

had an Opportunity to know him — He is well skill'd in *Law and Politicks*, and knows our *English Constitution* much better, perhaps, than any Man of his own Character that can be nam'd — There has a *controversie* fallen out of late, between him and (the dignified) Mr. Samuel Wesley, concerning the private Academies here at home, wherein he has fully vindicated those Nurseries of *Piety and good Learning*, from the Scandal, and Imputation, which Mr. Wesley, endeavour'd to throw upon 'em. Mr. Wesley's first Piece, address'd to the Parliament, then sitting, was a most unkind Satyr upon himself; the World had not known him, unless he had thought fit to make himself Publick. I'm afraid Mr. Wesley's Vein has almost spent it self; *the Dreggs come the last*; whether his last *Libel* be worthy of an Answer, Mr. Palmer is the best Judge, and that Province belongs to him — His *brave and generous Soul* is mounted above the Reach of *Bigotry*, on the one Hand, or *Levity* in Opinion, on the other, and it may be great and rational Evidence that induces him to Change.

By these Characters of the *Dissenting Ministers* (which I declare to be true, and impartial, from the best Observations I cou'd make on their Lives and Preaching, for Twenty Years) I say, from hence it plainly appears, that Mr. Wesley's Taxing their **MORALS AND BEHAVIOUR, &c.** was a malicious Falshood, publish'd on purpose to currie Favour with the **HIGH FLYERS**, and to enlarge his Perferment.

I have been too brief in the Characters; but tho' I crow'd several Persons into one Line (and some of 'em *Men of Quality*) yet I desire they'd pardon this *short Draught*; for in the Second Part of my Life, I intend to paint 'em at full Length — And if there's any Person takes it amiss, that he's not so respected, as to find his Name mention'd in these Sheets; he need do no more than *speake his Mind freely of this Book*, and then he shall certainly see himself inserted in the *Second Part of my Life and Errors*.

Thus

Thus have I describ'd my *LIFE AND ERRORS* in the several Stages of it, and have shewn how *I'd Think, Speak and Act*, might I live over my *Infancy, Childhood, Youth and Manhood* again, &c. I have also run through all the *Duties of the Christian Religion*, and own'd how defective and negligent I have bin in the *Practice of 'em* but (as David says) *who can know the Errors of his Life?* (Ps. 19. 12.) And seeing I have bin guilty of many Faults which I have forgot to insert, I here add a *SUPPLEMENT* to 'em, which I'll call

The After-Thought :

Or, A further Account of the Life and Errors of JOHN DUNTON, with the Manner how he'd Correct (or shun 'em) might he live over his Days again, &c.

AND here (Reader) I shall first acquaint thee, that I shou'd think my *AFTER-THOUGHT* well employ'd, if any Thing I can further purpose would be of any Force, either to prevent the pursuing a mistaken Course of Life, or prevail with those that are just beginning to Live, to make their Advantage of my Errors and avoid 'em, 'twould extreamly encourage me to Address to all that shall be so charitably dispos'd as to give me the Occasion, by *Exposing my Faults* to do so much good; but this is such a Piece of Self Flattery. I can find nothing to Support it; not being able to find any Rules I could safely rely on, but such as were perfectly

perfectly *opposite to the Maxims* of the World, especially so *refined*, as now it is, that it can make *Vice and Vertue equally charming* as they come in Vogue.

And therefore, I fear this **AFTER-THOUGHT** will be scarce intelligible to the Age we live in; 'tis therefore to the next to come (*those that are yet unborn*) that I Address myself with much greater Hopes and Expectations, that when the World has had full Experience of the Mischievous Effects of their *Lenity towards Youth*, they may begin to think it good to take away the Privilege they have so long enjoy'd to their own Destruction, and to the Dishonour of **GOD** and Religion.

Then this **AFTER-THOUGHT** may be of some Use, to put a little Caution into the Minds of Young Persons, and make 'em *look in some Measure, to the End of their Race*, that they may not live for no other purpose than to make 'emselfes the **W O R S E** for coming into the World, *and the World the worse for their living in it*; and that which gives the most expectation of the next Age, is, that we so lately had a *Star of the first Magnitude Shining in our Hemisphere*, which gave great Light and Direction to the Paths of Vertue, tho' the **G O D** of the World had so blinded the Hearts of the Men of this Generation, it was little seen or regarded; but that Star no sooner sets than **A N O T H E R A R I S E S**; who by her bright Example, we hope will work upon that Part of this Age, that is not so deely engaged in wickedness, that no Example can change the
Habit,

Habit, *no not the mode at Court*, but what they can't mend in themselves, perhaps they may be content to mend in their Children, if it be but to qualifie for THE QUEEN'S FAVOUR.

So that the *Children yet unborn*, may come into a World so well dispos'd, that any Rules that points out their Duty to GOD, or gives 'em the least Assistance towards the attaining their Chief End, the Love and Favour of GOD, may be accepted; but to proceed to my *After-Thought*.

After a Second Reflecting upon my PAST LIFE, I am inclin'd to think, were I to begin A NEW, 'twere impossible for me to act as I have done, had I that Experience I have now; I find *my Thoughts so changed*, I have quite other Apprehensions of this World; I could no more be cheated into the Pursuit and Expectation of Happiness, from any thing it can give me; *worldly Prosperity has lost all Esteem with me*, that now 'tis almost a wonder to me, how it was possible to be so Blind as I was, when without Experience, and to Encourage others (*especially great Sinners*) to enter upon a NEW LIFE, I do further assure 'em, I find *more real Joy in one Penitential Tear, than in all the Sins I ever committed*. I never before but saw a Beauty in worldly Comforts; but now those seem so faded by the greater lustre and Beauty that I see in GOD in Christ Jesus, that I am astonish'd where I have bin wandering all my Daies, spending my Time and Money for that which is not Bread:

Yet I am satisfied, the Wisdom of Providence sees it necessary for the good of the Universe, that we should remain in this Blindness for some Time; for we see the greatest Part of most Persons Lives are spent in so much Blindness, that *before Experience can have open'd their Eyes, Death is ready to shut 'em*; especially those of Eminent Wit and Parts are often distinguish'd by some Fall occasion'd by their Blindness; and what's more proper to mortifie the Pride and Arrogance of Humane Nature, than to give 'em a full Experience of their Folly and Vanity, which must needs bring 'em, if any thing will, to a true Humility, and a perfect Sence of their own Weakness, when upon a *Review of their Lives*; they find that hitherto they have only labour'd to procure to themselves Shame and Confusion, or at least have spent their Time to very little purpose; that Time that can never be recall'd, but carries with it, *Youth, Strength and Health*, and all the prime Faculties of Humane Nature. Time, That precious Treasure, so soon lost, yet such a Loss as would take up all the remaining Moments of our Lives to lament, but that it leaves Experience behind it of such Use to us, it supplies the Place of *a Thousand Masters*; we need no other to teach us the Knowledge of our selves, *what we are, what we have done, and what we might have done*, in the same Temptations wherein we have seen others Fall; and when once we are come to this Knowledge, we have finish'd the Business of this Life, and if we are continued longer in it, 'tis more for the Sake of others

others than our selves ; for then we are furnish'd with all that this World can afford us , towards the fitting us for a better. When Experience has taught us that Wisdom, to know we have labour'd in vain, and mis'd of our happiness, by seeing it in a wrong Place ; then are our Hearts set upon Heaven, having no more expectation in this World ; and all our business now, is to wait patiently till our change come.

