

Great is *DIANA*
OF THE
EPHESIANS:
OR,
The Original of
IDOLATRY,
Together with the
Politick Institution
OF THE
Gentiles Sacrifices.

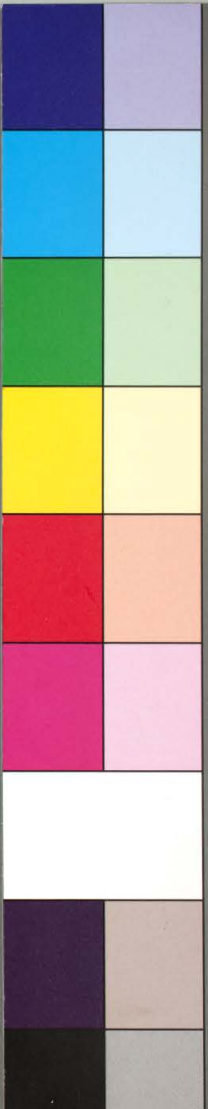
*Cum sis ipse nocens moritur cur victima pro te?
Stultitia est morte alterius sperare salutem.*

London, Printed in the year 1680.

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*Cum su ipse nocens moritur cur viliſſima prote?
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THE ORIGINALS OF
POLITICAL LIBERTY
OR
THE RIGHTS OF THE
GENTILES SACRIFICED
TO THE
GODS OF THE
HEATHENS
BY
JOHN HOBBS

To the Reader.

ME thinks I already behold some haughty Pe-
dant, strutting and looking down from him-
self as from the Devils Mountain upon the
Universe, where amongst several other inferiour ob-
jects, he happens at last to cast his eye upon this
Treatise; when after a quibble or two upon the Title,
he falls foul upon the Hook it self, damning it by the
name of an Atheistical, Heretical Pamphlet: and
to glorifie his own Zeal, under the pretence of be-
coming a Champion for Truth, summons Ignorance
and Malice for his Seconds: But such a Person un-
derstands not wherein the Nature of Atheism con-
sists, how conversant soever he may otherwise be in
the Practice of it. It were Atheism to say, there is
no God; and so it were (though less directly) to deny
his Providence, or restrain it to some particulars,
and exclude it in referance to others. Such are A-
theists, who maintain such Opinions as these: and so
are those Hereticks, who erre in Fundamentals, and
continue obstinately in such errors. But the igno-
rant Vulgar people (whose Superstition is grounded
upon the assimilating God with themselves) are apt
to think that every one they Hate, are Gods Almighty
s Enemies; and that whosoever differs from them
in Opinion, (though in never so trivial a matter) are
Atheists, or Hereticks at least: Nor rightly consi-
dering the words of St. Peter, That in every Nation,
he who feareth the Lord and worketh Righteousness,
is accepted with him. And Minucius Felix says well



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To the Reader.

to the same purpose, He is the best Christian, who makes the honestest man. Herefie is an Act of the Will, rather than Understanding; a Lye, rather than a Mistake: and thus Sr. Austin expresses it, saying, Errare possum, Hæreticon esse nolo. Herefie and Schism, (says the ingenious Mr. Hales) as commonly now used, are two Theological Scare-Crows, with which they who uphold a Party in Religion, used to frighten away such as making an enquiry into it, are ready to relinquish and oppose it, if it appear either erroneous or suspicious. For as Plutarch reports of a Painter, who having unskillfully painted a Cock, drove away all the Cocks and Hens he could find; but so the imperfection of his own Art might not appear, by comparing it with Nature: so Men for some ends, are willing to admit of any fancy but their own, endeavour to hinder all enquiries by way of Comparison, that so their own deformity may not appear. Therefore if any man blame me for comparing Christianity with Paganism, it shews nothing but his unworthy distrust of the sufficiency of that Religion he professes.

There are two sorts of Judges, unto whom all Writers are obnoxious, viz. the Ignorant, and the Judicious. As for the Ignorant, they are such men as I before was speaking of, those whose Approbation I desired nothing more: Simili simile gaudet, is a maxim that holds true as well in all other things, as Physicks; and there is nothing would make me hate so his opinion as my self, as to be an one of them, commended me. But the other Judge, viz. the man of

Learn

To the Reader.

Learning and Judgment, is the He I fear, and before him only will I arraign my self. Non-age is the general Plea for the First-fruits of Tongue men, but that I disown; for he that thinks himself old enough to write a Book, can hardly excuse the folly that is in it, by calling himself Child: Nor have I ever seen a Piece that was written by one of 16 years of age, which was fitting for one of 17 to read; such Writings being commonly like Poems that were made by men when they were half drunk, unintelligible to any persons but such as are in the same condition. Therefore waving all such frivolous excuses, I shall first disclose those things which are most liable to censure, and then clear my self as well as I am able.

Perhaps there may be these three Exceptions taken against this Treatise, viz. my numerous Quotations, or Latine Sentences, my rambling from my Subject, and my uneloquent Style.

First then, as for my many Quotations, whether in Latine or English, the Nature of the discourse requires it. Were it a bare Moral Essay, wherein I made use of none but my own Fancy, there to come in with a dixit autem Dominus, or other such scraps of Latine, were to render my self ridiculous: But this being a discourse of other mens Opinions, they would be thought my own, though father'd upon the Ancient Heathens, did I not cite my Authorities from the Authors themselves; so that I am enforced to play the Pedant even in my own defence. And yet notwithstanding, I have had some Enemies, who were so disingenuous, as to call that Reproach upon me when

they



To the Reader.

they saw this discourse but in Embryo; so ridiculous as well as uncharitable, were their Conferences. A man that with diligent search and care should collect together the Statues or Pictures of divers eminent Persons, and expose them in some publick place to the view of all Spectators, would not thereby procure to himself the repute of a good Painter or Statuary; and yet certainly this Act of his were laudable, and in some measure obliging; but it would render him most immodestly arrogant, if among the Portraitsures of those eminent men, he should erect his own. Now this would be my case, if while I present you with the conceptions of great Philosophers concerning the Infinite Being, I should vent any part of my own inconsiderable fancy among theirs: Wherefore expect it not, for I neither have vanity nor ability sufficient to erect an Opinion of my own; but acknowledge my self totally subdued under the commands of that Government, whereto Providence hath assign'd my Life. Besides, in this Treatise is comprehended a Relation of various Sects contradictory the one to the other, so as I cannot be said to hold them all; Neither (as I know of) have I any where shew'd my self the least partial; but if one had stronger arguments to justify their Opinion, than the other, blame not me who deliver them but recitative, and am as it were their Amanuensis, without ever concerning my self with the intrinsic value of their Doctrines.

As to the second exception, that charges me with rambling from my Subject, if this be an error, it is an error on the right hand, wherein I am but better

To the Reader.

than my word. Constancy is not so absolutely necessary in Authors, as in Husband: And for my own part, when I have my Pen in my hand, and Subject in my head, I look upon my self as mounted my Horse to ride a Journey, wherein although I design to reach such a Town by Night, yet will I not deny my self the satisfaction of going a mile or two out of the way, to gratifie my senses with some new and diverting prospect. He that always keeps at home, and never goes so far as to the end of his own Parish, only once a year in Procession, may be call'd a good Husband, but God deliver me from such a Companion. I confess I cannot but love both Men and Books of a Rambling Fancy, for even their very Extravagancies are diverting: Now be that it of this humour, will be sure to give me his voice. However, in this I have honour to imitate (though imperfectly) the great Montaigne, whose umbrage is sufficient to protect me against any one Age of Critics.

