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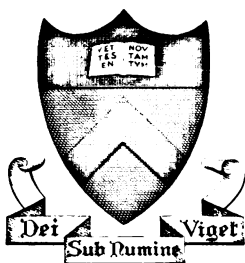
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Thomas Olive Mabbott
1924



8vo., A⁴, B-Aa⁸, Bb⁴; pp [8] + 376. (24 sheets, made up 23
2 half sheets)

Third edition of A Collection of Miscellanies, by
John Norris, Cambridge Platonist, London 1699.

According to the Dict. Nat. Bios. the first edition
was dated 16..



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Thomas Clive Mabbott
New York
1924

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A
COLLECTION
OF
Miscellanies:

Consisting of
POEMS, ESSAYS, DIS-
COURSES & LETTERS,
Occasionally Written.

By JOHN NORRIS, Rector of Bemerton
near Sarum.

— *Diram qui contudit Hydram.
Notaque Fatali portenta labore subegit,
Comperit Invidiam supremo sine domari.*

Hor. Epist. Lib. 2. Epist. 1.

The Third Edition Corrected.

L O N D O N :

Printed for S. Manship, and are to be sold by Percivall
Gilbourne, at the Harrow at the Corner of Chancery-
Lane in Fleetstreet, 1699.

TO THE
Honorable Leopold William Finch,
Warden of All-Souls-College.

S I R,

THe Greatness of your *Quality* and *Personal Worth*, consider'd with that *Happy Relation* which has further endear'd you to us, gives you so just a Title to these Performances, that I could not without an heinous Alienation, devote them to any other Patron. And therefore, however my boldness may be tax'd for making you so *disproportionable* a Present, yet certainly I should have incurr'd more dishonour by with-holding a *Debt*; and Presumption is a less Crime than Injustice.

Sir, 'Tis by your kind Patronage and Protection (next to the favourable influences of a good Prince) that our Studies prosper, and our Laurels thrive and flourish, and that any of us are in a capacity to throw in the least Symbol into the Muses Exchequer. To whom then should the Fruits of this Sacred Ground be offer'd, but to that Sun by whose genial influence they grow and ripen?

To you therefore I humbly present this Collection of *Miscellanies*, for the entertainment of your leisure hours, which were compos'd at some of mine. I shall not beg your *Protection* any farther than you shall find it worthy of it. I am only concern'd that you should hence conclude how well your (now more than ever fortunate) Society stands affected towards you, particularly how much you are honour'd and esteem'd by

Sir,
Your humble, and most devoted Servant

- JOHN NORRIS.

3876
155
1699

To the READER.

OF all the tedious things in the World, I was ever the least Friend to long Prefaces; and therefore I shall only commend to your Hands this Collection of *Miscellanies*, occasionally composed at several times, as my Humour and Leisure serv'd me, with a brief Account of my Design, as to both Parts of the Collection.

Not to trouble you with a Pompous Discourse of the Nature of Poetry, its Measures of Criticism, its Variety, Antiquity, its great use and excellence, and the like, which have been at large set forth by many curious Pens, I have only leisure at present to observe, that Poetry is of late mightily fall'n from the Beauty of its Idea, and from its ancient Majesty and Grandeur, as well as Credit and Reputation.

It may appear strange indeed, that in such a Refining Age as this, wherein all things seem ready to receive their last turn and finishing stroke, Poetry should be the only thing that remains unimprov'd. And yet so it happens, that which we generally have now a-days, is no more like the thing it was formerly, than Modern Religion is like Primitive Christianity.

'Tis with this as with our Musick. From grave, majestic, solemn strains, where deep instructive Sense is sweetly convey'd in charming numbers, where equal Address is made to the Judgment and the Imagination, and where Beauty and Strength go hand in hand, 'tis now for the most part dwindled down to light, frothy stuff,

To the Reader.

stuff, consisting either of mad extravagant Rants, or slight Witticisms, and little amorous Conceits, fit only for a Tavern Entertainment; and that too among Readers of a Dutch Palate.

The truth is, this most Excellent and Divine Art has of late been so cheapned and depreiated by the bungling Performances of some who thought themselves inspired, and whose Readers too have been more kind to them than their Planets, that Poetry is almost grown out of Repute, and Men come strongly prejudiced against any thing of this kind, as expecting nothing but Froth and Emptiness; and to be a Poet, goes for little more than a Country Fidler.

But certainly he had once another Character, and that in as Nice and Wise an Age as this. If we may believe the great Horace he was one,

----- Cui mens Divinior, atque Os
Magna locuturum -----

He had then his Temples surrounded with a Divine Glory, spoke like the Oracle of the God of Wisdom, and could describe no Hero greater than himself. Poetry was once the Mistress of all the Arts in the Circle, that which held the Rains of the World in her Hand, and which gave the first, and (if we may judge by the effects) perhaps the best Institutes for the moralizing and governing the Passions of Mankind.

The Design therefore of the present Undertaking, is to restore the declining Genius of Poetry to its Primitive and genuine Greatness, to wind up the Strings of the Muses Lyre, and to shew that Sense and Gracefulness are as consistent in these as in any other Compositions.

I de-

To the Reader.

I design here all the Masculine Sense and Argument of a Dissertation, with the advantage of Poetic Fineness, Beauty and Spirit; and accordingly I have made choice for the most part of Divine and Moral Subjects; and if I meddle with any other sort, I commonly turn the Stream another way, as particularly in those Two Poems call'd Beauty and Love, which I have rescued from those sordid Abuses they have hitherto suffer'd.

I confess 'tis a difficult Province to make substantial massy Sense yield to the softness of Poetry; and accordingly we find there are few Poems after the Divine and Moral way, but what are stiff, flat and insipid; but without this Mixture, Poetry is nothing worth; and when it has it, it has all it can have, and is withal so Divine a thing, that even Plato I fancy, would give it Entertainment in his Common-wealth.

I need not make any other Apology for my conversing with the Muses; for I do not think it an Employment beneath the Character of a Scholar; and though I have now set up my outmost Pillar, yet I can't find in my heart to repent me of those few blank hours bestow'd in this Exercise. For I have the example of some of the greatest and wisest in all Ages to warrant me, and the greatness of Solomon is seen as much in his Divine Pastoral, the Canticles, as in his Proverbs or Sermons; and the wise Ben-Sirach among other Characters of his Heroes, puts in this among the rest, that they were such as found out Musical Tunes, and recited Verses in writing, Eccl. 44. 5.

And thus much for the Verse-part. Concerning the Essays and Discourses, I have only this to say, that I design'd in them as much Brevity and Clearness as are consistent with each other, and to abound in Sense rather

To the Reader.

ther than Words: I wish all Men would observe this in their Writings more than they do. I'm sure the multitude of Books, and the shortness of Life require it; and Sense will lye in a little compass, if Men would be perswaded to vent no Notions but what they are Masters of; and were Angels to write, I fancy we should have but few Folio's.

This is what I design'd and endeavour'd in the whole. Whether I have attain'd it or no, I submit to Judgment.

*All-Souls Coll.
June 1.1678.*

J. Norris.

The

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	The

The Passion of our Blessed Saviour, Represented in a Pindarique Ode.

————— *Quis talia fando*
Temperet a Lachrymis? —————

I.

SAY *bold Licentious Muse,*
What Noble Subject wilt thou chuse;
Of what great *Hero*, of what mighty Thing,
Wilt thou in boundless Numbers Sing?
Sing the unfathom'd Depths of *Love*,
(For who the Wonders done by *Love* can tell,
By *Love*, which is it self all Miracle?)
Here in vast endless Circles may'st thou rove,
And like the Travelling Planet of the Day
In an Orb *unbounded* Stray.
Sing the great Miracle of *Love Divine*,
Great be thy *Genius*, sparkling every Line;
Love's greatest *Mystery* reherse:
Greater then that
Which on the teeming *Chaos* brooding fate,
And *hatch'd* with kindly Heat, the Universe.
How *God* in Mercy chose to Bleed, and Dye,
To rescue Man from Misery:
Man, not his Creature only, but his Enemy.

II.

Lo, in *Gethsemane*, I see him prostrate lye,
Press'd with the Weight of his great Agony.
The Common Sluces of the Eyes
To Vent his Mighty Passion won't suffice,
His tortured Body Weeps *all-o're*,
And out of every Pore

B

Buds

Buds forth a precious Gem of Purple Gore,
 How strange the Power of Afflictions Rod
 When in the Hand of an Incensed God !

Like the Commanding Wand
 In *Moses's* Hand,

It works a Miracle, and turns the Flood
 Of Tears into a *Sea of Blood*.

See with what *Pomp* Sorrow does now appear !
 How Proud She is of being Seated here !

She never Wore
 So Rich a Dye before.

Long was he willing to decline
 Th' Encounter of the Wrath Divine.

Thrice he sent for his Release
 Pathetick Embassies of Peace :

At length, his Courage overcame his Doubt,
 Resolv'd he was, and so the *Bloody Flag* hung out.

III.

And now the *Tragic Scene's* display'd,
 Where drawn in full *Battalia* are laid

Before his Eyes,
 That Numerous Host of Miseries
 He must withstand, that Map of Woe
 Which he must undergo.

That heavy Wine-press which must by him be Trod,
 The whole Artillery of God.

He saw that Face, whose very Sight
 Cheers Angels with its Beatific Light,
 Contracted now into a dreadful Frown,

All Cloath'd with Thunder, Big with Death
 And Showers of hot burning Wrath,
 Which shortly must be poured down.

He saw a Black and Dismal Scroll,
 Of Sins past, present, and to come,
 With their intolerable Doom

Which would the more Oppress his *spotless* Soul;

As th' Elements are Weighty proved,
 When from their Native Station they're removed.

He

He saw the Foul Ingratitude of those,
 Who would the Labours of his Love oppose;
 And reap no Benefit by all his Agonies.

He saw all this,
 And as he saw, to Waver he began,
 And almost to Repent of his great Love for Man.

IV.

When lo, a Heavenly Form all Bright and Fair,
 Swifter than Thought, shot through th' enlighten'd Air:

He who sat next th' *Imperial* Throne,
 And read the Councils of the Great *Three-One*,
 Who in Eternity's Mysterious Glass,
 Saw both what was, what is, and what must come to pass;

He came with Reverence profound,
 And rais'd his *prostrate* Maker from the Ground;

Wiped off the Bloody Sweat
 With which his Face and Garments too were Wet :

And comforted his Dark *benighted* Mind,
 With Sovereign Cordials of Light refin'd.

This done, in soft Addresses he began
 To Fortifie his kind Designs for Man :

Unseal'd to him the Book of God's Decree,

And shew'd him what *must* be :

Alledg'd the Truth of Prophecies,

Types, Figures, and Mysteries ;

How needful it was to supply,

With *Humane* Race, the Ruins of the Sky.

How this would new Accession bring

To the Celestial Quire ;

And how withall, it would inspire

New Matter for the Praise of the great King.

How he should see the *Travail* of his Soul, and Bless

Those Sufferings which had so good Success.

How great the Triumphs of his Victory,

How glorious his *Ascent* would be,

What *weighty* Bliss in Heaven he should obtain

By a few Hours of Pain ;

Where to Eternal Ages he should Reign.

He spake, Confirm'd in Mind the Champion stood ;
 A Spirit Divine
 Through the Thick Veil of Flesh did shine :
 All-over Powerful he was, All-over Good.
 Pleas'd with his successful Flight,
 The Officious Angel Posts away
 To the bright Regions of Eternal Day ;
 Departing in a Track of Light.
 In haste for News, the Heavenly People raiſe,
 And joy'd to hear the hopeful State of Man.

V.

And now that strange prodigious hour,
 When God muſt Subject be to Humane Power ;
 That Hour is come,
 Th' unerring Clock of Fate has Struck ;
 'Twas heard below down to Hell's lowest Room,
 And ſtrait th' Infernal Powers th' appointed Signal took.
 Open the Scene, my Muſe, and ſee
 Wonders of Impudence and Villany ;
 How wicked Mercenary Hands,
 Dare to Invade him whom they ſhould Adore ;
 With Swords and Staves, encompass'd round he ſtands,
 Who knew no other Guards but thoſe of Heaven before.
 Once with his Powerful Breath, he did repell
 The Rude Aſſaults of Hell.

A Ray of his Divinity
 Shot forth with that bold Answer, *I am He* :
 They Reel and Stagger, and Fall to the Ground ;
 For God was in the Sound.
 The Voice of God was once again,
 Walking in the Garden, heard :
 And once again, was by the Guilty Hearers fear'd :
 Trembling ſeiz'd every Joynt, and Chilneſs every Vein.
 This little Victory he won,
 Shew'd what he could have done.
 But He to whom as Chief was given,
 The whole *Militia* of Heaven,
 That *Mighty* He,
 Declines all Guards for his Defence, But

But that of his inseparable Innocence ;
 And quietly gives up his Liberty.
 He's Seiz'd on by the Military Bands,
 With Cords they Bind his Sacred Hands :
 But ah ! how Weak, What Nothings would they prove,
 Were he not held by stronger Ones of Love.

VI.

Once more, my weary'd Muse, thy Pinions Try,
 And reach the Top of *Calvary*.
 A Steep Ascent : But most to him who bore
 The Burthen of a Cross this Way before.
 (The Cross Ascends, there's something in it sure
 That Moral is and Mystical ;
 No Heights of Fortune are from thee secure,
 Afflictions sometimes Climb, as well as Fall.)
 Here Breathe a while, and view
 The dolefull'st Picture Sorrow ever Drew :
 The Lord of Life, Heavens Darling Son,
 The Great, th' Almighty One,
 With Out-stretch'd Arms, Nail'd to a Cursed Tree,
 Crown'd with Sharp Thorns, Cover'd with Infamy :
 He who before
 So many Miracles had done,
 The Lives of Others to Restore,
 Does with a greater, lose his Own.
 Full Three long Hours his Tender Body did sustain,
 Most exquisite and poignant Pain.
 So long the Sympathizing Sun his Light withdrew,
 And wonder'd how the Stars their *dying* Lord could View.

VII.

This strange Defect of Light,
 Does all the Sages in Astronomy Affright,
 With Fears of an Eternal Night.
 Th' Intelligences in their Courses Stray,
 And Travellers below mistake their Way ;
 Wond'ring to be benighted in the midst of Day.
 Each Mind is seiz'd with Horror and Despair,
 And more o'respread with Darkness than the Air.

Fear on, 'tis Wondrous all, and New ;
 'Tis what past Ages never knew.
 Fear on, but yet you'll find,
 The great Eclipse is still behind.
 The Lustre of the Face Divine,
 Does on the Mighty Sufferer no longer shine.
 God hides his Glories from his Sight,
 With a Thick Skreen made of Hell's grossest Night.
 Close-wrought it was, and Solid, all
 Compacted and Substantial ;
 Impenetrable to the Beatifick Light :
 Without Complaint, He bore
 The Tortures he endur'd before ;
 But now, no longer able to Contain,
 Under the great Hyperbole of Pain,
 He Mourns, and with a strong Pathetick Cry,
 Laments the sad Desertion of the Deity.
 Here Stop, my Muse, Stop and Admire,
 The Breather of all Life does now Expire ;
 His Milder Father Summons Him away ;
 His Breath Obediently he does Relign :
 Angels to Paradise his Soul convey ;
 And Calm the Relicts of his Grief with Hymns Divine.

ANNOTATIONS.

THis Ode is after the Pindarick Way ; which
 is the highest and most magnificent Kind of
 Writing in Verse ; and consequently, fit only for
 great and noble Subjects ; such as are as Boundless
 as its own Numbers : The Nature of which is to
 be Loose and Free ; and not to keep one settled
 Pace ; but sometimes like a gentle Stream, to glide
 along Peaceably within its own Channel ; and some-
 times, like an impetuous Torrent, to Roll on Ex-
 travagantly,

travagantly, and carry all before it. Agreeable to that Description of *Horace*:

*Nunc pace delabentis Hetruscum
In mare, nunc lapides adesos
Stirpesque raptas & pecus & domos
Volventis una non sine montium,
Clamore vicinaque Sylva.*

And this may serve to Explain the Introduction of the Poem:

And Hatch'd with kindly Heat the Universe.

Love in the *Gentile Theology*, is made the most Antient of the Gods, and the Sire of all Things. *In tarta di estro per d'una yvencia*, says *Platarch*. And it is described by *Simmius Rhodius*, in a Pair of Wings, which suited well with the Symbolical Representation of the *Chaos* by an Egg; which was Brooded and Hatch'd under these Wings of Love. This whole Matter is rarely well, and at large express'd by *Aristophanes* in *Avibus*. The plain and undisguis'd Meaning of it is this, That the Creation of the World was the Effect of the Divine Love; God having no other End in it besides the Communication of his own Happiness.

As th' Elements are Weighty proved,

When from their Native Station they're removed.

This is according to the *Aristotelean Hypothesis*, that the Elements are not Heavy in their own Places; which whether it be true or no, I shall not now Dispute. However, it serves for an Illustration, which is sufficient for my present purpose.

He saw the foul Ingratitude of those, &c.

The bitter Ingredients of our Lord's Cup mention'd

hitherto, were taken from Things relating to his own Personal Concern. But this last Motive of his Sorrow proceeds wholly on the Behalf of Others ; of whose Final Impenitence he is suppos'd to have a foresight. This I take to be a good and proper insinuation of the Excellency of our Blessed Lord's Temper, his exceeding great Love and *Philanthropy*, when among the other Ingredients of his Passion this is supposed to be One, That there would be some, who, by their own Default, would receive no Benefit from it.

Unseal'd to him the Book of God's Decree, &c.

Whether the Angel used these Topicks of Consolation or no, is a thing as indifferent to my purpose, as 'tis *uncertain*. In the Scripture it is only said in general, That *there appear'd an Angel from Heaven strengthening him*. However, these Arguments are such as are probable and pertinent ; and that's sufficient.

*In haste for News the Heavenly People ran,
And joy'd to hear the hopeful State of Man.*

It is highly reasonable to believe, that those Blessed and Excellent Spirits, who out of their Compassionate Love and Concern for Mankind, Usher'd in the News of our Saviour's Nativity, with *Anthems* of Praise and Thanksgiving ; and are said likewise, to Rejoyce at the Conversion of a Sinner, were also mightily Transported with Joy, when they understood that our Saviour, notwithstanding the Reluctancy of Innocent Nature, was at length fully resolv'd to undertake the Price of our Redemption.

Full

*Full three long Hours his Tender Body did sustain,
Most exquisite and poignant Pain.*

It is supposed by the Antient Fathers, that the Sufferings which our Blessed Saviour underwent in his Body, were more Afflictive to him than the same would have been to another Man, upon the account of the excellency and quickness of his Sense of Feeling : And this Opinion I take to be as *reasonable*, as 'tis *pious*. For since, according to the Principles of Philosophy, the Sense of Feeling arises from the proportion of the first Qualities, it follows, that the better the Complexion or Temperament of any Man is, the better his Feeling must needs be. Now 'tis very reasonable to believe, that that Man who was to be substantially united to the *Godhead*, and who was begotten by the miraculous *overshadowings* of the holy Spirit, should have a Body endow'd with the best Complexion, and most noble *Harmony* of Qualities that could be, that so it might be a suitable Organ for his excellent Soul. And if so, then it follows, that the Flesh of our Lord's Body was so Soft and Tender, and his Feeling so exquisitely Quick and Sensible, as never any Man's was before : And consequently, the severe usages which he underwent, not only at his *Passion*, but throughout his *whole* Life, must needs be in a *Singular* manner Afflictive to him. And hence appears the Vanity of their Opinion, who are little or nothing affected with the Consideration of our Lord's Passion, because they think it was made Light to him, by reason of his Union with the *Godhead*. 'Twas easie for him (some inconsiderate Persons are ready to say) to suffer this or this ; for he was God, and not meer Man, as we are. True, he
was

was so ; but his being God did no way lessen the Punishment he underwent as *Man*, but only supported him in his *Existence* under it, in the same manner as God is supposed, by an Act of his Almighty Power, to preserve the Bodies of the *Damn'd*, *incorruptible* among the *Everlasting Burnings*. But this I think is no *Kindness* to them. Neither did the Society of the Divine Nature any more diminish the Sufferings of our dearest Lord ; nay, in one respect it proved an *accidental aggravation* to them, because upon the account of this Noble Union, he had given him a Body of a most admirable Complexion and Harmonious Temperature, and consequently of a Flesh exceeding tender, and most exquisitely Perceptive of the least Impressions.

*So long the Sympathizing Sun his Light withdrew,
And wonder'd how the Stars their dying Lord could
view.*

The *Eclipse* which accompany'd the Passion of our Saviour was so remarkable and miraculous, that 'twas taken notice of by many of the *Gentile* Historians. There are three things which made this *Eclipse* so very remarkable, the time of its *Appearance*, the time of its *Duration*, and the *Degree* of it.

1. For the time of its Appearance, it was at *full Moon*, when the Moon was not in *Conjunction* with, but in *Opposition* to the Sun. And this appears not only from the Testimony of *Dionysius*, who affirms that he saw it at that time, but also from the time of our Lord's *Passion*, which, according to the Relation of the *Evangelist*, was at the Celebration of the *Passover*. Now the *Jews* were bound to celebrate the *Paschal* Solemnity always at *Full Moon*;

as

as is to be seen in the twelfth of *Exodus*. This was no time therefore for a *Natural Eclipse*, because 'twas impossible that the Moon should then interpose betwixt us and the Sun. 2. For the time of its *Duration*, it was full three Hours; which is another Evidence that this was no *Natural Eclipse*: For the *Natural Eclipse* of the Sun can never last so long, both because of the great disproportion between the Sun's Magnitude, and that of the Moon, and because of the swift Motion of the *latter*. 3. For the *degree* of it, it was a *total Eclipse*. The Sun was so darkned, that (as Historians report, who Write of that Eclipse) the *Stars* appear'd. And that is another Argument that it was no *Natural Phenomenon*, it being impossible that the Body of the Moon, which is so infinitely less than that of the Sun, should totally Eclipse it. Now all these three Remarkables are compris'd in the compass of these two Verses. For in that it is said that the *Sun withdrew his Light*, it is intimated that the Light of the Sun was not *intercepted* by the ordinary *Conjunction* of the Moon, but that by an *Extraordinary Commission* from the God of Nature, the Sun *reign'd* in his Light, and *suspended* the Emission of his Beams. And this denotes the time of its *appearance*, (*viz.*) when the Moon was not in *Conjunction*. The time of its *duration* is implied by the words, *So long*. And lastly, the *Degree* of it is implied in the last Verse, Where the Appearance of the Stars is not *directly* express'd, but only *insinuated* and *couch'd*, for the more Elegancy of the Thought.

And calm the Relicts of his Grief with Hymns divine.

It

It is here supposed that the Passion of our Saviour was now over, and his Father's Wrath wholly appeas'd. For I can by no means approve the Opinion of those who fancy that our Saviour, in the interim betwixt his Death and Resurrection, descended *locally* into Hell, there to suffer the Torments of the Damn'd. His own Words upon the Cross, *It is finish'd*; His Promise to the penitent Thief, that he should be with him that Day in *Paradise*; and his last *resignation* of his Spirit into the Hands of his Father, do all of them apparently contradict it. But yet, though the *bitter Cup* was wholly drank off upon the Cross, 'tis natural to imagine some little *Relish* of it to remain behind for a time. Though all his Sufferings and *penal* Infections were ended before his Death, yet, I suppose (and I think very naturally) some little *discomposures* of Mind, remaining like the *after-droppings* of a Shower, which his Soul could not immediately shake off, upon her release from the Body. In allusion to that of *Virgil*,

Inter quas Phœnissa recens a vulnere Dido

Errabat Sylva in Magna---

Where the Poet fancies the Ghost of *Dido* being newly releas'd from the Pains of Love, could not presently forget her *sbady* Walks and *melancholly* Retirements: Now these *Remains* of Sorrow and *After-disturbances* of Mind which cleav'd to the Soul of the *Holy Jesus*, I suppose here to be allay'd by the *Musick* of Angels in his *passage* to *Paradise*.

An

An Hymn upon the TRANSFIGURATION.

I.

Hail King of Glory, clad in Robes of Light,
 Out-shining all we here call bright:
 Hail Light's divinest *Galaxy*,
 Hail *Express Image* of the *Deity*.
 Could now thy *Amorous Spouse* thy Beauties view,
 How would her wounds all bleed anew!
 Lovely thou art all o're and bright,
 Thou *Israel's Glory*, and thou *Gentile's Light*.

II.

But whence this brightness, whence this suddain day?
 Who did thee thus with Light array?
 Did thy *Divinity* dispence
 T' its *Consort* a more *liberal* influence?
 Or did some *Curious Angel's Chymick Art*
 The *Spirits* of purest light impart,
 Drawn from the *Native Spring* of Day,
 And wrought into an *Organized Ray*?

III.

How e're 'twas done, 'tis Glorious and Divine,
 Thou dost with *radiant wonders* shine.
 The Sun with his bright Company,
 Are all *gross Meteors* if compar'd to thee.
 Thou art the Fountain whence their Light does flow,
 But to thy *will* thine *own* dost owe,
 For (as at first) thou didst but say, (day.
 Let there be light, and strait sprang forth this wondrous

IV.

Let now the *Eastern Princes* come and bring
 Their *Tributary Offering*.
 There needs no *Star* to guide their flight,
 They'll find thee now, *great King*, by thine *own* light.
 And thou, my Soul, adore, love, and admire,
 And follow this *bright Guide* of *Fire*.
 Do thou thy *Hymns* and *Praises* bring
 Whil'st Angels with *Veil'd Faces*, Anthems sing.

The

The PARTING.

I.

Depart! The Sentence of the *Danns'd* I hear;
Compendious grief, and *black* despair.
 I now believe the *Schools* with ease,
 (Tho once an *happy Infidel*)
 That should the *Sense* to torment seize,
 Yet *Pain* of *Loss* alone would make a *Hell*.

II.

Take all, since me of this you Gods deprive,
 'Tis hardly now worth while to live.
 Nought in *exchange* can grateful prove,
 No second Friendship can be found
 To match my mourning *Widow'd* Love;
Eden is lost, the rest's but *common* ground.

III.

Why are the *greatest Blessings* sent in vain,
 Which must be lost with *greater* pain?
 Or why do we fondly admire
 The greatest good which *life* can boast?
 When Fate will have the *Bliss* expire,
 Like *Life*, with painful *Agonies* 'tis lost.

IV.

How fading are the *Joves* we dote upon,
 Like *Apparitions* seen and gone:
 But those which soonest take their flight,
 Are the most *exquisite* and *strong*.
 Like *Angels* visits, *short* and *bright*;
 Mortality's too *weak* to bear them *long*.

V.

No pleasure certainly is so divine
 As when two Souls in Love combine:
 He has the *substance* of all bliss,
 To whom a *Vertuous Friend* is given,
 So sweet harmonious Friendship is,
 Add but *Eternity*, you'll make it *Heaven*.

VI.

The *Minutes* in your *Conversation* spent
 Were *Festivals* of true content.
 Here, here, an *Ark* of pleasing rest,
 My Soul had found that *restless Dove*,
 My *present State* methought was *best*,
 I envy'd none *below*, scarce those *above*.

VII.

But now the better part of me is gone,
 My Sun is *set*, my *Turtle* *flows*.
 Tho here and there of *lesser* bliss
 Some *twinkling* Stars give *feeble* light,
 Still there a *mournful darkness* is,
 They shine but just enough to shew 'tis *night*.

VIII.

Fatal divorce ! What have I done amiss,
 To bear such misery as this ?
 The World yields now no real good,
 All happiness is now become
 But *painted* and *deluding* food :
 As meer a *Fiddion* as *Elysium*.

IX.

Well then, since nothing else can please my taste,
 I'll *ruminate* on pleasures *past*.
 So when with glorious *Visions* blest,
 The waking *Hermit* finds no Theme
 That's grateful to his thoughtful *Breast*,
 He sweetly *recollects* his pleasing *Dream*.

To a Lady, who asked him, What Life was ?

'Tis not because I *breathe* and *eat*,
 'Tis not because a vigorous heat
 Drives *round* my *Blood*, and does impart
 Motion to my *Pulse* and *Heart* :
 'Tis not such *proofs* as these can give
 Any assurance that I *Live* :

No,

No, no, to *Live* is to enjoy ;
 What marrs our *bliss* does *Life* destroy :
 The days which pass without *Content*,
 Are not *liv'd* properly, but *spent*.
 Who says the Damn'd in Hell do *Live* ?
 That word we to the *Blessed* give :
 The *Sum* of all whose happiness
 We by the Name of *Life* express.
 Well then, if this account be true,
 To *Live* is still to Live with *You*.

The third Chapter of Job Paraphras'd.

I.

Curs'd, ever curs'd be that unhappy day,
 When first the Sun's unwelcom ray
 I saw with *trembling* Eyes, being newly come
 From the *dark* Prison of the *Womb*.
 When first to me my vital Breath was lent,
 That Breath which now must *all* in *sighs* be spent.

II.

Let not the Sun his chearing Beams display
 Upon that *wretched*, *wretched* day ;
 But mourn in *Sables*, and all over shroud
 His glories in a *sullen* cloud:
 Let light to *upper* Regions be confin'd,
 And all *below* as Black as is my *Mind*.

III.

Curs'd be the Night which first began to lay
 The *Ground-work* of this House of Clay :
 Let it not have the Honour to appear
 In the *Retinue* of the Year.
 Let all the Days shun its Society,
Hate, *curse*, *abandon* it as much as I.
 Let Melancholy call that Night her own,
 Then let her sigh, then let her groan :

A general grief throughout all Nature spread,
 With folded Arms, and drooping Head.
 All Harps be still, or tun'd to such a strain
 As *Fiends* might hear, and yet not ease their Pain.

V.

Let neither Moon nor Stars, with borrow'd light,
Chequer the blackness of that Night :
 But let a pure *unquestion'd* Darkness rear
 Her *Sooty* Wings all o're the Air ;
 Such as once on th' *Abyss* of *Chaos* lay,
 Not to be *pierc'd* by *Stars*, scarce by the *edge* of *Day*.

VI.

Why was there then, ah, why a passage free
 At once for Life and Misery ?
 Why did I not uncloister'd from the Womb
 Take my next Lodging in a Tomb ?
 Why with such cruel tenderness and care
 Was I nurs'd up to Sorrow and Despair ?

VII.

For now in sweet Repose might I have lain
 Secure from any Grief or Pain :
 Untouch'd with Care, my Bed I should have made
 In Death's cool and refreshing Shade.
 I should have slept now in a happy Place,
 All calm and silent as the Empty space:

VIII.

There where great *Emperours* their Heads lay down,
 Tir'd with the Burthen of a Crown.
 There where the Mighty, Popular and Great,
 Are happy in a dear Retreat ;
 Enjoy that solid Peace which here in vain,
 In Grotts and shady *Walks* they sought & obtain.

IX.

None of Hell's Agents can or dare molest
 This awful Sanctuary of Rest.
 No Prisoners sighs, no groanings of the Slave,
 Disturb the *quiet* of the *Grave*.

From Toil and Labour here they ever cease,
And keep a *Sabbath* of sweet *Rest* and *Peace*.

X.

Why then does *Heaven* on Mortals *Life* bestow
When 'tis thus *overtax'd* with woe?
Why am I forc'd to live against my *Will*,
When all the *Good* is lost in *Ill*?
My Sighs flow thick, my Groans sound from afar,
Like falling Waters to the Traveller.

Seraphick Love.

I.

'Tis true, *Frail Beauty*, I did once resign
To thy *imperious* Charms this Heart of mine :
There didst thou undisturb'd thy Scepter sway,
And I methought was pleas'd t' obey.
Thou seem'st so lovely, so divine,
With such sweet Graces didst thou shine,
Thou entertain'st my *Amarous* sense
With such *Harmonious* Excellence,
That, Credulous and Silly I,
VVith *vain*, with *impious* Idolatry,
Ador'd that *Star* which was to lead me to the *Deity*.

II.

But now, thou soft *Enchantress* of the Mind,
Farewel, a change, a mighty change I find;
The Empire of my Heart thou must resign,
For I can be no longer *thine*.
A Nobler, a Diviner Guest,
Has took possession of my Breast;
He has, and must *engross* it all,
And yet the Room is still too *small*.
In vain you tempt my Heart to rove,
A fairer Object now my Soul does move,
It must be all *Devotion*, what before was Love.

III. Through

III.

Through *Contemplation's Optics* I have seen
Him who is *Fairer than the Sons of Men*:

The *Source* of good, the light *Archetypall*,
Beauty in the *Original*.

The *fairest of ten thousand*, *He*,
Proportion all and Harmony.

All *Mortal Beauty's* but a Ray
Of his bright ever-shining Day ;

A little *feeble twinkling Star*,

Which now the Sun's in place must disappear ;

There is but One that's Good, there is but One that's Fair.

IV.

To thee, thou *only Fair*, my Soul aspires
With *Holy Breathings*, *languishing Desires*.

To thee m' *inamour'd*, *pausing Heart* does move,
By *Efforts of Ecstatic Love*.

How do thy glorious streams of Light
Refresh my intellectual sight !

Tho broken, and strain'd through a Skreen
Of envious Flesh that stands between !

When shall m' *imprison'd Soul* be free,

That she thy *Native Uncorrected Light* may see,
And gaze upon thy *Beatifick Face* to all Eternity ?

The RETIREMENT.

I.

WELL, I have thought on't, and I find,
This *busie World* is Nonsense all ;

I here despair to please my Mind,
Her sweetest *Honey* is so mixt with *Gall*.

Come then, I'll try how 'tis to be alone,
Live to my self a while, and be my own.

II.

I've try'd, and bless the happy change ;
So happy, I could almost vow

Never from this Retreat to range,
 For sure I ne't can be so blest as now.
 From all th' allays of Blifs I here am free,
 I pity others, and none envy me.

III.

Here in this shady lonely Grove,
 I sweetly think my hours away,
 Neither with Business vex'd, nor Love,
 Which in the *World* bear such *Tyrannick* sway :
 No Tumults can my *close Apartment* find,
 Calm as those *Seats above*, which know no *Storm* nor *Wind*.

IV.

Let *Plots* and *News* embroil the State,
 Pray what's that to my *Books* and *Me*?
 Whatever be the *Kingdom's* Fate;
 Here I am sure t' enjoy a *Monarchy*.
 Lord of my self, accountable to none;
 Like the first Man in *Paradise*, alone.

V.

While the *Ambitious* vainly sue,
 And of the *partial* Stars complain,
 I stand upon the *Shore* and view
 The mighty *Labours* of the distant *Main*,
 I'm flush'd with *silent* joy, and smile to see
 The *Shafts* of *Fortune* still drop *short* of *Me*.

VI.

Th' *uneasie Pageantry* of State,
 And all the *Plagues* to *Thought* and *Sense*
 Are far remov'd; I'm plac'd by Fate
 Out of the *Road* of all *Impertinence*.
 Thus, tho my *fleeting* Life runs *swiftly* on,
 'Twill not be *short*, because 'tis *all my own*.

The INFIDEL.

I.

Farewel *Fruition*, thou grand *Cruel Cheat*,
 Which first our hopes dost *raise* and then *defeat*.
 Farewel thou *Midwife* to *Abortive Blifs*,
 Thou *Mystery* of *Fallacies*.

Distance presents the *Object* fair,
 With *Charming Features* and a *graceful Air*,
 But when we come to *seize* th' *inviting prey*,
 Like a *Sly Ghost*, it vanishes away.

II.

So to th' *unthinking Boy* the *distant Sky*
 Seems on some *Mountain's Surface* to rely;
 He with *Ambitious* haste climbs the ascent,
 Curious to touch the *Firmament* :

But when with an *unweary'd* pace
 Arriv'd he is at the *long-wish'd-for* place,
 With *Sighs* the *sad defeat* he does deplore,
 His *Heaven* is still as *distant* as before.

III.

And yet 'twas long e're I could *thoroughly* see
 This grand *Impostor's frequent* *Treachery*.
 Tho often *Fool'd*, yet I should still dream on
 Of *Pleasure* in *Reversion*.

Tho still he did my hopes *deceive*,
 His fair *Pretensions* I would still *believe*,
 Such was my *Charity*, that tho I knew
 And found him *false*, yet I would think him *true*.

IV.

But now he shall no more with *shews* *deceive*,
 I will no more *enjoy*, no more *believe*.
 Th' *unwary Jugler* has so often shewn
 His *Fallacies*, that now they'r known.
 Shall I *trust* on? the *Cheat* is plain,
 I will not be impos'd upon again.

I'll view the *Bright Appearance* from *afar*,
But never try to *catch* the falling *Star*.

On a Musician, supposed to be mad with Musick,

I.

POOR dull mistake of low Mortality,
To call that Madness, which is Ecstasy.
'Tis no disorder of the Brain,
His Soul is only set t' an higher strain.
Out-soar he does the Sphere of Common Sense,
Rais'd to Diviner Excellence;
But when at highest pitch, his Soul out-flies,
Not Reason's Bounds, but those of vulgar Eyes.

II.

So when the *Mystick Sibyl's* Sacred Breast
Was with *Divine Infusions* possess'd,
'Twas *Rage* and *Madness* thought to be,
Which was all *Oracle* and *Mystery*.
And so the Soul that's shortly to *Commence*
A Spirit free from dregs of Sense,
Is thought to *rave*, when She discourses high,
And *breathes* the lofty *Strains* of *Immortality*.

III.

Musick, thou *Generous Ferment* of the Soul,
Thou universal *Cement* of the whole;
Thou *Spring* of *Passion*, that dost inspire
Religious Ardours, and *Poetick Fire*,
Who'd think that *Madness* should b' ascrib'd to thee,
That mighty *Discord* to thy *Harmony*?
But 'twas *such ignorance* that call'd the Gift *Divine*
Of *Various Tongues*, *Rage*, and th' *Effects* of *Wine*.

IV.

But thou, *Seraphick* Soul, do thou advance
In thy sweet *Ecstasy*, thy *pleasing* Trance:
Let thy brisk *Passions* mount still higher,
Till they join to the *Element* of *Fire*,

Soar

Soar higher yet, till thou shalt calmly hear
 The Musick of a well-tun'd Sphere :
 Then on the *lumpish Mass* look down, and thou shalt know
 The *Madness* of the *World*, for groveling still below.

The CONSOLATION,

I.

I Grant 'tis bad, but there is some relief
 In the *Society* of Grief.
 'Tis sweet to him that *mourns* to see
 A whole House clad in Sorrow's Livery.
 Grief in *Communion* does *remiss* appear,
 Like *harsher* sounds in *Consort*, which *less* grate the Ear.

II.

Men would not Curse the Stars, did they dispense
 In *common* their ill Influence.
 Let none be *Rich*, and Poverty
 Would not be thought so great a Misery.
 Our discontent is from *comparison*;
 Were better States *unseen*, each Man would like his *own*.

III.

Should *partial* Seas *wreck* my poor Ship *alone*,
 I might with cause my Fate bemoan.
 But since before I *sink*, I see
 A *Numerous Fleet* of Ships descend with me,
 Why don't I with *content* my Breath resign?
 I will, and in the *greater Ruine* bury mine.

The CHOICE.

*Stet quicumque volet potens
Aule culmine lubrico, &c.*

I.

NO, I shan't envy him, who'er he be,
That stands upon the *Battlements* of State ;
Stand there who will for me,
I'd rather be *secure* than *great*.
Of being so *high* the *pleasure* is but *small*,
But *long* the *Ruin*, if I chance to *fall*.

II.

Let me in some sweet Shade *serenely* lye,
Happy in *leisure* and *obscurity* ;
Whilst others place their joys
In *Popularity* and *Noise*.
Let my soft Minutes *glide obscurely* on,
Like *subterraneous* Streams, *unheard*, *unknown*.

III.

Thus when my Days are all in *silence* past,
A good *plain-Country-Man* I'll dye at last.
Death cannot chuse but be
To him a *mighty* Misery,
VVho to the *World* was *popularly* known,
And dies a *Stranger* to *himself* alone.

The MEDITATION.

I.

IT must be done (my Soul) but 'tis a strange,
A dismal and *Mysterious* Change,
VVhen thou shalt leave this *Tenement* of Clay,
And to an *unknown* *somewhere* wing away ;
VVhen *Time* shall be *Eternity*, and thou (how.
Shalt *be* thou know'st not *what*, and *live* thou know'st not

II. *Amazing*

II.

Amazing State! No wonder that we dread
 To think of *Death*, or view the *Dead*.
 Thou'rt all wrapt up in *Clouds*, as if to thee
 Our very *Knowledge* had *Antipathy*.
 Death could not a more *Sad* Retinue find,
Sickness and *Pain* before, and *Darkness* all behind.

III.

Some *Courteous Ghost*, tell this *great Secrecy*,
 What 'tis you *are*, and we *must* be.
 You warn us of *approaching Death*, and why
 May we not know from you what 'tis to *Dye*?
 But you, having *shot* the *Gulph*, delight to see
 Succeeding Souls *plunge* in with *like Uncertainty*.

IV.

When *Life's* close *Knot* by *Writ* from *Destiny*,
Disease shall cut, or *Age* unty;
 When after some *Delays*, some *dying Strife*,
 The *Soul* stands *shivering* on the *Ridge* of *Life*;
 With what a *dreadful Curiosity*
 Does she *launch* out into the *Sea* of vast *Eternity*!

V.

So when the *Spacious Globe* was delug'd o'er,
 And *lower Holds* could save no more,
 On th' *utmost Bough* th' astonish'd *Sinners* stood,
 And view'd th' *Advances* of th' *encroaching Flood*.
 O'ertopp'd at length by th' *Element's* *Encrease*,
 With *Horror* they resign'd to the *untry'd Abyss*.

The IRRECONCILABLE.

I.

I Little thought (my *Damon*) once, that you
 Could prove, and what is more, to me, *untrue*.
 Can I forget such *Treachery*, and *Live*?
Mercy it self would not this *Crime* forgive.

Heaven's

Heaven's Gates refuse to let *Apostates* in,
No, that's the *Great unpardonable Sin*.

II.

Did you not Vow by all the Powers above,
That you could none but *dear Orinda* love ?
Did you not swear by all that is Divine,
That you would *only* be and *ever* mine ?
You did, and yet you live *securely* too,
And think that *Heaven's* false as well as you.

III.

Believe me, *Love's* a thing *much* too divine
Thus to be *Ap'd*, and made a mere *Design*.
'Tis no less Crime than *Treason* here to *feign*,
'Tis Counterfeiting of a *Royal Coin*.
But ah ! *Hypocrisy's* no where so common grown
As in *Most Sacred Things*, *Love* and *Religion*.

IV.

Go seek *new Conquests*, go, you have my Leave,
You shall not *Grieve* her whom you could *deceive*.
I don't *lament*, but *pity* what you do,
Nor take that *Love* as *lost*, which ne'r was *true*.
The way that's left you to *befriend* my Fate,
Is now to prove *more constant* in your *Hate*.

The ADVICE.

*Prudens futuri temporis exitum
Caliginosa nocte premit Deus.* Hor.

I.

What's *forming* in the *Womb* of Fate
Why art thou so concern'd to know ?
Dost think 'twou'd be *Advantage* to thy State ?
But *Wiser* Heaven does not think it so.
With thy *Content* thou would'st this Knowledge *buy*,
No Part of Life thou'dst pleasant find
For dread of what thou see'st behind,
Thou would'st but *tast* of the *inlightning* Fruit and *Dye*.
II. Well

II.

Well then, has Heaven Events to come
 Hid with the *blackest* Veil of Night ;
 But still in vain if we *foresee* all our Doom,
 And with *Prophetic* Fears our selves affright :
 Grand Folly ! whether thus 'twill be or no
 We Know not, and yet silly Man
Secures his Evils what he can, (Blow.
 And *stabs* himself with Grief, lest Fate should *miss* the

III.

Be Wise, and let it be thy Care
 To manage well the *present* Hour ;
 Call home thy ranging Thoughts and fix them *here*,
 This only Mind, this only's in thy *Power*.
 The rest no settled, *steady* Course maintain,
 Like Rivers, which now gently slide
 Within their Bounds, now with full Tide
 O'erflow, whom Houses, Cattel, Trees resist in vain.

IV.

'Tis He that's happy, he alone
 Lives free and pleasant that can say
 With every Period of the setting Sun,
 I've *lived*, and run my Race like *him* to Day.
 To Morrow let the angry Heavens frown,
 Or smile with Influence more kind,
 On *Chance* depends what's yet *behind* ;
 But sure what I have seiz'd *already's* all my *own*.

V.

Fortune who no Diversion knows
 Like *Disappointment*, laughs to see
 How *Variouly* she can her Gifts *Transpose*,
 Sometimes to one, sometimes t'another free.
 Be sure to *enjoy* her while she's pleas'd to *stay*.
 But if for *Flight* she does prepare,
 Don't you at parting drop a Tear,
 But hold your *Virtue* fast, for that alone you *may*.

TO HIMSELF.

I.

Not yet Convinc'd ? why wilt thou still pursue
 Through Nature's Field *delusive* Blifs ?
 'Tis false, or else too *fugitive* if true ;
 Thou may'st assoon thy *Shadow* overtake as *this*.
 The gaudy Light still dances in thy Eye,
 Thou hot and eager in the *Chase*
 Art drawn through many a thorny rugged Place,
 Still laughing and sighing, but can'st ne'er come *nigh*.

II.

Give o'er my Soul, give o'er, nor strive again
 This treacherous *Chymic Gold* to find.
 Tell me, why should'st thou *fancy* there remain
 Days yet to *come* more sweet, than those thou'st left *be*-
 A *wiser Chymist* far than thou, t' obtain (*hind*.
 This Jewel all his Treasures spent,
 But yet he fail'd in's *grand Experiment*,
 And all he gain'd was this, to *know* that *all* was *vain*.

III.

Forbear, and at *another's* Cost be Wife,
 Nor longer this *Coy* Mistress woo.
 He's mad that runs where none can win the Prize,
 Why should'st thou lose thy *Mistress*, and thy *Labour* too ?
 Heaven does but sport with our *Simplicity*
 By laying Jewels in our way,
 For when we stoop to seize the *glittering* Prey,
 They'r snatch't away again, and *baulk* our greedy Eye.

IV.

'Tis so, the Choicest good this world can give
 Will never *stand* Fruition's *Test*.
 This all by Experience *find*, yet few *believe*,
 And in the Midst of *Chears* hope they shall once be *blest*.
 Strange *Magic* this. So Witches tho they find
 No Comfort from their *airy* Meat,
 Forget at next Cabal their *slender* Treat,
 And greedily again fall to their *Feast* of *Wind*.

V. But

But thou my Soul thy *strong Conviction* shew,
 And never reach at *Bliss* again.
 Our *best Good* here is Nature's *Bounds* to know,
 And those Attempts to *spare*, which else would be *in vain*.
 Here then Contain thy self, nor higher Good
 In this *enchanted Place* pursue.
 And pity those *short-sighted Souls* that do ;
 This World is best enjoy'd, when 'tis best *understood*.

The REFUSAL.

I.

Think not to Court me from my *dear Retreat* ;
 No, I protest 'tis all in vain.
 My Stars did never mean I should be *great*,
 And I the very Thought *disdain*.
 Or if they did, their Will I'll *disobey*,
 And in my *little Orb* remain as *Fix'd* as they.

II.

Honour, that *Idol* which the *Most* adore,
 Receives no *Homage* from my *Knee*.
 Content in *Privacy*, I value more
 Than all *uneasie Dignity*.
 How should that *Empty* thing deserve my *Care*,
 Which *Virtue* does not *need*, and *Vice* can never bear?

III.

Shall I echange *solid* and *unenvy'd Joys*
 Of a *Serene*, tho *humble State*,
 For *splendid Trouble*, *Pomp* and senseless *Noise* ?
 This I *despise* as well as *hate*.
 Poor *Gain* of that *Condition*, which will be
Envy'd by *others*, and as much *dislik'd* by *me*.

Hymn to DARKNESS.

I.

HAil thou most *sacred Venerable* thing!
 • What Muse is worthy thee to sing?
 Thee, from whose pregnant *universal* womb
 All things, even *Light* thy *Rival* first did come.
 What dares he not attempt that sings of thee
 Thou *First* and greatest *Mystery*?
 Who can the *Secrets* of thy *Essence* tell?
 Thou like the *Light* of God art *inaccessible*.

II.

Before *Great Love* this *Monument* did raise,
 This ample *Theatre* of *Praise*.
 Before the *folding* *Circles* of the *Sky*
 Were *tun'd* by him who is all *Harmony*.
 Before the *Morning Stars* their *Hymn* began,
 Before the *Council* held for *Man*.
 Before the *Birth* of either *Time* or *Place*,
 Thou reign'st *unquestion'd* *Monarch* in the *empty* *Space*.

III.

Thy *native* *Lot* thou didst to *Light* resign,
 But still *half* of the *Globe* is *thine*.
 Here with a *quiet*, but yet *aweful* *Hand*,
 Like the *best* *Emperours* thou dost *Command*.
 To thee the *Stars* *above* their *Brightness* owe,
 And *Mortals* their *Repose* *below*.
 To thy *Protection* *Fear* and *Sorrow* flee,
 And those that *wearry* are of *Light*, find *Rest* in *thee*.

IV.

Tho *Light* and *Glory* be th' *Almighty's* *Throne*,
Darkness is his *Pavilion*.
 From that his *radiant* *Beauty*, but from *thee*
 He has his *Terror* and his *Majesty*.
 Thus when he first proclaim'd his *sacred* *Law*,
 And would his *Rebel* *Subjects* *awe*.
 Like *Princes* on some *great* *Solemnity*,
 H' appear'd in's *Robes* of *State*, and *Clad* himself with *thee*.

V. The

V.

The Blest above do thy sweet *Umbrage* prize,
 When *Cloy'd* with Light, they veil their Eyes.
 The *Vision* of the Deity is made
 More Sweet and *Baastifick* by thy *Shade*.
 But we poor *Tenants* of this Orb below
 Don't here thy *Excellencies* know,
 Till Death our *Understandings* does *improve*,
 And then our *Wiser Ghosts* thy *silent Night-Walks* love.

VI.

But thee I now admire, thee would I chuse
 For my *Religion*, or my *Muse*.
 'Tis hard to tell whether thy reverend *Shade*
 Has more good *Votaries* or *Poets* made.
 From thy *dark Caves* were *Inspirations* given,
 And from thick *Groves* went *Voms* to Heaven.
 Hail then thou *Muse's* and *Devotion's* Spring,
 'Tis *just* we should *adore*, 'tis *just* we should thee *sing*.

The INVITATION.

Come my Beloved let us go forth into the Field, let
 us lodge in the Villages, Cantic. 7. 11.

I.

Come thou *divineſt* Object of my Love,
 This *Noify* Region don't with us agree ;
 Come let us hence remove,
 I cannot here enjoy *my ſelf* or thee.

Here *Vice* and *Folly* keep their *Court*,
 Hither their *chiefeſt Favouriteſ* reſort,
Debauchery has here her *Royal Chair*,

This is her great *Metropolis*,
 What e'er we ſee or hear *Contagion* is ;
 Their *Manners* are *polluted* like the *Air*.

From both unwholſom Vapours riſe
 And *blacken* with *ungrateful* Steams the neighbouring Skies.

II. Come

II.

Come we'll e'n to our *Country Seat* repair;
The *Native Home* of *Innocence* and *Love*.

There we'll draw *purser Air*,
And pity *Monarchs* sitting in our *Grove*.

Here *Virtue* has her safe *Retreat*,
Abandon'd by the *Many* and the *Great*.

Content does here her *peaceful Scepter* sway ;

Here *Faithfulness* and *Friendship* dwell,
And *Modesty* has here her *humble Cell* :

Come my *Beloved*, Come, and let's away.

Be thou My *Angel* good and kind.

And I'll ne'r look at *Sodom* which we leave *behind*.

III.

In *Fields* and flow'ry *Meadows*, *Woods* and *Groves*
The *first* and *best* *Delights* of humane *Kind*,

There we'll enjoy our *Loves*
All *free*, and only to our selves *confin'd*.

Here shall my *Eyes* be fixt on thee,
Till every *Passion* be an *Extasie*.

Each *Hour* to thee shall be *Canonical* ;

The *Sweets* of *Nature* shall not *stay*,
My *Soul*, but only shew to thee the way ;
To thee ; Thou *Beauty's* great *Original*.

Come My *Beloved*, let's go prove
These sweet *Advantages* of *Peace*, *Content*, and *Love*.

Sitting in an ARBOUR.

THus ye good *Powers*, thus let me ever be
Serene, retir'd, from *Love* and *Business* free ;
The rest of your great *World* I here resign

To the *Contentions* of the *great* ;

I only ask that this *Retreat*,

This little *Tenement* be *mine*.

All my *Ambition's* to this *Point* confin'd ;
Others enlarge their *Fortunes*, I my *Mind*.

II. How

II.

How calm, how happy, how serene am I!
 How *satisfy'd* with my *own* Company!
 To few things *foreign* my Content I owe;
 But in my self *have* almost all
 Which I *dare* good or pleasing call,
 Or (what's as well) I *fancy* so.
 Thus I come near my great Creator's State,
 Whose *whole* Blifs in *himself* does *terminate*.

III.

Pleas'd with a various *Scene* of Thought I lie,
 Whil'st an *Obliging* Stream slides gently by
Silent and *Deep* as is the Blifs I chuse,
 All round the little *winged* Quire
 Pathetic, *tender* Thoughts inspire,
 And with their Strains provoke my Muse:
 With Ease the *Inspiration* I obey
 And Sing as *unconcern'd*, and as well *pleas'd* as they.

IV.

If ought below deserve the Name of Blifs,
 It must (whate'er the great ones think) be this.
 So once the travelling Patriarch doubly blest
 With Dreams divine from Heaven sent,
 And his own Heaven of Content,
 On's rocky Pillow took his Rest.
 Angels stood smiling by and said, were we our Blifs
 To change, *it should be* for a State like his.

V.

'Tis strange so *cheap*, and yet so *great* a Good
 Should by so very *Few* be *understood*.
 That Blifs which Others seek with Toil and Sweat
 For which they prodigally wast
 Their Treasures, and yet miss at last,
 Here I have at an *easy* Rate.
 So those that *Costly* *Physick* use in vain,
 Sometimes by some *Cheap* Receipt their Health obtain:

The COMPLAINT.

I.

WELL 'tis a dull perpetual *Round*
 Which here we silly Mortals *tread*;
 Here's naught I'll swear *worth living* to be found,
 I wonder how 'tis with the *Dead*.
 Better I hope, or else ye Powers divine
Unmake me, I my *Immortality resign*.

II.

Still to be *Vex'd* by Joys *delay'd*
 Or by *Fruition* to be *Cloy'd*?
 Still to be *wearied* in a *fruitless Chase*,
 Yet still to *run*, and *lose the Race*?
 Still our *departed Pleasures* to *lament*
 Which yet when *present*, gave us no *Content*?

III.

Is this the the thing we so *extol*,
 For which we would *prolong* our *Breath*?
 Do we for this long *Life* a *Blessing Call*
 And *tremble* at the *Name of Death*?
 Sots that we are to think by *that* we *gain*
 Which is as well *retain'd* as *lost* with *Pain*.

IV.

Is it for this that we *adore*
Physicians, and their *Art implore*?
 Do we bless *Nature's* liberal *Supply*
 Of *Helps* against *Mortality*?
 Sure 'tis but *Vain* the *Tree of Life* to boast
 When *Paradise*, wherein it *grew*, is *lost*.

V.

Ye Powers, why did you *Man* create
 With such *insatiable Desire*?
 If you'd *endow* him with no more *Estate*
 You should have made him *less aspire*.
 But now our *Appetites* you *Vex* and *Cheat*
 With *real Hunger*, and *Phantastic Meat*.

A PASTORAL upon the Blessed Virgin, gone from Nazareth to Visit Elizabeth. Wherein the Sadness of the Country Nazareth is described during the Absence of the Virgin.

Translated out of *Rapin*.

The Speakers are *Afor*, *Alphæus* and *Zebede*.

Afor. **A**ND why *Alphæus*, in this sweet Shade dost thou
Make *Songs*, which are not seasonable now,
Since we of fair *Parthenia* are bereft!
Parthenia has our Fields and Mountains left.

Alph. Ay something 'twas my Pipe was t'other Day
So strangely out of Tune, and in so hoarse a Key.

Zeb. And I too this Misfortune might have known
By some late Signs, had my Thoughts been my own.
My little Goats as I to Pasture led
When the Grass rises from its dewy Bed.

I wonder'd why the new born Flowers hung down
Their languid Heads, as if scorch'd by the Sun.

The Lilly and the Rose to droop were seen,
And so did the immortal Evergreen,
Parthenia (alas) was gone ———

For thee sweet Maid Lilly and Rose did grieve,
The Evergreen thy Absence did perceive.

Afor. There grows a shady Elm in our yon Grove
Where *Philomel* wou'd constantly repair,
Sweet *Philomel* of all the Joy and Love

And with melodious Accents fill the Air.
When *Parthenis* was here, this shady Tree
Was never, never from her Music free.

But now divine *Parthenia* is gone,
Silent and sad she wanders up and down,
And among Thorns and lonely Hedges makes her Moan. }
}

Alph. Whil'st thou fair Nymph didst bless us with thy
 Each Grove was sprightly, every Wood was gay. (Stay,
 The Boughs with Birds, the Caves with Swains did ring,
 And the shril Grasshopper about the Field did sing.
 But now each Wood is silent as the Grave,
 Nor does the Shepherd whistle in his Cave,
 Nor does the Bird sit chirping on the Bough,
 Nor is the Grasshopper to be heard *now*.

Zeb. The Fields with living Springs were fruitful made,
 And every Spring had his refreshing Shade.
 Sweet Flowers to the Bees were ne'er deny'd,
 The Fold with Grass was constantly supplied.
 Now *Parthenis* is gone, the industrious Bee
 Can't Flowers procure with all his Industry :
 The Folds want Grass, the Fields their living Springs,
 Nor have the Fountains *now* their *shady* Coverings.
 Divine *Parthenia!* with thee we've lost
 All the Delights our Rural Life could boast.

Afor. My little Goats were boldly wont to go
 And climb the desert Hills, my Sheep would do so too.
 Then happy Sheep, the Wolf the Fold did spare,
 The Heat the infant Trees, the Rain the ripen'd Ear.'

Alph. Thou now perhaps sweet Nymph art travell'ing
 Some Craggy Hills, unknown to thee before, (o'er
 Whilest we sit here among the shady Trees,
 And *swallow down* each Cool refreshing Breeze.

Zeb. Say you sweet Western Blasts that *gently* blow
 And you fair Rivers that as *swiftly* flow,
 You who so often have been vocal made
 By Swains that *pipe* and *sing* under the Shade ;
 Say, now while *Phæbus* holds the middle Sky
 Under what Rock does sweet *Parthenia* ly ?
 Or through what Coasts may I her wandrings trace ?
 Or in what Fountain sees she now her lovely Face ?
 Ah! Tho our way of Life be plain and course
 Yet don't thou like thy Country e'er the worse
 Since 't'as thy happy *Parent* been and *Nurse*.

Afor.

Afor. Ah! where's that sweet Retreat can thee detain,
If thou thy native Country doth disdain?
Here are pure Springs, and o'er the Springs are Bowers,
Fine Woods and Fruit-Trees, and a world of Flowers.

Alph. But why, fair Nymph, would'st thou be absent
When the sweet Strawberry raises up his Head, (now,
Like Morning Sun all delicately red,
And Odorous Blossoms spring from every Bough?

Zeb. Don't you my Sheep that yonder Bank come near }
'Tis to *Parthenia* sacred all that's there, }
Nor wou'd the Grass be touch'd by any but by Her. }

Afor. Before fierce *Boreas* blow with's boisterous Mouth,
Or rainy weather come on from the South,
Before *Parthenia* to return again
Left by the Cold thou suffer or the Rain.

Alph. In a choice Garden is reserv'd for thee,
Sweet *Marjoram*, and a large Myrtle Tree;
Myrtles thou always lov'st, come then if now
Thou still lov'st Flowers as thou wert wont to do.

Zeb. Ripe Apples now hang dangling on the Tree
Ready to drop, and only stay for thee.
The Fig of thy Delay too does complain,
The tender Fig, but let them both remain
'Till thou to thy dear *Nazareth* return again. }

Afor. Return sweet Nymph, and with thee thou shalt
All the Delights and Beauties of the Spring. (bring
Fresh Grass again shall on the Mountains grow,
The Rivers shall with Milk and Nectar flow.
The Woods shall put on their green Livery,
And Nature in her *Pomp* shall wait on thee.
The Country Swains shall Flowers and Presents bring,
And I a Violet Garland for my Offering.

With me shall *Azarias* come along
Who with a smooth-wrought Pipe shall play the Song;
The Song that *Israel's* Shepherd as he stood
By *Jordan's* Bank, play'd to the listning Flood,

Alph. But if thou longer should'd our Hopes deceive,
With Rushes I'll a Basket for thee weave;

Here thy own *Nazareth* I'll represent,
 How all things here thy Absence do lament;
 The little Goats thou wandring here shalt see
 Mournful and sad, and all for want of thee.
 The Rivers which before flow'd swift and clear
 As glad the Image of thy Face to bear,
 Shall move benum'd and flow, whilest on each hand
 Appears the *thirsty* and *forsaken* Sand.
 The Corn shall droop and languish in the Field,
 The Meadows no fresh Grass or Herb shall yield,
 The Fir-Tree which with stately Pride before,
 Her curious shady Locks towards Heaven spread,
 Shall now with down-cast Boughs, and pensive Head,
 Thy Absence mourn, and thy Return implore.
 Thou round about shalt all things weeping see,
 If Tears in *Rush-Work* may decipher'd be.

Zeb. Preserve ye Powers, if you don't us disdain,
 The Nymph, whilest she runs panting o'er the Plain.
 And while she's absent since she once had Love
 For these our Fields, take care ye Powers above
 That neither Rivers do their Banks o'erflow
 Nor Storms the Pastures spoil, or ripen'd Corn o'erthrow.

Afor. From Night-Fires let our Stalls (sweet Nymph) }
 Defend from Heat the Rose, from Cold the Myrtle-tree, }
 While Rose and Myrtle are belov'd by thee. }
 That if you chance to cast a longing Eye
 Back on these Fields, now naked and forlorn,
 We may have still some Flowers left to supply
 Garlands t' express our Joy, and Dresses you t' adorn.

Alph. Haste not, if through rough ways thy Journey
 Haste not, the Heat will prove an Injury. (lyc,
 Let not the Sun thy *brighter* Beauties spoil :
 Ah! why wilt thou undo thy self with too much Toil?
 Take pleasing Shelter in some gentle Shade
 'Till the Day slacken, and the Heat b' allay'd.

Zeb. Parthenia, why dost thou our Hopes prolong?
 Perhaps too some ill Pipe, and worser Song ;

Now

Now grate thy Ears, whil'st thy poor country Swain
 On the deaf Winds bestows sweet lays in vain.
 Hang there my Pipe till she return, and be
 A silent Monument of my Misery.

For what are Songs or Mirth without her Company?

Azor. Our hills shall mourn while distant coasts you
Anamis shall not dance nor *Sabaris*. (blefs

The fields, the naked fields no Songs shall know,
 And Brooks their discontent by murmuring Streams shall
 Thus did the Swains the absent Nymph lament, (shew.
 The neighbouring Woods to Heav'n the doleful Accents
 (sent.

*The Tenth Ode of the Second Book of Horace,
 Translated.*

I.

'Tis much the better way, believe me 'tis,
 Not far to venture on the great *Abyss*,
 Nor yet from Storms thy Vessel to secure,
 To touch too nigh upon the dangerous Shore.

II.

The *Golden Mean*, as she's too nice to dwell
 Among the ruins of a filthy Cell,
 So is her Modesty withall as great
 To baulk the envy of a Princely Seat.

III.

Th' ambitious Winds with greater spite Combine
 To shock the grandeur of the stately Pine.
 The height of Structures makes the ruin large, (charge.
 And Clouds against high Hills their hottest bolts dis-

IV.

