

THE
New Practice of Piety

Writ in Imitation of
Dr. Browne's *Religio Medici*:

OR,

The Christian Virtuoso:
DISCOVERING
The Right Way to Heaven,
Between all EXTREAMS:

Together with

I. The Character of a Moderate (or Right) *Christian*, in all the Degrees of Perfection attainable in this World.

II. A Specimen of Holy *Living* and *Dying*; copied from the Lives of the Primitive Christians.

III. The *Secret Diary*, Shewing how the Author intends to govern his Thoughts, Words and Actions, for the remaining part of his Life.

The whole being a *System of Uncommon Thoughts* (Speculative and Practical) extracted from the *Christian EXPERIENCES* of Forty Years.

By a Member of the New Athenian Society:

The Second Edition.

Dedicated to the Learned Mr. JOHN LOCK, Author of the *Essay upon Humane Understanding*.

May we know what this New Doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? Acts 17. 19.

L O N D O N :

Printed for S. Malthus, in London-House-Yard, at the West-End of St. Pauls. 1704.

To the Learned

Mr. JOHN LOCK,

Author of the ESSAY

Upon Humane Understanding.

SIR,

M*Y Ambition to have your Worthy Name standing in the Front of my Book, was to induce the World to be at least Civil to it. I cou'd indeed have Dedicated these Sheets to some Men of High Title, but they make but small Reckoning of such Presents as these; in regard they are often above their Understanding, or disagreeing from their Genius; but for my part, I prefer Piety before Birth, and Learning before Dignity; and consequently chose rather to Address this New Practice of Piety to Mr. Lock, than to any other person whatsoever.*

Sir,

The New Athenian Society (of which I own my self an unworthy Member) have ever had an extraordinary Value for your Person and Writings; and I had sooner paid my Respects to you in this Publick manner, had I thought any thing less than a New Practice of Piety cou'd deserve so

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Great a Name as yours to be prefixt to it, a Name that is equally Rever'd and Lov'd by all Pious and Learned Men.

Sir, Great is the Contention about the Right Way to Heaven; but of the many Religions Profess'd in this Land our Spiritual Guides have sufficiently prov'd, that there is only One True Religion, and that the Protestant is it; and therefore I have endeavour'd in this Book to draw Right Christianity into a narrow Room, as a vast World into a small Map; to the end, that with a little Travel much may be Discover'd.

I hope, Sir, 'twill no ways offend you (tho' you have been settled in the Right way to Heaven for 60 Years) that a Review of matters belonging to Religion shou'd be thought needful; for since the Scripture doth premonish us, that Heresies must of necessity be, and False Teachers wou'd come to disturb the Peace and Unity of the Church: It is doubtless necessary to try which of all these Spirits are of God, and which is that Right Christianity so plainly shewn in the Holy Scriptures.

In which important Search, the Reading of this Book, will (by Gods Grace) discover such Light to discern Truth from Falshood, and such Directions to find out the Strait Gate, which only leadeth to Eternal Life, as may satisfie the most Scrupulous, especially if they Read with that Impartial Eye and Humility of Spirit, as they ought to do, who desire to see the Truth between all Extreame.

*Having therefore (amongst the Great Variety of Religions) discover'd the Right Way to Heaven, I shou'd be wanting to my self in so Nice a
Under*

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Undertaking, if I did make choice of any other Patronage than yours, whose Refin'd Conversation has rankt you in the Number of Primitive Christians: Others owe their Honour to Great Titles, you to Piety and Learning; their Conquest is of others only, yours of others and your self too: In a word, all the Addition that can be made to your Pious Character, is a continuing to Live as you now do: Dr. Burthog observing this, obtain'd your Patronage to his Ingenious Essay upon Reason: But tho' I can't merit your Favour as he did, yet from your Condescending Goodness, I raise to my self a Hope, that you will dart a Ray to Quicken and Cherish a Search after Right Christianity; and I'm the more encourag'd to hope this, as it owes its very Essence to your self, being compos'd of your Heroick Vertues; your Large Soul is so Brim-full of Knowledge and Piety, that he that Converseth with Mr. Lock, need not peruse this Book; for you two differ in nothing, save in the Lively Grace which all Originals have above their Copies: Or if my Christian Virtuoso has mistook his way (of which you are a proper Judge) look into your self, and form him a New out of your own Bosom, where Perfections dwell to which I can never Penetrate.

Worthy Sir, I intend not by this Address meerly to satisfie an Old Formal Custom of Dedications, but to tell you and others, what Esteem I have for a Pious, Sober and Peaceable Genius, such as you seem to be Inspired with; especially in this contentions Age, when Charity seems to be swallow'd up by a bitter Zeal, and Right Christianity pin'd and shrivel'd into a bare Skelleton, thro' the Idleness,

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or Security, or Impertinence of its Professors: I am mightily pleas'd with that Impartial Censure, which a Reverend Bishop of our Church hath given upon his Polemical Studies: I shall not be asham'd, saith he, to say, that I am weary and toyled with rowing up and down in the Seas of Questions, which the Interests of Christendom have Commenced; and in many Propositions (I am heartily perswaded) I am not certain that I am not Deceived, and I find that Men are most confident of those Articles which they can so little Prove, that they never made Question of them. But I am most certain (*continues this good Prelate*) that by Living in the Religion and Fear of God, in Obedience to the King, in the Charities and Duties of Communion with my Spiritual Guides, in Justice and Love with all the World, in their several Proportions; I shall not fail of that End which is Perfective of Humane Nature, and which will never be obtain'd by Disputing. — *So that 'tis clear from Bishop Taylor's words, Matter of Difference in Opinion, is often but an abatement of Devotion; but words appertaining to Piety, are sweeter than the Honey or the Honey-Comb: Sure I am, the time will come, when a Life well Liv'd, and Transacted in a quiet Pursuit of our Proper Duties, will be a better Cordial than all the Wrangling Disputes, of either Churchmen or Dissenters. That it were to be wish'd, we had less contending in Matters of Controversie, which avail little to Godliness, and more sincere Practice of Christian Piety; that we had less Questioning in general, and*

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in particular, less Curious Prying into Sacred Mysteries, and more Religious Preparation for Heaven; that there were more Moderation amongst Protestants, that (as my Lord Russel expresses it) Dissenters were less Scrupulous, and Churchmen less Severe : For we may consider, that after all the stir about Occasional Conformity, Re-Ordination, &c. the Devotion of most is but SO, SO; for the Heaps of Volumes that treat upon this Subject, how do they all in a manner tend only to matter of Contradiction ?

But the aforesaid Bishop has set us in The Right Way to Heaven, and what he observes concerning Practical Vertue, and the Ill Success of Disputing, shou'd make us all strive for an Union in Religion, which King William (as a Common Father to all his People) desired so much, that 'twas part of his daily Prayer,

Lord Bless and Preserve thy Church, dispersed over the Face of the Earth, Restore to it UNITY and Concord in the acknow-

ledgement of the Truth ; and the Practice of Righteousness and Goodness : Remove out of it all Divisions and Dissentions, all Tyranny and Usurpation over the Minds and Consciences of Men : Lord, Pity the Distractions, and Heal the Breaches of that part of thy Church which thou hast Planted in these Kingdoms : Take away thole mistakes and mutual Exasperations which cause so much Distemper and Disturbance and Restore to it Piety and Vertue,

PEACE

Lately Publish'd by the Bishop of Norwich and sold by *W. Barns*, at the *Crown* in *Pall-Mall*.

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PEACE and Charity; Endue the Pastors and Governours of it, with the Spirit of True Religion and Goodness: Give them Wisdom to discern the best and most proper means of composing the Differences of this miserably Divided Church; the Heart to Endeavour it, and by thy Blessing upon their Endeavours, the Happiness to Effect it.

Thus Pray'd King William (of Ever Glorious Memory) for an Union in Religion amongst his Protestant Subjects: And seeing we have lately seen Heads of Agreement Assented to by the United Ministers (formerly call'd Presbyterian and Congregational) why might not those Heads be enlarg'd to a Comprehension, or a General Union amongst Protestants.

Our Sovereign Lady (who is no ways behind King William, for Compassion and Tenderness to all Her Subjects) does also desire an Union in Religion; for in her Speech to the Parliament, Nov. 9. 1703. She's pleas'd to say, 'I want words to expresse to you, my Earnest desires of seeing all my Subjects in Perfect Peace and UNION among themselves: I have nothing so much at Heart as their General Welfare and Happiness: Let me therefore desire you all, that you would carefully avoid any Heats or Divisions, that may disappoint me of that Satisfaction, and give Encouragement to the Common Enemies of our Church and State.

And as at the opening of this Parliament Her Majesty exprest her Earnest Desire of seeing all Her Subjects in PERFECT UNITY amongst themselves.

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ives; so at the Proroguing of it, She persists in the same EARNEST DESIRE, Advising the Commons, to go down to their several Countries, so Disposed to Moderation and Unity, as becomes all those who are joyned together in the same Religion and Interest. And as our Gracious Queen desires to see all her Subjects PEACE and UNION among themselves; so I believe the Moderate Clergy wou'd greatly Rejoyce to see all Her Majesties Subjects United in one Church, for in a Letter, lately sent by an Eminent Conformist, to his Kinsman, a Dissenter, in these words, 'As for the Strangeness you charge me with, you wou'd be more just, to impute it to my seldom coming to London, and my short stay there, then to any Difference in our Opinions; for I think a Man may spend an hour or two with a Relation, without any Disputes upon Controversial Subjects; and I can Assure you, That the POWER of Godliness, is that which I have a much greater Regard to, than the FORMS of it.

But notwithstanding this seeming Concurrence of all Parties for an Accommodation in the Disputable Matters relating to Divine Worship, yet I much Question whether UNION in Religion will e'er be effected in our Days; for to be sure the Devil and the High Flyers, do all they can to oppose it: However, I have undertaken in this Book, to reduce the points in Controversie to so short a Compass, that I can't think Moderate Men will dissent from 'em.

But seeing the High Flyers and the Moderate

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Men, are Persons not so well understood as they should be, 'tis fit I should further explain what I mean by em

By *High Flyers*, I mean a sort of Soaring Politicians, that Sin against all the Prospects of Sense and Reason; they are Credulous Bigots that never think; and tho' they pretend to be Sons of the Church, they are in Reality, but half-Papists and half-Protestants. Their Charity to Dissenters waxeth colder and colder, and their Zeal (tho' *Late A-la-mode*) is little too hot; for 'tis not that Holy Fire which is kindled by a Coal from the Altar, but is that *Ignis Fatuus*, or *Wild fire*, which is but a Meteor piec'd up of Malignant Vapours. Had they liv'd in the time of the Ten Persecutions, what clean work wou'd they have made with those *Nonconforming Christians*? Our Gracious Queen desires perfect Peace and Union amongst all her Protestant Subjects; but these Fiery Mad-caps do now fling about their Bombs and their Granadoes against the Phanticks, as if they were storming a *Conventicle*, every word is a Snap-Dragon, or a Flash of Lightning, enough to singe all the Periwigs in the Congregation. — Strange! — That such Fiery Men should be for *Passive Obedience*! But that is a Vertue which they only Preach to others, never Practice themselves. — *This I take to be the True Character of the High Flyers.*

But the Moderate (or Right Christian) is a Man of a different Principle; for by Moderate Men, I don't mean Luke-warm Professors, but such as are Zealous to serve God, and (tho' members of the Church)