Now for the third and last exception, against my Style, I was never so well accomplish'd as to study the Singling and Cadences of words, the happy expressions, the more soft or histoned Syllables how to place them right; nor had I ever the modesty to search in the Looking-glasses which words gave the most graceful motion to the Lips: No, I confess my only endeavour is to write and speak so as to be understood; and as for Rhetorick, I leave that to those who delight more in the study of Words, than Nature of things. Rarely have I seen Orations full of Fancy, for Orators bring matter to words; and not words to matter;

To the Reader,

besides, the gravity of Philosophy would as ill become fine Language, as the Philosopher himself fine Cloaths.

These are the main Exceptions which I conceive may be urged against me: but if I have omitted any other, it proceeds from the abhorrence I have to read over that thing twice, which I my self have written. This Piece I am sensible cannot be altogether exempted from the evil Censures of some disaffected and interested persons; as for instance the Fanaticks and others who pleaded a Call from God to do the Work of the Devil, cutting off their Sovereigns Head, and are herein exploded for it; also all manner of Hypocrites, who counterfeiting the true Religion, are as much Traitors to Heaven, as those who counterfeiting Coins, wanting false Metal for true, are Traitors to the King. By such persons as these I expect to be condemn'd; but the Ingenious Reader (if impartial) will not esteem it less worthy, for its sufferings under their Judgments: since by the same Reason, he must also raise an outcry against the most sacred part of Philosophy, because Socrates suffer'd under it. There is nothing so virtuous or pious, which a contrary Faction will not decrie: as on the other side, there is nothing so mean or base, which has not from some Interested persons receiv'd Adoration; even an Ape it self has not wanted Egyptian Egyptians to back him, as long as thou shalt lived by extolling him. *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum.* Great is Diana of the Ephesians. But not to persecute you with too long a Scotch Grace, before I close a Month's pardon your country's Entertainment, and you are welcome.

Vale.

The Original of

IDOLATRY,

Together with the

Politick Institution

OF THE

Gentiles Sacrifices.

The Proem.

A Discourse concerning Heathen Religions in general, were certainly a vast undertaking, and vain; it being too immense a labour for any one man, either by reading, sufficiently to comprehend the Ancient Idolatry, or by Travel through both the Indies to discern that of this Age. Nor would it be less vain, if possible to be attain'd: For all Superstitions are to the people but like several Sports to Children, which varying in their several Seasons, yield them pretty entertainment.

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for the time, and when grown out of request, deserve no further consideration, but are still supplanted by new ones to the same purpose. Therefore to abbreviate my undertaking, after having touched a little upon the Original of Idolatry, I do in the rest of this discourse confine my self to one part of their Superstition, *viz.* their Sacrifices, and more especially their Sanguinary ones, as being the most horrid and brutish of all others: Also in them I observe only their seeming Rational and Politick Fundamentals, without mentioning the Sacerdotal particulars in the celebration of their fantastical Ceremonies; which are innumerable, though in effect but like the Ribbons on a Hobby-horse. Now if any Hypocrite to glorifie his own zeal, should pretend that a discourse of this nature does through the Heathen Sacrifices, reproach those of *Moses*, which resembled them but in outward appearance, he must receive himself from that error, if he rightly apprehends the difference: For the one justifies his Institutions as directed to the true God, and ordain'd as Typical by his appointment; whereas the other (*viz.* those of the Heathen) had neither of these Qualifications, and therefore no more ought to be spared for their resemblance to those of the *Jews*, than a Criminal ought to be pardoned for wearing the same colour.

Ex
W
par
sanc

coloured Garments with the Judge. Moreover, for the further justification of this Treatise, I have the Holy Scriptures for my President, wherein we may often find recorded the Idolatry of the Ancient Heathens, *viz.* of such as sacrificed to *Baal*, and offer'd up Cakes to the Queen of Heaven: Therefore all further Apologies I shall decline, as unnecessary in so brief a Narrative.

Sect. I.

Before Religion, that is to say, Sacrifices, Rites, Ceremonies, pretended Revelations, and the like, were invented amongst the Heathens, there was no worship of God but in a rational way, whereof the Philosophers pretending to be Masters, did to this end, not only teach Virtue and Piety, but were also themselves great examples of it in their Lives and Conversations; whom the People chiefly follow'd, till they were seduced by their crafty and covetous Sacerdotal Order, who, instead of the said Virtue and Piety, introduced Fables and Fictions of their own coining; perswading the Vulgar, that as men could not by any natural abilities of their own, know the best manner of serving God, so it was necessary that He should reveal the same to his Priests in some extraordinary manner, for the better instruction of the People. Whereupon pretermittin'g the Doctrines of Piety and Goodness for the



most part, they introduced a Religious worship of their own moulding, which amused and suspended mens minds in great part, and at last made the people relie so much upon them, that they neglected their proper duties, consisting chiefly in the Sacrifices, Expiations, and Lustrations of their Priests; who finding they got more by the sins and ignorance of the common people, than by their virtue and knowledge, made divers things sins which otherwise were but indifferent, especially those things which mens natures could with the most difficulty resist: which observation produced this ingenious Copy of Verses from a Modern Author, no less eminent for his Wit, than for his Quality.

Chorus Sacerdotum,
I. d. Braske's
Mistaphia.

Oh wearisom condition of Humanity!

Born under one Law, to another bound:

Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity,

Great sick, commanded to be sound.

What meaneth Nature by these divers Laws?

Passion and Reason self-division cause.

Is it the mark or majesty of Power

To make offences that it may forgive?

Nature her self, doth her own self disfigure;

To hate those Errors she her self doth give:

For how should man think that he may not die?

If Nature did not fail and punish too?

Tyrants

Tyrant to others, to her self unjust,

Only commands things difficult and hard:

Forbids us all things which it knows is Lust,

Makes easie pain, impossible reward.

If Nature did not take delight in blood,

She would have made more easie way to good.

We that are bound by vows and by promotion,

With pomp of Holy Sacrifice and Rites,

To teach belief in good and still devotion,

To preach of Heavens wonders, and delights;

Yet when each of us in his own Heavt looks,

He finds the God there far unlike his Book.

They forbid some meats as unclean, which yet were wholesom; commanding others to be used, which yet must be offer'd or sacrific'd, that fo they might have their parts; allotting some days to labour, and others to idleness: of all which, and many more conspicuous in pomp and ceremony, they constituted themselves the Patrons and Procurers. To whom no men were so odious as your incredulous honest men; for if a man were incredulous and vicious, that was the greater honour to the credulous party; or if a man were credulous and vicious, that did not any more reflect upon their Religion, than one man's being hang'd for dishonesty, scandalizes a Government; besides they might pretend his Faith was

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never sincere. But he that led an honest virtuous life. without any Faith for their Superstitions, he was the only person odious unto them, as a person that demonstrated unto the World how unnecessary the Priests and their Doctrines were to the propagation of Virtue. The Philosophers had their extravagancies in Natural, but they all agreed in Moral Philosophy; nor was Virtue any where better delineated, than by those ancient Philosophers, *Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Plutarch, Epictetus, &c.* in so much that *Hierophante*, or Teachers of Holy Doctrine, was a name anciently and primitively given to Philosophers. *Sic puramente colendus*: A pure undefiled Spirit is the only Sacrifice which Philosophy commands them to offer unto God. But as that taught the knowledge of God in his works, and a rational way to serve him, so the Doctrines of their Priests introduced not only impertinent, but also absurd and impious Tenents concerning God and Religion, withdrawing them as well from the use of their Reason, as from the study of Truth: not allowing them any knowledge of God, or Religious worship, but what themselves taught. Nay they betray'd the people into the Adoration of many Gods, because thereby they acquired to themselves much greater advantages by adoring many Deities, and introducing several

veral worships of them, than they could have expected from the single worship of one supreme God. All which serves but to confirm the verity of that Epigram, *Demetrius passis fallere, sume togam.* This Sacerdotal villany was well known to *Diogenes*, as we may learn from the Answer he made to the Priest who came to convert him to be of his Order, in hopes of *Elizium*: *Wilt thou (saith Diogenes) have me to believe that these famous men Agefilaus and Epimanondas should be miserable, and that thou who art but an Ass, and doest nothing of any worth, should be happy only because thou art a Priest?* So contemptible was their profession in that wise man's opinion. But of this more hereafter.

