

OR,

Mr. JOHN DUNTON's Serious Thoughts upon the Present and Future State, in a Fit of Sickness that was judg'd Mortal, in which many New Opinions are Started and Prov'd; and in particular this, That the sincere Practice of known Duties, or dying daily to this Life and World, would of it self resolve the most ignorant Person in all the abstruse Points of the Christian Religion—Being,

A New Directory for Holy Living and Dying;

Compos'd of the Author's own Experience in Religion, Politicks, and Morals, from his Childhood to his Sixty Third Year, (but more especially during his dangerous Disease in Ireland, in the Year Ninety Eight, when his Life was despair'd of)—And Completed in Twenty Essays upon such Nice and Curious Points in Divinity, as were never handled before—To which is added,

The Sick-Man's Passing-Bell.

To remind all Men of that Death and Eternity to which they are hastening.—Containing,

- (1.) *God be Merciful to me a Sinner*: Or, DUNTON at Confession, in which he discovers the Secret Sins of his whole Life; with his Resolutions in what penitent Manner (by the Help of God) he'll spend the short Time he has yet to live.
- (2.) *Dunton's Legacy to his Native Country*: Or, A dying Farewell to the most Remarkable Persons and Things both in Church and State; with his last Prayer (or those very Petitions to Almighty God) with which he hopes to Expire.
3. *A Living Man following his own Corpse to the Grave*: Or, DUNTON Represented as Dead and Buried, in an Essay upon his own Funeral—To which is added (for the Oddness and Singularity of it) A Copy of his last Will and Testament—His living ELEGY writ with his own Hand—And the EPITAPH design'd for his Tombstone, in the New Burying-Place—Together with
- (4.) *The Real Period of Dunton's Life*: Or, A Philosophical Essay upon the Nature of that Grand Climacterick Year Sixty Three, in which (as few Persons out-live that Fatal Time) he expects to be actually Buried with that best of Wives Mrs. Elizabeth Annesley (alias Dunton) with their Reasons for Sleeping together in the same Grave 'till the General Resurrection, as contained in two Letters that pass'd between Mr. Dunton and his Wife, a few Days before she Dyed.

The whole Directory and Passing-Bell, submitted to the Impartial Censure of the Right Reverend Father in God WILLIAM Lord Bishop of ELY.

By Mr. JOHN DUNTON, a Member of the Athenian Society, and Author of the Essay intitled—The Hazard of a Death-bed Repentance.

*We all are seiz'd with the Athenian Itch,
News, and New Things, do the whole World bewitch—Dr. Wild.*

Printed for S. Popping in Paternoster-Row.—Price 1 s. 6 d.

TO

The Right Reverend Father in God,

W I L L I A M

Lord BISHOP of E. Y.

My Honour'd Lord,

THAT this *poor Offering* from the most Affectionately Devoted of your Lordship's Servants, humbly presumes to lay it self at your Lordship's Feet, is not out of any *high Opinion* of my Performance, (tho' call'd *A New Directory for Holy Living and Dying*) but purely as a Testimony of that profound Respect and high Veneration, so justly due from, and sincerely Paid your Lordship by every true British Protestant.

My Lord, Whilst all the World is in an Hurry toss'd here and there with *Vanity* and *Vexation*, whilst few or none almost are looking after their *Future State*, or regarding what will become of them to *Eternity*; I judg'd it not amiss a little to call my *Fellow-Sinners* aside, to peruse such serious Thoughts concerning the *Present and Future State* (or that MOMENT of Time upon which an ETERNITY depends) as came into my Mind some Years ago in a Fit of Sicknes that was judg'd Mortal, (but more especially in *Ireland* in the Year *Ninety Eight*, whilst I pass'd away some *Restless Nights* in a dangerous Disease in which my Life was despair'd of.)

It was a Custom in former Times for great Men to make them *Sepulchres* in their *Gardens* to mind them of Death, in the midst of the Pleasures of this Life; this *New Directory for Holy Living and Dying* may not unfitly be termed a *Garden*, wherein, whosoever takes a daily Walk, will find that *Titles of Honour* are witten in Dust, and that Princes and great Men must die; that their very *Monuments* are Mortal, and will in time be found as *Archimedes* his Tomb (by *Cicero*) in *Vepretis*, overgrown with Thorns and Briars: And that even poor Men too (who have no Comet, Prodigy, or Earthquake to toll the Knell of their Departure, but) who do as it were steal into their silent Graves with no greater Noise than can be made by a Branch of

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Rosemary or Sprig of *Lawrel*) have Precious and Immortal Souls to save as well as they; with the Methods and Courses both should take to get *saving Grace*, and the *Knowledge of Christ*, which will prove a Possession for them to Eternity.

So that my *Readers* will find in my **NEW DIRECTORY** both *Instructions* to guide them, and *Comforts* to support them in their Journey on Earth till they arrive at their Heavenly Country; and as their Stay in this World is very uncertain, I have endeavour'd to Prove (in the *Following Directory*) that 'tis every Man's Duty (from the King to the Beggar) To live every Day as if it were his last; and, for that Reason, I intitle these serious Thoughts *A new Directory for holy Living and Dying*; for having now done with **POLITICKS** (i.e. having published *Forty Political Tracts* to detect his Majesty's Enemies, when Plotting in the Royal Palace, and other Parts of *Great-Britain* and *Ireland* to restore the Pretender, which I printed at the Hazard of my Life and Fortune; and therefore intitled, my *Early, Bold, and Successful Discoveries—Neck or Nothing—Queen Robix—And, The Impeachment, &c.*) I shall spend the remaining Part of my Days on Subjects that chiefly Respect the other World, as believing, that the frequent Meditation upon Death (and that Eternity which follows it) is the best Motive to an Holy Life; and therefore as your Lordship comes the nearest to Perfection in your *Preaching and Living* of any Prelate (or Minister) that I ever heard or knew, I judg'd you the fittest Patron, to whom I could inscribe those serious Thoughts in my late *Sickness*; which are the Subject of this First Part of my *New Directory* (in which I have advanc'd many Things wholly New and Unblown upon, but more especially where I prove that every Man is or might be his own Parson) and as I submit all my New Opinions to your Lordship's *Impartial Censure*, I hope they will meet with a kind Acceptance with all such Pious Minds that know your Lordship will approve of no new Discoveries in Religion, but what are Orthodox.

(For such Criticks ought to Blush for their great Ignorance, who suspect New Speculations in Divinity to be an Enemy to Religion) However, I must own to your Lordship I was so Early seiz'd with the **ATHENIAN ITCH**, that my whole *Directory* is compos'd of my own Experience in Religion, Politics, and Morals, from my Childhood to my Sixty-third Year (in which many pious Novelties are started and proved) and is writ in imitation of *Montaign's* Essays, who makes his own Experience the chiefest Argument in all his Writings; and therefore as my *Essay* intitled—*The Hazard of a Death-Bed Repentance*—was so well received (by the sincere Christian of all Perasions) as to encourage me to compleat it in a Tenth Edition

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(which is now ready for the Press) I hope my *new Experimental Directory*, will meet with the *like good Success*; however to make amends for any thing of Errors which have happened through Ignorance or Prejudice, or want of a more nice Disquisition into the Nature of Holy Living and Dying, I think fit to promise the World, that the remaining Parts of my *New Directory* shall have the Inspection of the whole *Athenian Society* (of which I have the Honour to be a Member) and shall be compleated in Twenty Essays upon such *nice and curious Points in Divinity*, as were never handled before; to which I shall add *The sick Man's Passing-Bell*, to remind others as well as my self of that Death and Eternity to which we are all posting as fast as the Wings of Time (or Day and Night) can carry us thither.

My Lord--I shall only presume to add, if Success in my honest Design of reforming my Fellow Subjects (both in their Religion, Politicks and Morals) answer my Wishes and Prayers, I shall ask no greater Happiness or Reward in this World, except it be a Deliverance from those Debts which I have contracted in the Service of my King and Country, that so (my few remaining Days being made a little easy and comfortable) I might have Nothing further to do in this *Moment* of Time, but to prepare for that Eternity that depends upon it; and I have great Hopes of being thus Happily deliver'd from *Debt* (the great Aversion of my whole Life) not only as I have often ventured my ALL in detecting the Enemies to *the Protestant Succession in the Illustrious House of Hanover* (as is largely proved in *—the Narrative of my Services and Sufferings in the glorious Cause of Religion and Liberty*—Annex't to this first Part of my *new Directory*) but also as I have the Honour to be one of those *Clergymens Sons* to whom his Majesty has promised "That they shall always have his Protection and Encouragement; and for that Reason (to use the Words of my Reverend Friend *Mr. Timothy Rogers*, "I reckon it "among the Felicities of my Life to have been a Prophet's Son, as my descending from the Tribe of *Levi* does in a very distinguished Manner recommend me to his Majesty's Favour, which I have great Reason to expect, as 'tis now a National Complaint that my desperate Venture of NECK or NOTHING to secure the Protestant Succession in his Illustrious House, has gone Nine Years unrewarded (as will be proved by my Brethren the Sons of the Clergy, in a Petition to the King at his Return from *Hanover*) Then sure I am, wou'd such a *Right Reverend Father in God* as the Bishop of ELY, (who has greatly distinguished his Affection to Ministers Children by a noble Gift to the *Sons of the Clergy*, but so far Condescend, as to represent to his Majesty my present deplorable Case, by Reason of Debts contracted in serving the Publick; this great Goodness in your

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Lordship (to the Eldest Son, Grandson, and Great Grandson of a Reverend Divine of the Church of *England*) wou'd so effectually deliver me from all my Troubles (his Majesty having promised "Never to forget his Obligations to those that have distinguish'd themselves in his Service) that I should have nothing further to do in this Transitory Life, but to get ready for my everlasting State; and this, I judge will be best done by practising those serious Thoughts that compose my *new Directory for holy living and Dying*.

That your Lordship may long continue a *bright Luminary* of our Church, a Glorious Asserter of Religion and Liberty, and a shining Pattern of Piety, Charity, and Moderation, and all other Christian Virtues on Earth, and Late, very Late, be translated from the SEE of *ELY*, to an Immortal *Diadem*, is, was, and to my last Breath shall be the Hearty Wish, and Earnest Prayer of him, who is with the Profoundest Respect and Reverence,

My Honoured Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most Humble Servant,

JOHN DUNTON.

This *FIRST PART* of the *New Directory for Holy Living and Dying* (together with this *Dedication*) were both prepared for the Perusal (and *Impartial Censure*) of the Right Reverend Father in God *WILLIAM* Lord Bishop of *ELY*, several Days before the *much lamented Death* of that truly Pious, and learned *Prelate*.

The *SECOND PART* of Mr. *John Dunton's New Directory for Holy Living, and Dying*, will contain the *Four following Essays*, viz.

ESSAY IV. — 'Tis easier to be Sav'd than Damn'd; or *DUNTON'S* Search into the Pleasures of a Religious Life, wherein he proves the *Self-Denying-Christian* (or Man in earnest for Heaven) takes greater Delight in *Mortifying the Sins of the Flesh*, than the greatest Libertine does in the Injoyment of his most Beloved Lust. — *Her ways are ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace*, Prov. 3. 17.

ESSAY V. — *Dunton's Creed*, (or the Religion of a Low Churchman) containing such a *New System of Moderate Principles* (or Right way to Heaven between all Extrems) as the *High Churchmen* now dislike, but wish they had Practiced when they come to die. Writ in Imitation of *Dr. Brown's RELIGIO MEDICI*. — *Let your Moderation be known unto all Men. The Lord is at hand*, Phil. 4. 5.

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Once in an Age the Moderate Man is in Fashion; each Extremes courts Him to make 'em Friends.—Dr. Fuller.

We agree in every Thing, and quarrel about Nothing.—Archbishop Tillotson's Sermon before Queen Mary.

ESSAY VI. *God be merciful to me a Sinner*; or, *Dunton at Confession*: in which he discovers the Secret Sins of his whole Life, (but not those of Whoredom, Slandering, Injustice, &c. — of which he challenges his worst Enemies to prove him ONCE Guilty) with his RESOLUTIONS in what penitent manner (by the help of God) he'll spend the SHORT TIME he has yet to live.—And the Publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his Eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his Breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a Sinner*, Luke 18. 13.

Who can understand his Errors? Cleanse thou me from my Secret Faults, Psal. 19. 12.

He that Repents is well near Innocent.—St. Austin.

ESSAY VII.— *The Happiness of not having our great Work to do when we come to Languish upon a Sick Bed*, or an experimental Essay upon *The Whole Duty of Man*. To which is added, *A View of Primitive Christianity, as exemplified in the Holy Life and Triumphant Death of that Best of Wives Mrs. Elizabeth Annesley (alias DUNTON)*. Also an Answer to this important Question, *Whether an Assurance of Heaven is possible in this World?* With a late Instance of it in *Mr. Albyn's Evidences for Eternal Life*, which are here printed from the Original Copy, and declared a good Title to Heaven, by several Eminent Divines.— Give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10.

Many Daughters have done Virtuously, but thou excellest them all, Prov. 31. 29.

Reader— Note, The Titles to all the REMAINING Essays (being Seventeen in Number) that are to compleat both by my *New Directory*, and *Sick-Man's-Passing-Bell*, shall be inserted in the *Second Part of my New Directory*, in which the Reader may expect those FOUR ESSAYS that are promised in this *First Part*.

ADVERTISEMENT.

BY Reason of the Author's Necessary Absence from the Press, several ERRORS have escaped Correction, which 'tis hoped the Candid Reader will either Pardon, or Amend with his Pen, as he reads the following Sheets.

ESSAY



ESSAY I.

Labour in vain; or, a Fruitless Search after Earthly Happiness; being Dunton's experimental Essay upon the Miseries and Vanities of human Life (but more especially those that Relate to his own Person) in which the tempting Features of Honour, Riches, Pleasure in the Time of his Health, are compared with their frightful Looks, when he thought he was seized with Death.

Published to warn *all Men* against setting their Hearts on this *Vain World*, but more especially those *Knaveish Directors*, that lately rob'd the Kingdom of *Immense Riches*, by their wicked Execution of the *South Sea Scheme*.

Then I looked on all the Works that my Hands had wrought, and on the Labour that I had laboured to do: and behold, all was Vanity and Vexation of Spirit, and there was no Profit under the Sun, Eccles. 2. 11.

Nam quid longa dies homini nisi longa dolorum Coluvies? —Mant.

What is a long Life, but even a continued sink of Sorrows?

THE Art of *knowing ones self*, is, what some *Heathens* have much talked of, but what some *Christians* have better practiced, And in Truth, it is so desirable a Perfection, that it is much to be wish'd, that the several Stations and Degrees of *Men* were Acquainted with it; however, *Nasce te ipsum*, is a Lesson a Man can never Learn too late; and therefore, tho' for Sixty three Years I have lived so much a Stranger to my self, that I have had little Leisure, and less desire to contemplate the *Miseries and Vanities of human Life*, (so far as I have experienced them in my own Person) but seeing (as *Cowley* says) —*The Voyage Life is longest made at Home.*— I'll now compare the tempting Features of *Honour, Riches, Pleasure* in the Time of my Health, with their *Frightful Looks*, when I thought I was seized

seized with Death in *Ireland*, in the Year *Ninety Eight*; for how can I better improve my RECOVERY from a dangerous Disease that was judged Mortal, than by shewing how I have LABOUR'D IN VAIN, for the whole Time I have yet liv'd? (i. e. Discover what a *Fruitless Search I have made* after Earthly Happiness for *Sixty three Years*) for as Death and I must shortly be better Acquainted, it will certainly be my *Wisdom* as well as my *Interest* to Familiarize it to my self before-hand; and I do not know how that can be better done, than by contemplating — *The Miseries and Vanities of human Life, in all its various Changes and Conditions* — And then to look upon Death as the Great *Panpharmakon and Remedy* of all those Evils that LIFE Subjects us to.

That I may make my own Experience the chiefest Argument in the following ESSAY, upon *the Miseries and Vanities of human Life*; my SERIOUS THOUGHTS both in this, and all those *Twenty ESSAYS* that are to compleat my *New Directory for Holy Living and Dying*; shall be chiefly such as may be useful to my own Heart and Practice, for the few remaining Days I have yet to live.

