

and the more he is in Travel, the less he brings forth. (a)  
 Nay, *Wi*—— is such a meer DOLT (of a Poet)  
 that he takes such Pains to make a Verse, (or a little  
 Nonsense Tag'd with Rhime) that at the Birth of Each,  
 he twists his Face as if he drew a Tooth. He blows  
 and writes, and sometimes HUNTS an Hour, with  
 the whole Kennel of the Alphabet, for one single Rhime.  
 And all this Pains is only to make him a Poor Ragged  
 Scoundrel; and (to do him Justice) he does not desire  
 to be thought otherwise: For, in his Poem——  
 To the Scriblers (b) he there says——

“ Now, Brother Scriblers, let me tell ye,  
 “ Bare Lines will never fill the Belly;  
 “ This Poem, and that Satyr too,  
 “ As little for the Back will do;  
 “ And often 'tis the Fate of many  
 “ A Poet, not to have one Penny:  
 “ But like Philosophers of Old,  
 “ Thro' Pocket-Holes you may behold }  
 “ Their A—se exposed to the Cold. }  
 “ Hard Hap indeed it is of Wit,  
 “ But so the Fates do think it fit:  
 “ And seldom 'tis they dispence  
 “ Money to the same Man, and Sense.  
 “ But why is Gold such a cross Devil? (c)  
 “ When you are so submissive and civil,  
 “ To pawn your very souls, and Sense  
 “ To Hell, and every soul for Pence.  
 “ Yet ne'er a Broker in the Town, (d)  
 “ On Wit would lend you Half a Crown.  
 “ Who then wou'd Scribble that has Sense?  
 “ That cannot live on Abstinence.

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(a) Of which his *Waboon Satyr* is a Notable Instance:  
 Or if I mistake the Title, 'tis no Great Matter, for his  
 Poems are such meer Stuff, they are all alike condemn'd  
 to the Bog-house.

(b) To be found in *Wi*——'s Hymn to Money, P. 15

(c) (d) These Two Lines are a little altered from what  
 they are in The Hymn to Money.

## Dunton's *Letter to his Few Creditors.* 49

Gentlemen—— if you wonder why these Verses are  
 lame and Foolish, you must know they Sympathize with  
 the Author; for in his *Hymn to Money*, he there  
 says, “ He hath been so long beating the Hoof in Quest  
 “ of Money, that he hath worn the Skin off his Ten-Toes:  
 “ And no wonder (adds our Hackney) if the Fancy limp  
 “ when the Body is uneasy—— So that *Wi——* (by  
 his own Confession) “ writes for Bread, and lives by  
*Defamation——* But (with all his CUNNING and  
*Savi*) He is but a Numscul —— a Simpleton——  
 a Rhiming Ass—— whole Life is but to laugh and be  
 laugh'd at. Had *Wi——* never pretended to P O E-  
 T R Y, he might have past for a Half-Witted Fellow;  
 (which is a Quarter more than he has) for he is  
 something the Less unwise that's unwise but in Prose.  
 But when a Goose dances, and a Fool versifies, there is  
 sport alike. He's twice an Ass, that's a Rhiming one;  
 which is the Case with Respect to *Wi——* for he is  
 only a WIT in Jest, and a FOOL in Earnest; and  
 yet (like a Right Hackney) he's so big of himself, that  
 when he has writ any thing that has past with Applause,  
 he is always Re-acting it alone, and conceits the Ex-  
 tacy his Hearers were in at every Period—— Nay,  
 he's so Vain and Foolish, as to hope in Time to be  
 P O E T - L A U R E A T—— For, in his [*Advice to*  
*the Sons of Parnassus*] he there says,

“ Don Projectero still in vain,  
 “ Plagu'd with the Wind-mills in his Brain,  
 “ By Scribling strives to raise Himself  
 “ Unto the Laurel, and to Pelf.