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Church of *England*, or any other Protestant Church) do cordially Embrace with the Extended Arms of Good Will, whoever are dignified with the Image of Piety, tho' not distinguished with their own Supercription. — *How* these Moderate Men are branded with the odious Name of Trimmers; but seeing Faith is above Reason, I wonder not to see even the Best Temper'd Christians, think that which is not their own Religion, to be therefore Ridiculous. However the Variety which we behold in the Universe, is not its Deformity but its Beauty; as the Eye is more pleas'd with a Landkip, which invites it with the grateful Interpositions of Hills and Valleys; Woods and Champion Grounds, than if it were let out, to see it self in the Uniformity of a waste Horizon, or Empty Prospect; so is the Truly Pious Soul, more surpriz'd with the Glory of the Christian Religion, when Various Apprehensions agree in the same Substantial Holiness, one Star differing from another in Glory, yet all shining with a Light borrow'd from the same Fountain. And therefore (as I said before) I can't think any Moderate Man will dislike the Subject of this Book, as my design is to put an end to needless Controversies, and to perswade us all to an Union in Religion; but alas, Sir, We are come to that height of Madness, that if a Man will not be Drunk, or Swear, streight he is a Dissenter: If you ask such as these, Of what Religion they are? They will tell you they are Protestants of the Church of *England*. — Ask 'em, Why then they side with Young Perkin, who is a Papist? Because,

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quo' they, the Papists are better than the Presbyterians. — Ask 'em how so? Because, cry they, the Presbyterians are worse than the Papists; Nay, such senseless and unreasonable Bigots are some Churchmen, that it is not enough for a Moderate Man to own Episcopacy, to hear Common Prayer constantly, to receive the Sacrament according to our Church, unless he will say and do in every thing as the High Flyers; he is a Phanatick, an Occasional Conformist, &c. Hence such a Bustle, such a Clutter, such a Hurry, hence so much canvassing at Elections, such Bawling out St. George for the Church, as if all lay at stake, when nothing is in danger: I have heard in a late Election of Parliament Men, a Clergy-Man of some Note, usher'd in a Company of Electors, Crying Out, No Popery, no Presbytery; the sober hearers, wondred what he meant, none looking towards Presbytery, being in any Nomination, or under any Pretensions to the Election. That therefore Men might no longer be Abused with Empty Noises and Clamours; 'twas high time for some Christian Virtuoso, to discover who that Right Christian is, that deserves our Vote and Esteem. I wou'd have a True Churchman to be one that is able and ready to give account of his Faith clearly to every one that asks him; and if all those of other Perswasions were able to do the like; I think all such as own the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and their Rule, wou'd quickly be agreed. If we of the Church of England have a Latitude to give to Men a further Power in the things of God than others can, we have no rea-
son

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son to be angry with the Dissenters that are more straitned; for we have no reason at all, to cry out against the Pope, for his claim to Infallibility; if we will not allow, that we or any Church may be mistaken.

However, the Souls of Men are Precious, and I have here said my utmost to direct us all in that Right Way that leads to Heaven, and I verily think, wou'd all Parties agree to lay by their Bigottry and Prejudice, an Union in Religion, wou'd soon be Effected. However, that I might contribute all I can to this Blessed Work.

In the First (or Speculative Part) of this Book I endeavour to imitate Dr. Brown, in his Religio Medici; I own I am far from matching that Brave Original, yet I found it easier and more proper for me to write after Dr. Brown's careless way, than to pretend to any Form or Method wherein I might commit a thousand mistakes; but in this, some of 'em will pass like his, for Uncommon Errors, and please for the sake of Novelty.—As for my self, my vanity never prompted me, to be a Standard Bearer to any either NEW SECT, or Old Heresie; and I pity such as Love to Live like Pew-keepers in the House of God, busied in seating others, without ever providing a Room for themselves. If then my Speculative Part, does offend such as are truly Pious, it will much grieve me, and it shall always be my endeavour for the time to come, rather to drop Tears for my own sins, than to upbraid other Men with theirs. But the Nice Speculations in Religion are not so Necessary; and are more dangerous than Sincere Practice

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Practice (for our Piety and Principles scarce ever grow after they begin to be too Curious) yet who knows but my Watch goes right, albeit it agree not with the Publick Clock of the City, especially where the Sun of Righteousness hath not by pointing clearly the Dial of Faith, shewed which of the two are in the Error. —

But however New, or Orthodox, my Speculations are, I intend not to gain to my self the Title of Reformer, by Publishing of them, seeing most of these have had the same Fate with that Curious Painter, who having drawn an Excellent FACE, as well as cou'd have been expected from the Smoothest Mirror, did therefore dish it afresh upon the dislike of every New Spectator, till at last he Reform'd it from being any ways like to the Original. But suppose our Christian Vertuoso has been too CURIOUS in drawing the Curtain of Holy Mysteries, to see what passes in Heaven, tho I wont defend such Bold Speculations (for we shou'd not be curious to know more than's Reveald) yet I find there be such Prying Christians amongst us as wou'd not be ignorant of Gods Secrets; as if it were a matter of nothing to be Saved, unless we also knew what God will have Unknown; these are Bold Querists indeed, that to be cur'd of the Athenian Itch, go to the Devil for Brimstone. For my own share, I think that sufficient, which God hath thought enough for me to know (and I hope I have kept within Bounds in these Speculations.) And do only seek to know what is just Necessary for Practice: What that is

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is coucht in a few words; Fear God and keep his Commandments; is the whole Duty of Man. *Eccles. 12. 13.* And therefore King James was much in the Right, when he told us, 'Disputations were the Scab of the Church. We shou'd not make the Way to Heaven, more Difficult than really it is; and therefore when I meet with Doubts that I can't Resolve, I have recourse to this sure Decider of all Differences, — Dominus Dixit; — and that makes me easie; for the Bible has cur'd my Vain Curiosity, and I am satisfi'd with PLAIN TRUTH. — 'Tis Practical Divinity that must bring us to Heaven. When Mr. Hoadly and Mr. Calamy, have vented all their Subtilty and Nice Reasoning against each other, many Pious Men will judge it no other than a Witty Scolding, but a Vain Curiosity; and a Contention who shall out-do each other, has been so much the Sin of the Present Age, that it has given occasion to a Learned Writer to say, 'That (it was his Opinion) Disputing and Wrangling wou'd be a considerable part of the Torments of Hell.

However, To cure this Athenian Itch, in the Practical (or Second Volume) I have added a MAP of Right Christianity (to warn us of all Extreams) and insure our Passage for Heaven, and that my Readers might have a NEW Directory for Holy Living and Dying, have intermixt both First and Second Volume, with such Variety of Original Manuscripts, as Entitles my Book The New Practice of Piety, which (tho compleated in Two Volumes) shall be Publish'd in Four Parts, for the ease of the Poorer Buyer, and as Two of the
Parts

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Parts relate to the Speculative Part of Divinity; and the other Two to the Practick, there shall be added a Distinct Table to each Volume, for the sake of those that will Bind them up when the Work's Compleat.

It had been well (for the High Flyers) if this Christian Moderator had been Published some

Years ago, for (as Bishop Taylor observes) 'Some Men never think of Heaven, and they that do,

'think to go thither in such Paths which all the Ages of the Church did give

'Men warning of; lest they should that way go to the Devil. And I pray God indue us all with

New Faculties of Mind, and give us Power to discern Spiritual things with Fresh Appetite: For the

Right Christian discovers more Solid Comfort, and Material Support, in one Article of Faith,

in one Period of the Lords Prayer, than in all the Disputes of Furious People, who take more

pains to defend a Ceremony, or quarrel with the Common - Prayer; than to perswade

Men to avoid Hell. But I was never any Friend to Controversie, and therefore in this Se-

cond Volume, I endeavour Only to shew what we are to Believe and Do, in the Right Way to

Heaven, and what those things are, which do most require our Time and Diligence; Rescinding the

Superfluities of an Ambitious and Curious Study.

To this end I have begun (this Practical Part) with my own Soul, &c. and hope I have found a Clue

to wind me through the Labyrinth of all Religions, and lead me directly to Heaven.— Oh the

Matchless Kindness of God to Bewilder'd Sin-

ners

The Preface.

Clock which a Great Prince wore in a Ring; it strikes every Hour of the Day, and agreeth with Reason, as the Dials with the Sun.

Great Books (says a Late Author) make men sometimes more Learned, seldom more Innocent; but this not only gives a Schem of Religion in Speculation, but reduceth Piety to Practice; and ('tis hop'd) shews the Right Way to Heaven, between all Extreame. Then, Reader, peruse it often, and do what it directs you to; whilst others wrangle about Religion, do you endeavour to Practice it, for this Book hath no other Character of its worth, than that of your NEW LIFE.

But I'll forestall the Readers Impatience with no more Preface; not in the least doubting, but that upon the first Reading the following Sheets, they'll see how little they, and others, have studied the Old, and what need there was of *A New Practice of Piety*.

I shall only add, so far as I have gone in my *New Practice of Piety*, I have fairly prov'd, That the Moderate Man is the Best Christian, and that the Right Way to Heaven lies between all Extreame; but seeing the High Flyers can't approve of such Healing Principles; to Pacifie these Gentlemen, I endeavour (in the conclusion of these Sheets) to Retract my Moderate Principles (so far as I can with a good Conscience) and this I attempt by writing — *A SATYR on the House of LORDS, for not Passing the Bill against Occasional Conformity*. — And as the Gentleman, who writ a Satyr on King WILLIAM, shew'd himself a Generous Friend to the Merits of that glorious Prince; so I hope (by this Satyr) to shew a True Concern for the Souls of the High Flyers, and if it prove the Conversion but of one Bigot, I hope he'll turn this Satyr into a Panegyrick; or at least own, That the House of Lords are in the Right Way to Heaven; and that if ever we design to get thither, we must follow their Noble Examples of Piety and Moderation; and in particular, that of the Bishop of Salisbury, who says in his Speech to the House of LORDS, 'I own I began the World on a Principle of Moderation, which I have carryed down through my whole Life, and in which I hope I shall continue to my Lives End.'

T H E

New Practice of Piety; &c.

ST. Austin says, *He that Repents, is well near Innocent*; and for that Reason I shall Recommend *A New Practice of Piety* to such as have *Erred and Gone Astray*.

A New Practice of Piety, according to my Notion of it, is, *A Becoming another Man, or New Creature*, Putting off, as to the Former Conversation, the *Old Man*, &c. or more plainly, It is, a denying all Ungodliness and *Fleshly Lusts*, and Living Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present World. — *Therefore if any Man be in Christ, he is a New Creature, Old things are past away, behold all things are become New.* 2 Cor. 5. 17.

If any Man wou'd be Saved, he must first be Born again of the Holy Spirit, be Converted and become a *New Creature*, Holy in Heart and Life; otherwise he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

So that if I'de Live (as well as Write) *A New Practice of Piety*, I must Conform to the Rules of Temperance and Chastity; Moderate all Inordinate Passions and Brutish Appetites, by a *Religious Reason*, Bridling my Tongue also, and setting a Guard upon my Outward Senses.

And that none (no not so much as my self) may doubt my sincerity in this matter, I Resolve henceforward — *To avoid every Known Sin* (whether it be of Omission or Commission) — *To Acknowledge God in all my ways.* — *To do all Things to his Glory* — *And be very Zealous in Sending others to Heaven*; for I read St. Andrew was no sooner Converted, but he strait findeth his Brother Simon, — *And he brought him to Jesus.* John 1. 41. 42.

This I call *A New Practice of Piety*; But tis a Folly to

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pretend to Live up to it, without I come to God in the Posture of a *Truly Penitent and Reform'd Believer*; that is to say, That I Truly REPENT of all the Sins of my Former Life (*whether Known or Unknown*) and have such a Godly Sorrow for 'em, as worketh the Hatred, Confession and Forlaking of 'em; for the *Leading of a New Life*, is, what in us lies, the Undoing of the Evil we have done; neither can I pretend to a *New Life*, except to a True Repentance of all my Sins, I add, — *Faith in Christ.* — *A Firm Belief of the Apostles Creed.* — *And a strict observance of the Ten Commandments, &c.* or (in fewer Words) That I stedfastly believe the *Whole Word of God*, and Square my Life and Actions according to it.