II.

The Primitive Institution of Idoltry received its Birth from Princes, at whose charge it was afterwards Educated by Ecclesiasticks; the one made the Idol, and the other ordain'd the worship of it. And this we may learn from the Book of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, wherein it is said, *That the Father made the Image of the deccalded Son, and the Son of the dead Father.* Thus *Ninus* after the death of his Father *Nimrod*, worshipp'd him by the name of *Bel*, or *Belus*, which in the *Punicke* Tongue signifies God: (From whence I conceive that errour of many *Hierians* does proceed, who hearing of a



Nimrod that after his death was adored by the name of *Belus*, presently misapprehended them to be two severall persons, who were really but one under two severall names: And therefore we see *Africanus* begins his Chronicle with *Belus*. Now the use of this Adoration was to breed a veneration in the common people, not only for the Prince deceased, but likewise for all his Posterity, as men of the *Jupiterian* Race. This Idol being therefore at first worshipp'd only in commemoration of some *Hero*, or gallant person, as his Effigies, grew in time to be by Posterity revered as a God; and as his courage or prudence in his life-time, was conducive to the grandeur and glory of his Subjects, so they thought being dead, he was no less able to assist them: with which expectation they paid frequent Vows, Prayers and Sacrifices unto him, such as were ordain'd by their Priests.

III.

Now Idolatry being thus insinuated by the Civil power, the Ecclesiastick was left to build upon that foundation, which presented them with a fit opportunity to introduce those Rites and Ceremonies, as might render them necessary in the performance of the same. For as men who drink Healths, do it more for love of the Liquor, than for loye of the party whose Health they drink;

so did the Heathen Clergy, under pretence of wishing well to others, enrich and advantage themselves: They not being like the Pastors of the Christian Church, who (according to Christ's Rule) ought to be like Sheep amongst Wolves; whereas the others were rather like Wolves amongst Sheep. Therefore we see with how great malice and violence they persecuted all such as opposed their impious Doctrines, when poor *Socrates* could not escape with his life, only because he preach'd up the belief of one supreme God: From whence we may observe, that as pity is less culpable than malice, so in Superstition is incredulity less mischievous than credulity; the incredulous only pitying the credulous, whereas the credulous always envy the incredulous.

IV.

Now whenever these Priests wanted wit to delude the Vulgar, with ambiguous Answers of their own inventions, they repair'd to the Temples of their Gods, and there lay all that Night; telling the people at their return; how being half asleep and half awake, their God spake and reveal'd such and such things, which they were commanded again to deliver unto the people for their satisfaction; when any business of importance occur'd in the Commonwealth; speaking therein many times not so much
their



their own sense, as the sense of the Magistrate, where there was occasion to abuse the people into any belief, that might relate to some publick good: in all which cases the Magistrate seem'd first to believe them. Also they had certain Books, which with much solemnity were consulted upon emergent occasions; such were the *Apollinis Libri*, as also the *Sybillina Oracula*, which *Tarquinius* bought at so high a rate, and afterwards depositing them in the Temple of *Jupiter Capitolinus*, might perhaps be there burnt together with the said Temple in *Scylla's* time. The *Hetrusci* had likewise their Books of natural predictions call'd *Hauruspicinae*, *Fulgurales*, & *Rituales*; as also the *Romans* had theirs call'd *Augurales Libri*, wherein was contain'd most of their Religious worship.

V.

The first Idolatry is thought to have come from *Aegypt*, and that the *Aegyptians* in all probability began their Religious worship from the Sun, or at least from the whole Machine of Heaven. The next to the *Aegyptians* were the *Hetrusci*, who proved their Doctrine by Antiquity and Universality, as also by Predictions. But the most ancient Religion next to the *Aegyptian* and *Hetruscan*, was that of the *Druids*, who were heretofore the Priests of *France*, *Germany*, and

and some parts of *England*. The School of these *Druids* flourish'd within less than one hundred years after the *Phoenicians*; and were destroyed, together with their Religious worship, by the Emperor *Tiberius*. These *Druids* (besides some Opinions they held in common with the other *Gentiles*, concerning worship due to the Heavens, Planets, and Stars) took certain observations from Oaks, Galls, and Mistletoe, for their prognostication of the ensuing year. The *Bardi* were a distinct Colledge in *England* from the *Druids*; they had little of the Philosopher or Vaticinator in them. The *Brachmans* were ancient Philosophers and Priests in the *Indies*, and continue so to this day; they hold the Transmigration of Souls with *Pythagoras*, which Opinion (as both *Apian* and *Clemens* affirm) he took from the *Jews*, and was therefore (say they) circumcised after their manner. The *Gymnosophists* were an ancient Sect of Philosophy and Divinity amongst the *Aethiopsians*. The *Persians* following *Zoroaster*, acknowledged *Asplex principium* as the *Aegyptians* did; worshipping the Sun above, and the Fire beneath: They had anciently their Wife men, or *Adagi*. The *Toracians* communicated many of their Rites and Ceremonies to the *Grecians*. The *Scythians* and *Getes* had certain Priests and Philosophers instituted according to the man-



manner of *Zamolxis*; who travelling into *Egypt*; brought home with him some of their Doctrines and Ceremonies. The ancient *Roman* Priests took many of their Laws and Ceremonies from the *Hetrusci*. The *Germans* and *Celts* had their Priests which were called *Sennabai*. The *Gots* had their Priests call'd *Parabusei*. And the *Africans* their Philosophers and Priests call'd *Abauveis*, *Lybici*, & *Hispani*. Now in all these several Sects there were not any two that agreed exactly in their Doctrines, although the fundamental design of all was the same, viz. the shearing of the Sheep; about which they did frequently quarrel with one another, in so much that one of the Ancients said, He would avoid all controverted points, until the Priests were agreed amongst themselves.

V I.

There is nothing does more endanger Religion, than Oblivion: therefore so long as *Jupiter* was preach'd up at all, they did not much concern themselves under what several Names, or several kinds of Adoration they worshipp'd him; such kind of disputes being but like a quarrel between little Children, who having got one Joynted-Baby amongst them, fall together by the ears about the naming and dressing of it. For Heresies in Religion, are but like Ivy-Trees, which though at first they rend and cleave the

the Walls whereunto they grow, yet afterwards serve to uphold and support the same. Also the Magistrates did frequently connive at such Heresies, because they found the Authority of Religion so prevalent in mens minds, that their Clergy when well united among themselves, did oftentimes contest with the Secular power; which grew so dangerous, that they were contented to wink at the many divisions and absurdities amongst them: *ne Sacra plus possent, quam Leges*. The chief and most eminent Office amongst the *Romans*, was that of the *Augurs*: the veneration and honour given unto them was so great, that they were look'd upon not only as the Gods Interpreters, but also as Messengers and Agents betwixt them and mankind. Besides, they were ever advanced to the Senate, and the rather, as is conceiv'd, because from the first foundation of *Rome*, until the change of the Government, Kings were *Augurs*, as not thinking it safe to disjoyn from the Regal power a discipline so full of Authority, as was that of an *Augur*: who were so highly esteem'd among the Ancients; that no Magistrate was chosen, nor business of importance done, till they were first consulted:

*Those who to Empire by dark paths aspire,
Still plead a Call to what they most desire.* Mr. D.

