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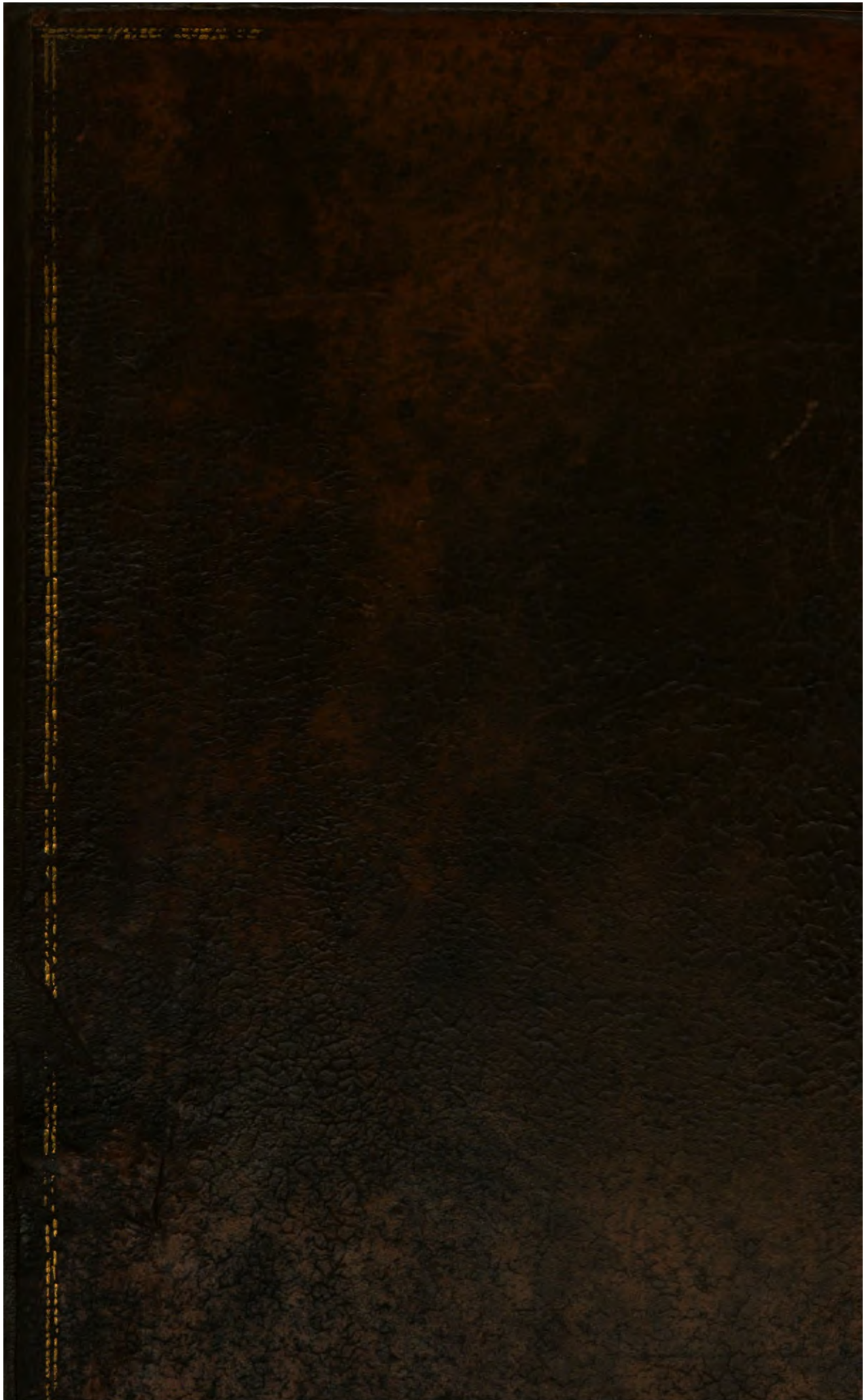
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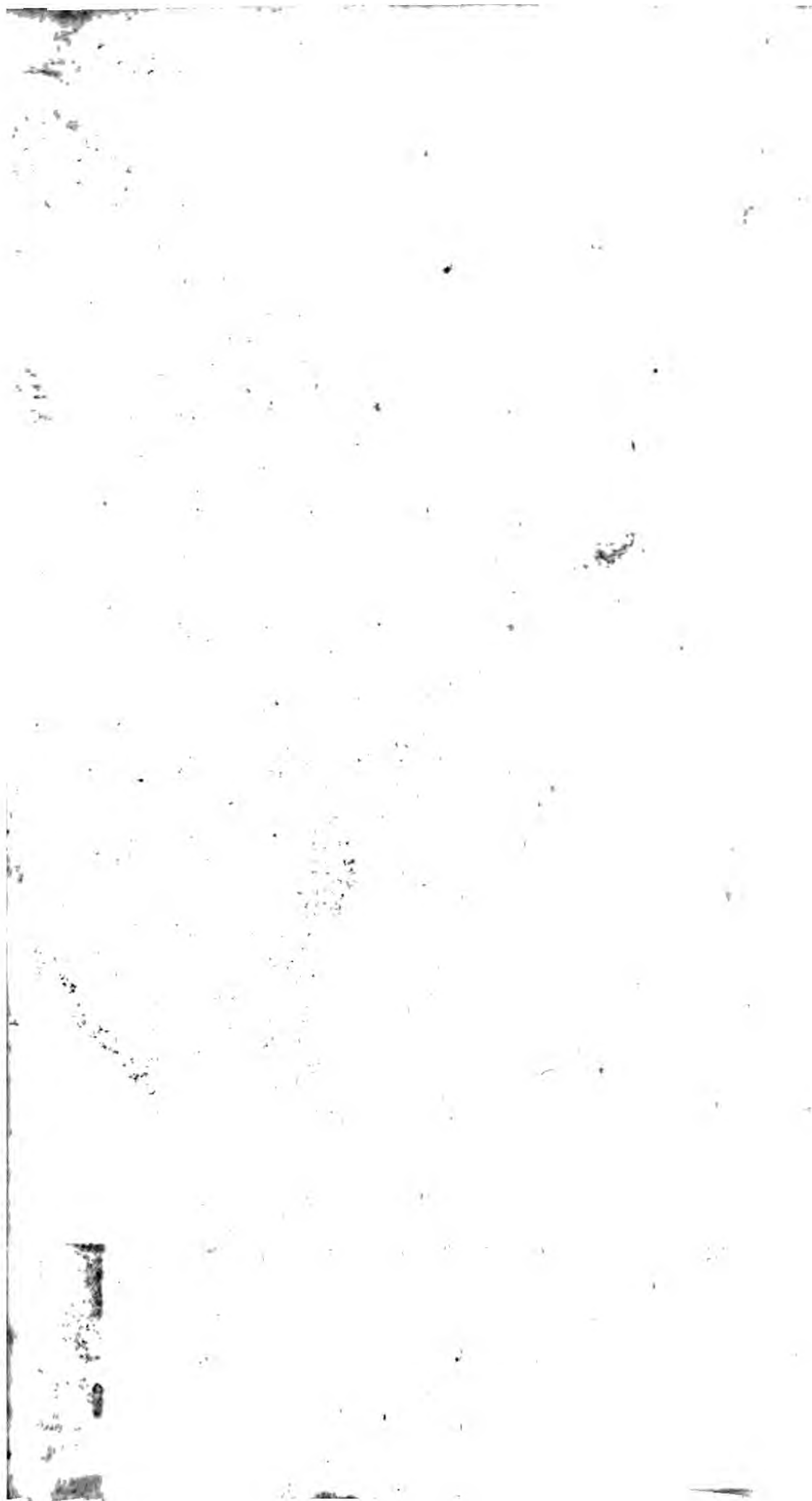


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XL 47.19 [11





J. Wall N. D. inv. J. Ravenel Sculp.
When I consider thy Heavens the work of thy fingers. y Moon
& the Stars which thou hast ordained. — Lord What is Man,
that thou art mindfull of him: & the son of man, that thou visitest
him. — Psalm 8. V. 3 & 4. — Publish'd May 2. 1748. by J. & J. Rivington.

MEDITATIONS

AND

CONTEMPLATIONS.

In TWO VOLUMES.

Containing,

VOL. I.	VOL. II.
MEDITATIONS among the TOMBS;	CONTEMPLATIONS on the NIGHT;
REFLECTIONS on a FLOWER-GARDEN;	CONTEMPLATIONS on the STARRY HEAVENS; <i>And,</i>
<i>And,</i> A DESCANT ON CREATION.	A WINTER-PIECE.

By *JAMES HERVEY*, A. B.
Late of Lincoln-College, Oxon.

The THIRD EDITION, with Additions.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed for JOHN and JAMES RIVINGTON,
at the *Bible and Crown* in *St. Paul's Church-
Yard*; and J. LEAKE, at *Bath*.

M DCC XLVIII.

[Faint, illegible text covering the majority of the page]

stoops a Youth, with conscious Self-Abasement in his Countenance; and holds a Scroll, inscribed with a Diagram; expressing the joint Action of the centrifugal and centripetal Forces; as by the One, the Planets are continually endeavouring to fly off; but by the other, are perpetually drawn towards the Center of their Motion, SIC GRATIA DEI, *Such is the Operation of divine Grace: correcting the irregular Impulse of our natural Depravity; determining our Desires to the Center of Happiness, and directing our Goings in the Circle of Duty.*—A Youth in the Middle, transported with Astonishment at the stupendous System, and over-whelmed with Veneration for the Almighty Maker, on his bended Knees, with Hands and Eyes lifted up to Heaven, seems to pour out his very Soul in those emphatical Words, *When I consider thy Heavens the Work of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained.—Lord what is Man, that thou art mindful of him: and the Son of Man, that thou visitest him.* Ps. viii. 3, 4.



TO
PAUL ORCHARD,
OF
Stoke-Abbey, in Devon, Esq;

Dear S I R,

AS your honoured Father was pleased to make Choice of me, to answer in your Name at the Font, and to exercise a Sort of Guardianship over your spiritual Interests; permit me, by putting these little Treatises into your Hand, to fulfil some Part of that solemn Obligation.

GRATITUDE for many signal Favours, and a *conscientious* Regard to my
A 2 sacred

iv DEDICATION.

sacred Engagement, have long ago inspired my Breast with the warmest Wishes, both for *your* true *Dignity*, and real *Happiness*. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual Way, of advancing either the one or the other, than to set before you a Sketch of your excellent *Father's Character*.—Illustrious Examples are the most winning Incitements to Virtue: And none can come attended with such particular Recommendations to you, as the Pattern of that worthy Person, from whom, under a gracious God, you derive your very Being.

A M O S T cordial and reverential *Esteem* for the *Divine Word* was one of his remarkable Qualities. Those Oracles of Heaven were his principal Delight, and his inseparable Companions. Your Gardens, your solitary Walks, and the Hedges of your Fields, can witness, with what an un-

wearied

DEDICATION. v

wearied Assiduity He exercised Himself in the Law of the LORD. From hence He fetched his Maxims of Wisdom, and formed his Judgment of Things. The sacred Precepts were the Model of his Tempers, and the Guide of his Life; while the precious Promises were the Joy of his Heart, and his Portion for ever.

IMPROVING Company was another of His most relishing Pleasures. Few Gentlemen were better furnished, either with Richness of Fancy, or Copiousness of Expression, to bear a shining Part in Conversation. With these Talents He always endeavoured to give some useful, and generally some religious, Turn to the Discourse. Nor did He ever reflect, with greater Complacency, on His social Hours, than when they tended to glorify the eternal Majesty, and to awaken in Himself and others a more lively Spirit of Devotion.

vi **D E D I C A T I O N.**

To *project* for the *Good* of *Others*, was His frequent *Study*; and to *carry* those benevolent *Contrivances* into *Execution*, His favourite *Employ*. When visited by the young Persons of the Neighbourhood, far from taking an ungraceful *Pride* to initiate them in *Debauchery*, or confirm them in a riotous *Habit*; it was His incessant *Aim*, by finely-adapted *Persuasives*, to encourage them in *Industry*, and establish them in a *Course* of *Sobriety*; to guard them against the *Allurements* of *Vice*, and animate them with the *Principles* of *Piety*. A noble *Kind* of *Hospitality* this! which will probably transmit its beneficial *Influence* to their earthly *Possessions*, to their future *Families*, and even to their everlasting *State*.

A *CONVICTION* of human *Indigence*, and a thorough *Persuasion* of the *Divine All-sufficiency*, induced Him to be *frequent*

DEDICATION vii

in Prayer. To prostrate Himself, in profound Adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in Light inaccessible, was his Glory; to implore the Continuance of the Almighty Favour, and the Increase of all Christian Graces, was his Gain. In those Moments, no doubt, He remembered you, Sir, with a particular Earnestness; and lodged many an ardent Petition in the Court of Heaven, for His infant Son. Cease not to second them with your own devout Supplications, that they may descend upon your Head, “in the
“ Fulness of the Blessings of the Gospel
“ of Peace.”

To give their native Lustre to all His other Endowments, He was careful to maintain an *bumble Mind*. Though his Friends might admire His superior Abilities, or his Acquaintance applaud His exemplary Behaviour, He saw how far He

viii **DEDICATION.**

fell short of the Mark of His high Calling; saw, and lamented his Defects: saw, and renounced Himself; relying, for final Acceptance, and endless Felicity, on a better Righteousness than His own; even on the transcendently perfect Righteousness, and inconceivably precious Death, of J E S U S the Redeemer. This was the Rock of his Hope, and the very Crown of his Rejoicing.

T H E S E, Sir, are some of the distinguishing Characteristics of your deceased Parent. And, as you had the Misfortune to lose so valuable a Relative, before you was capable of forming any Acquaintance with his Person, I flatter myself, you will the more attentively observe his Picture. This His *moral Picture*; designed, not to be set in Gold, or sparkle in Enamel, but to breathe in your Spirit, and to live in all your Conduct.—Which, though it be intirely

DEDICATION. ix

tirely your own, calculated purely for yourself, may possibly, like the Family-Pieces in your Parlour, that glance an Eye upon as many as enter the Room, make some pleasing and useful Impression on every Beholder.—May Every one, charmed with the beautiful Image, catch its Resemblance; and each, in his respective Sphere, “go
“ and do likewise.”

BUT *you*, Sir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable Original. As the Order of an indulgent Providence has made you Heir of the *affluent Circumstances*, let not a gay and thoughtless Inadvertence cut you off from the *richer Inheritance* of these noble Qualifications.—These will be your Security amidst all the glittering Dangers, which are inseparable from blooming Years, and an elevated Situation in Life. These are your Path, your sure and only Path, to true Greatness, and solid Happiness.—

Tread

x. *DEDICATION.*

Tread in these Steps, and you cannot fail of being the Darling of your Friends, and the Favourite of Heaven. Tread in these Steps, and you will give inexpressible Joy to one of the best of Mothers; you will become an extensive Blessing to your Fellow-Creatures; and which, after such most engaging Motives, is scarce worthy to be mentioned, you will be the Delight, the Honour, and the Boast of,

Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate Godfather,

And faithful Humble Servant,

Weston-Favell, near
Northampton,
July 14, 1747.

JAMES HERVEY.

CONTEMPLATIONS
ON THE
NIGHT.

*Night is fair Virtue's immemorial Friend;
The conscious Moon, through every distant Age,
Has held a Lamp to Wisdom.*

Night Thoughts, No. V.

CONSTITUTIONAL

OF THE

UNITED STATES

AMERICAN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY, 25 NASSAU ST. N. Y.
HARPER & BROTHERS, 15 N. 3RD ST. N. Y.

P R E F A C E.

WE have already exercised our Speculations on the Tombs, and Flowers; surveying Nature, covered with the deepest Horrors, and arrayed in the richest Beauties. Allegory taught many of the Objects to speak the Language of Virtue; while Imagination lent her Colouring to give the Lessons an engaging Air.—And this with an humble View of imitating that divine Instructor, who commissioned the Lilly *, in her Silver Suit, to remonstrate in the Ear of unbelieving Reason: Who sent his Disciples, Men ordained to teach the Universe, to learn Maxims of the last Importance, from the most insignificant Birds *, that wander through the Paths of the Air; from the very meanest Herbs *, that are scattered over the Face of the † Ground.

Imboldened by the kind Acceptance of the preceding Sketches, I beg Leave to confide in the same Benevolence of Taste, for the Protection and Support of the two remaining Essays; which exhibit

*** Matt. vi. 26, 28, 29, 30.

† Celebrated Writers, as Demosthenes and Cicero, Thucydides and Livy, are observ'd to have a Style peculiar to themselves—Now whoever considers the Discourses of Christ, will find a Style by which he remarkably distinguishes himself, and which may properly be called HIS OWN. It consists in Teaching his followers the Sublimest Truths, by spiritualizing
on

xiv. P R E F A C E.

exhibit a Prospect of still Life, and grand Operation: which moralize on the most composed, and most magnificent, Appearances of Things.—In which, Fancy is again suffered to introduce her Imagery; but only as the Handmaid of Truth: in order to dress her Person, and display her Charms; to engage the Attention, and win the Love, even of the Gay, and of the Fashionable. Which is more likely to be effected, by forming agreeable Pictures of Nature, and deriving instructive Observations; than by the laborious Method of long-deduced Arguments, or close connected Reasonings.—As the Contemplation of the Heavens and the Earth, of their admirable Properties and beneficial Changes, affords the most delightful Gratification to the human Mind; I have attempted to extract Virtue, from those Sources of refined and exalted Pleasure; to gather
Wisdom,

on the most common Occurrences; Which, besides its being level to the lowest Apprehensions; and admirably adapted to steal into the most inattentive Heart; is accompanied with this very regular Advantage, That it turns even the *Sphere of Business* into a *School of Instruction*; and renders the most ordinary Objects a Set of Monitors, ever soliciting our Regard, because ever present to our Senses.—So that I believe, it may be said of this amiable Method, in which our LORD conveyed, as well as of that powerful Energy, which attended his Doctrines, That *never Man spake like this Man.*—The Harvest approaching, He admonishes his Disciples once and again of the *Spiritual Harvest*, *John iv. 35.* In Al-
lusion

P R E F A C E. xv

Wisdom, from the stupendous Theatre, and variegated Scenery of the Universe.

The Evening, drawing her Sables over the World, and gently darkening into Night, is a Season peculiarly proper for sedate Consideration. All Circumstances concur, to hush our Passions, and soothe our Cares; to tempt our Steps abroad, and prompt our Thoughts to serious Reflection.

— — — — — *Then is the Time,
For those, whom Wisdom, and whom Nature
charm,*

*To steal themselves from the degenerate Croud,
And soar above this little Scene of Things;
To tread low-thoughted Vice beneath their Feet;
To sooth the throbbing Passions into Peace;
And woe lone Quiet in her silent Walks*.*

*The Favour I would sollicit for the first of the following Compositions, is, That it may be permitted to attend in such retired and contemplative Excursions. To attend, if not under the Character of a Friend; at least, in the humble Capacity of a Servant, or a Page:—as a Servant, to open the Door of Meditation, and remove every
Impedi-*

lusion to the present Season of Fruits, he admonishes his Disciples about knowing Men by the Fruits, Matt. vii. 16. To the Fishermen he speaks of Fishers of Men, Matt. iv. 10.—But for a farther Illustration of this no less useful, than curious Subject, I would refer my Reader to a most valuable Note in Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on the Prophecies, p. 148. 4to. Edition.

* Thomf. Autumn. l. 973. last Edit. 12mo.

Impediment to those best Exercises of the Mind ; which mingle Advantage with Entertainment, and improve, while they delight :—as a Page, to gather up the unstable, fluctuating Train of Fancy ; and collect her fickle Powers into a consistent, regular, and useful Habit of Thinking.

The other, conversant among the starry Regions, would lead the Imagination through those beautiful Tracts of unclouded Azure ; and point out to the Judgment some of those astonishing Particulars, which so eminently signalize the celestial Worlds. A Prospect this, to which Curiosity attracts our Eyes, and to which Scripture itself often directs our Study. A Prospect, of all others most excellently calculated, to enlarge the Soul, and enoble its Conceptions ;—to give the highest Apprehensions of the everlasting GOD, and create Sentiments of becoming Superiority, with relation to all transitory Interests ;——in a Word, to furnish Faith with the firmest Foundation, for a steady Affiance, and true Magnanimity of Spirit ; to afford Piety the strongest Motives, both for a lively Gratitude, and profound Veneration.

While Galilæo lifts his Tube, and discovers the prodigious Magnitude of those radiant Orbs ; —while Newton measures their amazing Distances, and unites the whole System, in harmoni-

ous

* Gen. xli. 43.

P R E F A C E. xvii

*ous Order, by the subtle Influences of Attraction :
—I would only, like the Herald before that illu-
strious Hebrew *, proclaim at every Turn, Bow
the Knee, and adore the Almighty Maker ; mag-
nify his eternal Name, and make his Praise, like
all his Works, to be glorious.*





The C O N T E N T S.

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CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.



THE Business of the Day dispatch-
ed, and the sultry Heats abated,
invited me to the Recreation of a
Walk: A Walk, in one of the
finest Recesses of the Country; and
in one of the most *pleasant Evenings*, which the
Summer-Season produced.

THE Limes and Elms, uniting their Branches
over my Head, formed a *verdant Canopy*, and
cast a most refreshing Shade. Under my Feet
lay a *Carpet* of Nature's *Velvet*; Grass inter-
mingled with Moss, and embroidered with
Flowers. Jessamines, in Conjunction with
Woodbines, twined around the Trees, display-
ing their *artless Beauties* to the Eye, and dif-
fusing

fusing their *delicious Sweets* through the Air. On either Side, the Boughs, rounded into a Set of regular Arches, opened a View into the *distant Fields*, and presented me with a Prospect of the *bending Skies*. The little Birds, all joyous and grateful for the Favours of the Light, were paying their Acknowledgements in a *Tribute of Harmony*, and soothing themselves to Rest with Songs. While a French-Horn, from a neighbouring Seat, sent its melodious Accents, softened by the Length of their Passage, to complete the *Concert of the Grove*.

ROVING in this most agreeable Manner, my Thoughts were exercised on a Subject, more delightful than the Season, or the Scene. I mean, our late *signal Victory* over the united Forces, of *intestine Treason*, and *foreign Invasion*. A Victory, which pours Joy through the present Age, and will transmit its Influence to Generations yet unborn.—Are not all the Blessings, which can endear Society, or render Life itself desirable, centered in our present *happy Constitution*, and *auspicious Government*? And were they not all struck at by that impious and horrid Blow, meditated at *Rome*; levelled by *France*; and seconded by factious Spirits at *Home*? Who then can be sufficiently thankful for the gracious Interposition of Providence, which has not only averted the
impending

Impending Ruin, but turned it, with aggravated Confusion, on the Authors of our Troubles?

METHINKS, every Thing *valuable*, which I possess, every Thing *charming*, which I behold, conspire to enhance this ever-memorable Event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmolested along the Vale of *private Life*, and taste all the innocent Satisfactions of a *contemplative Retirement*.—Had Rebellion succeeded in her detestable Designs, instead of walking with *Security* and *Complacence* in these flowery Paths, I might have met the *Assassin* with his *Dagger*; or have been obliged to provide for my Safety, by abandoning my Habitation.—Farewel then, ye fragrant Shades; Seats of Meditation, and calm Repose! I should have been driven from your *loved Retreats*, to make Way for some *insulting Victor*.—Farewel then, ye pleasing Toils, and wholesome Amusements of my rural Hours! I should no more have reared the tender *Flower* to the Sun; no more have taught the *Espalier* to expand her Boughs; nor have fetched, any longer, from my *Kitchen-Garden*, the purest Supplies of Health.

HAD Rebellion succeeded in her detestable Designs, instead of being regaled with the *Music* of the *Woods*, I might have been alarmed with the Sound of the Trumpet, and all the Thunder of War. Instead of being entertained with this *beautiful Land scape*, I might have beheld our

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Houses ransacked, and our Villages plundered ; I might have beheld our fenced Cities encompassed with Armies, and our fruitful Fields “cloathed with Desolation;” or have been shocked with the more frightful Images of “Gardments rolled in Blood,” and of a Ruffian’s Blade reeking from a Brother’s Heart. Instead of *Peace*, with her chearing Olives, sheltering our Abodes ; instead of *Justice*, with her impartial Scale, securing our Goods ; *Persecution* had brandished her Sword, and *Slavery* clanked her Chains.

NOR are these Miseries *imaginary* only, or the Creatures of a groundless Panic. There are, in a neighbouring Kingdom, who very lately *experienced* them in all their Rigour *. And, if the *malignant* Spirit of *Popery*, had forced itself into our Church ; if an *abjured Pretender*, had cut his Way to our Throne ; We could have no Reason to expect a Mitigation of their Severity, on our Behalf. —But, supposing the *tender Mercies* of a bigotted Usurper, to have been somewhat

* See a Pamphlet intituled, *Popery always the same*.—Which contains a Narrative of the *Persecutions*, and severe Hardships, lately suffered by the *Protestants*, in the southern Parts of *France*; and closes with a most *seasonable, alarming, and spirited Address* to the Inhabitants of *England*, Printed 1746. Price 8 d.

what less *cruel*; yet where, alas! would have been the *Encouragement* to cultivate our little Portion; or what *Pleasure* could arise from an improved Spot; if both the one and the other lay, every Moment, at the Mercy of *lawless Power*? This imbittering Circumstance would spoil their Relish; and by rendering them a *precarious*, would render them a *joyless* Acquisition.—In vain might the *Vine* spread her purple Clusters; in vain be lavish of her generous Juices; if *Tyranny*, like a ravenous Harpy, should be always hovering over the Bowl, and ready to snatch it from the Lip of *Industry*.

LIBERTY, that dearest of Names; and *Property*, that best of Charters; give an additional, an inexpressible Charm, to every delightful Object.—See, how the declining Sun has beautified the *western Clouds*; has arrayed them in Crimson, and skirted them with Gold. Such a Refinement of our *domestic Bliss*, is Property; such an Improvement of our *public Privileges*, is Liberty.—When the Lamp of Day shall intirely withdraw his Beams, there will still remain the same Collection of floating Vapours; but O! how changed, how gloomy! The *Carnation* blushes no more; the *golden Edgings* are gone; and all the *lovely Tinges* are lost, in a *leaden-coloured louring* Sadness. Such would be the Aspect of all these *Scenes of Beauty*, all these

6 C O N T E M P L A T I O N S

Abodes of Pleasure, if exposed continually to the Caprice of arbitrary Sway, or held in a State of abject and cringing Dependence.

THE Light of Heaven has almost finished his daily Race, and hastens to the Goal. He descends lower and lower; till his Chariot-wheels seem to hover on the utmost Verge of Day. And, what is somewhat remarkable, his *Orb*, upon the Point of setting, grows *broader*: The *Shadows*, just before they are lost in undistinguished Darkness, are surprizingly *lengthened**. — Like *Blessings*, little prized, while *possessed*: but *highly esteemed*, the very Instant they are *preparing* for their *Flight*; *bitterly regretted*, when once they are *gone*, and to be seen no more.

THE radiant Globe is now half immersed beneath the dusky Earth. He is taking his Leave of our Hemisphere, and gilds the Plains with a languid Lustre.—But, could I view the *Sea*, at this Juncture, it would yield a most amusing and curious Spectacle. The Rays, striking horizontally on the liquid Element, give it the Appearance of floating Glafs: or, reflected in many a different Direction, form a beautiful Multiplicity of Colours.—A *Stranger*, as he walks along the

* *Majoresque cadunt altis de Montibus Umbrae.*

VIRG.

the sandy Beach; and, lost in pensive Attention, listens to the Murmurings of the restless Flood; is agreeably alarmed by the *gay Decorations* of the Surface. With Entertainment, and with Wonder, he sees the curling Waves, here glistering with White, there glowing with Purple; in one Place, wearing an azure Tincture, in another, glancing a Cast of undulating Green; in the whole, exhibiting a Piece of *fluid Scenery*, that may vie with yonder pensil Tapestries, though wrought in the Loom, and tinged with the Dyes of Heaven.

BUT, while I am transported by Fancy to the Shores of the Ocean, the great Luminary is sunk beneath the Horizon, and totally disappears. The whole Face of the Ground is overspread with Shades; or with, what one of the finest Painters of Nature calls, a *dun Obscurity*. Only a few very superior Eminencies are tipped with streaming Silver. The Tops of Groves, and lofty Towers, catch the last Smiles of Day*; are still irradiated by the departing Beams.—But oh! how transient is the Distinction! how momentary the Gift! Like all the Blessings, which

B 4

Mortals

* See this remarkable Appearance delicately described, and wrought into a Comparison, which, in my Opinion, is one of the most just, beautiful, and noble Pieces of Imagery, to be found in modern Poetry.

Night Thoughts. N^o II. p. 42. 4^{to} Edit.

8 C O N T E M P L A T I O N S

Mortals enjoy below, it is *gone*, almost as soon as *granted*. See! how languishingly it trembles on the leafy Spire; and glimmers, with a dying Faintness, on the Mountain's Brow. The little Vivacity, that remains, decays every Moment. It can no longer hold its Station. While I speak, it expires; and resigns the World to the gradual Approaches of Night.

— *Now Twilight grey*
Has in her sober Liv'ry all Things clad.*

EVERY Object, a little while ago, *glared* with Light; but now All appears under a more *qualified* Lustre. The *Animals* harmonize with the *insensible* Creation; and what was *gay* in those, as well as *glittering* in this, gives place to an universal *Gravity*. In the *Meadows*, all was jocund and sportive: but now the *gamesome Lambs*, are grown weary of their Frolicks; and the *tired Shepherd*, has imposed Silence on his Pipe. In the *Branches*, all was Sprightliness and Song: but now the *lively Green*, is wrapt in the descending Gloom; and no *tuneful Airs* are heard, but only the *plaintive Stock-dove*, cooing mournfully through the Grove.—Should I now be vain and trifling, the Heavens and the Earth would rebuke my unseasonable Levity. There-
fore,

* MILT. *Par. Lost*. B. iv. l. 598.

fore, be these Moments devoted to Thoughts, *sedate* as the closing Day, *solemn* as the Face of Things. And, indeed, however my *social Hours* are enlivened with *innocent Pleasantry*; let every *Evening*, in her sable Habit, toll the Bell to *serious Consideration*. Nothing can be more proper for a Creature that borders upon Eternity, and is hastening continually to his final Audit; than daily to slip away from the Circle of Amusements, and frequently to relinquish the Hurry of Business, in order to consider and adjust “the
“ Things that belong to his Peace.”

SINCE the Sun is departed, from whence can it proceed, that I am not involved in *pitchy Darknes*? Whence, these Remainers of *diminished Brightness*? which, though scarcely forming a Refulgence, yet smooth the rugged Brow of Night. I see not the shining Orb, and yet am cheared with a Portion of his softened Splendours.—Does He remember Us, in his Progress through other Climes; and send a *Detachment* of his Rays, to *escort* Us in our further Motions; or *cover* (if I may use the military Term) our *Retreat* from the Scene of Action? Has He *bequeathed* Us a *Dividend* of his Beams, sufficient to render our Circumstances easy, and our Situation agreeable? till Sleep pours its soft Oppression on the Organs of Sense; till Sleep suspends all the Operations of our Hands; and
entirely

10 C O N T E M P L A T I O N S

entirely supercedes any more Occasion for the Light.

NO: it is ill-judged and unreasonable, to ascribe this beneficent Conduct to the *Sun*. Not unto *Him*; not unto *Him*; but unto his *Almighty Maker* We are obliged, for this noble Present, this valuable Legacy. The gracious Author of our Being, has so disposed the Collection of circum-ambient Air; as to make it productive of this fine and beneficial Effect. The Sun Beams, falling on the higher Parts of the aerial Fluid, instead of passing on in strait Lines, are bent inward, and inflected to our Sight. Their natural Course is over-ruled, and they are bidden to wheel about; on purpose, to favour Us with a welcome and salutary Visit.—By which Means, the Blessing of Light, and the Season of Business, are considerably prolonged. And, what is a very endearing Circumstance, prolonged most considerably; when the vehement Heats of Summer, incline the *Student* to postpone his Walk, till the temperate Evening prevails; when the important Labours of the Harvest, call the *Husbandman* abroad, before the Day is fully risen.

AFTER all the Ardors of the sultry Day, how reviving is this *Coolness*!—This gives new *Verdure* to the fading Plants; new *Vivacity* to the
the

the withering Flowers ; and a more exquisite *Fragrancy* to their mingled Scents.—By this the *Air* also receives a new Force, and is qualified to exert itself with greater Activity : to *brace* our *Limbs* ; to *heave* our *Lungs* ; and co-operate, with a brisker Impulse, in *perpetuating* the *Circulation* of our Blood.—This I might call the grand *Alembic* of *Nature*, which distils her most sovereign *Cordial*, the refreshing *Dews*. *Inces-*
sant Heat would destroy the pearly Drops, or oblige them to evaporate in imperceptible *Ex-*
halations. *Turbulent Winds*, or even the gentler *Motions* of *Aurora's Fan*, would dissipate the rising *Vapours*, and not suffer them to come to a *Coalition*. But, favoured by the *Stilness*, and condensed by the *Coolness* of the *Night*, they form that *finely-tempered Humidity*, which cheers the vegetable *World*, as *Sleep* exhilarates the animal.

SUCH are the Advantages of *Solitude*. The *World* is a *troubled Ocean* ; and who can erect stable Purposes, on its fluctuating *Waves*. The *World* is a *School* of *Wrong* ; and Who does not feel Himself warping, to its pernicious *Influ-*
ences * ? On this *Sea* of *Glass* †, how insensibly we *slide* from our *Stedfastness* ! Some *sacred*
Truth,

* *Nunquam a turba mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid, ex eo quod composui, turbatur : aliquid, ex his quæ fugavi, redit. Inimica est multorum conversatio. Seneca.*
† *Rev. xv. 2.*

Truth, which was struck in lively Characters on our Souls, is obscured, if not obliterated. Some *noble Resolution*, which Heaven had wrought in our Breasts, is shaken, if not overthrown. Some *enticing Vanity*, which we had solemnly renounced, again practises its Charms, and again captivates our Affections. How often has an unwary Glance, kindled a Fever of irregular Desire in our Hearts? How often has a Word of Applause, dropt *luscious Poison* into our Ears; or some disrespectful Expression, raised a Gust of Passion in our Bosoms? Our Innocence is of so *tender a Constitution*, that it suffers in the promiscuous Crowd; our Purity of so *delicate a Complexion*, that it scarce touches on the World without contracting a Stain. We see, we hear with *Peril*.

BUT here *Safety* dwells. Every meddling and intrusive Avocation is secluded. Silence holds the Door against the *Strife of Tongues*, and all the *Impertinencies* of idle *Conversation*. The busy Swarm of *vain Images*, and *cajoling Temptations*, that beset Us, with a buzzing Importunity, amidst the Gaieties of Life, are chased by these thickening Shades.—Here I may, without Disturbance, commune with my own Heart; and learn that *best of Sciences*, to *know myself*. Here the Soul may rally her dissipated Powers, and Grace recover its native Energy.—This is the Opportunity,

Opportunity, to rectify the evil Impressions, and expel the Contagion, of corrupting Examples. This is the Place, where I may, with Advantage, apply myself to subdue the *Rebel within*; and be Master, not of a *Sceptre*, but of *myself*. — Throng then, ye Ambitious, the *Levees* of the Powerful; I will be punctual, in my *Assignations* with Solitude. To a Mind intent upon its own Improvement, Solitude has Charms incomparably more engaging, than the *Entertainments*, presented in the *Theatre*; or the *Honours*, conferred in the *Drawing-Room*.

I SAID Solitude.—But am I then *alone*?— 'Tis true, my Acquaintance are at a Distance, I have stole away from Company, and am remote from all *human* Observation.—But that is an alarming Thought,

Millions of spiritual Creatures *walk the Earth*
Unseen, both when we wake, and when we
sleep *.

PERHAPS, there may be Numbers of those *invisible Beings*, patrolling this same Retreat; and joining with me, in contemplating the Creator's Works. Perhaps, those *ministering Spirits*, who rejoice at the Conversion of a Sinner, and hold up the Goings of the Righteous, may follow Us
to

* MILT. *Par. Lost*, B. iv. l. 677.

to the lonely Recess; and, even in our most *solitary Moments*, be our *constant Attendants*.—

What a *pleasing Awe* is awakened, by such a Reflection! How *venerable* it renders my *retired Walk*! I am struck with Reverence, as under the Roof of some *sacred Edifice*; or in the *Presence-Chamber* of some mighty Monarch.— O! may I never bring any Pride of Imagination, nor indulge the least dissolute Affection; where such *refined* and *exalted* Intelligencies exercise their Watch.

'TIS *possible*, that I am encompassed with such a *Cloud of Witnesses*; but it is *certain*, that GOD, the *infinite* and *eternal* GOD, is ever with me. The great JEHOVAH, before whom all the Angels bow their Heads, and veil their Faces, surrounds me; supports me; pervades me. “In HIM I live, move, and have my Being.” The whole World is his *august Temple*; and, in the most *sequestered Corner*, I stand before his adorable Majesty, no less than when I worship in his House, or kneel at his Altar. In every Place, therefore, let me pay him the Homage of a Heart, cleansed from Idols, and devoted to his Service. In every Circumstance, let me feel no *Ambition*, but to *please* Him; nor covet any *Happiness*, but to *enjoy* Him.

How sublime is the Description; and how striking the Sentiment, in that noble Passage of

the Psalms! *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy Presence? If I climb up into the Heights of Heaven, Thou art there enthroned in Light. If I go down to the Depths of the Grave, Thou art there also in thy Pavilion of Darkness. If I retire to the remotest Eastern Climes, where the Morning first takes Wing: if, swifter than the darting Ray, I pass to the opposite Regions of the West, and remain in the uttermost Parts of the Sea* : shall I, in that distant Situation, be beyond thy Reach; or, by this sudden Transition, escape thy Notice? So far from it; that could I, with one Glance of Thought, transport myself beyond all the Bounds of Creation; I should still be incircled with the Immensity of thy Essence, or rather, still be inclosed in the Hollow of thy Hand.—Important and delightful Truth! Let it be interwoven with every Thought! and become one with the very Consciousness of my Existence: that I may continually walk with GOD, and conduct myself, in every Step of my Behaviour, “as seeing HIM that is invisible.”*

THEY

* Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8, 9. There is, I think, an additional Strength and Beauty in the Thought, if, with the learned Mr. Mudge, we suppose an *Antitbesis* between the Two Clausures of this last Verse, as there evidently is between those of the preceding; and that they express, in a poetical Stile, the Extremities of the *East* and the *West*.

THEY are the happy Persons ; *Felicity, true Felicity is all their own* ; who live under an habitual *Sense of GOD's Omnipresence*, and a sweet *Persuasion of his special Love*. If *Dangers* threaten, their *impregnable Defence* is at hand ; nothing can be so near to terrify, as their Almighty Guardian to secure them.—To These, the *Hours* can never be *tedious* ; and it is impossible, for them, to be *alone*. Do they step aside from the *Occupations of animal Life* ? A more exalted Set of Employments engage their Attention. They address themselves, in all the *various Acts of Devotion*, to their heavenly Father ; *who now sees in secret, and will hereafter reward them openly*. They spread all their *Wants*, before his indulgent Eye ; and disburden all their Sorrows, into his compassionate Bosom.—Do they withdraw from *human Society* ? They find themselves under the more immediate Regards of their Maker. They resign the *Satisfactions of social Intercourse* ; but it is to cultivate a *Correspondence with the condescending Deity*, and taste the *Pleasures of Divine Friendship*.—What is such a *State*, but the very *Suburbs of Heaven* ? What is such a *Conduct*, but an Antepast of eternal Blessedness ?

Now, my Soul, the *Day is ended*. The *Hours are all fled* : They are fled to the *supreme Judge*,

Judge, and have given in their *Evidence*. An *Evidence*, registred in Heaven; and to be produced, at the *great Audit*.—Happy *They*, whose *Improvement* has kept pace with the passing *Minutes*. Who have seized them as they advanced; and engaged them in the *Pursuit of Wisdom*, or the *Service of Virtue*.

How is the Day gone, almost as soon as it dawned!—The silent *Moments* slip away *insensibly*. No *Thief* steals more unperceived from the *pillaged House*. Where-ever we are, however employed, Time pursues his incessant Course. Though *we* are listless and dilatory; the *great Measurer* of our *Days* presses on; still presses on, in his unwearied Career; and whirls our *Weeks*, and *Months*, and *Years* away.—Is it not then surprisngly strange, to hear People complain of the *Tediousness* of their Time, and how *heavy* it hangs upon their Hands? To see them contriving a Variety of amusing Artifices, to *accelerate* its *Flight*, and *get rid* of its *Burden*? Ah! thoughtless Mortals! Why need you urge the *headlong Torrent*? Your *Days* are *swifter* than a *Post*; which, carrying *Dispatches* of the last Importance, with unremitted Speed scours the Road. They pass away like the *nimble Ships*; which have the Wind in their Wings, and skim along the watery Plain. They hasten to their destined Period, with the *Rapidity* of an *Eagle*;

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which leaves the stormy Blast behind Her, while She cleaves the Air, and darts upon her Prey *.

AND NOW it is gone, how *short* it appears ! When my fond Eye beheld it in *Perspective*, it seemed a very *considerable Space*. Minutes crowded upon Minutes, and Hours ranged behind Hours, exhibited an extensive Plan, and flattered me with a long Progression of Pleasures. But, upon a *retrospective View*, how wonderfully is the *Scene altered* ? The Landscape, large and spacious, which a *warm Fancy* drew, brought to the Test of *cool Experience*, shrinks into a Span. Just as the Shores vanish, and Mountains dwindle to a Spot ; when the Sailor, surrounded by Skies and Ocean, throws his last Look on his native Land.—How clearly do I now discover the Cheat ? May it never impose upon my unwary Imagination again ! I find, there is nothing abiding on this Side Eternity. A *long Duration,*

* *Job ix. 25, 26.* By these Three very expressive Images, the inspired Poet represents the *unintermitted* and *rapid Flight of Time*. The Passage is illustrated with great Judgment, and equal Delicacy, in Dr. Grey's most ingenious Abridgment of *Schultens*.—*Quæ tribus in elementis velocissima, hic admirabili cum emphasi congeruntur. In terris, nil perniciosius cursore, & quidem læti quid ferente. Rapidus tamen adhuc undas, non secant, sed supervolant, navigiola papyro contexta. Omnium rapidissime aerem grandibus alis permetitur aquila, præcipiti lapsu rucus in prædam.*

ration, in a State of finite Existence, is mere Illusion.

PERHAPS, the *Healthy* and the *Gay* may not readily credit the serious Truth; especially from a young Pen, and new to its Employ. Let us then refer ourselves to the Decision of the *Ancient*. Ask some venerable old Person, that is just marching off the mortal Stage, *How many have been the Days of the Years of thy Life**? It was a *Monarch's* Question, and therefore can want no Recommendation to the *fashionable* World.—Observe how He shakes his hoary Locks, and from a deep-felt Conviction replies; “*Fourscore Years* have finished their Rounds, “*to furrow these Cheeks, and cloathe this Head* “*in Snow.* Such a Term may seem long and “*large, to inconsiderate Youth.* But Oh! how “*short, how scanty, to one that has made the* “*Experiment! Short, as a Gleam of tranfient* “*Sunshine; scanty, as the Shadow that de-* “*parteth.* Methinks, it was but Yesterday, “*that I exchanged my childish Sports, for* “*manly Exercises; and now I am resigning* “*them both, for the Sleep of Death.* As soon “*as we are born, we begin to draw to our* “*End; and how small is the Interval, between* “*the Cradle and the Tomb?*”—O! may we believe this Testimony of mature Age! May

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every

* Gen. xlvii. 8.

every Evening bring it, with clearer Evidence, to our Minds! And may we form such an Estimate of the *little Pittance*, while it is upon the *advancing Hand*; as we shall certainly make, when the Sands are all *run down*.

LET me add one Reflection on the *Work* to be *done*, while this *Shuttle* is flying through the *Loom*. A Work of no small Difficulty, and yet of the utmost Consequence.—Hast Thou not seen, hast Thou not heard of, the *Excellent* of the *Earth*, who were living Images of their Maker? His *Divine Likeness* was transfused into their Hearts, and beamed forth in all their Conduct. Beamed forth in the *Meekness of Wisdom*, and *Purity of Affection*; in all the *tender Offices* of Love, and all the *noble Efforts* of Zeal. To be stamped with the same beautiful Signature, and to be Followers of Them, as They were of CHRIST; *this, this* is thy *Business*. On the Accomplishment of this, thy *eternal All* depends. And, will an Affair of such unspeakable Weight admit of a Moment's Delay, or consist with the least Remissness?—Especially, since much of thy appointed Time is already elapsed, and the *Remainder* is all *Uncertainty*, save only that it is in the very Act to fly.—Or suppose, thou hadst made a *Covenant* with the Grave, and wast assured of reaching the Age of *Methuselah*; how soon would even such a *Lease* expire!—Extend it,

it, if you please, still farther, and let it be *co-existent* with *Nature* itself: Yet how speedily will the *Consummation* of all Things commence! For, yet a very little while, and the commissioned Archangel lifts up his Hand to Heaven, and swears by the Almighty Name, *That Time shall be no longer* *. Then, *abused Opportunities* will never return; and *new Opportunities*

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ties

* This alludes to the Beginning of *Revelations* the xth; which, abstracted from its spiritual Meaning, and considered only as a stately *Piece of Machinery*, well deserves our Attention; and, I will venture to say, has not its *superior*, perhaps not its *equal*, in any of the most celebrated Masters of *Greece* and *Rome*.—All that is gloomy or beautiful in the Atmosphere, all that is striking or magnificent in every Element, is taken in to heighten the *Idea*. Yet nothing is disproportionate, but an uniform Air of ineffable Majesty greatens, exalts, ennobles the Whole.—Be pleased to observe the *Aspect* of this august Personage. All the Brightness of the Sun shines in his Countenance, and all the Rage of the Fire burns in his Feet.—See his *Apparel*. The Clouds compose his Robe, and the Drapery of the Sky floats upon his Shoulders. The Rainbow forms his Diadem, and that which “compasseth the Heaven with a glorious Circle,” is the Ornament of his Head.—Behold his *Attitude*. One Foot stands on the Ocean, and the other rests on the Land. The wide-extended Earth, and the World of Waters, serve as Pedestals for those mighty Columns.—Consider the *Action*. His Hand is lifted up to the Height of the Stars. He speaks; and the Regions of the Firmament echo with the mighty Accents,

ties will never more be offered. Then, should negligent Mortals wish ever so passionately for a few Hours, a few Moments only, to be thrown back from the opening Eternity, *Thousands of Worlds* would not be able to procure the Grant.

