

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

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

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

When

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Some

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

The Satisfaction I have of the *Soul's Immortality*, if it amounts not to a Demonstration, may yet be numbred among those *Proleptick Ideas* that need none, as being self-evident. It is a Parallel with first Principles, and has equal Force on my Understanding; for I am not more convinc'd, *That one and two make three*, than *that the Soul of Man is immortal*. So that I make it not so much an *Article* of my Faith, as a *Proposition* of my Reason, and a *Conclusion* of Science. Yet I do not always go so far round about, as by a long Train of Logical Deductions and Inferences, to dispute my self into the Remembrance of my *Immortality*; This indeed were necessary to perswade another, but I have a nearer Method to comfort my self with the Demonstration of this *Noble Truth*, while it becomes an Object of my very Sense, and I can feel that *Immortality* in my self; which my Reason tells me another is possess'd of, as well as I. This is easier to be experienc'd, than utter'd in Words; 'tis an *Art* not to be acquired without assiduous *Reflection*, and strict *Animadversion* on our own Thoughts. But the *Fatigue* is more than recompens'd with the ineffable *Pleasure* that attends it; for when by a long and often repeated Practice, a Man has found the way to keep close Pace with his own *Intellect*, in all its *Flights* and abstracted *Starts* from the *Body*, when he can stand on the Brink of the *Immaterial World*, and perceive what is before Him, perceiving also that he perceives it, then 'tis he enjoys *Heaven* by Anticipation, and forestalls his *future Beatitude*, by tasting *Immortality* at present. He is risen from

the Dead, before he dies; and lives an *Eternity* of Ages in a *Moment*. Neither is this a sleeping *Chimera*, or a waking *Dream*, but a real Truth; which, as I have said, is easier practised than expressed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Treason

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

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

It was an ill-manner'd, as well as an envious Retort of him, that stood by and said, Your Highnesses Reply is like the *Delphick Oracle*, full of Ambiguous Subtilty: He had discover'd more Breeding and Charity, had he told her, That her Answer favour'd of his Wisdom, who when tempted by the *Pharisees* with a Question concerning the Lawfulness of paying *Tribute to Cæsar*, took a piece of Money, and ask'd *whose Image and Superscription* was that stamped on it? They said, *Cæsars*: He replied, *Give therefore to Cæsar, the Things that are Cæsar's; and to GOD, the Things that are GOD's*. It is certainly a necessary piece of Prudence sometimes to obviate the *Trains* of an Enemy, with a witty Evasion; which may be done without denying the Truth, or violating ones Conscience. Those who wou'd *trapan a Man with Queries*, and make him a Transgressor for a Word, deserve to be paid in the same Coin, and by an *Ingenious adapting* of words and placing of Periods, be baffled in their Design, and sent away like Fools as they came, without any better satisfaction than they cou'd reap from *a Riddle*. In my Opinion, it is but a Pious Scepticism to suspend our Thoughts from determining the particular Mode of Christ's being *present* in the Sacrament, since it is impossible ever to demonstrate so recondite a Secret, into

into which even the Angels themselves, those *perfect Intelligences*, perhaps look with Admiration, without improving their Knowledge. It is sufficient to my *humble Faith*, that my Redeemer is there, and that when I worthily receive this Blessed Sacrament, I shall receive the Author of it into my Tabernacle, and be united to the Heavenly Spouse. This is the true *Hidden Manna* which nourishes both Angels and Men; This is the Bread of Life, which strengtheneth Men's Hearts; This is the Wine which rejoiceth GOD and Man. This is that *Heavenly Morsel* which GOD has given us, as an Antidote against the Dregs of that Venom we all derive from Adam's eating the forbidden Fruit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

If we examine the Books of Phyſicians, thoſe *Registers of Humane Frailty* and Mortality, we ſhall find no leſs than *Six Thouſand Diſeaſes* on the Score, to which Man's Body is liable. And 'tis to be feared the *Diſtempers* of
the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the School of Nature, the other Experiments in the Shop of Art. Neither would Men know how to keep themselves in Action, or maintain Commerce, were it not for the Sake of *Philosophy*. To this are owing all the Advances and *Progressions* that Ingenious Men have made in their Callings and Occupations. And every *Smith, Carpenter, Mason, &c.* that makes an Improvement in his Craft or Mystery deserves the Title of *Virtuoso*, and to be number'd among the Philosophers.

Among all the Sciences, there is none to which (had I leisure) I could be more devoted than to *Astronomy*; and for this Reason, I could raise a Pyramid to the Inventors of the *Telescope*, That Happy Midwife to new Discoveries in the Heavens; and think my self no less oblig'd to him that first found out the MOTION of the EARTH. Both have Enfranchis'd me from the Slavery of Prepossession, and taught me to *unthink* the Sentiments of my greener Years. Methinks I owe no Allegiance to *Ptolomy*; and am perfectly wean'd from the Magisterial Dictates of the *Stagyrite*. I cannot so readily believe that the SUN moves above two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Miles every Minute of Time, as that the Earth moves Eighteen Miles in that space. And that the *Planet Saturn* moves ten, and the *fixed Stars* a Hundred Times faster and farther than the Sun in the same space, which must be the Consequence of the *Earth's standing still*, and the Sun's Motion. It seems no good *Divinity* to me, to expect that from GOD's Infinite Power, which is repugnant to his equal Wisdom and the *Laws of Motion* which he has Establish'd in the Universe: This were to make one of his Attributes *Clash* with another, and to calumniate his Holiness, which consists in the *Harmony* of them all. I adore his *Omnipotency*, and tremble at the Thought of calling in Question the Power that made *All things of Nothing*. Yet I think it my Duty to be Wise as well as Devout, and to speak *rightly* as well as *reverently* of his Divine Perfections. As his Word is the *Rule of my Faith*, so his Providence is the *Pole-Star* of my Reason. And in the Scrutiny of his Works I do not so much enquire what he uses to do. Being assured that as nothing is to him Impossible, so he has stated the Being, Actions, Passions,

Passions, Qualities and Circumstances of all things, ordering them in exact Number, Weight and Measure. So that, *a posse Dei ad esse Rei non valet Consequentia*. He has fix'd the Laws of *Loco-motion* in Corporeal Substances, and ty'd up the *Primum Mobile* it self to a certain Proportion of Time and Distance, which it can no more exceed, than the smallest *Wheel* of a Watch.

Such prodigious WHIRLIGIGS, as the Heavenly Bodies must needs be, in the *Ptolomaick Hypothesis*, makes me giddy to think on't; and I believe they were troubl'd with a Vertigo, that first reel'd upon the Notion: Or they labour'd under the deception of those at Sea, who sailing within sight of the Shore, and not being able to perceive the Motion of the Vessel that carries them, are apt to Fancy the Neighbouring Cliffs, Towns and Trees were under Sail, and steering a contrary Course, since they so appear to do. For not less silently do I believe the *Earth moves constantly round on her Axis*, thus making the Natural day and night, without putting the whole Frame of the Universe into an unconceivable Hurry.

The Planet *Jupiter* is discover'd by the Telescope to make the same Circulation in 10 Hours, *Mars* in 23, and the *Sun* himself in 28 days. These are no Chimæra's or dreams of Poets, no Metaphysical speculations of *Nut-shell* Brains, but Real truths, demonstrable by Art and Ocular Experience! And methinks it is a more Uniform Idea, if we suppose the *Earth* to be a Planet like the Rest, and to take its turn in the septenary dance round the *Sun*, who is plac'd in the Centre of this Vortex; and is the true *Apollo*, to whose Musick the whole Planetary System keeps time. I fear not the Lash of *Maurolycus*, nor the Scourge of his bigotted Brethren. If *Copernicus* was by them thought *Scutica & Flagello dignus*, for innovating on the Doctrines of *Ptolomy*; What was *Ptolomy* himself worthy of, who entrench'd on a greater Antiquity, and undermin'd the Philosophy of *Anaxarchus Samius*, who taught the Motion of the *Earth* above Four Hundred Years before *Ptolomy* was an Infant? For my Part, I think it no Treason against the Commonwealth of Learning, to say, I prefer *Galileo's Tube* to *Ptolomy's Spectacles*; and the Discoveries of our English Royal Society;

ciety, to the blind Conjectures of the Peripateticks, and the wild Speculations of Old Athens.

When I was first inform'd that there were discover'd four new Stars moving about Jupiter, and three about Saturn, I was as well pleased, as they who received the earliest News of Columbus's landing in America. I am so far from being of Alexander's Humour, that instead of weeping, I should heartily rejoyce could I be credibly satisfied, That there are ten Thousand more Worlds, than are already discover'd.

