



N<sup>o</sup> 146. Friday, August 17.

*Nemo Vir Magnus sine aliquo Afflatu divino unquam fuit.*  
Tull.

WE know the highest Pleasure our Minds are capable of enjoying with Composure, when we read sublime Thoughts communicated to us by Men of great Genius and Eloquence. Such is the Entertainment we meet with in the philosophick Parts of *Cicero's* Writings. Truth and good Sense have there so charming a Dress, that they could hardly be more agreeably represented with the Addition of poetical Fiction and the Power of Numbers. This ancient Author, and a modern one, have fallen into my Hands within these few Days; and the Impressions they have left upon me, have at the present quite spoiled me for a merry Fellow. The Modern is that admirable Writer the Author of the Theory of the Earth. The Subjects with which I have lately been entertained in them both bear a near Affinity; they are upon Inquiries into Hereafter, and the Thoughts of the latter seem to me to be raised above those of the former in proportion to his Advantages of Scripture and Revelation. If I had a mind to it, I could not at present talk of any thing else; therefore I shall translate a Passage in the one, and transcribe a Paragraph out of the other, for the Speculation of this Day. *Cicero* tells us, that *Plato* reports *Socrates* upon receiving his Sentence, to have spoken to his Judges in the following Manner.

‘ I have great Hopes, oh my Judges, that it is infinitely to my Advantage that I am sent to Death: For it must of Necessity be, that one of these two things must be the Consequence. Death must take away all these Senses, or convey me to another Life. If all Sense is to be taken away, and Death is no more than that profound Sleep without Dreams, in which we are sometimes buried, oh Heavens! how desirable is it to die? how many Days do we know in Life preferable to  
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such a State? But if it be true that Death is but a Passage to Places which they who lived before us do now inhabit, how much still happier is it to go from those who call themselves Judges, to appear before those that really are such; before *Minos*, *Rhadamanthus*, *Æacus* and *Triptolemus*, and to meet Men who have lived with Justice and Truth? Is this, do you think, no happy Journey? Do you think it nothing to speak with *Orpheus*, *Museus*, *Homer* and *Hesiod*? I would, indeed, suffer many Deaths to enjoy these Things. With what particular Delight should I talk to *Palamedes*, *Ajax*, and others, who like me have suffered by the Iniquity of their Judges. I should examine the Wisdom of that great Prince, who carried such mighty Forces against *Troy*; and argue with *Ulysses* and *Sisyphus*, upon difficult Points, as I have in Conversation here, without being in Danger of being condemned. But let not those among you who have pronounced me an innocent Man be afraid of Death. No Harm can arrive at a good Man whether dead or living; his Affairs are always under the Direction of the Gods; nor will I believe the Fate which is allotted to me my self this Day to have arrived by Chance; nor have I ought to say either against my Judges or Accusers, but that they thought they did me an Injury — But I detain you too long, it is Time that I retire to Death, and you to your Affairs of Life; which of us has the Better is known to the Gods, but to no mortal Man.

THE divine *Socrates* is here represented in a Figure worthy his great Wisdom and Philosophy, worthy the greatest mere Man that ever breathed. But the modern Discourse is written upon a Subject no less than the Dissolution of Nature it self. Oh how glorious is the old Age of that great Man, who has spent his Time in such Contemplations as has made this Being, what only it should be, an Education for Heaven! He has, according to the Lights of Reason and Revelation, which seemed to him clearest, traced the Steps of Omnipotence: He has, with a Celestial Ambition, as far as it is consistent with Humility and Devotion, examined the Ways of Providence, from the Creation to the Dissolution of the visible World. How pleasing must have been the Speculation,

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to observe Nature and Providence move together, the physical and moral World march the same Pace: To observe Paradise and eternal Spring the Seat of Innocence, troubled Seasons, and angry Skies the Portion of Wickedness and Vice. When this admirable Author has reviewed all that has past, or is to come, which relates to the habitable World, and run through the whole Fate of it, how could a Guardian Angel, that had attended it through all its Courses or Changes, speak more emphatically at the End of his Charge, than does our Author when he makes, as it were, a Funeral Oration over this Globe, looking to the Point where it once stood?

‘LET us only, if you please, to take Leave of this Subject, reflect upon this Occasion on the Vanity and transient Glory of this habitable World. How by the Force of one Element breaking loose upon the rest, all the Vanities of Nature, all the Works of Art, all the Labours of Men, are reduced to Nothing. All that we admired and adored before as great and magnificent, is obliterated or vanished; and another Form and Face of things, plain, simple, and every where the same, overspreads the whole Earth. Where are now the great Empires of the World, and their great Imperial Cities? Their Pillars, Trophies and Monuments of Glory? Shew me where they stood, read the Inscription, tell me the Victor’s Name. What Remains, what Impressions, what Difference, or Distinction, do you see in this Mass of Fire? *Rome* it self, eternal *Rome*, the great City, the Empress of the World, whose Domination and Superstition, ancient and modern, make a great Part of the History of this Earth, what is become of her now? She laid her Foundations deep, and her Palaces were strong and sumptuous; *She glorified her self, and lived deliciously, and said in her Heart I sit a Queen, and shall see no Sorrow*: But her Hour is come, she is wiped away from the Face of the Earth, and buried in everlasting Oblivion. But it is not Cities only, and Works of Mens Hands, but the everlasting Hills, the Mountains and Rocks of the Earth are melted as Wax before the Sun, and *their Place is no where found*. Here stood the *Alpes*, the Load of the Earth, that covered many Countries,