An even well-pois'd Mind, an evil State
 With Hope, a good with Fear does moderate.
 The Summers Pride, by Winter is brought down,
 And Flowers again the Conquering season Crown.

Take Heart, nor of the Laws of Fate complain,
 Tho now 'tis Cloudy, 'twill Clear up again.
 The Bow *Apollo* does not always use
 But with his milder Lyre sometimes awakes the Muse.

VI.

Be Life and Spirit, when Fortune proves unkind,
 And summon up the Vigour of thy Mind.
 But when thou'rt driven by too officious Gales,
 Be wise, and gather in the swelling Sails.

The DISCOURAGEMENT.

I.

WHAT wou'd the Wise Men's Censure be,
 I wonder, should they hear me say
 I was resolv'd to throw my Books away;
 How wou'd some scorn, and others pity me!
 Sure he's in Love, 'tis for some Charming *Eve*
 That he like *Adam Paradise* does leave.

This only difference would be
 Between my great *Grandfire*, and me,
 That I my *Paradise* forego
 For want of Appetite to know.

II.

'Tis not that Knowledge I despise;
 No, you misconstrue my Design;
 Or that t' *Enthusiasm* I incline
 And hope by *Inspiration* to be Wise.
 'Tis not for this I bid my Books adieu,
 No, I love Learning full as well as you,
 And have the Arts great Circle run
 With as much Vigour as the Sun
 His *Zodiac* treads, till t'other Day
 A thought surpris'd me in my way.

III. Thought

III.

Thought I, for any thing I know,
 What we have stamp'd for *Science* here,
 Does only the Appearance of it wear
 And will not pass above, tho Current here below ;
 Perhaps they've other Rules to Reason by,
 And what's Truth here, with them's Absurdity.

We Truth by a Refracted ray
 View, like the Sun at Ebb of Day :
 Whom the gross, treacherous *Atmosphere*
 Makes where it is not, to appear.

IV.

Why then shall I with Sweat and Pain
 Digg Mines of disputable Oar ?
 My labour's certain, so is not my Store,
 I may hereafter unlearn all again.
 Why then for Truth do I my Spirits waste,
 When after all I may be gull'd at last ?

So when the honest *Patriarch* thought
 With Seven Years Labour he had bought
 His *Rachels*, Love, by Morning Light
 He found the Error of the Night.

V.

Or grant some Knowledge dwells below,
 'Tis but for some few Years to stay
 Till I'm set loose from this dark House of Clay,
 And in an Instant I shall all things know.
 Then shall I learn t' *Accumulate Degrees*
 And be at once made *Master* of all *Sciences*.

What need I then great Summs lay out,
 And that Estate with care forestall,
 Which when few Years are come about,
 Into my Hands of Course will fall ?

The 63 Chapter of Isaiah Paraphrased to the 6 Verse.

A Pindarique ODE.

I.

STrange Scene of Glory! am I well awake?
 Or is't my Fancy's wild mistake?
 It cannot be a Dream, bright Beams of Light
 Flow from the Vision's Face, and pierce my tender Sight.
 No common Vision this, I see
 Some Marks of more than Human Majesty.
 Who is this mighty Hero, who,
 With Glories round his Head, and Terror in his Brow?
 From Bozrah he comes, a Scarlet Die
 O'respreads his Cloaths, and does out-vy
 The Blushes of the Morning Sky.
 Triumphant and Victorious he appears,
 And Honour in his looks and habit wears:
 How strong he treads, how stately does he go!
 Pompous and Solemn is his pace,
 And full of Majesty, as is his Face.
 Who is this mighty Hero, who?
 'Tis I who to my Promise faithful stand,
 I who the Powers of Death, Hell, and the Grave,
 Have foil'd with this all-conquering Hand,
 I who most ready am, and mighty too to save.

II.

Why wear'st thou then this Scarlet Die?
 Say mighty Hero, why?
 Why do thy Garments look all Red
 Like them that in the Wine-fat tread?
 The Wine-press I alone have trod,
 That vast unweildy Frame, which long did stand
 Unmov'd, and which no mortal Force could e're com-
 That ponderous Mass I ply'd alone (mand,
 And with me to assist were none;
 A mighty task it was, worthy the Son of God.

Angels

Angels stood trembling at the dreadful sight,
 Concern'd with what Success I should go through
 The Work I undertook to do ;
 Inrag'd I put forth all my might
 And down the Engine press'd, the violent Force
 Disturb'd the *Universe*, put *Nature* out of Course.
 The Blood gush'd out in Streams, and checquer'd o're
 My Garments with its deepest Gore ;
 With *Ornamental Drops* bedeck'd I stood,
 And writ my *Victory* with my *Enemy's Blood*.

III.

The day, the *Signal* day is come
 When of my Enemies I must Vengeance take ;
 The day when *Death* shall have its doom,
 And the *Dark Kingdom* with its *Powers* shall shake.
Fate in her *Kalender* mark'd out this day with *Red*,
 She folded down the Iron Leaf, and thus she said,
 This day, if ought I can Divine be true,
 Shall for a signal Victory
 Be Celebrated to Posterity :

Then shall the *Prince of Light* descend
 And rescue Mortals from th' Infernal Fiend,
 Break through his strongest Forts, and all his *Host* sub-
 This said, she shut the *Adamantin* Volume Close (due.
 And wish'd she might the *Crouding* Years *transpose* ;
 So much she long'd to have the *Scene display*,
 And see the vast event of this important Day.
 And now in midst of the *revolving* Years,
 This great, this mighty one appears :
 The faithful *Traveller* the Sun
 Has number'd out the Days, and the set Period run.
 I lookt, and to assist was none,
 My *Angelick Guards* stood trembling by,
 But durst not venture nigh :
 In vain too from my *Father* did I look
 For help, my *Father* me forfook.
 Amaz'd I was to see
 How all deserted me.

I took my fury for my sole support
 And with my single Arm the Conquest won,
 Loud *Acclamations* fill'd all Heavens Court,
 The *Hymning* guards above
Strain'd to an higher pitch of *Joy* and *Love*,
 The great *Jehovah* prais'd, and his Victorious Son.

The ELEVATION.

I.

TAke wing (my Soul) and upwards bend thy flight
 To thy *Originary* Fields of Light.
 Here's nothing, nothing here below
 That can deserve thy longer stay ;
 A secret *whisper* bids thee go
 To purer Air, and Beams of *native* Day.
 Th' *ambition* of the towering *Lark* out-vy,
 And like him *Sing* as thou dost *upward* fly.

II.

How all things lessen which my Soul before
 Did with the groveling Multitude adore !
 Those *Pageant* Glories disappear,
 Which charm and dazle mortals Eyes :
 How do I in this higher Sphere,
 How do I Mortals, with their Joys despise !
 Pure, uncorrupted Element I breath,
 And pity their gross *Atmosphere* beneath.

III.

How vile, how fordid here those Trifles shew
 That please the Tenants of that Ball below !
 But ha ! I've lost the little sight,
 The Scene's remov'd, and all I see
 Is one confus'd dark mass of Night.
 What nothing was, now nothing seems to be :
 How calm this Region, how Serene, how Clear !
 Sure I some strains of Heavenly Musick hear.

IV. On,

IV.

On, on, the Task is easie now and Light,
 No steams of Earth can here retard thy flight.
 Thou needst not now thy strokes renew,
 'Tis but to spread thy Pinions wide,
 And thou with ease thy Seat wilt view,
 Drawn by the Bent of the Ethereal tide.
 'Tis so I find; How sweetly on I move,
 Not let by things below, and help'd by those above!

V.

But see, to what new Region am I come?
 I know it well, it is my native Home.
 Here led I once a Life Divine,
 Which did all good, nor evil know:
 Ah! who wou'd such sweet Blifs resign
 For those vain shews which Fools admire below?
 'Tis true, but don't of Folly past complain,
 But joy to see these blest abodes again.

VI.

A good retrieve: But lo, while thus I speak,
 With piercing Rays th' eternal Day does break.
 The Beauties of the Face Divine
 Strike strongly on my feeble Sight:
 With what bright Glories does it shine!
 'Tis one immense and everflowing Light.
 Stop here my Soul; thou canst not bear more Blifs,
 Nor can thy now rais'd Palate ever relish less.

A N N O T A T I O N S.

THe general Design of the precedent Poem is to represent the gradual Ascent of the Soul by *Contemplation* to the Supreme Good, together with its firm Adherency to it, and its full Acquiescence in it. All which is done Figuratively, under the Allegory of a Local Elevation from the Feculent Regions of this lower World. *Pare*

*Pure uncorrupted Element I breath
And pitty their gross Atmosphere beneath.*

By *pure uncorrupted Element* is meant the refined intellectual Entertainments of the *Divine Life*, which are abstracted from all Corporeal Allays. *Ἡδοναὶ τὰ ἰαντῦ* as the *Divine Plato* calls them, *those Pleasures which are proper to Man as such*. By *gross Atmosphere* is meant the more drossy Gratifications of the *Animal Life*, which comes as short in Purity of the *Divine*, as the thick *Atmosphere* does of the *pure Æther*.

No steams of Earth can here retard thy flight, &c.

The thing intended in the whole Stanza is to insinuate the great Facility and Pleasure of the *Divine Life*, to one that is arrived to an Habit of it. For as the Magnetick influence of the Earth can have no Force upon him that is placed in the upper Regions, beyond the Sphere of its Activity, so (which is the Counterpart of the Allegory) the inclinations of the Animal Nature have little or no Power over him, who has advanc'd to the Heights of habitual Contemplation. He looks down upon, and observes the Tumults of his Sensitive Appetite, but no way Sympathizes with it; He views the Troubled Sea, but with the Unconcernedness of a Stander by, not as one that Sails in it. His Soul tho in Conjunction with his Body is yet above the reach of its Gusts and Relishes, and from her Serene Station at once sees and smiles at its little Complacencies. As *Lucan* says of the Soul of *Pompey*, when advanced to the *Ethereal Regions*.

— *Illic*

— Illic postquam se lumine vero
 Implevit, stellasque vagas miratur, & astra
 Fixa polis, vidit quanta sub nocte jaceret
 Nostra dies, risitque sui ludibria trunci.

And here I cannot chuse but take notice of a Difficulty which is very incident to the business in Hand, and wherewith I my self was once very much perplex'd when I first applied my Thoughts to Moral Contemplations. 'Tis in short this, we have a receiv'd Axiom that the Difficulty of the Performance Commends the Merit of a good Action. Now if so, it seems to follow that he who by a long habitual Course of Piety and Virtue has made his Duty easie and natural to himself, will be less perfect than another who does hardly abstain from Vice, or than himself before the Acquisition of that Habit. And then that *Ευνεμία* which *Aristotle* in the 7th of his *Ethics* makes only a *Semi-virtue*, because of the Difficulty of its Performance, will for that very Reason become *Virtus Heroica*, and if so, to make a Progress in Virtue will involve a Contradiction. This I confess appear'd to me in no inconsiderable Intricacy, when it first occur'd to my Thoughts, and I could not presently unwind my self from it.

But in answer to it I consider, 1st. That when the Difficulty of the Performance is said to commend the Action, 'tis not so to be understood as if Difficulty did in it self as an Ingredient, add any Moment to the Excellency of a Man's Virtue, but only that 'tis a sign of it *à Posteriori*. Because were not a Man endow'd with such a Degree of Virtue, he would not be able to conquer the suppos'd Difficulty.

culty. So that if a Man has a stock of Resolution sufficient to conquer such a Difficulty, his Virtue is the same, tho he never be engaged in it. For all the Virtue is absolv'd in the Degree of Resolution, the Difficulty is only a Sign or Indication of it. And upon this Consideration 'tis that those whom Nature has befriended with such an *Euphria* or happy Constitution as carries with it little or no Temptation to Vice may yet be accounted Virtuous, because their Resolution to Virtue may be so firm and peremptory, that they would adhere to it notwithstanding any Opposition.

2^{ly}. I consider that we are to distinguish of a two-fold Difficulty, 1st. There is a Difficulty which arises from the Nature of the Work it self. And 2^{ly}. There is a Difficulty which arises from the Disposition of the Agent. Now 'tis not this later Difficulty that commends the excellency of Virtue, but only the former, which is no way diminish'd by the Habit. For after the Induction of the Habit, the Work remains the same in its own Nature, which it was before; the only Change is in the Agent, who by his Habit is render'd more expedite and ready for the Performance of what is good. But as for the later Difficulty which proceeds from the Agent himself, that is so far from commending the Worth of any good Action, that it derogates much from its Commendation. 'Tis easiness of Performance that here gives the Value. He that abstains from sensual Pleasures with great Abhorrency, and has set himself at a wide Distance from it, discovers more and has more of a Virtuous Resolution, than he whose Mind stands almost in an Equipoise, and does but
just

just abstain. For since we become Virtuous by a right Application of our Wills, the excellency of our Virtues must be measured by the greater or less Strength of our Resolutions. And consequently, he who by a strong Habit has made his Virtue most natural and easie to him is arrived to the greatest Perfection.

Drawn by the bent of the Æthereal Tide ;

This is in Allusion to the *Cartesian* Hypothesis of Vortices or Whirl-pools of subtile Matter. The Mystic Sense is this, that the higher a Seraphic Soul advances in the Contemplation of the Supreme Good, the stronger he will find its Attractions.

I know it well, it is my Native home.

This Verse with the whole Stanza proceeds upon the *Platonic* Hypothesis of Præ-existence. I shall not here dispute the Problem. Those that desire to be Satisfied concerning it, I refer to the Works of that Oracle of profound Wisdom and Learning, the Excellent *Dr. More*, to an ingenious Treatise call'd *Lux Orientalis*, and to the Account of *Origen*. In the mean while I hope the most rigid maintainer of *Orthodoxy* will allow me the Liberty of alluding to it as an *Hypothesis*, if not, I'm sure the Laws of *Poetry* will. My Business here was to imitate Nature, and to represent how a Soul would be affected in such a Case, supposing it true: Which I think I have not done amiss. For so the Ingenious Platonist *Boethius*,

*Huc te si reducem referat via,
Quam nunc requiris immemor,
Hec dices, memini, patria est mihi,
Hinc ortus hic sistam gradum.*

E

'Tis

'Tis one immense and everflowing Light.

My Business was here to give a Compendious description of God. Now among all the Representations we have of him, I thought none so agreeable to the Genius of Poetry as a sensible One, and of all those I could not find a better in all the Inventory of the Creation, than this of Light. I shall not here endeavour a Parallel; It may suffice to say, that the Representation is warranted by Authority, both Humane and Divine. The School of *Plato* describes the Nature of God by an immense Light, or Lucid Fountain overflowing and diffusing its refreshing Beams. And Holy Scripture goes further, and says in exprefs Terms, that *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*, John 1. 5.

The CURIOSITY.

I.

UNhappy State of Mortals here below,
 Whom unkind Heaven does inspire
 With such a *constant, strong desire,*
 And with such *slender Faculties to know!*
 And yet we not Content to bear the Pain
 Of thirst *unquencht* and *fruitless Love,*
 With one more *Curse* our ills improve,
 And *Toil* and *Drudge* for what we ne're can gain.

II.

With what strange Frenzy are we all possess'd,
 Contented Ignorance to refuse,
 And by *Laborious* search to lose,
 Not the *Enjoyment* only, but our Rest!
 Something like *Oar* does on the surface shine,

We

We taken with the specious Shew,
 With Pains dig in the *flattering* Mine
 But all alas in *vain*, *Truth* lies more low.

III.

The greatest Knowledge we can ever gain
 From studying Nature, Books or Men,
 Serves just t' employ dull Hours ; but then
 It yields less *Pleasure* than it costs us *Pain*.
 Besides, so *short* and *treacherous* is our Age,
 No sooner are we *counted* Wife,
 But *envious* Death shuts up our Eyes,
 Just as our *Part* is *learnt*, we quit the *Stage*.

IV.

Could I among the nobler Spirits find
 One that would lay aside his *State*,
 And be my kind *Confederate*,
 That *suddainly* I might enrich my Mind ;
 'Twould be some *Pleasure* this, if happy I
 Could once at *Ease* sit a *survey*
 And my *great* *Victory* enjoy,
 And (*not* as now) still *labour* on and *dye*.

The 114 Psalm Paraphrased.

I.

WHEN conquer'd by the Plagues of *Moses* Rod
 Th' Egyptian Tyrant gave Command
 That *Israel* should depart his Land,
Israel the chosen *Family* of God.
 Among them dwelt the *Holy One*,
Juda his *Sanctuary*, and *Israel* was his *Throne*.

II.

The Sea beheld this *Scene*, and did admire,
 Each Wave stood *silently* to see
 The Power of the Divinity ;
 They saw, and fled the dreadful *Guide* of *Fire*.
 And *Jordan* too divided stood, (*Flood*.
 The *Priests* the sacred *Ark* bore through the *yielding*
 III. Mount

III.

Mount *Sinai* with great Horrour struck and Dread,
 Forgot her Weight, and in a Trance
 Like a light Ram, did skip and dance ;
 She fear'd, and fain would hide her *Palsy* Head.
 The Hills their *Mother* Mountain saw,
 The little Hills, and like young Sheep they stood in Awe.

IV.

What made thee to retreat, thou mighty Sea ?
 Tell me, for never any *Shore*
 Knew such a wondrous *Tide* before,
 And thou great *Jordan* ; say, what ailed thee ?
 Say *sacred* Mount, what meant thy Trance,
 And you small *under-hills*, why did you skip and dance ?

V.

You need not think it *Shame* to own your *Fear* ;
 What you dismaid, the same would make
 The universal *Fabrick* shake ;
 The Cause was great, for *Jacob's* God was there.
 That God who did the *Rock* subdue,
 And made it melt in *Tears*, tho' *harder* far than you.

The 148 Psalm Paraphrased.

I.

O Come let all created Force conspire
 A general *Hymn* of Praise to sing ;
 Join all ye Creatures in one solemn Quire,
 And let your *Theme* be Heaven's Almighty King.

II.

Begin ye blest Attendants of his Seat,
 Begin your high *Seraphic* Lays,
 'Tis just you should, your Happiness is great,
 And all you are to give again, is *Praise*.

III.

Ye glorious Lamps that rule both Night and Day,
 Bring you your *Allelujahs* too ;

To

To him that Tribute of Devotion pay
Which once blind *Superstition* gave to you.

IV.

Thou *first* and *fairest* of material Kind
By whom his other Works we see,
Subtile and active as pure Thought and Mind,
Praise him that's *Elder*, and more *Fair* than thee.

V.

Ye Regions of the Air his Praises sing,
And all ye *Virgin* Waters there
Do you *Advantage* to the Comfort bring,
And down to us the *Allelujah* bear.

VI.

In chaunting forth the great Jehovah's Praise
Let these the upper Comfort fill,
He spake, and did you all from nothing raise;
As you did then, so now obey his Will.

VII.

His Will, that fix'd you in a constant State
And cut a *Track* for Nature's *Wheel*,
Here let it run said he, and made it Fate,
And where's that Power which can this Law repeal?

VIII.

Ye Powers that to th' inferiour World retain,
Join you now with the Quire above.
And first ye Dragons try an higher Strain,
And turn your *angry* Hissings into *Praise* and *Love*.

IX.

Let Fire, Hail, Snow and Vapours that ascend
Unlock'd by *Phæbus* searching Rays,
Let stormy Winds ambitiously contend,
And all their wonted Force employ in Praise.

X.

Ye sacred Tops which seem to brave the Skies,
Rise *higher*, and when Men on you
Religious Rites perform and Sacrifice,
With their *Oblations* send your *Praises* too.

XI.

Ye Trees whose Fruits both Men and Beasts consume
 Be you in Praises *fruitful* too ;
 Ye Cedars, why have you such choice *Incense*
 But that sweet *Incense* should be made of you?

XII.

Ye Beasts with all the humble creeping Train
 Praise him that made your Lot so high ;
 Ye Birds who in a nobler Province reign
 Send up your Praises higher than you fly.

XIII

Ye sacred Heads, that wear *Imperial* Gold
 Praise him that you with Power arrays,
 And you whose Hand the Scale of *Justice* hold
 Be *Just* in this, and pay your *Debt* of Praise.

XIV.

Let sprightly Youth give *Vigour* to the Quire,
 Each Sex with another vye;
 Let feeble Age *dissolv'd* in Praise *expire*,
 And Infants too in *Hymns* their *tender* Voices try.

XV.

Praise him ye Saints who Piety profess
 And at his Altar spend your Days ;
 Ye Seed of *Israel* your great Patron bless,
 'Tis *Manna* this, for Angels Food is *Praise*.

A PASTORAL On the Death of his Sacred Majesty
 King CHARLES the Second.

Menalcas, Thyrsis, and Daphnis.

Thyr. **W**Hat, sad? *Menalcas*: Sure this pleasant Shade
 Was ne'er for such a mournful Tenant made.
 All things smile round thee, and throughout the Grove
 Nature displays a Scene of Joy and Love.
 But Shepherd where's thy Flock?—

Sure

Sure they in some forbidden Pastures stray
 Whilst here in Sighs thou numbrest out the Day.

Men. Ah *Thyrsis*, thou could'st witness heretofore
 What strange Affection to my Flock I bore.
 Thou know'st my *Thyrsis*, the *Arcadian* Plain
 Could not afford a more industrious Swain.
 But I no longer now that Mind retain.

Thyr. What change so great but what Love's Power can
Menalcas does his Kids, and tender Lambs forsake. (make?)
 So I, when Slave to *Galatea's* Eyes,
 Did neither City nor the Country prize,
 But all their Sports, and my Flock too despise.
 Hang thou my Pipe (said I) on yonder Tree,
 For then (alas) I had no Taste for Melody.
 Obscurely in thick Woods I fate alone
 And sigh'd in Consort to the Turtles Moan.

Men. 'Tis not fond Love that causes my Distress,
 No *Thyrsis*, you'r mistaken in your Guess.
 The glorious Prize I have in Triumph born,
 I am no longer now *Alexis* Scorn.
 Or if I were, I now could be unmoved
 At every scornful Glance, nor care where e'er he loved.
 A nearer Grief preys on my Spirits now,
 And I beneath a heavier Burthen bow.
 The gentle God of the *Arcadian* Plains
Pan that regards the Sheep, *Pan* that regards the Swains,
 Great *Pan* is dead ———

Throughout the Fields the doleful Tidings ran,
 A Swoon seiz'd all the Shepherds at the Death of *Pan*.
 Of *Pan* — But see the rest that Tree will shew
 Which wears the sad Inscription of my Woe,
 Where, with the Bark my Sorrows too will grow.

Thyr. How Shepherd, is it by Fame's Trumpet said
 Than *Pan* the best of all the Gods is dead?
 Whom oft w' adored, and whom because we knew
 As good as they, we thought him as *immortal* too?
 'Tis strange; but Omens now I find are true.

In yonder Copse a shady Oak there stood,
 Stately, well rooted, and it self a Wood;
 Her Branches o'er the inferiour Trees were spread,
 Who all ador'd her as their sovereign Head:
 Hither, when heated by the Guide of Day
 While their young wanton Goats did skip and play,
 Hither the Swains would constantly repair,
 Here sing, and in the ample Shade drink fresher Air.
 This Tree when I my Goats to Pasture drove,
 While all was *clear above*, and *still*, throughout the *Grove*.
 Struck by some secret Force fall down I saw, (and Awe.
 The Wood-Nymphs all were seiz'd with Wonder, Grief,
 Nor had I left this Ruin far behind
 When lo (*strange Sight*) a Nightingal I find,
 Which from brisk Airs, enlivening all the Grove
 Coo'd on a suddain like a mournful Dove.

Amaz'd I stand, and on my Pipe essay
 With some brisk Song her Sorrows to allay.
 But all in vain. She from the lofty Tree (like thee.
 Kept on her sad Complaint, and mourn'd, and droop'd
Men. And why these slighter things dost thou relate?

Nature her self perceiv'd *Pan's* mighty Fate.
 She fainted, when he drew his latest Breath,
 And almost sympathiz'd with him to Death.
 Each Field put on a languid dying Face (Grass.
 The Sheep not minding Food, with Tears bedew'd the
 The Lions too in Tears their Grief confest,
 And savage Bears, *Pan's* Enemies profest.
 The Nymphs all wept, and all the noble Train
 Of Deitys that frequent the Court of *Pan*.

Eccho that long by nought but Voice was known,
 In Sounds repeated others Woes, but wept her own.
 Th' *Arcadians* mourn'd, and press'd beneath the weighty
 With Cruelty they charg'd the Gods and every Star. (Care

Thyr. And well they might; Heaven could not shew a
 More mild, more good t' his Victaries than he. (Deity }
 He was all Love, all Peace, all Clemency ;

H'al-

H' allur'd the Love, and melted down the Hate
Of all : He had no Enemy but Fate.

Pan kept the Fields, from Wolves secur'd the Stall,
He guarded both the humble Shrubs, and Cedars tall.
The Summers Heat obey'd *Pan's* gentle Hand,
And Winter Winds blew soft at his Command, (Land. }
He blest the Swains with Sheep, and fruitful made their }
Weep Shepherds, and in Pomp your Grief express, }
The Ground with Flowers, your selves with Cypress }
dress. }

Let the *Arcadians* in a solemn Train
March slowly on, let mournful Accents fill the Plain, }
Do this at least in Memory of *Pan*. }

Daph. But why this vain Expend of Tears and Breath?
D' ye think *Pan* lost and swallow'd up in Death?
He lives, and with a pleas'd and wondering Eye
Contemplates the new Beauties of the Sky.

Whence on these Fields he casts propitious Rays,
Now greater than our Sorrow, greater than our Praise.
I saw (for why mayn't I rehearse the Sight)

Just as the Stars were kindled by the Queen of Night
Another new-made milky Way appear,
I saw, and wonder'd what Event it might prepare. •
When lo great *Pan* amaz'd my trembling Sight,
As through th' Æthereal Plains he took his Flight
Deck'd round with Rays, and darting Streams of Light.

Triumphant was his March, a sacred Throng
Of Gods inclosed him, *Pan* was all their Song, }
The Sky still brighten'd as they went along. }

Men. Thy Vision be all Truth——

But who shall now the royal Sheep-crook hold,
Who patronize the Fields, who now secure the Fold?

Daph. Discharge that Care, the royal Stock does yield
Another *Pan* to patronize the Field.

An Heir of equal Conduct does the Scepter sway,
One who long nurtured in the Pastoral Way,
In Peace will govern the *Arcadian* Plains, (Swains.
Defend the tender Flocks, and cheer the drooping }
Thyr. }

Thyr. Come then, let's tune the Pipe t'a brisker Key,
 Let's with a Dance our Sorrows chase away,
 And to new *Pan* in Sports devote the Day.

SATIETY.

I.

HAste on dull *Time*, thy winged Minutes haste,
 I care not now how soon thou bring'st my last.
 By what I've liv'd I plainly know
 The *total* Sum of all below.

The Days to come, altho they promise more,
 I know will be as false as those that went before.

II.

The *best* of Life tho *once* enjoy'd, is vain,
 And why ye Powers the self-same o'er again?
 The *Comedy's* so dull, I fear
 'Twill not a *second* acting bear.

No, I've enough; I cannot like the Sun
 Each Day the self-same Stage, and still *unwearied*, run.

III.

What cruel Laws are these that me confine
 Thus still to dig in a deceitful Mine?
 Be just ye Powers, my Soul set free,
 Give her her *native* Liberty.

'Tis 'gainst the *Stage's* Law to force my Stay,
 I've seen an *Act* or two, and do not like the *Play*.

The REPLY.

I.

Since you desire of me to know
 Who's the *Wise* Man, I'll tell you who.
 Not he whose rich and fertile Mind
 Is by the *Culture* of the *Arts* refin'd;

Who

Who has the *Chaos* of disorder'd Thought
By Reason's *Light* to *Form* and *Method* brought.

Who with a clear and piercing Sight
Can see through *Niceties* as dark as *Night*.

You err, if you think this is He,
Tho seated on the Top of the *Porphyrian* Tree.

II.

Nor is it He to whom kind Heaven

A secret *Cabala* has given

T' unriddle the *mysterious* Text

Of *Nature*, with dark *Comments* more perplext.

Or to decypher her *clean writ* and *fair*

But most *confounding* puzzling *Character*.

That can through all her *Windings* trace

This slippery *Wanderer*, and *unveil* her *Face*.

Her *inmost* *Mechanism* view,

Anatomize each *Part*, and see her *through* and *through*.

III.

Nor he that does *the Science* know,

Our *only Certainty* below,

That can from *Problems* dark and nice

Deduce *Truths* worthy of a *Sacrifice*.

Nor he that can *confess* the *Stars*, and see

What's writ in the black *Leaves* of *Destiny*.

That knows their *Laws*, and how the *Sun*

His *daily* and his *annual* *Stage* does run.

As if he did to them dispence

Their *Motions*, and there sate *supream Intelligence*.

IV.

Nor is it he (although he boast

Of *Wisdom*, and *seem* wise to *most*)

Yet 'tis not he, whose *busie* *Pate*

Can dive into the deep *Intrigues* of *State*.

That can the great *Leviathan* controul,

Manage and rule't, as if he were its *Soul*.

The *wisest* *King* thus gifted was

And yet did not in these *true Wisdom* place.

Who then is by the *Wise Man* meant ?

He that can want *all this*, and yet can be *content*.

My,

My ESTATE.

I.

How do I pity that proud wealthy Clown
 That does with Scorn on my low State look down !
 Thy vain Contempt dull *Earth-worm* cease,
 I won't for Refuge fly to this,
 That none of Fortune's Blessings can
 Add any *Value* to the *Man*,
 This *all* the *wise* acknowledge to be *true* ;
 But know I am as *rich*, *more* rich than *you*.

II.

While you a *Spot* of *Earth* possess with *Care*
 Below the Notice of the *Geographer*,
 I by the *Freedom* of my *Soul*
 Possess, nay more, enjoy the *whole* ;
 To th' *Universe* a Claim I lay ;
 Your *Writings* shew perhaps you'll say,
 That's *your* dull *Way*, my *Title* runs more *high*,
 'Tis by the *Charter* of *Philosophy*.

III.

From that a *firmer* Title I derive
 Than all your *Courts* of *Law* could ever give.
 A *Title* that more *firm* doth stand
 Than does even *your* very *Land*,
 And yet so generous and free
 That none will e'er *bethink* it me,
 Since my Possessions tend to no *Man's* *Loss*,
 I all enjoy, yet nothing I ingross.

IV.

Throughout the Works divine I cast my Eye,
 Admire their *Beauty*, and their *Harmony*.
 I view the glorious Host above,
 And him that made them, Praise and Love.
 The flowry Meads and Fields beneath,
 Delight me with their odorous Breath.

Thus is my Joy by you not understood
 Like that of *God*, when he said *all was good*.

V. Nay

V.

Nay (what you'd think less likely to be true)
I can enjoy what's *yours* much more than *you*.

Your Meadow's *Beauty* I survey,
Which you prize only for its *Hay*.

There can I sit beneath a Tree,
And write an *Ode* or *Elegy*.

What to *you care*, does to *me pleasure* bring,
You *own* the *Cage*, I in it *sit* and *sing*.

The CONQUEST.

I.

IN Power or Wisdom to contend with thee
Great God, who but a *Lucifer* would dare ?

Our Strength is but Infirmitv,
And when we this perceive our Sight's most clear :
But yet ! I will not be excell'd thought I,
In *Love*, in *Love*, I'll with my Maker v^y.

II.

I view'd the Glories of thy Seat above,
And thought of every Grace and Charm divine,
And further to encrease *my Love*
I measured all the Heights and Depths of *thine*.
Thus there broke forth a Strong and Vigorous Flame,
And almost melted down my mortal Frame.

III.

But when thy Bloody Sweat and Death I view
I own (Dear Lord) the Conquest of thy Love,
Thou dost my highest Flights outdo,
I in a lower Orb, and slower move.
Thus in this Strife's a double Weakness shewn,
Thy Love I cannot equal, nor yet bear my *own*.

The

The IMPATIENT.

I.

WHat *envious* Laws are those of Fate,
 Which fix a Gulph (Blest Souls) 'twixt us and you!
 How 'twou'd refresh and chear our Mortal State,
 When our dejected Looks confess
 The Emptiness of *earthly* Blifs,
 Could we in this *black Night* your brighter Glories view!

II.

Vain Comfort when I thus complain
 To hear the Wise and Solemn gravely say,
 Your Grief and Curiosity restrain,
 Death will e'er long this Bar remove,
 And bring you to the Blest above,
 Till then with this *great Prospect* all your Longings stay.

III.

But ah the Joy peculiar here
 Does from the greater *Excellence* arise,
 'Twill be worth nothing in an *equal* Sphere.
 Let me your noble Converse have
 Blest Spirits, on this side the Grave,
 I shall hereafter be as great as you, as wise.

IV.

Besides, when plung'd in Blifs *divine*
 I shall not taste, nor need this *lesser* Joy.
 What Comfort then does from this Prospect shine?
 'Tis just as if in Depth of Night,
 You rob a Traveller of his Light;
 And promise to restor't when 'tis clear *Day*.

Con-

CONTENTS.

I.

I Bless my Stars I envy none,
 Not great, nor wealthy, no nor yet the *Wise*,
 I've learn't the Art to like my own,
 And what I can't attain to, not to prize.
 Vast Tracts of Learning I descry
 Beyond the Sphere perhaps of my Activity,
 And yet I'm ne'er the more concern'd at this,
 Than for the Gems that lye in the profound *Abyss*.

II.

Should I my proper Lot disdain
 As long as further good eclipses mine,
 I may t' Eternity complain,
 And in the Mansions of the Blest repine.
 There shall I Numbers vast espy
 Of Forms more excellent, more wise, more blest than I.
 I shall not *then* lament my unequal Fate,
 And why should larger Prospects *now* molest my State?

III.

Where all in equal Stations move
 What Place for *Harmony* can there be found?
 The lower Spheres with those above
 Agree, and dance as free and briskly round.
 Degrees of *Essences* conspire
 As well as various *Notes* t' accomplish Heaven's Quire.
 Thus would I hav't *below*, nor will I care
 So the Result be *Harmony*, what *Part* I bear.

Against

Against KNOWLEDGE.

I.

Well let it be the Censure of the Wise,
That *Wisdom* none but *Fools* despise:
I like not what they gravely preach
And must another Doctrin teach.
Since all's so false and vain below,
There's nought so *indiscreet* as this, to *know*.

II.

The thoughtless, dull and less discerning Mind
No *Flaws* in earthly Joys can find,
He closes with what Courts his Sight,
All Coin will pass by his dim Light.
Though often baulk't, he hopes for Rest,
Sleeps on and Dreams, and is in Error Blest.

III.

But he that has refin'd and high-rais'd Sense,
Can nothing taste but *Excellence*.
Nor can he Nature's Faults supply,
By Fancy's happy Imag'ry.
He sees that all Fruition's vain,
Can't taste the present, nor yet trust again.

VI.

Our Joys, like Tricks, do all on Cheats depend,
And when once known, are at an end.
Happy and *Wise*, two Blessings are
Which meet not in this mortal Sphere;
Let me be Ignorant below,
And when I've solid Good, then let me know.

Seeing

Seeing a great Person lying in State.

WELL now I needs must own
That I hate Greatness more and more ;
'Tis now a *just Abhorrence* grown
What was *Antipathy before* :
With other Ills I could dispence,
And *acquiesce in Providence*.

But let not Heaven my *patience* try
With this *one Plague*, lest I *repine and dye*.

II.

I knew indeed before,
That 'twas the great man's wretched fate,
While with the *living to endure*
The vain *impertinence of State* ;
But sure thought I, in *death* he'll be
From that and other troubles free :
What e're his *life*, he then will lye
As free, as undisturb'd, as calm as I.

III.

But 'twas a gross mistake ;
Honour, that too *officious* ill,
Won't even his breathless Corps forsake,
But *haunts* and waits about him *still*.
Strange *persecution*, when the grave
Can't the distressed *Martyr* save !
What *Remedy* can there avail,
Where *Death* the great *Catholicon* does fail ?

IV.

Thanks to my Stars that I
Am with so low a fortune blest,
That what e're *Blessings* fate *deny*,
I'm sure of *privacy* and *rest*.
'Tis well ; thus long I am content,
And *rest* as in my *Element*.

F

Thea

Then Fate, if you'll appear my friend,
Force me not 'gainst my *nature* to *ascend*.

V.

No, I would still be *low*,
Or else I would be very *high*,
Beyond the state which *Mortals* know,
A kind of *Semi-desty*.
So of the Regions of the air
The *High'st* and *Lowest* quiet are,
But 'tis this middle *Height* I fear,
For *Storms* and *Thunder* are ingendred there.

Second Chapter of the Cant. from verse 10, to 13.

I.

T Was my Beloved spake,
I know his charming Voice, I heard him say,
Rise up my Love, my fairest one awake,
Awake and come away.

II.

The Winter all is past
And stormy Winds that with such rudeness blew,
The Heavens are no longer *overcast*,
But try to look like you.

III.

The Flowers their Sweets display,
The Birds in short *praludiums* tune their throat,
The Turtle in low murmurs does essay
Her melancholy Note.

IV.

The fruitful Vineyards make
An odorous smell, the Fig looks fresh and gay,
Arise my Love, my fairest one awake,
Awake and come away.

To a Friend in Honour.

I.

Some thoughtless heads perhaps admire to see
 That I so little to your *titles* bow;
 But wonder not my Friend, I swear to me
 You were as great *before* as *now*.
 Honour to *you* does nothing *give*,
 Tho' from your worth much lustre *she* receive.

H.

Your *native* Glory does so far out-do
 That of the *Sphere* wherein you move,
 That I can nothing but *your* self in *you*
 Observe, admire, esteem or love:
 You are a *Diamond* set in Gold,
 The Curious, the *Rich* *stare*, not *this* behold.

III.

All that to your late Honour you can owe
 Is only that you're brought in view;
 You don't begin to have, but *Men* to know,
 Your *Votaries* are *increas'd*, not you.
 So the Sun's height adds not t' his light,
 But only does *expose* him more to *sight*.

IV.

To some whose native worth more *dimly* shin'd
 Honour might some *improvement* give,
 As *Metals* which the Sun has *less* refin'd
 A *value* from their *Stamp* receive.
 But *you* like *gold*, pass for no more
 Tho' *Stamp'd*, than for your *weight* you wou'd before.

A Divine Hymn on the Creation.

I.

A Wake my Lyre, and thy *sweet* forces joyn
 With me to sing an Hymn divine,
 Let both our Strains in pleasing numbers flow,
 But see, thy strings with tediousness and pain
 Arise into a tuneful strain,
 How canst thou silent lye?
 The Universe is *Harmony*,
 Awake, and move by *sympathy*,
 My heart's already tuned, O why art thou so slow!

II.

Jehovah is our Theme, th' eternal King,
 Whose Praise *admiring* Angels sing,
 They see with steady and attentive eyes
 His *naked* Beauties, and from *Vision* raise
 To *wondrous* heights their Love and Praise.
 We Mortals only view
 His *Back-parts*, and that *darkly* too,
 We must fall *short*, what shall we do,
 But neither too can *they* up to his grandeur rise.

III.

No power can justly praise him but must be
 As great, as infinite as he,
 He comprehends his *boundless* self alone,
 Created minds too shallow are and dim
 His *works* to fathom, much more *him*.
 Our Praise at height will be
 Short by a *whole* *infinity*;
 Of his all glorious Deity,
 He cannot have the *full*, and stands in *need* of *none*.

IV.

He can't be *less*, nor can he more *receive*,
 But stands on fix'd *Superlative*.
 He's in himself *compendiously* blest;
 We, acted by the *Weights* of strong desire,

To

To good *without* our *selves* aspire,
 We're always moving hence
 Like lines from the *Circumference*,
 To some more *in-lodg'd* excellence.
 But he is one unmov'd *self-center'd* Point of Rest,

V.

Why then, if *full* of Blis that ne're could *cloy*,
 Would he do ought but still *enjoy*?

Why not *indulge* his *self-sufficing* state,
 Live to himself at large, calm and secure,

A *wise eternal Epicure*?

Why six days work, to frame
 A Monument of Praise and Fame
 To him whose Blis is still the same?

What need the *wealthy-Coin*, or he that's *Blest Create*?

VI.

Almighty *Love* the fairest Gem that shone
All-round, and *half* made up his *Throne*,

His *Favourite* and *darling* excellence,
 Whom oft he would his *Royal* Virtue stile,
 And view with a *peculiar* Smile,

Love moved him to create
 Beings that might participate
 Of their Creator's happy state,

And that *good* which he could not *highten*, to *dispen*ce.

VII.

How large thy Empire, *Love*, how great thy Sway!
Omnipotence does thee obey.

What *complicated* Wonders in thee shine!

He that t' *infinity* it self is great

Has one way to be *greater* yet;

Love will the method shew,

'Tis to *impart*; what is't that thou

O Sovereign Passion can't not do?

Thou mak'st *Divinity* it self much *more divine*.

VIII.

With *pregnant* love *full-fraught*, the great *Three-ome*,
 Would now no longer be *alone*.

Love, gentle Love unlockt his fruitful Breast
 And 'woke th' *Ideas* which there dormant lay,
 Awak'd their Beauties they display :
 Th' Almighty smil'd to see
 The comely Form and Harmony
 Of his eternal *Imag'ry* ;
 He saw 'twas good and fair, and th' Infant Platform blest.

IX.

Ye Seeds of Being, in whose fair Bosoms dwell
 The Forms of all things possible ;
 Arise, and your Prolific force display ;
 Let a fair Issue in your *Moulds* be cast
 To fill in part this empty waste.
 He spake. The empty space
 Immediately in *Travel* was
 And soon brought forth a *formless* mass,
First matter came undress'd, she made such haste t' obey.

X.

But soon a Plastick Spirit did ferment
 The liquid dusky element.
 The Mass *harmoniously* begins to move,
 Let there be Light, said God, 'twas said and done,
 The Mass *dipt through* with brightness shone.
 Nature was pleas'd to see
 This *feature* of Divinity,
 Th' Almighty smil'd as well as she,
 He own'd his *likeness* there, and did his *First-born* love.

XI.

But lo, I see a goodly frame arise
 Vast folding Orbs, and azure Skies,
 With lucid *whirl-pools* the vast Arch does shine,
 The Sun by day shews to each World his light,
 The Stars stand *sentinel* by night.
 In midst of all is spread
 That pondrous bulk whereon we tread,
 But where is its Foundation laid ?
 'Tis pompous all and great, and worthy hands divine.

XII.

XII.

Thy Temple's built great God, but where is he
 That must admire both it and thee?
 Ope one Scene more, my Muse, bless and adore,
 See there in solemn Council and Debate
 The great divine *Triumvirate*.
 The rest one Word obey'd,
 'Twas done almost *before* 'twas said;
 But Man was not so *cheaply* made,
 To *make* the world was *great*, but 't *epitomise* it *more*.

XIII.

Th' accomplish'd work stands his severe review
 Whose Judgment's most exactly true.
 In Nature's *Book* were no *Errata's* found,
 All things are *good*, said God, they answer well
 Th' *Ideas* which within me dwell;
 Th' Angelick voices, joy
 Their *Praise* to the *Applause* divine,
 The Morning Stars in Hymns combine,
 And as they sung and play'd, the *jocant* Orbs danc't round.

XIV.

With this thy Quire divine, great God I bring
 My *Eucharistick* Offering.
 I cannot here sing more exalted layes,
 But what's defective now I will supply
 When I enjoy thy Deity.
 Then mayst thou sleep my Lyre,
 I shall not then thy help require,
 Diviner thoughts will then me fire
 Than thou, tho' play'd on by an Angels hand, canst raise.

Plato's two Cupids.

I.

THE heart of Man's a *living* Butt,
 At which two different *Arches* shoot,
 Their shafts are *pointed* both with *fire*,
 Both wound our hearts with *hot* desire.

II.

In this they differ, he that lyes
 A Sacrifice t' his Mistress eyes,
 In pain does *live*, in pain *expire*,
 And *melts* and *drops* before the fire.

III.

But he that flames with Love divine,
 Does not in th' heat *consume*, but *shine*.
 H' *enjoys* the fire that round him lies,
 Serenely *lives*, serenely *dyes*.

IV.

So *Devils* and *damm'd* Souls in Hell
 Fry in the fire with which they dwell ;
 But Angels suffer not the same,
 Altho their *Vehicles* be *flame*.

V.

The Heart whose fire's divine and chaff
 Is like the *Bush* that did not *waste*.
Moses beheld the Flame with fear,
 That *wasted* not, for *God* was *there*.

A *Wish*.

I.

WHatever Blessing you my *Life* deny,
 Grant me kind Heaven this one thing when I *dye*.
 I charge thee guardian Spirit hear,
 And as thou lov'st me, *further* this my Prayer.

II.

When I'm to leave this grosser Sphere, and try
 Death, that amazing Curiosity,
 When just about to breath my last,
 Then when no *Mortal* joy can strike my taste,

III.

Let me soft melting strains of Musick hear,
 Whose Dying sounds may speak Death to my ear ;
 Gently the Bands of life unty,
 Till in sweet Raptures I dissolve and dye.

IV. How

How soft and easie my new Birth will be
 Help'd on by Musick's gentle *Midwifery!*

And I who 'midst these Charms expire,
 Shall bring a Soul well *sun'd* to Heaven's Quire.

To Dr. More. *An Ode.*

I.

GO Muse, go hasten to the Cell of Fame
 (Thou know'st her reverend awful seat,
 It stands hard by your blest retreat)
 Go with a brisk Alarm assault her ear,
 Bid her her loudest Trump prepare;
 To sound a more than Human name,
 A name more excellent and great
 Than she could ever publish yet;
 Tell her she need not stay till *Fate* shall give
 A *License* to his Works, and bid them *live*,
 His Worth *now* shines through Envy's base *Alloy*,
 'Twill fill her widest Trump, and all her Breath employ.

II.

Learning, which long like an *enchanted* Land,
 Did Human Force and Art defie,
 And stood the *Virtuoso's* best Artillery,
 Which nothing mortal could subdue,
 Has yielded to this Hero's *Fatal* hand,
 By him is conquer'd, held, and peopled too.
 Like Seas that border on the Shore
 The Muses *Suburbs* some Possession knew,
 But like the deep Abyss their *inner* store
 Lay unpossess'd, till seiz'd and own'd by you:
 Truth's *outer Courts* were trod before,
 Sacred was her *recess*, that Fate reserv'd for *More*,

III.

Others in Learning's *Chorus* bear their part
 And the great Work distinctly share:

Thou

Thou our great *Catholick Professer* art,
 All Science is annex'd to thy unerring *Chair*,
 Some lesser *Sports* of the *Wise*
 The *Muses* kept in *Universities* ;
 But never yet till in thy *Soul*
 Had they a *Council Oecumenical*.
 An *Abstract* they'd a mind to see
 Of all their scatter'd gifts, and summ'd them up in thee.
 Thou hast the *Arts* whole *Zodiack* run
 And fathom'ft all that here is known.
 Strange restless *Curiosity*,
 Adam himself came short of thee,
 He tasted of the *Fruit*, thou bear'ft away the *Tree*.

IV.

Whilst to be great the most aspire,
 Or with *low* Souls to raise their *Fortunes higher*.
 Knowledge the chiefest *Treasure* of the *Blest*,
 Knowledge the *Wise* man's *best Request*,
 Was made thy choice, for this thou hast declin'd
 A life of noise, impertinence and State ;
 And what er'e else the *Muses* hate;
 And mad'ft it thy own business to enrich thy mind.
 How calm thy life, how easie, how secure
 Thou *Intellectual Epicure*.
 Thou as another *Solomon* hast try'd
 All Nature through, and nothing to thy *Soul deny'd*.
 Who can two such *Examples* shew ?
 He all things try'd t' enjoy, and you all things to know.

V.

By *Babel's* Curse, and our *Contracted* Span
 Heaven thought to check the swift career of *Man*.
 And so it prov'd till now, our age
 Is much too short to run so long a *Stage*.
 And to learn words is such a vast *delay*
 That we're *benighted* er'e we come half way.
 Thou with unusual hast driv'ft on
 And dost even *Time* it self *out-run*.

No

No hindrance can retard thy Course,
 Thou rid'st the Muses winged Horse;
 Thy Stage of Learning ends e're that of Life be done.
 There's now no work left for thy accomplish'd mind,
 But to survey thy Conquests, and inform Mankind.

*The Passion of the Virgin Mother, Beholding the Cru-
 fixation of her Divine Son,*

I.

Nigh to the Fatal, and yet Sovereign Wood,
 Which crouds of wondring Angels did surround,
 Devoutly sad the Holy Mother stood,
 And view'd her Son, and sympathiz'd with every Wound.

II.

Angelick Piety in her mournful Face,
 Like Rays of Light, through a watry Cloud did shine;
 Two mighty Passions in her Breast took place,
 And like her Son, sh'appear'd half Human, half Divine.

III.

She saw a blacker and more tragic Scene
 Than e're the Sun before, or then would see;
 In vain did Nature draw her dusky Screen,
 She saw, and wept, and felt the dreadful Agony.

IV.

Grief in the Abstract sure can rise no higher
 Than that which this deep Tragedy did move;
 She saw in Tortures and in Shame, expire
 Her Son, her God, her Worship and her Love.

V.

That Sacred Head, which all Divine and Bright,
 Struck with deep Awe the Votaries of the East,
 To which a Star paid Tributary Light,
 Which the (*then joyful*) Mother kiss'd, ador'd and blest.

VI. That

VI.

That head which Angels with pure light had crown'd,
 Where Wisdom's Seat and Oracle was plac'd ;
 Whose Air Divine threw his Traitors to the Ground,
 She saw with pointed Circles of rude Thorns embrac'd.

VII.

Those hands whose Sovereign Touch were wont to Heal
 All Wounds and Hurts that others did endure,
 Did now the Piercings of rough Iron feel,
 Nor could the wounded Heart of his sad Mother Cure.

VIII.

No, no, it bled to see his Body torn
 With Nails, and deck'd with gems of purple gore,
 On four great Wounds to see him rudely born,
 Whom oft her Arms a happy burthen found before.

IX.

It bled to hear that Voice of grief and dread
 Which the Earth's Pillars and Foundations shook ;
 Which rent the Rocks, and 'woke the sleeping Dead,
 My God, my God, O why, why hast thou me forsook ?

X.

And can the tide of Sorrow rise more high ?
 Her melting Face stood thick with Tears to view,
 Like those of Heaven his setting Glories dye,
 As Flowers left by the Sun are charg'd with Evening dew.

XI.

But see Grief spreads her Empire still more wide,
 Another Spring of Tears begins to flow,
 A barbarous Hand wounds his now senseless Side ;
 And Death that ends the Son's, renews the Mother's Woe.

XII.

She sees now by the rude inhuman Stroke
 The Mystic River flow, and in her Breast
 Wonders, by what strange Figure th' Angel spoke,
 When amongst all the Daughters he pronounc'd her Blest.

XIII.

Thus far did Nature, Pity, Grief and Love,
 And all the Passions their strong Efforts try,

But

But still tho dark *below*, 'twas clear *above*,
She had (as once her Son) her *strengthening* Angel by.

XIV.

Gabriel the chiefest of th' Almighty's train
That first with happy tidings blest her ear,
Th' Archangel, *Gabriel*, was sent again,
To stem the tide of Grief, and qualifie her fear.

XV.

A large *Prospective* wrought by hands divine
He set before her first *enlightened* eye,
'Twas hewn out of the Heaven *Christalline*,
One of whose ends did *lessen*, th' other *magnifie*.

XVI.

With that his sufferings he expos'd to fight,
With this his Glories he did represent,
The weight of this made th' other seem but light,
She saw the mighty odds, ador'd, and was content.

Damon and Pythias. Or, Friendship in Perfection.

I.

Pyth. 'T'Is true (my *Damon*) we as yet have been
Patterns of constant love, I know ;
We have stuck so close, no third could come between,
But will it (*Damon*) will it still be so ?

II.

Da. Keep *your* Love true, I dare engage that mine
Shall like my Soul immortal prove.
In Friendship's Orb how brightly shall we shine
Where all shall *envy*, none *divide* our Love !

III.

Pyth. *Death* will ; when once (as 'tis by Fate design'd)
'T' *Elisium* you shall be remov'd,
Such sweet Companions there no doubt you'll find,
That you'll forget that *Pythias* e're you lov'd.

IV. *Da.*

IV.

Da. No, banish all such fears; I then will be
Your Friend and guardian Angel too.
And tho' with more refin'd Society
I'll leave *Elyſium* to converſe with you.

V.

Pyth. But grant that after Fate you ſtill are kind,
You cannot long continue ſo;
When I, like you, become all Thought and Mind,
By what mark then ſhall we each other know?

VI.

Da. With care on your laſt hour I will attend,
And leſt like Souls ſhould me deceive,
I cloſely will embrace my new-born Friend,
And never after my dear *Pythias* leave.

The Indifferency.

I.

WHether 'tis from Stupidity or no,
I know not; but I ne'er could find
Why I one Thought or Paſſion ſhould beſtow
On Fame, that gaudy Idol of Mankind.
Call me not Stoick; no, I can purſue
Things excellent with as much Zeal as you:
But here I own my ſelf to be
A very luke-warm Votary.

II.

Should thouſand Excellencies in me meet,
And one bright Conſtellation frame,
'Tis ſtill as Men's phantaſtick Humours hit
Whether I'm Written in the Book of Fame.
So tho' the Sun be ne'er ſo fair and bright,
And ſhine with free, uninterrupted Light,
'Tis as the Clouds diſpoſed are,
E'er he can paint his Image there.

III. The

III.

The World is seldom to true Merit just,
 Through Envy or through Ignorance.
 True Worth like Valour, oft lies hid in Dust,
 While some false Heroes grac'd with a Romance.
 The true God's Altar oft neglected lies,
 When Idols have Perfumes and Sacrifice.
 And tho' the true One some Adore,
 Yet those that do Blaspheme, are more.

IV.

Yet grant that Merit were of Fame secure,
 What's Reputation, what is Praise ?
 Who'd one Day's Toil, or sleepless Night endure,
 Such a vain *Babel* of Esteem to raise ?
 Pleas'd with his hidden Worth, the Great and Wise
 Can, like his God, this foreign Good despise ;
 Whose Happiness would ne're be less,
 Tho' none were made to Praise or Bless.

V.

Even I who dare not rank my self with those
 Who pleas'd, into themselves retire,
 Find yet in great Applauses less repose,
 And do Fame less, less than my self admire.
 Let her loud Trumpet sound me far and near,
 Th' *Antipodes* will never of me hear.
 Or were I known throughout this Ball,
 I've but a Point, when I have All.

VI.

Then as for Glory which comes after Fate,
 All that can then of me be said,
 I value least of all, it comes too late,
 'Tis like th' embalming of the senseless dead.
 Others with Pleasure, what me Labour cost
 May read, and praise ; but to me all is lost.
 Just as the Sun no Joy does find
 In that his Light, which cheers Mankind.

VII.

VII.

Or should I after Fate has clos'd my eyes,
 Should I my *living* Glories know,
 My *wiser, improv'd* Soul will then despise
 All that poor Mortals say or think below.
 Even they who of mens ignorance before
 Complain'd, because few did their works adore,
 Will then the self same *Censure* raise,
 Not from their *silence*, but their *praise*.

VIII.

Or grant 'twou'd pleasure bring to know that I
 After my death *live* still in *Fame*;
 Those that *admire* me too must shortly *dye*,
 And then where's my *Memorial*, where my *name*?
 My *Fame*, tho *longer-liv'd*, yet once shall have
 Like me, its *Death*, its *Funeral*, its *Grave*.
 This only *difference* will remain,
 I shall, *that* never rise again.

IX.

Death and Destruction shall e're long deface
 The World, the *work* of hands *divine*,
 What Pillars then, or Monuments of Brass
 Shall from the general Ruin rescue *mine*?
 All then shall equal be; I care not then
 To be a while the *talk* and *boast* of men.
 This only grant, that I may be
 Prais'd by thy *Angels*, Lord, and *thee*.

The Infirmitv.

I.

IN other things I ne're admir'd to see
 Men injured by *extremity*.
 But little thought in *Happiness*
 There might be danger of *excess*.
 At least I thought there was no fear
 Of ever meeting with *too* much on't *here*.

II. But

But now these melting sounds strike on my sense
 With such a *powerful* excellence ;
 I find that Happiness may be
Screw'd up to such extremity,
 That our too Feeble Faculties
 May not be said t'*enjoy,* but *suffer* Blifs.

III.

So frail's our Mortal state, we can sustain
 A mighty *bliss* no more than *pain*.
 We lose our weak *precarious* breath
Tortur'd or *tickled* unto death.
 As *sprights* and *Angels* alike fright
 With too much *Horror,* or with too much *Light*.

IV.

Alas ! I'm *over-pleas'd,* what shall I do
 The *painful* joy to *undergo* ?
 Temper your too melodious Song,
 Your *dose* of blifs is much too *strong* ;
 Like those that too rich Cordials have,
 It don't so much *revive,* as make me *rave*.

V.

What *Cruelty* 'twou'd be *still* to confine
 A *mortal* Ear to *Airs* *divine* ?
 The Curse of *Cain* you have on me
 Inverted by your Harmony,
 For since with that you charm'd my ear,
 My *Blifs* is much too *great* for me to *bear*.

VI.

Relieve this *Paroxysm* of delight,
 And let it be less *exquisite*.
 Let *down* my Soul ; 'tis too high *set* ;
 I am not *ripe* for Heaven yet.
 Give me a *Region* more *beneath,*
 This *Element*'s too *fine* for me to *breath*.

The Arrest.

I.

W^Hither so fast fond Passion dost thou rove,
 Licentious and unconfin'd?
 Sure this is not the proper *Sphere of Love*,
 Obey; and be not *deaf*, as thou art *blind*.
 All is false and treacherous here
 That I must *love* with *Caution*, and *enjoy* with *fear*.

II.

Contract thy Sails, lest a too *gusty* blast
 Make thee from shoar launch out too far;
 Weigh well this Ocean, e're thou make such haste,
 It has a nature very *singular*.

Men of the treacherous *shoar* complain
 In *other* Seas, but *here* most *Danger's* in the *Main*.

III.

Should'st thou, my Soul, indulge thy forward *Love*,
 And not controul its headlong course,
 The Object in th' enjoyment *vain* will prove,
 And thou on *Nothing* fall with *all* thy force.

So th' eager *Hawk* makes sure of's prize,
 Strikes with *full* might, but *over-shoots* himself and *dyes*.

IV.

Or should'st thou with long search on something light
 That might content and *stay* thy mind,
 All good's here *wing'd*, and stands prepar'd for flight,
 'Twill leave thee *reaching* out in vain, behind.

Then when *unconstant* Fate tho'st proved,
 Thou'lt sigh, and say with tears, *I wish I ne're had loved*.

V.

Well then ye softer Powers that *Love* Command
 And wound our Breasts with *pleasing* smart,

Gage well your *Lance*, and bear a steady hand,
 Lest it run in too deep into my *Heart*.
 Or if you're fix'd in your design
 Deeply to wound my *Heart*, wound it with *Love divine*.

To the Memory of my dear Niece, M. C.

I.
 BY tears to ease my grief I've try'd,
 And Philosophick med'cins have applied ;
 From Books and Company I've sought relief,
 I've used all *Spells* and *Charms* of Art
 To Lay this *Troubler* of my heart ;
 I have, yet I'm still haunted by my grief.
 These give some *ease*, but yet I find
 'Tis *Poetry* at last must cure my mind.

II.
 Come then, t' assuage my pain I'll try
 By the sweet *magick* of thy *Harmony*.
 Begin my *Muse*, but 'twill be hard I know
 For thee my *Genius* to screw
 To heights that to my *Theme* are due,
 The weight of *Grief* has set my *Soul* so low.
 To grace her death my strains should be
 As far above *Mortality* as she.

III.
 Is she then *dead*, and can it be
 That I can *live* to write her *Elegy* ?
 I hoped, since 'twas not to my *Soul* deny'd
 To sympathize in all the pain
 Which she tho' long did well sustain,
 T' have carry'd on the *sympathy*, and *dy'd*.
 But *Death* was so o'repleas'd I see
 At this *rich spoil*, that she neglected me.

IV.
 Yet has sh' of all things made me bare,
 But *Life*, nor was it kindness here to spare.

So when th' Almighty would t' inform mankind
 His *Eastern Hero's* patience try
 With the *Extreams* of misery;
 He gave *this* Charge to the malicious Fiend;
 Of all Life's *Blessings* him deprive,
 Vex him with *all thy Plagues*, but let him *live*.

V.

Yet I *will* live (sweet Soul) to save
 Thy *name*, since *thee* I cannot from the grave.
 I will not of this *burthen* Life complain
 Tho *tears* than *verses* faster flow,
 Tho I am *plung'd* in grief and woe,
 And like th' inspired *Sybills* write in *pain*.
 To *dye* for Friends is thought to be
 Heroick, but I'll *Life* endure for thee.

VI.

'Tis just, since I in *thee* did *live*
 That thou should'st *Life* and *Fame* from *me* receive.
 But how shall I this Debt of Justice pay?
 The *Collours* of my Poetry
 Are all too *dead* to *Copy* thee,
 'Twill be *Abuse* the best that I can say.
Nature that wrought thy curious frame
 Will find it hard to draw again the *same*.

VII.

In *Council* the Almighty fate
 When he did *man* his *Master-piece* create.
 His *Agent Nature* did the same for thee;
 In making thee she wrought for *Fame*,
 And with slow progress drew thy *Frame*,
 As he that painted for *Eternity*.
 In her *best Mould* she did thee *cast*,
 But thou wast *over-wrought*, and made *too fine* to *last*.

VIII.

Thy Soul the *Saint* of this fair *Shrine*
 Was pure without *Alloy*, and all divine.
Active and nimble as *Etherial* light,

Kind

Kind as the Angels are above,
 Who live on *Harmony* and *Love*;
 The Rays thou shott'st were *warm*, as well as *bright*:
 So mild so pleasing was thy fire,
 That none could *envy*, and *all must admire*.

IX.

Sickness to whose strong *Seige* resign
 The best of Natures did but set forth thine.
 Wisely thou did'st thy Passions all Controul,
 And like a Martyr in the fire
 Devout and Patient did'st expire,
 Pains could *expel*, but not *untune* thy Soul.
 Thou bore'st them all so *Moderately*
 As if thou meantst to teach how I should *mourn* for thee.

X.

No wonder such a noble mind
 Her way again to Heaven so soon could find.
 Angels, as 'tis but seldom they appear,
 So neither do they make long stay,
 They do but visit, and away,
 'Tis pain for them t' endure our too gross Sphere.
 We could not hope for a *Reprieve*,
 She must *dye soon*, that made such *haste to live*.

XI.

Heaven did thy lovely Presence want,
 And therefore did so early thee *transplant*.
 Not 'cause he dar'd not *trust* thee longer here,
 No, such sweet *Innocence* as thine
 To take a *Stain* was too *divine*,
 But sure he *Coveted* to have thee *there*:
 For meaner Souls he could delay,
Impatient for thine, he would not stay.

XII.

The Angels too did covet thee
 T' advance their *Love*, their *Bliss*, their *Harmony*.
 They'd lately made an *Anthem* to their *King*,
 An *Anthem* which contain'd a part
 All-sweet, and full of Heavenly Art,

Which none but thy *Harmonious Soul* could sing.
 'Twas all Heaven's Vote thou should'st be gone
 To fill th' Almighty's *Quire*, and to *adorn his Throne*.

XIII.

Others when gone t' eternal rest
 Are said t' augment the *number* of the Blest.
 Thou dost their very *Happiness* improve,
 Out of the Croud they single thee,
 Fond of thy sweet *Society*,
 Thou wast *our Darling*, and art so *above*.
 Why should we of thy loss *Complain*
 Which is not only *thine*, but *Heaven's gain*?

XIV.

