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A N  
A N S W E R  
T O T H E

Letter of Enthusiasm,

Publish'd in the

*BRITISH JOURNAL*

O F

APRIL the 13<sup>th</sup>. 1723.

I N

A LETTER to the Author of  
the *Weekly Journal*.

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*Si Christum discis, nihil est si cætera nescis ;  
Si Christum nescis, nihil est si cætera discis.*

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L O N D O N :

Printed, and Sold by J. PEELE, at *Locke's  
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## ADVERTISEMENT.

**A**ll serious Christians, of whatsoever Communion, must needs be convinced by their own Experience, that they can never persevere in a truly religious Life, without the divine Assistance of the Grace and Spirit of God operating upon their Hearts, to incline them to Virtue and Piety, strengthen them against Temptations, and enable them to subdue the evil Propensities of corrupt Nature: And as the whole Tendency of the Letter of Enthusiasm, is to enervate, and even to ridicule, the Doctrine of Grace, and the Operations of the Spirit; and then to establish humane Reason as the only Light and Guide to direct us as well in spiritual as natural Things: And this being a Notion which strikes at the very Foundation of the Christian Religion, and leads directly to Deism; the Design of the Writer of the following Answer was only to vindicate the Truth of Spiritual and Reveald Religion in general, without any Relation to the particular Sects and Parties of Christians. And that Letter having been spread over the Nation

## Advertisement.

*in a publick Paper, he thought it requisite that the Answer should be made as publick as the Letter had been; and to that End, two Parts of it were printed in the Weekly Journals of the 9th and 23d of November: But as the Proprietor of that Paper has declin'd to go on with the rest, it is therefore now communicated intire to the Publick in the following Sheets; the Letter itself being also subjoined, to the Intent that those who may not have seen it before, might, if they please, have Recourse to it.*





A N  
A N S W E R  
T O T H E

*Letter of Enthusiasm, &c.*

S I R,

**I** Have, some Time since, seen in the *White-Hall Evening-Post* of the 1st of *June*, something offer'd in answer to the Letter of Enthusiasm, publish'd in the *British Journal* of April 13, under the Name of *Diogenes*; and tho' I lik'd well enough much of what was there said, yet that Writer's Way of Reasoning on such Matters, did not seem, to me, to be clear and strong enough to deal with such a Disputant. Besides, I believe he would have lost nothing of the Force of his Arguments, if he had handled that Author a little more gently, and with that becoming Respect which was due to his handsome and civil Way of treating Mr. *Barclay*, and the *Quakers*. I have therefore thought, that it might not be unacceptable to such who have a Vene-

Veneration for reveal'd and spiritual Religion, if some other Hand should attempt to shew, somewhat more convincingly, that natural humane Reason, without the Assistance of a more sublime and supernatural Principle, is not sufficient to bring Men to the saving Knowledge of God ; and that therefore *Mr. Barclay's Position, That every Man in the World has, and may feel, the Operations of the Spirit, if he watches its Motions, and does not suppress them,* must be true, unless we will deny God's Goodness and infinite Mercy, in-willing that all Men should be saved.

If then we would examine into the Nature and Extent of humane Reason, our first Reflection should be on that glorious State wherein Man was created ; a State of perfect Innocence, free from all Sin, evil Inclinations or Passions, in a continual Communion with his Maker, and endu'd with a Divine Light, and even an intuitive Knowledge, far superior to that of Ratiocination, manifested in that great Instance of *Adam's Capacity* to give Names to all Creatures, according to their Natures.

But when Man had transgress'd the Command of his Creator, the Passions and sensual Appetites, which before had been kept under the Dominion of the spiritual Part, broke loose, and a Consciousness of Sin and Guilt captivated the noble Faculties of his Mind, and that glorious divine Principle of Light, whereby he bore that Image of God wherein he was created, became clouded, darken'd, and tho' not quite extinguish'd, yet there only remain'd that weak Glimmering thereof, which constitutes that Faculty of the Mind call'd humane Reason.

But the most merciful Creator, in Compassion to his Creature Man, instituted a Means for his Recovery out of this lost and undone State, by the Promise of the *Messiah* to come into the World in the Fulness of Time ; who, by the Pouring forth of his  
Grace



Grace and Holy Spirit into the Hearts and Minds of Men, should conduct all his Followers into Communion with God again ; and I believe it will be easily granted, that this could never have been discovered by the Eye of natural Reason : But 'tis certain, that the Patriarchs, and all the holy Men before, as well as after *Moses's* Time, had a firm Belief in this Promise, thro' which they were entitled to the Benefit of the general Redemption, and enabled to please God, live in his Favour, and become Examples of Righteousness in their Day and Generation ; which we cannot suppose to have been the Result of their mere natural humane Reason, without the Assistance of the Holy Spirit, to work that effectual Faith in them ; *Whereby, as the Apostle says, Heb. xi. they obtain'd a good Report, and wrought Wonders.*

The first Act of religious Worship which we read of, is the Rite of Sacrificing, which we may well suppose to have been practised by *Adam* himself, but we are sure that it was by *Abel, Noah, Abraham, &c.* and the Tradition of this was so strong, that even the Heathen Nations used it in Imitation ; but certainly no Man could, by his natural Reason, ever have accounted for this Ceremony, or have imagined that the Blood of Bulls and Goats would have been an acceptable Offering to the Almighty Creator of all Things ; though this (as it came to be manifested in the Fulness of Time) was a most significant Type of our blessed Saviour's laying down his Life, and offering up himself as a Sacrifice, to atone for the Sins of the whole World. 'Tis evident therefore, that the holy Patriarchs must have been led into it by the Impulse of a Divine Light, or Principle much above the Reach and Power of natural Reason.

The *Mosaical* Ministration consisted in the Promulgation of the Moral and Ceremonial Laws ; the former

former must be allowed to come within the Sphere of humane Reason ; but the Ceremonial was made up of Types, Figures, and Shadows, all which had Relation to Christ, and the glorious Dispensation of the Gospel, and was communicated to Man by Divine Revelation, thro' the Prophet *Moses*, without any Dependence upon natural Reason.

The same may be said, in great part, as to the Ministration of the Prophets ; all was as a *(a) Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. (b) The Law and the Prophets were until John, since that Time the Kingdom of God is preached.* The Fulness of Time was then come : *(c) The Mystery [of the Gospel] which had been hid from Ages and Generations, was now made manifest : (d) The Vail was taken away, and the new and living Way was consecrated ; and a Door opened for the Salvation of all Nations, through the universal (e) pouring out of the Spirit upon all Flesh.*

Thus much I have said to shew, that as the whole Business and Design of Religion is for the Recovery of Man out of his fallen State, and the Restoring him into Communion with God again ; so God has at sundry Times, and under divers Dispensations, revealed his Will, and ordained the Means whereby he might attain that End, by a divine, spiritual, and supernatural Light and Principle (not repugnant to, but) above the Reach of humane Reason.

