

302 e

A
COLLECTION

O F

Choice, Scarce, and Valuable

TRACTS,

Being taken from

MANUSCRIPTS

AND

PRINTED BOOKS,

Very Uncommon, and not to be found
but in the Libraries of the

CURIOUS

By a Gentleman who has search'd after them
for above Twenty Years.

LONDON,

Printed for D. BROWNE at the *Black Swan* without
Temple-Bar, and G. STRAHAN at the *Golden Ball* in
Cornehill. 1721.

T H E

Book of Sports,

Set forth by K. *James I.* and K. *Charles I.*
 (for Compiling of which Archbishop
Laud was Beheaded.) With Remarks
 upon the same in Vindication of King
CHARLES the First.



By the K I N G.

OUR Dear Father of Blessed Memory, in his Re-
 turn from *Scotland*, coming thro' *Lancashire*, found
 that his Subjects were debarr'd from lawful Recre-
 ations upon *Sundays* after Evening-Prayers ended, and upon
 Holy-days: And he prudently considered, that if these Times
 were taken from them, the meaner Sort, who labour hard
 all the Week, should have no Recreations at all to refresh
 their Spirits. And after his Return, He further saw, that
 His Loyal Subjects in all other Parts of His Kingdom, did
 suffer in the same kind, tho' perhaps not in the same Degree:
 And did therefore in His Princely Wisdom, publish a Decla-
 ration to all his loving Subjects, concerning Lawful Sports to
 be used at such times; which was printed and publish'd by
 His Royal Commandment, in the Year 1618, in the Tenour
 which hereafter followeth.

The Book of Sports.

By the KING.

WHEREAS, upon our Return the last Year out of *Scotland*, we did publish our Pleasure touching the Recreations of our People in those Parts, under our Hand : For some Causes us thereunto moving, we have thought good to command these our Directions then given in *Lancashire*, with a few Words thereunto added, and most appliable to these Parts of our Realms, to be published to all our Subjects.

Whereas We did justly, in our Progress through *Lancashire*, rebuke some *Puritans* and precise People, and took Order, that the like unlawful Carriage should not be used by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and unlawful punishing of our good People, for using their lawful Recreations, and honest Exercises upon *Sundays*, and other Holy Days after the Afternoon Sermon or Service ; We now find, that two sorts of People, wherewith that Country is infected, (we mean, *Papists* and *Puritans*) have maliciously traduced and calumniated those our just and honourable Proceedings. And therefore, lest our Reputation might, upon the one side, (tho' innocently) have some Aspersions laid upon it ; and that, upon the other Part, our good People in that Country be misled by the Mistaking and Misrepresentation of our Meaning ; we have therefore thought good hereby to clear, and make our Pleasure to be manifested to all our good People in those Parts.

It is true, that at our first Entry to this Crown and Kingdom, we were inform'd, and that too truly, that our County of *Lancashire* abounded more in *Popish Recusants*, than any County of *England*, and thus hath still continued since, to our great Regret, with little Amendment, save that now of late, in our last Riding through our said County, we find, both by the Report of the Judges, and of the Bishop of that Diocess, that there is some Amendment now daily beginning, which is no small Contentment to us.

The Report of this growing Amendment amongst them, made us the more sorry, when with our own Ears we heard the general Complaint of our People, that they were barr'd
from

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from all lawful Recreation and Exercise upon the *Sunday's* Afternoon, after the Ending of all Divine Service; which cannot but produce two Evils: The one, the hindering of the Conversion of many, whom their Priests will take occasion hereby to vex, persuading them that no honest Mirth or Recreation is Lawful or Tolerable in our Religion; which cannot but breed a great Discontentment in our Peoples Hearts, especially of such as are peradventure upon the point of Turning. The other Inconvenience is, that this Prohibition barreth the common and meaner sort of People from using such Exercises as make their Bodies more able for War, when We, or our Successors shall have occasion to use them: And in place thereof sets up filthy Tiplings and Drunkenness, and breeds a Number of idle and discontented Speeches in their Ale-houses. For when shall the common People have leave to Exercise, if not upon the *Sundays* and Holy Days, seeing they must apply their Labour, and win their Living in all Working Days?

Our express Pleasure therefore is, that the Laws of our Kingdom, and Canons of our Church, be as well observed in that County, as in all other Places of this our Kingdom. And on the other parr, that no lawful Recreation shall be barred to our good People, which shall not tend to the Breach of our aforesaid Laws, and Canons of our Church: Which to express more particularly, our Pleasure is, that the Bishop, and all other inferiour Church-Men and Church-Wardens, shall for their Parts be careful and diligent, both to instruct the Ignorant, and convince and reform them that are mis led in Religion, presenting them that will not conform themselves, but obstinately stand out our Judges and Justices: Whom we likewise command to put the Law in Execution against them.

Our Pleasure likewise is, that the Bishop of that Diocese take the like straight Order with all the Puritans and Precisians within the same, either constraining them to conform themselves, or to leave the County, according to the Laws of our Kingdom, and Canons of our Church, and so to strike equally on both hands against the Contemners of our Authority and Adversaries of our Church. And as for our good Peoples Recreation, our Pleasure likewise is, that after the End of Divine Service, our good People be not disturbed, letted or discouraged from any lawful Recreation; such

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as Dancing, either Men or Women, Archery for Men, Leaping, Vaulting, or any other such harmless Recreation; nor from having of May-Games, Whitson-Ales, and Morris-Dances, and the setting up of May-Poles, and other Sports therewith used, so as the same be had in due and convenient time, without Impediment or Neglect of Divine Service: And that Women shall have Leave to carry Rushes to the Church for the Decoring of it, according to their old Custom. But withal, we do here account still as prohibited, all unlawful Games to be used upon *Sundays* only; as Bear and Bull-baitings, and at all times in the meaner sort of People by Law prohibited, Bowling.

And likewise we barr from this Benefit and Liberty, all such known Recusants, either Men or Women, as will abstain from coming to Church or Divine Service, being therefore unworthy of any Lawful Recreation after the said Service, that will not first come to the Church and serve God: Prohibiting in like sort the said Recreations to any that, though conform in Religion, are not present in the Church at the Service of God, before their going to the said Recreations. Our Pleasure likewise is, that they to whom it belongeth in Office, shall present, and sharply punish, all such, as in abuse of this our Liberty, will use these Exercises before the Ends of all Divine Services for that Day. And we likewise straitly command, that every Person shall resort to his own Parish-Church to hear Divine Service, and each Parish by it self to use the said Recreation after Divine Service. Prohibiting likewise any offensive Weapons to be carried or used in the said times of Recreations. And our Pleasure is, that this our Declaration shall be publish'd by Order from the Bishop of the Diocess, through all the Parish-Churches, and that both our Judges of our Circuit, and our Justices of our Peace be informed thereof.

Given at our Mannor of Greenwich the Four and Twentieth Day of May, in the Sixteenth Year of our Reign of England, France and Ireland; and of Scotland the One and Fiftieth.

NOW

The Book of Sports.

NOW, out of a like pious Care for the Service of God; and for suppressing of any Humours that oppose Truth, and for the Ease, Comfort and Recreation of our well-deserving People, we do ratifie and publish this our blessed Father's Declaration: The rather because of late in some Counties of our Kingdom, we find, that under pretence of taking away Abuses, there hath been a general Forbidding, not only of Ordinary Meetings, but of the Feasts of the Dedication of the Churches, commonly called *Wakes*. Now our express Will and Pleasure is, that these Feasts, with others, shall be observed; and that our Justices of the Peace, in their several Divisions, shall look to it, both that all Disorders there may be prevented and punished, and that all Neighbourhood and Freedom, with Manlike and Lawful Exercises be used. And we further command our Justices of Assize in their several Circuits, to see that no Man do trouble or molest any of our Loyal and Dutiful People, in or for their Lawful Recreations, having first done their Duty to God, and continuing in Obedience to Us and our Laws. And of this we command all our Judges, Justices of the Peace, as well within Liberties, as without, Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, and other Officers to take notice of, and to see observed, as they tender our Displeasure. And we farther will, that Publication of this our Command be made by Order from the Bishops through all the Parish-Churches of their several Diocesses respectively.

Given at our Palace at Westminster the Eighteenth Day of October, in the Ninth Year of Our Reign.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

RE:



REMARKS

UPON THE

Book of *S P O R T S*.

THIS Book has been so much bandy'd about formerly, both in publick and private Conversation, and is so commonly still made the Subject of Popular Discourse or Controversie between two contending Parties, being frequently banter'd, or branded on the *one hand*, for establishing *Iniquity by a Law*; and as often also gravely justify'd on the *other*, with a serious Warmth for allowing *innocent Recreations on Sundays*; that it will require some sort of *Moderation* to reconcile Matters *on both sides*, and to set the *Saddle upon the Right Horse* (as we say) without giving any Offence designedly to either: So, I mean, as the Memory of King *CHARLES the First* may not be inconsiderately bespatter'd, or traduc'd between Jest and Earnest, nor *popularly inodiated* by the rash Prejudices of a mistaken Zeal, mutually engag'd upon this Affair.

Now, this *New Edition* of the *Book of Sports* is as far from being design'd to trump up any new Matter of Dispute between the *Church* and the *Conventicle*, as to give any Countenance to a kind of *Spiritual Pastimes*, or what are called *Lawful Recreations on the Lord's Day*: For though I could never think *Dancing, Cudgelling, Coaching, Tipling, Playing at Cards*, or any other *Gamboling Diversions* proper for that Sacred and Solemn Day, but as *prophane* and *immoral*, on the contrary, as ever any *honest Dissenter* has hitherto represented them to the World; yet I must believe, that the Church is in no wise concerned now a-days, either for *encouraging* or *tolerating* any such scandalous Levities, Lewdness or Libertinism, by a Law. Surely, no People, of what Party or Perswasion soever, in their right Wits (except the *Papists*) would

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would be for granting a Licence to sin, or to break the Sabbath. But it is to be hoped, that what Liberties of this kind have been *formerly* given, may never be *so allowed* again by *Royal Authority*.

However, it will be worth while here to enquire when such a *Licentiousness* first took footing in particular, and how it came afterwards to be Generally propagated throughout *England*. And therefore the First Remark I shall make upon it, is this; That King *JAMES the First* having a great Desire to oblige his good People of *Lancashire*, he would not have them debarr'd from *lawful Recreations* upon *Sundays* after Evening Prayers, and upon *Holy-Days*; considering, that if these Times were taken from them, the *meaner Sort*, who labour hard all the *Week*, should have no *Recreations at all* to refresh their *Spirits*: So that he publish'd a DECLARATION concerning *lawful Sports to be used at such times*, by his Royal Pleasure and Prerogative, in the Year 1618. Now, it seems, the *Lancashire* People had complained grievously to King *JAMES the First*, as he was returning once through that *County* from *Scotland*, against the Severity of the Puritans and other precise Persons; in strictly prohibiting, and unlawfully punishing many of them for using their *Lawful Recreations* and *Honest Exercises* upon *Sundays* and other *Holy-Days*, after the *Afternoon Sermon*, or *Evening Service*. So that the King then looking upon this as a Grievance, presently thought fit to redress it by his *Royal Authority* in this manner, for the Satisfaction of his *beloved Subjects* there. But afterwards finding what *good Effect* the granting of these particular Privileges and Pastimes had upon many *Papists* in that *County*, to bring them to Church, he was further Encouraged to make the same *Declaration of Sports* Universal throughout the Kingdom; being chiefly mov'd thereunto for *Two very good Reasons*, to the best of his Thinking, or Prince-like Wisdom. The *One* was, That the *Prohibition* of all *Lawful Recreations*, or *Exercises*, upon *Sundays* after all *Divine Service* being over, in the Evening, would very much discourage, at least, if not absolutely prevent, the Conversion of many well-disposed *Papists*, and peradventure, upon the very point of Turning too, at that time: For because their Priests might take occasion from hence to persuade them to the contrary, by telling them that they would be cramp'd in their Liberties, and that no honest Mirth or Recreation was
lawful

Remarks upon

lawful or tolerable in our Religion. The other Motive the King had to make such a Declaration, was for this reason, That it would remove a publick Inconvenience: For he thought it an impolitick thing, to debar the *common and meaner sort of People* from using such Exercises as might make their Bodies more able for War, when He or his Successors should have occasion for them. Besides, by being hinder'd from such innocent and Manly Sports, the Vulgar People were apt to follow filthy drunken Tiplings, and breed abundance of idle and discontented Speeches in Ale-houses, for want of better Exercise: And therefore *it was his Royal Pleasure, &c.* saving a Regard still to the Laws of the Land and the Canons of the Church, which were not hereby to be infringed in the least: That after the End of Divine Service on *Sundays* at Even, People might lawfully use *Dancing, Archery, Leaping, Vaulting, May-Games, Whitson-Ales, Morris-Dances, May-poles, &c.* provided yet that no unlawful Games should be used at such set Times of Recreation; as, *Bear and Bull-Baiting, Interludes, and Bowling*, as by Law is prohibited in the meaner Sort of People at all times before; Provided also, that no Offensive Weapons should be carried or used in the said Times of Recreations.

