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THE

Lord Mornay du Plessis Marly's

THOUGHTS

ON THE

TRINITY;

(Being the Fifth and Sixth Chapters of his

Learned DISCOURSE

Concerning the Truth of the

Christian Religion.)

Wherein he Endeavours to prove that God
the Son is Co-eternal, Co-equal and Co-
essential with God the Father.

*Written Originally in French, and now Tran-
slated into English,*

By Mr. BELLAMY.

*There are Three that bear Record in Heaven, The Fa-
ther, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these Three
are One, 1 John, Chap. V. ver vii.*

L O N D O N,

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T H E

Translator's P R E F A C E

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

SINCE the Doctrin of the ever-blessed Trinity was never more controverted, and that sacred, tho' mysterious Truth more publickly exploded, or at least depretiated than at present; since the Clergy of the Church of England draw their Pens with uncommon Heat against one another; and the most learned Divines amongst the Dissenters, not only differ from, but in Solemn Assemblies have rally'd one another on that Important Subject: 'Tis hop'd, this short Essay will at this Juncture meet with a favourable Reception; and that his Lordship, tho' a Lay-man, will make no contemptible Figure among the warmest Defenders of our most Holy Faith. The Character of this Noble Peer is too well known to the learned World to need any thing to recommend it; yet, since these Sheets may possibly fal' into the Hands of some who never heard of their Author's Merit, I could not prevail on my self to send it out naked into the World, without paying some Respect to the Memory of so great a Man, and so good a Christian.

MY Lord Mornay descended from a Noble and Antient Family, and had all the Advantages of an Education suitable to his High Birth and Character. In his tender Years

P R E F A C E to the Reader.

he apply'd himself very close to the Study of the Learned Languages and was remarkable for his generous Contempt of all Puerile Diversions. As he grew up to Manhood, he grew in favour at Court, and was justly esteem'd the Wonder of his Age. When he was Governour of Sanmur and Privy Counsellor to King Henry the Fourth of France, he us'd his utmost Endeavours to keep that Prince firm to the Protestant Religion; but not succeeding therein, he retir'd from Court, and apply'd himself to the Study of Divinity. In those vacant Hours he compos'd his learned Discourse, Concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion, (whereof this is only a small part) which has deservedly been esteem'd his greatest Performance. And the kind Reception it has met with, not only in the Original, but also in the Latin and other Languages into which it has been Translated, is an undeniable Argument, I think, of it's uncommon Worth. It was render'd indeed, into English about 130 Years ago by Sir Philip Sidney and others: But as that Translation, tho' undertaken by so great a Man, thro' the Revolution of Time is grown obsolete, and almost unintelligible; 'Tis hop'd the Publick will not censure an Attempt to dress it in more modern Language. And if this short Essay (which is all that my Lord there offers on the Subject before us) Shall meet with any tolerable Acceptation, I design shortly to publish that whole Discourse in two Volumes in Octavo, to which I shall prefix some Memoirs of his Lordship's Life.

T H E



THE
Lord Mornay's THOUGHTS
ON THE
TRINITY.

The INTRODUCTION.

AS this *Essay* of his Lordships (tho' a compleat Discourse of it self, and the whole he offers in Defence of the sacred *Trinity*) is but a small part of his most excellent Treatise, *Concerning the Truth of the Christian Religion*; it may not be thought improper to give the Reader a transient View of the four preceding Chapters, that he may judge of his Lordship's Method, and see how naturally he is lead into the following *Thoughts* on the Important and Mysterious Subject before us:

THE *First Chapter* is taken up in the Demonstration of that plain Proposition, *That there is a Supreme Being*; a Proposition which is so loudly proclaim'd by the Voice of Universal Nature, and engraven in such deep and legible Characters on the Minds of all Mankind; that 'tis almost needless, one would think, to labour in the Proof of it. But if we will but seriously reflect

The INTRODUCTION.

reflect on the impious Blasphemies we hear daily utter'd against the *Great God*, and his most *Holy Word*; and on the numerous Crowds of Atheistical Men, who make a Mock at Sin, and laugh at Religion; if we will but sit down and consider how unaccountably some Men are taken up in the fond Pursuit of the gay, tho' deceitful Vanities of this wicked World, that they will not allow themselves the least time for Reflection on any other Objects; never will admit a Thought of, or pay the least Regard to the God that made them, and are greater Strangers to the Excellency of their own Natures, and the inestimable Value of their precious and immortal Souls, than to the most remote and desert Wilds of *India*, or the most dangerous and unfrequented Paths of the tempestuous Ocean: We must confess (tho' with Shame and Confusion of Face) that there is even in this present Age, as well as that in which his Lordship wrote, too great a Necessity to dwell on, and take Pains to demonstrate so self-evident a Truth.

In the *Second Chapter* he endeavours to prove, that as by consulting the Book of Nature, we may find incontestible Proofs of a *Deity*, so likewise by a diligent Examination we may therein furnish our selves with undeniable Demonstrations of *its Unity*. And having sufficiently prov'd this Assertion, he proceeds in the latter part thereof, to shew the Absurdity of those who held *Two Principles*, the one Good, which they called *Oromases*, the other Evil, which they called *Arimanius*, and which they say was originally the Opinion of *Zoroaster*, and afterwards of the *Persians* and *Manichees*.

In the *Third Chapter* he produces the Testimonies of the wisest Men in all Ages, to confirm the Arguments

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ments made use of in the foregoing Chapter to prove *the Unity* of the God-head.

AND in the *Fourth* he endeavours to prove, that God is immoveable, immutable, eternal, uncompounded, incorporeal, infinite and omnipresent; and that, tho' the least thing in the Universe, most evidently demonstrates the *Being* of a God; yet the vast Volume of the Creation cannot perfectly teach us *what he is*: nor shall we to Eternity be able fully to conceive his Infinite Perfections.

THUS having prov'd that all Mankind unanimously acknowledge a *Supreme Being*, that there can be but *one God*, and that his Perfections are both infinite and inconceivable. He very naturally proceeds to the Proof of the *Trinity in Unity*, which is the Subject of the following Sheets.





On the TRINITY.

CHAP. V.



LET us now with a holy Boldness go on a little further, not with the rash Reasonings of Men, but the gracious Assistance which Almighty God has vouchsafed to afford us in the holy Scriptures, and see whether *Reason* (tho' too weak of her self to discover so profound a Mystery) will not help us to reconcile the seeming Difficulties, and confirm us in the Belief of the SACRED TRINITY: For *She* is in some Sense and Degree to God, what the Eye of the Body is to the Sun. As without the chearful Light of the latter all Objects would be invisible to humane Sight; so without the condescending Goodness of the former, 'twould be absolutely impossible for the most elevated Mortal to entertain the least Idea of his infinite Perfections. But as when the Sun begins to shine, the Eye (tho' not endu'd with a *new Visive Faculty*) immediately discerns, and with the greatest ease distinguishes one Object from another, tho' wholly dark and inactive before; So when God is pleas'd to reveal any mysterious Truth to us, *Reason*, without undergoing the least Alteration (tho' too weak of her self to discover the *Sacred Arcanum*) perfectly comprehends, and readily and chearfully embraces it.

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I HAVE already shewn from humane Reason, *that God is a most simple Being*; and divine Revelation teaches us, *that there are Three distinct Persons in the adorable God-head*. The former could never have made this profound Discovery (for she can only pass a just Judgment on Things she clearly conceives) yet readily assents to it, and obliges us to believe it when reveal'd.

I HAVE likewise shewn, from the various Works of his Creation, *that he is an Active Being*, and that from him all Being and Motion is deriv'd, that the exact Order of each Part of the spacious Universe, the mutual Dependance which great and small Bodies have on one another, and the beautiful Harmony they all observe among themselves, and with each other are bright Displays of an All-wise Contrivance. And since there can be no Art discovered, no Order kept, where there is no Judgment to direct, the Wisdom of God, who has given such signal Instances of both, must be infinite.

AGAIN, tho' he has thought fit to endue some Beings with Reason, and not others, yet he has created nothing in vain, but wisely ordered that each Being should answer such Ends as are most suitable to its Nature; the Sun to give Light and Heat by Day, the Moon to shine by Night, and the Stars and Planets to distinguish the various Seasons of the Year, &c. These constantly observe their stated Course, and never fail to accomplish the useful Purposes of their Creation, which being inanimate and irrational, they could never do of themselves, and therefore we must ascribe their regular Motions to their All-wise Creator, who abundantly compensates for their want of Knowledge by his infinite Wisdom. Now, since the World abounds with such a vast variety of Beings, and such a perfect Harmony is observed amongst them, they must proceed from, and have their Dependance on one perfectly intelligent Being: And as he is the Author of Nature, he must be infinitely Wise, since he communicates the bright Effects of Knowledge, even to Beings wholly void of Understanding.

AGAIN, the rational Part of the Creation has the Management and Disposal of the Irrational, but not *vice versa*. Man builds, plants, breeds up Cattle, and makes them all serve many excellent Purposes. And according to the Laws of Nature, the more intelligent Part of Mankind makes Laws for, and bears sway over the weaker Part: And I have shewn from the Testimonies of the Philosophers, that God made all Rational Beings, as well the separate as embodied Intelligences, and design'd them for certain Ends, and appointed distinct Employments for them, and so is at once their *Principle* and *End*. And he must be infinitely Wise, or have a Faculty of employing to wise Purposes the active Powers of Things: The chief Action of which always abides within himself. And as he is Infinite, every thing in him must be so too; yet would he be finite, if his Knowledge could be in the least improv'd. He knew therefore from Eternity what Ever was, is, or ever shall be. All the various Species of Beings, the minutest Parts of the Creation, their Original, Progress, Succession, Thoughts, Words and Actions are familiar to him, and with one Glance survey'd by him.

AGAIN, *Understanding* is one of his *Immanent Acts*, and does not terminate on any thing without him. Thus, if by our own Observation we can find out the Course of the Sun, our Knowledge indeed is thereby improv'd, yet that Luminary is as an unintelligent as before. And as God is a most simple Being, and every Thing in him is his Essence, he is not only wise, but his Understanding is the same with his Being. Let us therefore seriously reflect on the wonderful Effect of his Infinite Wisdom.

