

THE
STATE
OF THE
Philadelphia Society.

The Grounds of their Proceedings
Consider'd ;

IN
Answer to a Letter from
PHILALETES
Upon occasion of the *Theosophical Trans-*
actions, &c. to a Member of that So-
ciety.

EZEK. xii. 23.

Say unto them, *The Days are at Hand, and the Effect of every Vision.*

L O N D O N :

Printed for the Booksellers of London and Westminster, 1697.

Advertisement.

THis Letter of *Philaethes*, both as coming from an Unknown Hand, and requiring such a Publick Answer, the Person to whom it was Address'd, as well as the Rest who are Concern'd in the Name of the Society, tho' most willing to give Satisfaction unto All, did see the Necessity to refrain from certain Particular Informations, (which yet hereafter may be produc'd) of the Present State of the Same, either in this Kingdom, or Elsewhere; and that the more because of some Wrong, and Dangerous Applications that have been already made by some, against the Undertakers of Their *Transactions*, or *Acta Philadelphica*.

And whereas it may be Objected against the Calculation, p. 27. that some who have much study'd this Matter, do yet protract the Time for Seventy Years; even that will
not

not be Material, though likewise no more be meant by the Cleansing the Sanctuary, then the First *Visible* Beginnings of it; by the **FALL** of That which has *Polluted* it. For if the Alarm was given to the Old World an Hundred and Twenty Years before it was Accomplish'd; Seventy Years may not seem to be so long Now to Warn and Awaken the Slumbering Nations, to prevent the Impendent Judgments that will certainly overtake them, unless they Repent, and prepare to meet their Saviour.

As for what is Herein more Peculiarly Address'd to *One* Communion among *Protestants*, the Argument does equally (*yea a fortiori*) press the Divided Communions from it in this Kingdom, and in *Ireland*.

THE

THE STATE OF THE Philadelphian Society.

S I R,

UPON occasion of those *Philadelphian Papers*, and *Theosophical Transactions* that fly about, we are often ask'd in the City, both by our Friends in Conversation, and by others that are Inquisitive or Scrupulous. *What these Philadelphians are; this new Sect with a hard Name? What are their peculiar Principles or Practises? How are they distinguish'd from other Christians, and particularly from those of the Church of England on the one Hand, and from the Quakers on the other? Why do they seporate from us, and affect Singularity and a particular Title? with many such Questions which we cannot well Answer, for want of a full Account of the true State of this Society.* I Answer these Questions as well as I can, but am sensible that I want Instructions to give a full Answer to some of them. I tell them they differ not from the Protestant Churches as to external Communion; they do not refuse Communion with them, either in hearing the Word, or receiving the Sacraments, and therefore make no Schism. But, say they, why then do these *Philadelphians* make their separate Meetings, and on *Sundays*, in time of Divine Service in Our Churches? I could not well answer that Question, and therefore leave it to you.

B

As

As to their difference from the *Quakers*, I told them, they were not so silly as to place Religion in *Thouing and Theeing*, in keeping on their Hats, or in a *sad Countenance*, as the Hypocrites had in our Saviour's time. These have no external Badge or Mark of distinction, but are above those little Affectations or Superstitions. Very well say they, but do they not agree with the *Quakers*, as to the internal Principle of a Light within, and a private Spirit of Revelation or Inspiration? I could not fully answer to this, which you better understand, and can inform us in.

Then as to their peculiar Principles, I told them I knew none but that single Opinion, That the *Coming of Christ was near at Hand*; and therefore they think it their Duty to warn and awaken the World, that they may prepare for that great and solemn Time, by a good Life, universal Charity, and Union amongst the Protestant Churches. Very well, ~~said they~~, This is good Advice, and at all times seasonable. But what Grounds have they to believe and Affirm that the coming of Christ is near at Hand. I confess to them I did not remember any Proof or Grounds they have given us of their Judgment in this particular, neither could I discern from what Topicks they would fetch their Evidence. I consider'd with my self, seeing this is a thing that cannot be found out by Reason, they must come to the knowledge of it either by private Revelation, or by publick Revelation, such as is made to us all in Scripture. If they have it, or pretend to have it by private Revelation, they must give us some Assurance, (by Miracles, or some other way) that this is no Fiction or Delusion of theirs, but a real Inspiration from the Divine Spirit. They know how many have deceiv'd themselves, or have deceiv'd others by such Pretences; and therefore they ought to be more careful what they Vent and Affirm in this kind. 'Tis a bold and presumptuous a Thing to farther our Thoughts upon the Spirit of God, and obtrude them upon the World under that sacred Notion, without sure Evidence.

If they appeal to the written Word of God, we are always ready to be govern'd by that Rule, and desire them to name those Texts of Scripture that declare, or from whence it may be collected, that the coming of Christ is at Hand. We know there are several places of Scripture that spoke (according to a literal common Construction) of that Coming of Christ, as near in the Apostles time, but those places cannot now be of use to them in this Case. As to the Prophecies in the Revelations of St *John*, what is said

in the 11 and 16th. Chapters, seems rather to make against them. Several things there mentioned must be accomplish'd before the coming of our Saviour. In the 11th. Chapter the Witnesses must rise, and after their Resurrection must Ascend, and the tenth part of the City must fall, and the 2d. *Woe* must pass away before the 7th. Trumpet sound, and even in that, there is a *Woe* before the Blessed Times come on. In the 16th. Chapter the Vials of God's Wrath are poured out, and whether any of them be already past, is a disputable Point amongst the best Interpreters; much less do we know what distance is requir'd betwixt the effusion of one Vial and another. It is also necessary that they should fix the beginning of the Reign of Anti-Christ, and those other *Epscha's* that seem to be Contemporary with it, before they can Chronologically compute the time of our Saviour's coming. And you know some persons of late have not had such success in their Prophetical Predictions and Calculations, as to encourage others to venture upon the same Design, without good Warrant. I will not mention to you the Conversion of the *Jews*, which is usually look'd upon as Antecedent to the coming of Christ. But if you make the seven Churches (as you seem to do) to represent 7 Periods in the Christian Church, we are not yet in the last Period, nor in the Penultimate. For suppose the *Philadelphian* state to be coming on, there is still a *Laodicean* Period after that, which must have its time and duration, how great or how little we cannot define.

These Considerations are obvious to every one that reflects upon the Question concerning the Distance or Approach of our Saviour's coming. And it seems necessary that the *Philadelphian Society* (both for their own satisfaction, and the satisfaction of others) should distinctly state and explain these things, before they alarm the World, and expose themselves and these mysteries of Providence to mistaken Constructions. If you please to Print this Paper with your Answer to it, when you have occasion, you will Oblige,

Sir,

Your Humble Servant;

Philaethes.

T H E
A N S W E R.

S I R,

WHen I received your Letter, I was not a little pleas'd at the Candour and Generosity of it on one side : and the more I consider'd how hard you press the Philadelphians on the other side, my Pleasure still encreased, with my Admiration, to find that there are not wanting some, who then when they make the most Vigorous Attack, are able to do it without losing so much as one Grain of the True Christian Temper. For it must needs be own'd, that you have not only fallen upon the True Knot of the Question ; but that you have manag'd it with all the Dexterity, and Solidity, that it is possible I think for the Matter to bear.