SHALL I now be industrious to *shorten*, what is no longer than a *Span*; or to *quicken* the *Pace* of what is ever on the *Wing*? Shall I squander away what is *unutterably important*, while it lasts; and, when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable*? O! my Soul, forbear the Folly, forbear

cents, as the midnight Desert resounds with the Lion's Roar. The Artillery of the Skies is discharged at the Signal, a Peal of sevenfold Thunder spreads the Alarm, and prepares the World to receive his Orders.—To finish all, and give the highest Grandeur, as well as the utmost Solemnity, to the Representation, hear the *Decree* that issues from his Mouth. He *swears by HIM that liveth for ever and ever*. In whatever Manner so majestic a Person had expressed Himself, He could not fail of commanding universal Attention. But when He confirms his Speech by a most sacred and inviolable Oath, we are not only wrapt in silent Suspense, but overwhelmed with the profoundest Awe. — He swears, *That Time shall be no longer*. Was ever Voice so full of Terror, so big with Wonder? It proclaims, not the Fall of Empires, but the final Period of Things. It strikes off the Wheels of Nature; bids Ages and Generations cease to roll; and, with one potent Word, consigns a whole World over to Dissolution.—This is *one among a Multitude* of very sublime and *masterly Strokes*, to be found in that too-much neglected Book—the *Bible*.

forbear the desperate Extravagance. Wilt Thou chide as a *Loiterer*, the Arrow that *boundeth* from the String, or sweep away *Diamonds* as the *Refuse* of thy House? — Throw Time away! Astonishing, ruinous, irreparable Profuseness! Throw Empires away, and be blameless. But O! be parsimonious of thy Days; husband thy precious Hours. They go connected, indissolubly connected, with Heaven or Hell*. *Improved*, they are a sure Pledge of everlasting Glory; *wasted*, they are a sad Preface to never-ending Confusion and Anguish.

WHAT a profound Silence has composed the World! So profound is the Silence, that my very *Breath* seems a *Noise*; the *Ticking* of my *Watch* is distinctly heard; if I do but *stir*, it creates a *Disturbance*.— There is, now, none of that confused Din, from the tumultuous City: No Voice of jovial Rustics, from the neighbouring Meadow: No chirping Melody, from the shady Thicket.—Every *Lip* is sealed: Not the least *Whisper* invades the Air; nor the least Motion *rustles* among the *Boughs*. *Echo* herself sleeps unmolested. The expanded Ear, though

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all

* I have somewhere seen, upon a Sun-dial, the following Inscription; which, I think, is the most proper *Motto* for the Instrument which measures our Time; and the most striking *Admonition*, that can possibly be given, to the various Crowds of Beholders.
—*Ab hoc momento pendet Æternitas.*

all Attention, catches no Sound; but the *liquid Lapse* of a murmuring Stream.

All Things are hush'd, as Nature's Self lay dead.

I F, in the midst of this *deep* and universal *Composure*, *Ten thousand* bellowing *Thunders* should burst over my Head; and rend the Skies, with their united *Vollies*: O! how should I bear so *unexpected* a *Shock*? It would stun my Senses, and confound my Thoughts. I should shudder in every Limb; and, perhaps, sink to the Earth with Terror.—Consider then, O Mortals, consider, what a *prodigious* and *amazing* *Call* will, ere long, alarm your *sleeping Bones*. When the *Tenants* of the *Tombs* have slumbered, in the most *undisturbed* *Repose*, for a Multitude of Ages; what an *inconceivable* *Consternation* must the *Shout* of the *Archangel*, and the *Trump* of G O D occasion! Will it not *wound* the *Ear* of the *Ungodly*; and affright, even to *Distraction*, the *impenitent Sinner*? The stupendous Peal will sound through the *Vast* of Heaven; will shake the *Foundations* of Nature; and pierce even the deepest *Recesses* of the *Grave*. And how—O! how will the *Prisoners* of *Divine Justice* be able to endure that tremendous *Summons*, to a more tremendous *Tribunal*?—Do Thou, my Soul, listen to the *still Voice* of the *Gospel*. At-
tend,

tend, in this thy Day, to the gracious Invitations of thy Saviour. Then, shall that great midnight Cry lose its *Horror*; and be *Music* to thy Ears. It shall be *welcome* to thy reviving Clay, as the *Tidings of Liberty*, to the Dungeon *Captive*; as the *Year of Jubilee*, to the harassed *Slave*. This, this shall be its charming Import, "*Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in Dust* *."

WHAT a general *Cessation of Affairs* has this dusky Hour introduced! A little while ago, all was *Hurry, Hurry*. Life and Activity exerted themselves in a thousand busy Forms. The City swarmed with passing and repassing Multitudes. All the Country was *Sweat and Dust*. The Air floated in perpetual Agitation, by the flitting Birds, and humming Bees. Art sat prying with her piercing Eyes, and Industry ply'd her restless Hands. — But see, how all this fervent and impetuous Buffle is fled with the setting Sun. The Beasts are slunk to their grassy Couch, and the winged People are retired to their downy Nests. The Hammer has resigned its sounding Task, and the File ceases to repeat its flying Touches. Shut is the well-frequented Shop, and its Threshold no longer worn by the Feet of numerous Customers. The Village-Swain lies drowned in Slumbers; and even his trusty Dog, who, for a con-

* Isa. xxvi. 19.

considerable Time, stood Centry at his Door, is extended at his Ease, and snores with his Master. — In every Place, Toil reclines her Head, and Application folds her Arms. All Interests seem to be forgot; all Pursuits are suspended; all Employment is sunk away; sunk away, like the fluttering Myriads, that lately sported in the Sun's departing Rays. 'Tis like the Sabbath of universal Nature, or as though the Pulse of Life stood still.

THUS will it be with our *infinitely momentous Concerns*, when once *the Shadows of the Evening*, that long Evening which follows the Footsteps of Death, *are stretched over Us*. The Dead cannot seek unto GOD; the Living, the Living alone, are possessed of this inestimable Opportunity *. “ There is no Work or Device, no Repentance or Amendment in the Grave, whither We are All hasting †.” When once that

* — *Nunc, nunc properandus, & acri
Fingendus sine fine rota.* PERS.

Behold! *now* is the accepted Time. Behold! *now* is the Day of Salvation. 2 Cor. vi. 2.

† The *State* of the *Dead* is stiled, by King *Hezekiah* (Isa. xxxviii. 11.), in that pathetic Lamentation of his expected Doom ארץ חדל, and is rendered by *Vitringa, Terra Cessationis, the Land of Intermission or Cessation*. Which prevents all Appearance of *Tautology* in the Sentence, and is, I think, a valuable *Improvement* of the Translation: as it conveys an *Idea*, not only distinct from the preceding,
ing,

that *closing Scene* is advanced, We shall have no other *Part to act* on this *earthly Theatre*. Then, the *Sluggard*, that has slumbered away Life in a criminal Inactivity, must lie down in hopeless Distress, and everlasting Sorrow. Then, that awful Doom will take place, “ He that is *holy*, “ let Him be holy still; and He that is *filthy*, “ let Him be filthy for ever.”

Is it so my Soul? Is this the *only, only* Time allotted, for obtaining the great Reward, and making thy Salvation sure? And art Thou lulled in a *vain Security*, or dreaming on in a *supine Inadvertency*? Start, O! start from thy Trance. Gird up the Loins of thy Mind, and work while it is Day. Improve the present Seed-time, that
Eternity

ing, but of a very poetical and very afflicting Nature; such as was perfectly proper for the Royal Singer, and Royal Sufferer, to dwell upon, in his desponding Moments.— Thus interpreted, the Sense will run; “ *I shall see Man no more; I shall be cut* “ off from the chearful Ways of Men, and all the “ Sweets of human Society, And, what is a farther Aggravation of the threatned Stroke, *I shall,* “ by its taking Place, *be numbered with Those, that* “ *inhabit the Land of intire Cessation and Inactivity:* “ Where there will be no more Possibility of contributing to the Happiness of my Kingdom; no “ more Opportunity of advancing my Creator’s “ Glory, or of making my own final Salvation “ sure.—A Sentiment like this is grand and important; full of Piety, and full of Benevolence; removes all Suspicion of unbecoming *Pusillanimity*, and does the highest *Honour* to the Monarch’s Character.

Eternity may yield a joyful Harvest.—We especially, who are *Watchmen in Israel*, and *Ministers of the glorious Gospel*; may *We* be awakened, by this Consideration, to all Assiduity in our holy Office. Some or other of *our People* are ever and anon departing into the invisible State; all *our Friends* are making incessant Approaches to their long Home; and we *ourselves* shall very shortly be transmitted to the Confinement of the Tomb. This therefore is the favourable Juncture, wherein alone we can contribute to their endless Welfare. This is the Crisis, the *all-important Crisis* of their final Felicity. Instantly therefore let Us *pour in* our wholesome *Instructions*; now let Us *ply them* with our earnest *Exhortations*. A Moment's Delay may be an irreparable Loss, may be irretrievable Ruin. While we procrastinate, a fatal Stroke may intervene, and place *Us* beyond the Power of administering, or place *them* beyond all Possibility of receiving, any spiritual Good*.

How frequently is the Face of Nature *changed!* and, by changing, made more *agreeable!* The long-

* The *Case*, represented by the *Prophet*, (1 Kings xx. 40.) seems perfectly applicable on this Occasion. *As thy Servant was busy here and there, He was gone.* So, while we are either *remiss* in our Function, or laying ourselves out upon *inferior Cares*, the People of our Charge may be *gone*; gone beyond the Influence of our *Counsels*, beyond the Reach of our *Prayers*; gone into the *unchangeable* and eternal State.

long-continued Glitter of the Day, renders the soothing Shades of the Evening doubly welcome. Nor does the Morn ever purple the East with so pleasing a Lustre, as after the sullen Gloom of a dark and black Night.—At present, a *Calm* of Tranquility, and undisturbed Repose, is spread through the Universe. The weary Winds have forgot to blow. The gentle Gales have fanned themselves asleep. Nothing stirs. Not so much as a single Leaf nods. Even the quivering Aspin rests. *And not one Breath curls o'er the Stream.*—Sometimes, the *Tempest* summons all the Forces of the Air; and pours itself, with resistless Fury, from the angry North. The whole Atmosphere is tossed into tumultuous Confusion, and the watery World is heaved to the Clouds. The astonished Mariner, and his straining Vessel, now scale the rolling Mountain, and hang dreadfully visible on the broken Surge: now shoot, with headlong Impetuosity, into the yawning Gulph, and neither Hulk, nor Mast is seen. The Storm sweeps over the Continent: raves along the City-Streets: struggles through the Forest-boughs; and terrifies the savage Nations, with a Howl, more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty Oaks bend before the Blast; their iron Trunks groan; and their stubborn Limbs are dashed to

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the Ground. The lofty Dome rocks ; and even the solid Tower totters on its Basis.

SUCH Variations are kindly contrived with an evident Condescension to the Fickleness of our Taste. Because, a perpetual *Similarity* of Objects would create a cold *Disgust* ; therefore, the indulgent Father of our Race has diversified the universal Scene, and bid every Appearance bring with it the *Charm* of *Novelty*.—But this Circumstance is as *beneficial*, as it is entertaining. Providence, ever gracious to Mortals ; ever intent upon promoting our Felicity ; has taken Care to mingle in the Constitution of Things, what is pleasing to our Imagination, with what is serviceable to our Interests. The piercing Winds, and rugged Aspect of Winter, render the balmy Gales, and flowery Scenes of Spring, peculiarly delightful. At the same time, the keen Frosts mellow the Soil, and prepare it for the Hand of Industry. The rushing Rains impregnate the Glebe, and fit it for a Magazine of Plenty. The Earth is a great *Laboratory* ; and *December's* Cold collects the gross Materials, which are *sublimated* by the refining Warmth of *May*. The Air is a pure *elastic* Fluid ; and was it always to remain in *this* motionless Serenity, it would lose much of its *active* Spring ; was it never agitated by *those* wholesome *Concussions*, it would contract a noisome,

noisome, perhaps, a pestilential Taint. Instead of purifying, it would corrupt the vital Juices; and instead of inhaling Refreshment, our Respiration might be a Source of Diseases; or every Gasp we draw, might be Death.*—How then should we admire! Oh! how should we adore, that happy Union of Benignity and Wisdom, which, from a *Variety* of Dispensations, produces an *Uniformity* of Good; a perpetual Succession of Delights, and an un-interrupted Series of Advantages!

THE *Darkness* is now at its Height; and I cannot but admire the obliging Manner of its taking

* Considering the immense Quantity of Coals, and other combustible Materials, that are daily consumed, and evaporate into the Air.—Considering the numberless Steams, and Clouds of Smoke, that almost continually over-whelm populous Cities;—the noisome Exhalations, that arise from thronged Infirmaries, and loathsome Jayls; from stagnating Lakes, and putrid Fens;—the Variety of offensive and unwholsome Effluvia, that proceed from other Causes;—it is a very remarkable Instance of a Providence, at once tenderly kind, and infinitely powerful, that *Mankind* is not suffocated with Stench; that the *Air* is not choaked with Filth.—The Air is the *common Sewer*, into which ten thousand times ten thousand Nuisances are incessantly discharged; and yet is preserved so *thoroughly clear*, as to afford the most transparent Medium for Vision; so *delicately undulatory*, as to transmit, with all imaginable Distinctness, every Diversity of Sound; so *perfectly pure*, as to be the constant Refiner of the Fluids, in every Animal that breathes.

taking Place. It comes not with a blunt and *abrupt Incivility*, but makes gentle and *respectful Advances*. A precipitate Transition from the Splendors of Day, to all the Horrors of Midnight, would be both inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the Traveller in his Journey; it would strike the Creation with Amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the Organs of Sight. Therefore the Gloom rushes not upon us instantaneously, but increases by slow Degrees; and, sending *Twilight* before as its *Harbinger*, decently advertises us of its Approach. By this Means, we are prepared for the Change, and are able to take all suitable and timely Measures for its Reception.—Thus graciously has Providence regulated, not only the *grand Vicissitudes* of the Seasons, but also the *common Interchanges* of Light and Darkness, with an apparent Reference to *our Comfort*.

Now the fierce *Inhabitants* of the *Forest* forsake their Dens. A thousand grim Forms, a thousand growling Monsters, pace the Desert. Death is in their Jaws, while, stung with Hunger, and athirst for Blood, they roam their nightly Rounds.—O! *unfortunate Traveller*, overtaken by the Night in those dismal Wilds! How must He stand aghast at the mingled Yell of ravenous Throats, and Lions roaring after their Prey! Defend Him, propitious Heaven!

or

or else He must see his endearing Spouse, and hail his native Home, no more!—Now the prowling Wolf, like a murtherous Ruffian, dogs the Shepherd's Footsteps, and besets his bleating Charge. The Fox, like a crafty Felon, steals to the thatched Cottage, and carries off the feathered Booty.

HAPPY for the World, were these the only Destroyers that walk in Darkness. But, alas! there are *Savages* in *human Shape*, who, muffled in Shades, infest the Abodes of civilized Life. The *Sons of Violence* make Choice of this Season *, to perpetrate the most outrageous Acts of Wrong and Robbery. The *Audulterer* waiteth for the Twilight, and, baser than the Villain on the Highway, betrays the Honour of his Bosom-friend. Now, *Faction* forms her close Cabals, and whispers her traiterous Insinuations. Now, *Rebellion* plans her accursed Plots, and prepares the Train to blow a Nation into Ruin. Now Crimes, that hide their odious Heads in the Day, haunt the Seats of Society, and stalk through the Gloom with audacious Front. Now, the *Vermin* of the *Stews* crawl from their lurking Holes, to wallow in Sin, and feed on the Venom

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* ——— When Night

Darkens the Streets, then wander forth the Sons
Of *Belial*, flown with Insolence and Wine.

M I L T.

34 C O N T E M P L A T I O N S
of the Night. Each soothing Himself with the
fond Notion, That all is safe; That *no Eye sees*.

AND are They then concealed? Preposterous
Madmen! To draw the Curtain between their
infamous Practices, and a *little Set* of Mortals;
but lay them open to all these chaste and *wakeful*
Eyes of Heaven*.—Are they then concealed?
No, truly: Were these vigilant Luminaries
closed; an *Eye keener* than the Lightning's Flash,
brighter than Ten thousand Suns, beholds their
every Motion. Their *thickest Shades* are *beam-*
ing Day †, to the jealous Inspector, and supreme
Judge of human Actions.—Deluded Creatures!
have ye not heard, have ye not read, “ That
“ Clouds and Darknes are round about Him || ?”
In that very Gloom, to which you fly for
Covert, he erects his Throne. What you
reckon your *Screen*, is the *Bar* of his *Tribunal*.
O! remember this: stand in Awe, and sin not.
Remember, that the great and terrible God is
about

* — *Sed luna videt, sed sidera testes*
Intendunt oculos.

† This is finely and very forcibly expressed by
the Psalmist: *If I say, Peradventure the Darknes*
shall cover me, then shall my Night be turned to Day:
Or, as it may be rendered somewhat more empha-
tically, *Even the Night shall be broad Day-light all*
around me. Psal. cxxxix. 10.

|| Psal. xcvi. 2.

about your Path †, when you take your mid-
night Range; is about your Bed, when you in-
dulge the loose Desire; and spies out all your
Ways, be they ever so secretly conducted, or
artfully disguised.

SOME Minutes ago, a *Passenger* crossed along
the Road. His Horse's Foot struck the Ground,
and fetched *Fire* from a *Flint*. My Eye, tho'
at a Distance, caught the View; and saw, with
great Clearness, the bright Sparkles: Of which,
had I been ever so near, I should not have dis-
cerned the *least Glimpse*, under the Blaze of
Day.—So *, when *Sickness* has drawn a *Veil*

D 2

over

† The original Words are much stronger than the
Translation. ורית and הסכנתה signify, Thou
sitest my Path, and art *familiarly* or *intimately ac-
quainted with* all my Ways. The former, I appre-
hend, denoting the *exact Cognizance* which the Al-
mighty taketh, the latter implying the *constant In-
spection* which He exerciseth over all the Circum-
stances of our Conduct. *Psal. cxxxix. 2.*

* I beg Leave to inform the *young Gentleman*,
whose Name dignifies my Dedication, That this
was a Remark of his honoured *Father*, when we
rode together, and conversed in a dusky Evening.
I mention this Circumstance, partly, to secure the
Paragraph from Contempt; partly, to give Him and
the World an Idea of that eminently serious Taste,
which distinguished my deceased Friend.—The *less*
obvious the *Reflection*, the more clearly it discovers a

Turn

36 C O N T E M P L A T I O N S

over the Gaiety of our Hearts, when *Misfortunes* have *eclipsed* the Splendor of our outward Circumstances; how many *important Convictions* present themselves with the brightest Evidence? Under the Sunshine of Prosperity they lay undiscovered; but, when some intervening Cloud has darkned the Scene, they emerge out of their Obscurity, and even glitter upon our Minds. Then the *World*, that delusive Cheat, confesses her Emptiness; but J E S U S, the bright and Morning-Star, beams forth with inimitable Lustre. Then, *Vice* loses all her fallacious Allurements; that painted Strumpet is horrible as the Hags of Hell; but *Virtue*, despised Virtue, gains Loveliness from a louting Providence, and treads the Shades with more than mortal Charms.—May this reconcile me, and all the *Sons of Sorrow*, to our appointed Share of Suffering. If Tribulation tend to dissipate the inward Darknes, and pour heavenly Day upon our Minds; welcome Distress; welcome Disappointment; welcome whatever our froward Flesh, or peevish Passions, would *misal* Calamities. *These light Afflictions, which are but for a Moment,* shall
fit

Turn of Mind remarkably spiritual; which would suffer nothing to escape, without yielding some religious Improvement: And the *meaner* the *Incident*, the more admirable was that Fertility of Imagination, which could deduce the noblest Truths from the most trivial Occurences

fit easy upon our Spirits; since they befriend our Knowledge, promote our Faith, and so
 “work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*.”

How has this *Darkness* snatched every splendid and graceful Object from my Sight? It has dashed the Sponge over the Pictures of Spring, and destroyed all the *delicate Distinctions* of Things. Where are now the fine Tinges, that so lately charmed me from the glowing Parterre? The Blush is struck out from the Cheeks of the Rose, and the snowy Hue is dropt from the Lily. I cast my Eyes toward a magnificent Seat; but the aspiring Columns, and fair-ex-

D 3

panded

* 2 Cor. iv. 17, The great *Stephens*, that Oracle of *Grecian Learning*, translates our Apostle's Phrase —καθ' υπερβολην, *Quo nihil magis dici aut fingi potest*. But how does the Sense rise? How is the Idea enlarged, under *Two* such forcible Expressions?—The whole Verse is a Masterpiece of the beautiful *Antithesis*, the lively *Description*, and the nervous *Diction*. It is one of those noble Passages in the inspired Writings, which, like some rich *aromatic Plants*, cannot be transferred from their own generous and native Soil, without being impaired in their Vivacity, and losing much of their Delicacy. Perhaps, the following Version may be somewhat less injurious to the sacred Original, than the common Translation;—*Our very light Affliction, which is but just for the present Moment, worketh out a far more exceeding, an incomparably great, and eternal Weight of Glory.*

panded Front, are mingled in rude Confusion. Without the Sun, all the *Elegance* of the blooming World is a *mere Blank*, all the *Symmetry* of Architecture a *shapeless Heap*.

Is not this an expressive Emblem of the *Love-liness*, which the *Sun of Righteousness* transfuses into all that is amiable? Was it not for JESUS and his *Merits*, I should sigh with Anguish of Spirit, even while I rove through Ranks of the most beautiful Flowers, or breathe amidst a Wilderness of Sweets. Was it not for JESUS and his Merits, I should roam, like some *disconsolate Spectre*, even through the Smiles of Creation, and the Caresses of Fortune. My Conversation in this World, though dressed in the most engaging Forms of external Pleasure, would be like the Passage of a *condemned Malefactor* through enamelled Meadows, and Bowers of Bliss, to be broke upon the Wheel, or tortured to Death on the Rack. But a *daily Reflection* on the LAMB'S atoning Blood; a *comfortable Trust* that my Soul is reconciled through this glorious Expiation; this is the Ray, the golden Ray, that irradiates the Face of the Universe. This is the *Oil of Beauty*, which makes all Things wear a chearful Aspect; and the *Oil of Gladness*, which disposes the Spectator to behold them with
Delight,

Delight *. This, this, is the secret Charm, that teaches Nature, in all her Operations, so exquisitely to please.

“ MAN goeth forth to his Work, and to his Labour, till the Evening.” But then his Strength fails; his Spirits flag; and he stands in need, not only of some *Respite* from *Toil*, but of some kindly and sovereign *Refreshments*.— What an admirable Provision for this Purpose, is *Sleep*? Sleep introduces a most welcome Vacation, both for the Soul and Body. The Exercises of the Brain, and the Labours of the Hands, are at once discontinued. So that the *wearry Limbs* repair their exhausted Vigour, while the

D 4

pensive

* Thus applied, that fine Piece of *Flattery*, addressed to the *Heathen* Emperor, is strictly and literally *true*.

— *Vultus ubi tuus*
Affulfit populo, gratior it dies,
Et soles melius nitent.

HORAT.

Which I would cast in a *Christian* Mould, and thus translate:

When Faith presents the Saviour's Death,
And whispers, “ This is thine; ”
Sweetly my rising Hours advance,
And peacefully decline.

While such my Views, the radiant Sun
Sheds a more sprightly Ray;
Each Object smiles; all Nature charms;
I sing my Cares away.

pensive Thoughts drop their Load of Sorrows, and the *busy* ones rest from the Fatigue of intense Application.—Most reviving Cordial! Equally beneficial to our animal and intellectual Powers. It supple the *fleshy Machine*, and keeps all its nice Movements in a proper Posture for easy Play. It animates the *thinking Faculties* with fresh Alacrity, and rekindles their Ardor for the Studies of the Dawn. Without these enlivening Recruits, how soon would the most *robust Constitution* be wasted into a *walking Skeleton*; and the most *learned Sage* degenerate into a *hoary Idiot*?—Some time ago, I beheld, with Surprise, poor *Florio*. His Air was wild, his Countenance meagre, his Speech roving, and disconcerted. Inquiring the Cause of this strange Alteration, I was informed, That, for several Nights, he had not closed his Eyes in Sleep. For Want of which *noble Restorative*, that sprightly Youth, who was once the Life of the Discourse, and the Darling of the Company, is become a Spectacle of Misery and Horror.

How many of my Fellow-Creatures are, at this very Instant, confined to the *Bed of Languishing*, and complaining, with that illustrious Sufferer of old, *Wearisome Nights are appointed to me*? * Instead of indulging soft Repose, they are counting the tedious Hours; telling every striking Clock; or measuring the very Moments

* Job vii. 3.

by their throbbing Pulse. How many, *barrassed* with *Pain*, most passionately long to obtain some little Truce from their Agonies, in peaceful Slumbers? How many, *sick* with *Disquietude*, and restless even on their downy Pillows, would purchase this transient Oblivion of their Woes, almost at any Rate?—That, which *Wealth* cannot procure, which *Multitudes* sigh for in vain, thy GOD has bestowed on Thee, times out of Number. The *welcome Visitant*, punctual at the needed Hour, has entered thy Chamber, and poured his Poppies round thy Couch. Has gently closed thy Eye-lids, and shed his slumberous Dews over all thy Senses.

SINCE Sleep is so absolutely necessary, so inestimably valuable, observe, what a *fine Apparatus* Almighty Goodness has made, to accommodate us with the *balmy Blessing*. With how kind a Precaution He removes whatever might obstruct its Access, or impede its Influence. He draws around us the *Curtain of Darkness*, which inclines us to a drowsy Indolence, and conceals every Object that might too strongly agitate the Sense. He conveys *Peace* into our *Apartments*, and imposes Silence on the whole Creation. Every Animal is bidden to tread softly, or rather to cease from its Motions, when Man is retiring to his Repose.—May we not discern, in this gracious Disposition of Things, the *tender Cares*

of

of a *Nursing-Mother*; who hushes every Noise, and secludes every Disturbance, when She has laid the Child of her Love to Rest? So, by such soothing Circumstances, and gently-working Opiates, *HE giveth, to his Beloved, Sleep* *.

ANOTHER signal Instance of a Providence intent upon our Welfare, is, That we are preserved *safe* in the Hours of *Slumber*. How are we then lost to all Apprehension of Danger, even though the Murderer be at our Bed-side, or his naked Sword at our Breast. Destitute of all Concern for ourselves, we are unable to *think of*, much more to *provide for*, our own Security. At these Moments, therefore, we lie open to innumerable *Perils*: Perils, from the resistless Rage of *Flames*: Perils, from the insidious Artifices of *Thieves*, or the outrageous Violence of *Robbers*; without either Vigilance to observe the Foe, or Strength to resist the Assault: Perils, from the *Irregular Workings* † of our own Thoughts, and especially from the IncurSIONS of our spiritual

* Psa. cxxvii. 2.

† I think, it is referable only to a super-intending and watchful *Providence*, that We are not hurried, when our Imagination is heated, and our Reason stupefied by Dreams, into the most *pernicious* Actions. — We have sometimes heard of unfortunate Persons, who, walking in their Sleep, have thrown themselves headlong from a Window, and been dashed to Death on the Pebbles. And whence is it, that such disastrous Accidents are only *related* as Pieces of News,

tual Enemy. What dreadful Mischief might that restless, that implacable *Adversary* of *Mankind* work, were there not an invifible Hand to controul his Rage, and protect poor Mortals? What

News, not *experienced* by Ourselves, or our Families? Were *our* Minds more sober in their Operations, or more circumspect in their Regards? No, verily: nothing could be more wild, than their Excursions; None more inattentive to their own Welfare. Therefore, if *we have laid Us down, and slept* in Peace; it was because the LORD vouchsafed Us the sweet Refreshment: if *We rose again* in Safety; it was, *because the LORD sustained Us* with his unremitted Protection.

Will the candid Reader excuse me, if I add a short Story, or rather a *Matter of Fact*, which I know to be true?—Two Persons, that had been hunting together in the Day, slept together the following Night. One of them was renewing the Pursuit in his Dream; and, having run the whole Circle of the Chace, came, at last, to the Fall of the Stag. Upon this He cries out with a determined Ardour; *I'll kill him: I'll kill him:* and immediately feels for the Knife, which He carried in his Pocket. His Companion, happening to be awake, and observing what passed, leaped from the Bed; and, being secure from Danger, stood (for the Moon shined into the Room) to view the Event. When, to his inexpressible Surprise, the infatuated Sportsman gave several deadly Stabs, in the very Place, where a Moment before, the Throat and the Life of his Friend lay.—This I mention, as a Proof, that nothing hinders Us, even from being *Assassins* of *Others*, or *Murderers* of *Ourselves*, amidst the mad Sallies of Sleep, only the *preventing Care* of our heavenly Father.

What Scenes of Horror might he represent to our Imaginations, and “scare us with Dreams, “or terrify us with Visions *?” But the *Keeper of Israel*, who never slumbers, nor sleeps, interposes in our Behalf; at once to *cherish* us under his *Wings*, and to *defend* us as with a *Shield*. It is said of *Solomon*, “That Three-score valiant Men were about his Bed, all expert in War, every one with his Sword upon his Thigh, because of Fear in the Night †.” But One greater than *Solomon*, One mightier than Myriads of armed Hosts, even the great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting Strength, HE vouchsafes to watch over our sleeping Minutes, and to stop all the Avenues of Ill.—O! the unwearied and condescending *Goodness* of our Creator! Who *lulls* us to our *Rest*, by bringing on the silent Shades; and *plants* his own ever-watchful Eye as our *Centinel*; while we enjoy the needful Repose.

REASON, now, resigns her sedate Office; and *Fancy*, extravagant *Fancy*, leads the Mind through

* What a compleat Master that malignant Spirit is, in exhibiting *visionary Representations*, appears from his Conduct towards CHRIST on the high Mountain; and that he is too ready, if not restrained by an over-ruling Power, to employ his Dexterity in *afflicting Mankind*, is evident from his Treatment of *Job*. See *Luke* iv. 5. *Job* vii. 14.

† *Cant.* iii. 7, 8.

through a *Maze of Vanity*. The Head is crouded with false Images, and tantalized with the most ridiculous Misapprehensions of Things. Some are expatiating amidst *Fairy Fields*, and gathering Garlands of visionary Bliss; while their Bodies are stretched on a Wisp of Straw, and sheltered by the Cobwebs of a Barn. Others, quite insensible of their Rooms of State, are mourning in a *doleful Dungeon*, or struggling with the raging Billows. Perhaps, with hasty Steps, they climb the craggy Cliff; and, with *real* Anxiety, fly from the *imaginary* Danger. Or else, benumbed with sudden Fear, and finding themselves unable to escape, they give up at once their Hopes, and their Efforts; and, though reclined on a Couch of Ivory, are sinking, all helpless and distressed, in the furious Whirlpool. So unaccountable are the *Vagaries* of the *Brain*, while Sleep maintains its Dominion over the Limbs!

BUT is This the only Season, when absurd and incoherent Irregularities play their Magic on our Minds? Are there not Those who *dream* even in their *waking* Moments?—Some pride Themselves in a Notion of *superior Excellency*, because the Royal Favour has annexed a few *splendid Titles* to their Names; or because the dying Silkworm has bequeathed her *finest Threads*, to cover their Nakedness.—Others congratulate
 their

their own *signal Happiness*, because Loads of *golden Lumber* are amassed together in their Coffers ; or promise themselves a most superlative Felicity indeed, when some thousands more are added to the uselefs Heap.—Nor are there wanting others, who gape after *substantial* Satisfaction from *airy* Applause ; and flatter themselves with, I know not what, Immortality in the momentary Buz of Renown. Are any of These a whit more reasonable in their *Opinions*, than the poor ragged Wretch in his *Reveries*, who, while snoring under a *Hedge*, exults in the Possession of his *stately Palace*, and sumptuous Furniture ?—If Persons, who are *very Vassals* to their own *domineering* Passions, and *led captive* by numberless Temptations ; if these Persons pique themselves with a Conceit of their *Liberty*, and fancy themselves the *generous* and *gallant* Spirits of the Age ; where is the Difference between Theirs and the Madman's Frenzy, who, though *chained* to the Floor, is *throned* in Thought, and wielding an imaginary Sceptre ?—In a Word ; as many as borrow their Dignity from a Plume of Feathers, or the gaudy Trappings of Fortune ; as Many as send their Souls to seek for Bliss in the Blandishments of Sense, or in any Thing short of the divine Favour, and a well-grounded Hope of
the

the incorruptible Inheritance* ; what are they but Dreamers with their Eyes open ; *delirious*, though in *Health* ?

WOULD you see their *Picture* drawn to the very *Life*, and the Success of their *Schemes* calculated with the utmost *Exactness*, cast your Eye upon that fine Representation exhibited by the Prophet : *It shall be even as when a hungry Man dreameth, and behold, he eateth ; but he awaketh, and his Soul is empty : Or as when a thirsty Man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh ; but he awaketh, and behold, he is faint, and his Soul hath Appetite* †. Such is the *Race*, and such the *Prize*, of all those *Candidates* for *Honour* and *Joy*, who run wide of the Mark of the high Calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. They live in *Vanity*, and die in *Woe*.——Awaken us, merciful LORD, from these *noon-tide Trances* ! Awaken us, while *Conviction* may turn to our *Advantage*, and not serve only to increase our *Torment*. O ! let our “ Eyes be inlightened, “ to discern the Things that are excellent ; ” and no longer be imposed upon by *fantastic Appearances*, which, however *pompous* they may seem, will prove more *empty* than the *Visions* of
the

*These give a sacred, and home-felt Delight,
A sober Certainty of waking Bliss.

MILT. *The Mask*.

† Isa. xxix. 8.

the Night, more *transient* than the Dream that is forgotten.

HAVING mentioned *Sleep* and *Dreams*, let me once again consider those remarkable Incidents of our Frame : So very remarkable, that I may venture to call them, a Kind of experimental *Mystery*, and little less than a standing *Miracle*. — Behold the most *vigorous Constitution*, when stretched on the Bed of Ease, and totally resigned to the Slumbers of the Night. Its Activity is oppressed with Fetters of Indolence ; its Strength is consigned over to a temporary Annihilation ; the Nerves are like a Bow unstrung, and the whole animal System like a motionless Log. — Behold a Person of the most *delicate Sensations*, and *amiable Dispositions*. His Eyes, though thrown wide open, admit not the visual Ray ; at least distinguish not Objects. His Ears, with the Organs un-impaired, and articulate Accents beating upon the Drum, perceive not the Sound ; at least apprehend not the Meaning. The Senses, and their exquisitely fine Feelings, are overwhelmed with an unaccountable Stupefaction. You call Him a *social Creature* ; but where are his social Affections ? He knows not the Father that begat Him, and takes no Notice of the Friend, that is as his own Soul. The Wife of his Bosom may expire by his Side, and He lie unconcerned

concerned as a Barbarian. The Children of his Body may be tortured with the severest Pangs, and He, even in the same Chamber, be untouched with the least Commiseration.—Behold the most *ingenious Scholar* ; whose Judgment is piercing, and able to trace the most intricate Difficulties of Science : his Taste refined, and quick to relish all the Beauties of Sentiment and Composition. Yet, at this Juncture, the thinking Faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual Oeconomy disconcerted. Instead of close connected Reasonings, nothing but a disjointed Huddle of absurd Ideas : instead of well-digested Principles, a disorderly Jumble of crude Conceptions. The most palpable Delusions impose upon his Imagination. The whole Night passes, and he frequently mistakes it for a single Minute : is not sensible of the Transition, hardly sensible of any Duration.

YET, no sooner does the Morning draw back his Curtain, and Day-light fill the Room ; but he awakes, and finds himself *possessed* of all the valuable Endowments, which for several Hours were *suspended*, or *lost*. He feels his Sinews braced, and fit for Action : his Senses are alert and keen. The frozen Affections melt with Tenderness : the romantic Visionary brightens into the Master of Reason. And, what is beyond measure surprizing, the intoxicated Mind works it-

self sober, not by *slow Degrees*; but, in the *Twinkling* of an Eye, recovers from its Perturbation.—Why does not the Numbness, that seizes the animal Powers continue; and chain the Limbs in a perpetually listless Inability? Why does not the Stupor, that deadens all the nice Operations of the Senses, hold fast its Possession? When the Thoughts are once dis-adjusted, why are they not always in Confusion? How is it, that they are rallied in a Moment; and from the wildest Irregularity, reduced to the most orderly Array?—From an *Inactivity* resembling Death, and from *Extravagancies* little differing from Madness; how is the Body so *suddenly* restored to Vigour and Agility? How is the Understanding *instantaneously* re-established in Sedateness and Harmony?—Surely, *this is the LORD'S Doing*, and it should be *marvellous in our Eyes*: should awaken our Gratitude, and inspire our Praise.

THIS is the Time, in which *Ghosts* are supposed to make their Appearance. Now the *timorous Imagination* teems with Phantoms, and creates numberless Terrors to itself. Now dreary Forms, in *sullen State*, stalk along the Gloom; or, *swifter than Lightning*, glide across the Shades. Now, Voices more than mortal * are heard

* *Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes
Ingens, & simulacra modis pallentia miris
Visa sub obscurum noctis.* VIRG.

heard from the echoing Vaults, and Groans issue from the hollow Tombs. Now, melancholy Spectres visit the Ruins of ancient Monasteries, and frequent the solitary Dwellings of the Dead. They pass and repass, in unsubstantial Images, along the forsaken Galleries; or take their determined Stand over some lamented Grave. How often has the *School-Boy* fetched a long Circuit, and trudged many a needless Step, in order to avoid the haunted *Church-yard*? Or, if Necessity, sad Necessity, has obliged him to cross the Spot, where *human Skulls* are lodged below, and the *baleful Yews* shed supernumerary Horrors above; a thousand hideous Stories rush into his Memory; Fear adds Wings to his Feet; he scarce touches the Ground; dares not once look behind him; and blesses his good Fortune, if no frightful Sound purred at his Heels, if no ghastly Shape bolted upon his Sight*.

'TIS strange, to observe the excessive Timidity that possesses many Peoples Minds, on this *fanciful Occasion*; while they are void of all Concern on others of the most *tremendous Import*. Those, who are startled, in any dark and lonely Walk, at the *very Apprehension* of a single Spectre; are nevertheless unimpressed at the *sure*

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Prospect

* See that valuable Poem filed *The Grave*, Line; 6.

Prospect of entering into a whole World of disembodied Beings. Nay, are without any Emotions of Awe, though they know themselves to be hastening into the Presence of the great, infinite, and eternal Spirit.—Should some *pale Messenger* from the Regions of the Dead, draw back our Curtains at the Hour of Midnight; and, appointing some particular Place, say, as the horrid Apparition to *Brutus*, *I'll meet thee there**: I believe, the boldest Heart would feel something like a Panic; would seriously think upon the Adventure, and be in Pain for the Event. But when a *Voice* from *Heaven* cries, in the awakening Language of the Prophet, *Prepare to meet thy GOD, O Israel* †; how little is the Warning regarded? How soon is it forgot? Preposterous Stupidity! To be *utterly unconcerned*, where it is the truest Wisdom to take the Alarm; and to be *all Trepidation*, where there is nothing really terrible.—Do Thou, my Soul, remember thy Saviour's Admonition; “ I will forewarn you, whom you shall fear. Fear
“ not

* The Story of *Brutus*, and his *evil Genius*, is well known. Nor must it be denied, that the precise Words of the Spectre to the Hero were, *I'll meet Thee at Philippi*. But as this would not answer my Purpose, I was obliged to make an Alteration in the Circumstance of *Place*.

† Amos iv. 12.

“ not these *imaginary Horrors* of the Night ;
 “ but fear that *awful Being*, whose Revelation
 “ of Himself, though with Expressions of *pecu-*
 “ *liar Mercy*, made *Moses*, his favourite Servant,
 “ tremble exceedingly : whose Manifestation,
 “ with Purposes of *inexorable Vengeance*, will
 “ make *mighty Conquerors* ; that were familiar
 “ with Dangers, and estranged to Dismay ; call
 “ upon the Mountains to fall on them, and the
 “ Rocks to cover them : The *majestic Menace*
 “ of whose Eye, when He comes attended with
 “ thousand thousands of his immortal Hosts, will
 “ make the *very Heavens* cleave asunder, and
 “ the *World* flee away.—O ! dread his *Dis-*
 “ *pleasure* ; secure his *Favour* ; and then Thou
 “ may’st commit all thy other *Anxieties* to the
 “ Wind ; Thou may’st laugh at every other
 “ Fear.”

THIS brings to my Mind a *memorable* and
 amazing *Occurrence*, recorded in the Book of
Job * : which is, I think, no inconsiderable
 Proof of the *real Existence* of Apparitions †, on

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some

* Job iv. 12, 14, &c.

† *Proof of the real Existence of Apparitions.*—If the Sense, in which I have always understood this Passage, be true.—*Eliphaz*, I apprehend, was neither in a Trance, nor in a Dream, but perfectly awake.—Though He speaks of Sleep ; He speaks of it, as fallen, not upon *himself*, but upon *other Men*. He does not mention

some very extraordinary Emergencies; while it discountenances those Legions of *idle Tales*, which Superstition has raised, and Credulity received. Since it teaches us, that if, at any Time, those Visitants from the unknown World render themselves perceivable by Mortals, it is not upon any Errand of frivolous Consequence; but, to convey *Intelligences* of the utmost Moment, or to work *Impressions* of the highest Advantage.

'Twas in the *Dead of Night*. All Nature lay involved in Darkness. Every Creature was buried

mention *Dreams*, though הלומות *Samnia*, would have suited the Verse (if the Book be in Metre) altogether as well as הזיונות *Visiones*.—It could not, I think, be a *Wind*, as some translate the Word רוח. Because, the Circumstance of *standing still*, is not so compatible with the Nature of a Wind; and a Wind would have passed *above* Him, all *around* Him, as well as *before* Him; not to add, how low a Remark it is, and how unworthy of a Place in so august a Description, that He *could not discern the Form* of a Wind —It seems, therefore, to have been a *real Spirit*; either *Angelical*, as were those, which presented themselves to *Abraham* resting at the Door of his Tent, or to *Lot* sitting in the Gate of *Sodom*; or else, the Spirit of some *departed Saint*, as in the Case of *Samuel's* Apparition, or the famous Appearance of *Moses* and *Elijah* on the Mount of Transfiguration.—A Spirit, assuming some *Vehicle*, in order to become visible to the human Eye. Which, accordingly, *Eliphaz* saw, exhibiting itself as an Object of Sight. But saw so *obscurely* and *indistinctly*, as not to be able, either to describe its *Aspect*, or to discern *whom* it resembled.

buried in Sleep. The most profound Silence reigned through the Universe. In these solemn Moments, *Eliphaz* alone, all wakeful and solitary, was musing upon sublime and heavenly Subjects.—When, lo! an awful Being, from the invisible Realms, burst into his Apartment*. *A Spirit passed before his Face. Astonishment* seized the Beholder. His Bones shivered within Him; his Flesh trembled all over Him; and the Hair of his Head stood erect with Horror.—Sudden and unexpected was the *Appearance* of the Phantom; but not such its *Departure*. It stood still, to present itself more fully to his View. It made a solemn Pause, to prepare his Mind for some momentous Message.—After which, a

E 4

Voice

* I have given this *fine Picture* a *modern Dress*, rather for the Sake of Variety and Illustration, than from any Apprehension of improving the admirable Original. Such an Attempt, I am sensible, would be more absurd, than to lacquer Gold, or paint the Diamond. The Description in *Eliphaz's* own Language, is awful and affecting to the last Degree. A *Night-Piece*, dressed in all the Circumstances of the deepest Horror. I question, whether *Shakespear* himself, though so peculiarly happy for his great Command of terrifying Images, has any Thing superior or comparable to this. The Judges of fine Composition see the masterly Strokes; and, I believe, the most ordinary Reader feels them, chilling his Blood, and awakening Emotions of Dread in his Mind.

Voice was heard. A *Voice*, for the *Importance* of its *Meaning*, worthy to be had in everlasting Remembrance; for the *Solemnity* of its *Delivery*, enough to alarm a Heart of Stone. It spoke; and this was the Purport of its *Words*;—“*Shall*
 “*Man, frail and wretched Man, be just before*
 “*the mighty GOD? Shall even the most up-*
 “*right and accomplished of Mortals be pure in the*
 “*Sight of his Maker *? Behold, and consider*
 “*it attentively. He put no such Trust in his*
 “*most exalted Servants, as should bespeak them*
 “*altogether incapable of Defect, or authorize*
 “*them to arrogate any Honour to themselves.*
 “*And his very Angels, without the least Injury*
 “*to their Character, He charged with Folly;*
 “*as sinking, even in the highest Perfection of*
 “*their Holiness, infinitely beneath his transcen-*
 “*dent Glories; and falling, even in all the*
 “*Fidelity*

* There seems to be a significant and beautiful *Gradation* in the *Hebrew* Words *אנו* and *נבר*, which I have endeavoured to preserve by a Sort of *paraphrastic Version*.—The Reader will observe a *new Turn* given to the Sentiment, and much *nobler* than that which our *English Translation* exhibits. The Passage, thus rendered, speaks a Truth incomparably more weighty, and needful to be inculcated. A Truth, exactly parallel to that humbling Confession of the Prophet, *We are all as an unclean Thing*; and to that solemn Declaration of the Psalmist, *In thy Sight shall no Man living be justified*. Vide Schult. in loc.

“ Fidelity of their Obedience, inexpressibly
“ short of the Homage due to his most adorable
“ Majesty. And if angelic Natures must not
“ presume to justify either Themselves, or their
“ Services, before immaculate, and uncreated
“ Purity; *how much less* does such a Carriage
“ become *Them, that dwell in Houses of Clay*;
“ whose Original is from the Dust, and whose
“ State is all Imperfection?

I WOULD observe from hence, the very singular Necessity of that *Poverty of Spirit*, which intirely renounces its own Attainments; and, consequently, *submits to the Righteousness* of the incarnate GOD. To inculcate this Lesson, the *Son of the Blessed* came down from Heaven; and pressed no other Principle, with so repeated * an Importunity, on his Hearers. To instil the same Doctrine, the HOLY GHOST touched the *Lips of the Apostles* with sacred Eloquence; and made it an eminent Part of their Commission, “ to
“ bring down every high Imagination.” That no Expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and lasting Efficacy on the human Mind,

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* It is well worthy of our Observation, says an excellent Commentator, That no one Sentence uttered by our LORD, is so frequently repeated as this; *Who-so-ever shall exalt himself, shall be abased; and He that shall humble himself, shall be exalted*: Which occurs at least *ten Times* in the Evangelists.

a Phantom arises from the *Valley* of the Shadow of *Death*, or a Teacher descends from the *Habitation* of *Spirits*.—Whatever then we neglect, let us not neglect to cultivate *this Grace*, which has been so variously taught, so powerfully enforced.