For this Reason he is always talking of *Dryden*,  
*Congreve*, and *New Poems*, &c. For tho' he knows no-  
 thing, he wou'd not have the World know so much—  
 Or if he have any Wit, he wears it as *Bravo's* do  
 their Swords, to mischief and offend others, not as  
 Gentlemen, to defend themselves—— In a Word,  
 He's a meer Empty fellow; and tho' he talk  
 G g much

much of the *Question Oracle, Learning, and Athenian Catechisms*,  
 (a) he learns all from Talking; Two Encounters with the  
 same Man Pumps him, and then he only puts in, or  
 (GRAVELY) says nothing—— In a Word, his  
*New Years-Gift* shews he has taken Pains to be an *Ass*,  
 tho' not to be a *Scholar*; and where he is known,  
 his POEMS are banter'd and laugh'd at——

Gentlemen—— having given *Wi——*'s Character  
 as a *Poetaster*, I shall next consider him as a P E R-  
 F U M E R (or Master of Half a Dog-hole in L—down  
 H——l——s——t)—— And here I shou'd  
 tell the World, He has been *A Printer* (b)—— *A*  
*Salesman*—— *A Taylor*—— *A Pattern-Drawer*——  
*A Jack of all Trades*—— But he thriv'd in none,  
 and broke of all: So that he stinks in the Nostrils of  
 all he dealt with. 'Tis true, he endeavours to *Sweeten*  
*his Credit* again with *Perfume* and *Wash-balls*; (c) but  
 he stinks so Rank of the *Poetaster*, he'll B——ke  
 again with an ILL SMELL: For in *Jack Wi——*  
 The *Perfumer* and *Poet* are Synonymous Terms; and he  
 that SETS UP FOR A POET Sets up for a  
 Beggar. (*Wi——* a Poet, then *Wi——* a Beggar!)  
 His Mind to him a Kingdom is, but 'tis a Kingdom  
 wanting Form and Matter.

When Beadle Death does him at last attend,  
 Let him go where he will, in this he's sure to mend,  
 Death kindly *House* and *Land* provides him, more  
 (Besides the Cage) than e'er he had before.  
 Thrice miserable they, whom *Want* and *Fate*  
 Eternal *Mumpers* made at *Learning's Gate*;  
 Their Souls indeed they *Cram* with *Notions High*,  
 But let poor *Colon* live by *Sympathy*:  
 To *Honourable Beggars* they give *Place*,  
 Learn *Younger Brothers* of the *Lowest Rate*.

(1) *Wi——*'s *New-Years-Gift*, P. 6.

(b) Or if he want a Printer, he intended to be so.

(c) the Trifles he now Sells.

## Dunton's Letter to his Few Creditors. 51

But to proceed in my Account of *Wi*—— as he's (now) a *SWEETNER* in *L*——*d*——*n*——*H*——*t*——*S*——*t*: And here I find he *B*——*sh*——*tes* (instead of *PERFUMES*) his whole Conversation.

For *First*, He's a *meer Make-bate*, and wou'd set Man and Wife at Dissention the *first Day* of their *Marriage*, and Children and Parents the *last Day* of their *Lives*.

He's Old Dog at *St*——ing of Mutton, his very Courtship and Wedding was *T*——*ft*; and where he can't *Int*——*gue*, he'll be sure to make Mischief. To prove this, consult the Angry Vintner in *T*——*loy* street, or his *Satyr on my Chaste Wife*, in his *New-Years-Gift*, P. 7. Nor will Innocence ever be safe, or Conversation *Honest*, 'till such as he *leave the World the shortest way*. (I mean, 'till he's fairly Hang'd.)

And as for making of Mischief, so for *Lying and Slander*, (all the *High-flights* this Poet can call his own) commend me to *Jack Wi*—— He tells the World, "That I shall pay *D*—— *M*——*ls*—— and "*H*——*l*, the *Shortest Way*, and that my whole *Estate* "*lies in Reversion*—— Whereas, *D*——*y* has given a Receipt in full —— *M*——*ls* (the *Sec-ond Attacher*) is wholly paid—— And *H*——*l* was offer'd (a) Ten Shillings f' th' Pound, and refus'd to take it, as not doubting of Full Payment —— Or had I been as Poor and Needy as this *E*——*k*——*n* *Salesman*, &c. wou'd represent me, yet *Wi*—— shou'd have been the Last shou'd have made it known; for his *PERFUMES* stink so much, no *Printer* will trust him with Two Farthings; and therefore he might well cry (b)

" As poor as any Howlet still,

" A Curse that doth attend the Quill;

" Hence Buttocks bare look thro' my Breeches,

" Which more abound in Rags than Riches.

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(a) By a Stranger to me.

(b) In his *New-Years-Gift*, P. 5, 6.

