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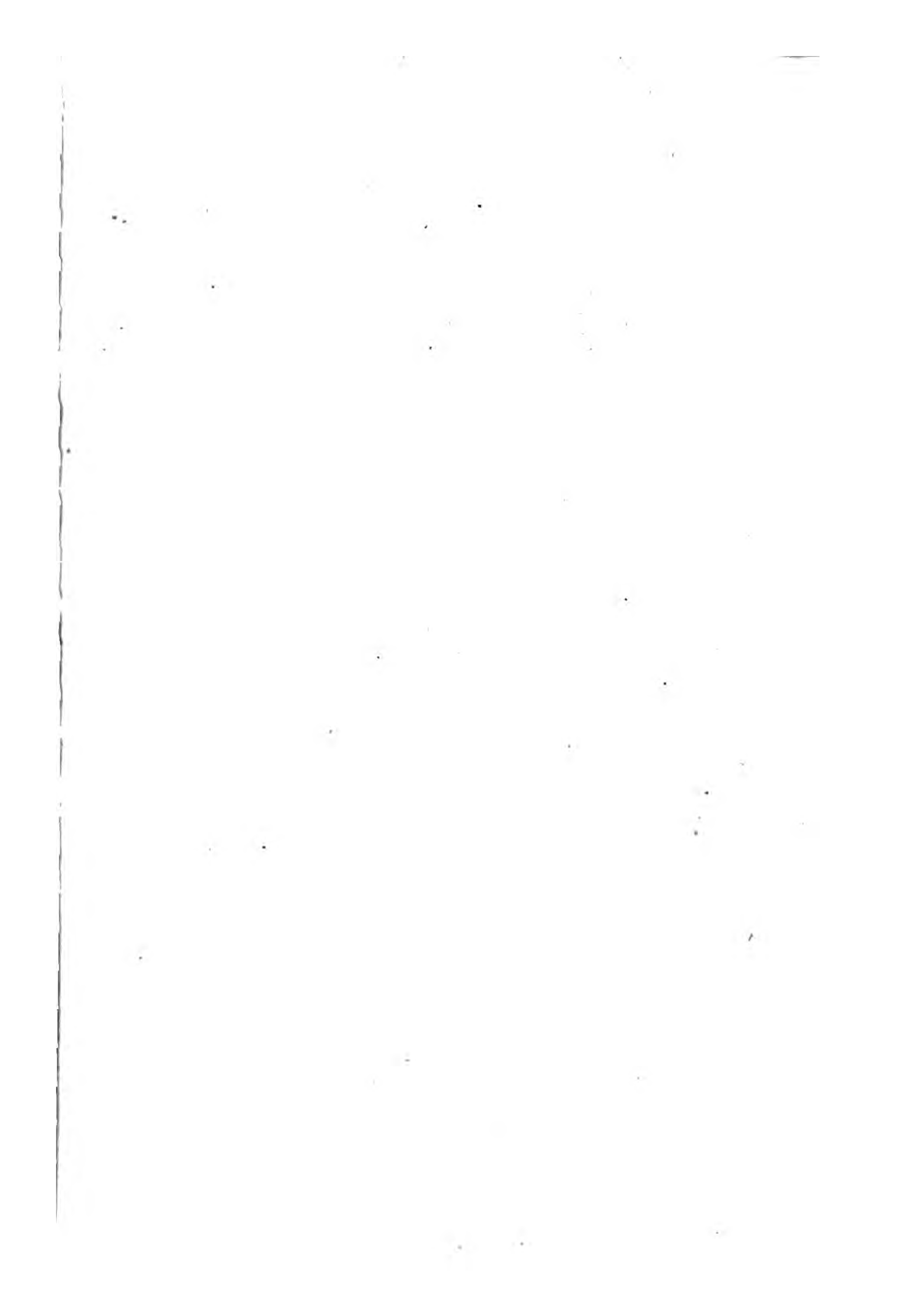
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Sarah Polderey 1798

THERON and ASPASIO:

Sarah Perry & Booth 1820

S E R I E S

O F

D I A L O G U E S

A N D

L E T T E R S,

U P O N T H E

Most Important and Interesting Subjects.

I N T H R E E V O L U M E S.

By JAMES HERVEY, A.M.

Rector of *Weston-Favell*, in *Northamptonshire*.

For Zion's sake will I not hold my Peace, and for Jerufalem's sake I will not rest, until the Righteousness thereof go forth as Brightness, and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp that burneth. Ifai. lxii. 1.

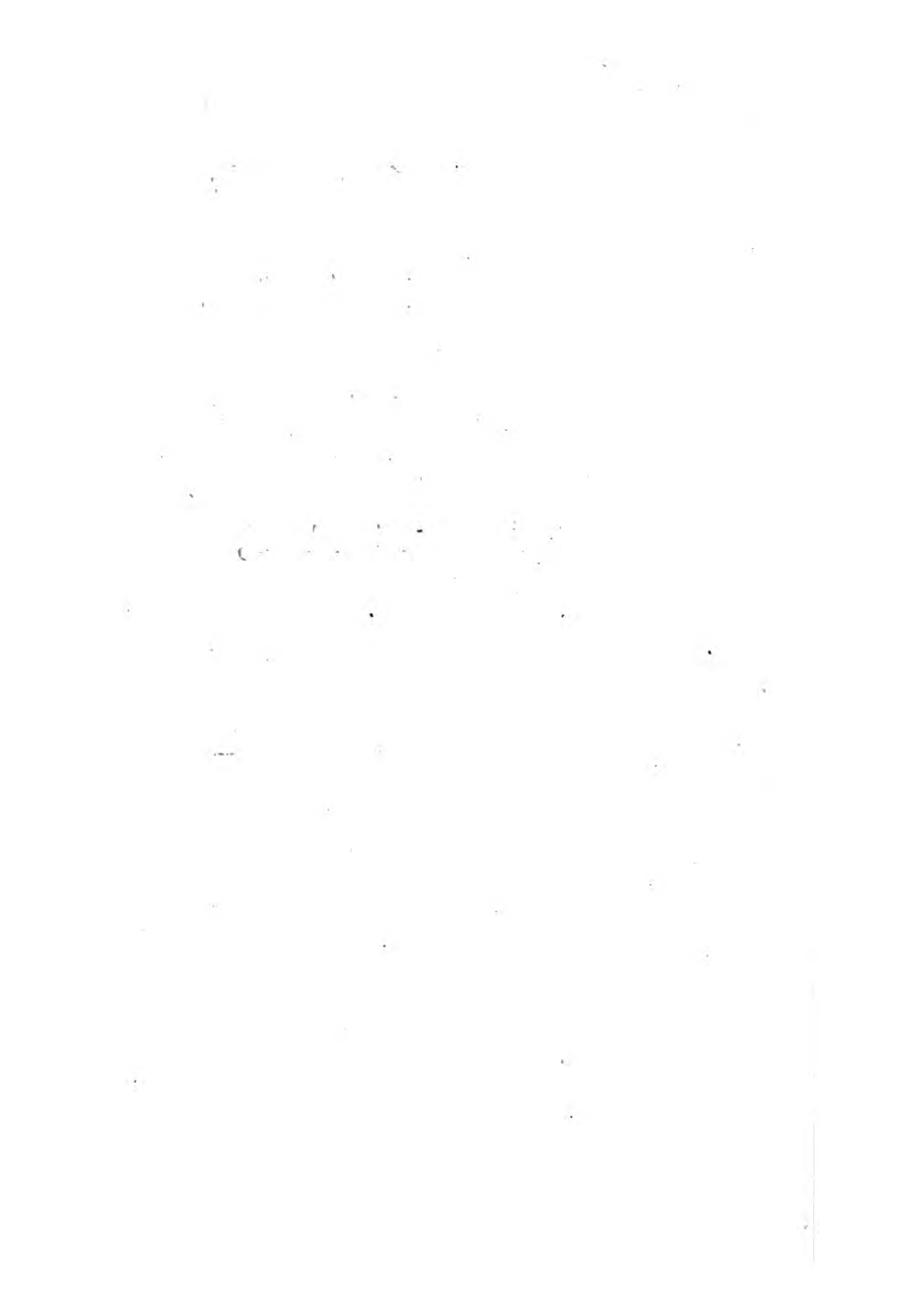
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A
S E R I E S
O F
L E T T E R S.



L E T T E R VI.
T H E R O N *to* A S P A S I O.

Dear ASPASIO,



HE last Evening was one of the finest I ever saw. According to my Custom, I made an Excursion into the open Fields; and wanted nothing to complete the Satisfaction, but my Friend's Company*. I could not but observe, how much your improving Conversation heightened the Charms of Nature. When Religion applied Philosophy,

* *Tu quod abes excepto, cætera lætus.*

phy, every Thing was *instructive*, as well as *pleasing*.—Not a Breeze swept over the Plains, to clear the Sky, and cool the Air; but it tended also to disperse our Doubts, and inviven our Faith in the supreme all-sufficient GOOD.—Not a Cloud tinged the Firmament with radiant Colours, or amused the Sight with romantic Shapes; but We beheld a Picture of the present World, of its *fading* Acquisitions and *fantastic* Joys, in the mimic Forms and the transitory Scene.—Even the weakest of the Insect-tribe, that skim the Air in sportive Silence, addressed Us with the strongest Incitements, and gave Us the loudest Calls, to be *active* in our Day, and *useful* in our Generation. They cried, at least when You lent them your Tongue,

*Such is vain Life, an idle Flight of Days,
A still delusive Round of sickly Joys,
A Scene of little Cares, and trifling Passions,
If not ennobled by the Deeds of Virtue.*

How often, at the Approach of sober Eve, have We stole along the Cloysters of a sequestered Bower; attentive to the Tale of some *querulous* Current, that seemed to be struck with Horror at the awful Gloom; and complained with heavier Murmurs, as it passed under the blackening Shades, and along the Root-obstructed Channel.—Or else, far from the
bab-

Let. 6. THERON to ASPASIO. 3

babbling Brook, and softly treading the grassy Path, We listened to the *Nightingale's* Song: while every Gale held its Breath, and all the Leaves forbore their Motion, that they might neither drown nor interrupt the melodious Woe.—From both which pensive Strains, You endeavoured to temper and chastise the exuberant Gaiety of my Spirits. You convinced me, that *true* Joy is a serious Thing*: is the Child of sedate Thought, not the Spawn of intemperate Mirth: nursed, not by the Sallies of dissolute Merriment, but by the Exercise of serene Contemplation.

Sometimes, at the gladsome Return of Morn, we have ascended an airy Eminence; and hailed the new-born Day; and followed, with our delighted Eye, the Mazes of some glittering Stream.—Here *rushing*, with impetuous Fury, from the Mountain's Side; foaming over the rifted Rocks, and roaring down the craggy Steep. Impatient, as it were, to get free from such rugged Paths, and mingle with the Beauties of the lower Vale.—There, slackening its headlong Career, and smoothing its Eddies into an even Flow. While, deep embosomed in the verdant Mead, it *glides* through the cherished and smiling Herbage. Sometimes, lost amidst closing Willows; sometimes, emerging with fresh Beauty from the

* *Res severa est verum Gaudium.* Sen.

the leafy Covert; always, roving with an Air of amorous Complacency; and careffing, as it were, the fringed Banks, and flowery Glebe. —Reminded, by this watery Monitor, of that Constancy and Vigour, with which the Affections should move towards the great *Center* of Happiness, *CHRIST JESUS*—of that determined Ardour, with which we should break through the Intanglements of Temptation, and Obstacles of the World, in order to reach our everlasting *Rest*—and of the mighty Difference between the turbulent, the frothy, the precipitate Gratifications of Vice, and the calm, the substantial, the permanent Delights of *Religion*.

Or else, with eager View, we have surveyed the extensive Prospect, and wandered over all the Magnificence of Things—an endless Variety of graceful Objects, and delightful Scenes! Each soliciting our chief Regard; every one worthy of our whole Attention; all conspiring to touch the Heart with a mingled Transport of Wonder, of Gratitude, and of Joy. —So that we have returned from our rural Expedition, not as the *Spendthrift* from the Gaming-table, cursing his Stars, and raving at his ill Luck; gulled of his Money, and the derided Dupe of Sharpers: Not as the *Libertine* from the House of Wantonness,

ness *, surfeited with the rank Debauch, dogged by Shame, goaded by Remorse, with a thousand recent Poisons tingling in his Veins. But we returned, as Ships of Commerce from the *golden* Continent, or the *spicy* Islands, with new Accessions of sublime Improvement, and solid Pleasure. With a deeper Veneration for the Almighty CREATOR; with a warmer Sense of his unspeakable Favours; and with a more inflamed Desire, “to know him now
“by Faith, and after this Life to have the
“Fruition of his glorious GODHEAD.”

Sometimes, with an agreeable Relaxation, we have transferred our Cares, from the Welfare

* *Solomon*, in order to deter unwary Youth from those Sinks of Uncleanness, represents the Harlot under the Character of a pestilent Hag, or baleful Sorceress. *Her Feet go down to Death*, Prov. v. 5. *Her House is the high Road to Hell*; Prov. viii. 27. yea, *her Guests are in the Depths of Hell*; Prov. ix. 18.—The second Clause seems to be emphatical. The original Expression is in the plural Number *דרכים* I choose therefore to render it, not simply *The Road*, but more largely *The high Road*: from which many other Ways of Guilt branch out, in which many other Paths of Ruin coincide. There, Murder is often known, to drench her Dagger in Blood; and Robbery forms the rash Resolve, which ends in the ignominious Halter. There, Intemperance daily brews the Bowl, which enervates the Constitution, and transforms the Man into a Beast. While Disease, pale cadaverous noisome Disease, anticipates the Putrefaction of the Grave,* and causes the wretched *Martyrs of Vice* to rot even above Ground.—Well may every one, that loves Life, and would fain see good Days, cry out with a Mixture of Detestation and Dread; “O my Soul, come not thou
“into their horrid Haunts!”