I freely acknowledge that the Difficulties by you either Propos'd or ImPLY'd, are weighty : I acknowledge there are knots not easily to be Solv'd. But because I perceive that you are a sincere Lover of Truth, (according to the Name which you take) greatly concern'd for the Honour of Religion, very desirous to be Inform'd about the Pretensions of the *Philadelphian Society*, and to know what Answers are to be made both to the *Inquisitive* and the *Scrupulous*, concerning the true State of this Society, and the Grounds of their Appearance at this Time ; I count my Self however oblig'd to give you what satisfaction I can at present in this grand Matter, and in the same Manner which you have desir'd it. Wherefore I shall first tell you, *What these Philadelphians are.*

You know that *Philadelphia* was, (and is still) a City in the lesser *Asia* ; call'd by the *Turks* at this Day, *the City of God*, which is in their Language *Allahscheir*. But upon what Ground it is so call'd, I leave you to Inquire. It is the sixth, you know of those seven Cities, the Seats of so many Churches, to which the Lord after his Ascension wrote so many Epistles, full of deep and secret Truths, hard to be understood. Whence there is this continual Call, *He that hath an Ear to hear, let him hear, what the SPIRIT saith unto*

the Churches, or unto all the Ages, Periods and Successions thereof; as the best Interpreters do gather. For not unto them alone were these Prophetical Epistles, as we believe, address'd: but unto all that should come after them; even to us, (though *as far off* both with respect to *Place*, and *Time*) and to the Generations which are yet to follow us, and to all that the Lord shall call. You know that the Church of Philadelphia is of all the seven represented as without Fault or Blame, yet of very low, and mean esteem in the World; having at first but a little *Strength*, Power or Splendor, and so oblig'd to pass through a most severe Probation, beyond all others, and to undergo all manner of Contempt and Ignominious Treating, even from those who profess themselves to be Christians: and shall have greater Outward Power and Strength. For it is expedient that its Members be Try'd whether they will keep the word of the Patience of Jesus; whether they will boldly Confess, and not Deny his Spirit, or Name; and whether they will so hold fast unto the end, as not to suffer any to supplant or deprive them of their *Crown*, or of those high Prerogatives which are peculiarly promis'd to the Conquerors in this State or Period. You know that *Love* is the Christian Badg, and that main distinguishing Character, whereby the Primitive Christians were discern'd from all the Sects and Religions which were then in the World: and that by an Allusion, which is most usual in Scripture, *Philadelphia* is set to express *Brotherly Affection*. If You please to read the Charter of *Philadelphianism* in the *Epistle* to that Church, you may thence best be able to understand what a *True Philadelphian* is: and to discern the proper Marks and Characteristics of an *Angel* of this Church.

' Well, but you will justly say to me, where is there such a Church as this upon the Earth? Is it among you? No: ye yourselves do not pretend that you are either Infallible, or Impeccable. You cannot say that you are without Fault or Blame, but on the contrary, do own your selves to stand in *much Weakness and Imperfection* on one Hand, and in *much superfluity and mixture* on the other. And where will you find such Angels, or Pastors, as may have the Care of such an *Holy and True Church*? Where are these Pillars of the *Philadelphian Temple*? These conquering Worthies that have endur'd out the Hour of Temptation? These Priests that do truly bear upon them the Name of God, and of Christ, and of the City of God? Admit it be true

true, that the *Old Philadelphia Church* in the *Lydian Asia* might challenge these good Things: admit also that all these Promises may be extended to future Successions in the Church, and that there is such a *Philadelphia State* or *Era* to be expected, that may excell the former, as the Antitype doth the Type, yet what is all this to that *Nem seft with an hard Name*, which is Here started up this present Year?

What are These Philadelphians?

These are to be known *What* they are, if you behold the first Draught, for which they have sat: and do examine the Claims which they make to the Charter that I have before referr'd you to. Wherefore if you will pass a right Judgment on the Copy, I must lead to you the Original, to compare it by. And here you will do a most excellent Service; for which I my Self, and as many as are concerned with me in this truly Great Design, shall be oblig'd to thank you, and to own it for the most Meritorious Act of *Eternal Love*; if you please but to discover the Defects of the Copy, so that they may be Corrected, and the Copy made perfectly conformable to its Original. Or if it should appear to you, even Wholly, and Fundamentally, Defective, I entreat you good *Philalathes*, whoever you are, to propose any other Model, that may better serve all the Ends of Religion in General, or those which this particular Society in *England*, have had a more principal Regard to, in their Establishment. For the Ends which they have set before em, (and whereof they have given an Account to the World in their *Reasons*, and *Propositions* lately Publish'd, and also in other Books, and Epistles) are so desirable, and so very Justifiable, that I have not yet found any that have so much as offer'd to condemn them: however they may have thought the Methods recommended for the attaining of these Ends to be Improper and Inadequate, or the Ends themselves not to be Attainable in this Life. Wherefore it deserves thoroughly to be examin'd into: whether these Ends (such as, the *Gifts* and *Graces* of the Blessed Spirit of God in a perfect and mature State,) be attainable in this Life, as these *Philadelphians* seem to expect? Or if in this Life they be not Attainable, whether it may not be yet requisite to press forward, as if they were Attainable, in order to the Attainment of them in another? Also whether the Re-union of

of the divided and scatter'd Limbs of Christianity, an Universal Peace and Amity among contending Brethren, the Conversion of the Jews, the call of the *Turks* and other Infidels, the Recovery of the Apostacy, the Renovation of all things, and such like, be not great and glorious Ends, worthy of a true Discipleship of JESUS CHRIST, and most fit by all that profess his Name to be Pray'd for, and endeavour'd after, to their utmost Ability? Also whether the Methods which the *Philadelphian Society* have propos'd be proper and Adequate to these Ends of their Institution and Foundation?

By the Designs which any one has, and by the Methods which he takes to compass them, we can judge what he is. So in like manner you may hereby without much Difficulty collect *What* these *Philadelphians* are; and especially if they may be suppos'd to be Sincere in their Designs, and to follow the best Methods which are made known to them. Which I believe you will find no Reason to Question.

Wherefore you may rectify the several strange Mistakes, that are commonly Entertain'd concerning these *Philadelphians*, as if they were a New Religion started up in the World, a new Sect, a Cabal, and I know not what besides. For I assure you they heartily lament the Divisions of *Christendom*, and especially of that Part of it which professes the *Reformation*: and they are utterly Averse to all Sectarianism, and Partiality in Religion, though even upon a pretence of higher Purity. Whence it is, as you rightly observe, that they differ not from the Protestant Churches, as to External Communion. Wherefore whenever this Question shall be again put to you by any, whether your Friends or others, you may answer them to this Effect: 'They are a Religious Society for the Reformation of Manners, for the Advancement of an Heroical Christian Piety, and Universal Peace and Love towards All: who though they are deeply sensible of great Corruptions and Deviations in most, or all, of the Christian Bodies, or Communities, from the *Apostolical Rule*; yet do not therefore formally Dissent, or separate from such a particular Body, Community, or Church, in which they have before liv'd according to the best of their Light, and Understanding: much less do they persuade others to Dissent from that Communion, which they are Previously oblig'd to Adhere to, or advise them to Separate themselves upon this Account, or upon any other: And though they meet once upon even

'ry Lord's Day to implore the good Spirit of God Unitedly for
 the effecting of all the aforeſaid Ends in the Fulneſs of the
 times, and particularly for a propitious Answer to all the
 Prayers and Interceſſions then at the ſame time offer'd up, in all
 Churches and Aſſemblies of Chriſtians throughout this Kingdom,
 and throughout the World, which are ſent up with a right In-
 tention, and according to his Bleſſed Will; yet do they not e-
 ſteem their meeting ſo together to be a proper Breach of the U-
 nity with their particular Church, which they would ſtill main-
 tain: but as the moſt Authentick and Declarative Act which they
 can make of their Unity with the *Catholick* Church, and of the
Communion of Saints, which they do aſſert to be here Experienc'd
 among them, even after a *Senſible*, (though *Spiritual*) Manner. I
 do not ſay, that thus it is: neither do I hereby at preſent main-
 tain that it is a Real and Declarative Act of Communion with the
Catholick Church, or that it ought to be ſo look'd on. For that
 depends upon the right ſtating of the Nature of the *Catholick*
 Church, (about which the preſent Chriſtian World, whether
Greek or *Roman*, *Proteſtant* or *Evangelical*, is ſo greatly Puzzled)
 and of the *Formal* Reaſon of Communion with it, and of the
 different Degrees of this Communion, with the various Modes
 and Expreſſions of the ſame: And (in ſome Meaſure) upon the
Eſteem which they themſelves have of it, or that others have of
 it; or that any Prudent Perſon may be ſuppos'd to have, when
 the Matter of Fact is truly known, and the Principles and Grounds
 of the Fact fairly exhibited: And laſtly upon the ſolution of ſome
 other Intricate Queſtions, which others are as much oblig'd to
 Answer, as the *Philadelphians*. I will not therefore now main-
 tain their Meetings upon ſuch Principles, and for ſuch Ends, as they
 do hold them, to be Poſitive and Real Acts of *Catholick* Com-
 munion: But I do ſay, that there are not wanting many favour-
 able Preſumptions and Motives, to incline one, upon due Conſi-
 deration, to believe that they are ſo; and that have actually in-
 clin'd theſe to believe ſo, who are altogether Diſintereſted one
 Way, or the other, and not Inſincere in the ſearch after Truth;
 neither quite ſo Incapable to judge of its Criteria, and Signs, as
 ſome would have 'em to be. And I do only deſire every ſober
 Chriſtian, that loves the Truth, which is after God, not to con-
 demn ſuch their meeting together, though upon one part of the
 Lord's Day, as a Breach of Eccleſiaſtical Communion, untill they
 ſhall