Gentlemen, eu't this a SWEET FELLOW, to tell my Printers, &c. " *I shou'd ne'er pay 'em? When 'tis thought his whole Estate (either in PERFUMES, or beyond the Skies (a) ) won't pay for that Doggrel Poem Entituled *A Hymn to Money*—— for of 1500 Printed, he never Sold an Hundred; so that (for certain) his Printers can never expect a Farthing—— And 'tis well if his *Very Porter* be ever paid: For, after Hawking a whole Day his *Hymn to Money*, left him so bare of CASH, that he did not sell enough to pay his Porter for his Day's Work—— No wonder then he tells his Readers [in his *New-Years-Gift*, P. 8.]*

" *The Old Year's gone, the New Year's come,*  
 " *My Tatters scarce will hide my Bum.*

But amongst other of his *Shipwrecks*, he hath happily lost *Shame*; and this want supplies him in his *Shoe, Trade, Cloaths, Diet, &c.*—— But tho he has *Home-spun Impudence*, (b) and can harp enough for his Back and Belly; yet were his Debts honestly paid, he has not a Rag to cover his Nakedness, but must (had he as much Innocence) *live as they did in Paradise.*

" *Who then wou'd follow that damn'd Trade,*  
 " *By which he's Fool and Beggar made? (c)*

Then *Wi*—— (for now my Resentment's over, I'll do thee all the Service I can) in meer Compassion to thy *W*——*k*——*n* Circumstance, I recommend to thee, to follow thy own Advice to the *S O T.* (d)

(a) See his *New-Years-Gift*. P. 7.

(b) 'Tis a Phrase of his own, in his *New-Years-Gift*. P. 2.—— (c) See his *Hymn to Money*. P. 7.

(d) See *Wi*——'s *Hymn to Money*. P. 14.

" Or beg, or starve, which you like best,  
 " In Aged Rags and Tatters dress,  
 " Or else in stinking Filth mayst lie  
 " Till freed by D——'s Charity.  
 " Or if so be thou lov'st Command,  
 " Boldly upon the High-way stand,  
 " Break open Houses, Learn to dive,  
 " Some Men by Theft and Sharping thrive:  
 " And at the worst thou'lt have this hope,  
 " To mount to Heaven by the Rope.

Our Doctastick (for Grub street Wits are usually as  
 Conceited and Proud as they are Poor and Base) will  
 think this but a Course Complement; but I look upon  
 Plainness as the best Dress for Truth: And sure our  
 woud-be-Laureat won't give Advice that he won't  
 take. However, I have fairly prov'd him ———  
 A Rhiming ——— B——k——n—— Slandering ———  
 Lowly, Scoundrel, (alias PERFUMER:) Or if he de-  
 nys this, I'll tye him up to our next Whipping-Post, and  
 then prove it ——— But why do I talk of answering  
 such a WRETCH? For he's below my very Porter's  
 Correction, and will disgrace (even) Newgate it self, when  
 he's sent thither for his Fulsome Libels and SLIPPERY  
 PRANKS. (a)

Thus (Gentlemen) I have largely prov'd that Wi——  
 [who sent Advice to the Sons of Parnassus(b)] is as Poor  
 and Base in his Trading as he is in his Rhiming Capacity—  
 He only Buys and Sells (when he dares be seen) to  
 ruine himself and to w——ng others ——— In a Word,  
 He's a poor, silly, B——ken Pedler, that merely Cum-  
 bers the Ground; and will be only able to render this  
 Account (of his Life and Rhimes) when he comes to  
 die, That he was as long a dying as he did live.

(a) See his New-Years-Gift, P. 7.

(b) 'Tis the Name of a Poem, wherein he abuses Sir  
 Barth—— G—— Sir Charles D—— De  
 Foe, Tutchin, Dunton, and several others. Gentle

Gentlemen, having wip'd off all that **D I R T** that *Wi*—— and my other Enemies have flung at me, I do now in this **Living Elegy** (*what I do every Night before I sleep*) forgive all the Damage they ever did me: Even that Person that forc'd me (*under a Penalty*) to pay 3*l.* for that which other Men wou'd have thought **Nobly** Rewarded at 20*s* (a) does not miss of my (Nightly) and Heartly Forgiveness. And I find the Injur'd *Tacchia* follows the same Practice; for [in his **Observator**, Vol. 4. Numb. 95.] he there says, “*I can pass by a Thousand Indignities and Affronts offer'd by so mean a Scoundrel as the Author of The Rehearsal.* And to shew he forgives all his Enemies, [In his **Observator**, Vol. 4. Numb. 94.] he further Adds, “*'Tis the Property of all good Christians to die in Charity with all Men; and as they Launch into Eternity, [and what is Sleep but a sort of Dying?] to forgive even their Enemies*—— which I do in so **Heartly** a manner, that I never close my **Eyes** (or sleep) in Malice, or rise with the Thoughts of Revenge—— And if I have ever wrong'd any Person my self (either in *Thought, Word, or Deed*) I as Heartily ask their Pardon as I here give them mine.— Or if we must *Quarrel at the Bar* to please our *Clients*, (*alias Readers*) yet I hope we do afterwards forgive, and embrace each other when we meet at the *Tavern* to drink a *Health to the QUEEN and our Healing Parliament*. Sure I am, however we *Expose* each other in **PRINT**, if we live in Malice we are much too blame; for 'tis the Duty of all Men to receive the **Sacrament**. (*He that denies this, renounces his very Baptism, and does as 'twere say, He desires Christ may be quite forgotten: Or at least does not consider, he that forsakes every KNOWN SIN, but more especially*