Thus



Thus *Romulus* and *Numa* could receive their Scepters only from the *Augurs* hands, as *Titus Livy* informs us.

V I I.

The Heathen Priests thinking it dangerous to teach any way to God which men might go by themselves, without further guiding and directing, (like Musicians who are unwilling to learn their Scholars to play by Notes, lest they might grow able to improve themselves without a Master) did not as our Christian Pastors do, furnish the people with a record of their Gods commands, whereby they might walk themselves without any other assistance; but on the contrary they instituted Lustrations, Expiations, and the like, which none but themselves could execute, and all was only to render the Clergy absolutely necessary to the people.

The Original of Sacrifices seems to be as ancient as Religion it self: for no sooner had men found out that there was a God, but Priests stepped up and said, that this God had taught them in what manner he would be worshipp'd. As Religion therefore seems to have began most anciently in the Eastern parts, or as some will have it in *Egypt*; so did Sacrifices, which from thence were propagated to *Greece*, *Italy*, and other remoter parts. The number of Sacrifices (says a
learn-

learned Author) were among the *Egyptians* reckon'd to be 666, which without all question were multiplied by the Priests of several Countries, where the said *Egyptian* Sacrifices were receiv'd. But what a madness was this, to think to flatter the Divinity with Inhumanity? to content the Divine goodness with the affliction of his Creatures, and to satisfy the Justice of God with cruelty? A Superstitious man serveth God out of fear, whereas the truly Religious serves him out of love. Superstition suffereth neither God nor man to live at rest, as evidently appears by these Heathen Sacrifices. What could be more foolish or irrational, than to think that the slaughter of a poor innocent Creature, (who follow'd the simplicity of his own Nature, without ever offending God) should be so grateful to the Deity, as thereby we might expiate our sins, and render a sufficient atonement for the most execrable villainies of mankind? as if the Almighty Justice could be no otherwise appeas'd for the errors of the Wicked, but by the sufferings of the Innocent.

Now as Sacrifices were the most ancient and universal, so the greatest and most mysterious fables that ever were invented or imposed upon mankind. What have Sacrifices to do with sins? could none but their unlightned Priests make peace between
God



God and man, when sins were committed; was there no address to be made to the Divine Majesty, but by their Intercession: were they the Courtiers of Heaven, and must they be first bribed before men could receive a pardon for their sins: an inward and hearty Repentance avail'd nothing amongst them. Neither can the Heathens be excus'd by saying, that at the same time when Sacrifices were offer'd, they might repent; for it doth so little appear that they commanded Repentance, as we can hardly find any mention thereof in their Religious worship; however we may hope that God did work it in some of their hearts: for we find in *Plato* and other Philosophers, sorrow for sin often enjoy'd; and we may read among the *Septem Sapientes* this Holy precept, *Quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris*, which gives a brave entrance into the Christian Philosophy, as it stands recorded in Holy Writ. But this they ow'd to their Philosophy, and not Theology.

VIII.

The stupidity of these Heathen Sacrifices are sufficiently already exploded by *Lucian*, *Arnobius*, and others: The first condemning them as ridiculous, the latter as impious; for God will be serv'd in Spirit, and that which is outwardly done, is rather to glorify our selves, than God. Yet however, as

men

monstrous as their Doctrines and Sacrifices appear, they have been the chief support of the *Gentiles* Devotion for many thousand years, and in some Nations continue to this day. Perhaps melancholly men might at first light upon this Frenzy, by observing how Nature had inevitably framed all Creatures to live by devouring and destroying one another; a man eats not one morsel, but he destroys an Animal or Vegetable life, or at least prevents them from attaining that life, which otherwise they would have enjoy'd. Nay, we cannot walk one step, but probably we crush many Insects creeping under our feet; and the same happens to other Creatures: the Life of each being by Nature made predatory upon others.

Torva leana Lupam sequitur Lapsus ipse capellam;
Florentem Cytisum sequitur lasciva capella.
Virg. Eccllog.

Upon this consideration *Æsop's* Woolf (being touch'd in conscience for the many murders he had committed) vow'd never more to eat Flesh, till being almost famish'd, and espying a Hog in a puddle, he was forced by an interpretation wiser than his vow, to suppose the Hog a Fish, and so by devouring it,

it, to save himself from starving. It was also found by experience, how many millions of violent accidents were ever ready at hand to destroy all things that had life in them, whereas preservatives were rarely to be met with: nor could the very best nourishment or Physick reprove life any considerable time, and that also ever attended with some mischievous quality enclining towards death; wherefore but like a small Parenthesis, intervening a long discourse: Nor was the longest estate of life above a moment, compared with that of death, which is for ever irrecoverable. Also the sickness of one man does often infect others, and extends to the destruction of many thousands: whereas the health of the soundest Body upon Earth, does not diffuse it self to the good of any but it self.

IX.

So that by these, and such like sinister observations, the destruction of things in being appear'd to them to be more grateful to Heaven, than their preservation: whereupon men raised unjust out cries against the miserable condition of Humane life, laying that fault upon the Deity, which did proceed only from themselves; and by this means fell to an unworthy opinion of Cruelty in God: and therefore we see the Heathens for three or four eminent *Joves*, had
many

many more *Vejoves*, or mischievous supposed Deities, they erected Altars to most Diseases and Vices, in hopes thereby to divert their infection from the people: as at this day many of the *Indians* do much more worship and consult the Devil, for fear of mischief, than they do the good Spirit which governs the World. But if it were possible for wise and virtuous men to believe, that the Divine power delights in the slaughter and destruction of harmless Creatures which it self hath made, they might perhaps suppose it to proceed, not out of cruelty, but rather as pleas'd to have them by a quick passage withdrawn from the sufferings and lingering decays of long life, to be suddenly establish'd in an everlasting undisturb'd peace and indolency; or rather, if from our state of ignorance it were possible to interpret Heaven, we might imagine, that it has made all Creatures unavoidably to destroy one another, in as much as that power which governs the Universe, does perhaps contrive the preservation and flourishing estate thereof in a proportion as far exceeding its regard of particulars, as the whole Globe of the Earth exceeds the smallest Sand upon the Sea-shore. And as for particular individuals, *Corruptio nimis est Generatio alterius*; whereby it comes to pass, that not only
C 2 their



their Life, but even their Death, helps to renew the World, and so tends to its continuation and prosperity. From hence now peradventure men of Airy fancies might conceit, some reason why in mankind and all other Sublunarie things, when any one lasts longer than is ordinary for others of its kind to do, it is usually punish'd with deformity and other decays, for retarding (as much as in it lies) that measure of the Worlds Renovation which would by its more early change have accru'd thereunto.

These thoughts unrectify'd, have even among Christians caus'd some Hercticks to think, that God has from the first creation, infus'd into all perishable things two internal principles, the one of Life and preservation, the other of Death and destruction; also that according as either of these are more or less agreeably entertain'd, so is the Creature more or less vigorous and durable. Or peradventure they might more aptly have observ'd the rise and fall of things represented in the rotation of Wheels in a Chariot, whose several Spokes are rais'd up, and cast down by one and the same mover, at one and the same time, without any separate assistant: for so they thought that Infinite power, wisdom, and goodness which is all in all, moves things
by

by his immediate presence and inoperation, without any need of *Aristotle's* Intelligences, *Plato's* Demons, or other imaginary powers subservient: Nor that it merits a bad censure for destroyng particulars, it being for an univerfal good.