GOD is a *mere Act*, and acted from Eternity, and since he is a most simple Being, every thing in him, and consequently his Understanding was employ'd about himself before there was any other Object of his Contemplation; and must not he who is infinitely Wise, have a perfect Knowledge of himself? *The Divine Mind* then beholding it self as in a Chrystal Mirrour, caused a Reflection upon it self (as when we behold our Faces in a Glass, or our Souls contemplate them.

themselves) and conceived in its self its own perfect Image, viz. the SON OR ETERNAL WORD. Now *this Intelligence* is actually eternal and eternally active, and consequently *co-eternal* with the Father. And God could not conceive any thing in himself less excellent than himself; for his Understanding is *equal* to his Essence, which we cannot fully comprehend by reason of that Load of Ignorance and Guilt which we contracted by the Fall, and which unhappily renders us even inferior to our selves. *The Son* then is *the Image* of the Father, and *co-equal* with him; nay, they are *One*. The Essence of the latter understood by himself is the Essence of the former: And since they are only relatively different, they are (as our Church teaches us) *co-eternal, co-equal* and *co-essential*.

NOW THE SECOND PERSON in the God-head, for several Reasons, is differently stil'd, but his most common Denomination is *the Son* begot by the Understanding of the Father, and the express Image or Character of his Person. Every living Creature begets (as it were) in its self an *Off-spring* before it brings it forth into the World, and the more noble it is, the closer is their Union. Some have imagin'd Fire to be an Animal, because it generates (as it were) its like. However, as the Elements are the lowest Order of Beings, so Fire has the meanest way of Propagation, viz. by the outward Application of combustible Matter. A Plant conceives a Moisture in its self, which is first a Bud, then a Flower, and then Fruit, which when ripe, falls down to the Ground, takes root again, and so produces another, which lives in, and is nourish'd by the former before it has any Existence of its own. Animals also have Life, Motion and Sense, long before their Production: In which manner of Generation there is still a much closer Union. The sensitive Being forms an Imagination which is treasur'd up in the Memory, but proceeds from the Senses and sensible Objects, so that its Operation is external. In the Generation of Rational Beings, there is still a closer Union: For they cause a Reflection on, and abide within themselves, and their Operations are call'd Conceptions, as learned Men by a Figure call their Works *the Off-spring of their Brains*; nay, proceed from Imagination which is without the Understanding,

ing, into which nothing can enter but thro' the Senses. Besides in us the Understanding and the thing understood are vastly different: But God who is all Intelligence, which is the noblest Life is most closely united to what he generates: For he conceives both in and of himself, and his Conception is Generation, which abides within him, since he alone existed from Eternity.

Now this *Second Person* we call *the Son*, as being the perfect Image of the Father, and in the strictest Sense *One* with him. And the $\Lambda\omicron\sigma\theta$, i. e. the **WORD** and **REASON** (as that *Greek Word* implies) properly belong to, tho' they are not fully expressive of that divine Person. The Philosophers (and we after them) give him this Name, and observe that there is the *Internal Word* in the Understanding conceiv'd before we speak, and the *External* expressed by Articulate Sounds. Both which, all Men are highly sensible of when disposed to disclose their Minds; especially such as never studied any Language, yet have fram'd both just and noble Conceptions. When any thing offers it self to the Mind, immediately it conceives an *inward Word* or *Flash* of the Soul, and afterwards expresses it imperfectly by the Voice: For, many are exceedingly happy in their Notions, yet very much at a loss to cloath them in a proper Dress. The Word of the Understanding Reasons concerning Things, the Voice pronounces Words: The one is the Image of the other, and there is the same Proportion between the Word of the Mind and the Understanding, as between the Voice and the Word of the Mind. Words pronounc'd by the Voice require Air and Time, and are extreamly various. The Mind indeed is indivisible, yet requires time to draw one Conclusion gradually from another. Any one may make this Observation in himself, tho' all the Operations of the Mind are so quick, that they seem to be but one Act, like a Clap of Thunder, or Flash of Lightning. Now we call God's Conception of himself from Eternity, *the Word*, the perfect Image of his Understanding, which is himself, and *Reason*, that Daughter and Word of the Understanding. We say likewise, God created all Things by the **WORD**: For as an Artist finishes his Design after that Form he conceives of it in his Understanding, so God has made the Universe accord-

according to the Model of the Idea's in his All-comprehending Mind, being one, yet ALL in ALL, as in conceiving himself, he conceives all Things. We call him sometimes *Wisdom it self*, sometimes *the Wisdom of God*; tho' in us, Wisdom is only an Habit proceeding from several Conceptions, whereby the Understanding is perfected in the Knowledge of sublime Subjects. Now God is the most exalted Being, who by conceiving himself, knows himself, and is the Object of his own delightful Contemplation: Whereas we are not the Objects of ours. Now, can his Wisdom appear more than in knowing himself? And does not this Knowledge proceed from his Understanding?

LET us come now to the THIRD PERSON in the sacred God-head. In the Essence of God (which is most simple) there is an active Nature and Intelligence which directs it in all its Operations: Now must not he have a Will too? Every thing has a natural Inclination to promote that Interest which bears a Proportion to its Understanding; as the Desire of Good does to the Knowledge of it: And the more it is desir'd, the more uniform the Will must needs be. Animals (not to speak of Irrational Beings, such as Plants, Herbs, and Minerals, which according to the Naturalists have an instinct to move in their own Sphere) delight in such things as their Senses dictate to be most suitable to, and convenient for them. And Men have a strong Inclination to pursue either Honours, Riches, or the Advantages of another and better Life, according as their Natures are bias'd by Ambition, Avarice, or Religion. And as their Enjoyments encrease, their eager Desires keep pace with them. But their Understandings for the most part are bewitch'd by Vanity, and call Evil Good, and Good Evil, and consequently their Wills which should be guided by their Reason, degenerate into sensual and brutish Appetites. 'Tis an Observation of the Philosophers, that Angels have more uniform and lively Wills than Men, and as they know God the chief Good, so their Wills cleave to him alone without being distracted (as ours generally are) with a variety of Objects. Now has not he a Will, who gave every Being one? Does he want those Perfections which he has bestow'd on others in different Degrees? And does not he enjoy the

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Satisfaction of the Will, from whom that of the most blessed Spirits is deriv'd? Since he knows himself, Does he not take infinite Delight in himself, who is a *perfect Will*, fill'd with the true Good, a *Fund* of Happiness sufficient for the only proper Object of the Will of a Rational Creature?

A G A I N, It is the Nature of the Will to apply all Powers to their Actions. In vain have we Sight, Hearing, or Power, if we do not duly exert and improve them. Experience tells us our Actions have not the desired Effect, unless animated by the Will. Now God has employed his Power in making a multiplicity of Beings, vastly different from one another. He will'd therefore to make some for one End, others for another, yet all for his own Glory. He has consequently a Will, which (as far as we can judge by its Effects) is a Faculty, by which he exerts his active Power, when, and as he pleases, as he likewise directs and exerts it by his Understanding, tho' its chief Operation is Internal. Here we speak after the manner of Men; for we cannot easily distinguish between our Understandings and Wills (so closely are they united) much less between the Understanding and Will of the most simple Being. We must conceive them therefore to be strictly *One* in him, and must worship (as the Catholick Faith is) *the Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity*. For the Will no more terminates on any thing without it self than the Understanding, but abides within the Persons who wills: For when we will a Thing, there is an alteration in our selves, but not in the Thing will'd.

T H U S I have prov'd, that every thing in God is his Essence: besides, he wills according to the Dictate of his Understanding (for known Good is the Object of the Will) and understands by his Essence, and therefore they are the same with his Being; and he is Power, Understanding and Will, in such a manner, that still he is but *One Being*.

LET us see in the next place what proceeds from his Will. He is a pure Act, and most simple Being, therefore every thing in him acted from Eternity. He has an Understanding whereby he knows, and a Will whereby he wills

wills himself. His Understanding by causing a Reflection on its self begot *the Second Person, the Son, and the Wisdom of the Father.* His Will then, which acted from Eternity, having no other Object, reflected on it self, well-pleas'd with the infinite Good, he perfectly knew and embraced.

THUS he produces (in a divine Way) the THIRD PERSON, the SPIRIT of GOD, or the HOLY SPIRIT, the LOVE of the Father conceiving, to the Son conceiv'd, and begotten by his Understanding, and of the SON to the FATHER, acknowledging that from him whatever he is or has is deriv'd. Now this Will is the Essence of God, and by consequence actually eternal, and eternally active: For every thing in an eternal Being is eternal; and in a mere Act is Act, and nothing can proceed from them, but what is like them. Besides, his Will is of equal Extent with his Understanding, for they are *One.* His Understanding perfectly comprehends the thing understood, which is likewise the Object of his Love; I mean himself. The Will then by the Act of Love extends it self as far as the Deity. Thus the THIRD PERSON is *equal* to the FIRST and SECOND, proceeding from the Will of God, which is his Essence, as every thing in it is, and therefore is also *co-essential* with them. Besides, we see that the Act of the Will follows the last Dictate of the Understanding. We will a thing, because we think we understand it, and it appears to us to be good. And there cannot be Love in the Person loving, but by the Knowledge of the Person belov'd, and the Will is nothing but the rational Desire of it. The THIRD PERSON therefore proceeds from the FIRST, from his Will and Understanding, and the Intelligence which it begot: And because he is deriv'd from the Father, and Son, not merely by way of Resemblance, we do not say, he was begot by, but *proceeds* from them, which is the Substance of the Doctrine of the Catholick Church concerning this important Mystery. When therefore we say the Act of the Understanding *preceeds* that of the Will; we mean in order of Nature only: For if there was a Succession in the God-head, we should conceive the SON to be

be before the SPIRIT, since the Knowledge of a thing is antecedent to the Desire of it.