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(a) Yet I'll pay even this Debt October the 10th, 1708. (the Time set to even with all the World) if the Person to whom I gave a Note for the Money, (after considering of it 'till that Time) thinks he may receive it with a good Conscience.

**PRIDE**

## Dunton's Letter to his Few Creditors. 55

PRIDE and MALICE is fit to receive the Communion.) Then (as 'tis in our Litany) "From Malice and  
"all Uncharitableness Good Lord deliver us. For the  
Sacrament tends "to the encreasing our Love one to ano-  
"ther—— It is a Feast of Love at our Father's Table,  
"and the Guests are Brethren: Here are all the Engage-  
"ments to Love set before us: The Love of our Lord, and  
"his express Commandments, John 13. 34. We cannot well  
"choose but pity our Brother's Infirmities, and pardon each  
"others Faults, when we see how much God hath pitied  
"our Miseries, and how Graciously he hath pardoned our  
"Offences; our Animosities will be abated, and our Thoughts  
"of Malice and Revenge will die. A Sense of the Par-  
"don of all our Sins, Happiness procur'd, and Death and  
"Hell conquer'd, will swallow up all our little Picques and  
"Displeasures, and so fill us with the Thoughts of Grati-  
"tude and Love, that we shall forget our Enmities, and  
"embrace our Foes, and shed abroad our Kindness upon all  
"about us; yea, and extend it to all the World, in Pray-  
"ers and good Wishes. And certainly, this Spirit of Charity  
"is a most Divine Temper, and a great Happiness; 'tis a  
"Sweet, Serene and Pleasant Thing, a Reward to it self  
"if there were no other; whereas Envy and Malice, and  
"all the Degrees of them, are an Hell and Torment to  
"the Soul; they are great Sins, and their own Punishment.

Surely, if these Things were considered, all Men  
wou'd frequent the Sacrament, and we shou'd have no  
more Slandering Spyes—— Abusive Moderators—— Spiteful  
Whipping-Posts—— Lying Rehearsals—— Revengeful  
Dialogues, or Scandal Clubs—— But, however ready  
we are to quarrel, yet I hope we are as ready to forgive,  
and love as Brethren—— For my own part, having  
done my self Publike Justice, (for the Publike Wrongs  
I receiv'd) I am willing to lead the Way in a Hearty  
Forgiveness of all my Enemies; but (as was said be-  
fore) "Self-Defence is the Law of Nature, and a Man  
"ought no more to be Passive under the Murderer of his  
"Reputation than of his Life—— And for that Rea-  
son I prove H—— a K—— and W—— a

Scoun.



Scoundrel—— And (as a Piece of Justice to my self and all that trust me) condescend so far as to answer *The Moderator*—— *Spy*—— *Whipster*—— *M*——

(and the other *Hackneys* that wrote against me) But to what Purpose do they Attach my Person or Credit?

For, *The Little Review* (my Private and worst Enemy) by Apeing my *Question-Project*, only got an Opportunity to shew his Teeth; or cou'd he have *B I T*, (i. e. stol'n my Project) I had Teeth growing in *Bow-lan. Eufield, St. Albans*, (a) shou'd have bit through *HIS Athenian-Club*, (consisting only of the *Learned, Witty, and Honest D—— F——*) and all the *S A T Y R S* he ever Publish'd——

*Thus Interlopers do betray  
Their Bad Success the Shortest way*

*The Moderator* (my dull Enemy) after all his Noise of promoting Peace, (and his Papers selling) went out with a Stink and a Lye in his Mouth.