And thus you have the very Substance and Soul of the *Declaration*: Only observe further, that all Puritans, Preclifians and Recusants, all Dissenters and Absenters whatsoever from the Church, or Divine Service, on *Sundays*, were *toties quoties* (or for ever, if they never came and conformed to the Church) BARR'D from the Benefit and Liberty of the aforesaid Recreation for that Day.

But I shall not enquire into the Merits of the Cause here, nor determine yet how far Human Policy, or the Wisdom of Princes can lawfully interfere with Divine Institutions, or cancel the Laws of God: Whether Emergencies of State, or the Diversion of People ought to come in competition with Religion, I leave the World to judge.

Be it as it will; now, as to that matter, we find afterwards, that King *Charles the First*, out of a like pious Care for the Service of God, as well as for suppressing any Humours that *oppose Truth*, and for the Ease, Comfort, or Recreation of his well deserving People, did also ratifie and publish the aforesaid *Declaration*, with a *Rider*, though not altogether to the same purpose or Drift; but because he
found

the Book of Sports.

found, that, under pretence of taking away Abuses, there had been a *General Forbidding*, not only of *Ordinary Meetings*, but of the *Feasts of the Dedication of Churches*, commonly called *Wakes*. And therefore He thought fit, according to his good Pleasure and great Wisdom, to allow those Feasts to be observed still, as well as to permit all Man like and Lawful Exercises to be used in like manner, without any *Molestation* or *Hindrance*. Now, I do not perceive here, by the way, any *positive Command* in the Case, nor any *Force* put upon the *People*, that they should and must practise such *Recreations* on *Sundays*, whatever their *Consciences* dictated to the contrary; but only that they were left wholly to their own Liberty still, either to *use them* or *let them alone*, as they pleased: If they us'd them, they should not be punish'd for it; and if they did not use them, there was no Harm done. In a word, if they had a mind to *Recreate* or *Divert* themselves on *those Days of Rest*, they should not be debarr'd such and such useful, innocent, Lawful Pastimes.

But what, and if King *Charles the First* did confirm his *Father's Declaration of lawful Sports* to be exercised on the *Lord's Day*! He was far from encouraging any such established Liberty, either by his own Practice or Example. And if there be any Vertue in that Expression of the Poet,

Regis ad exemplum totus componitur Orbis;

If it could have any Influence upon the Hearts and Minds of his Subjects, either as to their Pastimes or Professions; they had still the greatest Pattern of Piety among all the Princes then living in *Europe*, to follow, and to direct them to a Self-denial of whatever sinful Sport or Pleasure they had a desire to take by Authority. For, as to his own Practice, I cannot find, but that it was all of a piece, Devout, Regular and Innocent; Constant at Church publickly, and Pious in private Retirement; Free from Popish Superstitions, Indulgences or Fopperies in Religion. He was not, I am confident, addicted at all to Unlawful Gaming or Sports; but especially, no Sabbath-breaker, nor never used to play at Cards or Dice on *Sundays*: He could never yet be justly maligned, that ever I heard of, for being given to the Intemperances of Drinking, Swearing, or Whoring; but led his Life in Soberness, and Chastity, and Charity: And if we can believe the dying
Words

Remarks upon

Words of a Man, He never knew any *other Woman* but his *own Wife*; no, even so far from it, that his Heart had never strayed from Her. This was a glorious Practice indeed! and it rendred him also a bright Example for the Imitation of all his good Subjects, that were not glutted with Liberty, Prosperity and Wantonness, to the last degree of an excessive habitual Wickedness.

However, yet the main Blemish upon his Reputation, is the *Book of Sports* still: And why should so Religious a Prince establish so much Licentiousness and Prophaness rather, on *Sundays*, by a publick Declaration throughout all *England*? Why, it is true, it came from a Particular at first, to a General Liberty of Conscience after, in the matter of the Lawful Sports above mentioned, in King *James the First's* Reign: And it is as true also, that King *Charles the First* did afterwards ratifie the said Declaration. Now, the Charge looks as Odd and Disgraceful at first sight, in the Lump, as the Practice of all intemperate Frolicks are still reckoned both Unlawful and Intolerable upon so blessed a Day in a Christian Country: But then let us consider who Advis'd the thing, and methinks it is easie to take off the Odium of it from the Pious KING: For I have not Faith enough yet to believe, that he ever did it of his own Head, *ex mero motu*; out of Wantonness, or Remisness of his own Principles; Looseness in Religion, Licentiousness of Practice, or any other Freak of Libertinism or Prophaness. This would seem as incredible as any thing of Slander that can be invented, or broached in the dark, which the whole Course of a Man's Life contradicted in the Face of the Sun. In short, our *English* History makes King *Charles the First* no Whimsical Person, nor Changling, no Knave, nor Fool, nor Papist.

To do Justice then impartially both to the *Dead* and the *Living*; it must needs be granted on all Hands, that this *Book of Sports* was wholly owing to some *Evil Ministers* or *Designing Men* about the *Good King* at that Time: For what *End*, they that advis'd it knew it best. And though he was a Prince as Famous for *Piety*, *Policy*, and other noble *Qualifications*, for governing his *People* well, as any other *Potentates* upon Earth; yet it is not to be imagin'd that *He* was absolutely *Free* from All Vicious, Self-interested, and *Time-serving Courtiers*, about him; *Such* as might slyly endeavour either to inodiate his gracious Government by

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condescending too far to some of his *Subjects* upon this *Affair*, or at least to ingratiate themselves with his *Majesty's* secret *Enemies*, and so make themselves *Popular* as well as *Powerful* at last, by his *Miscarriages*. In short, a *Slip* of this imprudent, *Reflecting*, or *Reproachful Nature*, in a *Person* so singularly *Religious* and *Wise* in all other *Respects*, looks as like *Evil Council*, as if *Lucifer* was tampering again, and advising his *Lord* upon the *Pinnacle* of the *Temple* to cast himself down *Headlong*. Inasmuch that it cannot, in common *Reason*, be suppos'd that ever the *Prudent KING* acted upon his own *Choice* in this *Matter*; but by a *Kind* of an *Unwilling Consent*, rather than disoblige some of his *Council*, whether *Favorites*, *Friends*, or *Foes*, was over-ruled to make this *Condescension* and *Publick Declaration of Sports* at long *Run*; Let his *Pious Sentiments* be what they would at the same *Time* in his own *Breast*, or never so much inclin'd to the *Contrary*, and averse to *Prophaneness*: And I will venture to say, if the *Truth* was known, this is not the *First Time* that the best of *Princes* have, with no little *Reluctancy* and *Regret*, suffer'd those things to be done in a *Bickering Nation* for *Peace* and *Quietness Sake*, which never had their *Cordial Approbation*; nor did *Heart* and *Hand* go together upon the *Fact*. I might instance in the *Lord Strafford's* peculiar *Case of Accumulative Treason*; but *That* would be to launch out beyond the *Depth* of my *Present Subject*, and I only offer it by *Way of Allusion*: Notwithstanding yet perhaps *King CHARLES* might be *Brow-beat* or forc'd by some imperious *Ministers* (for any *Thing* I know) to comply with it quite contrary to his *Inclination*. And besides, neither did that *Error in Fact* argue any *Insincerity* of the *KING's* *Judgment*, in my *Opinion*, either as to the *Sports* or the *Sacrificing of Strafford*. He was certainly convinc'd of what He ought to have done in both *Cases*. He knew well enough that such *Pastimes* or *Actions* were *Unlawful* in themselves upon the *Lord's Day*, or upon *Life* and *Death*; the *One* as really inconsistent with his *Honour* and *Conscience*; the *Other*, as point-blank repugnant to the keeping *Holy* the *Christian Sabbath*. But when leading *Politicians* and haughty *Ministers of State* tell a *Prince* publickly, *it must be so or so*, and *They will have it so*; or whisper worse *Menaces* in private *Cabals*; as if his *Head* should fly for't, if he did not condescend or submit:

What

Remarks upon the Book of Sports.

What has *He* to do *then*, but to preserve the *Peace of the Nation* at the expence of his own *Power, Pleasure, or Prerogative*? I do not say that *This* was the very exact *Condition* of King *CHARLES* the *First*; far be it from me to think so, as some do, that *He* labour'd under any such *Streight-lac'd Circumstances*: But, if some cunning *Statesmen*, after all, had not made Use of strong and plausible *Importunities*, upon *Him* with more potent and prevailing *Insinuations*, *He* would in all probability, have refus'd his *Royal Consent or Assent*, both to the *Sports* and the *Tragedy*. And moreover, who knows whether it would not have been *Worse* for him before his *Time*, if he had not peremptorily don't.

Wherefore, after all is said yet as to the main *Point* in *Question*, I mean the *Matter of Fact* of the *KING's Doing THAT* by *Ill Advice, or Politick Wheedle*: What, it is to be presum'd, *He* would never have done *Voluntarily* of *Himself* for several undeniable good *Reasons* and great *Regards*, both of his *Conscience* and *Religion*: I cannot but think this *DECLARATION* of *Sports*, a very *Favourable Case* on the *KING's Side*, and that it justly requires a *Candid Construction* at the *Hands* of all unprejudiced or impartial *Perusers*. But besides, I appeal to the *Learned*, whether *God Almighty* did not permit some loose *Things* in the *Jewish Government* to be established by a *Law*, for the *Hardness of the People's Hearts*, thro' many troublesome *Importunities*; which *Things* yet *He* nether did, nor could ever approve of, as being highly *Injurious* to *Heaven*, and derogatory to his *Infinite Wisdom* and *Goodness*. This I mention only by the *By*, as an *Allusion*, not altogether *Impertinent* (I hope) to the *Purpose*, nor *Prophane*. However, when I call to mind that excellent incomparable *Expression* in the *Holy Scriptures*, *Take away the evil Counsellors and the King shall live*: I cannot but think it very *à propos*, very apposite to the *Pious KING's Case* and *Condition*, under the *Influence* of a perwasive *Ministry* and an *Easie, Gracious, Good Temper*; to say the worst on't.



F I N I S.

The Phoenix :
OR, A
REVIVAL
OF

Scarce and Valuable Pieces

From the Remotest Antiquity
down to the Present Times.

B E I N G

A COLLECTION of Manuscripts and
Printed Tracts, no where to be found but
in the Closets of the Curious.

By a Gentleman who has made it his Business to
search after such Pieces for Twenty Years past.

*All Men receive their Birth from other things;
But from Himself the PHENIX only springs;
From his own Cinders, balm'd in costly Spices,
A Second PHENIX like the First arises:
O happy thine own Heir! What ruins all;
Adds Strength to thee, restor'd by Funeral:*

Dryden.

LONDON, Printed for J. Morphew near Stationers Hall.
M. DCC. VII.

P R E F A C E

By the Undertakers.

THE Nature and Extent of this Design being explain'd sufficiently in the Title-Page, it's needless to insist on it here; and the Usefulness of the Work being obvious to every Intelligent Reader, it's equally needless to enlarge upon it.

A Design partly of the same nature, was begun in *Holland* by the Learned and Industrious Mr. *Le Clerc* in 1703. which has met with such Approbation, that it is still continu'd and publish'd there in *French*, in a small Volume in 12^o. once in half a year, under the Title of *Bibliothèque Choisie*, i. e. *The Select Library*. But whereas that Author mixes new Books as they come out, with those of an older date, our Design is only to give such as are antient or scarce; not by way of Abridgment as he does (except they be very bulky) but the Pieces themselves: And because many don't understand *French*, we shall from time to time insert such of Mr. *Le Clerc's* Extracts as are Valuable and suite our Design, when we can't meet with the Books. But for those newly publish'd, either abroad or at home, we leave them to the *Works of the Learned*, because we would not interfere with the Proprietors of that useful Book. And tho we shall take all possible care to invade no Man's Property,

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yet we shall be ready, if any such thing happens; to give all reasonable Satisfaction, upon a reference to Indifferent Persons.