And now I would fain see, if it were possible, to imagine (*Time recall'd, and a new Life begun*) by what means I might avoid my former Miscarriages ; all the disorders of my Youth, were not wholly to be imputed to corrupt Nature, but as much to the *Evil Customs* I learnt, and the wicked Maxims I pick'd up in my converse with the World. From a corrupt Heart, I had a large share of PRIDE and AMBITION, with a violent love of my self ; but for my own interest, I sought the Love and Esteem of others ; and when I perceived *Pride and Vanity*, was the charming object of all Peoples love and affections, I gave my self up to 'em without reserve, as to the most perfect and lasting perfections. For tho' 'tis possible, vanity may make but a short Flourish for a while, amongst gay and youthful Persons only, yet *Pride* will be sure to keep its Station, suiting it self to all Persons and Circumstances of Life, *whatever it is, we must still find something to be Proud of*, or else we forfeit all esteem and respect with others. And I have sometimes observ'd, there have been Persons that without any thing to recommed'em, but

the Marks of Pride, and a high value for themselves, have gain'd esteem; *being suppos'd to have some merit, only for pretending to it,* but that was a deceit I durst not trust to, but endeavour'd to acquire some *aimable qualities,* that might justly recommend me; and a great deal of Time and Money I spent with respect to the esteem and applause of the World, which I pursued, without the least check, finding it to be an universal principle, recommended to all young Persons, as the best Industry and Labour, *but not under the notion of Pride and Vanity, but of being finely bred, Gentle and Agreeable.*

Yet I found it a very hard Task, to divide myself between *GOD and the World,* for by his gracious Providence, (*as I hinted in the First Stage of my Life*) I was born of *such Religious Parents,* as carefully educated me in the Principles of Religion, and by their own Example and Encouragement, gave me the greatest Opportunity to live in the *Practice* of it: This took away from me the full liberty, of taking all the ways possible to please the World, and so I lived in an uncessant strife between both, neither enjoying the Comfort and Pleasures of Religion, nor with all my industry, able to make my self so considerable in the World as I expected and desired, for I was much restrain'd from all publick converse, *by the regular Orders and Sobriety observed in our Family,* so that all the mischievous Maxims I pick'd up, were chiefly from our own Servants, who first poyson'd me with *Flattery and Observance,* amusing and filling my Head with idle and impertinent fancies, and amongst

mongst the rest, all the foolish and abominable *superstitions*, observed amongst the Heathens, as observations of *Dreams and ill Omens*; and the high thoughts they had possess'd me with, tho' meerly for their own interest, so puffed me up, *I thought my self above my equals*, and acknowledg'd no superiour but my Parents.

But when I was come to the Age, that I was thought fit to be *trusted with my own conduct*, I still run on in the same Mistake; I Thought all my happiness depended upon the Opinion of the World; *I little valued what I thought or knew by my self, so that the World knew nothing that might lessen their esteem of me.* I found it no hard Matter to impose upon a Blind World, which incouraged me to make it my Business to set my self up for an *Idol* in it; and 'twas but a little way I was advanc'd in this Design, when *Vanity forsook me*, so that I grew indifferent to all the distinguishing Poms and Gaieties of Life; but *Pride* stuck close to me, and much assisted me to reproach and condemn Vanity, wherever I found it; I might very well perceive the advantage I had over those that were devoted to Vanity, without setting such a value upon it, as fill'd me with such contempt for others. But *this is the true Nature of Pride, wherever 'tis entertain'd; it fails not to turn even our very Vertues into Sin*

Thus Pride went on, deluding me into a mighty observation of the Faults and Imperfections of others, that *I had not time to see my own*; I almost thought I had none, unless it were any defect that obstructed some Ambi-

tious design ; such I could not chuse but see and remember, which could vex, but never humbled me, for *I submitted intirely to my Fancy*, and made my own reason and discretion, the only Rule to Judge by, as well for others, as my self ; but never thought of bearing with any Persons Faults and Infirmities, for I wou'd allow 'em none, supposing I had none in y self ; at least, not such as theirs ; and whatever I could do or suffer, I believed others might if they pleased ; and therefore, had the less compassion for 'em in their extreamities.

Thus *Pride* furnish'd me with all the ways of disobliging, when at the same Time, I was studdying to make my self lov'd and esteem'd, but my Aim was at *commanding their esteem by my perfections* ; when that was done, their Love or Envy, was equal to me. To so much folly and presumption, had my *Pride* brought me.

Thus had I rais'd a prodigious structure of *Pride*, and little thought how soon it wou'd be destroy'd, much less that I my self shou'd do it ; and by the very same way I took to raise it, for not being able to support *any Disgrace of my Family, no more than my own* ; whenever their credit required my Assistance, I was ready to help 'em beyond my power. I foresaw none of the Mischiefs I was falling into, such an absolute Dominion had *Pride* over me, it could lead me into any Danger. But yet I must own there was much of natural tenderness and compassion, that help'd as well to Transport me to that degree of rashness, as not to see that what was done, to help some, was as much to the Prejudice
of

of some other of my Relations, which is now my greatest trouble; cou'd I have suffer'd by my self alone, I should have Thought it nothing, because it prov'd such an effectual means to *mortify my Pride*, which was come to such a height, it would have baffled a small or force; and to be rid of such an Evil, makes amends for many sufferings.

Thus Pride and Vanity was all my Study in Youth, but how much better, had I employ'd my first Thoughts in enquiring, Why I came into the World? And upon what Errand? Which wou'd have led me to the Knowledge of the Infinite, Power, Goodness and Mercy of G O D, which first Created, and then Redeem'd me, and that I am his by so many TITLES; besides, being Sworn and Dedicated to Him in my Baptism, I can't, without committing the highest Sacrilege, Misemploy upon my self or the World, any of those Gifts of Body or Mind, G O D has Blessed me with; but such was the blindness of my first Years, that I sought Happiness in a wrong place; so that all my Notions was rewarded with nothing but Trouble and Centention.

I saw at length my ERRORS, how vainly I had spent my Time and Labour, for that which satisfieth not; and by this means I lost the *ADVANTAGE* of getting an *Early Habit of Piety and Vertue*, which had been my best Defence and Security against the Temptations of the World; in which if we are once insnared, we can't hope to be delivered, without many Sorrows and Afflictions, which tho' I have had

great

great Comfort in, and can Bless GOD for 'em, I shou'd be glad *those who are yet unborn* might be warn'd by my Experience, that GOD may never see it necessary to teach 'em by Afflictions, but that his *Mercy and Goodness* may e'en lead 'em to Repentance of their daily *Sins and Infirmities*! for cou'd we be *as really touch'd with the Sense of GOD's Love to us*. as we are with the feeling of *Sorrows and Afflictions*, that alone, wou'd move us to a continual Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, which wou'd render all *Crosses and Afflictions* useless, and serve the best of *any thing* to make us draw near to GOD — Therefore, were I to *begin my Life again, from my Youth*; to prevent at least, my particular Miscarriages, I wou'd carefully be kept from the *Company and Conversation of Servants*, or any other Person, but those that must instruct me; and no liberty allow'd me, to waste my Time in idle Follies, but strictly kept to silence and obedience to all my Superiours, which should be *all Persons above me, in Age and Experience*. I would be taught as soon as possible, the best and readiest way of doing my own Affairs, without the help of a Servant, which wou'd be both Exercise, and Imployment for Body and Mind, and take off the necessity of any other Diversion; for *What Pleasure can Diversion give, greater than what the Mind takes, in doing well and wisely, the necessary Concerns of Life.*

I would have all my Time measur'd, and a Share allotted for each Business, and *Change of Imployment* should be all my Diversion; I mean
from

from that which takes up the Mind to some other that exercifes the Body; but Reading shou'd have a Principal Share of this Time, as it relates to the greatest Concern, the Good of the Soul, chiefly *the Holy Scriptures*, in which, I would have my Memory wholly exercifed, that when I heard it *publickly explain'd in Sermons*, I might have the readier Apprehensions of it; I would not be permitted to read what Books I pleased, but have my *Books chosen* not above my Capacity, to confound and discourage me, but such as should instruct me in the *plain and easie Principles of Religion*, and have 'em explain'd to me in a familiar Way, so as to make me understand what Engagement I had to G O D, and what to the World.

And now I presume, this continued for some Time, would give me such a *Habit of a Sober and Regular Way of Life*, I should think it a Doing Violence to my Nature, to alter it, which I am persuaded, would pretty well secure the Time of Youth.

Then to proceed to my coming to act in the World, my First Study must be how to avoid both *the Pleasing and Displeasing it*, there is danger in both; and to secure me from the Necessity of pleasing the World, that is, of submitting to its Laws; *I would chuse to be hid in Obscurity*, that my Actions might be little known, and less regarded; the smaller their Value of me were, the more I should be at Liberty, and in the less Danger of displeasing 'em, I would keep my Time and Money out of their dispose; and therefore they should not

know

know how much I had of either to command it; but where it might do any real Good, I would freely give some Share of both, what I could spare; but I should hardly have so much of either, as to be willing to afford any considerable Part for trifling Conversation, *Plays, Ruffling, China, Tee, or Chocolet, fine Cloaths, or great Equipage*; and if the World disrespected me for that, I could only beg their Pardon, should I disrespect them, so as not to care. I am fix'd; for my Experience tells me, *those Things are nothing at all*; however the World Esteems 'em, 'tis all but Childrens Play; and that so much Respect should be had to the Judgment of our Fellow Creatures, Sinful, Blind Mortals, like our selves; that all our Fortunes, Ease and Satisfaction, should be Sacrific'd to the keeping up our Credit with them; that ever such a *Slavery* could be imposed upon us, would be thought the greatest wonder, were it not for another much greater, that at the same Time, we should decline *the Service of that great G O D our Creator*, who has placed us in the World only to do his Pleasure, and One on whom all our well Being depends, who has made his *Service perfect Freedom*; that could we but keep *the World from Exhausting so vast a Proportion of our Time and Money*, we might find more than enough of both to serve him with according to his Will; so easie has G O D in his Goodness and Mercy made our Duty and Service.