X.

Now because the generality of men are not thus speculative or Philosophical in their actions, but rather crafty and politic, as designing to themselves power amongst men, and by consequence Riches and Honour, the most nervous and effectual consideration of the Gentiles Sacrifices must be taken that way. Thus when Princes who in the governing of mankind, found it to be an unruly Creature, mischievous, and not capable to be guided by solid reason or truth, but torally subjected to the passions of hope and fear; how false and vain soever it matter'd not, provided that things were well fitted and fittable to their capacities: wherefore they to encourage obedience and good works, held forth gain and preferment; as on the other side, to deter from disobedience and mischief, they ordain'd forfeitures and disgrace:

————— *Et ponere Leges,
Ne quis sur esset, neu larro, neu quis Adulter,*
Horat. Serm.



Yet in as much as *abundans cautela non nocet*, and seeing there were many clandestine Villanies so secret and undiscoverable, as could hardly be brought to an open conviction, for such the Magistrate rais'd within them *Animo tortore flagellum*, viz. in their Consciences the fear of some future punishment; whereof for want of that true knowledge which we enjoy, they feign'd some of their own inventions, such as the *Strygian Lake*, and the like; which in as much as the goodness of God, and their present invisibility rendred the less credible, therefore the declaring them to be with material Fire, as also Eternal, did in good measure over-awe that incredulity. From whence we may observe, how necessary and how natural is the belief of a Reward and Punishment hereafter: that even the unenlightned Heathens, as well for convenience, as from the impulses of their own Natures, were forced to acknowledge it. So rational and so natural is that Article of our Christian Faith.

XI.

Now for the erecting of this Tribunal in the minds of men, they (not being enlightened from above) made use of Superstition, (the off-spring of too much Honour, and too much Fear) which being to be managed cunningly, and well fitting to vulgar

vulgar capacities, they did little or not at all regard the satisfaction of clear rational men. For first, the number of them is so small, as they are of no power; and then they are too wise to hazard their own Ruine for the instruction of foolish men, casting Pearl before Swine; knowing withall, that if any man should be so vain as to oppose the common belief, the *mobile* would (as they did by *Socrates*) oppress and decry him for an Atheist. Therefore the wisest among the Heathens follow'd this Rule in their converse, *Loquendum cum vulgo, sentiendum cum sapientibus; & si mundus vult decipi, decipiatur*. Our Saviour himself found how improper it was to unfold his Sacred mysteries to the ignorant multitude, and therefore explain'd not his Parable of the Sower, till he was alone amongst the Twelve, saying, *Unto you it is given to know the myserie of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables; that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand: lest at anytime they may be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them. He that hath ears to hear let him hear*, saith Christ; that is, not every one that can hear, but only such as are well able to digest and understand what they do hear. Now this kind of reservedness and secrecy being like

Mark 4.
11, 12.



wife observ'd by the most prudent of the Heathens, it made their Priests altogether neglect such thoughts, though never so wise, as being well assured that their Prudence would hinder them from discovering or interesting themselves in the vulgar Superstitions, how sottish soever. But nevertheless, to fortifie themselves the better against any such discovery, they ever decri'd Humane wisdom, and magnify'd Ignorance, well knowing that the seeds of their foolish Doctrine, would prosper no where but in barren ground. Reason teaches that there is but one only supreme God; but they taught the belief of many Gods. Reason teaches that the Law of God, viz. that Law which is absolutely necessary to our future happiness, ought to be generally made known to all men; which theirs was not. Reason makes no difference betwixt their *Enthusiasticks*, and our mad-men, Reason expects some more convincing argument to prove the infallible Divinity of their Laws, Inspirations, and Miracles, than an *ipse dixit*: and upon that Maxim of *Courta Principia non est disputandum*, Reason would reply, *Quo dato absurdo mille sequatur*. Reason would suspect the power of their *Jupiter*, who had no way to reduce the *Trojans* to himself, but was forc'd to suffer his own Son *Sarpedon* to be knock'd

on

on the head by them. Reason would tell us that *Romulus* and *Rhemus* were Bastards, and that their Mother *Rhea*'s pretence of being layn with by God *Mars*, was only a sham upon the credulous multitude, hoping thereby to save both her credit and her life. Again, when they desire me to give but the same credit to the History of their Gods, as I do to other History, I will; but as well in their Religious, as in *Livy* or other profane History, when I hear of an Ox's speaking, or a God's descending in a Cloud and shower of Gold to lye with a woman, in all such miraculous Narrations, my Reason desires to be further satisfi'd in the truth of them, than only by the report of the Author. *Proculus* tells us of *Romulus*'s appearing after his death, and that he saw him all array'd in white, &c. but my Reason bids me *quare*, whether he had not some hand in his murder, and thought by pretending *Romulus* to be taken up to Heaven, to clear himself to the people of that suspicion. *Apollonius Tyanicus* is reported by *Philostratus* to have rais'd a Maid from the dead, but Reason questions whether the Maid was not only asleep; for sleep is the Image of death. *Philostratus* also further telleth, that *Apollonius* vanish'd away out of the Emperor's presence, before a great number of people: but here Reason bids me observe, that



that although it is reported to have been done in the presence of a great number of people, yet I have but the Testimony of one man for the truth of it, *viz.* *Philoftratus*, and not the Testimony of all those people. The darkness of the Sun at *Julius Caesar's* death, appears to Reason to be but an accident, proceeding from some natural cause, and that it was no greater Complement to *Caesar*, than to any other person in the World that dyed at the same moment. There is nothing how impossible forever to be done, that is impossible to be believed; for two men conspiring, one to seem Lame, and the other to cure him with a charm, will deceive many; but many conspiring, one to seem Lame, the other to cure him, and all the rest to bear witness, will deceive more. Thus when *Vespassian* is said to cure the Lame and the Blind, Reason reports the story of it thus: That *Vespassian* observing how Kingdoms are preserv'd and augmented by Religion, pretended himself to have an immediate power from Heaven, and for that end corrupted two of his subjects with money, to feign themselves the one Blind, and the other Lame; whom he afterwards cured with much solemnity before the people. In the same manner the *French* Kings cure men of the Evil; for the Physician first examines the Patient's wound, and if he finds

it

it incurable, then declares it is not the Evil, but if he finds it a Sore that is easie and likely to cure, then the Physician calls it the Evil, that so the King may have the credit of curing that, which would have done well of it self. These and many more such impostures were put in practice by the Heathens, which for as much as Humane Reason detects, their Priests had great occasion to exclaim against it, as they did. Let us Christians from hence learn to esteem our Religion the more, which stands the Test of Reason, bidding us give a Reason for our Hope.

Furthermore, these grand Heathenish impostures (the *Sacris initiati*, as they call'd themselves) the better to prepare for the planting of their Idolatry in the minds of men, did (under the pretence of speaking after the manner of men) pre-suppose their Gods to be originally of Flesh and Blood, attributing to them such passions and designs as are only incident to mortals: They made them of both Sexes, Gods and Goddesses; *Jupiter* had his Wife *Juno*, and either for variety, or when weary of her Curtain-Lecture, he went to his Mistres; but for a fuller entertainment in his Cups, they procured him a *Gawymede*: His Grave was also to be seen in *Crete*, as well as the Grave of any other person; and yet so fortifly



tishly impious were they, as to believe this dead man to be the ever-living God. Nay they made their Deities subject to those Vices which were acted but by the worst of men: in so much that nothing is more celebrated in *Jupiter*, than his Adultery; nor in *Mercury*, than his Fraud and Theft; of whose praises in a Hymn of *Homer's*, the greatest is this: That being born in the morning, he had invented Musick by noon, and before night stoll away the Cattle of *Apollo* from his Herdsmen. Therefore in *Minucius* you may hear *Octavius* telling *Calpurnius*, that the Heathens entertain'd such fabulous Notions of their Gods, as they usually ascribed such horrid things to them, as would be accounted scandalous and dishonourable to any good man:

Immortalia mortali sermone noantet, Lucr.