I am naturally Melancholy, and the weight of this leaden Complexion does so depress my Spirits, That all the Race of Mankind on Earth seems too small to afford Variety enough for a Relief. This makes me the more willing to believe what my Reason suggests to be true, That the PLANETS ARE INHABITED. It is a lively, as well as a Rational Notion; and since they are Dark, Opake Bodies, like the Earth we tread on, having no other Light but what they borrow from the Sun, and seem in all other Circumstances to be adapted for Habitations, I see no Solæcism in Philosophy, nor Heresie against the Faith, to believe they are really Inhabited as is this Globe. That they have Succession of Day and Night, and their Satellites or Moons to give them Light by Night, even as we, is demonstrable to the Eye by the help of the Telescope. But there would, in my Opinion, be little need of all this, were there no rational Inhabitants in those Celestial Globes. It is a fastidious Pride in Man to Fancy all this Glittering Furniture above was only made for Ornament, or for Shepherds to gaze on in the Night, or for some other Inferior uses of the Sons of Adam. And tis a narrow Conceit to imagine, that tho' this Globe be plentifully Inhabited by all sorts of Animals, not a Turf of Land, nor a Puddle of Water being without its Tenants, yet all those ample and glorious Bodies above, should lye empty and vacant, tho' some of them be far bigger than our Earth, and for ought we know, may be ten times more commodious for Habitation. Those Passages in St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians 2. 11. Ephes. 1. 6, 10. Colos. 1. 16. seem to be calculated for the Inhabitants of those Heavenly Bodies. And his Emphatical words

in *Ephes. 3. 9.* seem to be but a Transcript of the Revelations he receiv'd, and of the Things he saw when he was *Rapt into the Third Heaven; viz.* That there are some in those Heavenly Places, even Principalities and Powers, to whom the manifold Wisdom of GOD in Christ was made known, and that they were not only Created by Him, but for Him, and that they and we are *all of the Family or Descent.* These may be some of the *ἀρρήτα ῥήματα* which that Holy Apostle speaks of in *2 Cor. 12. 4.* Words and Mysteries which could not be utter'd. And for ought I know, those Beings which he calls Principalities, Powers, Might, Thrones and Dominions, may be no other than the several glorious Colonies of the Coelestial Family dwelling in the Stars, who all believe in the same Eternal Jesus, even as we do, and through his Meditation make their Approaches to GOD the Father. This may be *the farther Fellowship of the Mystery of God, hid from the Beginning.* This the untraceable Riches of Christ, which put St. Paul to an *ὁ βάθος τοῦ ὑπερβάλλοντος μύθου τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ.* O the Depth of his Wisdom! O the Superlative Greatness of his Power! But whether the *Planets be Inhabited* or no, this I am assured of, and can produce an Hundred Authentick Witnesses, that they are Dark Bodies, like the Earth we tread on, and that they have no Light but what they receive from the Sun, which also they do but partially enjoy like us, by Successive Hemispheres, having their Day and Night measur'd out to them proportionate to the Time they take up in moving round their Centers.

When I have tyred my self with following these *visible Motions of Nature,* I retire Home again, thinking to take Sanctuary in my self, and find a Rest in the Contemplation of my own SOUL: But there I do but commence a new Fatigue, and am hurried about in a *perpetual Circle* by an invisible Energy within me. I think, speak, and act with infinite Variety, yet know not how I perform these different Operations. I know my self to be an *Incorporeal Substance;* and can easily FEEL out my own Independency on the Body. I look on this *House of Clay* I carry about with me, to be only my Prison. But how I am confin'd to this Prison, I that am but a
poor

poor Scintillation or Spark of the Eternal Sun, is a *Riddle* which I cannot solve. I can better imagine how a Beam of our Visible Sun may be united to a Marble Statue, than that a pure Thought should be fastned to a Clod of Earth, from which it cannot free it self but by Death, though it can pervade all the Universe beside. What Cement is it that thus closely tyes together two such incompatible Essences, as *Heaven and Earth*, Light and Darkness, Spirit and Body? This is a Knot must be left for *Elias* to untye, and is indeed one chief Argument of the *Ship-wrack* of Humané Reason, since not only all other Things are obscure to us, but we are so to our selves, the nearest Objects; even our own *Domestick* Operations are as incomprehensible to us, as those that are farthest off. The Things that touch us, nay, the very Faculties by which we *touch, see, understand, &c.* are as distant from us as the *Ninth Sphere*, and we are as much strangers to our selves, as to the Inhabitants of *Terra Incognita*.

There wou'd be nothing more welcome to me, than a HISTORY OF MY ORIGINAL, for I do not compute my Age or Family, by the short Chronology of the *Parish-Register*; nor do I think my self much the older by my Mother's Additional Record of *Nine Months*, I liv'd in her Womb. I esteem her Reckoning from my *Conception*, but the Tragick Memoris of my Death; and those which by most are accounted the *Chambers of Life*, and Shops of Generation, are no better in my Judgment than the Receptacles of the Dead, Seminaries of Corruption, the Graves of Souls *defunct to the Higher World*. For I believe I was then Born when the Morning Stars *Sang together*, and when all the Sons of GOD shouted for Joy. I time my INFANCY with that of the Universe, and esteem no Man older or younger than my self, no not the *Angels* themselves, believing that all *Spiritual* Substances were Created together, in the Beginning. I will not, with some, accuse *Moses* of scantiness in his *History of the Creation*, because according to the Letter he seems to take but little notice of *Immaterial Beings*. The *Hebrew Cabbala*, with the Commentaries of their Learned *Rabbins*, and some of the *Primitive Fathers* of the Christian

Christian Church do sufficiently evince, That there are greater Myſteries contained in the Three firſt Chapters of *Genesis*, than the bare Letter, or Vulgar Tranſlations ſeem to exhibit. There is a *Sacrament* in that Holy Language, which whoſoever partakes of, can be no Stranger to the Natural and Divine Truths couch'd under it. To ſuch an One, the Hiſtory of the *Terreſtrial Adam's* Happy State in *Paradiſe*, and his Banishment from thence, will be an Hieroglyphick of the Original Beatitude of the *Immaterial World*, and the Degeneracy of Humane Souls, their Deſcent from the *Ætherial Mansions*, and *Confinement to Houſes of Clay*, as well as of the Fall of Angels. I ſeem to my ſelf, not without Reason, to embrace the Doctrine of the **PRÆEXISTENCE OF SOULS**, ſince it was among the *Credenda* of many Ancient Sages, a peculiar Tradition of the *Jews*, and the general Opinion of all the East. That Queſtion which was put to our Saviour concerning the *Man that was born Blind*, *Whether it was for his own ſins, or thoſe of his Parents*, ſeems clearly to imply, That he was in a Condition or Capacity of *ſinning before his Birth*; which how it could be, without ſuppoſing the **PRÆEXISTENCE** of his Soul, is paſt my Divinity or Philoſophy to unriddle. The various Conjectures alſo which the *Jews* made of *Chriſt*, according to the Report of his Diſciples, when ſome ſaid he was *Elias*, others that he was one of the *Prophets*, a third ſort, that he was *John the Baptiſt riſen from the Dead*, are evident Arguments, That the Doctrine of *Præexiſtence*, and a *Metemphychoſis*, was eſta- bliſh'd as part of the Creed of that Nation. Of which alſo that paſſage in the *Wisdom of Solomon* is no obſcure hint, where the Author ſays, *Or rather being a good Spirit, I came into a Body pure and undefiled*. Neither am I ſtartled I find not *Chriſt*, or any of his Apoſtles aſſerting, or ſo much as mentioning any ſuch Doctrine. *St. John's Hyperbole* in the laſt verſe of his *Gospel*, ſatisfies me, that I muſt not expect to find all that our Saviour did and ſaid, register'd by the Evangeliſts: And *St. Paul's* frequent Exhortation to hold faſt the Traditions that he had imparted to them, whether by *Word* or *Epistle*, convince me, That it is not unreaſonable to conclude, That he deliver'd

deliver'd many Doctrines in his Sermons, which he had no occasion to mention in his *Letters to the Churches*; Among which this might be one. However, it is a sufficient Warrant to my Belief, That I no where in all the Scriptures can find this Doctrine reprehended. Which; had it been an Errour, cou'd not have escaped the censure of Christ and his Apostles, it being the Universal Tenet of all sorts of *Jews*, except the Sadduces. When I consider also that *Origen* and *Ammonius* taught it in the Schools of *Alexandria*) *Plotinus* himself learning it from the latter) and that all the Primitive Fathers who were Platonists; asserted it not only as a Philosophical, but also as a Divine Truth; I look upon it as an Effect of *Gothick Barbarity* and Ignorance, which afterwards overspread all Christendom, That neither this, nor hardly any other Point of *Platonism*, were countenanced in the Christian Schools, but only the Dictates of *Aristotle* and his Ghost *Averroes*. In fine, that elegant Flourish of *St. Augustine*, *Infundendo creatur, creandis infunditur*, is no RULE OF MY FAITH in this Point, since it fastens so many irreverent Consequences on *GOD Almighty*; neither can I believe the Soul to be *ex Traduce*, because it carries in its *Front* so many Inconsistencies in Philosophy, besides the indignity that is done to the Soul thereby, which amounts to a true *Scandalum Magnatum*, since 'tis levell'd at the whole Order of *immaterial Beings* I must therefore believe, That I had a Being, *L O N G* before I came into this Body, and yet not resolve the Manner of my *Existence* into a meer Potentiality, or an unactive slumber in the *Bosom of my Causes*, as if I were then but a *Seminal Idea* in the Blood of my Fathers, or a *Metaphysical Dream* of my present Life. I believe I was in a State of greater Activity before I was conceiv'd by my Mother, than since she bore me; and for ought I know, have rang'd all the Boundless Tracts of the Universe, been *Naturaliz'd* in the several Regions of the Sky and Air, till being tyred with so vast a Ramble, and willing to try all States of Life, I was by the Force of a strong Inclination, and the irresistible Charm of rightly adapted Matter, allured into this Terrestrial Body, here to do *PENANCE* for the Faults of my Superiour Life, and in this Horizon

