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Author(s): Rhodri Lewis

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Of “Origenian Platonisme”: Joseph Glanvill on the Pre-existence of Souls

Rhodri Lewis

IN OCTOBER 1666 John Beale—the Somerset clergyman, polymath, and Fellow of the Royal Society—informed Robert Boyle that a younger colleague was intending to write a theological work defending the workings of divine providence. This younger colleague was Joseph Glanvill, and Beale remarked that if Glanvill kept “off Origen,” his work might be successful. Glanvill, Beale added, “hath a flowry pen, & may doe well if we can ballaste him from Origenian Platonisme & Extravagant adventures.”¹ Beale was referring to the teachings of the Church Father Origen of Alexandria, which had long been a part of a theological legacy with which independent-minded thinkers and scholars were able to combat the bleak orthodoxies of Augustinian anthropology. Origen’s thought had proved particularly attractive in the course of the 1650s, when a number of theologians (generally, if misleadingly, described as “Cambridge Platonists”) sought to counterbalance the deprecation of human reason and agency in Reformed, and specifically Puritan, religious doctrine.² Although educated at Oxford, Glanvill sought to identify himself with the program of the Cambridge theologians from the late 1650s, and in 1662 published *Lux Orientalis*, devoted to the

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1. Beale-Boyle, 31 October 1666, *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, 6 vols., ed. Michael Hunter et al. (London, 2001), 3:260 (hereafter *BC*). For an account of Beale and for further references, see Rhodri Lewis, “‘The Best Mnemonical Expedient’: John Beale’s Art of Memory and Its Uses,” *The Seventeenth Century* 20 (2005): 113–44.

2. See, for example, Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: Europe’s House Divided 1490–1700* (London, 2003), 113–14. On Origen’s importance to mid-seventeenth-century English thought, see D. W. Dockrill, “The Fathers and the Theology of the Cambridge Platonists,” *Studia Patristica* 17 (1982): 427–39; Jean-Louis Quantin, “The Fathers in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Theology,” in Irena Backus, ed., *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1997), 2:987–1008, esp. 1005. The term “Cambridge Platonists” was given common currency by John Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1872). See further G. A. J. Rogers et al., eds., *Cambridge Platonists in Philosophical Context: Politics, Metaphysics and Religion* (Dordrecht, 1997), and the works cited in n. 68 below.

propagation of Origen's doctrine of the pre-existence of souls.³ However, after the restoration of the Church of England in 1660 and the 1662 Act of Uniformity, doctrinal heterodoxy of any sort was frowned upon as a threat to theological and ecclesiastical order—an order that had only just been reasserted after having atrophied so dramatically in the course of the preceding two decades. In this light, it is perhaps not surprising that Glanvill's efforts met with the predominantly hostile reception detailed below, even from those who shared his proclivity for “rational” religion.

Accounts of the uses to which the notion of the pre-existence of souls was put in seventeenth-century England have paid close attention to the writings of Henry More—the keystone of the Cambridge Platonist movement—and to Glanvill's *Lux Orientalis*. Here I examine the full extent of Glanvill's involvement with it, both before the publication of his *Lux* and for a number of years thereafter.⁴ In so doing, I hope to cast into sharper relief the political, philosophical, and religious dynamics impacting upon rational religion and its adherents in post-Restoration England. In the appendix to the article I provide a transcription from the manuscript of a letter Glanvill wrote about the pre-existence of souls, and identify its anonymous recipient.



The better to understand later discussions of Origen's thought, it seems necessary to begin with a word about what it comprised. Adamantius Origen(es) became perhaps the most controversial of the Church Fathers; his doctrines were officially condemned as early as 400, and his optimistic theology was rigorously opposed by Augustine. But he was the author of the seminal work of Christian Platonism, *On First Principles*, written in Alexandria at some point between 220 and 225. Only fragments of this work's four books survive in their original Greek, but its entirety has been preserved in Latin translation.⁵ A seventeenth-century admirer conveniently summarizes his thought in six “dogmata”:

3. The best and most comprehensive studies of Glanvill are Jackson I. Cope, *Joseph Glanvill: Anglican Apologist* (St. Louis, 1956); and Uwe Pauschert, *Joseph Glanvill und die Neue Wissenschaft des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994). See further Sascha Talmor, *Glanvill: The Uses and Abuses of Scepticism* (Oxford, 1981).

4. See Cope, *Glanvill*, 87–90; D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (London, 1964), 122–55; Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1991), 71–74; Peter Harrison, “Animal Souls, Metempsychosis, and Theodicy in Seventeenth-Century English Thought,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 31 (1993): 519–44; Sarah Hutton, “Henry More and Anne Conway on Pre-existence and Universal Salvation,” in Marialuisa Baldi, ed., “*Mind Senior to the World*”: *Stoicismo e origenismo nella filosofia platonica del Seicento inglese* (Milan, 1996), 113–25; D. W. Dockrill, “The Heritage of Patristic Platonism in Seventeenth-Century English Philosophical Theology,” in Rogers et al., eds., *Cambridge Platonists*, 55–77; Nicholas Tyacke, *Aspects of English Protestantism c. 1530–1700* (Manchester, 2001), 326–28; Robert Crocker, *Henry More, 1614–1687: A Biography of the Cambridge Platonist* (Dordrecht, 2003), 111–25; Sarah Hutton, *Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher* (Cambridge, 2004), 69–72.

5. See Antonia Tripolitis, *Origen: A Critical Reading* (New York, 1983), 15; Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton, N.J., 1992).

- I. His doctrine concerning the Holy Trinity, amongst the *hypostases* whereof, they say, he puts an *inequality*.
- II. That the souls of men do *praeexist*.
- III. That through their fault and negligence they appear here inhabitants of earth, cloath'd with *terrestrial* bodies.
- IV. That the mystery of the Resurrection is this, that we shall be clothed with heavenly or *aethereal* bodies.
- V. That after long *periods* of time, the damned shall be delivered from their torments, and try their fortunes again in such regions of the world as their Nature fits them for.
- VI. That the Earth after her *Conflagration* shall become habitable again, and be mansion of men and other *animals*, and this in eternal *vicissitudes*.⁶

The author might have paid attention to the central issue of free will in his précis of Origen's beliefs, and much more might be said about each of the six dogmata he does mention, but this summary is a useful departure point for the purposes of this essay.⁷ Of most importance here is Origen's doctrine of the soul, central to dogmata II through V.⁸

In the beginning, God created a collectivity of "pure minds," or *logika*, which were incorporeal, immortal, perfectly free, and able to partake of life in communion with God.⁹ However, through weariness, laziness, or inherent changeability—in each case, through the abuse of their freedom—these *logika* fell away from God. The most rebellious of them became demonic spirits and were clothed in the grossest matter, the less corrupted became (human) "souls," or *psuchai*, while those who had only lapsed a little from the good became angels and the spirits that animate the sun, moon and

Mark Edwards's recent study *Origen against Plato* (Aldershot, U.K., 2002), argues that it is mistaken to view Origen's teachings as straightforwardly Platonic; although compelling, the very revisionism of this account is a marker of its limited relation to the way Origen's thought has traditionally been understood.

6. [George Rust], *A Letter of Resolution Concerning Origen and the Chief of his Opinions. Written to the Learned and Most Ingenious C.L. Esquire; and by him Published* (London, 1661), 14. On the authorship of this tract, see nn. 34–43 below.

7. For a full overview, see Henri Crouzel, *Origen: The Life and Thought of the First Great Theologian*, trans. A.S. Worrall (San Francisco, 1989); J. M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1977); Harry A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, Vol. 1: Faith, Trinity, Incarnation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956).

8. See Antonia Tripolitis, *The Doctrine of the Soul in the Thought of Origen and Plotinus* (New York, 1978); Harry A. Wolfson, "Immortality of the Soul and Resurrection in the Philosophy of the Church Fathers," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 22 (1956–57): 5–40. See further Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 3 vols., ed. David Womersley (Harmondsworth, U.K., 1994), 1:463–64; Norman P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin: A Historical and Critical Study* (London, 1927), 210–19.

9. Origen, *On First Principles*, ed. and trans. G. W. Butterworth (New York, 1966), 2.9.1. Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 4.3.12–16. The doctrine of the soul's pre-existence was condemned by the Second Council of Constantinople in 553. The origins of pre-existence lie in Platonic thought, particularly the *Phaedo*. See Plato, *Phaedo*, 63e–69e, 80c–84b and passim; Plato, *Phaedrus*, 245c–249d; Plato, *Republic*, 608d–612a. Cf. Edwards, *Origen against Plato*, 87–101.

stars.¹⁰ The only pure rational creature to avoid the fall was the “soul of Christ.”¹¹ In all cases, incorporeality became impossible for the fallen *logika*, as their existence was dependent on being clothed by some form of material vehicle—whether of the coarsest sort, or somewhere on the ascending scale from the terrestrial to the aerial to the ethereal. Although the human body was created for the rational beings *after* their fall away from God, no human soul can now exist without one.¹² The example of Christ is the one that all human souls should imitate, in that they should strive to grasp divine mysteries through cooperation with God, insofar as such an understanding is embedded within their natures. If successful in this, these souls would eventually return to their condition of communion with God. But such is not possible in this life, and can be attained only after several degrees of post-mortal purification.¹³

After death, the soul sleeps until the end of the age (each soul can only be born once in any given age), whereupon the world is consumed by fire; it then awakens and is subject to divine judgment. After the conflagration, the purest souls ascend to the deity; the remainder are reincarnated in earthly form, that they might—with a view to eventual salvation—purify themselves, after Christ’s example, more effectually.¹⁴ A necessary corollary of this idea was the doctrine of *metempsychosis*, or the transmigration of souls.¹⁵ Souls will continue to be reborn, and ages continue to multiply, until such time as all beings are restored to their pristine unity with God, a condition Origen deemed *apokatastasis*.¹⁶

It is also worth dwelling on one point that will be important in the context of the letter transcribed in the appendix to this article: namely, the struggle to formulate the precise nature of the relationship between the soul and the body in which it is embedded. Crucially, Origen at all times presents the body as directly fitted to the nature of the soul that it incarnates: it is never just the base matter of the sort sometimes propounded in Platonic or Neoplatonic thought. The body, rather, is a necessary principle of limitation, providing each soul with an expression of its identity. This image of the soul, like the soul itself, is eternal; it is capable of being transformed in terms of the soul’s relative purity (in terms of the terrestrial, aerial, or ethereal vehicles) as the soul progresses from one age to another, but it cannot be discarded. Origen’s thought

10. *First Principles*, 2.8.

11. *Ibid.*, 2.6.5.

12. *Ibid.*, 2.2.1–2; 4.3.15.

13. *Ibid.*, 2.9.2–8; 3.6.1.

14. *Ibid.*, 2.10; 2.11.4–7; 3.6. For the origins of Origen’s idea of the conflagration—a Stoic doctrine with Platonic beginnings and biblical parallels—see Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, 2.46; Plato, *Timaeus*, 22c; 2 Peter 3:10–12.

15. *Metempsychosis* is the common name for the concept more properly referred to as *palingenesis* or *metensōmatōsis*. It is referred to by Plato (in, e.g., *Phaedo*, 70a; *Phaedrus*, 249b–c; *Meno*, 81a–d) but has its roots in Pythagorean thought. See H. S. Long, *A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Greece from Pythagoras to Plato* (Princeton, N.J., 1948), esp. 65–86; Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2d ed. (London, 1982), 103–11. See further Ugo Bianchi, “Origen’s Treatment of the Soul and the Debate over Metensomatosis,” in Lothar Lies, ed., *Origeniana Quarta* (Innsbruck, 1987), 220–81.

16. *First Principles*, 1.6.1; 2.10.8. See Plato, *Phaedrus*, 248d–249d, and cf., e.g., Plato, *Republic*, 517c–d, 519c–e, where the soul of the philosopher can only rest when in complete contemplation of the good.

espouses a form of dualism here, to be sure, but it is a form in which the two parts of human existence have an essential and divinely ordained congruity, if not unity. It might be stating the obvious, but if we agree that Origen's theory of the soul has a Platonic dimension, "Origenian Platonism" is of a decidedly different variety from that proposed by Plato himself.¹⁷



The first Civil War by then over and (a different sort of) order having been restored by the Parliamentary visitation, the late 1640s saw vigorous debates in the University of Cambridge on the difficult question of psychogenesis. Given the soul's immortality, what were its origins and how was it propagated in each new human life? In deciding upon the origins of the human soul, three basic positions were adopted. First, that of creationism, in which each soul is newly created by God and "breathed into" the bodies of human beings at conception, birth, or sometime in between; this was the prevailing view of Reformed thought. Second, that of traduction, in which souls are perpetuated from parent to child in the act of conception; this was the view generally held within Lutheran thought. Third, the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, which held that souls are pre-created and then incarnated at some later time.¹⁸ Nathaniel Culverwell delivered a series of sermons in Emmanuel College in the academic year 1646–47, taking as his text Proverbs 20:27, that the reason of man was the "candle of the lord," and these sermons were arranged into a treatise, posthumously published in 1652. Its popularity would dictate reprints in 1654, 1661, and 1669.¹⁹ Culverwell treated in detail the questions surrounding the origins of the soul, concluding that although traduction could be ruled out as impugning the soul's "deiformity" with the mortal (and despite his express hostility to the Platonism that underwrote pre-existence), it was not possible to say which of the two other options was correct: "'tis enough for us that the spirit of man either by vertue of its constant creation, or by vertue of its first creation *is the candle of the Lord.*"²⁰

Early 1647 saw a public debate on these questions at the Cambridge Schools, in which the participants neither suspended their judgment nor expressed themselves with such circumspection. One of these was Charles Hotham, a fellow of Peterhouse.²¹ In his *Ad Philosophiam Teutonicam Manuductio*, Hotham discussed the three

17. *First Principles*, 1.6.4; 2.2; 4.3.15. For a convenient summary of the traditional Platonic debase-ment of the body in favor of the soul, see Plato, *Cratylus*, 399d–400c.