The Heathens (says *Arnobius*) did by their Gods, as an Ass would do by *Cato*, whom if he were to commend to his fellow Asses, he would say he had delicate long Ears, could Bray very loud, and carry great Burthens; which being the most eminent qualities in Asses, they would attribute them to *Cato* when they meant to praise him: and just so did they impiously judge of their Gods; which an ingenious Physician

Physician observing, he would never give one of their Priests Physick, till he was inform'd what opinion his patient had of Divine Vengeance; because if he magnify'd Gods mercy, then he gave him something to purge Flegm; whereas if he extoll'd Gods Judgements, then he gave him something to purge Choller. *Cardan* was so uncharitable as to think this Superstition (which did really sink under the ruines of Paganism) was like the River *Aretbusa*, risen up again even among the Christians, saying, *Nos nebulones loquimur de Deo, tanquam de suo i nobis*. But this impiety is so far from being practis'd amongst us Christians of the Reformed Church, that Atheism it self would be as soon tolerated. *Plutarch* desired rather to be forgotten in the World, than remembered by the Name of the man that used to devour his own Children, as *Saturu* is reported to have done: and it is better to have no opinion of God at all, than such an one as is dishonourable to him, as the Lord *Bacon* well observes. Yet this was the Heathen Faith; for although they did not own themselves to be made after the Image of God, yet did they in their fond Imaginations make their Gods after the Image of men: which must needs occasion the same mutual likeness.



Having thus therefore manured the Ground of Popular understandings, where in to sow the Seed of vulgar Religions, they sow'd thereupon such kind of Doctrines, as they judged best capable of reception, and most proper to each particular *Genius* of the time and people, according as they found them more or less rude or subtle, debauch'd or austere. Hence grew their Oblations, and Altars, whercon they were offer'd: these did always accompany their Prayers; for they supposing their Gods to be like the Eastern Princes, before whom no man might come empty handed, and perhaps because a great part of their Offerings fell to the Priests share; therefore they soon left off *Numa Pompilius's* Institution, who according to the poverty of those times, ordain'd a little Cake and Salt with a few Fruits: and so *Pythagoras* appointed Honey, Frankincense, Fruits, Flowers, and other things, but always *incruentis*; till in process of time their Gods (or at least their Priests) grew so covetous, that they could not be satiated without the blood of Beasts; whereupon men began to offer up Sheep, Oxen, and almost all manner of Beasts, to one God or other; who at length, like corrupt Judges, were not to be bribed but at high rates, especially where either the petitioner was

a Rich man, or the Boon sued for very considerable, or the God one of the better sort: in such a case Sheep were despised, and nothing less than an Ox would be accepted. Thus by degrees they grew to such excess, that at length in case of a publick Pestilence, or upon some great Warlike undertaking, it was not unusual to offer *Hecatombs*, that is, an hundred Oxen, an hundred Sheep, and as many Swine, all at once upon a hundred several Altars. But to exceed all this, some grew to Sacrifice men and women: The ancient *Galli* used to feed a man sumptuously for the space of one year, and then upon a Festival day, they carried him out of the City and stoned him to death, as an Expiation for the sins of the people. Also *Apollonius Tyaneus* thought to stop the Plague at *Ephesus*, by sacrificing a poor old Beggar. Nay some went further than this, and sacrificed their own Children: thus *Agamemnon* upon his undertaking that renowned War of *Troy*, offer'd up his only Daughter *Iphigenia*; and if he could have procured one of the Gods themselves, it is very probable he would have sacrificed him to *Jupiter* or *Mars*, for the better success in his enterprise.

We read in ancient History of many Heathens, who sacrificed their own lives to propitiate the Gods to their Countries: as *Codrus*, for



for the *Athenians*, *Menaeus*, for the *Thebans*, *Anchorus*, for the *Sydonian*; as also *Curtius* and the two *Decii*, for the *Romans*, whereof you may read at large in *Livy's* 8th Book. Thus Humane Sacrifices grew every where so common, that in *Mexico* 20000 men in a year were frequently slain upon their Altars; for the more brutish and unnatural cruelties they used, the more prevalent they thought them with Heaven; and indeed they have usually been crown'd with the most success; perhaps supposing the intentional piety, to prevail above the unnatural act; or rather, that the general confidence of the Gods assistance to be thereby procured, might raise a more than ordinary vigour in the Soldiers minds, which is the chief cause of Victory. Therefore when they were ready to joyn Battle with the enemy, it was usual to make some Vow to the Gods for their assistance; which when the other party understood, they always out-vow'd the former, in hopes thereby to win the Gods from them, or at least to make the Soldiers believe they had: thus the *Crotonidae* in their War against the *Laerenes*, Vow'd to *Apollo* the tenth of the spoil, if he would give them victory: whereupon the *Laerenes* to outvie them, vow'd to the same God the ninth part if he would be on their side, and that re-vic carried it.

Also

Also the *French* under the conduct of *Aristonius* against *Flaminius*, vow'd to *Mars* a great Gold Chain; but *Flaminius* to out-bid them, vow'd to erect a magnificent Trophy, and so prevail'd. Much like the story of a corrupt Judge, who being bribed with a Jar of Oyl, the other party came the next day and presented him with a fat Ox, whereupon he gave sentence for the Ox; and when the Oyl-man murmur'd, the Judge to excuse the business told him, that in the place where the Jar of Oyl stood, an unruly Ox brake in and overturn'd it, so as it was quite forgotten. And many times their Prayers were in themselves so wicked and execrable, as could never hope for a reception, unless offer'd in with a very tempting Oblation:

*Da mihi fallere, da justum, sanctumq; videri,
Nollem peccatis, & fraudibus obijce nubem.*
Horat.

This Prayer one would think needed an *He-catomb* at least to render it passable; but their Gods unwilling to let their Altars grow cold, would sometimes like Country-Attornies, rather take small fees than none at all, to assist them in their Frauds.

XIII.

Now as there were Sacrifices to obtain things of the Gods, and Peace-offerings

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to appease their supposed wrath and fury; so also were there others of thanksgiving, for Benefits receiv'd: thus the *Toures* made a solemn Sacrifice to the North-wind, for having dispers'd and sunk the great Fleet which *Dyonisus* had sent to invade their Country. But these kinds of Sacrifices were most practis'd in private Families, and therefore may rather be call'd *Gentilitia* than *Sacra popularia*: of this sort were the *Sacra Clodia*, *Amilia*, *Juliana*, *Cornelia gentis*, &c. mention'd in *Tully* and others; which private *Sacra* were made perpetual by the Laws, and so recommended to Posterity. Now because they were not only chargeable but to be continued from Age to Age as long as the said Family or Inheritance lasted, therefore Purchasers were glad *adire hereditatem*, or to get such a living as was not clogg'd with these entail'd Sacrifices; concerning which, you may find a merry passage in *Plautus*, where a Parasite brags that he had gotten an Inheritance *sine sacris, sine sumptibus*, &c. but however, there were not so many of these Thanksgiving Sacrifices, as of the other; for as much as all men are naturally inclin'd to covet and wish well to themselves, but few are so generous as when their turns are serv'd, to give thanks, especially if it put them to charge: for thus we see many many men will be mighty chari-

charitable in giving their blessing; good advice, or ghostly counsel, who nevertheless will not part with a farthing of money. The base ingratitude of mankind, is in a just proportion represent'd in the ten Lepers; where although the reward expected for their Cure, was only an honest acknowledgement in a few words, yet when they had all they desir'd, and needed no more, there was but one in ten would trouble himself so much as to come and say, Sir, I thank you.