But seeing *A New Course of Piety* can never be effected, till my PRINCIPLES are as much Refin'd as my Daily PRACTICE.

I shall first present the Reader with *A Practice of Piety in Speculation*, and when I ha' run through *A System of New Thoughts* (as a Guide to my Future Life) I shall Publish the *Practical* (or *Second*) Volume of this Work, where our CHRISTIAN VIRTUOSO presents the Reader with a MAP of Right Christianity, and hopes (*by looking into all Religions*) has Discover'd the RIGHT Way to Heaven.

But my Present Task, is to present the Reader with *A New Practice of Piety in Speculation*; and here, the better to Imitate *Religio Medici*, I shall pry into every room of my Heart and Life, to make what Discoveries I can there; for if we consider *the Original of our several Deviations from the Right Path*, we shall find, they all proceed from our not Knowing our selves nor God; to Know our selves; therefore must be our first Care, which will lead us to the Knowledge of God; for we must needs perceive after the *strictest search* we can make into our own Being, how impossible 'twas for us to make our selves, that we are forced to conceive our being, to be the Gift of an Almighty Power. — *Then withdraw thine Attention a little, Ob my Soul from the Notice and Impressions of External Objects; View a while, with Application, the image of thy Self, within the sphere of thy own Activity; Exert the power of Reflection upon those Act-*

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which have no Affinity with the Body, and claim an Independence upon Inferiour Beings; gather thence the clear Notions of thy Nature, and how nearly thou art ally'd to the Intellectual World. The most successful Method is to Contemplate thy own Image in the mirrour of Peculiar Operations, which are Exhibitive of the apparent powers and faculties of their Active Source. How Extensive are thy Capacities? the Heavens are not Commensurate; thou art grasping beyond the circuit of the 8th. Immoveable, and stalking along the Fields of the Empyreum. Thou art swifter than the Rays of Light, and out-runst the courser of the Skies; thou canst measure the weary round of a Saturn in a moment, and stretch away into Empty Space, and all this, whilst thou art Enshrin'd at Home, Clasping thy Dear Companion. How Nice the motions and turns of Thought! How Charming the Spoils which they prey upon! Thou art possesst of a double Vertue, whence thy Thoughts roll along the Channels of Understanding and Will; the searches of the first, are for the sake of the Second, and the latter winds up the springs of the first, especially when the Game is practicable, and rang'd within the boundaries of Good and Evil.

Reader, As bad as the Age is, there is a Retail of Men, who are no Strangers to themselves; but whether the Author of this Essay is one of those Blessed Few, is now left to thy Candid Judgment.

However, having sincerely Repented of all the ERRORS of my past Life, I am bold to Challenge the Title of a Right Christian, neither am I ashamed to expose my Naked Thoughts with respect to the Time that is past, or to that New Life I wou'd now lead; and seeing the Right Way to Heaven lies first in the Knowledge of our selves, I shall (In imitation of Dr. Brown) begin my New Practice of Piety, with Divine SPECULATIONS on my Birth and Parentage; and however strange my thoughts appear in the following Sheets, I hope to prove that they all contribute to a New Practice of Piety.

I have no reason to tax my Education, or blame those who had the care of my Juvenile years; my Parents were Learned and Orthodox, and made it their Business to form my Mind, and square my Soul by the best Precepts and Purest Examples; yet when I arriv'd at Years

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of Maturer Judgment, I found occasion to Prune my self, and Lop off many *Excessencies*; to wipe out the Early Impressions of my Infant Years, and *unlearn* the Notions I suck'd in with my Mothers Milk; tho there were no *Legends* in the Nursery, nor *Heresies* in the Schools where I was brought up, yet my Blooming Fancy was fertile in ERRORS, and sprouted forth in many Luxuriant Thoughts: It was the task of my *Riper Judgment* to correct these, and reduce my self to the standard of *Reason and Faith*.

As soon as I had finish'd *all the course of my Studies*, at the end whereof Men are usually receiv'd amongst the Rank of the Learned, *I began to be in great fears about my Eternal State*; for tho I was *Master of all the Sciences*, and had looked into all Religions, yet I found my self intangled in so many *Doubts and Errors*, that methought I had no other Profit in *Seeking to instruct my self*, but that I had the more discover'd my own Ignorance: Being thus dissatisfi'd in my own Mind, I resolv'd at last to enter on a *New Practice of Piety*, and now looking on the *Divers Actions and Opinions of Men*, there is almost none which to me seems not Vain and Useless; yet I am extreamly satisfied with the Progress which (as it seems to me) I have made in the *Search of Truth*, and have now chosen that *Right Religion*, in which I'll venture my Heaven and Eternal Happiness.

I know how subject we are to mistake in those things which concern us, and how Jealous we ought to be of the *Judgement of our Friends*, when it is in our Favour. But I discover in these *SPECULATIONS*, the Experience of Forty Years, and Represent therein *my Life, as in Picture*, to the end that every one may Judge thereof and that learning from Common Fame, what Men say of my Naked Thoughts, I may find a *New Means* of Instructing my Self, and thereby Pass to Heaven with greater Assurance.

The Athenian Oracle never pretended to be Infallible neither is it my design to charge those with *Schism* who serve God in a Meeting, with as much (or perhaps more) Devotion, than I do in the *Established Church*, but only to shew *how I govern my own Life* and what need there is (in this Wicked Age) of *New Practice of Piety*.

The New Practice of Piety. 5

I Reverenc'd our *Theology*, and pretended to Heaven as much as any ; but having learnt, as a most certain Truth, that the *Right Way* to it, is no less open to the most Ignorant, then to the most Learned ; and that those Revealed Truths, which led thither, were beyond our Understanding ; I durst not submit to the weakness of my *Ratiocination* ; and I thought that to undertake to examine them, and to succeed in it, requir'd some extraordinary Assistance from Heaven and somewhat more than Man.

I shall say nothing of *Philosophy*, but that seeing it hath been cultivated by the most Excellent Wits, which have liv'd these many Ages, and that yet there is nothing which is undisputed, and by consequence, which is not doubtful. I cou'd not presume so far, as to hope to succeed better than others. And considering how many Different Opinions there may be on the same thing, maintain'd by Learned Men, and yet that there never can be but one only Truth : I declar'd (almost) all false, which had no more then Probability in it.

As for other Sciences, since they borrow their Principles from *Philosophy*, I judg'd that nothing which was Solid, cou'd be built upon such Unsound Foundations ; and neither Honour nor Wealth were sufficient to invite me to the study of them ; For (I thank God) I found not my self in a condition which oblig'd me to make a Trade of Letters for the Relief of my Fortune. And although I made it not my Profession to despise Glory with the Cynick ; yet did I little value that which I cou'd not acquire but by False Pretences.

And lastly, for Unwarrantable Studies, I thought I already too well understood what they were, to be any more subject to be deceiv'd, either by the promises of an Alchymist, or by the Predictions of an Astrologer, or by the Impostures of a Magician, or by the artifice or brags of those Quacks who profess to know more than they do.

By reason whereof, as soon as my years freed me from the subjection of my Tutors, I wholly gave over the study of Letters, and resolving to seek no other knowledge, but what I could find in my self, or in the great Book of the World ; I employed the rest of my youth in Travel, to see Courts and Armies, to frequent People of several humours and conditions, to gain Experience, to hazard my

self in those Encounters of Fortune which shou'd occur ; and every where to make such a *Reflection on those things which presented themselves to me, that I might draw Profit from them.* For (methought) I could meet with far more **TRUTH** in the Discourses which every Man makes touching those affairs which concern him, whose event would quickly condemn him, if he had judg'd amiss, then amongst those which Letter'd Men make in their Closets, touching Speculations, which produce no Effect, and are of no consequence to them, but that perhaps they may gain *so much the more vanity, as they are farther different from the Common Understanding* : Forasmuch as he must have imployed the more wit and subtilty in endeavouring to render them probable. And I had always an extream desire to learn to *distinguish Truth from Falshood*, that I might see clearly into the *Errors of my Life*, and enter on a *New Practice of Piety* ; and so it hapned that by little and little, I freed my self from *many Mistakes* which did eclipse my Natural Light, and render'd me less able to Comprehend Reason. But after I had employed some years in *this studying the Book of the World, and endeavouring to get Experience*, I took one day a Resolution to *search also within my self*, and to employ all the forces of my Mind in the choice of *The Right Way to Heaven* ; having therefore got the *Weather-gage of Youthful Mistakes*, by diligent Scrutinies, and proper Remarks ; having put in the Balance, and weigh'd my *Native Religion* with all others that are extant, I now make that the object of my Choice, which before was only the effect of *Prepossession* ; and as I was list'd a Soldier of Christ in my *Baptism*, so now I declare my self *A Volunteer in his Service* ; what was then done without my Knowledge, I now ratifie by my free Free Consent. And I resolve not to change my *Banner* as long as I Live.

'Tis no *Solecism* in Divinity, to say that *the Prince of Peace, is the Lord of Hosts*. The Church Militant, is his Army composed of many Battalions in different Posts, and under various Orders. So long as they all serve the great *Captain* of our Salvation, and practise well the Discipline of their Arms, I refuse not to give the word of Peace to any, let him be of what *Company or Troop* soever.

I am not fond of the Names which distinguish one Party from another in the *Church*. I esteem not a Man the better for being regimented in this *Communion*, rather than in that. And for ought I know, in the *Camp of God*, a *Reformade* may be as acceptable, as in those of Men. However, a Mutineer in either is odious, and to raise *Factions* about *Religion*, is to adore *Mars*, instead of *Christ*; and to commence a War, for the sake of Peace. I cannot approve of their bitter *Zeal*, who, if they cannot call down Fire from *Heaven*, will kindle it on the *Earth*, against all that think not as they do. He is an ill Disputant for *Christianity*, who uses no other Topicks than Gun-powder and Steel. *The Logick of Mahomet becomes not a Disciple of Jesus*; and I should make but an Hypocritical Convert, were I to be *Dragoon'd* into *Religion* by the Domineering Arguments of *Boored Apostles*.

The use I make of this Variety in *Religions*, is far different: *Truth* is *Homogeneous*, and attracts to it self all that is of its own *Nature*, wheresoever dispers'd or separated, rejecting the rest, as not pertaining to it. Thus I, overlooking the *Errors* and *Mistakes* of those who differ from me, at the same time embracc their *Orthodox Tenets*, and shunning their *Vices*, I imitate their *Vertues*. This is to take things by the right handle, and like the *Bee*, to suck *Honey* out of every *Weed*. It is of the *Nature* of the *Sun*, who has commerce with many *Pollutions*, yet remains himself undefiled:

I abhor that mercenary Course of joyning my self with any *Party of Christians* that is uppermost, to abet the prevailing *Faction*, and assert the Opinions most in Fashion; this is to be a *Weather-cock* in *Religion*, pliable to every fresh Gale of *Interest*. Neither, on the other side, do I think it good manners, or Prudence, to affront the *Religion* of the *State*, and by a sawcy Impertinence condemn those who worship *God* in the manner prescrib'd by the *Laws* of the *Land*. In my *Travels* I learn'd this *Moderation*, and he that knows not how to practice it, is not fit to stir out of his *Chimny Corner*. *Religion* does not authorize *Rudeness*, neither is *Arrogance* compatible with *Devotion*. It is difficult to find a *Company* of four or five Men together, where

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there is not at least a *Triumvirate* of Religions, and he that will set up for a *Dictator* among them, shall have all the Forces united against himself.