Dii meliora Piis, Erroremque Hostibus illum! Virg.

fare of the Nation, to the Flourishing of the Farm; and, instead of enacting Regulations for the civil Community, we have planned Schemes for the Cultivation of our Ground, and the Prosperity of our Cattle.—Instead of attending to the Course of Fleets, and the Destination of Armies, We have directed the Plough, where to rend the grassy Turf; or taught the Honeyfuckle to wind round the Arbour, and the Jessamine to climb upon the Wall.—Instead of interposing our friendly Offices, to reconcile contending Kingdoms; We have formed a *Treaty of Coalition*, between the stranger Cyon, and the adopting Tree; and, by the remarkable Melioration of the ensuing Fruit, démonstrated (would contending Empires regard the Precedent) what Advantages flow from pacific Measures, and an amicable Union.—Instead of unraveling the Labyrinths of State, and tracing the Finesses of foreign Courts; We have made ourselves acquainted with the *Politics* of Nature, and observed, how wonderfully, how mysteriously, that great Projectress acts.—In this Place she rears a vast Trunk, and unfolds a multiplicity of Branches, from one small Berry. She qualifies, by her amazing Operations, a few contemptible Acorns, that were formerly carried in a Child's Lap, to bear the *British* Thunder round the Globe, and secure to our Island the Sove-

Let. 6. THERON to ASPASIO. 7

Sovereignty of the Ocean.—In another Place, she produces from a dry Grain, *first the green Blade; then the turgid Ear; afterwards the full-grown and ripened Corn in the Ear* *. Repaying, with exact Punctuality, and with lavish Ufury, the Husbandman's Toil, and the Husbandman's Loan: causing, by a most surprising Resurrection, the Death of one Seed, to be fruitful in the Birth of Hundreds.

But I forget your Caution, *Aspasio*; forget, how kindly you have checked me, when I have been haranguing upon, I know not what, Powers and Works of Nature. Whereas, it is GOD who *worketh hitherto* †: who to this Day exerts, and to the End of Time will exert, that secret but unremitting Energy, which is the Life of this majestic System, and the Cause of all its stupendous Operations.—Let this shew you, how much I want my Guide, my Philosopher, and Friend. Without his prompting Aid, my Genius is dull; my Reflections are awkward; and my religious Improvements jejune; somewhat like the *bungling* Imitations of the Tool, compared with the *masterly* Effects of Vegetation.—However, I will proceed. Yet, not from any View of informing my *Aspasio*, but only to draw a Bill upon his Pen; and lay him under an Obligation to enrich me with another Letter,

* *Mark* iv. 28.

† *John* v. 17.

ter, upon the grand and excellent Subject of his last.

Art is dim-sighted in her Plans, and defective even in her most elaborate Essays. But *Nature*, or rather Nature's sublime AUTHOR, is indeed a Designer and a *Workman that need not be ashamed* *. His Eye strikes out ten thousand elegant Models, and his Touch executes all with inimitable Perfection.—What an admirable Specimen is Here, of the divine Skill, and of the divine Goodness! This terraqueous Globe is intended, not only for a Place of Habitation, but for a Storehouse of Conveniences. If We examine the several Apartments of our great Abode; if We take a general *Inventory* of our common Goods; We shall find the utmost Reason to be charmed with the Displays, both of nice Oeconomy, and boundless Profusion.

Observe the *Surface* of this universal Messuage. The Ground, coarse as it may seem, and trodden by every Foot, is nevertheless the *Laboratory*, where the most exquisite Operations are performed; the *Shop*, if I may so speak, where the finest Manufactures are wrought. Though a Multitude of Generations have always been accommodated, and though a Multitude of Nations are daily supplied

* 2 *Tim.* iii. 15.

plied by its Liberalities, it still continues inexhaustible. Is a Resource, that never fails; a Magazine, never to be drained.

The *Unevenness* of the Ground, far from being a Blemish or a Defect; heightens its Beauty, and augments its Usefulness.—*Here*, it is scooped into deep and sheltered Vales, almost constantly covered with a spontaneous Growth of Verdure: which, all tender and succulent, composes an easy Couch, and yields the most agreeable Fodder, for the various Tribes of Cattle.—*There*, it is extended into a wide, open, champain Country: which, annually replenished with the Husbandman's Seed, shoots into a copious Harvest. A Harvest, not only of that *principal Wheat*, which is the Staff of our Life, and strengthens our Heart; but of the *appointed Barley**, and various other Sorts of Grain, which yield an excellent Food for our Animals; and either enable them to dispatch our Drudgery, or else fatten their Flesh for our Tables.

The Furrows, obedient to the Will of Man, vary their Produce †. They bring forth a Crop of tall, flexile, slender Plants ‡: whose thin filmy Coat, dried, attenuated, and skilfully

* *Isai.* xxviii. 25.

† One may venture to say of the Earth, with regard to its vegetable Operations;

Omnia transformat sese in Miracula Rerum.

‡ Flax and Hemp.

fully manufactured, transforms itself into some of the most necessary *Accommodations* of Life, and genteelest *Embellishments* of Society. —It is wove into ample Volumes of Cloth; which, fixed to the Mast, give Wings to our Ships, and waft them to the Extremities of the Ocean.—It is twisted into vast Lengths of Cordage; which add Nerves to the Crane, and lend Sinews to the Pulley; or else, adhering to the Anchor, they fasten the Vessel even on the fluctuating Element, and secure it even amidst driving Tempests.—It furnishes the Duchefs with her costly Head-dress, and delicately fine Ruffles. No less strong than neat, it supplies the Plowman with his coarse Frock, and the Sailor with his clumsy Trowsers. Its Fibres, artfully ranged by the Operations of the Loom, cover our Tables with a graceful Elegance, and surround our Bodies with a cherishing Warmth. On this the Painter spreads the Colours, which inchant the Eye; in this the Merchant packs the Wares, which enrich the World.

Yonder, the *Hills*, like a grand Amphitheatre, arise. Amphitheatre! All the pompous Works of *Roman* Magnificence, are less than Mole-banks, are mere Cockle-shells, compared with those majestic Elevations of the Earth. Some clad with mantling Vines; some crowned with towering Cedars; some ragged with
mis-

misshapen Rocks, or yawning with subterraneous Dens. Whose rough and inaccessible Craggs, whose hideous and gloomy Cavities, are not only a continual Refuge for the wild Goats, but have often proved an Asylum to persecuted Merit*, and a Safeguard to the most valuable Lives.

At a greater Distance, the *Mountains* lift their frozen Brows, or penetrate the Clouds with their aspiring Peaks. Their frozen Brows *arrest* the roving, and *condense* the rarefied Vapours †. Their caverned Bowels collect the dripping Treasures, and send them abroad, in gradual Communications, by trickling Springs. While their steep Sides *precipitate* the watery Treasures; rolling them on with such a forcible Impulse ‡, that they never intermit their
unwearied

* To *David*, from *Saul's* Malice; to *Elijah*, from *Jezebel's* Vengeance; to many of the primitive *Christians*, from the Rage of persecuting Emperors: *they wandered in Deserts and in Mountains, in Dens and Caves of the Earth.* Heb. xi. 38.

† Therefore styled—*Nimbofa Cacumina Montis.* Virg.

‡ It is observed, that the largest Rivers in the World, those which roll the heaviest Burden of Waters, and perform the most extensive Circuit through the Nations, generally take their Rise from Mountains. The *Rhine*, the *Rhone*, and the *Po*, all descend from the *Alps*. The *Tygris* derives its rapid Flood, from the everlasting Snows, and steep Ridges of *Niphates*. And, to mention no more Instances, the River *Amazones*, which pours itself through a Multitude of Provinces, and waters near eighteen hundred Leagues of Land, has its Urn in the Caverns, and its Impetus from the Precipices, of that immense Range of Hills the *Andes*.

unwearied Course, till they have swept through the most extensive Climes, and regained their native Seas.

The *Vineyard* swells into a Profusion of Clusters: some, tinged with the deepest Purple, and delicately clouded with Azure: some, clad with a whitish transparent Skin, which shews the tempting Kernels, lodged in luscious Nectar,—The Vine requires a strong Reflection of the Sun-beams, and a very large Proportion of Warmth. How commodiously do the Hills and Mountains minister to this Purpose! May We not call those vast Declivities, the *Garden-walls* of Nature? Which, far more effectually than the most costly Glasses, or most artful Green-houses, concenter the solar Heat, and complete the Maturity of the Grape. Distending it with a Liquor of the finest Scent, the most agreeable Relish, and the most exalted Qualities: such as dissipate Sadness, and inspire Vivacity: such as make glad the Heart of Man, and most sweetly prompt, both his Gratitude, and his Duty, to the munificent GIVER.—I grieve, and I blush for my Fellow-

If the Reader is inclined to see the Origin and Formation of Rivers described, in all the Sublimity of Diction, and with all the Graces of Poetry, He may find this Entertainment in Mr. *Thomson's* Autumn, *Lin.* 781. Last Edit.

Amazing Scene! behold, the Glooms disclose.

I see the Rivers in their infant Beds!

Deep, deep I hear them, lab'ring to get free! &c.

low-creatures, that Any should *abuse* this Indulgence of Heaven. That Any should turn so valuable a Gift of GOD into an Instrument of Sin. Turn the most exhilarating of Cordials into Poison, Madness, and Death.

The *Kitchen-garden* presents Us with a new Train of Benefits. In its blooming Ornaments; what unaffected Beauty! In its culinary Productions, what diversified Riches! It ripens a Multitude of nutrimental Esculents, and almost an equal Abundance of medicinal Herbs; distributing Refreshments to the Healthy, and administering Remedies to the Sick.—The *Orchard*, all fair, and ruddy, and bowing down beneath its own delicious Burden, gives Us a fresh Demonstration of our CREATOR's Kindness. Regales Us, first, with all the Delicacies of Summer-Fruits; next, with the more lasting Succession of autumnal Dainties.

What is Nature, but a Series of Wonders, and a Fund of Delights! That such a Variety of Fruits, so beautifully coloured, so elegantly shaped, and so charmingly flavoured, should arise from the Earth! Than which nothing is more insipid, sordid, and despicable.—I am struck with pleasing Astonishment at the *Cause* of these fine Effects, and no less surprised at the *Manner* of bringing them into Existence. I take a Walk in my Garden, or

a Turn through my Orchard, in the Month of *December*. There stand several Logs of Wood, fastened to the Ground. They are erect indeed and shapely, but without either Sense or Motion. No human Hand will touch them; no human Aid will succour them; yet, in a little Time, they are beautified with Blossoms, they are covered with Leaves, and at last are loaded with mellow Treasures; with the downy Peach and the polished Plum; with the musky Apricot and the juicy Pear; with the Cherry, and its coral Pendants, glowing through Lattices of Green,

—————*and dark*
Beneath her ample Leaf, the luscious Fig.

I have wondered at the Structure of my Watch, wondered more at the Description of the Silk-mills, most of all at the Account of those prodigious Engines invented by *Archimedes*. But what are all the Inventions of all the Geometricians and Mechanics in the World, compared with these inconceivably nice *Automata** of

* *Automata*, or *self-operating* Machines; not meant to set aside the Superintendency of Providence, but only to exclude the Co-operation of Man.

The Word *αὐτοματῆ* is used by our MASTER, *Mark* iv. 38. and a fine expressive Word it is. Signifying, says a *Greek* Scholiast, *τας μηχανας, αι κατ' αυτας ενεργουσαι*.—It seems to give us the true Sense of that remarkable Phrase, in the *Mosaic* History of the Creation, אֵשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת Gen. ii. 3. *Which God created and made,*

of Nature! These *self-operating Machines* dispatch their Business, with a Punctuality that never mistakes, with a Dexterity that cannot be equalled. In Spring, they clothe themselves with such unstudied but exquisite Finery, as far exceeds the Embroidery of the Needle, or the Labours of the Loom. In Autumn, they present Us with such a Collation of Sweetmeats, as not only regale our Palate, but surpass all that Fancy could imagine, or Appetite crave.—So that those *coarse* and *senseless* Logs, first decorate the divine Creation, then perform the Honours of the Table.

If, amidst these ordinary Productions of the Earth, GOD appears so *great in Counsel and mighty in Work* * : what may We expect to see, in the Palaces of Heaven; in the Hierarchies of Angels; and in that wonderful REDEEMER, who is, beyond all other Objects, beyond all other Manifestations, *the Wisdom of GOD, and the Power of GOD* †!

The *Forest* rears Myriads of massy Bodies. Which, though neither gay with Blossoms, nor rich with Fruit, supply Us with Timber
of

made, appears tautological, and is by no means an exact Translation. It should rather be interpreted, *Which GOD created in order to make*; to make, by these prolific Instruments and reproducing Principles, a continual Succession of Animals, Vegetables, and Creatures.

* Jer. xxxii. 19.

† I Cor. I. 24.

of various Kinds, and of every desirable Quality †. But who shall cultivate such huge Trees, diffused over so vast a Space? The Toil were endless. See therefore the all-wise and ever-gracious Ordination of Providence! They are so constituted, that they have no Need of the Spade and the Pruning-knife. Nay, the little Cares of Man would diminish, rather than augment their Dignity and their Usefulness. The more they are neglected, the better they thrive; the more wildly grand and magnificent they grow.