A Work of this nature requires Impartiality; and as we mix nothing of our own Judgment in it, no man has reason to be offended that we don't make the Humour of any Party a Rule for our Collection; since in this matter we have no regard to our own Sentiments, which is the surest Test of Impartiality.

The Gentleman who laid the Groundwork of this Design, has look'd over all the late Mr. *Miller's* curious Collection of Pamphlets; and since Dr. *Seaman's* Auction, which was the first, he has attended most that have been in *London*; where he purchas'd such curious Pieces as he thought fit for his purpose: besides what he has had from his particular Friends, and other Persons who were willing to promote this Undertaking. And that nothing may be wanting to make it compleat, such Gentlemen as have any thing Scarce and Curious to impart, and will be pleas'd to send it, directed for the Undertakers of the *Phenix*, to be left at *Fellows's* Coffee-House in *Aldersgate-street*, or give notice where they may be attended, we shall be ready to wait upon them, and hear their Proposals. In the mean time 'tis thought fit to give this publick notice, That we are already Masters of a Valuable Collection for several Volumes; and shall go with all possible speed upon another, if this meet with a favourable Reception; which we can scarce doubt of, since this is the only method for preserving and making publick such Valuable Pieces, as would otherwise be utterly lost, or at least confin'd to the Closets of the Curious: Whereas they may at one time or other be useful and instructive to Men of all Ranks and Facultys, and by consequence answer the End of the first Publishers or Composers.



This

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this VOLUME.

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Phenix



Phœnix I.

A Letter of Resolution concerning **ORIGEN** and the chief of his Opinions.

*Written to the Learned and most Ingenious
C. L. Esq; and by him publish'd.*

To the READER.

IN conformity to Custom, which sends few Books into the World, be they never so mean, without some fair bespeaking of the Reader, or giving him an account of the Author or his Work, it was thought convenient that some little thing in that kind shou'd be prefix'd to these few Sheets, and that I shou'd do it, who may reasonably be presum'd to have a greater Knowledg and Interest in this Affair than any other. Know therefore, Reader, that some while ago, upon a certain Occasion, which would be to no purpose here to mention, there was begot in me a Curiosity to know the Opinions of that pious Father of the Church, the learned Origen: and being neither by natural Temper, nor the way of my Studies, nor condition of Life, either so punctually inform'd what was in general Esteem accounted Orthodox, or much aw'd by the word; I suffer'd that Curiosity to grow so great in me, that I was even afflicted till it was satisfy'd.

To the Reader.

But having neither Time enough to spare from my own secular Employments, nor Philosophy enough to pierce into those recondite Mysteries, I quickly perceiv'd I could not by my own Industry and Meditation come to the end of my Desires. I therefore wrote unto a Friend of mine, competently well enabled with those Advantages of Leisure and metaphysical Knowledg, conjuring him, by our long Acquaintance and Friendship, to give himself the Trouble of sending me an account of some Queries I there put to him, tending to my Contentment and Satisfaction in this Particular. He, by good hap, having just before finish'd a Treatise, which may one day see the Light to the benefit of the Church, and having nothing new in the Forge, pity'd my Anxiety, and promis'd to do something for the Ease of my Mind, and accordingly shortly after did me the Honour to send me the following Papers. Thou may'st easily imagine I receiv'd so obliging a Present with all due Respectment, and entertain'd the fair Conceptions in it with extraordinary Emotion of Spirit: For really several Things before lay so cross and scurvily in my Soul, that I took no pleasure to look into it, nay I was sensibly pain'd and prick'd when I had the Hardiness so to do: But I quickly felt all those Unevennesses begin to wear away, and every thing to range it self in its right Place and Order, Principles and Conclusions fairly accorded, and a lasting Peace and Calm (for so I boldly presag'd) possess'd me throughout. Having receiv'd so great a Benefit my self, and conjecturing that in this inquisitive Age, the Minds of other Men, as well as mine, might need, and would joyfully receive Relief by the same means which ministred to my Tranquillity, and having by Trial also off, upon some capable Persons, found that my Conjecture was real, I thought I should be envious if I did not endeavour to obtain leave of my Friend to make his Papers publick. Whereupon, after some time, I resolv'd to give him a Visit at his Hermitage (as he is wont to call the Place of his Retirement) for the effecting of my purpose. Where amongst many learned and pleasant Entertainments, the clear Witnesses of a benign Nature, an innocent Conscience, and satisfy'd Understanding, I mov'd my Design unto him. He with an amaz'd Look, ask'd me what I meant? I plainly told him that I meant to do what was in me, that others might receive that Ease and Benefit which I my self had felt by his Labour; for others there were in the World, I doubted not, in the same Condition I was then in, when I requested his Assistance; and in exchange for his Question, I ask'd him, why he shou'd be so unwilling to it as his Looks shew'd him to be? To which, after some little Recollection, The Questions discuss'd in those inconsiderable Papers you talk of (reply'd he) are great and bold, and you mistake the World if you imagine they will find an equal Hearing; but are certainly much out in your account, if you think Men will be convinc'd of their Truth by so mean an handling as mine is. For tho I thought that wou'd be enough to entertain your Curiosity a little till the Fit was over, and to offer some Hints to your more deliberate Meditations;

Meditations; yet I did not then while I was scribbling of them, much less now in my cooler Thoughts, conceive them convictive to any who were not in a very forward Preparation to the Belief of them already. For neither are the Foundations of my Reasonings laid low enough, nor firmly settled (being I was to follow Origen rather than my own Invention) nor is the Order of my Conceptions upon any of the Opinions such as it ought to be: for I remember very well upon my reading the Papers over after I had finish'd them; I discern'd some things in the entrance of a Question or an Argument, which by the right Laws of Discourse ought to have come behind; and others I saw were cast into the close of it, which wou'd have done better service more forwardly plac'd. To tell you the Truth, I did not scrupulously set my self any method, but took all Thoughts that came, and as they came (if homogeneous to the whole) and there upon the spot fetter'd them in Words, lest they might not have been at hand when I needed them, nor I been able to recal such fugitive Things when their Turn came. My Answers to Objections have the same Carelessness in them, no applying this or that to such or such a Proposition, but a diffuse speaking to the whole; being loth, as it shou'd seem, to lose any good Words that came in my Mind, which must needs render my Answer weak and obscure to strict Logical Readers. Many of my Interpretations of Scripture are rather extravagant or pleasant, than the serious Confirmations of a weighty Cause, and which affect to make the Holy Penmen of Sacred Writ speak Notions where in all likelihood they never meant it. I am also much too short in most of the Points debated: Which Faults, tho they be pardonable in a private Letter to a familiar Friend, will be sottish and ridiculous in a publish'd Piece. Do you then impartially judg whether so short a Discourse, full of so many and such monstrous Defects, pretending the Defence of high and rais'd Mysteries against strong inveterate Prejudices, be not a thing rather to be laugh'd at, than receiv'd as useful to any better Purpose. To this I smilingly reply'd, that he might be as bold as he pleas'd with his own; yet if he wou'd that I shou'd be of his Mind for the present, and acknowledg with him these Faults (as he call'd them) I was content, upon condition that he wou'd take his Papers back, and mend them in all the Particulars he was pleas'd to say they were defective in, and then give me that leave which I then came to beg. This I press'd him to with all earnestness possible, hoping that either he wou'd do it, and so I might receive his second and (as the Proverb says) better Cogitations, whose first pleas'd me so much; or else that he wou'd be forc'd out of Civility to grant my first Request, if he was resolv'd to deny the second. And it fell out according to my Hope; for being obstinately set against all Review, partly because he was now more seriously employ'd, partly because that wou'd look like an Approbation of Origen's Opinions, he at last unwillingly permitted me to do what I wou'd with that I had. Which I here offer to thy candid Acceptance, being confi-

4 *An Account of* O R I G E N,

dent thou wilt not be offended with any thing in it, if thou be'st of my Humour, to think no Opinion formidable which does Honour to God, renders him most amiable to Men, and a sure Object of our Faith and Hope, which justifies the Ways of his Providence, and reconciles them with his most precious Attributes, Equity and Benignity. Farewel.

C. L.

A Letter of Resolution concerning O R I G E N
and the chief of his Opinions.

S I R,

IF the partial Judgment which your Friendship makes of me, and the heat of your commendable Curiosity would suffer you equally and coolly to consider the Undertaker and his Work; you would, out of Pity to me, and Honour to the great Personage you enquire of, expect no other Letter from me at this time than one of humble Thanks, for releasing me from the Burden your Commands had laid upon me: For verily I much need your Pity and Relief, who am combated with two mighty contrary Passions; the one an infinite Desire to do the Father Right, the other as great a Despair of doing it, from the most certain Consciousness of my own Inability. And tho by my undertaking of it I shall reap this Fruit of having given you an evidence of what Authority your Commands are with me, and how ready I am in the greatest Disadvantages to obey them; yet I shall neither satisfy you nor my self in the Performance, and possibly be injurious to his venerable Name, in adding more Envy to his Opinions thro my unskilful Representation of them. But to be bold with you upon the warrant of our Friendship, I think you are not at present capable of any equitable consideration as to this Particular; and therefore I do resolve to bear the Necessity, as well as I may, hoping it will prove a Benefit to me, and Security for the future: for certainly you will not be very forward to impose a second Task of this nature upon me, who have so ill acquitted my self in the first. And to shew you how little Power I have over my own Inclinations and Actions, where you are pleas'd to direct them, I shall, even contrary to my own Judgment, omit nothing of the Method you have set me, but give you an Account, such as it will be, of all the Particulars you desire to know, and according to the Order they are in in your Letter; tho otherwise, being left free, I should certainly have wav'd the first

†

of

of them, and possibly the second. Five Things then you enquire of:

1. What Opinion the Antients had of the Worth, Spirit and Temper of his Person.
2. What they thought of his Doctrine.
3. What his *Dogmata* are.
4. By what Arguments he asserted them.
5. By what his Adversaries endeavour'd to confute them, and how I imagine an *Origenist* would answer to their Objections.

IN answer to the first, he pleas'd to receive this Adversifement in the first place, which may serve to arm you against the Entertainment of a too forward Prejudice against him. Those that are skill'd and well-read in the antient Writers of the Church, tell us, that there are very few Records left of him, but such as must be had out of those Writings which were on purpose compos'd to refute his Opinions; or at least out of such as collect and amass together his Opinions without their Confutation, with design to bid Men beware of them and detest them. Wherefore it is not to be wondred at, if the Heat of Disputation, or Zeal for what they were persuaded was the Truth, make them sometimes, in so pardonable a Passion, speak something more harshly and tartly of his Person and Opinions, whom they imagin'd the Adversary and Subverter of it. But to the business: 'Tis laid to his Charge that he was carry'd away with too curious an Endeavour of letting no part of Holy Scriptures, how hard soever, go unexplain'd, which prov'd his Ruin: That he was very temerarious, and in his Interpretations said any thing carelessly what he pleas'd; that he was *κομπῶδης καὶ δοκίμοι σοφῆς*, a Searcher of Things unsearchable, *ἐμβιβαστῆς τῶν ἐπερατίων*, who fill'd all the World with his Toys and Nugacity, a Fanatick, *ἐθελοσοφῶν*, a Caviller and Jeerer at the Simplicity of true Believers; one who thro his carnal Mind and Reasonings could not receive the Grace of the Spirit, an Unbeliever, and the greatest of Unbelievers, a pitiful vain-glorious Man, perverted by his great Skill in the Greek Learning. The Unpleasantness of the Argument tires me already, and my Reverence to the Censurers makes me abstain from their Names: But I shall recreate your Mind with his more advantageous Picture, which they drew for him in a direct View of him, without so oblique a Cast upon his Opinions. And here they represent him as one who, both in his Youth and afterwards, willingly and courageously suffer'd many Persecutions and much barbarous Usage for the Name of Christ, and the Holy