HARK! a *doleful Voice*.—With sudden Starts, and hideous Screams, it disturbs the Silence of the peaceful Night. 'Tis the *Screech-Owl*, sometimes in frantic, sometimes in disconsolate Accents, uttering her *Woes**.—She flies the vocal Grove, and shuns the Society of all the feathered Choir. The blooming Gardens, and flowery Meads, have no Charms for Her. Obscene Shades, ragged Ruins, and Walls overgrown with Ivy, are her favourite Haunts. *Above*, the mouldering Precipice nods, and threatens a Fall; *below*, the Toad crawls, or the poisonous Adder hisses. The sprightly Morning, which awakens other Animals into Joy, administer no Pleasure to

* *Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo
Sape queri, longasque in fletum ducere voces.*

Thus sung that charming Genius, that Prince of the ancient Poets, that most consummate Master of Elegance and Accuracy; all whose *Sentiments* are Nature, whose every *Description* is a Picture, whose whole *Language* is Music.—*Virgil.*

to this *gloomy Recluse*. Even the smiling Face of Day, is her Aversion; and all its lovely Scenes create nothing but Uneasiness.

So, just so, would it fare with the *Ungodly*, were it possible to suppose their Admission into the chaste and bright *Abodes* of endless *Felicity*. They would find nothing but Disappointment and Shame, even at the Fountain-Head of Happiness and Honour. For how could the *Tongue*, habituated to *Profaneness*, taste any Delight in joining the harmonious Adorations of Heaven? How could the *Lips*, cankered with *Slander*, relish the Raptures of everlasting Praise? Where would be the Satisfaction of the *vain Beauty*, or the *supercilious Grandee*? Since, in the Temple of the Skies, no Incense of Flattery would be addressed to the *one*, nor any obsequious Homage paid to the *other*. The transcendent and immaculate Purity of the blessed GOD would *flash Confusion* on the *lascivious Eye*. And the *envious* Mind must be on a *Rack* of self-tormenting *Passions*, to observe Millions of happy Beings, shining in all the Perfection of Glory, and solacing themselves in the Fulness of Joy. In short; the un sanctified Soul, amidst holy and triumphant Spirits; even in the refined Regions of Bliss and Immortality; would be like this melancholy Bird, *dislodged* from her darksome Retirement,

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Retirement, and *imprisoned* under the Beams of Day*.

THE Voice of this Creature screaming at our Windows, or of the Raven croaking over our Roof, is, they say, a *Token* of approaching *Death*. There are Persons, who would regard such an Incident with no small Degree of Solitude. Trivial as it is, it would damp their Spirits, and perhaps break their Rest—One cannot but wonder, that People should suffer themselves to be affrighted at such *fantastical*, and yet be quite unaffected with *real*, Prefages of their Dissolution. Real Prefages of this awful
Event,

* I cannot forbear taking Notice, with what admirable *Emphasis* and *Propriety* our L O R D touches this important Point, in his memorable Conference with *Nicodemus*. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a Man be born again, He CANNOT enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; q. d. "I waive the Authority*
" of the supreme Judge, and speak with the in-
" structive Condescension of a Master in Israel.
" Though I might, without being liable to the least
" Controul, pass it into a sovereign Decree; That
" unrenewed Mortals, who are Slaves to corrupt
" Appetite, SHALL NOT enter the Habitations of
" the Just. I rather choose to represent it, as a
" Case utterly impossible; and charge the Calamity
" not upon divine Severity, but human Folly. Such
" Persons, from the very Nature of Things, pre-
" clude themselves; they incapacitate their own
" Minds; and Contrarieties must be reconciled, be-
" fore They, in their unregenerate Condition, can
" be Partakers of those spiritual and sublime De-
" lights." John iii. 3.

Event, address us from every Quarter. What are these *incumbent Glooms*, that overwhelm the World, but a *Kind of Pall* provided for Nature; and an Image of that long Night, which will quickly cover the Inhabitants of the whole Earth? What an Affinity has the Sleep, * which will very soon weigh down my drowsy Eye-lids, with that State of intire Cessation, in which all my Senses must be laid aside? The silent Chamber, and the Bed of Slumber, are a very significant Representative of the Land, where all Things are hushed, all Things are forgotten.—What meant that deep *Death-Bell Note*, which, the other Evening, saddened the Air? Laden with heaviest Accents, it *struck* our *Ears*, and seemed to knock at the *Door* of our *Hearts*. Surely, it brought a Message to surviving Mortals, and thus the Tidings ran: “Mortals, the Destroyer
 “ of your Race is on his Way. The last Ene-
 “ my has *begun the Chace*, and is *gaining Ground*
 “ upon you, every Moment. His Paths are
 “ strewed with Heaps of Slain. Even now his
 “ Javelin has laid one of your Neighbours in
 “ the Dust; and will soon, very soon, aim the
 “ *inevitable Blow* at every one of your Lives.”

WE need not go down to the Charnel-House, nor carry our Search into the Repositories of the Dead,

* Et Consanguineus Lethi Sopor.

Dead, in order to find Memorials of our impending Doom. A Multitude of these Remembrances are planted in all our Paths, and point the heedless Passengers to their long Home. I can hardly enter a considerable Town, but I meet the *funeral Procession*, or the *Mourners* going about the *Streets*. The *Atchievement* suspended on the Wall, or the *Crape* streaming in the Air, are silent Intimations; that both *Rich* and *Poor* have been emptying their Houses, and replenishing their Sepulchres. I can scarce join in any Conversation, but mention is made of some that are given over by the Physician, and *hovering* on the *Confines* of Eternity; of others, that have just left their Clay amidst weeping Friends, and are gone to *appear* before the *Judge* of all the Earth. There's not a *News-Paper* comes to my Hand, but, amidst all its entertaining Narrations, reads several serious *Lectures* of *Mortality*. What else are the repeated Accounts, of *Age worn out* by slow-consuming Sicknesses; and of *Youth dashed to Pieces* by some sudden Stroke of Casualty? Of *Patriots*, exchanging their Seats in the Senate for a Lodging in the Tomb; and of *Misers*, resigning their Breath, and (O relentless Destiny!) leaving their very Riches for others? Even these *Vehicles* of our *Amusement* are *Registers* of the *Deceased*;
and

and the Voice of *Fame* seldom sounds, but in Concert with a *Knell*.

THESE Monitors croud every Place; not so much as the Scenes of our Diversions excepted. What are the *Decorations* of our *public Buildings*, and the most elegant *Furniture* of our *Parlours*, but the Imagery of Death, and Trophies of the Tomb? That marble Bust, and those gilded Pictures, how solemnly they *recognize* the Fate of *others*, and speakingly *remind us* of *our own*!—I see, I hear, and Oh! I *feel*, this great Truth. It is interwoven with my *Constitution*. The *frequent Decays* of the Structure foretel its *final Ruin*. What are all the *Pains*, that have been darted through my Limbs; what every *Disease*, that has assaulted my Health; but the *advanced Guards* of the Foe? What are the *Languors* and *Weariness*, that attend the Labours of each revolving Day, but the more *secret Practices* of the Adversary, *slowly undermining* the earthly Tabernacle?

AMIDST so many Notices, shall we go on thoughtless and unconcerned? Can none of these *Prognostics*, which are sure as *Oracles*, awaken our Attention, and engage our Circumspection? *Noah*; 'tis written, *being warned of GOD, prepared an Ark*. O! imitate this excellent Example. Admonished by such a Cloud of Witnesses

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nesses, be continually putting thyself in a Readiness for the last Change. Let not that Day, of which Thou hast so many *infallible* Signs, come upon thee *unawares*.—Get the *Ivy untwined*, and thy Affections disentangled from this enchanting World; that thou may'st be able to quit it, without Reluctance. Get the *dreadful Hand-writing cancelled*, and all thy Sins blotted out; that thou may'st depart in Peace, and have nothing to fear at the decisive Tribunal. Get, O! get thy Soul *interested* in the Redeemer's *Merits*, and *transformed* into his sacred *Image*; then, shalt Thou be meet for the Inheritance of Saints in Light, and may'st even desire to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST.

SOMETIMES, in my Evening Walk, I have heard

————— ————— *The wakeful Bird*
Sing darkling, and, in shadowiest Covert hid,
Tune her nocturnal Note*.

How different were the *Airs* of this charming Songster, from those harsh and boding *Outcries*? The little Creature ran through all the Variations of Music; and shewed herself Mistress of every Grace, that constitutes or embellishes Harmony.—Sometimes, she swells a manly Throat,
and

* MILT. Par. Iost B. III. l. 38.

and her Song kindles into Ardor; the *Tone* is so bold, and strikes with such *Energy*, that you would imagine the sprightly Serenader in the very next *Thicket*. Anon, the *Strain languishes*, and the mournful Minstrel melts into *Tenderness*. The melancholy Notes *just steal* upon the Shades, and faintly touch your Ear; or, in soft and sadly-pleasing Accents, seem to die along the *distant Vale*. Silence is all Attention, and Night listens to the trilling Tale.

WHAT an Invitation is this, to slip away from the thronged City! This coy and modest Minstrel entertains only the *Lovers of Retirement*. Those, that are *carousing* over their *Bowls*, or ranting at the riotous Club, lose this *Feast of Harmony*. In like manner, the Pleasures of Religion; the Joy of Reconciliation with GOD; the Satisfaction arising from the unbounded, ravishing, Prospect of a blissful Immortality; these are all lost to the Mind that is ever *in the Croud*; and dares not, or delights not, to *retire into itself*.—Are we charmed with the *Nightingale's* Song? Do we wish to *have it nearer*, and *hear it oftner*? O let us seek a renewed Heart, and a resigned Will; a Conscience that whispers Peace, and Passions that are tuned by Grace; then, shall we never want a Melody in our *own Breasts*, far more *musically pleasing* than sweet *Philomela's* sweetest Strains.

As different as the *Voices* of these Birds, are the *Circumstances* of those few Mortals, who continue awake.—Some are squandering, *Pearls*, shall I say, or *Kingdoms*? No; but what is unspeakably more precious, *Time*. Squandering this inestimable Talent, with the most senseless and wanton Prodigality. Not content with allowing a *few spare Minutes*, for the Purpose of necessary Recreation; they lavish many Hours, devote *whole Nights*, to that idle Diversion of *shuffling, ranging, and detaching*, a Set of painted PASTEBOARDS.—Others, instead of this *busy Trifling*, act the Part of their *own Tormentors*. They even picquet themselves*, and call it Amusement; they are torn by wild Horses, and yet term it a Sport. What else is the *Gamester's* Practice; while his Mind is held in the most *anxious Suspense*, and agitated by the *fiercest Extremes* of Hope and Fear? While the Dice are rattling, his Heart is throbbing; his Fortune is tottering; and, possibly, at the very next Throw, the one *sinks* in the *Gulph* of Ruin, the other is *hurried* into the *Rage* of Distraction.

SOME, snatched from the *Bloom* of Health, and the *Lap* of Plenty, are confined to the *Chamber* of *Sickness*. Where they are constrained

(O

* In Allusion to a very painful Punishment, inflicted on Delinquents among the Soldiery.

{O sad Alternative!) either to plunge into the everlasting World, in an *unprepared Condition*; or else, to think over all the *Follies* of a heedless Life, and all the *Bitterness* of approaching Death. The Disease rages; it baffles the Force of Medicine; and urges the reluctant Wretch to the Brink of the Precipice. While Furies rouse the Conscience, and point at the bottomless Pit below.—Perhaps, his *drooping Mother*, deprived long ago of the *Husband* of her *Bosom*; and bereft of all her other *Offspring*; is, even now, receiving the Blow which consummates her Misfortunes *. In vain she tries to assuage the Sor-

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rows

* This brings to my Mind one of the the deepest and most affecting *Mourning-Pieces*, extant in Writing. The sacred Historian paints it in all the Simplicity of Style, and yet in all the Strength of Colouring. — *When J E S U S came nigh to the Gate of the City, behold! there was a dead Man carried out, the only Son of his Mother, and she was a Widow.* — What a beautiful Gradation is here? Every fresh Circumstance is an additional Aggravation of the Calamity: 'Till, at length, the Description is worked up into the most finished Picture, of exquisite and inconsolable Distress. — He was a *young Man*; cut off in the Flower of Life, amidst a Thousand gay Expectations, and smiling Hopes.—He was an *only Son*; the afflicted Mother's All: So that none remained to preserve the Name, or perpetuate the Family.—And, what rendered the Case still more deplorable, *She was a Widow*; left intirely desolate; abandoned to her Woes, without any to share her Sorrows,

rows of a beloved Son; in vain she attempts, with her tender Offices, to prolong a Life, dearer than her own. He faints in her Arms; he bows his Head; he drops in Death. The last Pang, which dislodges the unwilling Soul, rends an *only Child*, from the yearning Embraces of a *Parent*; and tears away the *Support* of her *Age*, from a disconsolate *Widow*.

WHILE *Those* long for a *Reprieve*, *Others* invite the *Stroke*. Quite weary of the World, with a restless Impatience, they sigh for Dissolution. Some, pining away under the *tedious Decays* of an incurable *Consumption*; or gasping for Breath, and almost suffocated, amidst an *Inundation* of *dropscical Waters*. On some a *relentless Cancer* has fastened its envenomed Teeth; and is gnawing them, though in the midst of bodily Vigour, in the midst of pitying Friends, gradually to Death. Others are on a Rack of Agonies, by *convulsive Fits* of the *Stone*: O how the Pain writhes their Limbs; how the Sweat bedews their Flesh; and their Eye-Balls wildly roll! Methinks, the *Night* condoles with these her distressed Children, and sheds *dewy Tears*

Sorrows, or comfort her under her Misfortunes.—
It not this a fine Sketch of the *Picturesque*? Who can consider the Narrative with any Attention, and not feel his Heart penetrated with a tender Commiseration? *Luke* vii. 12.

Tears over their sorrowful Abodes.—But, of all Mortals, They are the most exquisitely miserable, who groan beneath the *Pressure* of a *melancholy* Mind, or smart under the *Lashes* of a resentful *Conscience*. Though robed in Ermine, or covered with Jewels, the State of a Slave chained to the Gallies, or of an Exile condemned to the Mines, is a perfect Paradise compared with theirs.

O! that the *Votaries* of *Mirth*, whose Life is a continued Round of Merriment and Whim, would bestow one serious Reflection on this *Variety* of human *Woes*. It might render them less enamoured with the *few languid Sweets*, that are thinly scattered through this Vale of Tears, and are invironed with such a *Multitude* of *ragged Thorns*. It might teach them, no longer to dance away their Years, with a giddy *rambling Impulse*; but to aspire, with a *determined Aim*, after those happy Regions, where Delights unmingled flow.

CAN there be Circumstances, which a Man of *Wisdom* would more earnestly *deprecate*, than these several Cases of grievous Tribulation? There are; and, what is very astonishing, they are frequently the *Desire* and the *Choice* of Those, who fancy themselves the sole Heirs of Happiness: Those I mean, who are launching out into the *Depths* of *Extravagance*, and running

excessive *Lengths* of *Riot*; who are prostituting their Reputation, and sacrificing their Peace, to their Lusts; who are sapping the Foundations of their Health in Debaucheries, and shipwrecking the Interests of their Families, in their Bowls; and, what is worse, are forfeiting the Joys of an eternal Heaven, for the sordid *Satisfactions* of the Beast, for the *transitory Sensations* of an Hour.—O! ye Slaves of Appetite, how far am I from envying your inordinate Revels? Ah! little are you sensible, that while Voluptuousness *showers* her *Roses*, and Luxury *diffuses* her *Odours*, they scatter *Poisons* also, and shed unheeded *Bane* *. Evils, incomparably more malignant than the Wormwood and Gall of the sharpest Affliction.—Since Death is in the Drunkard's Cup, and worse than Poiniards in the Harlot's Embrace, may it ever be the *Privilege* of the Man whom I love, to go without his Share of these *pestilent Sweets* †.

ABUN-

* Yes; in the Flow'rs that wreath the sparkling Bowl,
Fell Adders hiss, and pois'nous Serpents roll.

PRIOR'S *Sol.*

† *Quam suave est suavitatibus istis carere!*—In this fine Sentence quoted from *St. Augustine*, there is much the same beautiful Turn, and noble Sentiment, as in those Lines of *Mr. Pope*;

Count all th' Advantage prosp'rous Vice attains,
'Tis but what Virtue flies from, and disdains.

ARUNDANCE of *living Sparks* glitter in the Lanes, and twinkle under the Hedges. I suppose, they are the *Gleaners*; which have lighted their little Lamps, and obtained Leave, through the Absence of the Sun, to play a feeble Beam. A faint Glimmer just serves to render them perceivable; without tending at all to dissipate the Shades, or making any Amends for the departed Day.—Should a *Traveller*, dropping with *Wet*, and shivering with *Cold*, hover round this *Mimickry of Fire*, in order to dry his Garments, and warm his benumbed Limbs: Should some unfortunate *Rover*, groping for his Way in a black and dark Night, take one of these *languid Tapers*, as a Light to his Feet and a *Lantern* to his *Paths*: How certainly would both the *one* and the *other*, be frustrated of their Expectation?—And are *They* more likely to succeed, who, neglecting that *sovereign Balm*, which distilled from the Cross; fly to any *carnal Diversion*, to heal the Anxiety of the Mind? Who, deaf to the infallible *Decisions of Revelation*; resign themselves over to the erroneous *Conjectures of Reason*, in order to find the Way that leadeth unto Life? Or lastly, who apply to the *Froth* of this vain World, for a *satisfactory Portion*, and a *substantial Happiness*? Their Conduct is

in no Degree wiser; their Disappointment equally sure; and their Miscarriage infinitely more disastrous. To speak in the delicate Language of a sacred Writer, “*They sow the Wind, and will reap the Whirlwind* *.”

To say the Truth, the *Pleasures* of the World, which we are *All* so prone to dote upon; and the *Powers* of fallen Reason, which *some* are so apt to idolize; are not only vain, but treacherous. Not only a *painted Flame*, like these sparkling Animals; but much like those *unctuous Exhalations* †, which arise from the marshy Ground,

* Hof. viii. 7.

† I hope, it will be observed, That I am far from decrying that noble Faculty of *Reason*, when exerted in her proper Sphere; and acting in a *deferential Subordination* to the *revealed Will* of Heaven. While She exercises her Powers, within these appointed Limits, She is unspeakably serviceable; and cannot be too industriously cultivated.—But, when She sets up herself in *proud Contradistinction* to the sacred Oracles; when, all arrogant and self-sufficient, She says to the Word of Scripture, *I have no Need of Thee*: She is then, I must be bold to maintain, not only a Glow-worm, but an *Ignis fatuus*; not only a Bubble, but a Snare.

May not this Remark, with the strictest Propriety, and without the least Limitation, be applied to the *Generality* of our modern Romances, Novels, and *too many* of our theatrical Entertainments? These are commonly calculated, to inflame a wanton Fancy: or, if conducted with so much Modesty, as not to debauch

Ground, and often dance before the Eyes of the benighted Wayfaring Man. Kindled into a Sort of Fire, they personate a Guide, and seem to offer their Service: But, blazing with *delusive Light*, mislead their Follower into hidden Pits, headlong Precipices, and unfathomable Gulphs; where, far from his beloved Friends, far from all Hopes of Succour, the unhappy Wanderer is swallowed up and lost.

NOT long ago, we observed a very surprizing Appearance, in the western Sky. A *prodigious Star* took its flaming Route through those Coasts; and trailed, as it passed, a tremendous Length of Fires almost over half the Heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed the portentous Stranger with much the same anxious Amazement, as *Belshazzar* beheld the Hand-writing upon the Wall. Some looked upon it as a *bloody * Flag*, hung out by Divine Resentment, over a guilty World.

Some

debauch the Affections; they pervert the Judgment, and bewilder the Taste. By dressing up romantic Images, and forming extravagant Characters, widely different from Truth; they inspire unnatural Conceits; beget idle Expectations; introduce a Disgust of genuine History; and indispose their Admirers to acquiesce in the *decent* Civilities, or to relish the *sober* Satisfactions of common Life.

* — *Liquida si quando nocte cometæ
Sanguinei lugubre rubent.* — VIRG.

Some read, in its glaring Visage, the Fate of Nations, and the Fall of Kingdoms*. To others, it shook, or seemed to shake, *Pestilence* and *War* from its horrid Hair. — For my Part, I am not so superstitious as to regard, what every Astrologer has to *prognosticate* upon the Accession of a *Comet*, or the unusual Aspect of the Planets. Nothing can be more precarious and unjustifiable, than to draw such Conclusions from such Events: Since they are neither *preternatural* Effects, nor do they throw the Frame of Things into any *Disorder*. I would rather adore that omnipotent Being, who rolled them from his creating Hand; and leads them, by his providential Eye, through unmeasurable Tracts of *Æther*: Who bids them, now, approach the Sun, and glow with unsufferable Ardors †; now, retreat beyond the utmost Bounds of our Planetary System,

* ——— *Crinemque timendi
Sideris, & terris mutantem regna cometem.*

LUCAN.

† “ The Comet in the Year 1680, according to
“ Sir *Isaac Newton*’s Computation, was, in its
“ nearest Approach, above 166 times nearer the
“ Sun than the Earth is. Consequently, its Heat
“ was then 28000 times greater than that of Sum-
“ mer. So that a Ball of Iron as big as the Earth,
“ heated by it, would hardly become cool in 50000
“ Years.” *Derb. Astr. Theol.* p. 237.

System, and make their Entry among other Worlds.

THEY are harmless Visitants. I acquit them from the Charge of *causing*, or being *accessary to*, desolating Plagues. Would to GOD there were no other more formidable Indications of *approaching Judgments*, or *impending Ruin*. But, alas! when *Vice* becomes predominant, and Irreligion almost epidemical: when the *Sabbaths* of a jealous GOD are notoriously profaned; and that “*Name*, which is great, wonderful, and “*holy*,” is prostituted to the meanest, or abused to the most execrable Purposes: when the *Worship* of the great Creator and Preserver of Mankind is banished, from many of the most *conspicuous Families*; and it is deemed a Piece of *rude Impertinence*, so much as to mention the gracious Redeemer, in our *genteel Interviews*: when it passes for an *elegant Freedom* of Behaviour, to ridicule the Mysteries of Christianity; and a Species of *refined Conversation*, to taint the Air with lascivious Hints: when those, that sit in the *Scorner’s Chair*, sin with a high Hand; and many of those that wear the *Professor’s Garb*, are destitute of the Power, and content themselves with the mere Form of Godliness: when such is the State of a Community, there is Reason, too apparent Reason, to be horribly afraid. Such *Phænomena*, abounding in the *moral World*, are

not fanciful, but real Omens. Will not an injured GOD “be avenged on such a Nation as “this?” Will He not be provoked to “sweep “them with the Besom of Destruction *?”

O! that the Inhabitants of *Great-Britain*, would lay these alarming Considerations to Heart: The LORD of Hosts has commanded the Sword of *civil Discord*, to return into its Sheath: But have we returned every one from his *evil Ways*? Are we become a renewed People; devoted to a dying Saviour; and zealous of good Works.—What mean those *Peals of Sobs*, which burst from the *expiring Cattle*?—What mean those melancholy Moans, where the lusty Doves were wont to low †? What mean those Arrows of untimely Death, discharged on our innocent and useful Animals? Are not these the *Weapons of Divine*

* *Isa. xiv. 23.* The eternal Sovereign, speaking of *Babylon*, denounces this Threatning, *I will sweep it with the Besom of Destruction.*—What a noble, but dreadful Image is here? How strongly and awfully pourtrayed! How pregnant also in its Signification? Intimating at once the *vile Nature*, the *total Extirpation* of this wicked People; and the *perfect Ease*, with which the righteous GOD would execute his intended Vengeance.

† If these Papers should be so fortunate, as to outlive their Author; perhaps, it may be needful to inform Posterity, that these Hints allude to a most terrible, contagious, and mortal *Distemper*, raging, at the Time of writing them, among the *horned Cattle*, in various Parts of the Kingdom.

Divine Displeasure, and manifest Chastisements of a sinful Generation*? Has not GOD, the “GOD to whom Vengeance belongeth,” still a Controversy with our Land? And who can tell, where the Visitation will end? What a *Storm* may follow these prelusive *Drops*? O! that we may “hear the Rod, and who hath appointed “it.” Taught by these *penal Effects* of our Disobedience, may we remove the *accursed Thing* from our Tents, our Practices, our Hearts! May we turn from all Ungodliness, before Wrath come upon us to the uttermost; before Iniquity prove our Ruin!

SOMETIMES, at this Hour, another most remarkable Sight amuses the Curious, and alarms the Vulgar. A Blaze of lambent *Metears* is kindled; or some very extraordinary *Lights* are refracted, *in the Quarters* of the *North*. Sometimes, the radiant Streamers meet and *mingle*, insomuch that the Air seems to be all conflicting Fire: At other times, they *start* from one another, and, like Legions in precipitate Flight, sweep each a separate Way through the Firmament.

* *Hinc letis vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,
Et dulces animas plena ad præsepia reddunt,
Balatu hinc pecorum, & crebris mugitibus amnes,
Arentesque sonant ripæ, collesque supini.*

ment. Now, they are *quiescent*; anon, they are thrown into a *quivering* Motion; presently, a nimble *Glance* diffuses them over the whole Hemisphere. Sometimes, with an *Aspect awfully ludicrous*, they represent extravagant and antic Vagaries; at other times, you would suspect that some invisible Power was playing off the *Artillery* of the *Skies*, and giving us the Flash, without the Noise.

THE Villagers gaze at the Spectacle, first with Wonder, then with Horror. A general *Panic* seizes the Country. Every Heart throbs, and every Face is pale. The Clouds that flock together, instead of diminishing, increase the Dread. They catch Contagion from each other's Looks and Words; while Fear is in every Eye, and every Tongue speaks the Language of Terror. Some see *hideous Shapes*, Armies mixing in fierce Encounter, or Fields swimming with Blood. Some foresee *direful Events*, States overthrown, or mighty Monarchs tottering on their Thrones. Others, scared with still more frightful Apprehensions, think of nothing but the *Day of Doom*.
 “ Sure, says one, the unalterable Hour is struck,
 “ and the End of all Things come.—See, replies another, how the blasted Stars look wan!
 “ are not these the Signs of the Son of Man
 “ coming in the Clouds of Heaven?—JESUS
 “ prepare us, cries a Third, and lifts his Eyes
 “ in

“ in Devotion, for the Archangel’s Trump, and
“ the great Tribunal!”

If this *waving Brightness*, which plays innocently over our Heads, be so amazing to Multitudes; what inexpressible Consternation must overwhelm unthinking Mortals, when the *general Conflagration* commences? The Day, the dreadful Day, is approaching, “ *In the which the
“ Heavens shall pass away with a great Noise**,
“ and

* 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. I have often thought this Verse an eminent Instance of that Kind of beautiful Writing, in which the very *Sound* bears a Sort of *Significancy*; at least, carries an exact Correspondence with the Sense. The original Expression—*εοιζυδος*—is one of the hoarsest and deepest Words in Language. Nothing could be more exquisitely adapted to affect the *Ear*, as well as impress the *Imagination*, with the Wreck of Nature, and the Crash of a falling World.—I scarce ever read this Clause, but it brings to my Mind that admired Description in *Milton*,

— On a sudden open fly
With impetuous Recoil, and *jarring Sound*,
Th’ infernal Doors, and on their Hinges *grate*
Harsh Thunder. — Book II. l. 879.

It is a pleasing Employ, and one of the noblest Offices of true Criticism, to point out these inferior Recommendations of the *Sacred Classics*. Though, I believe, the inspired Writers themselves, amidst all the Elevation and Magnificence of their Divine Ideas, disdained a scrupulous Attention to such *little Niceties* of Stile.

“ *and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat ;*
“ *the Earth also, and all the Works that are*
“ *therein, shall be burnt up.*” That mighty Hand, which once opened the Windows from on High, and broke up the Fountains of the great Deep, will then unlock all the *Magazines of Fire*, and pour a *Second Deluge* upon the whole Earth. The vengeful Flames, kindled by the Breath of the Almighty, spread themselves from the Centre to the Circumference. Nothing can withstand their Impetuosity ; nothing can escape their Rage. Universal Desolation attends their Progress. Magnificent Palaces, and solemn Temples, are laid in Ashes. Spacious Cities, and impregnable Towers, are mingled in one smoking Mass. Not only the Productions of *human Art*, but the Works of *Almighty Power*, are Fuel for the devouring Element. The everlasting Mountains melt, like the Snows which cover their Summit. Even vast Oceans serve only to augment the Blaze. — O ! how shall I, or others, stand undismayed amidst the Glare of a *burning World*, unless the LORD JEHOVAH be our Defence ? How shall we be upheld in Security, when the Globe itself is sinking in a *fiery Ruin*, unless the Rock of Ages be our Support ?

BEHOLD !

BEHOLD! a new Spectacle of Wonder! The *Moon* is making her Entry into the Sky. See her rising in *clouded Majesty*: All grand and stately, but somewhat sullied in her Aspect. However, she *brightens*, as she *advances*; and grows clearer, as she climbs higher: 'Till, at length, her silver loses all its Dross; she unveils her peerless Light, and becomes “the beauty of Heaven, the Glory of the Stars*”; delighting every Eye, and chearing the whole World, with the Brightness of her Appearance, and the Softness of her Splendors.—O! thou *Queen* of the *Shades*, may it be my Ambition to follow this thy instructive Example! While others are fond to transcribe the *Fashions* of *little Courts*, and to mimic Personages of inferior State, be it mine to imitate thy *improving Purity*. May my Conduct become more unblemished, and my Temper more refined, as I proceed farther and farther in my probationary Course. May every sordid Desire wear away, and every irregular Appetite be gradually lost, as I make nearer Approaches to the celestial Mansions. Will not this be a comfortable Evidence, that I too shall shine in my adored Redeemer's Kingdom? Shine with a *richer Lustre*, than that which radiates from thy

VOL. II. G resplendent

* Ecclus. xliii. 9.

——— *Lucidum cæli decus.*

HOR.

resplendent Orb; shine with an *unfading* Lustre, when every Ray, that beams from thy beauteous Sphere, is totally extinguished?

THE Day afforded us a Variety of entertaining Sights. These were all withdrawn at the Approach of Darkness. The *Stars*, kindly officious, immediately lent us their Aid. This served to *alleviate* the *Frown* of Night, not to *recover* the Objects from their *Obscurity*. A faint Ray, scarcely reflected, and not from the intire Surface of Things, gave the straining Eye a very imperfect Glimpse; such as rather *mocked*, than *satisfied*, Vision.—But, now the Moon is risen, and has collected all her Beams, the Veil is again taken off from the Countenance of Nature. We once again behold the World's *great Picture*, not indeed in its late lively Colours, but more *delicately shaded*, and arrayed in *softer Charms* *.

WHAT a *majestic Scene* is here! How incomparably grand, and exquisitely fine!——The Moon, like an immense *crystal Lamp*, pendent in the magnificent *Ceiling* of the *Heavens*: the Stars, like so many Thousands of *golden Tapers*, fixed in their *azure Sockets*: all pouring their
Lustre

* ————— Now reigns

Full orb'd the Moon, and with more pleasing Light
Shadowy sets off the Face of Things.—MILT.

Lustre on spacious Cities, and lofty Mountains ;
glittering on the Ocean ; gleaming on the Forest ;
and opening a Prospect, wide as the Eye can
glance, more various than Fancy can paint *.—

We are forward to amidst the Performances of
human Art. A *Landschape*, elegantly designed,
and sketched out with a masterly Hand ; a *Piece*
of *Statuary*, that seems, amidst all the Recom-
mendations of exact Proportion and graceful At-
titude, to soften into Flesh, and almost breathe
with Life ; these little *Imitations* of Nature we
behold with a pleasing Surprize ; and shall we be

G 2

less

* As when the Moon, refulgent Lamp of Night,
O'er Heav'ns clear Azure spreads her sacred Light ;
When not a Breath disturbs the deep Serene,
And not a Cloud o'ercasts the solemn Scene ;
Around her Throne the vivid Planets roll,
And Stars unnumber'd gild the glowing Pole ;
O'er the dark Trees a yellower Verdure shed,
And tip with Silver ev'ry Mountain's Head ;
Then shine the Vales, the Rocks in Prospect rise,
A Flood of Glory bursts from all the Skies :
The conscious Swains, rejoicing in the Sight,
Eye the blue Vault, and bless the useful Light.

Iliad.

I transcribe these Lines, because Mr. *Pope* says, They
exhibit, in the Original, the finest *Night-Piece* in
Poetry. And, if they are so beautiful in *Homer's*
Language, who can suspect their suffering any Dis-
advantage from the Pen of his admirable *Translator* ?

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less delighted at the inexpressibly noble, and completely finished *Original*?—The ample Dimensions of *Ranelagh's Dome*, the gay Illuminations of *Vaux-Hall Grove*, I should scorn to mention on such an Occasion, were they not the Objects of general Admiration. Shall we be charmed with those *puny Essays*, of finite Ingenuity; and touched with no Transport, at this *stupendous Display* of omnipotent Skill? at the august Grandeur, and shining Stateliness, of the Firmament; that forms an *Alcove* for Ten thousand Worlds, and is *ornamented* with Myriads of everlasting Luminaries. Surely, this must betray not only a total *Want* of *Religion*, but the most abject Littleness of Mind, and the utmost *Poverty* of *Genius*.

THE Moon is not merely “an *Ornament* in “the high Places of the LORD,” but of signal *Service* to the Inhabitants of the Earth.—How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total Darkness! especially, in the long Absence of the Winter's Sun. Welcome therefore, thrice welcome this auspicious Gift of Providence; to enliven the nocturnal Gloom, and line with Silver the raven-coloured Mantle of Night.—How desirable to have our Summer-Evenings illuminated! that we may be able to tread the dewy Meads, and breathe the delicious Fragrancy of
our

our Gardens : especially, when the sultry Heats render it irksome and fatiguing, to walk abroad by Day.—How chearing to the *Shepherd*, the Use of this *universal Lanthorn* ; as He tends his *fleecy Charge*, or *late* consigns them to their hurdled Cots ! How pleasing to the *Mariner*, as He ploughs the Midnight Main ; to adjust the Tackling, and explore his Way, under the Influence of this *beaming Sconce* !—For these, and other beneficial Purposes, the Hand of the ALMIGHTY has hung the stately *Branch* on high ; and filled it with a Splendour, not confined to a single *Edifice*, or commensurate to a particular *Square*, but diffusive as the whole Extent of the *Hemisphere*.

THE most faithful of our inferior Servants, are sometimes *tardy* in their Office, sometimes *negligent* of their Duty ; but this celestial Attendant is most *exactly punctual*, at all the stated Periods of her Ministrations. If we chuse to prolong our Journey, after the Sun is gone down ; the Moon, during her whole *Increase*, is always ready to act in the Capacity of a Guide : if we are inclined to set out, very early in the Morning ; the Moon, in her *Decrease*, prevents the Dawn, in order to offer her Assistance : and, because it is so pleasant a Thing for the Eyes to behold the Light ; the Moon, at her *Full*, by a Course of un-intermitted Wait-

ing, never fails to give Us, as it were, a double Day.—How apparently has the divine Wisdom interested itself, in providing even for the *pleasurable Accommodation* of Man ! How desirous, that He should want no Piece of commodious Furniture ; no Kind of delightful Convenience ! And, in Prosecution of these benevolent Intentions, has annexed so valuable an Appendage to the terrestrial Globe.—Justly, therefore, does the Psalmist celebrate that admirable Constitution, which ordained *the Moon and the Stars to govern the Night*, as an Instance of rich Goodness, and of *Mercy which endureth for ever* *.

THE Moon, it is confessed, is no *luminous* Body. All the Brightness, which beautifies her Countenance, is *originally* in the Sun, and no more than *transmissively* in her. That glorious Orb is the Parent of Day, and the Palace of Light. From thence, the Morning-Star gilds her Horn † ; from thence, the Planetary Circles are

* Psal. cxxxvi. 9.

† I might, to justify this Expression, observe ; that the Planet *Venus*, vulgarly called the Morning Star, is found, by our Telescopes, frequently to appear *horned* ; or to have a *Crescent* of Light, somewhat like the Moon, a little before or after her Conjunction. But this would be a Remark, too deep and refined for my Scheme ; which proceeds only upon a *superficial* Knowledge, and the most *obvious* Appearances of Nature.

are crowned with Lustre; and from thence, the Moon derives all her Silver Radiance.—It is pleasing to reflect, that such is the Case with the *all-sufficient Redemer*, and his *dependent People*. We are replenished from his Fulness. What do we *possess*, which we have not *received*; and what can we *desire*, which we may not *expect*, from that never-failing Source of all Good? He is the Author of our Faith, and the Former of our Graces. In his unspotted Life, we see the *Path*; in his meritorious Death, the *Price*; and in his triumphant Resurrection, the *Proof* of Bliss and Immortality. If we offend, and fall Seven times a Day, He is the LORD our *Peace* *. If we are depraved, and our best Deeds very unworthy, He is the LORD our *Righteousness* †. If we are blind, and even brutish in heavenly Knowledge, He is the LORD our *Wisdom* ||; his Word dispels the Shades, his Spirit scatters the intellectual Gloom, his Eye looks our Darkness into Day. In short, we are nothing, and “CHRIST is all.” *Worse* than *defective* in ourselves, “we are *complete* in Him.” So that if we shine, it is with delegated Rays, and borrowed Light. We act by a Strength, and glory in Merits, not our own.—O! may we be thoroughly sensible of our Dependence on the Saviour! May we constantly imbibe his pro-

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pitious

* Judg. vi. 27. † Jer. xxiii, 6. || 1 Cor. i. 30.

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pitious Beams ; and never, by *indulging Unbelief*, or *backsliding into Folly*, withdraw our Souls from his benign Influences ! Left we lose our Comfort and our Holiness ; as the fair Ruler of the Night loses her Splendor, when her Urn is turned from its Fountain *, and receives no more Communications of solar Effulgence.

THE Moon is incessantly *varying*, either in her Aspect, or her Stages.—Sometimes, her Face is *all Lustre* ; anon, a *radiant Crescent* adorns her Brow ; soon, it dwindles into a *slender Streak* ; till, at length, all her Beauty vanishes, and she becomes a *beamless Orb*.—Sometimes, she rises with the *descending Day*, and begins her Procession amidst admiring Multitudes ; ere long, she defers her Progress till the *midnight Watches*, and steals unobserved upon the sleeping World.—Sometimes, she just appears on the *Edges* of the western *Horizon*, and drops us a ceremonious Visit ; within awhile, she sets out on her nightly Tour, from the opposite Regions of the East, *traverses* the whole *Hemisphere*, and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent Partner of her Sway renders her Presence unnecessary.—In a Word, she is,
while

* Alluding to those truly poetical Lines in *Milton*,
Hither, as to their Fountain, other Stars
Repairing, in their golden Urns draw Light.

while conversant among us, still waxing or waning, and “never continueth in one Stay.”

SUCH is the Moon; and such are all *sublunary Things*; exposed to perpetual Vicissitudes.—How often, and how soon, have the faint Echos of *Renown* slept in *Silence*; or been converted into the Clamours of *Obloquy*? The same Lips, almost with the same Breath, cry *Hosanna* and *Crucify*.—Have not *Riches* confessed their notorious Uncertainty, a Thousand and a Thousand times? Either melting away, like *Snow* in our *Hands*, by insensible Degrees; or escaping, like a *winged Prisoner* from its Cage, with a precipitate Flight.—Have we not known the *Bridegroom's Closet*, an *Antechamber* to the *Tomb*; and heard the Voice, that so lately pronounced the sparkling Pair Husband and Wife, proclaim an everlasting Divorce; and seal the Decree with that solemn Asseveration, “Ashes
“to Ashes, Dust to Dust?”—Our *Friends*, though the Medicine of Life; our *Health*, though the Balm of Nature, are a most precarious Possession. How soon may the *one* become a Corpse in our *Arms*; and how easily is the *other* destroyed in its *Vigour*?—You have seen, no doubt, a Set of pretty *painted Birds*, perching on your Trees, or sporting in your Meadows. You was pleased with the lovely Visitants, that brought Beauty on their Wings, and Me-
lody

lody in their Throats. But could you *ensure* the *Continuance* of this agreeable Entertainment? No, truly: At the least disturbing Noise, at the least terrifying Appearance, they start from their Seats; they mount the Skies; and are gone in an instant, gone for ever. Would you chuse to have a Happiness, which *bears Date* with their *Arrival*, and *expires* at their *Departure*? If you could not be content with a Portion, that is settled only for such a *fortuitous Term*, not of *Years*, but of *Moments*, O! take up with nothing earthly; set your Affections on Things above; there alone is “no Variableness or Shadow of turning.”

JOB is not a more illustrious Pattern of Patience, than an eminent Exemplification of this Remark.—View him in his *private Estate*, he heaps up Silver as the Dust; he washes his Steps in Butter; and the Rock pours him out Rivers of Oil.—View him in his *public Character*, Princes revere his Dignity; the Aged listen to his Wisdom; every Eye beholds him with Delight; every Tongue loads him with Blessings.—View him in his *domestic Circumstances*, on one Hand, he is defended by a Troop of Sons; on the other, adorned with a Train of Daughters; and on all Sides, surrounded by “a very great Household.”—Never was *human Felicity* so consummate, never was *disastrous Revolution* so sudden. The
Lightning,

Lightning, which consumed his Cattle, was not more terrible, and scarce more instantaneous. The joyful Parent is bereft of his Offspring, and his "Children are buried in Death." The Man of Affluence is stript of his Abundance, and he, that was cloathed in Scarlet, embraces the Dung-hil. The venerable Patriarch is the Derision of Scoundrels, and the late Darling of an indulgent Providence is become "a Brother to Dragons, a Companion of Owls."—Nor need we go back to *former Ages*, for Proofs of this afflicting Truth. In our Times, in *all Times*, the Wheel continues the same incessant Whirl; and frequently those, who are *triumphing* To-day in the *highest Elevations* of Joy, To-morrow are *bemoaning* the Instability of mortal Affairs, in the *very Depths* of Misery*.—Amidst so much *Fluctuation* and Uncertainty, how wretched is the Condition, which has no *Anchor* of the Soul

* I believe, I may venture to apply what the *Temanite* says, of the Affairs of the Wicked, to all *sub-lunary Things*; as a true Description of their very *great Instability*. Job xxii. 16. נהר יוצק יסודם rendered by *Schultens*, *Flumen fusum fundamentum eorum*. Their Foundation (or what they reckon their most solid and stable Possession) is a Flood poured out.—Which is one of the *boldest Images*, and most *poetical Beauties*, I ever met with in any Language, sacred or profane. In order to have a tolerable Conception of the Image, and a Taste of its Beauty; you must suppose a *Torrent* of Waters rushing in broken

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Soul sure and stedfast? May thy Loving-kindness, O G O D, be our *present Treasure*, and thy future Glory our *reversionary Inheritance!* Then shall our Happiness, not be like the full-orbed Moon, which is “ a Light that *decreaseth* “ in its Perfection ;” but like the Sun, when he goeth forth in his Strength, and knoweth no other Change, but that of *shining more* and more unto the perfect Day.

METHINKS, in this ever-varying Sphere, I see a Representation, not only of our temporal Advantages, but also of our *spiritual Accomplishments*. Such, I am sure, is what the kind Partiality of a Friend would call *my Righteousness*: And such, I am apt to suspect*, is the Righteousness

broken Cataracts, and with impetuous Rapidity, from a steep and craggy Mountain. Then, imagine to yourself an *Edifice* built upon the Surge of this rolling Precipice; that has no other *Basis*, than one of those *whirling Waves*, which constitute such a headlong Stream—Was there ever such a Representation of transitory Prosperity, tending, with inconceivable Swiftnefs, unto Ruin? Yet such is every Form of human Felicity, that is not grounded upon J E S U S, and a Participation of his Merits, which is the *Rock of Ages*; on J E S U S, and his Image formed in our Hearts, which is the *Hope of Glory*.

* I would not be understood, as measuring, in this respect, *others by myself*; but as taking my Estimate from the unerring Standard of Scripture. And indeed, proceeding on this Evidence, supported by
this

teousness of every Man living. Now we exercise it, in some few Instances, in some little Degrees. Anon, Sin revives, and leads our Souls into a transient, though unwilling Captivity. Now we are *meek*; but soon a ruffling Accident intervenes, and turns our Composure into a fretful Disquietude. Now we are *humble*; soon we reflect upon some inconsiderable or imaginary Superiority over others, and a sudden Elatement swells our Minds. Now, perhaps, we possess a *clean Heart*, and are warm with *holy Love*: But,

O!

this Authority, I might have ventured farther than a bare *Suspicion*. For “there is not a *just Man* upon Earth, that doeth Good, and *sinneth not*,” says the Spirit of Inspiration by *Solomon* (*Eccles* vii. 20.) — Nay, such is the Purity, and so extensive are the Demands, of the Divine Law, that an Apostle makes a still more humbling Acknowledgement, “In *many Things* we offend *All*.” (*Jam*. iii. 2.) — And the *all-wise Teacher*, who most thoroughly knew our Frame, directs the most advanced, most established, and most watchful Christians, to pray daily for the Forgiveness of their *daily Trespases*. — To which Testimonies, I beg Leave to add an elegant Passage from the *Canticles*; because, it not only expresses the Sentiment of this Paragraph, but illustrates it by the very same Similitude. *She* (the Church) *is fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun*. Fair as the Moon, the lesser and changeable Light, in her *Sanctification*: Clear as the Sun, the greater and invariable Luminary, in her *Justification*. The inherent Holiness of Believers being imperfect, and subject to many Inequalities; while their imputed Obedience is every way complete, and constantly like itself. *Cant*. vi. 10.

O! how easily is the Purity of our Affections sullied, how soon the Fervor of our Gratitude cooled? And is there not something *amiss* even in our *best* Moments? Something to be *ashamed* of, in all we *are*; something to be *repented* of, in all we *do*?

W I T H what Gladness, therefore, and adoring Gratitude, should we “submit to the Righteousness of our incarnate G O D;” and *receive*, as a Divine Gift, what cannot be *acquired* by human *Works**! The Obedience of our glorious Surety is stiled by the Prophet, an *everlasting Righteousness* †. Such as was subject to no Interruption, nor obscured by the least Blemish, but proceeded in the same uniform Tenor of the most spotless Perfection.—This Righteousness, in another Sense, answers the *Prophet’s* noble *Description*; as its beneficial and sovereign Efficacy knows *no End*; but lasts through all our Life; lasts in the trying Hour of Death; lasts at the decisive Day of Judgment; lasts through every Generation; and will last to all Eternity.

S O M E T I M E S, I have seen that resplendent Globe *stript* of her *Radiance*; or, according to the emphatical Language of Scripture, “turned into Blood.” The *Earth*, interposing with
its

* Rom. v. 17.—x. 3. † Dan. ix. 24.

its opaque Body, intercepted the solar Rays, and cast its own gloomy *Shadow* on the Moon. The malignant Influence gained upon her sickening Orb; extinguished more and more the Remainers of Light; till at length, like one in a *deep Swoon*, no Comeliness was left in her Countenance; she was totally *overspread* with *Darkness*—At this Juncture, what a Multitude of Eyes were gazing upon the rueful Spectacle? Even of those Eyes, which disregarded the Empress of the Night; or beheld her with Indifference; when, *robed in Glory*, and riding in her triumphal Chariot, she shed a softer Day through the Nations. But now, under these *Circumstances of Disgrace*, they watch her Motions with the most *prying Attention*: in every Place, her Misfortune is the Object of general Observation; and the prevailing Topic of Discourse, in every Company.