There dost thou sit in *Bliss and Light*,
 Whilest I thy *Praise* in mournful numbers write.
 There dost thou drink at *pleasure's virgin Spring*,
 And find'st no *leisure* in thy *Bliss*
 Ought to admire *below*, but this.
 How can I *mourn*, when thou dost *Anthems sing*?
 Thy *Pardon* my sweet *Saint* I implore,
 My *Soul* ne're *disconform'd* from *thine* *before*.

XV.

Now will I now: My *tears* shall flow
 No more, I will be blest 'cause thou art so.
 I'll borrow *Comfort* from thy *happy state*,
 In *Bliss* I'll *sympathize* with thee
 As once I did in *misery*.
 And by *Reflection* will be *Fortunate*.
 I'll practice now, what's done *above*,
 And by *thy happy state* my own improve.

The Resignation.

I.

LONG have I view'd, long have I thought,
 And held with *trembling hand* this *bitter Draught*?
 'Twas now just to my *Lips* applied,

Nature *strank* in, and all my Courage *dy'd*.
 But now Resolv'd, and firm I'll be,
 Since Lord, 'tis *mingled*, and *reach'd* out by thee.

II.

I'll trust my great *Physitian's* skill,
 I know what he *prescribes* can ne're be ill;
 To each *Disease* he knows what's fit,
 I own him *wise and good*, and do submit,
 I'll now no longer grieve or pine,
 Since 'tis *thy* pleasure Lord, it shall be *mine*.

III.

Thy Med'cine puts me to great smart,
 Thou'st wounded me in my most *tender* part;
 But 'tis with a design to cure,
 I must and will thy *Sovereign touch* endure.
 All that I priz'd below is gone,
 But yet I still will pray, *thy will be done*.

IV.

Since 'tis thy Sentence I should part
 With the most precious treasure of my heart,
 I freely *that and more* resign,
 My heart it self, as its *Delight*, is thine,
 My little *All* I give to thee,
 Thou gav'st a greater gift, thy *Son*, to me.

V.

He left true Blifs and Joys above,
 Himself he *emptied* of all good, but *love*:
 For me he freely did forsake
 More good, than he *from me can ever take*.
 A *Mortal Life* for a *Divine*
 He took, and did at last even *that* resign.

VI.

Take all great God, I will not grieve,
 But still will wish, that I had still to give.
 I hear thy voice, thou bid'st me quit
 My *Paradise*, I bless and do submit.
 I will not murmur at thy word,
 Nor beg thy *Angel* to sheath up his sword.

To my Guardian Angel.

I.

I Own (my gentle guide) that much I owe
 For all thy *tutelary* care and love,
 Through life's *wild maze* thou'st led me hitherto,
 Nor ever wilt (I hope) thy *Tent* remove ;
 But yet t' have been compleatly true,
 Thou should'st have guarded her life too.
 Thou know'st my Soul did most inhabit there,
 I could have *spared* thee, t' have guarded *her*.

II.

But since by thy neglect, or Heavens Decree,
 She's gone t' encrease the *pleasures* of the Blest,
 Since in *this Sphere* my *Sun* I ne're shall see,
 Grant me (kind Spirit) grant me this Request:
 When I shall ease thy charge and dye,
 (For sure I think thou wilt be by)
 Lead me through all the numerous Host above,
 And bring my *new-flown* Soul to her I love.

III.

With what high Passion shall we then embrace!
 What Pleasure will she take t' impart to me
 The Rites and Methods of that Sacred place,
 And what a Heaven 'twill be to learn from thee!
 That *Pleasure* I shall then I fear
 As ill as now my *sorrow* bear ;
 And could then any Chance my life destroy,
 I should I fear then *dye again* with Joy.

The Defiance.

I.

WELL Fortune, now (if e're) you have shewn
 What you had in your power to do,
 My *wandering* Love at length had fix'd on *one*,
 One

One who might please even *unconstant* you.
 Me of this one you have deprived
 On whom *I stay'd*, my Soul, in whom *I liv'd*,
 You've shewn *your* Power and *I resign*,
 But now I'll shew thee *Fortune*, what's in *mine*.

II.

I will not, no *I will not* grieve,
 My tears within their banks shall stand;
 Do what thou wilt, *I am* resolved to *Live*,
 Since *thee* *I can't*, *I will* my self command.

I will my Passions so controul
 That neither *they*, nor thou shalt hurt my *Soul*;
 I'll run so *counter* to thy will,
 Thy *good* I'll relish, but not feel thy *Ill*.

III.

I felt the Shaft that *last* was sent,
 But now thy *Quiver* I defy.
I fear no *Pain* from thee or *Discontent*,
 Clad in the *Armour* of *Philosophy*.

Thy *last* seiz'd on me out of guard,
Unarm'd too far within thy reach *I dar'd*,
 But now the *field* I'll *dearly* sell,
 I'm now (at least by *thee*) *Impassable*.

IV.

My Soul now soars high and sublime
 Beyond the *Spring* of thy *best* bow,
 Like those who so *long* on high Mountains climb
 Till they see *rain* and *thunder* here *below*.

In vain thou'lt spend thy *Darts* on me,
 My *Fort's* too strong for thy *Artillery*,
 Thy *closest* aim won't rouch my *mind*,
 Here's all thy gain, still to be thought *more blind*.

Super-

Superstition.

I.
I Care not tho it be
 By the *precifer* sort thought *Popery*;
 We Poets can a *Licence* shew
 For every thing we do,
Hear then my little *Saint*, I'll *Pray* to thee.

II.
 If now thy happy mind
 Amidst its various joys can leasure find
 T' attend to any thing so low
 As what I say or do,
 Regard, and be what thou wast ever, *kind*.

III.
 Let not the *Blest* above
Engross thee quite, but sometimes hither rove;
 Fain would I thy sweet Image see
 And sit, and talk with thee,
 Nor is it *Curiosity* but *Love*.

IV.
 Ah what delight 'twould be
 Would'st thou sometimes by stealth converse with me!
 How should I thy sweet Commerce prize
 And other joys despise!
 Come then, I ne're was yet *deny'd* by thee.

V.
 I would not long detain
 Thy Soul from Bliss, nor keep thee here in pain.
 Nor should thy Fellow-Saints e're know
 Of thy escape below,
 Before thou'rt mis'd, thou should'st return again.

VI.
 Sure Heaven must needs thy love
 As well as other qualities improve.
 Come then and recreate my sight
 With rays of thy pure light,
 'Twill cheer my eyes more than the Lamps above.

VII. But

VII.

But if Fate's so severe
 As to confine thee to thy Blissful Sphere,
 (And by thy Absence I shall know
 Whether thy state be so)
 Live happy, but be mindful of me there.

The Complaint of Adam turn'd out of Paradise.

I.

ANd must I go, and must I be no more
 The Tenant of this happy ground?
 Can no *reserves* of pity me restore,
 Can no *atonement* for my stay compound?
 All the rich Odours that *here grow* I'd give
 To Heaven in Incense, might I here but live.
 Or if it be a Grace too high
 To live in *Eden*, let me there but *dye*.

II.

Fair place, thy sweets I just began to know,
 And must I leave thee now again?
 Ah why does Heaven such *short-liv'd* Bliss bestow?
 A taste of *Pleasure*, but full draught of *Pain*.
 I ask not to be *chief* in this Blest state,
 Let Heaven some other for that place create.
 So 'tis in *Eden*, let me but have
 An *under-gardiner's* place, 'tis all I crave.

III.

But 'twill not do I see, I must away,
 My feet prophane this Sacred ground;
 Stay then bright Minister, one Minute stay,
 Let me in *Eden* take one *farewell* round.
 Let me go gather but one fragrant Bough
 Which as a *Relique*, I may keep and shew;
 Fear not the *Tree of Life*; it were
 A Curse to be *Immortal*, and not here.

W. Tis

'Tis done ; Now farewel thou most happy place,
 Farewel ye streams that softly creep,
 I ne're again in you shall view my face,
 Farewel ye Bowers, in you I ne're shall sleep.
 Farewell ye Trees, ye flowery Beds farewell,
 You ne're will blefs my *taste*, nor you my *smell*.
 Farewel thou Guardian divine,
 To thee my *happy Rival* I resign.

O whether now, whether shall I repair
 Exil'd from this *Anglic* coast?
 There's nothing left that's pleasant, good or fair,
 The *World* can't recompence for *Eden* lost.
 'Tis true, I've here a *Universal* sway,
 The Creatures me as their chief Lord obey ;
 But yet the *World* tho' *all* my Seat,
 Can't make me *happy*, tho' it make me *great*.

VI.

Had I lost *lesser* and but *seeming* Bliss,
 Reason my sorrows might relieve.
 But when the loss great and substantial is,
 To think is but to see good cause to grieve.
 'Tis well I'm *mortal*, 'tis well I shortly must
 Lose all the thoughts of *Eden* in the dust.
 Senseless and Thoughtless now I'd be,
 I'd lose even my *self*, since I've lost *thee*.

To Sleep.

Break off thy Slumber gentle God
 And hither bring thy *charming* Rod ;
 The Rod that weeping Eyes does close
 And gives to Melancholy hearts repose ;
 With *that* my Temples stroke, and let me be
 Held by thy *soft* Captivity.

But

But do not *all* my senses bind,
 Nor fetter up too *close* my mind;
 Let *mimic* Fancy wake, and freely rove,
 And bring th' *Idea* of the Saint I love.

II.

Her lovely *Image* has been brought
 So often to my *waking* thought,
 That 'tis at length worn out and dead,
 And with its fair Original is fled.
 Or else my working over-thoughtful mind
 With much *intention* is made *blind*,
 Like those who look on Objects bright
 So long till they quite lose their sight.
 Ah Cruel Fates, it's not enough for you
 To take my *Saint*, but I must lose her *Image* too?

III.

Thee gentle *Charmer* I implore
 This my *lost Treasure* to restore;
 Thy *magic* vertues all apply,
 Set up again my *Bank-rupt* memory.
 Search every *Cell* and corner of my Brain,
 And bring my *Fugitive* again.
 To thy dark Cave thy self betake
 And 'mong thy *Dreams* enquiry make;
 Summon the *best Ideas* to appear
 And bring that *Form* which most resembles her.

IV.

But if in all thy store there be
 None (as I fear) so fair as she,
 Then let thy *Painter Phancy* limn
 Her Form *anew*, and send it by a Dream.
 Thou can'st him all her lively Features tell
 For sure I think thou knew'st her well.
 But if *description* wont suffice
 For him to draw a Piece so *nice*,
 Then let him to my *Breast* and *Heart* repair,
 For sure her *Image* is not worn out there.

The

The Grant.

I.

'T'Was when the *Tide* of the *returning* day
 Began to chase ill forms away,
 When pious *Dreams* the *Sense* employ,
 And all within is *Innocence* and *Joy*,
 My *Melancholy*, thoughtful *Mind*
 O'come at length, to sleep resign'd ;
 Not common sleep, for I was blest
 With something more *divine*, more *sweet* than *rest*.

II.

She who her fine-wrought *Clay* had lately left,
 Of whose sweet *Form* I was bereft,
 Was by *kind* *Fancy* to me brought,
 And made the *Object* of my *happy* thought.
 Clad she was all in *Virgin* white,
 And shone with *Imperial* light ;
 A radiant *glory* *Crown'd* her head,
 She stream'd with *Light* and *Love*, and thus she said.

III.

And why this *Grief* and *Passion* for the *Blest* ?
 Let all your *Sorrows* with me *rest*.
 My *state* is *Bliss*, but I should live
 Yet much more *happy*, would you cease to *grieve*.
 Dry up your *tears* (*Dear* *Friend*) and be
 Happy in *my* *Felicity*.
 By this your *wisdom* you'll approve,
 Nay (what you'd most of all commend) your *Love*.

IV.

She spake, dissolv'd I lay and overcome,
 And was with *Extasie* struck dumb ;
 But ah the fierce *tumultuous* joy
 Its own weak *Being*, *hasten'd* to *destroy*.
 To see that lovely *Form* appear
 My *Spirits* in such *commotion* were,
 Sleep could no more their force controul,
 They shook their *Fetters* off, and free'd my *unwilling* *Soul*.

V. What

V.

What Bliss do we oft to *Delusion* owe!
 Who would not still be *cheated* so!
 Opinion's and Ingredient
 That goes so far to make up true Content,
 That even a *Dream* of Happiness
 With *real* joy the Soul does bless;
 Let me but always *dream* of this,
 And I will envy none their *making* Bliss.

The Aspiration.

I.

How long great God, how must I
 Immur'd in this dark Prison lye!
 Where at the Grates and Avenues of *sense*
 My Soul must *watch* to have *Intelligence*.
 Where but faint gleams of thee salute my sight,
 Like *doubtful* Moon-shine in a *Clondy* night.
 When shall I leave this Magic Sphere,
 And be all Mind, all Eye, all Ear!

II.

How Cold this Clime! and yet my sense
 Perceives even *here* thy Influence.
 Even here thy strong Magnetic Charms I feel,
 And pant and tremble like the *Amorous* steel.
 To lower good, and Beauties less Divine
 Sometimes my *erroneous* Needle does decline
 But yet (so strong the *sympathy*)
 It *turns*, and *points* again to thee.

III.

I long to see this Excellence
 Which at such *distance* strikes my sense.
 My impatient Soul struggles to disengage
 Her wings from the confinement of her Cage.
 Would'st thou *great* Love this Prisoner once set free,
 How would she hasten to be *link'd* to thee!

She'd

She'd for no Angels Conduct stay,
But fly, and love on all the way.

The Defence.

I.

THat *I* am colder in my Friendship grown,
My Faith and Constancy you blame,
But sure th' inconstancy is all your own,
I am, but *you* are not the same,
The flame of Love must needs expire
If you substract what should maintain the fire.

II.

While to the Laws of vertue you were true,
You had, and might retain my heart;
Now give me leave to turn Apostate too,
Since you do from your self depart.
Thus the *Reform'd* are counted free
From *Schism*, tho they desert the *Roman Sec.*

III.

The strictest Union to be found below
Is that which Soul and Body tyes,
They all the *Mysteries* of Friendship know,
And with each other sympathise.
And yet the Soul will bid adieu
T' her *much distemper'd* Mate, as *I* leave you.

The Retraction.

I.

I'Ve often charg'd all sublunary blifs
With vanity and emptiness:
You Woods and Streams have heard me oft complain
How all things, how even *your* delights were vain.
Methought *I* could with one short simple view
Glance o're all human joys, and see them through.
But now great *Preacher* pardon me,

I cannot wholly to thy charge agree,
For *Musick* sure and *Friendship* have no *vanity*.

II.

No, each of these is a firm *massy* joy,
Which tho eternal, will not cloy.
Here may the *Venturous* Soul love on, and find,
Grasp what she can, that more remains behind.
Such *Depths* of joy these living *Springs* contain
As Man t' Eternity can never *drain*.

These Sweets the *truth* of Heaven prove,
Only there's *greater* Blifs with Saints above,
Because they've *better Musick* there, and *firmer Love*.

The PROSPECT.

W HAT a strange *moment* will *that* be

My Soul, how full of Curiosity,
When wing'd, and ready for thy eternal flight
Tho th' utmost edges of thy tottering Clay,
Hovering and wishing longer stay

Thou shalt advance, and have *Eternity* in *sight* !

When just about to try that unknown Sea,
What a strange *moment* will *that* be !

II.

But yet how much *more* strange that state
When loosen'd from th' embrace of this close mate
Thou shalt at *once* be *plung'd* in Liberty,

And move as swift and active as a Ray
Shot from the lucid *spring* of day !

Thou who just now was clogg'd with dull Mortality,
How wilt thou bear the mighty change, how know

Whether thou'rt then the *same* or no !

III.

Then to strange Mansions of the air
And stranger Company must thou repair !
What a new Scene of things will then appear !

H

This

*This World thou by degrees wast taught to know
Which lessen'd thy surprize below,
But Knowledge all at once will overflow thee there.
That World as the first man did this, thou'lt see,
Ripe-grown, in full maturity.*

IV.

There with bright Splendours must thou dwell,
And be--what only those pure Forms can tell.
There must thou live a while, gaze and admire,
Till the great Angel's Trump this Fabrick shake,
And all the slumbring Dead awake,
Then to thy old, forgotten state must thou retire.
This Union then will seem as strange, or more,
Than thy new Liberty before.

V.

Now for the greatest Change prepare,
To see the only Great, the only Fair.
Vail now thy feeble eyes, gaze and be blest;
Here all thy turns and Revolutions cease,
Here's all Serenity and Peace:
Thou'rt to the *Center* come, the native seat of *rest*.
There's now no further change nor need there be;
When *One* shall be *Variety*.

The RETURN.

I.

Dear Contemplation my Divinest Joy,
When I thy sacred Mount ascend
What Heavenly sweets my Soul employ!
Why can't I there my days for ever spend?
When I have conquer'd thy steep Heights with Pain
What pity 'tis that I must down again!

II.

And yet I must; my Passions would rebel
Should I too long continue here:
No, here I must not think to dwell,

But

But mind the Duties of my proper Sphere.
So Angels, tho they Heaven's Glories know,
Forget not to attend their Charge below.

The 137 Psalm Paraphrased to the 7th. Verse.

I.
Beneath a reverend gloomy shade,
Where *Tigris* and *Euphrates* cut their way,
With folded Arms and Heads supinely laid
We fate, and wept out all the tedious day,
Within its Banks Grief could not be
Contain'd, when, *Sion*, we remember'd thee.

II.
Our Harps with which we oft have sung
In solemn strains the great *Jehovah's* Praise,
Our Warbling Harps upon the Trees we hung,
Too deep our grief to hear their pleasing Lays.
Our Harps were sad, as well as we,
And tho by Angels touch'd, would yield no *Harmony*.

III.
But they who forc'd us from our seat,
The Happy Land, and sweet abode of Rest,
Had one way left to be more cruel yet,
And ask'd a Song from hearts with grief oppress'd.
Let's hear, say they, upon the Lyre
One of the *Anthems* of your *Hebrew Quire*.

IV.
How can we frame our voice to sing
The Hymns of Joy, Festivity and Praise
To those who're Aliens to our *Heavenly King*,
And want a *taste* for such exalted Lays?
Our Harps will here refuse to sound;
An *Holy Song* is due to *Holy ground*.

V.
No, dearest *Sion*, if we can
So far forget thy Melancholy state

As now thou mourn'st, to sing one chearful strain,
 This ill be added to our Ebb of *Fate*;
 Let neither Harp nor Voice e're try
 One *Hallelujah* more, but ever silent lye.

The 139 Psalm Paraphrased to the 14 Verse.

I.

IN vain, great God, in vain I try
 T' escape thy quick all-searching eye.
 Thou with one *undivided* view
 Dost look the whole Creation through.
 The unshap'd *Embryo's* of my mind
 Not yet to Form or Likeness wrought,
 The tender *rudiments* of thought
 Thou see'st, before she can her own *Conception* find.

II.

My private Walks to thee are known,
 In *Solitude* I'm not alone;
 Thou round my Bed a Guard dost keep,
 Thy eyes are open, while mine sleep.
 My softest Whispers reach thy ear:
 'Tis vain to fancy secrecy;
 Which way so e're I turn thou'rt there,
 I am all round beset with thy *Immensity*.

III.

I can't wade through this Depth, I find,
 It drowns and swallows up my Mind.
 'Tis like thy immense Deity,
 I cannot fathom that, or thee.
 Where then shall I a refuge find
 From thy bright comprehensive Eye?
 Whither, O whither shall I fly,
 What place is not possess'd by thy all-filling Mind!

IV.

If to the heavenly Orbs I fly
 There is thy Seat of Majesty.

If

If down to Hell's Abyfs I go
 There I am fure to meet thee too.
 Should I with the swift wings of Light
 Seek some remote and unknown Land,
 Thou foon would'ft overtake my flight,
 And all my Motions rule with thy *long-reaching* Hand.

V.

Should I t' avoid thy piercing fight,
 Retire behind the skreen of night,
 Thou canst with one cœlestial ray
 Dispel the shades and make it day.
 Nor need'ft thou by fuch Mediums fee,
 The force of thy clear radiant fight,
 Depends not on our groffer light;
 On Light thou fit'ft *enthron'd*, 'tis ever Day with thee.

VI.

The *Springs* which Life and Motion give
 Are thine, by thee I move and live.
 My Frame has nothing hid from thee,
 Thou know'ft my whole *Anatomy*.
 T' an Hymn of Praise I'le tune my Lyre;
 How amazing is this work of thine!
 With *dread* I into my *self* retire,
 For tho the *Metal's base*, the *Stamp* is all *divine*.

To Dr. Plot, on his *Natural History of Stafford-shire*.

I.

What strange Perversity is this of Man!
 When 'twas a *Crime* to taste th' *inlightning* Tree
 He could not *then* his hand refrain,
 None then so *inquisitive*, so Curious as he.
 But now he has *Liberty* to try and know
 God's whole *Plantation* below;
 Now the Angelic fruit may be
 Tasted by all whose Arms can *reach* the Tree:
 H' is now by *Licence careless* made,
 The *Tree* neglects to *climb*, and *sleeps* beneath the *Shade*.

H 3

II. Such

II.

Such drowsie *sedentary* Souls have they
 Who could to *Patriarchal* years live on
 Fix'd to *Hereditary* Clay
 And know no Climate but their *own*.
 Contracted to their narrow *Sphere*
 Rest before *Knowledge* they prefer,
 And of this Globe wherein they dwell
 No more than of the Heavenly Orbs can tell.
 As if by Nature plac'd below
 Not on this Earth to *dwell*, but to take *root* and *grow*.

III.

Dull Souls, why did great Nature take such care
 To write in such a *Splendid* character ;
 If Man the only thing below
 That can pretend her hand to know
 Her fair-writ Volume does despise,
 And tho design'd for *Wisdom* won't be *wise*?
 Th' Almighty gets no *Praise* from this dull kind,
 The Sun was never worship'd by the *Blind*.
 Such Ignorance can ne're *Devotion* raise,
 They will want *Wisdom* and their Maker *Praise*.

IV.

They only can this Tribute *duely* yield
 Whose active Spirits range abroad,
 Who traverse o're all Nature's field
 And view the great Magnificence of God.
 They see the hidden wealth of Nature's store
 Fall down, and *Learnedly* adore ;
 But they *most* justly yet this Tribute pay
 Who do't *Contemplate* only, but *display*,
Comment on Nature's Text, and to the sense
 Expose her latent Excellence,
 Who like the Sun, not only *travel* o're
 The World, but give it *light* that others may adore.

V.

In th' Head of these *Heroic Few*
 Our Learned Author first appears in view,

Whose

Whose searching Genius like the Lamp of day
 Does the Earth's Furniture display,
 Nor suffers to lye bury'd and unknown
 Nature's rich Talent or his own.

Drake and *Columbus* do in thee revive,
 And we from thy *Research* as much receive.
 Thou art as great as they, for 'tis all one
New Worlds to find, or nicely to describe the known.

VI.

On Mighty *Hero*, our whole Isle survey,
 Advance thy Standard, conquer all the way.

Let nothing but the *Sea* controul
 The Progress of thy active Soul.
 Act like a pious Courteous *Ghost*,
 And to Mankind retrieve what's lost.

With thy victorious charitable hand
 Point out the hidden *Treasures* of our Land.

Envy or *Ignorance* do what they will,
 thou hast a *Blessing* from the *Muses Hill*.

Great be thy Spirit as thy Works divine,
 Shew thou thy *Maker's Praise*, we *Poets* will sing thine.

The EXCHANGE.

I.

WHEN *Corydon* had lost his Liberty
 And felt the Tyrants heavy chain;
 He swore, could he but once get free,
 He'd never, no, he'd never love again.

II.

But stay dull Shepherd, if you quench your fire,
 Too dear you will buy your Liberty:
 Let not such vigorous heats expire,
 I'll teach the how to love, and yet be free.

III.

Take bright *Urania* to thy Amorous breast,
 To her thy flaming heart resign;

Void not the *room*, but change the *guest*,
And let thy *sensual* love commence *Divine*.

IV.

The Swain obey'd, and when he once had known
This *fore-taste* of the joys above,
He vow'd, tho he *might* be his own,
Yet he would ever, yes, he'd ever love.

The REFINEMENT.

I.

WELL, 'twas a hard Decree of Fate,
My Soul, to *Clip* thy *pinions* so,
To make thee leave thy pure *Ethereal* state
And breath the *Vapours* of the *Sphere* below,
Where he that can pretend to have
Most Freedom, 's still his *body's* Slave.

II.

Was e're a Substance so divine
With such an unlike Consort joyn'd ?
Did ever things so wide, so close combine
As massy Clods and Sun-beams, Earth and mind ?
When yet two *Souls* can ne're agree
In *Friendship*, but by *parity*.

III.

Unequal match! what wilt thou do,
My Soul, to raise thy *Plumes* again ?
How wilt thou this gross vehicle subdue,
And thy first Blifs, first Purity obtain ?
Thy Consort how wilt thou refine,
And be again *all o're* divine ?

IV.

Fix on the Sovereign Fair thy eye,
And kindle in thy breast a flame ;
Wind up thy Passions to a pitch so high
Till they melt down, and rarify thy frame.
Like the great *Prophet* then aspire,
Thy *Chariot* will like *his*, be *Fire*.

To

TO MELANCHOLY.

I.

Mysterious Passion, dearest Pain,
 Tell me, what wondrous Charms are these
 With which thou dost torment and please,
 I grieve to be thy Slave, yet would not Freedom gain.
 No Tyranny like thine we know,
 That half so cruel e'er appear'd,
 And yet thou'rt lov'd as well as fear'd,
 Perhaps the only Tyrant that is so.

II.

Long have I been thy Votary,
 Thou'st led me out to Woods and Groves,
 Made'st me despise all other Loves,
 And give up all my Passions, all my Soul to thee.
 Thee for my first Companion did I chuse,
 First, even before my darling Muse;
 And yet I know of thee no more
 Than those who never did thy Shrine adore.

III.

Thou'rt Mystery and Riddle all,
 Like those thou inspirest, thou lov'st to be
 In Darkness and Obscurity.
 Even learned Athens thee an unknown God might call,
 Strange Contraries in thee combine,
 Both Hell and Heaven in thee meet,
 Thou greatest bitter, greatest sweet,
 No Pain is like thy Pain, no Pleasure too like thine.

IV.

'Tis the grave Doctrin of the Schools
 That Contraries can never be
 Consistent in the high'st Degree,
 But thou must stand exempt from their dull narrow Rules.
 And yet 'tis said the brightest Mind
 Is that which is by thee refin'd.
 See here a greater Mystery,
 Thou mak'st us wise, yet ruin'st our Philosophy.

The

The DISCONTENT.

I.
Not that it is not made my Fate
 To stand upon the dangerous heights of state,
 Nor that I cannot be possess'd
 Of th' hidden treasures of the *East*,
 Nor that I cannot bath in Pleasures spring
 And rife all the sweets which Nature's gardens bring
 Do I repine, my Destiny,
 I can all these *despise* as well as you *deny*.

II.
 It shall not discompose my mind
 Though not one Star above to me prove kind.
 Their influence may sway the *Sea*,
 But make not the least change in *me*.
 They neither can *afflict* my state, nor *blefs*,
 Their greatest *gifts* are *small*, and my *desires* are *less*.
 My Vessel bears but little *sail*,
 What need I then a full and swelling *gale* ?

III.
 And yet I'm discontented too,
 Perhaps y' aspiring Souls as much as *you* ;
 We both in equal trouble live,
 But for much different *Causes* grieve ;
 You, that these guilded Joys you can't obtain,
 And I, because I know they're *empty* all and *vain*.
 You still *pursue* in hopes to *find*,
 I stand and dare not *flatter* on my mind.

IV.
 This *Tree of Knowledge* is, I see,
 Still *fatal* to poor man's *felicity*.
 That which yields others great repast,
 Can't please my new *enlighten'd* taste.
 Before, tho I could nothing *solid* find,
 Yet still with specious *Prospects* I could please my mind.
 Now all the farthest I can see
 Is one perpetual *Round* of *Vanity*.

Beau-

BEAUTY.

I.

B*est* Object of the Passion most divine,
 What excellence can Nature shew
 In all her various store *below*,
 Whose Charmes may be Compar'd to thine?
 Even *Light* it self is therefore fair
 Only because it makes *thy* Sweets appear.

II.

Thou streaming Splendor of the face divine
 What in the Regions *above*,
 Do Saints like thee adore or love,
 What excellence is there like thine?
 I except not the *Divinity*.
 That great and Sovereign good, for thou art *He*.

III.

He's Beauties vast Abyfs and boundless Sea,
 The Primitive and greatest Fair,
 All his Perfections *Beauties* are,
Beauty is all the Deity.
 Some streams from this vast Ocean flow,
 And that is all that pleases, All that's *Fair* below.

IV.

Divine Perfection who alone art all
 That various *Scene* of Excellence
 Which pleases either *mind* or *sense*,
 Tho thee by different names we call!
 Search Nature through, thou still wilt be
 The *Sum* of all that's good in her *Variety*.

V.

Love, that most active Passion of the mind,
 Whose roving Flame does traverse o're
 All Nature's good, and reach for more,
 Still to thy *magic Sphere*'s confin'd.
 'Tis *Beauty* all we can desire,
 Beautie's the *native Mansion* of Loves *Fire*.

·VI.

VI.

Those finer Spirits who from the Croud retire
 To study Nature's artful Scheme,
 Or speculate a Theorem,
 What is't but *Beauty* they admire?
 And they too who enamour'd are
 Of *Virtue's* Face, love her because she's *Fair*.

VII.

No Empire, Sovereign Beauty, is like thine,
 Thou reign'st *unrivall'd* and *alone*,
 And *universal* is thy Throne,
Stoicks themselves to thee resign.
 From Passions be they ne'er so free
Something they needs must love, and that is *Thee*,

VIII.

He whom we all adore, that mighty He,
 Owns thy supreme Dominion,
 And happy lives in thee alone,
 We're blest in *him*, and He in *thee*:
 In thee he's *infinitely* blest,
 Thou art the *inmost* Center of his *Rest*.

IX.

Pleas'd with thy Form which in his Essence shin'd,
 Th' Almighty chose to multiply
 This *Flower* of his Divinity
 And lesser Beauties soon design'd.
 The unform'd Chaos he remov'd,
 Tinctur'd the Mass with *thee*, and then it *lov'd*,

X.

But do not thou my Soul, fixt here remain,
 All Streams of Beauty here below
 Do from that immense Ocean flow,
 And thither they should lead *again*.
 Trace then these Streams, till thou shalt be
 At length *o'erwhelm'd* in Beauty's *boundless* Sea.

LOVE.

I.

Imperial Passion! Sacred Fire!
 When we of *meaner* Subjects sing,
 Thou tun'st our Harps, thou dost our Souls inspire,
 'Tis *Love* directs the Quill, 'tis *Love* strikes every String.
 But where's *another* Deity
 T'inspire the Man that sings of *thee*?

II.

W'are by mistaken *Chymists* told,
 That the most active Part of all
 The various *Compound* cast in Nature's *Mould*,
 Is that which they *Mercurial Spirit* call.
 But sure 'tis *Love* they should have said,
 Without this even *their Spirit* is *Dead*.

III.

Love's the great *Spring* of Nature's *Wheel*,
 Love does the Mass pervade and move,
 What escapes the *Sun's*, does *thy* warm Influence feel,
 The Universe is kept in tune by Love.
 Thou Nature giv'st her *Sympathy*,
 The *Center* has its *Charm* from thee.

IV.

Love did great *Nothing's* barren Womb
 Impregnate with his genial Fire;
 From this first Parent did all Creatures come,
 Th'Almighty *will'd*, and made all by *Desire*.
 Nay more, among the Sacred *Three*,
 The *third Substance* is from thee.

V.

The happiest Order of the Blest
 Are those whose *Tide* of *Love's* most high,
 The bright *Seraphick* Host; who're more possess'd
 Of good, because more like the Deity.
 T' him they advance as they improve
 Their noble *Heat*, for *God is Love*.

VI.

VI.

Shall then a Passion so Divine
 Stoop down and *Mortal* Beauties know ?
 Nature's great Statute Law did ne're design
 That *Heavenly* fire should kindle here *below* ;
 Let it ascend and dwell above,
 The proper *Element* of Love.

The Consummation, A Pindarick Ode.

I.

THe rise of Monarchies, and their *long, weighty* fall
 My Muse out-soars ; she proudly leaves behind
 The Poms of Courts, she leaves our little *All*,
 To be the *humble* Song of a less reaching Mind.
 In vain I curb her tow'ring flight ;
 All I can here present's too small.
 She presses on, and now has lost their fight,
 She flies, and hastens to relate
 The last and dreadful Scene of Fate,
 Nature's great solemn Funeral.
 I see the mighty Angel stand
 Cloath'd with a Cloud, and Rain-bow round his head,
 His right Foot on the Sea, his other on the Land,
 He lifted up his dreadful Arm, and thus he said ;
 By the Mysterious great Three-one
 Whose Power we fear, and Truth adore
 I swear the Fatal Thred is spun,
 Nature shall breath her last, and *Time shall be no more.*
 The Antient Stager of the Day
 Has run his Minutes out, and numbr'd all his way.
 The parting *Isthmus* is thrown down
 And all shall now be overflown.
 Time shall no more her *under-current* know
 But one with great Eternity shall grow,
 Their streams shall *mix*, and in one *Circling* Chanel flow.

II. He

II.

He spake. Fate writ the Sentence with her Iron Pen,
 And mighty Thundrings said, *Amen.*
 What dreadful sound's this strikes my ear?
 'Tis sure th' Arch-angel's Trump I hear,
 Nature's great Passing-bell, the *only* Call
 Of Gods that will be heard by *all.*
 The Universe takes the Alarm, the Sea
 Trembles at the great Angel's sound,
 And roars almost as loud as he,
 Seeks a new Chancel, and would fain run under-ground.
 The Earth it self does no less quake,
 And all throughout, down to the Center shake,
 The Graves unclose, and the deep Sleepers there awake.
 The Sun's *arrested* in his way,
 He dares not forward go,
 But wondring stands at the great hurry here below.
 The Stars forget their Laws, and like loose Planets stray.
 See how the Elements resign
 Their numerous charge, the scatter'd Atoms home repair,
 Some from the Earth, some from the Sea, some from the
 They know the great Alarm, (Air :
 And in confus'd mixt numbers swarm,
 Till rang'd and sever'd by the *Chymistry* divine.
 The Father of Mankind's amaz'd to see
 The Globe too narrow for his Progeny.
 But 'tis the *closing* of the Age,
 And *all* the *Actors* now at once must Grace the *Stage.*

III.

Now Muse exalt thy wing, be bold and dare,
 Fate does a wondrous Scene prepare;
 The *Central* fire which hitherto did burn
 Dull like a Lamp in a moist clammy Urn,
 Fann'd by the breath divine begins to glow,
 The Fiends are all amaz'd below.
 But that will no Confinement know,
 Breaks through its Sacred Fence, and plays more free
 Than thou with all thy vast *Pindarick* Liberty.

Nature

FREEDOM.

I.

I Do not ask thee Fate, to give
 This little span a long Reprieve.
 Thy pleasures here are all so poor and vain,
 I care not hence how soon I'm gone.
 Date as thou wilt my Time, I shan't complain;
 May I but still live free, and call it all my own.

II.

Let my Sand slide away apace;
 I care not, so I hold the Glass.
 Let me my Time, my Books, my Self enjoy;
 Give me from Cares a sure retreat;
 Let no impertinence my Hours employ,
 That's in one word, kind Heaven, let me ne're be great.

III.

In vain from Chains and Fetters free
 The great Man boasts of Liberty.
 He's pinnion'd up by formal Rules of State;
 Can ne're from Noise and Dust retire;
 He's haunted still by Crouds that round him wait,
 His lot's to be in Pain, as that of Fools t' admire.

IV.

Mean while the Swain has calm repose,
 Freely he comes and freely goes.
 Thus the bright Stars whose station is more high,
 Are fix'd, and by strict measures move,
 While lower Planets wanton in the Sky,
 Are bound to no set Laws, but humourfomly rove.

To his MUSE.

I.

Come Muse, let's cast up our Accounts, and see
 How much you are in Debt to me :
 You've reign'd thus long the Mistress of my Heart,
 You've been the ruling Planet of my Days,
 In my spare-Hours you've had your part,
 Ev'n now my servile Hand your sovereign *Will* obeys.
 Too great such Service to be Free,
 Tell me what I'm to have for being thy Votary.

II.

You have Preferments in your Gift, you say,
 You can with Gold my Service pay;
 I fear thy Boast, your sacred Hill I'm told
 In a poor, curs'd and barren Country lies;
 Besides, what's State to me, or Gold,
 These you long since have taught me to despise.
 To put me off with this, would be
 Not to reward, but tax my ill Proficiency.

III.

But Fame you say will make amends for all,
 This you your sovereign Blessing call,
 The only lasting Good that never dies,
 A Good which never can be bought too dear,
 Which all the Wise and Virtuous prize,
 The Gods too with Delight their Praises hear.
 This shall my Portion be, you say,
 You'll crown my Head with an *immortal* Bay.

IV.

Give me a place less high, and more secure,
 This dangerous Good I can't endure.
 The peaceful Banks which profound silence keep
 The little Boat securely passes by,
 But where with noise the Waters creep
 Turn off with Care, for treacherous Rocks are nigh.
 Then Muse farewell, I see your store
 Can't pay for what is past, and I can Trust no more.

of

Of the Advantages of Thinking.

MAN being the only Creature here below design'd for a sociable Life, has two Faculties to distinguish him from other Creatures, *Thinking* and *Speaking*. The one, to fit him for the society of others; and the other, to qualifye him also for his own. As to the latter of these Faculties, there's no fear of its gathering Rust for want of use. We are rather apt to speak too much; and the most Re-serv'd have reason to pray with the Psalmist, *Set a watch O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips.*

But the former, is that which generally lies *fallow* and neglected; as may be guess'd from the intemperate use of the other. There are few indeed, that are *capable* of Thinking to any great purpose: but among those that *are*, there are fewer that *employ* this excellent Talent. And for ought I know, however strange it may seem, among the Ingenious and well Educated, there are as few *Thinkers* as among the Herd of the Vulgar and Illiterate. For either they live a *Popular* Life; and then what for Business, Pleasures, Company, Visits, with a world of other Impertinencies, there's scarce room for so much as a Morning Reflexion. Or else, they live *retir'd*, and then either they doze away their time in Drowsiness and brown Studies; or, if Brisk and Active, they lay themselves out wholly upon devouring Books, and making Common Places; and scarce entertain their Solitude with a Meditation once in a Moon.

But 'tis merely for want of Thinking that they can allow themselves in doing so. For by a little of this, they would soon discover, that of all the Methods of Improvement that can be used, there is none so advantagious as Thinking ; either for our Intellectuals or our Morals ; to make us Wiser, or to make us Better. And first, for our Intellectuals. 'Tis the perfection of our Rational part to *know* ; that is, to be able to frame clear and distinct Conceptions, to form right Judgments, and to draw true Consequences from one thing to another. Now besides, that the Powers of the Mind are made more bright, vigorous, and active by use, as all other Faculties are ; there is this further advantage, that by habitual thinking the Object is made more Familiar to the Understanding ; the Habitudes and Relations of Idea's one towards another, by frequent comparing, become more visible and apparent ; and consequently, 'tis more easie to divide what ought to be divided, and to compound what ought to be compounded ; wherein consists the sum of all *Truth* and *Science*.

Reading is indeed very excellent and *useful* to this purpose ; but *Thinking* is *necessary*. This may do without the other, as appears in the first Inventors of Arts and Sciences ; who were fain to think out their way to the Recesses of Truth ; but the other can never do, without this. *Reading* without *Thinking*, may indeed make a rich *Common Place*, but 'twill never make a rich *Head* ; it may, indeed bring in a great store of *Hyle*, but 'tis yet *without form* and *void*, till *Thinking*, like the Seminal Spirit, agitates the dead shapeless Lump, and works it up into *Figure* and *Symmetry*. But

But of what advantage Thinking is to the Advancement of Knowledge, will further appear, by considering some of the chief Impediments of it; and how they are removed by Thinking. And the first that I shall mention, is the Prejudice of Infancy. We form infinite rash Judgments of Things, before we duly understand any Thing; and these grow up with us, take root, spread and multiply; till, after long use and custom, we mistake them for common Notions and dictates of Nature; and then we think it a crime to go about to unlearn or eradicate them. And as long as we stand thus affected, we are condemn'd to Errours and perpetual Wandrings. So great reason had the excellent *Des-Cartes* to lay the foundation of his Philosophy in an *Equipoise* of Mind; and to make the removal of these Prejudices the very entrance and beginning of Wisdom.

But now when a Man sets upon a course of Thinking, nothing will be so obvious as to consider, that since we come so late to the perfect use of our Reason; among those many Judgments we have made, 'tis very likely the major part are False and Erroneous. And this is a fair step to the shaking off those Infant-Prejudices; at least he will be thereby induc'd not to believe any thing, the rather, because he had given it such early Entertainment. From this general reflection he proceeds to examin the Things themselves. And *now* he is a capable Judge, can hear both sides with an indifferent Ear, is determin'd only by the moments of Truth; and so retracts his *past* Errors, and has the best Moral Security against any for the *future*.

Another great hindrance to Knowledge is the wrong *perception* of Things. When the simple Ideas of our Minds are confus'd, our Judgments can never proceed without Error. 'Tis like a Fault in the first concoction, which is never corrected in either of the other. For how can I judge whether the Attribute agree to the Subject, if my Notion of both be *confus'd* and *obscure*? But now, the only Cause of the confus'dness of our Notions, next to the natural inability of our Faculties, is want of *Attention* and close *Application* of Mind. We don't *dwell* enough upon the object; but speculate it transiently and in haste; and then, no wonder that we conceive it by halves. Thinking therefore is a proper Remedy for this Defect also.

Another great hindrance to Knowledge is *ambiguity of Terms and Phrases*. This has bred a world of confusion and misunderstanding, especially in Controversies of Religion; a great many of which, if thoroughly sifted and well compared, will be found to be mere *verbal* Contentions. As may appear from what the excellent Monsieur *Le Blanc* has perform'd in this kind. But now, this is owing merely to want of thinking. There is a latitude in the Phrase; and one writer not sufficiently attending to that determinate sense of it which his Adversary intends, very hastily and furiously denies what the other does not affirm; and he again as furiously affirms what this does not deny. So that they are really agreed all along, and yet fight on like Fools in the dark. And there is no hopes they will ever be reconciled, till either they will take the pains to think themselves, or some body else will be so kind, as to think for 'em. Another

Another great hindrance to Knowledge is an *overfond* and *superstitious deference to Authority*, especially that of *Antiquity*. There is nothing that cramps the Parts, and fetters the *understandings* of Men like this strait lac'd humour. Men are resolv'd never to outshoot their forefathers Mark ; but write one after another, and so the dance goes round in a Circle ; and the World is never the *wiser* for being *older*. Take an instance of this in the *School-men*, and in the best of them, *Aquinas*. 'Tis pleasant to see how that great Wit is oftentimes put to't to maintain some unlucky Authorities, for the salving of which he is forced to such Shifts and Expedients, which he must needs (should he dare to think freely) see through and discern to be false ; and yet such a slave was he, that he would rather lose Truth, than go out of the Road to find it. This also makes Men, otherwise Senseful and Ingenious, quote such things many times out of an old dull Author, and with a peculiar Emphasis of Commendation too, as would never pass even in ordinary Conversation ; and which they themselves would never have took notice of, had not such an Author said it. But now, no sooner does a Man give himself leave to Think, but he perceives how absurd and unreasonable 'tis, that one Man should prescribe to all Posterity : That Men, like Beasts, should follow the foremost of the Herd ; and that venerable *non-sense* should be preferr'd before *new-sense* : He considers, that that which we call *Antiquity*, is properly the Nonage of the World ; that the sagest of his Authorities were once new ; and that there is no other difference between an ancient Author and himself, but

only that of Time; which, if of any advantage, 'tis rather on his side, as living in a more refined and mature Age of the World. And thus having cast off this *Intellectual* slavery, like one of the brave *Ἐρακτινοί*, mention'd by *Laertius*, he addict's himself to no Author, Sect or Party; but freely picks up Truth where-ever he can find it; puts to Sea upon his own Bottom; holds the Stern himself; and now, if ever, we may expect new Discoveries.

There are other notable Impediments to the improvement of Knowledge, such as Passion, Interest, fear of being tax'd with Inconstancy, scorn of being inform'd by another, Envy, the humour of Contradiction, and sometimes Flattery in applauding every thing we hear, and the like. Now as to the manner how all these are remov'd by Thinking, it may suffice to say in general, that they are all obviously absurd and ridiculous; and however unthinking Men may be abused by them, yet a free and close Thinker must needs quickly perceive that they are so; and there is no better Moral way that I know of to be quit of ill Habits, than the being convinc'd of their Folly and Mischief.

But the greatest advantage of Thinking is yet behind, that it improves our Morals as well as our Intellectuals; and serves to make us Better, as well as Wiser. This is in a great measure included in the other. All therefore that I shall further remark concerning it is this, that considering the great influence the Understanding has upon the Will, there are but two things necessary to preserve us in our Duty. First an habitual Theory of what we ought and ought not to do; and of all the motives and engage-

engagements to the one and to the other. Secondly, an actual and clear presence of all this to the Mind, in every Instant of Action. And this is for the most part the Thinking Man's condition. He does not only Habitually *know*, but Actually *attends* both to his Duty, and to all the engagements for its Performance. He has those Considerations almost always present with him which to others are the Principles of *Repentance*; and this keeps him *in* his Duty, which brings others *to* it; and makes him live like those *Righteous* Persons, of whom our Saviour says, That they *need no Repentance*;

Of the Care and Improvement of Time.

TO be careful how we manage and employ our Time, is one of the *first* Precepts that is *taught* in the School of Wisdom, and one of the *last* that is *Learn'd*. The first and *leading* Dictate of Prudence is, That a Man propose to himself his true and best Interest for his End; and the next is, That he make use of all those Means and Opportunities whereby that End is to be attain'd. And betwixt these two there is such a close Connexion, that he who does not *do* the *latter*, cannot be supposed to *intend* the *former*. He that is not careful of his Actions, shall never persuade me that he seriously proposes to himself his best Interest, as his *End*; for if he did, he would as seriously apply himself to the Regulation of the *other*, as the *Means*. And so he that is not careful of his *Time*, cannot
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in Reason be supposed to be careful of his Actions; for if he were, he would certainly have a special Regard to the *opportunity* of their Performance.

But, as I observ'd in the beginning, though this Precept be one of the *Elementary* Dictates of Prudence, and stands written in the *first Page* of the *Book of Wisdom*; yet such is the Sottishness and Stupidity of the World, that there is none that is more *slowly Learn'd*. And 'tis a prodigious Thing to consider, that, although among all the *Talents* which are committed to our *Stewardship*, Time upon several accounts is the most precious, yet there is not any one of which the generality of Men are more Profuse and Regardless. Tho it be a Thing of that inestimable Value, that 'tis not distributed to us *intirely*, and at once, like other Blessings, but is *dealt* out in Minutes and little Parcels, as if Man were not fit to be trusted with the *intire* Possession of such a *choice* Treasure, yet there are very many that think themselves so *overstock'd* with it, that instead of *husbanding* it to Advantage, the main Business of their Thoughts is how to rid their Hands of it, and accordingly they catch at every Shadow and Opportunity of *Relief*; strike in at a venture with the next Companion, and so the *dead Commodity* be *taken off*, care not who be the *Chapman*. Nay, 'tis obvious to observe, that even those Persons who are Frugal and Thrifty in every thing else, are yet extremely Prodigal of their best *Revenue*, Time; Of which alone (as *Seneca* neatly observes) 'tis a *Virtue* to be *Covetous*.

Neither may this Censure be fastned only upon the *unthinking* Multitude, the *Sphere* of whose Consideration

sideration is supposed to be very *narrow*, and their Apprehension *short-sighted*; but I observe that many of those who set up for Wits, and pretend to a more than ordinary Sagacity, and delicacy of Sense, do notwithstanding spend their Time very *unaccountably*, and live away whole Days, Weeks, and sometimes Months together, to as little purpose (tho it may be not so innocently) as if they had been asleep all the while. And thus they are so far from being ashamed to own, that they freely Boast of it, and Pride themselves in it, thinking that it tends to their Reputation, and commends the Greatness of their Parts, that they can *support* themselves upon the Natural *stock*, without being beholden to the *Interest* that is brought in by Study and Industry.

But if their Parts be so good as they would have others believe, sure they are *worth* Improving; if not, they have the more *need* of it. And tho it be an Argument of a *rich* Mind, to be able to *maintain* it self without *Labour*, and *subsist* without the *Advantages* of Study, yet there is no Man that has such a Portion of Sense, but will understand the use of his Time better than to put it to the Trial. Greatness of Parts is so far from being a discharge from *Industry*, that I find Men of the most exquisite Sense in all Ages were always most curious of their Time: Nay, the most Intelligent of all Created Beings (who may be allow'd to pass a truer Estimate upon Things than the finest Mortal Wit) value Time at a high rate. *Let me go* (says the Angel to the importunate Patriarch) *for the Day breaketh*. And therefore I very much suspect the Excellency of those Men's Parts, who are dissolute and careless

careless mis-spenders of their Time: For if they were Men of any *Thoughts*, how is it possible but these should be some in the Number? (*viz.*) 'That this Life is wholly in order to another, and that Time is that *sole Opportunity* that God has given us for transacting the great Business of Eternity: That our Work is great, and our Day of working short, much of which also is lost and render'd useless, through the Cloudiness and Darkeness of the *Morning*, and the thick Vapours and unwholesome Fogs of the *Evening*; the Ignorance and Inadvertency of *Youth*, and the Diseases and Infirmities of *Old Age*: That our Portion of Time is not only short, as to its Duration, but also uncertain in the Possession: That the loss of it is irreparable to the Loser, and profitable to no body else: That it shall be severely accounted for at the great Judgment, and lamented in a sad Eternity.

He that considers these Things (and sure he must needs be a *very unthinking* Man that does not) will certainly be Choice of his Time, and look upon it no longer as a bare State of *Duration*, but as an *Opportunity*; and consequently will let no part of it (no *considerable* part at least) slip away either *Unobserv'd* or *Unimprov'd*. This is the most effectual Way that I know of to secure to ones self the *Character* of a Wise-man *here*, and the *Reward* of one *hereafter*. Whereas the *vain Enthusiastic* Pretenders to the Gift of Wit, that Trifle away their Time, betray the *Shallownes* and *Poverty* of their Sense to the *discerning few*; or whatever they may pass for here among their fellow Mortals, do most infallibly make themselves *Cheap* in the sight of *Angels*.

Of

Of SOLITUDE.

IT has been urg'd as an Objection, by some *Atheistical* Persons, against the Existence of a God, that if there had been such a perfect Being, who was *completely* Happy in the Enjoyment of himself, he would never have gone about to make a World. Now, tho' this Objection contributes nothing to the support of Atheism (the Design of God in Creating the World being not to *increase* his Happiness, but to *Communicate* it) yet it proceeds upon this true Supposition, that *Society* is a *Blessing*. It is so, and that not only *respectively*, and in reference to the present Circumstances of the World, and the Necessities of this Life, but also *simply*, and in its own Nature ; since it shall be an *Accessory* to our Bliss in Heaven, and add many *Moments* to the *weight* of *Glory*. Neither will the Truth of this Assertion be at all weaken'd by alledging, that no Benefit or Advantage accrues to God by it ; for that it becomes unbeneficial to him (tho' a Blessing in its own Nature) is purely by accident, because God eminently containing in himself all *possible* Good, is uncapable of any *New* Accession.

And as Society is in its own Nature an Instrument of Happiness, so is it made much more so by the Indigencies and Infirmities of Men. Man of all Creatures in the World, is least qualify'd to live alone, because there is no Creature that has so many Necessities to be reliev'd. And this I take to be one of the great *Arts* of Providence, to secure mutual Amity and the *reciprocation* of good turns
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in the World, it being the Nature of Indigency, like common Danger, to indear Men to one another, and make them herd together, like *Fellow-Sailors* in a *Storm*. And this indeed is the true Case of Mankind, we all Sail in one *Bottom*, and in a *rough Sea*, and stand in need of one anothers Help at every turn, both for the *Necessities* and *Refreshments* of Life. And therefore I am very far from commending the undertaking of those *Ascetics*, that out of a pretence of keeping themselves *unspotted from the World*, take up their Quarters in *Deserts*, and utterly abandon all Human Society: This is in short (to say no more of it) to put themselves into an incapacity either of *doing* any good to the World, or of receiving any from it: and certainly that can be no desirable State. No; this *Eremetical* way of Living is utterly inconsistent with the Circumstances and Inclinations of Human Nature; he must be a God, *Self-sufficient* and *Independent* that is fit for this State of absolute and perfect Solitude, and in this *rigorous* sense, *It is not good for Man* (tho in *Paradise* it self) *to be alone*.

But tho Society, as 'tis opposed to a state of perfect and perpetual Solitude, be a Blessing, yet considering how little of it there is in the World that is *Good*, I think it advisable for every Man that has Sense and Thoughts enough, to be his own Companion, (for certainly there is more required to qualifie a Man for his *own* company than for *other Men's*) to be as frequent in his Retirements as he can, and to communicate as little with the World as is consistent with the Duty of doing good, and the discharge of the common Offices of Humanity.

'Tis

'Tis true indeed (as *Seneca* says) *Miscenda & alternanda sunt Solitudo & Frequentia: Solitude and Company are to have their turns, and to be interplaced.* But Wise-men use to dedicate the largest share of their Lives to the former, and let the *best and most* of their Time go to make up the *Canonical Hours* of Study, Meditation and Devotion. And for this, besides the Practice of Wise-men, we have the *Authentic* example of our Blessed Lord himself, Who, as 'tis reasonably supposed (for he had pass'd the thirtieth Year of his Life before he enter'd upon the Stage of Action, and then also sought all Opportunities to be alone, and oftentimes purchas'd Retirement at the expence of Night-watches) allotted the greatest part of his little Time here on Earth to Privacy and Retirement ; and 'tis highly probable, would have liv'd much more Reservedly, had not the peculiar Business of his Function made it necessary for him to be conversant in the World. The inclination of our Lord lay more toward the *Contemplative* way of Life, tho the Interest of Mankind engaged him oftentimes upon the *Active*. And 'tis very observable, that there is scarce any one Thing which he vouchsafed to Grace with so many Marks and Instances of Favour and Respect, as he did Solitude. Which are thus sum'd up by the excellent Pen of a very Great Master of Learning and Language : It

The Great Exemplar,

was Solitude and Retirement in which Jesus kept his Vigils ; the Desert places heard him Pray, in a Privacy he was Born, in the Wilderness he Fed his Thousands, upon a Mountain apart he was Transfigured, upon a Mountain he Died, and from a Mountain he ascended

ascended to his Father. In which Retirements his Devotion certainly did receive the Advantage of convenient Circumstances, and himself in such Dispositions twice had the opportunities of Glory.

Indeed, the *Satisfactions* and *Advantages* of Solitude (to a Person that knows how to Improve it) are very great, and far Transcending those of a *Secular* and *Popular* Life. First, as to Pleasure and Satisfaction, whosoever considers the great variety of Mens Humours, the Peevishness of some, the Pride and Conceitedness of others, and the Impertinence of most; he that considers what unreasonable *Terms of Communion* some Persons impose upon those that partake of their Society; how rare 'tis for a Man to light upon a Company, where, as his first Salutation, he shall not presently have a Bottle thrust to his Nose; he, I say, that considers these and a thousand more Grievances, wherewith the *Folly* and *Ill-nature* of Men have conspired to *Burthen* Society, will find, take one time with another, Company is an occasion of almost as much *Displeasure* as *Pleasure*. Whereas in the mean time the Solitary and Contemplative Man sits as safe in his Retirement as one of *Homers Heroes* in a Cloud, and has this only Trouble from the Follies and Extravagancies of Men, that he *pities* them. He does not, it may be, Laugh so loud, but he is better *Pleas'd*: He is not perhaps so often *Merry*, but neither is he so often *Disgusted*; he lives to himself and God, full of Serenity and Content.

And as the *Pleasures* and *Satisfactions* of Solitude exceed those of a Popular Life, so also do the *Advantages*. Of these there are two sorts, *Moral* and *In-*

Intellectual; to both which Solitude is a particular Friend. As to the first, it is plain that Solitude is the proper opportunity of Contemplation, which is both the *Foundation* and the *Perfection* of a Religious Life. It is (as the same excellent Person fore-cited says elsewhere of a single Life) *the huge Advantage of Religion; the great Opportunity for the Retirement of Devotion, which being empty of Cares is full of Prayers, being unmingled with the World is apt to converse with God; and by not feeling the Warmth of a soft and indulgent Nature, flames out with holy Urns, till it be blinding like the Cherubim and the most assist'd Order of holy and unpolluted Spirits.* And for this Reason 'twas that the Ancients chose to build their Altars and Temples in Groves and Solitary Retreats, thereby intimating, that Solitude was the best opportunity of Religion. *And here I have to observe that neither are our intellectual Advantages less indebted to Solitude. I And here too I have in a great measure anticipated this Consideration: (there being nothing necessarily required to compleat the Character of a Wise man, besides the knowledg of God and himself.) yet I shall not confine my self to this Instance, I but deduce the Matter further, and venture to affirm, That all kinds of *Speculative* knowledge as well as *Practical*, are best improv'd by Solitude. Indeed there is much talk about the great Benefit of keeping great Men company, and thereupon 'tis usually reckon'd among the *Disadvantages* of a Country Life, that those of that condition want the opportunities of a *Learned Conversation*. But to confess the Truth, I think there is not so much in it as People generally imagine. In-*

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deed,

deed, were the Souls of Men lodg'd in *transparent Cases*, that we might read their Thoughts; would they *communicate* what they know, were it the fashion to discourse Learnedly, 'twere worth while to frequent the *Cabals* of Great Men: But when it shall be counted a piece of *arrant Pedantry*, and defect of good breeding to start any Question of Learning in Company; when every Man is as shy of his Notions as of a *Fairy-treasure*; and makes his Head not a Repository or *Exchequer* of Knowledge, but a *Grave* to Bury it in: A Man may be a constant attendant at the *Conclaves* of Learned Men all his Life long, and yet be no more the wiser for't than a *Book-worm* is for dwelling in *Libraries*: And therefore, to speak ingeniously, I don't see for my part wherein the great Advantage of great Conversation lies, as the Humours of Men are pleas'd to order it. Were I to inform my self in Business, and the management of Affairs, I would sooner talk with a plain illiterate Farmer or Tradesman, than the greatest *Virtuoso* of *The Society*; and as for Learning (which is the only thing they are supposed able to Discourse well of) *that* in point of *Civility* they decline: So that I find I must take refuge at my Study at last, and there *redeem* the Time that I have lost among the *Learned*.

OF COURAGE.

A *Aristotle* in his *Morals* begins the Doctrine of Virtues with *Courage*; which has found work for his Interpreters to assign the Reason of his Method.

thod. But, methinks, there is no great need they should either *Study* or *Differ* much about it. For certainly, among all the Virtues this will justly challenge the *Precedency*, and is the most *Cardinal* and *Fundamental* part of *Morality*. This Virtue is pre-required to the *susception* of all the rest. For the very entrance into the School of Wisdom, and a Virtuous Course, is a State of Discipline, Difficulty and Hardship. And therefore 'tis *sapere aude*, a great piece of *daring* and *boldness* to set up for a good Man: Especially, if to the proper Difficulties and Agonies of a Virtuous Engagement, we add those Calamities and Straits it oftentimes exposes us to, through the Malice and Folly of the World. So that as *Plato* writ upon his School, *Αγνοήτων ἔστω*, *Let none enter here that understands not Mathematics*, it may be set as a *Motto* upon the School of Virtue, *Let none enter here that wants Courage*.

And as 'tis necessarily requisite to the *susception* of all other Virtues, so it is their main *Support*, *Guardian* and *Establishment*. Without this, every other Virtue is precarious, and lies at the Mercy of every cross Accident. Without this, let but a Pistol be held to the Breast, and the severest Chastity will be frighted into Compliance, the most Heroic Friendship into Treachery, and the most ardent Piety into renunciation of God and Religion. There is nothing among all the Frailnesses and Uncertainties of this sublunary World so tottering and unstable, as this Virtue of a Coward. He has that within him that upon Occasion will infallibly betray every Virtue he has; and to secure him from Sin, you

must keep him from Temptation. This was the Principle the Devil went upon, in his encounter with Job, *Do but put forth thy Hand, (says he to God) and touch all that he hath, and he will Curse thee to thy Face.* He was right enough in the Proposition, tho' mistaken in the Application.

Having now seen the usefulness of this great Virtue, 'twill be worth while to enquire a little into its Nature. And that the rather because 'tis not only variously and fallly Apprehended by the many, but too confusedly and darkly deliver'd even by Moralists themselves.

That which with the Vulgar passes for Courage, is certainly nothing else but Stupidity, Desperateness or Fool-hardiness; a Brutish sort of *Knight-errantry* in seeking out needless Encounters, and running into Dangers without Fear or Wit; which is so far from having the fore-mention'd property of Courage, of being a Guardian, and Security of our Virtues, that 'tis in it self a Sin.

But are we like to have a better account of it from the Moralists? Why they tell you that it is a Mediocrity between Fear and Boldness; So *Aristotle* in his Ethics. But then as for defining what this Mediocrity is (wherein the very point of the Business lies) you are as much to seek as ever.

Others will tell you that 'tis a firmness of Mind in sustaining Evils, and undertaking Dangers. Accordingly they Assign two parts of Courage *Sustinere & Aggredi*. Thus *Epictetus* and the School of the Stoics. But what it is thus firmly to sustain or undertake an Evil, and what Evils are to be thus sustain'd

stain'd or undertaken, they either could not, or have not thought fit to acquaint us.

In order therefore to the settling the Point in hand, I consider First in general, That Courage has evil of Pain for its Object ; which in some circumstances is to be chosen or submitted to. Whence I form this general Idea of Courage, That 'tis a firm and peremptory Resolution of Mind to chuse evil of Pain in right Circumstances, or when 'tis truly Eligible. This Definition I confess runs in general Terms, much like one of *Aristotles* ; but I intended it for no other. Only it has this advantage above his, that it lays a Foundation for one that is more particular.

For 'tis but here to subjoin when an Evil is truly Eligible, and the Idea of Courage will be sufficiently determinate and express. Now to make a thing Eligible, 'tis necessary that some way or other it appear good ; evil being no way Eligible under its own Formality. And to make an evil put on the nature and appearance of good, two things are necessary. 1. That it be a lesser evil than some other ; and 2^{ly}. That the chusing of it be a necessary Medium for the preventing of that other. Then, and in no other case, is evil truly Eligible : and consequently, we shall not be mistaken in the Idea of Courage, if we define it to be such a firm and constant *εὐχέσις*, or disposition of Mind, whereby a man is fix'd and determin'd never to dread any evil, so far as to decline it when the chusing it is the only Remedy against a greater. And this is most eminently signalized in the case of Martyrdom, when a Man submits to the greatest evils of Pain, to avoid that much greater one of Sin. This is the very summy

and perfection of Courage, that which an *Hannibal* or a *Scipio* could never equal in all their Gallantry and Feats of War : And I dare venture to pronounce, That he who would rather die, or part with any worldly Interest than commit a Sin, can never be a Coward.

And here I cannot but take notice of a false notion of Honour and Courage, whereby the World has been generally abused ; especially those Men that make the highest pretensions to both. According to these Mens Measures of things, 'tis sufficient reason to post a Man up for a Coward if he refuse a Duel ; and to merit a Badge of Honour from the Herald's Office, if he accept it. These Men would be ready to Laugh at me, I know, as a lover of Paradoxes, should I tell them that their Characters must be quite transposed to make them true. And yet I cannot help it ; so it falls out, that he who declines the Duel, is indeed the Man of Honour and Courage ; and he who accepts it is the Coward. For he who declines it, despises the obloquy and scorn of the World, that he may approve himself to God and his own Conscience, would rather be pointed and hiss'd at, than be Damn'd ; and so chuses a lesser evil to avoid a greater. But he that accepts the Duel, so dreads the loss of his Credit among those whose good Opinion is of no Value, that to avoid it, he chuses to incur Sin and Damnation ; and so chuses a greater evil to avoid a less. And if this be Courage, we must strike it out of the Catalogue of the Virtues ; for nothing is so, that is not under the direction of *Prudence* ; much less what is downright Folly, and the very *exaltation* of Madness.

of

Of SERIOUSNESS.