shall have thoroughly examin'd the *Present State* of the Christian Churches, or at least so far as may be requisite in order to pass a Judicial and Definitive Sentence in this Case. I know that you, Philalethes, are of too Free and Noble a Spirit to deny me this Request: and what you can't Approve, (as I would not have you, or indeed any, to do without a Rational and Solid Conviction) you will not Instantly Condemn: but will suspend your Censure, till the Matter upon which this Case depends can be sufficiently Clear'd. But to return from this Digression, I proceed to tell you.

That this Society of Philadelphians are not for turning the *World upside down*, as some have Represented 'em: they are not Enemies to the Civil or Ecclesiastical Rights of Any: they know how to bear with the Failures of Administration, and the Exigences of Time, if not directly against the clear Light of Nature or of the Gospel; and had rather chuse to Acquiesce under some *burthensome* Impositions, than to run the Risque of disturbing the Peace and Rest of the Publick, either as to Church or State: they so fix their Hearts upon the *Magnalia Dei*, upon the Great Things of God and Nature, the deeply Mystical Work of the *Regeneration* and *Ascension* of Souls, the Manifestation of the *Spiritual Kingdom* of the *Messias*, the Discipline of *Divine Philosophy* to her Children, the Glorious *Events* of the Future Blessed World; and the Gradual *Preparations* to it: that they hardly think those little Things, (as they Appear to them to be when Compar'd with These) which divide the greatest part of Christians, to be worth their Minding: and are not for setting a Value either upon the Superstitions, or the Particularities of this or that Party: As they do not condemn the Externals or Rituals of the Christian Religion, so far as they are made Subservient to the Main Ends thereof, as Mortification, Justification, and the Communion of Christ with the Soul; so also do they not place so much in them, as to endanger by an Eager Contention for or against them, the Life, Power, and Energy of the Holy and Undeified Religion of JESUS: they seek to Worship the Father, through his Son, in Spirit and Truth, in whatever Temple, or Place, they may appear as to their Outward Persons; and Wait for that happy Day when all shall go up to Worship the Lord upon one Mountain, and in one Temple, being united into one Spirit: they are most tenderly Sensible of the Distractions, and Controversies of Christendom, at this Day; and Some of them being acquainted with the various Pretensions of the Several Churches, with the Methods that

have been taken for the *Regulation*, or *Reformation* of the Chief of them both as to Discipline and Doctrine, and with the remaining Corruptions, and Imperfections in them, after all Ordinary Means have been Try'd, have been hence stirr'd up to a diligent Research after the Primitive and Original Model of the Church of Christ, while it kept its first Love, and to an Endeavour after the most Successful Methods to retrieve the same, and to re-establish the Catholick Unity in the Band of the Spirit, according to the Manifold and wise Distribution of its Pastoral and Prophetical Gifts: They believe that all the Learning, Policy, and Power of Man are too Weak and Inefficacious to undertake so Great a Work as the Reformation and Re-union of Religion; and therefore are not without hopes of the Extraordinary Appearance of God in an Affair of so High an Import: They know that the Divine Wisdom has made frequently use of the most frail and despicable Instruments, to bring the greatest Revolutions about in the World, and has thought fit to effect the most glorious Atchievements through those that have been counted as the Dung of the Earth; hence they are perswaded that God will confound all the Wisdom and Strength of Man by the most Mysterious Stratagem of his Providence, and that he will make All Flesh to be Asham'd by those Secret Springs of his Spirit which are Now at Work: They have continually before their eye the three peculiar (and most comprehensive) Titles of the Founder of the *Philadelphian Church*, and are of the Opinion that they are all Communicable to every Member of it, when they shall be fitly Purify'd; and Prepar'd for such an Inauguration: This they say must be by the Residence of the *Glory of God* (or the Divine *Shekinah*) within the Soul, variously displaying and manifesting itself: which is also what they call the *Internal Revelation of the Kingdom of Christ*; and is what according to the most Perfect Directory of all Prayer, they suppose themselves to be obliged Daily to Petition their Eternal Father for, and to pursue after by holy Watchings, Abstractions, and Recollection of Mind.

By all this, I hope you may be able to give a tolerable Judgment, *What* these *Philadelphians* are, and what they *would* be.. But if what has been already offer'd be not Satisfaction enough, and you still persist to demand *Where*, and *Who* they are, I must beg leave, for several weighty Reasons, not to be too Open here, till I shall have a sufficient Warrant for such a Publication. But in short, I would

would not have you to look for the *Philadelphian Society* among that little Company which doth generally pass by that Name, and is resorted to as such. For this Society doth not properly consist of those who meet together for Religious Worship at such certain Times, and in such a peculiar Manner. No, it is not confin'd to these : but it doth consist of as many as are Fellow Waiters for the same glorious Prize of the first Resurrection, and the high Immunities of the *New Jerusalem-State*; though they never convers'd much with them, nor ever saw one Book or Paper of this kind, or have so much as heard of the very Name of *Philadelphian*. The Society consists of all those who sincerely Pray and Labour for better Times, of all who bear the Testimony of *Jesus*, which is the Spirit of Prophecie, and the Spirit of *Wisdom* and of *Revelation*; and of all those who in the Patience of the Kingdom of our Lord and Mighty Saviour do suffer Tribulation and Reproach. The Number of whom may not be so small, as it may appear to be: and we dare not say that we are *Alone*, or that Our Society is made up of such a little Handful. For I do not despair but that there may be *Seven Thousand Undefil'd Names* found in this Nation, that shall be numbred with the *Philadelphian Society*, when a publick and Declarative Inquisition shall be made by the Searcher of all Hearts. The numbers of this Society in other Countries may be more Considerable, then is at first easie to be believ'd. The first Motion or Eruption of it may be said to have been in *Germany*, where it has spread it self chiefly through the indefatigable Zeal of some of the Clergy; under the Name of *PIETISM*. By which a Foundation has been there laid for a greater *Spirituality* in the *Christian* Profession then was before Known, or Entertain'd, except by some few: and for a greater Propagation thereof among well dispos'd Souls, then was from the Miraculous Days of the Church until that Day. The Advancement that it has already made in a very few Years is so Considerable, that it much alarm'd a Great and Potent Prince, who is since gone to his Fathers. Nor is it unknown, I suppose, to the World how great a Mediation did then interpose for the Revocation of that Prince's Designs. Concerning which it cannot be deny'd, but that they had a very good Umbrage, several plausible Pretexts, and Reasons of State; considering that the Worst Men will often take up the best Names; and that even those who are sincere and well meaning may be attended with many (and sometimes great) Imperfections, and not

only with Erroneous, but with Destructive Notions; some of them for a shorter, others for a longer while, and some it may be even for their whole Lives: and considering likewise that some lesser Exorbitances of Practice actually were, and others yet greater might have been committed, by such as, not having been Taught by the True Guide, had learn'd to attribute their vain and turbulent Enthusiasms to the Holy Spirit of God. But though we cannot answer for the Irregularities, of all that may take up the same Title, or Name, with us, or with our Brethren in *Germany*; yet we doubt not but we shall approve our Selves, in the sight of Heaven, and of all the World, as those who follow the true *Spiritual Guide*, the Meek and Humble JESUS. Who has taught us to Pray and Wait diligently for his Appearance; that he may not surprise us, when he comes, without *Oil* in our Vessels.