I do not value any Man's Religion by his starch'd look or *supercilious Gravity*. I hate to put on an unfociable Face or screw my self into an ill-humour'd *Riddle*; I do not angle for the *Character* of a *Saint*, by magisterially declaiming against the *Innocent* Divertisements of Humane Life and ranking things Indifferent among the greatest Crimes. Above all, I cannot approve of those who are prone to fasten *Gods Judgments* on particular *Occasions*, as if they alone cou'd unlock the Secrets of the Almighty, and were the *Privy-Counsellors* of Heaven. No Man's *misfortune* shall escape their *Censure*, but forgetting what our Saviour said of those on whom the *Tower of Siloam* fell, they condemn all alike, and presume to distribute the *Divine Justice* by their own *Weights* and *Measures*. I am in Love with that saying of *Plato*, *There is no Envy in the Deity*. Assuredly that Immense Ocean of Goodness never ceases to show'r down his Favours and Blessings, on all that are capable of receiving them; and he is not partial to any of his *Creatures*. Like the *Sun*, he imparts his Influence to all the *World*, and if they rejoyce not in his *Beams*, the *Cloud* that hinders them is of their own raising. Those Men will hardly profelitte me, who dress the *Deity* in a frightful *Figure*, and then wou'd perswade the *World* to his *Essential Complexion*. While they exclaim against *Statues* and *Images*, they themselves commit *Idolatry*: They set up an infinite Tyrant, morose, arbitrary and cruel, instead of the Original, Increated Beauty and Goodness, worshipping the *Idol* of their own Imagination, instead of the Indulgent Father of all things.

I do not take Prayer to consist in saying o'er the devoute *Colleets* and *Oraisons* of the Church, without a due *Application* of *Spirit*. This is the Sacrifice of Fools, without *Salt* or *Fire*, and therefore must needs be unfavoury to *God*. The bended *Knees*, *submiss* Looks, and even a *Body* prostrate to the Ground, unless accompanied with a proportionate *Fervour* and *Humility* of the *Soul*, are but Religious *Compliments*, and
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ious Banter. Such Mock-Addresses, I doubt, are not graciously receiv'd in the Court of Heaven.

An equal dislike I have for those who offer up strange and unhallowed Flames; burning Incense, whose Composition is not warrantable; who hold not fast the Form of sound Words, but giving the Reins to their Tongue, suffer to commit a thousand Indecencies in the Hearing of Him who made the Ear. These, as well as the former, are guilty of *Crimen lesa Majestatis*; while they affront Heaven with *Tautologies* and *vain Repetitions*. The one thro' inadvertency, the other thro' Presumption. This bringing Form without Matter, That offering Matter without Form; and both wanting the Spirit and Life of sincere Devotion. Yet I neither censure such as use an allowable Form, provided it be accompanied with attentive Devotion: And less those who address themselves to Heaven in words of their own choosing, provided it be season'd with Discretion, and a modest Society of Spirit. For when a Man fitly qualified, endued with Learning too, and above that, *adorn'd with a good life*, breaks out into warm and well deliver'd Prayer before his Sermon, it hath the appearance of a Divine Rapture, he raiseth and leadeth the Hearts of the Assembly in another manner than the most compos'd or best studied Form of words can ever do: And those Formal Suplicants, who serve up all the Sermon with the same garnishing, would look like so many Statues, or Men of Straw, in the Pulpit, compar'd with those who speak with such a powerful Zeal, that Men are tempted at the moment to believe Heaven it self hath directed their words to them.

On the other side, I think not that to be the only Authentick Prayer, which is attended with Sensual Raptures, and melting Entertainments: This is but the Smoke of Passion, and soon vanishes; a mere Vapour or Ebullition, a pleasing warmth of good Natures, and frequently the proper Result of a Sanguine Complexion.

Prayer is the Exaltation of the Soul, the Flight of a Sublimated Spirit: It makes a Man an Angel pro Tempore, while his abstracted Mind takes the Wing, and soars aloft, hovering on the Borders of Paradise. He then breathes immortal Airs, burns like a Seraphim, and flames out with Holy and defecate Fires, like the most exaltasi'd Orders of the Cœlestial Court.

For my own part, I can Pray Kneeling, Standing, or Sitting; either at my Business or at my Repast; with or without Words and Ceremonies. And this I take to be the only Method of complying with *St. Paul's* Counsel, when he bids us Pray without ceasing, A swift and Pious *Ejaculation* many Times does the Office of a *multitude of Words* (tho' the most apposite and elegant in Humane Language) since *God* understands the *Dialect* of the *Heart*, as well as that of the *Tongue*, being the Architect of both.

The Posture which *Pythagoras* enjoyn'd his Disciples, when they appear'd before the *Gods*, was not without a *Mystery*. He bid them hold their *Tongues* revers'd; intimating thereby that they should observe a devout *Silence* in such Tremendous Company, and utter no Words which were not dipt in the *Heart*. And I could wish the Advice of *Solomon*, instead of a *Nosce Teipsum*, were engraven on the *Frontispiece* of our *Churches*. "My Son, when thou enterest the House of *God*, let thy words be few, and be more ready to hear, than to offer the *Sacrifice* of Fools. In all this, I aim at a *Devotion* that is Masculine and Solid, Discreet and Humble, Sincere and Modest; full of *Primitive Reverence*, and the *Fervor* of the first Ages.

In proper speaking, our very silent Necessities are eloquent *Prayers*, and the wants which are hardest to be uttered, are such a prevailing *Rhetorick with God*, as oft times brings down swifter Relief from *Heaven*, than our loudest *Letanies*; even we our selves are most willing to dispose of our Alms to a *Dumb-Person*, who by being disabled to make his Address any other ways than by mute Signs, does by that Pathetick kind of *Complaint* engage our *Charity*. Indeed every Innocent *Action* of our Lives is a *Prayer*: But the more extraordinary Performances of *Heroick Vertue*, pierce the Clouds, storm the Regions above, and plunder *Heaven* it self (if I may so speak) of its choicest *Blessings*.

As to *Publick Prayer*, I own there is a Necessity of using some *Forms* and *Ceremonies*; and those are the best, which have the greatest Efficacy to excite and regulate our *Devotion*. Not too Pompous and Theatrical, nor slovenly and mean, but such as become the *House of God*, and give
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it an external Beauty, not a meer Pageantry of Holiness.

That Custom of the Greek, and other Eastern Churches to separate the Men from the Women in the Publick Assembly, seems to have something of Antiquity for its Plea, tho' the dilute of it in these Western Parts make us think it a Singularity. I envy not that Sex the Liberty of Worshipping God, and being present at the Publick Solemnities; yet I grudge them a Privilege which is so manifest an Impediment to our Devotion, as is their rehearsing aloud the Psalms, Responses and other Portions of the Common-Prayer. I cou'd stand beside the fairest of that Sex in the Church, unmov'd as Marble, their brightest Charms serving but as Foils to set off the incomparable Eminency of that Majesty and Glory who is adored in that Place. But when I hear them break the bounds of Female Modesty, whose greatest Ornament is Silence; when I hear their Tongues running over the Prayers, as loud, if not louder, than the Men, either with a careless wantonness or affected Gravity, their Eyes divided betwixt an amorous Glance, and a devout Ogle. This, I must confess, gives me Offence; 'tis an Obstacle to my Devotion, and makes me think the Grecians are not without reason in assigning a particular Place of the Church to the Women, where they can neither be seen nor heard. And this will not seem uncourtly or austere, if we remember that St. Paul himself has said, *I permit not a Woman to speak in the Church.* And in another place, *Let Women have Power on their Heads* [that is, be covered or veiled] *because of the Angels;* or as some interpret it, *because of the young Men.*

I wish for a purer Reformation in the Church than we have hitherto seen; yet I am not for tearing up Christianity by the Roots. I could be glad to see the House of God purged and cleansed, the Building Repair'd and Beautified, without Removing it from the Foundations. The Office of a Bishop and a Presbyter, to me, seems no other ways differenc'd than thus; I look upon a Presbyter as a Parochial Bishop, and a Bishop as a Diocesan Presbyter. Their Dignity equal in Quality, tho' not in Quantity. The one has power of administering the Sacraments as well as the other: Only for the sake

take of *Order* and good *Government* in the *Church*, one is invested with a *Jurisdiction*, and *Superiority*, of which the other is as capable, if duely *Elected* to it.

I envy not the *Bishops*, or *Ruling Presbyters*, their *Temporal Honours* and *Riches*, neither wou'd I be a *Leveller* in the *Church of God*: Yet it were a desirable thing, if there were a more equal *Distribution* of *Ecclesiastical Benefices*, that the poorest *Preaching Presbyter* might have an *Income* that should free him from the *Temptation* of envying a *Journey-man Carter*, and other inferior *Trades* who many times can boast of a larger *Stipend* than some of the *Ministry*.

Pluralities and *Non-Residents* were never heard of in the *Primitive Ages*, and it is a shame there should be so many fat *Parsonages*, and yet so many *lean Parsons*. It is the *Devil's Market* where *Church-Livings* are bought and sold, and such *Spiritual Hucksters* deserve to be whipt out of the *Temple*.

I refuse not to bow at the *Name* of *Jesus*, yet can give no *Reason* why I should not as well bow at the *Name* of *Joshua*, they being both one and the same in the *Hebrew*. And that *Scripture*, which is made to countenance this *Ceremony*, seems to me to speak no more than that in the *Name* of *Christ* all addresses should be made to *God the Father*. For if it were to be literally taken, why do they who so receive it, bow the *Head*, instead of the *Knee*? Besides, I see no *Reason* why I shou'd not bow at the *Name* of *Messias*, *Christ*, *Emanuel*, since the *Redeemer* of the *World* is called by all these *Names*? Nay, why should not I pay the same *Reverence* to all the *Names* of *God* in all *Languages*, especially to that tremendous *Name Jehovah*, which the *Jews* think it unlawful to utter? 'Tis true indeed, I can comply with the *Custom* of the *Church* in a thing not directly opposite to any positive *Command*; but I protest at the same time, my wishes are, that a *Custom* acknowleg'd to be indifferent, even by those who most zealously plead for its practice, were rather disus'd, than impos'd on Men of *tender Consciences*, since it gives so much *Scandal*, and has no *Authority* but that of *Tradition* to back it.

I am naturally a *Lover* of *Musick*, and believe it has an efficacy in composing or ruffling the *Spirits*, according

to the various kinds of it. But I find its most immediate Operation is on the *Fancy*, and sensual Affections, not on the *Superior Faculties* of the *Soul*. And therefore I see no use of it in the *Church*, where we come not to pay Homage to *God* in the strength of an exalted Imagination, or to present him with the *First-Fruits* of our *Passions*, tho' never so refin'd, but to offer up our selves a *Living Sacrifice*, which is our Rational Service, since *God* is to be worship'd in *Spirit* and *Truth*, and not with airy *Notions*, and carnal Raptures.

Tho' the *Ear* is a Member consecrated to the Service of *Religion*, since *Faith* comes by *Hearing*, yet I cannot observe that my *Faith* is at any time increas'd by the most Harmonious Lessons on the *Organ*, or other Instruments of *Musick*, used in Divine Service. Neither do I admire at the Countryman's Freak, who the first time he had ever been in a Cathedral, hearing the *Organ* strike up, fell a dancing, as tho' he had been in a *Musick-House*. To speak freely, I know not why we may not praise *God* as acceptably in a *Dance*, as with *Musick*, since the *Jews*, from whom we borrow our Arguments for the latter, did as usually practice the former; there being but little use of the one without the other. To me a Chapter in the *Bible* is the best *Musick* in the World, and no Melody like that of a good *Sermon*, where the Preacher, like a skilful Artist, reconciles the Discords of the *Law* and the *Gospel*; and between the Emblems and Types of the one, and the Substantial *Truths* and *Mysteries* of the other, strikes up such a grateful *Harmony*, as far exceeds the best *Consort* in the World, tho' it were as charming as *Nebuchadnezzar's*, and made up of the whole Family of *Musick*.