Doctrines of Faith, being many times drag'd thro the Streets of the City, reproachfully us'd and revil'd, enduring Tortures unsufferable, envy'd and hated by those in Power for his eximious Piety and Learning, who overthrew and confuted all the Heresies that were in the Church in his time; very well skill'd in the Natures and Properties of Animals and other natural things; who liv'd an Ascetick Life, and thro his excessive Strictness, spare Diet, and Abstinence from Animals, 'tis reported, ἡ δόξα αὐτῆς περισπασμένη, whom none but the Ignorant and Unskilful can deny to have been the Master of the Churches after the Apostles, so well vers'd in the Holy Scriptures, that he had them all without book; and his Knowledg in them was so great, that even his Adversaries wish'd to have had it, tho with the Envy of his Name; whose continual Study Night and Day was to understand them, and to explain them to others; and innumerable Treatises of that kind he publish'd for the good of all Men, besides a multitude of other Writings, to the number of 6000 Volumes in all; who writ more than other Men can read: and all this Divine Knowledg he had in conjunction with the perfect understanding of the profoundest Mysteries of the best and noblest Sects of Philosophy, before whom *Plotinus* himself was asham'd to continue his Lecture, so much did he revere this holy and learned Father. And to be short, I refer you to the Encomium given him by *Vincentius Lirinensis*. This is a Draught of him from those who otherwise were not apt to favour him. And you in taking a view of it, cannot but clearly discover these two things, the Ingenuity and Integrity of those who were Enemies to his Doctrine, in that they did not, like the Disputers of After-ages, make all Men ignorant and impious who were not of their Mind; and the stupendious worth of *Origen*, which drew such fair Testimonies of his personal Perfections even from them, who thro their Dislike of his Opinions, could not possibly be his profess'd Encomiasts. And if I should add what Intimations I find of the Esteem had of him, by such as did not disapprove his *Dogmata*, you would then say that he was little less than an Apostle; but because the witness of Friendship is so apt to be partial, and so less credible, I will wave it, and here make an end of the first Query.

THE second is, What they thought of his Doctrines?

They say his Heresy, tho entertain'd by the most eminent Christians, and such as profess'd a Monastick and Anchoritick Life and Poverty, yet was it παρῶν τῶν παλαιῶν μοχθηροῦσα. That his *Dogmata* concerning Faith and matters of higher

higher Speculation, are the most absurd of any that ever were before or after him, those only Opinions of other Sects excepted, which countenanc'd impure and filthy Practices: That his Doctrine of the Resurrection, beside the Nugacity of it, was indeed mere Unbelief; a deceitful Opinion, not maintain'd by Faith, but Syllogisms and Ratiocinations, subverting the Confession of our Faith, ἐν τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἡμῶν συμβαινόντων Madness, and Ignorance, and Blasphemy; a putative Resurrection, and only in Appearance, for he did only in Words confess that Article, but in Deed and in his Mind deny'd and subverted it. His Opinion concerning *Pre-existence*, and the happier State of the Soul before she was thrust down into these inferior parts of the World, they say, is *πρεπισμός* καὶ *τραυκολογία*, without Sense or Understanding, the Conceit of bad Men, Blasphemy and Stolidity: That the Author of it did imitate the Craft and Deceitfulness of the Devil, that old Serpent, who of old deceiv'd *Eve*, and still does the Minds of the Simple: That his Doctrine in general is absurd and pernicious, a Serpentine deadly Poison, which he vomited into the World to his own Destruction, and theirs who adhere to him. His Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, they say, is manifest Blasphemy, and he by it was the Father of *Arianism*, and the Root whence all other like Heresies sprang; so nearly symbolizing not only with *Arius*, but with *Eunomius* and *Manichæus* also, that they who have written against them have with the same Labour answer'd to his Impieties: An Enemy of God and the Church for his most hateful Opinions; and one professes, in the Word and Faith of a Christian, that his *Dogmata* are poisonous and contrary to Scripture. His Opinion concerning the happy Restitution of all Things, and the Liberation of the Punish'd, whether Men or Dæmons, is such, that they cannot tell whether they shou'd be griev'd or laugh at it. What hath been produc'd upon this second Inquiry, I think is sufficient, to let you see what Opinion some pious and learned Persons of the Church had of *Origen's* Doctrines. I cannot here, as in the former Query, oppose to this severer Censure one more favourable in his behalf, because the more antient Authors, I make use of in this whole matter, were profess'd Enemies to his *Dogmata*, and I have heard of no other extant which befriended them. Yet something you may gather from the first Testimony produc'd in this Particular, and add to it, that he hath not wanted such as have apologiz'd for him, and defended the Catholickness of his Doctrine; Men very eminent in the Church for Place and Dignity, and also for their learned Writings, some whereof are still extant, and in great esteem in the World. One of

them is by his Adversaries themselves confess'd to be Catho-
 lick in the grand Heresy of all, to wit, that of the Holy
 Trinity: A second was so good a Christian, as to confirm
 the Truth of his Faith by Martyrdom. That I may not
 add that some later Writers, but very learned Men, have
 defended him too: for I know with some Men it will be ex-
 ception enough against their Authority to say they are Mo-
 dern; with others against their Reason to say, This Man
 was a Philosopher, that a Papist, a third a Jesuit, the worst of
 Papists; for the Holy Father hath found Defenders a-
 mongst all these sorts of Men. But instead of such Testi-
 monies of antient Writers, which do as much cry up the
 Truth and Nobleness of his *Dogmata*, as those others I have
 produc'd do reprove their Falseness and Contrariety to the
 Faith of the Gospel: What if I should give you a short Hi-
 story of their Quarrel against him and his Opinions? May
 not this possibly somewhat lessen the Credit of their harder
 Censure? I will be very brief in it, because I know you
 would rather hear what his Opinions are, than see the Con-
 tentions among the venerable Fathers of the Christian
 Church. *Origen*, according to the Philosophicalness of his ex-
 cellent Spirit, had asserted God to be purely incorporeal and
 immense, and that it was an impious derogation to his most
 perfect Essence to be limited by any form whatever, and
 therefore not by human Shape; however the Scripture does
 ascribe to him the several Parts of human Bodies. And this
 he did with some Zeal and Earnestness, because some un-
 learned Monks of *Egypt* had advanc'd the contrary Opinion,
 for which they were call'd by him *Anthropomorphites*. Now
 as it commonly happens, and as we see in the *Roman Church*,
 that the same Orders constantly transmit the same Opinions
 to all their Successors; so was it amongst these ignorant
 Monks, for the same false Conceit was preserv'd and strenu-
 ously maintain'd amongst them almost two hundred years af-
 ter. At which time *Epiphanius*, one of that Profession, had
 imbib'd the Error, or at least was not much averse from
 it; for tho he was without doubt a very pious Man, yet it
 is apparent enough that he had not much Learning, and
 therefore was very obnoxious to that dull Hallucination:
 for his Piety would make him very much revere the plain
 Declarations of Scripture which countenance it, and his little
 Learning could not rescue him from the Fallacy. But as
 tenaciously as the Monks of his time kept their old *Mump-
 simus* which their Predecessors had taught them; so with no
 less care did other more learned Christians retain the true
 and more reasonable Doctrine of *Origen*. And it is no won-
 der

der if there was much Contention amongst them, and many hard Words given, to the mutual provoking and inflaming one another. It happen'd about this time that *Theophilus* Bishop of *Antioch*, an *Origenist*, and one who had in publick Writings call'd *Epiphanius* an *Heresiarch*, had ordain'd one *Dioscorus*, an *Origenist* too, Bishop of *Hermopolis*, and committed to two of his Brothers the whole management of the Affairs of his own Church: but they being as pious as learned, did much dislike the Temper and Practices of *Theophilus*, who was a proud, revengeful, covetous, crafty and turbulent Man; and out of this disgust left him, and retir'd to their Monasteries again, from whence he had call'd them. He smelling out what it was that displeas'd them, instead of mending his Manners, was resolv'd to be reveng'd of them; and therefore besides his sending several Monkish *Anthropomorphites* into those Parts whereto they had retir'd, to kindle that Controversy afresh, to bring *Dioscorus* and his Brothers into what Danger and Envy he could, as holding the blasphemous Opinion of *Origen* (for so he impiously and against his Conscience call'd it) he also persecuted them by the arm'd force of Soldiers; so that they poor Men were constrain'd to save themselves by flying to *Constantinople*, where *St. Chrysostom* was Bishop. And tho this holy and wise Prelate would not communicate with them, till the whole Cause was heard and judg'd according to Ecclesiastical Form; yet the proud *Theophilus* having nothing in his Eye but Violence and Revenge, was resolv'd to be reveng'd on him too for giving shelter to his Enemies. And therefore, thro his malicious Craft, he abus'd the simple and unwary Zeal of *Epiphanius*, and instigated him to call a Synod in his See for condemning the Books of *Origen*; signifying to him withal, that tho he had formerly been of another Mind, yet now he had renounc'd that pernicious Doctrine, and was wholly come over to his Opinion. By this Device he knew he should be even with all his Enemies together, who all admir'd and reverenc'd the Name and Works of that learned Father. And by the same great Craft of his; it is thought he drew in *St. Jerom* also into the same Confederacy: Which he might not difficultly do; he being naturally of a very hot and eager Disposition, and tho a very learned Man, yet scarce beyond the bounds of Philology. The Synod was call'd, and the Books condemn'd, according to *Theophilus's* Project, who did the same in his own See too, and made *Epiphanius* write to *Chrysostom* to follow their Example. But as it seems this Holy Father was not so forward in the Business, and therefore the restless Spirit of *Theophilus* instigated *Epiphanius* to go to *Constantinople*, carrying

rying the Decree of the Synod with him, to have it subscrib'd there. But *St. Chrysoſtom* refus'd to ſubſcribe, judging it very hard and unequal, and not according to the manner of Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures, that a Perſon of ſo great Learning and Piety, who had been ſo ſerviceable to the Church, who liv'd two hundred Years before, whoſe Books no Council had condemn'd, ſhould now be condemn'd by a ſmall pack'd Synod of his profefs'd Enemies. But *Epiphanius* was reſolv'd to go thro with his Work, being abetted in it not only by the false and implacable *Theophilus*, but alſo by the Empreſs her ſelf, and ſome potent Men in the Court, and ſeveral licentious Priests, who had a pique againſt *Chryſoſtom* for his free reproving of their Faults; and therefore in the moſt invidious manner he could, before all the People, he recited the Decree, expreſly naming ſome of the *Origeniſts*, to wit, thoſe whom the wrathful *Theophilus* ſo cauſeleſly perſecuted, with oblique Reflections alſo upon *Chryſoſtom* as the Patron of them. And this fervent Zeal of his for the Truth, as he conceiv'd, was the more eaſily boil'd up to this irregular height becauſe of ſome Diſciples of *Arius*, who ſince the Condemnation of their Maſter and his Doctrines, not daring to avow his Hereſy under that Title, craftily and moſt falſly endeavour'd to propagate it under the unmeet Cover of the plauſible name of *Origen*. If I was concern'd in the Opinions of *Origen* more than barely to give you an hiſtorical Account of them, or took ſo great an Intereſt in his Quarrel, as to be an Adverſary to his Adverſaries, I could mention to you, that *Chryſoſtom* gently ſnubbing *Epiphanius* by *Seraphion* for this pragmatycaſtical Deſign of his (as ſome would call it) and meddling ſo much where he had ſo little to do, and kindly bidding him beware leſt from the Stir and Commotion he had put the People in any danger ſhould redound to himſelf; the good Man forthwith upon this advertiſement haſted from *Conſtantinople* to his own See, but died by the way. I could alſo tell you what beſel *Cyrinus* Biſhop of *Chalcedon*, a bitter Enemy of *Chryſoſtom's*, when the pack'd Biſhops were there who were to compoſe another Synod againſt that pious Father. There are not wanting who draw ſuch Accidents into Argument againſt their unrighteous Proceedings againſt two ſuch excellent Perſons, and think they were the Rebukes of Providence: But ſuch Events are of too lubricous a conſideration to be taken notice of by any but an Adverſary and an Orator; but I am neither in this Work you have impos'd on me. Only this you may plainly gather from what I have now related, that the great Heat and Bitterneſs againſt the Opinions of *Origen* had ſuch beginnings as no Man now would dare to own, viz. the ſatisfying

satisfying the Revenge of an impious Dissembler, and the discountenancing a Doctrine which almost all the Christian World believes for true. But the eager Contention against this one Opinion would necessarily discover many others which were like to be suspected likewise; for *Origen's* rais'd Genius could not but light on such Conclusions as were of an higher and more remote Speculation, which to Heads unus'd to such Theories, would first appear strange, and then false; because we are very unwilling that any thing should be true which we never heard of before, and which we do not now understand. Many of which Conclusions sagotted together by some malicious or quarrelsome Reader of his Works, would make such a show to his Disadvantage in the Judgment of the Simple and Unlearned, that without any scruple they would be set against him as a Man of most monstrous Conceits.