I know not what stress may be laid upon the Observations which some curious Persons have concerning certain Places, which they suppose to be Considerable for certain Fatal (which I must rather call *Providential*) Propensions, certain *Critical* Dispositions, and *Periodical* Mutations in the Inhabitants; and particularly with respect to the Progress of Religion in the World. But however it be, the place of this late Eruption (if I may so call it) of a Solid, Nervous, and Spiritual Christianity, in the *Pietist* Divines, that are truly so call'd, is indeed very Singular and strange: and whatever Reflexion may be made hereby upon it, or upon this Society, deserves not to pass unobserv'd. It is now somewhat above a Century and an half since there began in *Germany*, and (what is still more remarkable) out of *Saxony*, that Grand Revolution of Religion, which by the best allow'd Expositors of Prophetical Scripture is call'd the *Sardian Reformation*, in Contradistinction to the expected *Philadelphian*: and it seems a little wonderful that now again something of a like Scene, should begin so to be Transacted about the same Place; and that as there were then many Circumstances which did concur towards so surprizing and astonishing a Work, so also at this Day they There are not lacking, if our Informations deceive us not. And further, as the *English* are a Branch from the *German* Root, so some have observ'd a Circulation as it were from the Root to the Branch, and from the Branch to the Root again, in various particulars. Moreover at the same time that Dr. *Luther* preach'd in *Germany* against the Corruptions of the Court and Church of *Rome*, there stood up others at the same time

in *Switzerland*, who pursued there the same Design, with some little Alteration. So it is also at this Day.

Neither are the *Philadelphian Society* without their Friends in *Roman Catholick* Countries, as well as in *Protestant*. It is no longer now a Mystery how the Clergy of the *Gallican Church*, and that even too the most considerable for Learning and Prudence, as well as for Piety, are Ting'd with the very same Principles upon which this Society is Founded. Some hints whereof were given above two Years ago in a Preface of the *English Editor*, before a Book Translated out of the *High German*, and call'd, *A Letter to some Divines concerning the Question*, Whether God since Christ's Ascension doth any more reveal himself to Mankind? And it begins to be notorious enough, that this Spiritual Devotion prevails not only among the *Rechuse* and the *Regulars*, but even among *Seculars*, and such as converse both in the World and in the Court. And it is Observable, that even that very Cardinal, who did lay the Foundation of the Grandeur of *France*, was a Favourer of such Principles of Devotion: and has left under his own Hand a lasting Monument of such his Esteem, by taking the Pains to Abridge them in a particular Treatise, that is deservedly valu'd by *Rationalists* as well as *Spiritualists*. Which shews that the clearest Heads have fallen into this Way, and that the Wilest Ministers of State have not thought it of such pernicious Consequence (as some do vainly surmise) to the Civil Government.

What Emotions there have been of late Years in *Italy*, and in the Kingdom of *Naples*, as I dare not undertake to justify the purity of the Source whence they proceeded; so they are too well known to be insisted on. But thus much at least may hence be gather'd, that there is generally a great Uneasiness under the Burthens of the Dominant Church in those Parts; and that there are some good Souls dispers'd who would gladly embrace a more Spiritual Religion, over-looking the outward Strength and Pomp of a Church State in Comparison of the *Inward Life and Spirit of the Gospel*.

Which is that whereby the *Philadelphians* desire that their Society may be distinguish'd. And therefore when in the Title Page of the *Theosophical Transactions* you find under-written By the *Philadelphian Society*, you are not thence to ascribe or appropriate these to such as wear the Badge of that Society in this City, or to imagine to your self that they are the Acts of any particular Convocation, or

Assem.

Assembly, of such Members: but you are to consider them as the *Mss*, which relate to the whole Philadelphian Society, whither soever dispers'd over the whole Earth, (according as the *Message* directed to them the last Year did signify) and publish'd by some that are of the same Society in *England*, who aspire after the inward Life and Spirit of Religion.

Well, you will say, the inward Life and Operative Spirit of the Religion of Christ is what we acknowledge to be the Principal, as well as they. Herein I find that we do not Disagree. This therefore (besides that it is invisible) can be no distinctive Mark either of their Society in general, or of the particular Society in *England*. *How therefore are they distinguish'd from other Christians:*

And particularly from those of the Church of England?

I can here tell you that they seek not to distinguish themselves from others, and that the Rule they go by will not suffer them to affect either *Singularity*, or *Superiority*: but that they seek rather (as far as it is in their Power) not to be distinguish'd from other Christians; and more affect an *Universality*, and generous and noble *Parity*, without encouraging the Sin of Schism by the one, or throwing waste by the other those Boundaries which the Laws either Divine, or Human, have establish'd. They pretend not to determine the Rights of the contending Parties, but leave all things *in Statu Quo*; without so much as entering into the merit of the Cause of the one or of the other. For they hope, that if the Dissenting Parties, or Societies, could be perswaded not to hate one another, and to retire more into the inward meek Life of JESUS, Matters might possibly come to be amicably adjusted on both sides, and a lasting Union in Religion concluded not only among Protestants, but even with the whole Christian World. Therefore they freely admit to them those that have a good Will to the Gospel of Christ, and seek to be conform'd to it in a Pure, Lowly, Loving and Peaceable Life; and in all other Matters so far as their Light extends; of whatever different Perswasions, or Opinions, they may be, which touch not the *Essentials* of the *Christian* Religion. And let me tell you they are so much for *Peace*, that they would have nothing but *these* to stand in competition with it: and *these* neither but so far as that *Peace* and *Truth* may be brought by this Means to kiss each other. They look beyond the most perfect external

ternal Constitution, as seeing that all must be Broken, to make way for that Pure and Spiritual Church-State, which is to descend immediately out of Heaven, according to the Representation that we have given us in the Holy Visions of the highly Beloved *John*. And, methinks, even while I am writing this, I see darkly as through a Glass this Angel of the Love descending as from the Holy City, and gently striking some of the more eminent Pastors of the Establish'd Church of this Nation, and saying as it were to them, 'Arise: here is no Abiding Place. There remains yet a more Glorious Work to be done, than your Predecessors could accomplish.

How are they distinguish'd from Quakers?

I answer, they do indeed agree with the Quakers, though not as to their external Habits, or Customs, yet as to the *Internal Principle of a Light within*. But herein also, if I mistake not, they agree not only with most of the Reformed Churches, but even with the Church of *England* it self: Who do no less own this Internal Light, or Divine Principle, when rightly Explicated, then the Quakers themselves; and who do no less lay down such Grounds, both in their Articles and Liturgy, from which a Spirit of Revelation, or Inspiration, in the Church, may be easily and fully deduced. I know not, Sir, of what Communion you are, because you speak in General Terms (somewhat Ambiguous) of the *Protestant Churches*: but I am perswaded that I can prove this to any impartial Person of what Communion you please, that is not perfectly a *Socinian*, or a *Pelagian*, if he will but stick to the Principles which he holds, and be content to follow, where they will lead him. But I chuse rather to speak of the Church of *England*, who are usually (and I think most unfairly) misrepresented as little Favourers of this internal Principle, of a Spiritual and Divine Light communicated to the Soul. I speak as to their *Principles*: And if they will but be true to *these*, as I charitably hope they are, they shall perhaps admire to find the Ground work of *that* among themselves, which they may have never thought of, or which they may have even thought themselves to be contrary to. Neither shall I for this purpose refer any Man to several of the most celebrated Writers of this Church, ever since its Reformation; from whence I could bring many pregnant Proofs of the Truth of this Internal Principle, and Light within, as by them

maintain'd: But I shall appeal to the most Authentical A&ts of its Communion, and the most solemn and constant Offices, in which all its Members are oblig'd to joyn, for a Determination of the Faith of this Church. Wherefore I shall make my Inquisition according to these Heads, viz.