Since I began to consider so far as to make Reflections upon *my self*, the most early and prevailing Dispositions which I observ'd, was an Inclination to *Seriousness*: And since I consider'd the Nature of *Things*, and the Circumstances of Human Life, I found I had reason to thank the kind influence of my Birth for making that my *Temper*, which otherwise I must have been at more Cost to *acquire*.

For tho' it be generally reckon'd only as a *Semi-Virtue*, and by some as no Virtue at all; yet certainly nothing is of greater advantage both as to Intellectual and Moral Attainments, than to be of a serious, composed and recollected Spirit. If it be not it self a Virtue, 'tis at least the *Soil* wherein it naturally grows, and the most visible Mark whereby to know those that have it. This is that whereby a *Man* is chiefly distinguish'd from a *Child*, and a *Wise Man* from a *Fool*. For (as the son of Syrac observes) a *Man may be known by his look, and one that has understanding by his Countenance when thou meet'st him*, Eccles. 19. And again speaking of levity and dissoluteness of Behaviour, *A man's attire, excess of laughter and gait shew what he is*; that is, it shews he is none of the *Wise*. And that this was his true meaning, we may be assured from another Character of his, where he expressly makes the signs of Wisdom and Folly to consist in these two Properties, (*viz.*) *That a Fool lifts up his voice with laughter, but a Wise man does scarce smile a little*, Ecclus. 21.

There is indeed a near Relation between Seriousness

ness and Wisdom, and one is the most excellent Friend to the other. A Man of a serious, sedate, and considerate Temper, as he is always in a ready disposition for Meditation (the best improvement both of Knowledg and Manners,) so he Thinks without disturbance, enters not upon another Notion till he is Master of the First; and so makes *clean work* of it. Whereas a Man of a loose, volatile and shatter'd Humour, thinks only by Fits and Starts, now and then in a *Morning Interval*, when the serious Mood comes upon him; and even then too, let but the least trifle cross his way, and his desultorious Fancy presently takes the *Scent*, leaves the unfinish'd and *half-mangled* Notion, and skips away in pursuit of the new *Game*. So that altho he *Conceives* often, yet by some Change or other he always *miscarries*; and the Issue proves *Abortive*.

Indeed nothing excellent can be done without Seriousness, and he that *courts* Wisdom must be in *earnest*. St. James, cap. i. 7. assures us, that 'tisto no purpose for a *wavering* and *unstable* Man to *Pray*, because he shall be sure not to *speed*. And as 'tis in vain for such a one to *Pray*, so is it in vain for him to *Study*. For a Man to pretend to work out a neat Scheme of Thoughts with a magotty unsettled Head, is as ridiculous and non-sensical, as to think to write *streight* in a jumbling Coach, as to draw an exact Picture with a *Palsie* Hand. No, he that will *hit* what he *aims* at, must have a steady Hand, as well as a quick Eye; and he that will Think to any *purpose*, must have fix'dness and composedness of Humour, as well as smartness of Parts.

And accordingly we find, that those among the
Phi-

Philosophic Sects, that profess'd more than ordinary Eminency in Wisdom or Virtue, assumed also a peculiar gravity of Habit, and solemnity of Behaviour; and the most sacred and mysterious Rites of Religion were usually perform'd with *silence*; and that not only for *Decency*, but for *Advantage*. Thus the *Italians*, who are the gravest, are also the most ingenious People under Heaven; and 'tis a known Observation of *Aristotle's* concerning *Malancholy*, that it furthers Contemplation, and makes great Wits. Thus again, the *Discipline* of *Silence* was a considerable part of the *Pythagoric* Institution: And we have it storied of our Blessed Lord himself, who was the *Wisdom* of his Father, that he never *Laugh'd*.

But because a solemn Deportment may sometimes disguise an unthinking Mind, and *Grave* in some Men's Dictionaries, signifies the same as *Dull*, I shall put the Character a little more home, and define more closely wherein the true Idea of Seriousness consists; or what it is to be in good earnest, a *serious Man*.

And First, I shall remove it from the neighborhood of those Things, which by their symbolizing with it in outward appearance, prove oftentimes the occasion of Mistake and Confusion. It does not therefore consist in the Morosity of a *Cynic*, nor in the Feverity of an *Ascetic*, nor in the Demureness of a *Precisian*, nor in the Deadness and Sullenness of a *Quaker*, nor in the solemn Mien of an *Italian*, nor in the slow Pace of a *Spaniard*: 'Tis neither in a drooping Head, nor a mortify'd Face, nor a Primitive Beard.

'Tis something very different, and much more
Excellent

Excellent than all this, that must make up a serious Man. And I believe I shall not misrepresent him, if I say, he is one that duly and impartially weighs the moments of Things, so as neither to value Trifles, nor despise Things really Excellent : That dwells much at *home*, and studies to know himself as well as Books or Men : 'That considers why he came into the World, how great his business, and how short his stay in it, how uncertain 'tis when he shall leave it; and whither a sinner shall then betake himself, when both Heaven and Earth shall fly from the presence of the Judg, Rev. 20. 'That considers God as always present, and the Folly of doing what must be repented of, and of going to *Hell* when a man *may* go to *Heaven*. In one word, That knows how to distinguish between a Moment and Eternity.

This is to be truly *serious*; and however the Pretender to gaiety and lightfomness of Humour may miscall and ridicule it by the Names of Melancholy, Dullness and Stupidity, &c. He that is thus affected cannot miss of being Wise and Good here, and Happy hereafter. And then 'twill be *his* turn to *Laugh*, when the others shall *Mourn* and *Weep*.

Of the slightness of all Secular, and the importance of minding our Eternal Interest.

Idleness and Impertinence, a doing of *nothing*, or of *nothing* to the *purpose*, are always signs of a vain, loose, and inconsiderate Spirit; but they are never

never ~~more~~ so, than where there is some very momentous and weighty Business to be done. The Man that Sleeps away his happy *Retirements*, or with the *Roman* Emperor, spends them in killing *Flies*, betrays a great deal of Weakness and Incogmancy ; but should he do the same at the *Bar*, when he's to plead for his *Life*, he would certainly be thought a mere *Changeling* or *Mad-man*.

And yet this I fear will prove the Case of the most of those who stile themselves *Rational*. For besides that, the generality of Men live at random, without any aim or design at all ; and those that propose some Ends, seldom take up with any that are Important and Material ; or if they do, they seldom proportion their *Care* to the *Weight* of Things, but are serious in Trifles, and trifling in things Serious : I say, besides all this, there is nothing relating purely to *this* World that can deserve the Name of *Business*, or be worth the serious Thoughts of him who has an immortal Soul ; and a Salvation to work out with *fear* and *trembling*. The greatest secular Affairs and Interest, are but *Specious Trifles* ; and all our Designs and Employments about 'em *Excentrical* Motions, and Solemn Impertinencies.

And yet this is made the *Center* of all our Studies and Endeavours ; the great *Beast* of the World points this way : Hence are taken the Measures of *Wisdom* and *Prudence* ; and Religion it self is forced to truckle to worldly Policy, Whereas in the meantime, there is an *Affair* of grand Importance, and wherein all Mankind are deeply concern'd ; and such as really deserves all that Care and Solitude which we lavish away upon other Things, and infinitely

finally more (tho perhaps it might be secured with *less*) and yet this is the Thing which by *Many* is utterly *neglected*, by the *Most* is *least* cared for; and by *None* sufficiently regarded. So that considering the general Practice of the World, I think there are very few in it to whom that will not be a very proper and seasonable Admonition, which our Blessed Lord gave to his solicitous and overbustie Disciple, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many Things, but one Thing is needful.*

To Cure therefore (if possible) this great Folly, I have two Propositions to offer; *First*, That no Interest relating purely to this present World, is of any great Moment or Concern to Man. *Secondly*, That to be very careful of our final Interest, and to make sure to our selves a happy Eternity, is indeed a Thing of vast Moment and Importance.

The first of these I know, will seem very strange and paradoxical to one that takes a Prospect of Mankind, and Contemplates the great stir and hurry of the World, the Plottings of Statesmen, the Emulations of Courtiers, and the Ambition of Princes; how busie Men are in their several Concerns; what variety of Designs are on foot; with what *trembling* Eagerness they are prosecuted; and what Grief attends our Disappointments. Sure after such a *Scene* as this, one would be tempted to Think, that there must be something very *considerable* in Human Life, and that Men had *notable* Interests here at stake, it being a Reproach to Human Nature, that the World should so generally Combine to make such a do about Nothing.

But

But yet *this is their Folly*; Not to insist upon that universal Vanity which the Wise and great Trier of the World has charged upon it, that *Hope deferr'd makes the Heart sick*, Prov. 13, and yet Fruition does not Cure it: That we are disappointed in our Enjoyments, as well as in our Losses; and yet that 'tis our hard Fate, to Weep at the *Funeral* of our *departed* Pleasures, tho' we were little the Happier for them when we had them; That our greatest Pleasures are most Transient; and great Mirth always ends in Heaviness and Demillion of Spirit; That the more we *Love* or *Enjoy*, the more we *venture*, and put our selves further within the reach of Fortune; That the greatest Men are not always the most contented; and that they who are most *envy'd* by *others*, think themselves more fit for their *Pity*: Not to insist I say on these, or the like Considerations, I shall fix only upon one; whereby I think 'twill plainly appear, That there *can* be no Interest relating purely to this World, that is of any great Moment or Concern to Man. And that is, the *shortness* and *uncertainty* of our Abode here.

The Life of Man in the *Book of Wisdom*, is compared to a *Shadow*. Now besides that the resemblance holds in many considerable Respects, as in that it is partly Life and partly Death, as the other is partly Light and partly Darkness; in that like a Shadow, where-ever it passes it leaves no *Track* behind it; in that it seems to be something when indeed it is nothing; in that 'tis always altering, and ends on a sudden; and when at its full Height and Prime, is often nearest to *Declension*, as a Shadow

is

is to disappear when at full Length. There is yet another Instance of Resemblance, which has a more particular aptness to our present Purpose. The Shadow can continue no longer at the *utmost*, than the Light of the Sun keeps its Residence above the *Horizontal Line*, which is but a little Portion of Time; but it may fall much short of that Period by the interposition of a Cloud; and when that may be, is as uncertain as the *Weather*; and depends upon a Thousand Accidents.

And thus 'tis with our *Lives*. No Man can lengthen out his Days beyond that *natural Term* which is set him by the Temperament of the first *Qualities*; which yet are of such jarring and *unsociable* Natures, that they can't dwell long together in a *vital* Amity. But then how far, and how many ways he may fall short of that Compass, depends upon so many hidden Causes, and so many little Accidents, that it may be reckon'd among the greatest of Uncertainties. So that there is nothing in all Human Life so frail and uncertain, as *Life it self*.

A Consideration sufficient to depreiate and vilifie all the Entertainments and Interests of the *Animal* Life; and to call off our Care from the Objects of secular Happiness, tho there were no other Vanity in them. For were they never so good and so solid in *themselves*, yet the Foundation on which they stand is so Weak and Rotten, that 'tis dangerous leaning *hard* upon them. They would be even upon this supposition, like *Nebuchadnezzers* Statue, made up indeed of *rich Metal*, but founded upon *feet of Clay*. And upon this account they are to be esteem'd as Vile and Contemprible as they are *Ruinous*. This

This is a Consideration indeed that has but little effect in the World, and the Reason is, because few give any serious H^eed and Attention to it. They know it indeed *laboriously*, and must confess it if put to the *Question*, but it lies *Dormant* in 'em, and they seldom *actually* attend to it. And therefore 'tis that the Voice bids the Prophet *Isaiah*, Cry and *Proclaim* it aloud, that *all Flesh is Grass, and all the Good-trees thereof as the Flower of the Field.* He is bid to *Cry aloud*, thereby intimating both the *importance* of the *Thing*, and the general *Stupidity* of Men in not considering it.

But if Men would but often and seriously *Meditate* upon the *shortness* and *uncertainty* of *Life*, I persuade my self they would not set their *Hearts* much upon any *Thing* in it, but would look upon all its *Pleasures*, *Honours* and *Profits*, with the same *Indifferency* that the *hasty Traveller* does upon the *specious Fields* and *Meadows* which he *passes* by. For to what purpose I pray, should Men who holds his *Tenement* here by such a *short* and *unstable Tenure*, that can't *Live* long, and *may Dye* presently, be so *Buſie* and *Thoughtful* about *worldly Concerns*? The ancient *Patriarchs*, tho' their *Span* was so very much longer than ours, thought it hardly worth while to *Build Houses*, but contented themselves to grow *gray* in *Tents*; and what do we mean, who in *Comparison* to them are but *Minuties* (as *Pindar* calls us) people for a *Day*, by plunging our selves so deeply into *Care* and *Trouble*? Is there any *Thing* among the *Actions* of either *Brutes* or *Mad-men*, so *ſilly* and *irrational* as this?

But

But to be a little particular, to what purpose should Man who walketh in a *vain Shadow*, disquiet himself also thus in *vain*, and be so greedy in heaping up Riches when he can't tell who shall gather them? To what purpose should a Man trouble both the World's and his own Rest to make himself *great*? For besides the emptiness of the Thing, the *Play* will quickly be done, and the *Actors* must all retire into a state of *Equality*, and then it matters not who Personated the *Emperor*, or who the *Slave*. To what purpose should a Man be very earnest in the pursuit of *Fame*? He must shortly *Dye*, and so must those too who admire him. Nay I could almost say, to what purpose should a Man lay himself out upon *Study*, and *Drudge* so laboriously in the *Mine* of Learning? He's no sooner a little wiser than his Brethren, but Death thinks him *ripe* for his *Sickle*, and for ought we know, a *far* all his Pains and Industry, in the next World an *Idiot* or a *Mechanic* will be as *forward* as he. To what purpose, lastly, does a Tyrant oppress his People, transgress those Bounds which *wise* Nature has set him, invade his Neighbor's Countries, deprive the Innocent and Peaceable of their Liberty, sack Cities, plunder Provinces, depopulate Kingdoms, and almost put the Foundations of the Earth out of Course; to what purpose is all this? *Thou Fool*, says our Blessed Saviour, *this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee; and then whose shall those Things be which thou hast provided?*

There is certainly nothing in all Nature so strange and unaccountable as the *Actions* of some Men. They see, as the Psalmist speaks, that *wise* Men also

Dye

Dye and Perish together as well as the Ignorant and Foolish, and leave their Riches for others, and yet they think (at least A&C as if they did) that their Houses shall continue for ever, and that their dwelling Places shall endure from one Generation to another, and call their Lands after their own Names.

This they think is their *Wisdom*, but the Psalmist assures them 'tis their *Foolishness*, and such a Foolishness too as makes them comparable to the *Beasts that perish*, however their *Posterity* may praise their saying. And certainly the Learned Apostle was of the same Mind, when from this Principle, *The time is short*, he deduces the very same Conclusion we have hitherto pleaded for, that we should be very Indifferent and Unconcern'd about any worldly Good or Evil, *That they that have Wives should be as tho they had none; and they that Weep as tho they Wept not; they that Rejoyce as tho they Rejoyced not; they that Buy as tho they Possess not; and they that use this World as not abusing it, for the Fashion of this World passes away.* It does so, and for that Reason there is nothing in this Life to be very much *Lov'd*, or very much *Fear'd*; especially if we consider what a grand Interest we have all of us at Stake in the *other World*. For as 'tis with the *Sufferings*, so is it with the *Enjoyments* of this present Time, they are neither of them *worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed.*

We have seen how frivolous and unconcerning the greatest Affairs of this World are, how unworthy to be made the Objects of our *Solicitude*, much more to be the *Business* of our Lives; we have weigh'd them in the *Ballance*, and they are found *wanting*.

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But Man is a Creature of brisk and active Faculties, and is there no Employment for him? Yes, As God has furnish'd him with Powers, so also has he assign'd him a Work; and such a one too as is to be perform'd with *Fear* and *Trembling*. There is a good Fight to be Fought, there is a whole Body of Sin to be destroy'd, there are Passions to be mortify'd, Habits to be unlearn'd, Affections to be purify'd, Virtues and Holy Dispositions to be acquired, Acts of Virtue to be oppos'd against Acts of Sin, and Habits against Habits: In a word, there is a Heaven to be obtain'd, and a Hell to be avoid-ed. This indeed is a great Work, and of great Concernment to be done, and such as calls for our principal, (I could almost say our whole.) Care and Diligence. The great necessity of which, for more Distinctness sake, I shall represent in a few Considerations.

And *First*, It highly concerns us to be very careful concerning our final Interest, because of the vast, the infinite Moment of the Thing. For certainly it can be no less, than whether a Man shall be *Damn'd* or *Saved*, *eternally* Happy, or *eternally* Miserable. No Man certainly that thinks at all, can think this an *indifferent* Matter; or if he does, he will one Day be sadly convinc'd of the contrary, when he shall Curse the Day of his Birth, and wish for the *Meray* of Annihilation. The lowest Conception we can frame of the Condition of the *Damn'd*, is an utter Exclusion from the Beatific Presence of God. And tho' the Non-enjoyment of this be no great Punishment to sensual Men in this State and Region of Exile, who perhaps would be content that God should keep Heaven to him-

himself, so he would let them have the free use of the *Earth*; yet hereafter, when the Powers of their Souls shall be awaken'd to their full Vigour and Activity, when they shall have a lively and thorough Apprehension of true Happiness, and of the infinite Beauties of the Supreme Good, there will arise such a vehement *Thirst*, such an intense Longing in the Soul, as will infinitely exceed the most exalted Languishments of *Love*, the highest Droughts of a *Fever*. The Soul will then point to the *Center* of Happiness with her full Bent and *Verticity*, which yet she shall find utterly out of her Reach; and so full of *Desire*, and full of *Despair*, she shall Lament both her *Folly* and her *Misery* to Eternal Ages. And who is able to dwell even with these Everlasting Burnings?

But *Secondly*, As an Argument for our great Care, we may consider, That as the Interest is great, so a more than ordinary Care is necessary to secure it. And that upon several Accounts. 1. Because our Redemption by Christ is not our immediate and actual discharge from Sin, (as the *Antinomians* would have it) but only an instating us into a *Capacity* of Pardon and Reconciliation, which is to be *actually* obtain'd by the Performance of *Conditions*; without which we shall be so far from being the Better for what has been done and suffer'd for us, that our Condemnation will be so much the Heavier, for neglecting to *finish* so great Salvation.

2. Because the Conditions of our Salvation, tho' temper'd with much Mercy and Accommodation to Human Infirmity, are yet so difficult, as to engage us to put forth our whole Might to the Work. A great part of Christianity is very harsh to Flesh

and Blood; however to the *Habituated Discipline*; Christ's *Yoke* may be *easy*, and his *Burthen light*. And accordingly, the Path that leads to Life is call'd *narrow*; and the Gate (tho open'd by our Saviour) is yet so *strait*, that we are bid to *strive* to Enter in at it. And *the Righteous scarcely are sav'd*.

Again, because there is a strong Confederacy against us among the Powers of Darknes. We have a very potent and malicious Enemy, who envies Man should arrive to those happy Mansions from whence himself by *Transgression fell*; And accordingly, there is a great Woe pronounc'd by the Angel against the Inhabitants of the Earth, because the Devil is come down among them, having great Wrath. And this is made by the Apostle himself an Argument for more than ordinary Care and Circumspection: *Be sober, says he, be vigilant, because your Adversary the Devil, walks about as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour*.

Again, Because we have but a little Time for this our great Work; and that too very precarious and uncertain. Our *Glass* holds but very little *Sand*, tho 'twere to be all spent, and drawn out in the *Running*. But there are also several accidental Impediments that may *intercept* its Passage: And therefore as this was alledg'd as an Argument for *Indifferency* about the Things of this World, so for the same reason, it concerns us to be eminently careful in the grand Business of the *Next*. He that duly considers how many persons Dye suddainly, how many more may, and that none can Engage for it that he himself shall not, must needs confess himself extremely concern'd to improve this short,
this

this *uncertain* Opportunity, this *only* Time of Probation; and to work with all his Might while 'tis *Day*, before the *Night* come, when no Man can Work.

Lastly, It concerns us to use a more than ordinary Care and Diligence in securing this our great Interest; because after all our Care and Vigilancy, all our Strictnesses and Severities, we don't know the just and precise Measures of *Qualification*; and how much *Trimming* of our *Lamps* is requisite, to fit 'em for the *Sanctuary* of God. For tho we are well assured in *general*, from the Terms of the Evangelical Covenant, that if we *Repent* we shall be *forgiven*, yet there is a great Latitude in Repentance; and what Degree in some Cases will be available, is a Secret God has kept to himself. For we don't know the full heinousness of our Sins, nor how far God was provoked by 'em; nor consequently, by what degrees of Sorrow and Amendment he will be appeas'd. And 'tis most certain there is a mighty difference. To *Simon Magus* 'twas almost a desperate Case: *If peradventure the thoughts of thy Heart may be forgiven thee*, Act. 8. 22. And some are said to be sav'd with *fear*, and as it were pull'd out of the *fire*. And we know what the great Apostle has said, *I know nothing by my self, yet I am not thereby justify'd*. All which argues a great Latitude and Variety, even in *necessary* Preparation; and how to state the matter *exactly* we don't know; and therefore as far as we are able, should be sure to do enough; for we may easily do too little; and can never do too much in a Matter of such high Importance.

From all which I conclude, *First*, That those who withdraw themselves (as far as is consistent with Charity and the prosecution of the Public Good) from the noise, hurry and business of the World, that they may apply themselves more serenely and entirely to a Life of Devotion and Religion, and more freely and undistractedly Attend upon the grand Concern of another World; act very *wisely* and *prudently*. For this is *Wisdom*, to take a right Estimate of Things; to proportion our Care to their Value; and to mind that most, which is most concerning. This is what the Apostle commends, *to lay aside every weight*, that we may be the surer to win the great *Prize*, and *so to run as to obtain*. This lastly, is the very Part which *Mary* chose; and which our Lord assures us, shall *never be taken away from her*.

Again I conclude, That all those who are either wholly negligent of this their grand Interest, or that do not principally regard it; and as our Saviour speaks, in the first place *seek the Kingdom of God*; that are more intent upon this World than the next; that will venture to play the Knave for a little *Preferment*; that make use of Religion as an Instrument for secular Designs: In one word, That in any kind forfeit their great Interest in the other World, for a little in this, are the greatest *Fools* in Nature. This Measure I confess, will take in a great many; and some perhaps, who would think it a great Affront to be reckon'd of the Number. But it can't be help'd, the Charge is most unquestionably True; and they themselves, however conceited of their Wit and Parts now, will once be of the

the same Opinion, when they shall say, *We Fools
thought his Life madnes.*

God grant we may all so number our Days, and
so compare our two Interests, as to apply our
Hearts to greater Wisdom.

A Metaphysical Essay toward the Demonstration of a God, from the Steddy and Immutable Nature of Truth.

-SECT. I.

How difficult a thing 'tis to demonstrate a God by any new Medium; and how far the present Essay may pretend to do so.

1. **I**T has been the curious Employment of so many and so excellent Pens to demonstrate the Existence of a God; and this they have done with such variety of Argument, Moral, Physical and Metaphysical, that however easie it may be to contrive new *Postures*, and Ring other Changes upon the same Bells, 'tis yet almost as difficult to find out an Argument for the Proof of a God that has not been used already, as to resist the Cogency of those that have. So that here if any where, that of *Solomon* is more than ordinary verify'd, *The thing that has been it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the Sun,* Eccles. 1. 9.

2. The newest indeed that has of late Years appear'd to the World, is that of the celebrated *Descartes*, taken from the Idea of God, consider'd both absolutely in its self, as including all kinds and de-

degrees of Perfection; and consequently, Existence; and as 'tis subjected in the Mind of Man, which (as he contends) could never have had such an Idea, were there not something which had all that Perfection in it *Formally* or *Eminently*, which is in the Idea *objectively*.

3. Now tho this Procedure of his be extraordinarily Fine and Subtile, and such as (to the first part at least) will appear no less strong and concluding to any capable and indifferent Person, that considers it as 'tis managed at large by its ingenious Author, yet this was not a Notion newly excogitated, but only revived by him. For *Aquinas* had before lighted upon the former, and refused it; and he is beholding to St. *Austin*, and the School of the *Platonists*, for the later.

4. I speak not this to diminish one *Ray* from the *Glory* of that incomparable Speculatist. That which I remark here, is not the Barrenness of his *Invention*, but that of the *exhausted Subject*. The Matter had been squeezed before to the last Drop; and his only Fault was, that he was not *Born sooner*. Which might be a sufficient Apology, if this Procedure of mine prove not entirely New and *Unblown* upon. Whether it be or no, 'tis not possible (without examining all the Books in the World) absolutely to determine. This much I believe I may venture to say, That 'tis no where universally receiv'd, nor by any that I know of, industriously and professedly managed; And that Lastly, 'Tis as New as the Matter will now afford; and consequently, as any Man in Reason ought to expect.

SECT. 9

SECT. II.

The various Acceptions of Truth; and which that is, which is made the ground of the present Demonstration.

1. **H**AVING undertaken to demonstrate the Existence of God from the steady and immutable Nature of *Truth*, I am first to distinguish the *Equivocalness* or *Latitude* of the Word, and then to point out to that determinate Part, which I intend for the Ground of my *Demonstration*.

2. The most general Partition of *Truth*, is into *Truth of the Thing*, and *Truth of the Understanding*; or (according to the language of the Schools) *Truth of the Object*, and *Truth of the Subject*. Both of these again, have a double *subdivision*. For by *Truth of the Object*, may be understood either that *Transcendental Verity* which is convertible with *Ess*, and runs through the whole *Circle of Being*, whereby every Thing is really what it is; which is *Simple Truth*. Or else, certain Relations and Habitudes of Things one towards another, whether *Affirmatively* or *Negatively*; which is *Complex Truth*.

3. And so again, by *Truth of the Subject* may be understood either a due Conformity between the *Understanding* and the *Object*, when I compound what is compounded, and divide what is divided; which is *Logical Truth*. Or else a due Conformity between the *Words* and the *Understanding*, when I speak as I think; which is *Moral Truth* or *Veracity*,

4. Now

4. Now the Truth, upon whose immutable Nature I build the Demonstration of a God, is not that of the *Subject*, but that of the *Object*. Nor that neither according to its *simple* and *transcendental* Acceptation, but as it signifies certain immutable Relations and Habitudes of Things one towards another by way of Affirmation and Negation ; which is *Truth of the Object Complex*.

SECT. III.

That there are such Relations and Habitudes of Things toward one another ; and that they are Steady and Immutable.

1. **T**WO Things are here asserted, First, That there are Relations and Habitudes of Things towards one another : And 2^d, That they are Steady and Immutable. First, I say, there are certain Relations and Habitudes betwixt Thing and Thing. Thus there is a certain Habitude between some *Premises*, and some *Conclusions* ; for any Thing will not follow from any Thing ; between some *Objects* and some *Faculties* ; between some *Ends* and some *Means* ; between some *Subjects*, and some *Predicates* ; and the like.

2. This is as true, as that there is any such thing as *Truth*. For Truth is nothing else, but the Composition or Division of Idea's, according to their respective Habitudes and Relations. And without *Truth*, there can be no such Thing as *Knowledge* ; for Knowledge is *Truth of the Subject* : 'Tis a Man's thinking

thinking of Things as they are ; and that supposes Truth of the *Object*. Which whosoever denies, contradicts himself, and establishes the Proposition which he design'd to overthrow ; and consequently, *universal* Scepticism is the very extremity of Nonsense and Inconsistency.

3. And as there are certain Habitudes and Relations between Things ; so *zly*, some of them are Steddy and Immutable, that never were *made* by any Understanding or Will, nor can ever be *un-made* or null'd by them ; but have a fixt and unalterable *existence*, from Everlasting to Everlasting. And consequently, there are not only *Truths*, but *Eternal Truths*.

4. As first in *general*, 'Tis a Proposition of necessity and Eternal Truth, That there must be ever such a thing as *Truth* ; or that *something* must be *True* ; for let it be affirm'd or denyed, Truth thrusts in upon us either way. And so *zly*, There are many *particular* Propositions of eternal and unchangeable Verity ; as in *Logic*, That the Cause is always before the Effect in order of Nature ; in *Physics*, That all local motion is by Succession ; in *Metaphysics*, That nothing can be, and not be, at once ; in *Mathematics*, That all right Angles are equal ; that those Lines which are parallel to the same Right Line, are also parallel to each other, &c. These and such like are standing and *irrepealable* Truths, such as have no precarious Existence, or arbitrary Dependence upon any Will or Understanding whatsoever ; and such as all Intellectual Operations do not *make*, but *suppose* ; it being as much against the Nature of Understanding, to
make

make that Truth which it speculates, as 'tis against the Nature of the Eye, to Create that Light by which it sees ; or of an Image, to make that Object which it *represents*.

SECT. IV.

That since there are Eternal and Immutable Verities or Habitades of Things, the simple Essences of Things must be also Eternal and Immutable.

1. **H**AVING gain'd this Point, That there are Eternal and Immutable Verities or Habitades of Things, the next will be, that upon this Postulatum it necessarily follows, That the *Simple Essences* of Things must be also Eternal and Immutable. For as there can be no Truth of the *Subject*, without Truth of the *Object* to which it may be Conformable, (as was before observ'd) so neither can there be Truth of the *Object Complex*, without Truth of the *Object Simple*.

2. This will appear undeniably true to any one that attends to the Idea of *Objective Truth Complex* ; which is nothing else, but certain Habitades of Respects betwixt Thing and Thing, as to Composition or Division. For how can there be any such *Habitades* or *Relations*, without the *Simple Essences* themselves from which they *result* ? As for instance, How can any Mathematical Proposition, suppose that of *Euclid*, that if two Circles touch one another inwardly, they have not the same common Center, have this Habitade, unless

less there be two such distinct Simple Essences, as *Circle* and *Center*? These Habitudes can no more subsist by themselves, than any other *Relations* can; they must have their *Simple Essences*, as the other have their *Subject* and *Term*; upon the Position of which, they immediately *result*.

3. If therefore there can be no Truth of the Object *Complex*, without Truth of the Object *Simple*; and there can be no Habitudes and Relations of Composition and Division, without the simple Essences themselves, it follows, That whenever the one does Exist, the other must Exist also; and consequently, if the one be Eternal, the other must be Eternal also; and so (to recur to the former Instance) if it be a Proposition of Eternal Truth, that if two Circles touch one another inwardly, they have not the same Common Center, the two distinct Simple Essences of *Circle* and *Center*, must be from Eternity also; and consequently, the Simple Essences, of Things are Eternal and Immutable; which was the Point to be *here* demonstrated.

SECT. V.

That the Simple Essences of Things being not Eternal in their Natural Subsistences, must be so in their Ideal Subsistences or Realities.

1. **F**ROM the Eternity of Essential Habitudes, we have demonstrated the necessity, that the Simple Essences of Things should be Eternal. And now, since they are not Eternal (as is too plain to need

need Proof) in their *natural* Subsistences, it follows, that they must be Eternal in their *Ideal* Subsistences or Realities.

2. For there are but two conceivable Ways how any Thing may Exist; either *out* of all Understanding, or *within* some Understanding. If therefore the Simple Essences of Things are Eternal, but not *out* of all Understanding, it remains, they must have an Eternal Existence *in* some Understanding; or rather, they are the same with that Understanding it self, consider'd as variously *exhibitive* or *representative*, according to the various Modes of *Imitability* or *Participation*; which is the true Notion of *Idea's*, as 'tis generally exprets'd both by Platonists and School-men; and as I have more at large Explain'd it in my Letter of *Idea's*; to which for Brevities sake I refer.

SECT. VI.

That there is therefore, an Eternal Mind or Understanding, Omniscient, Immutable, and endow'd with all possible Perfection, the same which we call God.

1. **T**His evidently follows from the Conclusion of the foregoing Section; for if the Simple Essences of Things have a real and eternal Existence in some Understanding, what Consequence can be more Plain, than that there is a Mind or Understanding Eternally Existing? An Essence can no more *eternally* Exist in a *Temporary* Understanding, than a Body can be *infinitely* extended

ended in a *finite* Space. The Mind therefore wherein it does Exist, must be *Eternal*; there is therefore in the first place, an *Eternal* Mind.

2. 'Twill follow also in the next place; that this Mind is *Omniscient* as well as *Eternal*. For that Mind which is *Eternally* Fraught with the *Simple Essences* of Things, must needs contain also in it self all the several *Habitudes* and *Respects* of them; these necessarily arising from the other by way of *Natural Result*. For as before, the Argument was good from the *Habitudes* of Things to their *Simple Essences*; so is it as good backwards, from the *Simple Essences* of Things to their *Habitudes*. But these are the same with *Truth*. That Mind therefore which has all *these*, has all *Truths*; which is the same as to be *Omniscient*.

3. 'Twill follow hence also in the next place, That this Mind is *Immutable* as well as *Omniscient* and *Eternal*. For if that Mind which has Existing in it self from all *Eternity*, all the *Simple Essences* of Things, and consequently, all their possible *Schemes* or *Habitudes*, should ever *change*, there would arise a new *Schesis* in this Mind that was not before; which is contrary to the *Supposition*. 'Tis impossible therefore, that this Mind should ever undergo any *Mutation*; especially if these *Eternal* *Idea's* and *Habitudes* be one and the same with this Mind, as I have already *hinted*, and elsewhere proved.

4. Lastly, 'Twill follow, that this Mind is not only *Eternal*, *Immutable* and *Omniscient*, but that in a word, 'tis endow'd with all *possible* *Perfection*. For to *have*, and it self to be all the *Essences* and *Habitudes*

See my Letter of
Idea's.

Habitudes of Things, is to *have* and to *be* all that can *possibly* be; to be the *Rule* and *Measure* of all Perfection; to be Supreme in the *Scale* of Being; and to be the *Root* and Spring of all *Entity*; which is the same as to be *God*. This *Mind* therefore so accomplish'd, is no other than *God*; and consequently *there is a God*; which was the Thing I undertook to *Demonstrate*.

POSTSCRIPT.

THis *Essay* has lain by me a considerable Time, and I have lately review'd it with all the *Coldness* and *Indifferency* of a *Stranger*; and with more *severity* perhaps than I am like to meet with from the most *Prejudiced Reader*. I have *turn'd* it, and *view'd* it on all sides; and, after the most deliberate and impartial Scrutiny that I could make, I must needs own, that I am not Conscious of the least *Flaw* in the whole Procedure.

I know but of one Place that is liable to any *reasonable* Exception; and that is in the Fourth Section. The Proposition there maintain'd is this, That *since there are Eternal and Immutable Verities or Habitudes of Things, the Simple Essences of Things must be also Eternal and Immutable*. Here it may be objected, That these Habitudes are not attributed *absolutely* to the Simple Essences as *actually* existing, but only *Hypothetically*, that whensoever they shall Exist, they shall also carry such *Relations* to one another. There is you'll say only an Hypothetical Connexion between the *Subject* and the *Predicate*, not an absolute *Position* of either.

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But in answer to this, I say first, That these Habitudes are not (as is supposed) only by way of *Hypothesis*, but *absolutely* attributed to the simple Essences as *actually* Existing. For when I say, for instance, That every part of a Circle is equally distant from the Center; this Proposition does not hang in *suspence*, then to be verify'd when the Things shall Exist in *Nature*, but is at *present actually* True, as True as it ever *will* or *can* be; and consequently, I may thence infer, that the Things themselves *already* are. There is no necessity I confess, they should Exist in *Nature*, (which is all that the Objection proves) but *Exist* they must. For of *Nothing* there can be no *Affections*.

But *2^{ly}*, Suppose I grant what the Objector would have, That these Habitudes are not *absolutely* attributed to the Simple Essences but only by way of *Hypothesis*; yet I don't see what he can gain by this Concession, For thus much at least, is attributed to the Simple Essences at *present*, that whensoever they *shall* Exist, such and such Habitudes will attend them. I say thus much is attributed *actually*, and at *present*: But now how can any thing be said of that which is not? There is therefore another way of Existing besides that *in rerum Natura*; namely, in the *Mundus Archetypus*, or the *Ideal World*; where all the *Rationes rerum*, or Simple Essences of Things, whereof there are standing and immutable Affirmations and Negations, have an *Eternal* and *Immutable* Existence, before ever they enter upon the *Stage* of *Nature*.

Nor ought this *Ideal* way of subsisting to seem strange, when even while Things have a *Natural* sub-

Subsistence; the Propositions concerning them are not verify'd according to their *Natural*, but according to their *Ideal* Subsistences. Thus we demonstrate several Propositions concerning a right Line, a Circle, &c. and yet 'tis most certain, that none of these are to be found in Nature according to that *Exactness* supposed in the *Demonstration*. Such and such Attributes therefore belong to them, not as they are in *Nature*, but as they are in their *Idea's*. This is a Notion very frequently glanc'd at by Saint *Austin*; and 'tis the Conclusion of *Aquinas*, that the Soul *Omnia vera cognoscit in rationibus aternis*, Part 1. Qu. 84. Art. 5. And of late years this Notion has been much improv'd by the ingenious Philosopher *Du Hamel*, in his Book *De Mente humana*. And if this be true in Propositions whose Subjects are in *Nature*, much more is it in *Eternal* Propositions, whose Simple Essences have not always a *natural* Existence. These can no otherwise be verify'd but by the *coeternal* Existence of *simple Essences* in the *Ideal* World.

One thing I have more to add in the Vindication of this *Essay*; Whereas in the third Section it was asserted, That the Nature of Truth is Steddy and Immutable, and such as has no precarious Existence or arbitrary Dependence upon any Understanding whatever; and yet in the fifth Section 'tis affirm'd, That it owes its Existence to some Mind or other; lest one part of this Meditation should be thought to clash against another, I thought it requisite to adjust this seeming Contradiction. For the clearing of which, we must be beholding to that celebrated Distinction of the Platonic School,

of the Divine Mind into *vous voyez* and *vous voyez*, *Conceptive* and *Exhibitive*. Truth does by no means depend upon any Mind as *conceptive*, whether Human or Divine; but is *supposed* by it; which is the Sense of the third Section. But upon Mind as *Exhibitive*, it may and does *ultimately* depend; so that if there were no *God* of Eternal Mind, there could be no *Truth*; which is the Sense of the fifth Section. So that here is no Contradiction, but all Harmony and Agreement. See more of this in my Letter of Idea's.

The

The Christian Law Asserted and Vindicated,
or a general Apology for the Christian
Religion, both as to the *Obligativeness*
and *Reasonableness* of the Institution.

- I. **I** Design here to consider Two Things concerning Christianity:
1st, That it is a State of Service,
2ly, That it is a Reasonable Service.

The Eviction of these two Propositions, will contain both the *Assertion* of a Christian Law, and its *Vindication*; and be a plenary Justification of its Divine Author from the Imputation of two sorts of Adversaries; Those that reflect upon his *Wisdom*, by supposing that he requires nothing to be done by his Servants; and those that reflect upon his *Goodness*, by supposing him a *Hard Master*; and that he requires unreasonable Performances.

2. I begin therefore with the *first* Proposition concerning the Christian Institution, That it is a *Service*. It is most certain, that the Christian Religion, according to the Genuine Sense and Design of its Divine Author, is the most Wise and Excellent Institution that could possibly be framed, both for the *Glory* of the *Divine* Attributes, and the best Interest of *Mankind*. And *without Controversie* (if we take it as 'tis exhibited to us in the inspired Writings) *Great is the Mystery of Godliness*, 1 Tim. 5. 16. But if we Consult the perverse Glosses and

Comments of some of our Christian *Rabbins*, and take our Measures of the Christian Religion from those ill-favour'd Schemes and Draughts of it we meet with in *Dutch Systemes*; as some Christians are the Worst of *Men*, so will their Religion appear to be the Worst of *Religions*; a senseless and ridiculous Institution; not worthy the Contrivance of a Wise *Politician*, much less of him who is the *Wisdom of the Father*. It fares here with Christianity, as with a *Picture* that is drawn at so many *remote* Hands, till at length it degenerates from the *Original Truth*; and wants an *under-title* to discover whose it is. And indeed, whatever Declamations are made against *Judaism* and *Paganism*, the worst Enemies of the Christian Religion, are some of those that Profess and Teach it. For if it be in reality, as some (who call themselves *Orthodox*) describe it, I may boldly say, that 'tis neither for the Reputation of God to be the *Author* of such a Religion, nor for the Interest of Men to be guided by it; and that as *Sin took occasion by the Law*, Rom. 7. 11. so may it (and that more justly) by the *Gospel* too, to deceive and ruin the World; by that Gospel which was intended as the Instrument both of its Temporal and Eternal Welfare.

3. For if you look upon Christianity as some Men are pleased to hold the *Prospective*, it is no way accommodated for the Promotion of Holiness and Virtue; but is rather a perfect Discharge from all Duty, and a *Character of Licentiousness*. For among other Misrepresentations of the Gospel, this is one, (and I think the most pernicious one that the Sophistry of Hell could ever suggest) That it requires

nothing to be done by its Profelytes. A Notion so ridiculous and mischievous, as is fit for none but a profane *Epicure* to Embrace; who may be allow'd to make his *Religion* as Idle and *Sedentary*, as he does his *God*. Nay, 'tis not only ridiculous and mischievous, but in the highest Measure *Antichristian*. For what greater *Antichristianism* can there be than that, which strikes not only at some of the main Branches, but at the very Root of Christianity; and at once, Evacuates the entire Purpose and Aim of the Gospel?

4. But to set this Mark upon the right Fore-head; there are Three sorts of Men that come in some measure or other, under this Charge. The first are the *Antinomians*, who are Impudent and Ignorant enough in exprefs Terms to Assert, That the Sacrifice and Satisfaction of Christ, does wholly Excuse us from all manner of Duty and Obedience; as if we *Libertines* of the Gospel were so far from being bound to *Work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling*, that we are not to work at all; and as if the Design of Christ's Coming, were only to Satisfie for the Transgressions Committed against the *Old Covenant*; and not at all to introduce a *New One*; and to discharge us from the Obligation of the *Moral*, as well as *Ceremonial Law*.

5. Nay, some there are among them, that carry the Business yet higher, and exclude not only the Repentance and good Works of Men, but even the Mediation of Christ himself; at least the necessity of it, by supposing an *Anticipating* Justification or Pardon from all Eternity; which they found upon the Secret Decree and Counsel of God.

6. The next that have a share in the forementioned Charge, are those who make Christianity a Matter of bare Speculation; and think all Religion absolved in *Orthodoxy* of Opinion; that care not how Men *Live*, but only how they *Teach*; and are so over-intent upon the *Creed*, that they neglect the *Commandments*. Little considering, that *Opinion* is purely in order to *Practice*; and that *Orthodoxy* of Judgment is necessary only in such Matters, where a Mistake would be of dangerous Influence to our *Actions*, that is, in *Fundamentals*. So that the necessity of thinking rightly, is derived from the necessity of doing rightly; and consequently, the later is the more necessary of the Two.

7. I am as ready to grant, as the most zealous Stickler for *Orthodoxy* can desire, that our Understandings are under Obligation in Divine Matters; but withal, I think it absurd that the Obligation should *Terminate* there; since then 'twould follow, *First*, That all Theological Science were merely Speculative; *Secondly*, That we are bound to exact *Orthodoxy* in all Speculations, (there being then no reason why in one, and not in another) And *Thirdly*, (Which is the greatest Absurdity of all) that we are obliged and tied up to no purpose; because nothing is effected by it. Whenever therefore, we are obliged to soundness of Judgment, 'tis purely in order to the Regulation of our Practice; and consequently, solitary *Orthodoxy* does not satisfy its own End, much less that of Christianity. For to what purpose serves the *Direction* of the *Compass*, if there be neither Wind nor Sail to carry on the Vessel to the Haven?

8. But

8. But there are yet another sort of Men, who are justly chargable with Expunging all Duty from the Christian Institution; I mean the *Solifidians*, who under a Pretence of advancing the Merits of the Cross, and the Freeness of the Divine Grace, requiring nothing of a Christian in order to his *Justification* and Acceptance before God; but firmly to rely on the Satisfaction and Merits of Christ; and without any more ado, to apply all to himself. And herein they do not only contradict the *general Design* and *particular Expresses* of the Gospel, but Trespass against all *Logick* and *Common Sense*. They contradict the *Gospel*, in requiring nothing but Faith, whereas that (as we shall see anon) equally requires *Obedience*. And they contradict *Common Sense* in requiring such a Faith. For they put the Conclusion before the Premises, and make that the first Act of Faith, which supposes others; and in due order ought to be the last. And besides, they make that Act of Faith contribute *instrumentally* towards the *effecting* of Justification, which in order of Nature is *Consequent* to it; and supposes it already *effected*. For I must be first Justified, before I can rightly believe that I am so; otherwise I shall believe a false Proposition; since (as the most Elementary Logician well knows) the certitude of the Subject does not make, but *suppose* that of the Object.

9. But I could dispense with the *unphilosophicalness* of this their Hypothesis, were it not withall *Unchristian*, and utterly destructive of all Piety and Virtue. The great Mischief is, they untie the Cords of Duty, and exclude the Necessity of Obedience

dience as really and effectually, tho' not so *formally*
 and expressly, as the *Antinomians* do. For they
 require nothing but Faith to qualifie a Man for
 Pardon; and tho' afterwards for Modesty's sake,
 they come in halting with good Works, yet 'tis at
 such a Time, when they might as well have left
 them out. 'Tis when the grand Business (for
 which alone they could be necessary) is over;
When the Man is Numbred among the Children of
God, and his Lot is among the Saints. And to say
 here, That good Works are necessary to *Salvation*,
 tho not to *Justification*, is a Mystery above my Con-
 ception; or rather, an Absurdity below my further
 Notice. Nor will it salve the matter to say, That
 they are necessary to declare our Justification be-
 fore *Men*, or to ascertain it to our selves, and the
 like; for alas, what does such a Necessity amount
 to? No more than this, That they are necessary
 for such Ends which themselves are not necessary.
 And besides, How can they *Declare* or *Ascertain*
 our Justification, when they are not the *Conditions*
 of it? So that 'tis plain, both from the *lateness* of
 the Time when, and from the *incompetency* of the
 Grounds for which they insert good Works, that
 they put them merely out of *Complaisance*; not be-
 cause they think them necessary, but because they
 are ashamed to declare expressly, that they are not.
 Which appears yet further, from the *Nature* of those
 Works they are at length pleased to insert. They
 are such (for there is nothing that these Men are so
 much afraid of as *meriting*) as are much short of
 that Sincerity and Perfection which is required by
 the Gospel. For 'tis notorious, that they set the
 State

State of Regeneration so *Low*, that 'tis consistent with the Dominion and Prevalency of sin. A bare reluctancy of the Spirit (tho' foil'd in the Conflict) against the Flesh, is esteemed a sufficient Mark of a *Regenerate* Person; and this every Sinner that has the least Remains of Conscience, the least *Twilight* of Natural Light left him, must needs have; for no Man loves Sin for it *self*; nay, he hates it as 'tis in its self absolutely an Evil, only he chuses and wills it *Comparatively* to avoid (as he then thinks) a greater Evil.

10. Thus as the *Jewish* Doctors did the *Law*, Mat. 15. 6. do these Men make the *Gospel*, of none effect by their *Traditions*; and would questionless, were our Lord now on Earth, have a severer Woe pronounced against them, as Perversers of a more Excellent, a more Perfect Institution. Strange, that Men should Corrupt and Ridicule so admirable a Dispensation; and turn so great a Grace of God into Wantonness! That there should be some *subtilty* in the Gospel, which unlearned and unstable Men might wrest to their own Destruction, is no very hard matter to imagine; but that Men should at once pervert the whole Scope and Design of it, is Prodigious, as well as Antichristian; a *Mystery of Wonder* as well as of Iniquity. And have these Men the Face to declaim against the Papists for leaving out one of the Commandments, whenas, they draw a black Stroke over the whole Table? Nay further, Have they the Face to call themselves Christians, and that of the Purer Sort too, who thus evacuate the *Mystery of Godliness*? By the same Figure of Speech might the Heathen Emperours assume that
Sacred

Sacred Name, when they endeavoured to Persecute it out of the World. Nay, much more plausibly; for they only Lopt off the Branches, but these Strike at the very Root of Christianity; they applied their Forces against the Professors of the Christian Religion, these against the Religion it self; and (what aggravates the Malice) not as open Enemies, but as Treacherous Friends, under the demure pretence of *Purity, Orthodoxy, and Saintsship*. They Cancel the Law of Christ, and at the same time pretend to Advance his Kingdom; call him Master, Kifs and Betray him. And how can it now be expected, that these Men should be more forward than they are, to yield Obedience to the *King*, who have found out an Expedient to Slip their Necks out of *Christ's* Yoke; and have made the Gospel in a worse sense, a *Dead Letter* than the *Law*?

11. But certainly the Gate that leads to Heaven is much Streighter than these Men are pleased to make it, otherwise there would be no need of *striving* to enter in at it, *Luk. 13. 24*. There are Things to be done, as well as to be believed and understood under the Evangelical Dispensation; and Christianity is a *Service*, as well as a *Profession*. To the Clearing and Establishing of which Proposition, I shall consider the Gospel under a double Capacity, *1st*, As a Law, and *2ly*, As a Covenant. And first, as a *Law*. 'Tis most certain that Christ was a Lawgiver as well as *Moses*; only as he was an *Introducer of a better Hope*, *Heb. 7. 19*. so he required better and sublimer Services. The Advantage of Christianity, does not consist in having
any

any Abatements of Duty; for Christ was so far from diminishing or retrenching the Moral Law, (for 'tis of that I speak) that he improved every part of it to higher Senses than the most Exquisite of the Jewish Doctors understood; or at least, conceiv'd themselves oblig'd to; As is evident from his Divine Sermon on the Mount, which from the Perfection and Sublimity of it's Precepts. St. Chrysostom calls, *Ἄκρον τῆς φιλοσοφίας, the Top and Height of Philosophy.*

12. And that he thus improv'd the Law of Moses; besides the Evidence of Comparison, we have his own express Word for it, Mat. 5. 17. *I come not to destroy the Law, but to perfect, compleat, or fill it up.* For so the word (Πληρῶσαι,) properly signifies. The Σκιαγραφία, or rude draught, was Moses his part; but the ζωγράφουσι τελεία, or the Painting to the Life, was Christ's. Moses drew out the main Lineaments, the Skeleton of the Picture (which was therefore call'd the *Body of Moses*, Jud. 9.) but 'twas Christ that fill'd up all its Intervals and Vacuities; and gave it all it's Graces, *Air*, and *Lifetouches*. And this is no more than what the Analogy of the Christian Dispensation required. The great End and Design of God Incarnate was, to Perfect Holiness, as well as to Retrieve Happiness; to Advance the Interests of the Divine Life, and make us *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2. Pet. 1. 4. Heb. 1. 3. and accordingly as he himself was the *express Image* of his Father's Person, so 'twas requisite he should Consign to us an Express Image, or Correct Copy of his Father's Will. He was 'to make us better Men; and accordingly, 'twas fit he

he should give us a better Law; a Law that could not be satisfied, but by such a Righteousness, as should exceed even the Strictest among the *Jews*, that of the *Pharisees*. So that we are by no means Released, but rather more deeply Engaged in Duty by the Gospel, as 'tis a *Law*.

13. Nor *Secondly*, Are we Released by it, as 'tis a *Covenant*. Here indeed, begin the *Abatements* of the Gospel, not as to *Duty* and *Obligation*, for the Gospel makes all that our Duty which the Law did, and more; only (which in short is the true Difference between the Two Covenants) it does not make the strict and exact Performance of it the Measure, the ultimate Measure whereby we are to Stand or Fall; but admits of *Pardon*, which the Law knew nothing of. Not of *Absolute Pardon*, for then the Gospel would be a *Covenant* without a *Condition*; nor of Pardon without Repentance, and actual Reformation of Manners; for then the Gospel as a *Covenant*, would Interfere with its self as a *Law*; but upon the sole Conditions of Faith and Repentance. For 'tis a great Mistake to think that we are actually Justified or Pardoned by the Satisfaction of Christ; this wou'd be the most ready Expedient to verifie the false Charge of the Scribes and Pharisees, and make him in their Sense a Friend to Publicans and Sinners; to Encourage all manner of Vice and Immorality, and to Turn the *Mystery of Godliness*, into a *Mystery of Iniquity*. No, Christ in this Sense, has Redeemed no Man. All that he either did, or could in Wisdom do for us as Satisfying, was in short, to instate us in a Capacity and Possibility of Pardon and Reconciliation,

conciliation, by procuring a Grant from his Father, That Faith and Repentance should now be Available to Justification; which without his Satisfaction, would not have been Accepted to that Purpose. Whereby it appears, that he was so far from superseding the Necessity of Repentance and Good Works, that he designed only to make Way for the *Success* of them; He did so much, that Repentance might not be in *Vain*; and he did no more, that it might not be *Needless*. And thus does the *Wisdom*, as well as the *Goodness* of God, lead us to Repentance; by so ordering the matter, that we may Obtain Pardon with it, and not without it; which are the two strongest Engagements to *Action* in any Concern, that our *Reason* either *Demands*, or our *Deliberation* can Suggest.

14. This I conceive, to be the true Hypothesis and State of Christianity; which I might yet further Confirm, by infinite Authorities from Scripture; which every where presses the Necessity of good Works, as *Conditions* to our *Justification* and Acceptance before God: But I think the more rational and unprejudiced Part of the World, are pretty well satisfied in that Point; and know how to accomodate St. *James* and St. *Paul*, better than some late *Reconcilers*. And besides, The Wisdom of the Hypothesis sufficiently Approves it self; 'Tis such, as becomes the Perfections of the Divine Nature to Exhibit to the World; and which the Angels may well desire to look into, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. For 'tis at once, fitted to the *Necessities* of Man; and to the *Honour* of God; to the *Infirmities* of the *Animal* Life; and to the Advancement of the
Divine;

Divine; to the Relief of the *Sinner*, and to the suppression of *Sin*. Here *Mercy and Truth meet together, Righteousness and Peace kiss each other*. The Sacrifice of the Altar, does not prejudice the Ballance of the Sanctuary; and the Divine Justice is so satisfy'd, that the Necessity of Holiness and Obedience remains secured. Much is forgiven, and much is to be done; Duty continues as fast as ever, and even the *Law of Liberty* is a *Service*.

15. And now that this may not be thought a *Hard* saying, and make some of Jesus his Disciples to go back, (as once they did) and walk no more with him when they hear of Duty, and something to be done, I shall now proceed to Demonstrate the *Reasonableness* of that Service which Christianity requires of us; which was the Second general Proposition I purpos'd to speak to.

16. Religion is so very agreeable, both to the *Inclinations* and *Discoursings* of *Humane Nature*, that as none is Capable of being Religious but a Rational Creature, so 'tis almost Impossible for a Creature to be indued with Reason, and not to be Religious. Hence 'tis, that there is no Nation so Barbarous and Degenerate, but what has some Religion or other; and tho' Ignorant of the true Object as well as Manner of Worship, yet rather than wholly abstain from Religious Applications, will adore *implicitly*, and Erect an Altar, *Ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ*, to the unknown God.

17. Nay, so great a Congruity is there between Religion, and the Radical Notices and Sentiments of a Human Soul, that all Mankind, except only some few distorted and *Anomalous* Heads (for there are

are Monstrosities in the *Soul* as well as the *Body*) are unanimously agreed upon the *fundamental* and *substantial* Maxims of it; which for their Correspondency to our Rational Natures, are usually distinguished by the Name of *Natural Religion*. For there are Practical as well as Speculative Principles; and that he who does no Hurt, is to receive none, is as evident a Proposition in *Morality*, as that the Whole, is greater than its Part, is in the *Mathematics*; or, That Nothing can be, and not be at once, is in the *Metaphysics*.

18. And as *Religion* and *Natural Religion*, carry such a strict Conformity to our Rational Faculties, so does *Revealed Religion* too. All the Lines of this, as well as of the other, point all the way at, and at last centre in the Happiness and Welfare of Mankind. 'Tis a pursuance of the same excellent End, only by more close and direct Means. For God in all his Intercourses with us, does accommodate himself to our *Natures*; and as he will not forcibly *determine* us to good, because he has made us free, so neither does he require any thing from us, but what is good, and consistent with *Reason*; because he has made us *Rational*. And altho' we cannot by this *Candle of the Lord*, Prov. 20. 27. find out some of the *great* and *wonderful* Things of his Law (for herein consists the formal difference between Natural and Reveal'd Religion) yet when they are once proposed to us, they are highly approved by our Intellectual Relish, and strike perfect Unisons to the Voice of our Reason; so that even the *Animal Man* (for 'tis of him the Apostle there speaks) *consents to the Law that it is good*, Rom. 7. 16.

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19. And

19. And indeed, were it not so, it would be as unfit for God to propose, as hard for Man to receive; since even the Prudence of a *Nation*, is by no one thing either more Justified or Condemned, than by the good or ill Contrivance of its *Laws*. Shall not then the *Law-giver* of the whole World, enact that which is right, Gen. 18. 25. as well as the *Judge* of all the Earth do right? Shall he not be as *Wise* in the *Framing* of his Law, as he is *Just* in the *Execution* of it? God in contriving the Mechanism of the material World, display'd the Excellency of his Divine *Geometry*, and made all things in *Number, Weight and Measure*. He established the World by his *Wisdom*, and stretched out the *Heavens* by his *Discretion*, Jer. 10. 12. And shall he not govern the Intellectual World with as much *Wisdom* as he made the Natural one? Questionless he does; and the Law which he has prescribed to us, is as Perfect and Excellent, as that whereby he wrought the Beauty and Order of the Universe. For the *Lord is Righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works*, Psal. 145. He has accommodated his Statutes and Judgments, both to the Infinite Perfection of his own Nature, and to the actual Perfection and Capacity of ours. *God is a Spirit*, and accordingly (as the Apostle tells us) *the Law is Spiritual*, Rom. 7. 14. Man is Rational; and accordingly, the Homage he is to pay to him that made him so, is no other than a *Reasonable Service*.

20. But to be as Compendious, and withal as just and distinct as may be in so Copious and Plentiful a Subject, I consider, That as the whole Rational Nature of Man consists of Two Faculties,
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Understanding and Will, (whether really or notionally distinct, I shall not now dispute) to Christianity, whose End is to Perfect the Whole Man, and give the last Accomplishment both to our Intellectual and Moral Powers, will be wholly absolved in these Two Parts, Things to be believed, and Things to be done. If therefore in both these, it can Acquit it self at the Bar of Reason, the Conclusion is evident, That it is a Reasonable Service.

21. First then, As to the Things which are to be believed. Now these are either the Authority and Truth of the whole Christian Institution; or the Truth of particular Mysteries contained in it. The first of these will appear to be a reasonable Object of Faith two ways; 1st, From the Nature of its Design, and its excellent Aptness to Compass it; and 2^{ly}, From Extrinlick Arguments, and Collateral Circumstances. And First, 'Tis recommended to us by the Nature of its Design, and its excellent Aptness to Compass it. It is (according to the precedent Representation) a very Wise and Rational Hypothesis, above the Reason of Man indeed, at first to Contrive; but such as when proposed, it must needs Approve and Acquiesce in, as at once the Power and Wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1. 24. because (as I first observed, and shall hereafter more plainly demonstrate) 'tis so admirably fitted to the Honour of God, and to the Necessities of Man; thereby verifying that double part of the Angelical Anthem at the Appearance of its Divine Author; and at once bringing Glory to God on High, and on Earth Peace, good will towards Men, Luk. 2. 14.

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22. And

22. And as it appears thus Rational in its general *Idea* or *Structure*, and thereby speaks it self *worthy* of God; so *Secondly*, that it came *actually* from him no Rational Person can doubt, that considers that *Conjugation* of Arguments; that *Cloud* of *Witnesses* whereby its Divine Original stands Attested. Such as are the Variety of Prophecies and Prefigurations, their punctual and exact Accomplishment in the Author of this Institution, his Birth, Life, Miracles and Doctrin, his Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension; with all the wonderful *Arrear* and *Train* in Accidents that ensued for the Confirmation of Christianity; such as the wonderful Sustainment, Protection, Increase and Continuation of Christ's little Flock, the Christian Church; the Miraculous *Assistances*, and Miraculous *Actions* of the Apostles; the Harmony of the Evangelists; the Constancy and Courage of his first Witnesses and Martyrs; the Defeat of the Infernal Powers in the silencing of Oracles; the just Punishment that lighted upon his Enemies; and lastly, the Completion of all Prophecies that proceeded out of his Divine Mouth while on Earth; which I shall here only point at in general, and leave to the enlargement of every Mans Private Meditation.

23. Then as for the Particular Mysteries contained in Christianity, I know but of Three that threaten any *disturbance* to our *Philosophy*; and those are the Three Catholick ones mentioned by St. *Athanasius*, the *Trinity*, the *Hypostatick Union*, and the *Resurrection*. Now concerning the two first, I observe, that they are indeed above the adequate Comprehension of our Reason; but not Contrary, or Repugnant to it. For as we cannot Conceive
how

how these things *can* be, so neither do we positively and clearly perceive that they *cannot* be, as we do in Contradictions, and Things contrary to Reason. But as to the last, I don't in the least understand why it *should be thought a thing incredible that God* (whose very Notion involves Omnipotence) *should raise the Dead*, Acts 26. 8. 'Tis true, we are as Ignorant how this can be, as in either of the former Articles; but that it absolutely *may* be, there is much plainer evidence; especially to those who think it reasonable to Believe a *Creation*. Which if taken according to strictness of Notion, for a Production of Something out of Nothing, is most confessedly a greater and more difficult performance (as to the Nature of the Work) than the Raising of the Dead can be. Or if more largely, for producing Something out of præexistent, but naturally unapt Matter, yet 'tis still at least Equal with it. He that with the bare Energy of his Omnipotent Word, could inspirit the dead, stupid, void and formless Mass, and make it move into a Frame so Elegant and Harmonious, that the mere *Contemplation* of its Beauty and Order, has by many Philosophers been thought a sufficient Entertainment of Life, may easily be presumed to be able to do the same in the *lesser* World; and with effect to say to a rude and disorder'd Heap of Dust, *Chaos* of a Human Body, *Stand up and Live*.

24. But after all, were this Article of the Resurrection much more thick-set with Difficulties than it is, yet would we, before we venture to determine against its Possibility, sit a while and consider, that we are nonplus'd at a Thousand *Pheno-*

menas in Nature, which if they were not done, we should have thought them absolutely impossible ; (as for Instance, to go no further, the *Central Libration* of the Earth) and now they are, we cannot comprehend 'em ; that *we have seen but a few of God's Works*, and understand yet fewer : And lastly, That as the Possibility of the Effect is above the Comprehension of our Reason, so the Power of the Agent is much more so ; we should discern great Reason to be Cautious how we set Limits to the Divine Omnipotence ; and should rather support our Faith against all Objections, with that Universal Salvo of the Apostle, *I know whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. 1. 12.

25. I descend now from the Things that are to be *Believed*, to the Things that are to be Done in the Christian Religion. And that those may appear to be a Reasonable Service, I consider first in general, That the Christian Law is nothing else but the Law of Nature *retrieved, explained, and set in a clearer Light*. Christ indeed, added some new Precepts that were not in the *Law of Moses* ; but not any that were not in the *Law of Nature*. That he only restored and rescued from the Sophistications of ill Principles, and the Corruptions of degenerate Manners. For the clearer understanding of which Proposition, 'tis to be observed, that the Law of Nature was *twice Retrieved*, by *Moses*, and by *Christ*. *Moses* did it imperfectly, with a *shaking Hand*, and with a *rude Pencil* ; He adopted 'tis true, into his Table, as many of Nature's Laws as were necessary to the present State and Capacity of the Jewish People ; but he did not Exhaust the whole
Code

Code and Digest of Nature. For there are many Instances and Branches of the Natural Law, which are no way reducible to the Mosaick Tables, unless hooked in by long tedious Consequences; which as the Law never intended, so neither is one of a Thousand able to deduce them from it; as appears in the Instances of Gratitude to Benefactors; Love to Enemies, Forgiveness of Injuries; Humility, and the like, which are Excellencies of the *first Magnitude* in the Imperial Constitutions of Nature, but not Transcribed in the Copy and Extract of *Moses*, as too Refined for the Grossness of that Age; for the Hardness of the Jewish People, and for the Infancy of that Dispensation.