Your third Query is, What his *Dogmata* are?

By which Question I presume you do not mean all the Doctrines that are in his Writings, which cannot be found in the common compendious Creed of the Christian Church, nor amongst the Articles of particular Churches, no nor yet in the usual Systems of Theology; for it would be as hard to tell you what his Opinion is in all those Questions he propounds and discusses in his Books, as it is unworthy in him who hath heap'd up several of them together as his Opinions, when yet he professes of them that he does not propound them as the Sentiments of his own Mind, but only as noble and illustrious Arguments of our Contemplation, very well worthy to be farther enquir'd of: but your meaning, I suppose, is of the most material of them, and which most offend our otherways taught Ears. Those of this sort may be reduc'd to these Six.

1. His Doctrine concerning the Holy Trinity, among the Hypostases whereof, they say, he puts an Inequality.

2. That the Souls of Men do pre-exist.

3. That thro their Fault and Negligence they appear here Inhabitants of the Earth cloth'd with Terrestrial Bodies.

4. That the Mystery of the Resurrection is this, that we shall be cloth'd with heavenly or æthereal Bodies.

5. That after long periods of time the Damn'd shall be deliver'd from their Torments, and try their Fortunes again in such Regions of the World as their Nature fits them for.

6. That the Earth, after her Conflagration, shall become habitable again, and be the mansion of Men and other Animals; and this in eternal Vicissitudes.

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These are the chief Matters wherein *Origen* is conceiv'd to have mightily transgress'd; and of which *Jerom* says, *Cum hæc rejeceritis & quasi censoriâ virgulâ separaveritis a fide Ecclesie, tuto legam cetera: nec venena jam timebo, cum antidotum præbitero.*

HOW he asserts these, and upon what Grounds and Reasons, is your fourth Query, which in order comes now to be answer'd.

Concerning the First of them, whether *Origen* ever us'd the very Term *Inequality* or *Inequal* in his Speculations of that mysterious and blessed Essence, I cannot say. Sure I am, I never met with it in his Writings; and, what is a better Argument that he us'd it not, none of those object it to him who have made Collections of his Errors and dangerous Speeches. And therefore if the thing it self be laid to his Charge, it must be infer'd from such Passages as these they take notice of, and have excerpted out of his Writings, *Pater non videtur a Filio, Pater non comprehenditur a Filio, Filius, qui est imago invisibilis Patris, comparatus Patri non est Veritas, &c.* But if he did hold a kind of Inequality amongst the blessed Hypostases of the most Sacred Trinity, a Man would probably guess from what he finds in his Writings that his Grounds were these.

1. The Difference of their Essential Characters and *Idiomata*, which is such as might easily induce him to think that the Divine Hypostases, which substantially were those *Idiomata* or Properties, did also differ one from another according as the Perfections differ'd signify'd by those Essential Properties. They are these, Original Goodness, or first Plenitude of Life and Being, All-comprehensive Wisdom or Reason, and Demiurgical Love; which tho they all be truly and properly universal Natures, yet there is manifestly in the two latter and derivative Hypostases a verging towards Particularity, if compar'd with the first Primitive Fountain of the Deity; and this drawing towards Particularity is greater in the Third than in the Second. For all things are in the First in such an indistinct manner, and in such Exuberances flow from him, that our Minds cannot particularly set out this and that: but emptying himself into the Second, we then find them, according to his Name and Nature, limited and bounded and divided into their respective Reasons and Ideas, but without destroying his Essential Unity, for he is them all; from whom they being further carry'd down to the Third, are by his Almighty and never-failing Power distinctly brought forth into visible Life and Existence, exactly accord-

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ing to those eternal Reasons and Ideas which shone into him from the Second, and faithfully govern'd the Operations of his Power. And if we descend from this higher Metaphysical Speculation, and take a view of these three Excellencies, not as they are Substances in the Deity, but as Dispositions and Qualities in created Beings; we cannot but pronounce that there is such plain difference in their Notions, that if they were from their accidental Nature exalted into Substantial life, they would there also still retain their difference.

2. There seems such a Necessity of Nature, that all Effects and Productions whatever, whether voluntary or emanative, should decline something from the supereminent Excellency of the Cause and Producer, that it is scarce possible to keep our Minds from thinking but that the Rule holds also in the Divine Emanations; especially when the very Names of *Father* and *Son*, and the Modes of Derivation, *being begot by the Father*, and *proceeding from both*, do so fairly countenance the Truth of it.

3. Tho' the Divine Hypostases be acknowledg'd Three in respect of their proper Essences, (for so, for more plainness, I shall crave leave to speak) and those three different, or *alius atque alius*; and not only so, in regard of three different Names, or a threefold Order (as the Church hath rightly determin'd, against *Sabellius*, I take it :) yet if we abstract from them in our Minds their Names and Order, and barely contemplate those Essences, we can find nothing in them (according to the Hypothesis of the Equalists) why one should be call'd the *Father* or *Son* rather than another: which must needs have seem'd very harsh to *Origen's* contemplative Spirit, if not derogatory to him who is simply First in that ever-blessed *Triad*.

4. The strict *Equalists* could not give him any reason why the Deity was not rather multiply'd into an Infinity of Hypostases, than have its Progressions stop'd at Three. Nay, it seems necessary by their Hypothesis, that the Multiplication should be Infinite. For the first Original Good communicating of himself to his first Productions, according to the emanative fertility of his own exuberant Fulness, if they did as fully receive his Life and Power, as he their Author was himself possess'd of it, the Third would be as able, and by the necessity of equal plenitude, would be as much constrain'd (as I may so speak with reverence) to produce Three more, and so on perpetually. And for them to say that the Number was limited to Three by explicit Will and Counsel, is to hazard the necessary Existence, and consequently the Divinity of the two latter Hypostases, and to induce such an Indifferency in-

to the first and earliest Operations of the Author of all things, as is inconsistent with infinitely-full Goodness. Wherefore *Origen* was forc'd to conclude that the Number was limited in a *Triad* by their unequal Declension from the First, in such a measure and proportion that those Three did perfectly comprehend and make up together in their Essential *Idiomata*, whatever Perfection goes to the constituting the entire $\Theta\epsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon$, or Divine Essence.

5. Since God is an Essence infinitely perfect, and since all the Perfections worthy of the Divine Nature, as Goodness, Wisdom, Power, &c. are neither of the same Nature, nor of the same Worth and Excellency; if every Hypostasis be essentially all those Perfections, they are three Gods; if one be one of them, another be another, they are not essentially equal.

6. He was encourag'd to think these his Reasons good, and his Conclusion true, from the fair Confirmations of it in Holy Scripture: *ex. gr. My Father is greater than I. I live by the Father. The Son can do nothing of himself. I can of my self do nothing. The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of my self. And of the Holy Ghost it is said, that he proceeded from the Father, and is sent into the World by him. That he is the Spirit of the Son. That he shall not speak of himself. He shall receive of mine.* All which places, that I may name no more, do most naturally imply some kind of inequality; and after the Reasons given, may pass for an evident Testimony of the Truth of *Origen's* Doctrine; which some Men say is necessary to be establish'd and believ'd, lest otherwise we be as sacrilegious to the Honour and Majesty of the *Father of all things*, as the antient Hereticks were impudently injurious to the other two blessed and ever-to-be-ador'd Hypostases. And if the temerarious and confounded Conclusions of the meddling School-men be receiv'd with a like temerity, they think there will be as much need to multiply Councils in this latter Age of the Church, to assert the Honour due to *God the Father*, as there was of old to restore the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* to their deserv'd Dignity of Nature in the Beliefs of Christians, from whence the saucy Ignorance and Impiety of some bold Men had detruded them. Thus, Sir, you have some of those Reasons upon which *Origen* founded his Doctrine of Inequality. Which Hypothesis of his he hath so warily and judiciously form'd, that it hath been said by some, that neither the subtiler Attacks nor more rude and boisterous Shocks of his Adversaries have been able hitherto to shake or disorder it, much less utterly to destroy the Reasonableness and Concinnity of it. And what some have too hastily fancied, and as clamorously pronounc'd, *viz.* that it made the

two latter Hypostases Creatures, and render'd some main parts of the Oeconomy of Christianity less reasonable and decorous, and was not consistent with many places of Scripture; have been like ill-planted Ordnance, which made a great noise and rattle indeed, but never touch'd the Fort their murtherous Load aim'd at.

It is not my business here to give you a perfect Explication of the Trinity after the *Origenian* way; but by that little hath been now said, with what I may have possibly some time or other more largely discours'd unto you, your piercing Judgment cannot but plainly see and be satisfy'd, that there is nothing in that blessed *Triad* he describes which can be call'd *Creature*. Is not every one of them essentially, immutably and independently on any Will endow'd with such perfection, and in such a degree as is truly and properly Divine? Are not the Two latter unspeakably-closely united with the First? and by their so near approach to him, who is the purest Spirit possible, are not they necessarily susceptible of what he Essentially is in a degree infinitely beyond the Comprehension of a Man; as likewise for the same Reason of what one another are? Are they not also by the Divine Excellency of their Natures, the true and adequate Causes of all Creatures? How needless then and unskilful is their Fear, that they are not by his Hypothesis truly and properly God? And therefore the highest Parts they bear in the most wise and gracious Oeconomy of the Gospel, of being ador'd, worship'd, invocated, obey'd, trusted in, and the like, do rightfully belong unto them, not only by a Temporary Constitution of the Father, but by the Essential and Eternal Dignity of their Nature. And the Nature of every Hypostasis, and their incomprehensible-near Union one with another consider'd, they will necessarily have but one Will, and consequently be of equal Power; and the greatest Honour and Service any Creature can possibly perform, being manifestly due to the two latter Hypostases, they are all truly of equal Glory. Those places of Scripture which (I suppose) they mean, *There are Three that bear witness in Heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which three ἓν εἶσι*; *I and the Father ἡμεῖς εἰσμεν*; *I am in the Father, and the Father in me*, and the like, are so solely congruous to his Hypothesis, that those Phrases of *ἓν εἶσι* and *ἡμεῖς εἰσμεν* are very improper, if every Hypostasis was perfectly like and equal to the rest, and each of them Essentially endow'd with all those Perfections which intirely constitute the Deity or τὸ Θεῖον. And lest any Man should yet be suspicious of *Origen's* Mind, beside what he hath more than once in that very Book of his which most offends, *That the Son is coeternal with the Father, and inseparably united with him, and that*
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the Holy Spirit is not a Creature; I dare wager my Credit and your Friendship, than which there are very few things more valuable to me, that in his excellent Treatise against *Celsum*, he twenty times joins together these words Θεός λόγος, and in several of them adds ὄντως or ἀληθῶς Θεός. For that impious Epicurean gave him very frequent occasion so to do by his foolish Cavilling and Jeering at our Blessed Saviour, whose Glory, as of the only begotten Son of God, his foul and impure Eyes could not discern through the Veil of his Humiliation and Crucifixion. But I am to beg your pardon, Sir, for my heedlessness in answering Objections out of place; for by your Method that is not to be done till the fifth Query. But my Pen, I know not how, grew warm, and was got so far before I perceiv'd it was out of the way. If you please therefore to transfer some few of these last Lines to their proper place in the fifth Query, I shall take care hereafter not to preoccupate the Order you have set me. This is all I shall now say of his First Dogma.