Now Reason, tho' infinitely inferior to this Divine Light, is yet a most excellent natural Faculty of the Mind, whereby Man is endued with a Capacity of Knowledge as much above that of the sensitive Creatures, as it is below that of the Angels : By this he can investigate, distinguish, compare, and judge of all natural and moral Things, and

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*(a)* Gal. iii. 24. *(b)* Luke xvi. 6. *(c)* Col. i. 26. *(d)* Heb. x. 20. *(e)* Joel ii. 28.

even speculate spiritual Things; but the utmost of its Extent reaches no farther than to discover by the Things that are made, that they were made, ordered, sustained and preserved, by a most wise, intelligent, omnipotent, beneficent, supreme Being; and that he must be worthy to receive all Honour, Glory, Obedience, Reverence, and Worship from all his reasonable Creatures; but, how to approach him, or in what manner to perform any acceptable Service to him, Reason of it self, and without the Assistance of a higher Principle, is wholly ignorant.

But how deficient soever Reason may be as to its own natural Power, it is yet capable of being illuminated and inform'd, by the Admission of that superior, divine and supernatural Principle of which I have been speaking, whereby it can be so far advanc'd and improv'd, as to be enabled to discern, know, and judge even of divine Things: And hence it is, that I have known some very learned, ingenious and sober Persons, who were strongly of the Opinion, that that which I call a supernatural Light, or Divine Grace, could not be any different Principle, but must be the very same with right or rectified Reason; wherein they might well err through their having been much better acquainted with the one than with the other: But, I think, the difference between them may pretty easily be apprehended, by only comparing the different Light of the two great Luminaries, each of which do in their respective Courses derive Light to the visible World. Now the Light of the Moon, tho' very glorious, in comparison to the Darknefs of the Night, and very useful to us in its Season, is yet no more than a Light borrowed from the Sun, and in its utmost Splendor is so deficient, as that it cannot discover to us the Beauties of a fine Picture, or the true Figures and Proportions of minute Objects, such as may well be discerned by the Light of the Sun; but, when

B the

the Sun rises, and diffuses its own Light over our Horizon, tho' we may at some times see both these Luminaries in distinct and different Bodies, yet the Moon's borrowed Light (notwithstanding it may, at the same time, subsist in its own Body) wholly disappears as to us, because it is overpowered, swallowed up, and lost in that far more resplendent Light of the Sun. In like manner, Reason, which derives its lesser Measure of Light from that most perfect heavenly Illumination which Man enjoy'd before the Fall, is of the highest Use to us to direct our Judgment in the discerning of natural Things, and even to discover to us the Knowledge of moral Virtues, and the Being of a God; but is wholly incapable of teaching us how to worship him in Spirit and Truth, until that glorious Sun of Righteousness arises in our Hearts, and opens our Understanding to the Knowledge and Experience of spiritual Things, yet without the extinguishing the rational Faculty, but exalting, perfecting and irradiating it by that more glorious Divine Illumination.

But this Distinction is most plainly demonstrated to us by the whole Tenour of the Gospel Dispensation, which all along tends to direct us to a divine and spiritual Principle, superior to that of Nature, to discover to us the Misery of our sinful corrupt fallen State, whereby, *we are by Nature, the Children of Wrath*; (a) and to bring us into that new and living Way, by which we may be lead back again into that blessed Communion with our Maker, which Man enjoyed before the Fall: Hence it is, that the *Apostle* does so frequently distinguish between the *Spirit of Man, and the Spirit of God*; the *first*, and the *second Man*; the *natural Man*, and the *spiritual Man*; the *earthly*, and the *heavenly*; the car-

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(a) Eph. ii, 3,

*nal, and the spiritual; as among many other Places, we may see 1 Cor. ii. 10. 11. The Spirit searcheth all Things, yea the deep Things of God. For what Man knoweth the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man [his Reason] which is in him? Even so the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God. Verse 13. Which Things also we speak, not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Ver. 14, and following. But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. And Chap. xv. 46, &c. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards, that which is spiritual. The first Man is of the Earth, earthly; the second Man is the Lord from Heaven. As is the Earthly, such are they also that are Earthly; and as is the Heavenly, such are they also that are Heavenly. And as we have born the Image of the Earthly, we shall also bear the Image of the Heavenly. Our Saviour also tells us, Jo. iii. 7. That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.*

'Tis true, indeed, that Reason being an innate natural Faculty annex'd to our very Being, as Men, and discernable even in Children, as soon as they are capable of knowing and distinguishing Things; Men are, generally speaking, much better acquainted with it, than they are with that divine Principle which the Scriptures denominate under the various Terms of the Spirit, the Word, the Light, hidden Treasure, *Unction, Grace, &c.* because this latter does not usually awaken in us, 'till we arrive at such an Age, wherein we are capable of making Reflections; and of discerning, in some Measure, between the Good and Evil of our Actions and Inclinations, and to receive Instruction from those who are elder, and who may have had some Experience in religious Matters; and when these open to our Understanding the Truths of reveal'd Religion, shew us the Corruption of our de-

prav'd Nature, our Propensity to Evil, and our Backwardness to that which is Good, this reaches to our Conscience, raises Convictions, and stirs up that Principle, of which before we had no Conception. And though, at first, it be but (as our Saviour likens it) as a Grain of Mustard-Seed, yet, if it be heeded and regarded, it never fails to check and reprove us for our vicious and evil Actions, and to kindle Desires in us to reform our Faults, and to live in the Fear of God; and if we are faithful to it, and give our selves up to follow its Dictates, it will increase, grow, and become more familiar to us; and we shall see it as a Light shining out of Darkness, and plainly know it to be the Movings of the Grace and Spirit of God in our Hearts, drawing and inviting our Will to chuse the better Part, by valuing and preferring the Hope of eternal Happiness before the momentary Pleasures of the present Time: And this is the Beginning of a truly religious Life. But then, such is the Infirmary of humane Nature, and so little Power has humane Reason (left to it self) to govern our Will, that the Allurements of the World, our Self-love, and our Proneness to gratify our Lusts and Pleasures, in the Enjoyment of our carnal Delights, do so easily prevail over this divine Principle, and draw off our Mind from regarding it, as that, (a) like the Seed that falls by the Way-side, and is devour'd by the Fowls, it often becomes quite lost, as to us. And hence it is, that too, too many worldly-wise and learned Men know little of it, and are apt to set up the Idol of their own humane Reason in its Stead; and so, though they may (b) know God, yet they come not to glorify him as God.