18. The opposition between traduction and creationism is a topos stretching back to Tertullian and Augustine. On the longevity of these debates within Protestant thought, see Arnold Williams, *The Common Expositor: An Account of the Commentaries on Genesis 1527–1633* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1948), 76–80; Don Cameron Allen, *Doubt's Boundless Sea: Skepticism and Faith in the Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1972), 157–62; Norman T. Burns, *Christian Mortalism from Tyndale to Milton* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972). For Augustine's difficulties with the question of psychogenesis, see J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London, 1958), 344–46.

19. Nathaniel Culverwell, *An Elegant and Learned Discourse of the Light of Nature* (London, 1652).

20. *Ibid.*, 97.

21. See the account of this debate in Charles Hotham, *Ad Philosophiam Teutonicam Manuductio, sive Determinatio de Origine Animae Humanae* (London, 1648). On Hotham, see Arnold G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised: Being a Revision of Edmund Calamy's Account of the Ministers Ejected and Silenced 1660–62* (Oxford, 1934), 278–79. This work was translated as *An Introduction to the Tevtonick*

competing hypotheses at some length, concluding that although the doctrine of pre-existence was to be commended for “its glorious deduction, and that it hath spirit and light in it beseeing those Heroick wits that brought it forth,” it was necessary “without further examination [to] bury it with honour, as the best and noblest Essay natural man hath attained unto.” It was not, in other words, a suitable explanation for “us Christians that have freed our understandings by a voluntary captivity to Sacred Writ, which delivereth to us mans first creation, his fall, and the contagion on his whole progenie; Adde also the bodies resurrection, its union again with the soule, and everlasting punishment in hell-fire for the wicked.” Hotham held that a belief in the pre-existence of souls was simply incompatible with orthodox Christian doctrine.²² It is clear that Hotham was inclined toward traduction, and indeed, by the end of his work, this option is embraced as not only probable but true.²³

One of those who wrote a proem to Hotham’s work was Henry More, a fellow of Christ’s College, Cambridge.²⁴ But More differed markedly from Hotham on the question of psychogenesis: his long poem “The Praeexistency of the Soul,” published in 1647 in his *Philosophical Poems*, makes plain his attachment to Origenist pre-existence.²⁵ In the prose preface to this poem, More claimed that although his case was made “so probably and passable in the Canto it self,” it would be as well to note the long-standing support for the doctrine from “the wisest and most learned of preceeding ages.” These included the generality of Judaic theologians (as detailed in the *De Creatione* of Menasseh Ben Israel), along with both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Moreover, pre-existence was more in keeping with the idea of “God’s Justice, and the divine Nemesis” than its alternatives. Given that the original sin occurred *before* “the Souls of men” became engaged “in the sad, dangerous, and almost fatall entanglements of this Corporeall World,” then pre-existence meant that God himself was not guilty of creating human beings with a capacity for evil.²⁶ That pre-existence might be a means of conceptualizing the Fall in a way that removed the stain of suspicion from the divine will was, as demonstrated below, the pre-eminent motivation of those who adhered to the doctrine in mid-seventeenth-century England.

Philosophie, trans. D. F. (London, 1650). *DNB* asserts that the translator of Hotham’s tract was his brother, Durant, later the biographer of Jacob Boehme—i.e., “D[urant]. F[rater].” I have found no evidence to support this claim, and it sits uncomfortably with the supplicatory tone of the prefatory epistle from the translator to the author, itself signed “Unus ex multis.” A more plausible candidate seems to be Daniel Foote, then a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, an avid foot soldier in academic affairs, and later the close associate of Francis Mercurius van Helmont. On Foote, see Matthews, *Calamy*, 204; John Venn and J. A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 10 vols. (Cambridge, 1922–54), 2:156; Mordechai Feingold, “Isaac Barrow: Divine, Scholar, Mathematician,” in Feingold, ed., *Before Newton: The Life and Times of Isaac Barrow* (Cambridge, 1990), 35; British Library MSS. Sloane 530, 587, 591, 696, 3991.

22. Hotham, *Introduction*, 7.

23. *Ibid.*, 8–9, 58–65.

24. *Ibid.*, sigs. A7r–v.

25. Henry More, *Philosophicall Poems* (London, 1647), 255–81.

26. *Ibid.*, sig. V3r. Menasseh Ben Israel, a Sephardic Jew from Portugal exiled in Amsterdam, played an important ambassadorial role from 1655 to 1657 in negotiating the readmission of the Jews to England. During this trip he met Henry More on several occasions, when More relates that they discussed

In any case, More rapidly became the most influential standard-bearer for those concerned with advancing the idea of the soul's pre-existence, his exegesis of the first three chapters of Genesis describing how "the *Aereal* or *Ethereal Adam* [was] conveyed into an earthly body, having his most conspicuous residence in the head or brain; . . . thus *Adam* became the Soul of a *Terrestrial living Creature*."²⁷ But it was his treatise on *The Immortality of the Soul*, published in 1659, that rapidly became the locus classicus for those with an interest in the subject.²⁸ As "this Hypothesis is Rationall in itself," More claimed, "so it has gained the suffrage of all Philosophers of all Ages." Having reasserted the agreement of the "abstruse Philosophy of the *Jewes*, which they call their *Cabbala*" with the doctrine, he claimed that it had been "in vogue" among the "wise men" of ancient Egypt.²⁹ The first thinker to propound the view, according to More's reading of the Hebraic tradition, was "*Moses*, the greatest philosopher certainly that ever was in the world." Other proponents included:

Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Epicharmus, Empedocles, Cebes, Euripides, Plato, Euclide, Philo, Virgil, Marcus Cicero, Plotinus, Iamblicius, Proclus, Boethius, Psellus, and . . . if it were fit to adde the *Fathers to Philosophers*, we might enter into the same list *Synesius* and *Origen*: the latter of whom was surely the greatest Light and Bulwark that antient Christianity had.³⁰

All catalogues run the risk of seeming absurd to those who do not share their compilers' preoccupations, but More's point is nevertheless well made. Pre-existence was a doctrine with a lengthy pedigree, and was in no sense opposed to Christianity. The following year, More again ventured into print to propose that the "Soul of man," on account of having "quite forgot his Creatour," was punished through being "fully plunged and immersed into the very feculency of the Material world."³¹ Certainly, one early reader of the *Immortality* with no particular sympathy for pre-existence was struck by its centrality to More's work. Nicholas Billingsley—clergyman, schoolmaster, and minor poet—annotated his copy extensively, adding on the endpaper a list of those sections of the work that interested him most: namely those parts "concerning y^e Souls preexistence," "of y^e souls vehicles" and the "spirit of nature."³²

pre-existence. See Jan van den Berg, "Menasseh Ben Israel, Henry More, and Johannes Hoornbeck on the Pre-Existence of Souls," in Yosef Kaplan et al., eds., *Menasseh Ben Israel and His World* (Leiden, 1989), 98–116; David Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England* (Oxford, 1982).

27. Henry More, *Conjectura Cabbalistica. Or, a Conjectural Essay of Interpreting the Minde of Moses, According to a Threefold Cabbala: viz. Literal, Philosophical, Mystical, or, Divinely Moral* (London, 1653), 37.

28. Henry More, *The Immortality of the Human Soul, so Farre Forth as it is Demonstrable from the Knowledge of Nature and the Light of Reason* (London, 1659), 238–325.

29. *Ibid.*, 245–46.

30. *Immortality*, 247.

31. Henry More, *An Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness: Or, a True and Faithfull Representation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (London, 1660), 56.

32. This copy is now in the Huntington Library, call no. 600645. On Billingsley, see Matthews, *Calamy*, 54–55; Anthony Wood, *Fasti Oxonienses*, 2:213 in *Athenae Oxonienses. . . To Which are Appended the Fasti, or Annals of the Said University*, ed. Phillip Bliss, 5 vols. (London, 1813–20), vol. 5. Billingsley's own views on

For all the copiousness of More's cataloguing, however, Origen remained the best peg on which to hang the theory of pre-existence, and he also provided a persuasive defense against any accusations of irreligion. After all, a keystone of the Reformation was the notion that Christianity should return to its primitive, uncorrupted, roots. As Origen was closer to the beginnings of Christian religion than, say, Augustine, there was every reason (discounting, for a moment, the distinctly Augustinian tenor of much Reformed theology) for modern theologians not to suspend their historical inquiries at the beginning of the fifth century, and to treat Origen as a fit subject of study.³³

It was in support of this view that in early 1661 the anonymous *Letter of Resolution Concerning Origen and the Chief of his Opinions* was published. But before considering the *Letter* in itself, it is worth saying a word on its authorship: it seems most likely to have been written by George Rust, More's colleague at Christ's between 1649 and 1659, and later bishop of Dromore in Ireland.³⁴ This attribution, however, is not an easy one: No indication of authorship is given in the work itself, while Rust's friends and earliest readers certainly seem not to have known that he wrote it, if indeed he did. More, John Worthington, and Glanvill himself all profess ignorance as to the author's identity,³⁵ and when John Dunton republished the *Letter* in the early eighteenth century, he also gave no indication who its author might have been.³⁶ More went as far as explicitly denying knowledge of the tract's authorship in the preface to his 1662 collected works, not least because "some... [had] *groundlessly imagined*" that he was the author of the *Letter* himself.³⁷ Another reader of the *Letter* with strong Cambridge

the origins of the soul appear to have been rather different: "When God had framed man with wondrous art, / He after made his soul the nobler part; / He did his dross with sacred fire refine / And breath'd in him a soul, a soul divine"; Nicholas Billingsley, *Kosmobrephia, or the Infancy of the World* (London, 1658), 49.

33. Although editions of Origen had been readily available from the early sixteenth century, collected works appearing from presses in Paris, Basel (edited by Erasmus), and Rome, the relaxation of ecclesiastical licensing powers in the 1650s saw an upsurge in the number of works popularizing him in England. See, e.g., the publications of the radical Socinian John Biddle, *The Apostolical and True Opinion Concerning the Holy Trinity, Revived and Asserted* (London, 1653), or *The Testimonies of Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Novatianus, Theophilus, Origen... Concerning that One God, and the Persons of the Holy Trinity* (London, 1653). An edition of *Origenes Kata Kelsou* was published in Cambridge in 1658, translated as *Origen against Celsus* and published in London in 1660.

34. Marjorie Hope Nicolson's preface to her 1933 facsimile edition of the *Letter* asserts confidently that its "author proved to be George Rust," but offers no evidence to support this; *A Letter of Resolution Concerning Origen and the Chief of his Opinions*, ed. M. H. Nicolson (New York, 1933). This attribution is brought into question in Cope, *Glanvill*, 10, and Walker, *Decline of Hell*, 124–25.

35. See More-Anne Conway, 14 September 1661, 26 October 1661, and 16 November 1661, *The Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More and their Friends, 1642–1684*, ed. M. H. Nicolson and Sarah Hutton (Oxford, 1992), 192, 194, 195; Worthington-Hartlib, 20 May 1661, *The Diary and Correspondence of John Worthington*, ed. James Crossley, 3 vols. (Manchester, 1847–86), 1:312. Glanvill did not include the *Letter* in his list of Rust's writings; see Jackson I. Cope, "The Cupri-Cosmits': Glanvill on Latitudinarian Anti-Enthusiasm," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 17 (1954): 269–86 at 276–77.

36. *The Phenix: Or, a Revival of Scarce and Valuable Pieces... Being a Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Tracts No Where to be Found but in the Closets of the Curious*, ed. John Dunton, 2 vols. (London, 1707), 1:1–85; *A Collection of Choice, Scarce and Valuable Tracts*, ed. John Dunton (London, 1721), 1–85.

37. Henry More, *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr Henry More* (London, 1662), xxii.

connections who naturally assumed More to have been its author was the Nottinghamshire nobleman, naturalist, and Fellow of the Royal Society Francis Willughby. On reading More's 1662 *Collection* of his writings, Willughby registered in his commonplace book his surprise that "Dr More [was] not y^e Author of y^e letter," adding that More "seemes himself to have bene Frightened" away from admitting his authorship by the consequences of his name being attached to the work.³⁸

Yet if More's candidacy is to be ruled out, Rust's may also be called in question by the *Letter* itself. Here, the author thanks "C. L." (to whom the *Letter* was addressed, by whom it was published, and whose identity is also unknown) for giving "the first notice I had" of the "Writings of the learned Gentleman Mr. More of Cambridge," thereby allowing the reader to infer that he was not acquainted with More himself, as Rust certainly was.³⁹ Given the opposition to any form of doctrinal heterodoxy within the Restoration church (even in Ireland), it should not be seen as surprising if the author of a work such as the *Letter* should have had recourse to obfuscation or diversion. In any case, this declaration certainly does not disqualify Rust from having authored the work. Quite aside from the fact that the *Letter* is stylistically reminiscent of other works by Rust, the strongest evidence of his authorship comes from Jeremiah White's *Restoration of All Things: Or, a Vindication of the Goodness and Grace of God* (1712). The preface to this work, written by the mystically inclined London clergyman Richard Roach, discusses the question of pre-existence, and "the most full and pregnant Testimony to this Doctrine we shall Collect, and that pretty largely, from that Ingenious Letter of Resolution, concerning the Opinions of Origen, printed Anno. 1661." This work, Roach continued, is "known among the Learned to have been Written by a Bishop of the Church of England, Famous for his Excellent Tract de Veritate."⁴⁰ Rust had written a work entitled *Of Truth*, initially delivered as a sermon at Cambridge in 1651 and 1655 and published in 1677, 1682, and 1686, the first two times alongside works of Glanvill; Roach's readers would have had little difficulty in identifying Rust from this description.⁴¹

38. Nottingham University Library, MS. Middleton LM 15, no. 34. Willughby's commonplace book is paginated seriatim but the numeration includes a large number of unbound, inserted pages; this manuscript is cited hereafter as MS. Mi LM 15. On Willughby, see David Cram et al., eds., *Francis Willughby's Book of Games: A Seventeenth-Century Treatise on Sports, Games, and Pastimes* (Aldershot, U.K., 2003), esp. 6–12.