When felled by the Axe, they are sawed into Beams, and sustain the Roofs of our Houses: they are fashioned into Carriages, and serve for the Conveyance of the heaviest Loads.—Their Substance so *pliant*, that they yield to the Chizzel of the Turner, and are smoothed by the Plane of the Joiner; are wrought into the nicest Diminutions of Shape, and compose some of the finest Branches of household Furniture.—Their Texture so *solid*,
that

† *Tully* has given Us an Abridgment of all the preceding Particulars. Which, I think, is one of the finest Landshapes in Miniature, that the descriptive Pen ever drew.—*Terra universa cernatur, vestita Floribus, Herbis, Arboribus, Frugibus; quorum omnium incredibilis Multitudo insatiabili Varietate distinguitur. Adde huc Fontium gelidas Perennitates, Liquores perlucidos Annium, Riparum Vestitus viridissimos, Specularum concavas Altitudines, Saxorum Asperitates, impendentium Montium Altitudines, Immensitatesque Camporum. De Nat. Deor. Lib. II.*

that they form the most important Parts of those mighty Engines; which, adapting themselves to the Play of mechanic Powers, dispatch more Work in a single Hour, than could otherwise be accomplished in many Days.—At the same Time, their Pressure is so *light*, that they float upon the Waters; and glide along the Surface, almost with as much Agility, as the finny Fry glance through the Deep.—Thus, while they impart Magnificence to Architecture, and bestow numberless Conveniencies on the Family; they constitute the very Basis of Navigation, and give Life, give Being to Commerce.

Amidst the inaccessible Depths of the Forest, an Habitation is assigned for those *ravenous* Beasts, whose Appearance would be frightful, and their Neighbourhood dangerous to Mankind. Here, the sternly majestic Lion rouses Himself from his Den, and awes the savage Herds with his Roar. Here, the fiery Tyger springs upon his Prey, and the gloomy Bear trains up her Whelps. Here, the swift Leopard ranges, and the grim Wolf prowls, and both in quest of Murder and Blood.—Were these horrid Animals to dwell in our Fields, what *Havock* would they make? What *Conspiration* would they spread? But they voluntarily bury themselves, in the deepest Recesses of the Desert: while the Ox, the Horse, and the serviceable Quadrupeds, live under our Inspection,

tion, and keep within our Call: profiting Us as much by their Presence, as the others oblige Us by their Absence.

If, at any Time, those shaggy Monsters make an Excursion into the habitable World, it is when Man retires to his Chamber, and sleeps in Security. The Sun, which invites other Creatures abroad, gives them the Signal to retreat. *The Sun ariseth, and they get them away, and lay them down in their Dens* *. Strange! That the orient Light, which is so pleasing to Us, should strike such Terror on them! Should, more effectually than a Legion of Guards, put them all to Flight, and clear the Country of those formidable Enemies!

If We turn our Thoughts to the *Atmosphere*, We find a most curious and exquisite Apparatus of *Air*. Which, because no Object of our Sight, is seldom considered, and little regarded; yet is a Source of innumerable Advantages. And all these Advantages, (which is almost incredible) are fetched from the very Jaws of Ruin. My Meaning may be obscure, therefore I explain myself.

We live plunged, if I may so speak, in an Ocean of Air. Whose *Pressure*, upon a Person of moderate Size, is equal to the Weight
of

* *Psal. civ. 22.*

of *twenty thousand* Pounds. Tremendous Consideration! Should the Ceiling of a Room, or the Roof a House, fall upon Us with half that Force, what destructive Effects must ensue. Such a Force would infallibly drive the Breath from our Lungs, or break every Bone in our Bodies. Yet, so admirably has the divine WISDOM contrived this aerial Fluid, and so nicely counterpoised its dreadful Power, that We receive not the slightest Hurt; We suffer no manner of Inconvenience; We even *enjoy* the Load. Instead of being as a Mountain on our Loins, it is like Wings to our Feet, or like Sinews to our Limbs.—Is not this *common* Ordination of Providence, thus considered, somewhat like the Miracle of the burning Bush; whose tender and combustible Substance, though in the midst of Flames, was neither consumed nor injured *? Is it not almost as marvelous, as the Prodigy of the three *Hebrew* Youths? Who walked in the fiery Furnace, without having a Hair of their Head singed, or so much as the Smell of Fire passing on their Garments †?—Surely, We have Reason to say unto GOD; *O! how terrible, yet how beneficent, art Thou in thy Works!*

The Air, though too weak to support *our* Flight, is a Thoroughfare for innumerable
Wings.

* *Exod.* iii. 2.

† *Dan.* iii. 27.

Wings. Here the whole Commonwealth of *Birds* take up their Abode. Here they lodge and expatiate, beyond the Reach of their Adversaries. Were they to run upon the Earth, they would be exposed to ten thousand Dangers, without proper Strength to resist them, or sufficient Speed to escape them. Whereas, by mounting the Skies, and lifting themselves up on high, they are secure from Peril, *they scorn the Horse and his Rider* *.—Some of them perching upon the Boughs, others soaring amidst the Firmament, entertain Us with their *Notes* : Which are musical and agreeable, when heard at this convenient Distance ; but would be noisy and importunate, if brought nearer to our Ears.—Here, many of those feathered Families reside, which yield Us a delicious *Treat* ; yet give Us no Trouble, put Us to no Expence, and, till the Moment We want them, are wholly out of our Way.

e Air, commissioned by its all-bountiful AUTHOR, charges itself with the Administration of several Offices, which are perfectly obliging, and no less serviceable to Mankind.—Co-operating with our Lungs, it *ventilates* the Blood ; cools and qualifies the vital Warmth, promotes and exalts the animal Secretions. Many Days We might live, or even whole Months, without the Light of the Sun,

or

* *Job xxxix. 18.*

or the Glimmering of a Star. Whereas, if We are deprived, only for a few Minutes, of this aerial Support, We sicken, We faint, We die. —The same *universal Nurse* has a considerable Hand, in cherishing the several Tribes of Plants. It helps to transfuse vegetable Vigour into the Trunk of the Oak, and a blooming Gaiety into the Spread of the Rose.

The Air undertakes to convey to our Nostrils the extremely subtil *Effluvia*, which transpire from odoriferous Bodies. Those detached Particles are so imperceptibly small, that they would elude the most careful Hand, or escape the nicest Eye. But this trusty Depositary *receives* and *escorts* the invisible Vagrants, without losing so much as a single Atom. Entertaining Us, by this means, with the delightful Sensations, that arise from the Fragrance of Flowers; and admonishing Us, by the Transmission of offensive Smells, to withdraw from an unwholesome Situation, or beware of any pernicious Food.

The Air, by its undulating Motion, conducts to our Ear all the Diversities of *Sound*; and, thereby, discharges the Duty of a most seasonable and faithful Monitor. As I walk across the Streets of *London*, with my Eye engaged on other Objects; a Dray, perhaps, with all its Load, is driving down directly upon me. Or, as I ride along the Road, musing and unap-

prehensive, a Chariot and six is whirling on, with a rapid Career, at the Heels of my Horse, The Air, like a *vigilant* Friend, in pain for my Welfare, immediately takes the Alarm; and, while the Danger is at a considerable Distance, dispatches a Courier to advertise me of the approaching Mischief. It even thunders in my Ear; and, with a *clamorous* but *kind* Importunity, urges me to be upon my Guard, and provide for my Safety.

The Air wafts to our Sense all the Modulations of *Music*, and the more agreeable Entertainments of refined Conversation. When *Myrtilla* strikes the silver Strings, and teaches the willing Harpsichord to warble with her CREATOR's Praise: when her sacred Sonata warms the Heart with Devotion, and wings our Desires to Heaven.—When *Cleora* tunes her Song, or the Nightingale imitates her enchanting Voice: when She heightens every melodious Note, with her adored REDEEMER's Name; and so smooths her charming Tones, so breathes her rapturous Soul, “that GOD's “own Ear listens delighted.”—When Wisdom takes its Seat on *Mitio's* Tongue; and flows, in perspicuous Periods, and instructive Truths, amidst the chosen Circle of his Acquaintance.—When Benevolence, associated with Persuasion, dwell on *Nicander's* Lips; and plead the Cause of injured Innocence, or oppressed Vir-
tue,

tue.—When Goodness, leagu'd with Happiness, accompany *Eusebius* into the Pulpit; and reclaim the Libertine from the Slavery of his Vices; disengage the Infidel from the Fascination of his Prejudices; and so affectionately, so pathetically invite the whole Audience, to partake the unequalled Joys of pure Religion.—In all these Cases, the Air distributes every musical Variation with the utmost *Exactness*; and delivers the Speaker's Message, with the most punctual *Fidelity*. Whereas, without this Internuntio, all would be fullen and unmeaning Silence. We should lose both the Pleasure and the Profit; neither be charmed with the harmonious, nor improved by the articulate Accents.

The Breezes of the Air, when vague and unconfined, are so very gentle; that they sport, with the most inoffensive Wantonness, amidst *Ophelia's* Locks, and scarce disadjust a single Curl. But, when collected and applied by the Contrivance of Man, they act with such *prodigious Force*; as is sufficient to whirl round the hugest Wheels, though clogged with the most incumbering Loads. They make the ponderous Millstones move as swiftly, as the Dancer's Heel; and the massy Beams play as nimbly, as the Musician's Finger.

If We climb, in Speculation, the higher Regions, here is an endless Succession of *Clouds*,

fed by Evaporations from the Ocean. The Clouds are themselves a kind of Ocean, suspended in the Air with amazing Skill. They travel, in detached Parties, and in the Quality of *itinerant Cisterns*, round all the terrestrial Globe. They fructify, by proper Communications of Moisture, the spacious Pastures of the Wealthy; and gladden, with no less liberal Showers, the Cottager's little Spot. Nay, so condescending is the Benignity of their great Proprietor, that they *satisfy the desolate and waste Ground; and cause, even in the most uncultivated Wilds, the Bud of the tender Herb to spring forth* *. That the Natives of the lonely Desert, those savage Herds which know no Master's Stall, may nevertheless experience the Care, and rejoice in the Bounty, of an all-supporting PARENT.

How wonderful! That the Water, which is much *denser* and far *heavier* than the Air, should rise into it; make its Way through it; and take a Station in the very uppermost Regions of it! This, One should imagine, were almost as impossible, as for the Rivers to run back to their Source. Yet PROVIDENCE has contrived a Way, to make it not only practicable, but Matter of continual Occurrence.

How wonderful! That *pendent Lakes* should be diffused, or *fluid Mountains* heaped over our
Heads;

* Job xxxviii, 27.

Heads; and both sustained in the thinnest Parts of the Atmosphere! We little think of that surprizing Expedient, which, without Conduits of Stone, or Vessels of Brass, keeps such Loads of Water in a buoyant State; and with-holds them from rushing down, with furious and disorderly Violence. *Job* considered this, not without holy Admiration, and grateful Praise. *Dost thou know the Balancings of the Clouds?* How such ponderous Bodies are made to hang with an even Poise, and hover like the lightest Down? These are *the wonderful Works of HIM who is perfect in Knowledge* *. *He bindeth up the Waters in his thick Clouds; and the Cloud, though nothing is more loose and fluid, becomes, by the ALMIGHTY's Order, firm and tenacious as Casks of Iron; it is not rent † under all the Weight.*

When the Sluices are opened, and the Waters descend, One is apt to suspect, that they should gush forth in Cataracts, or pour themselves out in Torrents. Whereas, instead of such a precipitate Effusion, which would be infinitely pernicious, they coalesce into *Globules*, and are dispensed in gentle *Showers*. They are often attenuated into the Smallness of a Hair ‡; they

* *Job xxxvii. 16.*

† *Job xxvi. 8.*

‡ The *Hebrew* Words, which convey the Idea of gentle *Rain*, signify a Portion of Water, made small as a *Hair*, or divided into *Millions* of Parts, שְׁעָרִים וְרֵבִיבִים Deut. xxxii. 2.

they spread themselves, as if they were strained through the Orifices of the finest Watering-pot; and form those *small Drops of Rain, which the Clouds distil upon Man abundantly* *. Thus, instead of drowning the Earth, and sweeping away its Fruits, they cherish universal Nature; and, in Conformity to the Practice of their great MASTER, distribute their humid Stores to Men, to Animals, and Vegetables, *as they are able to bear them* †.

Besides the Receptacles of Water, here are cantoned various Parties of *Winds*, mild or fierce, gentle or boisterous; furnished with breezy Wings, to *fan* the glowing Firmament, and diffuse Refreshment on a fainting World: or else, fitted to act as an universal *Besom*; and, by sweeping the Chambers of the Atmosphere, to preserve the fine aerial Fluid free from Feculencies. Without this wholesome Agency of the Winds, the Air would stagnate; become putrid; and surround Us, in the literal Sense of the Words, with *Darkness that might be felt* ‡. *London, Paris*, and all the great Cities in the World, instead of being the Seats of Elegance, would degenerate into Sinks of Corruption.

At *Sea*, the Winds swell the Mariner's Sails, and speed his Course along the watery Way: speed it far more effectually, than a
thousand

* *Job xxxvi. 28.* † *Mark iv. 33.* ‡ *Exod. x. 21.*

thousand Rowers, bending to their Strokes, and tugging at the Oar.—By *Land*, they perform the Office of an immense Seed-man, and scatter abroad the reproductive Principles of a Multitude of Plants; which, though the Staff of Life to many Animals, are too small for the Management, or too mean for the Attention of Man.—*HE bringeth the Winds out of his Treasuries* *, is a very just Observation; whether it relate to GOD's absolute and uncontrollable Dominion over this most potent Meteor, or to its welcome and salutary Influence * on all the Face of Nature.