On the other Hand, they that give Attention to it, and yield themselves to its Conduct, will soon experience it as (c) *a Well of Water in them, springing*

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(a) Mat. xiii. 4.    (b) Rom. i. 21.    (c) John iv. 14.

up to eternal Life, and to be a living operative Principle, drawing their Minds to the Love and Fear of God; inclining them to a virtuous and sober Conversation; discovering to them the Pravity of their Nature, their Propensity to Evil, and the Bondage they are under to their Lusts, Passions, and carnal Appetites; setting their Sins in order before them; begetting an Abhorrence of wicked Actions, and working true Contrition and sincere Repentance of Sins committed; through which they come to experience the tender Mercy of God to the penitent Soul, in washing and cleansing it from its Iniquities (a) *through Sanctification of the Spirit to Obedience, and sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ.* And sometimes they feel the (b) *Love of God to be shed abroad in their Hearts,* and such spiritual Consolations as are inexpressible, to engage them to a faithful Perseverance in a virtuous and pious Life, and to strengthen them against future Temptations.

And thus the Work of true practical Religion is carried on in the Hearts of Men, not by their own Strength, or the Power of their natural Reason, but through the Operations of the Spirit, and by their co-operating with it to improve that Talent which is given them to profit withal. But we are to know, that this Work is to go much deeper than the cutting off the Branches of Sin, the grosser Vices, and publick Enormities; for it must penetrate even to the Bottom of the Heart, to discover our selves to our selves, and find out our most secret Sins, all our inordinate Desires, Worldly-mindedness, Self-love, spiritual Pride, &c. which must all be conquered and mortified by Degrees, and our whole corrupt Nature must be leavened, changed, reformed, regenerated and renewed; so that the very Roots

(a) 1 Pet. i. 2,

(b) Rom. v. 5.

and Ground of Sin may be plucked up and destroyed, before we can be made (a) *Vessels unto Honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's Use, and prepared unto every good Work.* And they who have passed thro' this Soul-refining Furnace, know, that a religious Life is a continual Warfare; and, that nothing less than this divine supernatural Principle of the Spirit and Grace of God, is able to direct, guide, support, and carry them through it. *The Word of God, says the Apostles, Heb. iv. 12. is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged Sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrows, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart.* But these are inward and spiritual Exercises, which humane Reason, Arts and Sciences can never teach; nor can they be learned or comprehended by any, but such, who, through Faithfulness and Obedience to that Measure of Grace which is given them, are led into the Practice of them, and so attain to the Knowledge of them by a happy Experience; for these are the Things, which, as our Saviour says, *Luke x. 21. are hidden from the Wise and Prudent, and revealed only unto Babes.*

I think then we may clearly determine upon this Point, by referring to these, with many other the like Places of Scripture, *Rom. v. 5. The Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. Chap. 8. 9. If a Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 1 Cor. ii. 19. Know ye not your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you? 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Know ye not your selves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates? Gal. iv. 19. Until Christ be formed in you. Col. i. 27. Christ in you the Hope of Glory. 1 Thess. iv. 8. Who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit. 2 Tim. i. 14. By the Holy*

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(a) 2 Tim. ii. 21.



*Ghost, which dwelleth in us.* 1 John ii. 20. *Ye have an Unction from the Holy One.* From all which it plainly appears, either that the Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ in us, must be understood to be no other, but one and the same Thing with natural humane Reason, which were absurd; or else, that the Mind of Man is indu'd with two distinct Lights; the one of humane Reason, which is natural, and born with us, to direct us in the Knowledge of natural Things; and the other of Grace, which is a divine Gift supernaturally revealed, infused and inspired into our Soul, to direct us to the spiritual and saving Knowledge of God, to restore our deprav'd Nature, and conduct us to eternal Happiness.

What I have hitherto said hath been, according to the best of my slender Capacity, to demonstrate that humane Reason, and divine Grace, must needs be two distinct Principles; and that the whole Structure of true Religion, is raised upon no other Foundation, than that of the Operation of the Spirit or Grace of God in the Soul of Man: And then, to prove that this Grace is universally tendered to all Men, needs no clearer Arguments, than these three Places of Scripture: Jo. i. 4. *That was the true Light, which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World.* Tit. ii. 11. *The Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men.* 1 Cor. xii. 7. *But the Manifestation of the Spirit, is given to every Man to profit withal.* And as these two Points are the Postulatum, which the Author of the Letter will not grant, and fears will never be proved; I shall leave it to every impartial Man, who believes reveal'd Religion, to consider, whether it does not evidently appear from what I have offered, that the contrary Opinion can by no Means be consistent with the Doctrine of the Gospel. And then I think the main Bulk of this Letter, and the many seeming Arguments, ingenious Turns of Wit, and mechanical Comparisons, if designed to persuade

swade us, that the Inspirations and Operations of the Holy Spirit, may be accounted for by the same Principles in Nature, with the oracular Impostures of the Heathens, and with the Flights, Freaks, and Dreams of disordered, convulsive, infected, light-headed, melancholy, and distracted Persons, will all appear too extravagant to deserve a tedious (tho' easy) Refutation; because no Comparison can be tolerable between the Sallies, Raptures, and airy Imaginations of a Man of a distemper'd Brain, who, perhaps, never lived consistently, either before or after; and the solid and serious Discourses, and religious Admonitions of one, who had shewn a long and constant Perseverance in a virtuous and pious Course of Life.

But if the Author's Intent were only to expose real Enthusiasm, (as I would charitably hope) he has said some Things which may be not improperly apply'd in that Sense; but then I could wish that he had so well explained himself, as that no room had been left for Men of loose Principles to apply it indifferently, either to oppose the Operations of the Spirit, or to explode Enthusiasm, (as understood to be a false Pretension to the Inspiration of the Divine Spirit) which yet is something quite different from the Effects of a distempered Brain, it being indeed the most subtil of all the Temptations which the Devil is capable of suggesting to the Mind of Man; because it always appears under the Shew of Good, and pretends to aim at nothing but the promoting of Piety and Religion among Men; so that many a simple and well-meaning Soul has been deluded by it: This is that of which the Apostle speaks, 2 Cor. xi. 4. *Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light.* And 2 Thes. ii. 9. *Whose Coming is after the working of Satan himself with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders:* And, it must be acknowledged, that there is no small Similitude between these two Operations,  
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fo that both may well be called Inspirations, (for I take the Greek Word *Ἐνθουσιασμός* properly to signify *Numinis afflatio*) the one of the Good, the other of the Evil Spirit: But this Author takes no Notice of any difference between the Good and the Bad, and confounds all under the worser Sort, (to which indeed the Word is most commonly applied) distinguishing it under two Kinds, the one, he calls *Flaming*, the other, *a Sort of religious Enthusiasm, not at all mischievous, but rather beneficent to the World.* And to this latter, he ascribes the Writings of the *Mystics, the Alumbrati, the Quietists, and the Rise of the Quakers.* But here I would beg leave to tell him, that unless a Man has had some competent Experience of spiritual Operations in himself, it will be difficult for him to make a right Judgment in these Matters, and he may easily be led into the (a) Fault of speaking Evil of those Things which he knows not.