39. [Rust], *Letter*, 22.

40. Jeremiah White, *The Restoration of All Things: Or, a Vindication of the Goodness and Grace of God. To be Manifested in the Recovery of his Whole Creation out of their Fall* (London, 1712), sig. A3v. See Walker, *Decline of Hell*, 134–35.

41. *A Discourse of Truth* was published in *Two Discourses: Viz. A Discourse of Truth. By the Late Reverend Dr. Rust... The Way of Happiness and Salvation. By Joseph Glanvil* (London, 1677); *Two Choice and Useful Treatises: The one, Lux Orientalis... The Other, A Discourse of Truth by the Late Reverend Dr. Rust Lord Bishop of Dromore in Ireland; With Annotations on the Both* (London, 1682), 153–200; *The Remains of that Reverend and Learned Prelate, Dr. George Rust Lord Bishop of Dromore in Ireland*, ed. Henry Hallywell (London, 1686). A copy of the *Letter* held by the library of Christ Church in Oxford is bound with Hallywell's *Remains*. The binding is late seventeenth century, suggesting that at least one early owner of the *Letter* thought it should be grouped along with Rust's other work (Christ Church Library, shelfmark 1.E.109). As might be expected given its exclusion from his *Remains*, Rust's editor was unaware that he might have written the *Letter*; see, e.g., Hallywell-Rust, 14 May 1683 and 20 May 1686 (Christ's College, Cambridge, MS. 21, nos. 33, 37).

Although it is both plausible and probable that Rust wrote the *Letter*, it cannot be proven definitively; as More put it in another context, Rust had “improved in prudence and politicks” upon his arrival in Ireland.⁴² But it can be said with near certainty that More himself did not write it, and, in the absence of any other likely candidates, Rust’s name is the most suitable for a working attribution.⁴³

The *Letter* itself is remarkable for discussing a good deal of Origen’s thought in very clear terms; the six “dogmata” quoted above are all considered at length. A central plank of these dogmata was the pre-existence of souls, and Rust averred that there was “no doubt to be made but that this Conclusion is true, That the Souls of men did exist and act before this present world was fitted for their habitation, at least before they were born upon earth.”⁴⁴ Rust has it, moreover, that almost all the seeming injustices of human life can be accounted for by pre-existence, without recourse to elaborate theories of theodicy: the Fall was brought about by the abuse of the free will given to the souls by God, thereby rendering themselves “less pure in the whole extent of their powers both *intellectual* and *animal*, and so by degrees became disposed for the susception of such a degree of corporeal life as was less pure indeed than the former, but exactly answerable to their present disposition of spirit.”⁴⁵ Put differently, the “great Phaenomenon of Providence” is buttressed against the “ill-built Fabrick of ordinary Theology” by the “clear and righteous” truth of pre-existence.⁴⁶



Lux Orientalis (1662) was entirely devoted to the question of the soul’s pre-existence. Although the work was published anonymously, it is clear that Glanvill was the author.⁴⁷ In its preface, Glanvill emphasized the debt he owed to More’s *Immortality* and to the author of the *Letter*, remarking that “he had not baulk’d the reasons of *Origen*, *Dr. More*, or the Authour of the *Letter of Resolution*,” where they were germane to his case on pre-existence. But he also expressed the hope that he had “managed, fortified, & secured them against exceptions, especially the most considerable,” that he might “reasonably expect a pardon” for this intellectual trespass.⁴⁸ Mindful that *Lux Orientalis* might have seemed a “superfluous, unnecessary Repetition,” given the publi-

42. More-Anne Conway, 31 January 1663, *Conway Letters*, 213.

43. See the appendix to this article, where I transcribe a long letter Glanvill wrote on the pre-existence of souls and suggest that Rust was the likely recipient. In addition to the works cited in n. 4 above, Rust is considered in R. W. Serjeantson, “Herbert of Chisbury before Deism: The Early Reception of the *De Veritate*,” *The Seventeenth Century* 16 (2001): 217–38 at 225–26.

44. [Rust], *Letter*, 25–26.

45. *Ibid.*, 48.

46. *Ibid.*, 33.

47. See the letters to Boyle and Baxter cited in n. 52 below, and the copy of *Lux Orientalis* owned by the provost of Queen’s College, Oxford, and later bishop of Lincoln, Thomas Barlow, whose title page bears Barlow’s inscription that it had been authored “By Ios. Glanwile [*sic*].” Barlow dates his copy 1662 (Bodleian Library, Oxford, shelfmark 8° C 678 Linc.).

48. [Joseph Glanvill], *Lux Orientalis, or an Enquiry Into the Opinion of the Eastern Sages, Concerning the Praeexistence of Souls. Being a Key to Unlock the Grand Mysteries of Providence, in Relation to Mans Sin and Misery* (London, 1662), sig. B5v.

cations of More and (probably) Rust in the three years preceding its appearance, Glanvill noted that it was in fact “that very Treatise, viz. the Account of *Origen*, [that had] made some such thing as this, expedient.” This was because Rust had been confined to Origen in his discussion of pre-existence, while More’s opinions on the subject—though admirable enough—were “scatter’d up and down” his writings in a fashion that was too hard on even the gentlest reader. Neither brought together “the *Reasons, Answers, Principles & particular State of the Hypothesis* [of pre-existence]” in a way likely to win over their readers, and it was exactly this that Glanvill hoped his work would achieve.⁴⁹ Glanvill did what he could to ensure that his work on pre-existence met with a favorable reception, dedicating it to Francis Willughby, who undertook a research trip to the Bodleian Library in mid- to late-1660, in the course of which the two men probably made each other’s acquaintance. It is also possible that they met through the agency of the Puritan mystic and Hartlibian Francis Rous, provost of Eton College, whose chaplain Glanvill was from 1658 until his death. In the “Epistle Dedicatory” to *Lux Orientalis*, Glanvill reflects upon the “delight & satisfaction, that I have received in discoursing with you [that is, Willughby] of such matters” as are treated of in the main body of the work, suggesting that Willughby—himself at Cambridge from 1653 to 1660—was sympathetic to the doctrine.⁵⁰ Glanvill also sent copies to his friend and mentor Richard Baxter, the Presbyterian divine, and to Boyle, earnestly requesting feedback and expressing his hope that Boyle’s “[f]ree and inquir[ing] genius is no enemy to Praeexistence; or at least to a Modest Proposall of those Platonick Notions.” What Boyle made of it is unclear, but Baxter was unimpressed.⁵¹

Writing in his *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, published the year before *Lux Orientalis*, Glanvill suggested that the question of psychogenesis had been a “[b]all of contention to the most learned ages.” He noted that no agreement had been possible as to whether it was formed by “immediate creation, or seminall traduction,” then neatly deployed rhetorical *occultatio* to remark that—although he professed no such belief himself—others took these disagreements “to be pregnant proofs of the falshood of both; and substitute an hypothesis, which for probability is supposed to have the advantage of either.” This substitutive hypothesis, needless to add, was the soul’s pre-existence.⁵² By 1662, however, Glanvill was inclined to be more strident on this topic. He dismissed creationism as something that “cannot come off” without “vilely aspersing the *divine attributes*.” Likewise, it was impossible to square traduction with the reality of human existence: if parents beget the souls of their children from nothing, then “the *soul* . . . is

49. *Ibid.*, sig. B1r.

50. *Ibid.*, sig. A3r. The nature of the relationship between the two men is unclear, but Willughby’s commonplace book gives a lengthy, and sympathetic, notice to chapter 3 of Glanvill’s *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, the title of which is “*The nature of the Soul, and its origine, glanc’d at and past by*” (MS. Mi LM 15, no. 35). On Rous, see Charles Webster, *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine, and Reform, 1600–1660* (London, 1975), 73, 193–95, 282.

51. Glanvill–Baxter, 4 August 1662, Dr Williams’s Library, London, Baxter Correspondence MSS, vol. 1, fols. 174r–175v (notice given in N. H. Keeble and G. F. Nuttall, eds., *Calendar of the Correspondence of Richard Baxter*, 2 vols. [Oxford, 1991], 2:33 [hereafter CCRB]); Glanvill–Boyle, [1662], BC, 2:54–55.

52. Joseph Glanvill, *The Vanity of Dogmatizing: Or Confidence in Opinions. Manifested in a Discourse of the Shortness and Uncertainty of our Knowledge, and its Causes* (London, 1661), 18–19.

now as *clean* and *pure* as ever 'twas... [as] at its first *creation* while *pure* and *innocent*," while if they beget them from their own souls, then their children would be accumulatively "guilty of all the *sins* that ever were committed... ever since *Adam*"—a proposition that could be ruled out because, if true, humankind would long since have become "*brutish, yea diabolical*."⁵³

The remainder of *Lux Orientalis* proposes that pre-existence is the account of psychogenesis most in keeping with what we know of the world and of its creator. Having defended pre-existence from objections drawn from Scripture, the doctrine of the Fall, and the argument that reason cannot know the things of God, Glanvill outlined seven principal grounds for his convictions about pre-existence:

1. "All the Divine designs and Action are laid and carried on by pure and Infinite Goodness."⁵⁴
2. "There is an exact *Geometrical justice* that runs through the universe, and is interwoven in the contexture of things."⁵⁵
3. "Things are carried to their proper place and state, by the *congruity* of their natures; where this fails, we may suppose some arbitrary managements."⁵⁶
4. "The Souls of men are capable of living in other bodies besides Terrestrial; and never Act but in some body or other."⁵⁷
5. "The soul in every state hath such a body, as it fittest for those faculties and operations that it is most inclined to exercise."⁵⁸
6. "The Powers and Faculties of the Soul, are either (1) *Spiritual*, and Intellectual: (2) *Sensitive*: Or, (3) *Plastick*."⁵⁹
7. "By the same degrees that the higher powers are invigorated, the lower are consopited and abated, as to their proper exercise, & è contra."⁶⁰

Glanvill then reformulated the narrative of the Fall based on these broadly Origenist principles, a reformulation that is as detailed as it is unusual. In its pure condition, the soul "was *united* with the most *subtile* and *aethereal matter* that it was capable of inacting," a state of communion with God that was ideally felicitous. However, although "we were thus *unconceivably* happy, yet we were not *immutably* so," which meant that Adam would occasionally "fall a *sleep*." During this time of "*remission* of the *higher powers*, the *lower* may advance and more livelily display themselves then they could

53. Glanvill, *Lux Orientalis*, 32–33.

54. *Ibid.*, 122–24.

55. *Ibid.*, 124–27.

56. *Ibid.*, 128–30.

57. *Ibid.*, 131–34.

58. *Ibid.*, 134–36.

59. *Ibid.*, 136–37.

60. *Ibid.*, 138–44. "Consopite": "To lay or lull to sleep; to quiet, compose; to stupefy" (*OED*).

before.”⁶¹ It was in this condition of rest that Eve was drawn from Adam’s rib cage, and all was well until such time as “the *delights* of the *body* betray[ed] us, through our over indulgence to them.” Eve and Satan proved able tempters and, at length (but headlong), “*Adam* cannot withstand the *inordinate appetite*, but feeds on the *forbidden fruit*, viz. the dictates of his *debauched will*, and *sensual pleasure*.” The body therefore became “uppermost,” and the lower faculties begin to dictate the actions of the higher.⁶² The process continued as Origen’s *psuchai* fell through the ethereal state, finally coming to rest in the terrestrial condition in which humankind now finds itself, only by “*speech* . . . to be distinguisht from *Beasts*.”⁶³ The divine attributes were therefore off the hook: the existence of evil in the world was a necessary function of the world existing in its present form at all, terrestrial corporeality itself being the lowest level at which souls can be incarnated—a fallen condition that only came about by virtue of the souls’ own abuse of their free will.

Clearly then, it is the first two of Glanvill’s seven principles that carried the most weight for him in considering pre-existence, as is powerfully underscored by the letter he sent to Baxter accompanying his copy of *Lux*. Here, Glanvill related that he had dealt as skeptically as possible with the arguments in its favor, in fact more so that “a free & impartiall judgm[en]t would warrant mee in,” and that he had

Suborn’d all the Arguments that my little reasoning & judgm[en]t could furnish mee with to en counter [*sic*] & oppose it. And yet when all is done, I must confesse my self a Captiue; In spight of my eager resistance it hath erected it’s trophies over mee. And I must owne it’s victory by the Profession, That I can not imagine any thing that doth so harmoniously accord with the blessed excellencyes of God, the Appearances of Providence, & that nature of things, as this Hypothesis; To which I am not ashamed to confess my self a Prostrate. Nay, you’l [*sic*] pardon me if I say, that if this bee not y^e truth, I am at a miserable losse in these matters, & know not which way to turne mee.⁶⁴

It is difficult not to be struck by the—almost painful—candor of this statement. Although Glanvill may have tended to over-egg the rhetorical pudding elsewhere, here he wrote freely to one whose intellect and achievements he admired, and whom he hoped would respond with disinterested, insightful, and fair commentary on his position. As Baxter—no mean judge of character himself—would put it sometime after his

61. *Lux Orientalis*, 145–47.