THIS THIRD PERSON in the ever-blessed Trinity we commonly call the HOLY SPIRIT, *Holy*, because every thing in God is so, and *Holy Spirit*, to distinguish him by Way of Preheminance from all other Spirits; and a *Spirit*, because his Influence is secret like the Blowing of the Winds, Respiration of the Arteries, &c. and because every Being that has Life, has an Instinct proceeding from a sort of Will by a certain Spirit. Now *Love* is a strong Inclination of the Will to the Object belov'd, and there is an inexpressible Charm in a Reciprocal Affection.

AGAIN, We call him *Love*, the Principal of all the Acts of the Will, as *Wisdom* is of those of the Understanding: For we desire a Thing we have not, and delight in what we are in the actual Possession of, because 'tis the Object of our Love, as we dread or fly from any thing because 'tis the Object of our Aversion. But it is otherwise with God; *For who has resisted his Will?* And as from the eternal Act of his Understanding, there was *God of God*, that is, *the Son of God*; so from the joynt Acts of his Understanding and Will, proceeded *the Love* of the Father and Son, or *the Holy Spirit*: There is therefore a *Trinity in Unity*, viz. the Power of the Father, the Wisdom of the Son, and the blessed Effects of their Joynt-Love; of, by, and in whom it has pleas'd the one Divine and ineffable Being to give Existence to, and have a paternal Regard for the various Works of his Creation: And for this Reason there must be Three Persons and Three only in the ever-adorable God-head.

GODS Creating and Acting proves he has an Understanding and Will; for every thing here below carries the lively Characteristicks of them. And if all Things are in him (as universal Nature proclaims) there must be *the Son* and *Spirit*, *the Wisdom* and *Love*: For they are the Acts of those Two Persons who cannot but act, nor could any Being act from Eternity but God. Now as we cannot imagine God not to act, so we cannot conceive any more of his immanent

Acts than these : And therefore to superadd a *Fourth Person*, would be Heterodox and absurd. 'Tis true, God, as Creator, bears a Relation to his Creatures. But the Creation proceeded from a transient, not immanent Act of his Power ; since it terminated on the thing created, which was infinitely below him. He is our Redeemer also : But he redeem'd us by his Son, and that Redemption was a transient Act terminating on the World redeem'd. This therefore is not sufficient to prove a *Co-essential Quaternity*.

A L L the Acts of God are either internal and immanent, or external and transient. The Internal must be himself (for every thing in him is his Essence) in which nothing distinct from it can abide ; whereas the External are always different from it, and terminate on the Creatures, which compar'd with him, *are less than Nothing, and Vanity*. The latter flow from his Understanding, Will and Power ; the former from his Understanding and Will only, of which we have a faint Image in our selves. When we view a Picture, or read a Passage in any Author, we do not attribute either of them to any Faculty superiour to our Understandings and Wills ; much less do we ascribe God's transient Acts to any thing superiour to those Faculties in him, which alone can be co-essential with him. They are his Essence, which is One, and most simple. And *the Word* does not conceive *another Word*, but entirely directs it self to *the Father* ; nor *the Love*, another Love, but rests wholly in *the Father and Son*. Only *one Word* then could proceed from God's Understanding, and *one Love* from his Will ; nor could another Person proceed from these. There are but *Three Persons*, therefore the *Father, Son and Spirit*, and the former governs, loves and preserves all Things by the two latter, because he alone is *All in All*.

Now as Nature teaches us that there is but *one God*, whom we plainly discover in the minutest Circumstance of his Creation ; so there are some visible Footsteps of a *Trinity in Unity* in the Creatures, (tho' more conspicuous in some than in others, according to the different Degrees of Excellency in their Natures,) which we could not well observe till this
 Doctrine

Doctrine was reveal'd to us. Thus we could never be able to read a Letter wrote in Cyphers, unless we had a Key, or the Characters first explain'd to us. We may observe an *Unity* ev'n in Things which have only Being: For all Things (so far as they exist) are *One*, and cease to be, so far as they tend to Multiplicity. Then they are of some Figure, which is a Mark of that Act of God's Understanding which begot that Essential Form, which comprehends all Forms, viz. *the Eternal Word*, by whom he Created all Things.

AGAIN, they have a natural Inclination, some more, others less; as Fire to ascend, a Stone to descend, and all of them to keep united in their Matter and Form. This is a Mark of that active Will, by which it pleas'd Almighty God to incline himself even to them, and of the Union consequent upon it, by which he loves and preserves all Things.

NAY, some of this lowest Order of Beings are an *Image* of the *Trinity*. *The Sun* begets its *Rays*, which some Poets call its *Off-spring*, from which proceeds *Light*, which diffuses it self throughout the vast Universe; yet the one is not before the other, unless in order of Nature, which is a lively Image of the Co-eternity of the Father, Son and Spirit.

AGAIN, There is the *River-Head*, the *Spring* which bubbles from it, and the *Stream* which proceeds from both, and extends it self far and wide. These are one Water, and one is not in order of time before the others. We cannot well conceive them separate, yet they are different. Again, *Fire* begets *Fire*, from both which proceed *Light* and *Heat*. These are likewise *lively Images* of their Co-essentiality.

WE might further illustrate this by Instances of Beings of a higher Order. *Herbs and Plants* have a *Root and Stalk*, which become a *Tree*, and one is not before the others, being united by one common Sap, by means of one common Life. One Animal and Man begets another, from both which by Knowledge, proceeds Love, which is the Bond of Union. These are *Images* of the great Mytery of the *Trinity*;

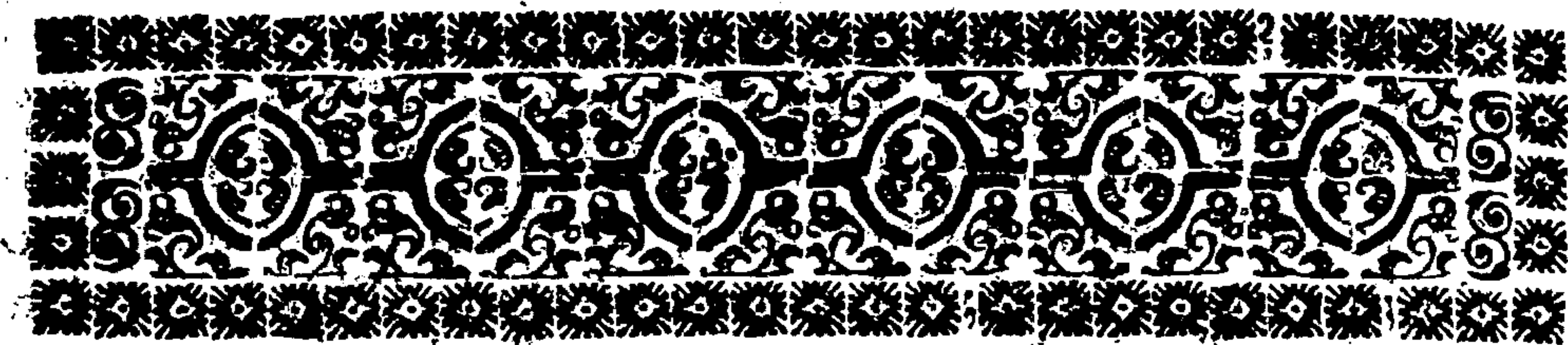
nity; tho' no Effect can perfectly represent its Cause, much less the F I R S T : But the *humane Soul* is still a *livelier Image* of it, which has an active Nature, and is, as it were, a pure Act, whereby it lives, moves, and animates the Body, which the *Roman Authors* call M E N S, and we *the Rational Soul*, which may be compar'd to the *Father*. This begets an *Understanding*, by which we know our selves and others, from which proceeds a *Will*, by which we love such and such Things, and generally for our own sake. These are distinct (for we do not act always by our Understandings or Wills, yet the Soul always acts) and we often will what we do not understand, and understand what we do not will, yet to act, understand, and will, do not make *three Souls*, but are so closely united, that at the same moment the Soul performs that threetold Operation. Tho' this is but a *faint Image* of the *Trinity*; for Understanding, Will, and Power, are distinct Faculties in us; whereas in God (who is the most simple Being) they are the same.

A G A I N, from the Understanding and Will of God proceeds *the Son* and *Spirit*, since he only understood and lov'd himself from all Eternity, and understands and loves other Things in himself. But a distinct Person cannot proceed from the Understanding and Will of the *humane Soul*, because their Objects are from without (tho' they themselves be in the Soul) nay, the Soul can neither understand nor love, unless its Faculties be excited by External Objects. And (which is above all) the more it understands it self, the more it endeavours to improve its Knowledge in other Things, and the more Satisfaction it seeks in the Love of God, by abhorring it self, and only delighting in, and loving it self for his sake, whose Prerogative it is to understand all Things in himself, and love them for his own sake.

I shall reserve the Sentiments of the Antients concerning this Matter for the Subject of the following Chapter. And to put a stop to the Curious, tho' impertinent Queries, which some may possibly make; let them give a Rational Account of their own Generation, before they presume to en-
quire

quire how God the Son was generated by the Eternal Father ; and what sort of Spirit animates their own Arteries, before they demand how God the Holy Spirit proceeded from the first and second Persons in the Sacred God-head. And if they cannot Solve such common Questions, let them be contented to remain in a great Measure ignorant of those Things, which (as Empedocles says) Eye has not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it enter'd into the Heart of Man to conceive.





C H A P. VI.

*That the Antient Philosophers held the Doctrine of
the TRINITY.*

I HAVE already shewn, that tho' there be some Foot-
steps of *the Trinity* in the humane Soul; yet our Fathers, who (as *Plato* tells us) were better than we, and approach'd nearer to the Deity, receiv'd it by *Divine Revelation*. And this is evident, because all humane Doctrines become more plain and intelligible, the more the World advances in Years; whereas the contrary has been observ'd to be true with respect to this Doctrine, which was never so clear as in its Infancy, except at the Appearance of *CHRIST JESUS*, the bright *Morning Star*. When *Plato* therefore and *Aristotle* make mention of *the Deity, Creation, &c.* they chuse to refer to antient Tradition, as giving the most authentick Account of Matters of so sublime a Nature, and their common Phrase is, *according to antient Tradition, as we learn from the Antients, &c.* thinking that equivalent to a Demonstration.