I am a great Admirer of good *Painting* and *Sculpture*, yet can never find them Helps, but Hinderances to my *Devotion*; since it is impossible for the greatest Master that ever profess'd those *Arts*, to draw or carve to the Life, what was never expos'd to any of his Senses, or to contrive a *Figure* of that which has no Resemblance, the *Invisible Divinity*. Indeed a Man's own *Fancy* in such Cases is the best Painter; and if it be lawful to make use of *Pictures* or *Images*, 'tis of such as our own Imagination frames: Yet this is the way to become *Anthropomorphites*, and worship
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God under the *Similitude* of a Man; or to follow the Pagan Vanities, and adore him under the likeness of a Beast, or some other sensible *Figure*; since all the *Ideas* of this *Mimick Faculty*, are but the Transcripts of External Objects: *Aristotle's* Maxim being truer of this, than of the *Intellect*, That there is nothing in it which was not first in the *Sense*. The only way to have a true *Idea* of God, is to suppress the Operations of this busie *Faculty*; and by withdrawing into the most inward *Recess* of the *Mind*, there, as in a *Mirror*, to contemplate that *Infinite Essence*, who is hid behind himself (if I may so speak) and cannot be discover'd but by his *Back-parts*.

It is with Pleasure that I behold Him in his *Rays* which shine in all his Works, and he has cast his shadow through out the *Universe*, but I should be oppress'd with *Glory*, were I capable of fixing my Eyes on that *Abyss* of Splendors, before which the most *Illustrious Spirits* in *Heaven* cover their Faces, as if they were ashamed of their comparative Imperfections, and were not able to behold that Original *Increated Purity* without a Blush.

I have no ambition to become an *Eagle* in *Divinity*, neither do I emulate the towering Flights of such as pretend to extraordinary *Revelations*. I had rather walk under the *Piazas* of *Gods Church*, than on the *Battlements* of the *Devils Chappel*, lest my Head should grow giddy with *Enthusiasms*, and I be blown off from those Heights and Pinnacles with some wind of vain *Doctrine*. That Father of the *Arrian Heresie* was an *Icarus* in *Religion*, he had lofty Thoughts and soaring *Speculations*, but he flew without a Guide, he forsook the Path of his *Mother* the *Church*, his Wings melted, and he had a terrible *Fall*, which at once bereft him of his *Life*, and ('tis to be fear'd) of his *Salvation*.

I take great Pleasure sometimes to find my self entangled in *Difficulties* and *Dangers*, out of which I have no *Skill* to extricate my self. I never think my self safer than in such a *Labyrinth* of thwarting Events, as no *Clue* of my own Reason or Experience can lead me out. 'Tis then I can be chearful and triumph, knowing my Deliverance is near at hand. And herein lies the *Quintessence* of my Comfort, that

that I am thus particularly, and demonstratively assur'd of the Divine *Favour* and *Protection*, since nothing below a *Miracle of Providence* could untie so knotty a juncture of *Misfortunes*.

Were all the Passages of my *Life* publish'd, it wou'd be taken for more than a *Romance*, it is so full of *Adventures*, which surpass the *Stories of Gyants, Monsters, Enchanted Castles*, and the whole *System of Knight Errantry*. Such strange and unexpected *Escapes* as I have made from the very *Jaws of Death*, exceed the *Fables of Poets*. And had I no other Reason but the Remembrance of my own *Perils* and *Deliverances*, it were more than enough to convince me of an unerring Eye that watches over *Mankind*. This makes me chearful and easie in all humane Circumstances, and reconciles me to the *Stoicks*. I look on all things to be govern'd by a fixed *Law* and *Destiny*; and therefore cou'd quietly sit down with *George Withers*, and say, *Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo*. I consider my self as a *Part* of the *Universe*, and therefore am never troubled at any thing which happens to me, since it comes not to pass without the Knowledge and Will of him who in all his Dispensations has Regard to the *Good* of the *Whole*; from which I am not excluded as a *Member*, and therefore must needs participate of the *Common Benefit*, even when I think I suffer *Damage*. I am not peevish at a *Calumny*, nor waspish at a loss. - When any one does me an *Injury*, I take a singular Pleasure in forgiving him. There is nothing so much gratifies an ill Tongue, as when it finds an *ANGRY HEARER*; nor nothing so much disappoints and vexeth it, as *Calmness* and a *Quiet Spirit*. It is the most exquisite and innocent Revenge in the World, to return *Gentle Words*, or none at all, to *Ill Language*. There is such a Noble *Pride* attends this generous *Conquest* of an *Enemy*, as far surpasses the celebrated *Sweetness* of *Revenge*. I hate to gratifie my *Passion* the *common way*; and because he has acted the part of an ill Man, I must do so too, or worse, by giving scope to my *Rage*, and executing the severest Dictates of my *Fury*. He is but a *Tinker* in *Morality*, who to repair one *Breach*, makes another; and perhaps wider than the first. Besides, 'tis the most profitable kind of *Revenge*, when I turn a *Wrong* to an *Advantage*, by cancelling it; since thereby I

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make a *Friend* of an *Enemy*; and if he have but the least Spark of *Gratitude* and *Vertue*, my *Benignity* makes him not only blush at his *Offence*, but puts him upon some ingenuous Study how to make me amends.

This *NEW WAY* of revenging of Wrongs, has been my constant Practice for six Months; so that now, to forgive *Injuries*, is so easie to me, 'tis scarce a *Trouble*. And when any wound me with *Slanders*, I meet 'em with *PATIENCE*: *Hasty Words* rancle the *Wound*, *soft Language* dresses it; *Forgiveness* cures it, and *Oblivion* takes away the *Scar*. It is more noble by *Silence* to cover an *Injury*, than by *Argument* to overcome or spread it.

Thus (when any wrong me) I AM BRAVELY REVENGED; I slight it, and the Work's begun; I forgive it, and 'tis finish'd: *He is below himself, that is not above an Injury*: But if my Brother *PRIVATELY* offends me, I reprove him privately; and by this means, when he has lost himself in an *Injury*, I find him again in my *Forgiveness*. *He that rebukes a private Fault openly, sordidly betrays it, rather than reproves it.*

But in all Cases of this Nature, I change Conditions with my Brother, and then ask my *Conscience* what I would be done to? Being resolv'd, I EXCHANGE again, and do the like to him; and that, I'm sure, is *Right Christianity*.

I esteem it one of the most substantial Exercises of Religion, to subdue our *Passions*: And because *Anger* is the most violent and precipitate, I use my most strenuous Endeavours to stifle this in its *Embryo*. Other *Passions* take a gradual Rise, and insinuate by steps; but *Wrath*, like *Gun-Powder*, takes *Fire* all at once, and blows a Man up before he can look about him. Therefore I have by long and assiduous Practice, labour'd to get the Victory of this turbulent Affection; and I count it the *Master-piece* of *Humane Wit*, to be above all *Provocation*. I cou'd long ago stop my Hand in the midst of its *Career*, when aim'd at a faulty *Servant*, or scurrilous *Companion*; but now I can bridle the *Nerves* which wou'd have stretch'd it forth, and curb the officious *Spirits* which were so ready to fall forth on such an *Occasion*. I scorn to suffer my *Tongue* to be my *Hand's Deputy*, and to lavish out in unseemly Expressions; as if the Height of *Man's Wit* and *Valour*, lay in a biting

Repartee.

Repartes. Nay, I will not permit so much as my *Cheek* to change Colour, my *Eye* to sparkle, or any other part of my *Face* to receive the least *Impression* of my *Resentments*, whereby it may be perceiv'd that I am fermented. If I am found dead on the spot, what matters it? *Not being able to govern Events, I endeavour to govern my Self.* 'Tis the greatest of *Dominions, to rule ones Self and Passions.* Yet at the same time I am not insensible of an *Affront*, nor void of due *Reflection* on it. All that I aim at, is to comply with the *Apostles Advice, To be angry and not to sin.*

I have no *Pannick Fears* of *Death* upon me, neither am I solicitous, how or when I shall make my *Exit* from the *Stage* of this *Life*; much less do I trouble my self about the manner of my *Burial*, or to which of the *Elements* I shall commit my *Carcass*. I envy not the *Funeral State* of *Great Men*, neither do I covet the *Embalming* of the *Egyptians*. I wonder at the *Fancy* of those who desire to be imprison'd in *leaden Coffins* till the *Resurrection*, and to protract the *Corruption* of their *Flesh*, out of which they shall be generated *de Novo*: As if they dreamt of rising whole, as they lay down, and carrying *Flesh* and *Blood* into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, without a *Change*.

For my Part, I admire the *Indian Obsequies*; and were it not against the long establish'd Custom of my *County*, wou'd sooner bequeath my *Body* to the *Fire*, than be *inhum'd*; that so I might be sooner resolv'd into the *Elements* of which I was first compounded.

Yet instead of that nearer way to *Dissolution*, I can be contented to undergo the tedious *Conversation* of *Worms* and *Serpents*, those greedy *Tenants* of the *Grave*, who will never be satisfied till they have eat up the *Ground-Landlord*.

I do not puzzle my self with projecting how my *scattered Ashes* shall be collected together, neither do I for that Reason take Care for an *Urn* to enclose them. I am satisfied, that at the last *Trumpet*, I shall rise with the same *Individual Body*, I now carry about me, tho' there may not then be one of the same *Individual Atomes* to make it up, which are its present *Ingredients*. For neither are they the same now as they were twenty years ago. Yet I may be properly said to have the same *Individual Body* at this Hour, which my *Mother* brought forth into the *World*, tho' it is

manifest, that there is so vast an *Accession* of other *Partic-les* since that time, as are enough to make *Ten* such *Bodies* as I had then. Which implies such a perpetual *Flux* of the former, as 'twould be a *Solæcism* in *Philosophy* to think I have one of my *Infant Atomes* now left about me.

If after all this, I may be still said to have the same *Individual Body* as I had then, tho' there be not one of the same *Individual Atomes* left in its *Composition*, why may we not assert the same of the *Bodies* we shall have after the *Resurrection*? *Matter* is one and the same in all *Bodies*; the *Individuation* of it, the *Meum* and *Tuum*, proceeds only from the infinitely different *Forms* which actuate it. Thus when my *Soul* at the *Resurrection*, either by its own *Energy*, or by the *Power* of *God*, and *Assistance* of *Angels*, shall be reinvested with a *Body*, it is proper to say it will be the same *Individual Body* I have now, tho' made up of *Atomes* which never before were *Ingredients* of my *Composition*; since not the *Matter*, but the *Form*, gives a *Title* to *Individuation*.