And here I shall first Observe, how ill are poor human Creatures by Nature provided against the innumerable Miseries of this Life; we are born Weak and Helpless, Dependent and meer Slaves, and so we continue some Years under Discipline better or worse, according to the Hands we light into, and to whom we owe our first Education, which proves too often a great Addition to our Misery; for be the Principles better or worse we first receive by them; we form our Habits, and launch into the World so well furnished, as we think, with those Principles, we need no better, but venture upon all Dangers and Temptations; before ever Reason or Experience, have taught us to mistrust our Imbecility and Ignorance of those Illusions the World abounds with, and which we find every where presented to our Senses, that are but too apt to Conspire with those deceitful Objects to betray us; so that if we have happily escaped the deforming of our Bodies, by the carelessness of Nurse and Mother, we are under a much greater Hazard in the forming of our Minds; our Parents being seldom so Moderate as to take a proper Care, but usually destroy all, either by a too fond Indulgence making us both our own Masters and theirs, or by a Tyrannical Severity teach us nothing but slavish Submission to their Humours; and some Parents are of such loose Principles, nothing can injure us more than their Teaching and Example; and here lies our Misery, that as we derive from our Parents the seeds of all Vice, so for want of Care to Irradicate 'em in our first Tuition, they spring up to a World of Misfortunes, which soon appear when we are once entered upon that Theatre, where we propose to meet with nothing but Pleasure and Advantage, and all that we see others possess'd of, especially those of our own Condition and Capacity; to which our great Opinion of our selves Levels a great many much above us, in every respect our Self-love, and want of Experience, keeps us from any mistrust of our Abilities; or the treacherous Designs of others; we take all those to be our Friends that carry us on in our Mistakes, and never go about to undeceive us; we think it the greatest Tyranny and Injustice to be deny'd the Liberty of experimenting all the Mischiefs that attend our Vices, our Vanity, Ambition and Curiosity; we measure our Happi-

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ness by the General Vogue and Opinion of the World, and those that make the Figure that procures the greatest Applause, are our Patterns to imitate, and we are so *dazled with the approaching Glory* we promise ourselves, we neither see nor consider the Charms of Vertue, which has of all others the least Share in the general Applause; and yet the designing to our selves so large a Share of *Wordly Greatness*, without respect to Vertue, is that which Poisons all our Faculties both of Soul and Body; it gives us up to the Tyranny of what ever *Pride, Excess* and *Vanity* can Subject us to, besides all the uneasy Customs, and exterior Ceremonies attending Greatness, which enslaves us to all our *Dependants*, and wherein we invert the Order of our Creation, turning that which was designed to *Humble* and make us know ourselves, into occasions of *Pride* and *Ostentation*; our *Cloathes*, the indication of our Shame and Misery, we make the Subject of our *Pride* and *Glory*; the excessive *Curiosity, Time* and *Money* we bestow upon 'em, shews how much we value 'em, and ourselves for 'em, while we as much despise and scorn those that want 'em, and all our other Weaknesses and Necessities we supply with so much *Pomp* and *Magnificence*; we see nothing in 'em to Humble us, but rather what augments our *Pride*, by distinguishing ourselves by that means from those whose *Necessities* are supply'd by Ways more Natural and Instructing; and thus while *Pride* has the Ascendant, all our Passions are kept in Slavery to *Fancy*, a *wanton Favourite* who places it on whom she pleases, and is obeyed by all, even *Pride* it self; there is nothing so *Vain, so Mean, and Base*, that is not made the object of our Love at *Fancies* Pleasure, who Cheates us with *such variety and change of Objects*; they stay not long enough to be consider'd, but are laid aside before we can perceive their *Emptiness* and *Vanity*; thus LOVE the noblest Passion of the Mind, destin'd for *supernatural Delight and Joy*, when so misplaced, there is nothing it so certainly procures, as *Misery and Vexation*, for Shame and Repentance is the necessary Consequence of any considerable Mistake, and sure none can be greater; for no Earthly Object, be it *Man or Woman*, can justify our *Obstinacy* and *Constancy* to such an *Inordinate Affection*, as *Fancy* generally creates in all her Slaves, which she submits in these Occasions to the *Basest Drudgery*, making us ridiculous both to our selves and others.

Then in another *turn of Fancy* she calls up *Anger* to Resent and Revenge, whatever she esteems an Injury, and judges that Man *unworthy to live* that makes the least mistake in paying the Respect he owes us, and where the Laws are wanting to the indemnity of our *Honour*, we are forced to be Judge and Executioner our selves, tho' with the forfeiture of our own Lives; which when effected *Fancy* in that case, makes *Pride* submit to sneak and hide our selfe as the basest Villain from the Justice of the Laws, this she calls *Honour*, and *Pride* must think it so; and whatever Vice reigns, *Fancy* never failes to have her share in the Dominion.

The necessity of *sustaining our Bodies* with Meat and Drink, which naturally shews our *Mortality*, we have with *Art* and *Curiosity* so improved the Pleasure (which was at first designed only to make a Thing so necessary, *easy and desirable*) it conquers our Reason, and leaves us only the *Sense of Brutes*, which would appear to all the World, if *Fancy* di-

not interpose, and by a strange and unaccountable Illusion, make it pass for Hospitality and Living Great; *Good Fellowship*, or *Charity*, or some good Quality, to which it has as much Resemblance, as the Dictates of Humour to those of Reason; this Tyranny she not only exercises over our *Passions* and *Appetites*, but extends her Dominion so far, as to press the *Virtues*, tho' Foreigners, into her Service, and with her Barbarous Usage, they are in a manner *transformed into Vices*. How unworthily is *Patience* employed by the Ambitious to bear such Trials, Labours, and Disappointments, as would discourage any one that were not under *this Enchantment*? *Vanity* also has her Share in the Service of *Patience*, to endure all the Care, Expence, and Fatigues, necessary to supply with Art and Curiosity, that wonderful Variety imposed in those Arbitrary Laws of Fooleries and Impertinences, that takes up so much Time and Study to Learn and Observe.

Charity is another Virtue, no less abused by the *Pain-Glorious*, who besides the Aim they have at raising themselves a *great Name and Reputation*, they design the Slavery of all the unhappy Persons that have ever been beholding to 'em, and think they never are enough their Creatures; but after much expence of Time and Service, call 'em *Ungrateful* upon the least occasion. But *Charity* is never so misemploy'd as in the fair Construction the World obliges it to put upon the *Works of Darkness*: while all reasonable suspicion of Ill is called *uncharitable Censures*, 'tis to this we owe the great Credit and Reputation such Persons carry in the World with all their *Vices*, when Cloaked and Masked with any *the least colour of Vertue*; this good natur'd *Charity* accepts the fair Pretences, and forbids us to Suspect or Examine, and so becomes a great *Patroness of Vice*.

Another Virtue misemploy'd is *Courage*, when to the injury of Truth and Virtue, in which it chiefly ought to be concern'd, it is used by Fancy in defence of *all manner of Vices* never so extravagant. *Honour* sometimes draws us into such Dangers, all our *Courage* serves only to please Fancy in an *honourable Death*, but not enough to support us in what she accounts an *Infamous Life*, which is, to want the Reputation of such a *Courage*, as *defies Heaven* and all Kind of Dangers, and dares even *Hell and Damnation*, or the *Devil* himself.

The *Sordid Covetous Man* also wants not *Courage* to live in Defiance of all that the World can say against him, and undauntedly bears all the *Curses of the Poor and Indigent*, by whose Wrong and Injury he has Enriched himself: In a Word, without an excess of *Courage* none would venture to engage themselves in *Vice*, and the *Mischiefs* that attend it; for nothing more augments our Misery than *the many Necessities* created by our *unruly Passions* and *vain Fancies* to the expence of more Time and Money, than the greatest Quality or amplest Fortune can satisfy with any true Pleasure, but what is accompanied with *much Sorrow and vexation of Mind*.

Now to what Confusion and Misery must we needs be reduced, whilst we thus form destructive Designs, and in a mistaken Notion, believe we are pursuing Pleasure and Happiness? And when we have tired out our *Passions*, abused our *Virtues*, and enslaved our Reason, and found nothing but the Experience of the perpetual Disappointment of our ill grounded

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grounded Hopes, we find what we least looked for ; *Shame and Repentance* must be our Portion at last, and can only set us right in the true Way to Happiness, which can never be had in this World from any outward Enjoyments; they are the delusions of Fancy, and must certainly Cheat us in the End, and after a full Experience of these Miseries; (and far from the Happiness we promised ourselves,) we find at last a Necessity of taking other Measures. But alas! our *Vicious Habits and Depraved Customs* is become our Nature, and can no more be changed than *Age for Youth*; but were it possible, it would be little less than Martyrdom to suffer the Importunity of *our old Companions in Vice*, who would impute such a Design to the Greatest Folly, Weakness, and want of Courage; and easily prevail with us not to undertake a Thing so Troublesome and Difficult, but rather Advise us to take *what Pleasures our Age and Condition will afford us*, and banish all Thoughts of another World; but the decays of Age and Sickness (the inevitable effects of a *debauched Life*) will, without our Leave, convince us how *Miserable* our Mistakes have made us.

But if Vice is followed with such a *Train of Mischief and Confusion*, may we not expect to be exempt from the Greatest Part of these Miseries, by a *Sober and Regular Conduct*, and live with Ease and Tranquility in the enjoyment of what we find *suitable to rational Beings*, and more answerable to the Ends of our Creation.

Let us then consider a *happy Education from our Infancy*, and see how that secures us from these *Miseries*, tho' our kind Parents keep us in strict Discipline under their own Eye; this secures us not from many *Accidents and Misfortunes*, not in their Power to prevent; nay, perhaps 'tis for their Punishment we fall into 'em, when they impute too much to their own *Care*, or *Pride* themselves in their *Great Conduct*.

But suppose we have escaped *most Accidents and Misfortunes* in our *Infancy*, our Parent's or Governor's next Care is, to furnish us with such *Principles* as must fit and prepare us for our *Converse* with the World, and defend us against those *Dangers and Temptations* we are sure to meet with; the first Thing we are to learn is *Obedience*, we all know the *Uneasiness* of that Doctrine to Youth, who are more ready to teach, than learn and envy our *Parents*, for nothing so much as the Dominion they exercise over us, and that *Obedience*, which only Interest and Self-Love extorts from us, is apter to create a Prejudice to their Rules, than a true Use of 'em for our *Use and Instruction*; and so our *Youth* (the proper Time of fortifying our Minds and improving our Knowledge) is spent in *conspiring against Instruction*, and taking part with our unruly *Wills and Affections*, against those that endeavour to warn us by their *Experience*; we think there can be nothing but *Envy and Ill will* in denying us the experimenting the Pleasure of *Good and Evil*, and judging of ourselves, having no mistrust of our *Weakness and Incapacity* to do it, and that we are more likely to be cheated by the inchanting Pleasures of this deceitful World: But how many Difficulties, Vexations and Follies must be the Consequence of such Proceedings? Enough to give our Parents great Advantage of convincing us of our *Rashness* and *Folly*, and perswading us to begin again at *Obedience*, to which must be added *Self-denial*, a hard Lesson, but so necessary, that without it nei-

ther

ther Reason nor Self-love can help us; but we must needs be baffled by the prevailing Force of our Strong Passions and Temptations; but having once learned these Habits of Obedience and Self-denial, our Parents may then promise themselves all manner of Compliance to what ever they shall think fit to Propose, as a means of our Future Subsistence, or for the Establishment of their Interest or ours, but purely by Authority and the force of Reason they must never hope to succeed, for the Examples in all Ages, shews how Vain and Uncertain all designs of that Nature prove; 'tis hardly ever seen that the Child's Sentiments suits the Parent's, because Reason and Experience governs the one, Fancy and Ambition the other; but a continual Practice of Self-denial and Obedience may have that effect upon us as to procure a Compliance tho' much against our Inclinations; for where we find our Interest, Self-Love is never wanting to persuade us to a kind of Obedience, even to what we disapprove, which is the Principle we Act by *all the rest of our Life*, for when we are no longer under Government, tho' we look upon Pleasure, Honour and Riches as Things very desirable, yet when we consider they are so Transient, Vexations and Deceitful in themselves, and draw such a Train of Mischiefs after 'em, if we love our Ease and Quiet we shall never trouble our selves with them, but *try to be Happy without 'em*.

What does Luxury bring us but Gross, Corpulent and Unwildy Bodies, dull and heavy Minds, Sickness and Diseases; it decays our Natures, spends our Fortunes, it wasts our Time (in all the impertinences of idle Company) it makes Reason a Slave to Sense, and turns us into Brutes.

Honour that carries so high a Reputation in the World, is as great an Enemy to Ease and Quiet; all the Pleasure of it consists in outward Pomp and Splendour, and the *exteriour Ceremonies the World pays it*; but so many Mischiefs attends that Condition, as much allays the Pleasure, our Persons and Actions are no longer our own, we cannot purchase Respect and Admiration from our Dependants, but at the price of our Liberty we must waste our precious Time in Pomp and Ceremony, we are obliged to act Virtuously under the strongest Temptations to Vice and Vanity, and to have a true Sense of our Frailties and Infirmities, tho' we are never told the Truth, or ever hear any thing from our Flatterers but continual Encomiums upon our Perfections; we cannot without Violence to our Passions and Inclinations curb and restrain 'em, and not to do it, lets in a Torrent of Mischiefs, and makes us the Object of Hatred and Envy; which taking Advantage of all our Miscarriages, marks 'em with Infamy, and the Contagion our ill Actions spreads amongst all the vain Admirers of our Greatness (who Conduct themselves by our Example) is enough to persuade, all that love Ease and Quiet, not to aspire after a Condition of so much Difficulty and Danger.

Another great Idol of the World is Riches, through a mistaken Conceit that they procure us *all that is necessary to make us Happy in this Life* tho' none can properly be esteemed RICH but those whose Fortunes far exceeds their Necessities, and to such, their Riches oftener procures their Misery than Happiness; for our Frail Nature can hardly resist the strong Temptation of Loving that inordinately, of which we receive and expect so much Good, and which according to the World, makes up for all other

Wants, and Defects either of *Body* or *Mind*, but the illusion of this *Imaginary Happiness* appears in that, there is more *Uneasiness* than *Pleasure* in taking much *Care* and *Concern* for Things we have *no Use of*, and a great deal of *Trouble* and *Business* attends that *Management*, and disposing of *Riches* in their best use, but if once we are overcome with a *violent Love* of 'em, the restless *Cares* and *Fears* they create are *inexpressible*, and *no real Good* can they procure us.

A good *Name* that every one seeks after, nothing deprives us of more than *Riches*; for whether we keep or part with 'em, we shall *never Satisfy*, we are *Censured* and *Hated* by the *Envious* and *Ungrateful World*, who would be carving to themselves of what we have more than enough, and think we might *Spare them more* than we do.

If *Health* be wanting, *Riches* may make us more easy by the supply of all necessary *Remedies*, but can't make us *Healthful*, nay, rather helps to destroy it, by furnishing to all the means of *Luxury*, *Effeminacy* and *Sensuality* the most certain procurers of *Sickness* and *Infirmities*.

But without a *calm and quiet Mind*, vain is our *Pretence* to *Happiness*, which *Riches* is so far from procuring, they hardly secure us from the *Fears* and *Distrusts* of the *Wants* and *Necessities* of this *Life*; so little can *Riches* be rely'd on while so subject to *Changes* and *Uncertainties*, and our great *Love* to 'em adds to the *Terror* of *Death* and *old Age*, which daily threatens a *Divorce*; if nothing else deprive us of 'em before; these will both *certainly come* and put an end to all our *Pleasures* and *Enjoyments*, which is a *Fair Warning* to all Men against setting their *Hearts* on this *Vain World*, (but more especially those *Knarish Directors* that lately robb'd the *Kingdom* of *Immense Riches* by their *Wicked Execution* of the *South-Sea Scheme*.) Then

Farewell—Fruition—thou Grand Cruel Cheat,

Which first our Hopes dost raise, and then defeat;

Farewell thou Midwife to abortive Bliss,

Thou Mystery of Fallacies.

Distance presents the Object fair,

With Charming Features and a Graceful Air;

But when we come to seize the inviting Prey,

Like a shy Ghost it Vanishes away.

So to th' unthinking Clown the distant Sky,

Seems on some Mountain's Surface to rely;

He with Ambitious Haste climbs the Ascent

Curious to touch the Firmament;

But when with an unwearied Pace,

Arrived he is at the long wish'd-for Place,

With Sighs the sad Defeat he does deplore,

His Heaven is still as distant as before.