Zoroaster leads the Van, who (according to *Plutarch*) lived some Thousands of Years before the *Trojan War*, and (according to the most faithful Historians) descended from *Ham*, and was overcome by *Ninus*, King of the *Assyrians*. From him the *Wise Men* of *Chaldea* and *Persia* deriv'd their Original, whose Employment it was to keep exact Registers of their Kings, and record their most remarkable Atcheivements, and to whom likewise the prudent Management and Administration of all Ecclesiastical Matters was wholly entrusted. And what their Sentiments were concerning this mysterious Doctrine, appears from their ORACLES, which they took the pains to collect, and of which some Fragments are still extant.

THE Father (says Zoroaster) perfected all Things and submitted them to the Direction of the second Mind, which we generally term the FIRST CAUSE. And Pletho Gemisthus the Platonist, says, the second Mind was a second God, subordinate to, and begot by the Father: But as God made the World by him, he was reckoned the First, tho' the Father created all Intellectual Forms, and committed the Disposal of them to his Care and Conduct. Is not this then a direct Acknowledgment of the Second Person in the ever-blessed Trinity? Proclus says, this Intelligence having alone deriv'd the Perfection of Intelligence from the Father's Omnipotence, possesses his Understanding and Power, which he communicates to all other Principles. He receiv'd then his Being and Intelligence from the Father, and all Things theirs from him. But he talks most admirably in another place.

Νῆς πατρὸς ἐρροίζησε νοήσας ἀκμαδι βελῆ, &c.

Almighty Jove by absolute Decree,
Various Ideas fram'd from all Eternity.
From him its actual Being each derives:
He finishes as well as first contrives.

The Model of the World was first design'd,
First laid in his All-comprehending Mind;
Then by that Pattern he the Fabrick rear'd,
And all Things in most beauteous Forms appear'd.

Again he says,

~~ὅς ἐκ νόου ἐκδορε πρῶτον~~, &c.

From Joves great Mind arose his Love Divine,
Which with bright Rays like Lambent Flames did shine,
To temper the cold Floods, and dissipate
The humid Vapours with his genial Heat.

THUS in their obscure Way, they acquaint us, there is the Father, Son, and Love, which unites the two former together. Nay, that by this begotten Intelligence God made the World, from whom the Divine Love proceeds. In another place,

place, That the Paternal Intelligence has implanted in our Souls a Resemblance of it self, but is never pleas'd with our Wills, till rousing out of their Lethargy they recollect the chaste Paternal Character that is stamp'd upon them. Again, that being self-existent it throw'd a fiery Bond of Love over all Things, to which they ow'd their daily Preservation. It sufficiently appears therefore, that the Magi or Wise Men held Three Principles, viz. Oromases, Mitras, and Ariminis, God, Thought, and the Soul, and that this was one of the Fundamental Tenets of their Religion. And 'tis much to be lamented, that the greatest part of their elaborate Writings are lost, thro' the distance of Time, and that we have only some Fragments left to preserve their Memory. These liv'd first in Chaldea, and Moses himself assures us, that Balaam's Reputation was so great, that he had an Authority devolv'd on him to Bless or Curse whole Armies and Nations. Of which Magi the ORACLE says,

That they and the Jews were the sole Masters of all useful Learning.

I have already shewn, that Hermes Trismegistus held our God under two Names, viz. the Good Being, and the Father. He calls him also the Mind, which yet he distinguishes from the Father. I am Pæmander, says he, the Shepherd, and Bishop of souls, and the Mind of the self-existent Being, &c. Nay God, says he, who is also Understanding, Life, Light, and of both Sexes begot a Word, i. e. another Understanding, the great Creator of all Things, and with him another, viz. the Fire, or Spirit of the Godhead. Here is an Understanding begot by an Understanding, Light of Light and the Spirit. Again, The Word proceeding from God, and being perfect, and the Sovereign Lord of the Universe sat on the Water and made it fruitful: which exactly agrees with the Account Moses has given us of the Creation. Hermes likewise calls him the Holy Word, who created all Things. And in another place we meet with this very profound and remarkable Passage. I am, says God, the Light and Understanding, thy God, more Antient than Moisture, which proceeds from the Shadow hovering over the dark Abyss. But this effulgent Word, darting from the Understanding, is the Son of God. That which is and hears in thee is the Word of the Lord, and the Understanding is God the Father. They are One, and their Union is the Vital One, &c. Again.

Again, *The Word*, by whom God made all Things, is the chief Power next to himself, uncreated, and infinite; and tho' deriv'd from him, presides over all Things, and is the first-born of the all-perfect Being; and his legitimate, perfect, and fruitful Son, and the intelligible, eternal, immutable, incorruptible Word, who is neither subject to Addition or Diminution, is like none but himself, and is first known next to God Almighty, and is the only-begotten, and dearly beloved Son of the most Holy One, whose infinite Perfections, even Eloquence itself can never properly express. Is not this in other Terms to say he is co-essential and co-eternal with him, and the All-wise Creator of Heaven and Earth? Now, what brighter Ideas could we Christians entertain, or what higher Eulogiums could we bestow on this Second Person in the Sacred God-head?

OF the Third Person indeed he speaks in more obscure Terms. Each Species, says he, is quickned by a Spirit suitable to its Nature. The World supports Bodies, the Spirit Souls; and this Spirit is altogether subservient to the Will, and is an Instrument in the Hand of the Supreme Being. And this he explains more fully afterwards. All Things, says he, stand in need of this Spirit; for it bears, quickens, and nourishes them according to the Dignity of their Natures, proceeds from an holy Fountain, and supports both Animals and Spirits. We call him therefore the HOLY GHOST, because he proceeds from Holiness itself. And least we should mistake him for a Creature, there was, says he, an infinite Shadow in the Abyss, over which there was Water, and the Power of God caused a subtle Spirit to animate the Chaos: Thence shone a Divine Splendour, which out of the Moisture and dry Sand produc'd the Elements and all other Creatures. And this divine Spirit fixt the Gods (who dwell in the Stars) in their proper Orbs. He assisted then at the Creation; and, as Moses says, mov'd upon the Face of the Waters.

SOMETIMES Hermes joyns them all together. O thou Life, says he, preserve my Life! O thou Light, and thou Divine Spirit, shed your Light and Influence around me! O thou Sovereign Creator of the World, who sendest forth thy Spirit, let thy Word govern me! O Lord, thou art God alone.

AGAIN, says he, one Intellectual Light preceded another, besides which there was nothing but the universal Spirit which united them:

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For he is the Lord, the Father, and even the God of Gods, of whom, and in whom are all Things. To which, says *Stridas*, he adds the following Invocation. I swear by thee, O Heaven, the wonderful Work of the All-wise Creator; and thee, O Voice, which the Almighty utter'd before he laid the Foundations of the Earth, by his only begotten Word, and the All-comprehending Father. It is wonderful that he should hit upon the very Words of St. *John*, when his Writings were translated by the Platonists themselves, long before our Saviour's Time. But that several Expressions should be quoted from him, which are not to be found in his *Panander*, is not so much to be admir'd at, since he wrote 36525 Volumes or Rolls of Paper, if we may Credit *Jamblichus*. And 'tis reported, that he (otherwise call'd *Theut*) taught the Egyptians to read and understand the Elements of Geometry and Astronomy, divided their Country, secur'd his Doctrine against a Flood, by inscribing it on two Pillars, which *Proclus* says, were to be seen in his Time, and were even the Objects of the Egyptian's Adoration. And, perhaps, their triple Acclamation, when they invoc'd the First Principle, or (as they call'd him) *Darkness beyond Conception* (like the *Ensoh* of the Jews, and *Night of Orpheus*, which the Greeks speak of) was borrow'd from him. Thus *Zoroaster* and *Trismegistus* give you the receiv'd Sentiments both of the Persians and Egyptians in this Matter; For what Notions the Learned of any Nation whatever hold, we must esteem them as the establish'd Opinions of the Country they live in.

LET us come now to the Greeks. *Orpheus*, their most ancient Writer, before he offers to make mention of these holy Mysteries, excludes such as he thought unfit for such Sacred Arcana's, and assures them,

ἰσχυροῦμαι οἷς θεοῖς ἐσι, &c.

————— Jove solemnly declares
His Secrets are not for unhallow'd Ears.

WHEN the Doors were shut, he thus bespeaks those who had the Priviledge of admittance.

Εἰς τὸ Λόγον Θεῶν Ἐλέφας, &c.

Lift up your Eyes to the *Eternal Word*,
 He only can your pious Acts reward.
 Tread in his Paths; walk upright and sincere;
 To him alone your humble Pray'rs prefer.
 Look up to him, who the World's Fabrick rear'd,
 Whose Praise the Antients sung, whom Gods rever'd.

AND a little after he makes this Invocation,

Ὅσων ὀφθαλμοὶ σε θεῶν μεγάλης σοφῶν ἕρπον, &c.

Ye radiant Orbs that beautify the Sky,
 And thou bright Image of the Deity;
 I call you all to Witness, &c. —————

THIS Prayer is manifestly borrowed from *Hermes*; and that common Fiction of the Poets, that *Pallas* was the Off-spring of *Jupiter's* Brain, and that *Wisdom* was the Mother of all Things, and *Love* their Guardian, was taken from *Orpheus*. Elsewhere he calls *Love* most Antient, Self-perfect, the Producer, and Diversifyer of the vast Universe. From whom *Pherecydes* says, God, willing to create the World, transform'd himself into *Love*. And *Jamblichus* says, *Pythagoras* always had the Philosophy of *Orpheus* in View; that he should therefore attribute the Creation to *Wisdom*, and (as *Proclus* says) hold with *Plato* a *Trinity in Unity* is easily to be accounted for. Even *Aristotle* allows *THREE* to be the Number of Perfection; and *Parmenides* makes *Love* to be their Principle. And as *Plotinus* observes, he speaks in very plain and intelligible Terms on this important Subject, yet not so directly as *Numenius* the *Pythagorean*, *Zeno* the Founder of the *Stoick* Philosophy, allows the *Word* to be God, and the Spirit of *Jupiter*. And *Alcinous* assures us, That *Socrates* and *Plato* taught that God is an Understanding; that his Idea is his Knowledge of himself, the Model of the Universe, and his very Essence. *Plato* says, Every Star is fixt in its proper Orb by the most Divine Word.