His Second is, *That the Souls of Men do præexist.*

Before I say any thing of this, I am to put you in mind of two Things which concern both this and his other Opinions which follow. The First is, that I so interpret your Commands to me to write you an Account of these Matters, not as if you expected from me a strict and accurate Discourse of them from their first and lowest Principles, and those Principles philosophically prov'd and confirm'd, and then orderly advanc'd to the very Conclusions asserted by the Father: but only such general Touches at those Principles, *Physical* or *Metaphysical*, in the lax and diffuse way of a *Letter*, as may put you upon a more close and methodical Consideration of them; or re-mind you of consulting such Treatises where they are purposely and exactly handled. And therefore you will find many things concerning the Nature of the Soul and her Operations, her Union with Matter, with many other incident Speculations, not prov'd by me, but supposed, because they are fully and excellently discuss'd in the Writings of that learned Gentleman Mr. *More* of *Cambridge*: whom since I have here nam'd, I think I should be highly ungrateful, if I did not acknowledg the infinite Obligation I have to you for giving me the first Notice I had of so worthy an Author; whose lately-publish'd Book of the *Immortality of the Soul*, I unluckily not having by me at the present, the Account I shall send you of those things you enquire of, which with all helps and advantages would have been imperfect, is for that reason like to be only not contemptible. The Second Thing I am to mind you of, is out of the *Holy Father*, in the beginning
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of his Book *Περὶ ἀρχῶν* where setting down an immutable Canon of necessary Truths, which the Blessed Apostles and Founders of the Christian Faith had plainly taught, and the Church receiv'd; and the contrary to which cannot be admitted, but with the lopping off an Essential part of our Religion; he then instances in many worthy Objects of Contemplation, concerning which there is no determinate Declaration in the divinely-inspir'd Writings of Holy Scripture: but the Truth in such things, he says, was purposely conceal'd by the Holy Spirit, to excite the Study and Industry of the Lovers of Truth, and to reward their honest Labour and pious Disquisition, with the finding so rich a Jewel, and so precious a Treasure. Of this last kind; he says, is this present Question concerning the Soul, *Whether she be traduc'd*, or upon occasion *then first created by God*, or *præexist*; as also several other of his *Dogmata*, which are behind. And to do him right, he propounds all such disputable Matters doubtfully, and discusses them variously, and explicitly tells his Reader that he only exhibits to him several Phantasms, that he may use his Judgment about them, and take which he thinks is truest. Which singular Modesty and Fairness in this learned Father, may seem to every candid and ingenuous Man, Apology enough for him where he is conceiv'd to err, and more than enough where he offers, beside such probable Reasons, as he does in behalf of those Opinions which the World will needs father on him. For the Reasonableness of this Opinion which is now before us, I find these things in him.

1. That the Nature of the Soul is such as makes her capable of existing eternally backward, as well as forward: For her spiritual Essence, as such, makes it impossible that she should either through Age or Violence be dissolv'd, part from part, as it happens in Bodies, where there is no *Vinculum* passing through the very Substance of them to tie and retain one part to another; and therefore either through the stiller insinuation of other Bodies near them, they insensibly melt away and decay, or by the ruder dashes of such as knock against them, are broken all to pieces: Whereas the Soul, as a Spirit, by the advantage of that formal Power and Property of hers, whereby she is distinguish'd from Matter, cannot only penetrate her self and other Substances to the preserving her own Continuity; but also by her gradual Derivation of-part from part, is in her whole Substance ultimately connected to her indivisible Head and Centre, as *Plotinus* speaks. Which Centre, being in its very Substance intellectual, does plainly shew who is the Father of it, to wit, the Essential Mind and Wisdom of God, whose univocal Productions (as I may so speak) are according

According to their measure and capacity what their Parent is in the most perfect and most infinite degree conceivable, Life it self, or eternal Life: and therefore whatever other parts of the Substance of the Soul necessarily proceed and flow from this, can no more be cut off from it, than Indivisible can be divided; nor no more perish, than Life it self can die. We have then here an Essence capable of eternal Existence: and since the Powers and Operations of Life are not such things as can at pleasure be put on and off, like loose-hanging Adjuncts, but are intrinsically made up into the essential Contexture of the Substance they are in; so vital and active a Substance as the Soul is, is as capable of acting according to her Nature, and consequently of feeling and enjoying the pleasure of her Life and Actions from eternal Ages, as she is of bare Existence throughout that long Period of Duration. So that nothing now is wanting to her actual Existence, but his good pleasure, from whom she and all things else proceed. I appeal therefore to your own candid Breast, and that noble Benignity of Mind which is in you, what Reason or Cause can you think of, worthy of God, which will manifestly assure us that she did not actually exist of old? If you pitch upon the *Platonick* way, and assign the production of all things to that exuberant Fulness of life in the Deity, which, through the blessed Necessity and Constraint of his most communicative Nature, emptied it self into all Possibilities of Being, as into so many capable Receptacles, you must then pronounce her Existence in a sense necessary, and after a sort coeternal with God. But if such Expressions seem too bold, and the Heats of an Enthusiastick Fancy, take that more sober Hypothesis, which is built upon the more conceivable Attributes of God, his infinite Goodness and Benignity, arm'd with equal Power, and directed by no less Wisdom, beside which nothing can be thought on to fit one for Action; and then ask your self, whether if the Subject in question be capable of existing and enjoying some part of that infinite Goodness, it be not evident from those Attributes that it will be made to exist? that which is infinitely Good, as certainly doing by a *Logical Necessity* every thing that is good, (no other Attribute gainsaying) as infinite Fire will necessarily burn whatever is combustible, if put to it. Wherefore unless God act by such arbitrary Humours, as we mortal Men are ashamed of, as Weaknesses and Imperfections in our selves, there is no doubt to be made but that this Conclusion is true, That the Souls of Men did exist and act before this present World was fitted for their Habitation; at least, before they were born upon Earth. I have heard some Men seriously profess, that

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there was a Light and Power in this Argument far more vigorous and convincing to their Minds, than in the plainest Demonstration in *Euclid's Elements*. But yet they wonder'd not that others were not mov'd by it, because it requir'd a peculiar Disposition of Spirit to feel the force of it. For there are Moral Axioms *Noematically* true, as well as *Geometrical*: and as if you imagin a Man so miserably confounded in his Mind, that the common Notions of *Geometry* appear'd not certain to him, he must necessarily be insensible of the Evidence of any Proposition in that Science; so in like manner will it happen to him whose Soul is so much out of her natural Order, as to have lost or dull'd, or silenc'd by what way soever her discriminative Sense of what is good, worthy, congruous, and decorous; all Argumentations proceeding upon those *νομιμαί εὑροιαε* of a diviner Sense, which to others are Demonstrations, will affect him no more than an Ape is taken with the Air of Moral Beauty.

2. The Actions of Providence will not otherwise correspond to those holy Attributes in the Deity, *Righteousness* and *Benignity*, according to which he governs and orders the Affairs of all the World. This Argument he makes use of two ways, in his Book against *Celsus*, and in his *Περὶ ἀρχῶν*, viz. in respect of the Place and Time wherein we are born, and of the Temper and Disposition of the Body wherewith we are born. As to the First of these, there is no Man doubts but that Education, Institution and Company are of wonderful moment to the making us good or bad. For it is manifest enough that few are born into this World in any higher condition than a possibility (as I may so speak) or capability of being made good and vertuous; which Capability is perfected and actuated by good Instruction and wholesome Precepts assiduously inculcated to us, and by exhibiting and commending to us daily Examples of Vertue and Honeity: So that when or where either these are wanting, or of little credit and esteem, or the contrary more in use and practice, there seems little less than a Necessity of our running into all Wickedness and Vice. And if we call to mind the sad Accounts we have met withal in History, of Times and Places almost all the World over, over-run with all manner of Barbarity and Lust, adopted even into their Laws, and practised in their most solemn Religions, how can we but think that the Soul then and there born and living, is inevitably condemn'd to all Iniquity and Impiety? What Father will care for instructing his Children in such things as are of no use, and small regard in the place he lives in; especially when they will certainly unlearn what he teaches them, by the stronger and more pleasing Impressions of publick Practice?

Practice? And indeed what Father will be fit to teach them such things, who himself hath all his life long, in all probability, done the contrary, being carried away in his younger years, as his Children are now, by the popular Stream of his Country's Vices? Certainly there is very little likelihood he should prove a benign, loving, compassionate, or a just and upright Man, who by the Laws of the City where he was born, is especially train'd up in his earliest years to the ferity and rage of War, and the sleights of Theft and Cozenage. And as small hope is there of his Purity and Chastity, who is so solemnly led, by his Father, it may be, to behold impudent Strumpets strip themselves, and wind their rotten Bodies into all unclean and lascivious Gestures; and who with great Devotion sacrifices to an allow'd Deity his foul Embraces of mercenary Harlots. It would be very easy for me to be copious in this Argument: The Histories of all Countries of old, all the Apologies and Disputations of the Primitive Fathers against the *Gentiles*, the latter Descriptions of the Religions and Manners of several Barbarous and Idolatrous Parts of the World, not long since discover'd or visited, would afford me too plentiful Matter to fill up a very sad Catalogue of all manner of Iniquity, which hath and doth still reign amongst them with little or no controll. For God therefore to send out of his pure and holy Hands an immaculate Soul, capable of living elsewhere, and fit for all Vertue and heavenly Wisdom, lest the Lust of two brutish Persons possibly should come to nothing, and condemn it to an Habitation in such Parts of the Earth, where reigns nothing but gross Ignorance and Vice, by which she cannot fail, without a Miracle, to be over-born (having such a Principle in her, vivid and vigorous, to which those brutish Depravities are natural and hugely pleasing; and that better principle of Life which should defend her from them, being scarce in a possibility of being awakened into any considerable degree of Power and Energy in such an Education and such Converse, and amongst such Examples as are above describ'd) what is this, says the Father, but to betray his own Offspring (for he is the Father of Spirits) unto unavoidable Misery; and to put off the chief Excellencies of his most blessed Nature, Goodness and Righteousness, and to govern the World with less Justice than an ordinary upright Man would do? You may, if you please, taking occasion from what hath been said, carry this First Part of his Argument from Providence further, and enquire how it came to pass that so many whole Nations both of old, and at this present day, were so over-run with all kind of Barbarity, Ferity, and Bestial Lust, so utterly estrang'd from the knowledg of

God and the love of Vertue, so abus'd and tyranniz'd over by the accursed Rebels of the Airy Principality, the Kingdom of Darkness; lastly, so quite estrang'd from themselves and human Nature, that they seem to have left themselves nothing whereby they might be distinguish'd from downright Brutes, save Speech; and a something larger and more methodical Wit and Craft to compass the satisfaction of their degenerate Appetites. Truly, Sir, if you would form the Idea of human Perfection in no greater Glory, or set the Attainments of a reasonable Soul at no higher pitch than the certain Knowledge of some of your own vertuous Friends will warrant you to do, in whom (as you have oft with joy and wonder related to me) appears so pure and Angelical an Understanding, so firm and radicated a Life of all Holiness and Sanctity, Love and hearty Benignity to all the World, of Justice and Purity, and whatever is truly Divine: and if you then consider the vast Dissimilitude between this Idea, and the Spirit of so many whole Nations in the World; I make no doubt but you will say, that the Life of Man upon Earth is too short so far to abuse the capacity of what he might come to, as to put him in so low a degree of Degeneracy as those forlorn People contentedly live in. But not only the degree of their Apostacy from a divine and intellectual Life, and of their Immersion in the brutish and sensual, is so wonderful; but their continuance also in that wretched Estate for so many Ages together, without any remarkable appearance of Providence for their Deliverance, nay rather with her perfect leaving them to the insolence, subtilty, and conduct of the Devil, is a *Phænomenon* inexplicable without the *Origenian* Hypothesis. For since whole Nations and their continuance are but the Aggregate of single Souls born into the World in successive Generations; and since every particular Soul comes into such or such parts of the Earth with so vast disadvantages as is above declar'd: If beside this, the crafty and malicious Serpent hath such free Scope to tamper with them, who at the best are very deceivable; it can seem to you little less than necessary but that they should be wrought into that enormous lapse from God, which History and too sad Experience witness they are and have been. Now since the two great and most proper Objects of the gracious and beneficent Providence of God are the vertuous and faultlessly-calamitous (of which latter Order those miserable Nations would in great measure be, if Souls did not præexist) who can doubt but that Providence would very early have appear'd for their Rescue, or rather taken such care, that they should not so much have needed any extraordinary Assistance from her? But since we see She hath done

neither, and yet are sure that all her ways are gracious and equal, it will be very hard for us to keep our selves from concluding, That all those wretched Souls had of old, by their long Revolt from God, and the Laws of his Righteous Kingdom, highly deserv'd this Scourge from him, to be so put out of his Care, as it were, and given up to the barbarous Domination of the Devil, the Head and Prince of the unrighteous and rebellious Empire of Darknes; and whom they by Choice and Affection fell off to, in other Regions of the World, that him and his Tyranny they should here upon Earth still suffer, whether with or against their Wills. *Exedendum est tibi quod tute intristi*, is a piece of warrantable Justice. And since there is possibility and hope that the present sad part of the *Drama* may end, and a more chearful Catastrophe close up all, the Benignity of Providence may in due time be as illustrious as her Justice hath been conspicuous.