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between the upper and the lower World, to make my Choice of Good or Evil, Light or Darkness, Life or Death. This unlocks all the *Ænigma's of Providence*; and reconciles the harsher difficulties with which the Immediate Creation or Traduction of Souls is involved. It is the noblest Instrument of Vertue, the sharpest Spur to a Divine Life, whilst it doubles the Hopes we have of being Immortal *a Parte post*, by assuring us we were so *a Parte ante*. And that it is not from any Arbitrary Decree of GOD, inconsistent with the rest of his Divine Perfections, that we shall live for ever, but from our own Nature and *Essence*, being Created to subsist an *interminable* duration of Ages.

I believe those Books of the *Holy Scripture*, which are lost; could they possibly be recovered again, would serve as a Lamp, to enlighten us in many *Obscurities* of Religion, History, and Nature: And if the Writings of *Jasher*, *Iddo* the Prophet, &c. could inform us nothing of the *P R Æ E X I S T E N C E* of Souls, 'tis very probable the more early *Oracles* of *Enoch* would, since he was but the *Seventh Soul*: that was drench'd in *Terrestrial Matter*, and led so pure and incorrupt a Life, as wou'd tempt one to believe, That he was awaken'd to the Memory of his former state, which for ought we know, might have no small influence on his succeeding Change.

I have often wonder'd where St. *Jude* had so particular an Account of *Michael* the *Arch-Angels* dispute with the *Devil* about the Body of *Moses*, that he was able to relate the very words that pass'd between them. Surely the *Jews* had some Books, or at least Traditions, which were believed to be *Orthodox*, tho' they were not so much as mention'd in the *Sacred Canon*; for we cannot without great *Impiety* imagine that the Holy Saint wou'd impose upon our Belief any thing that was Foreign or *Apocryphal*. I am apt to conclude from hence, That there were many *Traditional Doctrines* entertained among the *Hebrews*, which are by us esteemed no better than Fables.

However, tho' I am thus convinced of the Truth of our *P R Æ E X I S T E N C E*, and that this present Life, is but a Shadow or Dream in comparison of what

we enjoy'd before our Immersion in the Flesh; yet I wou'd not have this Dream interrupted by any untimely or harsher stroke of destiny. I shou'd think it no inconvenience to live long! but rather a Blessing: That so a multitude of years might scum off the Froth and Bullage of our Appetites and Passions; that so being gradually wean'd from those low Affections which brought us down to the Earth, we may without any disquiet or turbulency remount to our *Ætherial Homes*. For I am apt to think that those Souls who go out of their Bodies, with any remaining Relish upon them of the Body, like Fruit that is either pluck'd off, or shaken down by violent Winds, still retain in their separation, a raw and eager smack of the Flesh, with a languishing Byass towards it. Whereas he that has carried his full Period in the Body, parts from it with Ease and Willingness, as *Ripe Fruit* drops from the Tree. And therefore I do not wonder that the most general Scene of *Apparitions, Ghosts, &c.* is the Church-yard, or at least that Place where the Body of the *Spectrum* was buried. And the removed Earth which covered the *Cobler of Silesia's Body*, is a shrew'd intimation, That there are some Departed Souls, which if they seek not a Reunion with their Bodies, yet endeavour to hold a kind of Correspondence with them, even in the Grave. And tho' the Impossibility of being married again to these their dear *Consorts* after that final Divorce, were enough, one wou'd think, to cure their Impotent Desires; yet they burn with a new Lust, and commit a *Spiritual Adultery* in the unlawful Bed of the Grave. These I look on as the Effects of a too early and violent Separation, and therefore esteem *Methuselah* and the Rest of the Fathers before the Flood, happy; who prolong'd their years to the utmost standard of Humane Life, and seem'd not so much to die, (for that imports Violence) as voluntarily to forsake their *old Rotten Habitations*, shake Hands with their Bodies, and so return to the *Ætherial Palaces*, from whence they had so long stragled.

Yet notwithstanding the great Esteem I have of *long Life*, as a Means rather to improve than impair us; I cannot promise my self to out-live a *Jubilee*, tho' I have already seen one Revolution of *Saturn*. Neither do I affect

affect to make *Popes, Emperours, Kings, and Grand Seignours*, the Land-marks in the Chronology of my self; That were to insult over the Royal Ashes of Princes, besides the Ambition in *Ranking* my self in their Number. Methinks I grow old, even at those Years, when the World counts me Young, and possess the Heritage of *David's last Ten Years* of Fourscore, in the Prime of my Age.

Indeed the whole Earth, and all this *Planetary World* seems to droop and decay. Every *Species* of Beings grow weak and languid, and seem to draw near their Dissolution. Yet 'tis needless to engage GOD in the Act, since tho' Creation was above the Force of Nature, yet *Mutation* is not, and no *Annihilation* can proceed from that Paternal Essence of Essences. It seems easie to me to believe, That the World will perish upon the *Ruins of its own Principles*. And tho' the precise Period of its Destruction be not known to the Angels themselves, yet there are not wanting some *Philosophical Rules*, whereby one might venture to Calculate its Duration, and by observing the various Attempts, Eruptions and Devastations made by *FIRE* already, one may conjecture about what Time that most *active* Element shall be let loose, to destroy this Face of the World, and transform this *Superannuated* Heaven and Earth into *New Ones*, as the Holy Prophet has foretold. For as to Annihilation, I look on it as a Chimera, or Non Entity, which cannot be said to flow from Him who is *All-being*, and the Fountain of Existence. It were easier to conceive that Cold should be the immediate Effect of Fire, and Darkness the Natural Result of the actual Presence of Light, than to think that *Annihilation, or not Being*, can proceed from Him who is the Original Source of Being, from whose Divine Power, Wisdom and Goodness all Things flow by a *Necessary Emanation*, and continue in their several Perfections by as unalterable a Law as that which gave them; so that there can be no Vacuity supposed in their *Eternal Subsistence*, no Leaps or Starts from *Something to Nothing*. It is far more agreeable to the Principles of Philosophy to conceive, That only the Gross and Corruptible Part of the

the Universe shall be subject to the *Action of Fire*, such as the Earth we tread on, with the other Planetary Bodies; but that the *PUREST ÆTHER* shall remain for ever untouch'd, unchang'd, the Sanctuary of the Bless'd, the Habitation of the Spirits of *Just Men made Perfect*. I am also confirmed in this Belief by something more Sacred and Authentick than *natural Philosophy*. For when the Royal Psalmist in that Divine Rhapsody, calls upon the *Heavens of Heavens, and the Waters which are above the Heavens*, to praise GOD, he gives this for a Reason, (*viz.*) Because he spake and they were made, he commanded and they were created. He establish'd them to Eternity, and for *Everlasting Ages*: He fix'd a Decree, which he will not disannul. Then he calls upon the Earth and all Creatures therein, to joyn in the same *Act of Praise*, but not for the same Reason; not because the *Earth shall endure for ever*, but because the Name of GOD alone is exalted, and his Honour above Heaven and Earth. Which Distinction seems to me an evident Argument of the *unalterable Stability of the Cœlestial and Ætherial World*, whatsoever Mutations and Changes the Terrestrial may be subject to.