And yet 'twas long e'er I could see,

This Grand Impostor's frequent Treachery,

Tho' often Fool'd, yet I shou'd still Dream on

Of Pleasure in Reverſion.

Tho' still he did my Hopes deceive,
 His Fair Pretensions, I would still believe:
 Such was my Charity, that tho' I knew,
 And found him False, yet I would think him True.

NORRIS.

But were we so *Happy* as to have a true *Idea* of these three great Idols of the World, *Pleasure, Honour* and *Riches*, it would in a great Measure abate the *Miseries* of this Life; but such is our *Blindness* in this our *Weak and Frail* Condition, we are easily led away with *false Appearances*, we see nothing to *Fear* in what carries away all the World with *Triumph* and *Applause*.

Yet, with *Time*, and *sad Experience*, we may come to know so much of these *vain empty Pleasures* that with no better Teacher than our own *Self-Love*, we may be secured from any very fatal Fall into those *Snares* and prevailing *Temptations* by *Studying* to avoid 'em with *Care* and *Diligence*.

And then *Self-Love* may perhaps inspire us with an *Ambition* of a better Kind, yet in which we shall find no less *Uneasiness*, which is the *Improvement* of our natural *Endowments* by *Learning* and *Knowledge*, in which we promise our selves both *Pleasure* and *Advantage*; but here again we find our selves mistaken, for he that increases *Knowledge*, increases *Sorrow*; for *Experience* will soon teach us, the highest degree of *Learning*, is the *knowledge* of our own *Ignorance*, and that we may very well spare all but what is absolutely *Necessary* and *Useful* for the *Support* of our *Bodies* in this Life, and the *Happiness* of our *Souls* in the next; for all *Curiosity* and *Search* after any other *Knowledge*, is an *endless* and *wearisome* Labour, and perhaps when we are arrived to the highest Degree we can possibly attain, the *little certainty* of *Truth* we find in all *human Knowledge*, may convince us of our *Time*, and *Labour* lost.

And so the *Disappointments* we meet in all *human Designs*, may at last bring us to consider how we may secure an *Interest* in the next World, since we can depend on nothing in this, but to take every one our share of *Misery* and *Trouble*, so that the whole Life of Man is a *fruitless Search* after *Earthly Happiness*, (or I may call it, a *Vain-seeking Contentment* in *Worldly Honour, Riches, Pleasure, Learning, Knowledge, &c.*) and this I affirm to be *True* by my own *Experience* of *Fruition*, in all my Pursuits after *Satisfaction* in earthly *Enjoyments*, from my *Childhood* to the *Sixty Third Year* of my Age; and yet Reader, (I own to my *Shame*) I never *Seriously Considered* this *MISERY* and *VANITY* of human Life 'till I was seized with a *Fit of Sickness* that was judg'd *Mortal*; But if after all our *Pains* in searching after *Earthly Happiness*, (or, *True Satisfaction* in this World) no Man (no not even *Solomon* himself) could ever find it;
 Then

Oh!

OH! CONTENTMENT CONTENTMENT.

I.

SPARK of pure *Celestial Fire,*
PORT of all the *World's Desire;*
PARADISE of *Earthly Bliss,*
HEAVEN of the *other World, and this;*
Tell me where thy *Court abides,*
Where thy **GLORIOUS CHARIOT** rides.

II.

EDEN knew thee for a *Day,*
But thou would'st no longer *Stay;*
Outed for poor **ADAM's Sin,**
In a *Flaming Cherubim.*
Yet thou lov'st that *Happy SHADE,*
Where thy *Beauteous Form was made;*
And thy *Kindness yet remains,*
To the **WOODS and FLOW'RY PLAINS.**

III.

Happy **DAVID** found thee there,
Sporting in the open *Air,*
As he led his **FLOCKS** along,
Feeding on his *Rural Song;*
But when **COURTS and HONOURS** had
Snatch'd away the **LOVELY LAD,**
Thou that there no *Room couldst find*
Let him go, and **STAI'D BEHIND.**

IV.

His **WISE SON** with *Care and Pain,*
Search'd all **NATURE's FRAME** in vain;
For a while **CONTENT** to be,
Search'd it round but found not thee;
BEAUTY own'd she knew thee not,
PLENTY had thy *Name forgot;*
MUSICK only did aver,
Once you came and *Danced with her.*

V.

All the *World* still **HUNT** about,
Happy he that finds thee out;
Some have *Dreamt* thou still dost sit
Circled round with **MIRTH and WIT,**
In a **CLOYSTER** or a **PEW**
Others always seek for you:
But their *Search, alike is vain,*
These **MOROSE,** and those **PROPHANE.**

VI.

*Mothers with indulgent Care,
Hug their CHILD, and find thee there;
Kiss it while asleep it lies,
And upon it Feast their Eyes;
When the little BANTLING came
Just to lisp its Mother's Name,
All her airy Hopes are fled,
There it dies and leaves her Dead.*

Oh! Then CONTENTMENT.

VII.

*Since thy THRONE thou dost not Place
In a PALACE or a FACE,
Since thou coily passest by
PLEASURES, RICHES, HARMONY;
Since we cannot find thee out,
Wish the WITTY or DEVOUT;
Since I here of thee Despair,
I'll walk to HEAVEN and find thee there.*

Reader—'Tis therefore my hearty Wish, that my Fruitless Search after Earthly Happiness, from my Birth even to this Minute (i. e. for near Sixty three Years) may so fully convince thee of The Miseries and Vanities of human Life, as may (by thy avoiding those False appearances of Happiness, that I have been deluded by,) set thee in the right and nearest Way to Heaven, where TRUE CONTENTMENT only Dwells.

Our next Inquiry therefore is, what are the Conditions required of us to secure our Interest in the next World.

And here we find so many Disputes, Fears, and Difficulties, we are often at a Loss to determine positively where our Duty lies; we are so blinded with our depraved Reason and corrupt Affections, that the Devil's Subtilty has a great Advantage over us in making Religion, which is the general Concern subservant to his own Ends; whilst Pride, Self-Interest, and Ambition, occasions so many Factions and Animosities in the Church, the poor innocent Flock are too often misled by their Conductors.

And when they pretend to Conduct themselves, they are at as great a Loss; so, many and various are the Opinions of Religion, and so much is and may be said for all Opinions, enough to confound the clearest Reason, that 'tis impossible by our own Strength to be Proof against the Illusion; for our Self-Love carries us to what is most Plausible, and when once we have chosen, Perswades us our Religion only is true, tho' all others believe as much of theirs; and yet if there is but one true Religion, how Miserable must this Uncertainty make us? 'Tis sad to be deceived in a Business of such Consequence, we must then for our own Ease and Quiet believe and hope the best, and live Good Moral Lives, which is what all Religious Professions center in.

But

But then we are at a Loss again, when we reflect upon our Lives, and find 'em so far short of our good Moral Principles; we have denied our selves the free Enjoyment of this World to secure an Interest in the next, which yet we cannot promise our selves, from the Goodness of our Rules, from which we so often deviate, and at best so ill Observe, that we can take but little Comfort from 'em in respect to our Performances; or if we could, the Uncertainty of our Perseverance must needs discourage us, when Experience shews us how often we fall from our Duties by Weakness and Impotence, so great is the Power of Temptation.

Thus we see the true State of human Life by which we are intailed to Misery, so Weak and Frail we cannot support our selves, or any Thing in the World support us; Time carries us away and Death overtakes us, and now Self-Love that has accompanied us all along, will persuade us in our last Hour to consider from what we may entertain some comfortable Hopes of our Future Happiness, and if nothing else appears from our former Works of Charity, if we have any thing in our Power, it persuades us to add some to 'em at our Death to make our Interest the surer, but all this amounts to so little Certainty to be rely'd on, we can't but acknowledge our Misery both in Life and Death.

But yet there is a Life of Faith that is Victorious and overcomes the World, not by exempting us from the Miseries of this Life, but by supporting us under 'em, making 'em subservant to great Ends, even the Glory of God and our Eternal Happiness.

The great End of our Creation is the Glory of God, which can't be Frustrate; our Happiness or Misery do equally set forth his Glory in one, his Mercy and Goodness, his Truth and Justice in the other; and blessed are they whose Happiness and his Glory are so united, that neither the Powers of Darkness, the World, or our own deceitful Hearts, shall so far prevail as to make a Separation.

To be united to God in Faith and Love is such a Priviledge, as puts us out of the Reach of all human Miseries, and makes us happy in the midst of all the Troubles and Afflictions we can possibly meet with; our very Sins, when throughly consider'd and repented of, turn to our Benefit and Advantage, which if they did not, we might be sure his preventing and restraining Grace would hinder their Commission. He is so kind a Father, watching over us to do us Good, that knowing our Frame and Temper, and the necessity of those Dispensations we are under whatever they be, we may certainly conclude we could not be Happy without 'em.

To exercise our Patience by Afflictions, to humble us with the Sense of our Sins and Infirmities, to inflame our Love to him by the Sacrifice of our Wills and Affections to his wise Disposal and Providence, are such Blessings he bestows in Love, which we shall Praise him for to all Eternity; and therefore it can be no part of our Misery here on Earth to be under such Trials and Afflictions as strengthen and improve our Virtues, the proper business for which we are sent into this World, and when once accomplished, we are soon released from our Miseries and rewarded with Glory, with which he crowns those Works his Grace alone works in us, for to him results the Glory of all the Good we do.

Our Misery then properly proceeds from the Contradiction that is between the Flesh and the Spirit; the Soul is of a noble Extraction and aspires to Heaven from whence she came; the Body has a natural Sympathy with the Earth of which it was form'd, and is most sensible of material Objects in which it places all its Delights; the Soul strives to convince it of its being made for *Pleasures of a higher Nature* than any this World affords, and that it cannot set too slight a Value upon the *transitory Things* that Perish in the Using; that the *Pleasures of the Mind* are more permanant and serve to better Purposes, they lead us to the Contemplation of our *Future Happiness*, we anticipate by Love and by Desire the Joys to come, and the blessed Immortality the Soul and Body shall enjoy together in Heaven, whilst the Hope of it sweetens the bitterest Sorrows, and strengthens and supports us in all Temptations either of *Adversity* or *Prosperity*; thus far the Soul advances, and were it not for this Corrupt, Frail, Earthly Body, might easily Surmount all the Difficulties of this Life.

But alas! our Souls are so depressed by the Sin they contract in their Union with our Body's, tho' of themselves never so aspiring to Heaven and Heavenly Things, are yet confined by the Necessities of this present Life to the Desire and Enjoyment of gross and material Objects, such as frail mortal Bodies require; they cannot Act according to the Greatness and Excellence of their Natures, but in so feeble a Manner that in this Life the Body gets the Advantage, and seems in all Appearance the better part of Man, and by that Mistake too often prevails to the Ruin and Destruction of the Soul; in effect it is Sin, and the Train that Sin draws after it that composes all the Miseries of this Life by a *continual opposition of Flesh and Spirit*.

If in the Contest the Soul gets the better, it is only owing to the Grace and Favour of God, who in his own Way by the *wise Methods of his Providence* instructs and corrects us; mortifying and destroying the *Body of Sin* whereby the Flesh is subdued to the Spirit, not Totally but in such a Measure, as serves best to the *Honour and Glory of God*, and our Future and Eternal Happiness; thus the Soul recovers a sort of Liberty, whereby she acts as *Sovereign* over the Body, and in a higher Sphere than before, when subjected to Carnal and Wordly Desires.

The Body also is Partaker in this *happy Victory*, and now no more *enslaved to this vain World*, that pays our Love and Services with Rack and Torture, but can distinguish the using and enjoying these Temporal Blessings from the Dotish Pursuance even to Idolatry; the deceitful Pleasures of this transitory Life (whereby we suffer a *kind of Martyrdom* in all the painful Fatigues both of Soul and Body) they go to the perfecting any one Design of Ambition, Curiosity, Pleasure or Vanity.

And now what is the Happiness that a Soul (that lives by Faith, and a Body subjected to that Soul) may expect in this Life; surely this World is not a Place of Rest, *Our Life is a Warfare* we must be always upon our Guard against Innumerable sworne Enemies, besides *Traitors in our own Breast*, nay even God's heavenly Bounty in these earthly Blessings are by Man's Rebellion become Snares and Temptations enough to exercise the most Christian Fortitude, and imploy a very diligent

gent Care, and all too little against such *Powerful Enemies*; had we not the Power of God to help us, which will never leave us nor forsake us, but accomplish his Decree; *Nature does nothing in vain*, much less Grace we shall have one Day, the *Joy of Conquerors*; (and in Heaven every Temptation we overcome in this World, will be as a shining Jewel in our Crown of Victory,) but till then we must endure Hardness, as a good *Soldier of Jesus Christ*, supporting our selves with his Pay. All those blessed Fruits of the Spirit, *Love, Joy, Peace, Long-Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance*, these will carry us through all Assaults, that we shall never lose our Ground, but with Courage and Constancy endure to the end.

But yet we must expect *Many a sad and tedious March through this uneasy World* compos'd of so many Snares and Incentives to Evils of all Kinds; *Evil Men*, their *Evil Examples*, *Evil Councils*, and all their *Evil Consequences*, to which our Frailties and Corruptions so much contribute; our Misery would be inevitable were we not supported by the Grace of God that nothing can Surmount; our own *Weaknesses* and *Infirmities*, besides the Business of providing daily those Necessaries our Frail Bodies require, is enough to weary us and wean us from the Love of this *Earthly Tabernacle*, where not only our own, but the Failings and Infirmities of others, vexes and disquiets us, and takes up our Minds in the midst of our most *Heavenly Thoughts and Contemplations*; therefore 'tis in vain to expect what we shall never find, *Ease and Quiet in a sinful World*; let us content our selves with those *Pledges and Foretastes of Heaven*, God is graciously pleased to Grant us, and patiently wait till our Change comes.

And at that Hour we shall best perceive the *Happiness a Life of Faith* procures us; we have had a long acquaintance with God, and great experience of his *Goodness, Mercy and Providence*, which has carried us through all the *Dangers and Difficulties of this Life*, he has taught us from our first Years untill now; we have had Great Experience of our selves, and know what we are in our own Natures, as apt to yield to Temptations, and Commit *Great Crimes* as others; we find nothing that distinguishes us from the *worst of Sinners*, those Sins our Constitutions incline us to; how easily do we fall into 'em without perceiving it, besides those Sins that by Custom and ill Example have brought us to such a Habit in offending Heaven, that we often Sin without Remorse, to which if we add the *Force of Temptation* that so often Prevails, what can we see in our selves, but the sad Effects of depraved Nature.

But from hence we see how much we are Bound to God, First to ordain the *Means of Salvation*, then make us the Object of it. 'Tis to his *Free Grace* alone we must ascribe our *Hatred of Sin, our Love to God, our Faith in Christ* and all the blessed Effects of it, that we are Justified, and Accepted in the sight of God, that we are at Peace with our selves, and in Charity with all the World, that we can depend upon God, and go to him by Prayer, as to a *Loving Father*, that will deny us nothing that is good for us, that we are not carried away with the *Torrent of Wickedness* the World abounds with, but from a lively Hope of Heaven, can have a just contempt of all the *Glorie* this World can give us, and that we can with Comfort look upon Death as disarmed of all his Terror, and as a Faithful Messenger

Messenger sent to release us from Sin and Misery.—This is the Victory Christ has obtain'd for us, 'tis the Purchase of his *Sufferings*; this is the Faith that overcomes the World, and makes us *Victorious* even in Death.

And now having *Labour'd in vain* (that is, made a *fruitless Search* after *Earthly Happiness*) in contemplating—*The Miseries and Vanities of human Life*, and our *Releasement* from em by DEATH (so much the more necessary to ME, by how much it is nearer approaching by the arrival of my *Grand Climacterick Year*) I will conclude this my *First Experimental Essay* with a VALEDICTION TO THE WORLD, and all its vain Delights; Written by *A very great Man and Prime Minister of State* in the Reiga of CHARLES the First, and is this following, viz.

Go, empty Joys with all your Noise,
 And leave me here alone,
 In sad sweet Silence to bemoan
 Your vain and fond Delight,
 Whose Dangers none can see aright,
 Whilst too much Sun-shine blinds his Sight. }
 Go, and ensnare with your false Ware;
 Some other easie Weight,
 And cheat him with your flattering Light.
 Rain on his Head a Shower of Honour, Greatness, Wealth and
 Then snatch it from him in an Hour: [Power,
 Fill his big Mind with the vain Wind of flattering Applause,
 Let him not fear all curbing Laws,
 Nor King, nor People's Frown;
 But Dream of something like a Crown,
 And climbing tow'rd's it tumble down.