XIV.

Men may wonder why the Heathen Clergy did so highly extoll Sacrifices, to appease Divine wrath against sinners, and so little mention or make use of Repentance: But the Reasons of most obvious consequence were two: First, they could not but observe how fickle a creature man is, he seldom holds long in a humour or resolution, especially if it goes against the grain of his natural inclinations: so as in effect, most men do but like little Children, who having committed a fault, will (to avoid whipping) say they will do so no more, but do it again the next hour: this made Repentance seem to them but formal, if not hypocritical; and although the intention of amendment of life were for the time in some earnest, for *stultus semper incipit vivere*, and



so they may, like dying men in a dangerous fit of sickness, vow to become new men: Yet considering how frequent and certain their Relapses were, it seem'd almost a mockery, or at the best, such carelessness as is hardly to be extenuate by the term of Humane frailty, but rather a downright effect of incredulity; and if so, it were then a very improper Oblation to be recommended from their Clergy, who lived by the credulity of men. For certainly if men did really and seriously believe what they pretend, or what by fits they make themselves think they do believe, they could never live as they do; so that want of believing is the only thing which destroys all Religion, both true and false. The other and principal motive which induced the crafty Heathen Priests rather to promote Sacrifices, than Repentance, was for that they were to be managed by none but themselves; and so besides the great Profit they brought them, they also tendered them of absolute and perpetual life to the people; for they could never be laid aside, as being the only men who by their Oblations could mediate with Heaven for them; whereas in Repentance they were altogether unconcern'd, a broken and contrite heart was a Peace-offering which every man could bring for himself, without the Priests assistance.

assistance, or any gain accruing to them thereby.

XV.

Unless it were in *Japan*, I do not remember to have read of any place where they assumed the Office of Confessors, with power to absolve sinners; which peradventure if they had presumed to claim, and could have obtain'd, might have brought them in as great a Reverence as any kind of Oblation whatever; but they either thought not of it, or it may be these great Officers the *Confessors Moruus* would not admit thereof: for that it was ever found true, *Facile sit ad peccatum tibi venalis est gratia*; especially Rich men would not care how vicious they were, knowing they had wherewithal to procure Absolution when they pleas'd: so that the Poor seem'd in a manner predestinate to damnation, or Gods Enemies, as the *Turks* call them; who for that Reason will very seldom relieve them.

He that would ask, what the ancient Religion of the Heathens was: it may be answered him, that it was their Sacrifices; which varied according to the several manners of each Country. Now however all Sacrifices seem to be the invention of Priests, yet the *Cynema* especially; many Philosophers condemning them, but above all *Pythagoras*, who said, That men ought to permit



permit no Sacrifice made with slaughter; and that innocent were not to be slain for the Gods, such cruelty being rather likely to aggravate, than extenuate mens other sins; also that Altars were not to be inbrued with Blood. *Porphyry* likewise saith, That in ancient times it was thought a great crime to kill any harmless innocent Beasts, they being intercommoners with men on Earth: And many besides him were of that opinion; as thinking it enough to take from the Sheep her Fleece, from the Cow her Milk, and from the Ox his Labour, without robbing them of their Lives. The killing of Animals in Sacrifice, was however thought to be very proper for Feasting; they might also not without some good intention be offer'd to their Gods, as to whom they ow'd their Food. The matter of Sacrifices in general, was Flesh, Fish, and Fowl, as also whatsoever did afford favour and wholesome sustenance. But amongst all the *Cruenta Sacrificia*, the most ancient seems to be that of Swine, who for the trespass they made upon Agriculture, were offer'd to *Ceres* the Goddess thereof, as we may learn from this line of *Ovid*:

Prima Ceres avida gavisus est sanguine Porcae

Now these *Cruenta Sacrificia* were used not only

only for Thanksgiving, but also for Expiation of their sins; as likewise for assembling of the people together to make good Cheer, and bring in Roast-meat for the Priests: Nor were Feasts unlesseful for the upholding of the worship of their Gods in the minds of men; since at all Entertainments, the Company are naturally apt to drink the Founders health. Sacrifices, especially the *Cruenta*, seem to have been first used among the *Egyptians*, and from them derived to the *Hebrews*, as *Theodoret* confesses; observing only, that whereas the *Egyptians* sacrific'd either to Demons or Idols, the *Israelites* through the Divine permission were allow'd to offer them to God. *St. Jerom* also upon the words of *Jeremiah* (chap. 7. ver. 21.) saith, That God at last did allow the use of Sacrifices to himself, lest otherwise they should be made to false Gods: whereupon also he notes, that *Moses* never commanded the use of Sacrifices, but by the way of tolerating them after the *Israelites* were come out of *Egypt*, where the sweetness of Sacrifices seems first to have been found out; for not only their Bellies, but also their Backs prosted by them; *ramie & pellice*, or Coats of Skins being their usual garments: for which reason the *Cruenta Sacrificia* were most esteem'd of all others.



There are many general things observable in all or most of their Offerings; and of mystical signification; as this: That although their Gods were notoriously guilty of Fraud, Rapine, and Violence, yet above all other Oblations they delighted most in Creatures meek and harmles, as Doves, Sheep, and Oxen; which were not only better meat for their Priests, than Lyons and Tygers, or the like, but also served for an Emblem; to shew that soft and innocent Natures were ordain'd for a prey to the fraudulent, rapacious and violent: in the observation whereof, the wise Spectators instructed themselves to their own advantage and safety. Much to this purpose was that saying of an Ancient Father, *Oves nos sumus aut Corvi qui lacerant, aut Canes vera quæ lacerantur*; according to our English Proverb, he who makes himself a Sheep, becomes a prey to the Woolf. Therefore *Mabius* to make his Disciples all Wolves, delivers this Impious Doctrine, That he who forgives an injury does well, but he who revenges it does better: supposing that a constant Revenge for injuries, would in time make men more wary of committing them, and by consequence advance Morality. Also *Machiavil's* design being to render his Disciples so rapacious, that

that they might be able to encounter the worst of men, he is by the ingenious *Loceline* in his *Parnassus*, resembled to a man that driving a flock of Sheep into a Corner, did there take out their own Teeth, and in their stead, gave each of them a set of Wolves Teeth; so that whereas before one Shepherd was able to drive a whole Flock, now each Sheep hath need of particular Shepherd, and all little enough too. Much to our purpose is it noted by *Plutarch*, that great Princes in their Shields do ever give Creatures of Force and Rapine, as Eagles, Lyons, Dragons, and the like, to teach them how to maintain their Grandeur: in resemblance whereof, *Henry the 4th of France* had ever engraven upon his Ordnance this Motto, *Ratio ultima Regum*; but however for petty Princes, a Fox may be the better Emblem.

XVII.