26. This therefore was reserved for the Work of a Diviner Prophet, who should Retrieve the Law of Nature to the full, and Restore it as at the Beginning. For he came (as he testifies of himself, Mat. 5. 17. and as was before observed to another purpose) to fill up *Moses* his Law, which implies, that it was Imperfect and Deficient; and wherein should its Defectiveness consist, but in wanting something of the *Natural Law*? The Christian Law therefore, is only the Law of Nature retrieved.

27. This being premised, 'tis but now to consider what the Formal Notion of the Law of Nature is; and we have found out one *general* Measure whereby to judge of the Reasonableness of the *Christian Law*. Now by the Law of Nature, I suppose, we all understand certain Practical Maxims or Dictates, the Observing or Transgressing of which, considering the present System of the Uni-

verse, have a *natural* Connexion ; with the well or ill Being of Man, either as to his *private* or *political* Capacity. I say, considering the *present System* of the Universe. For no question, God might have so contrived the Order and Scheme of the Creation, as that many of those Things which are now for the *Interest*, might have been for the *Disinterest* of Mankind ; as he might have so Framed the texture of a Human Body, that what is now Wholsome and Sovereign, might have been Poisonous and Pernicious ; and in this respect, I conceive the Law of Nature may be said to *depend* upon the Arbitrary Will of God ; and to be *mutable* at his Pleasure. But yet it still remains immutably true in the *general*, That whatsoever has such a Natural Ordination to, or Connexion with the well or ill Being of Mankind, is Good or Evil respectively. This is the Standard of Morality, and Immorality ; and the Essential Difference between Virtue and Vice. And 'tis as immutably true, that some *particular* Instances should have such a Natural Connexion, *stante rerum Hypothesi*, during the present State and Order of Things. Now whatever has so, is an Essential Branch of the Law of Nature ; and obliges us to Act, or not to Act, respectively to the *Term* of its Ordination. So that *Bonum honestum*, is that which in the Order of Things, is *Bonum utile*, and conduces as a *Natural Medium* to Felicity ; which is the End of Man.

28. Hence then it follows, That the Christian Law, which is nothing else but the Law of Nature retrieved, consists only of such practical Maxims, which carry a *Natural Relation* to the true Interest and

and well Being of Mankind ; and consequently ; contains nothing in it but what is Reasonable, very Reasonable to be *Done*. But to Evince this more particularly, 'twill be requisite to take a Cursory View of the Christian Law. And this I shall consider, First, as I find it summ'd up in general by our Blessed Saviour, in Answer to the Lawyers Question, *What he should do to inherit Eternal Life*: And Secondly, In some of those particular Instances of it, which seem *most* to Cross the present Interest of Mankind.

29. As to the First, The Sum which our Blessed Saviour gave of it was this : *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thy self*, Mat. 22. 37. Mark 12. 30. Luke 10. 27. These he told him, were the Two great Commandments ; and that there were none greater than these : And certainly, none more *reasonable*. For since Man is not his own End, but has an *Amorous Principle* within him, which Transports him to Good without himself ; since he is not a *Central and self-terminating* Being, but by the weight of his Affections gravitates and inclines to something *further*, what is more Reasonable than that he fix upon *God* as his *Center*, who is as well the *End* as the *Author* of his Being ? And since whatever Portion of his Love is not directed thither, will necessarily light (for it cannot be Idle, and must fix somewhere) upon disproportionate and vain Objects which neither *deserve* it, nor can *satisfie* it, and consequently will but vex and torment him ; what can be more Reasonable than that he *Unite* and *Concenter* all the Rays of his Affection both

both Intellectual and Sensitive upon God ; and according to the *strictest* Sense of this great Commandment, Love him with all his Heart, Soul and Mind ; *Vision* and *Love* make up the full Composition of our Celestial Happiness hereafter ; and they are the nearest Approach we can make to it here.

30. Nor is the Second great Commandment less reasonable than the First. The truest and most effectual way a Man can take to Love himself, is to Love his Neighbour as himself. For since Man is a necessitous and indigent Creature (of all Creatures the most indigent) and since he cannot upon his own solitary Stock, supply the necessities of his Nature, (the want of Society being one of them) and since of all Creatures here below, none is capable of doing him either so much *good*, or so much *harm*, as those of his own Species ; as 'twill be his best *Security* to have as many Friends, and as few Enemies as he can ; so, as a Means to this, to Hate and Injure *none*, but to Love and Oblige *all*, will be his best *Policy*. So far is the State of Nature from being (according to the Elements of the *Leviathan*) a State of Hostility and War, that there is no One Thing that makes more apparently for the Interest of Mankind, than Universal Charity and Benevolence. And indeed, would all Men but once agree to Espouse one anothers Interest, and Prosecute the Publick Good truly and faithfully, nothing would be wanting to Verifie and Realize the Dreams of the Golden Age, to Anticipate the *Millennial* Happiness, and bring down Heaven upon Earth. Society would stand firm and compact, like a *Mathematical Frame of Architecture*, supported by mutual De-

Dependencies and Coherences ; and every Man's Kindnesses would return again upon himself, in the Circle and Reciproation of Love.

31. But, besides this Consideration of *Interest*, there is another which equally contributes to Recommend this Law of Universal Benevolence ; and perhaps, with more sweetness of Insinuation than the former, and that is Pleasure. These two are put together by the Psalmist, who tells us, *That 'tis both good and pleasant for Brethren to dwell together in Unity*, Psal. 133. 1. There is certainly, a most Divine Pleasure in the Acts and Expresses of Benevolence ; so that if God may be said to take Pleasure in any one Thing, besides the Richness of his own Infinity, it must be in the *Communication* of it. Sure I am, no Man can do Good to another, without Recreating and Feasting his own Spirit ; nay, even the most Happy and self-sufficient Man, who as to his *Interest*, has the least need to be Kind and Obliging, yet as to his *Pleasure*, has the greatest. For he enjoys his Happy State most, when he Communicates it, and takes a Partner with him into Paradise, and receives a more vigorous Joy from the *Reflexion*, than from the *direct Incidency* of his Happiness

32. I might here take occasion to shew, the Reasonableness of Justice and Honesty ; with other particular Branches of this great Law: But the Necessity of these is so *Notorious* (no Society being able to subsist without them) and withal so attested by the Common Vote and Experience of the World (it being the Business of all Human Laws, and the End of all Civil Government, to Engage Men

Men to the Observance of them) that I shall not need to make any Plea in their behalf. Instead therefore of lending any farther Light to what Shines already so Conspicuously by its own, I shall now proceed to justify the Christian Law in some of those Instances which seem most to Cross the present Interest of Mankind.

33. There are some Precepts of the Christian Law which seem directly, and in their whole Kind, to be against the Interest of Man. For (as for those which may accidentally and in some Junctures of Circumstances, I shall Consider them afterwards.) Now these I shall derive from that Abstract of Christian Philosophy, the Divine Sermon on the Mount. The *first* Instance shall be in the Precept of Meekness, which our Divine Law-giver has extended so far as τῷ πονηρῷ μὴ ἀντιστῆναι, that we resist not Evil, *Mat.* 5. 39. which is not to be understood in Prejudice either of the Civil Sword, or of Legal Prosecutions for the Reparation of Injuries (for this would be to give the worst of Men a continual Advantage against the best) nor of publick Wars between distinct Kingdoms (for they being under no Common Jurisdiction, have no other Expedient whereby to right themselves when injured) but only as to *Private* Persons, who by Virtue of this Precept are not permitted (unless in apparent Danger of Life; for then the Law of Self-Preservation takes place, the Benefit of other Laws being not at Hand) I say are not permitted to Retaliate Evil, but obliged rather with their Divine Master, to *give their Backs to the Smilers, and their Cheeks to them that Pluckt off the Hair*, *Isa.* 50.6.

34. Now

34. Now this may seem a very disadvantageous and inconvenient Command, in as much as it may be said by tying up our Hands, to Expose us to all manner of Contumelies and Affronts, and invite the ill Treatments of rude and disingenuous Spirits. But whoever seriously considers the Matter will find, that pure and simple Revenge is a thing very absurd, and very productive of ill Consequences; and in some respects, worse than the *first* Injury. For that may have some Ends of Profit and Advantage in it; but to do another Man a diskindness merely because he has done me one, serves to no good Purpose, and to many ill ones. For it contributes nothing to the reparation of the first Injury (it being impossible that the *Act* of any wrong should be rescinded, tho' the *permanent Effect* may) but instead of making up the Breach of my *Happiness*, it increases the Objects of my *Pity*, by bringing in a new Misery into the World more than was before, and occasions fresh returns of Malice, one begetting another like the *encirclings* of disturbed Water, 'till the Evil becomes fruitful, and multiplies into a long Succession, a *Genealogy* of Mischiefs. And by this time, I think the Man has reason to Repent him of his Revenge; and to be convinced of the Equity of the Law which forbids it.

35. The next Instance I shall mention, is that of loving *Enemies*. This runs higher than the former, that being only Negative, not to return Evil, but this Positive to do Good. A strange Precept one would think, and highly Contradictory to *Reason* as well as *Nature*. But whoever considers the
great

great usefulness of Love and Benevolence to the Interest of Society, will quickly perceive, that he ought not to be disengaged from the observance of so necessary a Duty, upon so slight a ground as another's Default in it. I grant, 'tis neither Reasonable, nor possible, to love an Enemy for being so, (that is no proper Motive of Love) but yet 'tis very reasonable to Love the *Man* notwithstanding his *Enmity*. Because the necessity of Charity is so indispensable, that it ought to oblige in all Cases. And besides, as by this means all Enmity is certainly prevented on one side (which is of very great Consideration to the Publick Peace) so is it the likeliest Method to bring over the other. Kindnesses will at length prevail upon him, who is proof against all the Sense of Duty and Conscience, and the Coals of Fire which are heaped upon his Head (when nothing else will do it) will melt him down into Love and Sweetness.

36. There is one Instance more, wherein the Christian Law seems not to consult the Interest of Human Life, and that is in the matter of *Divorce*; which our Saviour allows in no Case but that of Adultery. Now this also seems to be one of the *hard sayings*. For the natural propension to Procreation is not to be satisfied out of Marriage, and Marriage by this Appendage seems to be such a Burthen that the Disciples might well say, *if the Case of Man be so with his Wife, it is not good to Marry*, Matt. 19. 10. But yet upon Consideration, this also will appear to be a very Reasonable Confinement. For *First*, All the supposable Inconveniences of this Restraint may be in a great Measure pre-

prevented by Prudent and Wise Choice. But suppose they cannot, yet, *Secondly*, As 'twould be most advisable for *some* Men to Marry tho' with this Restraint, so is Marriage with this Restraint better for *Society* than without it. For were there Liberty of Divorce upon other Grounds, every party dislike would never want a Pretence for a *Dissolution*; and then the same Inconveniencies would ensue, as if there were no such thing as the Matrimonial Institution; such as diminution of Affection to Children, neglect of their Education, and the like; besides the perpetual Quarrels and Animosities between the Parties themselves so divided, and their respective Relatives, all which would bring more Inconveniencies upon Society, than those which are pretended to be avoided by distending and *enlarging* the Licence of Divorce.

37. Now if to this Apology for the Reasonableness of Christianity taken from its Conduciveness and Natural Tendency to the Interest of Human Life, we further add, the Dominion and Right that God has over us, the great Benefits wherewith he has already prevented us, and the exceeding weight of Glory laid up in Reversion for us; And would we further consider, that Holiness has a Natural Ordination to the Happiness of *Heaven* as well as of *Earth*, that 'tis among the *τὰ ἐξ ἡμῶν ὀφειλά*, the things that *accompany*, or are essentially retaining to Salvation; so that would God in mercy dispense with it as a *Conditionary*, yet we could not be Happy without it, as a *natural* Qualification for Heaven. Further yet, would we consider the great *Easiness* as well as manifold Advantage of Christianity,

anity, that many Instances of Duty are agreeable to the Inclinations of Nature; and that where there is a Law in our Members that runs Counter to that of the Mind, we have the Aids and Assistances of Grace; that God has required nothing of us but what is *substantially* within the Verge and Compass of Human Nature; for to *Believe*, *Repent* and *Love*, are all Natural Acts; we believe some Stories, we repent of some Follies, we love some Men, and God obliges us but to Believe *him*, to Repent of Follies against *him*, and to Love *him*. The Acts are the same for their *substance*, tho' not in their *determination*. Lastly, would we consider how much all this is confirm'd by the Argument of *Practice* and *Experience*; that the Devil has more Apostates than Christ; that the number of those who leave Sin, and come over to Virtue, is much greater than of those that leave Virtue and come over to Sin, (which is the Apology that the Platonist *Simplicius* makes for Virtue) the Conclusion would be placed beyond the reach of Controversie, That Christianity is a *Reasonable Service*, and that the Precepts of our excellent Law-giver both begin, continue, and end with a *Beatitude*.

38. I can now foresee but one Objection of any moment which the Argument of this Discourse is liable to, which is, that altho Virtue and Vice have a Natural Ordination to the Happiness and Misery of Life respectively, yet it may so happen by the intervening of some Accidents, that this connexion of things may be broken off; and that a Man may be a loser by Virtue, and a gainer by Vice, as in the instances of *Martyrdom* and *secure Theft*. And here
the

the Question will be, Whether it be then reasonable to act Virtuously, and unreasonable to do the Contrary. To this I Answer, *1st*, That it may be justly question'd (notwithstanding the intervention of any Accidents) whether a Man may be Virtuous to his Disadvantage, or Vicious to his Advantage, even as to *this present State*, considering the internal Satisfaction and Acquiescence, or dissatisfaction and molestation of Spirit that attend the practice of Virtue and Vice respectively. But supposing he may, then *2ly*, I reply, That here come in the Rewards and Punishments of another Life to supply the Natural Sanction of the Law. Then *3dly*, To the second Instance I offer this in peculiar, that altho in some Circumstances I might be dishonest to my present Gain, yet 'tis very reasonable, that all should be obliged to the Law of Justice. Because if every one should be permitted to use secret Frauds (and all may as well as one) the Evil would come about again, even to him whom we just now supposed a gainer by his Theft: And as to the Public, 'twould be all one as if there were no *Property*; and then for want of *Encouragement* and *Security*, the final issue of the matter would be, an utter neglect and disimprovement of the Earth, and a continual disturbance of the Public Peace. So that when all's done, *Honesty is the best Policy*; and to live most happily, is to live most Virtuously and Religiously. So true is that of the Psalmist, *I see that all things come to an end, but thy Commandment is exceeding broad*, Psal. 119.

39. From what has been hitherto discoursed, I shall now briefly deduce some Practical Inferences, and conclude. Since then our Religion is so Reasonable a Service, 'twill follow hence in the first place, that there may be a due exercise and use of *Reason* in *Divine* Matters; and that whosoever is apparently contrary to *Reason*, ought not to be obtruded as of *Divine Authority*, nor be accounted as any part of the *Christian* Religion. An Inference wherein the Faith of the Church of *Rome* is not a little concern'd.

40. 'Twill follow *Secondly*, That no Man ought to be Persecuted, or have any external Violence done him for his *Religion*, supposing that by *Overt* Acts, he give no disturbance to the *Public*. For since God has required nothing of us but what is agreeable to our Reason, why should Man?

41. 'Twill follow *Thirdly*, That Sin is the very Height and Extremity of *Folly* and *Disingenuity*. Of *Folly*, because it crosses and defeats the excellent End of Man; which is to live happily and commodiously. And of *Disingenuity*, because 'tis committed against him, who when he might by Virtue of his Supream Dominion have imposed upon us *Arbitrary* Laws (as that given to *Adam*) or *hard* and severe ones (as that to *Abraham*) has been graciously pleased to make nothing the Condition of our Happiness, but what upon other accounts would have been most advisable to be done. This certainly will render Sin *exceeding sinful*, and leave the *Sinner* without the least shadow of an Excuse. We commonly derive the aggravations of Sin from the *greatness* of God; but without question, his
goodness

goodness will supply us with as many; and in this sense also 'twill be true to say, *As is his Majesty, so is his Mercy.*

42. Lastly, hence 'twill follow, That we ought to perform this *Rational Will* of God with *Angelical Alacrity* and *Constancy*, partly for its own *Excellency*, as 'tis a pursuance of our Interest, and partly out of gratitude and generosity to God, for giving us such excellent *Laws*; in keeping of which, there is *so great Reward*. For not only the *End* of our Religion is *Happiness*, but even her *very ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* *Quintilian*, I remember, inquiring why former Ages afforded better *Orators* than the later, resolves the Problem into this, Because there were then greater *Encouragements* and *Rewards*. And if great *Encouragements* will make good *Orators*, why should they not make good *Men*? Let us then make it our daily *Endeavour*, as we do our daily *Prayer*, that this excellent *Will* of God may be done here on *Earth* as it is in *Heaven*; and the more we do so, the more we shall still be convinc'd that it is *our Reasonable Service*.

A Discourse concerning Perseverance in Holiness.

1. **A**LL that is of any moment for the full Discharging of this Subject, will be absolved in these Three Considerations. *First*, That Man has one way or other sufficient Power to Persevere in a Course of Holiness if he will; otherwise all Exhortations would be in *vain*. *Secondly*, That 'tis also impossible for him to Fall from a State of Holiness; otherwise they would all be *superfluous*. And *Lastly*, By shewing him what vast Encouragements, what infinite Engagements he has to stand.

2. I begin with the First, That Man has one way or other sufficient Power to Persevere in a Course of Holiness if he will. Where by *Perseverance*, I do not understand a continually uniform, equal course of Obedience, and such as is not interrupted with the least act of Sin, (for this is a Perfection not to be hoped for, under the *Disadvantages of Mortality*) but only such a constancy of Obedience as excludes all *contrary Habits*; and likewise all *such acts* of Sin as are said directly to wast the Conscience; those I mean, which are committed against the clear and express Dictate either of Natural Reason, and Supernatural Revelation. And withall (to compleat the Character) such an Obedience as is attended with a sedulous care and hearty endeavour to Correct and Subdue, even those *pittiable*

able Infirmities, which can never be wholly put off in this State, but will always adhere like Spots, to the brightest Star in the Firmament. This I conceive, to be all one with that disposition of Soul which with more compendiousness we usually call Sincerity, in opposition to a perfect and sinless Obedience. Now that Man has sufficient Power to Persevere in such a Course of Life as is here described, (not to call in the assistance of any other Argument) seems to me evidently demonstrable from this single Consideration, That to be found in the State above mentioned is the Condition of the New-Covenant, upon the fulfilling of which, all our hopes of Pardon and Salvation depend. I do not say 'tis the indispensable Condition of our Salvation, that we Persevere uninterruptedly even in this State of Evangelical Righteousness (it being possible for a Man after an interruption of a salvable State to recover into it again, as is plain from the Case of David, St. Peter, and many others) but that we be found finally in this State, is the Condition of our Salvation. For if the Righteous Man turneth away from his Righteousness, and committeth iniquities and Dies in them, the Righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in the Sin that he hath sinned shall he Die. Well then, if Salvation be not to be had out of this State, then it follows, That it must never become impossible to a Man without his own Fault, to be found in it, since 'tis repugnant to the very Nature of a Covenant (much more of this great Covenant of Mercy) to have a Condition annex'd to it; which in some Circumstances, and that without our Fault, may prove impossible.

3. The Condition then of this new Covenant, must be as possible to Man in this State of Degeneracy, now his *Locks are Shaven*, and his great *Strength is departed from him*, as the Condition of the first Covenant was to him in his Primitive *Might and Vigour*. *Do this and live*, is equally common to both; the only difference lies in the *This* that is to be done, not in the *possibility* of the *Performance*. Or if there are degrees of possibility, the advantage ought to lie on this side, this being (as was hinted before) a Covenant of *Grace* and *Mercy*.

4. Well then, If to be found finally in the State above described, be the indispensable Condition of our Salvation; and if for that very reason (as it has been prov'd) it must not in any Circumstance become impossible without our Fault, it unavoidably follows, That 'tis also possible to *Persevere in it without Interruption*; because otherwise, we having not the disposal of our own Lives, it will oftentimes prove impossible for us (and that without our own Fault) to be found *finally* in that State which is the Condition of Salvation; which is contrary to the supposition. The short is (to speak all in a word) the possibility of being *found* in a salvable State cannot be sufficiently secured, without a possibility of always *Persevering in it*; and therefore I conclude it possible for a Man to do so; which was the thing I undertook to prove.

5. But now left Man upon a Survey of his Natural Strength, and of the Auxiliaries of the Divine Grace, should pronounce himself absolutely Impregnable, and should begin to say in his Heart (as the

Psalmist

Pſalmiſt did in another Caſe) *I ſhall never be remov'd,* thou Lord of thy goodneſs haſt made my Hill ſo ſtrong; 'tis high time to turn the *Perspective*, and give him a more near, full, and diſtinct View of his Condition; that inſtead of *ſtretching* himſelf upon the *Bed of Security*, he may learn to Work out his Salvation with *fear and trembling*, Which we ſhall do, by advancing to the ſecond thing propoſed, which is, That although Man has ſufficient Power to Perſevere if he will, yet 'tis alſo poſſible for him to Fall from a State of Holineſs. *Navigat enim adhuc*, for he is ſtill upon the *Waters*; and tho' with the uſe of Diligence and Prudent Conduct, he may decline both *Rocks* and *Shallows*, yet if he venture to *Sleep* within the Veſſel which he ſhould govern; upon a groundleſs Preſumption that an *Angel* will be his *Pilot*, and that he ſhall be infallibly Steer'd to the right Point by the Arm of Omnipotence, he may, notwithstanding the *paſt* Succeſs of his Voyage, and his *confidence* of the *future*, be Shipwreck'd even within *ſight* of the *Haven*.

6. I confeſs, When I conſider with what Strength and Combination of Argument, Chriſtianity both as to *Faith* and *Practice*, does approve it ſelf to be the moſt Rational Thing in the World, When I conſider the Nobleneſs of its *Original*, (God being its Author) the Excellency of its *Nature*, (it being moſt agreeable to, and perfective of our beſt Faculties) its wholeſome Effects and Operations, (the Interests of Kingdoms and States as well as of private Perſons depending upon it) and Laſtly; the greatneſs of its *End*, which is no leſs than Everlaſting Blifs and Happineſs; I ſay, when I conſider

der all this, I am ready to conclude it the most Prodigious Thing in Nature, that so very *Few* should be in Love with the *Beauty of Holiness*, were I not immediately surpris'd with a *greater Miracle*, which is, That many of *those few*, after some considerable Progress in Virtue, retract their *best Choice*; and after the good Angel has brought them within sight of the *Mountain of Safety*, look back upon the Region of Wickedness.

7. This certainly is a Condition no less *strange* than *deplorable*, and calls for our *Wonder* as well as our *Pity*. 'Tis true indeed, Ignorance of the *Sweets of Religion* may something lessen the wonder of not Embracing it, and the *Food of Angels* may lie neglected on the Ground so long, as Men *miss* not what it is; but for those who are once *enlighten'd*, and have *tasted of the Heavenly Gift*, and are made *partakers of the Holy Ghost*, and have *tasted the good Word of God*, and the *Power of the World to come*, one would think it as *difficult* for such to fall away, as the Apostle assures us 'tis, to *renew them again to Repentance*.

8. But such is the imperfection and unsteadiness of Human Nature, that from the beginning of Things there have been Instances of this kind. *Paradise* could not preserve Man in his Innocence; and the *Garden of the Lord* degenerated into a *Wilderness*. Neither is this to be observ'd only in *Man*, who sits in the lowest Form of Intellectual Beings; but the very *Angels* also, who are greater in Power and Might, are *charged with Folly* for leaving their *own Habitation*, Job 4.18. Those bright Sons of the Morning could not long *endure* to be Happy; but grew
giddy

giddy with the sublimity of their Station, and fell from the *Heights* of Glory. And altho the Blessed Inhabitants of that serene and peaceful Mansion are now (as 'tis piously believed) fully confirmed in *Holiness* and *Happiness*, yet Man like this sublunary Region which falls to his Lot to inherit, is still nothing else but a Scene of Changes and Revolutions; but in nothing so Changeable, as in that wherein he ought to be most fixt, the practice of *Virtue* and *Religion*. 'Tis a narrow and rugged Path, and he that treads surest is not secure from Falling.

9. This will plainly appear to him that considers, that no Habit, tho' contracted by never so great a repetition of Acts, does *necessitate* the Faculty, but only disposes it to Act with greater *facility*; and consequently, leaves it still indifferent to Opposite Operations. Whence 'tis easie to conceive, that an Habit of Holiness may by degrees, be abolish'd by contrary Actions. For as this Habit was at first *begotten* by frequent Acts, so may it be *destroyed* by the opposite Ones; and (what is more) a contrary Habit may be at length produced.

10. This I say is very possible in the *ordinary* Course of Things; and that God should interpose here with an *irresistible* Power to prevent it, we have no grounds from *Scripture* or *Reason* to expect; and therefore 'twou'd be a most intolerable Presumption to rely upon it. *My Grace is sufficient for thee*, was the utmost degree of Consolation vouchsafed to the *chosen Vessel*; He had God's Faithfulness engaged for it, that he should not be tempted above his Strength; but yet notwithstanding this *sufficiency*, it must have been possible for him to have fall'n from

from his own *Stedfastness*, otherwise I cannot imagine to what purpose he should, ὑπωπιαζειν τὸ σῶμα, *keep under his Body, and bring it into subjection*; and all for this Reason, *Lest that by any means when he had Preach'd to others, he himself should be a cast away.*

11. What, Did the *Angels* let fall their Crowns of Glory, and shall *Man* pretend *Indefectibility*? Indeed the *Platonists* tell us of an Order of Beings call'd *νῦν*, ἑνάδες and αὐτοαγαθότητες, *minds, units and self-goodnesses*, whom they suppose to be the closest draught of their Maker, and the *Master-piece* of the whole Creation. And these they say, are *essentially* and in their own Nature, *immutable*; and the Reason that they assign for it is, because they are pure, un-compounded Spirits, and utterly abstract from Matter. And altho' these are the only Creatures which they affirm to be *essentially* *Immutable*, yet they allow a *gift* or *privilege* of Perseverance to certain Men. But then they are such as (according to their Hypothesis of Pre-existence) were not sent down into these Bodies for any *faults* committed in another State, but who came hither either out of Generosity, or by Divine Dispensation, to be guides and examples of *Heroick* Virtue in the World. And these they say, are secure of remaining Good and Virtuous, and of returning to their Native Country again.

12. Now as to the first Opinion of theirs, I can by no means make it part of my *Creed*. For to be *essentially* *Immutable*, I take to be the incommunicable Property of the Father of Lights, *with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning*; and who is the *same*

same yesterday, to day and for ever. No Creature how excellent soever, can lay Claim to this Divine Prerogative. And this I find acknowledg'd by a Person of great Worth, and one who in other Points was very *Platonically* given; But here he has deserted his Master, as is to be seen in his Book *περὶ ἀρχῶν*, Lib. 1. c. 8. And the generality of Christian Writers seem to conspire with *Origen* in this, inasmuch as they hold not only a Lapse of Angels in *general*, but withal, suppose him who is *now* the *Prince of Devils*, to have been *once* an Angel of the *highest Order*.

13. As to their later Opinion (not to meddle with the *Hypothesis* upon which 'tis founded) I do not absolutely deny, but that to some Men who have for a long time given excellent proof of their Obedience, and with unwearied Resolution Fought the Lord's Battels, God may at length vouchsafe such a plentiful Portion of Grace, and so stablish them with his *Free Spirit*, that they shall never depart from him, partly to Reward their *past Fidelity*, and partly, that they may become *burning Lamps*, to give *constant* Light in the *Temple* of God. For since 'tis confess'd on all Hands, That God by way of *Punishment* does withdraw his Grace from some *obstinate* Sinners, and give them up after a long Abuse of his Mercy, to the fulfilling of their own Lusts, 'tis but what the Analogy of Reason requires, to suppose on the other Hand, that God may be so favourable to some of his most eminent Servants, who have for a long time well acquitted themselves in the severest trials, as at length *to give his Angels a peculiar charge over them, to keep them in all their ways.*

ways. And this supposition seems not a little countenanc'd from what the Spirit says to the Church of Philadelphia, *Because thou hast kept the word of my Patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth,* Rev. 3. 10.

14. But altho' this be granted, yet it makes nothing against our present Assertion, as every one must acknowledge that attends to these two Considerations. 1st, That these are *extraordinary* Instances of the Divine Favour, vouchsafed only to *extraordinary Persons*, and to *extraordinary purposes*; and consequently, when we treat of God's *ordinary Dealings* with the Sons of Men, must not come into Computation. And Secondly, That even these extraordinary Persons whom we suppose to be at length thus *highly favour'd*, were notwithstanding for a great Part of their Lives, in a *defectible* Condition; and that they are now no longer so, is supposed to be the *reward* of their *past Fidelity*; so that they may say with the *Psalmist*, *this I had because kept thy Commandments,* Psal. 119.

15. What hinders then, but that it be concluded Possible for the *generality* of Men at *all* times, and for *all* Men at some times, to fall from a State of Holiness; and after they have tasted the *Liberty of the Sons of God*, to become again the *Servants of Corruption*? And sure those that Assert the contrary, destroy not only the Excellency, but the Nature of Obedience, defeat and evacuate the Design of all Scripture Exhortation; which would be as impertinent upon their Supposition, as to exhort him to *continue* to Live who is *Immortal*, pervert the Order

Order of Things, arrogating to themselves in this State of *Probation*, the Portion of *confirm'd* Saints : And Lastly, Assume to themselves more, than many of the great Masters of Theology will allow to our Blessed Saviour himself in the Days of his Flesh. Did our Saviour seem to *sbrink* at the Apprehension of his sad Hour, and to be at a *stand* whether he should drink off his bitter Cup ? Did his Danger seem so considerable, that he was fain to betake himself to his great *Antidote Prayer*, and borrow Courage from the Consolation of an Angel ? And does *mere* Man sit careless and unconcern'd, secure of the Issues of Eternity ? See the *indecorum*, the Lord is in his Agony, and the Disciples *Sleep on, and take their Rest*. But I think I have said enough to awaken them out of their dangerous Slumber ; and to convincethem, that all is not so safe as they *Dream* ; and that notwithstanding the present firmness of their Station, there is still left a possibility of Falling.

16. But now left this possibility of Falling be reduced to act, I proceed to consider the vast Encouragements, the infinite Engagements that he who is Holy has, to be Holy still. And these I shall chuse to represent to him in these two general Considerations. First, That he has made the *best* Choice that he could possibly have made ; and consequently, 'tis against all the Reason in the World that he should *rescind* it. Secondly, That if notwithstanding he does rescind it, he will not only lose the *advantage* of his best Chice, but incur an opposite Portion of Misery ; and that in a *greater Measure* than *other sinners*. These I take to be the most proper Con-

Considerations to inforce the grand Duty of Perseverance.

17. The Consequence of the first Argument proceeds upon this Principle, That that Choice which is best, is not to be rescinded. This Proposition is so evident, that it can hardly *admit*, much less *need* any Proof; and 'tis practically confess'd by every Man throughout the whole tenour of his Life. For no Man retracts his Choice, 'till he has alter'd the Dictate of his Understanding, (for otherwise he would chuse Evil under the very Formality of Evil) and has entertain'd other apprehensions of the Object, than he had when he first chose it. And this is that which makes up the entire Notion of *Repentance*, which is nothing else in its *precise Idea*, when abstracted from *particular Matter*, but a *Retraction* of a former Choice, proceeding from the alteration of the Practical Dictate, disallowing that now, which was before approv'd. For this a Man never does, till he thinks he has reason to do so. And upon this account 'tis, that God is ἀμεταμέλητος, and cannot properly *Repent*, because his Understanding being Infinite, and reaching out to all the possibilities of Things, must needs dictate to his Will after *one uniform* and constant manner; it being impossible he should either Discover something *afterward* which he did not Comprehend at *first*, or lose the Apprehension of something which he *did*. But the Understanding of Man being finite and imperfect at the best, and oftentimes corrupted and byass'd by the Passions, has at several times different Apprehensions of Things; and being sometimes *under*, and sometimes *out of the Cloud*, dictates to the Will

Will as the Sun shines upon the Earth, with a *disuniform* and *unequal* Light. Whereupon (as it frequently happens in Courts and Senates) many Decrees are Enacted, which at the next *Session* are Repealed again; tho' with this unhappiness, that sometimes her second Thoughts are worse than her first; and that she sometimes Retracts that which she should Persevere in, as well as Perseveres in that which she should Retract. But whatever the Retraction really be, 'twas always thought for the best when made; so that he that Repents him of his *Holiness*, as well as he that repents him of his *Sin*, does it upon the Change of his Practical Dictate, judging that not to be best now, which before was so pronounc'd, that consequently, they both own the Truth of the foremention'd Principle, That that Choice which is best, is not to be rescinded.

18. This being firm, all the business in question now will be, Whether he that is Holy has made the best Choice or no. And if it shall appear that he has, then by the Principle just now laid down, he ought not, nay, he cannot be so much a *Contradiction* to himself, as to rescind it. Now to convince him that he has made the best Choice, I desire him to consider, *First*, That he has chosen that which God had chosen for him before; so that his Choice stands recommended to him by the *Authority* of infinite and unerring Wisdom. And this is Foundation enough to warrant a *certain* (tho' *implicit*) Perswasion, that it must needs be best for him. I say best for *him*, for God being already possess'd of all possible Perfection, cannot Act any thing

thing for any *self-advantage*; and therefore whatsoever he does is for the good of his *Creatures*. For there is this difference (as *Divine Plato* excellently well observes) between the *Divine Love* and *Created Love*, that the one springs from *Indigency*, and the other from *Fulness* and *Redundancy*. And therefore as God did not at first speak this World into Being, to raise himself a Monument of *Power* and *Divine Architecture*, so neither does he govern the *Rational* part of it by the Precepts of Religion, out of any *Self-design*, as if he feasted his Nostrils with the Perfumes of the Altar, or his Ears with the Accents of an Hallelujah. *For can a Man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? Is it any Pleasure to the Almighty that thou art Righteous? Or is it gain to him that thou makest thy way perfect?* Job 22. No certainly; and therefore when he Chalk'd out the Ways of Righteousness and Holiness for Man to Walk in, it could not be for any *Self-end*, but purely for the good of *Man*, and consequently (if infinite Wisdom be to be trusted) it must be his best Choice to be *Holy*.

19. Secondly, let him consider, That the Practice of Religion consults a Man's *whole* Interest; and partly of its own Nature, and partly by *Divine* Constitution, tends to make him Happy in *all* his Capacities; and consequently must needs be his *best* Choice. As for impious and unjust Practices, if they do at any time promote a Man's *private* and *secular* Interest, yet 'tis always both at the expence of the *Public*, and of his own *Eternal* Welfare; and then, *What will it profit a Man to gain the whole World,*

World, and lose his own Soul? But now this is the peculiar gain of *Godliness*, that it has the promise both of this Life, and of that which is to come; that it conduces to our Advantage, both *here* and *hereafter*. *Interest* and *Duty*, are immediately link'd together in this Life; and every Virtue has a *Natural Sanction* of Reward and Punishment respectively attending it, as I could easily demonstrate, but that it has been already done by many excellent Hands, and particularly with *Mathematic*

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evidence by a late Writer of our own. And altho it happen sometimes through the unreasonableness and injustice of Men, that *Duty* and *Interest* *interfere*, and that Virtue be defeated of the Portion she is *naturally* endow'd with, yet she shall recover her own again at the great Affize, at the *Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgments of God*. And altho' instead of being rewarded, it be our fortune to suffer for Righteousness sake, yet we Christians know, that it intitles us to one of our Saviours *Beatitudes*; and we are also well assured from one, whose Case it was to be so dealt with, That *the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed*; and that *our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us καθ' υπερβολην εις υπερβολην αιωνιον βαρ' & δδξης, a far more exceeding and Eternal weight of Glory*. So that whatever Difficulties and Hardships Religion may sometimes engage a Man in, yet when the whole Account is cast up, he will find the *Practice* of Religion as *gainful*, as the *Belief* of it is *rational*; that to be Holy is his best Choice; and that he has infinite rea-

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son to pray in the words of Balaam, *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

20. And now one would think, that one who has so great and so apparent reason for his Choice, as the Religious Man has, should not easily be brought to Retract it, and say with those in *Malachi*, *It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that I have kept his Ordinances?* But because 'tis observ'd to be the Nature of Man to be more strongly affected with *Punishments* than *Rewards*, I shall for his better Establishment in the purposes of Holiness, present him with the second general Consideration, which is, That if notwithstanding the excellency of his Choice, he does Retract it, he will not only lose the *Advantages* of it, but also incur an *opposite portion of Misery*; and that in *greater Measures* than other Sinners.

21. That he will lose the *Advantages* of his first and best Choice, is plain from the whole Tenour of the Gospel, Perseverance to the End, being the expres Condition of Salvation. And that he will incur an opposite Portion of Misery, is plain from the double Sanction of Rewards and Punishments, wherewith God has bound us to the observance of his otherwise sufficiently profitable Laws. And altho this be sufficient in the severest Trials, to preserve us from *Apostasie*; and when Flames of Fire surround us, to secure our Footing in the *Holy Ground*, yet thus far is but to Dye the *common Death of Sinners*, and to be visited after the *Visitation of the Impenitent*. But now if the Lord make a new thing, and the Deserter of Piety be punish'd in a greater
measure

measure than other Sinners, then shall ye understand that this Man has provoked the Lord.

22. And that he shall be so punish'd, is the peculiar Consideration which I shall now insist upon; and which I prove from the *heinousness* of his Crime, *Apostasy* having in it many Degrees of Evil beyond the common State of Sin. For if after they have escaped the *Pollutions* of the World through thy knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the later end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment deliver'd unto them.

23. But to represent the heinousness of Apostasy a little more particularly; and that this Sin above all others, may appear to be exceeding sinful, let me desire the unthinking Man to Consider, *First*, That he that falls back from a Course of Holy Living, does in a special manner grieve the Holy Spirit of God. He sacrilegiously takes that from him, which he had once most solemnly Consecrated to his Service; he defiles the Seat of his Residence, alienates it to profane uses, blots out the *Tetragrammaton* of the Temple, and suffers it to be no longer *Holiness* to the Lord. He disinherits his God, disturbs his Rest, and forces him to leave the Habitation whereof he had once said, *This shall be my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein*. Add to this Affront of the Holy Spirit that resided in him, That he grieves the Angels that attended him, and with much much concern and hopes, minister'd to his Salvation. Those dis-

appointed and *unsuccessful Guardians*, with Sorrow cry out to one another, as the Angels did in the *Jewish Temple*, when through many Profanations it was no longer fit for their Charge, *Μετακαίρου ἐπιθόου,*

*Josephus
de Bej.
Jud. lib. 7.*

let us depart hence. Neither does he dis-appoint the Tutelar Ministers of his Salvation only, but causes *universal Grief* in Heaven. Those kind and compassionate Spirits, who before rejoyc'd at his *Repentance and Conversion*, and began to reckon upon the *new accession* they should have to the *Quire of Heaven*, now Tune their *Harps* to the *strains of Sorrow*, and lament the dis-appointment of their Hopes.

24. Consider Secondly, That to the Sin of Apo-*stasie* is added the Circumstance of *inexcusableness*. The Man has enter'd within the *Veil*, has seen the inner Beauties of the Holy Place, and has been taught the *Secrets* of the Kingdom; his Under-*standing* has been instructed, and his Will has been entertain'd; he has given Proof of his Powers and Abilities, and has Conquer'd the *steepest* Part of the *Mount*; his difficulties lessen, and his strength in-*creases*; so that if now he retreat, and slide back to the *bottom* of the Hill, he has nothing whereby to excuse himself, either before God or Man; but stands in the highest Sense of the Phrase, *Αυτοκατάκριτος*, *self condemn'd*. We generally make some allowances for the Miscarriages of those who were never *enlightned*, and have had no Acquaintance with the substantial delights of Religion, and the Satisfaction of sober Counsels, because indeed they *knew no better*; but when we are told, that the *wisest of Men*, after a *censure of Vanity*, pass'd upon the

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the whole Creation, and a long application of his Mind to the excellent Theories of *Moral* and *Divine* Knowledge, was yet towards the *Evening* of his Life, when the Sun drove hard, and the *shadows* increas'd, drawn aside by strange Women; and that his Wisdom departed from him like the *Dream* wherein it was given him, this indeed we may *Lament*, but cannot *Excuse*.

25. Consider Thirdly, That he who falls from a State of Holiness, must needs do strange Violence to his *Reason*. If he be a *new Convert*, he cannot sure without great reluctance, defile that Temple which he has so lately *swept* and *garnish'd*. And if he be a Saint of some *considerable standing*, sure he must be the more unwilling to break off a *long-dated* Innocence, for the unsatisfying Pleasure of a Moment. For tho' (as 'tis well observed by *Plutarch*) Men of desperate and Bankrupt Fortunes have little regard to their expences, because should they save them, the Tide of their Estates wont rise much the higher; and so they think it impertinent to be *Frugal*, when there's no hopes of being *Rich*. Yet they that see their Heaps begin to Swell, and that they are within the *Neighbourhood* of Wealth, think it worth while to be saving, and improve their growing Stock. But then after a long Thrift and Sparing, to throw away the hard purchase of many Years in one *Nights Gaming*, is one of the Prodigies of Folly and Indiscretion. And yet this is the very Case of him that lets go his Integrity.

26. Consider Fourthly and Lastly, That the Apostate has the greatest *ingratitude* imaginable to

aggravate his Folly. Indeed, every Sinner is a very ungrateful Person, because he Trespasses against his *best Friend and Benefactor*, against him that Made him, against him that Died for him, and against him that Follows him with the daily offers of his Grace; and lays *stratagems of Mercy* for his Reformation. But the *Back-sliding Man* sins against greater Mercies, Endearments and Obligations yet. He has liv'd in the Service of his Lord, has receiv'd the Earnest of his Spirit, he has been of his Family; nay more, he has been call'd his *Friend*, he has Eaten with him at his Table, he has dwelt under the Endearments of Familiar Converse, he has been with him in his *Banqueting House*, where the *Banner that was over him was Love*, he has plighted his Faith, given his Heart, and said with Passion, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*; so that to turn *Renegade* now, is the greatest Baseness and Ingratitude conceivable; 'tis to Betray his Lord and Master after the Obligations of Intimacy and *Discipleship*; 'tis to break the Tables of his Law, after he has been with him on the Mount, and seen the *back parts* of his Glory.

27. Since therefore the Apostate has so many peculiar Circumstances to aggravate his Crime beyond the guilt of Common Sinners, *of how much sorer Punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy, who has thus trodden under Foot the Son of God; and has counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was Sanctified, an unholy thing; and has done despite to the Spirit of Grace?* which was the last general Consideration.

28. What

28. What now remains, but that upon a serious Consideration of the Premises, He that is Holy, think himself highly concern'd to be Holy still. *That he lift up the Hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble Knees*; that he hold fast that which he has, that no man takes his Crown; that he unravel not his Holy Vows, nor put himself back in the Accounts of Eternity; that he be not frighted or laugh'd out of his Religion, since 'tis his best and wisest Choice, and will be found to be so in spite of all the profane Drollery of supposed Wits, in the day when *Wisdom shall be justified of all her Children. For then shall the Righteous Man stand in great boldness before the Face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his Labours. And they shall say within themselves, this was he whom we had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach; we fools counted his Life madness, and his End to be without honour. How is he numbered among the Children of God, and his lot is among the Saints!* Wherefore again, let him that is Holy, be Holy still. Let him but maintain his Station during his short warfare here on Earth, and he shall be hereafter confirm'd both in Holiness and Happiness; and be fix'd in that Center where he shall for ever rest. For so says the Spirit to the Churches, *Him that overcometh will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out,* Rev. 3. 12.

A Discourse concerning Heroic Piety; Wherein its Notion is Stated, and its Practice Recommended.

1. **S**ince the Practice of Religion in general, is not only the *Natural Instrument* of our present Happiness, but also the only and indispensable *Condition* of our *Future*, one would think there were but little left for the Orator to do here; the naked Efficacy of Self-love, and a serious Consideration of our true and main Interest, being sufficient to engage us upon Religious Performances. But he that shall undertake to recommend the Practice of *Heroic Piety*, has a much heavier task, not only because he persuades to higher Degrees of Virtue, but because he is to address himself wholly to a weaker Principle. For since our Interest is secured by the Performance of necessary Duty, there remains nothing but a Principle of *Generosity* to carry us on to the higher *Advances*, the more glorious *Atchievements* in Religion. And what small probability there is that it will often do so, may appear from the ill success of the former and more prevailing Principle. For if the greatest Interest imaginable can prevail with so very few to perform what is indispensably necessary to secure it, sure there is little hopes that *Generosity*, which is a much weaker Principle, should Engage many upon *greater Performances*.

2. But

2. But yet, notwithstanding these Discouragements, since our Blessed Saviour has taught us to Pray, not only for the Performance of God's will in general, but that it be done *one Earth as it is in Heaven*; that is, with the greatest Zeal, Readiness and Alacrity, with all the degrees of *Seraphic Ardency* that frail Mortality is capable of, I think a *Perswasive to Heroic Piety* may be a proper and useful Undertaking; it being very reasonable we should make that the Object of our *Endeavours*, which our Saviour thought fit to make the matter of our *Prayers*.

3. In discoursing upon this Subject, I shall proceed in this Method. 1. I shall state the Notion of *Heroic Piety*, and shew what I mean by it. 2. I shall demonstrate that there is such a Thing. And 3. I shall offer some *Perswasives* to recommend the Practice of it.

4. The Notion of *Heroic Piety* will be best understood by considering what the Moralists mean by *Heroic Virtue*. For the one carries the same Proportion in *Religion*, that the other does in *Morality*. But before I proceed to explain the *Thing*, I suppose it will not be amiss to give some short Account of the *Name*. That it is derived from the Greek word $\eta\beta\alpha\iota$, is very obvious, all the difficulty is concerning the derivation of the *Greek* word itself. And here I find the Grammarians are very much divided; some derive it $\alpha\pi\delta\ \tau\eta\ \alpha\beta\epsilon\tau\tau\upsilon\varsigma$, but that seems somewhat hard; others derive it from $\alpha\eta\epsilon\rho$, because 'twas supposed by the Ancients that the Souls of the *Heroes* had their Abode in the Air, where they had a near Prospect of Human Affairs; and

and accordingly *Xenon* in *Luertius*, *lib. 7.* calls *Heroes* the Souls of Wise Men separated from their Bodies, and ranging about in the Air: Others derive it from *ἦρα*, because the *Heroes* are a kind of *Terrestrial* Gods, according to that definition which *Lucian* gives of an *Hero*, *ἔστι μὴτε θεὸς μὴτε ἀνθρώπος ἀλλὰ συναμφοτέρων*, one that is neither God nor Man, but a compound of both. Others derive it from *ἦρα*, the Name of *Juno*, who was the President Goddess of the Air, intimating thereby, either the Habitation, or the Light Aereal Nature of the *Heroes*. And this Etymology I remember is approv'd of by *St. Austin*, *lib. 10. de Civ. Dei, cap. 21.* But methinks the most natural and significant one is that of *Plato*, who derives it from *ἔρα*, because of that ardent and passionate Love which the *Heroes* are supposed to have for God. And as the word *Hero* is very doubtful as to its Etymology, so is it also various in its Acceptation. Sometimes it is attributed to illustrious and eminent Personages while *living*, such as act and live above the ordinary strain of Mortality, and render it a very disputable Point, whether they are Gods or Men. A Character which *Homer* gives of the great *Hector*, *Iliad c.*

—“Ὅς θεὸς ἔχει μὲν ἀνδρείου ἔδδ' ἰφικῆ
 Ἀνδρεία δὲ θυτῆ παῖς ἕμμαναι, ἀλλὰ θεῶο.

And in this Sense the word *Hero* is used by *Hesiod*

Ἀνδρῶν Ἡρώων θῶον γένος, οἱ καλίσθηαι
 ἦμειθεαι

Sometimes by *Heroes* are meant the Souls of wise and good Men departed, as is evident from the fore-cited Testimony in *Luertius*. But in the *Platonic*

tonic Philosophy, by *Heroes* is understood a middle sort of Being, inferior to those whom they stile the *Immortal Gods*, and superior to Man ; as is to be seen at large in *Hierocles*.

5. Beyond these three Acceptations of the word, I do not know of any other. But this is certain, that in whatsoever sense it is used, it always denotes something great and extraordinary. So that from hence, 'tis easie to collect what is meant by *Heroic Virtue*, (*viz.*) Such a vehement and intense Pursuance of a Man's last and best End, as engages him upon such excellent and highly commendable Actions, which advance him much above the ordinary level of Human Nature; and which he might wholly omit, and yet still maintain the Character of a good Man. *Aristotle* in his *Ethics* l. 7. c. 1. calls it $\tau\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\ \acute{\alpha}\rho\epsilon\tau\eta\ \alpha\epsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\eta$, that Virtue that is above us. By which I suppose, he does not mean that it is above our reach, and unattainable, but that it is above our obligation; and that when it is attain'd, it will elevate us above our selves.

6. In proportion to this Notion of Heroic Virtue, I understand by *Heroic Piety* those excellent degrees and eminences of Religion, which, tho' to arrive at be extremely laudable, yet we may fall short of them without Sin, God having not bound them upon us as parts of *Duty*, or made them the *Conditions* of our Salvation, but only recommended them by way of *Counsel*, and left them as Instances of *Generosity*. Of this sort are those high and singular Exercises of Religion which are the fruits and effects of a profound and steady Contemplation of God : Such as are the passionate Applications

plications of *Seraphic* Love, Acts of ecstatic Joy and Complacency in the Perfections of the Divine Nature, holy Transports of Zeal and Devotion, Praise and Adoration; earnest, contentious, and very numerous Returns of Prayer, actual references of our most natural and indifferent Actions to God's Glory, extraordinary works of Charity, great severities of Mortification and Self-denial, abstemiousness from any Lawful Pleasures, perpetual *Celibacy*; and whatsoever else are the excellent products of a *contemplative* and *affectionate* Religion.

7. Thus far of the Notion of *Heroic Piety*. I come now to my second Undertaking, which was to shew, that there is such a Thing. Tho' universality and sincerity of Obedience be indispensably required of every Christian, and consequently every part of Religion obliges under the penalty of Damnation as to its *kind*, yet that there may be some *degrees*, to the Attainment of which we are not so obliged, will evidently appear from the proof of this one single Proposition, That every one is not bound to do what is best. The reasonableness of which Proposition. appears from the very Nature of the Thing; for since that which is *Best* is a *Superlative*, it necessarily supposes the *Positive* to be good: And if so, then we are not bound to that which is *Best*; for if we were, then that which is *only good* would be *evil*, (it being short of what we are bound to) which is contrary to the Supposition.

8. This Argument I take to be *Demonstrative*, and therefore 'twould be a kind of *Supererrogation* in me to alledge any more. But however, for the clearer Eviction and stronger Confirmation of this Assertion,

Assertion; I farther consider, That the Scripture consists of *Counsels* as well as *Commands*, *Matt.* 19. 20. and 21. *1 Cor.* 7. 1, 6, 7, 25, 38. *2 Cor.* 8. 10. and 9. 6. Now if some Things are matter of Counsel only, 'tis obvious to conclude two things. 1. From their being *counsell'd*, that they are good (nothing being matter of Counsel but what is so;) and Secondly, from their being only *councell'd*, that they do not Oblige; and consequently, that there are some degrees of Good that we are not obliged to.

9. It is farther observable, that in Scripture there is mention made of a threefold Will of God, *Rom.* 12. 2. τὸ θέλημα τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον, *That Will which is good, that which is well-pleasing, and that which is perfect.* The first of these denotes absolute *Duty*, the two last the various degrees of *Perfection* and *Heroic Excellence*. Thus for *St. Paul* to Preach the Gospel to the *Corinthians*, was an Act of strict *Duty* which he could not leave undone, without incurring that *Woe* which he annexes to the omission of it, *1 Cor.* 9. 16. τὸ δεῦν ἀδελφάνους κηρύσσειν περισσεύουσιν φιλοτιμία, καὶ οὐδὲ τὸ το καύχημα εἶσι. *But to preach without charging them was an instance of Generosity, and in that respect there was room for boasting.* Thus again, for a *Jew* to allot the tenth part of his Revenue every third year toward the Relief of the Poor, was an act of expres *Duty*; and in doing of that, he would but satisfy the Obligation of the Law: But now if in his charitable Contributions he should exceed that proportion; according to the degrees of the excess, so would the degrees of his *Perfection* be. Thus again in the matter of *Devotion,*

tion, Daily Prayer is generally concluded to be a Duty; and by some Criticks, that it be twice perform'd, in proportion to the Returns of the Jewish Sacrifices, Morning and Evening: But now if a more generously disposed Christian should add a third time, or out of abundance of Zeal should come up to the Psalmist's resolution of (*Seven times a day will I praise thee*) this would be a free-will Offering, well pleasing and of sweet savour, but not Commanded.

10 From these and many other Instances, which, if necessary, I could easily produce, it plainly appears that Religion does not consist in an indivisible point, but has a Latitude; and is capable of more and less; and consequently, there is room for voluntary Oblations, and Acts of Heroic Piety.

11. I know it is usually objected here, That what is supposed to be thus Heroically perform'd, is inclusively enjoy'd by virtue of those comprehensive words, (*Thou shalt Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy Soul, &c.*) But, I conceive, that all which is intended by that Phrase, will amount to no more than, First, A sincere Love of God, as 'tis oppos'd to that which is partial and divided; and secondly, Such a degree of loving him, as admits of nothing into Competition with him. And thus far reach the Boundaries of Indispensable Duty; it being impossible, that he who does not love God in this sense and degree, should keep his Commandments. But beyond this, there are higher degrees, which, because we may fall short of without Sin, are the more excellent when attain'd. So that in this Precept of loving God, as in all other Instances of Religion, there is a great latitude; it being

being very possible for two Persons to love God *sincerely*, and with their *whole Souls*, and yet in different Measures (which is observ'd even among the Angels, the *Seraphims* having their Name from their *excess of Love* (nay, for the same Person always to love God *sincerely*, and yet at some times to exceed himself; and with his Saviour (who to be sure never fail'd of *necessary Duty*): to pray yet *more earnestly*.)

12. There is another Objection yet behind, which I think may self concern'd to Answer, as well in my *own* Defence, as that of my *Argument*. Some perhaps may be so weak to imagine, that by asserting such a Thing as *Heroic Piety*, and that a Christian may do *more* than he is Commanded, I too much favour the Doctrine of *Supererogation*. But I consider, for a *Man to do more than he is Commanded* is an ambiguous expression, and may denote either that he can perform the *whole* Law of God and *more*, on that, tho he fail of his Duty in many Instances, and consequently with the rest of Mankind, *is concluded under sin*; Yet in some others he may exceed it, by *pressing forward* to some degrees of Excellency he is not obliged to. I do not Assert the *former* of these, but the *later*. And I think I have sufficiently prov'd, that there are certain degrees in *Religion*, which we are not obliged to under Pain of Sin; and consequently, that he who arrives so far, does (according to the *later* notion of the *Phrase*) do *more than he is Commanded*.

13. Having in the foregoing *Periods* stated the Notion of *Heroic Piety*, and demonstrat'd that there is such a Thing, I proceed now to my third and last

last undertaking, which was to offer some Persuatives to recommend the Practice of it. First then, I consider that Religion is the Perfection of a Man, the Improvement and Accomplishment of that Part of him wherein he resembles his Maker, the Pursuance of his best and last End, and consequently his *Happiness*. And will a Man set *Bounds* to his *Happiness*? Will he be no more Happy than he is *Commanded*, no more than what will just serve to secure him from a *miserable* Eternity? Is not Happiness desirable for it *self*, as well as for the avoiding of *Misery*? Why then do we deal with it as with *dangerous Physic*, weighing it by Grains and Scruples, and nice Proportions? Why do we drink so *moderately* of the *River of Paradise*, so *sparingly* of the *Well of Life*? Are we afraid of making too nigh Advances to the State of Angels, of becoming *too* like God, of *antedating* Heaven? Are we afraid our Happiness will flow in *too thick* upon us, that we shall not bear up against the Tide, but sink under the *too powerful* Enjoyment? Hereafter indeed, when we are blest with the *Beatific Vision*, and the Glories of the Divine Brightness shall flash *too strong* upon our Souls, so that our Happiness begins to be *lessen'd* by its *greatness*; We may then, with the Angels that attend the Throne, *veil* our Faces, and *divert* some of the *too exuberant* Blessedness: But now in this *Region*, we are far enough from being *under the Line*; there is no danger of such *Extremity*, but rather the contrary; and therefore it would be now most advisable for us to be as *Happy*, and to that End, as *Religious* as we can.

14. Secondly,

14. Secondly, I consider, That since God, out of the abundance of his *overflowing* and *communicative* Goodness, was pleas'd to create and design Man for the best of Ends, the fruition of himself in endless Happiness; and since he has prescribed no other Conditions for the Attainment of this Happiness, but that we would live happily here in this State of Probation, having made nothing our Duty but what would have been best for us to do whether he had Commanded it or no; and has thereby declared, that he is so far only pleas'd with our Services to *him*, as they are Beneficial to *our selves*; this must needs be a most endearing Engagement to one that has the least spark of Generosity or Ingenuity, to do something for the sake of so *good* a God, beyond the Measures of Necessity, and the Regards of his main and final Interest. This is *the only Tribute* of Gratitude we are capable of paying God, for giving us such good, such reasonable, and righteous Laws. Had the Conditions of our Eternal Welfare been never so hard, arbitrary, and contradictory to our present Happiness, yet mere Interest would engage us to perform *necessary Duty*; and shall we do no more out of a Principle of *Love* to our excellent Lawgiver, for making our *present Happiness* the *Condition* of our *future*? Shall the *Love* of God constrain us to do no more than what we would do *merely* for the *Love* of *our selves*? Shall we stint our Performances to him, who sets no Measures to his Love of us? Can our Generosity be ever more seasonably employ'd, than in endeavouring to please him in *extraordinary Measures*, whose *Pleasure* is to see us *Happy*, even *while*

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while we please him? For so is the Will of the wise and good Governour of the World, that in serving *him* we should serve *our selves*; and like *Adam* in his dressing and cultivation of Paradise, at the same time discharge the Employment which God sets us about, and consult our *own* Convenience: So that it fares with us in our Religious Exercises, as with the Votary that Sacrifices at the Altar, who all the while he *pleases* and serves his God, enjoys the *Perfumes* of his *own* Incense.

15. Thirdly, I consider, That every Man has a restless Principle of Love implanted in his Nature, a certain *Magnetism* of Passion, whereby (according to the *Platonic* and true Notion of Love) he continually aspires to something more Excellent than himself, either really or apparently, with a design and inclination to perfect his Being. This affection and disposition of Mind *all* Men have, and at *all* times. Our other Passions ebb and flow like the Tide, have their Seasons and Periods like *intermitting Fevers*. But this of Love, is as constant as our *Radical* Heat, as inseparable as *Thought*, as even and equal as the Motions of Time. For no Man does or can, desire to be happy more at one time than at another; because he desires it always in the highest degree *possible*. 'Tis true, his Love, as to particular Objects, may increase or decrease, according to the various Apprehensions he has of their Excellencies; but then, like *Motion* in the Universe, what it loses in one part, it gains in another; so that in the whole it remains always alike, and the same. Now this *Amorous* Principle, which every man receives with his Soul, and which is breath'd into

into him with the breath of Life, must necessarily have an Object about which it may exercise it self, there being no such thing in *Love* (if in *Nature*) as an *Element of Self-sufficient Fire*. For tho' we may easily and truly frame an abstract Notion of *Love* or *Desire* in general, yet if we respect its *real Existence*, we shall as soon find *First Matter* without *Form*, as *Love* without a particular *Object*. And, as 'tis necessary to the very Being of *Love* that it have an Object, so is it to our Content and Happiness, that it be a proportionate and satisfying one; for otherwise, that Passion which was intended as an instrument of *Happiness*, will prove an *affliction* and *torment* to us. Now there is but one such Object to be found, and that is *God*. In the Application of our Passions to other Things, the Advice of the Poet is exceeding necessary,

Quicquid amas cupias placuisse nimis.

Martial.

That we should be very cautious how far we suffer our selves to be engaged in the *Love* of any Thing, because there is nothing but *disappointment* in the *Enjoyment*, and *uncertainty* in the *Possession*. We must needs therefore be miserable in our *Love*, unless *God* be the Object of it. But neither is our *Happiness* sufficiently secured by making *God* the Object of our *Love*, unless we *concenter* our whole Affections upon him, and (in the strictest sense of the Phrase) *Love him with all our Heart, and with all our Soul*. For otherwise, whatever portion of our *Love* does not run in this Channel, must necessarily fix upon

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disproportionate and unsatisfying Objects ; and consequently, be an instrument of Discontent to us.

'Tis necessary therefore, to the compleating of our Happiness, that that Object should *engross* all our Affections to it self, which only can satisfy them ; and (according to the comparison of an ingenious *Platonist*) that our Minds should have the same ha-

Marsilius Picinus,
Tom. 2. pag. 315.

bitude to God, that the Eye has to Light. Now the Eye does not only love Light above other Things, but *delights* in nothing else. I confess, such an *absolute* and *entire* *Dedication* of our Love to God as this, is not always practicable in this Life. It is the priviledge and happiness of those *confirm'd* Spirits, who are so swallow'd up in the *Comprehensions* of *Eternity*, and so perpetually ravish'd with the Glories of the Divine Beauty, that they have not the *power* to turn aside to any other Object. But tho' this Superlative Excellency of Divine Love, be not attainable on this side of the *thick darkness*, it being the proper effect of *open Vision*, and not of *Contemplation* ; yet however, by the Help of this later, we may arrive to many degrees of it ; and the more entire and undivided our Love is to God, the fewer disappointments and dissatisfactions we shall meet with in the World ; which is a very strong Engagement to *Heroic Piety*.

16. Fourthly, I consider, That the degrees of our *Reward* shall be proportionable to the degrees of our *Piety* : We shall Reap as plentifully as we Sow ; and at the great Day of Retribution, we shall find, that besides the general *Collation* of Happiness, peculiar Coronets of Glory are prepared for

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Eminent Saints. Indeed, all hearty and sincere Lovers of God and Religion, shall partake of the *Glories* of the *Kingdom*; but some shall sit nearer the Throne than others, and enjoy a more *intimate* Perception of the *Divine Beauty*. All the true *Followers* of Jesus shall indeed *Feast* with him at the *great Supper*; but some shall be placed nearer to him than others; and still there shall be a *Beloved Disciple* that shall *lean* on his *Bosom*. I know this *Doctrin* concerning different degrees of *Glory*, is (and indeed what is there that is not) very much question'd by some, and peremptorily deny'd by others; but since it is so highly agreeable to the Goodness and Bounty of God, and to the *Catholick* Measures of Sense and Reason; and is so mightily favour'd if not expressly asserted in many Places of Scripture, I shall not here go about to establish the Truth of it; but taking it for granted, do urge this as another Consideration of great Moment, toward encouraging the Practice of *Heroic Piety*.