Elsewhere he calls him the Son of the most beneficent Being, and his most lively Image; the former being like the Sun, and the latter like its Rays. Elsewhere he solemnly conjures two at least of the *Three Persons* to whom he writes to peruse his Letter often, and invoke the great God, the Sovereign of the Universe, and his Royal and Ever-blessed Father; of whom, provided we take proper Measures to know him, we may have as clear and distinct an Idea as is necessary in order to our Temporal and Eternal Happiness. But writing to a Friend who enquir'd of the Nature of God. We shall only speak of the First Person, says he, darkly and enigmatically, that if our Letter should by any means miscarry, he, into whose hands it should accidentally fall, might read, as if he read it not. But this is an undoubted Truth, that all Things are subject to the Commands of the All-wise Sovereign of the Universe, the Author of all Perfection: that the second Order of Things are at the Beck of the Second, and those of the Third at the Disposal of the Third. And that he speaks here of the Trinity, is very evident; because all the Platonists, who have wrote elaborate Comments on these Words, understand by the **THREE SOVERAIGNS** the good Being, the Understanding, and the Soul of the World. And Origen quotes several Passages out of this Divine Author to confirm this Notion, which for Brevity's sake I shall not here transcribe.

Now the Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity was handed down by Tradition to *Aristotle's* Time, who liv'd about three Hundred Years before the Christian Æra. But he resolv'd to run Counter to his learned Predecessors, and most horribly corrupted it, and chose rather to pry into Nature, than Contemplate on the God who made her; yet even he attributes the Creation to the Infinite Mind, and free-Will of the Supreme Being, whereby he governs and preserves all Things; and acknowledges Nature her self dictates to us, that the Trinity is infinitely worthy of our Divine Adoration.

Now since this Doctrine was not of humane Invention, it may possibly be askt me, from whence these antient Wise Men receiv'd this Notion. I answer therefore, that the antient *Greeks* undoubtedly receiv'd it from the *Egyptians*. *Orpheus* says,

— Αἰγυπτίων ἱερὸν λόχον ἐξελόχασα, &c.

Memphis, and all the Cities I have view'd,
 Where Apis is the chief, the Favourite God,
 And every Town that borders on Niles's rapid Flood,
 To gratify at once my curious Eye,
 And into Egypt's Sacred Rites to pry.

PYTHAGORAS also travelled to Egypt, Arabia, Chaldea, and Judea, and dwelt some time on Mount Carmel. And Strabo says, that the Priests shew'd him the pleasant shady Walks which that Philosopher frequented; that he was Scholar to Sonchedi, the chief Prophet of Egypt, and to an Assyrian Nazarite, as Alexander (speaking of the Discourses wrote by that famous Philosopher) acquaints us. And some (thro' a Mistake in Chronology) have thought him to be the Prophet Ezekiel. And Herimippus the Pythagorean says, that his Master borrow'd several of his Notions from the Law of Moses. And the fore-mentioned Priest told Solon, with an Air of Contempt, that the Greeks were very ignorant in Matters of Antiquity. Proclus likewise says, that Solon (when in the City of Sais) was Pupil to Patanit, or (as Plutarch thinks) to Sonchis and (when in Heliopolis) to Oclapi, and when in Sebemytis to Etymon, &c. Plato, when in Egypt was Pupil to Sechnuphis an Heliopolitan, and Eudoxus Gnidius to Conuphis, who were all brought up in the School of Hermes Trismegisthus. And Plato often grants, that the Greeks ow'd their Learning to the Barbarians; and Zoroaster, who was a Jew, and Hermes an Egyptian, were esteem'd as such by the Greeks: And that the Jews at that time kept up a strict Correspondence with the Egyptians, we are very well assur'd from the Heathens themselves; so that this Doctrine was originally taught by them.

I SHALL not here mention many Texts of SACRED WRIT, which hint at the Second and Third Persons in the God-head, but content my self with transcribing these few, viz. Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee. The Lord possessest me (says Wisdom) in the beginning of his Ways. Before the Depths was I brought forth, &c. The Spirit of the Lord walked on the Waters. The Spirit of Wisdom is kind. And those Words of
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the Prophet *Isaiah*, *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me*; and those of the *Pfalmist*, *The Heavens were stretcht out by the Word of the Lord*, and the whole *Host* of them by the *Spirit of his Mouth*, The Antient *Jews* were of Opinion, referr'd to the *Son and Spirit*; tho' their *Modern Commentators* have us'd their utmost *Diligence* to corrupt the *Text*.

LET us see however what their *Sentiments* of this *Doctrine* were before our *Saviour's Time*, when most *Persons* were so much *prejudic'd* against it. In one of their most *authentic Treatises*, *Rabbi Simeon, Son of Jochai*, quotes *Rabbi Ibbai's Exposition* of those *Words*. *Hear, O Israel! יהוה אחד* &c. *Jehovah, Elohenu, Jehovah-echad*. *The Lord our God is one Lord*, and says, that *Jehovah* (an *incommunicable Name* of *God*) signifies (according to that *Rabbi*) the *Father*, who is *God over all*, and that *our God*, signifies the *Son*, the *Fountain of all Knowledge*; and by the following *Word Jehovah* is intended the *Spirit*. The former on those *Words, Holy, holy, holy Lord God, &c.* says, that *Repetition* refers to the *Trinity*; tho' sometimes that *mystical Author* calls them *three Mirrors, Lights, and Supream Co-eternal Fathers the Name and Substance of all first Principles*. Another of equal *Note and Authority* says much to the same purpose. No wonder then the *Antient Talmudists* enjoyn'd all *Persons* (as some still do) to repeat that *Text* twice a *Day*. And on those *Words, The Lord of Lords Jehovah has spoken*. The vulgar *Comment* says, *The Repetition signifies the three Properties by which God made the World*. Another, that he created it by his *Word*. Another, that he produc'd it by his *Spirit*, according to those *Words, a threefold Cord is not easily broken*, which refer (as he says) to the *three Persons* in the *Sacred God-head*. But whether this *Exposition* of his be perfectly just or not, I shall not here go about to examine.

THESE three *Properties* (which some of them call *Facets, i. e. Persons*) are expressed by various *Names*, according to the various *Idea's* they entertained of them, yet they all amounted to the same thing in effect. Some call them the *Principle, the Wisdom, and the Fear or Love of God*: And say the *Second* (according to the *Cabalists*) proceeds from the *Infinite and most Abstract Understanding of God*, who beholds his own in-

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initely bright Perfections as in a Chrystal Glass; which exactly agrees with what I mention'd in the foregoing Chapter, viz. that God begot the Son, or Wisdom, by contemplating his own ineffable Brightness.

OTHERS call them, *the Spirit, Word, and Voice.* The Spirit, says one, *produc'd the Word and Voice without any outward Operation of his Lips, Tongue or Breath.* And these three are a Spirit or God (as we read in the Book of the Creation) a most penetrating Spirit, to whom be glory, who is one God, blessed for evermore; the Spirit, Word and Voice, i. e. the Spirit, from whom two other Spirits are deriv'd: Which Book was wrote by Rabbi Abraham, a very antient Cabalist, and is of so great Repute, that some are of Opinion, 'twas Compos'd by the Patriarch to whom that Name was given. However he agrees with us: For he says, *that the Spirit conceives an Internal Word, from which two proceeds a Voice.* Another says, *the one God, the Uniter, and the thing united, are one supreme Being.*

ANOTHER calls the three Persons in the Sacred Godhead, *the Crown, Wisdom, and Intelligence.* Another makes this Observation, *that Jehovah is exprest by three Hebrew Jodds.* Thus, tho' they differ in Terms, yet they all in Effect acknowledge the Trinity, which 'tis no wonder they could not explain so clearly and distinctly in former Ages as at present. Another, borrowing from the Antients, says, *the Light of the Soul of the Messiah is the Living God, a Fountain of Living Water, and the Soul of the Messiah, the perpetual Stream that flows from it.* Again, *That the Messiah alone has a perfect Knowledge of God and is his Light, as well as that of the Gentiles: For he both knows, and is known of the Father.* Now he, who knows God to Perfection, must be God, since the Deity alone can comprehend it self. This agrees with our Phrase, *Light of Light,* and our Comparison of the Father to a Fountain, and to the Sun, and the Word to a Stream, and to Rays of Light.

'TIS remarkable, that most of the Hebrew Names of God, except Jehovah; have a plural Termination, tho' joyn'd to a Verb of the singular Number, of which the Jews give the same Account as the Christians, and expound several Texts in the Old Testament, as they do, in favour of the Trinity; tho'

tho' the *Talmudists*, since our *Saviour's* Time, have taken abundance of Pains to wrest and corrupt them. *Rabbi the Saint and Prophet*, talks in very plain Terms on this Subject; tho' I must premise, that the Name *Jehovah* was only mention'd on the Days of Expiation, instead of which, in process of Time, the Name consisting of twelve Letters, was always made use of. Now this *Rabbi* being askt to interpret the Meaning, both of the Name consisting of Twelve, and of that consisting of twenty four Letters, says, that by the former were signify'd the *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*; and by the latter, the *Father is God, the Son, is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, three is one, and one in three*. The Doctrine of the *Trinity* then was commonly taught in the Schools of the *Jews*; and handed down in their *Cabala* from Age to Age; tho' they disputed whether it was applicable to the *Incarnate Word*, some being of Opinion, 'twas inconsistent with the Majesty of the *Eternal and Omnipotent King of Kings*.