It were well to be wished that the mystical Writings were more read, and (consequently) better understood; for, tho' some of them are not free from some Mixture of Superstition, according to the prevailing Opinions of the Times and Places wherein they were written, yet they generally tend to persuade People not to stick in the Forms and outward Appearances of Religion, and to direct them to the Spirit and Grace of God; that by ceasing from their own Works, and yielding themselves up to the Conduct thereof, they may feel its operating Power and Vertue; to change and regenerate their sinful corrupt Nature, and through true Repentance, Humiliation, Abnegation, and Mortification of their Lusts, Passions, and carnal Affections, to purge, cleanse, and purify their Souls, so as that they may be thoroughly fitted and prepared for that Union

(a) Jude 10,

with God, wherein alone Man's real Happiness consists: And this being the general Tendency of most of such of them that I have seen, and also being so agreeable to the Marrow and Substance of the Doctrine of the Gospel; they who are acquainted with the inward Travel of the Soul, and who, as the Apostle says, Heb. v. 14, *By reason of Use have their Senses exercised to discern both Good and Evil*; will never censure many of them (for I will not vouch for all that pass under that Name) as Enthusiastical; nor are there many Books extant, which are so generally known and esteem'd among serious People of all Sorts, as that excellent little one of *Tho. a Kempis*; tho' there are others who have treated of those spiritual Matters, much more fully and deeply than he, and who have very admirably discovered the secret Wiles and Snares of Satan, the Signs to know them, and the Means to avoid them; as, among many others, this of Enthusiasm also. And thus much I was willing to say to vindicate this sort of Writings from the Prejudice which many People may have taken against them from common Fame, without having ever read them themselves. I cannot, however, agree with him, that Enthusiasm can any way proceed from the Distempers of the Body, or the Indisposition of the Organs, or that it may be cured by Physick, or a merry Bottle; and, yet I am content to allow him, that this, as well as all other Sin and Error, may be accounted a Disorder, or a Sort of spiritual Sickness of the Soul, and, perhaps, in some Measure catching too, (but not by Effluvia) as we know there may be a Communion of Spirits, and (a) *as evil Communication may corrupt good Manners.*

Let us, however, see whether we may not plainly distinguish between this Enthusiasm or False Ap-

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(a) 1 Cor. xv. 33.

pearance of Inspiration, and the true Operations of the Spirit of God. I believe this Author will readily agree with me, that a general Apostacy or Falling away from the primitive Purity of the Christian Religion, had overspread the Face of the World, and by a Deluge of Superstition, Formality and Ignorance, had almost extinguisht the Virtue and Power of Religion in the Hearts and Minds of Men; and that God has at divers Times raised up pious Men, and endued them with Gifts and Abilities, by their Preaching and Writings, to allarm the World, to detect the gross Abuses, Corruptions and Errors which had been introduced into the Church, through the Ambition, Avarice, and cheating Impostures of a long Succession of impious Monks and Priests; to stir up Princes and whole Nations to cast off the Yoak of the Papal Hierarchy, to reform (in good Measure, and by Degrees) the vain Superstitions, ridiculous Ceremonies, and lifeless Forms which had defac'd Religion, and to recal Men to a more inward and spiritual Worship of God; whereby Multitudes were *renewed* (as the Apostle expresses it) (*a*) *in the Spirit of their Minds*, and animated with so great an Ardour and Zeal, to revive the Power of Religion and true Piety, as that many were enabled to sustain very severe Persecutions, and even Martyrdom itself. And thus began that glorious Reformation of Religion, which has lasted now for two Centuries. And tho' this Zeal soon cool'd, too much of the old Leaven was left remaining, and some have rather turned back again than gone forward; yet others have been, from Time to Time, raised up to excite and carry on farther Reformations: And tho' there has been, and still is, too much of Formality, Sect-ship, and Party among the Profes-

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(*a*) Eph. iv. 23.

fors of Religion ; and Prophaness, Vice, and Immorality do too much prevail in the General ; yet as to Particulars, the Spirit of Religion has been in good Measure kept up ; and there are Thousands under the various Denominations of Christians, who by a virtuous and pious Life and Conversation, and the Gravity of their Spirits, shew that they live in the Fear of God, and govern themselves by that Wisdom which is from above, and not by that which is carnal and sensual. I would now recommend it to this Author to consider seriously, whether he can see nothing else in this great Work, and the visible Effects of it, (not forgetting the beneficent Principles and Virtues which himself has ascribed to the *Quakers*) but a meer *Enthusiasm*. On the other hand ; when the Devil deceives melancholly, weak or imaginary People, under the Appearance of an Angel of Light, he can never hide himself so closely, but that the cloven Foot may soon be discerned ; sometimes by the Affectation, Self-conceitedness and spiritual Pride of this sort of Enthusiasts, sometimes by the Irrationality and Inconsistency of their pretended Inspiration, their Misapplication of Scripture, the Confusedness of their Notions, the Extravagancy of their rapturous Fits and Agitations ; sometimes by the Lightness, Vanity, and even Immorality, which appears in their Conversation ; sometimes by their Prophecies of Events to come to pass at a fix'd Time, which soon prove to be false, and generally by the short Continuance of these Blazing-Stars ; I say, by these and many other Signs and Tokens (apparent enough in the late *French* Prophets) these Impostures come soon to be discovered. Will any considerate Man now say, that he can see no manner of Difference between the Source and Effects of these two Appearances, but that they are both to be confounded together as one and the same delusive *Enthusiasm* ?

Our

Our Author is pleas'd to tell us, that *he believes there are many Thousands, in all respects equally virtuous with Mr. Barclay, who have actually tried all Experiments of Watching, internal Prayer, outward and inward Resignation, Separation from Worldly Thoughts and Actions, Acquiescence of Mind, and Submission to the Operations of the Deity, and yet have found themselves after all just where they set out, nor could recollect any thing that happened to them in those Intervals, but Absence of Thought, &c.* But, I think, this is so far from being a convincing Argument, that it were as well answered by my only So-say, that I believe there is not one Man of a Thousand, in all respects truly virtuous, who has rightly practis'd those Exercises without Profit to his Soul: but I shall endeavour to explain myself somewhat more satisfactorily. These indeed are very proper Exercises to qualify us for the attaining of the most excellent spiritual Gifts; but there are other previous Dispositions requisite, without which all those Performances will never avail to attain them: He that hath not been faithful in a few Things (a), must not expect to be made a Ruler over many Things: And Multitudes have desired to be Christ's Disciples (b), who yet were not willing to take up their Cross and follow him. But if we would indeed be true Disciples, we must begin a religious Life in the manner before mention'd, and then God will never be wanting to give us such a Measure of Grace as shall be requisite for our present State; and when we are faithful in the lowest Appearances of it, we shall find an Encrease and Growth therein; and then, as that shall instruct and lead us into the Practice of internal Prayer, Resignation, Acquiescence, Submission to the Operation of the Deity, &c. we shall find the Virtue and Power of these

(a) Mat. xxv. 21.