But I am not only convinc'd of the Danger of *Pleasing the World*, but I find some Reasons
also

also to oblige me not to DISPLEASE it: *I was not born for my Self, but for the Glory and Service of G O D*; but I make my self unserviceable, if by my Words and Actions I give Offence, filling Peoples Minds with *Prejudice* against all I say or do, which would leave me no Power by *Example or Instruction*, to do the least good: I would therefore keep fair with 'em, by complying as much as I cou'd, and so conform my self to their Customs and Manners, as never to reject 'em without a perfect Necessity; and since 'tis G O D's Pleasure that *Vanity* should be the Subsistence and Support of so many People, till he sees fit to alter it; I would never affront new Modes so much as positively to oppose 'em, but follow only such to which some way or other 'tis possible to give a Decent and Sober Look, yet should allow the same Liberty I take, and suffer others to approve what I did not.

I never found my self infallible in any thing; I have lived to see my ERRORS, that I can look with the less Rigour upon those of others, considering how easily we slip into 'em, and in what we condemn others, we have as much Reason to condemn our selves, which reminds me how much I have been mistaken in Judging of others by my self; all Persons are not liable to the same Faults, there are Faults some may abstain from with more ease than others; and some Persons find more difficulty in the Exercise of some particular Vertues than some others; so that ALLOWANCE must be made for both; what

what that must be, G O D only knows who sees the Heart.

I would therefore learn to *pity and compassionate* the Faults of others, and save all my I N-D I G N A T I O N for my own, which may best be judg'd by my own Measure; for how little soever I know my own Heart, *I know much less the Hearts of others*; but for those that carry their Vices with Pride and Ostentation, I would keep my self at the greatest distance from them, not out of respect, but abhorrence; both to avoid the Contagion of their ill Example, and to approve my self a True and Faithful Servant of G O D, that will never be brought to have Affinity with his Enemies; for what greater Mark can be given of Reprobation, it goes beyond *the Fool that makes a Mock at Sin*; one shews his Folly and Ignorance, the other a Diabolical Spirit that defies Heaven, which extremely justifies me in this Severity, otherwise I could wish to be *as merciful to the Faults of others, as I am partial to my own*, which is to that Degree, I can never know and hate 'em, till I see 'em in others, and then am hardly brought to own 'em, for mine; so natural I have ever found it to Esteem ones self, and despise others; but Experience tells me, *if ever I would be easie and happy, I must change the Object, esteeming others better than my self*: This will cover most of their Faults, and set their Vertues in a full Light, which will bring me to take Pleasure in yielding and Compliance with others for their good, and not think this indispensable Duty such a hard Service,

vice,

vice, for *Love makes all things easie*: Every Vertue therefore, should engage my Love, and every Fault my Compassion; and cou'd I thus live *without pleasing or displeasing the World*, I shou'd enjoy a great Blessing, *the Blessing of Peace*, and gain to my self all that Time that's generally spent in Hearing, and relating all the Weaknesses, Follies and Infirmities, that have occasion'd any Miscarriages in the World, which fills it with so many uncharitable Animosities and Divisions; so that you see Reader, I publish this Idea of a New Life, to *refine and spiritualize* my own Practice; and if by divulging my *Errors*, I bring thine to Remembrance, it will not only *compensate my Labour in Writing*, but *thine in Reading*.

I come now to reflect upon the most *considerable Part of my acting in the World*, tho' I wou'd chuse not to live by Chance, and let the World impose upon me, and rather than Rack my self to satisfy its Expectation, *find a Way to look too inconsiderable for the World to mind me*; yet I very well know by Experience, there's no chusing one's Way of living; but whatever Divine Providence sees fit, must be my Lot; for the Troubles I brought upon my self and others, *by a Foolish Way I took to avoid'em*, has plainly convinc'd me, that when GOD determines to humble us, the very Methods we take to avoid it, it shall bring it upon us; there's no Resisting his Will, and blessed be GOD there's no Reason to desire to do it; all his Dispensations are so temper'd with Mercy; for in all my Afflictions I have found

such

such Favour, and his miraculous Providences over me, has plainly shew'd me, *'tis of very Faithfulness ; G O D has caus'd me to be afflicted and to give me Occasion to praise him ; I call'd upon him in the Time of Trouble, and he heard me, according to his Promise ; not only heard me when I call'd, but with many great Providences, prevented such Mischiefs, as came not to my Knowledge, till after I had escap'd 'em. I see therefore, 'tis G O D that must chuse which Way I shall glorifie him ; for tho' there is a plausible Pretence for desiring Riches, to be enabled to do good, and exercise many Vertues, yet who wou'd change for the Vertues of Poverty, that knows truly by Experience, what they are ; the World sees and approves the Vertues of Riches, and the Honour and Respect it pays 'em, requites in some Measure, the Labours and Disquiets that attend 'em ; but G O D only sees and approves the Vertues of Poverty, and finds ways to reward 'em, even in this Life ; if he strips me of all, and leaves me nothing I can call my own, but feeds and cloaths me, as he does the Fowls of the Air, which like me, can neither Toil nor Spin ; yet he allures me of his Fatherly care, who both knows what I need, and with what means to supply me.*

I may conclude I have no reason to desire *any Thing I have not, because G O D knows I have all I need.* But there's many Vertues must go to the making me thus Wise, which if G O D's having placed me in an *Humble State of Poverty*, has procured me by taking from me all earthly supports, to keep me from foolishly relying

on 'em; and at the same time giving me such instances of his *Kindness and Liberality*, that my trust and confidence is by that Means made to surmount all my fears; What can deprive me of Joy, Peace and Comfort, which must needs establish me in many Vertues, of *Meekness, Patience and Longsuffering*, but above all in a perfect RESIGNATION to his Will, who has made me a *Stranger and Pilgrim* with him in this World; so giving me earnest of a better Inheritance with him in Glory.

And since my Poverty procures me so many Blessings, I can't be solicitous, to consider by what Means I might have prevented it. *I could never think, after a Thing was once come to pass, there could ever have been any possibility of preventing it: Yet 'tis my self only, I charge with all the Folly and Infirmary that effected it; and to which, for my Comfort, it was meerly owing, and not to a mistaken Design of Passion or self Interest, which had been much worse; and I have still so much of the same Weakness, I know not how to Frame Rules against it. And this I esteem the greatest Affliction I have, for having been too remiss in the FIRST PART OF MY LIFE, I have now (if I get to Heaven) a great way to go by a Setting Sun; but seeing every Temptation I overcome, will be a Shining Jewel, in my Crown of Victory. I'll strive hard (I will repent of all I've done a Miss) that I may take Heaven by Violence and (if possible) get in at the Straight-Gate.*

In a Word; for those few Moments I have left, I will do what I can to improve 'em, to GOD'S Ser-

vice. Not my *unworthiness and ill deserving*, could hinder him from pouring his Benefits upon me; neither shall any *Humane respect* withhold me from intirely devoting to his Honour and Glory, my Time, with all the precious Talents and Gifts, he either has, or shall hereafter bestow on me.