LET us come now to *Philo the Jew*, who wrote in *Greek*, and frequently takes occasion to speak of this Doctrine. *God*, says he, is the most fruitful Being, and next to him the *Word of God*. Again, There are two *Eternal Beings*, the *Word*, and *God* who was before him, tho' the former was the beginning and final Consummation of the divine good Pleasure. Again, As a *City* (the Model of which is form'd in the Mind of the *Architect*) has no Existence but in his Mind; so the *World* had none from Eternity, but in the Mind of the *Divine Word*: For what else could comprehend the various Works of the *Almighty*, or even the simplest of all his *Idea's*? To speak plainly therefore, the *Intelligible World* is the *Word* or *Conception* of *God* who created it. And this is conformable to that Doctrine which *Moses* has transmitted to us. *Philo* calls him also the *Idea of Idea's*, and *Model of the Universe*, and says, This *World* is the younger *Son* of *God*, but the elder cannot be comprehended but by the *Understanding*, and by *Virtue* of his *Right of Primogeniture* dwells with the eternal *Father*. This exactly agrees with that Passage in *St. John*; The *Word* was with *God*. Again, he says, This *Word* is the *Temple* of *God*, who alone can comprehend him; and *God* comprehending himself by his own *Understanding*, begot the *Son*, or *Word*, who was co-equal with him, he being the most agreeable *Object* of his own delightful *Contemplation*. And this *Author* being at a Loss for proper *Images*, by which to express this

this divine Person calls him, the Book in which all Beings are entered, the perfect Model of the Universe, the Intellectual Sun, Head of Angels, first-born of God, by whom he governs and preserves his Creatures, the High-Priest of the World, Man-ner of Souls, Wisdom of God, perfect Image of the Supreme Being, Instrument of God's Goodness when he made the World, Principle of all Things, and most simple Existence: that is, Jehovah himself. Now, we do not attribute more than this to the great God, and he could not more expressly declare the Word to be Co-essential and Co-eternal with the Father. And he adds, That he has in himself the Seeds of all Things, has given them their various Beings, and is the indissoluble Bond of Nature, or (which is the same thing) is the efficient and formal Cause of the Universe: and if so he must be God. Again, There are two Words, the Original, God over all, and his Copy. The latter is in us who are said by Moses to be made after the Image of God; our Understanding being a Copy of the Eternal Word, as he is of the Eternal Father; And the Word is the express Character or Image of God, and like him, Eternal. Now, Does St. John, or the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews say more than this? These Passages, which are highly worth any curious Reader's while to read them at length, abound with St. John's Phrase, the Word. He speaks indeed of the Spirit in more obscure Terms, because the Word was the chief Object of the Jew's Contemplation. It is sufficient, that tho' this Doctrine was shamefully corrupted by the Heathens, it was not so by the Jews till our Saviour's Time: For Philo flourish'd in the Reigns of the Roman Emperors Tiberius and Caligula. And the reason why the Jews preserv'd it so uncorrupted was, because the Messiah was to be born among them, and lay the Foundation of this Doctrine. But as soon as the Sun of Righteousness arose, the Clouds that obscur'd it were immediately dispers'd. And as the Sun enlightens both the Northern and Southern Hemisphere, so this Tenet was not only receiv'd by the Christians, but the Heathens themselves in After-times, tho' inveterate Enemies to the meek and crucify'd Jesus.

NUMENIUS, the most famous Pythagorean (for whom Porphyry says, Plotinus had so great an esteem, that he wrote an Hundred Books of Annotations on him) says, he that would know the First and Second God, having carefully distinguish'd,

guish'd, and above all compos'd his Spirit, and call'd upon God, must think of him after the following Manner, *The first self-Existent God is a simple, uniform, and indivisible Being; and the second and third are one with him; But the first is the Father of him who created all Things: Now the Christians call them the three Persons in the ever-blessed Trinity. Again, The First does not act immediately, but by the Mediation of the Second, who presides in Heaven; and there are two Lives, one from the former, another from the latter: The one is conversant only about Intellectual, the other about Intellectual and Sensible Objects. Besides, by reason of the preceeding Motion of the Second, there is a preceeding Mission of the First: And the beautiful Order and exact Oeconomy of the World is wholly owing to their Joynt Operations. He speaks here like the Platonists, who metaphorically call a Thing's being understood, its Motion, and its Understanding, its being mov'd; being at a loss for proper Terms to convey an adequate Idea of things beyond the Sphere of Reason. Thus the Scripture says, the Son was sent by the Father. Again, God the Creator is the Principle of all Things, and the chief Good is the Fountain of all Being; And the Second is the Imitator of the First, as Generation is an Image of Being. Again, That he is called the Son as he created the World, and is known by all Mankind; but the First Spirit, i. e. the Father is unknown: Which is the same thing (in their Dialect) as if he had said, that he is the Image of the Father, derives his Existence from him, is one with him, and was the instrumental Cause of the beautiful Creation.*

NUMENIUS held (as Proclus says) *Three Gods, the Father, the Creator, and One who proceeded from them. Now, certainly 'tis an Argument of an ingenuous Disposition, rather to admire the just and agreeable Ideas that are to be found interspers'd in the Writings of any Author, than Momus-like to carpe at his Foibles and endeavour to expose him.*

AND here let us observe, that they held *those Three likewise to be One. Plotinus (who was very conversant with the Works of this Philosopher) goes farther, and says, There are three Supreme Subsistences, the one Being or chief Good, the Understanding, and the Soul of the World; and before we presume to make mention of their most holy Names, we ought to offer up our humble Addresses to the Throne*

Throne of Grace, and banish all worldly Thoughts, which are apt to distract our Minds, or at least to ruffle and discompose them. Their Personality therefore, and consequently their Generation is eternal; and the one is before the other only in order of Nature. The Understanding begotten by the one Being, is not owing to the Will or Motion of the Father, but is a diffusive Light darted from him like Rays from the Sun. For each thing naturally continuing to be, must produce another as a lively Image of it self. Fire produces Heat, Snow cold, and Herbs (without some accidental Deficiency) a fragrant Smell. An eternally perfect Being must therefore form another like, tho' inferior to it self; and yet the Second Being in the Universe, viz. the Understanding, Word, and Image of God, cannot be separated from, tho' he be not the same with him. And this exactly corresponds with our Notion of the Trinity, viz. That they are three Persons, but one God. The one Being, says he, begot the Understanding by his own Exuberancy, like to, yet different from him, as Rays of Light are from the Sun. Again, He begot another, by the Reflection of the Begotten on the Begetter, i. e. by an Act of his Understanding, whose Object was the chief Good. Now as the one Being can be but one, so the Understanding is all in all: For being begotten by the Fountain of Being, he knows and produces all Things, is the Beauty of all Ideas, and Creator of the Gods. Again, As, says he, the Understanding is the Son, Word and Image of God; so the Soul of the World is the same with respect to the Understanding, of whom it is an Intellectual Ray, and on whom it continually depends. And as there is no middle Essence between the one Being and the Understanding, so neither is there between the Understanding and the Soul of the World. But the former is like Heat in Fire, the other like that which it produces. Thus we lay, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son, and call him the Gift of God, because, God by him, who is infinite Love, vouchsafes to communicate himself to us. But we shall apprehend this Author's Meaning better by the Effects he ascribes to him. He inspires, says he, all Animals with Life, directs the Heavens, Sun, Moon and Stars (animated Matter which once had no Existence, or was a meer Chaos) by his Will alone, is all in all, the Image of the Father, and like him one, yet Omnipresent; And this is the full Extent of the God-head. He does not speak so plainly as Gregory Nazianzen does, but says (according to the Sentiments of Plato, Parmenides, and Anaxagoras) that they are different, yet co-substantial and co-eternal

AND forasmuch as the *Inward Man* is the *Image* of *God*, a *Trinity* may be shadow'd forth by one *Soul*, in which there are three distinct *Faculties*, viz. *Mind*, *Reason* and *Life*. The one *Being*, says he, generates the *Understanding* by its own *Essence*; The latter truly exists, reflects on, and is fill'd by the former. And the *Intelligible Being*, *Intellect* and *Intelligence* are one, and the second is the *Original*, and most gracious *Act* of the first, and co-essential with him, since all his *Acts* are his *Essence*. Again, There is a two-fold *Intelligence*: Either a *Being* understands it self, or another; yet, be it which it will, they are co-essential and co-equal: So that the one *Being* is superiour to the *Understanding* only in *Order* of *Nature*. Again, We do not call the living *God* the *Understanding*, but the *Intelligible Being*, which two, though different, are inseparably united; Which nevertheless implies not the least *Inconsistency*: For *God* is both the *Person* conceiving and conceived. When we say the *Understanding* forms *Ideas*, we mean, not in himself, but in the *Intelligible Being*, who was the *Understanding* in his *Unity* and *Rest*: Whereas consider'd as reflecting on himself, he was an *Act* of his, and one with his *Essence*. Again, To exist and understand are one in *God*, and if any thing proceeds from within him, he is still the same: For the *Conceiver* and the *Thing* conceiv'd are one; this *Reflection* on himself being only relatively different from his own *Being*. Again, They must be the same, yet different; essentially the same, (for whatever is in *God* is *God*) but personally different. Now he calls the *Begetter* the *Father*, and the begotten the *Son*, as we our selves do. Again, The *Understanding*, whom we call the *Father*, is the chief *Good*, enthron'd in unmix'd *Light*, and comprehends all *Things*, of whom this lower *World* is but a faint *Shadow*, compar'd with the *Regions* above, whose *Inhabitants* are all *Light*, *Life*, and *Bliss*. Now as one who beholds the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, immediately enquires after the great *Author* of *Nature*; so he, who thinks of the *Intellectual World*, and admires it, searches after him who created it, and asks by whom and how this *Understanding* was produc'd, this beautiful and holy *Child*, who shines with a glorious *Lustre*, borrow'd from the *Eternal Father*. The former is next to, tho' different from, and inferiour to the latter, derives all from the self-existent *Being*, and in him are hid all the *Treasures* of *Wisdom* and *Knowledge*, because he lies continually at the *Fountain Head*; whereas the *Father*, being the chief *Good*, is (as we all acknowledge) absolutely independent. Again,

He who beholds God, has the happiness to discern him begetting a Son, and by him all Things, and comprehending him and the Universe with the greatest ease, of whom this beautiful World is as faint a Resemblance, as a Picture is of the Art of the curious Limner; and he, and we call him the Wisdom of the Father. All things, says he, in the Sphere either of Art or Nature, were made by Wisdom. From Art we ascend to Nature, from her to a Mind, and then ask whether that Mind begot Wisdom. If so, Of what? If of it self, it self must be Wisdom, which is the true Essence and Glory of a Being. Things indeed void of it do exist with respect to that Wisdom which created them, but not from themselves. By true Essence, he means the Second Person in the God-head, and makes the First above Being and the Understanding. Wisdom and true Essence therefore are synonymous Terms. He says, The Understanding possesseth all Things in his own Infinite Wisdom, and all Ideas are Rays from him. In Sacred Writ he is call'd the Truth, and is indeed the King who presides over it.