Here are *Lightnings* stationed. Though dormant at present, they are in act to spring, and launch the livid Flame: whenever their piercing Flash is necessary, to destroy the *sulphureous* Vapours; or dislodge any other *noxious* Matter, which might be prejudicial to the delicate Temperature of the *Æther*, and obscure its more than crystalline Transparency.

Above all is situate a *radiant* and *majestic* Orb, which inlightens the Tracts, cheers the Inhabitants, and colours all the Productions of this habitable Globe. While the Air, by a singular Address in managing the Rays, amplifies

** Pſal. cxxxv. 7. *Quam ſalutares autem dedit, quam tempeſtivos non modo Hominum, ſed etiam Pecudum Generi, iis denique omnibus quæ oriuntur à Terra, Ventos? Quorum Flatu nimii temperantur Calores, ab iisdem etiam maritimi Curſus celeres & certi diriguntur.* De Nat. Deor. Lib. II.

fies their Usefulness: its *reflecting* Power * augments that Heat, which is the Life of Nature; its *refracting* Power prolongs that Splendor, which is the Beauty of the Creation.—These Emanations of Light, though formed of inactive Matter, yet (astonishing Apparatus of almighty Wisdom!) are refined almost to the *Subtilty* of Spirit, and are scarce inferior even to Thought in *Speed*. By which means, they spread themselves, with a kind of instantaneous Swiftnefs, through the Circumference of a whole Hemisphere; and though they fill, where-ever they pervade, yet they straiten no Place, imbarrafs no One, incumber Nothing.

These give the Diamond its Brilliancy, and the Velvet its Gloss: to these the chearful Eye
is

* The Air is a curious *Cover*, which, without oppressing the Inhabitants of the Earth with any perceivable Weight, confines, reflects, and thereby *increases* the vivifying Heat of the Sun. The Air increases this kindly Heat, much in the same manner as our Garments by Day, or Bed-clothes by Night, give additional Warmth to our Bodies.—Whereas, when the aerial Vestment grows thin, or, to speak more philosophically, when the Air becomes less in Quantity, and more *attenuated* in Quality, the solar Warmth is very sensibly diminished. Travelers on the lofty Mountains of *America*, sometimes experience, to their terrible Cost, the Truth of this Observation. Though the Clime, at the Foot of those prodigious Hills, is even hot and sultry; yet on their Summits, the Cold rages with such excessive Severity, that it is no unusual Calamity, for the Horse and his Rider to be frozen to death.—We have therefore great Reason to bless the supreme DISPOSER of Things, for placing Us in the *commo-dious* Concavity, or rather under the *cherishing* Wings of an Atmosphere.

is obliged for its lively Sparkle, and the modest Cheek for its rosy Blush. These, attending the judicious Touches of the Pencil, bid the Drapery flow, and the embodied Figure rise; bid the Countenance wear the calm Serenity of Thought, or be agitated with the wild Transports of Passion.—Without this Circumstance of *Colour*, we should want all the Entertainments of Vision, and be at a Loss to distinguish one Thing from another. We should hesitate to pronounce, and must take a little Journey to determine, whether yonder Inclosure contains a Piece of Pasturage, or a Plot of arable Land. We should question, and could not very expeditiously resolve, whether the next Person We meet, be a Soldier in his Regimentals, or a Swain in his Holy-day Suit? A Bride in her Ornaments, or a Widow in her Weeds. *But Colour, like a particular Livery, characterizes the Class, to which each Individual belongs. It is the *Label*, which indicates, upon the first Inspection, its respective Quality. It is the *Ticket*, which guides our Choice, and directs our Hand*.

We

* This, I believe, suggests the true Sense of those noble Metaphors, used by the divine Speaker. *It is turned as Clay to the Seal, and they stand as a Garment: It, the Earth and all its Productions receive, from the rising Sun, both Colour and Beauty. Just as the soft Clay, and the melting Wax, receive an elegant Impression from the Seal.—They (the Morning and the Day-spring, mentioned in a preceding Verse)*

We have cursorily surveyed the *upper Rooms* of our great Habitation, and taken a Turn along the *Ground-floor*; if We descend into the subterraneous Lodgments, the *Cellars* of the stately Structure, We shall there also find the most exquisite Contrivance, acting in Concert with the most profuse Goodness.—Here are various *Minerals*, of sovereign Efficacy in Medicine: that rectify the vitiated Blood, and quicken the languid Spirits; that often rekindle the fading Bloom in the Virgin's Complexion, and reinvigorate the infeeble Arm of Manhood.—Here are Beds fraught with *Metals* of the richest Value. From hence come the golden Treasures, from hence the silver Stores, which are the very Life of Traffic; and circulate through the Body politic, as the vital Fluid through the animal Frame. Which, in the refining Hand of Charity, are Feet to the Lame, and Eyes to the Blind, and make the Widow's Heart sing for Joy.—Here are Mines, which yield a Metal of meaner Aspect, but of a firmer Cohesion, and of superior Usefulness.

A

Verse) *stand as a Garment*; they act the Part of a magnificent and universal Clothing; give all visible Objects, their comely Aspect, and graceful Distinctions. *Job xxxviii. 14.*

What bold and fine Images are here!—The *Sea* had been described as an *Infant*, changeable, froward, and impetuous, with thick Darkness for its Swadling-band. The *Light* is represented as an *Handmaid*, attending to *dress* the Creation; and executing the CREATOR's Orders, with a *Punctuality* that never fails, with a *Speed* that cannot be equalled.

A Metal, that furnishes almost all the Implements, with which Art executes her various Designs. Without the Assistance of *Iron*, Trade would be reduced to the lowest Ebb; Commerce would feel her Wings clipped; and every Species of mechanic Skill, either utterly fail, or be miserably baffled. Without the Assistance of Iron, it would be almost impossible to rear the steady Mast, to display the daring Canvas, or drop the faithful Anchor. Destitute of this ever-needful Commodity, we should have no Plow to furrow the Soil, no Shuttle to traverse the Loom, scarce any Ornament for polite, or any Utensil for ordinary Life.

Here is an inexhausted Fund of *combustible* Materials*, which supply the whole Nation with Fewel. These present their Ministrations in the Kitchen; and yielding themselves as Aliment to the Flame, render our Food both palatable and healthy.—These offer their Service at the Forge; and, with their piercing Heat, mollify the most stubborn Bars, till they become pliant to the Stroke of the Hammer.—The *Coals* pour themselves likewise into the Glass-houses.

* *As for the Earth, says Job, out of it cometh Bread: Corn, Vegetables, and whatever is good for Food, spring from its Surface. While under it, is turned up as it were Fire: its lower Parts תחתיה its deeper Strata, yield combustibile Materials; which are easily inkindled into Fire, and administer the most substantial Fewel for the Flame. Job xxviii. 5.*

houses. They rage, amidst those astonishing Furnaces, with irresistable but useful Fierceness. They liquify even the obdurate Flint, and make the most rigid Substances far more ductile, than the softest Clay, or the melting Wax: make them obsequious, not only to the lightest Touch, but to the Impressions of our very Breath.

By this means, we are furnished, and from the coarsest Ingredients, with the most curious, beautiful, and serviceable Manufacture in the World. A Manufacture, which transmits the chearing Light of the Sun into our Houses, yet excludes the Annoyance of the Rains, and the Violence of the Winds. Which gives *new Eyes* to decrepit Age, and vastly *more enlarged Views* to Philosophy and Science: which leads up the Astronomer's Discernment, even to the *Satellites of Saturn*; and carries down the Naturalist's Observation, as far as the Animalcule Race: bringing near what is immensely remote, and making visible what, to our unassisted Sight, would be absolutely imperceptible.

We have also, when the Sun withdraws his Shining, an Expedient to supply his Place. We can create an *artificial Day* in our Rooms, and prolong our Studies, or pursue our Business, under its chearing Influence. With beaming Tapers and ruddy Fires, We *chase* the
Darkness,

Darkness, and *mitigate** the Cold; We cherish Conversation, and cultivate the social Spirit. We render those very Intervals of Time, some of the most delightful Portions of our Life, which otherwise would be a joyless and unimproving Void.

These obscure Caverns are the Birth-place of the most sparkling *Gems*. Which, when nicely polished, and prodigal of their Lustre, stand

* I can hardly forbear transcribing the grateful and pious Remark, which *Socrates* makes on this Occasion. Demonstrating, from the advantageous and benign Constitution of Things, GOD's indulgent Care for Mankind, He asks; Το δε και το πυρ πορισαι ημιν, επικερρον μεν ψυχης, επικερρον δε σκολης, συνερσον δε προ παντων τεχνην, και παντα οσα ωφελειας ενεκα ανθρωποι κατασκευαζονται; Ως γαρ συνελουσι ειπειν, οδεν αξιολογον ανευ πυρος ανθρωποι των προ ειον χρησιμων κατασκευαζονται.—To which his Pupil very intelligently replies, Υπερβαλλει και τω φιλανθρωπια. *Vid. Socrat. Memor. Lib. iv.* A Work, that may be ranked among the *finest* Remains of Antiquity. *Equal*, 'tis acknowledged, to any of the antient Compositions in Purity of Style, and Dignity of Sentiment. *Superior*, I think, to them all, for the artful, delicate, and happy Manner of conveying Instruction.

I wish, the Author of the preceding Dialogues had been better acquainted with the *Socratic* Method; and I could wish, that young Students for the Ministry would adopt the Skill of this *heathen* Philosopher. Perhaps, no Qualification of human Growth, would more effectually contribute to render them, what *St. Paul* styles, *διδασκλικος*. It seems to be the most *insinuating* and *successful* Way both to convince and instruct. Nay, it convinces the Opponent out of his own Mouth, and makes the Pupil instruct himself. It is what the Teacher sent from GOD practised, in those incomparable Sketches of obliging and masterly Address, The Parable of the *two Debtors*, and of the *good Samaritan*. Luk. vii. 41. Luk. x. 30.

stand Candidates for a Place on the royal Crown, or a Seat on the *virtuous* Fair One's Breast. And, I will not with our Men of Gallantry say, emulate the living Brilliancy of her Eyes; but serve as a Foil, to set off the Loveliness and Excellency of her accomplished Mind, and amiable Conversation: *whose Price*, according to the unerring Estimate of Inspiration, is superior to Sapphires, *is far above Rubies* *.

Here are *Quarries*, stocked with Stones, inferior in Beauty to the Jeweler's Ware, but much more eminently beneficial. Which, when properly ranged, and cemented with a tenacious Mortar, form the convenient Abodes of Peace, and build the strongest Fortifications of War: defending Us from the Inclemencies of the Weather, and the more formidable Assaults of our Enemies. These constitute the Arches of the Bridge, the Arms of the Mole, and the rocky Girdle of our Quays: which convey the Traveler, with perfect Security, over the most rapid Rivers; or screen the Bark from the destructive Inroad of tempestuous Seas.—These stony Treasures are comparatively *soft*, while they continue in the Bowels of the Earth; but acquire an increasing *Hardness*, when exposed to the open Air. Was this remarkable Peculiarity reversed, what Difficulties

* *Prov.* xxxi. 10.

culties would attend the Labours of the Mason? His Materials could not be extracted from their Bed, nor fashioned for his Purpose, without infinite Toil. Were his Work completed, it could not long withstand the Fury of the Elements; but insensibly mouldering, or incessantly decaying, would elude the Expectations of the Owner; perhaps, might prove an immature Grave, instead of a durable Dwelling.

Here are various Assortments or vast *Layers of Clay*. Which however contemptible in its Appearance, is abundantly more advantageous, than the Rocks of Diamond, or the Veins of Gold. This is moulded, with great Expedition and Ease, into Vessels of any Shape, and of almost every Size. Some, so delicately fine, that they compose the most elegant and ornamental Furniture, for the Tea-table of a Princess. Others, so remarkably cheap, that they are ranged on the Shelves, and minister at the Meals, of the poorest Peasant. All so perfectly neat, that no Liquid takes the least Taint, nor the nicest Palate any Disgust, from their cleanly Services.

A Multiplicity of other valuable Stores, are locked up by Providence, in those ample Vaults. The *Key* of all is committed to the Management of *Industry*; with free Permission to pro-

duce each particular Species, as Necessity shall demand, or Prudence direct.

Which shall we most admire, the bountiful Heart, the liberal Hand, or the all-discerning Eye of our great CREATOR? How observable and admirable is his *Precaution*, in removing these useful but cumbrous Wares, from the Superficies; and stowing them, in proper Repositories, beneath the Ground!—Were they scattered over the Surface of the Soil, the Earth would be *embarrassed* with the enormous Load. Our Roads would be blocked up, and scarce any Portion left free for the Operations of Husbandry.—Were they buried extremely deep, or sunk to the Center of the Globe, it would cost Us immense Pains to procure them; or rather, they would be quite *inaccessible*.—Were they uniformly spread into a Pavement for Nature; the Trees could not strike their Roots, nor the Herbs shoot their Blades, but universal *Sterility* must ensue.—Whereas, by their present Disposition, they furnish Us with a Magazine of metallic, without causing any Diminution of our vegetable Treasures. Fossils of every noble and serviceable Kind enrich the *Bowels*, while Bloom and Verdure embellish the *Face* of the Earth.