I am the more willing to believe this will be the manner of our *Resurrection*, because I think it not *Decorous* to put the *Angels* on the *Drudgery* of *Scavengers*; as if it should at that *Day* be their *Employment* to sweep the *Graves* and *Charnel-houses*, to sift the *Elements*, and rake in all the *Receptacles* of the *Dead*, for *Mens* divided *Dust*. Not that I think it impossible for *God* even this way to accomplish the *Resurrection* of the *Dead*, tho' the *Bodies* of all *Mankind* were crumbled into *Dust*, and that *Dust* scatter'd before the *Wind*, or distill'd into *Water*, or attenuated into *Air*, or tho' those *Bodies* were eaten by the *Beasts* of the *Earth*, or the *Fish* of the *Sea*, and those *Beasts* and *Fishes* eaten again by *Men*. Tho' they shou'd undergo all these *Changes* and *Transmigrations*, yet were they still in the great *Repository* of *God*. The whole *World* in this sense, being but as one great *Store-house*, and all the *Elements* as so many *Cells* therein; so that wheresoever we shall be laid up, whether in the *Bellies* of *Fishes*, *Entrails* of *Beasts*, or by various *Alterations* become the *Food* of *Men*, yet the great *Architect* of all things knows where to find our scatter'd *Remnants*. But why should we engage him in so infinite a *Task*, when the *Work* may as well be done a nearer way? And put him

to the Expence of multiplying *Miracles*; when fewer will serve the turn? When the Grand Alarm is given, He can soon fit our *Souls* with proper Matter for their future *Bodies*, out of the *Elements*, as well as out of their own *Antiquated Embers*. The *Jewish Rabbins* seem to deny the gathering together our dispers'd *Ashes*, and assign the Trouble to a certain *small Bone* in every Man's Back, which they say, never suffers any *Putrefaction*, but remaining to the last Day in its *Primitive Consistency*, impassible and incorruptible, is then impregnated by a *Dew* from *Heaven*, which diffusing its *Vertue* like a Ferment, not only animates and quickens this *Seminal Bone*, but also attracts all the *Atomes*, which formerly constituted the *Body*, tho' dispers'd in the remotest *Corners*, and most hidden *Recesses* of the *Universe*, marshalling them in the same *Order* as they had before the *Dissolution*, and so in a moment recovering the *Body* to its *Primitive State*. But these are gross *Concepts* for *Christians*, who believe that our *Bodies* shall in that great and *Final Change* become *Spiritual* and *Immortal*, being for ever divested of all the *peculiar Circumstances* of *Flesh*, and *Blood*.

Let the manner be how it will please *God*, I am ravish'd to think what a bright and serene *Morning* the *Resurrection* will prove, after the long *Night* of *Death*, and the languishing *Slumbers* of the *Grave*! How vigorous and active we shall rise from our *Beds* of *Darkness*, how merry and blithe from the melancholy *Regions* of *Horror* and *Silence*! More sprightly than *Youth*; stronger than *Lions*; and swifter than *Eagles*! Full of *Light*, full of *Joy*, we shall soar aloft, and like well mounted *Travellers* post it away through the *Balmy Air*, and liquid *Skies*, till we arrive at the *Place* of admirable *Mansions*, and be welcom'd to the *House* of *God*.

I dare not, with some of the *Jewish Rabbins*, say that all shall not rise at the great *Day*; much less will I presume, with others, to particularize so far, as to exclude all those who perish'd in *Noah's Flood*; or with a third sort, to confine the *Resurrection* to the *Children* of *Israel*; as if we, that are of the *Gentiles*, were not capable of it as well as they. But above all, I reject the *Censure* of the *Talmudists*, who say, that neither *Bilhah*, the *Concubine* of *Jacob*, that lay
with

with Reuben; nor Doeg that caused Saul to kill Abimelech and the Priests; nor Gehazi the Servant of Elijah the Prophet, nor Achitophel, David's prime Minister of State, shall rise from the Dead. These are the Memoirs of Hebrew Superstition; Invidious Remarks, the peculiar Heresie of that over-weening Nation.

Yet I am more scandaliz'd at some Christians, who will not allow Salvation to any Man that is not within the visible Pale of their Church; as if the Eternal Sun of Justice were Eclips'd to all that are out of their narrow Horizon. Surely He enlightens every Man that comes into this World, and his Rays, are not confin'd to Countries or Parties. He shines Universally, and no Man can trace him in the Zodiack of his Mercy.

I dare not, 'tis true, (with Justin Martyr) canonize the Philosophers, and place Socrates and Heraclitus in Heaven; neither am I sure that Aristotle, by his learned Treatises of Heaven, has obtain'd an Inheritance there himself. 'Tis too officious a Regard, and too bold a Charity, thus happily to dispose of Particular Men. On the other side, I dread to pass the Sentence of Damnation on all the antient Pagans, and to aver that none were saved that died before the fifteenth Year of Tiberius. Tho' the mere Light of Natural Reason was not sufficient to conduct them, nor all their Morality, enough to entitle them to Supreme Felicity; Yet I cannot be perswaded that the infinite Goodness would doom the vertuous Gentiles to the Abyss of Misery. Neither can any Man demonstrate, That Christ was not the Light of the Gentiles before his Incarnation, as well as after; and since Abraham saw his Day and was glad, how do we know that Plato, Solon, Lycurgus, Pythagoras, Cyrus, and other wise Law-givers, Philosophers and Kings, Men renown'd for their Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Chastity, Liberality, and the like Vertues, might not also be favour'd with a glimpse of the Messias, the Desire of all Nations, before he appear'd in the Flesh? Tho we have no Records in Scripture of Hermes Trismigestus, Zoroaster, Phocilides, Homer, Theogenes, Epictetus, Theseus and Hercules, yet we cannot be assured, but that they had Faith, and expected the Redeemer to come, as well as Job, who was not of the Holy Line, but a Branch of the Gentiles.

When

When I consider what Pains some of the wiser *Heathens* have taken to find out the Truth; when I contemplate a *Pythagoras* travelling through *Asia*, and particularly conversant in *Palestine*, an *Empedocles* journeying into *Africk*, to learn the Wisdom of the *Ægyptians*; an *Alexander* the Great falling at the Feet of the *Hebrew High-Priest*, I cannot think the *Heathen World* to be so ignorant of the true Religion, as is commonly imagin'd. They had a *Balaam* to instruct them, the *Sybills* to guide them to the Knowledge of a future *Messias*; and, for ought I know, some of them might have the *Scriptures* of the Old Testament too, or at least a good part of them, even before that celebrated Translation of the *Septuagint*, was extant; since it was easie for those *Gentiles*, who had Commerce with the *Jews*, to procure Copies of their *Law*, when they were made Captives in *Media*, *Assyria*, *Ægypt*, and *Babylon*.

An *Esther* lying in the Bosom of *Ahasuerus*, a *Daniel* sitting at the right Hands of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Belshazzar*, and *Darius*, had fair Opportunities of instructing those *Heathen Monarchs*, in the *Mysteries* of the *Mosaick Law*: And surely such Holy Persons wou'd never neglect so noble a Work, as proselyting the Kings and Princes of the *Gentiles* to God.

In the Days of *Solomon*, the Fame of the *Jewish Nation* had reach'd the utmost Parts of the *Earth*, Kings came from far, and Queens from the remotest Borders of the *Continent*, to be the Disciples of that *Royal Philosopher*, and Spectators of the *Hebrew Grandeur*. How could then the *Divine Oracles* be hid from the *Gentiles*, or the *Sacred Tradition* of *Shilsh* to come, not be delivered to the inquisitive *Nations* of the *Earth*! Without doubt the *East* saw the dawning of the *Star of Jacob*, and the *South* could calculate his *Meridian*, even before he rose. Neither were the *North* and the *West* without some glimmerings of his Appearance.

The *Wise Men* that came to adore him at *Bethlehem*, perform'd but the Wishes of their *Fathers*, and the *Eunuch* of *Queen Candaces* made no Scruple to become a *Christian*, when *Philip* had convinc'd him that He of whom the *Prophets* had so long foretold, was now come in the *Flesh*. Surely he was the *Desired of all Nations*, the *Hope* of the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Glory* of his People *Israel*. There-
fore

fore I cannot number it among the Commendations of *Christianity*, that a great part of those who profess that *Name*, are so presumptuously uncharitable, as to damn all that were not of the Seed of *Abraham* before *Christ* came in the *Flesh*; as if Salvation were entail'd to one *Family*, and no Man cou'd go to *Heaven* that was not circumcis'd.

Much rather had I believe, That in the very Instant of Death, *God* reveal'd the *Mystery* of *Redemption* to many innocent and vertuous Persons among the *Gentiles*, and infus'd a saving *Faith* in *Christ* into their Souls, at the very moment that their Senses were forsaking their Bodies. Supplying their want of *Scripture* or *Tradition*, with the Inspiration of his *Holy Spirit*, when they were taking the last gasp, and breathing out their own.

Or if this be not thought sufficient, I will believe, That when *Christ* descended into *Hell*; he preach'd the *Gospel* to the *Spirits* which were there in Prison; not only those who were disobedient in the Days of *Noah*; but all such of the Race of *Noah*, as by compleating the Measure of their Sins, had sunk themselves into that *Place*, whether they were *Jews* or *Heathens*. And I cannot understand those *Texts* of *Scripture* which mention his spoyling of *Hell*, and leading *Captivity Captive*, if they may not be applied to his *Triumphant Deliverance* of some of those *Souls* which were shut up in the *Infernal Caverns*. Neither do I perceive any *Heresie* in believing, there might be some vertuous *Heathens* in the *Retinue* he carried with Him from thence to *Heaven*, as well as some of the Sons of *Israel*. However, leaving the manner of their Salvation to *God*; I will conclude, That it is unreasonable, uncharitable, and has too much of the *Jew* in it, to pass the Sentence of *Damnation* on all the *Gentiles*, since the *Holy Ghost* has assured us, That *God* is no Respector of Persons, but he that in every *Nation* fears Him, and works Righteousness, is accepted of Him.

Besides, methinks if matters were brought to the severest Ballance, it would not appear Heterodox to say, That as all Men sinn'd in *Adam*, without their own personal Knowledge or Consent; so some might be saved in *Christ*, even without a particular and personal Belief in Him; of whom perhaps they never so much as heard.

Some

Some Grains of Allowance may be given to the involuntary *Frailties* of *Humane Nature*, some Indulgence granted to the invincible *Ignorance* of a great Part of *Adam's* Posterity, who if they knew not the *HIGH-WAY* to *Heaven*, which was reveal'd to their Brethren the *Jews* and *Christians*, might yet be conducted thither by some *BY-PATH*; since it is too narrow a Conceit of *God's* Mercy, to think, that because he had chiefly manifested it in the Royal Road of the *Law* and the *Gospel*, therefore he could never go out of the beaten Track. This were to retrench the *Divine Prerogative*, and to tye Him up to limited Conditions, whose Ways are in the Great Deep, and whose Foot-steps no created Being can trace.

The Satisfaction I have of the *Soul's Immortality*, if it amounts not to a Demonstration, may yet be numbred among those *Proleptick Ideas* that need none, as being self-evident. It is a Parallel with first Principles, and has equal Force on my Understanding; for I am not more convinc'd, *That one and two make three*, than *that the Soul of Man is immortal*. So that I make it not so much an *Article* of my Faith, as a *Proposition* of my Reason, and a *Conclusion* of Science. Yet I do not always go so far round about, as by a long Train of Logical Deductions and Inferences, to dispute my self into the Remembrance of my *Immortality*. This indeed were necessary to perswade another, but I have a nearer Method to comfort my self with the Demonstration of this *Noble Truth*, while it becomes an Object of my very *Sense*; and I can feel that *Immortality* in my self, which my Reason tells me another is possess'd of, as well as I. This is easier to be experienc'd, than utter'd in Words; 'tis an *Art* not to be acquired without assiduous *Reflection*, and strict *Animadversion* on our own Thoughts. But the *Fatigue* is more than recompens'd with the ineffable *Pleasure* that attends it; for when by a long and often repeated Practice, a Man has found the way to keep close Pace with his own *Intellect*, in all its *Flights* and abstracted *Starts* from the *Body*, when he can stand on the Brink of the *Immaterial World*, and perceive what is before Him, perceiving also that he perceives it, then 'tis he enjoys *Heaven* by Anticipation, and forestalls his future *Beatitude*, by tasting *Immortality* at present. He is risen from
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the Dead, before he dies; and lives an *Eternity* of Ages in a *Moment*. Neither is this a sleeping *Chimera*, or a waking *Dream*, but a real Truth; which, as I have said, is easier practised than expressed.