Is it not thus with regard to *Persons of Distinction*, in their respective Spheres? *Kings*, at the Head of their Subjects; *Nobles*, surrounded with their Dependents; and (after Names of so much Grandeur, may I be allowed to add?) *Ministers*, in their Parishes*; are each in a conspicuous Station. Their Behaviour, in its *minutest Step*, especially in any *Miscarriage*, will be

* Ye are the Light of the World. A City that is set on an Hill cannot be hid. *Matth. v. 14.*

be narrowly surveyed, and critically scanned. Can there be a louder Call, to ponder the Paths of their Feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their Ways?—Those, that move in inferior Life, may grossly offend, and little Alarm be given, perhaps no Notice taken. But it is not to be expected, that the least Slip in their Conduct, the least Flaw in their Character, will pass undiscovered. *Malice*, with her *Eagle-Eyes*, will be sure to discern them; while *Censure*, with her *shrill Trumpet*, will be as far from concealing them, as *Calumny*, with her *treacherous Whispers*, from extenuating them. A Planet may sink below the Horizon; or a Star, for several Months, withdraw its shining; and scarce one in Ten thousand perceive the Loss. But if the Moon suffers a transient Eclipse, almost half the World are Spectators of her Dishonour.

VERY different was the Case, when, at this late Hour, I have taken a solitary Walk on the *Western Cliffs*. At the Foot of the steep Mountain, the *Sea*, all clear and smooth, spread itself into an immense Plain, and held a watery Mirror to the Skies. Infinite Heights above, the *Firmament* stretched its azure Expanse, bespangled with unnumbered Stars, and adorned with the Moon, “walking in Brightness*.” She seemed to contemplate herself with a peculiar Pleasure; while

while the *transparent Surface*, both received, and returned, her *Silver Image*. Here, instead of being covered with Sackcloth, she shone with double Lustre; or rather, with a Lustre multiplied in proportion to the *Number* of Beholders, and their various *Situations*.

SUCH, methinks, is the Effect of an *exemplary Behaviour* in Persons of exalted Rank. Their Course, as it is nobly *distinguished*, so it will be happily *influential*. Others will catch the diffusive Ray, and be ambitious to resemble a Pattern, so attracting, so commanding. Their amiable Qualities will not *terminate* in themselves, but we shall see them *reflected* from their Families, their Acquaintance, their Retainers. Just as we may now behold another Moon; trembling in the Stream; glittering in the Canal; and displaying its lovely Impres on every Collection of Waters.

THE Moon, Philosophy says, is a Sort of *Sovereign* over the *great Deep*. Her Orb, like a Royal Sceptre, sways the Ocean, and actuates the fluid Realms. It swells the Tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal Returns of Ebb and Flow. By which means, the liquid Element purges off its Filth; and is preserved from being *putrefied* itself, and from *poisoning* the World. — Is the Moon thus operative on the vast Abyss? And

shall not the *Faith* of *eternal* and *infinite Delights* to come, be equally efficacious on this Soul of mine? Far above her argent Fields, are Treasures of *Happiness*, unseen by mortal Eye; by mortal Ear unheard; and unconceived by any human Imagination. In that desirable World, the most distinguished *Honours* also are conferred; in Comparison with which, the Thrones and Diadems of earthly Monarchs are empty Pageants, and childish Toys. Yonder Arch of Sapphire, with all its Spangles of Gold, is but the *Floor* of those Divine Abodes. What then are the *Apartments*, what is the *Palace*? How bright with Glories, how rich with Blifs?

O! YE Mansions of Blessedness; ye Beauties of my Father's Kingdom; that far outshine these Lamps of the visible Heaven, transmit your sweet and winning Invitations to my Heart. *Attract* and *refine* all my Affections. With-hold them from *stagnating* on the sordid Shores of Flesh; never suffer them to *settle* upon the *Lees* of Sense; but impress them with *Emotions* of restless *Desire*, after sublime and celestial Joys.— Joys, that will proceed on in one *everlasting Flow*, when Seas shall cease to roll:— Joys, that will charm every Faculty with *unimaginable Pleasure*, when the Moon, with her waxing Splendors, shall chear our Sight no more.

ENOUGH

ENOUGH for the present Evening. My Thoughts have been sufficiently exercised, and my Steps begin to be attended with Weariness. Let me obey the Admonition of Nature; and give Respite to my Meditations, Slumber to my Eyes. — But stay. — Shall I retire to the Bed of Sleep, with as little Ceremony, and with as much Inattention, as the Brutes to their sordid Lair? Are no *Acknowledgements* due to that divine Being, who has been the Support of my Life, and the Length of my Days? Have I no farther Need of his *protecting* Care; no more Occasion for the Blessings of his Goodness? — *Lepidus*, perhaps, may laugh at the bended Knee, and have a thousand Darts of Railery, ready to be discharged on the Practice of Devotion. The Wits, I know, are unmercifully severe on, what they call, the *Drudgery* of Prayer, and the *fantastical Rant* of Praise. These they leave to the illiterate Labourer, and mean Mechanic; or treat them, with a contemptuous Sneer, as the Parson's ignoble Trade.

Is it then an Instance of *superstitious* Blindness, to distinguish, or of *whimsical* Zeal, to celebrate, the most supereminent Merit? Is it an *ungraceful* Business, or does it argue a *groveling* Disposition, to magnify Goodness transcendently rich and diffusive? Is it only for the *inferior*

Herd, to admire the most consummate Excellence; only for *pusillanimous* Creatures, to maintain an Affiance on almighty Power?—What can be so truly becoming a *dependent State*, as to pay our adoring Homage, to the Fountain of Perfection; and profess our devoted Allegiance, to the supreme Governor of the Universe? Can any Thing more significantly bespeak an *ingenuous Temper*, or administer a more real Satisfaction: to its finest Feelings, than the Exercises of penitential Piety; by which we give Vent to an honest Anguish, or melt into filial Sorrow, for our Insensibility to the best of Friends, for our Disobedience to the best of Parents?—In a Word; can there be a more *sublime Pleasure*, than to dwell, in fixed Contemplation, on the Beauties of the eternal Mind; the amiable Author of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent Giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and useful? Can there be a more *advantageous Employ*, than to present our Requests to the Father of Mercies; opening our Minds to the Irradiations of his Wisdom, and all the Faculties of our Souls to the Communications of his Grace?—'Tis strange, unaccountably strange, that the Notion of *Dignity* in Sentiment, and the Pursuit of *refined* Enjoyment, should ever be dis-united from *Devotion*. That Persons, who make Pretensions
to

to an improved Taste, and exalted Genius, should neglect this most ennobling Intercourse with the wisest and best of Beings; the inexhaustible Spring of Honour and Joy.

SHALL I be deterred, from approaching this Source of the purest Delight? Deterred, from pursuing this highest Improvement of my Nature? Deterred from all, by a formidable Banter; or confuted by one irrefragable Smile?—No; let the Moon, in her resplendent Sphere; and yonder Pole, with all its starry Train; witness, if I be silent Even or Morn. If I refrain to kindle in my Heart, and breathe from my Lips, the reasonable Incense of Praise. Praise to that great and glorious GOD, who formed the Earth, and built the Skies; who poured from his Hand the watery World, and breathed the all-surrounding Air abroad.—“ Thou also madest
“ the Night, Maker omnipotent! and Thou,
“ the Day! which I, though less than the least
“ of all thy Mercies, have passed in Safety,
“ Tranquillity, and Comfort.—When I was
“ lost in the Extravagance of Dreams, or lay
“ immersed in the Insensibility of Sleep; thy
“ Hand recovered me from the temporary Le-
“ thargy, and strung my *Limbs* with recruited
“ Vigour: thy Hand set a new, a delicately
“ fine Edge, on all my blunted *Senses*; and
“ awakened my *Thoughts*, when benumbed,

“ into Alacrity ; reduced them, when discon-
“ certed, into Order : re-fitting me, at once,
“ to discharge the Duties of my Station ; to re-
“ lish the innocent Entertainments of an *Ani-*
“ *mal*, and to enjoy the sublime Gratifications
“ of a *rational* Capacity.—When *Darkness*
“ covered the Face of the Creation, at thy
“ Command, the *Sun* arose, and darted its
“ Beams ; painted the Flowers, and distinguish-
“ ed every Object ; gave Light to my *Feet*,
“ gave Direction to my *Hands*, and gave Na-
“ ture, with all her beautiful Scenes, to my
“ *Eye*.—To Thee, O Thou GOD of my *Life*,
“ I owe the *Continuance* of my Being, and the
“ *Vivacity* of my Constitution. By thy sacred
“ Order, without any Consciousness of mine,
“ the Wheels of Nature move within me, and
“ the *vital Fountain* plays. *Impelled* by thy
“ *Power*, the crimson Current flows through
“ innumerable Channels ; and never once misses
“ its Way ; never once is interrupted in its
“ Course ; when a small Obstruction, might be
“ Disease ; or the Bursting of a single Artery,
“ Death. *Over-ruled* by thy exquisite *Skill*, it
“ transforms itself, by the nicest Operations of
“ an inexplicable Kind of Chemistry, into a
“ Variety of the finest Secretions ; which glide
“ into the Muscles, and swell them for Action ;
“ or pour themselves into the Fluids, and repair
“ their

“ their incessant Decays; which cause Chear-
 “ fulness to sparkle in the Eye, and Health to
 “ bloom in the Cheek.

“ *DISASTROUS Accidents*, injurious to
 “ the Peace of my Mind, or fatal to the Wel-
 “ fare of my Body, beset my Paths, in formi-
 “ dable Ambush. But thy Faithfulness, and
 “ Truth, like an impenetrable Shield, covered
 “ my Head, and guarded me all around. Un-
 “ der this divine Protection, I walked secure,
 “ amidst Legions of *apparent* Perils; and passed
 “ unhurt, through an unknown Multiplicity of
 “ *unseen* Evils. Not one of my Bones were broken;
 “ nor a single Shaft grazed upon my Ease; even
 “ when the Eye, that watched over me, saw,
 “ in its wide Survey, *thousands falling beside me*,
 “ in irrecoverable Ruin; *and ten thousands* deep-
 “ ly wounded by the Arrows, that flew *on my*
 “ *right Hand*.—If *Sickness* has, at any Time,
 “ visited my Chamber, or *Pain* harrowed my
 “ Flesh; it was a *wholesome* Discipline, and a
 “ *gracious* Severity. The Chastisement proved
 “ a sovereign Medicine, to cure me of an im-
 “ moderate Fondness, for this imperfect trouble-
 “ some State; and to quicken my Desires, after
 “ the un-imbittered Enjoyments of Eternity.—
 “ Has not thy Munificence, unwearied and un-
 “ bounded, spread my *Table*; and furnished it,
 “ with the finest Wheat; replenished it, with

“ *Marrow and Fatness?* While Temperance
 “ sweetened the Bowl; Appetite seasoned the
 “ Dish; Contentment and Gratitude crowned
 “ the Repast.—Has not thy Kindness, O GOD
 “ of the Families of *Israel*, preserved my af-
 “ fectionate *Relations*; who study, by their ten-
 “ der Offices, to soften every Care, and heigh-
 “ ten every Joy? And given me valuable
 “ *Friends*, whose Presence is a Cordial, to cheer
 “ me in a dejected Hour; and whose Conver-
 “ sation mingles Improvement with Delight?

“ WHEN *Sin* lay lurking amidst flowery
 “ Scenes of Pleasure, enlightened by thy *Wis-*
 “ *dom*, I *discerned* the latent Mischief; made
 “ resolute by thy *Grace*, I *shunned* the luf-
 “ cious Bane. If, through the Impulse of Sen-
 “ suality, or the Violence of Passion, I have
 “ been hurried into the Snare, and stung by
 “ the Serpent; thy faithful *Admonitions* have
 “ *recalled* the foolish Wanderer, while the *Blood*
 “ of thy Son has *healed* his deadly Wounds,
 “ Some, perhaps, have been cut off in the
 “ midst of their Iniquities; and, to their in-
 “ expressible Astonishment, transmitted from the
 “ Thrillings of polluted Joy, to the Agonies of
 “ eternal Despair: whereas, I have been dis-
 “ tinguished by long-suffering Mercy; and, in-
 “ stead of lifting up my Eyes, in Torments, to
 “ behold a Heaven irrecoverably lost; I may
 “ lift

“ lift them up under the pleasing Views of
“ being admitted, e’er long, into those Abodes
“ of unutterable Felicity.—In the mean Time,
“ Thou hast vouchsafed me the *Revelation* of
“ thy Will; the Influences of thy *Spirit*; and
“ Abundance of the most effectual *Aids*, for
“ advancing in Knowledge, and growing in God-
“ liness; for becoming more conformable to thy
“ Image, and more meet for thy Presence; for
“ tasting the sacred Pleasures of Religion, and
“ securing the unsearchable Riches of Heaven.

“ How various is thy Beneficence, O Thou
“ Lover of Souls! It has unsealed a thousand
“ Sources of Good; opened a thousand Ave-
“ nues of Delight; and heaped Blessings upon
“ me with a ceaseless Liberality. If I should at-
“ tempt to declare them; they would be more
“ than the *Stars*, which glitter in this unclouded
“ Sky; more than the *dewy Gems*, which will
“ adorn the Face of the Morning.

“ And shall I *forget* the GOD of my Salva-
“ tion, the Author of all my Mercies? Rather
“ let my Pulse forget to beat?—Shall I render
“ Him *no Expressions* of Thankfulness? Then
“ might all Nature reproach my Ingratitude.—
“ Shall I rest satisfied with the *bare Acknow-*
“ *ledgement* of my Lips? No: let my *Life* be
“ *vocal*, and speak his Praise, in that only ge-

“ nuine, that most emphatical Language—the
 “ Language of devout Obedience. Let the *Bill*
 “ be drawn upon my very Heart; let all my
 “ Affections *acknowledge* the Draught; and let
 “ the whole Tenour of my Actions, in Time
 “ and through Eternity, be continually *paying*
 “ the Debt—the mighty Debt of Duty, Ve-
 “ neration, and Love.

“ AND can I, O Thou Upholder of my Go-
 “ ings, and Lifter up of my Head—can I *dis-*
 “ *trust* such signal, such experienced Goodness?
 “ *Thou hast been my Helper*, through all the
 “ busy Scenes of Day; *therefore under the*
 “ *Shadow of thy Wings* will I repose myself,
 “ during the Darkness, the Danger, and Death-
 “ like Inactivity of the Night. Whatever De-
 “ filement I have contracted, wash it thorough-
 “ ly away, in redeeming Blood; and let nei-
 “ ther the sinful Stain, nor the sinful Inclina-
 “ tion, accompany me to my Couch!—Then,
 “ shall *I lay me down in Peace*, and take my
 “ *Rest*; chearfully referring it to thy all-wise
 “ Determination, whether I shall open my Eyes
 “ in *this World*, or awake in the unknown Re-
 “ gions of *another*.

The E N D.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

*There dwells a noble Pathos in the Skies,
Which warms our Passions, proselytes our Hearts;
How eloquently shines the glowing Pole?
With what Authority it gives its Charge,
Remonstrating great Truths in Style sublime!*
Night Thoughts, N^o. 9.

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CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

THIS Evening, I exchange the nice Retreats of *Art*, for the noble Theatre of *Nature*. Instead of *measuring* my Steps under the *Covert* of an Arbour, let me *range* along the *Summit* of this gently rising Hill.— There is no Need of the leafy Shade, since the Sun has quitted the *Horizon*, and withdrawn his scorching Beams. But see, how Advantages and Inconveniencies are usually linked, and checker our Affairs below! If the *annoying Heat* ceases, the *Landschape* and its *pleasing* Scenes are also removed.—The majestic *Castle*, and the lowly *Cottage*, are vanished together. I have lost the aspiring *Mountain*, and its ruffet Brow;
I

I look round, but to no purpose, for the humble *Vale*, and its flowery Lap. The *Plains*, whitened with Flocks, and the *Heath*, yellow with Furze, disappear. The advancing Night has wrapt in Darkness the long-extended *Forest*, and drawn her Mantle over the Windings of the Silver *Stream*. I no longer behold that luxuriant Fertility in the Fields; that wild Magnificence of Prospect, and endless Variety of Images; which have so often touched me with *Delight*, and struck me with *Awe*, from this commanding Eminence.

THE Loss, however, is scarce to be regretted, since it is amply compensated by the opening Beauties of the Sky. Here I enjoy a free View of the whole Hemisphere; without any Obstacle from below, to confine the exploring Eye; or any Cloud from above, to overcast the spacious Concave. 'Tis true, the lively *Vermillion*, which so lately streaked the Chambers of the West, is all faded: But the *Planets*, one after another, light up their Lamps; the *Stars* advance in their glittering Train; a Thousand and a Thousand Luminaries shine forth in successive Splendors; and the whole *Firmament* is kindling into the most beautiful *Glow*. The *Blueness* of the *Æther*, heightened by the Season of the Year, and still more enlivened by the *Absence* of the *Moon*, gives those Gems of Heaven the strongest Lustre.

ONE Pleasure more, the invading Gloom has not been able to snatch, from my Sense. The Night rather improves, than destroys, the Fragrance which exhales from the *blooming Beans*. With these the Sides of this sloping Declivity are lined, and with these the balmy Zephyrs perfume their Wings. Does *Arabia*, from all her spicy Groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming Gale of *Sweets*? And, what is a peculiar Recommendation of the rural Entertainments, presented in our happy Land, they are alloyed by no Apprehensions of Danger. No *poisonous Serpent* lurks under the Blossom, nor any *ravenous Beast* lies ready to start from the Thicket.—But I wander from a far more exalted Subject. My Thoughts, like my Affections, are too easily diverted from the Heavens, and detained by inferior Objects. Away, my Attention, from these little *Blandishments* of the *Earth*, since all the *Glories* of the *Sky* invite thy Regard.

WE have taken a Turn among the *Tombs*, and viewed the solemn Memorials of the Dead; in order to learn the Vanity of mortal Things, and to break their soft Enchantment.—We have surveyed the *Ornaments* of the *Garden*; not that the Heart might be planted in the Parterre, or take Root among the flowery Race; but that
these

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these Delicacies of a Day might teach us to aspire after a better Paradise, where Beauty never fades, and Delight is ever in the Bloom*.—

A Third time we lighted the Candle of Meditation; and fought for Wisdom, not in the crouded City, or wrangling Schools, but in the silent and lonely *Walks* of antient *Night**.—

Let us once more indulge the contemplative Vein, and raise our Speculations to those *sublimar Works* of the great Creator, which the *Regions* of the *Sky* contain, and this dusky Hour unveils †.

IF we have discerned the *Touches* of his *Pencil*, glowing in the Colours of Spring; if we have seen a *Sample* of his *Beneficence*, exhibited in the Stores of Nature; and a *Ray* of his *Brightness*, beaming in the Blaze of Day; O! what an infinitely richer Field for the *Display* of his *Perfections*, are the Heavens. The *Heavens*, in the most emphatical Manner, declare the Glory of GOD. The Heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the most *magnificent*
Heralds

* * * Alluding to the several Subjects of the Three preceding Essays.

† Night opes the *noblest Scenes*, and sheds an Awe, Which gives those venerable Scenes full Weight, And deep Reception in th' entender'd Heart.

Night Thoughts, N^o. 9.

Heralds of their Maker's Praise. They speak to the whole Universe; for there is neither *Speech* so barbarous, but their Language is understood; nor *Nation* so distant, but their Voices are heard among them*.——Let me then, while Multitudes are buried in Sleep, listen to their silent Lectures. Perhaps, I may receive such impressive Manifestations of “the eternal Power and “Godhead,” as may shed Religion on my Soul, while I walk the solitary Shades; and may be a tutelary Friend to my Virtue, when the Call of Business, and the Return of Light, expose me again to the Inroads of Temptation.

THE *Israelites*, instigated by *Phrensy*, rather than *Devotion*, worshipped the Host of Heaven. And the Pretenders to *Judicial Astrology* talk of, I know not what, mysterious Efficacy in the different *Aspect* of the Stars, or the various *Conjunction* and *Opposition* of the Planets.——Let those, who are unacquainted with the sure Word of Revelation, give ear to these *Sons of Delusion*, and *Dealers in Deceit*: For my Part, it is Matter of Indifference to me, whether the Constellations shone with *Smiles*, or loured in *Frowns*, on the Hour of my Nativity. Let CHRIST be my *Guard*; and, secure in such a Protection, I would laugh at their impotent Menaces. Let
CHRIST

* Psa. xix. 3.

CHRIST be my *Guide* ; and I shall scorn to ask, as well as despair of receiving, any predictive Information from such lifeless Masses.— What ! shall “ the Living seek to the Dead* ? ” Can these Bodies advertise me of *future Events*, which are unconscious of their *own Existence* ? Shall I have Recourse to unintelligent stupid Matter, when I may apply to that *all-wise Being*, who ; with one comprehensive Glance, distinctly views whatever is lodged in the *Bosom* of *Immensity*, or forming in the *Womb* of *Futurity* ? — Never will I search for any *Intimations* of my *Fate*, but often trace my *Creator’s Footsteps*, † in
yonder

* Isa. viii. 19.

† “ It is most becoming, (says a great Author) “ such imperfect Creatures as we are, to contemplate the Works of GOD with *this* Design, that “ we may discern the Manifestations of Wisdom “ in them ; and thereby excite in ourselves those “ devout Affections, and that superlative Respect, “ which is the very Essence of Praise, as it is a reasonable and moral Service.—*Abernethy on the Attributes*.—And, indeed, if we are sincerely disposed to employ ourselves in this excellent, this comprehensive Duty, of *praising* the infinite Creator ; the *Means*, and the *Motives*, are both at Hand. His *Works*, in a wonderful and instructive Variety, present themselves, with *pregnant* Manifestations of the most *transcendent* Excellencies of their Maker. They pour their Evidence from all Quarters, and into all the Avenues of the Mind. They invite us, especially in the magnificent System of the Universe,
to

yonder starry Plains. In the former Case, they would be *Teachers of Lyes*; in the latter, they are *Oracles of Truth*. In this therefore, this Sense only, I profess myself the Pupil of the Stars.

THE *Vulgar* are apprehensive of nothing more than a Multitude of *bright Spangles*, dropt over the *æthereal Blue*. They have no higher Notion of these fine Appearances, than that they are so many *golden Studs*, with which the Empyrean Arch is decorated.—But *studious Minds*, that carry a more accurate and strict Inquiry among the celestial Bodies, bring back Advices of a most astonishing Import. Let me just recollect the most material of these *stupendous Discoveries*, in order to furnish out proper Subjects for our Contemplation. And let the *Unlearned* remember, That the Scene I am going to display, is the Workmanship of that incomprehensible GOD, who is “perfect in Knowledge, and mighty in Power:” Whose Name, whose Nature, and all whose Operations, are “great and marvelous:” Who summons into Being, with equal

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I

Ease,

to contemplate—*Counsel* consummately wise, and *Execution* inimitably perfect:—*Power* to which nothing is impossible, and *Goodness* which extendeth to All, which endureth for ever.—To give, not a full Display, but only some *slight Strictures* of these glorious Truths, is the *principal Scope* of the following Remarks.

Ease, a *single Grain*, or *Ten thousand Worlds*.—
To this if we continually advert, the Assertions,
though they will certainly excite our *Admiration*,
need not transcend our *Belief*.

THE *Earth*, is, in Fact, a *round Body*;
however it may seem, in some Parts to be sunk
into *Vales*, and raised into *Hills* *; in other
Parts, to be spread into a spacious *Plain*, ex-
tending to the Confines of the Heavens, or ter-
minated by the Waters of the Ocean.—We
may fancy, that it has deep *Foundations*, and
rests upon some prodigiously solid Basis: But it is
pendent, in the wide transpicious *Æther*; with-
out any *visible Cause*, to uphold it from above,
or support it from beneath.—It may seem to be
sedentary in its Attitude, and *motionless* in its
Situation :

* A learned Writer, I think, Dr. *Derham*, has
somewhere an Observation to this Purpose.—That
the loftiest *Summits* of Hills, and the most enormous
Ridges of Mountains, are no real Objection to the
globular Form of the Earth. Because, however they
may render it, to our *limited* Sight, vastly uneven
and protuberant; yet, they bear no more Proportion
to the *entire Surface* of the terraqueous Ball, than a
Particle of Dust, casually dropt on the Mathematician's
Globe, bears to its whole Circumference. Conse-
quently, the rotund Figure is no more destroyed in
the one Case, than in the other.—On the same Prin-
ciple, I have not thought it necessary to take any
Notice of the comparatively small Difference, be-
tween the *Polar* and *Equatorial* Diameter of the
Earth.

Situation : but it is continually *sailing* * through the Depths of the Sky ; and, in the Space of twelve Months, finishes the mighty *Voyage*. Which periodical Rotation, produces the Seasons, and completes the Year.—As it proceeds in the annual Circuit, it *spins* upon its *own Centre* ; and turns its Sides, alternately, to the great Fountain of Light. By which Means, the *Day* dawns in one Hemisphere ; while the *Night* succeeds in the other. Without this Expedient, the one half of its Regions would be scorched with excessive Heat, or languish under an un-intermitted Glare ; while the other would be frozen to Ice, and buried in perpetual Darkness.

I cannot forbear taking Notice, that, in this compound Motion of the Earth, the one in no wise *interferes* with the other, but both are entirely *compatible*.—It is not thus, with the *Precepts* of Religion, and the needful *Affairs* of the present Life ; not excepting even the innocent *Gratifications* of our Appetites?—Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they must *renounce* Society, if they *devote* themselves to CHRIST ; and abandon all the Satisfaction of

I 2

this

* With what amazing *Speed*, this Vessel (if I may carry on the Allusion) filled with a Multitude of Nations, and freighted with all their Possessions, makes her Way thro' the *Ætherial* Space ; See page 148, in Note

this World, if they once become zealous Candidates for the Felicity of *another*.—But this is a very mistaken Notion, or else a very injurious Representation, of the Doctrine which is according to Godliness. It was never intended to drive Men into Desarts; but to lead them, through the peaceful and pleasant Paths of Wisdom, into the blissful Regions of Life eternal. It was never intended to strike off the Wheels of *Business*, or cut in sunder the Sinews of *Industry*; but rather, to make Men industrious from a Principle of *Conscience*, not from the Instigations of *Avarice*; that so, they may promote their *immortal* Happiness, even while they provide for their *temporal* Maintenance. It has no Design to extirpate our Passions, but only to restrain their Irregularities; neither would it damp the Delights of Sense, but prevent them from evaporating into Vanity, and subsiding into Gall.—A Person may be chearful among his Friends, and yet joyful in G O D. He may taste the Sweets of his earthly Estate, and, at the same time, cherish his Hopes of a nobler Inheritance in Heaven. The *Trader* may prosecute the Demands of Commerce, without neglecting to negotiate the Affairs of his Salvation. The *Warrior* may wear his Sword, may draw, in a just Cause, that murtherous Weapon; and yet be a good Soldier of J E S U S C H R I S T, and obtain

tain the Crown that fadeth not away. The *Parent* may lay up a competent Portion for his Children, and not forfeit his Title to the Treasures, either of Grace, or Glory.—So far is Christianity from *obstructing* any valuable *Interest*, or *with-holding* any real *Pleasure*; that it evidently advances the one, and improves the other. Just as the *diurnal* and *annual* Motions are so far from *clashing*, that they perfectly *accord*; and, instead of being destructive of each other, by mutually blending their Effects, they give Proportion and Harmony to Time, Fertility and innumerable Benefits to Nature.

To Us, that dwell on its Surface, the Earth is by far the *most extensive* Orb, that our Eyes can, any where, behold. It is also cloathed with Verdure; *distinguished* by Trees; and adorned with a Variety of beautiful Decorations. Whereas, to a Spectator placed on one of the Planets, it wears an *uniform* Aspect; looks all luminous, and *no larger* than a Spot. To Beings, who dwell at still greater Distances, it entirely *disappears*.—That which we call alternately the Morning or the Evening Star; as, in one part of her Orbit, she rides foremost in the Procession of the Night; and, in the other, ushers in and anticipates the Dawn, is a *planetary World*. Which, with the four others, that so wonder-

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fully

fully vary their mystick Dance, are in themselves *dark Bodies*, and shine only by *Reflection*: have *Fields*, and *Seas*, and *Skies* of their own: are furnished with all Accommodations for *animal* Subsistence, and are supposed to be the Abodes of *intellectual* Life. All which, together with this our earthly Habitation, are *dependent* on that grand Dispenser of divine Munificence, the Sun; receive their *Light* from the Distribution of his *Rays*, and derive their *Comforts* from his benign *Agency*.

THE *Sun*, they say, that seems to perform its daily Stages through the Sky, is, in this respect *, *fixed* and immoveable. 'Tis the great Axle of Heaven, about which the Globe we inhabit, and other more spacious Orbs, wheel their stated Courses.—The Sun, they add, though seemingly *smaller* than the *Dial* it illuminates, is abundantly *larger* † than this whole *Earth*; on which so many lofty Mountains rise, and such vast Oceans roll. A *Line*, extending from Side to Side, through the Centre of that resplendent Orb, would measure more than
Eight

* I say, *in this respect*, that I may not seem to forget, or exclude, the Revolution of the Sun round its own Axis.

† A hundred thousand times, according to the *lowest* Reckoning. Sir *Isaac Newton* computes the Sun to be 900,000 times bigger than the Earth, *Religious Philosopher* p. 749.

Eight hundred thousand Miles; a *Girdle*, formed to go round its Circumference, would require a Length of Millions; and were its *solid Contents* to be computed, the Account would even confound our Understanding, and be almost beyond the Power of Language to express*.—Are we startled at these Reports of Philosophy? Are we ready to cry out, in a Transport of Surprize; How *mighty* is the *Being*, who *kindled* such a prodigious Fire; and *keeps alive*, from Age to Age, such an enormous Mass of Flame?—Let us attend our philosophic Guides, and we shall be brought acquainted with Speculations, incomparably more enlarged and amazing.

THIS Sun, with all its attendant Planets, is but a very little Part of the grand Machine of the Universe. Every *Star*, though, in Appearance, no bigger than the *Diamond* that glitters upon a Lady's Ring; is really a *vast Globe*, like the Sun in Size and in Glory; no less spacious, no less luminous, than the radiant Source of our Day. So that every Star, is not barely a World,

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but

† Dr. *Derham*, after having calculated the Dimensions of the Planets, adds, “Amazing as these
“ Masses are, they are all far outdone by that stupendous
“ Globe of Light the Sun; which, as it is
“ the Fountain of Light and Heat, to all the Planets
“ about it, so doth it far surpass them all in its
“ Bulk: Its apparent Diameter being computed at
“ 822,148 *English* Miles, its Orbit at 2,582,873
“ Miles, and its solid Content at 290,971,000,000,
“ 000,000.” *Astro-Theol.* Book I. Chap. II.

but the *Centre* of a magnificent *System* ; has a Retinue of Worlds irradiated by its Beams, and revolving round its attractive Influence. All which are lost, to our Sight, in unmeasurable Tracts of *Æther*.—That the Stars appear like so many diminutive and scarce distinguishable *Points*, is owing to their immense and inconceivable *Distance*. Immense and inconceivable indeed it is, since a *Ball*, shot from the loaded *Cannon*, and flying with unabated Rapidity, must travel, at this impetuous Rate, almost *Seven hundred thousand Years* *, before it could reach the nearest of those twinkling Luminaries.

CAN any Thing be more wonderful than these Observations? Yes: There are *Truths* far more *stupendous* ; there are *Scenes* far more *unbounded*. As there is no End of the Almighty Maker's Greatness, so no Imagination can set Limits to his creating Hand.—Could you soar beyond the Moon, and pass through all the planetary Choir ; could you wing your Way to the highest apparent Star, and take your Stand on one of those loftiest Pinacles of Heaven ; you would there see *other Skies* expanded ; *other Suns*, that distribute their inexhaustible Beams by Day ; *other Stars*, that gild the Horrors of the alternate Night : and *other* †, perhaps nobler *Systems*,
 established

* See *Religious Philosopher*, p. 819.—Where the exact Computation is 691, 600 Years.

† See *Astro-Theology*, Book II. Chap. II.—Where the Author, having assigned various Reasons

established; established in unknown Profusion, through the boundless Dimensions of Space.— Nor does the Dominion of the great Sovereign terminate *there*. Even at the End of this vast *Tour*, you would find yourself advanced no farther than the *Frontiers* of Creation; arrived only at the *Suburbs* of the great JEHOVAH's Kingdom*.

ARE we struck with Amazement, at this little *Sketch* of a very little *Part* of his Works? How then must we be lost in Wonder, at the Consideration

to support this Theory of our *modern Astronomers*, adds— “ Besides (the fore-mentioned) strong Probabilities, we have this farther Recommendation of such an Account of the Universe, that it is far more magnificent, and *worthy* of the infinite *Creator*, than any other of the narrower Schemes.”

* *Job*, after a most sublime Dissertation on the mighty Works of GOD; as they are scattered through universal Nature, from the Heights of Heaven, to the very Depths of Hell; closes the magnificent Account, with this noble Acknowledgement; *Lo! these are Parts of his Ways*. Or, as the original Word more literally signifies, and may, I think, be more elegantly rendered, These are only *the Skirts*, the *very outermost Borders* of his Works. No more than a small Preface to the immense Volume of the Creation.—From the *Hebrew*—קצות *Extremities*—I cannot forbear thinking on, the *extreme* and very attenuated *Fibres* of the Root, when compared with the whole Substance of the *Trunk*; or on the *exquisitely small* Size of the *capillary Vessels*, when compared with the whole Structure of the Body. *Job*. xxvi. 14.

sideration of the *CREATOR* himself? Who is so *high*, that He looks down on the highest of these dazzling Spheres, and sees even the *Summit* of Creation in a *Vale*; so *great*, that this prodigious *Extent* of Space is but a *Point* in his Presence, and all this *Confluence* of *Worlds* as the *lightest Atom*, that fluctuates in Air, and disports in the meridian Ray*.

O!

* This puts me in mind of a very fine Remark on a *scriptural Beauty*, and a solid *Correction* of the common *Translation*, made by that learned, sagacious, and devout Expositor *Vitringa*.—Isa. xl. 15. We find it written of the supreme Being, That *he taketh up the Isles as a very little Thing*. Which, our Critic observes, is neither answerable to the Import of the Original, nor consonant to the Structure of the Discourse. The Prophet had no Intention to inform Mankind, what the Almighty *could do*, with regard to the Islands, if he pleased to exert his Power: But his Design was to shew, how insignificant, or rather what mere Nothings *they are*, in his Esteem, and before his Majesty.——The Islands, says he, though so *spacious*, as to afford Room for the Erection of Kingdoms, and the Abode of Nations; though so *strong*, as to withstand, for many Thousands of Years, the raging and reiterated Assaults of the whole watery World; are yet, before the adored JEHOVAH, *small* as the minutest Grain, which the Eye can scarce discern; *light* as the feathered Mote, which the least Breath hurries away like a Tempest.—אִיִּם כְּדָק יִטּוֹל *Insulæ sunt ut leve quid, quod avolat*. The deep-rooted Islands are as the volatile Atom, which, by the gentlest Undulations of the Air, is waisted to and fro in perpetual Agitation.

O! THOU sublime and incomprehensibly glorious GOD, how am I overwhelmed with Awe, and sunk into the lowest Prostrations of Mind ; when I consider thy “ *excellent Greatness,*” together with my own *Littleness* and *Insignificance* !—But how much more Reason have I to be even confounded at the Remembrance, that, *excessively mean* as I am, I should ever entertain one *conceited Apprehension* of myself ; should feel the least Elatement of Thought, in the Presence of so majestic and adorable a Being.—Were I possessed of all the *high Perfections*, that accomplish and adorn the *Angels of Light* ; yet, amidst all these noble Endowments, I would fall down in the *deepest Abasement* at thy Feet. Lost in the infinitely superior Blaze of thy uncreated Glories, I would even then be annihilated in thy Presence.—How much more ought I to maintain the most unfeigned Humiliation before thy Divine Majesty, who am not only *Dust* and *Ashes*, but a Compound of *Imperfection* and *Depravity* !

WHILE, beholding this vast Expanse, I learn that I am myself as Nothing ; I would also discover the abject *Littleness*, which is in all *terrestrial Things*.—What is the *Earth*, with all her ostentatious Scenes, compared with this astonishing Furniture of the Skies ? What, but a dim *Speck*, hardly perceivable in the *Map* of the
Universe ?

Universe? It is observed by a very judicious Writer *, That if the *Sun* himself, which enlightens this Part of the Creation, was extinguished; and all the Host of *planetary Worlds*, that move about Him, were annihilated; they would not be missed, by an Eye that can take in the whole Compass of Nature, any more than a *Grain of Sand* upon the Sea-shore. The Bulk of which they consist, and the Space which they occupy, is so exceedingly little in comparison of the Whole; that their *Loss* would scarce leave a *Blank*, in the Immensity of GOD's Works.— If then, not our Globe only, but this whole System, be so very diminutive; what is a Kingdom, or a County? What are a few *Lordships*, or the so-much admired *Patrimonies* of those, who are stiled *Wealthy**? When I measure them with my own little Pittance, they swell into enormous Dimensions. But when I take the boundless Universe for my Standard, how scanty is their Size, how contemptible their Figure? They shrink into proud and *pompous Nothings* †.

WHEN the keen-eyed *Eagle* soars above all the feathered Race, and leaves their very Sight
below;

* Spect. Vol. VIII. No. 565.

* *Juvat inter sydera vagantem divitum pavimenta ridere, & totam cum auro suo terram.* — Seneca.

† *Terrellæ grandia inania.* — Watt's *Hor. Lyr.*

below ; when she winds her towering Way up the Steep of Heaven, and, steadily gazing on the meridian Sun, accounts its *beaming Splendors* all *her own* : Does she then regard, with any Solicitude, the *Mote* that is flying in the Air, or the *Dust* which she shook from her Feet ? And shall this eternal Mind of mine, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's Glory ; which is intended to enjoy the Visions of his Countenance ; shall this *eternal Mind*, endued with such *great Capacities*, and made for such *exalted Ends*, be so *ignobly ambitious*, as to sigh for the Tinsel of State ; or so *poorly covetous*, as to grasp after ample Territories on a Needle's Point ? — O ! no : While such my Considerations, I feel my Sentiments expand, and my Wishes acquire a Turn of Sublimity. Such *vast Surveys* affimilate the Soul, and make her *truly great*. My throbbing Desires after worldly Grandeur, die away ; and I find myself, if not possessed of Power, yet superior to its Charms. — Too long, must I own, have my Affections been *pinioned* by Vanity, and *immured* in this earthly Clod. But these Thoughts break the *Shackles* * : These Objects open the
Door

* The Soul of Man was made to walk the Skies,
Delightful Outlet of her Prison here !
There, disincumber'd from her Chains, the Ties
Of Toys terrestrial, she can rove at large ;
There

Door of *Liberty*: My Heart, fired by such noble Prospects, weighs Anchor from this *little Nook*, and coasts no longer about its contracted Shores; dotes no longer on its painted Shells. The *Immensisty* of *Things* is her Range, and an *Infinity* of *Bliss* is her Aim.

BEHOLD this immense Expanse, and admire the *Condescension* of thy GOD.—In this manner, an *inspired* and *princely* Astronomer improved his Survey of the nocturnal Heavens. *When I consider thy Heavens, even the Works of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which thou hast ordained;* I am smitten with Wonder at thy Glory, and cry out in a Transport of Gratitude, *L O R D, what is Man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man, that Thou visitest him*?*

“ How amazing, how charming, is that Divine
 “ Grace, which is pleased to bow down its *sa-*
 “ *cred Regards*, to so foolish and *worthless* a
 “ *Creature!* Yea, disdains not, from the *Height*
 “ of infinite Exaltation, to extend its kind pro-
 “ vidential Care, to our most *minute* Concerns!
 “ —But, that the everlasting Sovereign should
 “ give

There freely can respire, dilate, extend,
 In full Proportion let loose all her Powers.

Night Thoughts, No. 9.

* Pſal. viii. 3. 4.

“ give his Son, to be our incarnate Saviour ;
“ what a Miracle is this of condescending Good-
“ nefs? Or rather, What are all *Miracles*, what
“ are all *Mysteries*, to this *ineffable Gift* ?”

HAD the *highest Archangel* been commissioned to come down, with the *Olive-Branch of Peace* in his Hand, and to signify his eternal Maker's Readiness to be reconciled ; on our bended Knees, with Tears of Joy, and a Torrent of Thankfulness, we ought to have received the transporting News. But when, instead of such an angelic Envoy, He sends His *only-begotten Son*, his Son beyond all Thought illustrious, to make us the gracious Overture ;—sends Him from the “ Habitation of his Holiness and Glory,” to put on all the innocent *Infirmities of Mortality*, and dwell in a Tabernacle of Clay ;—sends Him, not barely to make us a *transient Visit*, but to abide *many Years* in our inferior and miserable World ;—sends Him, not to exercise Dominion over Monarchs, but to wear out his *Life* in the ignoble *Form* of a *Servant* ; and, at last, to make his *Exit* under the infamous *Character* of a *Malefactor* ! Was ever Love like this ? Did ever Grace stoop so low * ?—Should the

* This reminds me of a very noble Piece of sacred Oratory, where, in a fine Series of the most beautiful Gradations, the Apostle displays the admirably

the Sun be shorn of all his *radiant Honours*, and degraded into a *Clod* of the *Vallies*; should all the Dignitaries of Heaven be deposed from their *Thrones*, and degenerate into *Insects* of a Day; *great, great* would be the Abasement. But *nothing*

rably condescending Kindness of our Saviour.—*He thought it no Robbery*, it was his indisputable Right, *to be equal with* the infinite, self-existent, immortal *G O D*.—*Yet*, in Mercy to Sinners, *He emptied Himself* of the incommunicable Honours, and laid aside the Robes of incomprehensible Glory.—When He entered upon His mediatorial State, instead of acting in the grand Capacity of universal Sovereign, *He took upon Him the Form of a Servant*. And not the Form of those ministring Spirits, whose Duty is Dignity itself; who are throned, though adoring.—He took not on Him the Nature of Angels, but stooped incomparably lower. Assumed a Body of animated Dust, *and was made in the Likeness of Men*; those inferior and depraved Creatures.—Astonishing Condescension! but not sufficient for the over-flowing Richness of the Redeemer's Love. For, *being found in Fashion as a Man*. *He humbled Himself* farther still. Occupied the lowest Place, where all was low and ignoble. He not only submitted to the Yoke of the Divine Law, but also bore the Infirmities, and ministred to the Necessities of Mortals. He even washed the Feet of others, and had not where to lay His own Head.—*Yea*, He carried His meritorious Humiliation to the very deepest Degrees of possible Abasement. *He became obedient unto Death*.—And not to a common or natural Death, but a Death more infamous than the Gibbet, more torturous than the Rack—*even the accursed Death of the Cross*. Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

thing to Thine, most blessed JESUS; *nothing* to Thine, thou Prince of Peace; when for us Men, and for our Salvation, Thou didst not abhor the coarse Accommodations of the *Manger*, Thou didst not decline even the gloomy Horrors of the *Grave*.

'TIS well, the sacred Oracles have given this Doctrine the most reiterated and incontestable Evidence. Otherwise, so *prodigious* a *Favour* must stagger our Belief.—Could HE, who *launches* all these planetary Globes through the *illimitable* Void, and leads them on, from Age to Age, in their extensive Career; could He resign his Hands to be *confined* by the girding *Cord*, and his Back to be *ploughed* by the bloody *Scourge*?—Could HE, who crowns all the Stars with *inextinguishable* *Brightness*, be Himself defiled with *Spitting*, and disfigured with the *thorny Scar*? It is the greatest of *Wonders*, and yet the surest of *Truths*.

O! YE mighty Orbs, that roll along the Spaces of the Sky, I wondered, a little while ago, at your vast Dimensions, and ample Circuits. But now my Amazement ceases; or rather, is intirely swallowed up by a much more stupendous Subject. Methinks, your *enormous* *Bulk* is shrivelled to an *Atom*; your *prodigious* *Revolutions* are contracted to a *Span*; while I muse upon the far more elevated *Heights* and

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unfathomable *Depths*; the infinitely more extended *Lengths*, and unlimited *Breadths*, of this *Love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS**

WHILE I behold this vast Expanse, I see a Mirror, that represents, in the most awful Colours, the Greatness of the Creator's Glory, and the *Heinousness* of human Guilt.—*Ten thousand Volumes*; wrote on purpose, to display the Aggravations of my various Acts of Disobedience; could not so effectually convince me of their inconceivable Enormity, as the Consideration of that *all-glorious Person* †; who, to make an Atonement for them, spilt the *last Drop* of his *Blood*.—*I have sinned*, may every Child of Adam say, *and what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Observer of Men* ||? Shall I give my First-born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul? Vain Commutation! and such as would be rejected by the blessed GOD, with
the

* Eph. iii. 18, 19.

† *Quò quisque altiùs ascendit in agnitione CHRISTI, eò profundius peccati atrocitatem cognoscet.*

|| Job vii. 20. Not *Preserver*, as it stands in our Version, but *Observer of Men*. Which Phrase, as it expresses the strict and incessant *Inspection* of the divine Eye; as it intimates the absolute Impossibility, that any Transgression should *escape* the divine Notice; is evidently most proper, both to assign the *Reason*, and heighten the *Emphasis*, of the Context.

the utmost Abhorrence.—Will all the *Potentes*, that sway the Sceptre in a Thousand Kingdoms, *devote* their sacred and honoured *Lives*, to rescue an obnoxious Creature from the Stroke of Vengeance? Alas! it must cost more, vastly more, to expiate the Malignity of Sin, and save a guilty Wretch from Hell.—Will all the *Principalities* of *Heaven* be content to assume my Nature, and *resign* themselves to *Death* for my Pardon*? Even this would be too mean a

K 2 Satisfaction

* *Milton* sets this Thought in a very poetical and striking Light.—All the Sanctities of Heaven stand round the Throne of the supreme Majesty. *God* foresees and foretels the *Fall of Man*; the *Ruin*, which will unavoidably ensue on his Transgression; and the utter *Impossibility*, of his being ever able to *extricate himself* from the *Abyss of Misery*.

He, with his whole Posterity, must die;
Die He, or Justice must; unless for Him
Some Other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid Satisfaction, Death for Death.