That those immense Tracts of quiet and impassible *Æther* shall be the *Seat of the Bless'd*, is very consistent with Philosophy, and no ways repugnant to Divinity. However, let the Place be where it pleases GOD, we are assured that the *Entertainment and Joys* do far surpass all humane Comprehension. Yet tho' we cannot have *adequate Conceptions* of supream Felicity, there are some Land-marks, by which we may take imperfect Measures of that *Region of Promise*. The dim Light of Natural Reason may afford us a Glimpse, or faint Prospect of those superlative Joys, and the *Opticks of Faith* will improve the View. We shall have the same Nature and Faculties there as here, but free from the least Alloy of Frailty and Imperfection. Our Souls shall display the radiant Brightness of their Immortal *Essence* with stronger *Vibrations* than the Sun, having no *internal Scum* of Concupisence, boylling out from the Center of a depraved Will or erroneous Understanding, to blemish and stain those unspotted Orbs of Lights; nor a terrene gross
Body

Body to Eclipse and shut up their Splendors. But being ever bright and serene, they shall shine through their glorified and spiritual Bodies, as the *Sun* does through the *pervious Air*, or at least, as he does on a bright *Cloud*, which drinks in his Beams to reflect them abroad with a more sensible Glory. We shall then see, not by receiving the Visible Species into the *narrow Glass* of an Organized Eye, we shall then hear without the distinct and curious *Contexture* of an Ear. The Body shall then be *all Eye, all Ear*. All Sense in the whole, and every Sense in every Part. In a word, it shall be all over a common *Sensorium*, and being made of the purest *Æther*, without the Mixture of any lower or grosser Element, the Soul shall by one *undivided Act*, at once perceive all that Variety of Objects, which now cannot without several distinct Organs, and successive Actions or Passions, reach our sense. From this *Superlative Tenacity and Claritude* of our Bodies, will arise that *ineffable Delicacy* in the Sensation of the Soul, which will transport it with Delights infinitely transcending the *Height* of Mortal Voluptuousness, nay and even those more exalted Pleasures which the Vertuous sometimes enjoy here on Earth as *Foretastes* of their future Beatitude in Heaven. What here excites but an ordinary Emotion of Joy in the Soul, will there produce all *Raptures and Ecstasies*. We shall be always in *Paroxysms of Love*, such are the transcendent *Beauties* of that admirable Place! and such the divinely amorous Bent of the Soul. We shall be *always languishing*, yet ever enjoying what we languish for: Neither suffering the least Pain through the Want of Fruition, nor through any satiety that shall attend it: But through the *Vigour of an Immortal Activity*, we shall have ever freshly kindled Desires and new Enjoyments, being dissolv'd in a *Circle of Beatitude* without Measure or End.

Here on Earth Men generally strive to *Monopolize* Pleasure to themselves, there being few of so generous a Temper as to be sensibly touch'd with delight, that another shou'd partake with them in that which they esteem Felicity: This is the *peculiar Advantage* of the Bless'd in Heaven, that even in the *Height* of
the

the Affairs of Immortal Love and Empire, where they possess *Eternal* Crowns and unfading Beauties, there is no such Thing to be found as a Rival or Competitor, but every one's Joy is enhanc'd by the Enjoyments of another. *Every one loves all, and all love every one.* Neither wou'd their Felicity be Perfect, cou'd any Member of that Happy Society be suppos'd not to have his full proportion and share of Beatitude. So communicative is the Love and Joy of those Holy Souls, that they must cease to love and enjoy themselves, shou'd they desist from loving and rejoycing in the Happiness of their *Fellow-Citizens.* And if we may take our Measures of their Joys from our common Experiences here on Earth, it will be no small Augmentation of their Complacency, to find those *very Friendships which they had contracted here below,* translated to the Mansions above, when they shall both see and know those whom they once loved on Earth, now to be made Denizens with them in Heaven, *with what Ardours will they caress one another!* With what Transports of Divine Affection will they mutually embrace, and vent those Innocent Flames, which had so long lain *smothering* in the Grave! How passionately Rhetorical and Elegant will their Expressions be, when their Sentiments which Death had *Frozen* up, when he congeal'd their Blood, shall now be *Thaw'd* again in the *warm Airs of Paradise!* Like Men that have escap'd a common Shipwrack, and swim safe to the Shore, they will congratulate each other's Happiness with Joy and Wonder. *Their first Addresses will be a Dialect of Interjections and short Periods, the most Pathetick Language of Surprise and high-wrought Joy!* And all their after Converse even to Eternity, will be couch'd in the highest Strains and Flowers of Heavenly Oratory, with Allelujahs intermixt.

It much *sweetneth* the thoughts of Heaven to me, to remember that there are a multitude of my Friends gone thither; to think such a Friend that died at such a time, and such a Friend that died at such a time, and such a one another time (*O! what a number of them cou'd I name*) and that all these I shall meet again. 'Tis true,

50 **The New Practice of Piety.**

it's a question with some whether we shall know each other in Heaven or no? But 'tis none with me; for surely there shall no Knowledge cease which now we have, but only that which implyeth our Imperfection, and what Imperfection can this imply? Indeed we shall not know each other after the flesh, nor by Stature, Voice, Colour, or outward Shape, nor by Terms of Affinity and Consanguinity, nor by Youth or Age, nor, I think, by Sex, but by the Image of Christ and Spiritual Relation, beyond doubt, we shall know and be known; nor is it only my old Friends (such as *Horneck, Scot, Alsop, Taylor, &c.*) that I shall know in Heaven, but all the Saints of all Ages, whose Faces in the Flesh I never saw. *Lutber* in his last Sickness, being ask'd his Judgment whether we shall know one another in Heaven, answer'd thus, *Quid accidit Adamo? Nunquam ille viderat Evam, &c.* i. e. How was it with Adam? He had never seen Eve, yet he asketh not who she was, or whence she came, but saith, *She is Flesh of my Flesh, and Bone of my Bone.* And how knew he that? Why, being indued with the true knowledge of GOD, he so pronounced; after the same sort shall we be renewed by Christ in another Life. And we shall know our Parents, Wives, Children, &c. much more perfectly than Adam did then know Eve. In Heaven we shall not only see our *Elder Brother Christ*, but all our Kindred and Friends that living here in his fear, died in his favour: For since our Saviour tells us, that the Children of the Resurrection shall be *ἰσαγγελοι*, equal to, or like the Angels who yet in the Visions of *Daniel* and *St. John* appear to be acquainted with each other; since in the Parable of the miserable Epicure, and the happy Beggar the Father of the Faithful is represented, as knowing not only the Person, and present Condition, but the past Story of *Lazarus*: Since the Instructor of the Gentiles confidently expects his converted and pious *Thessalonians* to be his Crown at that great Day: Since these Arguments, besides divers others, are afforded us by the Scripture, we may safely conclude, that we shall know each other in a place where, since nothing requisite to Happiness can be wanting, we may well suppose that we shall not want so great a Satisfaction

as that of being knowingly happy in our own selves, or Friends.

Thus far we may venture to speak of the lower Degrees of Coelestial Beatitude, the **MUTUAL LOVE AND ENTERTAINMENT OF THE BLESSED.** But who has ever mounted to the Highest Seale of Heavenly Bliss? Let him come down and tell us the Mysteries wrapt up in the Clouds, the Secrets hid within the Veil of Inaccessible Light! Let him describe the Wonders of the Beatifick Vision, and say, how deep the Rivers of Pleasure are, which run by **GOD'S** Right-Hand for evermore! For my part, I must confess, I'm lost in that Abyss of Wonders, and therefore modestly withdraw my Pen to Subjects more Domestick, and within our Reach, and yet here I shall not pass from one Abyss to another, since every thing has a depth in it not to be fathom'd by our weightiest Sense or most solid Reason.

I have often try'd to dive into the **PROFUNDITIES OF DEATH**, but still I find my Intellect too light a Plummer, and the whole Thread of Life, though spun out in **FINEST SPECULATIONS** wou'd still prove far too short to reach the endless Bottom.

'Tis true, there have been Men, that have tryed, even in Death it self, to relish and taste it, and who have bent their utmost Faculties of Mind to discover what this Passage is; but they are none of them come back to tell us the News.

—No one was ever known to wake,
Who once in Deaths cold Arms a Nap did take.

Lucret. Lib. 3.

Caius Julius being condemn'd by that Beast *Caligula*, as he was going to receive the stroke of the Executioner, was askt by a *Philosopher*, Well *Caius*, said he, whereabout is your Soul now? What is she doing? What are you thinking of? I was thinking, replyed *Caius*, to keep my self ready, and the Faculties of my Mind settled and fix'd, to try if in this short and quick instant of Death I

could perceive the *motion* of the Soul, when she parts from the Body, and whether she has any Resentment at the Separation, that I may after come again to acquaint my Friends with it.

So that I fancy, there is a certain way by which some Men make Trial *what Death is*; but, for my own part, I cou'd ne'er yet find it out.

I have sometimes thought, what would I give for the *least glimpse* of that invisible World, which the first Step I take out of this Body, will present me with; and that there was nothing in the *whole Discourse of Death*, that I durst not meet the boldest way, and have therefore often attempted to LOOK HIM FULL IN THE FACE, that I might learn to die generously, but still when it came to the pinch, *Conscience, that makes Cowards of us all*, made one of me, and I was forc'd to shrink back with shame.

Yet surely the Terrour is not so much in *Death it self*, as the *Tragick Pomp* that goes before and after it. The tedious Discipline of Sickness, the formal Visits of Relations and Friends, their melancholy Looks, the frightful *Harangue* of the Physician, and our own dismal Apprehensions, compose that horrid Scene which renders Death uncomfortable. When the poor Patient, that perhaps may yet *out live his Fears of Death*; and see Millions drop into the Grave before him, yet dies a Thousand DEATHS in his Hag-ridden Phancy, and makes his Bed his Grave, by strength of an abus'd Imagination.