ESSAY II.

Every Man his own Parson; or, Dunton Preaching to himself upon the several Diseases of his Soul, but more especially upon his Athenian Itch (or too great Curiosity in prying into Divine Mysteries) a Paradox, attempting to Prove, that the sincere Practice of known Duties (or Dying daily to this Life and World) would of it self resolve the most ignorant Person in all the Abstruse Points of the Christian Religion.

PRIRST---to my self, accountable to none,
But to my Conscience, and my God alone.--*Randolph.*

Him that is weak in the Faith receive, but not to doubtful Disputations. Rom. 14. 1.

Reader, Having in my First Essay treated---Upon the Miseries and Vanities of human Life, from my own Experience of both---That those Serious Thoughts that I had in my late Sickness may the better furnish out---A new Directory for Holy Living and Dying--- The Subject of my Second Essay shall be :

Every Man his own Parson; or, Dunton Preaching to himself upon the several Diseases of his Soul but more especially upon his Athenian Itch, or too great Curiosity in prying into Divine Mysteries, &c.

Reader,

Considering the great Damage that comes upon most People by not knowing their Duty to the Hazard of eternal Death, I shall endeavour to shew (in this Second Essay) First—
How every Man is or might be his own Parson, that so the Hazard of his Soul, and Future Happiness may not be put to a Death-Bed-Repentance, He is his own Parson, that mortifies the Flesh with Study, Fasting and Prayer, and does every thing becoming a Man who
has

has a thing of greater Value than the whole World to look after, and therefore by *Every Man his own Parson*, I mean every Man's *whole Life* (as well as Words) should be a *Sort of living Sermon*, should PREACH even to himself, as well as to others.

He Preaches (sho' not Ordain'd as others are)
 Whose Pious Life does shew the Parson there,
 Who lives his Time, as if all Sundays were.
 He's the true Priest whose Life's a Preaching Text,
 And that a Pulpit where he speaketh next,
 The Place may Change but 'tis a Pulpit still,
 Our Practice must Preach, or all that's said is ill;
 He's the True Parson, and no Pulpit Fool
 Who Lives, and Speaks, and even Thinks by Rule;
 'Tis Preaching where the alarmed Soul betakes
 It self to a New Life, old Sins forsakes,
 For he no Sermon, who no Convert makes.

As new and singular as this PARADOX seems, yet 'tis very certain that every Man that is truly Pious, might be his own PARSON, for we find by daily Experience that the best Way of Preaching and Hearing is that which cures all the Evils of Life, (as far as in this World they are Curable) and that is the Ways of Holiness, which are therefore the best and only Way of Truth; in PULPIT QUARRELS (I mean in the Railing against this and the other Opinion) there is no End, and but very little Advantage, and therefore that I may Repeat an Expression in the Prayer of Mr. L——ke M——n) "The Lord Grant that we may not lose our Religion in Disputes, and our Charity in absurd Opinions" But the Way of Peace and Godliness, (I mean a Man's Preaching to himself the necessity of a holy Life) hath in it no Error, and no Doubtfulness, for the Conscience of every Man (if good and rightfully Inform'd) will still Side with the Doctrine he Preaches to it, and the Wise Man seems to allow that every Man may be his own PARSON; where he says, "Stand thou fast in thy sure Understanding, in the way and knowledge of the Lord, and have but one Manner of Word, and follow the Word of Peace and Righteousness" (a) which Words as they Direct, every Man (both of the Clergy and Layety) in what pious Manner he should be his own PARSON, so they sufficiently shew the Lawfulness (and Necessity in some Cases) of his Preaching to himself; and I am glad to find so learned a Man as Mr. L——ke M——n occasionally of this Opinion, for in his Sermon preached in Sh——d——ch C——h July the 7th; he there told his Hearers in what Case "A Layman might Baptize himself, Administer the Sacrament to himself, and be his own Priest, ay, and Preach so as to convert Souls, if by the Providence of God he were cast in an Heathenish Country."

Christ commanded his own Disciples not to be call'd Rabbi, nor Masters, by which last Words our learned Commentator the Reverend Dr. Whitby understands that we should call no Man Guide, or Master

(a) Ecclus. 5. 10. Vulg. edit. Lat.

upon Earth; no *Fathers*, no *Church*, nor *Council* who considers this, can think it possible for Christ to give so *Partial* a Command, as to contain a Reserve in behalf of any *Set of Priests* in Prejudice of the General Rule of *Free-thinking*, on which the Gospel was to be Built, which makes it evident, that *every thinking Man is or might be his own Parson*; and I find the Reverend Mr. *Parsons* of the same Opinion; for in the Sermon he preach'd at the Funeral of the Earl of *Rochester*, he there says "If all that hear me this Day, had been Spectators of the Lord *Rochester's* Penitential Sorrows, there would then have been no need of a Sermon to convince Men, but every Man would have been as much a Preacher to himself of this Truth as I am, except these Sorrows."

Reader, Having fairly proved from the Words of two Learned Clergymen, that (in some Cases) *every Man is, or might be, his own Parson*, I don't wonder that Dr. *Heylin* gives this Character of Mr. *John Hales* of *EATON* "That his Chamber was a Church, and his Chair a Pulpit, and that he was as communicative of his Knowledge, as the Celestial Bodies of their Light."

Reader—If I han't yet said enough to convince thee, that—*Every Man is, or might be, his own Parson*—I shall further prove it, by affirming, our Duties flow from *Nature*, and do not proceed only from *Education*, as some have imagined, to justify which, one need but suppose two Principles; the first is, that we naturally Love our selves, being sensible of Pleasure, and hating Evil, desiring Good, and having a Care of our Preservation; the second, that with this bent to *Self-Love*; Nature has given us a Reason to guide us, (that is, to Preach to our own Breasts) we love our selves Naturally, it is a Truth of Sense; we are capable of Reason, it is a Truth of Fact; Nature prompts us to make use of Reason for to direct this Love of our selves, that springs from the Principle of the latter, in a manner altogether Necessary; it not being possible that we should truly love our selves, without employing all our Lights in the Search of what's agreeable to us.

Then since Nature orders us to search after our Good, it follows, that it cannot be said without an evident Contradiction, that a Man is naturally without Duty and Law; which fully proves that *every Man is, or might be, his own Parson*.

And here comes into my Mind a Truth, which peradventure may seem Paradoxical; yet is in it self, most evident: That a Boy, who can neither write nor read, may be a greater Divine (by preaching to himself) than one who has study'd Scripture Forty Years, which who desires to see clearly, let him remember, Divinity has for its End the Knowledge of those Truths which are to guide us to our Salvation: a Knowledge so necessary, that no Ignorance can hinder our perishing eternally; and consequently, ought to be certain as any Demonstration. Again, that Forty Years Study may be employ'd without arriving, by the Force of such Study, to Demonstration sufficient to assure a Man of all Points necessary: as, the hundred Years debate betwixt Catholics and Protestants, without being one Foot farther advanced than at the first Day, doth amply manifest. The Conclusion therefore, is evident on this side; that the Forty Years Study does not necessarily make a Divine.

Let us consider, on the other side, a Child of a dozen Years old, never put to School farther then in the Church, to be taught in a Catechistical way, *the Sum of Christian Doctrine*; and to know 'tis to be held because 'tis descended from Christ, by the perpetual handing it from Age to Age in the whole *Catholick Church*. Let's see whether this Child be a *Divine* or no? If the Question be of the Matter, *he knows what is sufficient for him to bring him to Heaven*, (viz. enough to breed in him the *love of God*, and an *Obedience to the Church*, ordain'd by God for this End, to direct us in doing our Duties for the *Attainment of eternal Salvation*) Again, he has a Ground for his Belief more certain than any Demonstration in *Euclide* or *Archimedes*. Why then has not this Boy all that's necessary to the being a *Divine*, and more than the Long-study'd pretender to *Divinity* can shew for himself? Yet is there this difference between them, that as he who acknowledges *the Definitions* and other Truths pre-requisite, is nearer being a *Geometrician* than he who doubts of them; so the Boy, who believes all those *Articles of Christian Faith*, which he already knows, and has the Rule whereby to be certain of any other when they are propos'd to him, approaches nearer the Quality of a *Divine*, than he who calls himself one; because *Forty Years* together, he has doubted and disputed of the Principles of *Divinity*, which must be agreed to, before *Divinity* it self can be so much as commenced, for without they are, no Man (let his natural Parts, his acquired Accomplishments, his *Degree in holy Orders*, and his *Preferments* in the Church be what they will) can be a true *Divine*; but is in Truth so much the greater *Impostor*, appearing in Habit and external Form what he really is not; a *carnal, sensual, or animal Man at the best*, not having the good Spirit, but in many Things obnoxious to the *Impressions and Deceits of the subtle Evil one*; and therefore most dangerous to *Princes and Persons* concerned in the great Affairs of the World to be relied on. But this I intend only for a *general Caution*, not to reflect upon any particular Person.

Reader—I would by no means be Guilty here of *the Fault reproved in the Prophets*; namely, of contending with the *Priests*, or taking upon me to instruct my *Teachers*, (whom I, as much as any Man, desire to *Reverence*) far from my Intentions be a Design of imposing *Laws upon my Superiors*, or of binding Burthens upon other Men's Shoulders, which I would not touch with my least Finger; but tho' I wou'd presume to Direct our *Spiritual Guides* in their great Work of converting Sinners from the *Error of their Ways*; yet shou'd you here ask me *what a Parson is, or should be?* I would return you this Answer.

A *Parson* is the *Rektor of a Church*; because he, for his own Time, represents the Church; and his Office is, to take Care of all his *Parishioner's Souls* (as well as his own) and like a good Shepherd to mind every particular Sheep apart.

This I take to be the true Character of a *real Parson of a Parish*, and he that is his own *Parson*, has as great a Charge committed to his daily Care, for as *St. Matthew* says, *What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* (a)

(a) *St. Matthew* 10. 26.

How—Every Man his own Parson—Quo' the Rector of E ——— ? what then (*wicked Man*) would you have no more Sermons preached in Churches, or Meeting-houses, but only have every Man to sleep or doze out the Sabbath day, or spend it in vain Discourse? No, Reverend Sir, I abhor the Thoughts of thus Profaning the Lord's Day, and think to hear *two Sermons* every Sunday, either in a Church or a Meeting-house (as a scrupulous Conscience shall most approve) is every Man's indispensable Duty; (and whoever looks into the History of preaching, will find the sincere Christian of all Perswasions, of the same Opinion) for tho' we have a Parson within us (would we listen to our own Consciences) yet many have been converted by hearing the Parson of their own Parish; and therefore I advise every Man that has a Soul to be saved, never to neglect hearing of *two Sermons* every Sunday in publick, for I don't exhort every Man to be his own Parson, to keep People from Church, but to convince 'em; 'tis their Duty to go thither every Lord's Day, except Sicknes or Lameness force 'em to stay at Home, to hear (ONLY) the Preacher in their own Breast. For he that neglects going to Church every Sunday (for any other Reason, but an Impossibility of serving God in Publick, is Guilty of profaning the Lord's Day, and may justly expect the following Week those Judgments that do often fall on Sabbath breakers. I know an antient Gentleman, of whom 'tis reported he has not seen the In-side of either a Church or a Meeting-house (or heard one Sermon in any other Place) for the last twenty Years; what Blessing can such a profane Wretch expect either upon his own Person or Family? For tho' he has a Preacher in his own Breast, he won't either hear him Speak, or so much as once shew his Person at Church, tho' he can't but know incredible is the Influence of a great Man on a Family, Parish, and County by his constantly hearing of *two Sermons* every Lord's Day; for the Vulgar have quite lost their Hearing; Preaching is but an honest sort of Diversion: They learn all by Gaping and Staring on a Man in fine Cloaths; and therefore since Men of Quality can so easily do God and Man so great Service, I hope (for the Future) they'll think it their Duty to worship God Publickly, (either in a Church or a Meeting-house) every Sunday, and (Gentlemen) do not put God off with a little Fashionable Civility to the National Religion; I am afraid the serious Reflecting and Meditating Part is not frequent enough among the Gentry; let not Pastime, Business or Company waste all the Sabbath day, retire a little and enjoy your own Souls; this will not lessen the Pleasures of Life, but sweeten and make them solid; and make them differ from the crackling of Thorns, and the Flame of Straw, I mean the thin short-liv'd Delights of the Profaners of the Lord's day. For my own Part, I have often found Judge HALE'S Observation (concerning his keeping the Lord's-day) to be matter of Fact, that "It has always thrived with me the following Week according as I kept the Sabbath;" If Experience may be allowed to be the best Demonstration, I can affirm (to the best of my Remembrance) I never undertook, or intermeddled with any Secular Affairs on this Day, (which I might either have done before, or deferred till the next) but I was either blasted or disappointed therein; or if I succeeded, it was most certainly (though long after) attended with a Curse, which (upon due Reflection upon what had pass) I found to be

the sad Effect of such a Prophane, or mispending of the *Lord's Day*; then certainly 'tis as much our Duty to hear a Preacher every SUNDAY in Publick, as 'tis to listen to the Parson in our own Breast; for as God requires us to *Remember the Sabbath-day, so as to keep it Holy*, so himself remembers them that dare Prophane it. The Child that gathered Sticks on that Day, among the *Israelites*, in the early Times of the *Mosaick OEconomy*, was, by the Order of God himself, stoned to Death. And as he began to shew his Severity betimes, in the punishing of this Sin, so he hath continued to the present Age, to shew his great Displeasure against it; insomuch, that I think King *James* was much in the Right, when he caused his *Declaration for Sports upon that Day*, to be torn out of his Printed Volume or Writings, where it is not now to be seen; but the *Examples of God's Judgments on Sabbath breakers* (or such as never go to hear a Sermon either in a Church or a Meeting-house) may sufficiently Seal unto them, whose Hearts are not Seared; how wrathfully Almighty God is displeas'd with them who are wilful Prophaners of the *Lord's day*? For such, seldom hear either the Parson in their own Breast, or the Parson that preaches at Church, and for that Reason do seldom escape God's Judgments even in this Life; for we are told by the Reverend Mr. *Turner* (a) that

A certain Nobleman, prophaning the Sabbath usually in Hunting, had a Child by his Wife, with a Head like a Dog, and with Ears, and Chaps, crying like a Hound.

Stratford upon Avon was twice, on the same Day Twelvemonth, (being Sunday) almost consumed with Fire, chiefly for prophaning the *Lord's-day*, and contemning his Word in the Mouth of his faithful Minister.

A Husbandman grinding Corn upon the Sabbath-Day, had his Mill burned to Ashes.

Mr. *Smythies*, Curate of *St. Giles's, Cripplegate*, in the Confession and Discovery of a condemn'd Prisoner, Executed May the 25th 1687, (for Theft) saith, that it was his earnest Desire, that all young Men especially, should take Care not to mispend the *Lord's-day*. And I do not know, saith he, that ever I observed any Repentance in a condemned Malefactor, who did not bitterly Lament the Neglect of his Duty to God on that Day. 'Tis certain (tho' Every Man is, or ought to be, his own Parson, as I have largely proved) that we ought all to express our Reverence to God by the hallowing of the Times he has set apart for his Service, in which our Consciences ought as faithfully to Preach to us, as the Reverend Person that instructs us, publicly on the *Lord's-day*; for he who hath given all our Time, requires some Part of it to be paid back again, as a Rent or Tribute of the whole. Thus the *Jews* kept Holy the Seventh Day, and we *Christians* the Sunday or *Lord's-day*; the *Jews* were in their Sabbath, especially to remember the Creation of the World, and we in ours, the Resurrection of Christ; by which, a Way is made for us into that Better World we expect hereafter. Now this Day, thus set apart, is to be employed in the Worship and Service of God, and that first more solemnly

(a) In his Compleat History of the most Remarkable Providences both of Judgment and Mercy.

and publickly in the Congregation, (in Prayer and hearing of the Word preached by the Parson of the Parish where we live) from which no Man must then absent himself without a just Cause; and Secondly, privately at Home in Preaching to our selves, or in Praying with, and instructing our Families, or else in the yet more private Duties of the Closet; and therefore as I ought to hear the Parson of the Parish where I dwell (as well the Parson that preaches in my own Breast) the Lord grant that my Care in fitting my Soul for the Lord's-day, my Holy Carriage at it, and my suitable Conversation after it, may testify, that I had rather be a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness; and that I esteem one Day in his Courts, better than a Thousand elsewhere. But, tho' we ought (as I said before) to hear two Sermons every Lord's-Day either in a Church or a Meeting-house, yet 'tis evident (from what I shall further say of the Essentials of the Christian Religion) that Every Man is or might be his own Parson, for as wicked as the Age is, we have still some truly Religious Persons amongst us (some Fleetwood's, Hoadley's, Bisset's, Anstly's, Harris's, Reynolds's, &c) and that Man is — His own Parson—that lives a Holy Life (for even that it self is a Sermon; and therefore every Religious Person Erects a Pulpit in his own Conscience, that he might Preach to himself upon all occasions; and he that is his own Parson (having study'd and master'd all his Lusts and Affections within, and the whole Army of Temptations without) hath ever so many Sermons ready pen'd, as he hath Victories; and therefore I have endeavour'd in this Second Essay to be the first Man that has ascended (if I may so express it) The Pulpit of his own Breast; I mean that has preach'd to himself on purpose to furnish out a new Directory for holy Living and Dying.