I. The Manner of the Initiation of its Church Members.

II. The Manner of the Association of its Initiated Membets.

III. The Manner of Commissionating its Officers.

IV. The Daily Ministration, in which both the Church-Governours and Subjects are jointly concern'd.

V. The Commemorations of the Apostles.

I. *The manner of the Initiation of its Church Members.* This certainly ought to be allow'd as the Test of the Faith of any Church, or Christian Society. And most especially so it ought to be of that Church, or Society, in that Point, or Points, which it has hereby an immediate Respect to; and so much the more still it this be of only the Immediate, but also the Principal Respect, whence in the Initiation that the Church of *England* uses for [the Admission of its Members, if it shall appear that this Church has by it an *Immediate* and *Principal* Respect to the Internal Principle of a Light within, I hope none will be unwilling to submit to it, who would be thought *Verily* and *Indeed* Members of it. Now the manner of Initiation of Members us'd by the Church of *England* doth consist in the Office of *Baptism*, and in that of *Confirmation*: which is a Supplement, and Consummation of the former. And that the Infusion of an Internal Permanent *Light, Life, or Spirit*, (not barely for *Actual* Influences, but also for *Habitual* Residence) is the *Principal* End of *Baptism*, and which she has an Immediate Respect to in these her Offices may be collected from the following Considerations. 1. That there is a Baptismal *Illumination* maintain'd and defended by the very Ministers of it: and that from this Topick their strongest Arguments are drawn against those who dispute the Validity either of *Baptism* in General, or of that of Infants in particular. It matters not here whether there be *indeed* such a Baptismal Illumination, or that it be only believ'd to be so: for 'tis enough that they argue consistently with their own Principles; however they may afterwards modifie or qualifie the same in their Controversies with others. For this they find themselves oblig'd to, as often as they have to do with those who most loudly

loudly pretend to this Illumination of the Divine Spirit, or Word, 'ingenerated into 'em, as a Vital and Habitual Principle, or as a 'permanent *Light within*, variously and occasionally exerting it self 'in actual Influences: Ordinary and Extraordinary; as in to m ny 'Rays of Light proceeding from that *Life of Light*. And that most chiefly because these do assert the Communication or Infusion here-of to be without the Ministration of External Baptism; which they therefore lay aside. 2. That *Baptism* and *Illumination* are taken by many for Synonymous Terms: and that the most Classical Expositors and Commentators of this Church do make them that are said to have been *Enlightned*, to be only the *Baptiz'd*. And it is by some suppos'd that the Internal Light of Baptism, did in the early Days of its Administration break forth even externally, by a visible Coruscation. Several Instances are brought for the proof of this *Internal Principle* of the *Spiritual Light*, convey'd in *Baptism*: which, with what further Arguments might be drawn from the Rights of several Churches, and some particular Customs of our Ancestors, I pass over. 3. That *Regeneration* (which must be not a *new Modification*, but a *new Generation*) is attributed to the reception of Baptism: That the Subject upon which it is confer'd is thence call'd a *Member of Christ*; to signify that as really as every Member of the natural Body is quickened and influenc'd by the Natural Soul, so really is every Member of Christ's Spiritual (and Mystical) Body, quicken'd and influenc'd by that Super-natural and Spiritual Principle, which is then suppos'd to be first infused; as it were a new and higher Soul, or an inward Vital Light: That thence the said Subject is call'd a *Child of God*; which is not properly Applicable to any Creature, as such, but solely to Christ, who is the *only Begotten Son* of the Father; but improperly and mediately to the Creature, so far as it is animated with the Spirit of the *Son*, which teaches it to cry *Abba Father*; so far as it is made *partaker* with him of the *Divine Nature*; so far as it is fill'd with the *Universal Light* of all Worlds, enlightning every one that comes to it; and so far lastly as *Christ is form'd* within it, who is alone the *Heir* of the Father, and the *Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven*. And that this Regeneration by, and into, the Spirit of Christ is to be counted for another Generation or Birth, and not a bare Modification, or Alteration of the *first*, (but much less an external *Relation*) may be sufficiently evinc'd both from the Argumentation of St. Paul in his Epistles, and from the Collects thence fitly adapt-

ted by the Judicious Compilers of the *English Liturgy*. This is also most agreeable to the very Original Institution of Baptism among the *Jews*, for the initiating of their Proselytes: in which they did conceive that a *New Soul* was actually infused that, was only capable of Immortality, and of the Kingdom of the *Messias*: as it is also to that of the *Purgative Mysteries* among the *Pythagoreans*, which do answer to the Christian Baptism; according to what a most Learned Vindicator of this Church has prov'd. To conclude, the conveyance of such an Internal Principle, whether you call it the *Light within*, or whatever other Name you give to it, is that which the Church of *England*, from these Considerations, appears to have an *Immediate* Respect to, in her Baptism, whether it be of Infants or of Adults; as that whereby the Subject so admitted is conceiv'd to be instated in all the Church Privileges: which must be *Mediately* convey'd through this inward Principle of the *Light*. And it is that also to which the Church of *England* has the *Principal* Respect; as being that to which all other Regards are to be subservient and subordinate; as deriv'd from it, and centring in it. So that this may be safely allow'd as a Test of the Faith of a True Church of *England* Man; who by virtue of his Initiation into it is no less oblig'd to believe this inspired Light in the Soul, than a Quaker is. And if there be but such an internal Principle once in the Soul, then there can be no possible Reason assign'd why also there may not be true *Inspiration*, and *Revelation*, as the actual Influences and Operations of that Principle. Several other Considerations might here be brought, to conclude this to be the Reason of such a solemn Rite of Initiation into the Church and withal to shew that no Abuse of any Truth should make us ashamed to profess it; though we ought hereby to become more Wary, and Tender, and fearful of *Abusing* it when we *have*, or *pretending* to it when we have it *not*. But I must hasten to the other Heads. Which I must handle with more Brevity for the present. The Second is

II. *The Manner of the Association of its Initiated Members.*

If the former Supposition be True that the External Baptism of the Church of *England* is founded upon the Internal Baptism of the Holy Spirit, or upon the Infusion into the Baptized Person of a New Life, Light, or Spirit; then will not this latter need to be prov'd.

prov'd, Namely, that the *Eucharistical* Celebration in this same Church is grounded upon the Sustainment and Augmentation hereof, and is design'd for a mutual *Confederation* of all its Church-Members in the Holy and Spiritual Principle of the Divine *Paradisiacal Life*, in the *Light* of the *Eternal Wisdom* of God, and in the True Spirit of Christ. Let but the *Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion* be look'd into, and impartially Examined, how far it may Agree or Disagree with this Notion of *real* and *proper Union* with God and Christ, and of *Essential Communion* in the Spirit, by all the Participant Members. This will be the ready way to Decide the Matter : and that even independently on *Baptismal Regeneration*. And indeed I hardly know what *can* be said more Nervous, and Full to this Purpose, or that *would* be said with greater Force by the very sublimest Mysticks, then what I find in the *Exhortation*: which being Preparatory and Instructive, ought therefore to be taken according to the most *Popular* and *Literal* Sense. The Words that I observe are these, which are (as I have already hinted) peculiarly Address'd to the Unlearned rather then to the Learned ; to the *Idiot*, rather then to the Philologist : viz. *Then we Spiritually eat the Flesh of Christ, and Drink his Blood ; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us.* In which Words there are these three things Doctrinally Deliver'd. 1. A Spiritual Manducation of the Flesh and Blood of Christ ; concerning which the *Philadelphians* have many things to say that cannot be declared among the *Exotericks*. 2. A mutual *Inhabitation, or Circuminsestion*, of Christ and the Soul. 3. A *Reciprocal Union, or Communication* (as the Schools speak) of Idioms. There seems indeed to be a Limitation to the First of these by the Term *Spiritually* : but that is only oppos'd to *Carnally*, and not to *Really, or Substantially*. And it is further also observable that the Catechumens are not to be admitted to the Participation of so High a *Mystery*, but after a Profession made, that *the Body and Blood of Christ are herein Verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful*. Which howsoever it be Explicated, if it signifie any thing at all, must import that the Doctrine of a *Christ within*, or a *Light within*, as a Vital Principle in the Soul of every Worthy Participant, is not contrary, but exactly conformable to the Rites of Association, or Confederation, of its Initiated Members. So I proceed to