'Tis only Fancy gives Death those hideous Shapes we think him in; for indeed Death is no more than a soft and easie Nothing, or rather *Natures play-day*. I firmly think it is no more to die, than to be born; we felt no pain coming into the World, nor shall we in the act of leaving it, though in the first, one would believe, there were more of Trouble than in the latter, for we cry *coming into the World*, but quietly and calmly leave it. What is Death but a *ceasing to be what we were, before we were*; we are kindled, and put out; to cease to be, and not to begin to be, is the same thing. Methinks it is but the *other day I came into the World, and anon I am leaving it*; for

for though I am but in my Fortieth Year, and at present in perfect health and strength, yet I look upon my self as a Man that has one Foot in the Grave already; for David says, seventy is the Age of Man, and I have lived near Forty Years of that time already. The longest of my design now is not above a years extent, I think of nothing now but ending, take my last leave of every place I depart from; alas! there is no fooling with Life, when it is once turn'd beyond Thirty. Silence was a full answer of him that being ask'd what he thought of Humane Life, said nothing, turn'd him round and vanisht. *OH, HOW TIME RUNS AWAY!* and we are Dead, e'er we have time to think our selves alive; one doth but Breakfast here, another Dine; he that liveth longest, doth but Sup, we must all go to Bed in another World, therefore good Night to you here, and good Morrow hereafter.

Indeed our whole Life is but one often repeated Step to Death, and we are as near it at the first Minute of our setting out as at a hundred year's end. For Death either keeps an even Collateral Pace with us from our very Birth, or at least, he marches but one Step behind us all the way of our Life; so that when the appointed Time is come for him to execute his Commission, he soon can reach forth his Hand, arrest us, and stop our farther Journey. Man in the Vigour and prime of his Years, Phancies himself in the midst of a vast Plain; he looks behind him, and numbers all the weary Steps of Life he has already taken, perswades himself that Death must also measure the same space of years in his Pursuit, before he can o'ertake him; then turning his Eyes before, he sees a boundless Tract, an indeterminate Set of years; being thus deluded by the Incharmed Prospect, he rushes on, and bids defiance to pale languid Death, imagining he sees him lagging afar off, at the first entrance of all the wide-stretch'd Waste; whereas the nimble Skeleton is as far advanc'd as he, only keeps out of Sight, and will never be seen, till the very Moment he gives the Fatal Stroke. To whatsoever *LIGHT* Man turns his Face, Death, like his Shadow, whips behind him still, and is at his Back, but ne'er will *FACE HIM TILL THE LATEST GASP.* And

And he that can stoutly bear his Looks for that one Moment, shall never see him more to all Eternity. 'Tis but the Fear of this Moments Pain, that makes our Lives so uneasie all along. And I am really asham'd of this incorrigible Folly of Mortals, who spend so many years in painful Disquisitions how to protract the Pain of *one poor Moment*, and undergo ten times more Labour to escape it, than they can possibly feel in undergoing it. I admire the Resolution of the *Indian Wives*, who in contempt of Death, scorn to survive their Husband's *Funeral Pile*, but with chaste Zeal, and an undaunted Courage, throw themselves into the Flames, as if they were then going to the Nuptial Bed. Certainly they calculate aright, who reckon the Day of Death, the Day of our Nativity, since we are then Born to the Possession of Immortal Life. For this Reason I Honour the Memory of *Judovicus Cartesius* the *Paduan Lawyer*, who, in his Last Will and Testament, ordered, that no sad Funeral Rites should be observ'd for him, but that his Corps should be attended with *Musick and Joy* to the Grave, and as if it were the Day of his Espousals, he commanded that Twelve Suits of Gay Apparel should be provided instead of Mourning, for an equal Number of Virgins, who should usher his Body to the Church.

I have but small Acquaintance with the **FUTURE STATE**, but this I'm sure, there will be no change that will be so surprizing to me, as that **BY DEATH**. It is a thing of which I know but little, and none of the Millions of Souls that have past into the **INVISIBLE WORLD**, have come again to tell me how it is.

I.

*It must be done (my Soul) but 'tis a strange,
A Dismal and Mysterious change,
When thou shalt leave this Tenement of Clay,
And to an unknown somewhere wing away ;
When Time shall be Eternity ; and thou (not how.
Shalt be thou know'st not what, and live thou know'st*

II.

*Amazing State ! No wonder that we dread
To think of Death, or view the Dead,
Thou'rt all wrapt up in Clouds, as if to thee
Our very Knowledge had Antipathy.
Death could not a more sad retinue find,
Sickness, and pain before, and darkness all behind.*

III.

*Some courteous Ghost tell this great Secrecy,
What 'tis you are, and we must be.
You warn us of approaching Death, and why
May we not know from you what 'tis to dye ?
But you having shot the Gulph, delight to see
Succeeding Souls plunge in with like uncertainty.]*

—————Norris.

That the Souls of Men do not expire with the Breath and vital Union, or fall into a DEEP SLEEP, never to be awaked 'till the General Resurrection, according to the Opinions of some drowsy People, whose Reasons at present are asleep in their Bodies, is a Truth (I think) easible evincible, out of the Topicks of ALL RELIGIONS, that make any Noise and Figure in the World, out of the Clear Text of sacred Scripture, and from the very Nature of our Souls, as they now are, and act in the Body, whilst in Union with it. One of the Fathers calls the GOOD ANGELS (Evocatores Animarum) the Callers forth of Souls, and such as shew them, The Preparation of those Mansions, they are going to.
Hence

Hence we observe when good Men are dying, they are often in silent Raptures, and express a kind of Impatience, till they are dissolved, and Why? because they spiritually see what they cannot utter, as did *St. Paul*, when he *was wrapt up into the Third Heaven*. There is a kind of a *DRAUGHT* presented by their Guardian Angels of those transcendent Joyes, they are almost ready to enter in possession of, and therefore Long and Pine till they are conveyed into that place of unspeakable Felicity. These *Heavenly Spirits* succour and support us under our Pain and Sicknes; and when our Souls are storm'd out of our Bodies, they encompass and embrace them, soaring through the Regions of Evil-Angels, into Heaven. 'Tis said that *LAZARUS* was safely carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosome, so that 'tis plain, that the Angels are employed to convey the Souls of true Believers into a fixed State of Blessedness—

It is very desirable to know in what Condition our Souls will be, when they leave the Body, and what is the Nature of that abode into which we must go, but which we never saw into; and through what Regions we must then take our Flight, and after what manner this will be done. 'Tis certain my Soul will then preserve the Faculties that are natural to it, viz. to understand, to will, to remember, as 'tis represented to us, under the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*: But alas! we little know how the People of the *disembodied Societies* act, and will, and understand, and communicate their thoughts to one another, and therefore I long to know it. What Conception can I have of a separated Soul (says a late Writer) but that 'Tis all Thought. I firmly think, when a Mans Body is taken from him by Death, he is turn'd into all Thought and Spirit; How great will be its Thought, when it is without any Hinderance from these Material Organs, that now obstruct its Operations. **IN THAT ETERNITY** (as one expresses it) *The whole Power of the Soul runs together one and the same way*. In Eternity the Soul is united in its Motions, which way one Faculty goes, all goe; and the Thoughts all are concenter'd, as in one whole Thought of Joy or Torment.

These

These Things have occasion'd great Variety of Thoughts in me, and my Soul, when it looks towards the other World, and thinks it self NEAR, it can no more cease to be inquisitive about it, than it can cease to be a Soul.

It will not, I hope, be an unpardonable Transition, if I start back from the melancholy Horrors of Death, to the innocent Comforts of Humane Life; and from the Immortal Nuptials of this Italian, pass to the Mortal Emblem, the Rites of Matrimony, the Happiness of Female Society, and our obligations to Women. 'Tis an uncourtly Vertue, which admits of no Profelytes but Men devoted to Coelibacy, and he is a Reproach to his Parents, who shuns the Entertainments of Hymen, the blisful Amours of the Fair Sex, without which he himself had not gain'd so much as the Post of a Cypher, in the Numeration of Mankind, though he now makes a Figure too much in Natures Arithmetick, since he wou'd put a stop to the Rule of Multiplication. He is worse than Numa Pompilius, who appointed but a set Number of Virgins, and those were free to Marry, after they had guarded the Sacred Fires, the Term of Four Years: Whereas if his morose Example were follow'd, all Women should turn Vestals against their wills, and be consecrated to a peevish Virginity during their Lives. I wonder at the unnatural Phancy of such as could wish we might procreate like Trees, as if they were asham'd of the Act; without which they had never been capable of such an extravagant Thought; or like Alphonsus King of Spain, would correct the Institutions of Heaven, and say, had they been present with GOD, when he commanded Adam and Eve to encrease and multiply, they would have propos'd a better method for Generation. Certainly he that Created us, and has riveted the Love of Women in the very Center of our Natures, never gave us those passionate Desires to be our incurable Torment, but only as Spurs to our Wit and Vertue, that by the Dexterity of the One, and the Integrity of the Other, we might Merit and Gain the Darling Object which should consummate our Earthly Happiness.