Having (the better to direct my Reader in his Duty of Holy Living and Dying) proved how Every Man is or might be his own Parson, and told in what manner (and how often) he shou'd Preach to himself; and having also given the Character of him that is a real Parson (or the Rector of a Church) and shewn it every Man's Duty to be a constant Hearer (every Lord's Day) either in a Church, or a Meeting-house, I shall next Preach to my self upon the several Diseases of my Soul, but more especially those that did most afflict me in my late Fit of Sickness that was judged Mortal.

And here (being fully convinc'd of the Reality of that Future State of Happiness or Misery, that my Soul when it leaves my Body, will immediately commence) that I may be Eternally happy after Death. 'Tis my Advice to my self that I live every Day (whilst I continue in this World) as believing:

The Essentials of Religion are so plainly Revealed, that no Man can miss them, that hath not a mighty corrupt Bias in his Will and Affections to insatiate and blind his Understanding. Those Essentials are contained in the DECALOGUE, and the CREED: Many speculative remoter Doctrines may be True, but not Fundamental. For 'tis not agreeable to the Goodness or Justice of God, that Men's Eternal Interests should depend upon Things that are difficult to be Understood, and easily Mistaken; if they did, no Man could be secure, but that, do what he could (or hear what Parson he pleased) he should Perish everlastingly for not Believing:

or *Believing amiss* some of those difficult Points, that are supposed necessary to *Salvation*; and all those that are *Ignorant*, and of weak *Understanding* must Perish without Help, or they must be saved by *Implicite Faith in unknown Fundamentals*. And as I am very *sincere and constant in Preaching this Doctrine to my self*, I hope my living in the *Practise of it to my last Breath*, will bring me to *Eternal Happiness* that Minute I leave the World. for 'tis easy to prove a *Man may hold an erroneous Opinion from a mistaken Sense of Scripture, and deny what is the Truth of the Proposition, and what is the right Meaning of the Text, and yet not Err in Faith*. For Faith is the *Belief of God revealing*: And if God have not *so Revealed this, or that*, as to give us certain Ground to believe this to be *his Sense*, he hath not sufficiently *Revealed it to oblige our Faith* (and as this is *Orthodox Doctrine* and such as I always *Preach to my self*, I challenge the *most Learned Clergyman*, be he either *Churchman, Presbyterian, or Independent, &c.* to disprove it.) So that tho' I deny such, or such a *Sense*, while I believe, it is *not from God*; his *Veracity and Authority* is not concerned, since I am ready however, to give a *cheerful assent* to whatever is *clearly and sufficiently Revealed*. This Proposition must be understood only of *those Doctrines that are Difficult, and obscurely delivered*: (And consequently not well understood by either *the Parson within us, or him in the Pulpit*.) And that many Things are so delivered in *Scripture*, is certain; for some are only *Hinted, and spoken Occasionally*; some *Figuratively*, and by way of *Parable and Allegory*; some according to *Men's conceptions*; and some in *Ambiguous and Ænigmatical Phrases*; which *Obscurities* may occasion *Mistake* in those, who are very ready to believe whatever *God saith*; and when they do, I should be loath to say that such *Err in Faith*; tho' they had no other *Parson, or Teacher, than their own Understandings truly sanctified*, for I shall anon prove that *the sincere Practise of known Duties, (or dying daily to this Life and World) would of it self (without any other Preacher) resolve the most ignorant Person in all the absolute Points of the Christian Religion*; but those that rest plain *Texts to a Compliance with their Interests and their Lusts*, tho' their *Affections* may bring their *Judgments* to Vote with them; yet theirs is *Error in Faith with a Witness*, and capable of no *Benefit* from what I here *Preach to my self* concerning those *Doctrines and Providences which Transcend our Understanding*. And therefore that I may *Preach no longer concerning those Things that are difficult to be Understood, and easily mistaken (in hopes to cure that ATHENIAN ITCH, or vain Curiosity that has diseased the Souls of abundance of English People)*, I'll now conclude this *Sermon to my self*; with declaring:

“ I'll no longer embroil my Fancy with the *Niceties in Schools*; “ which dispute how *Sin* is remitted, whether by the *Expulsion of any positive Form*, and the *Introduction of another opposite to it*: Whether “ it be by the *meer infusion of Grace*, or else only by taking away the “ *Obligation of a Sinner to eternal Punishment*; I'll omit (for the Future) “ all these *curious Questions*, and attend only to the *sweet Effect, to-wit,* “ that I may be freed from my *Iniquity*.” For *Reader*, were it not better that all the *Arts were banished the Schools* and every *Man his own Parson*, than that they should entertain us with so many *unedifying Things*, that they should teach us to regulate our *Wills* rather than our *Fancies*, and

how to live *virtuously* rather than to *dispute well*? Were it not to be wish'd that *Logick*, by which we flourish our *Harangues*, by which we examine the property of *Speech*, and which boasteth of *laying open Truths* by the subtilty of *Arguments*, taught us to reform our *Manners* and to reject all these *vain amusements of the Mind*, which benefit a wise Man as little as they are troublesome and insignificant to the simple.

Were it not better that *Geometry*, taught the Rich to bound his *Desires*, to divide a *proportion of his Revenues amongst the Poor*, than to shew him the Art of taking the *Contents of his Parks*, the height of his *Palaces*, and the extent of his *Lands*? Were it not to be desired that the *Professors of Divinity* would discover to us the *Way to love rather than define the Creator*, and instead of informing us of his *Essence*, and labouring to make us conceive the *mysterious Trinity of his Persons* by the *Unity of his Nature*, to teach us the *awful Adoration of him* whom we are not able to *comprehend*, and to make us forego all that is dearest to us in the *World*, to be *united to him*, who alone ought to possess all our *Affections*. But the *Delight of all Arts* is the *Pleasure of Discourse*, they are swallowed up of the *Words that compose them*, they are the *Minds Diversion*, and not the *Employment of the Will*, they polish our *Speech*, and our *Actions* remain unrectified, and all the *witty Things* they propose are but to *divertize their Lovers*; so that as *Things* are new managed, 'tis well if every *Honest Man* (for I mean only such throughout this *whole Essay*) would now become *his own Parson and Preach to himself*, for the greatest part of our *Sciences* are properly but *specious trifling Imaginations*, and I do not think that he could offend the *Learned*, who should define *Knowledge* to be the *Dreams of them that Watch*, and *Dreams to be the Knowledge of them that Sleep*. These defects in *Knowledge* would be tolerable, if other *more dangerous Consequences* did not follow them, and that after having held their *Martyrs* in hand with *Things* that fall out to be of *little Use*, they did not make them *Impious or Insolent*. For as *Knowledge* is of an *imperious Humour*, suffers no *opposition*, pretends to understand all *Things*, and would no less be thought to *dive into the Mysteries of Faith* than into the *Secrets of Nature*; she is made use of to *uphold Vice*, and is conversant about what has *most of Show*, and not about what hath *most of Truth*, and, by an *injustice contrary to that of Idolatry*, she employs the most *sublime Part of her Skill*, to bring in *question or to overthrow the Maxims and Principles of Religion*. 'Tis true, *Naked Truth* is so gentle, that she permits all that *Court her* to take her by the *Hand*; not to *despise her*, is sufficient to be *admitted into her presence*, and as the *Sun* imparts his *Light* liberally to all *Men*, she communicates freely to *all those that seek her*: She is *obscure only where Science* hath *bemisted her*. Those *Tractions* which *ART* hath beaten to come at her, have made her *inaccessible*; that which ought to *conduct us to her*, has turned us out of the *Way*; and *Man* is assured to *miss her so often as he employs Learning to find her*. Nature has *endowed us with more ready helps to become better*; she hath *fix'd our Felicity to our Will*, as she condemns all those *Habitudes* which fill our *Heads with Wind*, she approves no *Skills* that direct us not to *Virtue*, she rejects all that *sublime Knowledge* whereof the *Learned* make their *Boast*. She esteems them the *Inventions of Ease and Delights*, which after

having

having a while entertained our Fancy, leave us in despair of finding her.

For this is certain we must not judge of the Wisdom of a Man by *the multitude of Things he hath learned*; Religion takes Offence when we study her Mysteries rather for Knowledge than Reverence, she commands that Practice should be the End of our Travels, and she permits us not to be of the Number of them *who spend their whole Lives in the Search without the Love of Truth*. When God placed Man in the *terrestrial Paradise*, he inspired him only with the Knowledge of Things needful for him, although the Favours wherewith he honoured him were excessive, *he limited his Science*, he would not he should learn what could not profit him; and, in the Opinion of *Tostatus*, he sent him not the *Animals* made of Corruption to give Names unto, but for that the Knowledge thereof was not of Use to him, *too much Learning is always insolent*, and edifieth not; as we find no *Conquerors* that are not Proud, we see *no learned Men that are not puffed up*, *Divines* can tell us that the proud Angels strayed not from their Duty but by having *too much Knowledge*.

Aristotle was of opinion that the famous Men of Old were often guilty of *fantastical Actions*, that they made *small Sallies* which were little different from *great Follies*, that their Extasies surpass the Strength of their Reason, and that they could bring forth nothing *above ordinary Men* which was not akin to Fury. Those *great Wits* which Antiquity puts amongst the number of *Prodigies*, have not always been the *wisest Men*, their *Works* are not irreprovable no more than their *Lives*, if they have written some Things worthy of Honour, they have left us others as ridiculous, and their Disciples confess they had intervals in which they were not more reasonable than Mad-men. Although this Language be opposite to the common Opinion of the People, and that the *Benefits of Knowledge* oblige Men to give it reverence wherever they find it, yet I think it not hard to draw them to the contrary Sentiment, and to obtain their Assent, that the knowing Men at this Day are but delightful Doctors who act the Fool by Authority, and teach Impertinences by approbation. For what is it that our *Professors of Learning* do, when they instruct us to define all Things by their chiefest Attributes, to separate *their Nature from their Properties*, and by the aid of Propositions infer, that *Virtue is a Gender*, that Justice and Prudence are the Species, and that *Virtue is separable from Temperance*, but that Temperance is not to be divided for Virtue? What profit do we reap from these *Formalities*? Of what Use is it to know how to compose a *formal Discourse*? To reduce an Argument to an Impossibility? To frame *Sophisms*, to ensnare the Unlearned? and to use *Dilemma's* and Inductions to surprize the unskillful? What Advantage can we hope from the Knowledge of *Natural Philosophy*, to be informed that the Earth is solid, that God by his Power can separate *the Form from the Matter*, that he unites at his Pleasure two substantial Forms into one Compound, and directs the Substance to produce a third by the intermediation of Accidents, to which he communicates his Efficacy?

But not to discredit Knowledge without authority, it is not she that hath so often changed the Face of Christendom? Did not *Philosophers* become the first *Hereticks*? Did not the Ages of the greatest Learning

lean more to *Atheism* than to *Religion*? And was the Church ever more dismembred than when *Ecclesiasticks* undertook to raise Arguments upon her Dignity and Decrees. *The Diversity of their Opinions* stifled that *Charity* which ought to have united her, and they ceased to be *Christians* when they were become *learned Men*, the Desire that possess them of out-arguing their Antagonists made their Designs *scandalous* even to the *Heathen*; and those Men of *Darkness* were sufficiently enlightened to see that they who were looked upon as the *Pillars of the Church*, robbed her Faith of *Assurance*, her Doctrine of *Evidence*, and her Councils of *Authority*. Doth not all *Euorpe* complain at this Day of the *Art of Physick*? Are not her Remedies as cruel as hazardous? *The Disputes of her Doctors*, have they not been the Destruction of the greatest Number of them that are gone down to the *Chambers of Death*? Do not *Physicians* make traffick of human Bodies without being arraigned at the *Tribunals of Justice*, when foregoing the Instructions of their Masters, they try the experience of new Medicines at the Price of our Lives? And see we not daily that they send *Death* to their Patients with the Drinks that ought to cure them? *The Churches and Church-yards* are full of their Victims; the *Marbles* that cover them publish nothing but their *injustice*; and if the *Stones* under which they lye were not insensible, they would openly accuse them of *Temerity and Ambition*: They would proclaim to all the World that they are deprived of Life by using too much means to preserve it, that *ART* hastened their Sepulture, and that the *Multitude of Medicaments* was the only cause of their Death. So that *Science* which was invented to divert and comfort us, is turned into our *chastisements*, and it were to be wish'd for the *Common Good*, that as she is banished from amongst the *Turks and Barbarians*, she were also unknown to *Christians*. For as she maintains that the Cause from whence she proceeds is *infallible*, she becomes obstinate in her *Determinations*, she approves of no Waters but what are drawn from her own Fountain, and building upon the *certainty of her own Authority*, she from thence forth *Consequences* no less dangerous than to her they seem evident. In fine, *Knowledge is an immortal Evil*, her *Fury* is without Bounds, her *Malice* exceeds the limits of Time, and she is not less pernicious to Man in the Discovery of false Doctrine, than when she invents *Reasons* to induce him to defend or embrace it, so that if we are thus led astray by Men whose very Profession 'tis to direct us in the Right Path; 'tis Time for us to examine whence our Errors spring, and to see if by being *Guides (or Parsons)* to our selves, we can take a safer Way to Heaven than our *Reverend Clergy* have hitherto shewn us; for I had not preach'd thus long both to my self and others, but to convince the *Vertuosi of Great-Britain*, they are our too eager Disquisitions after the *Internal Verities* of Things that have led the *Athenian World* into so large a Field of *Scepticism*. Men must be pressing and breaking into the *Recesses* of Nature, as that *Conqueror* heretofore into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, then mistake the Thing, return dissatisfied, cry all is *Pageantry*, and that we worship *Clouds*. Then what need is there of a new *Directory for Holy Living and Dying*, to spiritualize such abstruse, and intricate Points of Religion, as we shan't thoroughly understand, till we get to Heaven; for my own Part I had rather read the *Astonishments of Job*, when God

poses him through the whole Creation, than all the bold explications of *Alex* and *Demons*. I had rather consider the *Rain-bow* as the *Reflection* of God's Mercy, than the *Sun's Light*, and when I call to mind, that *Thunder* throughout the Scriptures is stiled his *Mighty Voice*, I'm satisfy'd at what I *Tremble*, and tho' this may debate my *Philosophy*, yet it heightens my *Divinity*; for 'tis plain a *serious Christian* may make a *Divine Improvement* of some pious *Ænigmas* that he does not understand, if any *Athenian* is not yet satisfied what is *Divine Truth*, let him but seriously reflect on his *Death-Bed*, and the *Day of Judgment*, and then I'm perswaded he'll need no Answer; when the *Gaiety of Fancy* forsakes him, and the *Prosperity of Invention* gives no relish; when his *Passions* and *Appetites* grow languid from the impotence of *Blood*, and his *Brains* becomes too weak for the *Image of the World*; then will *Holy Living and Dying* be his best News, and a *Post-Angel* his best Friend; then will he call for a *Portion of Scripture* to ease his *Conscience*, a *Drop from the Fountain of Living Water* to cool his *Tongue*. Then set him on the highest *Mountain of Metaphysics*, and from thence give him the ravishing Prospect of all the *Kingdoms of human Learning*, all the *Glories of Philosophy*, yet he will not *Worship*, not *Idolize one glittering Notion*, not part with one *single Text* for Ten thousand Worlds; for when the *whole Volume of the Creation* shall be shrivled up like a *Scrole of Parchment*, then shall the *HOLY BIBLE* be opened, its everlasting Truths unfolded, and though *Heaven and Earth pass away*, yet not one *Lot* of that shall *perish*.