III. The Manner of Commissionating its Officers.

And here the Church of *England* seems to be more Express, then she is either in the Forms of *Initiating*, or *Associating* her Subjects. For the Offices both for the *Ordination* of her *Priests* and *Deacons*, and for the *Consecration* of her *Bishops*, do wholly turn upon this one Principle, that none ought to be admitted for Officers, or Rulers, in the Church of Christ, but those that are truly *Call'd* by the *Spirit* of Christ to that particular Office or Government in the same: and that as a Consequent hereof none ought to presume to Exercise such an Office or Government in the Church, but according as they shall be fill'd, actuated, and guided by this Internal Spirit and Light of Christ, the supreme Pastor, and Head of it. Which may be made, I think, most Evident. 1. From that Part, which the Persons *Commissionating* do bear in this Sacred Ministration. 2ly. From that which the Persons *Commissionated* do bear. 3ly. From the Contents of the *Commission* it self, that is Deliver'd. 4ly. From the Rite of the *Delivery* of the Commission, or the Imposition of Hands. And 5ly. from that part which all the *Assistants*, whether of the Clergy or of the Layety, do bear. And the Evidence in all these Particulars will be very clear from the most natural and plain Sense of the Words and Symbolical Rites then us'd, without straining or distorting them either way, but taking them according to the ordinary Construction throughout the whole New Testament, and the most Primitive Antiquity. From whence alone we can know, what it was to be *Call'd* and *Mov'd* by the *Spirit* to any Office, or Ministration in the Church: and what are properly to be understood by the Pastoral, or Doctoral Gifts of the Holy Ghost. And further yet to prove how sensible she is of the great need that there is of *Inspired* and *Enlightn'd* Teachers in the Church, this very Church of *England* doth thrice every Week solemnly supplicate the Blessed Trinity to *ILLUMINATE* all *Bishops*, *Priests*, and *Deacons*.

IV. The

IV. The Daily Ministration, in which both the Church-Governors and Subjects are jointly Concern'd.

The Church of *England* doth not only teach her Children *Occasionally* to Pray the Father, through the Son, for the *Inspiration* of his Holy Spirit; and instructs them every Lord's Day, and Holy Day, how that without this Divine Inspiration, or Illumination, the Love of God cannot be perfect, neither the *Glorification* of his Name suitable, or *Worthy*: But she doth the same also in her *Constant* Offices. For do not her Children beg of Christ in the first place, that he may open their Lips, so that they may be able to *shew forth* his Praise; after the manner that the *Inspired* Prophets did, when their Mouths were open'd by the Lord? Do they not as from this *Opening* proceed on, in Conjunction with the goodly Society, of the *Prophets*, the Heroical Army of *Martyrs*, and the glorious *Colledge* of the *Apostles*; and with all the Angelical Orders; to Praise the LORD; that is, after the same Manner as they do, in his Life, Light, and Power. Wherefore also doth the Minister salute the People with the Salutation of the Angel *Gabriel*: and the People resalute the Minister with a *Lord be with thy Spirit*; that is, that the Spirit of the Lord (as *Immanu-El*) may be joyn'd with his Spirit in his Ministerial Offices then to be perform'd? And wherefore do they both mutually Deprecate the *Removal* of the Divine Spirit, but that they may be assisted by it, as an inherent Principle of Light, how they ought to Pray unto, and Praise him? Do they not therefore Approve of Prayer by the Spirit? Yea do they not even remind God of those Noble and Miraculous Works, that have been wrought by his Spirit, both Internally and Externally, in former Days? And do they not press him to Arise, and Help them, as Antiently in the Church he was us'd to do: and to deliver 'em by some Wonderful and Extraordinary Appearances? And why do they tell him that his Honour is so concern'd to do: than which nothing can be more proper in the Mouth of a *Philadelphian*?

V. The

V. The Commemorations of the Apostles.

But as there are several Footsteps of this Doctrine of an Internal Principle of Light, which the *Philadelphians* strenuously maintain, Obvious in the Daily Ministrations of the Church of *England*, wherein both Governors and Subjects are concern'd; so there is yet somewhat still more Notable in the Commemorations of the Holy Apostles by her Celebrated. For the very Original Institution of these seems to be for no other End but to preserve an Useful Memorial of their Deeds and Sufferings, and of the great and excellent Gifts of the Holy Spirit, conferr'd upon 'em; that so the Present Church, and especially its Officers, may be hereby incited to insist in their Steps; and so to hope for the Powerful Communications of the same Blessed Spirit, in order to a Right Government of It. And I do not see why a Church of *England* Man, as Such, may not pray to be *Enlighten'd*, by the Doctrine of the Holy Apostle, and Evangelist *St. John*, who treats so particularly of the *Divine Light*; to be made a *Partaker* of the *Gifts* and *Powers* of the World to come, through the Preaching and Epistles, of the Blessed Apostle *St. Paul*, who has spoken so distinctly concerning them; and to be endued with those *Pastoral* Abilities, which were by Christ committed to the Glorious Apostle *St. Peter*, that so the Bishops, and Pastors, may be enabled (like him) to *feed the Flocks*, entrusted to their Charge. Neither do I see, why any Church of *England* Man may not safely Pray to be *filled with the Holy Ghost*, for a right Judgment in all Sacred Matters, when he commemorates the plentiful Effusion of it upon all the Apostles: or why, in particular, he may not wait in Faith for such a *Eulness* of it, as was given to the first Martyr *St. Stephen*: or why stedfastly looking up to Heaven, he may not also hope to behold the *Revelation* of the same *Glory*: or lastly, why, being establish'd in the Truth of the same *Gospel*, he may not expect that, as God did endue his Holy Apostle *Barnabas* with *Singular* and Marvellous *Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, he will not leave him destitute of such his *Manifold Gifts*, (if they be Pray'd for, and Believ'd in) nor yet of *Grace* to use them aright.

, Now

Now from a sincere Inquisition upon all these Heads I have been driven to conclude, that the Church of *England*, according to her *Principles*, and also to her Solemn and Constant Devotions, doth no less favour the Internal Principle of a Divine Light, when rightly stated, then even those who are at this Day the most of all Exclaim'd against for it. Each of these Heads might have been much more largely Deduced: and others also might easily have been Added. But if all this should not be Satisfactory, I have yet a Reserve behind: which I am ready to produce, if there shall be occasion for it, to justify the Principles as of the Catholick Church, so of the Church of *England* in this Point.

'Very well, you will say: I desir'd to know, how the *Philadelphians* are distinguish'd from the *Quakers*; and you tell me that they are *not* distinguish'd from Them, neither from the Church of *England* it self, as to the Grand Point of the *Internal Light*. But then, say you, why do not these distinctly state what they mean by it; which is so capable of being misunderstood, and so liable to be Abus'd? This, if it can be done, will answer the Intent of that Question, concerning their Discrimination from the *Quakers*.

I answer, that the *Philadelphians* do state it, after the same manner as *Justin Martyr*, and the most Early, and Soundest, Writers of the Catholick Church. They will refer you therefore to these, with whom they express their full Concurrence: who, they say, were not such Enemies either to a Publick, or Private Spirit of *Revelation*, as the Moderns commonly seem to be. But these are the more to be excus'd, in that the Excesses of some wild Pretenders to Inspiration have been so Enormous, within our own Memory, as to warp many sober Minds too much to the other side. Whereof this Society being sensible, they study no less to guard themselves against the Quick-sands of *Credulity*, then against the Rock of *Incredulity*. Wherefore though they *despise not Prophecy*; yet they *examine all things*, and will have the Spirit of Prophecy to be try'd by the *Prophets*. Neither do they receive it but according to these Limitations: *viz.*

I. No *Private* is to oppose its self to a *Publick* Spirit of *Revelation*.

II. No

II. No Private Spirit of Revelation is to oppose it self to a Publick Constitution; though it be not of Immediate Divine Appointment. [Where by *Publick Constitution* I mean both the Civil and Ecclesiastical Power: and by *Opposing* it, I mean the Usurpation of a Supreme Dictatorial Power, which would oblige the Consciences of others.]

III. The Scriptures, according to the Canon thereof by us receiv'd, are a Compleat Rule to the Church, both with Respect to *Faith*, and *Manners*: and is therefore to be the Standard of all Succeeding Revelations, or Inspirations.

IV. No Private Spirit of Revelation has a Right to set up a *New* Rule, but only to *Interpret* the former; and even that but for its own Private use, and for that of as many as shall be convinc'd of the Truth of it.