I know there are many Men who, part out of Piety and Humility, part from a Parrot-like talking such words as their Books and Education have taught them, would make no bones of this Difficulty of the Holy Father, but can with very great ease and satisfaction of Mind resolve all into the Pleasure and Sovereignty of God, who being the Creator and Lord of all Men, may (they say) dispose of them how and where he pleases. But it would be very well if they were as zealous Patrons of the more excellent Attributes of God, as they are peremptory Assertors of his absolute Will and Power. For then they would both render his Existence and Government in the World so desirable to all Men, that none but the extremely-guilty would wish either his not-being, or his non-concerning himself in the Affairs of Men; and also cut off many scandalous Occasions of Atheism and Epicurism, and spoil the Professed of those execrable Mysteries of those over-plausible Pretences they now have and craftily manage against the Truth. For tell me, Sir, if the Frame of the Bodies or the Passions and Affections of Men or Beasts in whole Regions of the Earth, or of many in every Region, were such as did plainly serve for nothing but to incommodate or cruciate them, or make them an inevitable Prey to others; could you with any reasonable Confidence affirm, that the Goodness and Providence of a wise Mind did preside over their Generations? or think you could reasonably satisfy the Exceptions of an Atheist, or an Epicurean, taken from such manifest Phenomena, by saying God might make them as he pleased which were his own voluntary handy-work? I am glad, for my own particular, all things are so made, that there is no occasion given for any such Exception; for, believe me,
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if there was, I know not how I should behave my self in so cross a rencounter. And may not these Men with the same plausibility of Reason, maintain the same Conclusion from the odd Frame of Things in the Moral World, were it such as the Deniers of Præexistence must needs make it? I think they might do it with far juster Reason; forasmuch as a Man is a far nobler Creature, and the interest of his Mind and immortal Spirit much greater and more lasting, and therefore a more proper Object of the Care and Providence of God, if any Providence there be. Or are they so little peremptory in their Assaults, as to be beaten off by such painted Fire, such hurtless lambent Flames as are cast against them, by those who oppose to their Arguments nothing but the Will and Sovereignty of God? For they profess themselves well assur'd, that if God be at all, he is infinitely Good and Wise, as well as Powerful and Uncontrollable; and therefore by the necessary Consequences of Reason, wherever he is pretended by any to intermeddle either as to the making or disposing of any thing, they expect to find the Impresses and Indications of those Attributes: but if instead thereof they find all things quite contrary, it is not in their power to think that God hath had any thing to do there. But whatever ruin their Argumentations from such substantial Grounds may threaten to the ill-built Fabrick of ordinary Theology, the House of Wisdom and Truth, which hath made Præexistence one of her Pillars, stands as firm as a mountainous Pyramid; and by that Hypothesis, the great Phænomenon of Providence we have been speaking of, is clear and righteous. Neither hath the Atheist or Epicurean any thing considerable to say against the Truth of it, either as it is a single Proposition by it self, or as an Hypothesis to salve the *Phænomena* of Providence. Which straits of theirs they plainly enough confess by their either only gravely smiling at it as an Extravagance, or with a more solemn Brow chastising it as a dangerous Paradox. And truly a dangerous one it is to their pretended and boasted Wisdom: but to the genuine Plants of heavenly Truth and Divine Knowledge, 'tis as agreeable and salutary as Showers and Sun-beams are to the growing Spring.

The Second Part of the Father's Argument from Providence, is much-what the same with the first, *mutatis mutandis*. For the experience of most Men can bear witness, that there are not stronger Allurements from without to all manner of Viciousness, than we find Incitations to the same from our own intrinsic Constitution: which (according to the common Hypothesis) is not properly our Fault, nor any Fruit of it, nor was it in our power to prevent it; yet we are so fatally in-

tangled in it, that it is next to a Miracle to rid our selves in any good measure of its Chains. Is not the World disorder'd, and Society poison'd, and Mens own particular Peace and Honour miserably violated with the baleful Effects of the four Elements of our Terrestrial Composition? whilst some live even in this World, in a perpetual Fire, and are tormented before their time through Wrathfulness and Strifes, Contentiousness and injurious Zeal, which their Choler kindles in them; others on the contrary are drown'd in sottishness and stupidity, and an utter ineptness to all things worthy of a Man, by the overflowing of stupifying Phlegm; a third sort toss'd about like feathers with light-mindedness and admiration of trifles, or wasted into the foul Lake of bodily Pleasures by the gusts of reeking Blood; a fourth consum'd by that slow-devouring Demogorgon in the Earthy Melancholy, in which lodg anxious Fear, dark Suspicion, and fretting Envy. And tho you possibly may have heard some Men talk of Liberty and Free-will, and a Sovereign Power in us to keep all these rebellious humours in good order, and that with much ease, if we would but give our Minds to it; yet if you but consider whence it is that they talk in that high strain, you will begin to think they reckon without their Host, and against Experience. Such Men have a sort of Adversaries, who from the assurance of their very Senses, that there is a great Lapse and Degeneracy in Universal Mankind, do, without all ceremony, bluntly cast the Cause upon God, or at best assign such a Reason of it as their Antagonists think comes to the same; who therefore out of an abhorrency to such Blasphemy (as they call it) think it better and more pious to deny the Truth of a manifest Observation, than to make God the Author of so calamitous a *Phænomenon*. Where, by the way, you may observe, that both sides, by their earnest contention, making good half of their respective Opinions, have, to the free Enquirer and Lover of Truth, facilitated his finding out the true Cause, which neither contradicts Experience, nor is injurious to the Glory of the Almighty. But granting to these Contenders for Free-will, that something of what they plead for is true (as indeed it cannot be deny'd) I yet would ask them, whether or no, the condition of our Nature consider'd, the strong inclinations in us naturally to that which is evil, and these strengthen'd and further confirm'd for several years before we can come to have any considerable use of our Reason, or arrive to any Command over our selves; lastly, the way and manner how the Elections of our Will are perform'd, which we never find free where there is a Custom or Passion against it, and how corporeal Motions de ermine the Thoughts and Passions

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of our Mind: I ask them whether, these things being consider'd, it be not hundreds to one odds, that we shall chuse the ways of Vice rather than Vertue? Or let the disproportion be as little as they can with any colour pretend, they cannot clear the Goodness and Rectitude of Divine Providence by their Hypothesis, which thrusts pure and immaculate and most innocent Spirits into so great danger of being defil'd and corrupted by the Passions of the Body, and of soundly smarting for it hereafter. But for my own part, I think the Observation of their Adversaries is much the truer, that the disproportion is exceeding great: For since the ways of Holiness and Vertue are so full of Peace and unspeakable Contentment, and shine with so enravishing and irresistible Pulchritude to prepar'd Minds, and do so perfectly correspond to all the Senses of so happy a Temper, that we are fully assur'd our Soul is then as she should be, and in conjunction with her most proper Good; I cannot see why Men should universally take the contrary course, and that with so much passion as they do, jeering at those who have made the better choice, as Mad-men or Fools, if there was any Liberty in them worth speaking of, to Vertue or Piety. 'Tis true indeed, there is great variety, as to degree, in the backwardness of Men to Goodness and Vertue, and proneness to that which is Evil; yet those who have the care and nurture of Youth, Fathers, Schoolmasters and Tutors, do with one consent affirm, that they not seldom have some in their charge, who from their earliest years are of so inexpugnable a propension to that which is naught, so wretchless and insensible of all wholesome Counsels, and have their Eyes so perfectly seal'd up, and their Hearts so frozen to all impressions of Vertue and Sobriety, that you may as well read Lectures of Temperance to a Goat or a Boar, and as successfully teach Goodness, Pity and Kindness to a Bear rob'd of her Whelps, or a Tyger inrag'd with Hunger, as think to fasten any such things upon their blind and obdurate Minds. Whence is this strange Phænomenon? If the Soul was not in the World before she was born upon Earth, it is not conceivable how she should in so little a time contract so peremptory an affection to Vice, amidst those continual chidings and reproofs, those sharp and painful corrections, those several ways of ignominious punishments she meets with, those advantageous representations made to her of that which is good and laudable, those many and earnest invitations and allurements of her to embrace it, with all other methods of a good and prudent Institution. That she comes pure and undefiled out of the hands of her Creator, all grant; and be this Pureness what it will, whether with or without those

those Natural Notions of what is good and honest, the business will be much-what the same as to our present purpose. For if the latter way be the Truth, even this Negative Purity will leave her in an Indifferency to Vertue or Vice; and therefore if her first Precepts and earliest Inculcations be good and vertuous, she would be form'd unto Vertue: which yet we see is so far from happening to some (tho the very same instruction to others proves successful) that they on the contrary, impatient of every Curb and Rein, and deaf to all Calls and Charms, run headlong into all iniquity. If the former way be true, it would be still more wonderful how her first-appearing Inclinations should so eagerly carry her to that which is vicious, contrary to the positive Restraint of her inward Light. But if they say (as they generally do) that the Soul her self is pure and immaculate, but that she contracts this unreclaimable proclivity to Vice from the Body she is put into, beside the ignorance they discover by so saying, in the speculation of things, in joining such ill-agreeing Mates together into one vital Composition, where Sympathy and Congruity is the only *Vinculum*, the Father asks them how it is consistent with the Goodness and Righteousness of God, the blessed Spring of all Vertue and Holiness, and tender Lover of all his Creatures, to put such innocent Souls into such foul and untam'd Bodies, which so fatally and necessarily hurry them to that which alone of all things in the World he disapproves of, and which he knows will be their utter bane and miserable ruin. And therefore upon the whole of this Second Part of his Argument from Providence he concludes, That since so great a part of our pitiable bondage to Vice and Passion, in the judgment of all sides, proceeds from these Bodies of ours; if the Soul was merely passive in being born into this World, and was not before she was born here, much of the calamity she suffers from Vice, for which she must suffer more hereafter, must in his judgment be cast upon God: which he thinks is impious to affirm, and utterly contradictory to his holy Attributes.

A Third Argument of his I find in St. *Jerom*, from the misbecomingness of the contrary Position, which makes the blessed Majesty of Heaven and Earth diligently wait upon the unclean Embraces of lawless Persons, even to the degenerate vileness of Incest and Buggery with Beasts, and by a special Act of Providence carefully to perfect their impure Rudiments of Life. Which monstrous *Indecorum*, tho coarser Spirits are not sensible of, and think they have answer'd the Argument by those mean Comparisons of the Sun's shining upon Dung-hills as well as flowery Meads, and stollen Seed's growing as well as that which the Sower came justly by; yet it was exceedingly

ceedingly harsh to the more delicate sense of *Origen's* Mind, and not to be put off by such slight and ill-fitting Similitudes. 'Tis a shrewd sign that Soul is much discompos'd in her Harmonical Nature, who hath so far lost her sense of proportionateness and congruity, as either not to think this is a very humble Office to the Supreme Deity; or if it be so, not to feel in her self a great Reluctance, to the making God so particular an Executor of it. If they imagin'd all things were made and order'd by such settled Laws of Nature as might in some sense be call'd Necessary, this Indecorum would be more tolerable; but to make God work all things in an express and voluntary way, and with his own hands, as it were, and yet to fancy so special an interposal of his Will and Power in so abhor'd an occasion, is to be very bold with the Sovereign Majesty on High, and to make him do that which they themselves, were it in their power, would be asham'd to do. And what contrariety would it be to any of the Divine Attributes, or what loss to the World, if God did not appear in such unlawful Inchoations of life, but let them come to nought in the end, as they were without his Approbation begun? But the true Judgment of this Argument, as I intimated above, is the inward Touch of a Man's Mind; which in you I know to be so comely and graceful, that at the first Proposal you felt the force of it, and need not that I further enlarge upon it.