It shall be my Care and Business to make my way of living (as much as in me lies) *conformable to this Design*, and the greatest obstacle I apprehend, is the contempt and disrespect of the World, for we are apt to think, their *very pity uneasy* to us; and 'tis plain to perceive, that *to be envy'd composes all the Pleasure of the Rich and Great*; for what's too little for their Minds, they find too much for their Bodies; neither the Toil of Riches, or Honour, cou'd ever be supported, did it procure 'em *Love*, instead of *Envy*, tho' I think I neither *Love the World, nor the things of the World*, yet I find one ill Sign of too much respect to it, which is, That *I am readier to bestow my Money where 'tis expected, than where 'tis need'd*; I must therefore be fortified on that Weak Side, which to do, I need only Reflect upon the grossness of this Idolatry, that sets Man above G O D; If in a Low and Contemptible Condition, I can be acceptable to G O D; *What is Man, that I shou'd have such respect to him*, and his Opinion of me: But 'tis an ill Impression we receive from our I N F A N C Y, being long acquainted with the World, before we can be taught to know G O D, and the Fear and Awe exacted by Parents and Governours (*those especially, that affect an Arbitrary*

bitrary DOMINION) inclines us to think all our well-being depends on their Pleasure; and knowing too well how far *Flattery, Lying, and Dissimulation* goes toward the Deluding 'em; we have Recourse to those Arts, as the only Way to be able to support their Tyranny, as well as to GRATIFY our foolish Passions so often cross'd by their Authority; besides a *natural Pride we inherit from our Parents*, which they take more care to improve, than to suppress, Teaching us to decline at any Price, the bringing upon our selves or them, for our sakes, the least Contempt or disrespect, while we forget *all Honour comes from GOD*; the World is no proper Judge of it; that which the World gives, too often ends in Shame and Confusion.—Then might I live over my Life again, were it possible, I wou'd live the Life of an Angel; for can he be too Religious, or think too much of *Mortifying every Lust*, that hopes to be rewarded with Heaven at last? Seeing all **T H E S E T H I N G S M U S T B E D I S S O L V D, W H A T M A N N E R O F M E N O U G H T W E T O B E?**

I will therefore set my self with so much earnestness to perform my Duty to GOD; *I will not be at leisure to know or consider what the World says or thinks of me.* I look upon Religion as the highest Priviledge GOD gives to any Creature; *we are not born but made Christians*, and by the Will of GOD only, not Man; and since tis GOD that bids me, I count it my Duty, to believe that *I am one of those GOD has ordained to eternal Life*, and dare not

make the least Question of it, upon Account of my Sins and Unworthyness, as if any Goodness foreseen in us could be the Cause of GOD'S Election; and not as St. Paul writes to the Ephesians and others, *that 'twas according to the good Pleasure of his Will, to the Praise and Glory of his Grace, having from the Beginning, chosen us to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth;* this should make me strive to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith I'm call'd, and to be sure to let nothing discourage me, neither weakness within, nor Temptations without; not the Malice of the Devil, nor the Treachery of my own deceitful Heart, none of these can hurt me; for whatever Advantage any one, or all of these together, shall get over me, shall turn to my good; for GOD brings good out of all the Evil he permits; Glory to himself, and much good to his Elect, and since **A LONG TRIAL OF MY SELF** has given me a full Experience of my own weakness, I will never presume upon my Strength or Ability, in any thing, either Spiritual or Temporal; but give up my self to be governed and guided by Almighty GOD, as his Holy Spirit and Divine Providence shall direct; and in every thing I do, will beg his Assistance, having the Confidence, that *whatever we ask according to his Will, he heareth us,* and whatever we do according to his Will, he prospers it; and to know his Will, that I may do it, shall be the whole Business of my Life.

To that End, I will, allot my self a considerable Portion of Holy **SCRIPTURE**, to read

read

read every Day, *beginning always with Prayer, and ending with Meditation and Thanksgiving*; for 'tis only by a constant Application to GOD, that ever I must expect to overcome *the World, the Flesh, and the Devil*; to which I am engaged in a Combat to my Lives End; and I had need to Watch, and be careful to take every Advantage against such powerful Adversaries; but cou'd I make my Converse with the World, and the necessary Affairs of Life, Acts of Religion, 'twou'd prove the strongest Bullwark of Defence, that cou'd possibly be made against 'em; which might be done, wou'd we deny our Passions and Appetites in every thing, and make *G O D's Will the Rule and Reason of all our Actions*: How hard soever this may look at First, Custom and Experience will make it both easie and pleasant; we can't but be sensible, *how often our Passions have misled us, enough to discourage our indulging 'em*; for to what can be assigned, the Miseries of Life so perpetually lamented, but to some inordinate Appetite of the Mind or Body; but did we often deny to satisfy 'em, they wou'd in Time lose *the Habit of expecting it*, and then nothing would hinder us from designing all our Actions to some good End, which makes 'em Religious Duties; and 'twill be as easie to conclude there must needs be some Pleasure also in doing the only thing wherein we can testify our Love to GOD, when we know *with how much Pleasure we can cross any of our Inclinations, to shew our Love to a Friend*; this is all that goes to the making an active Life as religious as a Contemplative; for the closest walk-

ing with G O D, is to consider him in all we do, which will require a strict Guard over *our Thoughts, Words and Actions*, that we be not meer Strangers to our own Hearts.

I must also reflect upon the true Use of all the BENEFITS GOD has blest me with, in this Life, so that I may not abuse 'em, but answer the ends for which they are given; my TIME especially, I will imploy to the best Use I can; *The Firsi and Best in the Morning* after Rest, and the Refreshment of Sleep I will give to Religious Duties, and my necessities, shall, after that, have as much as they can justly Challenge upon the account of being Natural, so must be provided for; but I'll take care to destroy *all necessities of my own making*, if neglect will do it; and that Method which Physicians use to correct the ill Habits of the Body, by repeating the Medecine Three Times a Day, seems to me no less needful for the Soul to take, by Returning *Three times a Day to religious Duties*, to strengthen and support the Soul, especially of such, whose Condition Exempts 'em from any Labour of Body or Mind; for as with *high Feeding and no Exercise*, the Body Contracts many Diseases, which requires much *Physick* to prevent or Cure; so those Souls whose Station gives 'em much Leisure, feed too much upon *amuzements, and vain talk*, that fills them with many Diseases, that unless prevented by *Physick, and Exercise*, concludes in Death, but *reading, Prayer, and Recollection*, are the best *Physick* and Cordials, and the serving our own and others necessities the best Exercise, both

to preserve the Health, and keep up the strength and vigour of the Soul: Of this, I am by Experience so convinc'd, I will neglect neither, but *joyn to religious Duties, the serving my own, and others necessities*; nor will I rest satisfied, till with St. Paul I can say, *these Hands have ministered to my necessities*; and those of others, for let my Station be High or Low, they may be equal in this respect, for if I am obliged to keep more Servants, for state and attendance, than for necessity, this may easily be made an Act of great Charity, and give me Occasion to *serve to their necessities*, which I shall do, if I take care to have 'em well principled in Religion, and so employ'd, that no Time or Opportunity be given for idle Converse together, to strengthen one another in *the wicked Maxims of the World*, and by setting the best Examples I can of Thrift and good Management, and keep 'em always working for themselves or me; But I can't approve of so much *good Housewifery*, as hinders the Poor, all honest Trades shou'd live, and to manage so, as to have little Occasion to employ Tradesmen, instead of good management, would be *wicked and unjustifiable*, because in that, I cross the ends and order of Providence; this hinders not, but that I, and my Servants may find work enough to Exercise us for the supply of others necessities, tho' not my own; and procure to my self and my Posterity, *the Blessing and Prayers* of those that can't Work for themselves, who are the only Persons I shall Work for; besides, *the World will be the better for Servants so well taught*, for when they come to have Families and Children,

dren, they will teach 'em to get their living by honest Labour, and conscionable trading and industry.

But in A LOWER STATION my Exercise must be the supplying my own necessities, as well as the needs of others, and for those of mine, they shall be brought into the *Smallest Circle* I can possibly, by cutting off all the Claims of Custom, Fancy, or the general Vogue and Opinion of the World, and then I shall have none but of *cleanliness and decency*, which will be soon supply'd, and give way to others concerns, which I shou'd place before my own; yet shall my care for either be M O D E R A T E ; for *whatever it is I undertake, I will leave the success to GOD's good Pleasure*. If I do nothing but with respect to my Duty, GOD will certainly prosper it first, or last, how adverse soever some things may seem for the present.