It was but a drowsie Conceit in those Fathers, who fancy'd the *Soul* shou'd sleep in the *Grave* till the *Resurrection* of the *Body*. Had they well traced the *Nature* of a *Spirit* from its Principles, they wou'd not have provided a *Dormitory* for that *Being* which wou'd cease to be, shou'd it cease to act; since its very *Essence* implies a Contradiction to *Rest*. I cou'd as easily, and with equal Reason, believe it will be *annihilated* at its separation from the *Body*, or at least that it shall be *metamorphos'd* into something else, since if it continue the same it was before the Dissolution of the *Body*, it must continue to think; it being indeed nothing else but a pure *Thought*; and how a *Thought* can take a Nap, is beyond the Verge of my *Philosophy* to apprehend; neither do I know of any thing in *Divinity* that seems to countenance so dull a *Theorem*. As for those *Texts* of *Scripture* which seem to adumbrate the Supreme Felicity of the *Saints* by the Notion of *Rest*, I do not think they mean a Cessation of the *Souls* natural Energy; for how could it then be capable of that *Seraphick Love* and *Foy*, in the *Beatifick Vision*, which is the chief Entertainment of the Blessed in *Heaven*? It seems rather to intimate the *Soul's* *Escape* and *Deliverance* from the Troubles and Inquietudes of this mortal *Life*; which may very well be call'd a *REST*, and yet be consistent with an *Activity* far surpassing that which it was endued with in the *Flesh*. The *Scripture* clothes many abstruse *Mysteries* in familiar *Dresses*, the better to accommodate them to the Conceptions of vulgar and ignorant People, who make up far the greatest Part of *Mankind*; and we must not expect the rigid Definitions of *Aristotle* from the Sacred *Pen-Men*. But when we come scientifically, and according to the Method of the Schools, to treat of the *Natures* of Things, we ought to fit them with proper and intelligible Terms, and pursue their *Essences* by a continu'd Progress, not by wild Fits and Starts.

I am not at all edified in the *Notion* of the *Blessed Trinity*, by the sight of a *Triangle*, neither can the whole *System* of the *Mathematicks* improve my Knowledge in this Point of *Divinity*.

Divinity. The *three* distinct *Faculties* of a *Humane Soul* are far from illustrating to me the *Three Persons* in *One Essence*, since there is a *Subordination* in the *Former*, whereas there is an *Equality* in the *Latter*. Such *Similitudes* and *Comparisons*, seem not to me a *Stenography* or *short Characters*, but a *false Spelling* in *Divinity*. And tho' to *wiser Reasons*, and more *Active Beliefs*, they may serve as *Luminaries* in the *Abys* of *knowledge*, yet my *Heavy Judgment* will never be able to mount on such *weak and brittle Scales* and *Roundels* to the *lofty Pinnacles* of true *Theology*. All the force of *Rhetorical Wit* has not *Edge* enough to dissect so *tough a Subject*; wherein the little *obscure Glimmerings* we gain of that *Inaccessible Light*, comes not to us in *direct Beams*, but by the *faint Reflection* of a *Negative Knowledge*. And we can better apprehend what *it is not*, than what *it is*. In the *Disquisition* of his *Works*, I own, that those do highly magnify Him, whose *Judicious Enquiry* into his *Acts*, and deliberate *Research* into his *Creatures*, return the *Homage* of a *Devout and Learned Paraphrase*. But in the *Contemplation* of that *Eternal Essence* to which no *created Thought* can be adequate, I will humbly sit down and silently admire, that which neither the *Heart* can conceive, nor the *Tongue* or *Pen* of *Men* or *Angels* can declare as they ought, and as it is.

I do not affect *Rhodemontadoes* in *Religion*, nor to boast of the *Strength* of my *Faith*: I do not cover *Temptations*, nor court *Dangers*: Yet I can exercise my *Belief* in the *difficullest Point*, when call'd to it; and walk *stedfast* and *upright* in *Faith*, without the *Crutch* of a *visible Miracle*. I can firmly believe in *Christ*, without going in *Pilgrimage* to his *Sepulchre*, neither need I the *Confirmation* that was vouchsaf'd to *St. Thomas*, that *Proverb* of *Unbelief*. However I do not bless my self, nor esteem my *Faith* the better, because I lived not in the *Days* of *Miracles*, nor ever saw *Christ* or any of his *Disciples*. Or because I was not one of his *Patients* on whom he wrought his *Wonders*. Both their *Faith* and mine were insus'd by the *Ministration* of the *Senses*. And as they believ'd because they *saw*, so I believe, because I *hear* (undeniable *Witnesses* give *Testimony* of) the same *Matter* of *Fact*. Nor do I esteem their *Faith* the more *Extraordinary* who lived before his *Coming*, since they

they raised not a *Belief* of the future *Messias*, but on clear *Prophecies*, and most significant *Types*; being assured by the constant stream of *Tradition* from Father to Son, that what *GOD* had predetermin'd and foretold to *Adam* in Paradise, to *Abraham*, to *Jacob*, and the *Prophets*, shall infallibly be accomplish'd in the fulness of Time. And I cannot see wherein their *Faith* had the Advantage of ours, that it should deserve to be esteem'd more Bold and Noble, since they had an *Isaiah* to preach the *Gospel* to Them, who for the Eloquence of his Style, his most accurate and particular Enarration of the *Birth* of *Christ*, has acquired the Title of the *Fifth Evangelist*. 'Tis certain both their *Faith* and ours rests on the *Divine Revelation*, whether it consist in *Prophesie* of Things to come, or *History* of Things past. The ultimate *Object* of our *Belief* is one and the same, that is, the *Authority* of *GOD*. They had their *Sacraments* also to strengthen their *Faith*, as well as we. They were *Baptized* in the *Cloud* and in the *Sea*, they had *Manna* from *Heaven*, and *Water* cut of a *Rock* in the *Earth*. They all eat the same *Spiritual Meat*, and drank the same *Spiritual Drink* as we; for they drank of the *Spiritual Rock* of Ages, that followed Them, and that *Rock* was *Christ*.

I do not conclude from hence, That there is no difference between the *Sacraments* of the *Law*, and those of the *Gospel*. Doubtless there is an Excellency in the Latter, to which the Former could not pretend. The *Elements* in Both are *Natural*, as *Water*, *Manna*, *Bread*, *Wine*, &c. so that in the *Exteriour*, neither of Them has the Advantage of the other. They were both also *Conduits* of the same inward *Grace* and *Spirit*. Only herein lyes the difference, that the *Jews* had it but by Measure, whereas the *Christians* receive it in Abundance. They touch'd but the Hem of *Christ's* Garment, but we feed on his *Body* and *Blood*. They did but wade in the low Ebb of *Grace*, whereas we swim in the High-tide, and over-flowings of the *Holy Spirit*. Before the Everlasting Sluces were drawn up; while the *Heavens* were kept shut, the *Waters* which were above the *Heavens* did but distill gently on Mankind: The *Divine Influence* came Drop by Drop, here a little and there a little. But when *Christ* had

had once ascended up on High, and open'd the *Eternal Gates* above, then he show'd down his Gifts upon Men, and let loose the Flood of Light and Grace, that so it might water the whole Earth, and *make glad the City of GOD*, which is the Christian Church

The *Sacraments* of Christianity are the Principal Channels through which Eternal Life is conveyed to our Souls. By *Baptism* we are transplanted from the Old Stock of the *First Adam*, and inoculated into Him, who is the *True Vine*, in whom we grow up as Branches, receiving Nourishment and Encrease by the *Eucharist*, which conveys to us the vital Principles of *Immortality* and Salvation. I cannot speak of this tremendous Mystery, without a *Circumlocution*, nor think of it without a *Rapture*! It is such a Complex of *Riddles*, as it hath pos'd the stoutest *Sampsons* of the Church to solve: He alone was able to think and speak aright of it in few words, who when he first instituted it, said, *This is my Body, This is my Blood*. That there is a real Change made in the outward Elements after the words of Consecration are pronounc'd, is an *Article* of my Faith; but the Manner how *this Change* is effected, is no Query of my *Philosophy*. I had rather humbly believe, what I cannot comprehend, in this *Venerable Sacrament*; than suffer any vain Disquisitions to stagger my Faith. I see *Bread and Wine* both retaining the same Taste, Colour and other Natural Qualities of Creatures. Therefore I conclude there is no *Alteration* made in that which is the Object of my Senses. The Change must be in the *Spiritual Part*, which only falls under the *Intellect*. And yet I believe this Change to be *Real*, tho' I cannot sensibly perceive wherein, or how 'tis produced. Far be it from me, to enter into the Secret of those who make a mere *empty Figure* of the Blessed Sacrament; as if we were made partakers only of mere *Natural Bread and Wine* in the Holy Communion. This is to follow the impious Steps of *Manicheus and Marcion*, who taught that our Saviour had only a *Fantastick Figure* of a Body, not a *Real one*; as if they thought the Blessed Virgin *Mary* brought forth nothing but a *Shadow*, because she was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost. *This is to out-strip Judas, and begin where his*
Treason

Treason left off: And as he sold his Master's Life, so we should rob the Church of his *Body and Blood*, which he bequeath'd to her in his last Supper. Doubtless his Body is in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, but not *Bodily*, or after a corporeal manner, not invested with all the gross Circumstances of *Flesh and Blood*, but after a Spiritual Manner, in a Mystery too profound for *Humane Sense or Reason* to comprehend. I am extremely pleas'd with the Answer which Queen *Elizabeth* gave to the Bishop of *Winchester*, when he demanded her Opinion of the *Real Presence*; said she,

*'Twas GOD the Word that spake it,
He took the Bread and brake it;
And what the Word did make it,
That I believe and take it.*

It was an ill-manner'd, as well as an envious Retort of him, that stood by and said, Your Highnesses Reply is like the *Delphick Oracle*, full of Ambiguous Subtilty: He had discover'd more Breeding and Charity, had he told her, That her Answer favour'd of his Wisdom, who when tempted by the *Pharisees* with a Question concerning the Lawfulness of paying *Tribute to Cæsar*, took a piece of Money, and ask'd *whose Image and Superscription* was that stamped on it? They said, *Cæsars*: He replied, *Give therefore to Cæsar, the Things that are Cæsar's; and to GOD, the Things that are GOD's*. It is certainly a necessary piece of Prudence sometimes to obviate the *Trains* of an Enemy, with a witty Evasion; which may be done without denying the Truth, or violating ones Conscience. Those who wou'd *trapan a Man with Queries*, and make him a Transgressor for a Word, deserve to be paid in the same Coin, and by an *Ingenious adapting* of words and placing of Periods, be baffled in their Design, and sent away like Fools as they came, without any better satisfaction than they cou'd reap from *a Riddle*. In my Opinion, it is but a Pious Scepticism to suspend our Thoughts from determining the particular Mode of Christ's being *present* in the Sacrament, since it is impossible ever to demonstrate so recondite a Secret,
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into which even the Angels themselves, those *perfect Intelligences*, perhaps look with Admiration, without improving their Knowledge. It is sufficient to my *humble Faith*, that my Redeemer is there, and that when I *worthily* receive this Blessed Sacrament, I shall receive the Author of it into my Tabernacle, and be united to the Heavenly Spouse. This is the true *Hidden Manna* which nourishes both Angels and Men; This is the *Bread of Life*, which strengtheneth Men's Hearts; This is the Wine which rejoiceth GOD and Man. This is that *Heavenly Morsel* which GOD has given us, as an Antidote against the Dregs of that Venom we all derive from *Adam's* eating the forbidden Fruit.