Luke xiv. 27.

divine Operations to (a) *strengthen us with Might by his Spirit in the Inner Man*, and enable us to take up the daily Cross to our own carnal Will, and inordinate Affections to earthly Things, and to teach us to withdraw our chief Love from the Creatures, and to place it on God; so as we may learn to know, that though we may use them, yet God only is to be enjoyed; and then if we apply ourselves to those spiritual Exercises with a Heart so prepared, we shall know and recollect well, and to our great Comfort and Edification, that something has happened to us in those Intervals much better than Absence of Thought. But such who endeavour to force themselves to try those Experiments, (as he is pleas'd to word it) in their own unsubjected and unmortified Will, and with unclean Hands and an impure Heart, may well expect to be sent empty away. Will a rich and bountiful Master give away his Treasure to an importunate slothful Servant, whom he knows to have been unfaithful to him, and is daily offending him and doing him despight?

In the next Paragrah he says, *It is supposed the Power claimed is Jesus Christ operating within us; and it really is so; and as it is allowed by all, that the least Drop of his natural Blood was enough to atone for the Sins of the whole World, so one might imagine, that the least Portion of his Godhead working within us, might be too hard for, and overcome the Depravity transmitted to us by our first Parents.* Thus far I agree in the affirmative: But as he adds, *or at least be able to engage our Attention or Acquiescence, which is all that is supposed requisite to the farther Progress and Effusion of his Deity.* Here I must beg leave to differ with him, because there is much more required on our Part, than the bare engaging of our Attention and Acquiescence, in order to the

(a) Eph. iii. 16.



further Progress and Effusion of the Deity; for God will not restrain the Liberty of our Will, or engage our Attention whether we would or not: (a) Life and Death is set before us, but we are not to live unless ourselves chuse Life; and this Portion of the Godhead working in us, can be of no Benefit to us, but on the contrary will be our Condemnation, if we yield not ourselves up to its Working, and co-operate with it; for as the Apostle tells us, *Phil. ii. 2.* we are to *work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling.*

But I could wish that an Author, who appears to have so great a Command of Language had chosen to express himself in Words which might have been less grating to the Ears of such who have a Veneration for the most gracious Communications which God is pleas'd to vouchsafe to the Souls of pious Men, than such as the following: *It is very hard to conceive that we can serve God by sequestering for a time all the Faculties he has given us, by sending our Wits out of Doors to make room for Grace, and by believing that the Spirit of God will never exert itself but in an empty Head.* He might surely have spared the Extravagancy of these Expressions, if he had but well considered the Activity and Restlessness of the Mind of Man, as being continually busied with a thousand Thoughts and Imaginations, good, evil, indifferent, vain, or serious, skipping from one thing to another, without Connexion or Coherence; so that if a Man were to speak out all the Thoughts that pass'd through his Mind, he would seem to be mad. Does he think that such a Head is fit for the Spirit of God to exert itself in before it be emptied? When we would apply ourselves to any Study or Business, must we not first compose the Wandrings and Distractions of our

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(a) Deut. xxx. 19.

Mind, before we can settle it on the Subject we would handle? Does not that Subject then, as it were, wholly possess, rule and fix the Mind? And if we must proceed in this Manner in the Investigation of natural Things, how much more in spiritual? Thus in performing the Duty of vocal Prayer, we receive no Profit by it, unless we recall and restrain the Thoughts, and empty our Heads from all worldly Matters. In this way of Prayer indeed, although the Mind is to be directed to God alone as its Object, yet the Thoughts may be employ'd on various Subjects, either in Praise and Thanksgiving, Confession and begging Pardon for our Sins, imploring his Mercy and Goodness, for the Supply of all our temporal and spiritual Wants and Necessities, &c. But there is yet a more sublime kind of Prayer than this, called Mental Prayer, the Prayer of Silence, Contemplation, &c. which those who have made a good Progress in spiritual Religion may come to experience; wherein not only the Thoughts are to be suppress'd, but the whole Mind is to be so recollected, as to cease from its own Operations, and passively yield itself to be operated upon by the divine Spirit; and then they will come to know what it is to be made the *Temple of God*, and to understand that saying, *Rev. iii. 20. If any Man hear my Voice and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he will be with me.* And 'tis through these inward and deep Exercises, and, as I may say, Closet Devotions, that we may make way for the Spirit of God to carry on the thorough Work of Regeneration in our Souls, by purging away by Degrees; and as we are faithful, all our Dross, and enabling us to (b) *cleanse our selves from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God.* I doubt, however, that

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(b) 1 Cor. vii. 1.

there are too many Professors of Religion that are contented to go on in a formal Way, and neither seek after nor know much of these sacred Things; but if at any Time they may be brought to make a due Reflection on the Corruption of their fallen Nature, and to feel the Weight and Burthen of their Sins, this is that streight Gate, and that narrow Way, which they ought to enter into, in order to be cleansed from them, and to be conducted to their eternal Happiness: But in the mean while they may do well to forbear from prophaning them. If then this Author does believe that the Soul of Man is a spiritual and immortal Substance, but not capable by its own Powers to attain to eternal Happiness, (otherwise every Man could save himself,) but that it stands in need of a spiritual and supernatural Assistance to conduct it thereto; and that the Doctrine of the Gospel tends to direct all Men to these inward Operations of the Spirit, as that inward Assistance and only Means whereby they may be fitted and prepared for the Enjoyment of that blessed State; methinks it should not be so hard for him to conceive that 'tis possible that God (not our selves) may for a Time so far sequester the three principal Faculties (or Powers) of the Mind, the Intellect, the Will, and the Memory, as to *make room for Grace*; that is, that he may so powerfully possess and hold the Soul suspended from all its own Operations, as that it may be purely attentive to, and swallowed up in the Infusion of his Divine Communication; and that they who have been so happy as to have tasted of these Divine Enjoyments, will never regret the having had their Wits in this Manner sent out of Doors, or their Heads (or rather Hearts) thus emptied, tho' they were to be filled with nothing else but that Wind or Spirit, which bloweth when and where it listeth. (a)