So judicious is the Arrangement of this grand Edifice! So beneficent the Destination
of

of its whole *Furniture! In which, all is regulated with consummate Skill, and touched into the highest Perfection. All most exactly adapted to the various Intentions of Providence, and the manifold Exigencies of Mankind: to supply *every Want*, We can feel; and gratify *every Wish*, We can form.

Insomuch that the whole System affords a favourite and exalted Topic of Praise, even to those distinguished Beings, who *stand on the Sea of Glass, and have the Harps of GOD in their Hands*. They lift their Voice and sing, *Great and marvelous are thy Works, O LORD GOD Almighty †!*—And is there not Reason, my *Aspasio* would say, infinite Reason, for *Us* to join this triumphant Choir; and add Gratitude to our Wonder, Love to our Hallelujahs? Since all these Things are to *Us*, not merely Objects of Contemplation, but Sources of Accommodation: not only a majestic

* No Notice is taken of the *Ocean*, in this little *Rent-roll* of Nature's Wealth; because, a distinct Sketch is given of that grand Reservoir and its principal Services, in *Letter IX*.

† *Revel. xv. 3. Great and marvelous are thy Works, O LORD GOD Almighty! Just and true are thy Ways, Thou KING of Saints!* The first Part seems to mean, what the inspired Writer calls, *The Song of Moses*. The Second contains, what He styles, *The Song of the LAMB*. The first, I should imagine, relates to the stupendous Works of Creation. The second alludes to the far more wonderful Scheme of Redemption. The former, describing the System of Nature, is recorded by *Moses*; the latter, comprehending the Salvation of the Saints, is accomplished by *CHRIST*.

jestic Spectacle, bright with the Display of our CREATOR's Wisdom, but an inestimable Gift, rich with the Emanations of his Goodness. 'The Earth hath He *set before* the Inhabitants of Glory, but *the Earth hath He given to the Children of Men**.—Having given Us Ourselves; given Us a World; has He not a Right, a most unquestionable and unrivaled Right, to make that tender Demand? *My Son, give me thy Heart* †.

Shall I add another Passage? Which, viewed with any but the last Paragraph, will be like *the Head of Gold*, eminent and conspicuous on *Feet of Iron and Clay*. It is taken from the finest philosophical Oration, that ever was made. I never read it, but with a Glow of Delight, and with Impressions of Awe. It is, in short, inimitably spirited and sublime.—You think, perhaps, I act an impolitic Part, in being so lavish of my Praise; and that the Quotation must suffer, by such an *aggrandizing* Introduction. But I am under no Apprehensions of this Kind. Forbear to be delighted, if You can; cease to admire, if You can; When You hear OMNISCIENCE itself declaring, That, on the Sight of this universal Fabric, emerging out of Nothing, THE MORNING STARS SANG TOGETHER, AND ALL THE SONS OF GOD SHOUTED FOR JOY ‡.—The
System

* *Psal.* cxv. 16. † *Prov.* xxiii. 26. ‡ *Job* xxxviii. 5.

Let. 7. ASPASIO to THERON. 39

System was so graceful, so magnificent, and, in all Respects, so exquisitely finished ; that the most *exalted* Intelligences were charmed, were transported. They knew not how to express themselves on the great Occasion, but in *Shouts* of Exultation, and *Songs* of Praise. Is it possible for Imagination to conceive an Encomium, so just, so high, so beautifully noble ! —I am sure, after so much Delicacy, and Majesty of Sentiment, any thing of mine must be intolerably flat ; unless You will except this one Profession, that I am, with the most cordial Sincerity,

My dear Aspasio,
inviolably yours,

THERON.



L E T T E R VII.

ASPASIO to THERON.

My dear THERON,

IF You write with such a View, and from such a Motive, as are mentioned in your last, expect no more *free-will* Offerings from my Pen. In this one Instance, I shall think it my Duty to be covetous. I shall act the

D 4

Miser

Miser out of Principle; and hardly persuade myself to part with a single Line, till it is become an undeniable *Debt*. I must turn your own Artifice on Yourself; and lay You under a Necessity of obliging, entertaining, and edifying me by your Correspondence.

For, give me Leave to assure You, that I am always delighted, and always improved by your Epistles. They shew me a Multitude of Beauties in the Creation, which I should not otherwise have discerned. They point out the infinite Power, the unsearchable Wisdom, and the charmingly rich Goodness of the glorious MAKER. Such a Philosophy turns all Nature into a *School* of Instruction, and is an excellent *Handmaid* to true Religion. It makes every Object a Step, better than a golden Step, to raise both our Knowledge and our Affections to the adorable and immortal CAUSE of all.

While I am roving heedlessly along, your Remarks often interpose, like some intelligent faithful Monitor, who claps his Hand upon my Breast, and says; *Stand still, and consider the wondrous Works of GOD**.—Willingly I obey the Admonition: the *Christian* may, with peculiar Complacency, behold this grand Magazine of Wonders, this copious Storehouse of Blessings; and, conscious of an Interest in
JESUS,

* *Job xxxvii. 14.*

JESUS, has a Right to call them all *his own* *. He may look round upon present Things; look forward unto future Things; and, trusting in his SAVIOUR's Merit, may confidently say—"Not one only, but both
 " these Worlds are mine. By virtue of my
 " REDEEMER's Righteousness, I possess
 " the necessary Accommodations of this Life;
 " and, on the same unshaken Footing, I stand
 " intitled to the inconceivable Felicity of a
 " better."

Surely then it will be as pleasing an Employ, and as important a Search, to examine the *Validity of our Title* to all Things, as to estimate the Value of our present Possessions. *You* have executed the one, Let *me* attempt the other.—
 You have surveyed material Nature: it appears to be void of all Defect; and, for the Purposes which it is intended to answer, completely finished. Is not our SAVIOUR's Obedience, the Provision made for indigent and guilty Souls, equally perfect?—Since this is everlasting and immutable; since the other is transient and perishable; doubtless We may argue with the judicious Apostle: *If that which is to be done away, which will soon be consigned over to Dissolution, is glorious; much more that which remaineth, whose blessed Effects continue to eternal Ages, is glorious †.*

We

* 1 Cor. iii. 21. † 2 Cor. iii. 11.

We are every One, *as an unclean Thing* *. Our very Nature is contaminated. Even Sanctification, though it destroys the reigning, does not wholly supercede the polluting Power of Iniquity. So that whatever Graces We exercise, whatever Duties We perform, (like the Rays of Light transmitted through coloured Glass, or like generous Wine streaming from a defiled Cask) they receive some improper Tinge, or contract some debasing Taint. But *CHRIST* was intirely free from this *innate* Contagion. He had no erroneous Apprehensions in his Mind, no corrupt Bias upon his Will, nor any irregular Concupiscence in his Affections.

Being thus perfectly undefiled, *He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth* †. All his Thoughts were innocent, all his Words were irreproachable, and every Action blameless. The most accomplished among the Children of Men, when surpris'd in some unguarded Moment, or assaulted on some weak Side, have been betrayed into Error, or hurried into Sin. Even *Moses* spake unadvisedly with his Lips; and *Aaron*, the Saint of the LORD, warped to idolatrous Practices. *They* were like some stagnating Lake; in which, the Dregs being subsided, the Waters appear clean; but, when stirred by Temptation, or agitated

* *Isaiab* lxiv. 6.† *1 Pet.* ii, 22;

agitated by Affliction, the Sediment rises, and the Pool is discoloured. Whereas, *CHRIST* may be compared to a Fountain, that is all Transparency, and pure to the very Bottom: which, however shaken, however disturbed, is nothing but fluid Crystal; permanently and invariably clear.

It was a small Thing for the blessed *JESUS*, to have no depraved Propensity; He was born in a State of *consummate Rectitude*, and adorned with all the Beauties of Holiness. HOLINESS TO THE LORD was inscribed, not on the *Mitre*, but on the *Heart* of our great HIGH-PRIEST. Therefore He is styled by the Angelic Harbinger of his Birth, THAT HOLY THING*.—In the Prophecy of *Zechariah*, the Dignity of our REDEEMER's Nature, and the Perfection of his Obedience, are displayed by the Similitude of a *Stone* †, adorned with exquisite Engraving. Wrought,
not

* *Luke* i. 35.—Which is spoken, in *Contradistinction* to the State of all other Births; and implies the *universal* Prevalence of original Corruption, this *one* Instance only excepted. For, if other Infants were holy at their first Formation, and made after the Image of GOD, this Remark had been trivial and impertinent, if not droll and burlesque; like saying with great Solemnity, “The Child shall have a Mouth and a Head; aye, and Eyes in the one, and Lips to the other.”

† *Zechar*, iii. 9, 10. *Behold the Stone that I have laid before Joshua: upon one Stone shall be seven Eyes; behold! I will engrave the Graving thereof, saith the LORD of Hosts, and I will remove the Iniquity of that Land in one Day.*

not by *Bezaleel* or *Aboliab*, though divinely inspired Artists, but by the Finger of JEHOVAH Himself; and more highly finished, than it is possible for human Skill to equal, or human Thought to conceive.

The whole Tenour of our LORD's Conduct, was a living Exemplification of Piety and Morality, in their most *extensive* Branches, and most *amiable* Forms. Saints of the highest Attainments, have fallen short of the Glory of GOD; have been far from reaching the exalted Standard of his Precepts. But *CHRIST* failed in no Point, came short in no Degree. — We formerly observed the great Sublimity, and vast Extent of the divine Law. From whence appears the extreme Difficulty, nay the utter Impossibility of our Justification, on Account of any Duties performed by Ourselves. How should We rejoice then to contemplate the vicarious Righteousness of our condescending and adorable SURETY? As the Mercy-seat was exactly commensurate to the Dimensions of the Ark; so did our LORD's Obedience most *fully quadrate* with all and every Demand of the divine Law. It flowed from those noble Principles, supreme Love to GOD, and unfeigned Affection to Mankind.

From those two capital Sources, let Us trace our LORD's Obedience, through some little
Part

Part of its illustrious Progress.—His Delight in GOD was conspicuous, even from his *early* Years. The sacred Solemnities of the Sanctuary, were more engaging to his youthful Mind, than all the Entertainments of a Festival.—When He entered upon his Ministry, *whole Nights* were not too long for his copious Devotions. The lonely Retirements of the Desert, as affording Opportunity for undisturbed Communion with GOD, were more desirable to CHRIST, than the Applauses of an admiring World.

So ceaseless and transcendent was his Love to GOD, that He never sought any separate Pleasure of his own; but always did those Things, which were pleasing in his FATHER'S Sight. His own Will was intirely absorpt in the Will of the MOST HIGH; and *it was his Meat and Drink*, refreshing and delightful as the richest Food, or as royal Dainties, to *finish the Work that was given Him to do* *.

So intirely devoted to the Honour of GOD, that a Zeal for his House, and for the Purity of his Ordinances, is represented by the evangelical Historian, as *eating Him up* †. Like a heavenly Flame, glowing in his Breast, it sometimes fired Him with a graceful Indignation; sometimes melted Him into godly Sorrow; and, by exerting itself in a Variety

* *John* iv. 34.

† *John* ii. 17.

riety of vigorous Efforts, consumed his vital Spirits.

So active and unremitted was the Obedience of the blessed *JESUS*, that the Sun did not enter upon his Race with a more constant Assiduity, nor dispatch his Business with greater Expedition: and sure I am, that radiant Luminary never dispensed Beams, half so bright, or a thousandth Part so beneficial.—Short was his Span, but how grand and extensive were his Services. So *grand*, that they bring more Glory to GOD, than all the Administrations of Providence, and all the Phænomena of Nature. So *extensive*, that they spread, in their gracious Efficacy, to the Ends of the Earth, and to the closing Period of Time. Nay, they will diffuse their blessed Influence even to the celestial World, and have no other Limits of their Duration than the Ages of Eternity.

Most affectionately concerned for the Welfare of Mankind, He spent his Strength, not barely in relieving them, when his Aid was implored; but in *seeking* the Afflicted, and *offering* his Assistance. With great Fatigue*,

He

* *JESUS* being weary with his Journey, *εκαθεζετο ειως*. John iv. 6.—*ειως* is thus explained by a Greek Commentator, *απλως, και ως ετυχε*. Our LORD sat down, *without Ceremony* and *without Complaint*, even on the rough Place: contented to use it, just as He found it; neither desiring a softer Seat, nor wishing for any better Accommodation.—I rather

He travelled to remote Cities; and with no less Condescension, He visited the meanest Villages; that All might have the Benefit and Comfort of his Presence. Though Multitudes of miserable Objects were brought to Him from every Quarter, yet he was pleased even to prevent the Wishes of the Distressed, and *went about doing Good.*

He gave Sight*, and all the agreeable Scenes of Nature, to the Blind; Health, and all the choice Comforts of Life, to the Diseased. He expelled malevolent raging Dæmons; and restored, what is more precious than the Light of the Body, or the Vigour of Constitution, the calm Possession of the intellectual Faculties.—What *greatly surpassed* all the preceding Blessings, He released the wretched Soul from the Dominion of Darknes, and from the Tyranny of Sin. He made his Followers
Partakers

rather think, the Adverb refers to the preceding Adjective *κεκοπιακως*, which signifies a State of very great Fatigue; weakening a Person to such a Degree, that He can hardly walk with *steady Steps*, or even sit in an *upright Attitude*. The sacred Historian seems to mean, that our LORD sat in such a Posture, as spoke the Lassitude of his Body; declared the Failure of his Spirits; and *shewed* Him to be spent with the Heat of the Day, and the Toil of Traveling. Which Circumstance gives a most beautiful *Heightening* to his Charity and Zeal, so generously and so successfully exerted in the following Conference.