62. *Ibid.*, 150–51.

63. *Ibid.*, 157. This conception was a commonplace of Renaissance and seventeenth-century thought, with its roots in the writings of the Roman rhetoricians. See, e.g., Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.8.32–33; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 2.16.11–13, 2.20.9; Tacitus, *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, 6.3. See further R. W. Serjeantson, “The Passions and Animal Language, 1540–1700,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2001): 425–44.

64. Glanvill-Baxter, 4 August 1662, Baxter Correspondence MSS., vol. 1, fol. 175r.

younger friend's death, Glanvill was "a *Platonist*, of free Judgment, and of admired parts... and [was] one that had a too excessive estimation of me."⁶⁵

The earnestness with which Glanvill addressed the question of pre-existence is further underscored by a long letter he wrote in early 1662, almost certainly to George Rust. Here Glanvill asked his correspondent to assuage "those doubts which ever and anon disturbe my contemplations" about the "great & noble theoyes w^{ch} o^{ur} moderne Origenians haue enlightened the world with." These doubts, Glanvill makes clear, had been occasioned by reading the *Letter Concerning Origen*. Glanvill hopes that this uncertainty is the product of his own ignorance, preferring this to the chance "that there should bee any reall flaws in an Hypothesis that I am so enamour'd of."⁶⁶ Glanvill arranged his doubts into a series of questions about the following topics: "the highest and Etheriall state," the "Aeriall Praeexistent State," "The Terrestrial State," "The Next State," and "The State after the Conflagration," concluding with two "Incident[al]" queries that he had not been able to fit into this arrangement. In so doing, Glanvill anticipates many of the arguments made by the opponents of pre-existence across the 1660s and '70s, and quite justifies his claim to Baxter that he had done all he could to talk himself out of an attachment to pre-existence. Throughout the letter, Glanvill's concern is to vindicate the attributes of God, and to convince himself that pre-existence had the philosophical-theological coherence without which it would be altogether indefensible. It is unclear whether he received a response, but the close relation between the concerns expressed in this letter and the discussion of pre-existence in *Lux Orientalis* is manifest.

Glanvill was deeply committed to a providentialist theology that was very difficult to reconcile with traditional narratives of the Fall: not even Augustine had been able entirely to escape the implication of the traditional Fall narrative that humankind had been created by God with the latent capacity for sin. To admit the existence of sin is thus to admit that God is not infinitely good. One answer to this problem was a thoroughgoing voluntarism (as had been espoused, *mutatis mutandis*, by most Reformed thinkers), but recoiling from this prospect Glanvill believed that the only viable alternative was to adopt the doctrine of pre-existence along Origenist lines.⁶⁷ This had the double advantage of making the origins of sin pre-human and of demonstrating God's mercy in giving the fallen souls a chance at redemption. The student of Glanvill's works must occasionally reflect that their author was not unfailingly acute in his judgments, but if one accepts Glanvill's genuine concern about the very real theological problem he had set himself, then his remedies and his enthusiasms (along with those of Origen, More, or Rust) seem a great deal more trenchant.

65. Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae, or, Mr. Richard Baxters Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of His Life and Times* (London, 1696), 2:378.

66. Glanvill-[Rust], 20 January 1662, Huntington Library, MS. HA 7622, fol. 1r; a transcription of the letter was published by Charles F. Mullet as "A Letter by Joseph Glanvill on the Future State," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 1 (1937): 447–56.

67. See Williams, *Ideas of the Fall*, 315–90, 423–43.



Many of the so-called “Latitudinarians” (perhaps best seen as the successor generation to the Cambridge Platonists) who shared the providentialist leanings of Glanvill, More, and Rust did not see the need to further weaken their already fragile position in the Restoration church by advertising their attachment to such a manifestly heterodox doctrine.⁶⁸ An Oxford student defended the thesis that “the pre-existence of souls, which the Origenists assert, is consonant with Holy Scripture” in May 1663, and More described *Lux Orientalis* as a “good ingenious book of preexistence,” but there were very few expressions of support beyond these.⁶⁹ A trickle of works advocating pre-existence appeared into the mid-1680s. Anne Conway would recount the tale of a worthy horse that had increased in virtue through several incarnations but still not realized humanity (the affinity to Swift’s Houyhnhnms raises intriguing possibilities); and John Locke—although far from sympathetic to the Platonic philosophy underpinning it—considered the doctrine seriously enough to include it in his 1694 “*Adversaria Theologica*.”⁷⁰ But the doctrine elicited a torrent of condemnation across the entire religious and political spectrum. Willughby’s collaborator John Ray, the botanist, and fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, bemoaned the university’s

68. For an illuminating introduction to Latitudinarian theology, see Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660–1780*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1991–2000), 1:25–88. On the ecclesiastical and political weakness of the early Latitudinarians, see John Spurr, “‘Latitudinarianism’ and the Restoration Church,” *Historical Journal* 31 (1988): 61–82; D. W. Dockrill and J. M. Lee, “Reflections of an Episode in Cambridge Latitudinarianism: Henry More’s Epistle Dedicatory to Gilbert Sheldon of his *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*,” in D. W. Dockrill and R. G. Tanner, eds., *Tradition and Traditions (Prudentia, supplementary number, 1994)*, 207–23; Jon Parkin, *Science, Religion, and Politics in Restoration England: Richard Cumberland’s De Legibus Naturae* (London, 1999), esp. 17–56.

69. The student was Nicholas Meese, of Trinity College. See Oxford University Archives, NEP/supra18, register Qb, fol. 39r. On Meese, see Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500–1714*, 4 vols. (Oxford and London, 1891–92), 3:999. More–Anne Conway, 29 August 1662, *Conway Letters*, 208.

70. See Henry More, *A Modest Enquiry Into the Mystery of Iniquity* (London, 1664), 489–90; [Henry Hallywell], *A Private Letter of Satisfaction to a Friend* (London, 1667), 3–17 (on the authorship of this tract, see Walker, *Decline of Hell*, 153–54; although not explicitly formulated in the work itself, Thomas Barlow’s copy of it [Bodleian Library, shelfmark B.236.Linc.] notes, at p. 74, that Hallywell “holds y^e apochryphall opinion of y^e preexistence of Soules”). Christian Knorr von Rosenroth’s *Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae*, part of his *Kabbala Denudata* (Frankfurt, 1677), was published at Francis Mercurius van Helmont’s behest as C[hristianus]. P[eganius]., *A Dissertation Concerning the Pre-existence of Souls*, trans. D. F. (London, 1684). The translator was Daniel Foote; see n. 21 above. Rosenroth, who used Christianus Peganius as his pseudonym, is discussed in Allison Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century: The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614–1698)* (Leiden, 1999), 100–136. (Coudert asserts that Foote was a respected member of the Royal Society [pp. 60, 171, 260]; he was in fact not a member at all.) After Conway’s death in 1679, her *Principia Philosophiae Antiquissimae et Recentissimae* (1690) was published in Amsterdam; for the equine anecdote, see *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, trans. J. C. (London, 1692), 59–63. *John Locke: Writings on Religion*, ed. Victor Nuovo (Oxford, 2002), 21, 28–30; see further Damaris Cudworth-Locke, 16 June 1684, *The Correspondence of John Locke*, 8 vols., ed. E. S. de Beer (Oxford, 1976–89), 2:619–20.

attempts to re-impose theological order on its members after 1660.⁷¹ The university's tactics are clearly borne out by More's reflections on the publication of Rust's *Letter*: the university's vice-chancellor, Theophilus Dillingham, "looks upon it as a dangerous book, and therefore did in some sort censure it in the Consistory, and one of the unsound opinions of Origen was the Praeexistence of the soule, which was conceiv'd to be repugnant with the incarnation of Christ."⁷² Even those in sympathy with the providentialism that underpinned the doctrine were hostile to it. Writing hard on the heels of the *Letter* in 1662, Edward Stillingfleet declared that he could not "[make] use of so precarious and infirm an hypothesis as praeeistence," while More's close ally Ralph Cudworth, though affirming that "Humane Souls . . . are not a mere *Modification of Body* or Matter, but an Entity and Substance distinct from it," would go no further than stating that pre-existence would be valid "did we not (as indeed we do) suppose Souls to be Created by God immediately, and infused in Generations."⁷³ Despite an affinity with many of its exponents' other religious views, the mathematician and classical scholar Isaac Barrow, later Master of Trinity, Cambridge, wrote a short Latin work refuting the doctrine, "Animae Humane Corporibus Non praeeixistunt."⁷⁴ Likewise Richard Baxter: although his response to the copy of *Lux Orientalis* is now lost, Glanvill responded to it by telling Baxter, "Yo^{ur} disapprovall of Praeeistence is one of the greatest Arguments yett seen against it," before rehearsing some of the precedents—drawn, in this case, largely from the *Corpus Hermeticum*—that made "y^e Doctrine of Praeeistence . . . far from being a Novelty." Glanvill hoped that this recapitulation might make Baxter change his mind. Baxter seems to have done no such thing.⁷⁵

71. See Charles E. Raven, *John Ray: Naturalist. His Life and Works*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, 1986), 57–61.

72. More-Anne Conway, 26 October 1661, *Conway Letters*, 194.

73. Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines Sacrae, or a Rational Account of the Grounds of Christian Faith . . . and the Matters Therein Contained* (London, 1662), 411; Ralph Cudworth, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe: The First Part. Wherein, All the Reason and Philosophy of Atheism is Confuted; and its Impossibility Demonstrated* (London, 1678), 43 (cf. 798). Part 1 of Cudworth's work totaled more than nine hundred dense pages; part 2 remained incomplete. On Stillingfleet, see Sarah Hutton, "Edward Stillingfleet, Henry More, and the Decline of Moses Atticus," in Richard Kroll et al., eds., *Philosophy, Science, and Religion in England 1640–1700* (Cambridge, 1992), 3–84; and Parkin, *Science, Religion, and Politics*, 18–25.

74. *The Works of the Learned Isaac Barrow*, 4 vols., ed. John Tillotson (London, 1683), 4:34–45. The only modern author Barrow singled out was "H[enry]. M[ore]." (4:36). Barrow owned copies of More's *Immortality* and many of his other works, Glanvill's *Essays*, and the edition of Origen's *Opera* published at Leiden in 1536; see Mordechai Feingold, "Isaac Barrow's Library," 352, 358, 359.

75. Glanvill-Baxter, n.d. [c. February 1663], Baxter Correspondence MSS., vol. 1, fols. 170r–171v. A somewhat inaccurate transcription of this letter was published by Thomas C. Johnson as "A Letter on Preexistence from Dr. Joseph Glanvill to Richard Baxter," *Bibliotheca Platonica* 1 (Osceola, Miss., 1890): 186–92; see also *CCRB*, 2:37. Glanvill recounts that Baxter's immediate response to *Lux Orientalis*—"a Harsh Censure" of pre-existence—had "miscarried"; see also Glanvill-Baxter, 21 January [1663], Baxter Correspondence MSS., vol. 5, fols. 177r–v. Glanvill quotes from the "Clavis," or book 10, of the *Corpus Hermeticum*; see *Corpus Hermeticum* 10.7–8, 15–17 (in *Hermetica*, ed. Brian Copenhaver [Cambridge, 1992], 30–36). See further John Henry, "Medicine and Pneumatology: Henry More, Richard Baxter, and Francis Glisson's *Treatise on the Energetic Nature of Substance*," *Medical History* 31 (1987): 15–40 at 32–38.

Still others recorded their disagreement with pre-existence, even in manuscripts otherwise shot through with heresies that their authors felt the need to keep private. Foremost among these is John Milton, whose tone toward the doctrine is especially dismissive. In his manuscript treatise *De Doctrina Christiana* he concludes that “it would seem that the human soul is generated by the parents in the course of nature” (that is, that traduction is the most likely explanation for the origin of souls);⁷⁶ and apropos Genesis 1:26, he observes that the human likeness to the divine image was “not only [in] the body, but also [in] the soul which he made at that time, for it is in our souls that we are most like God. I say this in case anyone should think that souls, which God created at the time, really existed beforehand.” Having quoted Genesis 2:7 and Job 22:8 on the constitution of humankind, he summarily dispatches the subject.⁷⁷ Another, perhaps more surprising, critic (at least considering that *Lux Orientalis* was dedicated to him) is Francis Willughby, whose commonplace book is littered with his heretical interests. There are extensive Latin notes on the thesis of the radical Huguenot scholar Isaac La Peyrère that there were “men before Adam,” and on a sheet inserted into the book, a list of Willughby’s own “Obiections against y^e Scripture.” In the midst of the latter, Willughby notes with lambent fastidiousness that he has “Fewer Exceptions against y^e new testament” than against the Old.⁷⁸ One suspects that the reading public of the 1660s might have swallowed this judicious admission only with difficulty. But of most pertinence here are his remarks on Rust’s *Letter Concerning Origen*, which consume seven manuscript pages and are largely devoted to refuting the doctrine of pre-existence.⁷⁹

The first objection that Willughby raises to pre-existence is that if it were true, then “all the Places now inhabited must have bene for a great while Desolate, and the Prisons Emptie till the Faults had bene committed.” The “Prisons” are, of course, the bodies in which the fallen souls are compelled to exist, and Willughby questions the prelapsarian status of the matter from which they—and the world—were formed: “it is also to be considered whither all the matter in the world were not at First created pure and Aethereall.” And even if pre-existence were viable, he was unconvinced that divine justice could be served by the obvious inequalities in the scheme: all matter being of “an aequall Purity[,] why should any Parcel of it deserve so Brave a guest then all the rest”? Was it in keeping with the divine justice that some parts of matter were formed into base vehicles while others were formed into more elevated ones? Biological parasitism led to a related problem: Willughby thought it “also Likely that many

76. *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols., eds. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven, Conn., 1953–82), 6:319.