I know *nothing comes to pass but by Divine Providence*: Why then should I Marmor or Repine at any Cross Event, *Affront*, or *Injury*? Or be Angry at the Actors in 'em: Let it be *Interest*, *Folly*, or *Malice* they acted by, they are their own Enemies, not mine, I will both Pity and Pray for 'em; and for my Encouragement to this, I have often found their ill Designs have had a quite contrary effect to their intentions; and that *by suffering patiently, and forbearing to publish their injuries*, I have given 'em Occasion to change their Minds; it shall therefore be a Rule with me not to give way to any *Resentment* (and I may truly say, 'tis so easie to me to forgive Injuries, that 'tis scarce a Vertue) my unworthi-

unworthiness and ingratitude to GOD makes me deserve no better Treatment at the Hands of Men; and so little Right have I to the love and esteem of any, it were injustice to exact it. But such Care has GOD taken for the Comfort and support of his Creatures; he has made it *a law to Christians to love and assist one another*, and I should show my self unworthy of such a Mercy and Favour, cou'd any injury nourish in me Hatred or revenge. I will set no Mark upon those that are not disposed to do me any kindness, but I owe the more to those that are, *and in my gratitude to them, I pay my thanks to GOD*, who has made 'em his Instruments to do me good; which has sometimes been those, my corrupt Nature would never have chosen to be obliged to, but I can chuse nothing for my self, which is my Happiness; so much better 'tis to be *ruled and govern'd by GOD, than by the best Wisdom of our own*, that now I know the Pleasure and Comfort of it, I shall hardly suffer any more, *the World, the Devil, and my own unruly Passions* to exercise their Tyrannical Dominion over me; I never served any of these Masters, that ever I was paid my Wages: *Pride and Ambition*, made me serve the *World*, that I might have Honour and Esteem, the *Devil* I served for Fear of suffering Disgrace; and my *Passions* promised me Content and Pleasure, *and all agreed in disappointing me*; but I cou'd never say, that ever I cross'd my Passions, or resisted a Temptation for GOD's sake, that ever I fail'd of my reward; and till all my Desires are brought to Center in the *Will of GOD* (*which sets me out of the reach*

of

of every Disaster) where can I expect ease or safety? There is no blind Person but would think it a great security, to be under the protection of those who's Care and Conduct would perfectly supply all the inconveniences of that defect; such is my Case; how should I fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many foolish, and hurtful lusts, which drown Men in Destruction as (says St. Paul) they do that, will be rich; did I not distrust my own Blind Conduct, so much as wholly to rely upon the Guide and Protection of Divine Providence; our first Parents fondness to have their Eyes open'd, hath so depriv'd us their Posterity of Sight and Light, there's now no stirring a Step without a Guide; and where shall we find any but *Blind Guides*, unless GOD himself should vouchsafe to Guide us, which of his infinite Mercy, he has, in giving us a Saviour to give Light to them that sit in darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, and to guide our Feet into the way of Peace; who would not rejoyce in this Light and Direction, and seek no other, for indeed we are never brought into the way of Peace, till we renounce all our own Wisdom and Humane Reason, and humbly and meekly give up our selves to the guidance of GOD's Holy Spirit, in all the ways he takes to teach and conduct us, through this World, as by his word read and preach'd, and by his Divine Providence, to our selves or others, and that Experience, by which we come sensibly to feel the weakness of Humane Nature perfectly, incapable of Divine Knowledge; and 'tis my Happiness, that I am

come at last to that experience; and time enough, it was as soon as GOD saw it necessary for His Glory. And now, after all, a new Experience is added, by writing this Essay, for by a deep and serious Reflection upon my past failings, and the way and means to avoid 'em, I have learnt that 'tis not Experience that can Humble us, or teach us any Thing, till GOD's Holy Spirit has truly mortified us, which no Care and industry of ours can accomplish; tho' Religion is more Experience than Knowledge, yet that Experience must be taught of GOD, and by his own Way and Method too: That is, in Time, and by Degrees.

How then can I imagine, I could mend my past Life, were I to begin again? Which way can I avoid the passing through the First Follies and Ignorance of youth, and then the Errors of our Violent Passions in our riper years, which help us to form wicked Principles and Contract vicious Habits? And after all this Mischief is done, then comes EXPERIENCE to make the Discovery of our Faults, which is all it can do, for 'tis only the Grace of GOD can mend 'em. And what Power have we over this Grace which GOD gives, when and to whom he pleases? We for our part, are much better at resisting than procuring it; but if by a deep search into my Heart and Mind, I find there the least Spark of Grace, all I can do, is to esteem it a precious heavenly Treasure, which I should study to preserve by heaping about it all that were capable of increasing it to a Flame, that might make it visible to my self and others, and never be extinguish'd. But I must be highly to blame

blame, and shew my self insensible of this Divine Favour and Mercy, if I do not give it full Power and Authority, to govern and direct me in all my *Thoughts, Words and Actions*; especially my **THOUGHTS**, for nothing less than the Grace of **GOD**, can rule them; and 'tis from them *our Words and Actions Spring*, if they are the true Interpreters of our minds, as in truth and sincerity, they ought to be; and 'tis a *vain attempt to go about to regulate our Words and Actions, without beginning at the Thoughts*, tho' I should allow the Advantage our Words and Actions have above 'em; because 'tis they only, and not our Thoughts, can pass the Judgment of the World, which we so much respect, but no perfection in our Words and Actions, while they differ from our Thoughts. To advance us higher, than to the being **HYPOCRITES** detested, both of **GOD** and Man.

But if by **GOD**'s Grace, I can regulate my **THOUGHTS**, I need not study so much my *Words and Actions*, for to be so very exact, and careful of my *Words and Actions* that relate to Men, but very careless of my Thoughts, (*one of the chief ways of my Converse with GOD*) can there be any defection in corrupt Nature, that ought to give more horror and confusion? Tho' I am very sensible, I am not able of my self, to think a good Thought, I will endeavour to avoid the entertainment of loose and evil Thoughts, and whatever gives nourishment to 'em: This if I can do, will put the surest restraint upon my Words and Actions, whatever opposition my Corrupt Nature shall make to it, I know how tedious every
thing

thing is, which we do without delight, and 'tis apparent that all Reading and Conversations are chosen to delight our depraved Passions and Inclinations. *I can remark from my youth, how I was pleas'd with Tales and simple Stories, when I had nothing in my Head, but Childish Fancies.*

After that, when I was possess'd with **A M-BITION AND CŪRIOUSITY**, I found much Pleasure in *Novels and Romances*, or any other Pieces of Wit and Novelty; but when I was once acquainted with the Charms of Virtue and Sobriety, I quitted all my former, for the single Pleasure of contemplating the Happiness of a Vertuous way of living, and no Books pleas'd me but of that Subject. But now at last, I pursue a *Pleasure Transcendent to all these*; 'tis to be united, and enjoy the presence of **G O D**, and all the ways that lead to it; to that end I place my whole delight in *reading the Holy Scriptures*, humbly beginning with Prayer. 'Tis a Holy Conversation that leaves an Impression upon the Mind, of the Power, the Majesty, and the Infinite Goodness, and Mercy of **G O D** to poor Sinners *so full of Love to us, and pity to our failings and infirmities*, that there's nothing to discourage us, either in our selves or him; and where else can we hope to find so much Joy and Consolation? But I remember the Time when I had rather have read *any other Book of Divinity*, and am therefore, willing to hope 'tis a Mark of **G O D**'s Love reveal'd to me, which has in some Measure, taken up my Thoughts and Affections, and made this Change.

Thus, having *G O D, and His Holy VVord for my Guide*, I may go on chearfully, but no farther then that leads me I will not presume to tread in the Paths of the Great Saints, unless I had the same Measure of Zeal and Devotion, for so I may lead my self beyond my strength, *and make Religion a Penance instead of a delight.* I had rather take my Measures of Devotion and Prayer, from the Love and Zeal I find in my own Breast; not that I should decline any labour or difficulty, that meets me in my Duty, for *I know I am a Soldier, and must indure hardness.* But for all whatever I could possibly do or suffer, I should desire no greater Reward in this Life, than *to delight in Acts of Devotion*, which with the Blessing of *G O D* will Naturally follow; for what is our Duty, but to pursue the Destruction, of all the Enemies to Truth and Holiness? And could we obtain an intire Victory over them, nothing would obstruct our *communion with G O D*, our Joy and our Delight: But knowing how much my *Enemies* exceed me in strength and Power, I must be ready with all my Forces, and give 'em no Advantage by my sloth and negligence. I will be careful to beg of *G O D* that Assistance I need, and content my self with such a Victory as he is pleas'd to give me; *all my Desires shall wait on his pleasure*, for that Great *G O D*, that at first made me what he pleased, and sent me into the World in that Circumstance he approved, has the same Right to dispose of all he has given me, *Soul, Body and Goods*; if I be not slothful and negligent, but thankfully make use of those Means his good Providence brings me,

me,

me, for the support of my self and those that depend on me; 'tis all I can, or need to do, as to what relates to the temporal Things of this Life; for by taking care, I shall but make it worse; *sufficient to the Day is the Evil thereof*. And if I am so unable to provide for my Body, much more for my Soul; for if GOD did not prevent me with his Grace, I could not so much as desire it, or take any delight in using the Means he has ordain'd for obtaining it; and Blessed be GOD, that has not made *our well Being depend upon our Performances*. They are his good Gifts alone, that preserves the Life, both of Body and Soul; and for our Comfort and Security, the Gifts and Calling of GOD, are without Repentance. To be sure he will finish what he has once begun; and as to our Condition in this World, *a Mediocrity in our Desires and Expectation is best*. I will therefore, with a faithful Servant of GOD, pray, *Lord let me be a sharer with thy Saints in the Life to come; and let me act in this Life, what part it pleases thee, to impose upon me*: But for Spiritual Gifts and Graces, there is nothing too great for us to Hope and Expect from GOD's bountiful and gracious Promise, *even the Holy Spirit to those that ask it*; so that no failing and Infirmity of mine, shall Discourage me; but I will pray *O LORD GOD, if I cannot be like thee in Holiness, let me be like thy Angels in Obedience*; and if I can attain to neither, let me at least **ASPIRE TO BOTH**, and what I want in Power and Performance, let me supply with **VOWS AND PRAYERS**.