*The Slandring Spy* (my Third Attacher) was Arraign'd for a Beastly Fellow, and his *Lewd Spy* (to use a Word of his own) became *INVISIBLE*, in a Literal Sense.

*Drunken D——s* (my Reeling Enemy) has Interlop'd so long with my *Whipping-Project*, that a *London Fury* have found him (and his Tacking Master) guilty of Writing and Printing Scandalous Labels; and (if he have Justice done him) has *WHIP'D* himself into the Pillory.

*The London Post* (my *R——sh* Enemy) is prov'd a *R——* and *C——t*, by *Dr. Partridge*, and his useless and *T——sh* Paper is suppress'd for want of Receivers.

*The Rehearsal* (my Tacking Enemy) tho' he continues to Scribble at present, yet may soon expect the Fate of a Rebel, (that is, to Expire at *Tyburn*) and to have his *Bowells* and all his *Rehearsals* burnt——

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(a) From January the 9th, 1677.

## Dunton's Letter to his Few Creditors. 57

S—— (my Turn-coat-Enemy) 'tis said is run **Distracted**; or if he ben't, 'tis what he is to expect, for whispering Lyes to our HE- (or G——) FRIEND, and for defaming the Noncons. — This **BROKEN LEVITE** has writ at least Twenty or Thirty Books, but what they are, he does not desire **DUNTON** shou'd discover, nor will he (tho' the Wrong he did me was Base and Private) without just Provocation.

M—— (my Ungrateful Enemy) as a just Judgment upon her, has now neither Books nor *Moderators*, &c. to Publish; and (after all her **BOUNCE**) can hardly pay 2 s. 6 d. i' th' Pound.

And *Wi——* (my *Grub-street* Enemy and M——'s Poet) is now so far from writing of **Hymns** and **Satyr**s, that no Printer in Town will trust him.

And the same Fate has attended my **Dublin** Enemies, but *I scorn to Triumph over Men in Distress*: And for that Reason my other **ATTACHERS** shall be conceal'd, (that is) if they'll grow *Honest*, and forbear Slandering a Person that never wrong'd 'em.

But cou'd I *Refine my self to an Angel*, or were as free from K——ry as thole in *Paradise*, there's some in the World (*cou'd it save 'em Two Pence*) wou'd rail at me; for you know Gentlemen (*I wish you did not*) I'm guilty of the **SIN** of being in Debt; and 'till the **Sun** shines, [*I mean 'till October the 10th, 1708.*] I must pass for a **Door** Fellow (*alias K——*) as the Vulgar think and generally call such as are not able to pay their Debts; which makes me to remember the Opinion of the *Chineses*, who hold Men's Poverty for an *Infallible Mark of their Sins*. But (*my Generous Friends*) you are Men of a better Principle; not (if I may presume to use the Words of the **Princess Sophia** (a)) "*That I judge of People's Friendship for me, by the good Words they give me; but your Friendship (Gentlemen) is Generous Actions*: And therefore I hope won't take it amiss that I only visit you in this Letter: For,

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(a) In her Letter to his Grace the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury

as I said at first, Debt has been the Aversion of my whole Life. And I had much rather endure a Prison than to See any Person I owe Money to, 'till I am able to pay him——

This is *The Living Elegy*; (or *Mournful State of my present Case*) but it is meet with any Ill Treatment, as I do not deserve it, so I do not value it; for (Gentlemen) I writ this *Elegy* to satisfy you, and to please my self: And I am sure I shall have my End in the Latter, whatever I have in the Former. But for all others, they are *Mock-Mourners*, (alias *Summer-Friends*) and may go about their Business, for I neither value their Censure, nor shall court their Favour — FAVOUR! I might be a little Satyrical on that Word; but as M—— said (when she Loo'd her Beagles to Attach my Books, being aham'd to be seen in it her self) — A Word to the Wise is enough—— But I shan't enlarge, for I have as little Reason to humour the Criticks as Wi—— had to be M——'s *Setting Dog* (I mean to offer in Person to Attach my Books) — However, this *Matchless Impudence* (I call it so, as I ow'd him nothing, and scarce know him) justifies the Character I gave him in P. 47. and plainly shews Wi—— M—— H——l and M——'s *Pist all in a Quill*.