* *Εχαρισατο το βλεπειν*, is the delicate and noble Expression of the Evangelist, *Luke vii. 21.* *He made them a Present of Sight.* Silver and Gold had He none; but these were his Gifts; such were his Alms.

Partakers of a divine Nature, and prepared them for a State of never-ending Bliss.

Such priceless Treasures of Wisdom and Beneficence flowed from his Tongue, and were poured from his Hands!—How different these Triumphs of Mercy, from the Trophies erected, by wild Ambition, in the bloody Field! If *Heathens* celebrated those mighty Butchers, who made Cities their Slaughter-house; made half the Globe their Shambles; and measured their Merit, by the Devastations they spread; how should *Christians* admire this heavenly BENEFACTOR, who rose upon a wretched World, with Healing under his Wings! Who distributed, far and near, the unspeakably rich Gifts of Knowledge and Holiness, of temporal Happiness and eternal Joy!

Nor were these righteous Acts his strange Work, but his *repeated*, his *hourly*, his almost *incessant* Employ. Sometimes, We hear Him preaching in the Temple, or publishing his glad Tidings in the Synagogues. Sometimes, We see Him teaching in private Houses, or bringing forth the good Things of his Gospel on the Deck of a Ship. At other Times, He takes a Mountain for his Pulpit; the Heavens are his Sounding-board; and *all that have Ears to hear*, are invited to be his Audience.—Does He lay aside this solemn Office? It is only to carry on the same Design,
in

in a more condescending and familiar Manner. If he meets with the *Pharisees*, He discovers their Errors, and reproveth their Vices; He confutes their Objections, and (in case they are not absolutely inaccessible to wise Counsel) rectifies their Mistakes. If He vouchsafes to be present at a Feast, He furnishes the richest, incomparably the richest Part of the Treat. *Honey and Milk are under his Tongue* *. He inculcates Lowliness of Mind on the Vain †; He recommends disinterested Charity to the Selfish ‡; and promises Pardon to the weeping Penitent ||.—Is He retired from *other* Company, and surrounded only by his chosen Attendants? His Conversation is a Sermon. Whether He sit in the inner Chamber, or travel on the public Road, or walk through the Cornfields, He is still prosecuting his great Work; training up his Disciples for their sacred Function; and imparting to them, what they may communicate to Others.—Is He retired from *all* Company? Even then He does not discontinue his Labours of Love, but adds the fervent Intercessions of the Night, to the charitable Toils of the Day. Yes, when All but Himself, lay sunk in soft Repose, this ADVOCATE for a guilty World, was engaged in an Exercise of Benevolence; which, though secret and

* *Cant.* iv. 11. † *Luke* xiv. 8. ‡ *Luke* xiv. 12.
 || *Luke* vii. 48.

and unobserved as the falling Dews, was far more beneficial to our best Interests, than those pearly Drops to the languishing Herbs.

Most charming and unparalleled Benignity! He *forgot* his daily Food, *neglected* his necessary Rest, to spend and be spent for the Salvation of Mankind. Neither the Hardships of continual Self-denial, nor the Calumnies of invenomed Tongues, could divert Him from pursuing this favourite Business.—He sought none of your Honours, coveted none of your Rewards, O ye Children of Men! What *He* sought, what *He* coveted, was, to wear out his Life in your Service, and lay it down for your Ransom. This was all his Desire, and this indeed He desired earnestly.—He longed (beneficent, blessed Being!) He longed for the fatal Hour. He severely rebuked one of his Disciples, who would have dissuaded Him from going as a Voluntier to the Cross. He was even *straitened**, under a Kind
of

* *Luke* xii. 50. The original Word *συνεχομαι* seems to express the Condition of a Person, wedged in, on every Side, by a tumultuous Throng of People. His Hands are hampered, and his Body is confined in a moving Prison. He is crushed by the Crowd, and pants for Breath.—How must such a One long to be *disengaged* from these *very uneasy* Circumstances! With equal Ardour did our most beneficent *LORD* desire those Sufferings, which were to overwhelm Him with Distress, but exalt *Us* to Happiness; were to bathe his Limbs in Blood, but cleanse our Souls from Sin.—Οι οχλοι, says the same Historian, συνεχασι σε και αποθλιβουσι, *Luke* viii. 45.

of holy Uneasiness, till the dreadful Work was accomplished; till He was *baptized with the Baptism of his Sufferings*, bathed in Blood, and plunged in Death.

By this most meritorious Obedience and Death, what did He not *deserve*? What did He not *procure*? He procured those inestimable Blessings, the Pardon of Sin, and Reconciliation with GOD. Procured them (O! Love unmerited and unmeasurable!) for Prodigals, for Traitors, for Rebels.—To this it is owing, that We, who were Enemies against GOD, may call the KING of Heaven our Father; may have free Access to Him in all our Difficulties; and may hope to reign with Him in everlasting Glory.

Was ever Goodness like this Goodness*? Were ever Blessings comparable to these Blessings?

* *Codrus*, it is true, devoted Himself to Death for the *Athenians*; and *Curtius* threw Himself into the yawning Gulph, for the Preservation of the *Romans*.—But these died, being *mere* Creatures, and *guilty* Creatures: whereas, the dying *JESUS* was perfectly innocent, and supremely glorious.—These died, only a *little before* their Time: but *CHRIST* died, though He had Life in Himself, and None could have taken it from Him, had He not voluntarily resigned it.—These died for their valuable *Friends*, for their affectionate *Relations*, for their native *Country*: but *CHRIST* died for Slaves, for Enemies, for the Ungodly.—They died an *honourable* Death: but *CHRIST* submitted to the most *ignominious* Execution; *CHRIST* died under the Imputation of *horrid* Crimes, and in the Form of an *execrable* Malefactor.—In all these Instances, as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so is *CHRIST*'s Love greater than their Love; his *Philanthropy* than their *Patriotism*.

ings? or purchased with such a Price?—Hide, hide, your diminished Heads, ye little transitory Donations of Silver and Gold. The Riches of a thousand Mines, bestowed to feed the Hungry and clothe the Naked, are the most contemptible Trifles, if mentioned with the Charity of the *teaching*, the *healing*, the *bleeding* of *JESUS*. Kingdoms given away in Alms, if viewed with this infinitely noble Beneficence, would make just the same Figure, as a Spark from the Summer-hearth, under the potent and boundless Blaze of Noon.— This is indeed *Love that passeth Knowledge* *.

Amidst all these Miracles of Power and of Love (any one of which would have intitled Him to universal Admiration, and everlasting Honour) how *humble* was our SAVIOUR! O Humility—Virtue dear to the most High GOD, and peculiarly amiable in Man—never didst Thou

* *Eph.* iii. 19. This Expression, as also the *principal* Circumstance of Superiority hinted in the preceding Note, are founded on the *Divinity* of our LORD. And indeed the Expression is scarce justifiable, the Assertion is hardly true, upon any other Supposition. A Creature dying for a Creature, is, though great, yet not *incomprehensible* Goodness. But, when We view the Sufferings of *CHRIST*, and the Blessings of Redemption, surrounded with all the Splendor of the DEITY; they dazzle our Understanding, and fill Us with holy Astonishment. They appear to be the Effects of a Love, never to be spoke of but in the Language of *Wonder*, never to be thought of but with an Extasy of *Delight*.

Thou appear in so charming a Dress, or so striking a Light.

At his Birth, not accommodated with a magnificent Palace, but lodged in a Stable, and laid in a Manger.—As He advanced in Years, not attended and served with a *royal* Revenue, but earning his Bread by the Sweat of his Brow.—When He entered upon his ministerial Office, not the least ostentatious *Parade* appeared, in the Performance of all his wonderful Works. So far, so very far from affecting the Acclamations of the Populace, that He often imposed Silence on those unspeakably indebted Lips, which were ready to overflow with Praise, and would fain have been the Trumpets of his Fame.

Though a Voice from Heaven proclaimed Him, The BELOVED of his Almighty FATHER; He disdained not to own the ignoble Character of the *Carpenter's* Son*. Though PRINCE of the Kings of the Earth, He condescended to wash the Feet of mean Fishermen, and vile Sinners †. Though PROPRIETOR and LORD of the whole World, He was content to be more destitute than the Fowls of the Air, or the Foxes of the Desert ‡: more destitute (astonishing Abasement!) than the most *insignificant* and most *bated* Animals.

Gran-

* *Matt.* xiii. 53. † *John* xiii. 14. ‡ *Matt.* viii. 20.

Grandeur, We find, is apt to beget Expectations of superior Regard : consequently, gives a keener Edge to every Affront, and renders the Mind more tenderly sensible of every Disrespect. But our LORD's *Meekness* was as great as his Dignity ; and that, throughout a Series of such *unsufferable* Provocations, as were equaled by nothing, but the Sweetness of his forgiving Grace.

When rudely affronted, He calmly bore, and kindly overlooked the Insult.—When contradicted by *petulant* and *presumptuous* Sinners, He endured, with the utmost Serenity of Temper, their unreasonable Cavils, and their obstinate Perverseness.—When his Invitations, his endearing Invitations, to be wise and happy, were ungratefully and stubbornly rejected ; instead of remitting, He renewed them ; and, with still warmer Affection, importuned his Hearers not to forfeit *their own* Mercies.—When all the winning Arts of Persuasion were ineffectual, He added his Tears to his slighted Intreaties ; and lamented as a Brother, when scornfully repulsed as a Teacher.

Though *his Disciples* slept, stupidly slept, when his bitter Cries pierced the Clouds, and were enough to awaken the very Stones into Compassion ; did their divine but slighted MASTER resent the Unkindness ? Did He refuse to admit an Excuse for their Neglect ?

Yea,

Let. 7. ASPASIO to THERON. §5

Yea, He made their Excuse; and that the most tender and gracious imaginable; *The Spirit is willing, but the Flesh is weak**.—When his *Enemies* had nailed Him to the Cross, as the basest Slave, and most flagitious Malefactor; when they were glutting their Malice, with his Torments and Blood; and spared not to revile Him, even in his last expiring Agonies; far, very far from being exasperated, this HERO of Heaven repaid all their Contempt and Barbarity, with the most fervent and effectual Supplications in their Behalf. *FATHER, forgive them*, was his Prayer: *for, they know not what they do* †, was his Plea.

Nor was his *Resignation* less exemplary than his Meekness. He went out to meet Afflictions, when they came in his *FATHER's* Name, and commissioned from his *FATHER's* Hand. He gave, without the least Reluctance, his Back to the Smiters, and hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting. Though his Soul, his very Soul was penetrated with the keenest Sensations of Anguish; yet, no impatient Thought discomposed his Mind, no murmuring Word forced its Way from his Lips. *FATHER, not my Will, but thine be done* ‡, was his Language; when the Sorrows of Death compassed Him, and the Pains of Hell

* *Matt.* xxvi. 41.
xxii. 42.

† *Luke* xiii. 34.

‡ *Luke*

Hell gat hold upon him *. *When they gaped upon him with their Mouth, and smote Him upon the Cheek reproachfully. When his Face was foul with Spitting, and on his Eyelids was the Shadow of Death. When GOD delivered Him to the Ungodly, and turned Him over into the Hands of the Wicked. Yea, when the ALMIGHTY set him for the Mark of his Arrows, and brake Him with Breach upon Breach. When the Weapons of his Wrath cleft his very Reins asunder, and poured his Gall upon the Earth †.* Amidst all this exquisite Distress, He sinned not by the least irregular Perturbation; but bowed his Head, and dutifully kissed the divine Rod, and ordially blessed his very Murderers.

Thus did the whole Choir of *active* and *passive* Virtues abound and shine in our LORD: abound with the richest Variety, and shine with the highest Lustre. Infinitely surpassing that curious Assemblage of costly Gems, which studded the *Aaronic* Breast-plate ‡; and, as far as earthly Things can represent heavenly,
type-

* *Psal.* cxvi. 3.

† These tragical Images are borrowed from the Book of *Job*, who was an eminent Type of a suffering SAVIOUR; and, though they are the very Eloquence of Woe, do not exaggerate, nay, cannot express, that inconceivable Anguish; which wrung a bloody Sweat from our blessed MASTER'S Body, and forced from his Lips that melancholy Exclamation—*My Soul is sorrowful—exceeding sorrowful—sorrowful even unto Death.* See *Job* xvi.

‡ *Exod.* xxviii. 17, 18, 19, 20.

typified the Splendor of our REDEEMER's Righteousness.

In all this, he acted as GOD's *righteous Servant*, and as his People's *righteous Surety*.—By all this, He fulfilled every Jot and Tittle of the divine Law; nay, He more than fulfilled, He *magnified* it. He gave it (if I may apply the most beautiful Allusion that ever was used, to the most noble Subject that ever was discussed) *good Measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over* *.

He defied the most vigilant of his Enemies to convince him of Sin.—A more malignant, a far more sagacious Adversary than the Scribes and Pharisees, could detect no Blemish in our LORD JESUS. *The Prince of this World*, that infernal Tyrant, who had deceived and enslaved the Nations of the Earth, *came and found nothing in Him* †; not the least Corruption in his Nature, nor the least Defect in his Obedience.

He hath done all Things well ‡, was the general Acclamation of Mankind: or, as the Words may be rendered, He hath done all Things *finely* and *gracefully* ||. With every Circumstance, that can constitute the Propriety and Dignity, the Utility and Beauty of Action.

I

* Luke vi. 38. † John xiv. 30. ‡ Mark vii. 37.
 || Καλως.