I do not patronize the Smoak of those *Dunghill-Passions*, who only court the Possessions of an Heirefs, and fall in Love with her Money. *This is to make a Market of Women*, and prostitute the Noblest Affection of our Souls, to the fordid Ends of Avarice. Neither do I commend the softer Aims of those, who are wedded only to the *Charming Lineaments* of a Beautiful Face, a clear Skin, or a well shap'd Body. 'Tis only the Vertue, Discretion, and *good Humour* of a Woman, could ever captivate me; and I am bless'd in a Mate who has her share, both of these, and the other exterior Ornaments.

I hate the Cynical Flout of those who can afford Women no better Title than *Necessary Evils*, and the lewd Poetical License of him who made this Anagram, *Uxor & Orcus—idem*. That Oratour whisper'd the *Doctrine of Devils*, who said, Were it not for the Company of Women, Angels would come down and dwell among us, I rather think, were it not for such ill-natur'd Fellows as he, Women themselves would prove Angels.

'Tis an ungrateful *Return*, thus to abuse that *Gentle Sex*, who are the *Moulds* in which all the Race of Adam are cast: As if they deserv'd no better Treatment at our Hands, than we usually give to Saffron Bags and Verde Bottles, which are thrown into a Corner, when the Wine and Spice are taken out of them. The Pagan Poet was little better than a Murderer, who allow'd but two good Hours to a Woman.

Ἔνω' μίαν ἐν θαλάμῳ τὴν μίαν ἐν θανάτῳ.
Unam in Thalamo, alteram in Tumulo.

For my Part, I should esteem the World but a *Desert*, were it not for the Society of the *FAIR SEX*; and the most polished Part of Mankind wou'd appear but like Hermits in Masquerade, or a kind of *Civilized Satyrs*, so imperfect and unaccomplish'd is our Virility, without the Reunion of our *lost Rib*, that Substantial and Integral Part of our Selves. Those who are thus dis-

joynted

joyned from Women, seem to inherit *Adam's Dreams*, out of which nothing can awake them, but the Embraces of their own living Image, the Fair Traduct of the first Metamorphosis in the World, *the Bone converted into Flesh*. They are always in Slumbers and Trances, ever separated from themselves, in a *wild Pursuit* of an intolerable Loss, nor can any thing fix their Volatile Desires, but the powerful Magnetism of some Charming *Daughter of Eve*. These are the Centers of all our Desires and Wishes, the true *Pandoras* that alone can satisfy our longing Appetites, and fill us with *Gifts and Blessings*; in them we live before we breathe, and when we have tasted the *Vital Air*, 'tis but to die an amorous Death, that we may live more pleasantly in them again. They are the *Guardians of our Infancy*, the *Life and Soul of our Youth*, the *Companions of our Riper years*, and the *Cherishers of our Old Age*. From the Cradle to the Tomb, we are wrapt in a Circle of Obligations to them for their Love and good Offices. And he is a Monster in Nature who returns them not the *Caresse*s of an *Imnocent Affection*, the *Spotless Sallies of Vertue and Gratitude*. *Love is the Soul of the World*, the *Vital Prop of the Elements*, 'tis the *Cement of Humane Society*, the strongest Fence of Nature: Earth would be a Hell without it, neither can there be any Heaven where this is absent.

Yet I am no *Advocate for those general Lovers*, who not content to let this active Passion run within the lawful Channel of chaste Marriage, swell it up with irregular Tides, and wanton Flouds of Lust, till it wash away the Banks of Reason and Mortality, find out new Passages and Rivulets, encroaching on other Mens Possessions, or at least dilating on the general waste of the weaker Sex, who ought to be as Gardens enclos'd, or holy Ground, not to be prophan'd by the Access of every bold Intruder.

I approve not the *Incestuous Mixtures of the Chinese*, where the Brother Marries the Sister, or next a-kin; nor the *Sensual Latitude of the Mahometans*, who allow every Man four Wives, and as many Concubines as he can maintain. But above all, I detest the *Wild and Brutal*

Liberty of that *Philosopher*, who in his Idea of Humane Happiness, conceiv'd a promiscuous Copulation *ad Libitum*, to be a necessary Ingredient of our Bliss.

On the other side, My Regards to that Sex are not circumscrib'd within such narrow Limits, as to exclude any from our Conversation and Friendship, that by any warrantable Title can lay a Just Claim to it; I would have our Commerce with Females as General as is their Number that deserve it, whose Knowledge and Vertue will be a sufficient security from criminal Familiarities, and from the Scandals of the *World*. There are among that Sex, as among Men, Good and Bad, Vertuous and Vicious, and a Prudent Man will so level his Choice, as not to stain his Reputation, or hazard his Integrity. 'Tis no small Point of Discretion, I own, to regulate our Friendships with Women, and to walk evenly on the Borders and very Ridge of a Passion, whose next Step is a precipice of Flames, not kindled from the Altar of Vertue. However, 'tis not impossible to conserve Innocency, on the Frontiers of Vice. There is no Difference of Sex among Souls, and a Masculine Spirit may inhabit a Womans Body. It is disingenuous to rob Vertue of the Advantages it receives from Beauty, which makes it appear like Diamonds enchac'd in Gold, and gives it a greater Lustre. Reason it self will appear more Eloquent in the Mouth of a fair Maid, than in that of the most Florid Orator: And there are no Figures in all the System of Rhetorick so moving and forcible, as the peculiar Graces of that Sex. I am of Opinion that Men can boast of no Endowments of the Mind, which Women possess not in as great, if not a greater Eminency. There have been *Muses as well as Amazons*, and no Age or Nation but has produced some Females Renowned for their Wisdom or Vertue. Which makes me conclude, that the Conversation of Women, is no less useful than pleasant; and that the Dangers which attend their Friendships and Commerce, are recompens'd by vast Advantages.

But whatever may be adduced against the *Friendships* we contract with Women, there is not in all the *Magazine of Detraction*, any Weapon of Proof against the mutual Intimacies of our own Sex, *the generous Endeavours of Souls truly Merciful and Vertuous, united by Sympathies and Attraction whose Root is in Heaven.* No *Pinegnicks* can reach the Worth of these Divine Engagements, since they admit not of any Medicerity, but derive their Value only from their Excess. I have been always slow and cautious in contracting Amities, lest I should run the Risque of his Mistake, who while he thought he had an Angel by the Hand, held the Devil by the Heel: But where I have once pitch'd my Affection, I love without Reserve or Rule. I never entertain without suspicion the warm Professions of Love, which some Men are apt to make at first sight. Such *Mushroom-Friendships* have no deep Root, and therefore most commonly, wither as soon as they are form'd, Yet I deny not, but that there are some *secret Marks* and Signatures, which Souls ordain'd for Love and Friendship can read in each other at a Glance, by which that Noble Passion is excited, that afterwards displays it self in more apparent Characters. This is the *silent Language* of Platonick Love, wherein the Eye supplies the Office of the Tongue; 'tis the *Rhetorick of Amorous Spirits*, wherein they make their Court without a Word. There are some lasting Friendships which owe their Birth to such an Interview, but their Growth and Fastness proceeds from other Circumstances, being cherish'd by frequent Conversation, repeated good Offices, and an inviolate Fidelity, which are the only proper and substantial Aliment of Love. 'Tis impossible to fix a durable Friendship, where-ever we place a *Transient Inclination*, because of the insuperable Necessities which divide particular Men from each others Commerce or Knowledge, after they have began to Love. In the Orb of this Life, Men are like the Planets, which now and then cast friendly Aspects on each other en *Passent*: But following the Motion of the Greater Sphere of Providence, they are again separated, their Influences dissolv'd and new Amours commenc'd. But I would have my Friendship, resemble the *Fixed Stars* and Constellations,

ons, who in the Eternal Revolution never part Company or Interests.

I have ever look'd on those Men to be but *one step differenc'd from Beasts*, whose Love is confined only to their own Families Kindred. Such a narrow Affection deserves not to be rank'd in the *Prædicament of Humanity*. My Love is communicative, it makes a large Progress, and extends it'selt to Strangers; it takes in Men of different Humours and Complexions, Customs and Languages, it refuses none that have the *Face of Men*, but with wide-open'd Arms embraces all that bear the stamp of Humane Nature. And I have this *peculiar in my Temper*, that I find not the least Reluctancy in loving and doing Good to my *Enemies*. That which costs others so much Labour and Toil to perswade themselves to, is to me as familiar and easie, as to laugh at a ridiculous Object, and I esteem it not so properly a Verrue in my self, as a Gift of Nature, the Effect of my Constitution.