4. Tho Scripture no-where particularly and plainly teaches us when the Soul was first produc'd and came into Being, yet there are some passages in it which favour her Præexistence. *I have glorify'd thee on Earth; I have finish'd the Work thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with that glory I had with thee before the World was.* In which Text these two Things are plainly enough intimated, the Existence of the Subject of this Glory pray'd for before the World was, and an Intercision of this Glory for a while, and Recuperation of it again; the former whereof, tho it be true of the Divine $\Lambda\omicron\gamma\omega$, yet the latter is incompetent to him. And the Event plainly shews the Subject of this Glory: for he that humbled himself to the Death of the Cross, was exalted by God to be the Sovereign Prince of Men and Angels; and he that was made in the Likeness of Man, or sinful Flesh, in a vile Body, was invested with Power to change our vile Bodies into the Similitude of his glorious Body. *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World: again, I leave the World, and go to the Father. His Disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no Parable.* For the opinion of Præexistence, but in a special manner of the Soul of the Messiah,

fiah, was the common Doctrine of their Nation; and that Key easily unlock'd our Saviour's meaning. *Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not, like Lucifer, think equality with God a prey or spoil to be invaded by him, in that sense that Cicero says of Verres, lib. 5. Omnium bona prædam suam duxit; but was so far from assuming that which was not his own, that on the contrary he made himself less than indeed he was, and emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, which consisted in his being made in the likeness of Man, or of one of the Sons of Adam; and being found in fashion as a Man, he humbled himself yet further, becoming obedient even to death. If this place be to be understood of the Humanity of Christ, nothing can be more plain than that his Soul præexisted: for otherwise to be born, tho' but in the Likeness of a Terrestrial Man, would have been a gain to him, not a diminution; since there is no good at all in not being, save to those who are extremely miserable. And that it is so to be understood, will be very probable, if we but take notice of the importance of the Phrases here us'd, and compare them with others in Holy Scripture. Ἐν μορφῇ Θεῦ ὑπαρῶν, is as much as if he had said, θεόμορφος, or, after the more Attick Purity, θεοειδής, or θεοεικέλος ὢν, or ὑπαρῶν. even as St. Mark, in the story of the Woman which had the Issue of Blood, says after the Jewish way, ἕσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος, but St. Matthew more elegantly αἱμορροῦσα. St. John, after the Seventy, διδακτοὶ Θεῦ, but St. Paul Θεοδιδάκτοι. a very usual Hebraism in these Holy Writers. The thing signify'd by the Phrase in hand is Christ's Angelick Purity both in Body and Spirit. This is that Image of God according to which we were all at first made, and which Christ had not lost as the rest of his degenerate Brethren had; and this is the Divine Nature we shall again be made partakers of, when we shall have escap'd the Corruption that is in this World: for the Sons of the Resurrection are truly the Sons of God, and like unto God. But tho' the Humanity of Christ was so truly Deiform, yet he emptied himself of this Fulness of Life and Glory by taking the Form of a Servant, μορφῶν δούλος. What this means, the Apostle tells us in another place: *The Creature, i. e. Man in the Jewish Language, shall be manumitted from the servitude of corruption, and asserted into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, i. e. Angels, or Angelick Souls, by the redemption of his Body.* So that μορφῆ δούλος is a mortal corruptible Body, which the Soul of Christ voluntarily took upon her, by which he became like unto us mortal Men, as he immediately adds, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων. which he elsewhere calls ὁμοίωμα σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας, and εἰκόνα τῆς χροῦς. And being by this his Servile Schema made lower than the Angels, he was put*

put in a capacity of being obedient even unto Death, and of tasting Death for every Man; and was thereby made perfectly like unto his Brethren, partaking of Flesh and Blood as they did, that he might by Death destroy him who had the power of Death, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* speaks. For without this exinanition of himself, and descent from his Æthereal or Angelical condition, it was not possible for him to die. I might further add, for the justifying of this interpretation, that it is not conceivable how the Eternal Λόγος, who is what he is by an unchangeable and undiminshable necessity of Nature, can be said to empty himself; especially since the several parts and degrees of the Humiliation here describ'd, are spoken of the same person: but certainly he that is *Life it self* cannot be said to die, or become obedient to the Death of the Cross. Neither is it proper nor usual in Scripture to propound the Deity to us as an Example of Humility; tho' nothing is so frequent there, nor more congruous than to exhort us to be conformable to him in Love, Goodness and Purity. I shall say no more upon this place but this, That if *being in the form of God*, be to be expounded of the Soul of Christ, as in Physical Union with the Divine Λόγος, yet still our Argument for the Præexistence of his Soul will be every whit as good; as is plain at first sight. I have been something long upon this Text, but will make amends for it in only pointing to the rest which countenance this Opinion of Præexistence, as all those many Texts most naturally do, which say Christ *came down from Heaven*. For every other Interpretation of this Phrase *coming down from Heaven*, will either be *Socinian* as to the Notion, and a mere Violence as to the Words; or else will make the Λόγος alone to be the *Christ*, and him that *fills all things* to quit a place.

And certainly something in favour of this Opinion may be made of that question of the Disciples to our Saviour concerning the Man that was born blind; for either he approv'd of the common Opinion as true, or at least thought it very harmless, if false; since having so fair an occasion of rectifying the common Belief, he yet said nothing against it. I know indeed that the Silence of Scripture and the Arguments from thence, which they call *Negative*, are esteem'd of little force in Disputation, unless in some certain Cases. But he that shall seriously consider how great a Change does necessarily follow in the whole Frame of Christian Religion, from the beginning to the end of it, by the taking in or leaving out this Opinion of Præexistence, may possibly be induc'd to think that our Saviour's saying nothing on so apt an occasion, is one of those Cases wherein Silence is almost as argumentative as a positive Approbation.

Parables likewise will not be taken for Arguments: which is no ill Rule, if understood of the minute Circumstances of them, and of such parts as the Decorum of an Apologue requires; but certainly the whole will argue as well as instruct. But I lay no stress upon them, because they may have other true and sober Interpretations; yet I thought good to cast them in for variety sake, that you may see how congruently they may be apply'd to the Doctrine we are upon. The Prodigal Son's leaving his Father you know is describ'd by his going into a far Country, and there wasting his Substance with riotous Living: and in his return, his Father says of him, This my Son was dead, but is alive again; was lost, but is found. The Son of Man is come [from Heaven] to save that which was lost. If a Man have an hundred sheep, and one of them go astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now return'd unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your Souls. I am the good Shepherd, not an hireling, whose own the sheep are not. You may consider these places also, tho they do not all belong to this head of Parables: I am not sent, but εις τὴν ἀρχαίαν τὴν Ἰουδαίαν — and not for that Nation only, but that he should gather together in one τὸ ἔθνος τῆς Θεῆς τὰ διεσκορπισμένα — and having made peace by the blood of his Cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether things in Heaven, or things in Earth. Dearly lov'd Brethren, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul — And confess'd that they were Strangers and Pilgrims upon Earth.

Lastly, The History of the Creation, cabbalistically interpreted, confirms the Truth of Origen's Opinion. And that the Word may not fright you, nor you think I mean by it fancifully and extravagantly, I will more particularly tell you my meaning; which is this: So interpreted as becomes the Majesty of that Spirit which dictated it; the profound Wisdom and Science of Moses who wrote it; the Natures of those things whose production is there deliver'd; lastly, so as may answer that form of delivery which it manifestly pretends to. For do but read it over, and then tell me whether it does not plainly aim at a Philosophical Method of completely teaching us the Natures and Order of God's universal Creation: and then apply the literal sense to this design, and see whether that alone does not infinitely fall short of it. Therefore necessarily some higher sense must also be added: which if it be so manag'd as to contain nothing but what is Great and True, answering the Title of the Sacred Story, and continuedly applicable to the Letter; I should not be very difficult to grant that this is the very thing intended by the Holy Spirit and his

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Pen-man *Moses*. And that this hath been so done with all these Conditions observ'd, and that the *Præexistence of Souls* is found amongst the other noble Doctrines of that great Physiologer, *Moses*, I refer you for satisfaction to the most judicious and ingenious Essay of the learned Gentleman above-nam'd. This may serve to let you see that the Father had very probable Reasons for his Second Opinion.

His Third is this, That these præexisting Souls, through their Fault and Negligence, became Inhabitants of the Earth in Terrestrial Bodies.

Which Opinion he grounds upon these Considerations.

1. That that infinitely full Goodness, the first blessed Spring and Original of all things, communicated of himself in their production to all possible varieties and degrees of Life, which his essential and eternally-assistant Wisdom judg'd best for the things produc'd, and most fitting and decorous in it self, so as they might neither incommodate one another, nor yet be unhandsofly crowded together without due distance and discrimination of their Natures. In which long Chain of Life and Being, propagated from the highest to the lowest of all, from the most incorporeal Deity to Matter it self, 'tis not to be wonder'd at, nay, 'tis necessary, that many of the intermediate Essences should partake of both the Extremes, and so there be brought into light Spirits incorporate. But since few Spirits after the First and Best are of immutable Purity, and since every different degree of their changeable Purity is proportion'd to a correspondent degree of Purity in Matter; and since Matter is actually existent in the World according to all degrees of Purity, 'tis not to be wonder'd at neither, that the same individual Spirit, or same Order of Spirits, should be sometimes united with one sort of Matter, sometimes with another. But whatever happen'd to them afterwards through the Mutability of their Nature, we may be assur'd from that infinite Goodness which produc'd them, that they were at first join'd to the purest Matter, and plac'd in the best Regions of the World, that the highest Life and Purity of Essence they then had made them then fit for. The Souls of Men are one Order of these essentially-incorporate Spirits, as both their deep Immersion into Terrestrial Matter, the Modification of all their Operations by it, and the heavenly Body promis'd us in the Gospel, as the highest Perfection of our recover'd Nature, do sufficiently argue. And therefore if our Souls did exist before they appear'd Inhabitants of the Earth, the Sediment of the corporeal World, they did exist in a purer Element, to which an higher degree of Life and purer Operations, and consequently greater Happiness, did belong. Who then

then should turn them out of that better condition, in which the Order and Course of Nature, and the internal Congruity of their own Essence had plac'd them? Certainly not He whose overflowing Goodness first brought them into Life and Being, and who, no doubt, in the first moment of their Existence, set them to exercise those Powers of Life he had given them, in those Parts of the World as were most advantageous for the Happiness they were capable of. And tho they should through the Lapsability of their Nature fall from this eminent pitch of primitive Felicity, to a state less happy and perfect: yet this State being not the lowest and worst of all, and that same Goodness which first made them, and always governs them, being undiminshable; it is almost as harsh to think he would precipitate them from this something better condition into that which is the most miserable of all, as that he did originally create them in such a condition as was far worse than what he then judg'd them capable of. And to think that any other external Cause could do it by Force and Violence, is very unphilosophical; since there is an inward Maturation of vital Congruity to be first wrought, before they be so much as capable of uniting with this or that Element; much less of living in it as a Seat and Habitation of a durable Life: besides, it seems inconsistent with that most wise and gracious Providence which governs the World, that any thing should have a power of disposing of any Being in it, *ὅτι τὸ αἴτιον*. What then remains, but that through the faulty and negligent use of themselves, whilst they were in some better condition of Life, they rendred themselves less pure in the whole Extent of their Powers, both Intellectual and Animal, and so by degrees became dispos'd for the susception of such a degree of corporeal Life, as was less pure indeed than the former, but exactly answerable to their present disposition of Spirit; so that after certain Periods of Time they might become far less fit to actuate any sort of Matter than the Terrestrial; and being originally made with a capacity to join with this too, and in it exercise the Powers and Functions of Life, it seems necessary, according to the Course of Nature, that they should sink into it, and so appear Terrestrial Men? And that this is a very probable Cause of their becoming Inhabitants of the Earth, the learned Father thinks cannot be doubted, if we consider the necessary Mutability in created Essences, the Freedom of Will in humane Souls, and the great Sympathy there is betwixt the Parts of the Soul, (for he, according to the *Platonick* Doctrine, thinks the Soul heterogeneous, and nothing is more easy than to prove she is so.) For as he often inculcates, Goodness and Truth are not
Essential