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(a) Jo. iii. 8,

I cannot however but observe, that tho' the Author has very frankly declared his Diffidence, or at least his Doubt, that this Doctrine of the Operation of the Spirit will never be proved; yet he seems to be rather a Friend than an Enemy to it, inasmuch as *he wishes that such a Discovery could be made, as what would put an End to all the jangling vain Questions, Superstitions, and Oppositions, which have plagued the World from the Beginning.* I am not so fond of my own Performance in this Essay, but that I believe there are many others who, if they would have taken the Pains, could have done it much better; and I am sure that I have made no new Discovery; nor will I pretend to put an End to Disputes; neither perhaps have I been able to say any thing that may contribute more to his Conviction than his own candid Concession in the latter End of his Letter, where he says; *As it is not to be denied, but Almighty God has sometimes communicated himself to particular Persons by secret Impressions upon their Senses and Understandings, &c.* Now I am apt to think that by these Expressions, *sometimes, and to particular Persons,* he had chiefly in View such as the Prophets, Apostles, &c. (otherwise he might have been thought to deny all Inspiration;) Be it so; he grants however that God has communicated himself to Men by secret Impressions, and this will bring our Dispute to a short Issue; for it will lie upon him to shew us what Difference he can find between these Divine Communications, and the Operations of the Spirit, (which I believe he can hardly conceive himself,) or else we agree in one and the same Thing, and differ in nothing but the expressing it in different Words. But our Author has the Caution to limit his Concession to *particular Persons*; yet I believe he will hardly deny, but that if some Men have had these Communications, all Men (fitly qualified) must be capable of them; and then I will allow him, that the Measure of them may differ very  
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much as to Particulars; Prophets and Apostles received them in a much greater Measure; Pious Men of a lower Degree, in a lesser Measure; to some but one Talent is given, to others five; the common Grace which the weakest Christians receive is, as to its Quality, tho' not as to its Quantity, as certainly a *Communication, or Secret Impression of God*, or, in other Words, an *Operation of the Spirit*, as Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, or Miracles in the strongest and most advanc'd. See what the Apostle says of these Matters, 1 Cor. xii. 4, 5, and following;—*There are Diversities of Gifts, but it is the same Spirit; Differences of Administrations, but the same Lord; Diversities of Operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all: But the Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal; for to one is given the Word of Wisdom, to another the Word of Knowledge, to another Faith, &c. but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every one severally as he will.* What could have been said more clearly to decide this whole Controversy? I note however his artful Turn, that these *Secret Impressions* are made upon their *Senses and Understandings*; Visions indeed must be seen, and Voices must be heard, through the Medium of those two Senses; but he seems at the same time to allow that other Communications may be made only to the *Understanding*; and I think I might as well have said, to the *Mind*, to the *Heart*, or to the *Spirit*, or to the *Soul*, either of which Words would have convey'd much the same Idea, and had been better adapted to the Subject; and then we should agree in this also. He proceeds in the same ingenuous Temper; So, *I dare not affirm that he may not and does not do so still; nor will I dogmatically assert, that any one who pretends to feel his Divine Spirit is a Liar and Enthusiast: And here methinks he does so entirely give in to the Operations of the Spirit, as if he had never intended*

to oppose Mr. Barclay's *Postulatum*, but only in that one Point, of his saying, *that every Man in the World has and may feel them*; and I could almost persuade myself, that when he has considered the Scriptures alledged for the Universality of the Grace of God, and allowed for the Difference there may be between the lowest and the highest Degrees of its Manifestation, he will find no room for Argument about it. He adds, *But I think I may safely affirm, that no one is concerned in his Visions or Revelations but himself, unless the other feels them too, or he can prove the Truth of them by Miracles.* Once more we are agreed, with this further Remark on my Part; that as I think (pretended) Miracles in this Age are much oftner false than true, they would be, in my Opinion, much less a Proof of the Revelations of another Man, than the feeling (or witnessing) the Truth of them in my self; for I believe it possible for a pious Man, acted by the true Spirit of God, to open the Divine Truths, which may have been reveal'd to him, with so much Demonstration and Power, as to reach to the Witness of the same Spirit in the Hearts and Consciences of others, so as that the inward Sense, Taste, and Feeling of the Soul may discern thereof with as much Assurance, as the outward bodily Senses can discern of natural Things: And of this we may have infallible Proofs, not only in that vast pouring forth of the Spirit in the Apostolical Times, when the preaching of those holy Men was so powerful, as to open the Hearts of Multitudes, and spread the glorious Light of the Gospel over the Face of the World in the Space of a few Years; but also in many Instances since, when God has rais'd up faithful Ministers to preach to the Hearts of People, and convert them from Superstition and Formality, to a more inward and spiritual Worship of God, whereby (as has been hinted already) the Power and Vir-  
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ture of Religion has been from Time to Time reviv'd and kept up, and, I doubt not, will be continued, till a more perfect Reformation shall reduce Christianity to its primitive Purity.

But our Author is still resolv'd not to quit the Light of his natural Reason, which he says is *the only Light he can find in himself*; nor shall I ever persuade him to quit it, and would only presume, in the most friendly Manner, to advise him not to depend too much upon it (till it may be in some Measure illuminated by the Wisdom from Above) in Matters of a spiritual Nature, lest it should prove to him a worse *Ignis fatuus* than Enthusiasm itself, (from which well-meaning Men have often been recovered) to lead him out of the Way of his eternal Happiness, by deceiving him with an Opinion, that a good moral Life will be sufficient to carry him to Heaven, without ever troubling himself with the Doctrine of the Cross: Nor will he, I hope, mistake my Good-will, if I should also recommend to him a serious Endeavour to cast off the Prejudice of deep-rooted Opinions, and to be more easy and willing to entertain Conviction, if it touches his Understanding, than to persist in any Error; for I can assure him, by my own Experience, that a rational Flexibility disposes the Mind much better to receive Truth, than where there is a tenacious Adherence to any favourite Notions.

'Tis now time for me to beg Pardon for the Length of my Letter, which has indeed swell'd to a much bigger Bulk than I intended; but I must ingenuously confess, that I had not the Capacity to explain my Sentiments in these Matters in fewer Words: However, if you shall think fit to publish it, you have the Liberty to split it into as many Pieces as you please, and to  
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hand it to the World in such Portions as you  
may find you can spare room in your Weekly Pa-  
per. I am,

S I R,

*Your very Humble Servant,*

**DIONYSIUS.**



*The*



*The Letter of ENTHUSIASM.**To the Author of the British Journal.*

S I R,

BESIDES the flaming Enthusiasm mention'd in our last, which is there supposed to be inspired by a Super-abundance of Spirits, labouring for Evacuation; and shaking, disordering, and sometimes bursting its Tenement to get ready Vent, (like Gun-powder in a Granado or Mine, or subterraneous Fire enclosed in the Bowels of the Earth;) there seems to me to be another sort of religious Enthusiasm, not at all mischievous, but rather benificent to the World; and this has shewn itself in several Ages, and under several Denominations. There is much to be read of it in the mystick Writers in all Times. Hermits seem to be inspir'd with it, and several Sects have built their innocent Superstitions upon it; as the *Alumbrati* in Spain, the *Quietists* in Italy, the *French Prophets* lately amongst us; and I doubt a very great Party in Europe, call'd *Quakers*, owe their Rise and Increase to it. And having mention'd this last Sect, I think my self obliged to declare that I esteem them to be great, industrious, modest, intelligent, and virtuous People; and to be animated with the most benificent Principles of of any Sect, which ever yet appeared in the World. They have a comprehensive Charity to the whole Race of Mankind, and deny the Mercies of God to none. They publicly own that an universal Liberty is due to all, are against Impositions of every kind, and yet patiently submit to many themselves, and perhaps are the only Party amongst Men, whose Practices, as a Body, correspond with their Principles.