Then (my *Athenian Reader*) captivate all your Thoughts to the Positions of Faith, your whole Heart to the Embrace of the Gospel, be *Christians in earnest for Heaven*, that is, let the frequent inquiry into the Nature of *Sin, Death, and Judgment*, macerate your *bold Naturals* into an humble contrition of understanding.

Reader—having proved that *Every Man is or might be his own Parson*, and given the Character both of the *Parson of a Parish*, and of the *Parson that preaches in our own Breasts*, and having also preached a *Sermon upon the several Diseases of my Soul*, but more especially upon my *Athenian Itch*, or too great *Curiosity in prying into Divine Mysteries*, I shall conclude this Essay upon Sermonizing, with a Paradox, proving *That the sincere Practice of known Duties, (or Dying daily to this Life and World) would of it self (as 'tis following the Advice of the Parson that preaches to us both abroad and at home) resolve the most Ignorant Person in all the abstruse Points of the Christian Religion; to which Paradox I shall annex Directions—How we may graciously improve those Doctrines and Providences which transcend our Understandings.*

Reader—I shall introduce my Paradox (proving that *The sincere Practice of known Duties, or dying daily to this Life and World, would of it self resolve the most abstruse Points of the Christian Religion*) with Observing:

Mans Life may not unfitly be compared to a *Candle*; *CURIOSITY* may well be resembled to the *Thief in the Candle*, which makes Men to spend much precious Time in *needless Disputes*, the Conclusions whereof are both *Uncertain and Unprofitable*. The *Schoolmen's Books* are stuffed with such *Questions about the Distances and Dignities of Angels*, as if

Men were to marshal them in *Rank and File*, how that Heavenly Host do march in *Glory* one before another. When Men hear improbable Matters from far Countries related unto them, it is their usual return, *it is better to believe them, than go thither to confute them*. Then let us not Credit many Unlikelihoods concerning *Angels*, which the Boldness of *Schoolmen* have obtruded upon us, but rather labour in *Gods due Time*, to go to *Heaven*, there with our own Happy Experience to confute them.

Well it is said of *Socrates*, that he was the first of the *Grecians*, which humbled *Speculative* into *Moral Philosophy*. How well would the *Paias* of that Minister be employed, who should endeavour to bring down, and abate many *superfluous contemplative Queries* into *Practical Divinity*; it were *Liberty enough* if the Sermons of all Preachers were bound to keep Residence only on such Subjects, which all Christians are bound to believe and practice for their Souls Health; amongst which this Doctrine (*—That the sincere Practice of known Duties, or dying daily to this Life and World would of itself resolve the most ignorant Persons in all the abstruse Points of the Christian Religion—*) may justly challenge a principal Part.

In the proving of this PARADOX, I shall First—Represent to you that the certain causes of our Errors are nothing but direct Sins, nothing makes us Fools and Ignorants but living vicious Lives; and then I shall proceed to prove That the sincere Practice of known Duties, (or dying daily to this Life and World) would of it self resolve the most ignorant Person in all the abstruse Points of the Christian Religion.

1. No Man understands the Word of God as it ought to be understood, unless he lays aside all Affections to Sin: Of which because we have taken very little Care, the product hath been that we have had very little Wisdom, and very little Knowledge in the Ways of God. *Κακία ἐστὶ φθορά τῆς ἀρετῆς*, said *Aristotle*, Wickedness does corrupt a Man's Reasoning, it gives him false Principles and evil Measures of Things: The sweet Wine that *Ulysses* gave to the *Cyclops* put his Eye out; and a Man that hath contracted evil Affections, and made a League with Sin, sees only by those Measures. A covetous Man understands nothing to be good that is not profitable; and a voluptuous Man likes your Reasoning well enough if you discourse of *Bonum jucundum*, the Pleasures of the Sense, the ravishments of Lust, the Noises and Inadvertencies, the Mirth and Songs of merry Company; but if you talk to him of the melancholy Lectures of the Cross, the Content of Resignation, the Peace of Meekness, and the Joys of the Holy Ghost, and of Rest in God, after your long Discourse, and his great Silence, he cries out, What's the matter? He knows not what you mean; for where is there a Man but the more he studies and enquires, still he discovers nothing so clearly as his own Ignorance? This is a Demonstration that we are not in the right Way, that we do not enquire wisely, that our Method is not artificial. If Men did fall upon the right way, it were impossible so many learned Men should be engaged in contrary Parties and Opinions. We have examined all ways but one, all but God's Way: Let us (having missed in all the other) try this: Let us go to God for Truth; for Truth comes from God only, and his Ways are plain, and his Sayings are true, and his Promises

Promises *Yea and Amen*, which fully proves that the *sincere Practice of known Duties* (or *dying daily to this Life and World*) would of it self resolve the most ignorant Person in all the abstruse Points of the Christian Religion, for if we miss the Truth, it is because we will not find it: For certain it is, that all that Truth which God hath made necessary, he hath also made legible and plain, and if we will open our Eyes, we shall see the Sun, and if *we will walk in the Light, we shall rejoice in the Light*: Only let us withdraw the Curtains, let us remove the *Impediments and the Sin* that doth so easily beset us; that's God's way. Every Man must in his Station do that portion of Duty which God requires of him, and then he shall be taught of God all that is fit for him to learn: There is no other way for him but this. *The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and a good understanding have all they that do his Commandments.* And so said David of himself, *I have more understanding than my Teachers; because I keep thy Commandments.* (a) But so few Men live after this Example of Holy David, that if you'd have so much as a seeming Convert of 'em, you must fit their Humour, and speak as they do.

I remember that *Arianus* tells of a Gentleman that was banished from Rome, and in his Sorrow visited the Philosopher, and he hear'd him talk wisely, and believed him, and promised him to leave all the Thoughts of Rome and Splendors of the Court, and retire to the Course of a severe Philosophy: But before the Good Man's Lectures were done, there came *κελεύσεις ἀπὸ τοῦ Καίσαρος*, Letters from *Cesar* to recall him Home, to give him Pardon, and promise him great Employment. He presently grew weary of the Good Man's Sermon, and wished he would make an End, thought his Discourse was dull and flat; for his Head and Heart were full of another Story and new Principles; and by these Measures he could bear only and he could understand.

Every Man understands by his Affections more than by his Reason, and upon this Account it is that there are so many false Doctrines in the only Article of Repentance. Men know they must Repent, but the Definition of Repentance they take from the Convenience of their own Affairs: What they will not part with, that is not necessary to be parted with, and they will Repent but not Restore: They will say, *nollem factum*, they wish they had never done it; but since it is done, you must give them leave to rejoice in their purchase: They will ask Forgiveness of God; but they sooner forgive themselves, and suppose that God is of their Mind. If you tye them to hard Terms, your Doctrine is not to be understood, or it is but one Doctors Opinion, and therefore they will fairly take their leave, and get them another Teacher.

What makes these evil, these dangerous and desperate Doctrines? Not the Obscurity of the Thing; for I have already proved, That the sincere Practice of known Duties, would of it self resolve the most ignorant Person all the Abstruse Points of the Christian Religion; but the Cloud upon the Heart; for say you what you will, he that hears must be the Expounder, and we can never suppose but a Man will give Sentence in behalf of what he passionately loves. So that it is no Wonder we understand so little of Religion: It is because we are in love with that

(a) *Psal. 111. ver. 10. Psal. 119.*

which destroys it; and as a Man does not care to hear what does not please him, so neither does he believe it; he cannot, he will not understand it.

Let God declare his Mind never so plainly, if Men will not lay aside the evil Principle that is within, their open love to their secret Sin, they may kill an Apostle, and yet be so ignorant as to think they do God good Service.

2. No Man, how learned soever, can understand the Word of God, or be at Peace in the Questions of Religion, unless he be a Master over his Passions:

*Tu quoque si vis Lumine claro
Cernere verum, Gaudia pelle,
Pelle Timorem: Nubila mens est
Vinetaque franis Hæc ubi regnant.*

Said the wise Boethius. A Man must first learn himself before he can learn God. *Tua te fallit Imago*: Nothing deceives a Man so soon as a Man's self; when a Man is (that I may use Plato's expression) συμπερυσθός τῆ ζωῆς, mingled with his Nature and his congenial Infirmities of Anger and Desire, he can never have any thing but ἀμυδρὴν δόξαν, a knowledge partly moral and partly natural: His whole Life is but Imagination; his knowledge is Inclination and Opinion; he judges of Heavenly Things by the measures of his Fears and Desires, and his Reason is half of it Sense, and determinable by the Principles of Sense. *Ἐν τῷ ἐπι φιλοσοφῆσαι ἐκ πάθους*, then a Man learns well when he is a Philosopher in his Passions. (a) Passionate Men are to be taught the first Elements of Religion: And let Men pretend to as much learning as they please, they must begin again at Christ's Cross; they must learn true Mortification and Crucifixion of their Anger and Desires, before they can be good Scholars in Christ's School, or be admitted into the more secret Enquiries of Religion, or profit in spiritual Understanding.

But Reader, Perhaps you may here ask me (if we must lay aside all Affections to Sin, and be Masters of our Passions, &c. because they are the cause of our Controversies and Ignorances in the Things of God) how is it possible (as the best Man living Sins Daily in Thought, Word and Deed) That the sincere Practice of known Duties, or dying daily to this Life and World, should resolve the most ignorant Person in all the abstruse Points of the Christian Religion.

To this I answer, Sometimes God gives to his choicest, his most elect and precious Servants, a knowledge even of Secret Things, which he communicates not to others. We find it greatly remarked in the Case of Abraham, Gen. 18. 17. *And the Lord said shall I hide from Abraham that Thing that I do? Why not from Abraham? God tells us v. 19. For I know him, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do Justice and Judgment.* And though this be irregular and infrequent, yet it is a Reward of their true Piety (or Sincere Practice of known Duties) and the proper increase also of the spiritual Man. We find this spoken by God

to Daniel, and promised to be the Lot of the Righteous Man in the Days of the Messias; many shall be purified and made white and tryed; but the Wicked shall do wickedly: and what then? None of the Wicked shall understand; but the Wise shall understand. (a) Where besides that the wise Man and the wicked are opposed, plainly signifying that the wicked Man is a Fool and an Ignorant: It is plainly said that *None of the wicked shall understand* the Wisdom, and Mysteriousness of the Kingdom of the Messias, which fully proves, a good Life is the best way to understand Wisdom and Religion, because by the Experiences and Relishes of Religion, there is conveyed to them such a sweetness, to which all wicked Men are Strangers: There is in the Things of God to them which practice them, a deliciousness that makes us love them, and that love admits us into God's Cabinet, and strangely clarifies the Understanding by the purification of the Heart. For when our Reason is raised up by the Spirit of Christ, it is turned quickly into Experience: When our Faith relies upon the Principles of Christ, it is changed into Vision: And so long as we know God only in the Ways of Man, by contentious Learning, by arguing and dispute, we see nothing but the Shadow of him, and in that Shadow we meet with many dark Appearances, little Certainty and much Conjecture: But when we know him *λόγῳ ἀπορρητῷ, γὰρ ὁὐκ ᾔσκησεν*, with the Eyes of holiness and the Intuition of Gracious Experiences, with a quiet Spirit and the Peace of Enjoyment; then we shall hear what we never heard, and see what our Eyes never saw; then the Mysteries of Godliness shall be opened unto us, and clear as the Windows of the Morning. And this is rarely well expressed by the Apostle, *If we stand up from the Dead, and awake from Sleep, then Christ shall give us Light.* (b)

For although the Scriptures themselves are written by the Spirit of God, yet they are written within and without; and besides the Light that shines upon the Face of them, unless there be a Light shining within our Hearts, unfolding the leaves, and interpreting the mysterious Sense of the Spirit, convincing our Consciences and preaching to our Hearts; to look for Christ in the Leaves of the Gospel, is to look for the Living amongst the Dead. There is a Life in them, but that Life is (according to St. Paul's expression) *hid with Christ in God*: And unless the Spirit of God be the *Promo-conduis*, we shall never draw it forth; The Angels in Heaven dwell in Love and Contemplation, they Worship and Obey, but dispute not; and our Quarrels and impertinent Wranglings about Religion are nothing else but the Want of the Measures of this State

But that we may speak not only Things *Mysterious*, but things *Intelligible*; how does it come to pass, by what Means, and what Oeconomy is it effected, that the sincere Practice of known Duties (or a Holy Life) is the best Determination of all Questions, and the surest way of Knowledge? Is it to be supposed that a Godly Man is better enabled to determine the Questions of Purgatory or Transubstantiation? Is the Gift of Chastity the best way to reconcile Thomas and Scotus? and is a temperate Man always a better Scholar than a Drunkard? To this I Answer, that

(a) Dan. 12. 10. (b) Eph. 5. 14.

in all Things in which true Wisdom consists, Holiness, which is the best Wisdom, is the surest Way of understanding them. What Learning is it to discourse of the Philosophy of the *Sacrament*, if you do not feel the Virtue of it? And the Man that can with eloquence and subtilty discourse of the instrumental Efficacy of *Baptismal Waters*, talks ignorantly in respect of him who hath the *Answer of a good Conscience* within, and is cleansed by the purifications of the Spirit. How can a wicked Man understand the *Purities of the Heart*? And how can an evil and unworthy *Communicant* tell what it is to have received Christ by Faith, to dwell with him, to be united to him, to receive him in his Heart? The good Man only understands that: The one sees the Colour, and the other feels the Substance; the one discourses of the *Sacrament*, and the other receives Christ; the one discourses for or against *Transubstantiation*, but the good Man feels himself to be changed and so joyned to Christ, that he only understands the true Sense of *Transubstantiation*, while he becomes to Christ Bone of his Bone, Flesh of his Flesh, and of the same Spirit with his Lord; if the Spirit of God be our Teacher, we shall learn to avoid Evil, and to do Good, to be Wise, and to be Holy, to be Profitable and Careful: And they that walk in this Way shall find more Peace in their Consciences, more Skill in the Scriptures, more Satisfaction in their Doubts than can be obtain'd by all the polemical and impertinent Disputations of the World. God kept the Secrets of his Kingdom from the wise Heathens and the learned Jews, revealing them to Babes, not because they had less Learning, but because they had more Love; they were Children and Babes in Malice, they loved Christ, and so he became to them a Light and a Glory. St. Paul had more learning than they all; and Moses was instructed in all the Learning of the Egyptians; yet because he was the meekest Man upon Earth, he was also the wisest, and to his human Learning in which he was excellent, he had a divine Light and excellent Wisdom superadded to him by Way of spiritual Blessings. And St. Paul, though he went very far to the Knowledge of many great and excellent Truths by the force of human Learning, yet he was far short of perfective Truth and true Wisdom, till he learned a new Lesson in a new School, at the Feet of one greater than his Gamaliel: His Learning grew much greater, his Notions brighter, his Skill deeper, by the Love of Christ and his Desires, his passionate Desires after Jesus.

He that goes about to speak of and to understand the *mysterious Trinity*; (about which near two Hundred Books have been lately published to no better Purpose, than to render those *abstruse Points in Religion* unintelligible, which before every True Christian fully believed) and does it by Words and Names of Man's Invention, or by such which signifie contingently, if he reckons this Mystery by the *Mythology of Numbers*, by the *Cabala of Letters*, by the *Distinctions of the School*, and by the weak Inventions of disputing People; if he only talks of *Essences*, and *Existences*, *Hypostases* and *Personalities*, *Distinctions without Difference*, and *Priority in Coequalities*, and *Unity in Pluralities*, and of *superior Predicates of no larger extent than the inferior Subjects*, may amuse himself, and find his Understanding will be like St. Peters upon the Mount of Tabor at the Transfiguration: He may build three *Tabernacles* in his Head, and talk something, but he knows not what, but the good Man that feels

feels the Power of the Father, and he to whom the Son is become *Wisdom; Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption*; he in whose Heart the Love of the Spirit of God is spread, to whom God hath communicated the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; this Man, though he understands nothing of that which is unintelligible, yet he only understands the *Mysteriousness of the Holy Trinity*. No Man can be convinced well and wisely of the Article of the *Holy, Blessed and Undivided Trinity*, but he that feels the Mightiness of the Father begetting him to a *new Life*, the Wisdom of the Son building him up in a *most Holy Faith*, and the Love of the Spirit of God making him to become like unto God; there is no other satisfactory Knowledge of the *Blessed Trinity* but this: And therefore whatever Thing is spoken of God *Metaphysically*, there is no knowing of God *Theologically* and as he ought to be known, but by the *Measures of Holiness* and the proper Light of the Spirit of God.