After which affecting Representation, intended to raise the most tender Emotions of Pity, the following Inquiry is addressed to all the surrounding Angels;

Say, heav'nly Pow'rs, where shall we find such
Love?
Which of you will be mortal, to redeem

Man's

Satisfaction for inexorable Justice, too scanty a Reparation of G O D's injured Honour. So flagrant is human Guilt, that nothing, but a *Victim of infinite Dignity*, could constitute an adequate Propitiation.—*He* who said, “Let there be “Light, and there was Light;” Let there be a Firmament, and immediately the blue Curtains floated in the Sky; *He* must take Flesh; *HE* must feel the fierce Torments of Crucifixion; and pour out his Soul in Agonies, if ever such Transgressors are pardoned.

How *vast* is that *Debt*, which all the Wealth of both the *Indies* cannot discharge! How *vitiated*

Man's mortal Crime? and die, the Dead to save?

He ask'd; but all the heav'nly Choir stood mute.

And Silence was in Heav'n.————

There is, to me at least, an inimitable Spirit and Beauty in the last Circumstance.—That such an innumerable Multitude, of *generous* and *compassionate* Beings, should be struck *dumb* with *Surprize* and *Terror*, at the very mention of *The deadly Forfeiture and Ransom set!* No *Language* is so eloquent as this *Silence*. Words could not possibly have expressed, in so emphatical a Manner, the *dreadful Nature* of the Task; the *absolute Inability* of any or all Creatures to execute it; the super-eminent and *matchless Love* of the eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous Work; not only without Reluctance, but unsought and unimplored; with Readiness, Alacrity, and Delight. *Paradise lost*, Book iii. Line 209. Edit. BENTL.

vitiated that *Habit* of Body, which all the Drugs produced by Nature herself, cannot rectify ! But how much more *ruined* was thy *Condition*, O my Soul ! how much more *heinous* were thy *Crimes* ? Since nothing less than the Sufferings and Death of Messiah, the Son of GOD, and radiant Image of his Glory, could *effect* thy *Recovery*, or *cancel* thy *Iniquity*.—Therefore, though thou art not, perhaps, sunk so very deep in Pollution, as some of the most abandoned Profligates ; yet remember the inestimable Ransom, paid to redeem thee from everlasting Destruction. Remember this ; and “ never open thy Mouth any more *,” either to *murmur* at the Divine Chastisements, or to *glory* in thy own Attainments. Remember this ; and even “ *loath* thyself †, for the Multitude of thy Pro- vocations,” and thy great Baseness.

ONCE more : Let me view this beautiful, this magnificent Expanse, and conceive some juster Apprehensions of the unknown *Richness* of my *Saviour's Atonement*.—I am informed by a Writer who cannot mistake, that the *High-Priest* of my Profession, who was also the Sacrifice for my Sins, is *higher than the Heavens* † ; more exalted in Dignity, more bright with Glory,

K 3

than

* Ezek. xvi. 63.

† Heb. vii. 26.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

than all the heavenly Mansions, and all their illustrious Inhabitants. If my Heart was humbled at the Consideration of its excessive Guilt, how do all my drooping Powers revive at this delightful Thought! The *poor Criminal*, that seemed to be *tottering* on the very *Brink* of the infernal Pit, is *raised*, by such a Belief, even to the *Portals* of Paradise. My Self-abasement, I trust, will always continue; but my Fears are quite gone*. I do not, I cannot, doubt the Efficacy

* I am sorry to find, that some of my Readers were a little disgusted at this Expression, "*My Fears are quite gone.*" As thinking, it discovered a Tincture of Arrogance in the Writer, and tended to discourage the *weak* Christian. But, I hope, a *more mature* Consideration will acquit me from *both* these Charges.—For, what has the Author said? Only, that at some *peculiarly happy* Moments, when the Holy Ghost bears Witness of CHRIST in his Heart, and He is favoured with a Glimpse of the Redeemer's matchless Excellency,—that, in these *bright Intervals* of Life, his trembling Fears, with regard to the decisive Sentence of the great Tribunal, are turned into pleasing Expectations. And what is there in such a Declaration, offensive to the *strictest* Modesty, or dispiriting to the *weakest* Believer? Instead of striking Terror, it points out the Way of obtaining a *settled* Tranquillity. Its natural Tendency is, to engage the serious Mind in a *more constant* and *attentive* Meditation, on the unknown *Merits* of the Divine MEDIATOR. And were we more *thoroughly* acquainted, more *deeply* affected, with his un-utterable Dignity; I am
per-suaded,

ficacy of such a Propitiation. *While I see a Glimpse of its matchless Excellency; and verily believe myself interested in its Merits; I know not what it is, to feel any misgiving Suspicions; but am steadfast in Faith, and joyful through Hope.*

BE my Iniquities like Debts of Millions of Talents, here is more than full Payment for all that mighty Sum. Let the Enemy of Mankind, and *Accuser* of the Brethren, load me with *Invectives*, before the dreadful Tribunal; yet this one *Plea, a Divine Redeemer died*, most thoroughly quashes every *Indictment*. For though there be much *Turpitude*, and manifold *Transgressions*, “there is no *Condemnation* to those “that are in *CHRIST JESUS*.”—Nay, were I chargeable with all the *vilest Deeds*, that have been committed in *every Age* of the World, by *every Nation* of Men; even in this most deplorable Case, I need not sink into *Despair*. Even such *Guilt*, though grievous beyond all Expression, is not to compared with the *Abundance of Grace and Righteousness*, which is in the *incarnate Divinity*.—How great, how transcendently glorious, are the *Perfections* of the adored *JEHOVAH*? So great, so superlatively precious,

K 4

is

persuaded, our uneasy Apprehensions would *proportionably* vanish; our Faith be established, our Hopes brightened, and our Joys enlarged.

is the *Expiation* of the dying JESUS. 'Tis impossible for the human Mind to *exalt* this Atonement*, too highly; 'tis impossible for the HUMBLE PENITENT to *confide* in it, too steadily. The Scriptures, the Scriptures of eternal Truth, have said it, (exult my Soul in the Belief of it!) that the Blood on which we rely, is GOD'S *own Blood* †; and therefore all-sufficient to expiate, omnipotent to save.

DAVID, that most egregious Sinner, but more exemplary Saint, seems to have been well acquainted with this comfortable Truth. What else can be the Import of that very remarkable,
but

* The Doctrine, tho' rich with *Consolation* to the ruined Sinner; yet, is it not likely to open a Door for *Licentiousness*, and embolden Transgressors to prosecute their VICES?—No; It is the most powerful Motive to that *genuine* Repentance, which flows from an ardent Love of GOD; and operates in a hearty Detestation of all Sin, and an unfeigned Desire to *abound* in the Works of Obedience. One, who knew the un-measurable Goodness of the LORD, and was no Stranger to the sinful Perverseness of our Nature, says, *There is Mercy with Thee, THEREFORE shalt thou be feared.* Psal. cxxx. 4.—Words, full to my Purpose; which at once add the *highest* Authority to *this Sentiment*, and direct our Minds to its *proper* Influence, and Improvement.

† Acts xx. 28.

but devout Declaration, *Thou shalt purge me* with Hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than Snow?—*“ I
 “ have been guilty, I must confess, of the most
 “ complicated and shocking Crimes: Crimes,
 “ inflamed by every aggravating Circumstance,
 “ with regard to Myself, my Neighbour, and
 “ my GOD. *Myself*, who have been blessed
 “ above Men, and the distinguished Favourite
 “ of Providence; *my Neighbour*, who, in the
 “ most dear and tender Interests, has been irre-
 “ parably injured; *my GOD*, who might justly
 “ expect the most grateful Returns of Duty, in-
 “ stead of such enormous Violations of his Law.
 “ Yet, all horrid and execrable as my *Offence*
 “ is, it is nothing to the superabundant *Merit*
 “ of that *great Redeemer*, who was promised
 “ from the Foundations of the World; in
 “ whom all my Fathers trusted; who is the
 “ Hope of all the Ends of the Earth. Though
 “ my Conscience be more *loathsome*, with adul-
 “ terous Impurity, than the *Dunghil*; though
 “ the

* Psal. li. 7. *Thou shalt purge.* I prefer this Trans-
 lation, before the new one. Because this speaks the
 Language of a more *stedfast Belief*, and gives the
highest Honour to the Divine Goodness. Were the
 Words intended to bear no more than the common
petitionary Sense, and not to be expressive of a noble
Plerophory of *Faith*, they would rather have been—
 'הטאני and 'נבסני *Imperatives*, not *Futures*.

“ the most barbarous of Murders has rendered
 “ it even *black* as the Gloom of *Hell*; yet,
 “ washed in ‘ the Fountain opened for Sin and
 “ for Uncleanness *,’ I shall be — I say not,
 “ *pure only*, this were a Disparagement to the
 “ Efficacy of the Saviour’s Death; but I shall
 “ be fair *as* the *Lily*, and white *as* the *Snow*.
 “ Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious
 “ Object of my Confidence; cleansed by this
 “ sovereign Stream, I shall be *fairer* than the
 “ full-blown *Lily*, *whiter* than the new-fallen
 “ *Snows*.”

POWER, saith the Scripture, *belongeth unto*
GOD †.—And in what majestic Lines is this
 Attribute of **JEHOVAH** written, throughout
 the whole Volume of the Creation? Especially,
 through those magnificent Pages unfolded in yon-
 der starry Regions. Which are therefore stiled,
 by the sweet and sublime Singer of *Israel*,
 “ The Firmament of his Power ||.” Because,
 the grand *Exploits* of *Omnipotence* are there dis-
 played with the utmost Pomp, and recorded in
 the most legible Characters.

WHO, that looks upward to the midnight
 Sky; and, with an Eye of Reason, beholds its
 rolling Wonders; can forbear inquiring, Of *what*
 were those mighty Orbs *formed*?—Amazing

* Zech. xiii. 1. † Psal. lxxii. 11. || Psal. cl. 1.

to relate ! They were produced without Materials. They sprung from Emptiness itself. The *stately Fabric* of universal Nature emerged out of *Nothing*.—What *Instruments* were used by the supreme Architect, to *fashion* the Parts with such exquisite Niceness, and give so beautiful a *Polish* to the Surface ? With what were the various Pieces of the complicated Structure *cemented* ; and how was all *connected* into one finely-proportioned, and nobly finished Whole ?—A bare *Fiat* accomplished all. LET THEM BE, said GOD. He added no more ; and immediately the wonderful Structure arose ; adorned with every Beauty ; displaying innumerable Perfections ; and declaring, amidst admiring Seraphs, its great Creator's Praise. “ By the *Word* of “ the LORD were the Heavens made, and all the “ Host of them by the *Breath* of his Mouth*.”

What

* If this Thought is admitted a Second time, and suffered to ennoble the next Paragraph ; it is partly, because of its unequalled *Sublimity* ; partly, because it awakens the most *grand Idea* of creating Power ; and partly, because the *Practice* of the *Psalmist*, an Authority too great to be controverted, is my Precedent.—The beautiful Stanza quoted from *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. is a Proof, how thoroughly the royal Poet entered into the *Majesty* of the *Mosaic Narration* : The Repetition of the Sentiment, *ver.* 9. intimates, how peculiarly he was charmed, with that *noble Manner*, of describing the Divine Operations : While the Turn of his own Composition shews, how perfectly he

—What wonderful Force *fixed* some of those vast Globes, on an immoveable Basis? What irresistible Impulse *bowled* others, through the dark Profound? And what coercive Energy *confined* their impetuous Courses, within the nicest, strictest Bounds?—Nothing but his *sovereign Will*. For all Things were at first constituted, and all to this Day abide, “according to his Ordinance.”

WITHOUT any toilfome Affiduity, or laborious Process, to raise—to touch—to *speak* such a Multitude of enormous Bodies into *Being*;—to *launch* them through the Spaces of the Sky, as an *Arrow* from the Hand of a Giant;—to impress on such *unwieldy Masses* a Motion, far outstripping the Swiftmess of the *winged Creation* *; — and

he possessed the same *elevated Way* of thinking. And this, long before *Longinus* wrote the celebrated Treatise, which has taught the Heathen, as well as the Christian World, to admire the *Dignity of the Jewish Legislator's Stile*. Vid. *Longin. de Sublim.* Sect. IX.

* To give *one* Instance of this Remark.——The *Earth*, in the diurnal Revolution, which it performs on its own Axis, *whirls about* at the Rate of above a *Thousand Miles* an Hour. And as the great Orbit, which it describes annually round the Sun, is reckoned at 540 Millions of Miles, it must *travel* near a *Million and Half*, each Day.——What an *amazing Force* must be requisite, to *protrude* so vast a Globe: and *wheel* it on, loaded as it is with huge Mountains, and ponderous Rocks, at such a prodigious Degree of *Rapidity*. It surpasses human Conception. —How

—and to *continue* them in the same *rapid Whirl*, for Thousands and Thousands of Years; — What an astonishing Instance of infinite Might is this!—Can any thing be *impossible* to the LORD, the LORD GOD; the Creator and Controuler, of all the Ends of the Earth, all the Borders of the Universe? Rather, is not all that we count *difficult*, *perfect Ease* to that glorious Being, who only spake, and the World was made †: Who only gave Command, and the stupendous Axle was lodged fast, the lofty Wheels moved complete?—What a sure Defence, O my Soul, is this everlasting Strength of thy GOD? Be this thy continual *Refuge*, in the Article of *Danger*; this thy never-failing *Resource*, in every Time of *Need*.

WHAT cannot this uncontrollable Power, of the great JEHOVAH, effect for his People? Be their *Miseries* ever so galling, cannot this GOD *relieve* them? Be their *Wants* ever so numerous, cannot this GOD *supply* them? Be their *Corruptions* within ever so inveterate, or their *Temptations* without ever so importunate, cannot this mighty, mighty GOD *subdue* the one, and *fortify*

—How natural, how pertinent, how almost necessary, after such an Observation, is the Acknowledgement made by holy *Job*: *I know that THOU canst do every Thing, and that no Thought can be withholden from Thee.* Chap. xlii. 2.

† Psal. xxxiii. 9.

tify them against the other?—Should *Trials*, with an incessant Vehemence, *sift* thee as Wheat; should *Tribulation*, with a Weight of Woes, almost *grind* thee to Powder; should *Pleasure*, with her bewitching Smiles, solicit thee to *delicious Ruin*; yet “hold thee fast by GOD,” and lay thy Help upon Him that is omnipotent *. Thou canst not be involved in such *calamitous Circumstances*.

* It is a most *charming Description*, as well as *comfortable Promise*, which we find in *Isa.* xl. 29, 30, 31.—*H E giveth Power to the Feeble; and to them that have no Might at all, He not only imparteth, but increaseth Strength; making it to abound, where it did not so much as exist—Without this Aid of JEHOVAH, even the Youths, in the very Prime of their Vigour and Activity, shall become languid in their Work, and weary in their Course. And the young Men, to whose Resolution and Abilities nothing seemed impracticable, shall not only not succeed, but utterly fall, and miscarry in their Enterprizes.—Whereas, they that wait upon the LORD, and rely on his Grace, shall press on, with a generous Ardour, from one Degree of religious Improvement to another: instead of exhausting, they shall renew their Strength; Difficulties shall animate, and Toil invigorate them; they shall mount up, as with soaring Wings, above all Opposition; they shall be carried through every Discouragement, as Eagles cleave the yielding Air: They shall run, with Speed and Alacrity, the Way of GOD’s Commandments, and not be weary: They shall hold on, with Constancy and Perseverance, in those peaceful Paths, and not faint; but arrive at the End of their Progress, and win the Prize of their High Calling.*

Circumstances, or exposed to such *imminent Peril*; but thy GOD, whom thou serveſt, is able to ſupport thee under the one, and to deliver thee from the other.—To *ſupport!* to *deliver!* O, let me not diſhonour the unlimited Greatneſs of his Power. He is able to exalt Thee, from the *deepeſt Diſtreſs*, to the moſt *triumphant Joy*; and to make even a *Complication* of Evils, *work together* for thy everlaſting Good. He is able, not only to accompliſh what I have been ſpeak-
ing,

To this moſt cheering Doctrine, permit me to add its no leſs *beautiful* and *delightful Contrast*. Eliphaz, ſpeaking of the Enemies of the Righteous, ſays—*לֹא נִכְחַד קִיּוּמֵנוּ*—which is rendered by a great Critic in ſacred Learning, *Nihil exciſum factio nobis adverſaria*.—We ſhould reckon, our Language acquitted itſelf tolerably well, if, when depreſiating the Abilities of an Adverſary, it ſhould repreſent them weak as the *ſcorched Thread*, feeble as the *difſolving Smoke*. But theſe are cold Forms of Speech compared with the Eloquence of the Eaſt. According to the Genius of our Bible, *All the Power, that oppoſes the godly, is a mere Nothing*; or to ſpeak with a more emphatical Air of Contempt, *a deſtroyed, an extirpated Nothing*.—Admire this *Expreſſion*, ye that are charmed with daring Images, and (what Tully calls *verbum ardens*) a ſpirited and glowing Diction.—Remember this *Declaration*, ye that fight the good Fight of Faith. The *united Force* of all your Enemies, be it ever ſo *formidable* to the Eye of Fleſh, is, before your Almighty Guardian, *Nihil nibiliſſimum*, not only Nothing, but *leſs than Nothing*, and Vanity. *Job xxii. 20.*

ing, but *to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask, or think* *.

O! THE *wretched Condition* of the *Wicked*, who have this LORD of all Power for their Enemy! O! the *desperate Madness* of the *Ungodly*, who provoke the Almighty to Jealousy!—Be-fotted Creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the Lists against incensed Omnipotence? Can you *bear* the Fierceness of his Wrath, or sustain the Vengeance of his lifted Arm? At his Presence, though *awfully serene*, the *Hills* melt like Wax, and the “*Mountains* skip like frightened Lambs.” At the least *In-*
timations

* I should, in this Place, avoid swelling the Notes any farther, was it not to take Notice of the inimitable Passage quoted above, and to be found *Eph. iii. 20.*—Which, if I do not greatly mistake, is the most noble Representation of Divine Power, that it is possible for Words to frame.—To do all that our Tongue can *ask*, is a Miracle of Might. But we often *think* more than we can express, and are actuated “with *Groanings unutterable.*” Yet, to answer these *vast Desires*, is not *beyond* the *Accomplishment* of our heavenly Father.—Nay, to make all Manner of Blessings commensurate to the *largest Stretch* of human Expectations, is a *small Thing* with the GOD of Glory. He is able to do *above all*, that the most enlarged Apprehension can imagine; yea, to do *abundantly* more, *exceeding abundantly* more, than the Mind itself, in the *utmost Exertion* of its Faculties, is capable of *wishing*, or knows how to *conceive*.

timations of his *Displeasure*, the *Foundations* of Nature rock, and the "*Pillars* of Heaven "*tremble.*" How then can a *withered Leaf* endure, when "*his Lips* are full of *Indignation*, "*and his Tongue* as a *devouring Fire?*"— Or can any thing *screen* a guilty *Worm*, when the great and terrible G O D, shall *whet his glittering Sword*, and his *Hand* take hold on *inexorable Judgment?* When *that Hand*, which *shoots* the *Planets*, *Masses* of excessive *Bulk**, with such surprising *Celerity*, through the *Sky*; *that Hand*, which *darts* the *Comets*, to such unmeasurable *Distances*, beyond the *Limits* of our *Solar System*, beyond the *Pursuit* of the strongest *Eye*; when *THAT HAND* is stretched out to *punish*, can the *Munition* of *Rocks*, the *Intervention* of *Seas*, or even *interposing Worlds*, *divert* the *Blow?*— Consider this, *Ambition*; and bow thy *haughty Crest*. Consider this, *Disobedience*; and bend thy *iron Sinew*. O! consider this, All ye that *forget*, or *affront*, the tremendous *JEHOVAH*. He can, by a single *Act* of his

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L

Will,

* One of the *Planets* (*Saturn*) is supposed to be 427,218,300,000,000 Miles in *Bulk*. The largest of the *Planets* (*Jupiter*) is computed at 920,011,200,000,000 Miles—Such enormous *Magnitude*! winged with such prodigious *Speed*.—It raises *Astonishment* beyond *Expression*.—*Who shall not fear THEE, O LORD, and glorify thy Name?* Rev.

Will, lay the *Universe* in utter Ruin : and can He want Power to bring *you*, in a Moment, to the Dust of Death, and to the Flames of Hell ? He has, I say not, ten thousand Lightenings to scorch you to Ashes, ten thousand Thunders to crush you into Atoms ; but, what is unspeakably more dreadful, He has an *Army of Terrors*, even in the *Look* of his angry *Countenance* : His very Frown is worse than Destruction.

I CANNOT dismiss this Subject, without admiring the *Patience* of the blessed GOD. Who, though so “ strong and powerful, yet is provoked “ every Day.”—Surely, as is his Majesty, so is his Mercy ; his Pity altogether commensurate to his Power. If I *vilify* but the *Name* of an earthly Monarch, I lose my *Liberty*, and am confined to the Dungeon. If I *appear in Arms*, and draw the Sword, against my national Sovereign ; my *Life* is forfeited, and my very Blood will scarce atone for the Crime. But *Thee* I have dishonoured, O ! thou King immortal and invisible ; against Thee my Breast has cherished *secret Disaffection*, my Behaviour has risen up in *open Rebellion* ; and yet I am spared, I am preserved. Instead of banishing me from thy Presence, I sit at thy Table, and am fed from thy Hand. Instead of *pursuing* me with *Thunderbolts* of Vengeance, thy *Favours* surround me on every Side. That Arm, that injured Arm, which
might

might justly fall with irretrievable Ruin on a Traitor's Head, is most graciously stretched out, to caress him, with the tenderest Endearments; to cherish him, with every Instance of parental Kindness.—O! thou mightiest, thou best of Beings, how am I pained at my very Soul, for such shameful and odious Disingenuity! Let me always *abominate* myself as the basest of Creatures, but *adore* that unwearied Long-suffering of thine, which refuses to be irritated; *love* that unremit- ted Goodness, which no Acts of Ingratitude could stop, or so much as check, in its gracious Current. O! let this *stubborn Heart*, which Duty could not bind, which Threatnings could not awe, be the Captive, the *willing Captive*, of such triumphant Beneficence.

I HAVE often been struck with Wonder at that Almighty Skill, which *weighed* the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance; which *proportioned* the Waters in the Hollow of its Hand, and *adjusted* the Dust of the Earth *

L 2

by

* *The Dust of the Earth*, in this sublime Scripture, signifies the *dry Land*, or *solid* Part of our Globe. Which is placed in Contradistinction to the whole Collection of *fluid* Matter, mentioned in the preceding Clause.—Perhaps, this remarkable Expression may be intended to intimate, not only the

extreme

by a Measure. But how much more marvellous is that magnificent Œconomy, which *poised* the Stars with inexpressible Nicety, and *meted* out the Heavens with a Span? Where all is prodigiously vast; immensely various; and yet more than mathematically exact. Surely, the *Wisdom* of GOD manifests itself in the Skies, and shines in those lucid Orbs: Shines on the contemplative Mind, with a Lustre incomparably brighter, than that which their united Splendors transmit to the Eye.—Behold that countless Multitude of Globes; consider their amazing Bulk; regard them as the *Sovereigns* of so many *Systems*, each accom-

extreme Niceness, which stated the Dimensions of the round World, *in general* or in the gross; but also that *particular Exactness*, with which the very smallest Materials, that constitute its Frame (not excepting each individual Atom) were calculated and disposed:—*q. d.* 'Tis a small Thing to say, No such enormous Redundancies, as unnecessary Ridges of Mountains, were suffered to subsist. There was not so much as the least Grain of Sand *superfluous*, or a single Particle of Dust *deficient*.—As the grand *Aim* of the *Description* is, to celebrate the *consummate Wisdom* exemplified in the Creation; and to display that *perfect Proportion*, with which every Part tallies, coincides, and harmonizes, with the Whole; I have taken Leave to alter the Word of our *English* Translation *comprehend*, and introduce in its stead a Term, equally faithful to the *Hebrew*, and more significative of the Prophet's precise Idea. *Isa. xl. 12.*

accompanied with his *planetary Equipage*. Upon this Supposition, what a Multiplicity of mighty Spheres must be perpetually running their Rounds, in the upper Regions? Yet, none mistake their Way, or *wander* from the Goal; though they pass through *trackless* and unbounded Fields. None *fly off* from their *Orbits*, into extravagant Excursions; none *press in* upon their *Centre*, with too near an Approach. None *interfere* with each other in their perennial Passage, or *intercept* the kindly Communications of another's Influence*. But all their Rotations proceed in eternal Harmony; *keeping such Time*, and *observing such Laws*, as are most exquisitely adapted to the Perfection of the Whole.

WHILE I contemplate this “excellent Wisdom which made the Heavens,” and attunes all their Motions; how am I abashed at that Mixture of *Arrogance* and *Folly*, which has, at any time, inclined me to *murmur* at thy *Dispensations*, O LORD! What is this but a Sort of implicit Treason against thy Supremacy, and a tacit Denial of thy infinite Understanding?—

L 3 Hast

* The Interception of Light, by means of an *Eclipse*, happens very rarely: And then, is of so short a Continuance, as not to be at all inconvenient: Is attended with such *Circumstances*, as render it rather useful, than prejudicial.

Hast Thou so regularly placed such a wonderful Diversity of Systems, through the boundless Universe?—Didst Thou, without any probationary Essays, without any improving Retouches, *speake* them into the most consummate Perfection?—Dost Thou continually *superintend* all their Circumstances, with a Sagacity, that never mistakes the minutest *Tittle* of *Propriety*? And shall I be so unaccountably stupid, as to question the *Justness* of thy *Discernment*, in “choosing
 “my Inheritance, and fixing the Bounds of my
 “Habitation?”—Not a *single Erratum* in modelling the Structure; determining the Distance*; and conducting the Career of *unnumbered Worlds*! And shall my peevish Humour presume to *cen-
 sure* thy *Interposition*, with regard to the Affairs of *one* inconsiderable *Creature*; whose Stature, in
 such

* The Sun in particular (and let this serve as a Specimen of that most geometrical Exactness, with which the other celestial Bodies are constituted, and all their Circumstances regulated) the Sun is formed of such a determinate Magnitude, and placed at such a convenient Distance—“as not to annoy, but only
 “refresh us, and nourish the Ground with its
 “kindly Warmth. If it was *larger*, it would set
 “the Earth on Fire; if *smaller*, it would leave it
 “frozen. If it was *nearer* us, we should be scorched
 “to Death; if *farther* from us, we should not be
 “able to live for Want of Heat.” *Stackhouse’s
 History of the Bible.*

such a comparative View, is less than a Span, and his present Duration little more than a Moment?

O! THOU GOD, “in whose Hand my “Breath is, and whose are all my Ways,” let such Sentiments as now possess my Thoughts, be always lively on my Heart! These shall compose my Mind into a *cheerful* Acquiescence, and *thankful* Submission; even when Afflictions *gall* the *Sense*, or Disappointments *break* my *Schemes*. Then shall I, like the *grateful Patriarch* *, in all the Changes of my Condition, and even in the Depths of Distress, *erect* an *Altar* of adoring Resignation, and inscribe it with the Apostle’s *Motto*, TO GOD ONLY WISE. Then, shouldst Thou give me Leave to be the Carver of my own Fortunes, I would humbly desire to relinquish the Grant, and recommit the Disposal of myself to thy unerring Beneficence. Fully persuaded, that *thy Counsels*; though contrary to my froward Inclinations, or even afflictive to my Flesh; are incomparably more eligible, than the *blind Impulse* of my own Will, however soothing to animal Nature.

ON a *careless Inspection*, you perceive no Accuracy or Uniformity in the Position of the
L 4 heavenly

* See *Gen. xii. 7, 8.*

heavenly Bodies. They appear like an *illustrious*.
Chaos, a promiscuous Heap of shining Globes;
 neither ranked in Order, nor moving by Line.
 —But, what *seems* Confusion, is all Regularity.
 What carries a *Shew* of *Negligence*, is really the
 Result of the most *masterly Contrivance*. You
 think, perhaps, they rove in their aerial Flight;
 but they rove by the nicest Rule, and without
 the least Error. Their Circuits, though seem-
 ingly *devious*; their Mazes, though *intricate* to
 our Apprehensions*; are marked out, not in-
 deed with *golden Compasses*, but by the infinitely
 more *exact Determinations* of the all-wise Spirit.
 So, what wears the *Appearance* of *Calamity*,
 in the Allotments appointed for the Godly, has
 really the *Nature* of a *Blessing*. It issues from
 fatherly Love, and will terminate in the richest
 Good. If *Joseph* is snatched from the Embraces
 of an indulgent Parent, and abandoned to Sla-
 very in a foreign Land; it is in order to save
 the holy Family from perishing by Famine, and
 to preserve “the Seed in whom all the Nations
 of the Earth should be blessed.” If he falls
 into the deepest Disgrace, it is on purpose that
 he

* ——— Mazes intricate,

Eccentric, intervolv'd, yet regular

Then most, when most irregular they seem.

M I L T.

he may rise to the highest Honours. Even the *Confinement* of the *Prison*, by the unfearchable Workings of Providence, *opens* his Way to the Right-hand of the *Throne* itself.—Let the most afflicted Servant of JESUS wait the final Upshot of Things; and he will *then* discover the apparent Expediency of all those Tribulations, which *now*, perhaps, he can hardly admit without Reluctance, or suffer without some Struggles of Dissatisfaction. Then, the gushing *Tear*, and the heaving *Sigh*, will be turned into *Tides* of *Gratitude*, and *Hymns* of holy *Wonder*.

IN the mean time, let no audacious Railer tax the Divine Procedure; but, *adoring* where we cannot *comprehend*, let us expect the *Evolution* of the mysterious Plan. Then, shall every Eye perceive, that the seeming *Labyrinths* of Providence, were the most *direct* and *compendious* Way, to effect his general Purposes of Grace, and to bring about each one's particular Happiness*—Then, also, shall it be clearly shewn, in the Presence of *applauding* Worlds, why *Virtue* pined in *Want*, while *Vice* rioted in *Affluence*:

* ————— The *moral World*,
 Which though to Us it seems embroil'd, moves on
 In higher Order; fitted, and impell'd
 By *Wisdom's* finest Hand, and issuing all
 In general Good.

THOMAS WINTER, l. 586. last Edit.

Affluence : Why amiable Innocence so often dragged the Dungeon Chain, while horrid Guilt trailed the Robe of State.—That Day of universal Audit, that Day of everlasting Retribution, will not only vindicate, but magnify, the whole Management of Heaven. The august Sessions shall close with this unanimous, this glorious Acknowledgment : “ Though Clouds and
 “ Darknes, impenetrable by any human Scrutiny, were sometimes round about the supreme
 “ Conductor of Things ; yet Righteousness and
 “ Judgment were the constant Habitation of his
 “ Seat *; the invariable Standard of all his Administrations.”—While we view (if I may illustrate the grandest Truths, by inferior Occurrences) while we view the Arras on the Side of least Distinction, it is void of any elegant Fancy ; without any nice Strokes of Art ; nothing but a confused Jumble of incoherent Threads. No sooner is the Piece beheld in its proper Aspect, but the suspected Rudeness vanishes, and the most curious Arrangement takes Place ; we are charmed with Designs of the finest Taste, and Figures of the most graceful Forms ; all is shaped with Symmetry ; all is clad in Beauty.

THE Goodness of GOD is most eminently displayed in the Skies.—Could we take an understanding

* Psal. xcvi. 2.

derstanding Survey of whatever is formed by the Divine Architect, throughout the whole Extent of *material* Things; our *Minds* would be charmed with their matchless Excellencies, and our *Tongues* echo back that great Encomium, they are “very, very good.” Most *beautiful* * in themselves, contrived by unerring Wisdom, and executed with inimitable Skill: Most *useful* * in their Functions, exactly fitting the Places they fill, and completely answering the Purposes for which they were intended.—All the Parts of the inanimate Creation proclaim, both by their *intrinsic* and *relative* Excellencies, the all-diffusive Beneficence of their Maker.

How

* * This *καλοκραγῆσια* of the Universe, and all its Parts, has been very highly, and very justly extolled, by the antient Inquirers into Nature. And was, indeed, an illustrious Scene, spread before the Sages of the Heathen World, wherein to contemplate the Goodness, and the Glories, of the supreme Being.—It was nobly said, by a Pagan Philosopher, on this Occasion, *Εἰς ἐρῶσα μεταβληθῆναι τὸν Θεὸν μελλοῦσα δημιουργεῖν.* *That GOD, when He undertook the Work of Creation, transformed Himself into Love.*—But He need not transform Himself into this amiable Principle, for “*GOD is Love:*” As was much more loftily said by One, whom that *Philosopher* would have termed a *Barbarian*, 1 *John* iv. 8.

How much more wonderful are the Displays of Divine Indulgence, in the Worlds of *Life!* Because *dead Matter* is incapable of *Delight*; therefore the gracious Creator has raised innumerable Ranks of *perceptive Existence*: Such as are qualified to taste his Bounty, and enjoy each a *Happiness* suited to its peculiar State. With this View, He furnished the Regions of Nature with a most numerous Series of sensitive Beings. The *Waters* teem with Shoals of finny Inhabitants. The *dry Land* swarms with Animals of every Order. The Dwellings of the *Firmament* are occupied by Multitudes of winged People. Not so much as a *green Leaf*, Philosophers say, but lodges and accommodates its puny animalcule Tenants*.—And wherefore this Diversity, this Profusion

* A very celebrated Poet, in a beautiful Paragraph on this Subject, informs his Readers, That all Nature swarms with Life. In subterranean Cells, the Earth heaves with vital Motion. The *Stone*, in its winding Citadel, holds Multitudes of animated Inhabitants. The *Pulp* of mellow *Fruit*, and all the Productions of the Orchard, feed the invisible Nations. Each *Liquid*, whether of acid Taste, or milder Relish, abounds with various Forms of sensitive Existence. Nor is the pure *Stream*, or transparent *Air*, without their Colonies of unseen People.—In which Constitution of Things, we have a wonderful Instance, not only of the Divine Goodness to those minute Beings, in giving them a *Capacity* for animal Gratifications; but of his tender Care
for

Profusion of living Creatures, flying the Air, treading the Ground, and gliding through the Paths of the Sea? For this noble Reason,—That the great Sovereign may exercise his superabundant Goodness; that his *Table* may be furnished with Millions and Millions of *Guests*; that He may fill, every Hour, every Moment, their *Mouths* with *Food*, or their *Hearts* with *Gladness*.

BUT what a *small Theatre* are Three or *Four Elements*, for the Operations of JEHOVAH'S Bounty? His magnificent Liberality scorns such scanty Limits. If you ask, Wherefore has He created *all Worlds*, and replenished them with an unknown *Multiplicity* of *Beings*; rising one above another in an endless Gradation of still richer Endowments, and still nobler Capacities? The Answer is,—For the Manifestation of his
OWN

for Mankind, in *making* them *imperceptible* to our Senses.

— These, conceal'd
By the kind Art of forming Heav'n, escape
The grosser Eye of Man: For, if the Worlds
In Worlds inclos'd should on his Senses burst,
From Cates ambrosial, and the nectar'd Bowl,
He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of Night,
When Silence sleeps o'er all, be stunn'd with Noise.

THOMSON'S *Summer*.

own Glory, and especially for the *Communication* of his inexhaustible *Beneficence* *.—The great Creator could propose no Advantage to Himself. His *Bliss* is *incapable* of any *Addition*. “*Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever the Earth and the World were made,*” He was supremely happy in his own independent and all-sufficient Self. His grand Design therefore, in erecting so many Stately Fabrics, and peopling them with so many Tribes of Inhabitants, was, To *transfuse* his exuberant *Kindness*, and *impart Felicity* in all its Forms. Ten thousand Worlds, stocked with Ten thousand times Ten thousand Ranks of sensitive and intelligent Existence, are so many *spacious Gardens*, which, with *Rivers* of communicated *Joy*, this ever-flowing Fountain waters continually.

BOUND-

* A *sacred Writer*, considering this pleasing Subject; and confining his Observation within the *narrow Limits* of his own Country; cries out, with a Mixture of Amazement and Gratitude, *How great is his Goodness, and how great is his Beauty!*—Who then can forbear being lost in Wonder, and transported with Delight, when he extends his Survey to those infinitely more *copious Communications* of Divine Bounty; which, like salutary and refreshing Streams, run through all Worlds; and make, not only the *little Valleys* of a single Kingdom, but the *Immensity* of Creation, *laugh and sing?* Zech. ix. 17.

BOUNDLESS*, and (which raises our Idea of this divine Principle, to the very highest Degree of Perfection) disinterested* Munificence! How *inexpressibly amiable* is the blessed GOD, considered in this charming Light? Is it possible to conceive any Excellence, so adorable and lovely, as infinite Benevolence, guided by unerring Wisdom, and exerting Almighty Power, on purpose to make a whole Universe happy?—O my Soul, what an *irresistible Attractive* is here! What a most worthy Object for thy most fervent Affection! Shall now every *glittering Toy* become a *Rival* to this transcendently beneficent Being, and *rob* Him of thy *Heart*? O! no. Let his creating Arm teach thee, to *trust* in the Fulness of his Sufficiency:—Let his all-superintending Eye incline thee, to *submit* to his Decrees:—And let his Bounty, so freely vouchsafed, so amply diffused, win thee to *love* Him, with all the warmest Affections of a grateful and admiring Soul; win thee to *serve* Him, not with joyless Awe, or slavish Dread, but with unfeigned Alacrity, and a delightful Complacency.

BUT,

** In this Sense, *There is none good, but One, that is G-O-D.* None *universally and essentially* good: None, whose Goodness extends itself, in an infinite *Variety* of Blessings, to *every* capable Object; or, who always dispenses his Favours, from the *sole* Principle of *free* and dis-interested Benevolence.

BUT, if the Goodness of GOD is so admirably *seen*, in the Works of Nature, and the Favours of Providence; with what a noble Superiority, does it *even triumph*, in the *Mystery of Redemption**? Redemption is the brightest Mirror, in which to contemplate this most lovely Attribute of the Deity. Other Gifts are only as *Mites* from the Divine Treasury; but Redemption opens, I had almost said exhausts, *all the Stores* of his glorious Grace. Herein “GOD *commendeth* his Love †;” not only manifests, but renders

* In this, and in other Parts of the *Contemplations*, the Reader will observe, That the Attributes of the DEITY are represented, as shining, with more distinguished Lustre, in the Wonders of *Redemption*, than in the Works of *Creation*. If *such* Remarks should seem to be unprecedented, or to stand in Need of a Vindication; permit me to subjoin the Sentiments of a great Critic, equally versed in *both* those sublime Theories.—“*Fully*, says He, requires, in his perfect Orator, some Skill in the Nature of heavenly Bodies; because, his Mind will become more extensive and unconfined; and, when He descends to treat of human Affairs, He will both think and write in a more exalted and magnificent Manner. For the same Reason, that excellent Master would have recommended the Study of those great and glorious Mysteries, which Revelation has discovered to Us; *to which the noblest Parts of this System of the World are as much inferior, as the Creature is less excellent than the Creator.* *Spect.* Vol. VIII. No. 633.

† Rom. v. 8.

renders it perfectly marvellous; manifests it in so stupendous a Manner, that it is beyond Parallel; beyond Thought, and “above all Blessing and Praise.”—Was HE not thy Son; everlasting GOD; thy *only* Son; the Son of thy Bosom from eternal Ages; the highest *Object* of thy complacential *Delight*? Was not thy Love to this adorable Son, incomparably greater than the *tendereſt* Affection of *Any*, or the *united* Affections of *All*, mortal Parents? Was not the blessed JESUS more illustrious in Excellency, than all Angels; more exalted in Dignity, than all Heavens? And yet didst thou resign HIM for poor Mortals, for vile Sinners? Couldst thou see Him descend from his *Royal Throne*, and take up his Abode in the *sordid Stable*? See Him forego the *Homage* of the *Seraphim*; and stand exposed to the reproachful *Indignities* of an insolent *Rabble*? See Him arraigned at the Bar, and sentenced to Death; numbered with Malefactors, and nailed to the Gibbet; bathed in his own innocent Blood, and pouring out his Soul in Agonies of Sorrow?—Could the Father; the Father *himself*, with unknown Philanthropy, say; “It must, it shall, be so. My Pity to rebellious Man pleads and prevails. Awake; therefore, O *Sword**; edged with Divine Wrath. Awake; and be sheathed in that *immaculate Breast*; pierce

VOL II. M “ that

* Zech. xiii. 7.

“ that *dearly-beloved Heart*. I am content, that
 “ my Son endure the Sharpness of Death, rather
 “ than *sinful Mortals* perish for ever.”—Incom-
 prehensible Love! May it henceforward be the
 favourite *Subject* of my *Meditation*; more de-
 lightful to my musing Mind, than Applause to
 the ambitious Ear. May it be the darling *Theme*
 of my *Discourse*; sweeter to my Tongue, than
 the Droppings of the Honeycomb to my Taste.
 May it be my choicest *Comfort* through all the
 Changes of *Life*, and my reviving *Cordial* even
 in the last Extremities of *Dissolution* itself.

A *PROPHET*, contemplating, with a di-
 stant Survey, this unexampled Instance of Al-
 mighty Love, is wrapt into a *Transport* of *De-*
light. At a Loss for proper Acknowledgements,
 he calls upon the whole Universe to aid his
 labouring Breast, and supply his Lack of Praise.
Sing melodiously, ye vaulted Heavens; exult, and
even leap for Gladness, thou cumberous Earth;
ye Mountains, break your long Silence, and burst
into Peals of loudest Acclamation ; for the LORD,*
 by

* *Isa* xlix. 13.—I have not adhered to our com-
 mon Translation, but endeavoured to preserve some-
 what more faithfully, the noble *Pathos*, and inimit-
 able *Energy*, of the sacred Original.—The Love of
 GOD manifested in a Divine and dying Saviour, is
 a Blessing of such *inconceivable Richness*, as must ren-
 der all Acknowledgements *flat*, and all Encomiums
languid.

by this precious Gift, and this great Salvation, hath comforted his People.—A sacred Historian has left it upon Record, that, at the first Exhibition of this ravishing Scene, there was with the Angel, who brought the blessed Tidings, a Multitude of the heavenly Host; praising GOD, and making the Concave of the Skies resound with their Hallelujahs. At the Dawn of the Sun of Righteousness, when He was beginning to rise with Healings in his Wings, the *Morning Stars* sang together, and all the *Sons of GOD* shouted for Joy.—And shall *Man*, whom this gracious Dispensation principally respects; shall *Man*, who is the Centre of all these gladdening Rays; shall He have no *Heart* to adore, no *Anthem* to celebrate, This

Love without End, and without Measure Grace?

MILT.

How clear is the Face of the Sky, and how perfectly pure! Clearer than the limpid Stream,

M 2

more

languid. Yet, I think, the most poetical and most emphatical Celebration of that unspeakable Instance of Goodness, is contained in this rapturous Exclamation of the Prophet. Which intimates, with a wonderful Majesty of Sentiment, that even the whole Compass of the *inanimate Creation*, could it be *sensible* of the Benefit, and capable of *Delight*, would express its *Gratitude* in all these Demonstrations of the most lively and exuberant Joy.

more pure than the *polished Crystal*. That *stately Ceiling*, fretted with Gold, and stretched to an Extent of many Millions of Leagues, is not disfigured with a *single Flaw*. That *azure Mantle*, embroidered with Stars, and spacious enough to form a Covering for unnumbered Worlds, is without the least *Spot* or *Wrinkle*.—Yet this can scarce yield us so much as a faint Representation of the *Divine Purity*. GOD is a GOD of the most immaculate Excellence. His *Ways* are Uprightness itself; his Counsels and Words, the very Sanctity of Wisdom and of Truth. The *Laws*, which He has given to *universal Nature*, are exquisitely contrived, and beyond all Possibility of Improvement. The *Precepts*, which He has appointed for the *human Race*, are a complete Summary of all that is honourable in itself, and perfective of the rational Mind.—Not the least *Oversight*, in planning a Series of Events for all Futurity; nor the least *Mal-administration*, in managing the Affairs of every *Age*, since Time began; of every *Nation*, under the whole Heaven.—Pardon these disparaging Expressions. A *negative Perfection* is far, far beneath thy Dignity, O *Thou most Highest* *. In
all

* O *Thou most Highest*.—This Expression occurs more than once, in the Psalms used by the Established Church. And is, I think, one of those *Beauties*, which,

all these Instances; in all thy Acts, and all thy Attributes; Thou art not only *holy*, but “*glorious in Holiness.*”

So inconceivably holy is the LORD GOD of Hosts, that He sees *Defilement* even in the *Bright-*

M 3 *ness*

which, because often exhibited, generally escape our Notice. It is a *Superlative* formed on a *Superlative*; and, though not strictly conformable to *grammatical Rules*, is nobly superior to them all.—The *Language* seems to be sensible of its own *Deficiency*, when the incomprehensible JEHOVAH is addressed, or celebrated. Oppressed, as it were, with the Glories of the Subject, it labours after a *more emphatical Manner of Diction*, than the *ordinary Forms of Speech* afford.—It is, if I rightly judge, one of those daring and happy Peculiarities of a masterly Genius, which Mr. *Pope* so finely describes; and, while he describes, exemplifies:

Great Wits sometimes may *gloriously offend*,
And *rise* to *Faults* true Critics dare not mend;
From vulgar Bounds with brave Disorder part,
And snatch a Grace beyond the Reach of Art.

Essay on Criticism.

St. Paul's—ελαχιστοτερων των αγιων—is a beautiful Passage of the like Nature; which our Translators have very properly rendered, *Less than the least of all Saints.*—His—πολλω μαλλον περισσον—is another Instance of the same Kind. But here the *English* Version fails. *Far better*—is extremely *flaccid*, compared with the *nervous* Original. And I greatly question, whether it is possible to translate the Sentence with equal Conciseness, and equal Spirit. See *Eph. iii. 8.* *Phil. i. 23.*

ness of yonder Firmament. Those living Sapphires, before his Majesty, lose their Lustre. *He looketh even to the Moon, and it shineth not; yea, the Stars are not pure in his Sight. How much less Man, who, in his fallen and depraved State, is little better than a Worm, that crawls in the corrupted Carcase; and the Son of Man, who, by Reason of his manifold actual Impurities, is too justly compared to an Insect, that wallows amidst Stench and Putrefaction*?—* Is there not then abundant Cause, for the most irre-

* *Job xxv. 5, 6.* I submit it to the Judgment of the Learned, Whether this is not the true Meaning of the Text.—It may not be able, perhaps, to recommend itself to the *squeamishly nice* Critic, or to those who are always extolling the *supposed Dignity* of the human Nature. But it seems, in Preference to every other Interpretation, *suitable* to the sacred *Context*; and is far, far from being *injurious* to the *Character* of that apostate Race, which is “altogether become abominable,” and “is as an unclean Thing.”—On this Supposition, there is not only an *apparent*, but a very *striking* Contrast, between the Purity of GOD, and the Pollution of Man: The *Purity* of GOD, which outshines the Moon, and eclipses the Stars; the *Pollution* of Man, which renders him as loathsome to the all-seeing Eye, as the vilest Vermin are in ours.—Without assigning this Sense to the Passage, I cannot discern the *Force* of the *Antitheses*, or indeed the *Propriety* of the *Sentiment*. *Worms*, in the general, give us an Idea of *Meanness* and *Infirmity*; not of *Defilement* and *Impurity*; unless they are Insects of such a particular Kind,

irreproachable and eminent of Mankind, to renounce all *arrogant Pretensions*; to lay aside every assuming Air; to take nothing but *Shame and Confusion to themselves*? A holy Sufferer, and a holy Prophet, felt such humbling Impressions from a Glimpse of the uncreated Purity. *I abhor myself in Dust and Ashes**, was the Declaration of the one; *I am a Man of unclean Lips †*, the Confession of the other. — And should not this teach us all to adore the Divine Mercies, for that precious *purifying Fountain* ||; which was foretold from the Foundations of the World, but was opened at that awful Juncture, when knotty *Whips* tore the Flesh; when ragged *Thorns* mangled the Temples; when sharpened *Nails* cut fresh Sluices for the crimson Current; when the Gash of the *Spear* completed the dreadful Work, and *forthwith flowed there*, from the wounded Heart, *Blood and Water*.