I am not ashamed to own, that I have with great Pleasure read over Mr. *Barclay's* Apology for *Quakerism*,



*kerism*, and do really think it be the most masterly, charitable, and reasonable System that I have ever seen. It solves the numerous Difficulties rais'd by other Sects, and by Turns thrown at one another, shews all Parts of Scripture to be uniform and consistent; and as Sir *Isaac Newton*, by all allowing him Gravitation, has accounted for all the Phœnomena of Nature, so if we will allow to Mr. *Barclay* those Operations of the Spirit, which the *Quakers* pretend to feel, and which he says every Man in the World has and may feel, if he watches its Motions, and does not suppress them; then I think all the jangling vain Questions, numerous Superstitions, and various Oppressions, which have plagued the World from the Beginning, would cease and be at an End.

But this Postulatum will not be granted, and I fear will never be prov'd, though such a Discovery is much to be wished, and the Opinion of it alone must render those very happy who can persuade themselves that they have attained to it. Mr. *Asgil* wrote and published a Book, to prove that all true Believers (that is, all who had attained a Spirit like to this,) shall be translated without passing through Death; and, as I doubt not, but he believed his own Dream himself, so if he had published it before any Man had actually died, I cannot see how it could have been answer'd, or how it can be answer'd now, but by opposing Fact to it, and by making the Words *Eternal Death*, signify *Eternal Life* in Torments, which Liberty no Language will bear in other Disputes; and yet his Doctrine cannot be assented to without supposing that no Man ever had Faith but *Elias* and *Enoch*; which is a very wild Supposition.

For the same Reason, I cannot concur with Mr. *Barclay*, in believing that all Men who cannot find this Spirit in themselves, do or have suppressed it; for I believe there are many Thousands, in all Respects, equally virtuous with himself, who have  
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actually tried all Experiments of Watching, internal Prayer, outward and inward Resignation, Separation from worldly Thoughts and Actions, and Acquiescence of Mind, and Submission to the Operations of the Deity, and yet have found themselves, after all, just where they set out; nor could recollect any Thing that happened to them in those Intervals, but Absence of Thought; and therefore, till I can feel something in my self, or discover some Traces in others, which I cannot account for from lower Motives, I shall take the Liberty to call the Pretenders to it Enthusiasts; though, I must confess, that all or most religious Parties have laid Claim to this Spirit upon certain Occasions, and have bestowed it upon their Founders, or particular Men amongst them; and the *Quakers* only say all Men have it, and may exert it, or rather permit it to exert itself if they please.

It is supposed that the Power so claimed, is Jesus Christ operating within us; and as it is allowed by all that the least Drop of his natural Blood was enough to atone for the Sins of the whole World; so one might imagine that the least Portion of his Godhead working within us, might be too hard for and overcome the Depravity transmitted to us by our first Parents, or at least be able to engage our Attention or Acquiescence, which is all that is supposed requisite to the farther Progress and Effusion of his Deity. It is very hard to conceive, that we can serve God by sequestering for a Time all the Faculties he has given us, by sending our Wits out of Doors to make Room for Grace, and by believing that the Spirit of God will never exert itself but in an empty Head; and therefore I shall presume to believe, till I am better informed, that as the Almighty shews and exhibits to us the visible World by the Medium of the outward Senses he had before given to us, so he dispenses all that we do know or can know of the

invisible One thro' the Vehicles of our reasoning Faculties.

We have not yet been able thoroughly to discover any *Vacuum* in Nature, but as soon as any Body gets out of a Place, another leaps in; therefore if a Man can once drive his Wits out of House and Home, some other Being of a different kind will certainly get into their Room, and Wind is always at Hand crowding for Preferment; which, in various Shapes, has a great Share in human Transactions, and always has contributed much to the great Revolutions in Empire and Superstition, which have often overturned the World. But to return to my Dream :

A Clock, or other Machine, made by a skilful Artist, will have certain and regular Motions, whilst it continues in that State; but if it gathers Filth, meets with Obstructions, or its Springs and Wheels decay and wear out by Time, or are hurt by Accidents, it moves irregularly, or not at all. Experience proves the same in the Mechanism of Animals, who have infinitely finer Conectures, as consisting of Thousands of Tubes, Veins, Arteries, Nerves, and Muscles, every one of which, in a certain Degree, contributes to the Operations of the living Engine; and as all these are more tender and delicate, and consequently more susceptible of Injuries, than the Parts which constitute and give Motion to other organiz'd Bodies, so they are much more easily put out of Order; and we find in fact, that a Cold which stops Perspiration, and hinders the Evacuation of the super-abundant Particles of Matter, disorders the whole Fabrick, clogs and interrupts its Action, and those Effluvioms which cannot find their proper Vent through the Pores, over-shadow and oppress the Brain, and render the Mind unactive, and incapable to perform its Functions, till they are let out by larger Passages, as by bleeding, or vomiting, or  
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forced out by sweating, or other violent Action ; or by fasting, and taking in no new Supplies, there is Time given to them leisurely to expire ; but if they require quicker Vent than those Conduits can give, then Fevers or other violent Distempers ensue, when the Brains of Men are so oppress'd, that they see Visions, Appearance of Angels, Demons, and dead Men, talk incoherently, and sometimes surprizingly, and have obviously different Sensations, Affections and Reasonings, from what they have at other Times.

The same is true of Madmen, who through wrong Organizations at first, or the Indisposition of the Organs, afterwards perswade themselves that they are Princes, Prophets, or Messengers from Heaven ; and certainly often utter Flights, and Sallies of Imagination, which are amazing, and that never fall from them in their lucid Intervals, and which have often passed upon the World for Inspiration ; inso-much, as in several Ages, and in several Countries in our Age, they have been, and are thought to be divinely inspired. Now Madness shews itself in a thousand Shapes, and as has been said in my former Paper, there is scarce a Man living, but at Times has more or less of it, though we denominate it from a Train of irregular Actions, and many kinds of it certainly do not fall within common Observation, or scarce within any Observation.

When we see Men in the main of their Conduct seemingly act with Prudence in such Things as we understand, we are apt to take their Words in such Things as we do not understand, especially if we see them do such Actions, shew such Emotions of Spirit, and emit such Discourses as we cannot otherwise account for, though we perceive the same done by Men in known Distempers, and in Sleep, and often feel it in our selves : For it is incredible to those who have not seen or observed it, what Ener-

gy and Strength Men shew in Convulsive Distempers, when too they often vent surprizing Discourses, without knowing what they say; and there are few Men, who do not sometimes strike out sudden and extemporary Thoughts and Expressions, without being able to observe by what Traces they came into their Minds; and fanciful and conceited Men easily perswade themselves, or are perswaded by others, to believe that at those Times they are inspired from above.