V. The Truth of the *History* of Holy Scripture must remain inviolable: and must not be taken away, or diminish'd, by any *Mystical Interpretations* whatever.

VI. Every pretended Spirit of Revelation that confesses not the *Cross* of JESUS of Nazareth: or that would find out Another *Jesus*, must be *Anathema*.

VII. The true Spirit of Revelation cannot abide with any but Holy and Humble Souls.

According to these Restrictions and Limitations They can judge of a Spirit of Revelation, either in themselves, or in others; whether it be True, or False; whether it be Good, Bad, or Mixt. And if they cannot so perfectly judge in this Case, they leave it as it is; without daring either positively to Accept, or Reject it: until the Light shall break so clearly up, as to dispell all Doubts. According also to these Restrictions They do judge of the Principles, and the Practices, which are said to have been dictated, or directed, by Divine Inspiration: and do leave others to do so likewise. But of these you may see more in some Experienc'd Mystics, who have written concerning the *Discernment of Spirits*: and in the Occasional Writings of Some of their Society, but especially in the *Editors* Preface, before the Second Volume of Mrs. *Leads* Fountain of Gardens, with respect to some Books of that Author lately sent abroad.

And here I might speak to the Query concerning the Peculiar Principles and Practices of the *Phyladelphians*: as which are said to be either Founded upon, or Confirm'd by such a Spirit of Re-

vela-

velation in some private Persons. But since they do not impose them on others, I shall beg leave to pass 'em over at this time. So I shall only deliver you my Thoughts of that singular Opinion of Theirs, known by you, *That the Coming of Christ is near at Hand*. You say you could not discern from what Topicks They could fetch their Evidence: For it cannot be found out by *Reason*; neither by *Private Revelation*, without a Sign; nor yet by the *Publick Revelation* of the Scriptures, which are by you suppos'd to make rather against, then for them. As to the first of these they grant that this Thing cannot be found out by it: but yet they are apt to think that when once it is Discover'd by *Revelation*, it may be *Rationally* Confirm'd by certain Phenomena in *Nature*. As to the Second, they chuse rather to Wave, then absolutely to lay it aside. For they themselves may possibly have an *Internal Evidence* hereof, without an *External Sign*, or Assurance to others: and therefore may be allow'd to *warn and awaken the World, that they may prepare against that Great and Solemn Time*. As with some Prophets it has been: who have been found to Act conformably to this *Internal Evidence* alone, and that with good Success. But this I am Inform'd is under the Management of another Pen, upon whom this Task has been laid by a Person of very great Eminence.

But as to the *Third*, which is the *Publick Revelation* of the Scriptures, they are most willing to joyn Issue there. Notwithstanding they distinguish in the first place, what they here mean by the *Coming of Christ*; and what by the *near Approach* of it. Now I do not find that by the *Coming of Christ*, when they say that it is *near*, they understand his *Visible Appearance* in the Clouds: but a coming *in Spirit*, or in powerful Demonstrations of the Holy Ghost, for the Edifying an Hoily and Perfect Church upon the Earth, amidst whom the *Living Oracle*, and the *Shecinah*, or Tabernacle of *Glory* may remain: that may be as the *First Fruits* of a Full *Harvest* afterward to be gather'd in. And by the *near Approach* of this *Spiritual Coming of Christ*, after an Extraordinary Manner, they mean no more but that the *First Breaking out* of it is very nigh, (probably in this present Generation) because there are already some Witnesses hereof *rais'd up* in diverse Countries; and that there shall be a *Gradual Succession* and Augmentation of the same, till the whole Number of the *First Born* be made up; so that the *After Born*, or the *Remnant of the Seed*, may in process of time come also to be Admitted into the same Fold.

E

So

So that the Difficulties that are by you drawn from the 11th. and 16th. Chapters of the *Revelations* of St. *John*, do not so press the *Philadelphian Society*, as they may at first seem to do. For they grant that there are many things yet to be Accomplish'd before that Great and *Personal* Coming of Christ in the Days of the the Seventh Trumpet; as relating to the Witnesses, the Earthquake, the Fall of the Tenth Part of the City, the Second and Third Woe, &c. Neither do they dispute, whether the Effusion of the Seven Vials, be to be understood Mystically; or Literally; or both ways: whether any of them be yet past, or whether all of them remain still to be pour'd out: whether they be Gradual Preparations for a General Conflagration, or what else they may be. For the Foundation of this Society will still continue the same: And though they should not be able nicely to fix the Beginning of the Reign of *Anti-Christ*, yet they may be able to compute pretty well, that the Coming of Christ (as before Explicated) cannot now be *far off*.

For there are many Motives of Credibility, and Rational Presumptions, which they draw from the Written Word of God, to confirm their Judgment in this Particular; of the nearness of the Reign of Christ in Spirit. I shall instance in one or two: which I shall leave you to deduce further. The first Motive therefore of Credibility for the near Approach, of Christ in the Powers of his Spirit, I shall take from the Great Line of Ecclesiastical Time, which was given by the *Numberer of Secrets* to the Prophet *Daniel*, and was to expire with the Purification of the Sanctuary, which is the Restoration of the Church to its Primitive State. Now nothing more will want to be suppos'd here, but that according to the Prophetical Stile, a Day is taken for a Year. So that from the Date of the Vision untill that Blessed Time, there were to pass away two Thousand and three Hundred Years. Now let us examine, if you please, whether these be yet drawing near to a Period. This will not be difficult to find out: since it shall not be necessary hereto to be very Nice in our Calculations. This we may be easily assur'd of, that *Daniel* Prophesied about Six Hundred Years before the Birth of Christ: and that the Date of this Vision, which was in the third Year of the Reign of *Belshazzar* (call'd *Nebo Nidlochus*) could not be above three or four Year more or less; according to the Computation of some Indifferent Persons. Now if to Six Hundred you shall

shall add the Years, that are lapsed since Christ, you will find this Term allotted for the Purification of the Church to expire about the end of * this present Century. This gross * 600
Calculation will be sufficient for my Purpose, and for that 1700
of the Society. Since they are Sensible, that an exact —
Scrutiny into this Matter is of very great Difficulty, 2300
if not of absolute *Impossibility*: upon these Accounts, viz.

1. We cannot be certain of what Variation there may be in the Years, the odd Days in the space of seventy Years making up one Compleat Year. 2. We cannot be very Certain what may be the true *Era* of Christ's Birth; some Chronologists placing it two, three, or even four Years higher or lower. 3. We cannot be certain what, or how long may be the *Shortening* of the Time, which is Promis'd. All which ought to make every one very Careful in Determinations of this Kind. But yet all due Allowances being made, the Distance will not be considerable: and the *Philadelphian* Society may well be excus'd for Alarming the World against such a solemn Day, as is drawing on, in order to prepare for it *by a good Life, Universal Charity, and Union among the Christian Churches.*

Another Motive of Credibility from Scripture-Revelation for the near Approach of a Great and Signal *Reformation* in the Church, according to the most perfect Model, I shall take from that most Antient Interpretation, or Application, (Generally Receiv'd by the Primitive Christians) of the *Seven Days* of the *Creation* and *Rest* of the World; the Seven Great Days, each containing a Thousand Years, which Allotment seems to be favour'd by no less a Person than *St. Peter*. Whence if there be, according to the known Tradition of one of the greatest Schools among the *Jews*, about two Thousand Years allow'd before the Law, as many under it; and as many after it, in the present Dispensation of the Christian Church; it will follow that as the *Seventh* Thousand Years are to be the Grand *Sabbatical* Day of this Our Orb; so the Preparation for it must be some proportionable Time before, in the *Sixth* Thousand, like as the *Jewish* Sabbath did begin upon the Evening of the *Sixth* Day; and according as it is Prophesied, *At Evening tide it shall be light*. How long this Proportionable Time may be I do not fix: but I think it may be pretty nearly Calculated from the Type. However I shall not lay any greater stress upon such Typical, or Mystical Explications, though well grounded, than you are willing to allow them. Thus much at least I dare to say on

that it is not contested, to have been a very early, and a very spreading Belief in the Church.