*I have glorified Thee on Earth**, was his own Profession before the most High GOD. I have glorified Thee, in all that I acted, in all that I spoke, in all that I suffered. I have displayed the Magnificence of thy Majesty, the Riches of thy Grace, and the Honour of *all* thy Attributes. Inſomuch that *whoſo ſeeth ME, ſeeth the FATHER* †; whoever is properly acquainted with my Perſon and my Work of Redemption, ſees the inviſible and knows the incomprehenſible DEITY; ſees his venerable, his amiable, his adorable Perfections, in the cleareſt Mirror, and in the brighteſt Light ‡.

GOD alſo, who is the ſupreme Standard and unerring Judge of Excellency, bore his Teſtimony to our bleſſed MEDIATOR. He ſpoke it once, yea twice, and with a Voice from Heaven.—In the Conſtitution of the material World, when it came forth from the CREATOR's Hand, Omnſcience itſelf could diſcern no Flaw. Neither could Juſtice itſelf, upon the ſtricteſt Inquiry, diſcover any Failure in the Obedience of our SURETY. As therefore it was ſaid, concerning the Works of Creation, *They are all very good* ||; So it was

* *John xvii. 4.*

† *John xii. 45.*

‡ Therefore CHRIST is ſaid to be *απαυγασμα της δοξης*, *Heb. i. 3.* Not barely the Glory, but *the very Brightneſs* of his FATHER's Glory: Or, the Glory of the GODHEAD, beaming forth with *adequate*, that is, with ineffable and infinite Splendor.

|| *Gen. i. 31.*

was said, concerning our SAVIOUR, and by the same Almighty MAJESTY, *In Him I am well pleased* *.

You took Notice, and very justly, how much the Productions of Nature *exceed* and *eclipse* the Attempts of human Skill. We are pleased with the Performances of the Painter: but do they equal the native Blush of the Rose, or the artless Glow of a Pea-Blossom? We are charmed with a fine Piece of Enameling; but is it fit to be comparèd with the natural Polish, of a thousand Shells which are formed in the Ocean, or a thousand Seeds which spring from the Earth? We admire the Virtues of the ancient Saints; Men “that were honoured in their Generation, and the Glory of their Times †.” We admire the Meekness of *Moses*, and the Magnanimity of *Elijah*; the exalted Piety of *Isaiab*, and the enlarged Wisdom of *Daniel*; the active Spirit of *Joshua*, and the passive Graces of *Jeremiab*. But what Proportion, put them all together—what Proportion do they all bear to HIS Obedience, *who is gone into Heaven, Angels and Authorities and Powers being made subject unto Him ‡*? Who is called the HOLY ONE and the JUST ||; not only by way of Emphasis, but by way of *Exclusion*. Because, no Person is worthy of the

Cha.

* *Matt.* iii. 17.

† *Ecclef.* xlv. 7.

‡ *1 Pet.* iii. 22.

|| *Acts* iii. 14.

Character, no Duties deserve to be mentioned, when *CHRIST* and his Merits are under Consideration.

If then We talk of Merit, what Merit must there be in such immaculate Sanctity of Soul, and such exemplary Holiness of Conduct; such ardent Zeal for GOD, and such compassionate Good-will to Man; such consummate Worthiness, and extensive Usefulness? Such as were utterly unknown before; have been absolutely unequalled since; and never will, nor can be paralleled, throughout all Ages!—O my *Theron*! What is the *Drop* of a Bucket to the unfathomable Waves of the Ocean? What is a *Grain* of Sand to the unmeasurable Dimensions of the Universe? What is an Hour or a *Moment* to the endless Revolutions of Eternity? Such are all human Endowments, and all human Attainments, compared with this matchless Righteousness of *CHRIST JESUS*.

Think not, that what I have written is the Language of Rant. It is a Paraphrase, though, I must confess, but a scanty Paraphrase, on *David's* Practice and *David's* Faith. *My Mouth shall shew forth thy Righteousness and thy Salvation all the Day**, for I know not the Numbers thereof.

* *Psal.* lxxi. 15. I cannot but observe, that *Righteousness* and *Salvation* are frequently connected, by the Author of the *Psalms*, and by the Prophet *Isaiab*. In order to intimate, that the one is founded on the other; the latter derives its
Origin

thereof. The glorious Righteousness of *CHRIST*, and the great Salvation obtained thereby, He declares, shall be the chosen, the principal Subject of his Discourse. And not on a Sabbath only, but on *every Day* of the Week, of the Year,

Origin from the former; there can be no Salvation without a Righteousness, a real, proper, *Law-fulfilling* Righteousness.—At the same Time, I am sensible, that the Word Righteousness *may* signify GOD's Goodness in making, and Faithfulness in performing, his Promises unto *David*. Salvation may likewise denote the Delivery of that afflicted Hero from all his Persecutors, and his Establishment on the Throne of *Israel*.

But if We should confine the Sense to these narrow Limits, how *comfortless* the Favour even to *David* Himself, considered as an immortal Being. How much more *insignificant* to Us and Others, on whom the Ends of the World are come. And how very *unworthy* of that infinite GOD, who is the Father of the Spirits of all Flesh; who sees, at one View, whatever is, or has been, or shall exist; who therefore, when He speaks, speaks to all his Children, in every Period of Time, and in every Nation under Heaven. As much as a Tutor, when delivering his Lectures, addresses Himself to all his Pupils, whether they sit at his Right-hand or his left, before Him or on every Side.

Whereas, if Righteousness signifies the meritorious Obedience of *CHRIST*, and Salvation implies the Benefits of his Redemption, the Sense is no longer shriveled, impoverished, and mean; but *rich, august, and magnificent*. It pours Consolation among all People, Kindreds, and Tongues. It is worthy of that GOD, who seeth the Things, and regardeth the Persons, which are not as though they were. It comports exactly with that Revelation, in which *CHRIST* is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the Ending, the Sum total.

This Note is already too long; otherwise I should take leave to gratify my Inclination, and give a Sanction to my Sentiment, by transcribing *Vitringa's* Exposition of *Isai*. xlv. 8.

Year, of his Life. And not barely at the stated Returns of solemn Devotion, but in every social Interview, and *all the Day long*.—Why will He thus dwell, perpetually and invariably dwell, on this one Theme? Because, *He knew no End thereof*. It is impossible to measure the Value, or exhaust the Fulness of these Blessings. The Righteousness is unspeakable, the Salvation is everlasting. To compute the Duration of the One, Numbers fail; to describe the Excellency of the Other, Words are at a Loss.

Here therefore Millions of Sinners may *suck, and be satisfied with these Breasts of Consolations*: yea, Thousands of Millions may *milk out, and be delighted with the Abundance of their Glory**. —Here we shall find the Doctrine of *Supererogation*, no longer a Chimera, but a delightful Reality. Here indeed is an immense Surplusage, an inexhaustible Fund of Merit †, sufficient to enrich a whole World of indigent and miserable Creatures: sufficient to make their Cup run over with a superabundant Fulness

* *Isai. lxvi. 11.*

† Yet here is no *rich Fund* (as a learned Writer asserts) no Fund at all, *for the Pope's Treasury of meritorious supererogating Actions*: unless *CHRIST* and the *Pope* are to be placed upon the same Footing; unless the ineffably excellent Obedience of a divine REDEEMER, and the miserably defective Duties of sinful Men, are to be deemed equally valuable. —Since this will hardly be admitted by *Protestants*; I believe, *Aspasio* may safely call the Obedience of *CHRIST*, *The true Supererogation*; as Mr. *Ambrose* has called the Blood of *CHRIST*, *The true Purgatory*.

ness of Peace and Joy, so long as Time shall last, and when Time shall be no more. For, to use the Apostle's weighty Argument, *If by one Man's Offence, Death reigned by one; much more they which receive Abundance of Grace, and of the Gift of Righteousness, shall reign in Life by one, JESUS CHRIST* *. If one Offence, committed by one mere Man, made all his Posterity chargeable with Guilt, and liable to Death: HOW MUCH MORE shall the manifold Instances of our divine REDEEMER'S Obedience; his long, uninterrupted, consummate Righteousness;—how much more shall they absolve all his People from Condemnation and Punishment, and intitle them to the Honours and Joys of Immortality!

Which will appear in a clearer Light, if, to the Perfection of his Obedience, We add the Majesty of his Person. A proper Subject this, for some future Letter.—In the mean Time, let me desire my Friend, the Friend of my Bosom, to contemplate our LORD JESUS under that lovely and august Character, GLORIOUS IN HOLINESS †. And for my Part, I will not cease to pray, that a Sense of this supereminently grand and precious Righteousness may be written on my Theron's Heart.—On those living Tables, may it be like Figures cut on a Rock of solid Marble, or inscribed on the Bark of a growing

* Rom. v. 17.

† Exod. xv. 11.

growing Tree: be *lasting* in its Duration as the former, and *spreading* in its Influence as the latter.—It will then be a sure Proof, that his Name is written in the Book of Life; and it shall then be a pleasing Pattern for

the Affection,

the Gratitude,

and the Friendship, of

his ASPASIO.

P.S. You give a most astonishing Account of the *Pressure* of the Atmosphere. Astonishing indeed! That we should be continually surrounded, continually overwhelmed, with such a tremendous Load; and not be crushed to death, no, nor be sensible of the least Weight.—This, I think, may serve to represent the State of a Sinner, *unawakened* from carnal Security. Loads, more than *mountainous Loads* of Guilt, are upon his Soul, and He perceives not the Burden. For this Reason, He is under no Apprehensions of the Vengeance and fiery Indignation, which He deserves; He has no superlative Esteem for the Atonement and Merits of the REDEEMER, which alone can deliver Him from the Wrath to come. But, if once his Conscience *feels*, what his Lips, perhaps, have often repeated; *We do earnestly repent Us*
of

Let. 8. ASPASIO to THERON. 65

of these our Misdoings; the Remembrance of them is grievous unto Us, the Burden of them is intolerable; then how will He prize such a Text; The LORD laid on CHRIST the Iniquity of Us all! How will He long for an Interest in the LAMB of GOD, which taketh away the Sin of the World! Then, that JESUS who has finished the Transgression, and brought in everlasting Righteousness, will be all his Salvation, and all his Desire.



L E T T E R VIII.

ASPASIO to THERON.

Dear THERON,

I HAVE just been reading that exquisitely fine Piece of sacred History, *The Life of Joseph*. A History—filled with surprising Incidents, and unexpected Revolutions—adorned with the most heroic Instances of triumphant Virtue, both amidst the Allurements of Temptation, and under the Pressures of Affliction—animated with such tender and pathetic, such melting and alarming Touches of natural Eloquence, as every Reader must *feel*, and every true Critic will *admire*.

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When

When I came to that remarkable Injunction, with which the generous Viceroy dismissed his Brethren; *Ye shall tell my Father of all my Glory in Egypt* *—I paused—I pondered—I was struck. Certainly, this was enjoined, not by way of Ostentation; but on account of the Pleasure, which, He knew, it would yield the good old Patriarch.—Was it some kind prompting Angel, or the Voice of Gratitude and Devotion, that whispered in my Ear? “Should not the Children of Men
 “likewise tell one another of *all the Glory* †,
 “which their REDEEMER possesses in Heaven and on Earth? Will not this afford
 “them the sublimest Pleasure Here, and be a
 “Source

* *Gen. xlv. 13.*

† *To see the Glory of CHRIST*, is the grand Blessing, which our LORD solicits and demands for his Disciples, in his last solemn Intercession. *John xvii. 24.* It is that, which will complete the Blessedness of Heaven; and fill its Inhabitants with Joy unspeakable and glorious.—Surely, then, We should endeavour to *anticipate*, in some Degree, that celestial Bliss; and *habituate* our Souls to this sacred Exercise, which will be our Business and our Reward to endless Ages.

Should the Reader desire Assistance in this important Work, I would refer Him to a little Treatise of Dr. Owen's, intitled, *Meditations on the Glory of CHRIST*:—'Tis little in Size, not so in Value. Was I to speak of it, in the classical Style, I should call it, *aureus, gemmeus, mellitus*. But I would rather say, it is richly replenished with that *Unction from the HOLY ONE*, which tends to enlighten the Eyes, and cheer the Heart; which sweetens the Enjoyments of Life, softens the Horrors of Death, and prepares for the Fruitions of Eternity.

Let. 8. ASPASIO to THERON. 67

“ Source of divine Satisfaction for ever and
“ ever ?”

Though I had almost determined to write no more, till You could make a Demand, upon the Foot of *Value received*; willingly I recede from my intended Resolution, and obey this pleasing Hint.—But *who can declare the noble Acts of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, or shew forth all his Praise?*—However, if I may but *lisp out* his adorable Name, and present my Friend with a *Glimpse*, or a *broken View* of his divine Perfections, even this will be desirable and delightful. Far more desirable and delightful, than to behold *Rome* in its Magnificence, *St. Paul* in the Pulpit, or King *Solomon* on his Throne*.

Let me take the *Lark* for my Pattern; which, as I was lately returning from an Evening Ramble, attracted my Observation.—Warbling her CREATOR's Praise, she mounted in the serene Sky. Still she warbled, and still she mounted, as though she meant to carry her Tribute of Harmony unto the very Gates of Heaven. Having reached, at last, her highest Elevation, and perceiving herself at an immense Distance from the starry Mansions, she dropped on a sudden to the Earth; and

* These, if I remember right, are the three Things, which *St. Augustine* declared, would, of all others, most eminently gratify his *Curiosity*.

and discontinued, at once, both to sing, and to soar.—Now the Morning appears, and is awakening the World, our little Songster retunes her Throat, and re-exerts her Wings.—As I have endeavoured, very imperfectly endeavoured, to strike out a *shadowy* Draught of our LORD's complete Obedience; I would, though unequal to the Task, once more resume my Pen, and attempt—nothing like a Display, but only a faint *Sketch* of his *essential Dignity*.