77. *Ibid.*, 6:316–17.

78. MS. Mi LM 15, pp. 557–59 (notes on La Peyrère); no. 8 (“Obiections against y^e Scripture”). La Peyrère published *Prae-Adamitae* together with *Systema Theologicum* in one edition, probably in Amsterdam or Leiden, in 1655, and an English translation (*Men before Adam*) appeared in 1656. Willughby was noting from the Latin edition. See R. H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676): His Life, Work, and Influence* (Leiden, 1987); Noel Malcolm, *Aspects of Hobbes* (Oxford, 2002), 383–431; William Poole, “Seventeenth-Century Preadamism and an Anonymous English Preadamist,” *The Seventeenth Century* 19 (2004): 1–35.

79. MS. Mi LM 15, nos. 10a–10b.

soules of different Ranks might Bee Imbodied together,” as in the cases of “Insects Bred not onely in excrementitions [*sic*] but in the more noble parts of all Animalls”—a reality manifestly at odds with the Origenist teaching that the body was fitted to the exact nature of its animating force.⁸⁰ Another concern was that there was no clear delimitation to the process of metempsychosis that pre-existence implied: “what bounds shall bee on one side to souls growing more Angellike & Heroicall and on the other to those that grow more Depraved & Bestiall”? Put differently, Willughby was not prepared to accept the implications of a doctrine holding that an entomologist might be reincarnated as an insect.

Willughby continued, proposing that there are “Two great Difficulties . . . left Vntouched” by Rust’s *Letter*. The first of these was “How the soules Beeing Fallen from the Aether should bee readie at Hand at all Coitions,” not least given the problems in finding and delivering one inherently fitted to the bodies “prepared by . . . Parents” at exactly the right time. He considered the requisite “miracle for god to Bring such a soule to such a Peculiar Bed” as to be “almost as great” as that required to accept creationism.⁸¹ The second, explicitly drawn from Augustine, was “that soules that Have once tumbled downe and are got Vp again should not bee wise Enough to Keep themselves from returning to that misery they have had so much adoe to Free themselves from.” In other words, if even in their condition of pristine unity with God, the abuse of their free will allowed for Origen’s *logika* to tumble down the chain of being, then what would prevent them falling again? If that was the case, as Willughby descried in another of his rhetorical questions, “to what purpose is the Renovation of the World”? Willughby holds that Origen’s *apokatastasis* depends on a degree of ontological and moral fixity that Origen’s own account of free will denies.⁸² Ultimately, however, what is most interesting about Willughby’s objections to pre-existence is that they attack the doctrine on its ill-defended providentialist flank. Just as his “Obiections against y^e Scripture” sought to defend a beneficent God from some passages, and some of the morality, displayed in the Bible, so his disagreement with some of the consequences of

80. Cf. the opinion of the FRS and physician Thomas Willis, whose *De Anima Brutorum* (1672) disputes pre-existence (and metempsychosis) on the grounds that the vast quantity of insects in the world would demand implausibly large “Myriads of Souls” to animate them, the more so given that these and other smaller creatures “serve[d] only for Food to other Creatures”; Thomas Willis, *Two Discourses Concerning the Soul of Brutes which is that of the Vital and Sensitive of Man* (London, 1683), 4.

81. MS. Mi LM 15, no. 10a. Willughby’s attitude toward sex is ardent, if unappealing; as with most Platonic and Christian neo-Platonic thought, the intentional object of desire is considered to be not the person desired, but the act to be performed with him or her. Willughby was attracted by the “Origenicall Hypothesis that it is sin that Very often if not allwaies prepares Bodies” for their fallen souls (see Rust, *Letter*, 52–53), “nuptials themselves taking away nothing of the shame[,] Horror and repentance a man is sensible of. and were it not a fault there is not reason one should bee more ashamed of it then of eating this meat nor does marriage take it away, anie more than a Vow of being a drunk with one sort of wine would take away y^e Guilt of Drunkenesse” (MS. Mi. LM 15, no. 10b). Willughby died in 1672, still a young man, only four years after his marriage; he and his wife had three children.

82. MS. Mi LM 15, no. 10a. See Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 11.23, 21.7. In the main body of his commonplace book, Willughby noted Augustine on “Origens Opinion of y^e soules getting Bodies for Prisons” (MS. Mi LM 15, p. 126). Further, cf. Jeremy Taylor, *Vnum Necessarium. Or, the Doctrine and Practice of Repentance* (London, 1655), 380–81.

Origenist beliefs was because of their divergence from divine justice as he conceived it. Pre-existence led to a belief that the souls of human beings might transmigrate into insects, suggested that matter was distributed inequitably and, despite its profession that souls be given bodies fitted to their natures, gave no account of why, in reality, “wicked men... [often] have Better Bodies.”⁸³ Although inclined toward the theological underpinning of pre-existence, Willughby seems to have found it a most unsatisfactory doctrine. Willughby’s high social standing aside, Glanvill might well have chosen a more suitable dedicatee for *Lux Orientalis*.



Yet it was two printed works from the later 1660s that played the most prominent role in the backlash against pre-existence as it had been advertised by More, Rust, and Glanvill. One of these was Edward Warren’s *No Praeexistence* (1667),⁸⁴ but the most influential—and most widely read—rebuttal of pre-existence was written by Samuel Parker, originally a Presbyterian, a conformist at the Restoration and later, under James II, bishop of Oxford. *An Account of the Nature and Extent of the Divine Dominion* was published jointly with Parker’s *Free and Impartial Censure of the Platonick Philosophie* in 1666, the two works being reprinted together in 1667. The *Free and Impartial Censure* laid the groundwork for his later attack on pre-existence, sketching a version of Platonism as a breeding ground for zealotry (or “Enthusiasm”), bad science, and philosophical error.⁸⁵ Parker ridicules Platonism and many of its more extreme adherents, noting that if he were to describe the whole gamut of their views, “it would tempt your gravity (thought you were most Stoically morose) much beyond the essay of a smile, unless perhaps your perusal of *Jacob Behem* [*sic*] may have prevented their novelty.”⁸⁶ In his *Account* Parker redirected his fire specifically at pre-existence, arguing that its advocates fundamentally misunderstood the nature of divine providence. For Parker, although goodness was a divine attribute, it was not “an Essential Faculty” but a

83. MS. Mi LM 15, no. 10b.

84. E[dward]. W[arren]., *No Praeexistence. Or a Brief Dissertation Against the Hypothesis of Humane Souls, Living in a State Antecedaneous to This* (London, 1667). On the authorship of this work, see Walker, *Decline of Hell*, 149.

85. *A Free and Impartial Centure of the Platonick Philosophie, Being a Letter Written to His Much Honoured Friend Mr N[athaniel]. B[isbie]*. (Oxford, 1666), to which was appended *An Account of the Nature and Extent of the Divine Dominion & Goodnesse, Especially as they Refer to the Origenian Hypothesis Concerning the Preexistence of Souls* (Oxford, 1666). On Parker, see Wood, *Athenae*, 4:225–35; and Parkin, *Science, Religion, and Politics*, 37–45.

86. Parker, *Free and Impartial Censure*, 67. For an earlier equation of Platonism with enthusiasm, see Meric Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme* (London, 1655), 59. Parker, and his *Censure*, are best known to posterity as a result of their parodic treatment by Andrew Marvell. The second part of his *Rehearsal Transpros’d* (1672–73) assails Parker repeatedly and with vigor. See *The Prose Works of Andrew Marvell*, 2 vols., ed. Annabel Patterson et al. (New Haven, Conn., 2003), esp. 1:229–32, 358–59, and (for Marvell’s antagonistic biography of Parker) 1:259–65. It is not without irony that Glanvill—in Anglican apologist mode—should have attacked Marvell in his anonymously published tract *An Apology and Advice for some of the Clergy... On Occasion of the Second Part of the Rehearsal Transpros’d* (London, 1674).

“habit,” subservient to God’s supreme voluntary faculties: when He deemed it necessary, God was able to act with “Anger and Severity, which not only Reason but Scripture opposes to his Benignity.”⁸⁷ He notes that it is absurd to describe bodily failings as the soul’s punishment for sins in former lives, given that it has no memory of these; furthermore, this corporeal condition and failings make it all the more difficult for the soul to re-ascend toward God.⁸⁸ Attacking Glanvill directly, he notes that the dual strategy for the defense of divine goodness through pre-existence is self-defeating: the argument that creationism was impossible, as God would not allow pure souls to be born into a state of sin, was countered by praise owed Him for allowing the sinful, fallen, *psuchai* another chance at redemption through their incarnation on earth.⁸⁹ Appropriating a tone that Glanvill had made his own in the *Vanity of Dogmatizing*, Parker placed the whole question of psychogenesis “outside the sphere of human knowledge,” so that any explanation for it had to be “ranked amongst things meerly possible, and meerly contingent, and . . . is sufficiently confuted on the grounds on which it stands.”⁹⁰

This seems a good point at which to reflect that, shortly after the publication of the *Account*, Parker was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.⁹¹ Far from being a reactionary attack on pre-existence, the *Account* was an attempt to distinguish modestly empirical science—of the sort that the Royal Society wished to present itself as pursuing—from damaging suggestions of enthusiasm or heterodoxy. Parker’s point was that most of the virtuosi did not support theological speculations such as pre-existence, but concerned themselves with the more humble business of natural philosophy, a view that John Beale certainly shared. It was one thing, like Willughby, to compile a private collection of heresies with which one sympathized, but quite another to put them into print. By no means opposed to moral or rational religion as propounded by More and his acolytes, Beale—as noted above—was thus hostile to Glanvill’s “Origenian Platonisme” and informed Boyle that he had “very greate hopes of Mr Parker” in this respect.⁹² Writing to Boyle several months beforehand, Henry Oldenburg, the first secretary to the Royal Society, informed him that Beale “commends Parker’s censure of the Platonick Philosophy, and thinks, that the same armes against Glanvill Pre-existence of Soules,” adding that “Mr Glanvill is, I find, of an excellent temper for the

87. Parker, *Account*, 35–37. Hallywell would answer Parker in his *Deus Justificatus: Or, the Divine Goodness Vindicated and Cleared* (London, 1668), 254–59, but More would wait to do so until the publication of his *Annotations* on the republication of *Lux Orientalis* and Rust’s *Discourse of Truth* in 1682. On Hallywell, see Andrew Pyle, ed., *The Dictionary of Seventeenth-Century British Philosophers*, 2 vols. (Bristol, 2000), 1:393.

88. Parker, *Account*, 49–50, 53.

89. *Ibid.*, 54–55. He also attacks *Lux Orientalis* at 41, and Rust’s *Letter* at 27–28, 35, 55–57.

90. *Ibid.*, 48.

91. Thomas Birch, *The History of the Royal Society of London*, 4 vols. (London, 1755–57), 1:500–501.

92. Beale-Boyle, 31 October 1666, BC, 3:260. For Beale’s sympathy toward More and the idea of natural religion, see, e.g., Beale-[John Worthington], 12 June 1658, Beinecke Library, Yale University, Osborn Files MS. 966, esp. fol. 1v. See also *The Hartlib Papers*, 2d ed., ed. Patricia Barry et al., CD-Rom (Sheffield, 2002). On Glanvill, Parker, and the Royal Society, see Parkin, *Science, Religion, and Politics*, 121–25.

Argument.”⁹³ This argument does not appear to have occurred, and writing to More in early 1667 Glanvill explained that this was because “Dr Beale” had talked him out of “ye Designe of saying something about ye Divine Attributes, especially ye of Goodness, vpon ye occasion of M^r Parker’s booke.”⁹⁴ One of the ironies of this situation is that Parker’s attempts to remove the suspicion of enthusiasm from natural philosophy only succeeded in laying it open to accusations of skepticism, materialism, and Hobbesianism—from, among others, Glanvill’s friend Richard Baxter.⁹⁵

Although he apparently resolved to soft-pedal his public pronouncements on the subject, Glanvill’s interest in pre-existence seems to have continued unabated. For instance, although the references to it are relatively brief and noncommittal, pre-existence is discussed in his 1676 *Essays*.⁹⁶ This is in keeping with Glanvill’s tendency, throughout the 1670s, to support a comprehensive doctrinal basis for the Church of England—in which a wide range of opinion and practice would be admissible—but rigorously to oppose any suggestion of accommodating Dissenters such as Baxter within the Anglican fold. Glanvill’s posthumously published *The Zealous and Impartial Protestant* (1681), composed in 1678, was the apotheosis of this tendency. Baxter, feeling ill-served by his former friend, responded to its publication by printing the letter of self-introduction Glanvill had sent him in 1661, noting of Glanvill that “though an Origenist,” he was “a most triumphant Conformist.” For his own part, Baxter dryly remarked that he could “better bear with the venturousness of dissenters, than hereticians can do.”⁹⁷ Glanvill’s correspondence with Margaret Cavendish in 1667 and 1668 also suggests that Parker’s *Censure* had failed to change Glanvill’s mind about pre-existence. Responding to her inquiry “about my Notion of the *Souls Original*,” Glanvill summarized his views that pre-existence “best suited” both “the appearance of the world” and the “Divine Justice and Goodness, in all the affairs of Providence,” adding that he was “a little *Dogmatical*” on the latter point. Noting his conviction that

93. Oldenburg-Boyle, 8 June 1666, *BC*, 3:168.

94. Glanvill-More, 13 March [1667], Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS. Eng. 855.

95. Pointing to Parker and Glanvill in particular, Baxter condemned recent writers “who have received prejudice against the Peripateticks, the Platonists and the Stoicks, before they did ever thoroughly study them,” thereby opening the door to Epicureanism, Hobbesianism, and other forms of atheistical materialism; Richard Baxter, *The Reasons of the Christian Religion* (London, 1667), 497–98. Cf. Henry More, *Divine Dialogues* (London, 1668), 44–46. Glanvill responded to Baxter in his *Philosophia Pia, or, A Discourse of the Religious Temper and Tendencies of the... Royal Society* (London, 1671), 110–13, but the two men remained on terms. Having been sent a copy of *Philosophia Pia* by Glanvill, Baxter responded with a long letter detailing his opinions on Descartes, Gassendi, and Hobbes, noting his sympathy with “Plato’s Philosophy w^{ch} acknowledgeth ye spirituall nature to be ye mouer of ye Corporeall,” and hinting at the existence of a “scheme” of his own “principles of Philosophy.” Baxter concluded the letter with gratifying robustness: “Believe I pray you, that I wrote not this as offended at your publick reprehension, being most offended wth mens touchynes that cannot bear such reproofes”; Baxter-Glanvill, 18 November 1670, Baxter Correspondence MSS, vol. 2, fols. 138r–139v (see also *CCRB*, 2:101).