17. Fifthly, and Lastly, I Consider, That We have indeed but very little Time to serve God in. The Life of Man at longest, is but short; and considering how small a part of it we *Live*, much *shorter*. If we *deduct* from the *Computation* of our Years (as we must do, if we will take a true Estimate of our Life) that part of our Time which is spent in the incogitancy of Infancy and Childhood, the impertinence and heedlessness of Youth, in the Necessities of Nature, Eating, Drinking, Sleeping, and other Refreshments; in Business and Worldly Concerns, engagements with Friends and Relations,

in the Offices of Civility and mutual Intercourse ; besides a thousand other unnecessary Avocations : We shall find that there is but a small Portion left, even for the Retirements of Study, for our Improvement in Arts and Sciences, and other intellectual Accomplishments. But then, if we consider what great *disbursements* of our Time are made upon *them* also, we shall find, that Religion is *crowded* up into a very *narrow Compass* ; so narrow, that were not the Rewards of Heaven matter of *express Revelation*, 'twould be the greatest *Presumption* imaginable, to hope for them upon the Condition of such *inconsiderable* Services. Since then our Time of serving God is so very short, so infinitely disproportionate to the Rewards we expect from him, 'tis but a reasonable piece of Ingenuity, to work *with all our might*, and do as much in it as we can : To supply the *poverty* of Time by *frugal* Management, and *intenseness* of Affection ; to serve God *earnestly*, *vigorously*, and *zealously* ; and in one Days Devotion, to *abbreviate* the ordinary Piety of *many Years*. 'Tis said of the Devil, that he prosecuted his malicious designs against the Church with greater earnestness and vigour, because *he knew he had but a short time*, Rev. 12. 12. And shall not the same Consideration prevail with a *generous* Soul, to do as much for God and Religion, as the Devil did *against* them ? 'Tis a shame for him that has but a *short* Part to Act upon the *Stage*, not to perform it *well* ; especially when he is to Act it but *once*. Man has but one *state of Probation*, and that of an exceeding short Continuance, and therefore, since he cannot serve God *long*, he should serve him *much*, employ

ploy every Minute of his Life to the best Advantage, *thicken* his Devotions, *hallow* every day in his *Kalendar* by Religious Exercises, and every *action* in his *Life* by Holy References and *Designments*; for let him make what haste he can to be *Wise*, Time will *out-run* him. This is a Consideration of infinite Moment to him that duly weighs it; and he that *thus numbers his days*, will find great Reason to *apply his Heart* to more than *ordinary* degrees of *Wisdom*.

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Con.

Contemplation and Love: Or, the Methodical Assent of the Soul to God, by Steps of Meditation.

CONTEMPLATION I.

That 'tis necessary Man should have some End.

1. **I**N the Depth of Solitude and Silence, having withdrawn my self not only from all Worldly Commerce, but from all Thoughts concerning any Thing without my own Sphere; I retire wholly into my self, and there speculate the Composition of my *Intellectual* Nature.

2. And here, besides that faculty of *Perception* whereby I apprehend Objects, whether Material or Immaterial, without any Material Species; (which in the *Cartesian* Dialect I call *Pure Intellect*) and that other of apprehending Objects as present, under a corporeal Image or Representation; (which I distinguish from the other Power of Perception by the Name of *Imagination*) I say, besides these Two, I observe an *Appetitive* Faculty, whereby I incline to Apparent Good; and that either by a bare Act of *Propension*, or endeavour to Unite with the agreeable Object; which answers to Pure Intellect, and may be call'd (*Will* or rather *Volition*) or by such a Propension of the Soul, as is also accompany'd

company'd with a Commotion of the Blood and Spirits; which answers to Imagination; and is the same with the *Passion of Love*.

3. And of this I further meditate, and by self-reflexion experiment; that altho' the *Perceptive Faculty* be not always in actual Exercise, or at least not in the same degree of it: (For, if according to the *Cartesian Hypothesis* there be no intermission of Cogitation, yet 'tis most certain, that its Applications are not always equal and uniform) tho' this I say, be true as to the *Perceptive*; yet, I find by attending to the Operations of my Nature, that the *Appetitive Faculty* is not only always in Act, but in the same degree of Intention and Application. As it never has any total Intermision, so neither is it subject (as indeed every Thing else in Man is) to *Ebbs and Flows*, but acts *uniformly* as well as *constantly*. This Amorous *Bias* and Endeavour of the Soul, is like that Stock of Motion which the *French Philosopher* supposes the Universe at first endowed with, which continues always at the same rate, not to be abated or increas'd. Not that this Equality of Love is to be understood in reference to *particular* Objects, any more than that of Motion in reference to particular Bodies; but only, that it gains in one part, as much as it loses in another; so as in the whole, to remain equal and uniform.

4. For however various and unconstant I may be in my Love of particular Objects according to the various Apprehension I have of their respective Excellencies; yet certainly, I persue *Happiness* in *general* with the same Earnestness and Vigour; and do

do not love, or *wish well* to my self, more at one time than at another.

5. And indeed, since all my inconstancy in the prosecution of particular Objects proceeds from the variety of my Apprehensions concerning their Excellency; and the only reason why I withdraw my Affection from this, or that thing, is, because I discern, or suspect, that Happiness not to be there which I expected, it is hence plainly argued *a posteriori*, that I stand at all Times equally affected towards Happiness it self. As he that is therefore only variously affected towards the Means, according as he variously apprehends their serviceableness to the End, may be truly said, to affect the End it self always alike.

6. Nor can it possibly be otherwise, than that I should thus point at Happiness with an equal *Verticity*; because I always affect it in the highest degree that is possible; which admits of no *Latitude*. For I consider my self here, as a *necessary Agent*; and accordingly as such, can neither suspend the whole Act, nor any one Degree of it; but must needs Operate to the utmost Stretch of my Power. This *Spring* of my Soul (my Appetitive Faculty) is always at its *full Bent*; and accordingly, presses and endeavours with its whole *Elasticity*.

7. For since Good or Happiness is the *utmost* object of my *Appetitive*, it must needs employ its *whole* Power; otherwise, so much of it as is not in Act, will be for ever incapable of being so; (there being nothing left beyond that to bring it into Act) and consequently, will be planted in me in vain, which I think absurd to admit; and therefore find
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It necessary to conclude, That my Appetitive is wholly employ'd in the Love of Happiness; or that I always love it to the utmost Capacity of my Faculty.

8. Since therefore, I find in my self an Appetitive Faculty, which is always in actual Exercise, and that after an even and equal Measure; and not only so, but also in the very Height of Activity and *Invigoration*; I am by the clue of Meditation further led to conclude, That there must be some *Center* for this *Weight*; some Object or other, either within or without me, of such ample, copious, and solid Excellence, as may answer to the full Extent of my Desires, bear the whole *stress* of my inclining Soul, and such as may well deserve to be call'd, the *End of Man*.

9. For I cannot think it any way Consistent with the goodness of that great Being, which call'd me out of the Womb of Nothing to what I am, to Plant in me such an *Amorous* Principle, which at no time lies *Dormant*, but is always *equally* Awake, and acting with the utmost plenitude of its Vigour; supposing there were no proportionable Object in the whole *Lustrade of Existence* for it to sit and bottom upon. It being only a greater preparation and qualification for Misery, to have enlarged Faculties and Appetites, when there is nothing to afford them agreeable Satisfaction. Which however some may be justly subjected to for their *after-merit*, can yet never be reasonably supposed to be the *Antecedent* Will of God.

10. And this I am further induced to believe, when I consider how the great Author of Nature, has

has made provision for the Entertainment of our animal Faculties, and particular Appetites: All our Senses, Seeing, Hearing, Tasting, Smelling and Touching, have their proper Objects, and opportunities of Pleasure respectively. Which makes it very unlikely, that our great and general Appetite of being *Happy*, should be the only one that is disinherited and unprovided for. Especially, considering that the Enjoyment and Indulgence of any of the rest is then only, and in such Instances and Circumstances restrain'd, when the greater Interests of Happiness are thereby cross'd and defeated. Which argues, that the True Happiness of Man is the Thing chiefly regarded by God; and consequently, that there is a Provision for that *great* Appetite of his being *Happy*, as well as for any of the rest.

11. Which is yet further confirm'd to me, when I consider, That there is an *exemplification* of it in the *material* Part of the Universe; the most ponderous Body that it has its Center towards, which it always presses, and in which it settles with full Acquiescence. Now since there is something in Spiritual Beings which corresponds to *weight* in Bodies, (according to that of St. *Austin*, *Amor tuus est Pondus tuum*) the Analogy of the Thing perswades me to think, that there is also something which shall be to them in the Nature of a *Center*.

12. And as the contrary is inconsistent with the Divine *Goodness*, so neither can I reconcile it to the *Wisdom* of him who made all Things in *Number*, *Weight* and *Measure*, to be so much out in his *Proportions*, as to Create an Appetite too high, vigorous

rous, and craving, for the excellency and fulness of any Object. This would be like making a Body too heavy for the *Central Poise*; or, as if the *Spring* of a Watch should be made too Strong for the *Wheel*; or any other such disproportionate operations; which neither comports with the *Geometry* of the Divine *Mind*, nor with the exact *Harmony* of his *other Works*.

13. The *Conclusion* therefore from these *Premises* is, That Man is not as a Body for ever, rolling on in an Infinite Vacuity; or as a Needle continually *trembling* for an *Embrace*: But that he has his proper *End* and *Center*; to which 'tis possible for him to arrive; and in which, as impossible for him when once arrived, not fully to *Acquiesce*.

The P R A Y E R.

MY God, my Creator, who by that active principle of Love and immense Desire, thou hast interwoven with my Nature, hast given me fair grounds to Conclude, that there must be some End on which I may fix and Center with the full stress of my Faculties; point out to me by the guidance of thy Spirit this my True End, direct me in the Pursuance, and bring me to the Attainment of it. Let me neither mistake my true Center, nor by any irregular or oblique Motion, decline from it. But as thou hast appointed me for Happiness, and furnished me with Natural Capacities of receiving it, so let it be thy good pleasure to possess my Soul with such a serious and diligent Concern for my great Interest, that I may not by any default of mine, fail

fail of that excellent Good which will fill all the Emptinesses of my Soul; leave no desire unsatisf'd, and no trouble I can undergo in the quest of it, unrewarded. O suffer me not to be disappointed of that excellent, that only Good: but as thou hast made me Aspire towards it Infinitely, so grant I may Enjoy it Eternally, for thy great Love and Goodness sake, Amen.

CONTEMPLATION II.

That 'tis impossible Man should be his own End.

1. **B**EING from my *yesterdays* Contemplation of my Intellectual Nature, and the stock of Desires therein implanted, led to this *Conclusion*, That 'tis necessary Man should have some End; I now consider, that 'tis but to carry on the Thread of the same Contemplation a little further, and 'twill as evidently appear, That 'tis impossible Man should be his own End.

2. For while I stand fix'd in the Contemplation of my self, I observe, that I have this *Appetitive Principle*, not only in such a manner as answers to *Weight* in Bodies, but also so as to be analogous to *gravitation*, that is to *Weight* not only *in actu primo*, but *in actu secundo*, as it denotes such an Inclination of Body, whereby not only one part presses against another, but whereby the whole leans, and endeavours to something beyond the Bounds of its own *Circumference*.

3. For, besides Acts of *Self-complacency*, whereby I delight and please my self in the Perfections of my

my Nature, and turn as it were upon my own *Axis*; I find in me a great deal of *Extatical* Love, which continually carries me out to Good without my self; which I endeavour to close and Unite with, in hopes of bettering my present State, and of supplying from *without* what I seek, but cannot find *within*.

4. Hence therefore I conclude, That I am not (whatever Complacencies I may sometimes take in my self) a *Central* or *self-terminative* Being; it being as impossible that what is so, should Love any thing *without*, (as Love is taken for *Desire* or *Aspiring* to Good) as that a Body should gravitate in the *Center*. That which Loves any thing *without*, wants something *within*. If therefore I *gravitate*, I am off from the *Center*; consequently, not my own *Center*.

5. And that I cannot ever Center in my self, and be my own End, is yet further evidenc'd to me, when I contemplate the great *Disproportion* between my *Appetitive* and all my *other Perfections*, whether of Body or of Mind.. I desire both more *Kinds* of Pleasure than they all can afford, and more *Degrees* of Pleasure in the same kind. Which must necessarily be, because my Desires are extended to all possible Good, but my real Endowments and Perfections are infinitely short of that Extent. And by consequence, my Desires cannot be *cramp'd* within the narrow Bounds of my own Sphere, but will of necessity run out farther, even as far as there is Good without it.

6. And as there is a manifest disproportion between my Stock of *Self-perfection* and my *Apetitive*

tive, as to its *objective* Latitude (*viz.*) the *kinds* and *degrees* of Happiness; so is there no less as to the *intenseness* of its Acts. This Appetitive of mine (as was remark'd in the preceding Contemplation) is alway in an *equal* Invigoration, and burns with an even and uniform Heat; but I have not within my self *Fuel* enough to maintain this Flame in an equal height. I always equally *Desire*, but I am not always equally *Desirable*: partly because I am sometimes (even in my own partial Judgment) in a Condition of less Excellence, both as to my Morals and Intellectuals, than at other Times; and partly, because the Stock of my Perfections, tho' 'twere possible they could be always alike as my *Desires* are, yet being both *Finite* in Nature, and *Few* in Number, cannot bear a long and uninterrupted Enjoyment, and appear still equally grateful under it; any more than a short Poem, tho' in it self equally excellent, can please equally after a Million of Repetitions.

7. Hence it comes to pass, that I do not always take an equal Complacency in my self, but am oftentimes (especially after long Retirements) apt to be Melancholy, and to grow weary of my own Company; so that I am fain to lay aside my self (as it were) for a while, and relieve the *penury* of Solitude with the variety of Company, and so *whet* my Appetite toward my self as I do toward my Meat, by *Fasting* and *Abstemiousness*.

8. Since therefore, I always desire equally, but not my *self*: (being not upon the two Accounts before mention'd always equally desirable) it follows, That the *steadiness* and *evenness* of this my
Flame,

Flame, must depend upon some *other* Fuel, good which is *without* me. And consequently, I do not Terminate in my self, and so am not my own End.

The PRAYER.

MY God, my Creator, who hast in thy great Wisdom furnish'd me with Desires too large and vehement for the other Perfections of my Nature; and hast thereby made it impossible that I should ever be my own End; grant me effectually to Consider the Barrenness and Insufficiency of my own Nature, and how unable I am upon my own solitary Stock, to satisfy the Importunity of my Soul: that so I may not be Transported with vain Complacencies, nor endeavour to Bottom my self upon such a Center, as will moulder away under me, and deceive me. Let me ever weigh my self in a true Balance; and be as observant of my Imperfections, as of my Excellencies. Let me be ever thankful for the one, and humble for the other. Whatever else I am ignorant of, O grant me a true Understanding of my self; that I may not to the vanity of my Nature, add levity of Spirit, nor become despicable in thy Eyes, by being too precious in my own. Amen, Amen.

CONTEMPLATION III.

That 'tis impossible that any other Created Good should be the End of Man.

1. **H**AVING by the Light of Contemplation, discover'd the necessity of Man's having some End, and the utter impossibility of his ever being his own End; I am now concern'd to look beyond the Orb of my own Perfections, and to consider, Whether the whole Latitude of the *Creation*, can afford any good that will Terminate the *Amorous* Bent of my Soul; and wherein I may sweetly and securely Rest, as in my *End* or *Center*.

2. And this I am the more induced to enquire into, First, Because I observe that the generality of Men, and those some of the most Sagacious, Thinking, and Inquisitive, do pursue many Interests in this visible and sublunary World (which yet is the most cheap and inconsiderable Part of the *Creation*) with as much Fervency, Vigour and Affidity, as they could possibly do, were it the True End of Man. So that one would think by the *quickness* of their *motion*, they were nigh the *Center*.

3. Secondly, Because I observe concerning my self, that there are some *few* Things in the World which I Love with great Passion, and Delight in with something like *Satisfaction* and *Acquiescence*. Such as are Conversation with select Friends, or Men of harmonical and *tunable* Dispositions; reading
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ing of close and fine-wrought Discourses, solitary Walks and Gardens, the Magnificence of the Heavens, the Beauty of the Spring; and above all, majestic and well composed Music. Which last, could I enjoy it in its highest Perfection, and without Interruption, would, I am apt to fancy, Terminate my Desires, and make me Happy; at least, I am well assured, I should *pity* more than I should *envy*.

4. Thirdly, Because I consider, that the great Author of Nature is brought in by *Moses*, commending upon a *deliberate Review*, all the Works of his Hands. That which before the Divine Incubation was *תרו ובהו Solitude and Inanity*, after the Spirit had moved upon the Waters, he pronounced *טוב מאד Superlatively Good*. So very Superlatively Good, that even the Glory of *Solomon* in the Judgment of him who was both greater and wiser than he, was not comparable to one of Nature's meanest Flowers. And if the Beauty and Variety of the Creature was so considerable, as to merit Approbation from him that made it, what is there of our Love and Complacency that it may not Challenge? That which can but *please* God, may well be suppos'd, able to *satisfie* Man: That wherein the Creator *delights*, the Creature one would think, might fully *rest* and *acquiesce* in.

5. By such Considerations as these, when solely attended to, I have been sometimes almost prevail'd upon to think, That there is good enough in the Creation of God, if amass'd together, and fully enjoy'd, to employ the whole Activity of my

Love, and fix the entire Weight of my Soul. But yet, when I consider *experience*, and compare the Aspirations of my Nature with the Goodness of the Creation, I am driven to conclude, That altho the Creatures of God (whatever the *Manichees* say to the contrary) are all good enough to afford Matter for *Entertainment* and *Praise*, yet they cannot *detain*, and give *Anchorage* to the Soul of Man. The motion of the Appetite may be somewhat *resisted* by Created Good, and its force a little *broken*. but it will soon sink through, like a Stone through a watery *Medium*. Some repast may be found in the Creature; but as for complete Satisfaction, and Termination of Desires, *the Sea saith it is not in me, and the Depth saith it is not in me*. All that God ever did, or ever can make, will prove insufficient for this purpose; and come under that decretory Sentence of the Wise Preacher, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*.

6. And this is first confirm'd to me from *Experience*; and that not my own only, but of all *Mankind*. For as the weight of my Affections (as was observ'd in yesterdays Contemplation) is *extatical*, and inclines to good without my self; so does it press beyond that which is *Created* too; and consequently argues, That the Creation without me, can no more be my Center, than I can be to my self.

7. For not to insist upon the great Emptiness of *Fruition*, That every Flower in this Paradise of God, *shrinks* as soon as *touch'd*; that whatever *Reversions* and *Prospects* of happiness we may have, 'tis yet seldom known that any Man pronounces him-

himself tolerably Happy in the *present* ; That Men are not pleas'd with that themselves, for which they envy another : Not to insist, I say on these, and the like, Did ever any Man, tho' never so fortunate in his Designs, and never so well pleas'd at his Attainments, find himself able to confine his Desires within the Sphere of that Good he was possess'd of? 'Tis true indeed, he may desire no more of the same; he may have so much of *Riches*, as to desire no more *Riches* ; so much of *Honour*, as to desire no more *Honour* ; but he cannot have so much of any thing, as not simply to desire on further. That is in short ; He may be *satiated*, but not *satisfy'd*.

8. And this we have confirm'd by the ingenious Confession of one, who dug as low for his *Treasure* as ever Man did or could ; that ransack'd the whole Creation, and seem'd to make it his profess'd Business, to extract if possible, this *Divine Elixir* ; not as a *Voluptuary*, but as a *Philosopher* ; for *Experiment* and *Curiosity*, more than for *Sensuality* and *Pleasure*. But what was the issue? Why, after the chargeable *Operation*, the deluded *Chymist* sits down, recounts his gains, and finds this to be the sum of them, That his *Judgment* indeed was *inform'd*, but not that his *Desires* were *satisfied*: That he had with all his Cost, bought only this piece of Wisdom, to know the vanity of the Creation so far, as to give o'er all further search, and lose no more Time, Cost and Labour, in a *fruitless Experiment*.

9. And that what this great Enquirer after Happiness experimented is every Mans Case, I am further assured, when I Contemplate, that the great-

est Favorites of Fortune, those who have had the World at Command, and could enjoy all that is good in it, with almost as little trouble as 'twas Created, at a *words speaking*, have yet all along been subject to Melancholy, especially after some notable Enjoyment; as the *Grecian Hero* Wept when he had Conquer'd the World. Now what should the Cause of this be, but that they find themselves Empty in the midst of their fullness; that they *Desire* further than they *Enjoy*; that however every sense about them be feasted to the Height, yet there remains a *general* Appetite, that of being *Happy*, which is not satisfy'd; and not only so, but because they suspect withal (as indeed they have very good reason, having tasted the *utmost* of Natures Entertainment) that it *never* shall be. And from this *Desire* and *Despair*, proceeds their Melancholy and Dejection of Spirit. And to this purpose, I call to mind a very remarkable Story recorded by *Eusebius Nierembergicus*, in his Book *De Arte Voluntatis*, concerning an Eastern Emperour, who was minded to try the same Experiment upon his Son, as *Solomon* did upon himself; and to see how far the Accommodations of Life, might go towards True Felicity. He accordingly, train'd him up from his Infancy in magnificent Apartments, studiously remov'd from him all pitiable Objects, that he might not have so much as a *Notion* of Misery, humour'd him in every Punctilio, and furnish'd him with whatsoever he either did wish for, or might be suppos'd to take Pleasure in; till at length, the *unfortunately* Happy young Man, observing himself to be still in *Desires*, and that in

lib. 6. P. 537.

a State of all possible Worldly Affluence, could no longer flatter himself with *imaginary* Prospects, but concluded, That no Condition would ever mend the matter ; and so fell into extream Melancholy and Despair.

10. Now I consider, That if *mean* Persons only were subject to Melancholy, the *Desire* from whence it proceeded might be accounted for another way ; namely, from their not having so *much* of *Created* Good, as if *possess'd*, might be thought sufficient to satisfy. But when Men that sit on the Top of Fortune's Wheel, and drink at the *head Fountains* of Nature, are yet liable to Melancholy Dejections, 'tis to me a plain Argument, that the Cause of this Melancholy, their *Desires*, proceeds from a *Deficiency* in the *Things themselves* ; not that they are straitned in their *Possessions*, but that the *Things* which they possess, are *weigh'd in the Ballance, and found wanting*.

11. Thus far is this Truth attested to by *Experience*. But I am yet further assured of it, when I compare the Aspirations of my Nature with the goodness of the Creation ; for when I do so, I find they are very *disproportionate*. 'Twas a Celebrated Problem among the Ancient Mythologists, What was the *strongest* thing, what the *wisest*, and what the *greatest* ? Concerning which 'twas thus determin'd, that the *strongest* Thing was *Necessity*, the *wisest* was *Time* ; and the *greatest*, was the *Heart* of Man. And well may that be call'd the *greatest* Thing, whose Capacity can take in the whole Creation, and yet like the *immense space*, remain still an *unreplenish'd* Emptiness.

12. For my Desires are circumscribed with no Limits, but run on indefinitely to all possible Good. But now the *good* of the *Creation*, like the *Creation* it self, is *bounded*; the very Notion of a *Creature* involving *Imperfection*, as much as *Body* does *Circumscription* and *Termination*. Hence therefore I conclude, That not only all the good of the *Creation*, though collected together into *Extract* and *Spirit* by the *Chymistry* of its great Author, would be insufficient to afford me perfect Satisfaction; but that 'tis not in the *Power* of him that is *Omnipotent*, to Create any good that can satisfy my Desires, any more than to Create a *Body* that shall fill *Immense* Space. And consequently, That 'tis impossible that any *Created* Good should be the *End* of *Man*.

The PRAYER.

MY God, my Creator, who hast made all Things for the present Entertainment, but nothing for the End of Man; grant I may ever justly discern between the Goodness and the Vanity of thy Creatures, that I may not either by not heeding to the former, become Unthankful, or by not heeding to the later, become Idolatrous. O keep this Conviction still awake in me, How insufficient all Created Good is towards true Felicity; that I may not any longer with the mistaken Votaries of thy Son's Sepulcher, seek the Living among the Dead, Light in the Regions of Darkness; and that I may no longer labour for that which is not Bread. Let me not add Care, Labour and Toil to the Misery of unquench'd Thirsts, and unsatisfy'd Desires: but since I

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am certain never to find Rest in the Bosom of thy Creation, grant I may be so wise at least, as not to weary my self more in the fruitless Pursuit of it. Withdraw, I beseech thee, my expectations of Happiness from all the works of thy hands ; and fix them there only, where there is no Disappointment or Delusion, even in the true Center of all Desire : for the sake of thy tender Compassions, Amen.

CONTEMPLATION IV.

That God who is the Author of Man, is likewise his true End and Center.

1. **W**HEN I Contemplate the Nature of Man, and consider how the Desire of Happiness is interwoven with it ; That *Love is strong as Death, and importunate as the Grave* ; That there is a vehement and constant *Verticity* in the Soul towards perfect Good, which begins a soon, and is as Immortal as her self ; and withal, how disproportionately this *Amorous Disposition* of the Soul is gratify'd by any Entertainment, whether domestic or foreign, she can meet with in the Circle of *Created Good* : I find it necessary to conclude, that the great Being who commanded me to Exist, is so every way Perfect and All-sufficient, as to answer that vast Stock of Desires our Natures come Fraught withal into the World ; since otherwise (which is absurd to suppose) of all the Creatures in it, Man would be the most Miserable.

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2. For what Man of *Thoughts* is there, who after a through Conviction, that he can neither get rid of his Desires, nor among the Provisions of Nature have them fully *gratify'd*, would not immediately throw up his Title to Immortality, if he thought himself arriv'd to the *Meridian* of his Happiness, and that he must never expect to be in a better Condition than he is? For to have his Desires *enlarg'd*, and nothing to satisfy them, is such a *Contrivance* for Misery, that 'tis thought by some, to be the *Portion* of Hell, and to make up the very *Formality* of Damnation.

3. But to our great Consolation, 'tis wholly in our own Power, whether it shall be *always* so with us, or no. There is a Being, whose *Perfections* are answerable to our *Desires*. He that made us, can satisfy every Appetite he has planted in us; and he that is Happy in *reflecting* upon himself, can make us so too, by the *direct* View of his Glory. He can Entertain all our Faculties; our *Understandings*, as he is *Truth*; and our *Wills*, as he is *Goodness*; and that in the *Highest* Degree, because he is Infinite in *both*. He can more than employ all our Powers in their utmost *Elevation*; for he is every way Perfect, and All-sufficient, *yea he is altogether Lovely*.

4. But to evince more particularly and distinctly, That God is the true End of Man, I shall consider, whether the Conditions requisite to his being so are found in him. Now these can be no other than these two in general. 1st, That he be absolutely Good and Perfect in himself, so as to be *able* to fill and satisfy the whole Capacity of our Desires; and 2^{ly}, That he be *willing* that Man shall partake of this

this his Transcendent Fulness, so as actually one time or other to fix the weight of his Appetite, and become his Center. If therefore these two Conditions are found in God, he has all that is requisite to make him our End. And that they are, is now to be made appear.

5. First then, That God is absolutely Good and Perfect in himself, so as to be able to fill and satisfy the whole Capacity of our Desires. There are several Topicks in the *Metaphysics* from whence I might infer this, but I shall confine my present Speculation to this one, That God is the *First Being*. This is a very reasonable *Postulatum*; it being too obvious to need any proof, that there is a *First Being*, or, that by the *First Being* is meant God. It remains therefore, that we try what advantage may be made of it.

6. When therefore I consider God as the *First Being*, I am from thence in the first place, led to conclude, That he has *eminently*, and in a most excellent manner in himself, all kinds and degrees of Perfection, that exist loosely and separately in all second Beings. And that, not only because the Effect cannot possibly exceed the Virtue of the Cause, any more than it can proceed from no Cause: (which is the ground *Cartesius* builds upon, when he proves the Existence of God from the *objective* reality of his *Idea*) but because I further observe, that in the *Scale* of Being all *Ascension* is by *Addition*, and, that what is dispers'd in the Inferiour, is collected, and that after a more excellent manner, in the Superiour. Thus in Vegetables, there is bare Life; in Sensitives, Vegetative, Life and Sense;
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in Rationals, Vegetative, Life, Sense and Reason : and all this either formally or eminently with Intelligence in Angels. And since there is such an Harmonical *Subordination* among second Beings, so that the Superiour contains all the Perfection of the Inferiour, with a peculiar Excellence of its own superadded ; I think I have fair grounds to conclude, That the absolutely First Being has in his rich Essence, all the scattered Excellencies of the subordinate ones, in a more perfect manner than they *themselves* have, with some peculiar Excellence of his own besides.

7. Now though a Being thus *accumulatively* Perfect and Excellent, would be beyond all Conception, great and glorious, and would employ an Eternity, in *Contemplation* and *Love* ; we have yet seen but an *Arm* of this *Sea of Beauty*, and been enlightened only with the *Back-parts* of his Glory. For if God be the First *Being*, as is here supposed, I may further conclude, that he is also the First *Good* : (*Good* and *Being* being convertible, and every thing having so much Good in it as it has of Entity, and no more) and if he be the First Good, I cannot see how this Conclusion can be avoided, That he is *Infinitely Good*.

8. For I consider, that the First Good can have no *Cause* of that Goodness which it has : otherwise, it being necessary that the *Cause* of Good should be *Good*, it would not be the *First*. And if the First *Good* can have no Cause of its Goodness, it can likewise have no Cause of the *Termination* of it ; since what has no Cause *absolutely* and *simply*, cannot have a Cause in any particular *respect* ; and if it has

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no Cause of its Termination, it must necessarily be *Intermediate* or Infinite, and Consequently God, who is the *First* Good, is infinitely Good.

9. And now Breathe a while my Soul ; and consider what a Rich Mine of Good thou hast Sprung. Thou hast found out a Being, who is not only the Ideal as well as Efficient Cause of all Created Excellence ; but who is *Infinitely* Good and Excellent. This is he whose great Perfection not only contains and infinitely exceeds, but *Eclipses*, and quite *Extinguishes* all the Beauty of the Creature ; so that (as the express Image of this great Excellence informs us) *there is none Good, but one, which is God.* This is he whose Good is incomprehensible by the Understanding, and inexhaustible by the Will and Affections of Man. This is the celebrated *Αὐταρκέστατον* of *Aristotle*, the *ἰσὺ τῆ Ἀγαθῆ* of *Plato*, and the *El Shaddai* of the *Hebrews*. This is the great *πάν πλήρωμα*, the universal Plenitude, whose Happiness is consummated within his own Circle ; who supports himself upon the *Basīs* of his own *All-Sufficiency*, and is his own End and Center.

10. And now what is there more requisite to qualify him for being mine also but this only, That he be willing that Man shall partake of this his transcendent Fullness, so as actually one time or other to fix the *Weight* of his Appetite ; which was the second Condition.

11. And that this is also found in God, I think I have sufficient Assurance from these two Things ; the Absolute Perfection of his Nature ; and those express Revelations he has made of his Will, as to this particular. As for the Nature of God, it involves

volves, as in Notion and Conception, so likewise in Truth and Reality, (as was above demonstrated) absolute and infinite Perfection; and consequently, includes a *Benevolent* and *Communicative* Disposition; this being a *Perfection*.

12. Nor does the Superlative Eminency of the Divine Nature, only argue him to be Communicative, but to be the most Communicative and Self-diffusive of all Beings. For, as all Kinds, so all Degrees of Excellency must of necessity be included in a Being absolutely and infinitely Perfect, such as God is. Whence it will also follow, That he is not only the most Communicative of all Beings, but that he will also Communicate *himself*: and not only so, but in such an ample and liberal Measure too, as entirely to satisfy the most aspiring and reaching Appetite of Man; since otherwise, some degrees of Communicativeness, and consequently, of Excellence, would be wanting; which is absurd to suppose in a Being absolutely Perfect. Especially considering, that those importunate Desires of Human Nature are of his *own* Planting; which as it firmly assures us of his being *able*, so is it no less cogent an Argument for his being *willing* to be our Center; it being incredible, that so infinite an Excellence should Plant in Man such Desires, as either he *could not*, or *would not* satisfy.

13. And of this willingness of God that Man should partake of his *fulness*, so far as to Bottom upon it, and Acquiesce in it, there is yet further Assurance from many express *Revelations* of his good pleasure to that purpose. Which consist of two kinds, express *words*, wherein he professes himself

self passionately desirous of the Salvation and Happiness of Man; and two very notable and signal *Acts*; namely, the Consigning to the World a Copy of his Will, as a Chart to direct us to the true Haven of Rest and Anchorage; and the sending his beloved Son from the Mansions of Glory, to dislodge the angry Guardian of Paradise, and re-open for us an Entrance into the *Joy of our Lord*. By both which kinds of Revelation he has given us the highest Assurance imaginable, that he designs not to Engross and Monopolize the Perfections of his rich Essence; but that he is heartily willing to admit Man to a Participation of that excellent Good, wherein he himself is Happy; to give him (as the Psalmist expresses it) *Everlasting Felicity, and make him glad with the Joy of his Countenance*.

14. To which Considerations I might further add, That this excellent Communicativeness of the Divine Nature is typically represented, and mysteriously exemplify'd by the *Porphyrian* Scale of Being. For as there the lower degrees are *determin'd* and *contracted*, but the Higher more *common* and *extensive*, so is it in the *real* Scale of Being. The inferior, which are either Matter, or complicated and twisted with Matter, are more contracted, narrow, selfish and illiberal; but the superior, as they are less immers'd in, and allay'd with Matter, so are they more open, diffusive and free. For indeed, all Contraction and Confinement is from Matter; but 'tis Form and Spirit that is the Root of all Freedom and Enlargement. And thus we see in Bodies; the more of kin they are to Spirit in Subtilty and Refinement, the more *spreading* are they and *self-*

self-diffusive. Whereupon *Light*, which of all Bodies is nearest ally'd to Spirit, is also most Diffusive and Self-communicative. God therefore, who is at the very Top of all Being, who is an absolute, mere and spiritual Act, and who lastly, is such a *pure Light* as in which *there is no darkness at all*, must needs be infinitely Self-imparting and Communicative; and Consequently, wants nothing to qualifie him to be the True End and Center of Man.

The PRAYER.

M*Y* God, *my Happiness, who art as well the End as the Author of my Being; who hast more Perfection than I have Desire, and art also seriously willing to quench my great Thirst in the Ocean of thy Perfection; I beseech thee shew me thy Glory. Withdraw thy Hand from the Clift of the Rock, and remove the Bounds from the Mount of thy Presence, that I may see thee as thou art Face to Face, and ever dwell in the Light of thy Beauty. I have long dwelt with Vanity and Emptiness, and have made my self weary in the Pursuit of Rest. O Let me not fail at last, after my many wanderings and disappointments, to be taken up into this true and only Ark of repose and security, where I may for ever Rest, and for ever Bless the Author of my Happiness. In the mean time strike, I beseech thee, my Soul with such lively and ravishing Apprehensions of thy Excellencies, such bright Irradiations of thy Divine Light, that I may see enough to Love thee infinitely, to Depend on thee for my Happiness entirely, to Live upon holy Hopes and comfortable Expectations, and to*
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Bear up my Spirit under the greatest Aridities and Dejections with the delightful Prospect of thy Glories. O let me sit down under this thy shadow with great delight, till the fruit of the Tree of Life shall be sweet to my taste. Let me stay and entertain my longing Soul with the Contemplation of thy Beauty, till thou shalt condescend to kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, till thou shalt bring me into thy Banqueting-House, where Vision shall be the Support of my Spirit, and thy Banner over me shall be Love. Grant this, O my God, my Happiness, for the sake of thy great Love, and of the Son of thy Love, Christ Jesus. Amen.

CONTEMPLATION V.

Two Corollaries hence deduc'd : the First whereof is, That God is therefore to be loved with all possible Application and Elevation of Spirit, with all the Heart, Soul and Mind.

1. **A**Mong the Perfections of Human Nature, the faculty of desiring or reaching out after agreeable Objects, is not the least considerable; and 'tis the peculiar Glory of Man to be an *Amorous*, as well as a *Rational* Being. For by this he supplies the Defects of his Nature, not only *enjoys* the Good he unites with, but *digests* it as it were into himself, and makes it his own; and relieves his *domestic* Poverty by *foreign* Negotiation.

2. But tho' the *Pathetic* part of Man be one of the noblest Perfections he is furnished with, yet so generally faulty are we in the due applications and
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direction

direction of this Noble Faculty, that to be pathetically and amorously dispos'd, is look'd upon by some not as a *Perfection*, but as a *Disease* of the Soul, and is condemn'd by a whole Order of Men, as inconsistent with the Character of Wisdom, according to that Stoical Aphorism, *Amare simul & sapere ipsi Jovi non datur.*

3. But certainly, *Eve* was intended as a Help for *Adam*, tho in the event, she prov'd the Instrument of his Seduction ; and our Passions were given us to perfect and accomplish our Natures, tho' by accidental misapplications to unworthy Objects, they may turn to our degradation and dishonour. We may indeed be *debased*, as well as *innobled* by them ; but then the fault is not in the large Sails, but in the ill *conduct* of the *Pilot*, if our Vessel miss the Haven. The Tide of our Love can never run too high, provided it take a right *Channel* ; our *Passion* then will be our highest *Wisdom* : and he was no Stoic that said, *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God*, Psal. 42. And again, *My Soul is athirst for God.* And again, *My Soul breaketh out for fervent desire.* And again, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire in comparison of thee*, Psal. 119. Psal. 23. 24.

4. Being therefore from the foregoing Periods arrived to this Conclusion, That God is the True End and Center of Man, I think I ought now to loose the Reins of my Affections, to *unbait* the current of my Passion, and Love on without any other boundary or measure, than what is set me by the finiteness of my Natural Powers

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5. 'Tis true indeed, Whenever we turn the *Edge* of our Desire towards any Created Good, 'tis Prudence as well as Religion, to use Caution and Moderation, to *gauge* the *Point* of our Affections, lest it run in too far ; there being so much *Emptiness* in the *Enjoyment*, and so much *Hazard* in the *Possession*. When we venture to lean upon such Objects, we are like Men that walk upon a *Quagmire*, and therefore should tread as *lightly* as we can, lest it give way and sink under us.

6. But how excellent a Virtue soever Moderation may be in our concernments with other Objects, we have nothing to do with it in the Love of that Being who is our End and Center. There is here, danger but of *one Extream* ; and that is, of the *defect*. We can Love but finitely, when we have lov'd our utmost ; and what is that to him who is infinitely Lovely ? Since therefore our most liberal Proportions will be infinitely short and scanty, we ought not sure, to give *new Retrenchments* to our Love, and cut it yet shorter by *frugal* Limitations.

7. For if God be our End and Center, he must necessarily have all that Good in him which we can possibly Desire ; and if so, then he is able to stay and satisfy all our Love ; and if so, then nothing so reasonable, as that he should have it all. We are therefore to Love him with all possible Application and Elevation of Spirit, with all the the *Heart*, *Soul* and *Mind*. We should Collect and *Concenter* all the Rays of our our Love into this one *Point*, and lean towards God with the whole Weight of our Soul, as all that is ponderous in Nature, tends

with its *whole* Weight toward the *Center*. And this we should do as *directly* as may be, with as little *warping* and declension toward the Creature as is possible. For so also 'tis to be observ'd in Nature, that not only all Weight or *Pondus* tends toward the *Center*, but that also it moves thither as nigh as it can, in a *direct* and *perpendicular* Line.

The PRAYER.

MY God, my *Happiness*, who art fairer than the Children of Men, and who thy self art very Love, as well as altogether lovely, draw me and I will run after thee. O wind up my Soul to the highest pitch of Love that my *Faculties* will bear, and let me never alienate any degree of that noble *Passion* from thee its only due *Object*. Quench in me all *terrene* Fires and *sensual* Relishes, and do thou wound me deep, and strike me through with the *Arrows* of a *Divine* *Passion*, that as thou art all *Beauty* and *Perfection*, so I may be all Love and *Devotion*. My Heart is ready, O God, my Heart is ready for a *Burnt offering*; send down then an *Holy Fire* from above to kindle the *Sacrifice*, and do thou continually fan and keek alive, and clarify the *Flame*, that I may be ever *Ascending* up to thee, in devout *Breathings*, and pious *Aspirations*, till at length I ascend in *Spirit* to the *Element* of Love, where I shall know thee more clearly, and love thee more *Seraphically*, and receive those peculiar *Coronets* of *Glory* thou hast reserv'd for those that *Eminently* love thee, Amen.

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CONTEMPLATION VI.

The Second Corollary: That therefore God is ultimately to be referr'd to in all our Actions; and that he is not to be used by us, but enjoyed.

1. **A**S there is nothing of greater and more Universal Moment to the regular Ordination of Human Life, than rightly to accommodate the Means and the End, and to make them Uniform and *Symbolical*; so is there nothing wherein Men are more Universally Peccant and Defective, and that not only in *Practice*, but also in *Notion* and *Theory*.

2. For altho' to do an ill Action for a good End, and to do a good Action for an ill End, are generally acknowledg'd alike Criminal; yet concerning this later, 'tis observable, That Men usually think the Morality of their Actions sufficiently secured, if the End proposed be not in its own Nature *specifically* Evil. Whereas indeed, there is yet another way whereby an End may become Evil, namely, by being rested in, when 'tis not the last, without any further respect or reference. By this undue and *ill-plac'd* Acquiescence, an End that is otherwise in its own intrinsic nature Good, upon the whole commences Evil. For tho' it be good to be chosen, it is yet ill to be rested in.

3. For indeed 'tis against the Order and Oeconomy of things, as well as against the Perfection of *Religion*, That any End should be ultimately rested in, but what is truly the last. Now the last End of Action, can be no other than that which is

the last End of the *Will*; which is, the *Spring* of *Action*. This therefore being God (as appears from what I have already contemplated) it follows, That he ought to be the ultimate End of all our Actions; that we ought not in any of our Motions to stop short of this Center, but in all our Actions, to make a further reference either actual or habitual; and according to that of the Apostle, *Whether we eat or drink, to do all to the Glory of God.*

4. For what can be more absurd and incongruous, than to turn the Means into the End, and the End into the Means; to enjoy what ought to be only used, and to use what ought to be enjoyed? God is our last *End*, and therefore must not be desired for any thing but himself, nor used as a means to accomplish any other Design. Which also, concludes against all those who make Religion a point of Secular Interest, and a Tool of *State-policy*, whereas that ought to prescribe, and not receive Measures from any *Human* Affairs.

The P R A Y E R.

MY God, my Happiness, who art the last End of my Desires, the very utmost of all Perfection, and beyond whom there is no Good; be thou the last End of my Actions too, and let them all meet and unite in thee, as Lines in their Center. Grant, I may set thee before me in all my Thoughts, Words and Actions; let my Eye of Contemplation be always open, and whatever intermedial Designs I may have, let my last Aim be thy Glory. And, O let me never be so low sunk, base

base and wicked, as to make Religion an Instrument of Worldly Policy, nor to dishonour thee and my own Soul, by such a mercenary Piety. But do thou always possess my Mind with such a due Value for thy infinite Excellency, that I may refer all things to Thee, and Thee and Thine to nothing, but Love and Embrace Thee for Thy own self, who in Thy self alone art altogether lovely, Amen, Amen.

A Discourse upon *Rom. 12. 3.*

— *Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every Man the Measure of Faith.*

1. **T**HERE is nothing wherein Men are so much divided from one another, as in *Opinions*; and nothing wherein they more unanimously *conspire*, than in *thinking well of themselves*. This is a Humour of so *Catholic a Stamp*, and *Universal Empire*, that it may seem to Challenge a place among those *Elements* of our Constitution, those *Essentials* of our Nature which run throughout the whole Kind; and are participated by every *Individual*. For should a Man *take the Wings of the Morning*, and Travel with the Sun round the *Terrestrial Globe*, he would hardly find a Man either of a *Judgment* so difficult to be *pleas'd*, or of *Accomplishment* so little to recommend him, that was not notwithstanding sufficiently in Love with himself, however he might dislike every thing else about him; and without question, that arrogant and peevish *Mathematician* who charged the grand *Architect* with want of Skill in the *Mechanism* of the World, thought he had play'd the *Artist* well enough in *himself*; and as to the *Harmony* of his own frame, acquitted the *Geometry* of his Maker.

2. And

2. And as Men are thus naturally apt to think well of themselves in general, so there is nothing wherein they indulge this Humour more, than in the Opinion they have of the *Goods* of the *Mind*; and among these, there is none which has so great a share of their *Partiality*, as their *Intellectual* Faculty. The Desire of Knowledge is not more Natural, than the Conceit that we are already furnish'd with a considerable Measure of it; and tho' a particular *Señ* were Characteriz'd by that Appellation, yet all Mankind are in reality, *Gnostics*. For as 'tis (ingeniously observ'd by the excellent *Cartesius*) nothing is more equally distributed among Men than the *Intellectual* *Talent*, wherewith every one fancies himself so abundantly stock'd, that even those who have the most unsatiable Desires, and whom Providence could not satisfy in any one thing else, are notwithstanding, as to this *Dispensation* of Heaven, well enough content, complain not of the dull Planet that influenc'd their Nativity, or wish their Minds more richly endow'd than they are. And altho' there are a *generation* of Men who use to be very eloquent in setting out the degeneracy of Human Nature in general, and particularly in decyphering the *Shortness* of our *Intellectual* Sight, and the Defects of our now diminish'd Understanding, yet should a Man take them at their Word, and apply that *Verdict* to themselves in particular, which they so freely bestow upon the whole Species, no Men in the World so full of resentment and impatience as they; and I dare affirm, notwithstanding their *Harangues* upon the Corruption of Human Nature, could

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could all Mankind lay a true Claim to that *Estimate* which they pass upon themselves, there would be little or no difference betwixt laps'd and perfect Humanity; and God might again review his *Image* with *paternal Complacency*, and still pronounce it good.

3. Nor is it at all to be wonder'd, that *Self-Conceitedness* should be of such an unlimited and *Transcendental* Nature, as to run through all Sorts and Classes of Men, since the cause of it, *Self-love*, has such an universal *Jurisdiction* in our Hearts. 'Tis most natural and necessary for every Man (and indeed for every Intelligent Being) to be a lover of himself; and to Covet whatsoever any way tends to the Perfection of his Nature. And as 'tis necessary for every Man to be thus affected towards himself, so is this the only Disposition of Mind wherein Man acts with Constancy and *Uniformity*. Our other Passions have sometimes their total intermissions, and at best their increases and decreases; but this is always at *Full*, and stands drawn out to the utmost *Stretch* of its Capacity. No Man loves himself more at one time than at another, and that because he always loves himself in the highest Degree that is possible. More than all good he cannot wish to himself, and less than all he will not; nay, I had almost pronounced it impossible for Omnipotence it self, which *stays the proud Waves* of the Ocean, and blocks up its violent Efforts with *Barrs and Doors*, to say unto this Passion, *Hitherto shalt thou come but no further*, Job. 38. 10. or to set any other Bounds to it besides those of all possible good.

4. Now

4. Now Man being such an *infinite* Lover of himself, is easily brought to believe that he is really Master of many of those Excellencies and Perfections which he so passionately wishes among the *Inventory* of his Possessions. For there is this notorious difference betwixt *Self-love* and the *Love* of others, that whereas the Love of others supposes an Opinion of their Excellency, the Love of our selves *begets* it. We *Love* others because we *think well* of them, but (so preposterous is the method of *Self-love*) we think well of our selves because we first Love our selves. So that now upon the whole, considering how necessarily and vehemently every Man is carried on to the Love of himself, and what a natural product *Self-conceit* is of *Self-love*, 'tis much to be fear'd, that as we cannot set any Bounds to the *love* of our selves, so we shall hardly set due ones to our *Opinions* of our selves; and consequently, the most mortify'd and resign'd Man of us all, has no reason to think himself unconcern'd in this Admonition of the Apostle --- *Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every Man the Measure of Faith.*

5. 'Tis supposed that the Apostle in these words, had respect to the then prevailing Heresie of the *Gnosticks*, a sort of Men that pretended to great *Heights* of Divine Knowledge, to close Intimacies and Familiarities with God; and upon that presumption grew so haughty and insolent, as to *despise Dominions and speak evil of Dignities*; and withal so careless and secure, as to *desile the Flesh*, and indulge themselves in all manner of Sensuality; as you may see their Character in the Epistle of St. *Jude.*

Jude. Nay, of such turbulent ungovernable Principles, and profligate Manners were these Men, that some of the Learned (and particularly an eminent Divine of our own Church) have

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adventured to Write upon their Foreheads, *Mystery*, and to place them in the *Chair of Anti-Christ*. As an Antidote therefore against this Poison, the Apostle (2 Cor. 12. 7.) who through the *Abundance of Revelation* had himself been in danger of being *exalted above Measure*, and experimentally knew how prone Human Nature is to swell and plume upon a Conceit of its own Excellencies, thought it expedient to advise his Charge at *Rome* (the place which *Simon Magus* the Author of that Sect had (as *Esebius* tells us, *Hist. Eccles. l. 2. cap. 13.* made choice of to be the Scene of his Magical Operations) to moderate and sober Thoughts of themselves; and being to teach them a Lesson of Humility, he modestly ushers it in with a Preface of his Commission and Authority. *For I say* (says he) *through the Grace given unto me, to every Man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly, &c.*

6. The Discourse which I design upon these words shall be comprised within these limits :

First, I observe, That we are not at our own liberty, to entertain what Opinions we please concerning our selves; but that we ought to regulate them by some Standard. Which I Collect from the former part of the Text, *Not to think himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly.*

7. *Second-*

7. *Secondly*, I observe, That the Standard whereby we are to regulate our Opinions concerning our selves, are those Excellencies and Perfections which we are really indow'd with ; which I Collect from the later part of the Text, *According as God has dealt to every Man the Measure of Faith.*

8. And in the *third* place, I shall consider the Absurdities and ill Consequences of transgressing this *Standard* ; whereby it shall appear how highly reasonable this *Admonition* of the Apostle is ; and so conclude with a practical Application of the whole in relation to our selves, and the present occasion.

9. I begin with the first Proposition, *That we are not at our own liberty to entertain what Opinions we please concerning our selves ; but that we ought to regulate them by some Standard.*

10. The Acts of the *Understanding* are by some Men thought as free from all *Law*, as the Acts of the *Will* are from all *Necessity* ; and accordingly they give every one a *Toleratation* to *abound in his own sense*, and (provided his *Actions* be conformable to the Rule) to *Think* what he please. Now since a Man cannot be accountable for an *Opinion* of *himself* in particular, unless it be first granted that he is under a *Law*, as to the Acts of his *understanding* in general, before I can proceed any farther, I find it necessary to lay down this *Preparatory* Position, That we are under an *Obligation* as to the Acts of our *Understanding*, or (which is all one) that we are *Countable* for them. Nay, I believe I may venture higher, and affirm, That the *Understanding* is not only under *Obligation*, but that 'tis the *Primary*

mary and *immediate* Subject of it. For the proof of which Paradox, I desire the Patrons of the *Intellectual Libertinism* to consider, that that must be the Primary and immediate Subject of all *Obligation* which is so of *Liberty*. Now that this cannot be the *Will*, I suppose will be acknowledg'd a clear Consequence, if the *Will* necessarily follows the Practical Dictate of the Understanding. And that it does so, I think there is *Demonstration*.

11. Tis an unquestionable Axiom in all the Schools of Learning in the World, That the Object of the *Will* is *apparent* Good: Now *apparent* Good in other words, is that which is apprehended or judg'd to be Good; and if so, then it follows, that the *Will* cannot but Conform to the Dictate of the Understanding; because otherwise, something might be the Object of the *Will* that is not apprehended Good; which is contrary to the supposition. In short, the *Will* (as *Aquinas* has well expressed it) is the *Conclusion* of an *Operative Syllogism*; and follows as necessarily from the Dictate of the Understanding, as any other *Conclusion* does from its Premises; and consequently, cannot be the *immediate* subject of *Liberty*; and consequently, not of *Obligation*.

12. But then are we not involv'd in the same difficulty as to the *Understanding*? Does not that act with equal (if not more) Necessity than the *Will*? So I know it is ordinarily taught. But if this be absolutely and universally true, I must confess it above the reach of my Capacity to solve the Notion of *Morality*, or *Religion*; or to find out an Expedient how the *Foundations* of the *Intellectual* World

World should not be *out of course*. For since 'tis evident, both from the preceding Demonstration, and from experimental Reflection, that the Will necessarily acts in Conformity to the Dictates of the Understanding, if those very Dictates are also wholly and altogether necessary, there can be no such thing as a *τὸ ἐπ' ἑμῶν*, The Man is bound Hand and Foot, has nothing left whereby to render him a Moral Agent, to qualify him for Law or Obligation, Virtue or Vice, Reward or Punishment. But these are Absurdities not to be endured; and therefore I conclude, according to the Rules of right Reasoning, the *Principle* from which they flow to be so too.

13. To clear up then the whole Difficulty with as much Brevity and Perspicuity as in a matter of this Intricacy is possible, I shall no longer consider the Understanding and Will as Faculties really distinct either from the Soul it self, or from one another, but that the Soul does immediately Understand and Will by it self, without the Intervention of any Faculty whatsoever. And that for this demonstrative Reason in short, Because in the contrary Hypothesis, either *Judgment* must be ascribed to the Will, and then the Will immediately commences Understanding, or the Assent of the Will must be blind, brutish, and unaccountable; both which are as great Absurdities, as they are true Consequences. This being premised, I grant, that as the Soul necessarily Wills as she Understands, so likewise does she necessarily Understand as the Object appears. And thus far our sight *terminates* in *Fatality*, and *Necessity* Bounds our *Horizon*. That then

then that must give us a *Prospect* beyond it, must be this, That although the Soul necessarily Understands or Judges according to the Appearance of Things, yet that Things should so appear (unless it be in Propositions that are self-evident, as that the whole is greater than any one part, or the like) is not alike necessary, but depends upon the degrees of Advertency or Attention, which the Soul uses; and which to use, either more or less, is fully and immediately in her own Power. And this indifferency of the Soul, as to attending or not attending, I take to be the only *τὸ ἐν ἡμῖν*, the Bottom and Foundation into which the Morality of every Action must be at length resolv'd. For a farther Proof, as well as Illustration of which Hypothesis, let us apply it to a particular Case, and try how well it will answer the *Phænomena*. In the Case then of *Martyrdom*, I look upon Sin as an Evil; and not only so, but (while I attend fully to its Nature) the greatest of Evils. And as long as I continue this Judgment, 'tis utterly impossible I should Commit it; there being according to my present Apprehension, no greater Evil for the declining of which I should think it eligible. But now the Evil of *Pain* being presented before me, and I not sufficiently attending to the Evil of Sin, this later appears to be the lesser Evil of the two, and I accordingly *pro hic & nunc*, so pronounce it; and in Conformity to that Judgment, *necessarily* chuse it. But because 'twas absolutely in my Power to have *attended* more heedfully, there was Liberty in the Principle, the Mistake which influenc'd the Action was vincible; and consequently, the

the Action it self imputable. This *Hypothesis*, however strange it may seem to those that have sworn Faith and Allegiance to the Dictates of the Schools, I believe will be the more approv'd, the more it is examin'd; and that not only as rational and consistent in it self, but also as a Refuge from those Absurdities which attend the ordinary Solutions. Neither is this account wholly *unlicens'd* by Authority; for I find some Hints and Intimations of it in the * *School of Plato*, where the reason why those middle sort of Beings call'd *Heroes* are not so uniformly pure as the *Αδύρατοι Στοι*, or *Nisi*, is assign'd to be, because they do not so equally attend to the *Beauty* of the *Supream Good*.

* See Hierocles upon the Golden Verses of Pythagoras.

14. From what has been said it appears plainly, That the Morality of every Human Action must be at length resolv'd into an immediate indifference that the Soul has of *attending*, or not *attending*; and consequently; that we are not only under Obligation as to the Acts of the Understanding, but that all Obligation begins there.

15. Having thus clear'd the way by the Proof of this Preparatory Position, That we are under Obligation as to the Acts of the Understanding in general. I may now proceed to consider, That our Opinion of our selves, is one of those Acts of the Understanding which are subject to Law; or in other Terms, That *we are not at our own liberty to entertain what Opinions we please concerning our selves, but that we ought to regulate them by some Standard.* Now the general reason of this is, be-
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cause 'tis of great moment and influence in relation to our Practice, what Opinion we entertain concerning our selves. Indeed, there are many acts of the Understanding which tho' Originally free, yet fall under no Obligation by reason of the *Indifferency* of the Matter ; as in things of pure and naked Speculation. These are the *unforbidden* Trees of the Garden ; and here we may let loose the Reins, and indulge our Thoughts the full Scope. Thus there is no danger of *Hereſe* in asserting or denying the *Antipodes* ; nor is *Orthodoxy* concern'd, whether the *Moon* be *habitable*. But although to mistake a Star be of no Conſequence to the *Theoriſt* that ſits immur'd in his Study, yet it may be to the *Pilot*, that is to *Steer* his *Course* by it. There are *other* Things which have a *Practical* Aspect ; and here 'tis not *indifferent* what we think, becauſe 'tis not *indifferent* what we do. Now among theſe the Opinion of our ſelves is to be reckon'd, as having a great Influence upon our well or ill demeaning our ſelves reſpectively ; as will more minutely and particularly appear, when we come in the third and laſt place, to conſider the *Absurdities* and ill Conſequences of tranſgreſſing the *Standard* preſcribed ; and therefore I ſhall defer the further proſecution of it till then ; and in the mean while, proceed to the ſecond *Observable*, Namely,

That the Standard whereby we are to regulate our Opinions concerning our ſelves, are thoſe Excellencies and Perfections which we are really endow'd with. Which is collected from theſe words, According as God has dealt to every Man the meaſure of Faith.

16. In the former part of the Text there was indeed a Restraint laid upon our Opinions concerning our selves; but it was general only, and indefinite. But here the ground is measured out, and the Boundaries precisely set. *Μέτρον πίστεως*, that's the great *Ecliptic Line*, which is to bound the Career of our most forward and *Self-indulging* Opinions. If we keep within this Compass, our motion is Natural and Regular, but if we slide never so little out of it, 'tis Unnatural and Portentous. Or to speak with greater Simplicity, He that Judges of himself according to those Excellencies, whether Moral or Intellectual, which he really has, does *φρονεῖν σὺς τὸ σωφρονεῖν*, *think soberly*; and he that thinks himself indow'd with any Kind or Degrees of Excellence which really he has not, does *ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δέ φρονεῖν*, *think of himself more highly than he ought to think*.

17. Here then are Two things to be considered.

First, That we may proceed so far as this *Standard*.

And Secondly, That we may not go beyond it.

First, That we may proceed so far.

18. It has been taught by some of the severe Masters of *Spiritual Mortification*, That we ought to take up the most low and abject Thoughts of our selves that are possible, to be conscious of no manner of Excellency in our selves; and consequently, not to be affected with the least *Self-complacency*; That we ought to account our selves to be Nothing, to have Nothing, to be worth Nothing; but to be very *refuse*, and the *off-scouring of all things*, 1 Cor. 4.

13. And this they call the *Mystical Death*, or the *Spiritual Annihilation*. Now whatever degrees of

Excellency this may have (which I shall not now dispute) 'tis most certain it can have nothing of *Duty*. For tho' it may, and oftentimes is, required of a Man to think the *Truth*, yet he can never be under an Obligation to be *mistaken*. Besides, 'Tis hard to conceive how any Man (especially one that *dwells* much with himself, and heedfully reflects upon the Actings of his own Mind) should be Master of any considerable *Excellency*, and yet not be *Conscious* of it. And besides, That very degree of Attention which is required, that a Man should not think himself *more* Accomplish'd than indeed he is, will also infallibly hinder him from thinking he is *less*. 'Tis true indeed, *Moses* knew not that his Face shone, after he had been *Conversing* with God on the Mount. He saw not the Orb of Glory that stream'd from him; and wondred what it was that made him so dreadful to the People. But 'tis not so with the Soul, whose reflective Faculty will not fail to give her Information of her most retir'd and reserv'd Accomplishments. 'Tis not with the *lesser*, as with the *Greater* World, where whole Tracts and Regions (and those some of the best too) lye undiscovered. No, Man cannot be such a *Stranger* to his own Perfections, such an *America* to himself. For *who can know the things of a Man, if not the Spirit of Man which is in him?* And accordingly we find, that the *ignorance* of our selves, with which Mankind has been hetherto so universally tax'd, runs quite in another Channel, and does not consist in *overlooking* any of those Indowments which we *have*; but in *assuming* to our selves those which we *have not*.

19. I confess (were it possible) I should think it advisable for some Persons to be ignorant of some of their Excellencies, and like the Sun, not to *reflect* home to their own *Sphere of Light* ; Not that I think it in the least *unlawful* to be fully Conscious of ones own Worth, but only I consider, that some Men have not Heads strong enough to *endure Heights*, and walk upon *Spires and Pinnacles*. But if they can stand there without growing *vertiginous*, they need not question the lawfulness of the *Station* ; they are still within the *Region of Humility*. For 'tis not every thinking well of ones self, that falls in with the Notion of *Pride* ; but only when there is more of *Opinion* than there is of Worth. 'Twas this that was the Condemnation of the Apostate Angel, not that he took a just Complacency in the Eminency of his Station, but that he vainly arrogated to himself what was not his *due*, in that he said, *I will Ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God, I will sit upon the sides of the North, I will ascend above the heights of the Clouds, I will be like the most High, Isa. 14. 13.* 'Twas for this that the Angel of *Death* drew upon *Herod*, not because he was pleased with the *fineness* and *success* of his Oratory, but because he was not so *just* to God as the People were to *him*, but lookt upon himself as the *Head-fountain* of his own Perfections, and so *gave not God the Glory*, *Act. 12. 23.*

20. But now if we take Care to proportion our *Estimation of*, and our Complacencies *in* our selves to the measure of our Endowments, and if we look upon those very Endowments not as *originary* and independent, but as *derivative* from the *Father of*

Lights, from whom every good and perfect gift descends, Jam. 1. 17. and accordingly refer all to God's Glory, and with the Elders of the Revelations, take off our Crowns from our Heads and cast them at the foot of the Throne, we have not only the express words of the Text, but likewise, all the Reason in the World to warrant the *Sobriety* of our Opinions. For, this is but to have a right and exact Understanding of ones self. And why may not a Man be allowed to take a true Estimate of himself, as well as of another Man? Or, why should a Man think an Excellency less valuable, because 'tis in himself? The Happiness of God consists in seeing himself *as he is*; he reflects upon the *Beauty* of his Essence, and rejoices with an infinite *Complacency*. Now certainly, that wherein consists the *Happiness* of the *Creator*, cannot be a *Sin* in the *Creature*. Besides, I would fain know why a Man may not as lawfully think well of himself upon the Score of his real Worth, as *desire* that *others* should think well of him for the same Reason? And that he may do, the later is confessed as well by the *Practice*, as by the common *Suffrage* of Mankind. For otherwise, what becomes of that *good Reputation* which *Solomon* says, *is rather to be chosen than great Riches*; Prov. 22. 1. and of which the best and wisest Men of all Ages, had ever such a tender, such a *Passionate* Regard? Nay, 'tis look'd upon as a very *commendable* thing to be so affected; and the contrary is censured as the mark of a dissolute and *unmoraliz'd* Temper. Only there is a Μέτρον τῆς Καρίης, to be observ'd in this as well as in the former, and as we are not to *stretch out our selves beyond our Measure*, 2 Cor. 10. 13. so must

must we take care with the great Apostle, not to give *others* occasion to *think of us above that which they see us to be*, 2 Cor. 12. 6. Besides, if we may not be allow'd to *take the full Height* of our own Excellencies, how shall we be able to give God thanks for them? The *Elders* must know they *wear Crowns*, before they can use them as Instruments of Adoration; and *Herod* must be Conscious of the right *Genius* of his Oratory, before he *can give God the Glory*. Again, in the last place, if a Man may not have leave to take Cognizance of his own Deserts, and to Value himself accordingly, what will become of that $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha\tau\iota\sigma\tau\omega\varsigma \alpha\gamma\alpha\theta\eta\varsigma \iota\pi\epsilon\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta\mu\alpha\tau\iota\varsigma \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ which the Apostle speaks of, *the answer of a good Conscience towards God*, 1 Pet. 3. 21. which is nothing else but a Sentence of Approbation, which a Man passes upon himself for the well managing of that *Talent* of Liberty which God has entrusted him with? Now this is the *Reward* of Virtue, and therefore certainly not *contrary* to it.