And

And thus has my AFTER-THOUGHT brought many ERRORS to Light, which I forgot to insert in the several STAGES of my Life.

But tho' by ransacking my Life and Actions, I find my self guilty of many ERRORS; yet I Challenge the worst Enemy I have to prove, Black is my Eye, with respect to Women, Avarice, Drunkenness, Injustice, or any other immoral Practice; not but the single Life I'm forc'd to, will make People the more censorious, and some that have been in the OVEN, will be railing Lies of me (*so common to men under a Cloud*) but I referr'em to Time, to clear me; for by the Grace of GOD, I shall live such a NEW LIFE, as I may have a Conscience void of Offence, both towards GOD and towards Man.

'Tis a Comfort, that ACCUSATIONS make no Man a Criminal: (*Aristophanes* was accus'd Ninty Five Times, and ever acquitted) or if they did, my Friend Mr Richard are Taylor (and all the Houses where I have liv'd) are ready to testifie in what Innocent Manner I spend my Hours; or supposing there were such a SHE LUNATICK (for my own Sex was never guilty of such MADNESS) as to mind the Words of distracted People, such a TADRY is fitter for BEDLAM; than those confin'd to a Chain, or a Dark Room: not that the greatest Innocence will clear a Man of Reflection, (even Charity to a Widdow in Bedlam, or the requiting of Innocent Favours, shall pass for I KNOW NOT WHAT) but shall I be UNGRATEFUL (a Vice that

that my Soul abhors) because the World is UNCHARITABLE? GOD forbid! I will ever do what I think my Duty, and BID THE WORLD GO WHISTLE: I live above (undeserv'd) Slander, and dare (when e'er I am wrong'd) trust Heaven with my Vindication, I may indeed suffer a while) shou'd my Enemies live conceal'd) but it can't be long for the Sun, tho' CURTAIN'D with Clouds, yet in Time, dissipates the congeal'd Vapours, and gets the Victory, and dissolves these Vails to thinness, and so to nothing. So honest Men (like Socrates) dissipate Calumnies by the Innocence of their Lives, as the Christal Currents of Rivers carry along the small flying Dust. All the Arrows of Re-proach (as is seen in the Disgrace that befalls Slanderers) return upon the Calumniator. (for I'll find him out if he en't hang'd) Thus a Basilisk, desirous to infect a Lookingglass, killeth himself, by Repercussion of Vapours which proceed from his own Body; and the Slanderer doth the like, when (like the Accusers of Socrates) he meeteth with an unspotted Life, It is a smooth Glass, which killeth him with his own proper Arms: And for this Reason, when Philip was advis'd to Chastise the Grecians for speaking against him, he only answer'd, If they Slander me without Reason, what wou'd they do if I shou'd do them hurt? But (added he) they make me a better Man; for I strive daily, both in my Words and Deeds, to prove them Lyars. I'll imitate PHILIP in this Excellent Practice, and hope to lead such A NEW LIFE, that even the DEVIL himself shall find it hard to

accuse me (were't possible) of *one sinful Thought*; but cou'd I *refine my self to an Angel*, or were as *INNOCENT* as those in Paradise; there's some in *St. Albans* (cou'd it save 'em Two Pence) wou'd rail at me. Almost every Man knows so much *Ill of himself*, that he is very forward to censure another, but (as in the former Part of my Life, so in the Conclusion of it) *I Judge of all Mens Religion by their Charity: Prejudice and mis-information has murder'd the Reputation of many Innocent Persons; and for that Reason, I never judge any Man unheard; but now a daies, Men are bold to speak any thing, since many are willing to credit all, but more especially Lyes. Lyes are sooner believ'd than Truth, and for this Reason, one Man will Slander his Neighbour, to pick a Thank; another, to Revenge a Quarrel; a Third from the Pleasure he takes in doing of Ill Turns; Doll Wickham slander'd that vertuous Person, that advis'd her against hanging herself. And every Man thinks (be he never so scrupulous in other Respects) that to B E-R O G U E another, is to B E-S A I N T himself; so that if I believe One Report in Forty, I give a very large Allowance. And none will deny this, that considers,*

That *Sparkes*, a *Flintshire* Minister, had a Bastard laid to his Charge, and was Suspended on that occasion; the Woman afterwards asking Mr. *Sparkes's* Pardon, and declar'd his Innocence to the whole World

That a *London* Divine was charg'd
with

with Whoredome, for only having a *Woman* to rub his Side in a Fit of the *Spleen*.

That the Reverend — (a Man of a spotless Life) was call'd a *Night Walker*, for only being like the Person that endeavour'd to pick up the Maid that accus'd him.

That the Parson of L—— (a) was so deep in Debt he cou'd not shew his *EARS*; That 'twas a Judgment upon him, for Slandering his Friend at the *Request of a Woman*, or (as the Dissenters tell us) for *ACADEMICALLY*, b—h—g his own Nest.

That *ENFIELD* was tax'd with Incest, for (only) loving one Sister more than another, tho' she was a Woman of strict Vertue, and made an *AFFIDAVIT* of her Brothers Innocence.

That a Merchant in Dublin, sent an *IRISH VENTURE* (I mean another Mans Wife) to London, at his own Charge, when her Husband asserted he sent her by the Advice of the *Dublin Physicians*, and that he gave her Money to bear her Charges.

That the Widdow T—— was a *LEUD WOMAN* ('twas said by one that liv'd in her House) for letting a Married Man out of her Chamber at Twelve at Night.

(a) In Surrey.

That Madam I — Murder'd her Husband with **M E E R A V A R I C E** (I cou'd Name the Person that reported this) and that she often *Stole Candles* ends at Church to save her Pockets at home.

That *Valeria* had got me an *Heir* to Sampsil (and for that *Reason* retir'd to *Luton*) tho' I had not seen her in Two Years.

What a **V I L E C R E W** is here, cou'd Accusations have made them guilty but these, (and Fifty more I cou'd Name) were all very *innocent Persons* (a) tho' made as **B L A C K** as Independent Malice cou'd do it. And for my own share, **T W O O L D M A I D S** have talk'd very freely of me, and for no other Reason, but that my Wife and I are parted; but *my Conscience is better then a Thousand Witnesses*, and those Actions of my Life, which some have thought the *most culpable*, I solemnly declare to be the most Innocent. Tis true, my Hereditary Distemper the **S T O N E**, often brings me so very **L O W**, that I am not able to help my self.

At Mr. *Marjals* in *Suffolk*, I could not turn my self in my Bed, for several Months.

At Mr. *Lutwiches*, I was brought to the Brink of Eternity.

At Mrs. *Gardners*, I was consum'd to a meer Skeleton.

Or if by their **W I N C I N G** they show the contrary, both they (and the World) shall hear **F U R T H E R** of me.

At Mr. *Wilsons*, I was up given up for a Dead Man.

And I am (often) seiz'd in the Streets with such *Fits of the Stone*, as I can neither stand nor go.

This makes it NECESSARY for me (except I'd perish to save charges) to have the constant Assistance of some Person, and none so fit as those (*for my own Sex make but odd! Nurses*) that have been *Indefatigable* in the saving my my Life; and as Zealous (nay, perhaps have been OVER RIGHTEOUS) for the health of my Soul.