And here (Gentlemen) perhaps 'twill be said (for Creditors have Reason to look into the Lives and Souls of their Debtors) — Dunton, we find you have Enemies in all Religions, [L——y is High-Church—— The Moderator Low-Church—— The Whipster No Church—— S——ge a Tacker—— F—— a Dissenter—— M—— a Trimmer, &c.] — Then what are you that oppose 'em all? ——

To this I answer, (a) “ My Religion is [CHRISTIAN,] I mean, entirely disencumber'd of all those Names, and Sects, and Parties, that have rais'd so much Dust and Noise, and have done the greatest Prejudice to Christianity and the Reformation. The

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(a) As I formerly hinted in my *Idea of a New-Life*. P. 2.

“ World,

## Dunton's Letter to his Few Creditors. 59

“ World, 'tis true, has given me that Partial and Pre-  
“ cise Name of **Presbyterian**, which I renounce for  
“ ever; and take this Opportunity to tell those **Strait-**  
“ **Lac'd Souls**, who are for fixing Bounds and Enclo-  
“ sures in the Flock of Christ, that I am neither *Church-*  
“ *man, Presbyterian, Independent, Anabaptist, Quaker, &c.*  
“ That Title is the best, and sufficient for me, which  
“ obtain'd at *Antioch* under the *Christian Dispensation*: I  
“ desire no Character for the Future, but— **CHRISTI-**  
“ **AN** ——— A Lover of *Jesus*, and one that intends  
“ for Heaven and Happiness in the Life to come; and  
“ 'tis of small Moment with me, whether a Malignant  
“ World will allow me this Measure of Charity: My  
“ Right to the Covenant of Grace, and my Eternal  
“ Interest, have no Dependance upon *Ill Nature and Envy*.  
“ This (*Gentlemen*) is the Religion, (call it what you  
“ please) that I desire to live and die in; and whilst  
“ others wrangle for this or that Party, or way of Wor-  
“ ship, I desire to practice it: But tho' (as I said before)  
“ *My Religion is entirely disencumber'd of all those Names*  
“ *and Parties* which promote Divisions, and as 'twere,  
“ pine and shivel **Right Christianity** into a bare  
“ Skeleton, yet I profess my self an Impartial Lover of  
“ all good Men; (by what Names soever dignify'd and di-  
“ stinguish'd) and do presume every Man to be Good, till  
“ I find him otherwise ——— I have as little Zeal about  
“ Things that are manifestly **Indifferent** (either *Pro* or  
“ *Con*) as any Man in the World, and chuse to reserve  
“ it for those Things which are truly worthy of it. — 'Tis a  
“ great Principle with me, that the **Real Differences**  
“ of Good and Intelligent People are not so wide as they  
“ seem; and that thro' **Prejudice** and **Interest**, they do  
“ many times contest about Words, whilst they do Heartily  
“ think the same Thing ——— And this, in Answer to  
“ the Question [*What are you?*] is **Dunton's Religion**,  
“ or the *uncommon Principles* upon which he hopes to be sav'd. (a)

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(a) By **Uncommon Principles**, I only mean such as  
are seldom believ'd, and more rarely practis'd.

This is also the Title of a *Large Essay* intended for Publick View, wherein are so many *Theses* different from what is generally believ'd and practis'd, as will make L——y (and my other Enemies) say, *Dunton had rather err by himself, than hold a Common Truth*—— However, I shall advance nothing in this *Essay* but what really are (or I take to be) *Orthodox Truths*; and such on which I intend to *venture my Soul and Eternal Happiness*—— But I won't anticipate my own Design, [*In this New Scheme of Religion*] having said enough at present to satisfy all my Friends, (and I hope my Enemies too) of what Religion I am, or shou'd be. —Gentlemen, I hope I have fairly prov'd, that as to my *Morals*, I am (or shall be) an *Honest Man* as soon as I get Money: And that *Dunton's Religion* is such (did he seriously practice it) as will bring me to Heaven at last—— I know a *System of Healing Principles*, &c. will be banter'd by L——y and the High-Flyers; but *Moderation* to such as *Dissent* from us, is what all Men own to be Reasonable, and wish they had practis'd on a *Death-bed*; for then Persons are *Open and Plain-Hearted*, find themselves as Fallible as other Men, and dare not Depart in Malice to the *Serious Christian* of any *Perswasion*—— This made King *WILLIAM* declare with his last Breath, “*That he dy'd a Christian of a Comprehensive Charity*——  
 “*This with every Serious Mind must surely have a much greater*  
 “*and better Sound, than to have said, I die in the Enclos'd Com-*  
 “*munion of one or other Party, or Denomination of Christians*——  
 “*Nor do I see how any one can safely leave the World, how-*  
 “*ever they make a shift to live in it, without A Charity that*  
 “*reaches to all Serious Christians under whatever Distinguishing*  
 “*Name they pass. And let others confine their Candour and*  
 “*Communion within Narrower Limits, if they dare; but I cou'd*  
 “*never hope to be joyn'd to the General Assemblie and Church*  
 “*Above, if I shou'd willingly, and out of Choice, cut off my*  
 “*self from any Part of the Body, or refuse upon truly Catholick*  
 “*Terms, to hold Communion with 'em: And upon this very Prin-*  
 “*ciple it is, that many Protestant Dissenters do, and may justify*  
 “*both their Occasional Communicating with the Church of England,*  
 “*so call'd, and their not daring to do it constantly (a)——*  
 L——y and D——ke may banter this *Moderation*, &c. as much as they please, yet I don't fear (if my *Morals* are good, and my *Religion* as Sincere and Charitable as here describ'd) but I shall meet all such Persons in Heaven that practice this *Healing Doctrine*: And here all the Debt will be LOVE. For, as *Herbert* says,