M 4

ESPE-

Kind, and considered in such noisome Circumstances. — The Two Words of the Original—*תולע* and *מז*—are evidently used in this Signification by *Moses* and *Isaiab*; by the one, to denote the Vermin that devoured the *putrefied Manna*; by the other, to express the Reptiles, which swarm in the *Body* that sees *Corruption*. *Exod. xvi. 20. Isa. xiv. 11:*

* *Job. xlii. 6.*

† *Isa. vi. 5.*

|| In that Day there shall be a Fountain opened to the House of *David*, and to the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, for Sin and Uncleanness. *Zech. xiii. 1.*

ESPECIALLY since the GOD, in whose Sight the *very Heavens* are *not unfulled*, though so curiously fine, and “spread out like a molten Looking-glass,”—since this GOD saw *no Blemish* in his *dear Son*. His all-penetrating and jealous Eye discerned nothing amiss, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiss? Yea, He bore this most illustrious Testimony concerning his holy Child JESUS: “In Him
 “ I am pleased; I am well pleased; I acquiesce,
 “ with intire Complacency, and the highest
 “ Delight, in his Person; his Undertaking;
 “ and the whole Execution of his Office.”

—How should this Thought *enliven* our *Hopes*, while the other *mortifies* our *Pride*? Ought not our Hearts to spring within us, and even, leap for Joy, from the repeated Assurances given us by Revelation, That such a divinely excellent Being is our Mediator? What Reason has every Believer to adopt the blessed Virgin’s Exclamation? “*My Soul doth magnify the*
 “ *LORD* for this transcendent Mercy; and
 “ *my Spirit rejoices*, not in wide-extended Har-
 “ vests, waving over my fertile Glebe* ; not in
 “ Armies vanquished, and leaving the peculiar
 “ Treasure of Nations for my Spoil* ; but in
 “ an

* * The inspired Penman, from these Two Occasions of distinguished Joy, sets forth the incomparably greater Delight, which arises from the Gift of a Saviour, and the Blessing of Redemption. *Isa.* vi. *ver.* 3. compared with *ver.* 9.

“ an infinitely richer, nobler Blessing, even in
 “ *GOD my Saviour.*” — That a Person, so
 sublime and perfect, has vouchsafed to become
 my Surety ; to give Himself for my *Ransom* in
 the *World below*, and act as my *Advocate* in the
 Royal Presence *above* ; yea, to make my *Reco-*
very, the Reward of *his Sufferings* ; my final Fe-
 licity, the Honour of *his* mediatorial Kingdom !

WHEN an innumerable Multitude * of Bo-
 dies, many of them more than a *Hundred thou-*
sand Miles in Diameter †, are all set in *Motion* ;
 — When the *Orbits*, in which they perform
 their periodical Revolutions, are extended at the
 Rate of some Hundreds of *Millions* ; — when
 each has a *distinct* and separate *Sphere*, for finish-
 ing his vast Circuit ; — when none knows what
 it is to be *cramped*, but most *freely expatiates* in
 his unbounded Career ; — when every one is
 placed at such an *immense Remove* from each
 other

* This refers, not only to the Planets which pass
 and repass about our Sun, but also to the other Pla-
 netary Worlds, which are supposed to attend the
 several fixed Stars.

† The Diameter of *Jupiter* is calculated at 130,653
 Miles, while his Orbit is reckoned to consist of
 895,134,000. Which Computation, according to
 the Maxims of Astronomy, and the Laws of Propor-
 tion, may, as is taken for granted in the Contem-
 plations, be applied to *other Planets* revolving round
other Suns.

gether, that they appear to their respective Inhabitants, only as so many *Spots of Light*;—O! how astonishing must be the *Expanse*, which yields *Room* for all these mighty *Globes*, and their widely-diffused *Operations*? To what prodigious Lengths did the Almighty Builder stretch his Line, when He marked out this stupendous Platform?—I wonder at such an immeasurable Extent. My very Thoughts are lost in this *Abyss of Space*. But, be it known to Mortals; be it never forgot by Sinners; that, in all its most *surprising Amplitude*, it is *small*, it is *scanty*, compared with the Bounty and the Mercy of its Maker.

HIS *Bounty* is absolutely without Limits*, and without End. The most lavish Generosity cannot *exhaust*, or even *diminish*, his Munificence. O! all ye Tribes of Men; or rather, all ye Classes of intelligent Creatures; ye are not
 straitned

* By *Bounty*, I mean, not the actual *Exercise*, or the *Effects* of this Excellency in the Deity. These *are*, and always *must be*, through the immense Perfection of the Attribute, and the necessary Scantiness of the Recipient, bounded. But I would be understood, as speaking of the Divine *Power*, and the Divine *Will*, to exert Divine Beneficence. These can have no real, no imaginable Limits. These, after a Communication of Blessings, distributed to unnumbered Worlds, continued through unnumbered Ages, must *still* have more to bestow; for *ever* have more to bestow; *infinitely* more to bestow, than it is possible for Creation itself to receive.

straitned in the *Liberality* of your ever-blessed Creator, be not straitned in your own *Expectations*. “Open your Mouth wide, and He shall “fill it” with copious and continual Draughts from the Cup of Joy. Your GOD, on whom is your whole Dependence, is more than able, is more than willing, to “supply all your Need, according to his Riches in Glory.”—When the LORD of All is the Giver, and his Grace * the Gift, let your Wishes be unbounded, and your Cravings insatiable. *All* that created Beings can possibly *covet*, is but a very small *Pittance* of that unknown Happiness, which the everlasting Benefactor is ready to *bestow*. Form not your Estimate of the *supreme Beneficence* from those narrow Models of *mortal Kindness*, which either your own Experience has observed, or the History of Ages has recorded. Suppose every charitable Disposition, which warms the Hearts of the human Race, added to those more enlarged Affections, which glow in heavenly Bosoms; what were they *all*, even in their highest Exercise,

* 2 Cor. ix. 8. GOD is able to make all Grace abound towards you, that ye having all Sufficiency in all Things, may abound to every good Work.—How beautiful and emphatical is this Description! inferior to nothing but that Extent of Ability, and those Riches of Liberality, which it so eloquently celebrates. Does it not *exhaust* all the Powers of Language, while it attempts to give us a *Specimen* of the *Munificence* of the LORD.

cise, compared with the *Benignity* of the Divine Nature?—Bless *me* then, Thou eternal Source of Love; bless *all* that reverence thy holy Name; according to thy own most profuse Goodness: whose *great Prerogative* it is, to *disdain all Measure*. O! bless us, in proportion to that Grace, the Richness of which, *unutterable* by the Tongues of Men and of Angels, was once *spoke* in the *Groans*, and *written* in the *Wounds*, of thy expiring Son.

AND as for the *Mercy* of GOD, it is “greater than the Heavens;” more extensive than the Dimensions of the Sky. Charming Thought, transporting Reflection! let me indulge Thee once more*. Let me think over the noble Displays of this lovely Attribute; and, while I admire the *Trophies* of *forgiving Goodness*, add one to the Number.—With what amiable and affecting Colours is this represented in the *Parable* of the *Prodigal*? What could induce that foolish Youth to forsake his gracious Father? Had he not been tenderly cherished by the good Parent, and loaded with Benefits from his indulgent Hand? Were not the *Restraints* of parental Government an *easy Yoke*, or rather a *Preservative* from *Ruin*? Notwithstanding every endearing Obligation, he revolts from his Duty; and launches

* This refers to Page 125. of *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*.

launches out into such scandalous Irregularities, as were a Dishonour to his Family, and destructive to himself.—But, when Afflictions brought him to a Sense of his Folly, and sharp Necessity drove him to a submissive Return; did the *injured Father* discover the least *Resentment* of Mind? Quite the Reverse. He *espied him*, while he was yet a *great Way off*; and, the Moment he beheld the profligate Creature, “his Bowels founded like an Harp,” touch’d with Notes divinely soft. He never once thinks of the riotous Living, and infamous Course of Debaucheries. Pity, parental Pity, passes an Act of Oblivion; and, in one Instant, cancels a Series of long continued Provocations.—So strong are the Yearnings of fatherly Affection, that he even *runs* to receive the naked and destitute Wretch to his Arms. And is there a single Frown in his Brow, or one upbraiding Word on his Tongue?—Instead of *reproaching* him for his odious Excesses, he *falls* on his Neck, and snatches him to his eager Embraces. Instead of rejecting him with Indignation, for his undutiful Extravagance, he kisses him with Tears of Delight; and rejoices at his Return from Folly, as he formerly rejoiced on the Day of his Nativity.—When this Companion of Harlots opens his Mouth, *before he speaks, the Father hears*. He interrupts him in the midst of his intended Speech.

The

The Overflowings of his compassionate Heart can brook no Delay. He seems to be *uneasy himself*, till he has made the afflicted *Penitent glad*, with the Assurance of his Acceptance, and the choicest of his Favours.—While the poor *abashed Offender* seeks nothing more than not to be abhorred, he is thoroughly reconciled. While he requests no other Indulgence, than only to be treated as the *meanest Servant*, he is caressed and honoured as the *dearest of Children*.—Was there ever so bright and winning a Picture, of the tenderest Mercy, most freely vouchsafed, to the most unworthy of Creatures? Yet *thus*, my Soul; and *thus*, my Fellow-sinner; will the LORD GOD of everlasting Compassions receive us, if, with a contrite Spirit, and lively Faith, we turn to him through J E S U S C H R I S T.

WHERE Sin has abounded, says the Proclamation from the Court of Heaven, *Grace doth much more abound*.—By this, *Manasseh*, a Monster of Barbarity, and an Adept in Iniquity, becomes a Child of forgiving Love, and an Heir of immortal Glory.—Behold that bitter and bloody Persecutor *Saul*, when, breathing out Threatnings *, and bent upon Slaughter, he
worried

* ACTS ix. 1. Σαυλῶς ἐστὶ ἐμπνευὼν ἀπειλῆς καὶ φόνου.
Saul yet breathing out Threatning and Slaughter.
—What a Representation is here of a *Mind, mad* with *Rage*, and abandoned to the fiercest Extremes
of

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worried the Lambs, and put to Death the Disciples of the blessed J E S U S. Who, upon the Principles of human Judgment, would not have pronounced him a Vessel of Wrath, destined to unavoidable Damnation? Nay, would not have been ready to conclude, that, if there were heavier Chains, and a deeper Dungeon in the World of Woe, they must surely be reserved for such an implacable Enemy of true Godliness. Yet (admire and adore the Riches of Almighty Grace!) this *Saul* is elected into the goodly Fellowship of the Prophets; is numbered with the noble

of Barbarity! I scarce know, whether I am more shocked at the Persecutor's *savage Disposition*, or charmed with the Evangelist's *lively Description*.—The Adverb—*et*—seems to refer to *Chap. viii. ver. 3* and has, in this Connection, a peculiar Force. The Havock he had committed, the inoffensive Families he had *already* ruined, were not sufficient to assuage his vengeful Spirit. They were only a *Taste*; which instead of *glutting* the Blood-hound, made him more closely pursue the Track, and more *eagerly pant* for Destruction.—He is *still* athirst for Violence and Murder. So restless and insatiable is his Thirst, that he even *breathes out* Threatning and Slaughter. His Words are Spears and Arrows, and his Tongue a sharp Sword. 'Tis as natural for him to *menace* the Christians, as to breathe the Air.—Nay, they *bleed* every Hour, every Moment in the Purposes of his rancorous Heart. It is only owing to Want of Power, that every Syllable he utters, every Breath he draws, does not deal about Deaths, and cause some of the innocent Disciples to fall.

noble Army of Martyrs ; and makes a distinguished Figure among the glorious Company of the Apostles.—The *Corinthians* were flagitious even to a Proverb. Some of them wallowed in such abominable Vices, and habituated themselves to such outrageous Acts of Injustice, as were a Reproach to human Nature. Yet even these Sons of Violence, and Slaves of Sensuality, “ were washed, were sanctified, were justified *.” *Washed*; in the precious Blood of a dying Redeemer ; *sanctified*, by the powerful Operations of the blessed Spirit ; *justified*, through the infinitely tender Mercies of a gracious G O D. And Those, that were once the Burden of the Earth, are now the Joy of Heaven, and the Delight of Angels.

T H E R E is another Instance in Scripture; which most loudly publishes that sweetest of the Divine Names, “ The LORD, the LORD GOD, “ merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and “ abundant in Goodness and Truth ; keeping “ Mercy for Thousands ; forgiving Iniquity, “ Transgression, and Sin.” An Instance this; which exceeds all the former ; which exceeds whatever can be imagined ; which if I was to forget, the very Stones might cry out, and sound it in my Ears. I mean the Case of those Sinners, who *murdered* the *Prince of Peace*, and LORD of Glory: These Men could scarce have the

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

the Shadow of an Excuse for their Crime ; hardly a Circumstance to extenuate their Guilt. They were well acquainted with his exemplary Conversation ; they had often heard his heavenly Doctrines ; they were almost daily Spectators of his unequalled Miracles. They therefore had all possible Reason to *honour* Him, as the most *illustrious* of Beings ; and to *receive* Him into their Houses, their Arms, their very Hearts, as the most *inestimable* of Blessings. Yet, notwithstanding all these engaging Motives to love Him, even above their own Lives, they seize his Person ; asperse his Character ; drag him before a heathen Tribunal ; and extort a Sentence of Death, against Innocence and Holiness itself. Never was the *vilest Slave* so contumeliously abused, nor the most *execrable Malefactor* so barbarously executed. The Sun was confounded at the shocking Scene ; and one cannot but wonder, how the avenging Lightenings could withhold their Flashes. The Earth trembled at the horrid Deed ; and why, why did it not cleave asunder, and open a Passage for such Blood-thirsty Miscreants into the nethermost Hell ? Shall *These* ever hope to obtain *Forgiveness*, from the righteous Judge ? shall not *These* be consigned over to *inexorable Wrath*, and the *severest Torments* ?—O the miraculous Effects of Divine Grace ! O the triumphant Goodness of G O D

our Saviour! Many even of these impious Wretches, at the Descent of the Holy Ghost, were convinced of their enormous Sin; were wounded with penitential Remorse; fled to the Sanctuary of the Cross, and laid hold on the Horns of that Altar; had their Pardon ratified by the baptismal Seal; and, continuing in the Apostles Doctrine, were made Partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven: Where they now shine, as so many everlasting *Monuments* of most distinguished *Mercy*; and receive *Beatitude* past Utterance, from that very Redeemer, whom once
 “ with wicked Hands they crucified and slew.—
 Well might the Prophet cry out, with a pleasing
 “ Amazement, Who is a G O D like unto Thee,
 “ that pardoneth Iniquity, and passeth by Trans-
 “ gression * ?”—Let all Flesh remember, let all
 Flesh rejoice, That with the L O R D there is
such Mercy, and with his C H R I S T *such plen-*
teous Redemption †.

WHAT

* Mic. vii. 18.

† It is needless, I hope, to offer an Apology for dwelling so long upon this delightful Theme. Who can complain of *Tediousness*, while I speak *Consolation* to distressed, and *Recovery* to ruined Creatures? The Divine Mercy is the sole Fountain of all our present and future Blessings. In proportion to this benign Attribute, human Hopes arise, and human Felicity flows. Who therefore can be weary of *viewing* and *reviewing*; when the *Lengths* and
Breadths

WHAT a grand and majestic *Dome* is the Sky ! And where are the *Pillars*, that support the stately Concave ? What Art, most exactly true, *balanced* the Pressure ; and what Props, of insuperable Strength, *sustain* the Weight ? How is that immeasurable Arch *upheld*, unshaken, and unimpaired ; while so many Generations of busy Mortals have *sunk* and disappeared, as Bubbles upon the Stream ? — If those Stars are of such an amazing Bulk, how are they also *fastened* in their lofty Situation ? By what Miracle in Mechanics, are so many Thousands of ponderous Orbs kept from falling upon our Heads ; kept from dashing, both the World to Pieces, and its Inhabitants to Death ? Are they hung in golden, or *adamantine*, *Chains* ? Rest they their enormous Load on *Rocks of Marble*, or *Columns of Brass* ? No ; they are *pendulous* in fluid *Æther*, and yet more immoveably *fixed*, than if the everlasting Mountains lent their Ridges for a Basis. The Almighty Architect *stretches out the North*, and its whole starry Train, *over the empty Place*. He *hangs the Earth*, and all the ethereal Globes, *upon nothing* *.

N 2

Founda-

Breadths of forgiving Grace are the ravishing Prospect ? — Methinks, on such a Subject, I might have expatiated, without Fear of creating Disgust, till the Lark listened to the joyful Tidings.

* Job xxvi. 7.

Foundations laid so sure, that they can “ never
“ be moved at any time.

No unfit Representation, to the *sincere* Christian, of his *final* Perseverance* : but such, as points out the Cause, which effects it ; and constitutes the Pledge, which ascertains it.—

His

* With regard to the *final Perseverance* of the true Believer ; I am sensible, that this Point is not a little controverted.—The Sentiments, which follow, are *my* stedfast Belief. It is, by no Means proper, in a Work of this Nature, to enter upon a Discussion of the Subject. Neither have I Room, so much as to hint, what might be urged for its Support.—Let my Reader observe, that I am far from delivering it, as essential to Christianity, or necessary to Salvation. Millions, of the very contrary Persuasion, are, I doubt not, high in the Favour of GOD ; and in a growing Meetness, for his heavenly Kingdom. As I blame none for *rejecting*, none, I hope, will be offended with me for *espousing*, this particular Doctrine.—To be of different Opinions, at least in some inferior Instances, seems an unavoidable Consequence of our present State : where *Ignorance*, in Part, cleaves to the *wisest* Minds ; and *Prejudice* easily begets the most *impartial* Judgments. It may also turn to our common Advantage ; and afford Opportunity for exercising the *healing* Virtues, of Moderation, Meekness, and Forbearance.—Let me only be permitted to ask, whether this Tenet does not evidently tend, to establish the *Comfort* of the Christian ; to magnify the *Fidelity* of GOD our Saviour ; and whether, far from countenancing Sloth, or encouraging Remissness, to *know* that our Labour shall not be in vain, is not the most *prevailing* Inducement to *abound* in the Work of the LORD ? I COR. XV. 58.

His Nature is all enfeebled. He is not able, of himself, to think a good Thought. He has no *visible Safe-guard*, nor any *Sufficiency* of his own. And yet, whole Legions of formidable Enemies, are combined to compass his Ruin. The *World* lays unnumbered Snares for his Feet; the *Devil* is incessantly urging the Siege, by a Multitude of fiery Darts, or wily Temptations; the *Flesh*, like a perfidious Inmate, under Colour of Friendship, and a specious Pretence of Pleasure, is always forward to betray his Integrity.—But, amidst all these threatening Circumstances, of personal Weakness, and imminent Danger, an *invisible Aid* is his Defence. “*I will uphold thee*, says the blessed GOD, *with the Right-hand of my Righteousness* *.” O comfortable Truth! The Arm, which fixes the Stars in their Orders, and guides the Planets in their Course, is stretched out to preserve the Heirs of Salvation.—“*My Sheep*, adds the great Redeemer, *are mine, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand* †.” What Words are these! And did they come from HIM, who hath all Power in Heaven, and on Earth? And were they spoke to every unfeigned, though feeble Follower of the great Shepherd? Then, *Omnipotence* itself must be *vanquished*, before

N 3

they

* Isai. xli. 10.

† John x. 28.

they can be *destroyed*, either by the Seductions of Fraud, or the Assaults of Violence.

IF you ask therefore, *What Security* we have of enduring to the End, and continuing faithful unto Death?—The very *same* that establishes the Heavens, and settles the Ordinances of the Universe. Can *these* be thrown into Confusion *? Then may *the true Believer* draw back unto Perdition? Can the Sun be dislodged from his Sphere, and rush lawlessly through the Sky? Then, and then only, can the Faith of GOD'S Elect † be finally overthrown.—Be of good Courage then, my Soul; rely on those Divine *Succours*, which are so *solemnly stipulated*, so *faithfully promised*. Though thy *Grace* be languid as the glimmering *Spark*; though the *Overflowings* of *Corruption* threaten it with total Extinction; yet, since the great JEHOVAH has undertaken to cherish the dim Principle, “many Waters cannot quench it, nor all Floods drown it.” Nay, though it were feeble as the *smoking Flax* †, Almighty

* Jer. xxxi. 35. 26.

† Tit. i. 2.

‡ The *Tenderness*, and *Faithfulness*, of GOD to his People, are finely pictured by the Prophet *Isaiab*, Chap. xlii. ver. 3. Which Passage, because of its rich Consolation, and uncommen Beauty, is deservedly adopted by *St. Matthew*, and ingrafted into the System of evangelical Truths.—*He will not himself break*, nor suffer to be broken by any other,
the

mighty Goodness stands engaged to augment the Heat; to raise the Fire, and feed the Flame; till it beam forth, a *Lamp* of immortal *Glory*, in the Heavens.

AND as to the *Faithfulness* of a covenanting GOD, this may be emblematically seen, in the *Stability* of the heavenly *Bodies*, and the *Perpetuity* of their *Motions**.—Those that are *fixed*, continue unalterably in their Stations. No injurious Shocks, no Violence of conflicting Elements, are able to displace those *everlasting Hinges*, on which dependent Worlds revolve. Through the whole Flight of Time, they re-

N 4.

cede

the bruised Reed; nor quench the smoking Flax. Was it possible to have chosen two more delicate and expressive Representations? Could any Image be more significant of a very infirm and enfeebled *Faith*, than the *flexile Reed*, that bends before every Wind; which, besides its natural Weakness, is made abundantly weaker by being bruised; and so, ready to fall in pieces of itself?—Nor could any Thing, with a more pathetic Exactness, describe the extreme Imbecility of that other Principle of the Divine Life *Love*, than the State of the *Flax*, which is but just beginning to burn; and, consequently, liable to be put out by the least Blast: or rather of the *Wick* of the Lamp, when it is not kindled into so much as a glimmering Flame, but only breathing Smoke, and uncertain whether it shall take Fire or no. *Matt. xii. 20.*

* *Psal. cxix. 89, 90.*

cede not, so much as a Hair's Breadth, from the precise central Point of their respective Systems.—While the *Erratic* perform their prodigious Stages, without any Intermiffion, or the least Embarrassment. How soon, and how easily, is the most finished Piece of *human Machinery* disconcerted? But all the *celestial Movements* are so nicely adjusted; all their Operations so critically proportioned; and their mutual Dependencies so strongly connected; that they prolong their beneficial Courses, throughout all Ages. While *mighty Cities* are overwhelmed with Ruin, and their very Names lost in Oblivion: While *vast Empires* are swept from their Foundations, and leave not so much as a shadowy Trace of their antient Magnificence: While *all terrestrial Things* are subject to Vicissitude, and fluctuating in Uncertainty: *These* are permanent in their Duration; invariable in their Functions; “not one faileth.”—Who doubts the *constant Succession* of Day and Night; or the *regular Returns* of Summer and Winter? And why, O! why should we doubt the *Veracity* of GOD, or distrust the *Accomplishment* of his holy *Word*? Can the Ordinances of Heaven depart? Then only can GOD forget to be gracious; or neglect the Performance of his Promise.—Nay, our LORD gives us *yet firmer Ground* of Affiance. He affords us a *surer Bottom* for our *Faith*, than the
fundamental

fundamental Laws of the Universe. “Heaven
“and Earth, He says, may pass away; but, not
“one *jot* or *Tittle* of his Word shall fall short
“of its Purpose.” His sacred Word, what-
ever may obstruct it, whoever may oppose it,
shall be fulfilled to the very uttermost.

O *powerful Word!* How astonishing is its Efficacy? When this Word was issued forth, a *thousand Worlds* emerged out of nothing. And should the mighty Orders be repeated, a *thousand more* would spring into Existence. By this Word, the vast System of created Things is *upheld*, in immutable *Constancy*; but should it give Command, or cease to exert its Energy, the universal Frame would be dissolved, and all Nature *revert* to her original *Chaos*. And this very Word is *pledged* for the Safety, the Comfort, the Happiness of *the Godly*. This inviolable, this Almighty Word *speaks* in all the *Promises* of the Gospel.—How *strangely infatuated* are our Souls, that we should value it so little! What *Infidels* are we *in fact*, that we should depend upon it no more! Did it *create* whatever has a Being, and shall it not *work* Faith in our Breasts? Do unnumbered Worlds owe their *Support* to this Word, and shall it not be sufficient to *buoy* up our Souls in Troubles, or establish them in Trials? Is it the *Life* of the Universe, and shall it be a *dead Letter* to Mankind?

IF

194 CONTEMPLATIONS

IF I wish to be heard, when I implore heavenly Blessings; is not *this Privilege* most clearly made over to my Enjoyment, in that well known Text, “Ask, and it shall be given you *?” — If I long for the eternal Comforter, to dwell in my Heart, and sanctify my Nature; have I not an *apparent Title* to this *high Prerogative*, conferred in that sweet assertive Interrogation, “How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask him †?” — If I earnestly covet the inestimable Treasures, that are comprised in the great IMMANUEL’s Mediation; can I have a *firmer Claim* to the *noble Portion*, than is granted in that most precious Scripture, “Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out ‡.” — *What Assurance*, of being interested in these unspeakable Mercies, would I desire? What *Form* of Conveyance, what *Deed of Settlement*, were it left to my own Option, should I choose? Here is the *Word* of a King; the King immortal and invisible; all whose Declarations || are Truth itself. — If a Monarch
bestow

* Matt. vii. 7.

† Luke xi. 13.

‡ John vi. 37.

|| ————— If these fail,

The pillar’d Firmament is Rottenness,
And Earth’s Base built on Stubble.

MILT. *The Mask.*

bestow Immunities on a Body of Men, and confirm them by an authentic Charter; no one controverts, no one questions, their Right to the Royal Favours. And why should we suspect the Validity of those glorious Grants, which are made by the everlasting Sovereign of Nature; which he has also ratified by an Oath, and sealed with the Blood of his Son?—Corporations may be disfranchised, and Charters revoked. Even Mountains may be removed, and Stars drop from their Spheres: But a Tenure, founded on the Divine Promise, is unalienably secure, is lasting as Eternity itself.

WE have endeavoured to spell out a *Syllable* of the eternal *Name*, in the Wonders of the Sky. We have caught a *Glimpse* of the Almighty's *Glory*, from the Lustre of innumerable Stars. But would we behold all his Excellencies portrayed in *full Perfection*, and drawn to the *very Life*, let us attentively consider the *Redeemer*.—I observe, there are some Parts of the Firmament, in which the *Stars* seem, as it were, to *cluster*. They are sown thicker, they lie closer, than usual; and strike the Eye with redoubled Splendor. Like the Jewels on a Crown, they mingle their Beams, and reflect a reciprocal Increase of Brilliancy on each other.—And is there not such an Assemblage, such a *Constellation*

tion of the *Divine Honours*, most amiably effulgent in the blessed JESUS?

DOES not *infinite Wisdom* * shine with surpassing Brightness in CHRIST? To the *making* of a *World* there was no Obstacle; but to the *Saving* of *Man* there seemed to be unfurmountable Bars. If the Rebel is suffered to escape, where is the *inflexible Justice*, which denounces “Death as the Wages of Sin?” If the Offender is thoroughly pardoned, where is the *inviolable Veracity*, which has solemnly declared, “The Soul that sinneth, shall die?” These awful Attributes are set in terrible Array; and, like an impenetrable Battalion, oppose the Salvation of apostate Mankind. Who can suggest a *Method*, to *absolve* the traiterous Race, and yet *vindicate* the Honours of Almighty Sovereignty? This is an Intricacy, which the most exalted of finite Intelligencies are unable to clear.—But behold the *unsearchable Secret* revealed; revealed in the wonderful Redemption accomplished by a dying Saviour! So *plainly revealed*, that “He who runs may read;” and even *Babes* understand, what Minds of the deepest Penetration could not contrive.—The Son of GOD, taking our Nature, obeys the Law, and undergoes Death, in our stead. By this Means, the threatned *Curse* is executed in all its *Rigour*, and free *Grace* is exercised

* See the next Note.

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exercised in all its *Riches*. Justice maintains its *Rights*, and, with a steady Hand, administers impartial Vengeance; while Mercy *dispenses* her *Pardons*, and welcomes the repentant Criminal into its tenderest Embraces. Hereby, the seemingly thwarting Attributes are reconciled; and the Sinner is saved, not only in *full Consistence* with the Honour of the supreme Perfections, but to the most *illustrious Manifestation* of them all.

WHERE does the *Divine Power* * so signally exert itself, as in the *Cross* of CHRIST, and in the *Conquests* of Grace?—Our LORD, in his lowest State of Humiliation, gained a more glorious Victory, than when, through the dividing Sea, and the waste howling Wilderness, He “rode upon his Chariots and Horses of Salvation.” When his Hands were *riveted* with Irons to the bloody Tree, He *disarmed* Death of its Sting, and *plucked* the Prey from the Jaws of Hell. Then, even then, while He was crucified in *Weakness*, He vanquished the *strong Man*, and subdued our most formidable Enemies: Even then

* * CHRIST, the *Wisdom* of GOD, and the *Power* of GOD. 1 Cor. i. 24.—To the Intent that now unto the *Principalities* and *Powers* in heavenly Places, might be known by the Church (by the amazing Contrivance, Circumstances, and Accomplishment of its Redemption) the deep, extensive and (πολυποικιλῶς) greatly *diversified Wisdom* of GOD. Eph. iii. 10.

then He spoiled Principalities, triumphed over the Powers of Darkness, and led Captivity captive.—And now He is exalted to his heavenly Throne, with what a prevailing Efficacy does his Grace go forth, “conquering, and to conquer!” By this, the *Slaves of Sin* are rescued from their Bondage, and restored to the *Liberty of Righteousness*. By this, depraved Wretches, whose *Appetites* were *sensual*, and their *Dispositions* *devilish*, are not only renewed, but renewed after the Image of *GOD*, and made Partakers of a *Divine Nature*. Millions, Millions of lost Creatures are snatched, by the Interposition of Grace, like *Brands* from the Burning; and, translated into everlasting Mansions, shine *brighter* than the *Stars*, shine *bright* as the *Sun*, in the Kingdom of their Father.

Wou’D you see a more complete Display of the Divine *Purity*, than the unspotted Firmament, the Spangles of Heaven, or the golden Fountain of Day? Contemplate the same sacred Being. He is the *Brightness* of his Father’s *Glory*, and the *express Image* of his Person. In his immaculate Nature, in his heavenly *Temper*, in his most holy *Life*, the *moral Perfections* of the *Deity* are represented to the highest Advantage*.—Hark! how *Mercy*, with her charming

* In this Sense, that Saying of our *LORD* is eminently true, *He that hath seen ME, hath seen the FATHER*, John xiv. 9.

ing Voice, speaks in all He utters.—See ! how *Benevolence* pours her choicest Stores, in all He does.—Did ever *Compassion* look so amiably soft, as in those pitying *Tears*, which swelled his Eyes, and trickled down his Cheeks, to bedew the *Rancour* of his inveterate Enemies?—Was it possible for *Patience* to assume a Form so lovely, as that sweetly-winning Conduct, which bore the *Contradiction* of *Sinners*; and *intreated* the *Obstinate*, to be reconciled; *besought* the *Guilty*, not to die?—In a Word; from other Things, we may collect some *scattered Rays* of J E H O V A H's Glory; but in CHRIST they are all *united*; and beam forth with the strongest Radiance, the most delightful Effulgence. *Out of Sion*, and in *Sion's* great Redeemer, *bath GOD* appeared in perfect Beauty.

SEARCH then, my Soul, above all other Pursuits, search the *Records* of *redeeming Love*. Let these be the *principal Objects* of thy Study. Here employ thyself with the most unwearied *Affiduity*.—*In these are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge* *. Such *Wisdom*, as
the

* *Colof. ii. 3.*—Not a mean Degree, but a *Treasure*; not one *Treasure*, but *many*; not many only, but *all Treasures*, of true *Wisdom*, and saving *Knowledge*; are in CHRIST, and his glorious *Gospel*.
—The *superior Excellency* of those *Treasures* seems
to

the very Angels are intensely desirous to become more intimately acquainted with * : *Such Knowledge*, as qualifies the Possessor, if not for Offices of Dignity on Earth, yet for the most honourable Advancements in the Kingdom of Heaven. Disunited from which, all *Application* is but *elaborate Impertinence* ; and all *Science*, no better than

to be finely intimated, in that other Expression—*αποκερυφουι*—*hid*; or *laid up*, with the utmost Care, and in a Place of the greatest Safety. Not left at all Adventures, to be *stumbled upon* by every giddy *Wanderer*, or to *fall into* the Arms of the yawning *Sluggard*; but, like *Jewels* of the brightest Lustre, or *Riches* of the highest Value, *kept in Store* to adorn and reward the diligent Searcher.

* This, I believe, is the *Import* of the Apostle's Language, though it is not a *literal* Translation of —*Εις α επιθυμωσιν αγγελουι παρακυψαι. 1 Pet. i. 12.*—I never had so lively an Apprehension of the beautiful Significancy of the last Word, as when I have attended a *Dissection* of some Part of the *animal* Body. In order to discern the *Minutiæ* of the admirable Frame ; the *latent* Wonders of Art and Mechanism ; the Eye is so sharpened, and its Application so *intensely bended*, as gives a very just *experimental Comment* on that expressive Phrase, *παρακυψαι.* —With such earnest Attention is the everlasting Gospel contemplated by the *Angelic* Orders ! How much more, if it were possible, does it deserve the devout and incessant Consideration of *human* Minds ? Since by *them*, it is not only to be *speculated*, as a bright and ravishing Display of the Divine Attributes ; but to be *applied* to their fallen Nature, as a most benign Scheme of *recovering* Grace ; as the *sure* and *only* Method of obtaining Life and Immortality.

than *pompous Ignorance*.—These also contain the *faultless Model* of Duty, and the *noblest Motives* to Obedience. Nothing so powerful to work a *lively Faith*, and a *joyful Hope*, as an attentive Consideration of our LORD's unutterable Merits. Nothing so soveraign to *antidote* the *pestilential Influence* of the World, and *deliver* our Affections from a *Slavery* to ignoble Objects, as an habitual Remembrance of his extreme Agonies. The genuine, the ever fruitful *Source* of all *Morality*, is the unfeigned Love of CHRIST; and the *Cross*, the CROSS, is the appointed * *Altar*, from which we may fetch a *Coal* †, to inkindle this sacred Fire.

BEHOLD, therefore *the Man*; the matchless and stupendous Man, who gave us a Pattern of the most exalted Virtue, and was Himself the Mirrour of every Divine Perfection. Examine the *Memoirs* of his exemplary *Conversation*. Contemplate that *Choir* of *Graces*, which were associated in his Mind, and shed the highest Lustre on all his Actions: familiarize to thy Thoughts his heavenly Discourses, and enter into the very

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O

Spirit

* *And I, says our LORD, if I be lifted up from the Earth, and extended on the Cross, will draw all Men unto me: will give such a rich and transcendent Display of my Love, as shall constitute the most powerful and prevailing Attractive of theirs. John xii. 32.*

† Alluding to *Isaiab* vi. 6.

Spirit of his *refined Doctrines*: get the one transfused into thy Breast, the other transcribed in thy Life.—Follow Him to the *last Scene* of the most innocent and useful Course, that was ever passed on Earth. Follow Him to *Calvary's* horrid Eminence, to *Calvary's* fatal Catastrophe. Be thy most constant Attention fixed on that lovely and sorrowful Spectacle. Behold the *spotless Victim*, nailed to the Tree, and stabbed to the Heart. Hear Him pouring out *Prayers* for his *Murderers*, before He poured out his *Soul* for *Trangressors*. See the *Wounds*, that stream with Forgiveness, and *bleed Balm* for a distempered World. O! see the Justice of the Almighty and his Goodness, his Mercy and his Vengeance, all his *tremendous* and *gracious* Attributes manifested; manifested with inexpressible Splendor, in that most *ignominious*, and yet *grandest*, of Transactions.

SINCE GOD is so inconceivably great, as these his marvellous Works declare;

*Since the great Sovereign sends Ten thousand
Worlds,
To tells us, He resides above them all,
In Glory's unapproachable Recefs*;*

What

* For this *Quotation*, and several valuable *Hints*, I acknowledge myself indebted to those beautiful and sublime Poems, intitled *Night-Thoughts*.——Of which

What an *honourable*, as well as advantageous *Employ*, is *Prayer*? By *Prayer*, we have *Access* to that most mighty *Potentate*, whose *Sceptre* sways universal Nature, and whose rich *Regalia* fill the Skies with *Lustre*. *Prayer* places us in his *Presence-Chamber*, while “the *Blood* of “*sprinkling*” procures us a gracious *Audience*.—Shall I then *blush* to be found prostrate before the *Throne of Grace*? Shall I be *ashamed* to have it known, that I offer up social *Supplications* in the *Family*, or am conscientious in observing my private *Retirements*? Rather let me *glory* in this unspeakable *Privilege*. Let me reckon it the *noblest Posture*, to *fall* low on my *Knees* before his *Footstool*; and the *highest Honour*, to enjoy *Communion* with his most exalted *Majesty*.—Incomparably more noble, than to *sit*, in *Person*, on the triumphal *Chariot*; or to *stand*, in *Effigy*, amidst the *Temple of Worthies*.

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H o w

which I shall only say, That I receive fresh *Pleasure*, and richer *Improvement*, from every renewed *Perusal*. And, I think, I shall have *Reason* to bless the indulgent *Bestower* of all *Wisdom*, for those instructive and animating *Compositions*, even in my last *Moments*. Than which, nothing can more emphatically speak their very *superior Excellency*, nor give a more *solid Satisfaction* to their worthy *Author*.—Happy should I think myself, if these *little Sketches* of contemplative *Devotion*, might be honoured with the *most inferior Degree*, of the same *Success*; and receive a *Testimony*, not from the *Voice of Fame*, but from the dying *Lips* of some edified *Christian*.

How ineffimable, in such a View, is that Promise, which so often occurs in the prophetic Writings, and is the crowning Benefit of the new Covenant, *I will be thy GOD* *?—Will this supremely excellent, and Almighty Being, vouchsafe to be my Portion? To settle upon a poor Sinner, not the *Heritage* of a County, not the Possession of the whole *Earth*, but his *own* ever-blessed *Self*? May I then, through his free condescending Grace, and the unknown Merits of his Son, look upon all these infinitely noble Attributes as my Treasure? May I regard the *Wisdom*, which superintends such a Multitude of Worlds, as my *Guide*; the *Power*, which produced, and preserves them in Existence, as my *Guard*; the *Goodness*, which, by an endless Communication of Favours, renders them all so many Habitations of Happiness, as my *exceeding great Reward*?——What a Fund of Felicity is included in such a Blessing? How often does the *Israelitish* Prince exult in the Assurance, that this unutterable and boundless Good is his own? Interested in this, he bids *Defiance* to every *Evil*, that can be dreaded; and rests in certain *Expectation* of every *Blessing*, that can be desired. *The LORD is my Light, and my Salvation; whom then shall I fear? The LORD, with an Air of Exultation, he repeats both his Affiance, and his Challenge, is the Strength of my Life; of*

* Heb. viii. 10.

whom then shall I be afraid * ? Nothing so effectual, as this appropriating Faith, to inspire a *Dignity of Mind*, superior to transitory Trifles ; or to create a *Calmness of Temper*, unalarmed by vulgar Fears, unappalled by Death itself.—*The LORD is my Shepherd*, says the same truly gallant and heroic Personage, *therefore shall I lack nothing* †. How is it possible, *He* should suffer Want, who has the *All-sufficient Fulness* for his Supply ? So long as unerring Wisdom is capable of *contriving* the Means, and uncontrollable Power is able to *execute* them ; such a one cannot fail of being safe and happy ; whether he continue amidst the Vicissitudes of Time, or depart into the unchangeable Eternity.

HERE let us stand a Moment, and contemplate this great GOD, together with our selves, in a relative View—If we reflect on the Works of *material Nature*, their Number, incomprehensible, and their Extent unmeasurable : each of them apart, so admirably framed ; the Connections of the whole, so exquisitely regulated ; and all derived, from one and the same glorious Agent.—If we recollect the far more noble Accomplishments of elegant Taste, and discerning Judgment ; of refined Passions, and exalted Sentiments ; which are to be found, among the several Orders of *understanding Beings* : and all of them flowing, in rich Emanations, from the

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one

* Psal. xxvii. 1.

† Psal. xxiii. 1.

one sole Fountain of intellectual Light.—If we farther consider this Author of material Beauty, and moral Excellency, as a *Guardian*, a *Governour*, and *Benefactor* to all his Creatures: supporting their Being, and protecting their Persons, by an ever watchful Providence; presiding over their Affairs, and causing all Events to terminate in the most extensive Good; heaping, with unremitted Liberality, his Benefits upon every capable Object, and making the whole Circle of Existence a Seminary of Happiness.—It is possible for the human Heart, under such captivating Views, to be *indifferent* towards this ever-blessed Original of all Good? Can any be so immersed in Stupidity, as to say, unto the Almighty—in the Language of an irreligious Temper, and licentious Life, to say? “Depart from Us; we implore not thy Favour; nor desire the Knowledge of thy Ways.”——Wonder, O *Heavens!* be amazed, O *Earth!* and let all the Inhabitants of *both* joyn their Astonishment, at this unparalleled Complication of dis-ingenuous, ungrateful, and destructive Perverseness!

If we consider our own *imperfect* State; frail in our Bodies; enfeebled in our Minds; in every Part of our Constitution, and in all the Occurrences of Life, “like a tottering Wall, or a broken Hedge”.—If we survey our *indigent* State;

State ; without Holiness ; without Happiness ; our Possession of present Conveniencies absolutely precarious, our All in GOD'S Hand, and entirely dependent on *his good* Pleasure ; yea forfeited, with every future Hope, by a Thousand aggravated Iniquities.—If we add the various *Disasters* of our Condition ; agitated by tumultuous Passions, oppressed with dispiriting Fears ; held in Suspence by a Variety of perplexing * Cares ; liable to Pains, and exposed to Troubles ; Troubles, from every Quarter ; Troubles, of every Kind ;—Can we, amidst so many Wants, under such deplorable Infirmities, and

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subject

* All that are conversant with the original Language of the New Testament, are sufficiently apprized, that *this* is the *Significancy* of that important Dissuasive, urged by our LORD, *μη μεριμνασθε*. Mat. vi. 25.—I beg Leave, for the sake of the *unlearned* Reader, to observe, That our Translation, though for the most Part faithful and excellent, has here slipt into a very great Impropriety, and misrepresented our divine Master's Meaning. *Take no thought for your Body*, is not only not the *true* Sense, but the very *Reverse* of the Scriptural Doctrine. We are required to take a *prudent* and *moderate* Thought, for the Necessaries of Life. The Sluggard, who neglects this decent Precaution, is severely reprimanded ; is sent to one of the meanest Animals, to blush for his Folly, and learn Discretion from her Conduct, Prov. v. 6 Our Saviour's Precept, and the exact Sense of his Expression, is, Take no *anxious* Thought ; indulge no *perplexing* Care ; no *such* Care, as may argue an unreasonable *Distrust* of Providence ; or may *rend* and *tear* your Minds with distressing, with pernicious Solicitude.

subject to such disastrous Accidents,—can we be *unconcerned*, whether GOD's omnipotent Hand, and uncontrollable Will, be *against* Us, or *for* Us? Imagination itself shudders at the Thought! —Can we rest satisfied, without a *well-grounded* Persuasion, that we are *reconciled* to this supreme LORD, and the Objects of his unchangeable Goodness? If there be an abandoned Wretch, whose Apprehensions are so fatally blinded; who is so utterly lost to all Sense of his Duty, and of his Interest: let me bewail his Misery; while I abhor his Impiety. Bewail his Misery; though *Popularity*, with her choicest Laurels, adorn his Brow: though *Affluence*, with her richest Delicacies, load his Table; though half a Nation, or half a World, conspire to call Him *happy*.

As for me, may I, by a *believing Application*, solace myself in this everlasting Source of Love, Perfection, and Joy! Grant me this Request, and I ask no more.—Only, that I may expect, not with a *misgiving* Anxiety, but with an humble *Cheerfulness*, the Arrival of that important Day; when this Veil of Flesh shall drop, and all the Shadows of Mortality flee away. When I shall no longer complain of *obscure* knowledge, *languid* Affections, and *imperfect* Fruition: but shall see the uncreated and immortal Majesty. See Him, not in this distant and unaffecting Method of reasoning from his Works, but with
the

the most clear and direct Intuition of the Mind. When I shall love Him, not with cold and contracted, but with the most lively and enlarged Emotions of Gratitude. When I shall abundantly enjoy the Light of his Countenance, and be united, intimately, inseparably united to his glorious GODHEAD.—Take ye *Ambitious*, un-envied and un-opposed, take to yourselves the *Toys* of State. May I be enabled to *rejoyce* in this blessed Hope, and to *triumph* in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful, Name, the LORD MY GOD! And I shall scarce bestow a Thought on the splendid Pageantry of the World; unless it be to *despise* its empty Pomp, and to *pity* its deluded Admirers.