96. “Of Scepticism and Certainty” and “Anti-fanatical Religion and Free Philosophy,” in Joseph Glanvill, *Essays on Several Important Subjects in Philosophy and Religion* (London, 1676), 52–55 (sigs. H2v–H4r), 54 (sig. S84v).

97. Richard Baxter, *A Second True Defence of the Meer Nonconformist* (London, 1681), 175, 176 (the letter is at 179–82). See further Cope, *Glanvill*, 8–10, 78–83.

“Mankind fell by a voluntary Transgression” from its “State . . . Spotless and Innocent,” Glanvill promised to send her a copy of *Lux Orientalis* just as soon as he could “light on” a copy of it.⁹⁸ Writing two months later, he had still failed to do so, but confided in Cavendish that “of Praeexistence I have many things to say more about it, which I think it not fit publickly to expose”—testimony to the toll that the publication and republication of Parker’s *Account* had taken on Glanvill’s hopes.⁹⁹ Sadly, Cavendish’s replies to these letters are not extant, but it seems that by July 1668 Glanvill had managed to procure her a copy of *Lux Orientalis*, as he then wrote to thank her both for her observations on it and for her approbation of the account of witchcraft in his *Blow at Modern Sadducism* (1668).¹⁰⁰

Finally, the Cavendish correspondence provides a convenient occasion to highlight, and partially to resolve, one difficulty in reading the writings of Glanvill, More, or Rust: that of terminology. Having noted his adherence to a form of philosophical Platonism in taking “the Soul to be the Bodies Maker,” Glanvill clarified for Cavendish what he took to be the three key concepts used in and around discussions of pre-existence to be: “The *Mind*” (that is, the faculty of abstract reason), “the *Soul*” (which “exerciseth the operation of the Sense”), and the “Plastical” faculties (which “move and turn the body, but are devoid of Understanding”).¹⁰¹ While helpful in understanding Glanvill’s beliefs, these definitions are in many respects too clean fully to assist the reader of writings on pre-existence in seventeenth-century England. A better reference point is provided by Charles Hotham, taking part in the 1647 Cambridge psychogenesis debates. He declared that every creature comprised three parts:

Spirit, Soul and Body . . . By the Spirit, here, I understand not that common tye of the Body and the Soul; but the supreme region of man, or that divine principle, by the mediation of which we have fellowship with God: nor by the Body, that unprofitable carcasse, but a concrete notion of the gross spirits of sense and vegetation. And by the Soule, (if we may speak as things are) I understand that middle Essence, placed betwixt that heavenly and that brutal spirit: but in this present controversie, the word Soule comprehends a Hotch-potch of all these; and all that is purely opposed to the Body, is in this controversie called Soul.¹⁰²

Except, of course, when that opposed to the body is called the spirit. Discerning what Glanvill and his philosophical fellow-travelers meant is a demanding task that sometimes yields inexact results.

98. Glanvill-Cavendish, 13 October 1667, *Letters and Poems in Honour of the Incomparable Princess, Margaret, Dutchess of Newcastle* (London, 1676), 125–26. Sometime beforehand, Cavendish had written to an anonymous correspondent expressing her doubts about *Lux Orientalis*, averring that psychogenesis “belongs to Faith, and not to Reason”; Cavendish-[?], n.d., Margaret Cavendish, *Philosophical Letters, or, Modest Reflections . . . Expressed by Way of Letters* (London, 1664), 230–31.

99. Glanvill-Cavendish, 22 December [1667], *Letters and Poems*, 85.

100. Glanvill-Cavendish, 8 July [1668], *ibid.*, 137–42.

101. Glanvill-Cavendish, 13 October 1667, *ibid.*, 124. Cf. *Lux Orientalis*, 136–37, and see further Taylor, *Vnum Necessarium*, 401–3.

102. Hotham, *Introduction*, 29–30.



This reconstruction of Glanvill's attitude to pre-existence (and his concomitant involvement with Cambridge Platonist and Latitudinarian theology and theologians), I would suggest, is important in the following ways. Glanvill's career and interests exemplify the weak position of the Latitudinarian group within the Church of England in the decades immediately after the Restoration. Glanvill's case underscores that, as the Latitudinarians based much of their appeal on doctrinal rather than ecclesiological arguments, it was incumbent on them to disassociate their theology from any hint of heresy, enthusiasm, or schismaticism—however serious personal endeavors such as Glanvill's attempt to reconcile Christianity and the notion of original sin might have been. By the 1660s, church politics meant that it was simply no longer expedient to propagate views that would have reflected moderation in the 1650s. Ultimately, Glanvill's writings are important because they closely reflect the philosophical, political, and religious dynamics of English thought in the third quarter of the seventeenth century. But his greatest worth to the scholar of intellectual history might not have pleased him: precisely in virtue of his failure successfully to accommodate himself to the demands of these dynamics—a failure never starker than in his attachment to pre-existence—Glanvill's career allows one to identify and to map more exactly the terrain of the intellectual landscape he inhabited.

JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD

ABSTRACT

The writings of Origen of Alexandria, long relied upon by Christian theologians as a counterweight to Augustinian orthodoxies, provided the so-called Cambridge Platonists with a useful basis for polemizing against the extremes of Puritan thought. One of those attracted to Origen, specifically to his doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, was Joseph Glanvill. Rhodri Lewis traces Glanvill's involvement with this tradition in the mid-seventeenth century and explores how religious beliefs that were considered moderate before the Restoration came to be seen as dangerously heterodox. In an appendix, Lewis transcribes a letter written by Glanvill in 1661 questioning the philosophical and theological basis of the soul's pre-existence.

Appendix overleaf

Appendix
 A letter concerning the pre-existence of souls,
 written by Joseph Glanvill, 20 January 1662.

The identity of the person to whom Glanvill sent this letter is not immediately clear. But although there is no external evidence to support the identification of any particular addressee, it is possible to draw some conclusions from clues within what Glanvill himself wrote, and from the letter's history.

It is addressed to "Reverend and excellent Sir," so the recipient was without question a clergyman. Glanvill's reference to their "acquaintance" suggests that the two correspondents had met, but that circumstance had removed his correspondent from his "Country, and from the Armes of yo^{ur} beloved friends and honourers." Given that Glanvill says he had "adventur'd to cross the seas" with his letter, it is also possible to infer that his correspondent had departed for somewhere beyond the British mainland. A final internal clue is the reference to "o^{ur} worthy & ingenious friend M^r Gibbon," from whom Glanvill had "received encouragem^t" in pursuing his ideas on pre-existence and to whom Glanvill suggests that any reply should be addressed, "since the place of my then abode will bee uncertain." However, an anonymous endorsement on the final verso of the letter gives the strongest indication of the intended recipient. Glanvill had written, "I think [*to*] Bishop Rust Severall queries Conserving a further state." Given that Rust was not made a bishop until 1667, this was obviously written sometime after the letter itself. Although Glanvill did not know that Rust was the author of the *Letter Concerning Origen*, this attribution makes very good sense, as I argue in the preceding article.

Certainly, this letter was received in Ireland, for it survives in the papers of John Bramhall, archbishop of Armagh. After Bramhall's death in 1663, these passed through Bramhall's daughter into what would become the Hastings collection, now housed in the Huntington Library.¹ Having been at Christ's College until just before the Restoration, Rust had, at the behest of Jeremy Taylor, then bishop of Dromore, departed for Ireland to be dean of Connor in mid-1661; Rust succeeded Taylor to the episcopal chair at Dromore on Taylor's death in 1667.² Glanvill and Rust became close, and it seems likely that they made one another's acquaintance either in Oxford or through Glanvill's connection to Francis Rous at some point between 1658 and 1660. Certainly, Glanvill considered himself on intimate terms with Rust, noting in his "Bensalem" manuscript that he had a "Temper of very unusuall Benignity and Goodness, that rendred him the Darling of all that had the Happiness to know him. Virtue seem'd the Natural Genius of his Soul. His Understanding also was Vast, and his Reason most

1. See *Report on the Manuscripts of the Late Reginald Rawdon Hastings* (Historical Manuscripts Commission, series 78), 4 vols. (London, 1928–47), 4:vi, xiv–xxxi, 125. On Bramhall, see *DNB*.

2. On Rust's departure for Ireland, see Worthington-Hartlib, 19 April 1661 and 24 June 1661; *The Diary and Correspondence of John Worthington*, ed. James Crossley, 3 vols. (Manchester, 1847–86), 1:301, 339–40.

clear and Powerful.”³ Rust was also on very good terms with Francis Marsh, who was Bramhall’s dean at Armagh, and who had been a fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, until 1661. Marsh was in close personal and epistolary contact with Rust, More, and Anne Conway throughout the 1660s. It thus seems reasonable to conjecture that Rust shared the letter with his friend Marsh (More and Conway referred to them as their “two Deanes”), thereby going some way toward explaining its presence in Bramhall’s papers. On the other hand, Glanvill might have sent the letter directly to Marsh, and it is even possible that Bramhall’s close association with Taylor might account for its presence in Bramhall’s papers.⁴ In any case, given that the details of Rust’s biography so closely fit those of the man to whom Glanvill was writing, and as he was an authority on the Alexandrian Father—if the author of the *Letter Concerning Origen*—he must be seen as the most likely candidate to have been in receipt of Glanvill’s long letter on pre-existence.

The “Mr Gibbon” to whom Glanvill referred is probably Nicholas Gibbon, the then recently restored rector of Sevenoaks in Kent, and the author of numerous tracts propounding elaborate schemes for the eradication of denominational differences within Christianity throughout the 1640s, ’50s and ’60s.⁵ One of his supporters was Robert Sanderson, bishop of Lincoln, and as it was Sanderson who ordained Glanvill in 1660, it seems likely that the two men met one another through his agency.⁶ Gibbon also had Irish connections, as Baxter recounts meeting him at the home of “Lord Broghill,” Roger Boyle, the first Earl of Orrery. Baxter, however, did not enjoy the meeting, relating that Gibbon cornered him a locked room (“that there might be no witnesses”), and “drew forth a Scheme of Theology” that he assured Baxter was the “very thing . . . [Baxter] had long been groping for.” Having reflected upon it, Baxter came to the decided view that it was not, and that Gibbon’s “Frame . . . was secretly and cunningly fitted to usher in a Socinian Popery, or a mixture of Popery and half Socinianism.”⁷ Glanvill, his movements uncertain as he familiarized himself with his new

3. Jackson I. Cope, “The Cupri-Cosmits’: Glanvill on Latitudinarian Anti-Enthusiasm,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 17 (1954): 269–86 at 277.

4. See, for example, Worthington-Hartlib, 19 April 1661, Worthington, *Diary and Correspondence*, 1:301; More-Anne Conway, 29 August 1662 and 31 January 1663, *The Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More and Their Friends, 1642–1684*, eds. M. H. Nicolson and Sarah Hutton (Oxford, 1992), 208, 212–13; Anne Conway-More, 5 December 1662, *Conway Letters*, 209; Anne Conway-Edward Conway, 9 December 1662 and 30 January 1663, *Conway Letters*, 209–10, 211–12; George Rawdon-Edward Conway, 10 August, 14 August, and 31 August 1667, *Conway Letters*, 286, 287, 290. On Marsh, see *DNB*.

5. On Gibbon, see *DNB*.

6. On Sanderson’s support for Gibbon, see Nicholas Gibbon, *Theology Real; and Truly Scientifical; in Overture for the Conciliation of All Christians* (London, n.d. [ca. 1663]), 5, 6–7. On Glanvill’s ordination by Sanderson, see Jackson I. Cope, *Joseph Glanvill: Anglican Apologist* (St. Louis, 1956), 5. On Sanderson himself, see Peter Lake, “Serving God and the Times: The Calvinist conformity of Robert Sanderson,” *Journal of British Studies* 27 (1988): 81–116.

7. Baxter added that he had listened to Gibbon’s account of his plan with “suspicion” because “Bishop Ussher had before occasionally spoken of him in my hearing as a Socinian”; *Reliquiae Baxterianae, or, Mr. Richard Baxters Narrative of the Most Memorable Passages of His Life and Times* (London, 1696), 2:205–6; cf. 1:78, 3:69. Gibbon and his schemes were also known to Hartlib and his circle, one of

sinecure (procured for him by his brother) at Wimbish in Essex, supposed his correspondent to know how to contact Gibbon. It is certainly plausible that Rust had made the acquaintance of one known to Hartlib, Baxter, and Ussher in London at some stage before his departure to Ireland in 1661.