The Reverend Mr. *CHARLES BUCK*, (a) gives CLIMENE the Character of being *A very good Woman, and an excellent Nurse* ——— And Mr. *HENRY* (who liv'd with her several Months) assured his Friend (b) *That she is a very Vertuous Person, in all Respects* and all the Persons that know her, assert, that she strives to be so like Vertue (*by fasting every Sunday, and receiving the Sacrament every Month*) that you can scarce know one from the other. This is that *Guardian-Angel* that has kept me from SIN and DEATH, and none but *Whores and Rogues* will slander such a necessary and Pious Friend; In a Word, *Vertue, and Innocence*, was the Rife and Cement of my Friendship to GOOD *Climene*: Neither wou'd I desire her HELP (tho' to want it, wou'd end my Life) did I not think her *CHASTE*, so much as in Thought.

(a) In his Letter Dated September, 25th 1723. (b) Mr. P. Bowtel.

But tho' my FREQUENT Disorders of *Body and Mind*, make it necessary for me to have the CONSTANT SERVICE of some Person, yet no Creditor is a Farthing the worse for the CHARGE, that attends my Sickness (as I SLAVE for it at my Fingers ends.)

Perhaps such a Miser as R—— will abuse me for taking such Care of my self. But (as no Man shall lose a Farthing by me) I may justly despise such Merciless Creditors Indeed all men under a Cloud are call'd Rogues and Scoundrels 'twas the fate of the Two D——neels, and that True Nathaniel, Mr. William Emp——n) but 'tis a Word I could never digest, and (by the Grace of GOD) I will never deserve it. Yet I can't deny, but most Men owe not only their Learning to their Plenty, but likewise their Vertue and their Honesty; For how many Thousands are there in the World, in great Reputation for there Honest and Just Dealings with Mankind, who if they were put to their Shifts (as others, as honestly, inclin'd are) wou'd soon lose their Reputation, yea turn Rogues and Scoundrels, as the VULGAR think, and generally call such as are not able to pay their Debts: I Question not but WANT, AND SELF PRESERVATION (for Hunger will break through Stone Walls) wou'd put some of them upon those very hard shifts, they now blame so much in others.

But if my *Marrying a Fortune* has made me a Scoundrel, (for my Bond wou'd pass for Six Thousand Pound, if my Wife wou'd let it) 'tis but while I continue a WIDDOWER BEWITCH'D,

WITCH'D, for that very Minute she opens her Purse, (*which 'tis thought, will reach from hence to St. Albans*) I shall be counted the same **HONEST MAN** which I was before, and will run to meet her with open Arms.

But I need not apologize here; for to do my *Creditors Justice*, they are all equally Civil to me: If any have exceeded in kindness, 'tis Mr. *Grantham* and Mr. *Hool*. But if I had nothing left but a **NEW-LIFE**, I have enough a Conscience to bear my Charges to Heaven

So that you see **READER**, none will censure those Friends that serve me, but such as wou'd slander Vertue it self, were she *dress'd in Petticoats*. But alas! some Men are so vile, that when no Merit of Fortune can make 'em hope to enjoy the bodies of those Beauties they are charm'd with, they will yet *Lie with their Reputations*, and make their Fames suffer: 'Tis true to such Women, *Innocence is the safest Armour* (for just Heaven will ne'er forsake the Innocent) yet this leud Revenge is a **DOUBLE VILLANY** for certainly Women are necessary Evils; from our Cradle, to our Grave, we are wrapt in a **CIRCLE** of Obligations to 'em; Dr. Tom— was of this Opinion, or had never sent so often for *Iris*; and I am sure, such a Mortal as I (who am helpless at best) can't live without their Assistance, which none but a **WHORE** will deny me; for *I heartily Wish Adultery was Death*. But sure all the World have been in the **OVEN**, for a Man can't have a Woman to **SERVE** him, (*tho' she liv'd the life of an Angel*) but
C . . .
straight

straight he must lie with her. But how many Times do believ'd *Mis-interpretations*, cause Men to have undue, or evil Opinion of us, and our innocent and faultless Actions; and for that Reason, I will never deny my self *an honest solace*, for fear of an airy Censure, Why shou'd an other Mans injustice, breed my unkindness to my self.

I would not for the *Mannour of Sampsil*, to which Madam Nicholas Tronise, has given me a just Title (a) Contribute to my own destruction, which I must do shou'd I (to Humour censorious People: rather *eye in a Fit of the Stone*, then receive help from the Hand of a Woman. No (Dear Spouse) assure yourself, *I shan't deny my self of a necessary Assistance*, because the World is uncharitable: I am more afraid of my self, than of all the World. A Man can't run from his own conscience. Now if I live according to this *IDEA*, a Fig for *B—N—W* ———, and all those *SUMMER-FRIENDS*, that now requite me *Evil for Good*, and wou'd by their Private Slanders *U N M A K E* those Favours they can never (b) requite.

(a) As for that sort of Debt, which is brought upon a Man by his own Voluntary Promise, it cannot without great Injustice, be withholden, for it is now the Mans *R I G H T*, and then 'tis no matter, by what means it came to be so. Therefore we see David makes it part of the Description of a just Man, Psal. 15. 4. That he keeps his Promises, yea, though they were made to his own Disadvantage. Thus far the Author of the *W H O L E D U T Y O F M A N* p. 227. and (he adds) Surely he is wiserly unfit to ascend to that *H O L Y H I L L* there spoken of, either as that signifies the Church here, or Heaven hereafter, that does not punctually observe this part of Justice. — (b) As they formerly own'd in their Letters to

'Twas said of *CHRYSOSTOME*, That he never spake Ill of any Man, but your Right Slanderer, will Publish that to all, that he dares not own to any: *Their Hands can never be clean, that throw so much Dirt in other Mens Faces*: Sure I am, the abusive Language of *S_____s* Children has made 'em as Black as Hell. They now Act the ungrateful *SPANIEL*, who when he gets out of the River, shakes off that very Water which supported him; but when they come to their *DEATH-BEDS*, I can't see how they can die in Peace (especially *Parson Grub*) without asking my Pardon for those many false and injurious Things they said of me, and of those *INNOCENT PERSONS* before mention'd.

By this it appears (as I said before) That *Accusations make no Man a Criminal*, and that there be many things that look *ODD*, when we inspect into the Causes of them are *STRICTLY* Vertuous; and for this Reason (might I live over my Daies again) I'D *BELIEVE NO MANS EYES NOR EARS, BUT MY OWN*; or (a) if there were any need that a Man shou'd be evil spoken of, it is but fair and equal, that his good and bad Qualities shou'd be mention'd together, otherwise he may be strangely mis-represented, and an indifferent Man may be made a Monster; they that will observe nothing in a good Man, but his Failings and Infirmities, may make a shift to render a very wise and good Man (and I never pretended to be either)

(a) *Archbishop Tillotson's Works*, p. 515.

very despicable. If one shou'd heap together all the passionate Speeches, all the forward and imprudent Actions of the best Man; all that he had said and done amiss in his whole Life, and present it all at one View, concealing his Wisdom and Vertues; the Man in this Disguise, wou'd look like a Mad-man or a Fury; and yet if his Life were fairly represented, and just in the same manner it was led, and his many and great Vertues set over against his failings and infirmities, he wou'd appear to all the World, to be an admirable and excellent Person: But how many and great soever any Mans Ill Qualities are, it is but just, that with all his heavy Load of Faults, he shou'd have the due Praise of the few real Vertues that are in him.

One wou'd think this Passage of Bishop Tillotson, were enough to CURE CENSURING. Tis certain, had the Innocent Persons, before mentioned, but met with this just Treatment, they had pass'd (as they really are) for Excellent Christians: However, I have here inserted, what FALSE things ha' bin said of 'em, that the World may see what a vile Thing Slandering is (especially the private Slanderer) *the Thing is True*, but pray say nothing, you had it from me, is a Wound can never be Cur'd; 'tis Stabbing a Man behind, and is the worst sort of Murder, as it leaves no room for Defence; and for this Reason, for the TIME TO COME, I'll rather be silent, than speak Ill of any Man, tho' he deserve it; and that I may do so, I'll observe this Rule: *Whensoever I hear one Ill spoken of, before I second it, I'll examine mine own Heart, and it is*
odds

odds ; but I shall find in my self, either the same Fault, or a worse than what he is accus'd for ; so I shall be forced, *either to mend my self, or not to condemn him* ; which if I do, it shall be to his Face ; for the PRIVATE SLANDERER (b) is the BLACKEST of all Villains.