ALL these Bodies, though immense in their Size, and almost infinite in their Multitude, are *obedient* to the *Divine Command*. The GOD of Wisdom “telletH their Numbers,” and is intimately acquainted with their various Properties. The GOD of Power “calletH them all by their “Names,” and assigns them whatsoever Office He pleases.—He *marshals* all the *starry Legions*, with infinitely greater Ease, and nicer Order, than the most expert *General* arranges his disciplined *Troops*. He appoints their *Posts*; he marks their *Route*; he fixes the Time for their *Return*. The *Posts*, which he appoints, they occupy, without fail. In the *Route*, which he settles

settles, they persevere, without the least Deviation. And are punctual to the Instant*, which he fixes for their Return.—He has given them a *Law*, which, through a long Revolution of Ages, shall not be broken; unless his sovereign Will interposes for its *Repeal*. Then indeed their Motions are controuled, their Action is suspended, and their Influence sealed up.—The *Sun*, at his Creation, received a Command to travel through the Heavens. Since which, he has constantly performed the great Circuit, and “rejoiced, as a Giant, to run his Race.” But, when it was requisite to subserve the Purposes of Divine Love, the Orders are countermanded; the flaming Courier stops his Career; *stand still in Gibeon* †; and, for the Conveniency of the chosen People, holds back the falling Day.—The *Moon* too was dispatched with a Charge,
never

* “The Planets, and all the innumerable Host of heavenly Bodies, perform their Courses and Revolutions, with so much Certainty and Exactness, as never once to fail; but, for almost 6000 Years, come constantly about to the same Period, in the hundredth Part of a Minute.” *Stackhouse’s Hist. Bib.*

† This is spoken in Conformity to the Scripture Language, and according to the common Notion. With respect to the Power which effected the Alteration, it is much the same Thing, and alike miraculous, whether the Sun or the Earth be supposed to move.

never to intermit her revolving Motion, till Day and Night come to an End. But, when the Children of Providence were to be favoured with an uncommon Continuation of Light, she halts in her March; makes a solemn Pause *in the Valley of Ajalon* *; and delays to bring on her attendant Train of Shadows.—When the Enemies of the LORD are to be discomfited, the Stars likewise are levied into the Service; the Stars are armed, and take the Field; *the Stars, in their Courses, fought against Sisera* †.

So

* *Josb. x. 12, 13.*——The Prophet *Habakkuk*, according to his lofty Manner, celebrates this Event; and points out, in very poetical Diction, the Design of so surprizing a Miracle.—*The Sun and Moon stood still in their Habitation: In the Light, the long-continued and miraculous Light, thy Arrows, edged with Destruction, walked on their awful Errand; in the clear Shining of the Day, protracted for this very Purpose, thy glittering Spear, launched by thy People, but guided by thy Hand, sprung to its Prey. Hab. iii. 11.*

† *Judg. v. 20*—The scriptural Phrase *fought against*, will, I hope, be a proper *Warrant* for every Expression I have used on this Occasion.—The Passage is generally supposed to signify, that some very dreadful *Meteors*, (which the Stars were thought to influence) such as fierce *Flashes of Lightning*, impetuous Showers of *Rain*, and rapid Storms of *Hail*; were employed by the Almighty to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the Enemies of *Israel*. If so, there cannot be a more clear and lively Paraphrase on the Text, than those fine Lines of a *Jewish* Writer.—

H's

So dutiful is material Nature ; so obsequious, in all her *Forms*, to her Creator's Pleasure !—The *bellowing Thunders* listen to his Voice, and the *vollied Lightnings* observe the Direction of his Eye. The flying *Storm*, and impetuous *Whirlwind*, wear his Yoke. The *raging Waves* revere his Nod ; they shake the Earth, and dash the Skies, yet never offer to pass the Bounds which He has set.—Even the *planetary Spheres*, though vastly *larger* than this wide-extended Earth, are in his Hand as *Clay* in the Hands of the Potter ; though, far *swifter* than the *northern Blast*, they sweep the long Tracts of *Æther*, yet are they *guided* by his *Reins*, and precisely execute whatever He enjoins.—All those enormous *Globes* of *central Fire*, which beam through the boundless *Azure* ; in comparison of which, an Army of Planets were like a Swarm of Summer Insects ; those, even those, are conformable to his Will, as the *melting Wax* to the impressed Seal.

His severe Wrath shall HE sharpen for a Sword ; and the World shall fight with Him against the Ungodly. Then shall the right-aiming Thunderbolts go abroad ; and from the Clouds, as from a well-drawn Bow, shall they fly to the Mark. And Hail-stones, full of Wrath, shall be cast as out of a Stone Bow ; and the Water of the Sea shall rage against them ; and the Floods (as was the Case with the River Kishon) shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty Wind shall stand up against them ; and, like a Storm, shall blow them away. Wisd. v. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Seal.—And if *all*, ALL is *obedient*, throughout the whole Ascent of Things, shall *Man* be the *only Rebel*? Shall our unruly *Appetites* reject the Government of Almighty Goodness? Shall these headstrong *Passions* break loose from Divine Restraint; and run wild, in exorbitant Sallies, after their own Imaginations?

O MY Soul, be stung with Remorse, and overwhelmed with Confusion, at such a Thought! Is it not a righteous Thing, that the blessed GOD should sway the Sceptre, with the most absolute Authority, over all the Creatures, which his Power has formed; especially over those Beings, whom his distinguishing Favour has endued with the noble Principle of Reason, and made capable of a blissful Immortality? Sure, if all the Ranks of inanimate Existence submit to their Maker's Decree, by the *Necessity* of their Nature; this more excellent Race should pay their equal Homage, by the *willing Compliance* of their Affections*.—Come then, all ye *Faculties* of my
my

* This Argument, I acknowledge, is not *absolutely conclusive*: But it is *popular* and *striking*. Nor can I think myself obliged, in such a Work, where *Fancy* bears a considerably Sway, to proceed always with the Caution and Exactness of a *Disputer* in the *Schools*. If there be some Appearance of Analogy between the Fact and the Inference, it seems sufficient for my
Purpose;

my *Mind*; come all ye *Powers* of my *Body*; give up yourselves, without a Moment's Delay, without the least Reserve, to his Governance. Stand, like dutiful Servants, at his Footstool, in an everlasting Readiness, to *do* whatsoever He requires; to *be* whatsoever He appoints: To further, with *united Efforts*, the Purposes of his Glory in this *earthly Scene*: or else to *separate*, without Reluctance, at his Summons; the *one* to sleep in the silent Dust, the *other* to advance his Honour in some remoter Colony of his Kingdom.—Thus may I join with all the Works of the LORD, in all Places of his Dominion, to recognize his universal Supremacy; and proclaim
Him

Purpose; though the Deduction should not be necessary, or strictly syllogistical—One of the *Apostolic Fathers* has an affecting and truly sublime Paragraph, which runs intirely in this Form; Ηλιος τε και σεληνη, ασερων τε χοροι, κατα την διαταγην αυτην ομονοια, διχα πασης παρεκβασειως, εξελισσασιν τας επιταγμενους αυτοις ορισμους. *The Sun, the Moon, and the starry Choir, without the least Deviation, and with the utmost Harmony, perform the Revolutions appointed them by the supreme Decree.* From which Remark, and abundance of other similar Instances observable in the Oeconomy of Nature, he exhorts Christians to a *cordial Unanimity* among themselves, and a *dutiful Obedience* to GOD. Vid. *Clem. Roman. 1. Ep. ad Corinth. Sect. 20.*—See also a beautiful Ode in Dr. *Watts's* Lyric Poems, intituled, *The Comparison and Complaint*, which turns intirely upon this very Thought.

Him *Sovereign* of *Souls*, as well as *Ruler* of *Worlds*.

AT my first coming abroad, all these Luminaries were totally eclipsed, by the overpowering Lustre of the Sun. They were all placed in the very same Stations, and played the same sprightly Beam; yet not one was seen. As the Day-light wore away, and the sober Shades advanced, *Hesperus*, that leads the starry Train, raised his radiant Forehead, and caught my Eye. While I stood gazing on his bright and beautiful Aspect, others peeped thro' the blue Curtains. Scarce had I turned to observe these fresh Emanations of Splendor, but others dropt the Veil; others stole into View. When lo! faster and more numerous, Multitudes sprung from Obscurity; they poured, in shining Troops, and in sweet Confusion, over all the *caerulean* Plain. 'Till the Firmament seemed like one vast Constellation, and a Flood of Glory burst from all the Skies.

Is not such the *Rise*, and such the *Progress* of a true *Conversion*, in the prejudiced Infidel, or inattentive Sinner? In the Period of his vainer Years, a thousand interesting Truths lay utterly undiscovered; a thousand momentous Concerns were entirely disregarded. But when divine Grace dissipates the delusive Glitter, which dazled

dazled his Understanding, or beguiled his Affections; then He begins to discern, dimly to discern the Things that belong to his Peace. Some powerful Admonition of Scripture darts Conviction into his Mind, as the Rays of a Star pierce the Gloom of Night. Then, perhaps, another awful or cheering Text, flings Terror, or diffuses Comfort; a Threatning alarms his Fears, or a Promise awakens his Hopes. This, possibly, is succeeded by some very impressive Dispensation of Providence; or improved by some edifying and instructive Conversation. All which is fastened, as to its Continuance, and enlarged as to its Influence, by a diligent Study of the sacred Word. By this Means, new Truths continually pour their Evidence; new Scenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto, unknown Delight, address Him with their Attractives; new Desires take Wing; new Pursuits are set on Foot; a new Set of Tempers actuate his Heart; a new Habit of Conversation regulates his Life; old Things are passed away, and “He that was sometime Darkness, is now “Light, and Life, and Joy in the LORD.”

THE more attentively I view the crystal Concave, the greater *Number* of Luminaries I discern. Abundance of minuter Lights, that lay concealed from a *superficial Notice*, are visible on a *closer Examination*. Especially in those Tracts
of

of the Sky, which are called the *Galaxy*, and are distinguishable by a Sort of milky Path. *There* they are crouded, rather than disseminated. The Region seems to be all on a Blaze with their blended Rays. They shine thick as *Dew-drops* on the Face of the *Morning*.—Besides this vast Profusion, which the prying Eye discovers; were I to make my Survey from some other Part of the Globe, the *Northern* or the *Southern Pole*, I should behold a *new Choir* of starry Bodies, which have never appeared in our *Hemisphere*.—And were I, either *Here* or *There*, to view the Firmament with the *Virtuoso's Glass*; I should find a prodigious Multitude of flaming Orbs, that, immersed in Depths of *Æther*, escape the keenest unassisted Sight*.—And yet, in these various Situations, even with the Aid of the Telescopic Tube, I should not be able to descry the Half, perhaps not a *Thousandth Part*, of those illustrious Bodies, which the vast expansive Hea-

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P

vens

* Come forth, O Man, yon azure Round survey,
 And view those Lamps, which yield eternal Day,
 Bring forth thy Glasses: Clear thy wond'ring Eyes:
 Millions beyond the former Millions rise:
 Look farther:—Millions more blaze from remoter
 Skies.

See an ingenious Poem, intituled, *The Universe*.

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vens contain *.—So, the more diligently I pursue my Search, into those Oracles of eternal Truth, the *Scriptures*; I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever-increasing *Fund of spiritual Treasures*. I perceive the Diviner Strokes of Wisdom, and the richer Displays of Goodness; the more transcendent Excellency of the Messiah, and a more deplorable Vileness in fallen Man; a more immaculate Purity in G O D's Law, and more precious Privileges in his Gospel. And yet, after a Course of Study, ever so assiduous, ever so prolonged, I should have Reason to own myself a mere *Babe* in heavenly Knowledge; or, at most, but a *puerile* Proficient in the *School* of CHRIST.

AFTER all my most accurate Inspection, those *starry Orbs* appear but as *glittering Points*; and even the *Planets*, though so much nearer our earthly Mansion, seem not to exceed the Size of *flaming Bullets*. If then we have such
imperfect

* How noble, considered in this View, are the Celebrations of the Divine Majesty, which frequently occur in the sacred Writings! *It is the LORD that made the Heavens*. Psal. xcvi. 5.—What a prodigious Dignity, does such a Sense of Things give, to that devout Ascription of Praise; *Thou, even Thou, art LORD alone; Thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, with all their Host*. Nehem. ix. 6.—And how inimitably sublime is that beautiful Climax, in the inspired Hymn! *Praise HIM, Sun and Moon: Praise Him, all ye Stars of Light: Praise Him, ye Heaven of Heavens*. Psal. cxlviii. 3, 4.

imperfect Apprehensions of visible and material Things, how much more scanty and inadequate must be our Notions of invisible and immortal Objects?—We behold the Stars; and, though every one is incomparably *bigger* than this whole Earth; yet they *dwindle*, upon our Survey, into the most diminutive Forms. Thus, we see by Faith the Glories of the blessed JESUS; the atoning Efficacy of his Death; the justifying Merit of his Righteousness; and the Joys, which are reserved for the Godly. But alas! even our most *exalted* Ideas are vastly *below* the Truth: As much below the Truth, as the Report, which our Eyes make of those celestial Edifices, is inferior to their real Grandeur.—Should we take in all the *magnifying Assurances*, which Art has contrived; those luminous Bodies would elude our Skill, and seem as *small* as ever. Should an Inhabitant of Earth travel towards the Cope of Heaven, and be carried forwards, in his aerial Journey, more than a hundred and sixty Millions of Miles*; even in that *advanced Situation*, those

* This, incredible as it may seem, is not a *mere Supposition*, but a *real Fact*. For, about the Tenth of *December*, we are above 160,000,000 of Miles nearer the Northern Parts of the Sky, than we were at the Tenth of *June*. And yet, with regard to the Stars situate in that Quarter, we perceive no *Change* in their *Aspect*, nor any *Augmentation* of their *Magnitude*.

Oceans of Flame would look no larger than *radiant Specks*. In like Manner conceive ever so magnificently of the Redeemer's *Honours*, and of the *Bliss* which he has purchas'd for his People, yet you will fall short. Raise your Imagination *higher*; stretch your Invention *wider*; give them *all the Scope*, that a soaring and excursive Fancy can take; still your Conceptions will be extremely *disproportionate* to their genuine Perfections.— Vast are the *Bodies*, which roll in the Expanse of Heaven; vaster far are those *Fields of Æther*, through which they run their endless Round; but the Excellency of J E S U S, and the Happiness laid up for his Servants, are greater than *either*, than *both*, than *all*. An inspired Writer calls one, “The unfearchable Riches of CHRIST;” and styles the other, “An exceeding great and “ eternal Weight of Glory.”

I F those Stars are so many inexhaustible *Magazines of Fire*, and immense *Reservoirs of Light*, there is no Reason to doubt, but they have some very *grand Uses*, suitable to the Magnificence of their Nature. To specify or explain the particular Purposes they answer, is altogether impossible in our present State of Distance and Ignorance. This however we may clearly discern, that they are disposed in such a manner, as is most *pleasing* and *serviceable* to Mankind.—They are not placed at
such

such an *infinite Remove*, as to lie beyond our Sight; neither are they brought *so near* our Abode, as to annoy us with their Beams. We see them shine on every Side; and the deep Azure, that serves them as a Ground, heightens their Splendor. But their Influence is gentle, and their Rays destitute of Heat. So that we are favoured with the View of a Multitude of fiery Globes; without any Risque either to the *Coolness* of our *Night*, or the *Quiet* of our *Rest*.—Who can sufficiently admire that immense Benignity; which, on our Account, *strews* the *Earth* with Blessings of every Kind; and vouchsafes to make the *very Heavens*, subservient to our Delight.

BUT it is not solely to *adorn* the Roof of our Palace with costly Gildings, that GOD commands the celestial Luminaries to glitter through the Gloom. We also reap considerable *Benefits* from their Ministry.—They *divide* our *Time*, and fix its solemn Periods. They settle the *Order* of our *Works*; and are, according to the Destination mentioned in sacred Writ, “for
“ Signs, and for Seasons, for Days, and for
“ Years.” The Returns of Heat and Cold alone would have been too precarious a Rule. But these radiant Bodies, by the *Variation*, and also by the *Regularity* of their Motions, afford a Method of calculating, absolutely certain, and
P 3 sufficiently

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sufficiently obvious. By this the *Farmer* is instructed, when to commit his Grain to the Furrows, and how to conduct the Operations of Husbandry. By this the *Sailor* knows when to proceed on his Voyage, with least Peril; and how to carry on the Business of Navigation, with most Success.

AND why should not the Christian, the *Probationer* for *Eternity*, learn from the same Monitors how to *number* his *Days*; and duly to transact the Affairs, that belong to his Peace? Since G O D has appointed so many *bright Measurers* of our Time, to determine its larger Periods, and to minute down its ordinary Stages; sure, this most strongly inculcates its *Value*, and should powerfully prompt us to *improve* it.—Behold! the supreme Lord marks the Progress of our *Life*, in that most *conspicuous Kalendar* above. And does not such an Ordination tell us, in the most emphatical Language, That it is given for *Use*, not for *Waste*? That no Portion of it is delivered, but under a *strict Account*; that all of it is entered, as it passes, in the *Divine Register*; and, therefore, that the Stewards of such a Talent are to expect a *future Reckoning*!—Behold! the very Heavens are bidden to be the *Accountants* of our Years, and Months, and Days. O! may this induce us to manage them with a vigilant Frugality; to part with them, as *Misers* with
with

with their *hoarded Treasure*, warily and circumspectly; and, if possible, as *Merchants* with their *rich Commodities*, not without their Equivalent, either in personal Improvement, or social Usefulness.

How bright the starry Diamonds shine? The Ambition of *eastern Monarchs* could imagine no Distinction, more noble and sublime, than that of being likened to those beaming Orbs*.— They form Night's *richest Dress*, and sparkle upon her sable *Robe*, like *Jewels* of the finest Lustre. Like *Jewels*! I wrong their Character. The *lucid Stone* has no Brilliancy, quenched is the Flame even of the *golden Topaz*, compared with those glowing Decorations of Heaven.— How widely are their radiant Honours diffused! No Nation *so remote*, but sees their Beauty, and rejoices in their Usefulness. They have been admired by all *preceding* Generations, and every *rising* Age will gaze on their Charms with renewed Delight.—How *animating* then is that *Promise*, made to the faithful *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, “ They that turn many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars for ever and ever †.” Is not this a most winning Encouragement “ to spend and be spent,” in the Service of Souls? Methinks, the Stars *beckon*,

P 4

as

* Numb. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10.

† Dan. xii. 3.

as they *twinkle*. Methinks, they shew me their Splendors, on purpose to awaken my *Alacrity*, in the *Race* set before me; on purpose to enliven my *Activity*, in the *Work* that is given me to do.—If *Honour* has any *Charms*; if true *Glory*, the *Glory* which cometh from G O D, is any *Attractive*; there cannot be a more powerful *Incentive*, to exercise all *Affiduity* in my holy *Vacation*. Therefore, when *Zeal* becomes *languid*, let me have Recourse to these Lamps of Heaven, and *rekindle* its *Ardor* at their *inextinguishable Fires*,

OF the *Polar Star*, it is observeable, that while other Luminaries *alter* their Situation, this seems invariably *fixed* *. While other Luminaries now *mount* the *Battlements* of Heaven, and appear upon *Duty*; now *retire* beneath the *Horizon*, and resign, to a *fresh Set*, the *Watches* of the *Night*; this never departs from its *Station*. This, in every *Season*, maintains an *uniform Position*, and is always to be found in the same *Point* of the northern *Sky*.—How often has *this* beamed bright *Intelligence* on the *Sailor*, and conducted the *Keel* to its desired *Haven*? In
early

* I speak in Conformity to the *Appearance* of the *Object*. For, though this remarkable *Star* revolves round the *Pole*, its *Motion* is so *slow*, and the *Circle* it describes so *small*, as render both the *Revolution*, and *Change* of *Situation*, hardly perceivable.

early Ages, those that went down to the Sea in Ships, and occupied their Business in great Waters, had scarce any other *sure Guide* for their wandering Vessel. This therefore they viewed with the most solicitous Attention. By this they formed their Observations, and regulated their Voyage. When this was obscured by Clouds, or enveloped in Mists, the trembling Mariner was *bewildered* on the watery Waste. His Thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating Surge; and he knew not *where* he was advanced, nor *whither* he should steer. But, when this auspicious Star broke through the Gloom, it dissipated the *Anxiety* of his Mind, and cleared up his *dubious Passage*. He re-assumed, with Alacrity, the Management of the Helm; and was able to shape his Course, with some tolerable Degree of Satisfaction and Certainty.

SUCH, only much *clearer* in its *Light*, and much *surer* in its *Direction*, is the *Holy Word* of GOD, to those Myriads of intellectual Beings, who are bound for the eternal Shores; and, embarked in a Vessel of frail Flesh, are to pass the Waves of this perilous World. In all *Difficulties*, these sacred Pages shed an *encouraging Ray*; in all *Uncertainties*, they suggest the *right Determination*, and point out a *proper Procedure*. And, what is still a more inestimable Advantage, they, like

like the Star which conducted the Eastern Sages, make *plain* our Way to the *Redeemer*. They display his unspeakable Merits; discover the Method of being interested in his Atonement; and lead the weary Soul, *tossed* by Troubles, and *shattered* by Temptations, to that only *Harbour* of peaceful *Repose*.—Let us, therefore, attend to this *unerring Directory*, with the same Constancy of Regard, as the Sea-faring Man observes his Compass. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this *sacred Chart*, as the Pilot is with every trusty Mark, that gives notice of a lurking Rock; and with every open Road, that yields a safe Passage into the Port. Above all, let us *commit* ourselves to this *infallible Guidance*, with the same implicit Resignation; let us *conform* to its *Divine Precepts*, with the same sedulous Care; as the Children of *Israel*, when sojourning in the trackless Desert, followed the Pillar of Fire, and the Motions of the miraculous Cloud.—So, will it introduce us, not into an *earthly Canaan*, flowing with Milk and Honey; but into an *immortal Paradise*, where is the Fulness of Joy, and where are Pleasures for evermore. It will introduce us into those happy, happy Regions, where *our Sun shall no more go down, nor our Moon withdraw itself; for the LORD shall be our everlasting Light, and the Days of our Mourning,*

Mourning, together with the Fatigues of our Pilgrimage, shall be ended.*

I PERCEIVE a great *Variety* in the Size and Splendor of those Gems of Heaven. Some are of the *first Magnitude*, others of an *inferior Order*. Some glow with intense Flames, others glimmer with fainter Beams. Yet all are beautiful; all have their peculiar Lustre, and distinct Use; all tend, in their different Degrees, to enamel the Cope of Heaven, and imbroider the Robe of Night.—This Circumstance is remarked by an *Author*, whose Sentiments are a *Source of Wisdom*, and the very *Standard of Truth*. “One
“ Star, says the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, *differeth*
“ from another Star in Glory: So also is the
“ Resurrection of the Dead.”

IN the World above are various *Degrees* of Happiness, various *Seats* of Honour. Some will rise to more illustrious Distinctions, and richer Joys †. Some, like Vessels of ample Capacity, will admit *more copious* Accessions of Light and Excellence. And yet there will be no Want, *no Deficiency* in any; but a *Fulness* both of Divine Satisfaction, and personal Perfection. Each will

* Isai. lx. 20.

† 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. The great Mr. Mede prefers the Sense here given; and the learned Dr. Hammond admits it, into his Paraphrase. Whose joint Authority, though far from excluding any other, yet is a sufficient Warrant for this Application of the Words.

will enjoy *all* the Good, and be adorned with all the Glory, that his Heart can wish, or his Condition receive.—None will know what it is, to *envy*. Not the least Malevolence, nor the *least Selfishness*, but everlasting Friendship prevails, and a *mutual Complacency* in each other's Delight. Love, *cordial Love*, will give every *particular* Saint a *Participation* of all the Fruitions *, that are diffused through the whole Assembly of the blessed.—None will *eclipse*, but rather *reflect Light* upon, another. A sweet Interchange of Rays subsists; all enlightened by the great Fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal Communication of Pleasure and Amity, each will be continually *receiving from*, each incessantly *adding to*, the general Felicity.

H A P P Y, supremely happy they, who obtain the *most humble* Portion in the celestial Mansions. Better to be a *Door-keeper* in those “ivory Palaces †,” than to fill the most *gorgeous Throne* on Earth. The very lowest Place at G O D'S Right-hand, is distinguished Honour, and consummate Delight.—O ! that we may *anticipate* something of that blissful State, while we remain in our Banishment below ! May we, *by rejoicing* in the superior Prosperity of another, make it
our

* *Tolle Invidiam, & tuum est quod habeo: Tolle Invidiam, & meum est quod habes.* Augustine.

† Psal. xlv. 8.

our own ! And, provided the *general Result* is Harmony, be content, be pleased, with *whatsoever Part* is assigned to our Share, in the universal Choir of Affairs.

WHILE I am considering the heavenly Bodies, I must not intirely forget those fundamental Laws of our modern Astronomy, *Projection*, and *Attraction*. One of which is the *all-combining Cement*, the other is the *ever-operative Spring*, of the mighty Frame.—In the Beginning, the all-creating FIAT impressed a proper Degree of Motion on each of those whirling Orbs. Which, if not controuled, would have carried them on, in strait Lines, and to endless Lengths, till they were even lost in the Abyss of Space. But, the *gravitating Property* being added to the *projectile Force*, determined their Courses to a *circular * Form*, and obliged the
reluctant

* I am aware, the planetary Orbits are not strictly *circular*, but rather *elliptical*. However, as they are but a small Remove from the perfectly rotund Figure ; and partake of it, incomparably more than the Trajectories of the Comets ; I choose to represent the Thing in this View. Especially, because the Notion of a Circle is so much more intelligible to the Generality of Readers, than that of an Ellipsis ; and because I laid it down for a Rule, not to admit any such *abstruse* Sentiment, or *barbarous* Expression, as should demand a *painful Attention*, instead of raising
an

reluctant Rovers to perform their destined Rounds.—Were either of those Causes to suspend their Action, all the harmoniously moving Spheres would degenerate into *torpid Masses*; and, falling into the central Fire, be burnt to *Ashes*: Or else, would exorbitate into *wild Confusion*; and each, by the Rapidity of its Whirl, be *dissipated* into *Atoms*. But, the impulsive and attractive Energy being most nicely attempered to each other; and, under the immediate Operation of the Almighty, exerting themselves in perpetual Concert; the various Globes run their radiant Races, without the least Interruption or Deviation: so as to create the alternate Changes of *Day* and *Night*, and distribute the useful Vicissitudes of *succeeding Seasons*: So as to answer all the great Ends of a gracious Providence, and procure every comfortable Convenience for universal Nature.

DOES not this Constitution of the *material*, very naturally lead the Thoughts to those grand Principles of the *moral* and *devotional* World,
Faith

an agreeable Idea. For which Reason, I have avoided *technical Terms*; have taken no notice of *Jupiter's Satellites*, or *Saturn's Ring*; have not so much as mentioned the Names of the Planets, nor attempted to wade into any Depths of the Science; lest, to those that have had no Opportunity of using the *Telescope*, or of acquainting themselves with a *System of Astronomy*, I should propound *Riddles*, rather than *entertaining and edifying Truths*.

Faith and Love?—These are often celebrated by the inspired Apostle, as a comprehensive Summary of the Gospel*. These inspirit the Breast, and regulate the Progress, of each *private Christian*. These unite the *whole Congregation* of the Faithful to GOD, and one another: To GOD, the great Centre, in the Bonds of Gratitude and Duty; to one another, by a reciprocal Intercourse of brotherly Affections, and friendly Offices.—If you ask, why it is impossible for the true Believer, to live at all Adventures; to *stagnate* in a listless *Inactivity*, or to indulge the *extravagant Excursions* of lawless Inclination?—It is owing to “his Faith working by Love †.” He verily trusts, that CHRIST has sustained the Infamy, and endured the Torment, due to his Sins. He firmly relies on that Divine Propitiation, for the Pardon of all his Guilt; and humbly expects everlasting Salvation, as the Purchase of his Saviour’s Merits. This produces such a Set of grateful Sentiments, and such a Spirit of unfeigned Thankfulness, as animate his whole Behaviour. He cannot, he cannot *run to Excess* of Riot; because Love to his adorable Redeemer, like a strong, but filken *Curb*, sweetly *restrains* him. He cannot, he cannot *lie lulled* in a *lethargic Indolence*; because Love to the same infinite

* Col. i. 4. Philem. ver. 5.

† Gal. v. 6.

nite Benefactor, like a pungent, but indearing *Spur*, pleasingly *excites* him.—In a Word ; Faith supplies the powerful *Impulse*, while Love gives the determining *Biafs*, and leads the willing Feet through the *whole Circle* of GOD'S Commandments. By the united Efficacy of these *heavenly Graces*, the *Christian Conduct* is preserved in the Uniformity and Beauty of Holiness ; as by the blended Power of those *Newtonian Principles*, the *solar System* revolves in a steady and magnificent Regularity.

How admirable, how extensive, how diversified is the Force, of this single Principle of *Attraction* ! *.—This penetrates the very Effence of all Bodies, and diffuses itself to the remotest Limits of the Mundane System.—By this, the vast Worlds of Matter hang *self-ballanced* on their Centres ; and, though Orbs of immense Magnitude, require nothing but this amazing Property for their Support. To this we ascribe a Phænomenon, of a very different Kind, the *Pressure* of the Atmosphere : which, though a yielding and expansive Fluid, yet constipated by an attractive Energy, surrounds the whole Globe, and encloses every Creature, as it were with a tight Bandage. An Expedient this, absolutely necessary to preserve the Texture of our Bodies,

and

* I mean the Attraction both of *Gravitation*, and *Cohesion*.

and indeed to maintain every Species of Animal Existence.—Urged by this wonderful Impetus, the *Rivers* circulate, with a never-failing Current, along the Veins of the Earth ; rolling with torrent Rapture, down the Steeps, or softly ebbing through the Plains. Impelled by the same mysterious Force, the *nutritious Juices* are detached from the Soil ; and, ascending the Trees, find their Way through Millions of the finest Meanders, in order to transfuse vegetative Life into all the Branches.—This confines the *Ocean* within proper Bounds : Though the Waves thereof roar ; though they toss themselves, with all the Madness of indignant Rage ; yet, checked by this potent, this inevitable Curb, they are unable to pass even the slight Barrier of Sand. To this the *Mountains* owe that unshaken Firmness, which laughs at the Shock of careering Winds ; and bids the Tempest, with all its mingled Horrors, impotently rave—By Vertue of this invisible Mechanism, without the Aid of Crane or Pulley, or any Instrument of human Device, many thousand Tons of Water are raised, every Moment, into the Regions of the Firmament : by this, they continue suspended in thin Air, without any capacious Cistern to contain their Substance, or any massy Pillars to sustain their Weight : by this same variously acting Power,

they drop down again in gentle Falls of Dew, or are precipitated in copious Showers of Rain; they slide into the Fields in fleecy Flights of Snow, or are darted upon the Houses in clattering Storms of Hail.—This occasions the strong *Cohesion* of solid Bodies; without which our large Machines could exert themselves with no Vigour, and the nicer Utensils of Life would elude all our Expectations of Service. This affords a Foundation for all those delicate or noble *mechanic Arts*, which furnish Mankind with numberless Conveniencies, both of Ornament and Delight.—In short; this is the prodigious *Ballast*, which composes the *Æquilibrium*, and constitutes the Stability of Things: this the great *Chain*, which forms the Connections of universal Nature; and the mighty *Engine*, which prompts, facilitates, and, in good Measure, accomplishes almost all her Operations.—O! what *complicated* Effects, from a *single* Cause *! what Profusion, amidst Frugality; an unknown Profusion of Benefits, with the utmost Frugality of Expence.

AND what *is* this Attraction? Is it a Quality, in its Existence inseparable from *Matter*,
and

* See another remarkable Instance of this Kind, in the *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*, pag. 173.—together with a fine Observation, quoted in the corresponding Note.

and in its Acting independent on the DEITY? —Quite the reverse. It is the very *Finger* of GOD: the constant Impression of divine Power: a Principle, neither innate in Matter, nor intelligible by Mortals. —Does it not, however, bear a considerable Analogy to the *Agency* of the HOLY GHOST, in the Christian Œconomy? Are not the gracious Operations of the blessed Spirit, thus *extensive*, thus *admirable*, thus *various*? —That almighty Being transmits his Gifts through every Age, and communicates his Graces to every Adherent on the Redeemer. All, either of illustrious Memory, or of Beneficial Tendency; in a Word, “all the Good that is done upon Earth, He doth it himself.” Strong in *his* Aid, and in the Power of *his* Might, the Saints of all Times, have trod Vice under their Feet; have triumphed over this abject World; and conversed in Heaven, while they dwelt on Earth. *Not, I, but the Grace of GOD which was with me**, is the unanimous Acknowledgment of them All. —By the same kindly Succours the whole Church is still enlightened, quickened, and governed. By his benign Influences, the Scales of *Ignorance* fall from the Understanding; the Leprosy of *evil Concupiscence* is purged from the Will; and the Fetters,

Q 2

ters,

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

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ters, the more than adamantine Fetters, of *habitual Iniquity* drop off from the Conversation. He breathes even upon dry Bones *, and they live : they are animated with Faith ; they pant with ardent Desire ; they exercise themselves in all the Duties of Godliness.—His real, though secret, Inspiration *dissolves* the Flint in the impenitent Breast, and *binds up* the Sorrows of the broken Heart : *raises* the Thoughts high in the Elevations of holy Hope, yet *lays* them low in the Humiliations of inward Abasement : *steels* the Soul with impenetrable Resolution, and persevering Fortitude ; and, at the same Time, *softens* it into a Dove-like Meekness, and *melts* it in penitential Sorrow.

WHEN I contemplate those *ample* and amazing *Structures*, erected in endless Magnificence, over all the æthereal Plains ; — When I look upon them as so many splendid *Repositories* of *Light*, or fruitful *Abodes* of *Life* ; — When I remember, that, in all Probability, there are *Orbs* vastly *more remote*, than those which appear to our unaided Sight ; Orbs, whose *Effulgence*, though travelling ever since the Creation, is *not*
yet

* See that beautiful Piece of sacred and allegorical Imagery displayed, Ezek. xxxvii.

yet arrived upon our Coasts * ;—When I stretch my Thoughts to the innumerable *Orders of Being*, which inhabit all those spacious Systems; from the *loftiest Seraph* that furrounds the Throne, to the *puny Nations* which tinge with Blue the Surface of the Plum †, or mantle the

Q 3

standing

* If this Conjecture (which has no less a Person than the celebrated Mr. *Huygens* for its Author) concerning *unseen Stars*, be true; if, to this Observation be added, what is affirmed by our skilful Astronomers; that the *Motion* of the *Rays* of Light is so *surprisingly swift*, as to pass through Ten Millions of Miles in a single Minute—How *vast! beyond Imagination* vast and unmeasurable, are the *Spaces* of the *Universe!*—While the Mind is distended with this *grand Idea*; or rather, while she is dispatching her ablest Powers of piercing *Judgment*, and excursive *Fancy*; and finds them all *drop short*; all baffled by the amazing Subject: Permit me to apply that beautiful Exclamation, and noble Remark—

— Say, proud Arch,
 Built with Divine Ambition; in Disdain
 Of Limit built; built in the Taste of Heaven!
 Vast Concave! Ample Dome! Wast thou design'd
 A meet Apartment for the DEITY?
 Not so: That Thought alone thy State impairs:
 Thy *Lofty* sinks; and shallows thy *Profound*;
 And straitens thy *Diffusive*.

Night-Thoughts, No. 9.

† Ev'n the *blue Down* the purple Plum furrounds,
 A *living World*, thy failing Sight confounds.

To

standing Pool with Green ;—O ! how various are the *Links* in this immense *Chain* ? How vast the *Gradations* in this universal *Scale* of Existence ? Yet *all* these, however vast and various, are the *Work* of GOD'S *Hand*, and are *full* of his *Presence*.

HE rounded in his Palm those dreadfully large Globes, which are pendulous in the Vault of Heaven. He kindled those astonishingly bright Fires, which fill the Firmament with a Flood of Glory. By Him they are suspended in *fluid Æther*, and cannot be *shaken* : By Him they dispense a *perpetual Tide* of Beams, and are never *exhausted*.—He formed, with inexpressible Nicety, that exquisitely fine *Collection* of *Tubes* ; that unknown Multiplicity of *subtle Springs* ; which organize and actuate the Frame of the minutest Insect. He bids the crimson Current roll ; the vital Movements play ; and associates a *World of Wonders*, even in an *animated Point* *.

—In

To HIM a peopled Habitation shews,
Where Millions taste the Bounty GOD bestows.

*See a very beautiful, noble, and instructive
Poem, stiled—DEITY.*

* There are living Creatures abundantly smaller than the Mite. Mr. Bradley, in his Treatise on Gardening, mentions *an Insect*, which, after accurate Examination, he found to be a *Thousand* times less than the *least* visible *Grain* of Sand. At the same time

—In all these is a rich Exhibition of *creating Power* ; to all these are extended the special Regards of *preserving Goodness*. From hence let me learn to rely on the Providence, and to be ever sensible of the Presence, of the supreme Majesty.

To *rely* on his *Providence*.—For, not *one Being*, amidst that *inconceivable Number* and *Variety*, which swarm through the Regions of Creation, is overlooked, or neglected, by the great omnipotent *Cause of all*. However *inconsiderable* in its *Character*, or *diminutive* in its *Size*, it is still the Production of the universal Maker, and belongs to the Family of the Almighty Father.—What ? Though introned

Q 4

Archangels

time declaring, that such an *Animalcule*, though quite imperceptible to the naked Eye, is a *Bulky Being*, compared with others almost infinitely more minute, discovered by Mr. *Lewenboeck*.—If then we consider the *several Limbs*, which compose (if I may be allowed the Expression) such an organized Particle : The *different Springs*, which actuate such a Sett of Limbs : The *Flow of Spirits*, inexpressibly more attenuated, which put those Springs in Motion : The various *Fluids*, that circulate : The *different Secretions*, that are performed : Together with the proportionable *Minuteness* of the *Solids*, before they arrive at their *full Growth* : Not to mention other *more astonishing* Modes of Diminution :—Sure, we shall see the utmost Reason to acknowledge, that the adored Maker is—*Maximus in minimis* ; *greatly glorious* even in his *smallest* Works.

Archangels enjoy the *Smiles* of his *Countenance*; yet the low Inhabitants of Earth, the very meanest Worms that creep the Ground, are not excluded from his kind *providential Cares*. Though the *Manifestation* of his *Perfections* is vouchsafed to holy and intellectual Essences; his *Ear* is open to the Cries of the young Raven; his *Eye* attentive to the Wants, and to the Welfare, of the very meanest Births of Nature. —How much less then are his *own People* disregarded? *These*, for whom He has delivered his beloved Son to Death, and for whom He has prepared Habitations of eternal Joy. *They* disregarded! No: **THEY** are “kept as the Apple “of an Eye;” the very Hairs of their Head are all numbered; and the fondest Mother may forget the *Infant*, that is “dandled upon her Knees,” and sucks at her Breast *; much sooner than the Father of everlasting Compassions can *discontinue*,
or

* *Isai, xlix. 15. Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee.*—How delicate, and very expressive are the Images, in this charming Scripture? How full of *Beauty*, if beheld in a *critical*, how rich with *Consolation*, if considered in a *believing* View?—Can a *Woman*, one of the softer Sex, whose Nature is most impressible, and whose Passions are remarkably tender—Can such a one, not barely disregard, but intirely forget; not suspend her Care for a while,
but

or remit, his watchful Tenderness to those, whom He condescends to call, not *Servants* only, but *Children*.

LET this teach me also a more lively *Sense* of the *Divine Presence*.—All the *rolling Worlds* above; all the *living Atoms* below; together with
all

but utterly erase the very Memory of—*Her Child*; her own Child, not another's; a Child, that was formed in her *Womb*, and is a Part of herself?—*Her Son*; the more important, and therefore more desirable Species; to whom it peculiarly belongs, to preserve the Name, and build up the Family——*Her only Son*; for the Word is singular, and refers to a Case, where the Offspring, not being numerous, but centred in a single Birth, must be productive of the fondest Endearment—Can she divest herself of all Concern for such a Child, not when he is grown up to Maturity, or gone abroad from her House; but while he continues in an infantile State, and must owe his whole Safety to her kind Attendance; while he lies in her Bosom, rests on her Arm, and even *sucks* at her Breast?—Especially, if the poor Creature be racked with Pain, or seized by some severe Affliction, and so become an Object of *Compassion*, as well as of Love. Can she hear its piercing Cries; can she see it all restless, all helpless under its Misery; and feel no Emotions of parental Pity?——Or if *one* such Monster of Inhumanity might be found; yet can *all* Mothers be so degenerate? This, sure, need never be feared. Much less need the *true Believer* be apprehensive of the *Failure* of *my Kindness*. An *universal* Extinction of these *strongest* Affections of Nature, is a more supposable Case, than that I should ever be unmindful of my People, or regardless of their Interests.

all the *Beings* that *intervene* betwixt these wide Extremes ; are *Vouchers* for an ever-present Deity. “ GOD has not left Himself without Witness.” There are the Marks of his Footsteps in every Place, and the Touches of his Finger in every Creature. “ *Thy Name is so nigh, O Thou all-* “ supporting, all-informing LORD, *and that* “ *do thy wonderous Works declare. Thy Goodness* “ *warms in the Morning Sun, and refreshes in* “ *the Evening Breeze. Thy Glory shines in the* “ *Lamps of Midnight, and smiles in the Blossoms* “ *of Spring. We see a Trace of thy incompre-* “ *hensible Grandeur, in the boundless Extent of* “ *Things ; and a Sketch of thy exquisite Skill, in* “ *those almost evanescent Sparks of Life, the* “ *insect Race.*”—O ! How stupid is this Heart of mine, that, amidst such a Multitude of Remembrancers, thronging on every Side, I should forget Thee a single Moment ! Grant me, Thou great I AM, Thou Source and Support of universal Existence,—O ! grant me an enlightened Eye, to *discern* Thee in every Object ; and a devout Heart, to *adore* Thee on every Occasion. Instead of living *without* GOD in the World, may I be ever *with Him*, and see all Things *full of Him* * !

I F

* ————The glittering Stars,
By the deep Ear of Meditation heard,
Still in their Midnight Watches sing of HIM.

He

IF the beautiful Spangles, which a clear Night pours on the Beholder's Eye; if those other Fires, which beam in remoter Skies, and are discoverable only by, that Revelation to the Sight, the Telescope; if all those *bright Millions* are so many Fountains of Day, enriched with native and independent Lustre, illuminating Planets and enlivening Systems of their own*; O! What *amazing Pomp* is disclosed in the Midnight Scene? What *unknown Riches* are disseminated, through all these numberless Provinces of the great JEHOVAH's Empire?—Yet, immense and endless as they are, there's not the *meanest Slave* but carries incomparably *greater Wealth* in his own Bosom.

He nods a Calm. The Tempest blows his Wrath.
The Thunder is his Voice; and the red Flash
His speedy Sword of Justice. At his Touch
The Mountains flame. He shakes the solid Earth
And rocks the Nations. Nor in these alone,
In every common Instance GOD is seen.

Thompson's Spring.

- * Consult with *Reason*. Reason will reply,
Each *lucid Point* which glows in yonder Sky,
Informs a *System* in the boundless Space,
And fills, with Glory, its appointed Place:
With Beams unborrow'd, brightens other Skies,
And *Worlds*, to Thee unknown, with Heat and
Life supplies. *The Universe.*

som. The *Soul*, that *informs* his Clay,——the *Soul*, that teaches him to think, and enables him to *choose*; that qualifies him to relish rational Pleasure, and to breathe sublime Desire *;——the *Soul*, that is possessed of such noble Faculties; and, above all, is endued with the *dreadful*, the *glorious* Capacity, of being pained, or blessed for ever—this Soul surpasses in Worth, whatever the Eye can see; whatever, of material, the Fancy can imagine. Before one such intellectual Being, all the most astonishing *Magnificence* of unintelligent Creation, becomes poor and *contemptible* †.—For this Omnipotence itself has waked, and worked, through every Age. To *convince* this Soul, the fundamental Laws of Nature have been controuled, and the most amazing Miracles have alarmed all the Ends of the Earth. To *instruct* this Soul, the Wisdom of Heaven has been transfused

* In *this* respect, as vested with such Capacities, the Soul even of *fallen* Man has an unquestionable Greatness and Dignity; is *majestic*, tho' in Ruin.

† I beg Leave to transcribe a pertinent Passage, from that celebrated Master of Reason, and universal Literature, Dr. *Bentley*; whom no one can be tempted to suspect, either tinctured with Enthusiasm, or warped to Bigotry.—“ If we consider, says he, the “ Dignity of an intelligent Being, and put that in “ the Scale against brute and inanimate Matter, we “ may affirm, without overvaluing human Nature, “ that the Soul of one virtuous and religious Man is “ of greater Worth and Excellency, than the Sun, “ and his Planets, and all the Stars in the World.”

See his Sermons at *Boyle's* Lect. N^o. 8.

transfused into the sacred Page, and Missionaries have been sent from the great King, who resides in Light unapproachable. To *sanctify* this Soul, the Almighty Comforter takes the Wings of a Dove, and with a sweet transforming Influence broods on the human Heart. And O! to *redeem* this Soul from Guilt, to rescue it from Hell, the Heaven of Heavens was bowed, and G O D himself came down to dwell in Dust.

LET me pause a Moment upon this important Subject.—What are the Schemes, which engage the Attention of *eminent Statesmen*, and *mighty Monarchs*, compared with the *grand Interests* of an immortal Soul? The *Support of Commerce*, and the *Success of Armies*, though extremely weighty Affairs; yet, if laid in the Balance against the Salvation of a Soul, are lighter than the *downy Feather*, poised against *Talents of Gold*. To save a *Navy from Shipwreck*, or a *Kingdom from Slavery*, are Deliverances of the most momentous Nature, that the Transactions of Mortality can admit. But O! how they shrink into an inconsiderable Trifle, if (their Aspect upon Immortality forgot) they are set in Competition with the *Delivery of a single Soul*, from the Anguish and Horrors of a *distressed Eternity* *!

SINCE

* Not all yon Luminaries quench'd at once
Were half so sad, as one benighted Mind,
Which gropes for Happiness, and meets Despair.
Night-Thoughts, N^o. 9.

SINCE such is the Soul's Importance; what *Vigilance* can be *too much*, or rather what *holy Solitude* can be *sufficient*, for the Overseers of the Saviour's Flock, and the *Guardians* of this unutterably noble *Charge*?—Since such is the Importance of the Soul; wilt thou not, O Man, be watchful for the Preservation of thy own? Shall every *casual* Incident awaken thy Concern, every *transitory* Toy command thy Regard? And shall the Welfare of thy Soul, a Work of *continual* Occurrence; a Work of *endless* Consequence; sue in vain for thy serious Care?—Thy Soul, thy Soul, is thy All. If this be *secured*, thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unspeakably happy. If this be *lost*, a whole World acquired, will leave thee in Poverty; and all its Delights enjoyed, will abandon thee to Misery.