To conclude: two notes on my editorial and textual practice. First, anticipating that the reader of this letter will share my disagreement with its original editor's assertion that it is "intellectually... its own commentary," I have annotated it as much (or as little) as seems necessary to ensure its comprehensibility.⁸ Second, the principles on which I have based my transcription are derived from Noel Malcolm's edition of Hobbes's correspondence.⁹ While I am mindful of the impossibility of replicating the manuscript page in printed form, it seems important not to smooth out the text any more than necessary. The text of my transcription is not "clean," but this was a private communication, not something Glanvill intended to publish, much less something worked over by stationers, typesetters, or compositors. If we modify his usage, ignore his slips, or elide his deletions, some of the sense of a mind actively grappling with—and accommodating itself to—a given intellectual problem is unavoidably lost.

Huntington MS. HA 7622.

[*fol. 1r*]

Reverend and excellent Sir,

The short acquaintance w^{ch} I had with y^u gaue mee such a taste of the excellency of yo^{ur} spirit, & worthy accomplishm^{[en]ts} of yo^{ur} generous and noble mind, that I cannot satisfye my-self quietly to let goe an happiness, a touch whereof was so gratifying & delightsome. Nor should I ever answeere to my Selfe-Loue, or discretion the omission of any oportunity of making my self better known to a person, that is so deservedly deep in mine esteem & affections. Therefore though the envious fates haue snatch't y^u from yo^{ur} Country, and from the Armes of yo^{ur} beloved friends and honourers, yet notwithstanding their injury and the gulph they haue place'd between us, I haue found a way to my felicity, and shall haue some content in this Remedy of absence, since I can't enjoy y^u nearer. Nor can I ever feare that y^u will deny mee [*deleted* the] [[^]y^e] influence of yo^{ur} goodness, till I suspect that Starrs & seas can divide y^u from yo^{ur} self, that is, seperate y^u from yo^{ur} unequal'd benignity and cando^{ur}. Wherefore

whose goals was the reconciliation of Lutheran and Reformed churches. See *Ephemerides* 1642, 1648, and 1650, *The Hartlib Papers*, 2d ed., ed. Patricia Barry et al., CD-Rom (Sheffield, 2002), 30/4/84b, 31/22/33b, 28/1/75a; John Hall-Hartlib, 23 February 1647, 60/14/24a–25b; Cheney Culpeper-Hartlib, 16 February 1647, 9 April 1647, and 29 March 1648, 13/165a–166a, 13/171a–172b, 13/213a–214b; George H. Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury, and Comenius: Gleanings from Hartlib's Papers* (London, 1947), 258, 318, 433.

8. Charles F. Mullet, "A Letter by Joseph Glanvill on the Future State," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 1 (1937): 447–56 at 450.

9. *The Correspondence of Thomas Hobbes*, ed. Noel Malcolm, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1994), 1:lvii–lxi. For a trenchant overview of differing editorial practices, see Michael Hunter, "How to Edit a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript: Principles and Practice," *The Seventeenth Century* 10 (1995): 277–310.

upon the assurance of yo^{ur} unalterable goodness, and the natiue sweetness of yo^{ur} disposition, yu see I haue adventur'd to cross the seas to y^u, and to giue y^u the trouble of a long and tedious diversion. And though I foresee that I shall somewhat distress yo^{ur} patience, yet it reliues mee to consider, that hereby I shall demonstrate how I rate yo^{ur} goodness: w^{ch} had I not thought magnificently of, I should never upon that incouragement haue ingag'd in a buisness [*sic*], w^{ch} by one less benigne might bee interpreted as a rudeness and praesumption. But not to tyre y^u with praefacing I'le address my self to the [*deletion*] errant of this present missiue.

The great & noble theoryes w^{ch} o^{ur} moderne Origenians haue enlightened the world with, haue fire'd my desires to learne the whole Hypothesis; for not to dissemble mine ignorance from one that I would should cure it, I perceive there are some recon-dite dogmata therein, w^{ch} all my search & enquiryes could never yet bring mee acquainted wth. The not knowing of w^{ch} I praesume occasions those doubts which ever and anon disturbe my contemplations; And I hope that all the objections that I haue in this paper given y^u an account of, are but the products of mine ignorance: For I would much rather haue that discover'd too mee, then that there should bee any reall flaws in an Hypothesis that I am so enamour'd of. I perceive y^e Noble philosophers are unwilling to prostitute their generous theoryes to unworthy opinionists, or to expresse them to the contempt of sturdy and incapable mindes by too frank a disclosure. And therefore they seem to mee industriously to conceale some thinges w^{ch} are necessary to a full comprehension of their dogmata. Now how I should learne the mystery or get a Key to unlock the Archives, I knew not except by applying my self to some of the Mysta's [*sic*] of the Cabbala¹⁰: w^{ch} course therefore I concluded on, and the same thought that suggested the project, minded me of you as the fittest person for such an application. And me thought yo^{ur} benignity invited mine Address, and yo^{ur} communicative goodness seem'd to tell mee that y^u would freely impart the secret. wherefore having first made known my doubts to o^{ur} worthy & ingenious friend M^r Gibbon and received incouragement^[en]t from him in my designe I resolu'd to put it in execution: And y^u haue here the product of that determination. The Peticulars I haue here recited are some of them only Quaeryes, others doubts & objections w^{ch} seeme to confront the Hypothesis. And though my meditations haue suggested to mee what I think will take of [f] the edge of the some of them, yet I durst not confide in mine own resolutions, till I am confirmed in them by one who I am sure hath a perfect comprehension of those Doctrines. For more cleare procedure I haue cast my scruples into a kind of method, w^{ch} though it may bee I haue not exactly kept to in all particulers yet I think I haue done it as far as was necessary to avoid confusion. And knowing to whome it is that I write, I haue compris'd my reflections in as little roome as I well might, & bee understood, and I know y^u need not large excursions. But I come to the Buisness [*sic*].

10. While doing duty for (among other things) the *prisca theologia*, mystical figurations of the universe and allegorism, "Cabbala" would here appear principally to signify the usual seventeenth-century English sense of the word—that is, designating any philosophy thought to be particularly enlightening. See M. H. Nicolson, "Milton and the Cabala," *Philological Quarterly* 6 (1927): 1–18. Cf. Rust, *Letter*, 45.

Doubts about the highest and Etheriall state

1. Are there not pure Νόεξ, or unbodyed spirits? I had not made this a Quaestion but that D^r More seems shy of them. And I think, at least in effect, some where affirms that all spirits are incorporate. Yea, he puts it into the very definition of a Spirit, that it can moue & alter the matter, w^{ch} I conceiue not possible with out vitall union with a body. He sth also that Angells, without restraining them to any kind, are as truly compound beings as men & Brutes.¹¹ Now I see no inconvenience in asserting such beings; and (1) Methinks they are fairly possible in y^e notion; and the perfection of y^e vniverse seemes to require them. (2) The Acc^t of Origen intimates that the highest & best orders are impeccable and immutable¹²: w^{ch} perfections I cannot understand compatible to spirits incorporate.¹³ For Hyle and matter is the root of degenerasy & apostacy.
2. what is the difference between the highest orders of incorporated spirits & o^{ur} order? since they are but Aetheriall & so [*deleted* are] were wee. For D^r More confounds the Aeriall & Aetheriall Adam.¹⁴ O^{ur} having a treble vitall congruity is but a consequent of less perfection in o^{ur} natures: But wherein consists the essentiall perfection that they haue about us: with out assigning this, y^e g[i]ving y^m only a double vitall aptitude will seem to bee arbitrary.
3. Doth the Aetheriall congruity by the course of nature expire? the Reasons of y^e Quaestion are these (1) D^r More saith in his Cabbala that Adam had but praecipitated himself into that condition w^{ch} in due time might haue faln to his share by course.¹⁵ (2) y^e Acc^t of Origen offers a conjecture at the length of the Aetheriall periods, telling

11. See More, *The Immortality of the Human Soul, so Farre Forth as it is Demonstrable from the Knowledge of Nature and the Light of Reason* (London, 1659), 44–48, for the passages referred to in this paragraph. Glanvill himself would discuss “purely unembodied Spirits” in [Joseph Glanvill], *Lux Orientalis, or an Enquiry Into the Opinion of the Eastern Sages, Concerning the Praeexistence of Souls. Being a Key to Unlock the Grand Mysteries of Providence, in Relation to Mans Sin and Misery* (London, 1662), 133.

12. [George Rust], *A Letter of Resolution Concerning Origen and the Chief of his Opinions. Written to the Learned and Most Ingenious C.L. Esquire; and by him Published* (London, 1661), 46–47.

13. Glanvill is concerned with understanding the nature of the interaction between body and soul, which he takes, after Origen, to be separate entities naturally bound together by “vitall congruity” in living beings of any sort—whether the bodies in question be terrestrial, aerial, or ethereal. While often related to a notion of spirit, neither Glanvill nor his contemporaries succeeded in precisely defining this existential bond. See *Corpus Hermeticum*, 10.11–12 (in *Hermetica*, ed. Brian Copenhaver [Cambridge, 1992]); More, *Immortality*, 258–72; Rust, *Letter*, 46–51; Glanvill, *The Vanity of Dogmatizing: Or Confidence in Opinions. Manifested in a Discourse of the Shortness and Uncertainty of our Knowledge, and its Causes* (London, 1661), 21–23; Glanvill, *Lux Orientalis*, 145–48, 156–57; D. P. Walker, “The Astral Body in Renaissance Medicine,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21 (1958): 119–32. Stephen M. Fallon finds Glanvill’s Neoplatonic dualism (along with that of More and Rust) to be contradictory and ambiguous, but this reading is reliant on a deliberately narrow definition of what “dualism” might be said to mean (*Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* [Ithaca, N.Y., and London, 1991], 68–78, esp. 71–73. For a lucid overview of the topic, see Jeremy Taylor–John Evelyn, 29 August 1657, *Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn*, 4 vols., ed. H. B. Wheatley (London, 1906), 4:244–47.

14. Henry More, *Conjectura Cabbalistica. Or, a Conjectural Essay of Interpreting the Minde of Moses, According to a Threefold Cabbala: viz. Literal, Philosophical, Mystical, or, Divinely Moral* (London, 1653), 36–37.

15. *Ibid.*, 37.

us that it may as much exceed the Aeriall, as y^e Aether doth in purity the blended Atmosphere.¹⁶ And though the Autho^{ur} professeth the determination of y^e length of y^e Aetheriall life to be but conjecturall; yet doth hee plainly suppose it terminable. Now my Reasons against it are these;

(1) This would be a fault and imperfection in their very essentiall constitution, and the defect must bee either in the spirit, or body to w^{ch} it is united. Not in y^e Spirit, for that as long as it retains it's purity would bee as capable of an aetheriall vehicle as ever. Nor yet is it in it's body, for there can never bee wanting fit matter for vitall union in y^e aetheriall regions. (2) The Platonists hold these blessed immaculate spirits to bee closely united to their supream head, and fountain the Deity, and methinkes that should priveledge y^m from so praejudiciate a lapse. (3) it seemes to mee not to bee very consistent with the divine goodness & benignity to praecipitate unblemish't spirits into a lower condition of life with out their own fault or demerit. For sure they goe not immediately to y^e same condition after their Aetheriall congruity is expired, for y^t were a kind of impertinency in nature. (4) They are in the same condition that the blessed are after the Resurrection And I understand that to bee perfect immortality. Y^u know the Distich 'Hv δ' ἀπολείταζ σῶμα &c.¹⁷ And this D^r More makes acc^t is signified by the tree of Life.¹⁸ (5) This seemes to bee a blot to the just distributions of Providence, and the same would bee y^e fate of the good & of the wicked. Where as [*deleted* y^e] one great Law of y^e Divine Nemesis is this, that every degree of purity in the spirit should be answer'd by a suteable degree of purity in it's body. w^{ch} would be transgress'd if the most pure spirit [*descended ms. faded*] into less refined vehicles. (6) This were to expose them to Sin & apostacy from the divine [*ms. torn li*]fe, for th[ese *ms. faded*] [*fol. iv*] would bee far more obnoxious to a morall laspe in the Aeriall state then they were in the [*deleted* Celiestiall] Celestiall. (7) I [*deleted* wold?] would fain know how they returne againe; or whither they ever fall as low as earth supposing y^m to retain their integrity and vertuous dispositions?

4. How doth the union of the highest orders with God, differ from that of the Λόγοζ wth y^e Humanity?¹⁹

5. How doe good souls, as the Acc^t of Origen saith, out of Loue to mankind descend to Earth?²⁰ can they ad placitum command themselves from their fiery vehicles into

16. Rust, *Letter*, 54.

17. The distich in question is the conclusion of the "Carmen Aureum" traditionally attributed to Pythagoras. It reads "ἐν δ' ἀπολείσας σῶμα ἐσ αἴθερ' ἐλευθερον ἐλθῆῖς, / ἐσσεαί ἀθανάτος θεός ἀμβρότος, οὐκετι θνήσῃς" (*Theognis: Ps.-Pythagoras. Ps.-Phocylides... Fragmentum Teliambicum*, eds. Ernst Diehl and Douglas Young, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1971), 94). In all the renaissance or early modern texts that I have consulted, "apoleipsas" is rendered as "apoleitas": see, e.g., *Poemata Pythagorae, et Phocylidis* (Strasbourg, 1545), 20; or the parallel text English edition compiled by Hartlib's associate John Hall. Hall's rather flat English translation of these lines reads: "So quitting earth, thou purest air shalt breath, / A God divine, not capable of death"; *Hierocles Upon the Golden Verses of Pythagoras; Teaching a Vertuous and Worthy Life*, trans. John Hall (London, 1657), sig. A6r.