There are several other Arguments and Motives, which may be extracted out of the Holy Scriptures, for the Authenticating such a Belief as this. But because in order to make them Convictive, some things must be previously Prov'd, which I will not beg to be Suppos'd; therefore I cannot make use of 'em at present. So I am necessitated to wait till the way be more clear'd: and what relates to the Course of the *Jubilees*, the Feast of *Tabernacles*, as also that of *Trumpets*, and the *Signs* of the Times I must pass over; with some Chronological Disquisitions that might be too Intricate for the greatest part of Readers, who love not to puzzle themselves with Difficulties of this Kind.

What relates to the Periodical Successions of the Church, according to the Seven Typical Churches of *Asia*; and especially to the Period now about beginning: and to the Solution of that Question, whether the Seventh and the Sixth be Concomitant, or Successive States; I am oblig'd to consider, (if God shall enable me by his Spirit, that *Searcheth the hidden things*) in Answer to some Questions lately sent from a very Learned Quirist. In the mean time I shall only say, that we now seem to be drawing near to an End of the *Sardian* State: and that the Weak Beginnings of the *Philadelphian* will concur with this, till it obtain more Strength, and the former be made to give place to it. For which Blessed Days to Watch and Pray is the Peculiar Employment of this Society: that so LOVE may triumph over all, unite all Breaches, cement all Ruptures, and reconcile all Differences; that amidst all the Contending Brethren, who profess the Name of Christ, an Universal Peace may be establish'd in which Mercy and Truth may meet each other; and that the Angelical Hosts beholding the Peace of our *Jerusalem*, may again Sing *Glory to God in the Highest*; and cry to each other, *How Good and how Pleasant is it for Brethren thus to dwell together in Unity!*

This is the *Philadelphian Alliance*, which they have now begun to found: and will not give over to found, till the Revived Church of *Jerusalem*, in *Philadelphia*, be built as a City that is compacted together, by the indissoluble Knot of *Fraternal Love*. Neither are they afraid to expose themselves for so Excellent a Cause, as they have appear'd for: but do the more loudly redouble their Cry, *Arise, O ye Brethren, and let us go up together unto the TESTIMONY of Israel.*

Israel, to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord. For there do sit the Thrones of JUDGMENT.

And while I am but mentioning this, my Heart even burns within me for Zeal to our Common Country, that they may hear the Voice of this Cry, which is now sounded in their Ears: and may lay aside all little Animosities and Bitternesses; so agreeing to worship the Lord with one Lip and with one Heart, in Peace and Love without End.

Whether this may be thought Worthy of the Cognisance, or Consultations, of the Governors and Representatives of the Church Establish'd by Law, as also of the several Classes of Dissenting Brethren from her (who do not generally so much as pretend to Dissent, but for the Cause of greater *Purity* and *Spirituality*) I leave you, Sir, (and Them) to consider. And how far an Enterprize of this Nature, when freed from Mistaken Constructions, may be fit to be Promoted by Both; and how far it may also hope for the Favourable Concurrence at this time, and Encouragement of all Reform'd (if not of all *Christian*) Princes, and States; and (in a Special Manner) of Such Now Bearing the Key of the Government in this Kingdom, for some End yet reserv'd in God's Secret Cabinet; and particularly, of that Noble and Honourable Assembly which is Now Sitting, and Consulting the most Probable *Ways and Means* to Secure Peace and Prosperity to This Nation; If the said Enterprize shall be found Suitable and Proper to those Ends of the *Philadelphian Society* (at Home and Abroad) which have been Propo'd; I leave you also to consider, and the Supreme Mover of all Hearts to direct.

Thus have I freely open'd to you the Sence of this Society, and the Grounds of their Pretensions: And in what I have been defective you will do, Sir, an Acceptable Piece of Service in signifying it to

Your Humble Servant,

Philadelphia.

Second Message to the Philadelphian Society; and Touch-stone to the gathered Churches. p. 107.

This is the PHILADELPHIAN Church which I must Proclaim; and which is already, in some Measure, Begun: And, though at first it has but a *little Strength*, and be Comparatively as a Grain of Mustard Seed, it shall spring up as a mighty Tree; whence the *Lebanon-Glory*, under the Shadow of it, will come to open, in Power and MAJESTY.

POST

See Seder O'lam. p. 147.

P O S T - S C R I P T.

S I R,

Since these Sheets were gone to the Press there came to my Hand a Piece, call'd *Bourignianism Detected*; wherein I expected (from its more General Intent) to find something relating to the Pretensions of *This Society*. But the Learned and Ingenious Author gives one Comprehensive Blow at them, and many others. For he is pleas'd to say, That *Our Quakers and Philadelphians, as well as the Quietists and Pietists abroad, are of the same Kidney, and do all stand upon the same Foundation; so that what overturns one, overturns all.* They may have truly, for ought I know, the same *Resolution of Faith*: but whether this may involve all under the same Condemnation I leave you to consider. Sure I am that *Our Church of England Men and Presbyterians, as well as the Unitarians and Zuinglians* both at Home and Abroad, are not so very easily to be Wounded all by one Blow; though they pretend to stand all upon one *Foundation*, and do *Resolve* the Principles of their *Faith*, according to the same *Rule*. And notwithstanding the Principle of an *Internal Light* be that which all these do pretend to alike, yet none have written better, or with more Perspicuity and Solidity, against all *Enthusiastical Impostures and Delusions*, then they who have possess'd the same Principle; such as the Profound *Juan de la Cruz*, and several others. Let the Case of *Antonia Bourignon* be what it will, I desire that Justice may be done. And I hope to see her *True Character* undertaken by One, that is neither a Friend, nor an Adversary.

F I N I S.

BOOKS

Books lately Published by some of the *Philadelphian Society*.

A Letter to some Divines, concerning the Question, Whether God since Christ's Ascension doth any more Reveal himself to Mankind by the Means of Divine Apparitions? With an Exact Account of what God had bestowed upon a Noble Maid, from the Seventh Year until now. Written Originally in High Dutch 1695. Price 1 s.

The Laws of Paradise, Given forth by Wisdom to a Translated Spirit. 1695. Price 6 d.

The Wonders of God's Creation manifested in the Variety of Eight Worlds, as they were made known Experimentally to the Author J. L. 1695. Price 6 d.

The Message of the Philadelphian Society, Whithersoever dispersed over the Whole Earth: With a Second Message to the same Society and a Touchstone to the Gathered Churches. By J. Lead, 1696. Price 6 d.

The Tree of Faith, or Tree of Life, springing up in the Paradise of God. From which all the Wonders of the New Creation must proceed. To which is Added,

The Ark of Faith, as a Supplement to the Same, containing a Discovery of the New World. By J. Lead, 1696. Price Bound 1 s.

A Fountain of Gardens Watered by the Rivers of Divine Pleasure, and Springing up in all the Variety of Spiritual Plants; blown up by the Pure Breath into a Paradise. To which is Prefixed a Poem, Introductory to the Philadelphian Age, call'd Solomon's Porch or the Beautiful Gate of Wisdom's Temple, 1697. Price 4 s.

A Fountain of Gardens. Vol. II. Being a Continuation of the Process of a Life according to Faith, of the Divinely Magical Knowledge, and of the New Creation, in Mutual Entertainments betwixt the Essential Wisdom and the Soul in her Progress through Paradise, to Mount Zion, and to the New Jerusalem; 1697. Price 4 s.

A Revelation of the Everlasting Gospel-Message, which shall never cease to be Preach'd till the Hour of Christ's Eternal Judgment shall come: Whereby will be Proclaim'd the Last Love Jubilee, in order to the Restitution of the Whole Lapsed Creation, whether Human, or Angelical, 1697. Price 6 d.

A New Years Gift, or a Token of Love to all Persons of what Persuasion soever. In three Parts. By *Mary Sterrell*.

An Earnest Call of the *Eternal Love* of God. Published in the Beginning of this 1696 Year in *High Dutch*, and Printed in *Amsterdam*. Price 4 d.

Theosophical Transactions, Number I. II. III.

Propositions extracted from the Reasons for the Foundation and Promotion of a *Philadelphian Society*. Price 3 d.

9 NOV 3

Page 6. l. 13. to you, read you to.