21. Neither is this *Self-esteem* only the *Reward* of Virtue but also the *Cause* of it too; and consequently 'tis not only *allowable*, but also highly *needful*, that we should think *Honourably* of our selves. 'Tis a frequent Observation among *Moral* and *Divine* Writers, that most, if not all the Sins which Men commit, proceed from want of a due Sense of the Dignity of their Nature. And consequently, a due reflection upon a Man's own Worth, must needs be a strong *Preservative* against whatsoever would *stain* its Glory. *Shall such a Man as I flee?* was the powerful Consideration that *buoy'd* up the *sinking* Spirits of *Nehemiah*. And 'tis one of the *Capital* Pre-

cepts of *Pythagoras's* Morals (and perhaps one of the best too that was ever given to the World)

———Πάντων ἢ μάλιστα ἀρχαίω σοφόν. *Above all things reverence thy self.* And 'twas the Saying of another of the Sons of Wisdom, *Let not the Reverence of any Man cause thee to sin.* Which it certainly will do, unless we observe the former Rule, and reflect with due *Reverence* upon our own Worth and Dignity.

22. From these Considerations (not to urge any more) it seems to me very evident, That 'tis not only *Lawful*, but in some respects highly *Expedient*, that our Opinions of our selves should rise up so as to be of a *Level* with our Excellencies, whatsoever they are. Let one of the Scales be mounted never so *high*, yet if there be a proportionable *Weight* in the *other*, the Ballance moves regularly, and as it should do. We may then proceed so far as this *Standard*.

23. But Secondly, We must not go *beyond* it. For all beyond this is *Pride*. *Pride*, that turn'd the Angels out of Heaven, *Adam* out of Paradise, and level'd the great King of *Babylon* with the *Beasts* that *Perish*; and which is nothing else but an *Intemperate* Opinion of our selves, which consists either in assuming to our selves any Excellency which we have not, or in *Over-rating* what we have. Tho' indeed in *Strictness* of Notion, this later falls in with the former: For to *Over-rate* what we have, is indeed to assume some *Degree* of good which we have not. Here then begins our Restraint, the *Reasonableness* of which will appear from the Absurdities and ill Consequences which attends the transgressing of this *Standard*; and which in the third and last place, I come now to consider.

24. I shall observe only the most notorious ; and these I shall reduce to these Three general Heads.

First, That it unqualifies us for the performance of many Duties.

Secondly, That it betrays us into many Sins.

And Thirdly, That it frustrates all methods of Reformation. Of these very briefly.

25. First, An excessive Opinion of our selves (and that is so which surpasses the measure of our real Worth) unqualifies us for the performance of many Duties ; and that both in Relation to God, our Neighbour, and our selves.

First, in relation to God.

26. As *Folly* leads to *Atheism*, so does an *over-weening* Opinion of our own *Wisdom*, or any other Excellency, to *Profaneness*. For as *the Fool has said in his Heart, there is no God*, so it is said in another place, That the *ungodly is so Proud that he careth not for him*, Psal. 10. 4. Pride then is altogether inconsistent with that Subjection, Honour and Veneration which we owe to God. For how can he submit his Passions to the *Authority* of the *Divine Will*, who has made a *Law* of his own? And as it indisposes us for all *active*, so likewise for all *passive* Obedience ; for how can he *suffer* that with *Patience*, which he thinks he does not *deserve* in *Justice*? Or how can he submit with *Resignation* to the seeming unevenness of Providential Dispensations, the equality of which because he cannot *discern*, he must in *honour* to his own Understanding *deny*? And upon the same ground, it unqualifies us for *Faith* in many of the Divine Revelations. For how can he *Captivate* his Understanding to *Mysteries*, who thinks
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it a dishonour to *own* any, and is resolved to *Believe* no farther than he can *Comprehend*?

27. Lastly, It unqualifies us for *Gratitude* towards God ; and consequently, puts a Bar to all those good Actions which we would otherwise perform upon that *Principle*. And by this it becomes a *Multiplied*, a *Legion* Evil. For how can he acknowledge an Obligation passed upon him by God's *Favours*, who calls them not by that Name, but esteems them as *Rewards* and *Payments*, and inverting the Protestation of the good *Patriarch*, Gen. 22. 16. thinks himself *worthy* of the *greatest* of his *Mer- cies*.

28. Then Secondly, In relation to our Neighbour, it unqualifies us for Obedience to Civil Government. For how can he submit to the Wisdom of his Superiors, and pay an *implicite* Deference to the *Occult* Reasons of State, who thinks himself Wiser than a whole *Senate*, and disputes even the ways of *Providence* ? Pride was ever observed to be the Mother of Faction and Rebellion ; and accordingly, St. *Jude* makes it part of the *Character* of the Proud *Gnostics*, *To despise Dominions, and speak evil of Dignities*.

29. Again, It unqualifies us for those Acts of Justice which consist in due observation of our Neighbours Merits, and a deference of external Respects proportionable to that observation. For how can he be at *leisure* to take notice of *another's* Worth, who is so wholly taken up in the *Contemplation* of his *own* ? Let the Reputation of his best Friends (if it be possible for a Proud Man to have any) be in never so great danger, he like *Archimedes*, is so over-
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busie in admiring the Creatures of his own Brain, those *Draughts* and *Ideas* which he has form'd of *himself* there, that he regards not the *Ruin* that is about him. Or if he does, he is so far from appearing in their defence (as in Justice he ought) that he rather rejoyces at their *Spots* as *Accessions* to his own *Brightness*.

30. Again, It unqualifies us for the Offices of Humanity, and Civil Behaviour, and all kinds of *Homilitical* Virtue: For how can he treat those with any tolerable Civility, whom he looks down upon as a whole *Species* below him?

31. Lastly, It unqualifies us for Gratitude toward our Benefactors. For how can he think himself obliged by *Man*, who counts *God* his *Debtor*,

32. Then Thirdly, In relation to our Selves, here is this grand ill Consequence of an immoderate Self-esteem, that it unqualifies us not only for higher Attainments, but even for the very *endeavours* of Improvement, and so cuts short, and *bedwarfs* all our Excellencies. 'Tis the Observation of *Cicero*, *Multi ad scientiam pervenissent nisi se jam pervenisse credidissent*, The *Opinion* of the Proud Man has so far got the *start* of the real *Worth*, that the later will never overtake the former.

33. And as the immoderate Esteem of our Selves, unqualifies us for the performance of many Duties, so does it also, in the second place, Betray us into many Sins.

34. First, Into all those Sins which are contrary to the forementioned Virtues respectively. And besides them, into many more; such as are Presumption and Security, Vexation and Discontent, Contempt

tempt of others (tho' at the same time it exposes us to theirs) Anger and Contention, Malice and Revenge. For the Proud Man is not content to be his own *private* Admirer, but quarrels with all others that are not of his Perswasion; and with the *Tyrant of Babylon*, kindles a *Fire* for those who will not *fall down and Worship the Image which he has set up.*

35. Neither does the *Leprosie* stop here. But as it betrays us into many Sins, so in the Third and last place (which is the most dismal Consequence of all) it frustrates all Methods of Reformation. God's Judgments will but exasperate and irrage him, because he thinks he does *not* deserve them; and his Mercies will not indear him, because he thinks he *does*. *Advice* he thinks, he does not *need*, and *Reproof* he cannot *bear*. Besides, he thinks so well of himself already, that he wonders what you *mean* by advising him to become *better*; and therefore as he does not endeavour after any of those Excellencies which he thinks he has, so neither can he dream of mending those Faults which he thinks he is not guilty of: Thus is the Man *Seal'd up* to Iniquity, and deeply *lodg'd* in the *strong holds* of Sin, where nothing that has a Salutory Influence can come nigh him. And in this he resembles the first *Presidents* of his Folly, who from Angels transform'd themselves into Devils, and fell beyond the *possibilities* of *Recovery*.

36. These are some of the Fruits of this *Root of Bitterness*; and tho' more might be named, yet these I think sufficient to justify this Admonition of the *Apostle* to every Man, *not to think of himself more highly*

highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every Man the Measure of Faith. Let us then all Endeavour to conform our Opinions concerning our selves to this Standard. Let us not stretch our selves beyond our *natural dimensions*, but learn to entertain modest and sober thoughts of our own Excellencies and Endowments, and mortifie our *understandings* as well as our *sensitive affections*. And thus shall we compleat our Lent Exercise, by joyning the mortification of the Spirit to that of the Flesh, without which the greatest Austerities wherewith we can afflict the later, will not be *such a Fast as God has chosen*. For what will it avail to macerate the Body, while the principal Part, the Soul, remains unmortified? The Humility of *Moses* must conspire with his Forty Days Fasting, to qualifie a Man for Divine Intercourses, to make him the Joy of Angels, the *Friend of God*. Thus then let us accomplish the Refinings of our Souls, and fill up the Measure of our Mortifications. To which end, let us add this one further Consideration to what has been already said, That Humility, in the Judgment even of the *High and Lofty One that inhabits Eternity*, is a Virtue of such great Excellency, and singular Advantage to the Happiness of Mankind, that our Blessed Saviour came down from Heaven to teach it; that his whole Life was one continued Exercise of it, and that he has dignified it with the First Place among his Beatitudes. Let us then, as many as profess the Religion of the Humble and Crucify'd JESUS, make it our strict Care, that we neglect not this his great Commandment, nor omit to Copy out this
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Principal Line, this main Stroke of the Pattern he has set us. Especially let us of this Place, who are set among the *greater Lights* of the Firmament, and whose Profession and Business is to Contemplate Truth, and to think of Things as God made them, in *Number, Weight, and Measure*, labour in the first place to take just and true Measures of our Selves, that our *Knowledge puff us not up*, nor our Height become our *Ruin*.

Considerations

Considerations upon the Nature of Sin ;
Accommodated to the Ends both of *Speculation* and *Practice*.

SECT. I.

Of the division of Sin into Material and Formal; and of the reality and necessity of that Distinction.

1. **T**O make this our Discourse about Sin, more clear and distinct, before we enter upon its Nature, 'twill be requisite to premise something concerning the double Acceptation of the word. For nothing can be defined, before it be distinguished.

2. I observe therefore, That Sin may be considered either *abstractedly*, for the bare Act of Obliquity ; or *concretely*, with such a special Dependence of it upon the Will, as renders the Agent *guilty*, or obnoxious to Punishment. I say, with such a *special* Dependence of it upon the Will ; for not every dependence of an Action upon the Will, is sufficient to make it *imputable*, as shall be shewn hereafter. The former of these, by those that distinguish more nicely, is called *transgressio voluntatis* ; the later, *transgressio voluntaria* ; or according to the more ordinary distinction, the former is the *material* ; the later, the *formal* Part of Sin.

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3. This distinction is both *real* and *necessary*. 1. It is *real*, Because the Idea or Conception of *material* Sin is not only distinct from the Idea of *formal* Sin, (as it may be in things really the same) but when considered as *alone* does positively exclude the other. For this Notion, a *bare act of obliquity*, does not only *prescind from*, but also *positively deny* such a special Dependence of it upon the Will, as makes it imputable for Punishment.

4. Now as it is a certain sign of *Identity*, when the Idea of one thing necessarily includes the Idea of another; so is it of *real distinction*, when the Idea of one thing in any Case, positively excludes the Idea of the other. There may indeed, be distinct Conceptions of one and the same thing, whereof there are different Properties or Degrees; but then one does only *abstract from*, and not in any Case *positively exclude* the other. Which when it does, it is an evident sign of *real distinction*.

5. But the greatest Argument of real Distinction, is *separability* and *actual separation*. For nothing can be separated from it self. And this also has place here. For the *material* Part of Sin, may actually exist without the *formal*. That is, there may be an Act of Obliquity, or an irregular Act, without any Guilt deriv'd upon the Agent; or to speak more strictly, without that *special* Dependence of the Act upon the Will, which is the *foundation* of that Guilt. This is evident in the Case of *Fools* and *Mad Men*.

6. And as this Distinction is *real*, so also is it very *useful* and *necessary*. 1st. In the *Notion*, to prevent Ambiguities and Fallacies, that might arise from the use of the word (Sin.) As when St. *John* says,
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He that commits Sin is of the Devil, John 3. 8. certainly 'twould be a Fallacy to argue hence, that every mere Act of Obliquity is *Diabolical*, because a Sin; since not *material* but *formal* Sin, was the thing intended in St. *John's* Proposition.

7. *2ly*, In the *Thing*, for the honour and vindication of the Divine Attributes. Particularly, from the Damning of Infants merely for the Corruption of Nature, commonly call'd Original Sin; It being repugnant to the Measures of Justice, and the Dictates of Common Sense, that the bare doing an irregular Act, or the bare having an irregular Propension, should be *punishable at all*; much more, with *Eternal Damnation*; as it must be, if *every* Dependence of an Action upon the Will, be enough to render it imputable; that is, if every *material* be also a *formal* Sin. This I say would be very unjust, because such irregular Acts are no more a Man's own, than those Committed by another Man.

8. But it is certain, that God does not proceed by such Measures; as may be gathered from the Oeconomy of his severest Dispensation, the *Law*. For when he forbade Murther with such strictness and severity, as to order the Murtherer to be taken from his Altar, and put to Death, yet he provided Cities of *Refuge* for the security of those, who ignorantly or unwillingly had shed Human Blood, Deut. 19. Which may be also added as a further Confirmation, that *every* Dependence of an irregular Act upon the Will, is not such as derives Guilt upon the *willer*; and consequently, that there is a real Distinction between *Material* and *Formal* Sin.

9. This Distinction I confess, is sometimes other-

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wife used, where the *material* of Sin is taken for all that is *Substantial* and *Positive* in the Act, not including the *Obliquity*, and the *formal* for the *Obliquity*, not including that *special* Dependence of it upon the Will which make it imputable. This I remember the Angelical Doctor distinguishes upon the Definition which St. *Austin* gives of Sin, that it is *Dictum, factum vel concupitum contra legem Dei aeternam*, Prim. Secund. Quæst. 71. Art. 6. Here, says he, St. *Austin* points out both the *matter* and the *form* of Sin. The *matter* in the *substance* of the Act, the *form* in the *Obliquity*, its Contrariety to the Law.

10. But it may be considered that *Aquinas* here, and all those that so use the Phrase, by the *matter* of Sin, intend only that which is equally *Common* both to *good* and *bad* Actions, the *substratum commune*, as the Schools call it ; and by the *Form*, that which *specifies* the Act otherwise indifferent, and gives it the *first* difference of Sin. And this indeed, is according to Propriety as well as the other. For the *material* Part of Sin is *compleat* Sin in its *kind*; and consequently, must also consist of its *matter* and form. But when Sin is considered according to its full *Latitude*, then the *irregular Act* goes for the *material*, and that *special* Dependence of it upon the Will which drives guilt upon the Agent for the *formal* Part of Sin. And in this Sense I now consider it.

SECT. II.

SECT. II.

A more particular and explicit Consideration of Material Sin, and what it adds to the general Nature of Evil.

1. **A**fter our Distinction of Sin into *Material* and *Formal*, and our justification of that Distinction, it follows, that in the next place, we give some more particular and explicit Account of the Nature of *Material Sin*. That it is an *irregular Act* in general, was intimated before; but to speculate its Nature more thoroughly, we must set it in a clearer Light, and define what it is that makes an Action *irregular*. And the Account which I shall give of this, I shall ground upon that Definition of St. John, who tells us, That *Sin is a Transgression of the Law*. So that *Transgression of the Law*, is the *irregularity* of an Action, and is more explicitly, the *Material Part* of Sin.

2. Thus far in *general*. But now to make *Transgression of the Law* fully adequate, and commensurate to *Material Sin*, so as to extend to all kinds of it, it concerns us in the next place to enquire, What is here to be understood by (*Law*) and upon the right stating of this, will depend the whole *Theory* of *Material Sin*.

3. By *Law* therefore, in the first place, is to be understood that which is *Positive*; that is, any Rule of Action prescribed to us by God, consider'd only as *prescribed*. Any Action so prescribed, be it otherwise never so indifferent for the *Matter*, puts on the

force of a *Law* from the *Authority* of the Prescriber; and every Transgression of such a Rule is *Sin*.

4. But the Transgression of Law in this narrow Sense of the word, will not comprehend all the kinds of *Material Sin*. For although *Positive Law* creates the first difference in *some* Things, yet it does not in all. For had God never made any *Positive Law*, yet the doing of *some* Actions would have been *Sin*; nay, there was *Sin* where there was no *Positive Law*; as may be probably Collected from the Fall of *Angels*. But where there is no Law, there is no Transgression. There must be therefore some other Law, besides *Positive Law*.

5. By Law therefore, 2ly. is to be understood the Law of Reason, that Candle of the Lord that Lights every Man that comes into the World in his Passage thro' it. This is Twofold. For 1st. By the Law of Reason may be understood, that Original Stock of *rational Tendencies* or practical Sentiments, which prevent all Discourse and Reasonings about what is to be done; and Answer to *Speculative Principles*. For as the Animal and Sensitive Nature, is not only furnish'd with Sense and Perception, but also with certain con-natural Instincts and Impressions, whereby Animals are directed and declined to *sensitive good*; so for the guardianship and security of Virtue, against the danger, either of *Ignorance* or *Inadvertence*, God has furnish'd the Rational Nature, not only with the Faculty of Reasoning, but with certain Common Principles and Notions, whereby 'tis inclined to the Good of the *Reasonable Life*. This is the *νομοθετικόν*, so much talkt of; and that which Men generally mean by the *Law of Nature*.

6. Or

6. Or else *2ly*, By the Law of Reason may be understood a Power, which a Rational Creature has of finding out by discoursing from First Principles what is fit to be done, and of reflecting upon the Reasonableness of those Moral *Anticipations* and Impressions; which he *before* entertain'd, tho' he knew not upon what *ground*.

7. These Two make up the adequate Notion of the *Law of Reason*; but we are not yet come to the adequate Notion of *Law*. For if the *Law of Reason* be taken in the first Sense for a Stock of Moral *Anticipations* implanted by God in the Soul, this will be but another Branch of *Positive Law*. For *Light of Nature*, and *Light of Scripture*, are but different Modes of Divine Revelation; and neither of these can be the *ultimate Reason*, into which the Morality of every Action is to be resolv'd.

8. But if the *Law of Reason* be taken in the later Sense, for a Power which a Rational Creature has of finding out by Discourse, what is Reasonable to be done, this will of Necessity lead us *higher*; namely, to consider that there are certain, antecedent, and independent *Aptnesses* or Qualities in Things; with respect to which, they are fit to be commanded or forbidden by the Wise Governour of the World, in some *positive Law*; whether that of Internal, or External Revelation, or both.

9. We are therefore, in the next place, to resolve these antecedent *Aptnesses* of Things, into their proper *ground*; or to assign what that is which makes an Action *fit to be commanded*, or *forbidden*. Which when we have done, we are advanced as high as we can go; and have found out that Su-

preme, Eternal and Irreversible Law, which prescribes Measures to all the rest, and is the *last* Reason of *Good* and *Evil*.

10. That therefore which makes an Action fit to be commanded or forbidden by the Wise Governour of the World, can be nothing else *ingeneral*, but its respective tendency to promote, or hinder the Attainment of some certain *End* or other, which that *Governour* proposes. For all Action being *for* some *End*, and not the *End* it *self*, its aptness to be commanded or forbidden, must be founded upon its serviceableness or disserviceableness to some *End*. So much in general.

11. I further Consider, That this *End* must be that which is simple and absolutely the *best* and *greatest*. For no other is Worthy of *God*. Now certainly, there is none better or greater, than the *universal Good* of the whole Systeme of Things; which is therefore to be regarded, and prosecuted to the utmost, both by *God*, and all other *Intelligent Beings*.

12. And hence arises this first and great *Canon* or *Law*; That whatever naturally tends to the Promotion of the Common Interest, is *good*, and apt to be *commanded*: and whatever naturally tends to the Disinterest of the Public, is *Evil*, and apt to be *forbidden*. This is the great *Basis* of *Morality*; the fixt and immutable Standard of *Good* and *Evil*; and the *fundamental Law* of *Nature*.

13. And because there are some Actions *in specie*, which with relation to the present Systeme both of the *Material* and *Intellectual World*, have such a *natural Connexion* with the furtherance or prejudice of this great *End*; therefore these by way of *Assumption*

tion, under the two *general* Propositions, are intrinsically and naturally *good* or *bad* ; and are thereby differenc'd from those that are made so only by *Arbitrary Constitution*. Though yet in one respect, *these* are *Arbitrary* too, in as much as they depend upon such a particular *Hypothesis* of the World which was *it self* *Arbitrary* ; and which if God should at any Time change, the relations of Actions to the great End might change too ; that which now *naturally* makes for the Common Advantage, might *as naturally* make *against* it ; and consequently, that which is now *Good*, might have been *then* *Evil*. But still the two *great Hinges* of *Morality*, stand as fixt and as unvariable, as the two *Poles* ; whatever is naturally *Conducive* to the Common Interest, is *Good* ; and whatever has a contrary Influence, is *Evil*. *These* are Propositions of *Eternal* and *Unchangeable Verity* ; and which God can no more *Cancel* or *Disannul*, than he can *deny himself*.

14. So that now to *analyze* the *Immorality* of any *Action* into its *last Principles* : If it be enquired, why such an *Action* is to be avoided, the *immediate* Answer is, *Because 'tis Sin* ; If it be ask'd, why 'tis *Sin* ; the *immediate* Answer is, *Because 'tis forbidden* ; if why *forbidden*, *Because 'twas* in it *self fit* to be *forbidden* ; if why *fit*, *Because naturally* apt to *prejudice* the *Common Interest* : if it be ask'd, *Why* the *natural aptness* of a *Thing* to *prejudice* the *Common Interest*, should make it *fit* to be *forbidden*, the Answer is, *Because the Common Interest* is above all *Things*, to be *regarded* and *prosecuted* : If farther, a *Reason* be demanded of this, there can no

other be given, but because 'tis the *best and greatest End*, and consequently, is to be desired and prosecuted, not for the sake of any *thing else*, but purely for it *self*.

15. So that now the *last Law* whereof Sin is a *Transgression*, is this *great and supreme Law* concerning the prosecution of the *Common Interest*. And every Sin is some way or other, directly or indirectly, a *Transgression* of this *Law*. Those against any *Moral Precept*, *directly*; and those against a *Precept* merely *Positive*, *indirectly*; because 'tis for the *Common Good*, that the *Supreme Authority* be acknowledged and submitted to; let the *instance* wherein *Obedience* is required, be in it *self* never so *indifferent*.

16. If it be now objected, That according to these *Measures* there will be no difference between *Moral* and *Physical Evil*, contrary to the *Common Distinction* between *malum Turpe*, and *malum Noxium*; the one as opposed to *bonum utile*, and the other as opposed to *bonum honestum*; I Answer, That I know of no *Good* or *Evil*, but of the *End*, and of the *Means*. *Good* of the *End*, is what we call *bonum jucundum*; *Good* of the *Means*, is what we call *utile*. *Evil* of the *End* there is properly none; but that only is *Evil*, which is prejudicial to it. Indeed the old *Masters* of *Morality* discours'd of *Moral Good* and *Evil* as of *absolute Natures*; and accordingly, nothing so common among them, as to talk of *Essential Rectitudes*, and *Essential Turpitudes*. But I think it greater *Accuracy* to say, That *Moral Good* and *Evil* are *Relative Things*; that *bonum honestum* is one and the same with that which is truly *utile*; and that *malum turpe*, is that which is naturally against the *Profit* of the
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Community. And herein I assert no more than what the great Master of the Latin Philosophy and Eloquence, professedly contends for throughout the whole Third Book of his Offices. And therefore, instead of evading the Objection, I freely own its Charge; and affirm, That there is no difference between Moral and Physical Evil, any otherwise, than that Physical Evil extends to all Things in Nature which obstruct Happiness; whereas Moral Evil is appropriated to Actions that do so.

SECT. III.

The Second Part of the Discourse, which briefly treats of Formal Sin; with the Requisites necessary to its Constitution. Where also 'tis enquired, Whether the Nature of Sin be Positive or Privative.

I. **W**E are now come to the Second Part of our Discourse, where we are to Treat of the Nature of Formal Sin, that is, of Sin consider'd not *abstractedly* for the mere Act of Obliquity, but *Concretely*, with such a special Dependence of it upon the Will, as serves to render the Agent guilty, or obnoxious to Punishment.

2. And here, the first Thing to be observ'd is, That altho material Sin does neither in its Notion, nor in its Existence, include formal Sin, yet formal Sin does always include the other. Tho' there may be a Transgression of the Law without formal Sin, yet the later always supposes the former; and as St. *John* says, *Whosoever committeth Sin, transgresses also the Law*, Joh. 3. 4.

3. But

3. But that which formal Sin adds over and above to material, and under whose respect we are now to consider it, is the Connnotation of that special Dependence of it upon the Will, which derives Guilt upon the Agent. So that for a Definition of formal Sin, we may say, That it is an irregular Action, or a Transgression of the Law; so depending upon the Will, as to make the Agent liable to Punishment. This is in the Phrase of St. *John*, *ἔχειν αἰμαρτίαν*, to *have* Sin; that is, so as to be accountable for it; for he speaks of that Sin which upon Confession, God is *faithful and just to forgive*; and consequently not of material, (for where there is no Guilt, there can be no Remission) but of formal Sin.

4. From this general Notion of formal Sin, proceed we to enquire, what that special Dependence is that makes an irregular Action formally a Sin. And here 'tis in the first place supposed, that not every Dependence of an Action upon the Will, is sufficient to make it imputable. And with very good reason. For otherwise, the Actions of Infants, Fools and Mad-men, would be imputable; for these (as indeed all Actions) have some dependence upon the Will; at least, as a *Physical Principle*.

5. To be positive therefore, that an irregular Action may so depend upon the Will, as to derive Guilt upon the Agent, 'tis necessary first, that it proceed from the Will as from a free Principle; Free not only in opposition to Coaction, (for so all the actions of the Will are free) but in opposition to Necessity, or determination to one part of the Contradiction. That is, in one word, 'tis necessary to the imputableness of an Action, that it be avoidable.

able. To this purpose is that common saying of St. Austin, *Nemo peccat (that is, formaliter) in eo quod vitare non potest* : And great reason the Father had to say so ; for he that cannot avoid transgressing the Law, is not so much as capable of being obliged by it, (because no Man can be obliged to what is impossible) and if he be not obliged by it, certainly he cannot Morally and Formally break it. A thing which the Patrons of *Physical Predetermination* would do well to consider.

6. But when I make it necessary to the imputableness of an Action, that it be freely exerted, I would not be understood of an immediate Freeness. For certainly those rooted and confirm'd Sinners, who have by long use reduced themselves under a necessity of Sinning, are never the more excusable for the Impotence they have Contracted. If there was Liberty in the Principle 'tis sufficient.

7. The next requisite, and that which gives the last and finishing stroke to Formal Sin, is, that it proceed from the Will, *sufficiently instructed* by the Understanding. That is, to make a Man Sin formally, 'tis requisite that he has not only a Power of avoiding that Action which is a Transgression of the Law, but that he also know it to be a Transgression of the Law ; at least, that he be in a Capacity so to do ; that so he may be induced to Exert that Power. And 'tis also necessary, that he know that he Commits it ; that is, he must have, or at least, be in a Capacity of having, both *notitia Juris*, and *notitia Facti*.

8. The former of these depends upon that Common Principle, That Laws do not oblige till they are
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are publish'd; according to that known Maxim of the Canon Law, *Leges constituuntur cum promulgantur*; and that of the Civilians, *Leges quæ constringunt hominum vitas, intelligi ab omnibus debent*. And the later also depends upon the Equity of the same Principle, tho' somewhat more remotely; for without this, the Law with relation to that particular Instance, cannot be said to be properly known. For altho' I know such a species of Action (suppose Adultery) to be a Transgression of the Law, yet if I know not that by such a particular Instance I *commit* it, I cannot be said to know, that *this my action* is a Transgression of the Law; and consequently, (supposing this my Ignorance *invincible*) am wholly excusable; as appears in the Case of *Abimelech*, when he took *Abraham's* Wife, *Gen. 20.*

9. So that to the Constitution of Formal Sin these two Things are required; 1st. That the Transgressor have a Power either *immediately*, or at least in the Principle, of not doing that Action which is a Transgression: 2^{ly}. That he either do or may, know that Act to be a Transgression of the Law; and likewise, that he know when he Commits it. And thus have I shewn the rise, progress, and maturity of Sin; I have presented to view both the *imperfect Embrio*, and the *full proportion'd* and animated *Monster*. All which I shall briefly comprize in that compendious Description of *St. James*, *Lust when it is conceiv'd bringeth forth Sin; and Sin when it is finish'd, bringeth forth Death*, *James 1. 15.*

10. There is one thing behind, relating to the Nature of Sin in Common; which I shall briefly consider; and that is, Whether its Nature be *Positive*

tive or *Privative*. The later is generally held, both by Metaphysicians, Moralists and Divines; but upon what sufficient grounds, I could never yet understand. The Formal Part of Sin, without all question, is *Positive*; as is plain from the very Notion of it. For it denotes only that special Dependence, which an irregular Act has upon the Will; which is the same (as well as the common Substance of the Act) both in *good* and *bad* Actions; and consequently, *alike Positive*.

11. All the Controversie therefore, remains concerning the *Material* Part of Sin, Whether that be *Positive* or *Privative*. And this too, not with respect to the *mere Act*, (for that without question is *Positive*) but with respect to the Irregularity of it.

12. Here then I consider, that according to the foregoing Measures, the irregularity of an Action is not only its aberration from the Rule, but its *crossing*, or going *contrary* to it. For 'tis not only its *not promoting*, but its *opposing*, or at least, its natural aptness to oppose the greatest and best of Ends. So that 'tis not so properly an *Irregularity*, as a *Contraregularity*. And therefore, good and bad Actions are not *privatively*, but *contrarily* opposed; and consequently, both positive; for Contraries are always so.

13. For *as to be in Pain*, is not *Privatively*, but *Contrarily* opposed to being Happy, (for Pain is something more than *want of Happiness*) so that Action which causes Pain or Misery, is not *privatively*, but *contrarily* opposed to that which is Effective of Happiness; and consequently, is as Positive as the other.

14. Those

14. Those Sins which bid the fairest for Privation, are Sins of Omission. But even these, if we consider their Nature, will appear to be also Positive. For to speak properly, their Irregularity does not lye in the *not doing*, or the *not willing* to do what ought to be done, but in the *willing not* to do it: But to *will the not doing* of a thing, is as *positive* as the *willing to do it*, as being not *contradictorily* or *privatively*, but *contrarily* opposed to it. The Sins therefore of Omission, are as Positive as those of Commission. The only difference is, that the Positiveness of Sins of Commission, lies both in the *Habitude* of the *Will*, and in the *executed Act* too; whereas the Positiveness of Sins of Omission, is in the *Habitude* of the *Will* only.

15. And what is here determin'd concerning *Moral Evil*, will, I suppose, hold equally true in all Evil, except only that which is *Absolute*; that is, whose Evil is not its *noxiousness* to any thing else, but only the want of some constituent Perfection due to *its self*, according to that distinction mentioned by *Suarez* in his Disputation *de Malo*, of *malum in se*, and *malum alteri*. This indeed does import no more than a Privation. And this I suppose, might be the occasion of mistake to those who first thought *Moral Evil* to consist in a Privation only; for *Absolute Evil* does so, and they (as I intimated above) took *Moral Evil* to be a kind of *absolute Nature*.

16. Many things I know might be, and are commonly objected against the Positiveness of Sin; but I can think but of one that's worth considering; which is, That if Sin be *positive*, it will be a *real Entity*; and if so, then we are press'd with a double

ble Absurdity: First, That God will be the Author of it, as being the Efficient Cause of all *Entity*: Secondly, That it will be *Good*, goodness being a necessary Affection of *Ens*.

17. To this I Answer: First, That I not only freely *acknowledg*, but *contend* that Sin is a *real Entity*. But then I distinguish of Entity. There are *Physical*, and there are *Moral Entities*. By the later, (which alone needs Explication) I understand certain Modes of Determination, superadded to Physical Things, or Motions by intelligent Beings, in order therefore to the interest, or disinterest of the Universe.

18. This being premised, I answer to the first part of the Objection, by *denying* that it hence follows, that God is the Author of Sin. God indeed is the Author of all *Physical Beings* and *Motions*, but not of those *modes of determination* super-added by *intelligent Beings*; which I call *Moral Entities*. As to the Second, I grant the Consequence, but deny the Absurdity of it. For it is no Absurdity that *Moral Evil* should be *Metaphysically Good*. For this metaphysical, transcendental Goodness, which is the Affection of *Ens*, is nothing else but a Being's having that Essence whereof it is capable, or (as *Suarez* expresses it) its having that Perfection which is *convenient* to it. But this is very consistent with the Nature of *Moral Evil*; for this may have what belongs to its *Idea*, as well as *good*; and 'tis the Perfection of Sin, to be *exceeding sinful*.

Sect.

SECT. IV.

Corollaries deduced from the whole. The foulness and deformity of Sin represented. That it is the greatest of Evils. That no Formal Sin can be in its self Venial. That in all probability Vindicative Justice is Essential to God, hence deduced. A new Hypothesis for the reconciling of Eternal Punishments with the Divine Justice. That he who thoroughly understands, and actually attends to the Nature of Sin, cannot possibly Commit it.

1. **H**AVING thus far carried on the Theory of Sin, we may now sit down, and take an Estimate of its *Foulness* and *Deformity*. And methinks I am affrighted at the ugliness of the Face which I have unmask'd; and am ready to start back from the distorted and ill-boding Monster. For however the Magic of Self-love may reconcile Men to their own Faults, yet if we set the Object at a more convenient distance from the Eye, and consider the Nature of Sin irrespectively to our selves, 'twill certainly appear according to the precedent Measures, to be the most deform'd, monstrous Thing, that can either be found, or conceiv'd in Nature.

2. For if we consider it in its full Latitude, it is the highest *χόλις*, or Habitude of the Will to the worst of Objects; than which, what can be imagin'd more Monstrous and Absurd? If we consider it as a violation of the Positive Law, what can be more indecorous, than for a Creature to violate the Commands, and trample upon the Authority of
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that awful Excellence to whom he owes his Life, his Motion, and his very Being? If we consider it as a Violation of the Law of Reason, what can be more Monstrous and Unnatural, than for a Man to Rebel against the *vicarious Power of God* in his Soul? to refuse to live according to that Part of him, whereby he is a Man? to suffer the ferine and brutish Part to get the Ascendent over that which is Rational and Divine; to refuse to be govern'd by those sacred Digests, which are the Transcripts of the *Moral Nature of God*; and to act against the very Frame and Contexture of his *Being*. Lastly, If we consider it as a Transgression against that *great and Sovereign Law* of promoting the *Common Happiness*, what a monstrous Evil must that be which crosses and opposes the best of Ends, and which is also proposed by the best of Beings; that for the Interest of an inconsiderable Part (commonly ones self) justles the great Wheel of Society out of its proper Track; that by pursuing a lesser, in prejudice to a greater Good, disturbs the Order of Things, dislocates the Frame, and untunes the Harmony of the Universe!

3. We may also hence conclude, That Sin is the *greatest Evil* that is, or that can possibly be. For it is contrarily opposed to the *greatest possible Good*; and consequently, must needs be the *greatest Evil*. And besides, 'tis that which in no Case or Juncture whatsoever, is to be Committed; and therefore must be the *greatest Evil*; because otherwise, it might happen to come into *Competition* with a *greater*, and so commence *Eligible*; which is contrary to the supposition. Moreover, the greatness of this

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Evil

Evil above all others, is *à posteriori*, further confirm'd from the greatness of the *Sacrifice* required for its *Attonement*. God *could not*, or at least, *thought not fit* to remit it, without the shedding of Blood; and that too, of the *Blood of God*. So great a Fool is he, so little does he consider, that *makes a Mock at sin*.

4. Again, It may be hence Collected, That no Formal Sin can be in its *own Nature Venial*. For according to the former Measures, every Formal Sin, tho' never so small, is a Sin against the *greatest Charity imaginable*. For 'tis against *that Charity*, whereby I ought to promote the Ends of God, and prosecute the great Interest of the Universe. And consequently, cannot be in its own Nature Venial, or Pardonable without *Repentance*.

5. Nay, May I not further conclude according to the preceding Measures, that 'tis very *probable*, that no Sin could have been pardon'd even with Repentance, had there not been also Satisfaction made for it; and that *vindicative Justice* is Essential to the Nature of God? For when I consider Sin, I find it so diametrically contrary to the Essential Sanctity of God, and so destructive of that great End which he cannot but propose, that he must needs Hate it with an *infinite Hatred*. But how he should do so, and yet not *Punish* for it, is hard to understand.

6. Upon these Measures we may also find out a way of reconciling *Eternal Punishments* with *Divine Justice*. The great Objection is, What Proportion is there between a *transient Act of Sin*, and *Eternal Misery*? And if there be none, how is it consistent with

with Divine Justice to inflict the one for the other? This has been a great difficulty. and has for a long time stood proof against all Solutions. But now, if we consider Sin as *contrarily* opposed to the *greatest possible good*, the good of the *Universe*; and consequently, as the *greatest possible Evil*, its demerit will be such, that we need not fear 'twill be *over-punish'd*, even with *Eternal Misery*. For if any Misery is to be endured, rather than one Sin to be committed, 'tis also just that any may be, when it is committed. For the Equity of both, depends upon Sin's being the *greatest Evil*.

7. The last Deduction which I shall make from the Premises is this, That he who *thoroughly understands*, and *actually attends* to the Nature of Sin, cannot possibly Commit it. For as long as he does so, he must look upon it as the *greatest Evil*, otherwise he cannot be said rightly to understand it. And if he look upon it as the greatest Evil, he cannot chuse it, so long as he continues in that Judgment; because the then chusing it, would be the chusing of *all that* whereby it exceeds other Evils, *gratis*; which is the chusing of Evil *as Evil*; which is *impossible*.

8. Whosoever therefore consents to the Commission of Sin, passes first a *wrong Judgment* upon it, has the *Light of his Understanding darkened*, and intercepted by a Cloud of Passion, loses the *present Conviction* of Sin's being the *greatest Evil*, and so Commits it to avoid (as he then foolishly thinks) a *greater*. So that the Cause and Origine of all Sin, is *Ignorance, Folly, and Inadvertence*: There is a false Proposition in the *Understanding*, before there is any misapplication in the *Will*; and 'tis through the *swimming*

ming of the Head that the Feet slip, and lose their Station. And yet the Sinner is no way excusable for this his Deception, because 'tis the Ignorance of that which he habitually knows, and he might have attended better; and 'twas his Fault that he did not.

9. And 'tis the recovering and awaking up into this *Conviction*, that is the Principle of Repentance and Reformation of Life. When a Man by the aid of Grace, and the use of due Attention, resumes his interrupted Judgment of Sin's being the *greatest Evil*, he then comes again to himself, forms new Resolutions never to Commit it, and returns to the *Wisdom of the Just*, Psa. 119. So great reason had the Psalmist to pray, *O grant me Understanding, and I shall live.*

THE PRAYER.

O My God, who art pure Light, and in whom there is no Darkness at all; who art pure Love, and hatest nothing but Sin, and hatest that infinitely, give me an Heart after thine own Heart, that I may also abhor it without Measure, and without End. Open thou mine Eyes, that I may see those two wondrous Things of thy Law, the Beauty of Holiness, and the Deformity of Sin. Inspire me with that Charity which seeketh not her own, that I may ever propose and follow that great and excellent End which thou proposest, that I may ever adhere to that which is simply and absolutely Best; and never for any Self-advantage, disturb the Order of thy Creation. O let me never so far abuse those Faculties thou hast given me,

me, as to thwart the designs of thy Goodness and Wisdom, and to interrupt that Harmony wherein thou so delightest. But let all my designs be generous, unselfish and sincere, so as chiefly to rejoice at the good of thy Creation, at whose very material Beauty the Morning Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy. Holy Father, 'tis thy Will that this thy great Family should be prosperous and happy, and the better part of it thy Angels, strictly Conform to it ; O let this thy Will be done here on Earth as it is in Heaven ; and grant that every Member of this great Body, may so study the good of the Whole, that thou may'st once more review the Works of thy Hands ; and with a Fatherly complacency, pronounce them good. Grant this for the sake of him who gave his Life for the Happiness of the World, thy Son Jesus, Amen.

I I.

Give me Wisdom that sitteth by thy Throne ; and reject me not from among thy Children. That Wisdom which was with thee from the Beginning ; which knoweth all thy Works ; and was present when thou madest the World ; and knew what was Acceptable in thy Sight ; and Right in thy Commandments. O send her out of thy holy Heavens, and from the Throne of thy Glory ; that being present, she may labour with me ; that I may know, and thoroughly consider what an Evil it is to Affront thy Authority, to break through the Bounds which thou hast set, to Rebel against the most excellent and divine Part of my Nature, and to oppose that which

thou lov'st, and which is of all things the most lovely.
O let thy Wisdom dwell with me, let my Loins be always
Girt, and this my Light always Burning, that I may
never be deceiv'd through the deceitfulness of Sin, nor
seek Death in the Errour of my Life. Thy words have
I hid within my Heart, that I might not Sin against
thee; O grant me Understanding, and I shall live.
Keep I beseech thee, this Conviction still fresh and
fully awake in me, That Sin is the greatest of all Evils,
that so the fear of none may ever drive me to do the
Thing which thy Soul hates. Consider and hear me,
O Lord my God, lighten mine Eyes that I sleep not in
Death. Amen, Amen.

An

An I D E A of Happiness : Enquiring
Wherein the greatest Happiness Attain-
able by Man in this Life does consist.

In a Letter to a Friend.

S I R,

1. **T**HO' you have been pleas'd to Assign me the Task of an Angel, and in that respect, have warrant'd me to disobey you; yet, since a considerable Part of that experimental Knowledge which I have of *Happiness* is owing to Delight, which I take in your virtuous and endearing Friendship, I think 'tis but reasonable I should endeavour to give you an Idea of that, whereof you have given me the *Possession*.

2. You desire to know of me, Wherein the greatest Happiness Attainable by Man in this Life, does consist: And here, tho' I see my self engaged in a Work already too difficult for me, yet I find it necessary to enlarge it: For, since the greatest *Happiness*, or *Summum Bonum* of this Life, is a Species of Happiness in general; and since it is called (Greatest) not because absolutely Perfect and Compleat; but inasmuch as it comes nearest to that which indeed is so, it will be necessary first to State the Notion of Happiness in general; and then to define, wherein that Happiness does consist which is Perfect and

Compleat, before I can proceed to a Resolution of your Question.

3. By *Happiness*, in the most general Sense of the word, I understand nothing else but an Enjoyment of any Good. The least Degree of Good has the same Proportion to the least Degree of *Happiness*, as the greatest has to the greatest; and consequently, as many ways as a Man enjoys any Good, so many ways he may be said to be *Happy*: Neither will the Mixture of Evil make him forfeit his Right to this Title, unless it either *equals* the Good he enjoys, or *exceeds* it; and then indeed it does: But the reason is, because in strictness of Speaking, upon the whole Account, the Man enjoys no Good at all: For if the Good and the Evil be equal-ballanc'd, it must needs be indifferent to that Man either to be, or not to be, there being not the least Grain of Good to determine his Choice: So that he can no more be said to be *Happy* in that Condition, than he could before he was Born. And much less, if the Evil exceeds the Good: For then he is not only not *Happy*, but absolutely and purely Miserable; For after an exact Commensuration supposed between the Good and the Evil, all that remains over of the Evil, is pure and simple Misery; which is the Case of the Damn'd: And when 'tis once come to this (whatever some Mens Metaphysics may perswade them) I am very well satisfied, that 'tis better not to be, than to be. But now on the other side, if the Good does never so little out-weigh the Evil, that Overplus of Good is as pure and unallay'd in its Proportion, as if there were no such Mixture at all; and consequently,

quently, the Possession of it may properly be call'd Happiness.

4. I know the Masters of Moral Philosophy do not treat of Happiness in this Latitude, neither is it fit they should: For their Business being to point out the ultimate End of Human Actions, it would be an impertinent Thing for them, to give any other Idea of Happiness than the highest: But however, this does not hinder but that the general Idea of Happiness may be extended farther, even to the Fruition of any Good whatsoever: Neither is there any reason to find fault with the Latitude of this Notion, since we acknowledge Degrees even in Glory.

5. In this general Idea of Happiness, two Things are contain'd. One is, some Good, either real or apparent; in the Fruition of which, we are said to be in some measure or other Happy. The other is the very Fruition it self. The first of these, is usually called *Objective Happiness*; and the later, *Formal*. Some I know, divide Happiness into these as distinct Species; but I think not so artificially: For they are both but constituent Parts, which joyntly make up one and the same Happiness: Neither of them are sufficient alone, but they are both equally necessary. That the last of these is a necessary Ingredient, I think no doubt can reasonably be made: For what would the greatest Good imaginable signifie without Fruition? And that the former is likewise necessary, is no less certain: For how can there be such a Thing as Fruition, without an Object? I grant, 'tis not at all necessary that the Object be a real substantial Good; if it appear so, 'tis sufficient.

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6. From this Distinction of *real* and *apparent* Good, some have taken occasion to distinguish of *Happiness* likewise in two sorts, *real* and *imaginary*: But I believe, upon a more narrow Scrutiny into the matter, 'twill be found, that all *Happiness*, according to its Proportion, is equally *real*, and that that which they term *Imaginary*, too well deserves the Name; there being no such thing in Nature: For let the Object of it be never so *Phantastic*, yet it must still carry the Semblance and Appearance of Good (otherwise it can neither *move* the Appetite nor *please* it, and consequently be neither an Object of *Desire* nor of *Fruition*;) and if so, the *Happiness* must needs be real; because the Formality of the Object, tho' 'twere never so true and real a good, would notwithstanding lie in the *Appearance*, not in the *Reality*: Whether it be real or no, is purely accidental: For, since to be happy, can be nothing else but to enjoy something which I desire, the Object of my *Happiness* must needs be *enjoy'd* under the same Formality as 'tis *desired*. Now since 'tis desired only as apparently good, it must needs please me when obtained under the same Notion. So that it matters not the Reality of my *Happiness*, whether the Object of it be really Good, or only apprehended so; since if it were never so *real*, it *pleases* only as *apparent*. The Fool has his Paradise as well as the Wise-man, and for the time is as *happy* in it; and a kind Delusion, will make a Cloud as pleasing as the Queen of *Heaven*. And therefore I think it impossible, for Man to think himself *Happy*, and (during that Perswasion) not really to be so. He enjoys the *Creature* of his own Fancy, worships the *Idol*
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of his Imagination ; and the *happiest* Man upon Earth does no more : For let the Circumstances of his Life be what they will, 'tis his Opinion only that must give the Relish. Without this, Heaven it self would afford him no Content ; nor the Vision of God prove *Beatific*. 'Tis true, the Man is seated at the *Spring-Head* of *Happiness*, is surrounded with excellent Objects ; but alas, it appears not so to him ; he is not at all affected with his Condition, but, like *Adam*, lies fast in a dead Sleep in the midst of Paradise.

7. The Sum of this Argument is this ; Good is in the same manner the Object of *Fruition*, as 'tis of Desire ; and that is not as *really* good in its own Nature, but as 'tis *judged* so by the Understanding : And consequently, tho' it be only apparent, it must needs be as effectual to *gratify* the Appetite, as it was at first to *excite* it during that Appearance. So long as it keeps on its Vizard, and imposes upon the Understanding, what is wanting in the Thing, is made up by an *obliging* Imposture ; and *Ignorance* becomes here the Mother of *Happiness*, as well as of *Devotion* : But if the Man will *dare* to be Wise, and too curiously examine the superficial Tinsel-Good, he undeceives himself to his own Cost ; and, like *Adam*, adventuring to Eat of the Tree of *Knowledge*, sees himself naked, and is ashamed. And for this Reason, I think it impossible for any Man to Love to be flatter'd : 'Tis true, he may delight to hear himself commended by those who indeed do flatter him ; but the true Reason of that is, because he does not apprehend that to be Flattery, which indeed is so ; but when he once thoroughly knows

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it, 'tis impossible he should be any longer delighted with it. I shall conclude this Point with this useful Reflection, That since every Man's Happiness depends wholly upon his own Opinion, the Foundation upon which all envious Men proceed, must needs be either *false* or very *uncertain*. False, if they think that outward Circumstances and States of Life, are all the Ingredients of Happiness ; but uncertain however : For since they measure the Happiness of other Men by their own Opinion, 'tis mere Chance if they do not misplace their Envy ; unless they were sure the other Person was of the like Opinion with themselves. And now what a vain irrational thing is it, to disquiet our selves into a dislike of our own Condition, merely because we mistake another Man's ;

8. Thus far of the Notion of Happiness in general ; I now proceed to consider that Happiness which is *ὁρθὴ καὶ ἀλόκλῆς* (as *Plato* speaks) Sound and Entire, Perfect and Compleat. Concerning the general Notion of which, all Men I suppose, are as much agreed, as they are in the *Idea* of the *Triangle* : That 'tis such a State than which a better cannot be conceiv'd : In which there is no Evil you can fear, no Good which you desire and have not : That which fully and constantly satisfies the Demand of every Appetite, and leaves no possibility for a desire of Change ; or to sum it up in that comprehensive Expression of the Poet,

Quod sis esse velis, nihilque malis.

When you would always be what you are, and (as
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the Earl of Roscommon very significantly renders it) do *Rather* nothing.

9. This I suppose is the utmost that can be said, or conceiv'd of it ; and less than this will not be enough. And thus far we are all agreed. For I suppose, the many various Disputes maintained by Philosophers concerning Happiness, could not respect this general Notion of it ; but only the particular *Causes* or *Means* whereby it might be acquired. And I find *Tully* concurring with me in the same Observation, *Ea est beata vita* (says he) *quarimus autem non qua sit sed ande*. The difficulty is not to frame a Conception of a perfectly happy State in the general, but to define in particular wherein it consists.

10. But before I undertake this Province, I think it might not be amiss to remove one Prejudice ; which, because it has gain'd upon my self sometimes in my Melancholy Retirements, I am apt to think it may be incident to other Men also. It is this, Whether after so many Disputes about, so many restless Endeavours after this state of Perfect Happiness, there be any such Thing or no. Whether it be not a mere *Idea*, as imaginary as *Plato's Common-wealth*, as fictitious as the Groves of *Elysium*. I confess, this suspicion has oftentimes *overcast* my Mind with black Thoughts, damp'd my Devotion ; and as it were, clipp'd the Wings of my Aspiring Soul. And I happened to fall into it upon a serious reflection on the Nature of Fruition in the several Periods and Circumstances of my Life. For I observ'd, according to my *Narrow* Experience, That I never had in all my Life, the same Thoughts of
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any Good in the very time of the enjoying it, as I had before. I have known, when I have promised my self vast Satisfactions, and my Imagination has presented me at a distance, with a fair *Landskip* of Delight, yet when I drew nigh to grasp the alluring Happiness, like the *Sensitive Plant*, it contracted it self at the *touch*, and *shrink'd* almost to *Nothing* in the Fruition. And tho' after the Enjoyment is past, it seems great again upon *Reflection*, as it did before in *Expectation*, yet should a *Platonical Revolution* make the same Circumstances recur, I should not think so. I found 'twas ever with me, as with the *Traveller*, to whom the Ground which is before him, and that which he has left *behind* him, seems always most curiously embroider'd and delightful, than that which he *stands* upon. So that my Happiness, like the time wherein I *thought* to enjoy it, was always either *past* or to *come*, never *present*. Methought I could often say upon a *Recollection*, How happy *was* I at such a time ! Or when I was in *Expectation*, How happy shall I be if I compass such a Design ! But scarce ever, I *am* so. I was pretty well pleas'd methought, while I expected, while I hoped, till Fruition jogg'd me out of my pleasing Slumber, and I knew it was but a Dream. And this single Consideration has often made me, even in the very pursuit after Happiness, and full career of my Passions, to stop short on this side of Fruition, and to chuse rather with *Moses* upon *Mount-Nebo*, to entertain my Fancy with a remote Prospect of the *Happy Land*, than to go in and possess it, and then *Repine*. How then shall Man be Happy, when setting aside all the Crosses
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of Fortune, he will complain even of *Success*; and Fruition it self shall *disappoint* him!

11. And this melancholy Reflection bred in me a kind of suspicion, That for all that I knew it might be so in *Heaven* too. That although at this distance I might frame to my self bright *Ideas* of that Region of Bliss; yet when I came to the Possession of it, I should not find that perfect Happiness there which I expected; but that it would be always to *come*, as 'tis now; and that I should seek for Heaven, even in Heaven it self. That I should not fully Acquiesce in my Condition there; but at length, desire a Change. And that which confirm'd me the more in this *unhappy Scepticism*, was, because I consider'd that a great number of Excellent Beings, who enjoyed the very *Quintessence* of Bliss, who were as Happy as God and Heaven could make them, grew soon uneasie and weary of their State, and *left their own Habitation*. Which argues, that their Happiness was not *Perfect* and *Compleat*, because otherwise they would not have *desired* a Change; since that very Desire is an Imperfection. And if Happiness be not Compleat in Heaven, sure 'tis impossible to be found any where else.

12. Before therefore I proceed to define wherein perfect Happiness does consist, I think it necessary to endeavour the removal of this Scruple, which, like the flaming Sword, forbids *Entrance into Paradise*. In order to which, I shall enquire into the *true Reason* why these Sublunary good Things, when enjoyed, do *neither* answer our *Expectations*, nor satisfy our *Appetites*. Now this must *proceed either* from the Nature of Fruition it self; or from the Im-

Imperfection of it ; or from the Object of it ; or from our selves. I confess, did this Defect proceed from the *very Nature* of Fruition, (as is supposed in the Objection,) 'tis impossible there should be any such thing as *perfect Happiness*, since 'twould *Faint away* while enjoy'd, and *Expire* in our *Embraces*. But that it cannot proceed thence, I have this to offer, Because Fruition being nothing else but an Application, or Union of the Soul to some good or agreeable Object, it is impossible that should *lessen* the Good enjoyed. *Indeed* it may *lessen* our Estimation of it ; but that is, because we do not rightly consider the Nature of Things, but promise our *selves* infinite Satisfaction in the *Enjoyment* of finite Objects. We look upon Things through a false Glass ; which Magnifies the Objects at a distance, much beyond its just Dimensions. We represent our *future Enjoyments* to our selves in such *favourable* and *partial Ideas*, which abstract from all the *Inconveniencies* and *Allays*, which will really in the *Event* accompany them, And if we thus over-rate our *Felicities* before hand, 'tis no wonder if they baulk our *Expectations* in the *Fruition*. But then it must be observed, That the *Fruition* does not cause this *Deficiency* in the Object, but only *discover* it. We have a better insight into the Nature of Things near at hand, than when we stood afar off ; and consequently, discern those *Defects* and *Imperfections*, which, like the Qualities of an ill Mistress, lay hid all the Time of *Courtship*, and now begin to betray themselves, when 'tis come to *Enjoyment*. But this can never happen, but where the Object is finite. An infinite Object can never

never be over-valued ; and consequently, cannot frustrate our *Expectations*.

13. And as we are not to charge Fruition with our *Disappointments*, but our selves, (because we are Accessory to our own *delusion*, by taking false Measures of Things) so neither is the *Unsatisfactoriness* of any Condition to be imputed to the Nature of Fruition it self ; but either to the *Imperfection* of it, or to the *Finiteness* of the Object. Let the Object be never so Perfect, yet if the Fruition of it be in an imperfect Measure, there will still be room for *Unsatisfactoriness* ; as it appears in our *Enjoyment* of God in this Life. Neither can a finite Object fully satisfy us, tho' we enjoy it never so thoroughly. For since to a full Satisfaction and *Acquiescence* of Mind, 'tis required, that our Faculties be always entertained, and we ever enjoying : it is impossible a finite Object should afford this Satisfaction, because all the Good that is in it (being finite) is at length run over ; and then the *enjoyment* is at an End. The Flower is suck'd dry, and we necessarily desire a Change. Whenever therefore our *Enjoyment* proves unsatisfying, we may conclude, that either the Object is finite, or the Fruition imperfect. But then how came the *Angels* to be dissatisfy'd with their Condition in the Regions of *Light* and *Immortality*, when they drank freely of the *Fountain of Life*, Rev. 26. proceeding out of the Throne of God, with whom is fulness of Joy, and at whose Right Hand are *Pleasures for evermore* ? Here certainly, there is no room either for the *finiteness* of the Object, or the *imperfection* of Fruition. And therefore, their dissatisfaction can be imputed

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to no other Cause, than the Nature of Fruition in general, which is to *lessen* the Good enjoyed, as was supposed in the *Objection*. This I confess presses hard; and indeed I have but one way to *extricate* my self from this difficulty; and that is, by supposing a *State of Probation* in the *Angels*. That they did not immediately upon their *Creation* enjoy an *infinite Object*, or if they did, yet that 'twas in an *imperfect Measure*. For should it be granted, that they were at first confirmed in Blis, and *completely Happy*, both in respect of *Fruition* and *Object*, as we suppose they are now, I cannot *conceive* it possible they should be dissatisfy'd with their Condition. This being repugnant to the *Idea of Perfect Happiness*.

14. Since then this Dissatisfaction must be derived either from the imperfection of the *Fruition*, or the finiteness of the *Object*, and not from the Nature of *Fruition* in the general, to infer the possibility of *Perfect Happiness*, there needs no more to be supposed, than the *Existence* of a Being full fraught with infinite inexhaustible Good, and that he is able to Communicate to the full. There may be then such a thing as *Perfect Happiness*. The possibility of which may also be further *proved* (tho' not *explicated*) from those boundless Desires, that *immortal Thirst* every Man has after it by Nature: Concerning which, I observe, That nothing does more constantly, more inseparably cleave to our Minds, than this Desire of perfect and consummated Happiness: This, as *Plato* pathetically expresses it, is, *πέρας ἢ πόνον τὸ κάλλιστον, ὁ μέγας ἀγὼν, καὶ ἑλπίς ἡ μεγάλη*, the most excellent End of all our Endeavours,

deavours, the great Prize, the great Hope. This is the Mark every Man shoots at ; and tho' we miss our Aim never so often, yet we will not, cannot give over ; but, like passionate Lovers, take *Resolution* from a *Repulse*. The Rest of our Passions are much at our own Disposal ; yield either to Reason or Time ; we either Argue our selves out of them, or at least out-live them. We are not always in Love with Pomp and Grandeur, nor always dazzled with the glittering of Riches ; and there is a Season when Pleasure it self shall Court in vain : But the desire of perfect Happiness has no Intervals, no Vicissitudes ; it out-lasts the Motion the Pulse, and survives the Ruins of the Grave. *Many Waters cannot quench it, neither can the Floods drown it* : And now certainly, God would never have planted such an Ardent, such an Importunate Appetite in our Souls ; and as it were, *intwoven* it with our very Natures, had he not been able to satisfy it.

15. I come now to shew, wherein this Perfect Happiness does consist ; concerning which, I affirm in the First place, That it is not to be found in any Thing we can enjoy in this Life. The greatest Fruition we have of God here, is imperfect ; and consequently unsatisfactory. And as for all other Objects, they are finite ; and consequently, though never so fully enjoy'd, cannot afford us perfect Satisfaction. No, *Man knoweth not the price thereof* : *Neither is it to be found in the Land of the Living. The Depth saith, it is not in me ; and the Sea saith, it is not in me, Job 28.* The Vanity of the Creature has been so copiously discoursed upon,

both by Philosophers and Divines, and withal is so obvious to every thinking Man's *Experience*, that I need not here take an *Inventary* of the *Creation*, nor turn *Ecclesiastes* after *Solomon*. And besides, I have already anticipated this Argument in what I have said concerning *Fruition*, I shall only add one or two Remarks concerning the Objects of *Secular Happiness*, which are not so commonly insisted upon, to what has been there said. The first is this, That the Objects wherein Men generally seek for *Happiness* here, are not only *finite* in their *Nature*, but also *few* in *number*. Indeed, Could a Man's Life be so contrived, that he should have a new *Pleasure* still ready at hand as soon as he was grown weary of the Old, and every day enjoy a *Virgin Delight*, he might then perhaps, like Mr. *Hobbs* his Notion, and for a while think himself happy in this *continued Succession of new Acquisitions*. But alas, Nature does not treat us with this Variety. The Compass of our *Enjoyments* is much shorter than that of our Lives; and there is a *Periodical Circulation* of our *Pleasures*, as well as of our *Blood*.

————— *Versamur ibidem atque insumus usque.*

Nec nova vivendo procuditur ulla voluptas.

Lucretius.

The Enjoyments of our Lives run in a perpetual Round, like the Months in the *Calendar*, but with a quicker Revolution, we *dance* like *Fairies* in a *Circle*, and our whole Life is but a nauseous *Tautology*: We rise like the Sun, and run the same Course we did the Day before; and to Morrow
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is but the same over again : So that the greatest Favourite of Fortune, will have Reason often enough to cry out with him in *Seneca*, *Quo: sive eadem* ? But there is another Grievance which contributes to defeat our Endeavours after Perfect Happiness in the Enjoyment of this Life ; which is, That the Objects wherein we seek it, are not only *finite* and *few* ; but that they commonly prove occasions of greater *Sorrow* to us, than ever they afforded us *Content*. This may be made out several ways, as from the Labour of Getting, the Care of Keeping, the Fear of Losing, and the like Topick, commonly insisted on by others ; but I wave these, and fix upon another Account less Blown upon, and I think more Material than any of the rest. It is this, That altho' the Object loses that great Appearance in the *Fruition* which it had in the *Expectation*, yet after it is gone, it Resumes it again. Now we, when we lament the loss, do not take our Measures from that Appearance which the Object had in the *Enjoyment* (as we should do to make our Sorrow not exceed our *Happiness*) but from that which it has in the *Reflection* ; and consequently, we must needs be more *miserable* in the loss, than we were *Happy* in the *Enjoyment*.

16. From these, and the like *Considerations*, I think it will evidently appear, that this perfect *Happiness* is not to be found in any thing we can enjoy in this Life. Wherein then does it consist ? I answer positively, in the full and entire Fruition of God. He (as *Plato* speaks) is *κύριον ἢ ἀρχιτελευτητικόν τιλθ*, the proper and Principle End of Man, the Center of our Tendency, the Ark of our Rest. He

is the Object which alone can satisfy the Appetite of the most capacious Soul, and stand the *Test* of Fruition to Eternity. And to enjoy him fully, is perfect Felicity. This in general, is no more than what is deliver'd to us in Scripture, and was believ'd by many of the *Heathen Philosophers*. But the manner of this Fruition requires a more particular *Consideration*. Much is said by the School-men upon this Subject, whereof, in the first place, I shall give a short and methodical Account; and then fix upon the Opinion which I best Approve of. The first Thing that I observe, is, that 'tis generally agreed upon among them, That this Fruition of God consists in some *Operation*; and I think with very good Reason. For as by the *Objective* part of *perfect Happiness*, we understand that which is best and last, and to which all other things are to be refer'd; so by the *Formal* Part of it, must be understood the best and last Habitude of Man toward that best Object; so that the Happiness may both ways satisfy the Appetite; that is, as 'tis the best Thing, and as 'tis the Possession, Use, or Fruition of that best thing: Now this Habitude, whereby the best Thing is perfectly possess'd, must needs be some *Operation*; because *Operation* is the ultimate Perfection of every Being. Which *Axiom* (as *Cajetan* well observes) must not be so understood, as if *Operation* taken by it self, were more Perfect than the Thing which tends to it; but that every Thing with its *Operation*, is more Perfect than without it.