I HAVE often been *charmed* and *awed* at the Sight of the nocturnal Heavens; even before I knew how to consider them in their proper Circumstances of *Majesty* and *Beauty*. *Something*, like *Magic*, has struck my Mind, on a transient and unthinking Survey of the æthereal Vault, when tinged throughout with the purest Azure, and decorated with innumerable starry Lamps. I have felt, I know not what, powerful and aggrandizing Impulse, that snatched me from the

low

low Intanglements of Vanity, and prompted an ardent Sigh for *sublimier Objects*. Methought, I heard, even from the *silent Spheres*, a *commanding Call*, to spurn the abject Earth, and pant after unseen Delights.—Henceforward, I hope to imbibe more copiously this *moral Emanation* of the Skies; when, in some such Manner as the preceding, they are *rationally seen*, and *duly weighed*. The Stars, I trust, will *teach*, as well as *shine*; and help to dispel, both Nature's Gloom, and my intellectual Darkness. To some, they discharge no higher a Service, than that of holding a *Flambeau* to their *Feet*, and softening the Horrors of their Night. To me, may they be Ministers of a superior Order, and act as *Counsellors of Wisdom*, and *Guides to Happiness*. Nor will they fail to execute this noble Office, if they gently and gradually light my Way into the *Knowlege* of their adored *Maker*; and point out, with their silver Rays, my *Path* to his beatific *Presence*.

I GAZE, I ponder. I ponder, I gaze; and think ineffable Things.—I roll an Eye of Awe and Admiration. Again and again I repeat my ravished Views, and can never satiate my Sight in this immense Theatre. I spring my Thoughts in Speculation, till even Fancy tires upon her Wing. I find Wonders *ever new*, Wonders more and more
amazing.

amazing.—Yet after all my *present Inquiries*, what a mere *Nothing* do I *know*; by all my *future Searches*, how *little* shall I be able to *learn*, of those vastly distant Suns, and their circling Retinue of Worlds? Could I *pry* with *Newton's* piercing *Sagacity*, or *launch* into his most extensive *Surveys*: yet, even then, my *Apprehensions* would be little better, than those dim and scanty Images, which the *Mole*, just emerged from her *Cavern*, receives on her feeble *Optic* — This, sure, should repress all immoderate *Thirst* after an *Insight* into the *Secrets* of the starry Structures, and make me more careful to *cultivate* my *Heart*. To fathom the *Depths* of the *Divine Essence*, or to scan universal Nature with a critical *Exactness*, is an Attempt that sets the *acuteſt Philoſopher*, very nearly on a *Level* with the *Idiot*. Since it is almost, if not altogether, as impracticable by the one, as by the other.

BE it then my chief Study, not to pursue what is absolutely unattainable; but rather to seek what is obvious to find; easy to be acquired; and of inestimable Advantage, when possessed. O! let me seek *that Charity*, which edifieth*; *that Faith*, which purifieth. Love, humble

* 1 Cor. viii. 1. I need not inform my Reader, that in this Text; in that admirable Chapter 1 Cor. xiii. and in various other Passages of Scripture; the Word *Charity* is, by no means, to be confined to the

bumble Love, and not *conceited Science*, keeps the Door of Heaven. Faith, a *child-like Faith* in JESUS, and not the *haughty self-sufficient Spirit*, which scorns to be ignorant of any Thing, presents a Key * to those Abodes of Bliss.—This present State, is the Scene destined to the *Exercise of Devotion*; the invisible World, is the Place appointed for the *Enjoyment of Knowledge* †. There, the *Dawn* of our *infantile Minds* will be advanced to the *Maturity* of perfect *Day*; or rather, there our *midnight Shades* will be brightened into all the *Lustre* of *Noon*. There, the Souls that come from the *School* of Faith, and bring with them the *Principles* of Love, will dwell in Light itself; will be obscured with no *Darkness*

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the particular Act of *Alms-giving*, or external *Benevolence*. It is of a much more exalted and extensive Nature. It signifies that noble and divine *Grace*, which *warms* the Soul with a *supreme Love*, to GOD; and *enlarges* it with a *disinterested Affection*, for Men. Which renders it the reigning Care of the Life, and chief *Delight* of the Heart, to promote the *Glory* of the ONE, and the *Happiness* of the other.—*This, this*, is that *Charity*, of which so many *excellent Things* are every-where spoken: Which can never be too highly extolled, or too earnestly coveted, since it is the *Image* of GOD, and the very *Spirit* of *Heaven*.

* By *Milton* beautifully stiled,

————— The golden Key

That opes the Palace of Eternity.

The Masque COMUS.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

at all; will know even as they are known.—Such an *Acquaintance*, therefore, do I desire to form, and to carry on such a *Correspondence*, with the heavenly Bodies; as may shed a *benign Influence* on the *Seeds of Grace*, implanted in my Breast. Let the *exalted Tracts* of the Firmament sink my Soul into *deep Humiliation*. Let those *eternal Fires* kindle in my Heart an *adoring Gratitude* to their Almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous Globes, which rest on his supporting *Arm*, teach me an *unshaken Affiance* in their incarnate Maker. And I shall be—if not wise as the *Astronomical Adept*, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

HAVING now walked, and worshipped, in this *universal Temple*, that is *arched* with Skies, *emblazed* with Stars, and *extended* even to Immen-
sity—Having cast an Eye, like the inrap-
tured Patriarch *, an Eye of *Reason* and *Devo-*
tion, through the magnificent Scene; with the
one, having discovered an *Infinite* of *Worlds*,
and with the *other*, met the *Deity* in every View
—Having beheld, as *Moses* in the flaming Bush,
a *Glimpse* of J E H O V A H ' s Excellencies, *re-*
flected from the Planets, and *streaming* from My-
riads of celestial Luminaries—Having read *va-*
rious Lessons in that stupendous *Book of Wisdom*,
where

* Gen. xv. 5.

where unmeasurable Sheets of Azure compose the Page; and Orbs of Radiance write, in everlasting Characters, a *Comment* on our *Creed*—What remains, but that I close the *midnight Solemnity*, as our LORD concluded his grand Sacramental Institution, with a *Song of Praise*?—And behold a Hymn, suited to the *sublime Occasion*; indited by * *Inspiration itself*; transferred into our Language, by † one of the *highest* and *happiest* Efforts of human Ingenuity.

*The spacious Firmament on high,
With all the blue æthereal Sky,
And spangled Heav'ns, a shining Frame,
Their great Original proclaim :
Th' unwear'd Sun, from Day to Day,
Does his Creator's Pow'r display,
And publishes, to ev'ry Land,
The Work of an Almighty Hand.*

*Soon as the Ev'ning Shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wond'rous Tale,
And nightly, to the list'ning Earth,
Repeats the Story of her Birth :
While all the Stars, that round her burn,
And all the Planets in their Turn,
Confirm the Tidings as they roll,
And spread the Truth from Pole to Pole.*

R 2

What

* Pſal. xix.

† Addiſon, *ſpect.* Vol. VI. N^o. 465.

252 CONTEMPLATIONS, &c.

*What though, in solemn Silence, all
Move round the dark terrestrial Ball?
What though, nor real Voice nor Sound
Amid their radiant Orbs be found?
In Reason's Ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious Voice,
For ever singing, as they shine,
The Hand, that made Us, is divine.*



A

WINTER-PIECE.

*Storms and Tempests may calm the Soul
—— Snow and Ice be taught to warm
the Heart, and praise the Creator.*

Anonym. Lett. to the Author. See Page 258.

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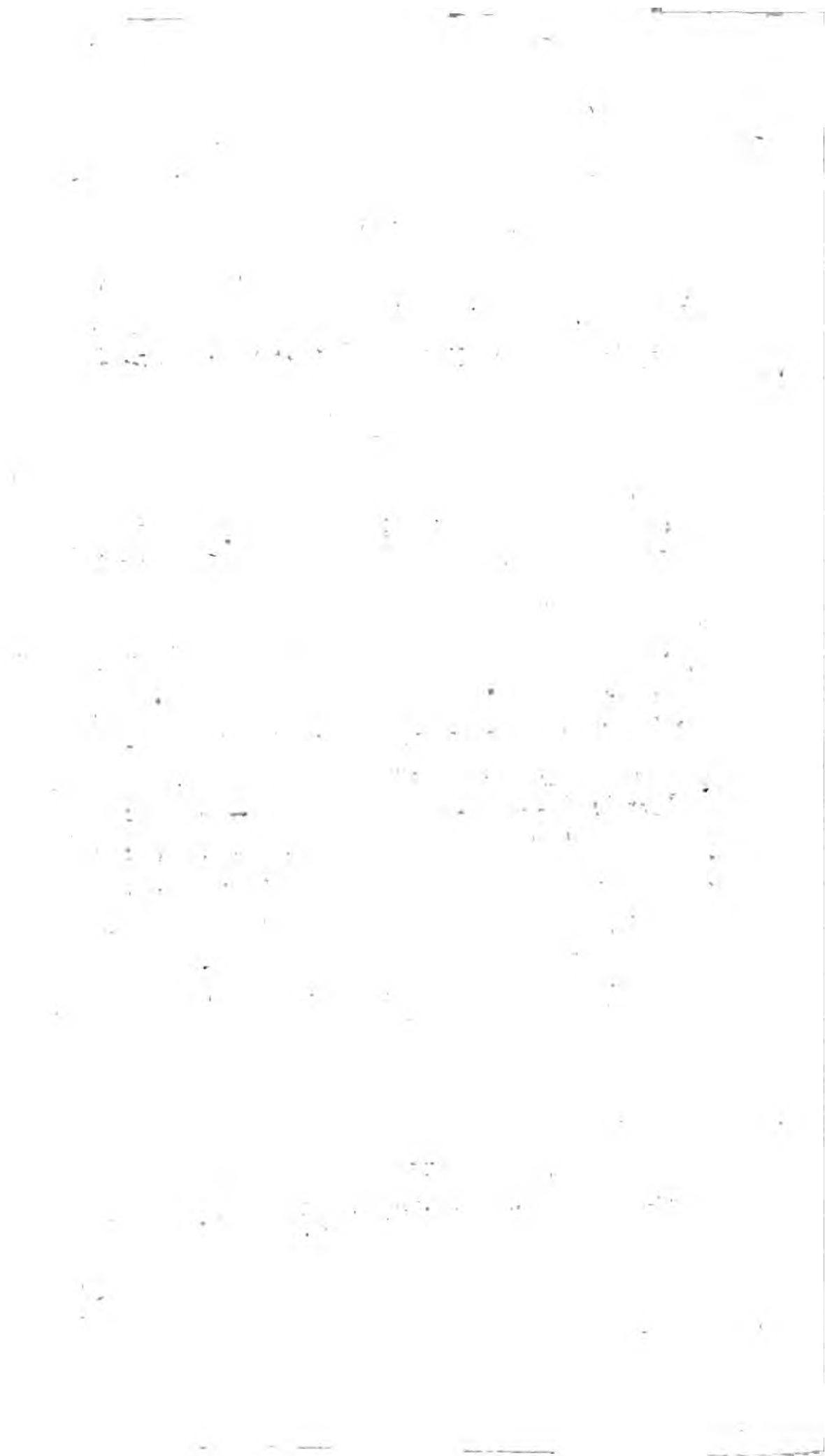
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THE
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ter's Day——Incessant Rain, pro-
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Cold, and piercing Winds——Deep Snow
——General Thaw——Ever-Greens——
Storm of Hail——Rainbow.





A

WINTER-PIECE.

TIS true, in the delightful Seasons
HIS Tenderness, and HIS Love,
are most eminently displayed.—
In the *vernal* Months, all is Beau-
ty to the Eye, and Music to the
Ear. The Clouds drop Fatness; the Air softens
into Balm; and Flowers, in rich Abundance,
spring where-ever we tread, bloom where-ever
we look.—Amidst the burning Heats of
Summer, HE expands the Leaves, and thickens
the Shades: He spreads the cooling Arbour, to
receive Us; and awakes the gentle Breeze, to
fan Us: the Moss swells into a Couch, for the
Repose of our Bodies; while the Rivulet softly
rolls, and sweetly murmurs, to soothe our Imagi-
nation. — In *Autumn*, HIS Bounty covers
the

the Fields with a Profusion of yellow Treasure, and bends the Boughs with Loads of delicious Fruit. He furnishes his hospitable Table with present Plenty, and prepares a copious Magazine for future Wants.——But, is it only in these smiling Periods of the Year, that GOD, the all-gracious GOD, is seen? Has *Winter* no Tokens of his Presence? Is not *Winter* eloquent of his Praise? Yes: “his Way is in “the Whirl-wind.” Storms and Tempests fulfil his Word, and extol his Power. Even piercing Frosts bear Witness to his Goodness, while they bid the shivering Nations tremble at his Wrath.——Be *Winter* then, for a while, our Theme*. Perhaps, those *barren* Scenes may be *fruitful* of intellectual Improvement. Perhaps, that chilling Cold, which binds the Earth in icy Chains, may serve to enlarge our Hearts, and warm them with holy Love.

SEE!

* A Sketch of this Nature, I must acknowledge, is quite different from the Subject of the Book; and, I cannot but declare, was as far distant from the Thoughts of the Author. But, the Desire of *several* Acquaintance, together with an Intimation of its Usefulness, by a very *polite Letter* from an *unknown Hand*, (which has *undesignedly* furnished me with the best Motto I could recollect) prevailed with me to add a few descriptive Touches, and improving Hints, on what is so often experienced in these northern Regions. I hope, the Attempt I have made to oblige these Gentlemen will obtain the *Approbation*, or, at least, the *Excuse*, of my other Readers.

SEE! how the *Day* is *shortened!*—The Sun walks along the Edges of the southern Sky; just looks upon our dejected World; and scarcely scatters Light through the thick Air. Dim is his Appearance, languid are his Gleams, while He continues: and, like the Gay and Young in the House of Mourning, He seems uneasy, till He is gone; is in Haste to depart.—And let Him depart. Why should we wish for his longer Stay; since He can shew Us nothing, but Spectacles of Woe. The flowery World lies dead, and the tuneful Tribes are struck dumb. The Trees, stript of their Verdure, and lashed by Storms, spread their naked Arms to the enraged and relentless Heavens. Fragrance no longer floats in the Air, but chilling Damps hover, or cutting Gales blow. Nature, divested of all her beautiful Robes, sits, like a forlorn disconsolate Widow, in her Weeds. While Winds, in doleful Accents howl, and Rains, in repeated Showers, weep.

WE regret not, therefore, the speedy Departure of the Day. When the Room is hung with funeral Black, and dismal Objects are all around, who would wish to have the glimmering Taper kept alive; which can only discover Scenes of Sorrow, and make the Horror visible?—And, since this mortal Life is little better than

than a continual Conflict with Sin, or an unre-mitted Struggle with Misery, is it not a *gracious* Ordination, which has reduced our Age to a *Span*? Four-score Years of Trial, for the Vir-tuous, are sufficiently long; and more than such a Term allowed to the Wicked, would render them beyond all Measure vile. Our Way to the Kingdom of Heaven lies through Tribula-tion; shall we then accuse, shall we not rather bless the Providence, which has made the Pas-sage short? Soon, soon we cross the Vale of Tears, and then arrive on the happy Hills, where Light for ever shines, and Joy for ever smiles.

SOMETIMES, the Day is rendered shorter still; is almost blotted out from the Year. The Vapours gather; they thicken into an impene-trable Gloom, and obscure the Face of the Sky. At length, the *Rains* descend; the Sluices of the Firmament are opened; and the low-hung Clouds pour their congregated Stores. Copious and un-intermitted, still they pour; and still are un-exhausted. The Waters drop incessantly from the Eaves, and rush in rapid Streams from the Spouts. They roar along the channel'd Pavements, and stand in foul Shallows amidst the Village Streets. Now, if the inattentive Eye, or negligent Hand, has left the Roof but
scantily

scantly covered; the insinuating Element finds its way into every Flaw, and oozing through the Ceiling, at once upbraids and chastises the careless Inhabitant. The poor Tenants of the Bough shrink into shelter, and wander no more through the troubled Air. The Beasts, joyless and dispirited, ruminates under their Sheds. The Roads swim, and the Brooks swell. The River, amidst all this watery Ferment, long contained itself within its appointed Bounds: but swollen by innumerable Currents, and roused, at last, into uncontrollable Rage, bursts over its Banks; shoots into the Plain; bears down all Opposition; spreads itself far and wide; and buries all under a brown, sluggish, soaking Deluge.

How fortunate for Man, that this Inundation comes, when there are no flowery Crops in the Meadow, to be over-whelmed; no Fields standing thick with Corn, to be laid waste! At such a Juncture, it would have been *Ruin* to the Husbandman and his Family: but *thus* timed, it yields *Manure* for his Ground, and promises Him *Riches* in Reversion.—How often, and how long, has the divine Majesty bore with the most injurious Affronts from Sinners! His Goodness triumphed over their Perverseness, and graciously refused to be exasperated. But Oh! presumptuous Creatures, multiply no longer your Provocations.

Provocations. Urge not, by repeated Iniquities, the almighty Arm to strike; left his long-suffering cease, and his fierce Anger break forth; break forth, like a Flood of *Waters**, and sweep you away, into irrecoverable and everlasting Perdition.

How mighty! how majestic! and O, how mysterious are thy Works, thou GOD of Heaven, and LORD of Nature! When the Air is calm, where sleep the *stormy Winds*? In what Chambers are they reposed, or in what Dungeons confined? Till Thou art pleased to awaken their Rage, and throw open their Prison Doors? Then, with irresistible Impetuosity they fly forth, from the Quarters of the South †.

THE whole Atmosphere is hurled into the most tumultuous Confusion. The aerial Torrent bursts its Way over Mountains, Seas, and Continents. All Things feel the dreadful Shock. All Things tremble before the furious Blast. The Forest, vexed and tore, groans under the Scourge: her sturdy Sons are strained to the very Root, and almost kiss the Soil, they were wont to shade. The stubborn Oak, that dreads to bend, is dashed headlong to the Ground; and,

* Hof. v. 10.

† See Isa. xxi. 1. Zech. ix. 14. Job xxxvii. 9.
“ Out of the South cometh the Whirlwind.”

and, with shattered Arms, with prostrate Trunk,
blocks the Road.—While the flexile Reed,
that springs up in the Marsh, yielding to the
Gust, (as the *meeke* and pliant Temper, to Inju-
ries; or the *resigned* and patient Spirit, to Mis-
fortunes;) eludes the Force of the Storm, and
survives amidst the wide-spread Havock.

For a Moment, the turbulent and outrageous
Sky seems to be assuaged; but, soon it resumes
its Wrath, and renews its Ravages with redoub-
led Fury. The stately Dome rocks, amidst the
wheeling Clouds. The impregnable Tower
totters on its Basis; and threatens to overwhelm,
whom it was intended to protect. The ragged
Rock is rent in Pieces †, and even the
Hills, the perpetual Hills, on their deep Foun-
dations, are scarcely secure.—Where, now,
is the Place of *Safety*? Sleep affrighted flies.
Diversions is turned into Horror. All is Up-
roar in the Element; all is Consternation a-
mong Mortals.—Yet, this is only an inferior
Minister of divine Displeasure. The Executi-
oner of milder Indignation. How then—O,
how will the lofty Looks of Man be humbled,
and the Haughtiness of Men be bowed down *;
when

* 1 Kings xix. 11.

† ——— Mortalia Corda
Per Gentes humilis stravit Pavor.——

One would almost imagine, that *Virgil* had read
Isaiab, and borrowed his Ideas from Chap. ii. vers.

when the LORD GOD omnipotent shall meditate Terror—when He shall set *all* his Terrors in Array—when He arises, to judge the Nations, and to *shake terribly* the Earth!

THE Ocean swells with tremendous Commotions. The ponderous Waves are heaved from their capacious Bed, and almost lay bare the unfathomable Deep. They sweep over the Rocks; they lash the lofty Cliffs; and toss themselves into the Clouds. Navies are rent from their Anchors; and, with all their enormous Load, are whirl'd, swift as the Arrow, wild as the Winds, along the vast Abyfs. Now, they climb the rolling Mountain, they plough the frightful Ridge, and seem to skim the Skies: anon, they plunge into the opening Gulph, they lose the Sight of Day, and are lost themselves to every Eye. How vain is the Pilot's Art! How impotent the Mariner's Strength! They reel to
and

11. The *humilis*, and *stravit* of the One, so exactly correspond with the *humbled—bowed down—* of the other. But, in one Circumstance, the Poet is vastly inferior to the Prophet. The latter, by giving a very striking *Contrast* to his Sentiments, represents them with incomparably greater Energy. He says not, *Men* in the gross, or the *human Heart* in general; but Men of the most *elated* Looks, Hearts big with the most *arrogant* Imaginations, even *Haughtiness* itself, shall stoop from their supercilious Heights, shall *growel* in the lowest Dust of Abasement, and *shudder* with the Extremes of an abject Pusillanimity.

and fro, and stagger in the jarring Hold; or cling to the Cordage, while bursting Seas foam over the Deck. Despair is in every Face, and Death sits threatening on every Surge.—But why, O ye astonished Mariners, why should you abandon yourselves to Despair? Is the LORD's Hand shortened, because the Waves of the Sea rage horribly? Is his Ear deafened, by the roaring Thunders, and the bellowing Tempest? Cry, Cry, unto HIM, who “hold-
 “ eth the Winds in his Fist, and the Waters in
 “ the Hollow of his Hand.” HE is all gracious to hear; and almighty, to save. If HE command, the Storm shall be hushed to Silence: the Billows shall subside into a Calm: the Lightnings shall lay their fiery Bolts aside: and, instead of sinking in a watery Grave, you shall find Yourselves brought to the desired Haven.

SOMETIMES, after a joyless Day, a more melancholy *Night* succeeds.—The lazy, louring Vapours had wove so thick a Veil, as the meridian Sun could scarcely penetrate. What Gloom then must overwhelm the nocturnal Hours? The Moon withdraws her shining. Not a single Star is able to struggle through the deep Arrangement of Shades. All is *pitchy Darkness*, without one enlivening Ray. How solemn!

How awful ! 'Tis like the Return of Chaos, or the Shroud of Nature. I don't wonder that it is the Parent of Terrors, and so apt to engender Fear. Lately, the Tempest marked its rapid Way with Mischief; now, the Night dresses her silent Pavilion with Horror.

I HAVE sometimes left the beaming Tapers, withdrew from the ruddy Fire, and plunged into the thickest of these footy Shades: not in the least regretting the Change, but rather exulting in it, as a welcome Deliverance. The very Gloom was pleasing, was exhilarating, compared with the Conversation, I quitted. The Speech of my *Companions* (How does it *grieve* me to mention them by *that* Name!) was the Language of Darknes: was Horror to the Soul, and Torture to the Ear* (alás! that I should have room to make the Reflection, may I never be under a *Necessity* of repeating it!) Their Tongues were dipt in the Venom of Asps: "their Throat was an open Sepulchre,"
cruel

* What has been said, I ask'd my Soul, what done?

How flow'd our Mirth? or whence the Source begun?

Perhaps, the Jest, that charm'd the sprightly Croud,
And made the jovial Table laugh so loud,
To some *false* Notion ow'd its poor Pretence,
To an ambiguous Word's perverted Sense;

To

cruel to their Neighbour's Character as the Grave; and, like the Grave, insatiable in Slander. Sometimes, their licentious and ungovernable Discourse shot Arrows of Profaneness against Heaven itself; and in proud Defiance challenged the Resentment of Omnipotence. Sometimes, as if it was the *Glory* of human Nature to share and cherish some of the *grossest* Appetites of the Brute, and the Mark of a Gentleman to have serv'd an *Apprenticeship* in a Brothel; the filthiest Jest of the Stews (if low *Obscenity* can be a Jest) were nauseously obtruded on the Company, 'till all the *Modest* part of it were expell'd: while the *other* besotted Creatures laughed aloud, though the Leprosy of Uncleanness appeared on their Lips. — Are not these Persons Prisoners of Darkness, tho' blazing Sconces pour artificial Day through their Rooms? Are not their Souls immured in the most baleful Shades, though the Noon-tide Sun is brightened by flaming on their gilded Chariots? They discern not that great and

S 2

adorable

To a wild Sonnet, or a wanton Air,
 Offence and Torture to the sober Ear.
 Perhaps, alas! the pleasing Stream was brought
 From this Man's Error, from another's Fault;
 From Topics, which good Nature would forget,
 And *Prudence* mention with the last Regret.

PRIOR'S *Solomon*.

adorable Being, who fills the Universe with his infinite and glorious Presence : who is all Eye, to observe their Actions ; all Ear, to hear their Words. They know not the all-sufficient Redeemer, nor the unspeakable Blessedness of his heavenly Kingdom. They are groping for the Prize of Happiness, but will certainly feel the Thorn of Anxiety. They are wantonly sporting on the Brink of that Precipice ; from whence, in a moment, they may fall headlong into *irretrievable* Ruin, and *Endless* Despair.

THEY have forc'd me out, and are perhaps deriding me in my Absence ; are charging my Reverence for my Maker, and *real* sense of the *Excellency* of the RATIONAL Nature, (the Characteristick of Man) to the Account of Humour and Singularity, Narrowness of Thought, or Sourness of Temper—But be it so.—I will indulge no Indignation against Them ; and, if any thing like it *should* arise I will convert it into Prayer—“ Pity
 “ Them, oh Thou Father of Mercies !— Shew
 “ them the Madness of their Profaneness—Shew
 “ them the Baseness of their vile Ribaldry—
 “ Let them be dumb in silent Shame and
 “ Confusion, till they open their Lips to adore
 “ thine *insulted* Majesty—to implore thy Par-
 “ don—and humbly to devote to Thee, as In-
 “ struments of Righteousness, the Members,
 “ which

“ which they are *now* abusing to thy Dishonour,
 “ and to their own Infamy and Perdition.”

I RIDE Home amidst the gloomy Void: all darkling and solitary, I can scarce discern my Horse's Head; and only guess out my blind Road. No Companion, but Danger; or, perhaps, “ Destruction ready at my Side*.” But why do I fancy myself solitary? Is not the Father of Lights, the GOD of my Life, the great and everlasting Friend, always at my Right Hand? Because the Day is excluded, is his Omnipresence vacated? Though I have no earthly Acquaintance near, to assist in case of a Misfortune; or to beguile the Time, and divert uneasy Suspicions, by entertaining Conferences: May I not lay my Help upon the Almighty, and converse with GOD by humble Supplication? For this Exercise no Place is improper, no Hour unseasonable, and no Posture incommodious. This is Society, the best of Society, even in Solitude. This is a Fund of Delights, easily portable, and quite inexhaustible. A Treasure this, of unknown Value; and liable to no Hazard from Wrong or Robbery; but perfectly secure to the lonely Wanderer, in the most darksome Paths.

AND why should I distress myself with Apprehensions of Peril? This Access to GOD is not

S 3

only

* Job xviii. 12.

only an indefeasible Privilege, but a kind of ambulatory Garrison. Those that make known their Requests unto GOD, and rely upon his protecting Care, he gives his Angels Charge over their Welfare. His Angels are commissioned to escort them in their Travelling, and to hold up their Goings, that they dash not their Foot against a Stone. Nay, He Himself condescends to be their Guardian, and “ keeps all “ their Bones, so that not one of them is broken.” They are, according to the Certificate of Revelation, “ in League with the “ Stones of the Field*.” Though they fall headlong on the Flints, even the Flints, fitted to fracture the Scull, shall receive them as into the Arms of Friendship; and not offer to hurt, whom the LORD is pleased to preserve.

MAY I then enjoy the Presence of this gracious GOD; and Darkness and Light shall be both alike. Let HIM whisper Peace to my Conscience, and this dread Silence shall be more charming than the Voice of Eloquence, or the Strains of Music. Let HIM reveal his ravishing Perfections in my Soul, and I shall not want the Saffron Beauties of the Morn, the golden Glories of Noon, or the impurled Evening Sky. I shall sigh only for those most desirable and distinguished Realms, where the Light of HIS
Countenance

* Job v. 23.

Countenance *perpetually* shines, and consequently—"there is * no Night there."

How surprising are the Alterations of Nature ! I left her, the preceding Evening, plain and unadorned. But, now, a thick *Rime* has shed its hoary Honours over all. It has shagged the Fleeces of the Sheep, and crisped the Traveller's Locks. The Hedges are richly fringed, and all the Ground profusely powdered. The downward Branches are tossed with Silver, and the upright are feathered with the plummy Wave.

BUT, the *Fine*, are not always the *Valuable*. The Air, amidst all these gaudy Decorations, is charged with chilling and *unwholesome* Damps. The hazy Influence spreads wide ; sits deep ; hangs heavy and oppressive on the Springs of Life. A listless Languor clogs the animal Functions, and the purple Stream glides but faintly thro' its Channel. In vain, the Ruler of the Day exerts his beaming Powers : In vain, He attempts to disperse this Infurrection of Vapours. The sullen, malignant Cloud refuses to depart. It invelops the World, and *intercepts* the *Prospect*. I look abroad for the neighbouring Village ; I send my Eye in quest of the rising Turret ; but am scarce able to discern the very next House. Where are the blue Arches of
S 4 Heaven ;

* Rev. xxi. 25.

Heaven; where the radiant Countenance of the Sun; where the boundless Scenes of Creation? Lost, lost are their Beauties; quenched their Glories. The thronged Theatre of the Universe, seems an empty Void; and all its elegant Pictures, an undistinguished Blank. ———

Thus wou'd it have been with our intellectual Views, if the *Gospel* had not come in to our Relief. We should have known neither our true Good, nor real Evil. We had been a Riddle to ourselves; the present State all Confusion, and the future impenetrable Darkness. But the Sun of Righteousness, arising with potent and triumphant Beams, has dissipated the interposing Cloud; and opened a Prospect, more beautiful than the Blossoms of Spring; more chearing than the Treasures of Autumn; more enlarged than the Extent of the visible System: which, having led the Eye, of the Mind, thro' Fields of Grace, over Rivers of Righteousness, and Hills crowned with Knowledge; terminates, at length, in the Heavens; sweetly losing itself in Regions of infinite Bliss, and endless Glory.

As I walk along the Fog, it seems, at some little Distance, to be almost solid Gloom; such as would shut out every Glimpse of Light, and totally imprison me in Obscurity. But, when I approach, and enter it; I find myself agreeably mistaken, and the Mist much *thinner*,
than

than it *appeared*.—Such is the Case, with Regard to the *Sufferings* of the present Life; they are not, when experienced, so dreadful, as a timorous Imagination furnished. Such also is the Case, with Reference to the *Gratifications* of *Sense*; they are not so substantial, as a sanguine Expectation represented. In both Instances, we are graciously disappointed: the Edge of the Calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with incurable Anguish: The exquisite Relish of the Prosperity is palled, that it may not captivate our Affections, and enslave them to inferior Delights.

SOMETIMES, the Face of Things wears a more pleasing Form; the very Reverse of the foregoing. The sober Evening advances, to close the short-lived Day. The Firmament, clear and un sullied, puts on its brightest Blue. The Stars, in thronging Multitudes, and with a peculiar Brilliancy, glitter thro' the fair Expanse. While the *Frost* pours its subtle and penetrating Influence all around. Sharp and intensely keen, all the long Night, the rigid Æther continues its Operations. When, late and slow, the Morning opens her pale Eye; in what a curious and amusing Disguise is Nature dressed! The Icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendent on the Houses. A whitish Film incrusts the Windows, where mimic Landscapes rise, and fancied Figures
swell

swell. The fruitful Fields are hardened to Iron; the moistened Meadows are congealed to Marble; and both resound (an Effect unknown before) with the Peasant's hasty Tread. The Stream is arrested in its Career, and its ever-flowing Surface chained to the Banks. The fluid Paths become a solid Road; where the finny Shoals were wont to rove, the sportive Youth slide, or the rattling Chariots roll*. And (what would seem, to an Inhabitant of the southern World, as unaccountable as the deepest Mysteries of Religion) that very same Breath of Heaven, which *cements* the Lakes into a crystal Pavement, *cleaves* the Oaks, as it were with invisible Wedges: "breaks in Pieces the northern Iron, and the Steel;" even while it *builds* a Bridge of Icy Rock over the Seas †.

THE Air is all Serenity. Refined by the nitrous Particles, it affords the most distinct Views, and

* *Concresecunt subito currenti in Flumine crustæ.
Undaque jam tergo ferratos sustinet orbes,
Puppibus illa prius patulis, nunc hospita Plaustris.
Æraque difiliunt vulgo.* VIRG.

† Job xxxviii. 30. *The Waters are hid, locked up from the Cattle's Lips, secured from the Fisher's Nets, and concealed from the human Eye, as Wells are with a ponderous and impenetrable Stone. And not only Lakes and Rivers, but the Surface of the great and boundless Deep, with its restless and uncontrollable Surges, is taken captive יהלכדו by the Frost, and bound in shining Fetters.*

and extensive Prospects. The Seeds of *Infection*, are killed, and the *Pestilence* destroyed, even in Embryo. So, the Cold of *Affliction* tends to mortify our Corruptions, and subdue our vicious Habits.—The crowding Atmosphere constringes our Bodies, and braces our Nerves. The Spirits are boyant, and sally briskly on the Execution of their Office. Had we been under such unclouded Skies, and so bright a Sun, in the Summer Months, we should have been melted with Heat, and softened into Supinens: been ready to stretch our Limbs under the spreading Beach, and lie at Ease by the murmuring Brook. But, now, none loiters in his Path; none is seen with folded Arms: all is in Motion; all is Activity; Choice, prompted by the Weather, supplies the Spur of Necessity. Thus, the *rugged* School of *Misfortune*, often trains up the Mind, to a lively Exertion of its Faculties; the *keen* Climate of *Adversity*, often inspirits us with a manly Resolution: when a soft and downy Affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous Spring of the Soul, and have left it enervated with Pleasure, or dissolved in Indolence.

“*COLD* cometh out of the North.” The Winds, having swept those Deserts of Snow, arm themselves with Millions of frozen Particles, and make a fierce Descent upon our Isle. Under black and scowling Clouds, they drive dreadfully

fully whizzing, through the darkened Air. They growl around our Houses; assault our Doors; and, eager for Entrance, fasten on our Windows. Walls can scarce restrain them; Bars are unable to exclude them; through every Cranny they force their Way. Ice is on their Wings; they scatter Agues, through the Land; and Winter, all Winter, rages as they go. Their Breath is as a searing * Iron to the little Verdure, left in the Plains. Vastly more pernicious to the tender Plants than the sharpest Knife, they not only kill their Branches, but wound the very Root. Let not the Corn venture far from the Entrenchment of the Furrow; let not the fruit-bearing Blossoms dare to come abroad from their Lodgment in the Bark; lest these savage, murderous Blasts, destroy the Hopes of the advancing Year.

O 'TIS severely Cold! Who is so hardy, as not to shrink at this *excessively pinching* Weather? Every Face is Pale. Even the blooming Cheeks contract a gelid Hue; and the
Teeth

* This, I suppose, is the Meaning of that figurative Expression, used by the Prophet *Habakkuk*; who, speaking of the *Chaldeans* invading *Judaea*, says—*Their Faces*, or the Incursions they make, *shall sup up*, shall swallow greedily, shall devour utterly the Inhabitants of the Country, and their valuable Effects; *as the East-Wind* destroys every green Thing in the Field.

Teeth hardly forbear chattering.—Ye that sit easy and joyous, in your commodious Apartments, solacing yourselves in the diffusive Warmth of your Fire; be mindful of your Brethren, in the cheerless Tenement of Poverty. *Their* shattered Panes are open to the piercing Winds; a tattered Garment scarcely covers their shivering Flesh; while a few faint and dying Embers on the squalid Hearth, rather mock their Wishes, than warm their Limbs.—While the generous Juices of *Oporto* sparkle in your Glasses; or the Streams, beautifully tinged, and deliciously flavoured by the *Chinese* Leaf, smok in the elegant Porcelain: O remember, that many of your Fellow-Creatures, amidst all the Rigour of these inclement Skies, are emaciated with Sickness, benumbed with Age, and pining with Hunger. Let “their Loins bless you” for comfortable Cloathing; supply them with Food, with Fuel, and baffle the raging Year. So, may you never know any of their Distresses, but only by the Hearing of the Ear, the Seeing of the Eye, or the Feeling of a tender Commiseration.—Methinks, the bitter blustering Winds plead for the poor Indigents: may they breathe Pity into *your* Breasts! while they blow Hardships into *their* Huts—Observe those blue Flames and ruddy Coals, in your Chimney: quickned by the Cold, they look more lively, and glow more strongly. Silent, but seasonable Admonition

hition to the gay Circle, that chat and smile around them! *Thus*, may your Hearts, at such a juncture of Need, kindle into a peculiar Benevolence. Detain not your superfluous Piles of Wood. Let them hasten to the Relief of the starving Family. Bid them expire in many a willing Blaze, to mitigate the Severity of the Season, and cheer the bleak Abodes of Want: So shall they ascend, mingled with Thanksgivings to GOD, and ardent Prayers for your Welfare — ascend, more grateful to Heaven, than curling Columns of the most costly Incense.

Now the Winds cease. Having brought their Load, they are dismissed from Service. They have waded an immense Cargo of Clouds, which empty themselves in *Snow*. At first, a few scattered Shreds come wandering down the faddened Sky. This slight Skirmish is succeeded by a general Onset. The Flakes, large, and numerous, and thick-wavering, descend in a continual Flow. All Night, the fleecy Showers, in softest Silence, fall. In the morning, when we awake, what a surprising Change appears! — Is this the same World? — Here is no Diversity of Colour! I can hardly distinguish the Trees, from the Hills on which they grow. Where is the Difference between the Grounds destined to the Plough, and those reserved for Pasturage?
All

All Things lie blended in bright Confusion. So bright, that it heightens the Splendour of Day, and even dazles the Organs of Sight. The Lawn is not so fair, as this snowy Mantle, which invests the Fields; and even the Lilly, was the Lilly to appear, would look tarnished in its Presence. I can think of but *one* Thing, which *excels* or equals this glittering Robe of Winter. Is any one desirous to know what I mean? He may find it described in that admirable Hymn*, composed by the royal Penitent. Is any one desirous to be possessed of so valuable a Rarity? He will find it offered to his Acceptance, in every Page of the Gospel.—See! (for the Eye cannot satisfy itself, without viewing again and again the curious, the delicate Scene) See! how the Hedges are habited like spotless Vestals: the Houses are roofed with Uniformity and Lustre: the Meadows are covered with a Carpet of the finest Ermine†: the Groves bow beneath the lovely Burthen: and all, all below, is one wide, immense, shining Waste of White.

AMAZING are the Works of the great Creator, and prodigiously *various*. How pliant and ductile is Nature under his forming Hand! At his

* Psal. li. 7.

† This Animal is milk-White; and so far is it from having *Spots*, that, as the Tradition goes, it will rather die, or be taken, than sully its Whiteness. See Chambers's *Dictionary*.

his Command, the self-same Substance assumes the most different Shapes, and is transformed into an endless Multiplicity of Figures. If HE ordains, the Water is moulded into Hail, and discharged upon the Earth like a Volley of Shot ; or, it is consolidated into Ice, and defends the Rivers “ as it were with a Breast-plate.” At the bare Intimation of his Will, the very same Element is scattered in Hoar-Frost, like a sprinkling of the most attenuated Ashes ; or is spread over the Surface of the Ground, in these Couches of deep and flaky Down.

THE Snow, however it may carry the Appearance of Cold, affords a *warm* Garment for the Corn ; screens it from nipping Frosts, and cherishes its infant Growth. It will abide for a while, to exert a protecting Care, and exercise a fostering Influence. Then, touched by the Sun, or thawed by a softening Gale ; the furry Vesture melts into genial Moisture ; sinks deep into the Soil, and saturates its Pores with the dissolving Nitre : replenishing the Glebe with that vegetative Life, which will open into the Bloom of Spring, and ripen into the Fruits of Autumn.—Beautiful Emblem this, and comfortable Representation, of the Efficacy of the divine Word : both in the successful and advantageous Issue of its Operation. “ As the Rain
“ cometh down, and the Snow from Heaven,
“ and

“ and returneth not thither, but watereth the
 “ Earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud,
 “ that it may give Seed to the Sower, and Bread
 “ to the Eater : So shall my Word be, that
 “ goeth forth out of my Mouth ; it shall not
 “ return unto me void, but it shall accomplish
 “ that which I please, and it shall prosper in the
 “ Thing whereto I sent it.* ”

NATURE, at length, puts off her lucid Veil.
 She drops it in a trickling *Thaw*. The loosened
 Snow rolls in Sheets from the Houses. Various
 Openings spot the Hills ; which, even while we
 look, become larger and more numerous. The
 Trees rid themselves, by Degrees, of the hoary
 Incumbrance. Shook from the springing Boughs,
 Part falls heavy to the Ground, Part flies abroad
 in shining Atoms. Our Fields and Gardens,
 lately buried beneath the drifted Heaps, rise plain
 and distinct to View. — And, since we see
 Nature once again, has She no verdant Traces,
 no beautiful Features left ? They are, like real
 Friends, very rare ; and therefore the more par-
 ticularly to be regarded, the more highly to be
 valued. — Here and there, the *Holly* hangs out
 her glowing Berries ; the *Laurestinus* spreads her
 graceful Tufts ; and both under a Covert of un-
 fading Foliage. — The plain, but hardy *Ivy*
 cloaths the decrepid, crazy Wall ; nor shrinks
 from the friendly Office, tho’ the Skies frown,

and the Storm roars.—The *Laurel*, firm and bold, lifts and expands its Leaf of vivid Green. In spite of all the united, the repeated Attacks of Wind, and Rain, and Frost, it preserves an undismayed lively Look ; and maintains its Post, while withering Millions fall around. Worthy, by vanquishing the rugged Force of Winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant Conqueror's Brow.—Nor must I forget the *Bay-tree* ; which scorns to be a mean Pensioner, on a few sunny Gleams ; or, with a servile Obsequiousness, to vary its Appearance, in Conformity to the changing Seasons. By such Indications of sterling Worth, and stanch Resolution, reading a Lecture, to the Poet's Genius, while it weaves the Chaplet for his Temples.—These, and a few other Plants, clad in native Verdure, retain their comely Aspect, in the bleakest Climes, and coldest Months.

SUCH, and so durable are the Accomplishments of a *refined* Understanding, and an *amiable* Temper. The tawdry Ornaments of Dress, which catch the unthinking Vulgar, soon become insipid and despicable. The rubied Lip, and the flushing Cheek, fade. Even the sparkling Wit*,

as

“ * How little does G O D esteem the Things that
 “ Men count great ; the Endowments of W it and
 “ Eloquence that Men admire in some ! Alas ! how
 “ poor

as well as the sparkling Eye, please but for a Moment. But the virtuous Mind has Charms, which survive the Decay of every inferior Embellishment; Charms, which add to the Fragrancy of the Flower, the *Permanency* of the *Ever-green*.

SUCH, likewise, is the *Happiness* of the *sincerely Religious*; like a Tree, says the inspired

T 2

Moralist,

“ poor are they to Him; He respecteth not any who
 “ are wise in Heart: they are nothing, and less than
 “ nothing in his Eyes. Even wise *Men* admire, how
 “ little it is that Men know, how small a Matter lies
 “ under the Sound of these popular Wonders, a learned
 “ Man, a great Scholar, a great Statesman. How
 “ much more doth the all-wise GOD meanly account
 “ of These; He often discovers, even to the World,
 “ their Meanness, He *befools* them. So Valour, or
 “ Birth, or Worldly Greatness, these He gives, and
 “ gives as Things He makes no great Reckoning of,
 “ to such as shall never see his Face; and calls to the
 “ Inheritance of Glory poor despised Creatures, that
 “ are look’d on as the *Off-scourings*, and *Refuse* of
 “ the World”.

—*THUS* says an excellent Author; who writes with the most amiable Spirit of Benevolence; with the most unaffected Air of Humility; and, like the sacred Originals, from which He copies, with a majestic Simplicity of Style.—Whose *select Works* I may venture to recommend, not only as a Treasure, but as a MINE of genuine, sterling, evangelical Piety.—See Page 520. of Archbishop LEIGHTON’S select Works, the *Edinburgh* Edition, Octavo: Which it is necessary to specify, because the *London* Edition does not contain that Part of his Writings, which has supplied me with the preceding *Quotation*.

Moralist, " whose Leaf shall not fall." He borrows not his Peace from external Circumstances, but has a Fund within, and is " satisfied from himself." Even though impoverished by Misfortunes, He is rich in the Possession of Grace, and richer in the Hope of Glory. His Joys are infinitely superior to, as well as nobly independent on, the transitory Glow of sensual Delight, or the capricious Favours of, what the World calls, Fortune.

IF the *Snow* composes the light-armed Troops of the Sky, methinks the *Hail* constitutes its heavy Artillery. When driven by a vehement Wind, with what dreadful Impetuosity, does that stony Shower fall! How it rebounds from the frozen Ground, and rattles on the resounding Dome! It attenuates the Rivers into Smoke, or scourges them into Foam. It crushes the infant Flowers; cuts in Pieces the Gardener's early Plants; and batters the feeble Fortification of his Glasses, into Shivers. It darts into the Traveller's Face: He turns, with Haste, from the Stroke; or feels, on his Cheek, for the gushing Blood: If he would retreat into the House, it follows him even thither; and, like a determined Enemy, that pushes the Pursuit, dashes thro' the crackling Panes.—But, the fierce Attack is quickly over. The Clouds have soon spent

spent their Shafts; soon unstrung their Bow.
How happy for the Inhabitants of the Earth,
that what is so dreadfully *furios*, should be so
remarkably *short*! What else could endure the
Shock, or escape Destruction?

BUT behold a *Bow* of no hostile Intention;
a Bow painted in variegated Colours, on the dis-
burdened Cloud. How vast is the Extent, how
delicate the Texture, of that *showery Arch*!
It compasseth the Heavens with a glorious Circle,
and makes Us forget the Horrors of the Storm.
Elegant its Form, and rich its Tinctures, but
more delightful its sacred Significancy. While
the Violet and the Rose blush in its beautiful
Aspect, the Olive Branch smiles in its gracious
Import. It writes, in radiant Dyes, what the
Angels sung in harmonious Strains; “Peace on
“Earth, and Good-will towards Men.” It is
the Stamp of *Insurance*, for the continued Wel-
fare of this present World; and a comfortable
Token of a better State, and happier Kingdom:—
a Kingdom, where a *Rainbow* is represented, as
surrounding the Throne*; to intimate, that *there*
Storms shall beat, and *Winter* pierce no more,
but one unbounded *Spring* for ever, ever bloom.

* Rev. iv. 3.

A T A B L E

Of the T E X T S illustrated
in this W O R K.

N. B. *As Dr. SHAW in the Supplement to his Excellent Book of Travels, and several other Writers of the greatest Eminence, have given an Index of Scriptures, occasionally Explain'd in their Writings; I doubt not but I shall oblige many of my Readers, by what I here subjoin; those especially, whose Taste is happily formed to relish the Beauties of the sacred Records.*

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Chap.	Ver.	Vol. Heb.	Page
XII.	2.	I.	211, 212.
		I Pet.	
I.	12.	II.	200.
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X.	{ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. }	II.	{ 21, 22.
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E R R A T A . . .

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Page 36. lowest Line, for *she*, read *her*.

Page 40, l. 18. for *want*, r. *wont*.

Page 81. in the Note, r. 1 *Sam.* xxviii, 19.

V O L. II.

**Page 176. lowest l. read *Isai.* ix. ver. 3. compared
with ver. 6.**

Page 270. l. 26. r. *impurpled*.

Page 277. l. 7. r. *scarcely*.