Yet I cannot pretend to such an *universaliz'd Spirit*, as to be without my *Antipathies*. I esteem Hatred to be as necessary and allowable a Passion as Love, provided it be exercis'd on its proper Objects, since as the one fastens us to those Things which procure our Happiness; so the other snatches us from what would be the Cause of our Misery. I observe, that these *contrary Faculties* are inherent in all Creatures, neither could the Creation subsist, were it not for the Discords as well as the Agreements of the Elements. The whole Universe subsists by the *Oppositions of its Parts*, and the Epitome of it, our Microcosm, is preserv'd by its *intestine Divisions*. So that I cannot apprehend a more immediate Way for the Supreme Architect, to overthrow his Works, than by diffusing that *Nepenthe* through the Elements, which should compose their Quarrels; for they wou'd no sooner cease to hate their *Contraries*, but they would also desist from loving themselves; and having thus lost the Cement which fastens them together in this exquisite Order, they must necessarily return to their Primitive Chaos out of which they were extracted.

However I will not from these *innocent Fends of inanimate Creatures*, draw Arguments to countenance in my self a Hatred

Hatred which is Criminal, being assured that among those various Aversions, which molest the Quiet of Men, there is hardly one which is not against Reason or Morality. Every Creature bears in its Essence the Stamp of Infinite Goodness; and 'twere gross impiety to calumniate any of those Works, on which GOD Himself has bestow'd an *universal Panegyrick*, when he pronounc'd them all to be Good. They are all lovely in their Order, and those which our Squeamish Phancies esteem the most odious, have Qualities which claim our Love and Admiration. Those *venemous Creatures*, which we shun as the inveterate Enemies of our Race, deserve our Caresses, instead of our Spight; since the Service they afford us, equals the Hurt we receive from them, and the most Efficacious Medicines are sometimes compounded of the *fiercest Poysons*. In strict speaking, the Devils themselves are not the Object of my Hatred, according to their Essence, though they are so by the Malice of their Will. They still retain their *Natural Perfections*, and the Goodness of their Essence remains the same as it was before their Fall. Their Vigour, their and Intellectual Accomplishments, have suffered no Detriment from the Depravedness of their Affections, but remain untouch'd, as when they shone among the Hierarchies above. And tho' GOD detests and punishes them for their Crimes, yet he Himself loves and *conserves their Essence*. There is Nothing therefore in *Heaven, Earth or Hell*, but SIN, that deserves our Hatred; with all things else, we may be enamour'd; and we ought to hate this Monster so much the more, in that by disordering our Natures, it has planted in us those *Antipathies* and Aversions which make us peevish at the Works of GOD, and hate those Things which we ought to love.

But among all the *Species of Hatred*, I tremble at that which is exercis'd against our own Race, because I find none so violent, none so inexorable as one Man against another. They are not content with the most furious Sallies of this Passion, during their Lives, but to consummate the Height of their Malice, they willingly involve themselves in Death. With *Atreus* they take Delight in their own Ruine; provided *Thyestes* may be crush'd

it in too. Nay, this passion is immortal, and descends into the very Grave. The Antipathies of *Etheocles* and *Poleniss*, were translated to the other World, their Hatred surviv'd their Breath, it liv'd in their Ashes and wou'd not suffer their divided Flames to mix in the same Funerall Pile. Above all, I abhor the *Italians* inflexible Cruelty, who bequeath their Hatred as an Inheritance to their Children, adjuring them to Eternal Enmity, with Curses on such of their Off-spring as shall ever make Peace with their Foes.

I quarrel not with that *Logick*, by which we call a Toad venomous. 'T wou'd prove but a thin *Sophistry*, that should impose on us the Safety of the Experiment; and I doubt our best *Metaphysicks* wou'd make but a weak Antidote against the Forces of its Poyson. I am not fond of quibbling my self into so dangerous an Absurdity, under the Protection of a refin'd Theory, whose Practice wou'd convince me of a foolish Madness, and that I were neither good Philosopher nor Divine. Yet I cannot say I hate even this Creature, which is become the Proverb of Humane hatred: For as much as it carries with it, in its Life and Motion, the Character and Impression of a *Divine Artificer*; especially for this reason, that we have no cause to believe it ever sinned, and consequently thereupon maintains and performs the end and design of its Creation, which tho' it be in a lower Sphere, has this Prerogative beyond Mankind; that it never yet transgress'd the Rules, nor violated the Laws of its Maker. Nor can I imagine whence our Reflections upon such Creatures should arise, but from a mistaken Knowledge of our selves, and a perfect Ignorance of the Nature of all things beside.

'Tis under the Prejudice of Education, and most detested ERRORS OF OUR LIFE. Have not some People liv'd upon that, and deliciously too, that is another Man's Poyson? Did not *Mithridates* take Poyson till the strongest Confection of that Kind would not do his business, when he wanted it? 'Tis to that we are to ascribe the Mischiefs of Humane Life. For if we could once forsake the false Guide we have been us'd to, and consult our own Reason, there's nothing would seem strange to us,
nothing

nothing uneasie, nothing dreadful. Therefore I shall a little Descant upon this Subject, in order to Rectifie our Judgments, and Reform our Practices.

It is enough already, that I have lived for others. Let me at last return home, and do somewhat for my self. Time flies away, Nature decays, and I shall soon find my self most unfit for the work, when I shall stand most in need of strength to do it. To what purpose is it, we are so busily concern'd in *Exotick Affairs*, things neither consistent with our present Peace, nor conducive to our future Happiness?

Mankind is all *Labyrinth*, and *Disguise*, and never shows the same Face two Hours together. I know my self better than all the Men in the World know me, and can be more just and faithful, according to Truth, in my Judgment and Censure. They set up a *Rule*, and try all Complexions and Temperaments by *That*, wildly, unreasonably, and uncertainly. I daily find them miserably out in their Conjectures of me, even those who think they best know me. They may frame a general *Air* of my Humour, by a frequent Conversation, but are wonderfully mistaken in their Application, as to the Ends, Inducements and Motives of most of my Actions.

The most stupid *Soul* that is, will sometimes *work* upon her self, review her own Thoughts and Inclinations, and would delight to be more Conversant in this Exercise, if we did not interrupt her Meditation by the Proposal of external Objects, which do not at all concern her. It is the best Acquaintance we can have, and would deal more faithfully and wisely in her Advise-ments than the best Friend we know upon Earth. It is, I am confident, the want of this Intelligence that occasions all the Irregularities and Disorders we are guilty of. Remember to make *Reason* and *Conscience* of your *Party*, and you will soon perceive your Anxiety, and Torment abated. Then should we not only be *Wise*, but in a great measure *Happy* to boot: And, for ought I know, in as high a Degree as humane Nature is capable of attaining;

I could (in some fits of contemplative Melancholy) fall asleep as soon in a Church-Yard as on my Bed; and am often so weary of dull Life, that my great-

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est delight is in such *Objects* as speak most to it's *Advantage*.

I know that I carry a *Ghost* always about me, and that I my self am a *Walking Spirit*. This thought allays in me those vulgar *Fears* of the Haunts and Visits of *Spectres*. And as I am not at all afraid of my self, so I am very little apprehensive of *Apparitions*: Nay more, I could wish the *Communications* more frequent betwixt us and the *Inhabitants* of the *Upper World*: It would harden our *Christian Courage*, familiarize to us the Thoughts of *Separation*; and create in us a more passionate love of the *Heavenly Country*.

I pretend not by the *Title* of this small Treatise to any extraordinary *Scheme* or new draught of Religion, for my *Athenian Querists*; much less would I be thought slightly to suggest any neglect or deficiency of theirs in the PRACTICE of the *Old*: I am very well assur'd, that *Religio Athenæ*, seems a direct *Tautologie*. But surely it can be no Offence to say, that I could wish we were all more in earnest for Heaven, and that we had all the *Wisdom* and *Vertue* that ever appeared in the *guise* of true Reason in the World, summ'd up and amassed in a *Christian Virtuoso*, especially in a daily sincere contempt of this World.

No eager pursuit, or restless intemperate desire of *Wealth* or *Honour*, must be harboured by us, who are to fix our whole hopes on *another Country*; and we should confess our selves *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* on this Earth, by the Precepts and Examples of all the *Holy Prophets* and *Apostles* throughout the whole Book of GOD. To set an extraordinary *Value on the World*, is to unravel the peculiar Principle of Christianity, and run *retrograde* to the Steps of the *Holy JESUS*.

Thus have I made a considerable Progress in my *New Practice of Piety*, wherein my aim has been to discover an *Universal Doctrine* (or make such *SPECULATIONS*) as no ways opposeth the Religion established among

mong us, but which may tend to unite us all in the same Church.

A Perfect Atheist, is fit for no Place here but *Bedlam*, and therefore I began my Essay with a *New Scheme of Religion*, I began first with *Divine Worship*, in Obedience to *GOD's Commandment*, who wills us first to seek the *Kingdom of Heaven*, and the *Righteousness thereof*, promising that all other things shall be added unto us, and having given a *GENERAL SCHEME* of the way to Heaven, I shall conclude this *First Part* of my Book with discovering here that right Religion that will lead us to it. And I shall be the *PLAINER* upon this Subject, as our mistaking the *ROAD* to Heaven, may lead us to Hell.