17. The next thing which I observe, is, that 'tis also farther agreed upon among them, That this *Operation* wherein our Fruition of God does consist, is

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an Operation of the *Intellectual* Part, and not of the *Sensitive*. And this also I take to be very reasonable. First, Because 'tis generally receiv'd, That the Essence of God cannot be the Object of any of our Senses. But Secondly, Suppose it could, yet since the Operation, wherein our *perfect Happiness* does consist, must be the perfectest Operation; and since that of the *Intellectual* Part is more Perfect than that of the *Sensitive*; it follows, that the Operation whereby we enjoy God, must be that of the *Intellectual* Part only.

18. But now whereas the *Intellectual* Part of Man (as 'tis opposed to the *Sensitive*) is double, *viz.* That of the *Understanding*, and that of the *Will*, there has commenced a great Controversie between the *Thomists* and the *Scotists*, in which Act or Operation of the *Rational Soul*, the *Fruition* of God does consist, Whether in an Act of the *Understanding*, or an Act of the *Will*. The *Thomists* will have it consist purely in an Act of the *Understanding*, which is *Vision*. The *Scotists* in the Act of the *Will*, which is *Love*. I intend not here to launch out into those *Voluminous Intricacies* and *Abstrusities*, occasioned by the management of this Argument: It may suffice to tell you, that I think they are both in the extrem; and therefore I shall take the middle way, and resolve the perfect *Fruition* of God partly into *Vision*, and partly into *Love*. These are the two arms with which we embrace the Divinity, and unite our Souls to the *fair One* and the *Good*. These I conceive are both so *Essential* to the *perfect Fruition* of God, that the *Idea* of it can by no means be maintained, if either of them be wanting. For since

God is both Supreme *Truth* and infinite *Goodness*, he cannot be entirely possess'd, but by the most clear *Knowledge*, and the most ardent *Love*. And besides, since the Soul is happy by her *Faculties*, her *Happiness* must consist in the most perfect *Operation* of each *Faculty*. For if *Happiness* did consist formally in the sole *Operation* of the *Understanding*, (as most say) or in the sole operation of the *Will*, (as others) the Man would not be completely, and in all respects *Happy*. For how is it possible a Man should be perfectly *Happy* in loving the greatest *Good*, if he did not know it; or in knowing it, if he did not *Love* it? And moreover, these two operations do so mutually tend to the promotion and conservation of one another, that upon this depends the *Perpetuity* and the *Constancy* of our *Happiness*. For while the Blessed do *πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον*, Face to Face Contemplate the Supreme *Truth* and infinite *Goodness*, they cannot chuse but *Love* perpetually; and while they perpetually *Love*, they cannot chuse but perpetually *Contemplate*. And in this mutual *Reciprocation* of the *Actions* of the Soul, consist the *Perpetuity* of Heaven, the *Circle* of *Felicity*.

19. Besides this way of resolving our *fruition* of God into *Vision* and *Love*, there is a famous *Opinion* said to be brought by *Henricus Gandavensis*, who upon a *Supposition* that God could not be so fully enjoy'd as is required to *Perfect Happiness*, only by the *Operations* or *Powers* of the Soul, fancied a certain *Illapse* whereby the *Divine Essence* did fall in with, and as it were penetrate the *Essence* of the Blessed. Which *Opinion* he

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endeavours to illustrate by this Similitude : That as a piece of Iron, red hot by Reason of the *Illapse* of the Fire into it, appears all over like Fire; so the Souls of the Blessed, by this *Illapse* of the *Divine Essence* into them, shall be all over *Divine*.

20. I think he has scarce any *Followers* in this Opinion ; but I am sure he had a *Leader*. For this is no more than what *Plato* taught before him, as is to be seen in his Discourses about the *Refusion* of the Souls of good Men into the *Anima Mundi* ; which is the self-same, in other Terms, with this Opinion. And the Truth of what I affirm, may farther appear from an Expression of that great *Platonist Plotinus*, (viz.) *That the Soul will then be happy, when it shall depart hence to God, and as another, and no longer her self shall become wholly his,* Enn. 6. lib. 9. cap. 10. *ἑαυτὴν αὐτῷ ὡς αὐτὸ κέντρῳ κέντρῳ συνῆλθα, having joyn'd her self to him, as a Center to a Center.*

21. That such an intimate *Conjunction* with God as is here described, is possible, seems to me more than *Credible* from the Nature of the *Hypo-static Union* ; but whether our *Fruition* of God after this Life shall consist in it, none know but those happy Souls who enjoy him ; and therefore I shall determine nothing before the time. This only I observe, That should our *Fruition* of God consist in such an Union, or rather *Penetration* of *Essences*, that would not exclude, but rather infer those Operations of *Vision* and *Love* as necessary to *Fruition* ; but on the other hand, there seems no such necessity of this Union to the *Fruition*, but that it may be conceiv'd entire without it. And therefore why

why we should multiply Difficulties without cause, I see no reason. For my part, I should think myself sufficiently Happy in the clear Vision of my Maker, nor should I desire any thing beyond the Prayer of *Moses*: *I beseech thee shew me thy Glory*, *Exod. 33. 18.*

22. For what an infinite Satisfaction, Happiness and Delight it must needs be, to have a clear and intimate Perception of that Primitive and Original Beauty, Perfection and Harmony, whereof all that appears fair and excellent, either to our Senses or Understandings in this Life, is but a faint Imitation, a pale Reflection! To see him who is the Fountain of all Being, containing in himself the Perfection, not only of all that is, but of all that is possible to be, *The Alpha and Omega, the beginning and ending, the first and the last, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty!* *Rev. 1. 8.* To see Him, of whom all Nature is the Image, of whom all the Harmony, both of the visible and invisible World, is but the Eccho! To see him, who (as *Plato* divinely and magnificently expresses it) *IS πολὺ πλάγῳ τῷ καλῷ αὐτοῦ καθ' αὐτοῦ μὲθ' αὐτῷ μονοειδέει ἀείδῳ.* The Immense Ocean of Beauty, which is it self, by it self, with it self, uniform, always Existing! This certainly will affect the Soul with all the pleasing and ravishing Transports of Love and Desire, Joy and Delight, Wonder and Amazement, together with a settled Acquiescence and Complacency of Spirit; only less infinite than the Loveliness that causes it, and the peculiar Complacency of him who rejoices in his own fulness, and the Comprehensions of Eternity. We see how
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strangely our Sense of *Seeing* is affected with the Harmony of Colours; and our Sense of *Hearing*, with the Harmony of Sounds; insomuch, that some have been too weak for the Enjoyment, and have grown Mad with the Sublimate of Pleasure. And if so, what then shall we think of the *Beatific Vision*; the Pleasure of which will so far transcend that of the other, as God, who is all over Harmony and Proportion, exceeds the sweet Melody of Sounds and Colours; and the perception of the Mind is more vigorous, quick and piercing, than that of the Senses? This is *perfect Happiness*, this is the Tree of Life which grows in the midst of the Paradise of God; this is Heaven, which while the Learned Dispute about, the Good only Enjoy. But I shall not venture to Soar any longer in these Heights; I find the Æther too Thin here to Breath in long, and the Brightness of the Region flashes too strong upon my tender Sense; I shall therefore hasten to descend from the Mount of God, lest I grow Giddy with Speculation, and lose those Secrets which I have learnt there, the *Cabala* of Felicity.

23. And now (Sir) I come to consider your Question, *viz.* *Wherein the greatest Happiness Attainable by Man in this Life, does consist.* Concerning which, there is as great variety of Opinions among Philosophers, as there is among Geographers, about the Seat of Paradise. The Learned *Varro* reckons up no less than 288 several Opinions about it; and yet notwithstanding the Number of Writers who have bequeathed Volumes upon this Subject to Posterity, they seem to have been in the Dark in

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nothing more than in this; and (excepting only a few *Platonists*, who placed Man's greatest End in the Contemplation of Truth) they seem to have undertaken nothing so unhappily, as when they essay'd to Write of Happiness. Some measure their Happiness by the high-tide of their Riches, as the *Egyptians* did the Fertility of the Year by the increase of the River *Nile*. Others place it in the Pleasures of Sense; others in Honour and Greatness. But these and the like, were Men of the Common Herd, low groveling Souls, that either understood not the Dignity of Human Nature, or else forgot that they were Men. But there were others of a *Diviner Genius, and Sublimer Spirit*.

Quis meliore luto finxit praeordia Titan.

Who had a more generous Blood running in their Veins, which made them put a just Value upon themselves, and scorn to place their greatest Happiness in that which they should Blush to Enjoy. And those were the *Stoics* and the *Peripatetics*, who both place the greatest Happiness of this Life in the Actions of Virtue, with this only difference, That whereas the former are contented with *Naked Virtue*, the later require some other Collateral Things to the farther Accomplishment of Happiness; such as are Health and Strength of Body, a Competent Livelyhood, and the like.

24. And this Opinion has been subscribed to by the Hands of eminent Moralists in all Ages. And as it is Venerable for its Antiquity, so has it gain'd no small Authority from the Pen of a great Modern Writer,

Writer, (*Descartes*) who resolves the greatest Happiness of this Life into the right use of the Will ; which consists in this, That a Man have a firm and constant purpose, always to do that which he shall judge to be best.

25. I confess, the Practice of Virtue is a very great Instrument of Happiness ; and that there is a great deal more true Satisfaction and solid Content to be found in a constant course of well-living, than in all the soft Caresses of the most studied Luxury, or the Voluptuousness of a *Seraglio*. And therefore, I have oftentimes been exceedingly pleased in the reading of a certain Passage in that Divine Moralist *Hierocles*, where he tells you, that the Virtuous Man lives much more pleasantly than the Vicious Man. For (says he) *all Pleasure is the Companion of Action, it has no Subsistence of its own, but accompanies us in our doing such and such Things. Hence 'tis that the worse Actions are accompanied with the meaner Pleasures. So that the good Man does not only excel the wicked Man in what is good, but has also the Advantage of him even in Pleasure, for whose sake alone he is wicked. For he that chuses Pleasure with Filthiness, altho for a while he be sweetly and deliciously entertain'd ; yet at last, through the Filthiness annexed to his Enjoyment, he is brought to a painful Repentance. But now he that prefers Virtue with all her Labours and Difficulties, though at first for want of use sits heavy upon him, yet by the Conjunction of Good he alleviates the Labour, and at last enjoys pure and unallay'd Pleasure with his Virtue. So that of necessity, that Life is most unhappy, which is most wicked ; and that most pleasant, which is most virtuous.*

26. Now

26. Now this I readily submit to as a great Truth, That the degrees of *Happiness* vary according to the degrees of *Virtue*; and consequently, that that Life which is most *Virtuous*, is most *Happy*, with reference to those that are Vicious or less *Virtuous*, every degree of *Virtue* having a proportionate degree of *Happiness* accompanying it, (which is all, I suppose, that excellent Author intends.) But I do not think the most *Virtuous* Life *so* the most *Happy*, but that it may become *Happier*; unless something more be comprehended in the word (*Virtue*) than the *Stoics*, *Peripatetics*, and the generality of other *Moralists* understand by it. For with them it signifies no more but only such a firm *xiōis*, or habitude of the *Will* to good, whereby we are constantly disposed, notwithstanding the contrary tendency of our *Passions*, to perform the necessary *Offices* of *Life*. This they call *Moral* or *Civil* *Virtue*; and although this brings always *Happiness* enough with it to make amends for all the *Difficulties* which attend the practise of it: Yet I am not of *Opinion*, that the greatest *Happiness* attainable by *Man* in this *Life*, consists in it. But there is another and a higher *Sense* of the word, which frequently occurs in the *Pythagorean* and *Platonic* *Writings*, *viz.* *Contemplation*, and the *Unitive* *Way* of *Religion*. And this they call *Divine* *Virtue*. I allow of the *Distinction*, but I would not be thought to derive it from the *Principle*, as if *Moral* *Virtue* were *acquired*, and this *infused* (for to speak ingenuously, *infused* *Virtue* seem'd ever to me as a *Paradox* in *Divinity*, as *Occult* *Qualities* in *Philosophy*) but from the *Nobleness* of the *Object*, the *Object* of the former being *Moral* *Good*,

Good, and the Object of the later, God himself. The former is a State of Proficiency, the later of Perfection. The former is a State of Difficulty and Contention, the later of Ease and Serenity. The former is employ'd in mastering the Passions, and regulating the Actions of Common Life, the later in Divine Meditation, and the Extasies of *Seraphic Love*. He that has only the former, is like *Moses* with much difficulty climbing up to the Holy Mount; but he that has the later, is like the same Person Conversing with God on the serene Top of it, and shining with the Rays of anticipated Glory. So that this later supposes the Acquisition of the former, and consequently, has all the Happiness pertaining to the other, besides what it adds of its own. This is the last Stage of Human Perfection, the utmost *round* of the Ladder whereby we Ascend to Heaven; one Step higher is Glory. Here then will I build my Tabernacle, for *it is good to be here*. Here will I set up my Pillar of Rest, here will I fix; for why should I Travel on farther in pursuit of any greater Happiness, since Man in this Station is but a little lower than the *Angels*, one remove from Heaven? Here certainly is the greatest Happiness, as well as Perfection attainable by Man in this State of Imperfection. For since that Happiness, which is absolutely Perfect and Compleat, consists in the clear and intimate Vision, and most ardent Love of God, hence we ought to take our Measures, and conclude that to be the greatest Happiness attainable in this State, which is the greatest Participation of the other. And that can be nothing else but the Unitive
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Way of Religion, which consists of the Contemplation and Love of God. I shall say something of each of these severally, and something of the Unitive Way of Religion; which is the result of both; and so shut up this Discourse.

27. By Contemplation in general (*σασία*) we understand an Application of the Understanding to some Truth. But here in this place, we take the word in a more peculiar Sense, as it signifies an habitual, attentive, steady Application or Conversion of the Spirit to God, and his Divine Perfections. Of this the Masters of *Mystic Theology*, commonly make fifteen Degrees. The first is intuition of Truth; the second is a Retirement of all the Vigour and Strength of the Faculties into the innermost parts of the Soul; the third is Spiritual Silence; the fourth is Rest; the fifth is Union; the sixth is the Hearing of the still Voice of God; the seventh is Spiritual Slumber; the eighth is Ecstasy; the ninth is Rapture; the tenth is the Corporeal Appearance of Christ and the Saints; the eleventh is the Imaginary Appearance of the Same; the twelfth is the Intellectual Vision of God; the thirteenth is the Vision of God in Obscurity; the fourteenth is an admirable Manifestation of God; the fifteenth is a clear and intuitive Vision of him, such as St. *Austin* and *Tho. Aquinas* attribute to St. *Paul*, when he was wrapt up into the third Heaven. Others of them reckon seven degrees only, (*viz.*) Taste, Desire, Satiety, Ebriety, Security, Tranquility; but the name of the seventh (they say) is known only to God.

28. I shall not stand to examine the *Scale* of this Division; perhaps there may be a kind of a *Pythagoric* Superstition in the number. But this I think I may affirm in general, that the Soul may be wound up to a most strange degree of *Abstraction*, by a silent and steady Contemplation of God. *Plato* defines Contemplation to be λύσις ἔ χειρομῆς ἢ ψυχῆς ἀπὸ σώματος, a Solution, and a Separation of the Soul from the Body. And some of the severer *Platonists* have been of Opinion, that 'tis possible for a Man by mere intention of Thought, not only to withdraw the Soul from all Commerce with the Senses, but even really to separate it from the Body, to untwist the Ligaments of his Frame, and by degrees to resolve himself into the State of the Dead. And thus the *Jews* express the manner of the Death of *Moses*, calling it *Osculum Oris Dei*, the *Kiss of God's Mouth*. That is, that he breath'd out his Soul by the mere Strength and Energy of Contemplation, and expired in the Embraces of his Maker. A happy way of Dying! How Ambitious should I be of such a Conveyance, were it practicable? How passionately should I joyn with the Church in the *Canticles*: φιλοσάτω με ὑπὸ φιλημάτων σώματος αὐτοῦ, *Let him Kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth*, Cant. 1. 2.

29. But however this be determin'd, certain it is, that there are exceeding great Measures of *Abstraction* in Contemplation; so great, that sometimes whether a Man be in the Body, or out of the Body, he himself can hardly tell. And consequently, the Soul in these *Praludiums* of Death, these Neighbourhoods of Separation, must needs have brighter glimpses, and more *Beatific Ideas* of God,

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than in a State void of these Elevations; and consequently, must Love him with greater Ardency. Which is the next Thing I am to consider.

30. The Love of God in general, may be considered either as it is purely Intellectual, or as it is a Passion. The first is, When the Soul, upon an Apprehension of God as a good, delectable, and agreeable Object, joyns her self to him by the Will. The later is, When the Motion of the Will is accompany'd with a sensible Commotion of the Spirits, and an Estuation of the Blood. Some I know, are of Opinion, that 'tis not possible for a Man to be affected with this sensitive Love of God, which is a Passion; because there is nothing in God which falls under our Imagination; and consequently (the Imagination being the only Medium of Conveyance) it cannot be propagated from the Intellectual Part to the Sensitive. Whereupon they affirm, that none are capable of this sensitive passionate Love of God, but Christians, who enjoy the Mystery of the Incarnation, whereby they know God has condescended so far as to Cloath himself with Flesh, and to become like one of us. But 'tis not all the Sophistry of the *cold Logicians*, that shall work me out of the Belief of what I feel and know, and rob me of the sweetest Entertainment of my Life, the *Passionate Love of God*. Whatever some Men pretend, who are Strangers to all the affectionate Heats of Religion, and therefore make their Philosophy a Plea for their Indevotion, and extinguish all Holy Ardours with a Syllogism; yet I am firmly persuaded, that our Love of God may be not only Passionate, but even *Wonderfully* so, and

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exceeding the Love of Women. 'Tis an Experimental, and therefore undeniable Truth, That Passion is a great Instrument of Devotion; and accordingly we find, that Men of the most warm and pathetick Tempers and amorous Complexions, (provided they have but Consideration enough withal to fix upon the right Object) prove the greatest Votaries in Religion. And upon this account it is, that to heighten our Love of God in our Religious Addresses, we endeavour to excite our Passions by Musick, which would be to as little purpose as the Fanatick thinks 'tis, if there were not such a Thing as the *Passionate Love of God.* But then as to the Objection, I answer with the excellent *Descartes*, That altho in God, who is the Object of our Love, we can imagin nothing, yet we can imagin that our Love, which consists in this, that we would unite our selves to the Object beloved, and consider our selves as it were a Part of it. And the sole Idea of this very Conjunction, is enough to stir up a Heat about the Heart, and so kindle a very vehement Passion. To which I add, That although the Beauty or Amiability of God, be not the same with that which we see in Corporeal Beings, and consequently, cannot directly fall within the Sphere of the Imagination, yet it is something Analogous to it; and that very Analogy is enough to excite a Passion. And this I think sufficient to warrant my general division of the Love of God into Intellectual and Sensitive.

31. But there is a more peculiar Acceptation of the Love of God proper to this place. And it is that which we call *Seraphic.* By which I understand in

short, that Love of God which is the Effect of an intense Contemplation of him. This differs not from the other in kind, but only in degree, and that it does exceedingly, in as much as the thoughtful Contemplative Man (as I hinted before) has clearer Perceptions, and livelier Impressions of the Divine Beauty, the lovely Attributes and Perfection of God, than he whose Soul is more deeply set in the Flesh, and lies groveling in the bottom of the Dungeon.

32. That the Nature of this Seraphic Love may be the better understood, I shall consider how many degrees there may be in the Love of God. And I think the Computation of *Bellarmin, lib. 2. de monachis, cap. 2.* is accurate enough. He makes Four. The first is to Love God proportionably to his Loveliness, that is, with an *infinite Love*; and this degree is peculiar to God himself. The second is to Love him, not proportionably to his Loveliness, but to the utmost Capacity of a Creature; and this degree is peculiar to Saints and Angels in Heaven. The third is to love him not proportionably to his Loveliness, nor to the utmost Capacity of a Creature, absolutely consider'd; but to the utmost Capacity of a *Mortal Creature* in this Life. And this (he says) is proper to the Religious. The fourth is to Love him not proportionably to his Loveliness, nor to the utmost Capacity of a Creature, consider'd either absolutely, or with respect to this Life, but only so as to Love nothing equally with him or above him. That is, not to do any Thing contrary to the Divine Love. And this is absolute indispensable Duty, less than which will not qualifie us for the Enjoyment of God hereafter.

33. Now

33. Now this *Seraphic Love* which we here Discourse of, is in the third degree: When a Man, after many degrees of Abstraction from the Animal Life, many a profound and steddly Meditation upon the Excellencies of God, sees such a vast Ocean of Beauty and Perfection in him, that he loves him to the utmost stretch of his Power; *When he sits under his Shadow with great delight, and his Fruit is sweet to his Taste*, Cant. 2, 3. When he Consecrates and Devotes himself wholly to him, and has no Passion for Inferiour Objects. When he is ravished with the Delights of his Service, and breaths out some of his Soul to him in every Prayer. When he is delighted with *Anthems* of Praise and Adoration, more than with Marrow and Fatness, and Feasts upon *Allelujab*. When he melts in a *Calenture of Devotion*, and his Soul breaketh out with fervent Desire, Psal. 119. When the one thing he *delights* in, is to Converse with God in the *Beauty of Holiness*; and the one thing he *desires*, to see him as he is in Heaven. This is Seraphic Love, and this with Contemplation, makes up that which the Mystic Divines stile the Unitive Way of Religion: It is called so, because it Unites us to God in the most *excellent manner* that we are capable of in this Life. By Union here, I do not understand that which is Local or Presential, because I consider God as *Omnipresent*. Neither do I mean an Union of Grace, (as they call it) whereby we are reconciled to God, or an Union of Charity, whereof it is said, *He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*, Jo. 4. 16. The first of these being as common to the inanimate Things, as to the most *Extasid* Soul upon Earth. And the

two last being common to all good Men, who indeed love God, but yet want the Excellency of *Contemplation*, and the Mystic Union. The Union then which I here speak of, is that which is between the Faculty and the Object. Which consists in some Habitude or Operation of one toward the other. The Faculties here, are the Understanding and Will, the Object God, and the Operations Contemplation and Love. The result of which two is the Mystic Union. Which, according to this complex Notion of it that I have here delivered, is thus most admirably represented by the excellent Bishop Taylor: *It is (says he) a Prayer of quietness and silence, and a Meditation extraordinary; a Discourse without variety; a Vision and Intuition of Divine Excellencies; an immediate entry into an Orb of Light; and a resolution of all our Faculties into Sweetness, Affections, and Starings upon the Divine Beauty. And is carried on to Extasies, Raptures, Suspensions, Elevations, Abstractions, and Apprehensions Beatifical.* Great Exemplar, p. 60.

34. I make no doubt, but that many an Honest Pious Soul arrives to the Heavenly *Canaan*, who is not fed with this *Manna* in the Wilderness. But though every one must not expect these Antepasts of Felicity that is Virtuous, yet none else must. *Paradise* was never open but to a State of *Innocence*. But neither is that enough. No, this Mount of God's Presence is fenced not only from the Profane, but also from the moderately Virtuous. 'Tis the Privilege of Angelical Dispositions, and the Reward of eminent Piety, and an excellent Religion, to be admitted to these Divine Repasts, these Feasts of
Love.

Love. And here I place the greatest Happiness attainable by Man in this Life, as being the nearest Approach to the State of the Blessed above, the *outer-Court* of Heaven.

35. These (Sir) are my Thoughts concerning Happiness. I might have Spun them out into a greater length, but I think a little Plat of Ground *thick-sown*, is better than a great Field, which for the most part of it lies Fallow. I have endeavour'd to deliver my Notions with as much Perspicuity, and in as good Method as I could, and so to answer all the Ends of Copiousness, with the advantage of a shorter Cut. If I appear singular in any of my Notions, 'tis not out of an industrious Affectation of Novelty, but because in the composing of this Discourse (the Meditation of a few broken Hours in a Garden) I consulted more my own Experimental Notices of Things, and private Reflections, than the Writings of others. So that if sometimes I happen to be in the Road, and sometimes in a Way by my self, 'tis no wonder. I affect neither the one nor the other, but write as I think. Which as I do at other times, so more especially when I subscribe myself

S I R,

Yours most Affectionately,

All-Souls College,
Apr. 18. 1683.

J. N.

*A Letter of Resolution concerning some Passages
in the foregoing Treatise, to the same Person.*

S I R,

1. **T**HE kind Entertainment which you gave my *Idea of Happiness*, does not only encourage, but oblige me to endeavour the satisfaction of that Scruple, which the Perusal of it has occasion'd. I cannot but highly commend your searching Curiosity, in desiring farther satisfaction concerning a matter of so sublime and excellent a Nature (for the Tree of *Paradise* is good for Food, pleasant to the Eye, and a Tree to be desired to make one Wise) though you must give me leave to wonder, that you would not enquire at a better Oracle. But since you are pleas'd to be of the Opinion, that few have made this Subject so Familiar to their Meditation as I have, I cannot with any pretence decline your Request, though perhaps by my performing it, I shall work you into a contrary Persuasion.

2. Sir, You say you should like my Notion concerning the Reality of that which is usually call'd *Imaginary Happiness*, that is, (as you well explain both your own and my meaning) that although the Object may be an *Imaginary Good*, yet the Happiness which consists in the Fruition of that Object, will not be Imaginary too, but Real; and consequently, that 'tis impossible for a Man to seem to himself to be Happy, and not to be really so, all
Happy

Happiness consisting in Opinion. This Notion, you say, you should like rarely well, could you free your self from one Difficulty which it engages you upon; (*viz.*) That hereafter, in the State of Glory, either one Saint shall think himself as Happy as another, or not; if not, this must needs occasion Envy or Discontent; but if one shall think himself as Happy as another, then, according to my *Hypothesis*, That Opinion is the *Measure of Happiness*, 'twill follow, that he will already be so; and this brings in Equality of Happiness, which you look upon (and I think justly too) as another Absurdity.

3. I confess, Sir, this Argument is pretty subtle and surprizing; but I conceive the Knots of it may be untied by this Answer. First, It may be justly question'd, Whether the first part of your *Dilemma* be necessarily attended with the appendant Absurdity. 'Tis true indeed, not to think ones self as Happy as another, is the Spring of Envy or Discontent, among Men in this World; but whether this be the *genuin* and *constant* Effect of that Consideration, or whether it ought not rather to be ascribed to the present Infirmities and Imperfections of Human Nature, may admit Dispute. But in case this Absurdity does inseparably cleave to the first part, then I betake my self to the later, and affirm, That in Heaven one Saint shall think himself as Happy as another. Then, according to my own Notion (say you) it will follow, that he *is really* so. No, I deny the Consequence, the invalidity of which will plainly appear, by distinguishing the Ambiguity of the *Phrase*.

For

For this Expression, *One Saint thinks himself as Happy as another*, may be taken in a double sense ; either that he thinks himself as Happy as he himself thinks that other ; or, that he thinks himself as Happy as that other thinks himself. I grant, should one Saint think himself as Happy as another in this later Sense of the Phrase, he would, according to my *Hypothesis*, really be so ; so that this would bring in Equality. And therefore in this Sense, I deny the Proposition ; and that without the least danger of splitting upon the first Absurdity. But for the former Sense, that has no such levelling Quality ; for to say that I think my self as Happy as I think another, amounts to no more than this, That in my Apprehension another does not exceed me in Happiness : But tho he does not in my Apprehension, yet he may in *reality* ; for tho my Opinion gives Measures to my own Happiness, yet it does not to another Man's. So that one Saint may be said to think himself as Happy as another in the former Sense, without equalling the Happiness of the Blessed ; tho, I confess, I should much rather adhere to the contrary Proposition, (*viz.*) That *one shall not think himself as Happy as another*, in case such a Opinion be not necessarily attended with *Envy* or *Discontent*. Because it seems unreasonable to make them ignorant of the degrees of one anothers Bliss, unless that Ignorance be necessarily required to prevent the alledg'd Absurdities. But I determine nothing in this Point ; my business was only to break the Force of your *Dilemma*, and to shew that my Notion does not involve you in the Difficulty supposed. This, Sir, is all that I think necessary

cessary to say to a Person of your Apprehension ; and therefore I end these nice Speculations with this profitable reflection, That altho the Notion of Happiness be intricate and obscure, yet the means of attaining it are plain ; and therefore 'twould be most advisable both for you and me, chiefly to apply our selves to the later here ; and we shall understand the former with the best sort of Knowledg, that of Experience, hereafter.

Tours

J. N.

Ans-

*Another Letter to the same Person concerning
the true Notion of Plato's Ideas, and of
Platonic Love.*

*Tanta vis in Ideis constituitur, ut nisi his intellectis,
sapiens esse nemo possit.*

Augustinus Tom. 4. Pap. 548. Q. 46.

S I R,

1. **W**ERE I not as well acquainted with your singular Modesty, as I am with your intellectual Accomplishments, I should readily conclude, that your directing your Enquiries to me, proceeded not so much from a Curiosity to improve your own Knowledg, as to try mine. But when I consider, that you are ignorant of nothing so much as of your own Worth and Abilities, I begin to think it possible that you may propose these Questions, even to me, out of a desire to be inform'd. Which way soever it is, I acknowledg my self to be obliged to you for affording me an opportunity of serving you, especially in such an Instance, where I cannot gratifie your Request without humouring my own *Genius* at the same time. For indeed to my Apprehension, there is not a finer or more sublime Piece of Speculation in all *Plato's* Philosophy, than that of his Ideas, and that of his Love, tho it
has

has undergone the same hard Fate with many other excellent Theories; first to be either *ignorantly misunderstood*, or *maliciously misrepresented*; and then popularly vilify'd and decry'd.

2. To do right therefore to the Name of this great Man, as well as to satisfy your Demands, I shall first propose the general Mistake; and then rectify it; First present you with the suppos'd Opinion of *Plato*; and then with the true and genuine one. I begin with his *Ideas*, by which 'tis taken for granted by the generality of Writers, especially those of the *Peripatetic Order*, that he understood universal Natures, or abstract Essences, subsisting eternally by themselves, separate both from the Mind of God and all singular Beings; according to which, as so many Patterns, all Singulars are form'd. As for instance; That a Man, not this or that in particular, but an universal Man, or a Man in general, should exist by it self Eternally, according to which all particular Men were made. Sir, I suppose you can hardly forbear smiling at the oddness of the Conceit; but as ridiculous as you may think it, 'tis said to be maintained by no less a Man than *Plato*; and has been thought of that moment too, that Multitudes of great Men have set themselves very seriously to Confute it, as a dangerous Heresie; and have opposed it with as much Zeal, as ever *St. Austin* did the *Manichees*, or the *Pelagians*.

3. But now, that this Opinion was not only for its Absurdity and Contradictioness unworthy of the contemplative and refin'd Spirit of *Plato*; but was also apparently none of his, I dare say any capable Person will be convinc'd, that shall heedfully
and

and impartially examine and compare the Works of *Plato*; And this *Aristotle* himself must needs have known (he having been his constant Auditor for Twenty Years together) but only he wanted a Shadow to Fight with; and so Father'd this monstrous Opinion upon his Master. And of this disingenuity of *Aristotle*, together with other Abuses, *Plato* himself complain'd, while alive, in these words, *Ἀριστοῦ τῆς ἡμῶν ἀπειλάνησι καὶ ἀπειρῶ τῶν πωλῶν αὐτοῦ γυνθίστα ἔμνῆται*, as is recorded by *Laertius* in the Life of *Aristotle*.

4. And now, that the grossness of this Abuse may the more fully appear, I will in the next place present you with another Sense of *Plato's Ideas*; and such as by a more than ordinary Acquaintance with his Works, I know to be the true and genuin one. Know then, that *Plato* considering the World as an Effect of an intellectual Agent, and that in the Operations of all other Artificers or *rational Efficients*, there must be some Form in the Mind of the Artificer presupposed to the Work (for otherwise what difference will there be between a fortuitous Effect, and an intended one; and how comes the Effect to be of this Species rather than another?) thought it necessary to suppose *αἰώνια πνευματικά*, *Eternal Forms*, Models or Patterns, of all the Species of Being in Nature, existing in the Mind of God. And these he calls *Ideas*. I say, existing in the Mind of God; for there is not the least Intimation in all *Plato's* Works of any such *Ideas*, existing separately from the Divine Intellect; nor do the great Masters of *Platonic Philosophy*, *Plotinus*, *Porphyrus*, *Proclus*, or any other that I know of, make mention of any such

such Spectres and Ghosts of Entity. No, this Monster was hatch'd in *Aristotle's* Brain, and I believe did never enter *Plato's* Head, so much as in a Dream. For he is not only silent about it, but does in several places expressly assert the contrary; particularly in his *Timæus*, where, of set purpose, he describes the Origin of the World; he says, that God made the World, according to that Pattern or Idea which he had in his Mind. The same you will find more amply confirm'd in his *Hippias*, his *Parmenides*, and his sixth Book of *Repub.* and many other places. And these *Ideas* he calls τὰ πρῶτα νοητῶν, *the first Intelligibles*, and ἑ ὄντων μέτρα, *the Measures of the things that are*, implying, That as all Things were form'd according to these specific Platforms, so their Truth must be measured from their Conformity to them. And in this Sense must be taken that Common Axiom of the Schools, That *the Truth of a thing is its Conformity with the Divine Intellect*; for it is in no other Sense intelligible, as you will discern in the Process.

5. But now, lest you should imagine that this *Platonic Hypothesis* of *Ideas* existing in the Divine Mind, should ill comport with the simplicity of God, or clash with that approved Doctrin of the Schools, *Nihil est in Deo quod non sit Deus*, (which is another Cavil of the *Antiplatonicists*) you are to understand, that *Plato* by his *Ideas*, does not mean any real Essence distinct from the Divine Essence, but only the Divine Essence it self with this Connotation, as it is variously imitable or participable by Created Beings; and consequently, according to the multifarioufness of this imitability, so are the

the Possibilities of Being. Which is as fine a Notion as was ever framed by the Mind of Man; and that it is his, you will find if you consult his *Parmenides*. And this will serve to help us out with another Difficulty; for whereas *Plato* makes his *Divine Ideas*, not only the *exemplary* Causes of Things, but also (which is a Consequent to the former) the measure of their Truth, this may seem to fall in with their Opinion, who make all Truth dependent upon the Speculative Understanding of God; that is, That God does not understand a thing so, because it is so in its own Nature, but that a thing is therefore so, because God is pleas'd so to understand it. Which is an Opinion full of Mischief and Absurdity, as you may see compendiously, and yet evidently demonstrated in Dr. *Russ*'s little Discourse of Truth. Now for the clearing this Difficulty, 'tis to be observed, that the Essence of God, according to *Plato*, is distinguished into *νῦς νοεῖς*, and *νῦς νοητάς*, the Counterpart whereof in *English*, is *Conceptive* and *Exhibitive*. By the Mind of God *Exhibitive*, is meant the Essence of God, as thus or thus imitable, or participable by any Creature; and this is the same with an *Idea*. By the Mind of God *Conceptive*, is meant a reflex Act of God's Understanding upon his own Essence as *Exhibitive*, or as thus and thus imitable. Now if you consider the Divine Understanding as *Conceptive* or *Speculative*, it does not make its Object, but suppose it; (as all *Speculative Understanding* does) neither is the Truth of the Object to be measured from its Conformity with that, but the Truth of *that* from its Conformity with its Object.

But

those of that Character. But that Divine *Plato* intended nothing less than to Countenance any such Thing, is evident from the whole scope and purport of that Dialogue, and from other places, where he expressly condemns it, and rejects it with great Abhorrence; particularly in the first of his *de legibus*, where he calls it, τὸ πρὸ φύσιν πόλημα, an unnatural Attempt. Others by *Platonic Love* understand the Love of Souls; and this indeed has something of Truth in it, only it is too narrow and particular.

7. Others take *Platonic Love* to be a desire of imprinting any Excellency, whether Moral or Intellectual, in the Minds of Beautiful Young Men by Instruction; and so likewise of enjoying your own Perfections reflected from the Mind of another, mix'd with and recommended by the Beauty of the Body. According to the usual saying, *Gratior e Pulchro*, &c. And thus *Socrates* was said to love his Beautiful Pupils *Phædrus* and *Alcibiades*. Others measure the Nature of *Platonic Love*, not from the Object (to which they suppose it indifferent) but from the manner of the Act. And according to these, that Man is said to love *Platonically*, that does *Casso delectamine amare*, love at a distance, that never designs a close Fruition of the Object, whatever it be, whether Sensual or Intellectual; but chuses to dwell in the Suburbs, pleasing himself with remote Prospects; and makes a Mistress of his own Desire. And this is the receiv'd Notion; and that which People generally mean when they talk of *Platonic Love*. But this too is far enough from the right; for tho' *Platonic Love* does not aim at the Fruition of sensual Objects, yet it designs

designs the Fruition of its own Object as much as as any other Love does. That therefore which distinguishes *Platonic Love*, is not the manner of the Act above-mention'd, but the peculiarity of the Object. And what that is, must be collected from the Design of *Plato* in that Dialogue, where he treats purposely of it, his *Convivium*. Which is briefly to shew the manner of the Soul's assent to God by Love. For *Plato* makes the Happiness of Man to consist in the Contemplation and Love of God, whom he calls the *Idea of Beauty*. But now because this *Idea of Beauty* (God) is of too sublime and refined Excellency to be immediately fastned upon by our Love, he recommends to us $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\theta\omicron\delta\omicron\theta\ \alpha\nu\omicron\delta\omicron\theta$, a *Method of Assent*; which is from loving the Beauty we see in Bodies, to pass on to the Love of the Beauty of the Soul; from the Beauty of the Soul, to the Beauty of Virtue; and lastly, from the Beauty of Virtue, $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\omicron\ \mu\omicron\lambda\upsilon\ \pi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\alpha\gamma\theta\ \tau\omicron\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\ \alpha\nu\tau\omicron\ \tau\omicron\ \acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\delta\omicron\nu\ \tau\omicron\ \epsilon\epsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\nu\ \eta\ \epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\tau\omicron\nu$, to the immense *Ocean of Beauty*, &c. For so have I observ'd a tender Infant's Eye, not enduring to gaze directly upon the too powerful Excellence of the Meridian Sun, chuse to entertain it self with the Abatements of corrected and reflected Light, and take up with the feebler Refreshments of lesser Beauties for a while; till at length the Faculty grows more confirm'd, and dares encounter the Sun in his Strength. And these are the Steps of the *Sanctuary*. So that *Platonic Love* is the Love of Beauty abstracted from all sensual Applications, and desire of Corporal Contact, as it leads us on to the first Original Beauty, God; or more plainly thus: The Assent of the Soul to the Love of the

Divine Beauty, by the Love of abstracted Beauty in Bodies. This Love of abstracted Beauty in Bodies, he calls, Ἐρως Οὐρανίου, *Celestial Love*, in opposition to that which he calls ἐρὸς ἑσθίου, which is the same with that Passion commonly signify'd by the Name of Love, *viz.* a desire of Corporal Contact arising from the sight of Beauty. This last indeed, is a very vile, brutish, unmanly Affection; and such, as considering the vileness of our Bodies, one would think a Man could never be Charm'd into without the Magic of a *Love-potion*. But the former is an Angelical Affection; for certainly, Beauty is a Divine Thing; It is (as the *Platonic Author* says of Wisdom) *the pure Influence flowing from the Glory of the Almighty, and the Brightness of the Everlasting Light*; or in *Plato's* own words, *A Ray of God*. And therefore the Love of abstract Beauty, must needs be a very generous and divine Affection. Sir, I could be more large in my Account, but I consider what 'tis I Write, and to whom; and therefore I think it high time to remit you to your own Thoughts, some of which I hope will be, that I *am in a very eminent degree of Friendship*,

Yours

J. Norris.

A Letter

A Letter concerning Love and Musick.

S I R,

1. **T**O the first of your Enquiries concerning the true Idea of Love, and particularly that between Man and Woman, and wherein it stands distinguish'd from Lust, my Answer in short is this. That Love may be consider'd either barely as a Tendency toward Good, or as a willing this Good to something capable of it. If Love be taken in the first Sense, 'tis what we call *Desire*; if in the second, 'tis what we call *Charity*, or *Benevolence*.

2. Then as to *Desire*, there is either an Intellectual or a Sensual Desire, which denomination is not here taken from the Faculty, but from the Quality of the Object. That I call here an Intellectual Desire, whose Object is an Intellectual Good, and that a Sensual Desire, whose Object is a Sensual Good. And this is that which *Plato* meant by his two *Cupids*. The later of these is what we call Lust.

3. But then this again signifies either abstractly and indifferently, *viz.* a bare desire of Corporal Pleasure, or else concretely and immorally, *viz.* a desire or longing after Corporeal Pleasure in forbidden and unlawful instances.

4. These things being thus briefly premised, my next Resolution is this: That the Ordinary Passion of Love, that which we mean when we say, such

a Man, or such a Woman is in Love, is no other than plain Lust, if Lust be taken according to the first signification; namely, for a sensual Desire, or a Tendency toward a sensual Good. But if Lust be taken in the later sense, as a Tendency to Corporeal Pleasure in unlawful instances, that which our Saviour meant when he said, *He that looks upon a Woman to Lust after her, &c.* Then 'tis not necessary that the Passion we here speak of should be Lust, because then 'twould be a Sin to be in Love, and consequently, there would be a necessity of Sinning in order to Marriage; because no Man is supposed to Marry, but whom he thus Loves.

5. And now to your second Enquiry, Whether Musick be a Sensual or Intellectual Pleasure: Before this can be determin'd, the Idea of a Sensual and Intellectual Pleasure must be stated.

6. And First, I observe, That the precise difference of a Sensual Pleasure cannot consist in this, That the Body be pleas'd, or gratefully affected; nor of an Intellectual, That the Mind be pleas'd. For by reason of the strict Union of Soul and Body, one so sympathizes with the other, that these Pleasures are always Mutual, and complicated. So that there is no Pleasure of Mind that does not also recreate the Body; and no Pleasure of Body, but whereof the Mind has its share. And thus far there is agreement and reciprocation. That then which is peculiar and discriminative, must be taken from the Primariness and Secondariness of the Perception. That Pleasure therefore is an Intellectual Pleasure, when the Soul is primarily and immediately affected, and the Body only Secondarily, and by Participation.

cipation. And that is a Sensual Pleasure, when the Body is primarily and immediately affected, and the Soul only secondarily, and by Participation.

7. Now according to this Measure we must of necessity define the Pleasure of hearing Musick to be properly Intellectual. Because the Soul is the Part that is then primarily and immediately affected, and the Body only by result. And that for this evident Reason, because Musick consisting formally in Proportion, and Proportion pleasing only as understood, that part must be primarily and directly pleased, which is capable of understanding. But this is not the Body, but the Soul. 'Tis true indeed, the Ear may be directly pleased by a single Sound, as the Eye is recreated by a single Colour (suppose *Green*) and this I grant to be a Pleasure of Sense as much as Smelling or Tasting, though not so gross. But the Ear may no more properly be said to be pleased with the Proportion of Sounds, or with Sounds as Proportionate, than the Eye is with a Picture.

8. If it be here objected, That Musick is a Pleasure of Sense, because 'tis convey'd by the Ear; I reply, That if this be sufficient to make a Pleasure Sensual, the most Intellectual Pleasures we are here capable of may be call'd Sensual; as reading fine Discourses, Contemplating the Beauty of the Creation, attending to Mathematical Diagrams, and the like; because all these as well as Musick, are enjoyed by the *Mediation* of the Senses.

9. But it matters not though the Senses be the *Instruments of Conveyance*, so the Soul be the Part directly and primarily affected; which is the Case

here. For though the Ear may be pleased with those single Sounds, which with relation to each other are really Harmonical, yet it is not, it cannot be pleased with them as such, or in that Formality. This is the sole Priviledge of the Mind, which as it can only judge of, so is it only capable of being pleas'd with Harmony.

10. And thus, Sir, you have my Sentiments, with as much Brevity and Clearness as I could use, and it may be, as the Matters would bear. I have now nothing further to add, but to renew the Assurances of my being

Your Friend and Servant

J. N.

A Letter

A Letter concerning Friendship.

S I R,

1. **T**O your Question, Whether in propriety of speaking, there may be a *strict Friendship* between a Man and his Wife? I answer first, that the solution of this Question depends upon another, *viz.* What are the Requisites essentially necessary to the Exercise of Friendship? and this Question likewise depends upon another, *viz.* What is the true Notion or Idea of Friendship? This being rightly stated, 'twill be easie to discern what are the essential Requisites; and consequently, whether Man and Wife are capable Terms in this Relation or no?

2. Now as to the Idea of Friendship, I answer first in general, That Friendship is nothing else but *Benevolence* or *Charity*, under some certain Modifications, or accidental Circumstances. Accidental I mean as to *Charity*, though necessary and essential to Friendship. And thus far I think all Moralists are agreed. But now what these certain Modifications are, here they begin to be divided. 'Twould be too tedious a work to insist here upon the variety of other Men's Opinions; and therefore I shall only briefly deliver my own, which is, That all the Modifications of *Charity* necessary to the Constitution of Friendship, may be well enough reduced to these three: 1. That it be in a special manner *intense*.
2^{ly}.

2ly. That it be *mutual*; and 3ly. That it be *manifest*, or *mutually known*. Charity, when cloathed with these three Modifications, immediately commences Friendship. More than these it need not have, but of these not one may be spared, as will easily appear, if you examine them severally.

3. Now from this Idea of Friendship 'tis very obvious to deduce what are the Requisites necessary to Friendship, not in reference to its Idea (for that's already stated) but in reference to its Existence and actual Exercise, that is, in one word, what are those Dispositions or Aptnesses in the Subject, whether as to Person, State, or Condition; which may render it capable of Friendship, according to the forementioned Idea. Now, I say, what these are may be easily Collected from the Idea it self, as will appear if we consider it distinctly, according to those three Modifications; and by applying the Genius to each of them. For 1st. whereas Friendship is said to be Charity in a special manner *intense*, hence I collect First, That it cannot be but between good Men, because an ill Man cannot have any true Charity, much less such an *intense* degree of it, as is requisite to Friendship. So that *Virtue in general* is one Requisite. 2ly. Hence I collect, That a Friend must not be only according to the Character *Lucan* gives of *Cato* ----- *rigidi servator honesti, rigidly virtuous and honest*; but he must be also *χενός διός*, a Man of a liberal, sweet, obliging Temper; one of those good Men of whom 'tis said in Scripture, (by way of contradistinction to the Righteous, or rigidly Honest) that some would even dare to *dye* for them. For tho I may have *Common*

mon Charity ; nay more, a great *Esteem* for a Man of plain Honesty and Integrity, yet I can never love him with that *special intenseness* of Affection which belongs to *Friendship*, unless he be also of a beneficent, kind and obsequious Temper. So that *good Nature* is another requisite. 3^{ly}. Hence I collect, That there must be also (at least in a competent proportion) an *agreeableness of humours and manners* ; for unless the materials be of an apt and correspondent *figure*, the Building can neither be *compact* nor *lasting* ; so that *likeness of disposition* is another Requisite. 4. Hence I collect, That true Friendship cannot be among *many*. For since our Faculties are of a *finite* Energy, 'tis impossible our Love can be very intense when divided among many. No, the Rays must be *contracted* to make them *burn*. So that another Requisite is, that the Terms of this Relation be *few in Number*.

4. These are all the Requisites that I can think of at present deducible from the first Part of the *Idea*, (*viz.* Charity in a special manner intense :) As for Fidelity in retaining Secrets, constancy of Adherence, and the like, I think they are virtually included in the first Requisite ; it being hardly conceivable how a Man can be good and virtuous that wants them. But if you think the Reduction not so obvious, you may if you please, add them here in the fifth place as distinct Requisites ; 'twill be all one. Thus far of the Requisites deducible from the first Part.

5. To proceed. Whereas it is further said, that Friendship is a Benevolence that's *Mutual*, there is but one general Requisite deducible from this, which
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is, that all the other be found in both (or if more) in all the Persons supposed to be Friends. The third of which importing *Relation*, will of necessity be so; for all *Similitude* is *mutual*. Lastly, Whereas 'tis said that Friendship is a Benevolence *mutually known*, all that will be Requisite upon this Head is, that the Persons who are to be confederated in this Union, have such opportunities of Converse or Correspondence, that they may be satisfy'd of the *Degree* and *Reality* of each others Love.

6. Having thus stated the *Idea of Friendship*, and from thence deduced all the necessary qualifications in the subject for its *entertainment*, I think I may now from the Premises, venture to affirm, That there may be *strict Friendship* between *Man and Wife*. For, which of these Requisites is it that they must *necessarily* want? As for your Objection taken from their *inequality*, I grant Equality is wanting both as to *Sex* and as to *Conjugal Relation*; but neither is *all* Equality *necessary*. 'Tis not absolutely necessary that Friends should stand upon a *Level*, either in respect of Fortune, State or Condition. This sort of Equality I grant, is a *good Preparative* for a more easie *Introduction* of Friendship; and 'tis also advantageous to the *lastingness* of it; but yet 'tis dispensable. 'Tis like levelling the Ground betwixt two Rivers, it makes way for a more easie Union; but yet 'tis possible from *Earthquakes*, *Floods*, or other Contingencies, they may be united without it. The only Equality that is necessary, is an Equality of *Dispositions*, an Harmony of *Affections*; but this may be in Persons of *unequal Fortunes* and Conditions. I confess, there can be no such thing as Friend-
ship

ship between Persons of different Quality, if the Superiour takes *advantage* of his *Preheminence* or Authority; for then 'tis true what the Poet says, *Si vis Sexte coli, non amaho.*

7. But then 'tis not the being *invested* with Superiority that is inconsistent with Friendship, (for then Kings, who have no Equals but those of *other Kingdoms*, with whom they cannot intimately *Converse*, would be the miserablest Creatures alive) but the *habitual use* and *exercise* of it, and the standing upon its *Privileges*.

8. But there is no necessity that it should be so. *Friendship* may *level* those whom *Fortune* has made *unequal*; and the greatest *Monarch* in the World may find Opportunities to descend from the Throne of Majesty to the familiar *Caresses* of a *dear Favorite*: and *unking* himself a while for the more glorious Title of *Friend*. 'Tis but to apply this to the particular Case in hand, and you have a Solution to your Question. And now Sir, from the *Theory* of Friendship, I shall most readily descend to the *Præctice* of it, whenever you please to employ the Service of

(Dear Sir)

Your most real Friend and Servant

J. NORRIS.

The

*The Copy of a Letter written to my Friend F.B.
concerning the Death of my Dear Niece
M. C.*

My Dear Friend,

1. **S**INCE 'tis one of the Happinesses of Friendship to Communicate Sorrow, as well as to Share in Joy; that the one may be increas'd, and the other diminish'd, I cannot but betake my self to this easy Refuge; being at present in such a Condition, as will need more Relief and Support, than I can either give to my self, or receive from others.

2. The Truth is, should I indulge my Passion, I might find perhaps as much Cause as he that did it, To Curse the Day of my Nativity. My pretty little Dear Niece and Scholar; She whom I loved, admired, and delighted in; She for whose sake I once thought Life, as now I think Death, a Blessing: She (how shall I bring out that dismal word) is Dead.

3. She is; and has left a strange Emptiness in my Soul, (so large was the Room which She took up there) which nothing of this World's Good can ever fill. I must needs own, that I never was so deeply 'Affected with any Trouble in my Life; nor did I ever think that it could be in the Power of any Temporal Loss, so much to discompose and
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unspirit my Soul. It is not a transient Gust of Passion, which like a little Cloud, would either soon Blow over, or spend it self in a momentary Shower; but 'tis with my Mind, as with the Face of the Sky when 'tis all set to Rain. Were it only an Affection of the *Sensitive* and *Animal* Part, it would soon vanish like the phantastic Colours of the Rain-bow; but my Grief is of a more malignant kind, and penetrates even into the very Center of my Soul. 'Tis lodg'd (as *Lipsius* I remember emphatically phrases it) *in ipsa animi mente*, 'tis an *in-grain'd*, *rational*, and *judicious* Sorrow.

4. I lament not on her account; (for I cannot, without reflecting upon the Divine Goodness, question the Happy State of one who was nothing but Innocence and Sweetness) but purely upon my own. And that I do in such a measure that ---- but 'tis in vain to go about to express it; for I lov'd her as I lov'd my own Soul; and however my Sorrow may be blam'd for her now, yet I'm sure my Love for her could not.

5. For she was a Person (and you know I am not over-prone to *admire*) so peculiarly Accomplish'd, as if Nature had design'd nothing else in her Composition, but to make one *on purpose* to be *below'd*. As for her outward Form, she was one of the studied and elaborate Pieces of Nature; and by the very Air of her Countenance, was markt out for an extraordinary Soul to inhabit in. Nor was the Jewel unworthy of the Case; for certainly she had as excellent a Spirit (one only excepted) as ever condescended to wear Human Flesh. Her Parts were miraculous, and extraordinary; so extraordinary,

traordinary, that had not the Youth and Verdancy of her Face contradicted the ripeness of her Discourings, you would have thought her well in years.

6. And though Art had little more to do where Nature had been so eminently Liberal, yet so Covetous was she, as well as Capable of Improvement, as if she meant to grasp all manner of Knowledge, and leave nothing to a Future State to add to her Accomplish'd Soul. And indeed 'tis too incredible to be related, considering the shortness of the time, (for her Pulse had not beat Thirteen Years) what a wondrous progress her Active Soul had made. Thus far only I shall venture in general, That had she lived to be as Ripe in Years, as she was in Parts and ingenious Attainments, she would have been the Envy of her Sex, and the Wonder of Mankind.

7. But yet the former of these would have been much abated by her admirable *sweetness* and good *Nature*. A Quality as of it self most excellent, so that wherein she most excell'd. And herein I must beg leave of all that I ever convers'd with, to declare, that I never observ'd in any, such a free, generous, obliging, and disinterest'd Temper, which mightily sweetned and recommended her Parts, and made her not only admirable, but lovely.

8. And besides all this, there were in her (as in Poetry) many *errantes abditæque veneres*, wandering and hidden Graces that want a Name, and unexpressable Prettinesses; which yet were strangely moving, and of a charming influence. I am not Conscious to my self of any partial Fondness, or Rhetorical Affectation in any one part of this Character,

rafter, but as near as I can do speak the genuine, unprejudiced sense of my Soul. I hate to flatter the *living*, much more the *dead*, whose Names are as Sacred to me as their Sepulchers. My only fault here (if any) is in the *defect*; for she was as much too good to be sufficiently commended, as to to be long enjoy'd.

9. And now (setting aside that particular respect which she ever blest and honour'd me with) how can I chuse but be very passionately concern'd for the loss of such a rare and every way Accomplish'd Person! I cannot, and methinks when I survey the *suddain ruin* of my pleasant, but short-lived Gourd, I can hardly forbear justifying my Grief, as the iraged Prophet did his Anger, and like him am tempted to say, *I do well to be sorrowful.*

10. But I must not be so ill a Pilot, as now the Floods of Passion arise, to throw away my Tackling, commit my Vessel to the Winds, and run along with the Tempest; *satis natura datum est, jam & Ratio suum asserat Principatum.* For my Ship begins to be cover'd with the Waves, and therefore 'tis now high time to awake Reason from her dead Sleep, that she may rebuke the Winds and the Sea, that they may be *calm and still.* 'Tis dangerous to indulge any longer; the Tumult of the Passions runs high, and the unruly Faction presses hard upon the Gate of the Palace; 'tis therefore time for the Sovereign Faculty to come forth in her Imperial Robes, and suppress the Mutiny.

11. In order therefore to the quieting of my Passions, and the resettlement of my discompos'd

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Soul,

Soul, I consider, First, That *Grief* is the most absurd and senseless of all the Passions, yea of all the things in the World, and utterly unbecoming a Creature that makes the least Pretension to Reason. Because 'tis resolvable into no rational Principle; for whatever is so, must be, or at least appear to be either an End or a Means: But this can pretend to neither. Not to be an End, for nothing is so but what is Good; but this is in *no respect good*, and in *many respects evil*. Not to be a Means, because it effects nothing, but is altogether vain and fruitless. And indeed it cannot but be so, because 'tis of a thing past, which even to Omnipotence it self is impossible to be alter'd. Our other Passions are to some Purpose, and aim at some End. *Love to enjoy, Anger to revenge, Fear to avoid*; and the like; But this Passion, Grief, serves to no end or purpose in the World; and it cannot be its *own end*, because (as I said before) it is in no respect Good. It is therefore utterly absurd and unreasonable.

12. Again I consider, That suppose Grief were not so vain and ineffectual a thing as 'tis, but that it could make some alteration in things; yet it cannot alter any one Event for the better; and therefore to what purpose should I indulge it? For since we acknowledge a Being of an infinite Wisdom, Power and Goodness to sit at the Helm of the Universe; it must be consequently acknowledg'd, that the Course of this World is steer'd to the best advantage of the whole; and however ignorant we may be how to justify particular *Phenomena's*, yet we must (if we will be consistent with our former Concession) at least *implicitly* believe that all things are

are as well as they can possibly be. Certain it is (whatever some *Male-content*s may think) the World is govern'd with as much Wisdom as 'twas made; and as the Natural World stood the Test of the Divine Criticism, so will the Moral One too. God upon review would pronounce this as Good as he did the other, and why should not we? yea we should, if we could see this excellent *Drama* from end to end as he does; we should then discern that all those Dispensations, which separately taken, appear harsh and unequal, yet in Concatenation and together, conspire to the Beauty and Interest of the whole. This will be our Portion hereafter; in the mean time 'twill be our greatest Wisdom to trust that of God, and believe that implicitly as to the thing, which we cannot discern as to the manner. And this I take to be the most rational foundation of Resignation and Acquiescence in the Divine Pleasure, which is grounded upon a Consideration of his infinite Wisdom and Goodness. When we resolve our Wills into his, merely for this reason, because we pay so much deference to his Perfections, as to think, that if we knew as much as he, we should not wish things to be otherwise than they are. And this is highly specify'd in the Saints in Heaven, who through that near and intimate View which they have of God's *Perfections*, are so intirely conformable to his Will, that they can dispence not only with the *eternal loss*, but Damnation of their Friends, without the least Grief or Repentment. I confess, this eminency of Resignation is no more attainable in this Life, than any other part of Celestial Happiness; but yet an heedful and attentive Meditation

of this Argument may do much towards it ; And however difficult it be to reduce it to Practice, yet 'tis most certain in the Theory, that granting the superintendency of an infinite and unprejudic'd Understanding ; and that every Calamity is (as *Euripides* somewhere calls it) *συμφορά δέηλατθ*, sent from God, to grieve at any Misfortune is to grieve that things are as they should be. Which is, one would think, too absurd for him to be guilty of who is defined to be a *Rational Creature*.

13. Again I consider, That as that which I call an Affliction is (as certainly as God is Wise and Good) for the best in reference to the *whole Systeme of things* ; so for all that I know it may be most conducive to *my Interest in particular*. In as much, as by it I may either *obtain a greater good*, or *avoid a greater evil*. Thus a Shipwrack made *Zeno* a Philosopher, and the Messenger of Satan proved an Antidote to the great Apostle against Pride and Vanity of Spirit. And perhaps there was in me some Evil and unmortify'd Quality or other, of so malignant a Nature that it could not be cured by a less severe Application. For certainly God is not so ill a Physitian, as not to weigh the Ingredients of his Bitter Cup, before he mingles it into a *draught*, that it may be proportionable to the strength of the Disease, as well as of the Patient.

14. Again I consider, That as this Affliction may be one of the Arrows of Love, and in the designation of God be intended for my particular Good, so 'tis most certain that by wise Conduct I may extract Good out of it if I will, and turn it to my greater advantage. *Plato* I remember somewhere

where compares the Life of Man to a Game at Tables. And indeed the comparison is worthy the Wisdom of its Author, and full of mystic and important Truth. For as *there* what *Cast* we shall have is not in our power; but to manage it well, that is: So is it with Man in the Concerns of Life. 'Twas not in my power whether this Affliction should befall me or not; but 'tis in my power to manage it for my advantage now it has befall'n me. I can use it as an Opportunity of shewing my Virtue, as an Occasion of withdrawing my Affections from the World, considering the uncertainty of the best Objects of it, of increasing my Love to God, and his Love to me here, and his Rewards to me hereafter. And to this purpose I consider the Story of *Abraham*, who for his readiness to part with his beloved Son at the demand of God, became the Favorite and Friend of his Maker, and obtain'd this emphatical Promise from him, *In blessing I will bless thee.*

15. Again I consider, That although by the loss of this excellent Creature a great Breach be made upon my Happiness, yet the remainder of what I enjoy is much greater than the Evil which I suffer; so that upon the whole, the Scale weighs down for Happiness. My Condition is still better than that of many others, who yet think themselves Happy. And therefore for me to pine and lament, because I am not so Happy as I was, or may be, becomes neither the Philosophy of a Scholar, nor the Humility of a Christian; and upon the same Principle I may continue to Lament even when I am in Heaven. Rather let me adore the
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Bounty of God for filling my Cup so full, than be discontented because it does not run over.

16. Again I consider with the great Apostle, that *the time is short*, and that therefore I should *weep as if I wept not*. 'Twill not be long e're I shall enjoy the Beatific Vision of God, and (if after that the fruition of any Creature can be of any moment) the Society of even this dear Person. In the mean while I have one Artifice more whereby to solace my self, and that is, by entertaining the same apprehension of what I enjoy, as I should do if I did not enjoy it. I think with my self, how miserable should I be if I wanted several of those Blessings which I have, particularly if I had not been bred a Scholar, and thereby been qualify'd to be my own Comforter. And by Virtue of this Consideration, I set a higher value upon what I enjoy, and consequently find the less miss of what I do not.

17. This is my *Consolatio Philosophica*, whereby I allay and fix the violent Fermentation of my Passions. To which I might add many popular Arguments, as that 'tis as natural to Dye as to be Born; that 'tis incident not only to Man, but to the *whole Creation, the fashion of this world passes away*; that 'tis envious to think that *our loss* which is our *Friend's gain*; that occasions of Grief in this World are many, and therefore not singly to be much lamented; that 'tis a shame for Reason not to be able to conquer that which must at length yield to time, and the like. But these I shall be content only to mention, partly because I don't fancy much to be *Topical*, and partly because I think my *other supports* strong enough to bear the stress of the most *weighty sorrow*.

18. And

18. And now the result of all these Considerations is this : I am fully and entirely satisfy'd with the Accomplishment of the Divine Pleasure, and though before 'twas my hearty Prayer, that (if possible) *this Cup might pass from me*, yet I now as cheerfully subscribe to the other Clause, *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*. I am thoroughly convinc'd, both of the absurdity and undecency of my former Sorrow, and though not so much a *Stoic* as to condemn all the Passions, yet I do this of Grief as freely as any of that rigid School, and therefore will no longer *defile my self for the Dead*, Lev. 21. 1. If any Grief can now be reasonable, it must be because I have griev'd so much ; for I am Conscious that I have thereby exceedingly betray'd the greatness of my Soul. *Homer* indeed thought it not unworthy the Character of his great Hero *Achilles*, to bring him in passionately bewailing the Death of *Patroclus*. His expression (as I remember) is *Smerdaleon d' Hoimozen, He wept hideously*. But certainly our Saviour was of another Mind, when he said to his Disciples upon the occasion of his own Death (and certainly if any thing could justify Sorrow, that would) *Let not your Hearts be troubled*.

19. But yet after all, I must needs say, though I have pretty well by this time argued my Passions into a Calm, That 'tis a great Venture to Love any thing well in this World ; and that I am resolv'd for the sake of this dear Person, never to ingage my Passions very far in the Love of any thing again,

Quic-

Quicquid amat cupias non placuisse nimis.

Shall be my *Motto* as long as I live ; and I will follow the excellent Rule of the Royal Philosopher, *M. Antoninas, Aploson seauton*, and reduce my self as near as I can to a Simplicity, and delight in as few things as may be. So shall I *more undividedly* adhere to my *last and best End*, and lye less at the mercy of Fortune.

20. But (Sir) however I contract my Love, you may assure your self of the same room you ever had in the Affections of

Your true Friend

J. Norris.

F I N I S.

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