*All we know of the Bless'd Above,  
 Is that they Sing, and that they Love.*

Having in this *LIVING ELEGY* briefly (and Publickly) Lamented

1. The Death of a Flourishing Trade

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(a) See my *New Practice of Piety*. P. 54.

2. The

# Dunton's Letter to his Few Creditors. 61

2. The Character and Ingratitude of those *Summer-Friends* that carels'd me as long as the World sinil'd.

3. The spiteful and ungrateful Treatment of M—— that wou'd have blatted my Credit with Printers and Stationers.

4. The Little or No-Religion and Honesty that has appear'd in the Lives and Writings of *The Moderator*—— *Spy*—— *Whipster*—— *Rebearfal*, &c.

And as this *Elegy* has wept over, and fairly answer'd these *Impious Wretches*, so in Answer to this Question, [*What are you?*] I have briefly shewn what *Religion and Justice* ought to be found in my Conversation: But having *Publickly* treated on these Heads, the Criticks are now desir'd to withdraw a little, whilst I have some *Private Discourse* with my *Few and Generous Creditors*——

Then (*Gentlemen*) *A Word in your Ear*, and I'll then dismiss you with this *Prayer*. "That God wou'd bless all your *Affairs*,  
"and make up the *Disappointment* you have met with on my *Account*, (for that's all you can call it) in the *Quick and Full Payments* of your other *Debtors*—— But to the Word in  
"your Ear!

Perhaps you'll ask, *Who do you mean by the* 21.— *B—l; S—l F—*  
*W—P—s L—y H—S—n D—y—C—r M— Wi— &c ?*——

I Answer—— I mean *no Body*. but those that wince; and if any such *DARE* appear, I am ready and able to make *Good every Word* that is here Publish'd.

Thus (*Gentlemen*) have I finish'd my *Living Elegy*: (Or all the *Words of Comfort* your *Poor Debtor* can give at present) But seeing in all *Elegies*, *Verse* is rather expected than *Prose*; and that in a *Fit of the Stone*, &c. I scarce know whether I live or die, *A Rhiming Elegy* is the most proper Conclusion of this Letter——

My *Body* is besieg'd with *The Rheumatism, Scurvy, and Consumptive Cough*, &c. (which shews *Death* is not far off) But in a *Fit of the Stone*, I actually stand (as *Aaron* once did in the *Camp*) betwixt the *Living and the Dead*. And whilst I reflect on my self, I find I participate of both. So that if a *Rhiming Elegy* was ever proper (for a *Living Person*) 'tis so for me; not only as it justifies the Title of this Letter, and shews I have *one Foot in the Grave*, but as I was *Born seemingly Dead*: ('Twas thought I was *Lug'd* out of my *Natural-Cell* into my *Grave*.) And I cou'd have been content, had I had no more than the *Register, or Sexton*, to tell the World that I had ever been. However, I may venture to say, That from the *first laying of these Mud-walls in my Conception*, they have moulder'd away, and the whole *Course of Life* is but an *Active Death*: Nay, every *Meal* we eat, is as it were a *Ransom* from one *Death*, and lays up for another; and while we think a *Thought*, we die; for the *Clock* strikes, and reckons on our *Portion of Eternity*: Nay, we even form our *Words* with the *Breath* of our *Nostrils*, and we have the less *Time to live* (*want we dead already*) for every *Word* we speak.