But in this Case *Experience* is the best Learning, and *Christianity* is the best Institution, and the *Spirit of God* is the best Teacher, and *Holiness* is the greatest Wisdom; and he that Sins most is the most Ignorant, and the humble and obedient Man is the best Scholar. For the *Spirit of God* is a *loving Spirit*, and will not enter into a *polluted Soul*: But he that keepeth the *Law* getteth the *Understanding* thereof, and the *Perfection of the Fear of the Lord*, is *Wisdom* (a).

Thus Reader you see the best way of *Resolving the most Ignorant Person in all the abstruse Points of the Christian Religion*; it is not by his reading multitude of Books, but by his *sincere Practice of known Duties* (or *dying daily to this Life and World*) it is not by the laborious Commentaries of the Doctors, but by the *Expositions of the Spirit of God*: It is not by the Rules of *Metaphysics*, but by the *Proportions of Holiness*: And when *all Books are Read, and all Arguments Examined, and all Authorities alledged*, nothing can be found to be true that is unholily. Give your selves to *Reading, to Exhortation, and to Doctrine*, saith St. Paul. Read all good Books you can; but exhortation unto good Life is the best Instrument, and the best Teacher of true *Doctrine*, of that which is according to *Godliness*.

And therefore (to use the Words of the Right Reverend Father in God THOMAS Lord Bishop of Chichester.)

“ If we would obtain this *spiritual Strength*, we must often
 “ meditate on the *clear Evidences of our Religion*; admit no
 “ doubts concerning its *principal Articles*, and be often repre-
 “ senting to our Minds the *excellent design of the Gospel*. Tho’
 “ the *Doctrines and Promises of our Religion* be ever so valuable in
 “ themselves and important to us, yet *’tis the Certainty of them that fills*
 “ *us with Satisfaction*, and gives us that *Hope and Confidence* which is the
 “ *Strength of the Soul*. The *Evidences* we have for the *Truth of our*
 “ *Religion*, are as great as the *Nature of Religion* will bear, and as our
 “ *Faith and Condition in this Life* require. And tho’ *perverse Men* be
 “ continually starting of *Objections*, and every *Age of the Church* have its
 “ *subtle and sharp Adversaries*; yet an *honest Mind*, establish’d upon
 “ those plain *Matters of Fact*, on which the *Christian Religion* is grounded,

(a) *Ecclus. 21. 11.*

“ may preserve its Faith amidst them all, by looking upon *all those Dis-*
“ *putes and Cavillings* as so many Temptations to try the Constancy of
“ his Belief. Sophistical Reasonings, bold Speculations, and over
“ *curious Refinements in Matters of Religion*, will be always flow-
“ ing from those Heads which have ill Designs, or have too much
“ Leisure: But what *Fooleries* must such Attempts appear to a *serious*
“ *and wise Christian*, who knows that the *Articles of his Creed*, are the
“ *Oracles of God*, and the *Revelations of divine Wisdom*, and not the
“ *Probabilities of human Understanding*? And therefore, *the more other*
“ *People dispute and doubt*, the more firmly he believes and practices; and
“ that ill Mode of doubting which may stagger those who *love not the*
“ *Truth*, gives him an Occasion of taking a nearer View of the Evi-
“ *dence of his Religion*, and fixes him upon an *everlasting Founda-*
“ *tion*.

“ The excellent Design of the *Gospel* thoroughly consider'd, is a com-
“ plet Answer to all the *Blasphemies and Imputations of Falsity and*
“ *Imposture*; for he who knows any thing truly of *God and his Per-*
“ *fections*, may easily discern *his Image in the Holy Scriptures*; and he
“ who loves his *Goodness* will apply himself to the *Fountain of Grace*,
“ and be quickly conscious of its *Power and Strength*; and really there
“ is nothing more hard to be deceived in Matters of pure Religion,
“ than a *pious and humble Heart*.

“ The Force and Power then of our Religion, is founded upon the
“ *Firmness of our Perswasion*; and the Firmness of that, depends upon
“ our *outward and inward Evidences*; and as we meditate upon these,
“ we are strengthened, with *more and more Might according to his glori-*
“ *ous Power*.

“ (2.) We must be *very serious and earnest in all our Devotions*; for
“ thereby we may be certain of drawing into our Souls a *great Degree*
“ *of Spiritual Strength*. When our *Prayers* are right for their Matter
“ and Design, and are sent forth by an Heart qualify'd for that *sacred*
“ *Performance*, they never return empty; for Christ has given us his
“ *own Word and Promise* for their Success, and we have *his own pow-*
“ *erful Intercession* to make it good. So likewise the *Holy Sacrament*
“ being a *Mystery* accompany'd with *Prayers and Praises*, when wor-
“ thily and devoutly receiv'd, never fails of adding *new Strength to the*
“ *Soul*; for 'tis the heavenly Bread by which *the divine Life* is nou-
“ rish'd and maintain'd, and greatly increased: There we may expect
“ all that *moral Improvement* which arises from good Thoughts, and
“ heavenly Designs, and pious Resolutions; and *all that infused Blessing*
“ which God by the *Mystery* imparts; there we may find that *Strength*
“ which a Soul well employ'd and well exercised, attains to; and there
“ we may receive a *more plentiful Communication of the Grace of Union*,
“ whereby we are sealed to *Immortality*, and a *glorious Resurrection*,
“ are made one Spirit and one Body with Christ. They who find none
“ of these Effects, can blame nothing but their *own unprepared Hearts*;
“ or if People indulge themselves in *any one Sin*; to be sure that one Sin
“ will not suffer their Religion to grow, nor the *several Parts of their*
“ *Devotion* to unite into the *inward Strength of their Souls*. Thus far
that Truly, Pious, and Learned Prelate, THOMAS, Lord Bishop of
Chichester.

Reader—having (I presume) fully proved, that *The sincere Practice of known Duties (or Dying Daily to this Life and World) would of it self resolve the most Ignorant Person in all the abstruse Points of the Christian Religion*, I shall now conclude this SECOND ESSAY (which I thought could not be omitted if I'd compleat *A new Directory for Holy Living and Dying*) with some Directions, *how we may graciously improve those Difficulties and Providences which Transcend our Understandings?*

In these DIRECTIONS I shall wholly follow the Advice of a celebrated Divine of great Piety and Learning (now in Heaven) with whom I was long and intimately acquainted.

And here (Reader) I shall first observe, that “ In the most Mysterious Doctrines and Providences, there is somewhat apprehensible by us, enough to oblige us to conclude that there is no Implication in the Doctrines, nor any Inconsistency between one and another. They are not contrary unto our Reasons, neither are the Providences such, but that what difficulty soever about them lies before us, they are not unworthy of God; only we cannot see how, without all scruple to satisfy our selves concerning some things of lesser Moment with relation unto them. We cannot say that the Doctrines and Providences are such as in their own Nature are incapable of a Solution; but this only we can say, we know not how to solve them. There is somewhat in them that is above us, the which does but shew that they are from God. If the Doctrines and Providences had been in all respects plain and obvious, how could it appear they had been of God; surely what things soever are in all respects easily within our compass, cannot be supposed to be from one infinitely above us; wherefore then that the World may see that the Author of Christian Doctrines and Providences is God, God has left some Characters and Ideas of himself upon them, the which may be observed in every thing that is of God. In those very things that are most known unto us, if well looked into, we shall find somewhat extraordinary; the Reason of which we cannot with any satisfaction fully discover, for there is still in them somewhat beyond us.

If any shall ask why *Divine Truths* are so obscur'd? I answer, it may be they are reserved to augment our Future Bliss, which shall consist as well in the enlargement of our Knowledge, as the refining of our Wills: When the Vail of Ignorance is to be taken away, and we shall know even as we are known (a) or perhaps it is to encrease our Respect to them; for Men do usually esteem that with greater Reverence, with which they be not so thoroughly acquainted.

These Things being so, 'tis manifest, That the many profound Doctrines that are in Scripture, and the many dark Providences that attend us, do very much contribute to our living the more religiously, (i. e.) to our walking the more by Faith, to the saving the Soul.

This, I conceive, is one great End of the profoundness of the Doctrines of Religion, and of the many Difficulties in the Providences of God, namely, to raise us up to a Life above Sense and Reason, even to the Life of Faith, which is a high and a heavenly Life.

(a) 1 Cor. 13.

‘ The more Difficulties that lie in the Way of our Believing, the
‘ more strong is the Faith that is exercised ; and the stronger our
‘ Faith, the more God is glorified by us, and the more is our Salvation
‘ furthered ; the which being so, we have great Reason to be abun-
‘ dantly quickned in our Thoughts.

‘ As by Faith we behold the Accomplishment of the Promises,
‘ which are not comprehended by our Reason, and can thorough the
‘ Mysteriousness of Doctrines and Providences see that they are of God,
‘ so by Faith we are enabled to put our Trust and Confidence in God,
‘ even when under the darkest Dispensations. Faith never appears so much
‘ in its lustre as when the greatest Difficulties lie before it. Then ’tis
‘ that the Believer puts his Trust in the Power, Wisdom, Mercy and
‘ Faithfulness of God, when under the obscurest Dispensations. When
‘ there are some difficult Appearances in the Sacred Scriptures that re-
‘ late to some Doctrines, and when some Providences seem to be contrary
‘ to the Discoveries that are made of God’s Faithfulness, &c. then ’tis
‘ that our Faith appears in its Beauty ; for thereby we shew the just
‘ apprehensions we have of God’s Power, Wisdom, Mercy and Faith-
‘ fulness. That God has promised to extend his Compassions to Belie-
‘ vers, that he will order all things to work together for their Good,
‘ is evident enough in Scripture ; but yet notwithstanding this, all
‘ things seem to be against them, they are afflicted and under sore
‘ Temptations, they lose their temporal Estates, are deprived of their
‘ Liberty, are Sick, Weak, and in great Distress, several thwarting
‘ Providences attend them, all Things are seemingly against them :
‘ Thus it was with good old *Jacob*, he is bereaved of his Children,
‘ *Joseph* is not, *Simeon* is not, and *Benjamin* must be taken away ; *All*
‘ *these Things* (says he) *are against me*, Gen. 42. 36: But yet this was
‘ the Time for *Jacob* to exercise his Faith, as he did in the following
‘ Chapter, ver. 14. *q. d. The Lord Almighty be with you*, with him I
‘ leave you ; to him I commit my Concerns ; *If I am bereaved I am*
‘ *bereaved* (i. e.) the Will of the Lord be done. Thus it was with
‘ *Job* ; God had suffered the Tempter to break in upon him ; God him-
‘ self seemed as if he was resolved he should die ; and yet then could
‘ *Job* say, *Though he slay me yet will I put my Trust in him*, Job 13. 15.
‘ So with *Habakkuk*, chap. 3 17, 18, 19. *Although the Fig-tree shall*
‘ *not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines, though the Labour of*
‘ *the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no Meat, though the*
‘ *Flocks shall be cut off the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls,*
‘ *yet will I rejoyce in the Lord, the Lord God is my Strength, he will make*
‘ *me to walk upon mine high Places.*

‘ Whoever will duly consider, How that Man when in Innocency
‘ was mostly disposed to close with the Temptation of being like unto
‘ God in Knowledge, and that the Lord ever since the Fall, hath taken
‘ special care to keep us very much in the Dark, may easily see that the
‘ Use we are to make of the Transcendency of the Doctrines and Pro-
‘ vidences of God, is to *walk humbly before the Lord*, and be to afraid
‘ to enquire too curiously after his Secrets.

When *Adam* was first Created, his Knowledge was much more
 full, clear and distinct than afterwards it was; and no question but
 that it afforded him suitable Delight and Satisfaction. He saw so
 much Excellency in the Knowledge of God and his Works, that a
 Temptation to the doing any thing but what might encrease his Know-
 ledge, would with the greatest Disdain be contemned and rejected:
 This the subtle Tempter saw, and therefore recommends the forbidden
 Fruit as what was rather to be chosen as a Means of enlarging his Know-
 ledge, than as what was pleasing to the Taste; *Ye shall be as Gods,*
knowing Good and Evil. *Adam* finding so much Pleasure in the Know-
 ledge he already had, is soon tempted to be inordinate in the desiring
 more, yea, so inordinate, that as soon as he meets with the Tempta-
 tion, no Knowledge less than what was like unto Gods, could satisfie
 him, and so he fell. So that the Sin of our first Parents was an Am-
 bition to be like unto God in Knowledge, an inordinate desire of
 knowing what could not be known by any but by him whose Under-
 standing is infinite; and this Sin appears in all his Off-spring; we
 would fain be like unto God, and we are unwilling to be satisfied with
 such Measures as the Lord appoints, and therefore are prying into
 the deep things of God. Such are our low thoughts of God, and such
 are the high Thoughts we have of our selves, that we think it not
 impossible to know God to perfection, and therefore are so curious
 and strict in our enquiry after him.

God keeps his Distance, he will make us know that he is the Lord,
 and that we are but Men; even vain Worms that cannot comprehend
 him, and who therefore ought to submit our selves unto God, and
 humble our selves before him, and not come too near him; for the
 nearer we come the more we are in the Dark, the more at a Loss, yea
 the more perplexed and confused are our Apprehensions.

This the Transcendency of the Doctrines and Providences of God
 does evince; which is enough to shew, how humble we ought to be
 when we discourse of God, and how Modest in our Enquiries into his
 Doctrines and Providences. Content thy self therefore with what is
 clearly revealed, and leave what is hid and above thee unto God. Be
 not thou so bold as to measure the boundless Mysteries of God, by thy
 narrow confined Understanding; neither do thou presume to reject
 what thou canst not comprehend. What is of God is above thee, for
 God is God, he is clothed with Honour and Majesty, and with that
 Light which is inaccessible. We ought therefore to be modest when
 we speak of the unsearchable Doctrines and Providences of God;
 for in them we see enough to admire, but can never comprehend; and
 when we have spent all our Time to find out God, and the infinity of
 his Being, the Mystery of the Trinity, the Mode of his Workings, or
 Operations, the Depth of his Contrivances about the accomplishing
 Fall'n Man's Salvation; and all the great Counsels of God, and the In-
 tricacy of his Providences, we must come to this Close with the Apostle,
O! the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God!
how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding
out.

And therefore as many Reverend Sons of the Clergy (both Churchmen, and Dissenters) have published several excellent Sermons upon those *Doctrines and Providences which Transcend our Understandings* that I may do, all the Justice I possibly can to *The Honourable, Birth, Education, Learning, and eminent Charity of CLERGYMEN'S SONS*; as well as to their Reverend Progenitors that Preach in Publick to their Congregation, as well as privately to their own Consciences; I'll now conclude this Essay (intitled, *Every Man his own Parson, &c*) with an *Appendix* (reducing the foregoing Sermons to Practice) which I'll intitle,



The Parson's Son : Or, A Congratulatory Poem
to the Minister's Children, on their ANNUAL
and Splendid Feast, kept at Merchant-Taylor's-
Hall, December the 7th, MDCLXXXII. De-
dicated to the Stewards of the next Meeting of
Clergymen's Sons.

By JOHN DUNTON, Son, Grandson, and Great Grandson, to
a CLERGYMAN.

To my Honoured Friends and Brethren, the Stewards of the
next Meeting of Clergymen's Sons.