Besides, 'tis a pitiful Cowardice that strikes a Man in the Dark (I mean, that sends LYES to St. *Albans* without a Name) and then like a Serpent, creeps into his Hole again for want of Courage (or Witnesses) to prove 'em. This way of Stabbing is so unmanly, that ANTHONY put those Slanderers to Death, which cou'd not prove their Accusations. The Design of these *Private Varlets*, was to make a Difference between me and *Valeria* ; but I'm much mistaken in my present Wife, if her great Innocence don't set her above SUSPITION ('tis only guilty People are Jealous) or if it don't, my Innocence is too great to need my Concealing the worst that *Malice or Slander* can say of me, for there's no Sex in Souls ; and I shall think it a Duty to respect Vertue where e'er I find it ; my First Wife was of this Opinion, and therefore told the *Findrick* LADY, that *Platonick Love* is the most Noble, and may be allowed by all. THE LEARNED NORRIS, Publish'd several Letters which he sent to his Maiden Friend, and (sure I am) none but such as are leud themselves (and so can't help suspecting

(b) As I prove in my Essay, call'd the SHORTEST-WAY with Whores and Rogues.

of others) will censure a Friendship where *the Body has nothing to do.*

Now if any are so vile, as to nibble at this **CONFESSION**, they may go about their Business, for I have not an Acquaintance in the whole World (I'll scarce except the Reverend *W——*) but may find enough in his own **LIFE** to damp his censuring me; and those Vertuous Persons (**THAT OUT OF MEER CHARITY**) endeavour to save my Life.

Thus have I finish'd my **AFTER-THOUGHT** (which concludes *the Account of my Life and Errors*) and if my Reader apprehend me, such as I am, I have my end in this Publication. But if by these *Features of my Confession*, he imagin others to my Prejudice, let him look to it, for I wou'd come again from the other World, to contradict any one that shou'd *represent me other than I was*, tho' he did it to honour me.

But I think I may assure the Reader, that if he practises *my Idea of a New Life*, and avoids the **ERRORS** I repent of in these Sheets, we shall meet in Heaven at last; for tho' *Pride and vain Glory* may incline that Man to recommend *Mortification and Repentance*, and extol even the Stoicism of *Cato*, who privately hugs his darling Lusts, and lives as **SENSUAL** a Life, as the late Earl of *W——ck*. Yet Reader, if **THEE AND I** (which is **TRUE LIVING**) in the Vigor of our Youth, and the full Career of Pleasure, set Bounds to our inordinate Appetites; if we begin a *New Life,*

Life, before Sickneſs comes, and retire from the World, and its Vanities before they leave us, we plainly demonſtrate, that *there is ſome more ſublime Happineſs we purſue after, ſome more perfect good which attracts our Affections.*

To perſuade to this NEW LIFE, is the deſign of this *Idea,* and that we may want no Helps in the Way to Heaven; one end of our Saviours coming into the World, was to be a *Pattern of Holy Living and Dyeing,* to convince us, that notwithſtanding the Infirmities of our Nature. *the moſt ſtubborn Luſts may be ſubdued,* the moſt allureing Temptations may be rejected, if we call in his Grace to the Aſſiſtance of our Honoſt Endeavours.

So that you ſee Reader, my *Idea of a New Life,* is no feigned Matter to beg applauſe of Men, but is all (except the Two Prayers of SIR RICHARD BAKER) *what I Collected from my own Breſt,* and is, *my true Thoughts in Sincerity;* It was written in SOLITUDE, and wants thoſe Embelliſhments which it might have had (*was I near a Library*) but 'tis as much to the purpoſe, to aſſure my Reader, I writ it with my own Hand, as a REGISTER of my fix'd Reſolution to practice it.

I hope I wou'd rather dye a *Thouſand times,* then commit again, the Errors I have here confeſs'd. Indeed it was a ſaying of a Father of the Church: *That 'Tis more caſie to find one that has preſerv'd his Innocence from his Baptiſm, than a ſincere and hearty Penitent, becauſe few*
are

are converted as they ought to be ; nevertheless, GOD out of his Infinite Goodness and Compassion, does from Time to Time, turn the Hearts of some PRODIGIOUS SINNERS, demonstrating to the World, that he is truly a GOD of Mercy ; and that there is no Man who has been never so desperately wicked, but he will receive him, if he enters upon a NEW LIFE, and does it with a Heart truly sensible of his former Sins : He does not desire the death of a Sinner, for he came to lay down his Life for such, but only that they would be Converted and live.

Then shall it suffice (oh my GOD) to acknowledge thy *BENEFITS*? Will it be any Recompence to employ the *Remainder* of that Time in thy Service, which hitherto has been spent in affronting thy Majesty ; or will the divorcing those *unlawful Pleasures* to which I have bin formerly wedded, satisfy thy Justice, and blot out my Transgressions ?

In short, Will it be sufficient to secure me from HELL, that henceforward I will aspire after nothing but HEAVEN, the Fruition of thy Self, and those Ravishing Pleasures which are at thy Right Hand for evermore ; if so, *Blessed Lord*, I will endeavour (by thy Grace) daily to Act Faith and Repentance, and direct all the *future Steps* of my Life towards Heaven.

And as I writ this Idea to influence (my own Practice) and to caution those who *are yet unborn, or but just enter'd into the World* ; so I also Publish it for their sakes (who having seen their

their ERRORS) are desirous to Reform their Lives, and *bid adieu to their vain Conversation*; and I hope it will put all (especially Old Sinners) upon A NEW WAY of living.

Sure 'tis time for us all to examine what *Publick and Secret Sins* we have been guilty of, and to immitate that Repentance which I press so much in, EVERY STAGE of my Life.

But let the *Atheist* (or *Libertine*) live as he please, for, my self, I'm desirous to bid a long Farewell to LIFE (*which at best, is but a dull Repetition of the same Thing*) and if I spend the remaining part of my Daies according to this *Idea*, when I come die (I hope) *I shall have nothing to do, but so die*; not that I wou'd be deliver'd from *sudden Death*, in respect of it self, for *I care not how short my Passage be, so it be safe*: Never any weary Traveller complain'd that he came too soon to his Journeys End. 'Tis true, the MANNER OF SAMPSEL is a fine Sight, but he that looks up to Heaven, will not care for the World—*Oh how amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! One Day in thy Courts is better than a Thousand.* There's nothing in this World, but *Vanity, Disappointment, and Black Ingratitude.*

Oh that I was strip'd into a NAKED SPIRIT, and Set a Shore in a better World.

1.

*What tho' I must pass through the Gates of
(Death;
It is to come to thee that gav'st me B R E A T H ;
And thou art better (Lord), than Dunghill Earth.*

2.

*When shall I come? Lord tell me, tell me when,
What must I carry Threescore Years and Ten?
My Thirsty Soul cannot hold out till then.*

When I consider, that Sin like a L E P R O -
S I E hath so corrupted me, that there is no
soundness in my *Mind, Memory, Will and Af-*
fections; it makes me e'en weary of Life.

Indeed, Death is call'd the K I N G O F
T E R R O R S ; but I do not fear Death for
the P A I N of it, for I am persuaded, I have
endur'd as great Pains in Life, as I shall find
in Death; and I trust G O D who hath
loved me in Life, will not neglect me in
Death, but will succour and strengthen me
all the Time of the Combat.

Neither do I fear Death for any L O S S,
for I shall but lose my Body by it, and
that is but a Prison to my Soul, an old rot-
ten House, or ragged Garment; nay, I shall
not lose that neither, for I shall have it
restored again at my Saviours Second Coming,
much better than now it is; for this V I L E
B O D Y shall be like the B O D Y of
C H R I S T, and by Death, I shall obtain
a far better Life.

But

But seeing SIN will cleave to me to the last MOMENT of my Life (and seeing upon that MOMENT depends Eternity) I wou'd expire with these or the like words:

(My last PRAYER.)

ETternal and Everliving GOD, I'm now drawing near the Gates of Death, and which is infinitely more Terrible, the Bar of thy Judgment. Oh LORD, when I consider this, my Flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and my Heart is Wounded within me. But one Deep, calleth upon another, the depth of my Misery, upon the depth of thy Mercy: LORD save me now, or I Perish Eternally—— LORD, one Day is with thee, as a Thousand years; Oh let thy Mighty Spirit work in me now, in this my last Hour, whatsoever thou seest wanting to fit me for thy Mercy and Acceptance; and then, tho' I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil. I can't without some Reluctance, think of leaving my Friends and Relations, and for ever shutting my Eyes, upon that World where I now live, (to go into a World, where I never was) but tho' the Light is Pleasant, and a joyful thing it is to behold the Sun, yet let it abundantly