I say it again, (*want we dead already*) for I have undertook to prove (a) what we call *Life* is *Actual Death*; or at best I am but *Half alive, and half dead*; for Half my Body (by Reason of the Stone, &c.) is dead, and hath already taken Seisin of the Grave for me: And all my Friends (that Hour I grew Unfortunate) dy'd. So that if I would adhere to the greater Number, (as many do in Factions) I must repair to the Dead, if I en't with em already, for my Habitation (my Body) moulders apace, and the very Top and Cover (my Thatch above) turns Colour, grows Grey, and withers —

So that you see (Gentlemen) not only my *Civil Death*; (by Reason of Debt) but my Crazy (and Dying) Body calls for a *Living Elegy*: And so that Reason, as I have written a *Living Elegy* (in Prose) on my *Civil Death*, so I'll conclude this Letter with a *POEM* on *The Arrest of Natural Death*, which *Dunton* (did my Creditors forgive all I owe them) can never escape.

[Dunton's Living Elegy in Verse.]  
**D**earth is my House, for I perceive I have  
 In all my Life ne'er dwelt out of a Grave.  
 The Womb was (first) my Grave, whence since I rose,  
 My Body (Grave-like) doth my Soul enclose;  
 That Body (like a Corps with Sheets o'er spread)  
 Dying each Night, lies bury'd in my Bed;  
 O'er which my Spreading Testers large Extent  
 Born with Carv'd Antiques, makes my Monument.  
 And o'er my Head (perchance) such Things may stand  
 When I am quite run out in Dust and Sand.  
 My close-Low-bilded Chamber, to my Eye,  
 Shows like a little Chappel; where I lie,  
 While at my Window pretty Birds do ring  
 My Knell, and with their Notes my Obits sing.  
 Thus, when the Day's vain Fo' I my Soul has weary'd,  
 I in my Body, B.d, and House lie bury'd;  
 Then have I little Cause to fear my Tomb,  
 When this (whercin I live) my Grave's become.

Then Crazy Dunton, why dost take such Care  
 To lengthen out thy Life's short Calendar?  
 Each dropping Season, and each Flower does cry,  
 John, as I fade and wither, thou must die.  
 The beating of thy Pulse when thou art well,  
 Is but the Tolling of thy Palling Bell.  
 Night is thy Hearse, whose Sable Canopy  
 Covers alike Deceas'd Day and Thee;  
 And all those weeping Dew which Nightly fall,  
 Are but as Tears shed for thy Funeral.

(a) In a Paradox Entituled *The Funeral of Mankind: Or, an Essay proving we are all Dead and Buried, &c.*

# Dunton's Letter to his Few Creditors. 63

Whilst thus I musing lay, to my Bed-side  
(Attir'd in all his Mourning Pride)  
The King of Terrors came ;  
Awful his Looks, but not Deform'd and Grim,  
(He's no such Goblin as we fancy him)  
Scarce we our selves so Civiliz'd and Tame.  
Unk'nown the Doom assign'd me in this Change,  
Too justly I might fear Heaven's worst Revenge,  
Yet with my present Griefs redrest,  
With curious Thoughts of unknown Worlds possist,  
Inflam'd with Thirst of Liberty,  
Long lov'd, but ne'er enjoy'd by me,  
I su'd for Leave the Fatal Guilt to pass.  
My Vital Sand is almost run,  
And Death, said I, will strike anon.  
Then to dull Life I bid a long Farewel,  
And stretch'd for Flight—— But as the last Grains fell,  
Death fail'd a my Flatter'd Hopes, and turn'd the Glass.

But (Gentlemen) this is but a *Living Elegy*, for my Soul and Body en't yet parted ; or if they were, shou'd you put a *Bag of Guineas* into my Hand, I shou'd let it fall ; or cou'd you give me *Sampsil*, (a) 'twou'd be too heavy to carry to the other World, for you'll see (when I die in Earnest) that my Eyes are clos'd, and I observe nothing——

Gentlemen—— I have nothing further to Add, but to tell ye again (at parting) [October the 10th, 1708.] I shall pay you every Penny I owe you ; and that I am, till then (and for ever)

From the *Athenian*  
(alias *Smith's*) Coffee-  
House, in *Stocks-Market*,  
April the 10th, 1706.

Your much Obliged,

And very Humble Servant,

JOHN DUNTON.

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(a) The Name of a Good Estate which my Honoured Mother once offer'd to secure to me, by a Writing under her Hand, which I refus'd to take, as not doubting but she'll perform her Promise of giving it to me and my Wife, after her Death.

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