Religion in General, is a sense of our Duty to *GOD*, and the *Worship* we owe to him, according to the best of our *Understanding*, in order to the obtaining of a *Blessed Immortality*.

But Religion in this Age, admits of so many several Modes and Forms, that a Man can now no sooner speak of Religion, but the next Question is—*P R A Y W H A T Religion are you of?*—To this I answer, *GOD is my Father*, the *Church my Mother* (I need not say this or that Church, if I am sound in the *Main Points*) the *Saints my Brethren*, and all that needs me my *Friends*: 'Tis true, I worship *GOD* under the Title of a *CHURCH-MAN*, but dislike all Names, but that which the *Disciples* were called at *Antioch*, that is, I wou'd be neither *Church-man*, *Presbyterian*, *Independent Anabaptist*, *Quaker*, &c. but a *Christian*, a *Follower of Christ*, a *Servant of GOD*, the *Worlds Master*, and my own *Man*. I do not think Religion to consist so much in *NAMES* as Things. *Christ's Church* is not limited to any *Nation* or *Party*, but extends to all *Places*, is propagated in all *Ages*, and containeth all saving *Truth*; and in this Sense is *UNIVERSAL*, or *Catholique*. 'Tis true, Religion is divided into *subordinate Sects* and *Branches*, yet the *Essence* is the same in every *Part*; and for that Reason the *Right Christian* does *Love* and *Honour* the *Pious Men* and *Preachers* of either *Opinions*; as *David* did favour both *Zadock* and *Abiathar*, *Priests* of

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Diverse Families (a) as Saint Paul did Jey, that Christ was preached, tho' by them that were of a contrary Faction; as Jacob had a Right Hand for Ephraim, and a Left for Manasses: Paul and Barnabas jarred, yet both Preach'd the Gospel; Cyprian and Cornelius differed in Judgment, yet both Pillars of the Christian Faith; Chrysoſtom and Epiphanius disagreed, yet both Enemies to the Arrians; Hierome and Ruſſinus, were divided, yet in the end were reconciled; and I verily think all ENGLISH Protestants wou'd soon UNITE in one National Church, did we seriously consider that all those that are converted by the Holy Ghost, are one Holy Church (already) whereof CHRIST is the only Head. I shall venture to say all that outwardly profess Christianity, and have been Baptized, are to be accounted Holy, by a visible separation and Dedication to GOD, till they cut themselves off by SCHISM, are or justly cast out by Excommunication.

I profess my self an Impartial Lover of all Good Men, and do presume every Man to be good, till I find him otherwise. I have as little Zeal about things that are manifestly INDIFFERENT (either Pro or Con) as any Man in the World, for 'tis a Principle I receiv'd from my Education, That the Real Differences of Good and Intelligent People, are not so wide as they seem; and that through Prejudice and Interest, they do many times contest about words, whilst they do heartily think the same thing. Then let those little narrow soul'd Christians, that appropriate their Faith and Charity to a CANTON, live in a little Corner of the World by themselves; they are hardly worthy to enjoy the Benefit of a Universal Sun and Gospel. I hope Church-men, Presbyterians, Independents, &c. will all meet in Heaven at last. What tho' they differ in their WAY thither? I hope they Pardon one another; Men go to China both by the Streights, and by the Cape: A Right Christian may go to Heaven with any Wind, and with any Name; Religious Men (such as Mr. Bennet, and Mr. Shepherd) have no other End in all

(a) 2 Sam. 20. 25. Phil. 1. 18. Acts 15. 39.

their Disputes, but to send us *all in the Right way to Heaven.*

But whilst you are only for the out-side, gilt'ed part, or husk of Religion, you are but for a Faction, and a Party, and you have no Communion with the *Universal Church of Christ*; you are but for Christians of your own Size, and live and grow up into a little *Creeping* narrow Spirit that can never love nor serve any Soul, but what is just and directly of your own dimension; whereas a Christian of the *Universal Church* is of a large comprehensive Generous Spirit and Principle, and loves a good and Vertuous Man, that practices *Right Christianity*, let his persuasion in other and minuter things be what it will, for this is *God's Religion*, all other is but *Man's*, and subject to Innovation, and changes, according as their Humours vary: Hence it is that those that are so *furious*, for formal and outward Rites, are always *sowre and quarrelsome*, fretting themselves, and vexing others, if they come not up to every *Punctilio* of their Observances. And it is also from hence, that the *High-Flyers*, are every where laying out, and engaging themselves and Interest, in getting the *worst of Magistrates, the worst Parliament-Men, the worst Justices, the worst Mayors, &c.* that all the Countries and Cities can afford; in so much that it is almost become the surest Indication of a Knave, to have the *High-Flyers* for 'em; and of an Honest Man to have 'em against him, that can be given: For their *Breath* blesses every Man they are against, and blasts every Man they are for.

But whatever the Principles of others are, yet (as to my self) *I am or should be an honest Man*, and no Name deserves that Character so well as that of *Christian*. All *opprobrious Distinctions of Sects and Schisms*, do as 'twere feed upon *Christianity in the Substance*.

I value no Man meerly because he is of this or the other Party; but I love a Good Man, of whatever Profession, or by what Name or Title soever, he's distinguish'd; but (as I said before) I dislike all Names, but that of CHRISTIAN, and think 'em a great abuse.

But I fear most Men know not, or forget, what it is to be a *Right Christian*; and what that worthy Name doth oblige them to, which was the Name whereby all *Christ's Disciples* were called, before all those Names were known in the World, whereby since they have been *distinguish'd or Reproach'd*. And as it was the first Name given on Earth, so it may probably continue for ever in Heaven; For of *Christ the whole Family of Heaven and Earth is named*, as the Apostle speaks.

I find all Parties ready to reflect one upon another, whereas all may be guilty; and while each are contending for some Particular Opinions and Circumstances in Religion, they may evidently transgress the Rules of Common Christianity; while some are called *Papists*, others *Protestants*, some *Conformists*, others *Dissenters*; all are apt to forget they are called *C H R I S T I A N S*; and tho' in doubtful Things it is commendable to search out Truth, and plead for it; yet not with minds possess'd with *Passion* or *Prejudice*, which blind the Judgment, and break the Bonds of *Unity, Love and Peace*; like the Two Men mention'd by *Anselm*, who disputing, and then falling to Blows in the Morning, about the Place where the Sun wou'd rise, beat out one anothers Eyes, and so neither of 'em could see it.

Its no great Advantage to a Man be a *Papist, Church-man, Presbyterian, &c.* if he be not a *Right Christian*; but (alas!) our *Greatest Zeal* is about those things, for the most part, that are not necessary to Salvation, and which may leave us short of *Heaven*.

Such *Speculations* as these (seriously weigh'd) wou'd bring us all to an *Union in Religion*, and for ever banish those Nicknames of *Presbyterians, Independents, &c.* These with the Title of *High-Church-Men*—— &c. are *New Terms of Distinction* (a) raised on design to distract us yet more; I know no *High-Church* but the Church of *Rome*; so here we see who are to be called *High-Church*,

(a) See the Bishop of Salisbury's Speech to the House of Lords upon the Bill against Occasional Conformity.

our Legal Establishment founded upon the Primitive Pattern,
is the same true Measure of our Church, and those who
rise above it, are as much out of the way, as those who
fall below it——

I cou'd enlarge in these Speculations, but that I am un-
willing to transgress my Bounds. But certainly, unless
Men take this moderate Road for the way to Paradise, I can
see no Hopes of an Union among the several Sects of the
Christian Religion, but a continual jarring till they get to
Heaven, where no doubt they'll A L L Embrace and
UNITE as Brethren: For, as Herbert says,

All we know o'th' Bless'd Above,
Is, that they Sing, and that they Love.

Thus Reader have I Plainly discovered what that Right
Religion is that will lead us to Heaven, by which the
Dissenters may see that Occasional Conformity is no such
Scandalous Trimming between Two Religions, as some
wou'd make it; but has been practiz'd by the best Christi-
ans of all Ages. Neither is Occasional Dissenting, (howe-
ver New the Doctrine may seem) a forsaking the Church
of England, but a Real Duty in some Cases: For my own
share, I am a profest Enemy to Bigots of all Religions;
and tho' I have been a Son of the Church, these Forty
Years, yet I thank GOD, I was never fetter'd with super-
stitious scruples, and I heartily pity those that are, for
they are generally such as are riding Post after Pre-
ferment, or (like Dor——n and W——y) have been
Apostates to the Dissenters.

I am none of those who Acknowledge no Temples, be-
sides those of their own Heads. And I am of Opinion
that such Furious Guides as think that they have a Church
within their own Breasts, shou'd likewise believe that
their Heads are Steeples, and so shou'd provide them with
Bells. I believe that there is a Church Militant, which
like the Ark, must lodge in its Bowels all such as are to
be saved from the Flood of Condemnation; but to chalk out
its bordering Lines, is beyond the Geography of my Re-
ligion.