These Sacrifices upon extraordinary occasions, were ever presented with wonderful Solemnity and Magnificence; for according to *St. Paul's* observation, they holding we were the Off-spring of the Gods, might probably conjecture that our great delight which we take in solemn Shows and Musick, might be originally derived into our Natures, from the like Spirit in the Divine Original of Nature, of whom we

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proceed : and if so, then these kind of Solemnities seem proper Sacrifices to the *Genus* of mankind; and by consequence, would at least take with men, if not with God. However, they were found to work two great effects upon peoples minds : the one, of concern to Religion; the other, to the State. The concern as to Religion was, in raising a kind of Veneration and awful Terror in the Spectators; which is a frame of Spirit most susceptible of Devotion, excluding all wandering, light and vain thoughts. Therefore in the most ancient times, the chief part of their Divine worship was celebrated in thick Groves; and afterwards when they erected Temples, many of them were of magnificent structure, but ever so gloomy and dark, as they were in the day time fain to make use of Lamps upon their Altars; for such a Light represents any Show much more splendidly than open day-light : As we plainly see in our Theatres, who but for that advantage, would never be at the charge of Lamps and Candles in the Summer time. These stately Representations of their Offerings, with the Priests fantastical Vestments and profound Gravity, was a kind of Acting

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their Religion as it were upon a Stage; and it fared also with that as with *Opera's*, which ever take better Acted, than Read : *Sequius irritant animos demissa per aures, quam quae sunt oculis subiecta fidelibus.* The whole History of most of their Gods, was at the time of their several Festivals very splendidly Acted after the manner of publick Plays, and generally in dumb-shows, without any words at all; as supposing every one from his Childhood acquainted with the Story by his Religious education. These Shows upheld their fabulous Divinity many thousand years, perhaps much longer than if they had grounded it upon Argumentative discourses and Syllogisms, which are knacks that either take not the multitude at all, or never hold them long : for either the cares of the World stifle them, or at best after a time they grow as tedious as a Fiddler that can play but one Tune. Besides, these frequent Representations were no less effectual to strengthen the peoples Faith, than if they heard the Articles of their Faith daily rehears'd unto them; which is the most prevalent way of Naturalizing a Religion to the people, how false soever : since nothing is more frequent, than to have

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men tell Lyes (though of their own inventions) so often , till in time they themselves grow to believe them true.

XVIII.

The other concern, viz. of the State in those great Sanguinary Sacrifices, was by inuring the People to such horrid and bloody Sights, which though but of Beasts, yet doubtless tended much to the hardning of their hearts against all apprehensions of blood and death, either in themselves or others; rendering them fitter for the Wars, and thereby more capable either of defending or enlarging their Empire. Upon this consideration it is, that our Laws will not admit a Butcher to serve upon the Jury of Life and Death: Also at the Battel of *Edgehill* it was generally observ'd, that one Foot Regiment of Butchers, behaved themselves more stoutly than any other Regiment of either side; and yet they had never before that time been flesh'd, in any blood but that of Beasts. To this purpose therefore the ancient *Romans* did much harden the hearts of their men, by using them to various other inhumane bloody Sights; as Gladiators slaughtering one another in their Amphitheatres; and condemning Malefactors to be there torn in pieces by wilde Beasts, for the diversion of the People: which

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occasion'd the Primitive Church to prohibit the Christians all such bloody Sights, as not intending or approving of such hardnes of heart, but rather choosing to govern in the Spirit of meeknes and innocence, hoping thereby to gain a greater submission: whereas the Heathen Princes (especially the *Romans*) when they arriv'd to that Grandeur as encouraged them into an ambition of conquering the Universe, desired in pursuance of that wicked design, to educate their people in such fiercenes and inhumanity as might fit them for that purpose. And the Heathen Priests (who were certainly the wickedest and craftiest of men) knowing how serviceable they might be to the Prince, as well as the Prince to them, in a despotic Government, soon discover'd their own interest, in being contrivers to that design.

XIX.

Now considering these things, and where all regard of God and Nature was laid aside, the use of their Sacrifices could not but be very pertinent; and apprehended that way, were not so absurd as by *Lactantius* and other ingenious persons they are represented to have been. The common people were so weak, as to be de-

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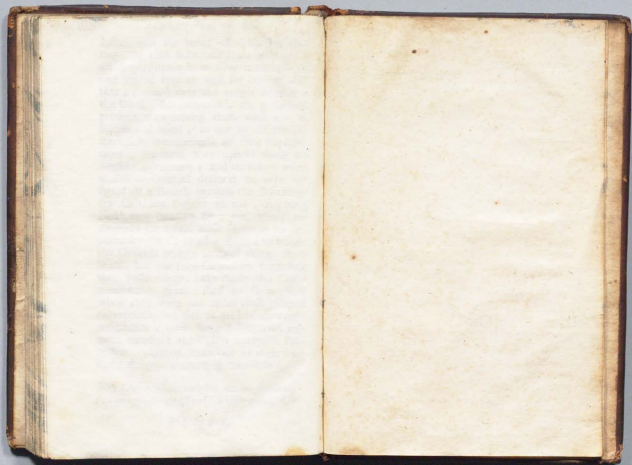


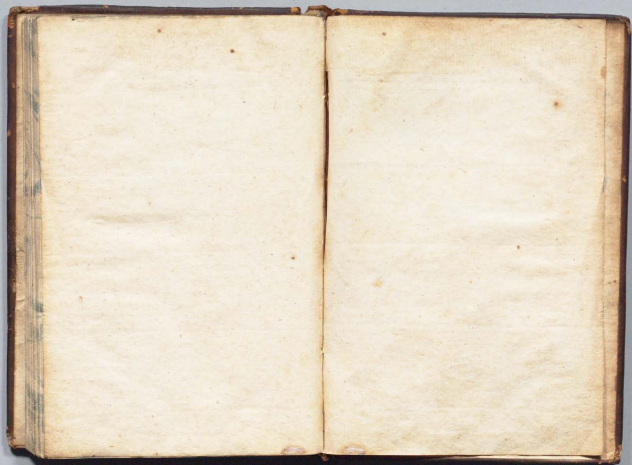
luded into the belief of these Trumperies, by that fallacious Argument which all Superstitions have ever made use of, and indeed lyes as well for one as another, (*viz.*) that the vulgar Faith was the safest. But however, the great and prudent men among them were not so fottish and blind, as not to discern the intrinsic worthlesness of their Superstitions, however they upheld them for worldly advantage; and therefore when a *Roman* General deser'd to give the signal of a Battel, because the Soothsayers Chickens forbore to eat; a young Nobleman standing by, told him, He wondred he would omit so great an opportunity for so small a thing: to whom the General reply'd, These things seem small, but our Fore-fathers by regarding these little things, have made this Commonwealth great. And to shew that when they were not under these politick corruptions, but free to declare their own judgments, their inward Devotion was more excellent than their outward Profession, observe what one of their own Poets delivers concerning Sacrifices:

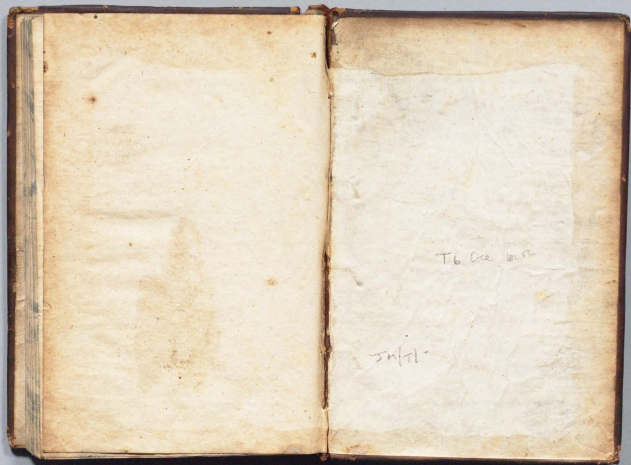
*Non Bove mactato caelestia numina gaudent,
Sed qua praestanda est vel sine teste Fides. OY.*

F I N I S.











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