And he is a *KIND PHYSITIAN*, who, when nothing else in the *Divine Pharmacopœa* could be found available for so great a Cure, *applies his own Body*, to heal the Distempers of our Souls, and his Blood to restore the *Spoils of Humane Nature*; it is grown even to a Proverb, saith *Acosta*, among the poor *Indians* that have entertain'd the Faith, *He must never more be unholy, that hath once receiv'd the holy communion*. None but the Favourites of the King of Heaven, are admitted to this *Immortal Banquet*. None but such as have the *Wedding Garment* on, can have Access to this Table of Delicacies, this *Repast of Royal Dainties*. Many indeed (and too many, 'tis to be feared) are licensed to come into the *Kings Anti-chambers*, and to sit down in the Church, and taste the *outward Elements*, but it is the Priviledge of his Saints only to enter his Cabinet, and be *Regal'd* with the costly Entertainment of his Secret Table, and to partake in the *New Wine* of the Kingdom of Heaven.

A Serious Christian once told me, That if ever he was like *St. Paul*, taken up into the *Third Heaven*, it was when he first sat down at the Lords Table.

The Sacrament of the *Lords Supper* is the nearest and *visiblest* Communion that can be had with GOD and Christ upon Earth. Here are the greatest Revivings, and the sweetest Refreshings that a Pious Soul is capable of on this side Heaven it self. Other Duties seem to be our *Work*, this our *Meat and Wages*; other Duties are but pre-

preparative to this: *Baptism, Praying, Preaching, Hearing, Meditating, Conferring*, are all ordained but to fit us for this High and Mysterious Ordinance. Here you have all the Benefits of the Covenant of Grace, folded up in one Rite. Here is the *whole contrivance of Salvation represented in a little Bread and Wine*, whereby GOD invisibly seals up an assurance of his Everlasting Love upon our Hearts.

As to the *Posture of Receiving*, I am not scrupulous, being willing to conform to the Custom of those with whom I *communicate*: I can receive on my *Knees* without Danger of Idolatry; or *SITTING*, without the Guilt of Contempt. This latter I esteem of greater Antiquity, it being the Posture wherein Christ *communicated to his Disciples* at the last Supper; unless it be said they *lay along*, according to the Mode of the Eastern People in those Days. However, I do not think the *Position* of the Body, but the Preparation of the Soul, is required to render one a *Worthy Communicant* in these Holy Mysteries.

I censure not the Primitive Christians, nor those more *MODERN* ones, who Communicate frequently. We should remember him often, that never forgets us. St. Augustin counselleth the more perfect to receive every Day, (and 'tis the Opinion of *NEW-ATHENS* that they are fit to receive the Sacrament, *That don't live in a known Sin*) yet I shall be timorous to approach these *Holy Mysteries*, without a Due Preparation, lest I should incur the Judgment which St. Paul has pronounced on those who *eat and drink unworthily*. I have Charity for others who Celebrate this Sacrament Monthly, Weekly, or Daily; but I should have little for my self, should I receive, this tremendous Mystery of Life, with less Preparation than were requisite to fit me for Death. It being in the Number of those Medicines which either *Kill or Cure*, according to the Constitution to which they are applied.

If we examine the Books of Physicians, those *Registers of Humane Frailty* and Mortality, we shall find no less than *Six Thousand Diseases* on the Score, to which Man's Body is liable. And 'tis to be feared the *Distempers* of
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the Soul come not short of the Account. What is Pride but a Tympany? Lust but a Feavour? Drunkenness but a Dropsie? Envy and Malice but the Consumption of the Soul? To obviate these and innumerable more Spiritual Maladies, GOD has (as a Token of his Infinite Bounty) given his Ministers Commission to dispense to the Sons of Men the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, as a Divine Catholicon, or Cure for [all] the Diseases which are incident to our Souls, but with this Condition, That he who partakes of these Holy Mysteries unworthily, instead of being healed, does but increase his Malady, work it up to a dangerous Crisis, if not to a desperate Paroxysm, which affords no Hopes, but a fearful Expectation of Judgment to come. Cyprian tells us two remarkable Stories, that one coming to the Sacrament, after the Minister had given him the Bread, and he going to eat it, it stuck in his Throat; *Gladium sibi sumens non cibum*, saith he, he received his Banè instead of Bread, the other came and took the Bread into his Hand; and when he went to eat it, there was nothing but *Ashes in his Hand*. This Apprehension, (I own to my Grief) has had such Influence on me, as to restrain me long from approaching the Holy Table. I tremble at the Thought of Eating and Drinking my own Damnation, and of trampling under-foot the Blood of the Eternal Testament.

I love not to humour my SPLEEN, or gratifie my Hypochondria, by inveighing against the Luxury of the present Age, as if it were worse than those of old, and that our Fore-fathers did not Eat and Drink to Excess, as well as we: The present Intemperance of Mankind is but the Transmigration of the Former: And our Posterity shall but act o'er the Patterns we set them. Drunkenness is as old as Noah's Flood, and Epicurism began with Adam. The one had no sooner escaped the Universal Inundation of Water, but he had like to have been drown'd in a Deluge of Wine; And the Other not content with the large Indulgence and Commission GOD had given him to eat of the Fruits of Paradise, must needs leep the Fence which guarded the Forbidden Tree, and when he might have Banquetted without Satiety or End on the Varieties which would have given him Life and Immortality,

lity, he plays the Glutton, and Surfeits himself with the Plant of Death and Damnation. His Children soon learn'd to tread in their Father's Steps, and *Gluttony* was equally propagated with Mankind. And tho' that REPAIRER of Adam's almost Shipwreckt Progeny could be abstemious, when he might have furnisht his Table with all the *Beasts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air at one Meal*, yet he could not refrain from the tempting *Fruit of the Vine*. His Ebriety was also catching, and the Incestuous Off-spring of *Lot* ow'd their Original to the *Blood of the Grape*. Before the Flood, Men were busied in Banquetting and Riot; so they have been ever since, and so they will be, to the End of the World. Men are great Followers of Antiquity in the Practice of these Vices.

For my Part, I envy not the Board of *Vitellius*, that at one Meal, was covered with *two Thousand Fish*, and double that Number of *Fowls*. Neither do I covet the more Expensive Feasts of *Heliogabulus*. The refin'd Luxury of *Cleopatra* seems to me less Sordid, tho' the more Prodigious, who at one Draught swallow'd down a Kings Ransom. It was not her Palate she gratify'd in that Rich Portion, but she humour'd the Gust of her Ambition; which is a *Sublimed sort of Vice*, and may not unfitly be call'd the *Gluttony of the Soul*, while it Revels on the Breath of Fame, and Epicurizes with a *Chamelion-like* Appetite on the Air of Honour.

Intemperance is the *blind side of Mortals*; it is our soft Place, where we suffer our selves to be stroak'd and tickl'd to Death by the flattering Serpent. This made *Isaac* mis-place his Blessing for a *Piece of Venison*, and his Son to sell his Birth-right for a *Mess of Pottage*.

The *Italian* Proverb hits the Glutton Home, when it says, He digs his Grave with his Teeth, and cuts his Throat with the Knife that carves his Meat.

Rioting and Drunkenness were formerly esteem'd the National Sin of *Germany* only, but I believe other Nations may put in for a share in the Charter, *It is the Epidemick Vice of the whole World*. Men fall passionately in Love with it, as if they were of *Mucæus* the Poet's Opinion, who held, That perpetual Drunkenness was the only Reward

Reward of Merit and Vertue. The very *Mahometans* themselves, who are expressly forbidden by their Law to *taste* of Wine, being told by *Mahomet*, that there is lodg'd a *Devil* in every Grape, are sworn Votaries to *Bacchus*, and the greatest Drunkards on Earth.

For my own Part, I could be content with the Diet of *Johannes de Temporibus*, who when he had lived three Hundred Years, being asked by the King of *France*, *what method* he took to preserve his Life to so great an Age; Replied *Intus Melle, extra Oleo*. I say, I could be content with his Diet, not so much for the sake of *Spinning out my Life* to Centuries of years, (which yet I believe were not altogether impracticable in one of my Constitution) as that by a constant and habitual Desuetude of *merely Animal* Enjoyments, I might the more closely and vigorously attend the Operations of my Soul, and be always *awake to the Superior Faculties of my Mind* and Intellect, *Anima Sicca, est Anima Sapiens*, was a true Maxim of the Philosopher. And the Sons of *Minerva* exepience it.

I abhor the Superstitious Cant, and Discriminating Shibboleth of *Enthusiasts*, who must needs take upon them to alter the Form of sound Words; as if the Dialect of the Primitive Church were grown obsolete, or that the Apostles understood not the *Orthography of Christian Faith*. I like not those Spiritual Boutefeus, who take a great Deal of Pains to breed a Quarrel between *Religion and Nature*, and set those two twins together by the Ears; as if we could not be good Christians, unless we deny our *Sense and Reason*. Certainly it is not the Business of Religion to Supplant and Extirpate Nature, but to prune and rectifie it. Religion is that which polishes and smooths the Roughness of laps'd Humanity, pares away the Vicious Knobs which grow up with us from our *tainted Embryo*, and by various instruments of Grace forms and squares us into fit Materials for GOD's Holy Temple. The *Work of Regeneration* seems in some manner to copy that of Creation. The Holy Ghost at his first Visit, finds us in our corrupt state, but meer *Chaos*, a confused Heap of Passions and Sensual Appetites; our Reason, that *Light of our Souls*,

lies Dormant, smother'd as it were by our Animal Faculties ; Darkneſs covers the Face of this *Microcoſm*, till he give the Word, *Fiat Lux*, and by a forcible Energy ſtrike ſome Divine Sparks out of our *Flinty* Hearts. Thus ſeparating the *Cœleſtial* Parts from the *Terreſtrial*, and Sublimating us into the Similitude of his own glorious Eſſence, enduing us with *Faith*, without deſtroying our *Reason*, and inſpiring us with *Charity*, without exterminating our *Paſſions*. Thus I can believe the moſt transcendent *Mysterieſ* of our Religion, and yet not be guilty of an implicate *Credulity* and blind *Devotion*: And I can practiſe *Chriſtian Moderation*, tho' I cou'd never learn the *Stoical Apathy*.

I highly value the Sacred Scriptures as the *Oracle of Divinity*, and *Rule of Faith*: Yet I eſtem them not a *System of Philoſophy*, or a *Pandect of natural Science*. They are able to make us *Wiſe unto Salvation*, and perfect in the *Knowledge of GOD*, through *Faith in Chriſt Jeſus*, but they inſtruct us not in *Humane Curioſities*, nor acquaint us with the *Theory of all his Works*. That frightful *Caution of the Apoſtle* [*beware of vain Philoſophy*] is no *Bug-bear* to my *Studies*, nor can it ſtartle my harmleſs *Enquiries into the Secrets of the Elements*. I will not be afraid of prying into the *Circumſtances of the Earth*, ſince *Job* has told us, it is *hang'd upon Nothing*; nor of caſting my *Eyes up to the Heavens*, and examining the *Motions, Influences and Operations, of the Sun, Moon and Stars*, ſince the ſame *Holy Patriarch* was poſed with this *Aſtrological Queſtion* by *God himſelf*, *Canſt Thou reſtrain the ſweet Influence of the Pleiades, or looſe the Bands of Orion?* There are many *Natural Obſervations in the Bible* which may ſerve as *Hints or Spurs to more accurate Diſquiſitions*: But in no *Place* that I know of, does it ſet a *Non Ultra* to thoſe *Sober Enquirers*, who by making a *Modest and Judicious Search into the Works of the Creation*, are capable of returning a more exact and conſummate *Praise to the Eternal Archite&t*. Indeed, moſt (if not all) the *Manual Trades in the World*, are but the ſeveral *Species of Practical Philoſophy*: While the *Mechanick* puts in *Execution the Theory of the Scaſen*; and what the *One dictates from*
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