But if we compare Things we do not know with those we do, I think we may account for them both by the same Principles in Nature. Men, as has been said, in Sleep see Visions, hold Discourses, and sometimes very good Ones, with Phantoms of their own Imaginations, and can walk about, climb over Houses and Precipices, which no Man who is awake durst venture to do. Men in Distempers see Spirits, talk and reason with them, and often fancy themselves to be what they are not. Melancholy Men have believ'd that they were Glass Bottles, Pitchers, Bundles of Hay, Prophets, and sometimes that they were dead; and yet in all other Actions of Life, have behaved themselves with Discretion. And as these Things have happen'd often, few or none are surpriz'd at them, and therefore treat them only as Subjects of Jest or Merriment: But if they had happen'd but once, or seldom, we should either not have believ'd them, or have recurred to Miracle or Witchcraft for the Solution. No Man wonders at the Sun's Rising every Day, and yet all are amaz'd and frighten'd by seeing a blazing Star once in their Life-time, tho' that is certainly the less Wonder of the two.

Now what Stretch will it be upon our Imagination, to believe that once in an Age, or more, a catching Distemper of the Mind should actuate a Man or two, and communicate itself afterwards to others of  
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the same Complexion, the same Temperament of Juices, and consequently the same Dispositions of Mind, which certainly are as infectious as those of the Body, tho' not so observable. We assimilate to the Passions, Habits and Opinions of those we converse with, and their Tempers are catching. This indeed is not true in all Instances; neither does a Plague infect every Body, but only those who have proper Juices, and suitable Dispositions of Body to receive it. We see often, that the yawning of one Man, will make a whole Company yawn; and the Sight of Men in convulsive Distempers will throw others into the same; as many People were agitated with the same Motions and Spirit of Prating, who went to see the *French* Prophets fall into their Trances, with a Design only to divert themselves; which Trances undoubtedly were an unusual Kind of Epileptick Fits, which often actuate the Organs of Speech without the Patient's knowing it, and have often been mistaken for divine Trances, and their incoherent Rapsodies been esteem'd Revelations.

If we may believe Mr. *Barclay*, and Mr. *George Keith*, in his *Magick of Quakerism*, (who was once of that Sect, and afterwards took Orders in the Church of *England*,) the same thing has happen'd to many others who went to insult the *Quakers*, and were caught by their Shakings, Groanings, and the Solemnity of their silent Meetings, and became afterwards steady Converts. I think it is *Thucydides*, who tells us, that at *Abdera*, a City in *Greece*, upon a hot Day, all the Spectators who were present in the Theatre to see *Andromache* acted, were suddenly seized with a Madness, which made them pronounce Iambicks; and the whole Town was infected with the Distemper, which lasted as long as that Weather continued. And he tells us too of another sort of Madness which seiz'd the young Women of *Athens*,  
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many of whom kill'd themselves; and the Magistrates could not stop the Contagion, till they made a Decree, that those who did so should be expos'd, and hung up naked. There seems to be no Difficulty, in conceiving that the Effluvia, which steam from the Body of an Enthusiast, should infect others suitably with the same Distempers; as Experience shews us, that the minute Particles, which are conveyed by the Bite of a mad Dog, cause Madness, and will make the Person infected bark like the Dog who bit him; and such Particles in other Instances may be convey'd through the Pores, and in a common Instance undoubtedly are so; for many People will swoon if a Cat is in the Room, tho' they do not see her. And all infectious Distempers must be communicated by those Passages.

Some Distempers, or Dispositions of Body, make Men rave; others make them melancholy: Some give them Courage, Imperuosity, prodigious Energy of Mind, and rapturous Thoughts and Expressions; others sink and depress their Spirits, give them panick Fears, dismal Apprehensions, melancholy Images, and secret Frights; and they will all account for such Sensations from their former imbib'd Prejudices by early Education, and by long Use become familiar to them. One of these Distempers will make a flaming false Prophet, and the other a despairing Penitent, in spite of the Mercies of God; and afterwards Physick, or Abstinence, shall cure the first, and a Bottle of Wine now and then moderately and chearfully taken, in agreeable Company, shall make the other a Man of this World again.

Opium in different Constitutions will work both these Extremes; and other Drugs will give temporary Madness. The Oracular Priests of old well understood this Secret of Nature. The High Priestess of *Delphos* suck'd Inspiration from the Fumes of an intoxicating Well, which disordered her Brain, made her



her rave, and utter incoherent Speeches, out of which something was found to answer the devout Querist, and tell the Meaning of the God: And in the Temple as I remember {of *Amphiaraus*, where Oracles were convey'd in Dreams, the humble and submissive Votary was let down into a deep Hole, that had several fantastical Apartments, where he saw Sight and Apparitions, which his Mind was prepar'd to receive before by Physick, suitable Diet, and sometimes by Fasting; and then he was wrapp'd up in the Skins of Victims, rubb'd and impregnated with intoxicating Drugs, which made him dream most reverently; and when he related his Visions, it was very hard Luck if the Priests could find nothing in them for their Purpose; but if that happen'd not to be the Case, the same Operation was tried over again; and if they had no better Fortune then, the God was angry with the impious Seeker for his Sins, and so was become sullen, and the poor Miscreant was sent away as an excommunicate Person, (if he had the good Luck to escape so,) and perhaps hang'd himself in his Way home.

We see and feel, by constant Experience, that our Thoughts in Dreams are lascivious, frightful, or pleasing, according to the Temperament of our Bodies, the Food we eat, as our Spirits are oppress'd or cherish'd by it. We see too, that drunken or distemper'd Men are overcome by Liquor, or Disease, and made to talk, reason, and act differently from what they do in Sobriety and in Health; and we all confess such Discourses and Actions to be the Indispositions of their Organs, and the Operations of external or internal material Causes, and will yet not account for other Sensations equally extravagant from like Mediums, though we cannot shew any Difference between them: However, as it is not to be deny'd, but Almighty God has sometimes communicated himself to particular Persons by secret Impressions upon

on their Senses and Understandings, so I dare not affirm that he may not, and does not do so still; nor will I dogmatically assert, that any one who pretends to feel his divine Spirit, is a Lyar or Enthusiast; but I think I may safely affirm, that no one is concern'd in his Visions or Revelations but himself, unless the other feels them too, or he can prove the Truth of them by Miracles.

Almighty God, as has been said, has given us Reason to distinguish Truth from Falshood, Imposture from Revelation, Delusion from Inspiration; and when we quit that Light, we must wander through endless Mazes and dark Labyrinths, and ramble wherever Fancy, Imagination, or Fraud, leads us. If Mr. *Barclay* had meant only by the Testimony of the Spirit, that natural Faculty, or Principle, that the Deity has inspired into all Men to regulate their Actions, and to acknowledge his divine Bounty, (which Principle I call Reason,) and could have reconcil'd the Workings of his Light to the only one I can find in my self, I could readily have subscrib'd to a very great Part of his System; for I must confess it to be most beneficent to the World, in my Opinion, most agreeable to the Scriptures, and makes them, or rather shews them, to be most consistent with themselves, and comprehends every Thing which has been since said by the best Writers for Liberty of Conscience, and against all Sorts of religious Impositions. And this he has done with as much Wit, happy Turn, and Mastery of Expression, as is consistent with the Plainness and Simplicity affected by those of his Sect, and for the most part used in the holy Writings. I am,

S I R,

Your Humble Servant,

DIOGENES;

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