Honoured Bretheren,

THERE is scarce any Dignity in Church or State, any Profession, or Calling, or Rank, which some Clergyman's Son has not advanced the Reputation of ——— Mr. West, in his Sermon to the Sons of the Clergy, has this Expression "I might mention a great many Instances of your Bounty and Liberality, and recount a vast Number of your publick Acts of Charity, but I shou'd not pass over in silence that Generous Benefaction lately left by a Right Reverend Father * to this Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy; (for, to the great Honour of Clergymen's Sons, there was a Charter granted by Charles II. on purpose for erectting a Corporation for the Relief of Ministers, Widows, and Children) but the perpetual Good it will do, will be a more lasting Memorial than any Commendation can be given it." So that we may say to those of the Tribe of Gad, (especially if they are such that have the Impudence to say Parson's Sons never come to Good, &c) in the Words of Terullian † *Vestra omnia implevimus urbes, municipia, castra, decurias, palatium, senatum, forem: And this, as it confirms God's antient Promises of blessing the Seed of the Righteous, so it reminds us, that since by his kind Providence our Branches are spread so far, it becomes us in all Places through which we pass, to leave some Footsteps of our virtuous*

* Dr. Turner, late Lord Bishop of Ely, who left Twelve Hundred Pounds to it: † Apok. 6. 37. Edu-

Education and honourable Birth, and of the Principles instill'd into us by our Religious Parents; to whose Memory we cannot dedicate a better Monument, than the publick Fruits of their Cultivation, and a Life answerable to their Instructions and Prayers.

'Tis certain Clergymen's Sons are greatly obliged to their Reverend Parents for that Learned Education they (generally) bestow upon 'em, and that for the following Reasons:

(1.) Because a Learned Education renders Clergymen's Sons more agreeable in Neighbourhood and Conversation. Most of your little Animosities and Quarrels are to be found chiefly amongst uneducated People; and tho' we find too much of them among Men who have been better bred, yet they are seldom guilty of that roughness and hard Language which is common among others: Nay, the obliging and endearing Airs of Conversation are in the greatest Heighth and Perfection to be seen only in those Gentlemen (or Clergymen's Sons) who have had the Advantage of the most learned Education. For, as for all the other little Arts of Popular Talk and Refin'd Address, they lie but thin spread over a Man, like Varnish, and every untoward Accident makes him liable to discover his inward Imperfections. I will not say that an Education perfectly Bookish where Genius, and the Life and Brightness of Nature, and a competent Knowledge of the World, are deficient; I will not say this does render a Man more agreeable in Conversation; but if Men would take care to talk as they ought to do, and would be improving their Minds upon all occasions, (for which no Persons have such a fair Opportunity as Clergymen's Sons) they would find more Satisfaction in the useful tho' unpolish'd Discourse, of such a Person, than in all the Circle of fine Jest and Tales that are requisite to furnish out an empty Wit.

(2.) Because Learned Education does commonly endow Clergymen's Sons with more than ordinary Principles of Generosity. The Company, which they are Educated among, are Persons who are generally Men of Honour, and who value their Reputation, and scorn a base Thing; and therefore if they fall into such Actions they must sort out to themselves a new Acquaintance; for they will be abandon'd by all their former Friends, who are Lovers of Honour and Virtue. Besides the Minds of Clergymen's Sons have been habituated to such generous Virtues during their whole Series of Education, that they cannot, without a great Force upon their Inclinations, stoop to sordid Vices; and for that Reason, a base Covetousness, dishonest Dealing, or Treacherousness, and such other shameful Vices are rarely incident to Clergymen's Sons, as being Persons (generally) of a Learned Education. Their very Reading in Philosophy and History affords them such excellent Rules and Examples which so tinctures their Souls with these noble Ideas, as makes it no easy matter for them to be tempted to do an unworthy Thing. The Vulgar and Illiterate have very little Sense of Fame and Honour, and do many scandalous Things when they may be advantageous; but Clergymen's Sons being Persons of a Liberal Education have, for the most part, such a spark of Honour within their Breasts, as is a Guard to them against the Commission of any enormous Crimes at least; and oftentimes is the last Stake of Virtue within them,

when

“ when all true Piety and Religion have taken their Flight : A Spark
“ which sometimes, by God's Grace, kindles again into a bright Flame
“ of Piety and true Religion, when others live on senseless and stupid
“ Sinners to the last.

“ And Thirdly, Because a Learned Education does render a Clergyman's
“ Son more Eminent in his particular Calling. A Previous Knowledge
“ in any part of Literature does qualifie a Man for the understanding
“ of any kind of Business, far better than one who is destitute of all.
“ It opens and clears ones Head for a ready Preception of whatever shall
“ be proposed to us ; for, the more the Mind is used to thinking and
“ contemplation, the more quick and perceptive it is, and is discernable
“ even in those that have been very little used to it. A Lad that has
“ but gone thro' a Form or two in a Grammar-School, that has had
“ Thoughts but a small matter Exercised about the Propriety of Speech,
“ and the Congruity of Terms with one another, only in the Gramma-
“ tical Way of Concord, shall have a far greater Facility in Learning
“ any Art, than one taken from the Plough, or any other, who all his
“ Time has lived by pure Sense, without any manner of abstracted
“ Thought or Meditation. But a farther Progress, in a well managed
“ Course of Studies, gives a kind of new Genius to the Soul, and often-
“ times quickens the slowest Natures; so that, when Learning and a
“ noble Stock of natural Parts meet together, (as is often seen in
“ Clergymen's Sons) they must needs arrive, in any thing they apply
“ themselves to, to the utmost Perfection that human Nature is capable
“ of. For there is an Analogy between all sort of Reasoning, and
“ Men, who have been used to make good Consequences in one Art of
“ Science, with a little Application may do it as well in another. But
“ I need not go to prove this ; for 'tis evident to every ones Obser-
“ vation, that the most Famous in any Art whatsoever are generally
“ Clergymen's Sons (or the best Scholars in that Profession.) A good
“ Philosopher and Historian shall make the best Lawyer, and an ordinary
“ Mathematician an excellent Mechanick ; nay, by frequent Reading
“ sensible Authors, a Man will improve his Reason so that he shall be
“ able to Buy and Sell, and manage Trade the better for it.” — Thus
far the Reverend Dr. Nichols in his Sermon preached to those Clergy-
men's Sons who were Educated at St. Paul's School.

So that you see Gentlemen, for several Reasons, the Birth and Educa-
tion of Ministers Children may well be accounted Honourable ; and I yet
account it the more Honourable, as that ingenious Gentleman and eminent
Divine, Mr. Timothy Rogers, is pleased to say, (in the Sermon he
preached at my Wife's Funeral) Mrs. Dunton was honoured by having a
“ Minister for her Father, as much as if he had been a LORD, tho' by the
“ Iniquity of the Times, and the Simplicity of unthoughtful People, the
“ Character of a Minister is thought lower than many others ; and
“ were we more Great or Rich, we should be more valu'd ; but while we stink
“ in the Nostrils of unserious Persons, we are unto God a sweet smelling Sa-
“ vour.” To be the Ambassadors of Jesus is the matter of our Glory ; and
“ if as such we are despised, we'll pity our Despisers, and wish them more
“ Grace and Wit. I reckon it amongst the Felicities of my Life, to have been
“ a Prophet's Son ; nor would I leave a Pulpit for a Throne ; We reckon our
“ selves

“ *seives as honourable in our Cloaks as others do in their furr'd Gowns, or
 “ in the long Robe. Happy was Mrs. Dunton in having a Minister,
 “ and such a Minister to her Father, and happy he in having such a Daugh-
 “ ter, who (as he used to say) never displeas'd him in all his
 “ Life.”*

Again, my Honoured Brethren and Friends, we shall do well to con-
 sider, (but more especially you that have the Honour of being chosen Stew-
 ards of the next Meeting of Clergymen's Sons) that we claim a nearer
 Relation to the Church than others, and solemnly call our selves The Sons
 of the Church of England: And therefore we ought, above all Men,
 not only to be stedfast to her Communion, but to do every thing that tends
 to the Honour and Establishment of it; 'tis plain, nothing can more conduce
 hereunto, than the good Works, and Charity, and Love, and Innocence
 of those that enter into her Gates: And accordingly let this be our Way of
 standing up in her Defence; and let us plead for our Communion by the
 Goodness of our Lives, and the Tenderness of our Hearts, and by walk-
 ing suitably to the Scriptures which we have had an early Acquaintance
 with; for ill Examples have a malignant Influence, and scatter Infection far
 and wide, will give Authority to Vice, and furnish it with Excuse and
 Apology. If the Salt of the Earth lose its Savour, rottenness and putre-
 faction will cover the Face of it. Two Things make Wickedness bold and
 daring, and overflow beyond all measure, when 'tis either established by a
 Law, or encouraged by leading Examples, (for such are all Clergymen's
 Sons on the Account of their Honourable Birth.) 'Tis observable all along,
 that the greatest Symptoms of decaying Piety, were legible in the vicious
 Lives of a depraved Clergy or their Wicked Children. And the best Prog-
 nosticks of the Future Growth of Religion is, when it not only tips the
 Tongues, but lives in the Hearts, adorns the Conversations, and regulates all
 the Actions of Clergymen, or such as have the Honour to Descend from them.
 And (my Dear Brethren) if you'd be thus religious throughout your whole
 Conversation:

Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day, according to the Command-
 ments, which is the Girdle of all the Commands Strengthening, and hold-
 ing them together, without which (like weak and loose Things) they will
 fall one from another, and dwindle into nothing; hence it is seen by undeni-
 able Experience, that People making no Conscience of this Obligation,
 make Conscience of no other Duty; but are only Professors at large, and
 little acquainted with the Power of Godliness, (as I proved in my Essay
 intitled, Every Man his own Parson) whereas on the contrary, be it spoken
 to the Praise of such Pious Examples, I never knew yet a Clergyman's Son,
 if he was strict in keeping the Lord's Day, but he was equally strict in
 the whole Course of his Life; therefore it was worthily said by that Prophet
 and Bishop, the most Learned USHER. “ Keep the Fourth Commandment,
 “ and keep every Command, but keep not that, and keep never a one.”
 In keeping this Command, we revive the MEMORIAL of God upon
 our Souls, which otherwise would be buried, and lost in the Rubbish
 and Dust of our Worldly Encumbrances; then we ascend out of the
 lower Valley, and converse with God in the Holy Mount; who meets
 his Pious Potaries, and blesseth them Richly in Heavenly Places in Jesus
 Christ, Remunerating their Zeal with Vision and Fruition, with Unc-
 tion

tion and Glory; St. JOHN was ravished in Spirit on the Lord's Day and several besides him have been so Transported in the same Blessed Season, sensibly feeling and foretasting the *Celestial Joys* of the Eternal Sabbath; and therefore (my Honoured Brethren) 'tis a great Encouragement for us that are *Clergyman's Sons* to follow our Reverend Father's Holy Examples in strictly Observing the *Lord's Day*, as we may by this happy Union of Purity both in Words and Practice, be Instruments of begetting such a quick and lively Sense of Religion in the Hearts of Laymen's Children, such a serious and sober Practice of it in their Lives, such a Zeal in them to transmit it down to their Posterity, that the Places we live in may be the better for us to the Word's End; but (my Honoured Brethren) I forbear to enlarge; for as I do not suspect your PIETY in Devoutly Worshipping of God every Sunday, (either in a Church or a private House) so I would be loth to disoblige you with Prolixity.

Gentlemen, for my further thoughts of the *Parsons Sons*, I refer you to the *Congratulatory Poem* that was writ in the Year 1682. and published that Day I made one of your Number at the *Anniversary Meeting* of the *Sons of the Clergy*, in the Church of St. Mary le-Bow, being *Thursday* December the 7th, 1682.

I conclude with all due Respect to your Persons, and hearty Prayers to Almighty God, that your next friendly Meeting, both at *Bow-Church*, and at the *Annual Feast*, may be attended with a Blessing to your selves, and those distressed Widows and Orphans you so bountifully relieve, for that I am, (having the Honour to be one of your Number for three Generations, or more)

GENTLEMEN,

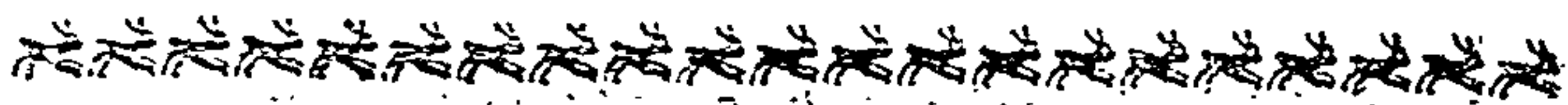
Your most Humble Servant,

Affectionate Brother,

And hearty Friend,

JOHN DUNTON





The Parson's Son: Or, a Congratulatory Poem to the
Ministers Children, on their Annual Feast.

I.

THE SONS OF LEVI are no sooner come*,
But GAD † cries out, Pray, good Sir, make us Room,
May none but Scholars wait on PARSONS SONS?
We never saw such Men! so justly priz'd!
Sure Parsons Sons are Mortals Angeliz'd!

II.

What Grace and Science shines in ev'ry Face!
Cry'd GAD, who thought 'twas HONOUR but to gaze,
Their very Looks proclaim their Sacred Race!
Let's WONDER, and away—— Fools were we when
We thought that Parsons Children had been Men.

III.

The Mob (or Tribe of Gad) still wond'ring cry'd,
Oh Education!—— had we been ally'd
To Parsons too, how bless'd had been our Fate!
Such POLISHING had made us truly Great.

IV.

All Parsons Sons descend from Sacred Race,
And Bishops Sons have such a shining Place,
They're Sons of LORDS, and some are Sons of GRACE ‡.
One of the noblest of the sacred Gown (*)
Descends from LEVI, is a Parson's Son.

V.

The Parsons Sons are Heaven's peculiar Care,
And for our Bishops they were MITRED there.

* To Bow-Church, where they first meet to hear a Sermon, and then go in
Procession to Merchant-Taylors-Hall; where all the Clergymen's Sons
that had purchas'd Tickets, are treated with a splendid Dinner.

† The Sons of Laymen.

‡ The Title given to an Arch-bishop.

(*) Dr. Tenison, the present Arch-bishop of Canterbury.

To the Stewards of the next Meeting

35

I mean such who now fill the *English Sees*,
Who are *truly Pious, Learned, Grave, and Wise* ;
FATHERS IN GOD—and none can higher rise.

VI.

Prelates, tho' made still by the *Sovereign's Choice*,
Seem recommended by the *People's Voice* ;
Religious Lives successfully they teach;
By giving *Patterns* of the *Lives* they Preach.

VII.

How great's the *Honour* to descend from these
(Or any *PARSON*, tho' of low'r Degrees)
That feed their *Flocks*, and *GUARD* their *Consciences* ?
Nay, shou'd the *Romish Wolves* again pursue,
These wou'd (with *LONDON*) put on *Jack-Boots* too. †

VIII.

Then never fear the *Church's Danger* here,
“ When *Reverend Fathers* can in *Arms* appear,
“ And *Men of God* become the *Men of War*.
No *PARSON'S SON* (if not o'th *Popish Brood*)
But wou'd defend his *King thro' Seas of Blood*.

IX.

If 'tis thus *GREAT* to be a *Parson's Son*,
Receive a bold *unbidden Guest*, among
The *least, and worst of all your Nobler Throng*,
Who for *Admittance* only dares to sue,
Because kind *Fate* has made him *one of you*.

X.

When that *wise King*, whose young but mighty *Hand*,
Bore the vast *Sceptre* of the *Sacred Land*,
When him and all his *Glories Time shall rust*,
Then you shall be *obscur'd with common Dust*.

XI.

In vain the trembling *Atheist* would dethrone
That *Power*, which for his *Life* he dares not own ;
Whilst grateful *Heaven its Servants here does Grace*
With such a *worthy, such a generous Race*.

† Alluding to *Dr. Compton Bishop of London*, that *Commanded a Troop of Horse at the Glorious Revolution in 1688.*

XII.

In vain on *Inspiration* t'other doats,
 Human Learning but a *need-not* votes;
 While the *Prophet's Sons* so far may find
 Beyond the usual Stamp of human Kind.

XIII.

More madly Rome grants to the Sacred Life
 Dozens of *Whores*, but not one single *Wife*:
 Since from the holy *Matrimonial Flame*
 Of Priests, so great, so brave an *Army* came.

XIV.

The PARSON'S SON is ever nobly bred,
 And teaches MANNERS to the *Tribe of Gad*,
 (He that can bounce, and yet is scarcely fed.)
 Or if the FOP thinks he's most *Wit and Sense*,
 'Tis not his *Manners*, but his IMPUDENCE.

XV.

All here look pure like *Truth*, like *Virtue* fair,
 And all breath something more than common *Air*!
 Envy look round, and when thy *Blood-shot Eye*
 Can find no *Spot*, Envy look round and die.

XVI.

But as for— YOU— let Plenty, *Pleasure* bring,
 And Veil you safe beneath her gentle *Wing*,
 Till from long happy *Ages* you remove,
 And all your bright *Fore-fathers* meet above.