18. See More, *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, 37–38, 164.

19. Cf. George Rust, *A Discourse of the Use of Reason in Matters of Religion*, ed. Henry Hallywell (London, 1683), 43.

20. Rust, *Letter*, 47.

these gross & terrestiall ones? And is there not a naturall maturation of vitall congruity necessary to such a Descent? and y^t is not voluntary, but fatall.

Aeriall Praeexistent State

1. Doth the Aeriall congruity expire through any defect of the Plastick? if so (1) how come wee to resume an aeriall state [*deleted* in] [[^]w[*i*]thin] these terrestiall bodies? and (2) how then doth the soul unite to a body that is more difficultly manigeable then the aeriall vehicle. or

2. Doth that aptitude expire through the accrewm^{[en]t} of more strength to the plastick power, where by the body of ayre is rendred less suteable to it's now th[o]roughly awakened energy: w^{ch} yet methinks should p[ro]cure it a body more pure & tenuious²¹ that should be more obedient to it's laws, then this sluggish stubborn element. Yet this latter seems to bee the sence of o^{ur} Philosophers; For their Doctrine is, That the lower wee fall, the more wee sink into the Plastick life; w^{ch} I can understand nothing by, but the invigeration [*sic*] of that powre. And as the higher facultyes are more & more consopited,²² so by the same degrees are the lower awakened.

The Terrestrial State

1. This state is either a state of Punishm^{[en]t} or Probation. if y^e former, why doe wee not remember o^{ur} offences? Since penall inflictions without memory of the faults y^t occasion'd y^m would indeed bee a misery, but no mulct²³ or prop[er] punishm^t. Why els is the Memory their past delinquencye's necessary in the next state to compleat the Hell of the wicked.²⁴

But (2) if this bee a state of meer probation, & an after game of y^e divine goodness (1) how doth it appear to bee so to dying infants? (2) how to bruitish Indians, who haue few or no helps or oportunities of mending or bettering themselues? (3) how to those that are under fatall indispositions to virtue?²⁵

2. How doth the soul make the body, since the plastick acts without sence or animadversion? And how can an unintelligent principle guide or direct such numerous nice motions, with such order and decorum, as is necessary to so difficu[l]t & exact a fabrication?

3. Methinks the Soul should forme the body round according to the Platonicall Hypothesis:²⁶ except it haue such a kind of organisation in it's naked essence as it signes

21. "Tenuious": "Thin, attenuated" (OED).

22. See n. 60 in the article above.

23. "Mulct": "1. A fine imposed for an offence... 2. A penalty of any kind" (OED).

24. On memory, see n. 33 below.

25. The heresiographer Thomas Edwards listed the belief that "Infants rise not again, because they are not capable of knowing God, and therefore not of enjoying him" (*Gangraena: or a Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and Pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this Time* [London, 1646], 27). Cf. Jeremy Taylor, *Vnum Necessarium. Or, the Doctrine and Practice of Repentance* (London, 1655), 381–82. On the need for dead infants (and those born before the time of Christ) to be reincarnated to achieve salvation, see F. M. van Helmont, *Two Hundred Queries... Concerning the Doctrine of the Revolution of Humane Souls* (London, 1684), 3–4, 16, 134; and *Paradoxical Discourses... Concerning the Microcosm and the Macrocosm* (London, 1685), 107.

26. See, for example, Plato, *Phaedrus*, 246a–e; *Timaeus*, 41d–42d.

the body w^t; w^{ch} is a groundlesse device of van- Helmonts.²⁷ And without this suppos- all what reason is there that the plastick should beare out so unequally from it's centre in the formation of the body.

The Next State.

1. How would y^u hinder the enlarging the Hypothesis to Pythagorisme.²⁸ For (1) the Divine goodness w^{ch} regardes all his Creatures seemes to require it, otherwise some will bee faultlessly miserable; for what acc^t els can be given of the State of Beasts who some of them are all their liues subiect to y^e tyrannicall lustes of merciless men, except wee suppose y^m to haue deserv'd this severe discipline by some former delinquencies. (2) Some men seem naturally prepar'd for a descent into brute bodyes, by their brutish dispositions: And haue almost nothing to speak y^m better while in humane flesh but speech, and their externall persons. Now if the Reason of o^{ur} descending into these bodyes was as ye Acc^t of Origen saith,²⁹ That o^{ur} souls acted at no higher rate of perfection, than might haue been expected from souls in such bodyes; In like manner methinks those that liue like brutes should the next step descend into such bodyes, as their bestiall nature fits them for. (3) The next state is a state of punishm^t to the wicked, and therefore worse then this, and therefore they will haue worse bodyes, since the Acc^t of origen saith, the purer the body is the purer & happier will be the life & operations. according to w^{ch} if wicked men rise immediately in aeriall bodyes, they would then bee less miserable then now they are.³⁰ (4) this [*deleted* Hypothesis] descent is no more unlikely then that Aeriall genii should become terrestrial men.³¹ And (5) methinks 'tis more tollerable then a state of utter silence and inertness; w^{ch} according to Origenianism after y^e Conflagration will bee y^e lot of the wicked. And (6) the Metempsychosis of insects is a dangerous instance.

2. At least may not some act more then one part on this stage in humane forme, before this rowl of Providence [*deleted* haue] [^hath] gone round? For doe not dying infants fall back again immediately into their former state of silence, when they quit these bodyes? and may they not bee tempted forth again from that recess when fitly prae- pared matter calls for them?³²

27. See J. B. van Helmont, *A Ternary of Paradoxes. The Magnetick Cure of Wounds. The Nativity of Tartar in Wine. The Image of God in Man*, trans. Walter Charleton, 2d impression (London, 1650), 129–31.

28. See Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2d ed. (London, 1982), 504–7.

29. Rust, *Letter*, 47–48.

30. *Ibid.*, 48.

31. Cf. *ibid.*, 51.

32. Cf. n. 128 above. Writing of pre-existence to More, Hallywell reflected, “The most pressing Objection to me is that concerning y^e state of the souls of Infants departed this life. For although I have a Great Reverence of y^e Doctrine of our church, so farre as not to affirme any thing in Opposition and Contradiction to it, and therefore shall content my selfe in these Points with the Peace and Quiet of my own Mind, yet I find such Pertinacious Assaults as are not to be beaten back by saying that children dying Immediately after Baptism have all things necessary to salvation, and are undoubtedly saved” (Hallywell-More, March 17 1672, Christ's College, MS. 21, no. 21).

3. May wee not amend in the next state what we haue done amiss in this? And so many not the departed wicked get beyond the reach of the black fate, before the day of fiery vengeance? For the misery they will then feele will awaken those considerations & in-deavours in them, which the pleasures of the body here would not giue them leaue to attend to. And on the contrary, w^{ch} is the more troublesome doubt, may not those that haue beene in some good praeparations to happiness, and haue lived vertuously here, degenerate and grow into the Animall life in the next state? Though I could with out much difficultye admit the former, yet this latter is a discouraging consideration.

[fol. 2r]

4. Is there not some feare that wee may loose o^{ur} memoryes after death, since far less changes now cause a totall oblivion; we haue forgot most passages of o^{ur} infancy, & a disease oft make memory a meer Rasu Tabula. Besides wee remember nothing now with out the help of those Spirits, w^{ch} very likely will take the winges & flye away, or at least [deleted their] they will see much alter'd when wee haue got us Aeriall bodyes.³³

5. I cannot perceiue what Acc^t this Hypothesis giues of the state of the wicked after death before the day of judgm^t. Methinks it makes the condition of y^e Good (at least those that are imperfectly so) and y^e bad, to bee much what as now, without much distinction of [deleted place or] state or abode. or if the wicked are confin'd to uncomfortable squallid places here on Earth or under [it ms. torn] I pray by what law? Naturall or politicall? Their confinem^{[en]t} to the [U? ms. damaged] nique shade of the Earth w^{ch} Dr More speaks of in his Philosophicall dream;³⁴ I know not whether I am to take it for such; or in earnest. If the latter, I see no reason, why they might not moue with the circling Atmospher.

The State after the Conflagration

1. shall all the silence'd souls immediately awaken after the ayre is restor'd to it's naturall temper? or else lye insensible till they are cal'd for by a terrestriall congruity? The former seems most probable to mee, since there was no failure on the soule's part, it's radicall vitall aptitude remaining: so that there will bee nothing wanting to it's reaccension but matter fit for vitall union, w^{ch} restored nature will then abundantly furnish it

33. Knowledge as a form of innatist recollection is a central tenet of all Platonic thought—see Plato, *Meno*, 80d–86c; Plato, *Phaedo*, 72e–77d. Henry More identified two kinds of memory: the first “is seated in the Mundane spirit of man, [and is] but a strong impression, or inustion [sic] of any phantase, or outward sensible object, upon that spirit. But there is a memory more subtile and abstract in the soul it self, without the help of this spirit, which she also carries away with her having left the body”; More, *Philosophicall Poems* (London, 1647), 429–30. It is the second of these that is of concern here, which also overlaps with Descartes’s notion of an “intellectual” memory. The last part of More’s poem “Antimonopsychia” is entitled “Memory after Death” and turns the topic over in some detail (*Philosophicall Poems*, 292–95). See further van Helmont, *Ternary of Paradoxes*, 133–34; More, *Immortality*, 167–68, 252–54; Glanvill, *Vanity*, 32–39; Glanvill, *Lux Orientalis*, 58–61. Also Geneviève Lewis, *L’Individuelité selon Descartes* (Paris, 1950), 208–18; John Sutton, *Philosophy and Memory Traces: Descartes to Connectionism* (Cambridge, 1998), 129–48.

34. “Insomnium Philosophicum,” in More, *Philosophicall Poems*, 324–28.

with. But yet methinks o^{ur} philosophers [*deleted* inclime] incline to the other Hypothesis. yo^{ur} opinion will determine mee.

2. How shall the matter bee praepar'd for the reception of humane Souls; and what common seedsman will there bee of succseding [*sic*] mortality, when as all mankind shall bee swep't away by the conflagra[*ti*]on? To haue recourse to a Miracle seemes a desperate refuge. And if there bee any way within the course of nature; methinks wee should 'ere this haue had instances of such generations.

3. will not the earth after it's Conflagration recover it's solary nature, and flye away into the centre of some other vortex again? I had made no doubt of it, but that D^r More & the ingenious Apologist for Origen, giue an other acc^t of it.³⁵

2 other Incident Quaeries.

1. Since probably like lapses haue hap[*en*]ned in other vortices as in ours, what method can wee probably [conjecture *ms. damaged*] that div[*ine ms. torn*] providence hath [us'd *ms. damaged*] for their recovery? or what were the aeriall genii that yet never fell so low as earth, benefitted by the appearance of o^{ur} Redeemer?

2. How appears it that Bruits are not meere machina's? Wee cannot conclude y^m to haue immaterial soul's, but by determining that the actions w^{ch} they performe are about the power of any materiall principle; w^{ch} I see no reason to assert, since the same and other as difficult operations are perform'd without [*deleted an*] animadversion or sence, as in the direction of o^{ur} Spirits for animall motions, & in the plastick formations.³⁶ And (2) if Bruits are not Machina's, 'tis either because g[o]d could not make such creatures, as should doe such things mechanically; or because he would not. To assert y^e former is methinks to bee too bold with the divine power; since wee deprehend no contradiction in the thing: And every day presents us with things in nature y^t are as wonderfull. And the latter, that he would not is contrary to the Maxim, Frustra fit per plura &c. ———³⁷

Y^u see Sir, how much I praesume on yo^{ur} goodness, w^{ch} yet I should not so unreasonably haue overlay'd, but that I haue some assurance that M^r Gibbon's interest will procure mee a pardon. And but that he promis'd to recommend my doubts to yo^{ur} consideration I should haue been asham'd to giue y^u so voluminous a trouble. If y^u can find time from yo^{ur} more weighty imployments to returne mee an answer, y^u may bee pleas'd to inclose it to Mr Gibbon, since the place of my then-abode will bee uncertain. By gratifying my desires herein y^u will lay an infinite obligation on

35. More, *Immortality*, 538–40, 543; Rust, *Letter*, 89–91. Cf. Glanvill, *Lux Orientalis*, 188–89.

36. Descartes held that animals were machines with no souls; see, for example, Descartes-More, 5 February 1649, *Oeuvres de Descartes*, 11 vols., eds. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery (Paris, 1964–74), 5:278.

37. Ockham's razor, one formulation of which was "*Frustra fit per plura quod potest fieri per pauciora*" [What can be explained by assumption of fewer things is vainly explained by the assumption of more things].

Sir,
Yo^{ur} most affectionate
Serv^t and honourer
Jos. Glanvill.

Cecill-house³⁸
Jan. 20. 61³⁹

[*fol. 2v.*]

Qs des Cartes from Mr Glanvil to I think Bishop Rust Severall queries Concerning a further state.⁴⁰

38. Cecil House, also known Burghley House and Exeter House, was demolished in the late 1670s. It stood on the site of the present Lyceum Theatre, just off the Strand in London. See J. F. Merrit, "The Cecils and Westminster," in Pauline Croft, ed., *Patronage, Culture, and Power: The Early Cecils* (New Haven, Conn., 2002), 231–46.

39. That is, 1661/2.

40. Written in a different hand.