

little reason to condemn the former for their credulity, as there is the latter entirely for their unbelief.

It perhaps may be thought better to steer a middle course. That there have been apparitions is beyond all doubt, when we consider that such are recorded in holy writ. It were certainly to be wished that a line could be drawn between idle delusions (the creatures of a disordered imagination) and real apparitions; for most intelligent persons are well aware, that many things of this kind, which are not real facts, are often related, to the discredit and certain confusion of the reporter.

Now to reconcile the matters between two extremes, may by some be thought difficult, but in order to set such bounds to our inquiries as right reason prescribes, it is our intention in the following sheets to relate nothing but what is upon the surest foundation of credit.

Many persons have been, and still are, very much alarmed at the bare mention of a spirit or apparition, and in consequence would not venture a step in the dark, or across a church yard at midnight, for fear of meeting the awful form of some departed friend. This can be accounted for no otherwise than from the prejudice of education; for our infant ideas of this kind grow up to maturity with our stature, and fix so strong and strange an impression upon our minds, as even in future life to drive reason from her throne.

But the reader is not wished to presume from hence, for suppose there is no certainty of the actual existence of spirits and apparitions; but on the contrary, that we have the best evidence that such have been seen in all ages, according to the testimony of the soberest and wisest of mankind, and doubtless sent by providence as ministering spirits, to answer some fit decree of his divine wisdom.

Mr. Addison in one of his papers, No. 110.) where the scene is laid in the country, at the house of Sir Roger de Coverly in Worcester, observes, that they