As for the Third Person, whom he calls the Soul of the World, he seems in some places to have a juster Idea of him. God, says he, has acted, therefore he has willed, and consequently he has a Will. Now he, whose Power is equal to his Will, must produce very wonderful Effects. God then, who is Goodness in the Abstract filled his own Will, and was what he willed to be, and willed to be what he is, his Will being his very Essence, and an act of it at the same time: He himself therefore caus'd himself to become this Act: which is in effect what I have already said, viz. That God by an Act of his Will, and by isolating himself in his own Infinite and Eternal Love produc'd the Third Person. Again, He is both the amiable Being, and the Object of his own Love: For he is beautiful in and of himself, and could not co-exist with himself, unless the Person loving, and the Object belov'd were the same. And if the Original Existence, and he who co-exists with him, if the Lover and the Beloved are one, the Love and the amiable Essence must be so too. Now this Love (or the Third Person) proceeded from God's co-essential Will. Again, This Third Person, says he, is an Appetite of the Understanding, and not only desires after, but is in the full Possession of the Divine Perfections: So that 'tis plain his Opinion

ion was, that the *Third Person* proceeds from the *First*, by the Influence of the *Second*, or *Soul of the World*.

THE reason why I have troubled my Reader with so many Quotations from this Author is, because he asserts, that the Doctrine of the *Trinity* (which he learn'd from his Predecessors *Numenius*, *Severus*, *Cronius*, *Gaius Atticus*, *Longinus* and *Pbilarchæus*, which afterwards he taught his Disciples who esteem'd him, as will appear by their Writings, no less than a God) was very antient; and because he very clearly, and at large demonstrates the Impossibility as well as Absurdity of admitting a *Fourth Person* into the Sacred God-head.

JAMBLICHUS says expressly, God made the World by his most divine Word, and the first God being before him, who truly is, and being alone, is the Father of a first God, whom he begot, tho' he dwells in his own inconceivable Unity, and is a Copy from his Father, the Original, and only living and true God. Here he plainly distinguishes the Persons, yet allows them (according to the receiv'd Opinion of the Egyptian Divines) to be but one God.

PORPHYRY, who revis'd Plotinus's Works, and whom St. Austin esteems the most Learned and Judicious of all the Philosophers, tho' an inveterate Enemy to the Christians, acknowledges, that Plato taught, that the chief Good, i. e. the First Person begot an Understanding in an inconceivable Way, who is next to himself, and is the Principle and Essence of the Universe: The first Beauty, amiable of himself, generated by God from all Eternity, yet (as it were) self-originated, not by any Motion on God's Part, but by an eternal Procedure from him. By an eternal Procedure, I say; for as yet Time was not, neither is there the least Comparison between that and Eternity. And this Divine Person was alone eternal. And explaining a remarkable Passage in Plato, he says, there is a Trinity in Unity, the Supreme Being, or chief Good, the Creator, and Soul of the World, And this is the full Extent of the Deity. These are the Three Kings, of whom he makes mention, and on whom, he says, all things have their sole Dependance. The first underiv'd, the second deriv'd from him, and the third proceeding from them both. He talks indeed too
much

much like an *Arian*, yet extremely well for an Heathen. Nay, he goes farther than their Heretical Scheme will allow them; for he speaks of *One Essence*, but *Three Persons*, relatively, and in order of Nature only different. And *St. Austin* assures us, that he held the *Third Person* to be the Bond of the Union between the *Three Persons* in the God-head.

PLOTINUS indeed was of Opinion, that the *Third Person* was inferiour to the *Second*. And *Proclus* says, he held one eternal Person antecedent to another, the latter adhering to the former, who is God over all, and a *Third*, between whom *Eternity* is the medium. Now, since every thing in *Eternity* is equal, he must mean *Three* co-eternal, co-equal Persons (as *Plotinus* observes) tho' different indeed in order of Nature.

PROCLUS, Pupil to *Jamblichus*, says, the ancient *Platonists* held *Three Principles*, or *Persons*, viz. the one *Supreme Being*, the one *many*, and the one and *many*. The *Essence*, says he, or *Understanding* (which are *Synonymous Terms* with the *Platonists*) originally subsists in the chief *Good*, adheres to him, and is fill'd with the *Light of Truth* proceeding from him, and by *Virtue* of their *Union* partakes of his most *Divine Nature*. He speaks here of the *Second Person*, *Light of Light*, who derives his *Being* from the *First*: And by those *Terms*, *Most Divine Nature*, he endeavours to express the *Preheminence* of the eternal *Father*: Elsewhere he says, the *Son* is united to the *Supreme Being*, and by an *Intellectual Act*, is *Eternity* it self, tho' dependant on the *Father*, and uniform, or like the *Father*, and the *Spirit* is *meniform*, or like the *Son*, i. e. the *Understanding* from which he proceeded. Again, *Most of them*, says he, hold three *Principles*, viz. the chief *Good*, the *Understanding* or true *Essence*, and the *Soul*. The *Supreme Being* is first, and then the *Unity* which subsists in, and is deriv'd from him. Now there must be a *middle Power* between the two first *Persons*, so that the first might give *Being* and *Perfection* to the *Second*, otherwise the latter could not proceed from and reflect on the former. This is the original *Trinity* above the *Scale* of finite *Beings*, the *Unity*, *Power*, and *Understanding*. One produces, another is produc'd, and the *Power* depends on the former, and is united to the latter; which is the same thing in effect as if he had said with our *Church*, There are *Three distinct Persons*

Persons in the Sacred God-head, viz. the Father, Son, and Spirit, yet these Three are one. But as he was an inveterate Enemy to the Christians, it could not be expected he should talk in their Dialect.

AMELIUS, one of *Plotinus's* Pupils, says; *Proclus* held Three Kings or Sovereign Minds, viz. he who is, he who actually enjoys, and he who perfectly sees, or in other Terms, the real Understanding, the Understanding deriv'd from him, and the Understanding proceeding from them both.

THEODORUS calls them the substantial Intellect, Intellectual Substance, and Fountain of Souls: And as great an Enemy as *Amelius* was to the Christians, he acknowledges the Eternal Word was he, by whom God created all Things, and owns that *Heraclitus* maintain'd the same Notion. Nay, the former had attain'd to that Pitch of Pride and Impiety, that he swore by the awful Majesty of Heaven; that he was the individual Person, who (as that Barbarian, meaning *St. John*) says was in the beginning, &c. Another Platonist had so great a Value for the Gospel of *St. John*, that in his Opinion it highly deserv'd to be transcrib'd in Characters of Gold: From whence it appears what a beautiful Harmony there was between the Greek Philosophy and Christian Divinity before the Incarnation of our blessed Lord.

THE Romans indeed began long after to apply themselves to the Study of Philosophy, yet speak much to the same purpose. *Chalcidius* says, The supreme ineffable God created all things; and next to him is the Wisdom of God, the Author both of Temporal and Eternal Happiness, and last a second Understanding, Guardian of the eternal Law. The first commands, the second directs, the third proclaims it. This Law Men observe; this is Destiny itself. A little before he had said, the second is the Eternal Understanding of God, an Eternal act, resembling his Goodness, as always reflecting on the chief Good. *Macrobius* likewise acknowledges, that *Plato's* Notion of a supreme and begotten God was well grounded, and so sublime that it could not be explain'd but by Images adapted to our finite and weak Capacities; and that his usual Illustration of it was by the bright

Bright Rays of that glorious Luminary, the Sun; and that we have wholly lost several valuable Treatises wrote by Varro and others, is a misfortune much to be lamented.

IN short, all the Platonists (according to their different Capacities) make mention more or less of *the Trinity in Unity*. Some agree with us in their Premises, others in their Conclusions. The Aristotelians are little to be regarded, since they spent their whole time in Writing voluminous Comments on their Master's Works, and were so diligent and curious in their Search into Nature, that they wholly neglected the Contemplation of the God that made her. However, *Avicenna* allows, *the first Understanding produc'd a second, and that a third*; but goes no farther.

LET us now see what the Devils themselves have been forc'd to acknowledge, who (either by the Assistance of the *Sacred Scriptures*, or by having been once the happy Inhabitants of the Realms of Light above) have had some insight into this important and Mysterious Doctrine. And certainly it must be no small Satisfaction to observe with what Reluctance those restless, haughty, and obdurate Spirits have submitted to the irresistible Charms of Truth. *Thulis*, an antient proud Monarch of *Egypt*, ask'd *SERAPIS* their chief Dæmon (and conjur'd him by all that was Sacred not to deceive him,) What Prince ever had been, or should be greater than himself? To whom he answer'd,

Πρῶτα θεῶς μελέπειλα λόγῳ; &c.

THREE God Almighty fill Heav'n's awful Throne;
The Father sits Supreme, next him, his Son,
The Spirit last; and yet these Three are One.
With speed, fond Querist, from these Altars fly,
Too deep, too intricate's this Mystery
For you to comprehend, or be resolv'd by me.
Th' unletter'd Swain, who labours all the Day,
And whistles as he works to pass his Hours away,
Lives free from Thought, from anxious Sorrow free,
Is more content, and happier far than thee.

AND *Apollo*, when consulted to reveal the *True Religion*, re-
turn'd this Answer,

Μὴ ὄφελος πυμάλον, &c.

UNHAPPY Priest, thy Questions now forbear,
In vain thou'lt speak, and I in vain shall hear:
Ask me no more of HIM, who rules the Skies,
Nor of *his Son*, who in his Bosom lies;
Nor of *that Power* which from them both doth flow,
And moves and governs all Things here below.
Fain would I answer thee as heretofore,
But, oh! I'm doom'd by that *Almighty Power*,
To quit this Place, and fill this Shrine no more. }
For ever now must these sad Gates be shut,
And thy *Apollo's* Tongue for ever mute.

