

Sarah Fyge Egerton, “To Mr. Norris, on his Idea of Happiness”

Description

SARAH FYGE EGERTON

“To Mr. Norris, on his Idea of Happiness”

I.

If Pythagorick notions would agree,
With sublimated Christianity;
What mighty Soul, shall I allow,
 Informs thy Body now;
 For when did such appear, 5
Sure the belov'd Disciple's Soul is here.
Not us'd since then, but kept above,
And taught a more extatick Love;
The Understanding more inlarg'd and free,
 Each generous Faculty 10
Refin'd, Improv'd, made more compleat,
 In the seraphick Seat.
The brightest warmest of th' exalted Quire,
Flaming with Rays of beatifick Fire;
Such seems thy elevated Soul to be, 15
And not the usual sort gave to Mortality.

II.

The great, the Eternal God of Love,
Took Pity on us from above;
 He could no longer see,
Our Souls wrapt in Obscurity: 20
But sent thee like, a bright celestial Ray,
To clear our Sight, and to direct the Way;
 To the Etherial Courts of Bliss,
The only great, and lasting Happiness.
The active native Principle of Love, 25
 We found did move
 By an internal Influence,
But 'twas toward some object of the Sense:
Effects and Causes were not understood,
We only knew we wisht for Good, 30
And would with Joy each glimpse pursue,

And in what Bliss departed Souls do dwell:
All this in pure and pregnant Elegance we hear, 75
Plain as Corporeal Organs can declare,
That when we read thy Lines we almost think we're there.

NOTES:

Title The reference is to John Norris (1657-1711), Anglican priest and philosopher and his poem titled "An Idea of Happiness, in a Letter to a Friend enquiring wherein the Greatest Happiness attainable by Man in this Life does consist" (1684) (*Britannica*).

1 *Pythagorick* "Of, relating to, or characteristic of Pythagoras, his followers, or their philosophy" (*OED*).

12 *seraphick Seat* This appears to be a reference to heaven, where seraphim "hover above the throne of God" (*OED*).

13 *Quire* "Figurative of angels" (*OED*).

45 *vitiated* "Corrupted, spoiled" (*OED*).

48 *Trifles* Insignificant things (*OED*).

50 *Repast* "Figurative, as the type of something providing nourishment for the spirit, intellect, etc." (*OED*).

54 *Bill of Fare* "Menu; a programme" (*OED*).

66 *refulgent* "Illustrious" (*OED*).

72 *Sapience* "Spiritual wisdom, knowledge of divine things" (*OED*).

76 *Corporeal* "Of the nature of the animal body as opposed to the spirit; physical; bodily; mortal" (*OED*).

SOURCE: *Poems on Several Occasions, Together with a Pastoral, By Mrs. S. F.* (London, [1703]), pp. 27-31. [Google Books]

Edited by Madison Maraspini