ANOTHER time (as *Porphyry* tells us) being ask'd
which was superiour, *the Word*, or *the Law*, he answer'd,
We must believe in God the Father, and in the Eternal King (as
whose awful Nod the whole Creation trembles) to whom the Father
is a Law, and the Jews pay the Tribute of divine Adoration. And
Plutarch assures us, That these Oracles were held in so great
Repute, that they were daily sung in Verse, to make the
deeper Impression on the Memories of those who heard
them.

I HOPE the Reader will excuse my Dwelling so long on
so intricate a Subject, since some there are who vainly ima-
gine *the Trinity* to be wholly inconsistent with Reason, and
Philosophy, not considering that 'tis one thing to conceive,
another to approve of that Conception.

LET us then conclude both from Reason and Revelation,
from the lively Signatures impress'd on the vast Universe in
general, and our own beautiful Structure, (that *Microcosm*
or little World in particular) and from the Confessions both
of Men and Devils, that in one Sacred God-head, there are
the Father, Son, and Spirit; the Second eternally begotten by

the First, and the Third eternally proceeding from them both; *the Second* begotten by *the Understanding* of the Father, and *the Third* proceeding from his *Will*. Let what has been said, since it relates to the Effence of God, be understood by way of Prolepsis, or Anticipatiou, the Doctrin of the Trinity being plainly reveal'd in the Sacred Scriptures.

PERHAPS some may be so pragmatical as to require even in this Case a Mathematical Demonstration; but let them consider the Subject is too Sublime, too Metaphysical to be accounted for by humane Reason alone; and let them see whether what they say in Opposition to the plain Dictates of Nature, and Sense of all Mankind in all Ages, be not meer Conjecture, and altogether unworthy to stand in Competition with the many solid Arguments I have here offer'd to their serious Consideration, to prove this very mysterious, yet most important Truth.

NOW to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascrib'd (as is most due) all Honour, Glory, and Praise, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.

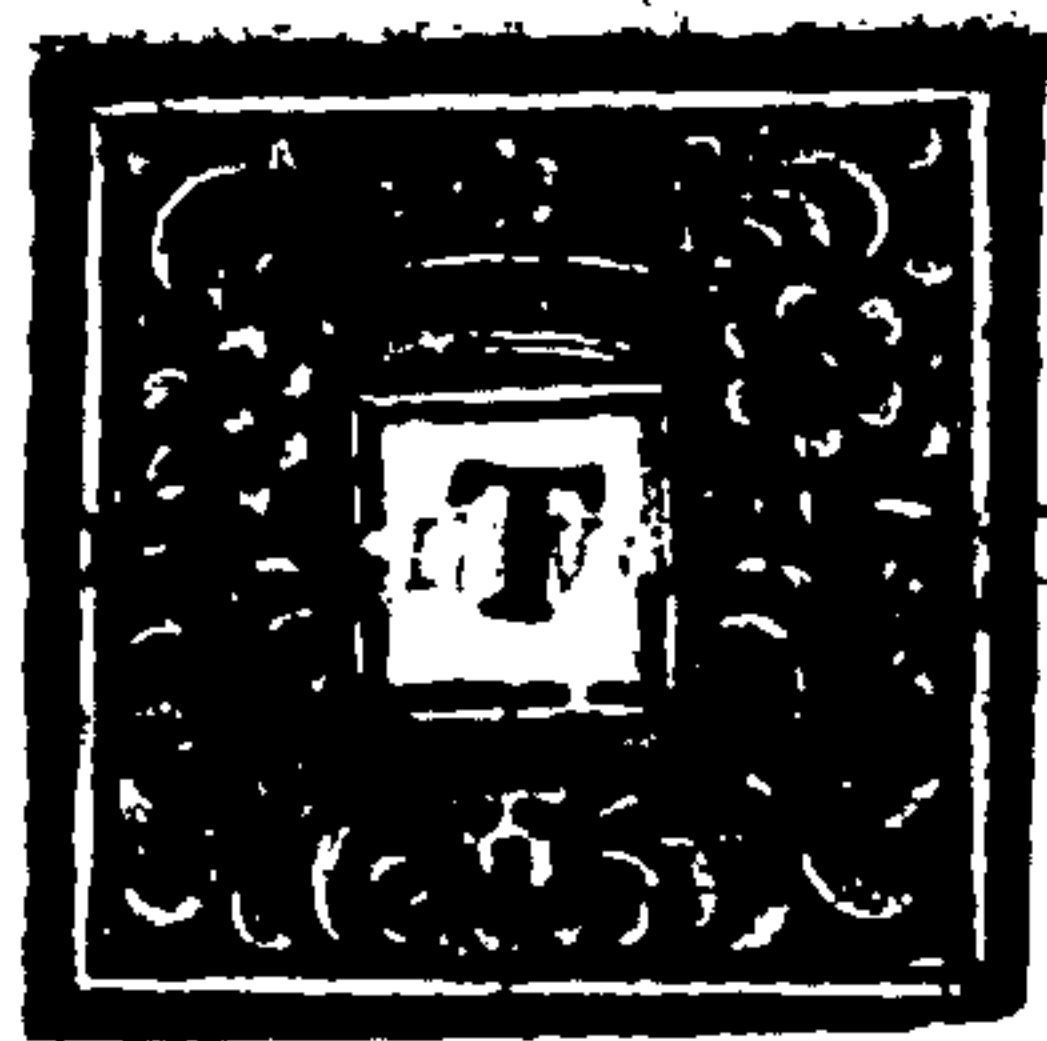
F I N I S.

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Concerning the Truth of the

Christian Religion;

Wherein the Arguments brought by the *Atheists, Deists, Arians, Socinians, Turks, Jews,* and other inveterate Enemies of our most *Holy Faith,* are duely consider'd and fully answered.

Written Originally in *French,* by PHILIP Lord MORNAY *du Plessis Marly,* Governour of *Sau-mure,* and Privy Counsellor to King *Henry the IVth of France,* and now translated into *English*

By Mr. BELLAMY.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Are taken in by *W. Mount* on *Tower-Hill,* *J. Marshal* at the *Bible* in *Newgate-street,* *A. Jellico* at *Hamlin's* Coffee-house near the *Royal-Exchange;* And by the Author in *Old-Boswel-Court* near *Clement's-Inn.*



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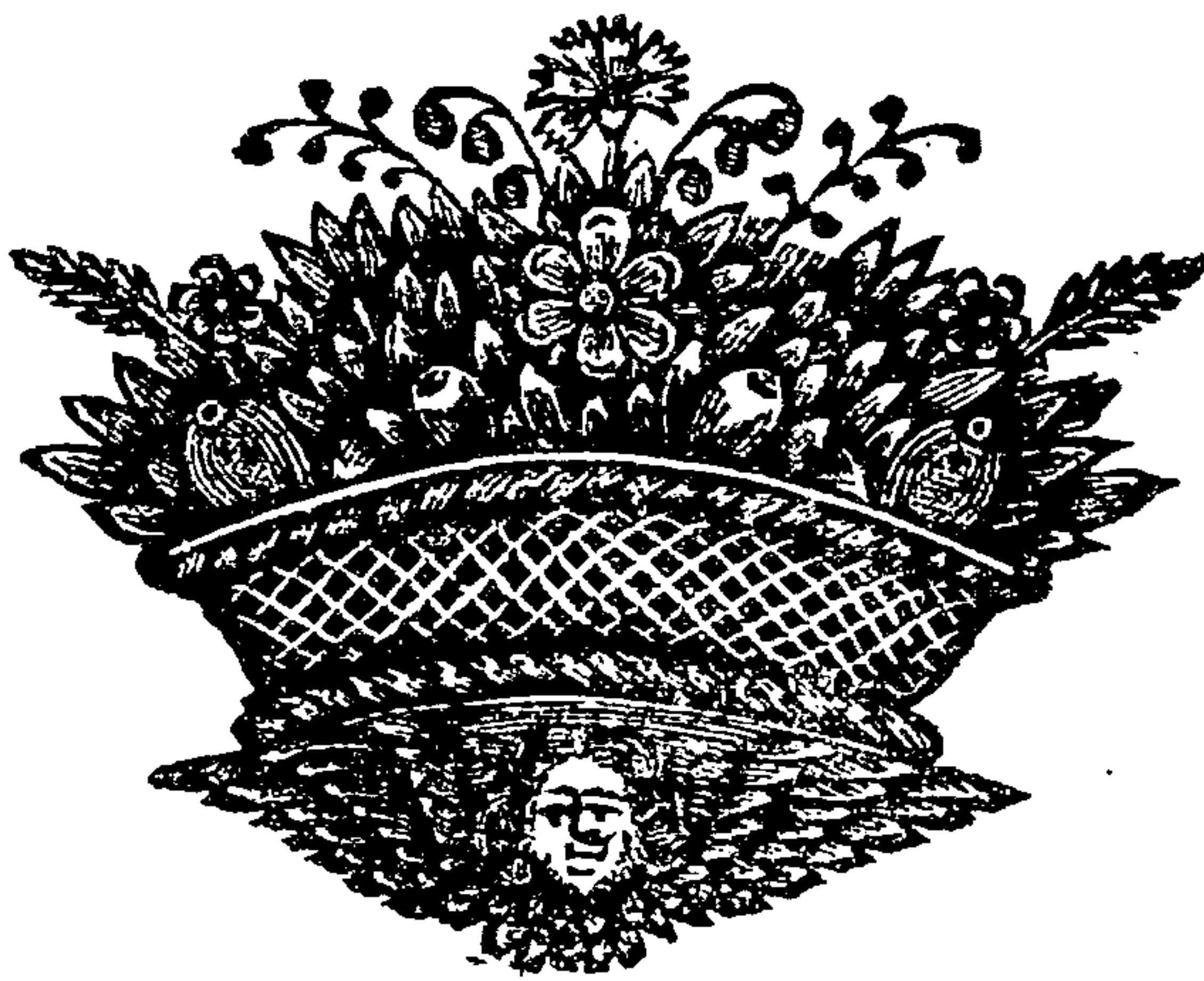
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MUSEVM
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