First let me observe, that for some Time past, We have been visited with the most uncomfortable Weather; *dewless Nights*, and *sultry Days*. The Firmament was more like a glowing Furnace, than the Region of refreshing Rain.—The Earth lay *parched* with Thirst, and *chapped* with Heat. The Meadows were drained of their Humidity, and all the Flowers hung their fading Heads.—The Streams, which used to flow parallel with the verdant Margin, abandoned their Banks; and sunk, diminished and discoloured, to the Bottom of their oozy Channels.—Nature in general seemed to be resigning the “Robe of Beauty, “for the Garment of Heaviness.” *Drought* was in all our Borders; and *Famine*, We feared, was not far behind.—Clouds of Dust, obscured the Air; tarnished the Hedges; and almost
smo-

smothered the Traveler: but not one Cloud of fleecy White appeared, to variegate the blue Expanse, or give Us Hopes of a reviving Shower*.

It reminded me of that awful Threatening, denounced by *Moses* on a wicked People; *Thy Heaven, that is over thy Head, shall be Brass; and the Earth, that is under Thee, shall be Iron*†.— It made me apprehensive of that terrible State, which the Prophet so emphatically describes; *The Field is wasted, and the Land mourneth. The Seed is rotten under the Clods, and the Harvest perisheth. The Garners are laid desolate, and the Barns are broken down.—The new Wine is dried up; the Oil languisheth; and all the Trees of the Field are withered.—How do the Beasts groan! The Herds of Cattle are perplexed. Yea, the Flocks of Sheep are made desolate. Because, the Rivers of Waters are dried up, and the Fire hath devoured the Pastures of the Wilderness*‡.—But, blessed be the Divine PROVIDENCE, our Fears are vanished, and a most joyful Change has taken Place. The LORD hath sent a gra-
cious

* At such a Juncture, how pertinent is the Question, proposed by the Almighty MAJESTY? *Job xxxviii. 37, 38. Who can number, muster or arrange, the Clouds in Wisdom?* So as to have them ready at hand, on any Emergency. And who can empty those Bottles of Heaven, in copious but seasonable Effusions upon the Earth? When, as in the Case described above, the Dust of the Roads is attenuated into Powder, *בצקת למוצק* and the Clods of the Valley are glued fast together, *ידבקו*

† *Deut. xxviii. 23.*

‡ *Joel i. 10, &c.*

70 ASPASIO to THERON. Let. 8.
*cious Rain on his Inheritance, and refreshed it,
when it was weary* *.

Yesterday in the Afternoon, the Wind shifting to the South, roused the *dormant* Clouds, and brought some of those agreeable Strangers on its Wings.—At first, they came sailing in small, and thin, and scattered Parties. Anon, the flying Squadrons advanced in larger Detachments, more *closely* wedged, and more *deeply* laden. Till at last, the great Rendezvous completed, they formed into a Body of such prodigious Depth, and extended their Wings with such an unmeasurable Sweep, as darkened the Sun, and overspread the whole Hemisphere.

Just at the Close of Day, the Gales that escorted the spongy Treasures, retired; and consigned their Charge to the Disposal of a profound *Calm*. Not a Breeze shook the most tremulous Leaf. Not a Curl ruffled the smooth expansive Lake. All Things were still, as in *attentive Expectation*. The Earth seemed to gasp after the hovering Moisture. Nature, with her suppliant Tribes, in expressive pleading Silence, solicited the falling Fruitfulness. Nor pleaded long, nor solicited in vain.

The *Showers*, gentle, soft, and balmy, descend. The Vessels of Heaven unload their precious Freight, and enrich the penurious
Glebe.

* *Psal.* lxxviii. 9.

Let. 8. ASPASIO to THERON. 71

Glebe. Through all the Night, the liquid Sweetness, incomparably more beneficial than trickling Silver, distils; shedding Herbs, and Fruits, and Flowers.—Now the Sun, *mild* and *refulgent*, issues through the Portals of the East. Pleased, as it were, to have emerged from the late aggravated Darkness, He looks abroad with peculiar Gaiety, and the most engaging Splendors. He looks through the disburdened Air, and finds a gladdened World, that wants nothing but his *all-bearing* Beams, to render her Satisfaction complete.

*The Glory comes!—Hail to thy rising Ray,
Great Lamp of Light, and second Source of
Day!*

*Who robe the World, each nipping Gale remove,
Treat every Sense, and beam creating Love*.*

At his auspicious Approach, the freshened Mountains lift their Heads, and smile. The Garden opens its aromatic Stores; and breathes, as from a fuming Altar, Balm to the Smell, and Incense to the Skies. The little Hills, crowned with springing Plenty, *clap their Hands* on every Side. The moistened Plains, and irriguous Valleys, *laugh and sing*. While their Waters, lately exhausted, again *are made deep*, and *their Rivers run like Oil* †.

The

* These beautiful Lines are borrowed from the SEA-PIECE, Canto IV. A *narratory, philosophical, and descriptive* Poem, written by my ingenious Friend, Dr. Kirkpatrick.

† *Ezek.* xxxii. 14.

The Earth, *saturated* with the Bounty of Heaven, and *flushed* with humid Life, wears a thousand Marks of Gratitude and Complacency. Washed by the copious Rain, how bright and vivid is the universal Verdure! The *green Carpet* below, may almost vie with the *blue Canopy* above.—The Forest, and every Tree, burnish their Colours, and array themselves in their finest Apparel. Which, as on a Day of general Festivity, is delicately decked with Gems: Gems of un sullied Lustre, and of genial Moisture.—From every Pasture, and from all the Grove, the Voice of *Pleasure* and of *Melody* resounds. While the officious Zephyrs waft the floating Harmony, blended with native Perfumes; gently waft them to the Senses, and touch the very Soul with Transport.

Could there be a more brilliant Appearance, or more exuberant Demonstrations of Joy, even to celebrate the Anniversary of *Nature's Birth*? With what admirable Propriety has the *Psalmist* compared yonder orient Sun, in all his sparkling Grandeur, to a young exulting *Bridegroom* †; who comes forth, with every heightened Ornament from his Chamber, to shew Himself in the most distinguished Period of his Life, and to receive the Blessing that consummates his Happiness!

This

* *Psal.* xix. 5.

This most charming and equally majestic Scene, recalls to my Memory that fine Description of the MESSIAH, extant in the last lovely Strains of the *Israelitish Swan**—*HE shall be welcome and salutary as the Light of the Morning; when the Sun ariseth, to chase the malignant Shades, and pour Day through the reviving World. He shall be as the Light of a Morning, that is most serenely fair; without either Storms to disturb, or Clouds to obscure the glorious, the delightful Dawn. Yea, his Appearance shall be more beautiful, and his Influences more beneficial †, than the clear Shining of*

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. *Israelitish Swan*—In Allusion to those well-known Lines of the Poet,

Multa Dirœum levat Aura Cygnum.

And not without a Reference to the *popular* Notion, that the Swan sings the most melodious Notes in its last Moments. *Fuit hæc facundi Senis quasi cygnea Vox.* Tully.

† *More beautiful, more beneficial, than the clear Shining.*—Thus We have ventured to translate, or rather to paraphrase, the Words כִּינֹרָה That the Prefix כִּי often occurs in the Acceptation of *comparative Pre-eminence*, is plain from a very remarkable Passage in *Psal. xix. 11.* Where our inspired Author, quite ravished with the Love of the sacred Oracles, declares; *They are desirable beyond Gold, even beyond fine Gold; and sweet beyond Honey, even beyond the Droppings of the Honeycomb.*

If this Sense is admitted, We shall have a fine Comparison, and a grand Advance upon it; acknowledging the *Insufficiency* even of the boldest and brightest Images, to represent the Glory of *CHRIST's* Kingdom, and the Benignity of his Administration—Perhaps, the Translation may
be

of that grand Luminary, *after* a Night of fuddled Gloom, and Showers of incessant *Rain*. When his Beams shed animating Warmth, and vital Lustre, *on the* tender *Grass* impearled with Dews, and on all the green Treasures of *the* teeming *Earth*.

As We have already contemplated the blessed *JESUS*, under the amiable Character of the *JUST ONE*; the foregoing Passage of Scripture represents Him to our Faith, in the more majestic Quality of *THE LORD OF GLORY*.—Or rather, unites the two grand Peculiarities, which render Him *unparalleled* in his personal, and *all-sufficient* in his mediatorial Capacity.

Great, unspeakably great and glorious would our SAVIOUR appear; if We had no other Manifestations of his Excellency, than those which preceded his mysterious Incarnation.—In the antient Scriptures, He stands characterized, as the supreme Object of *GOD's* ineffable Complacency; vested with a Glory, prior to the Birth of Time, or the Existence of Things; even *the* *Glory, which He had with the FATHER, before the World was**.—He is every

be too free and daring, and not approve itself to the exact *Critic*. The Sense, however, is unquestionably just; agreeable to the whole Tenour of Scripture; and can want no Recommendation to the intelligent *Christian*.

* *John* xvii. 5.

every where exhibited, as the ultimate Desire of all Nations; the sole Hope of all the Ends of the Earth; the Seed, of inestimable and universal Importance, in whom all People, Nations, and Languages should be blessed.— In those royal, or rather divine *Acts and Monuments*, He is publicly recognized, as The RULER of GOD's People: Whose Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, and his Kingdom from Generation to Generation. And how august, how venerable, is this SOVEREIGN! Since it was the highest Honour of the most eminent Saints, and renowned Monarchs*, to act as his *Harbingers*. Every inspired Prophet was his *Herald*, deputed to blazon his Perfections, or foretel his Coming. The Splendor of the Temple, the Richness of its Ornaments, and the Solemnity of its Services, were the Ensigns of his Grandeur; were his sacred *Regalia*, intended to usher Him into the World with becoming State.

Does not all Mankind agree to estimate the *Merit* of the Practice, according to the *Dignity* of the Person? If a Neighbour of inferior Rank, visit some poor afflicted Wretch, in a coarse Garret, and on a tattered Bed; it is no very extraordinary Favour. But if a

Lady

* *Moses*, for Instance, and *Joshua*, *David* and *Solomon*, were Types, strongly marked Types, of our great LAW-GIVER and DELIVERER, of our Divine RULER and PREACHER.

Lady of the first Distinction, or a Nobleman of the highest Order, perform the same Office; it is a much more remarkable, a much more admired Instance of self-denying Charity. On the Foot of this Calculation, to what a *supereminent* Height will the Worthiness of our LORD's Obedience rise! It will rise, like some magnificent Edifice, whose Basis rests upon the Center; whose Dimensions fill the Hemisphere; and whose Turrets glitter in the Sky. Or rather, it will extend itself to Immensity; where Length, and Breadth, and Height, and all Dimensions are lost. Especially, if We consider—The *Names*, He bears; and the *Honours*, He receives—the *Works*, He has done; and those *mightier* Works, He is appointed to do.

The *Names*, He bears.—The Title, by which *JESUS* of *Nazareth* is distinguished in the heavenly World; the Name written on his Vesture, and on his Thigh, is, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS*.—The Description, which the incomprehensible *JEHOVAH* gives of the Surety for sinful Men, runs in this exalted Strain; THE MAN THAT IS MY FELLOW †. Which the Apostle explains,

* *Rev.* xix. 16.

† *Zech.* xiii. 7. עִמִּיתִי *Contribulis vel Coequalis.* My Fellow, or my Equal.—The original Expression occurs nowhere,

plains, in that memorable and majestic Clause;
*He thought it no Robbery to be equal with GOD**.

The

where, but in this Verse of *Zechariah*, and in the Book of *Leviticus*. In one Text, it is explained by *Brother*, or Partaker of the same Nature. In every other Place, I believe, it will be found to signify, not barely a *Neighbour*, but an *Equal*; one that stands upon the same Level, with regard to the Claims of Equity, and the common Rights of Life.—In either Sense, it militates strongly for the Divinity of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*.

* *Phil.* ii. 6. Some Writers, I am aware, have endeavoured to interpret away this Evidence of our *LORD*'s Divine Nature. But I think with great Injury to the Context, and no less Violence to the Phrase.

Ἀρπάζω, as far as I can observe, denotes, not the *Prize* or *Spoil*, but the *Act* of plundering or taking the Spoil; *Ipsa rapiendi Actio*. Vid. *Steph. Thesaur. Græc. Ling.*—If so, the Text most naturally implies, that *CHRIST* counted it no Act of Robbery; no Invasion of Another's Prerogative; but looked upon it as his unquestionable Right, to be equal with *GOD*, and to receive Divine Honours.—*Nevertheless* (*ἀλλὰ*, *Rom.* v. 14.) He was so far from tenaciously insisting upon, that He willingly relinquished the Claim. He was content to forego the magnificent Distinctions of the *CREATOR*, and to appear in the Form of a *Creature*. Nay, to be made in the Likeness of the *fallen* Creatures; and not only to share the *Disgrace*, but to suffer the *Punishment*, due to the *meanest* and *vilest* among them all.—An Example of Humility, worthy to be displayed by the Eloquence of an Apostle! Worthy to be an everlasting Pattern for all Believers!

But however *Ἀρπάζω* be translated, the Stress of the Argument, I apprehend, lies upon the Word *ἴσα*. If this signifies a *real* and *proper* Equality, the Proof seems, to me at least, irrefragable.—How shall We determine the exact Significancy of this important Word? By having recourse to *Homer's* Works, or to *Heathen* Authors? This, in case the *sacred* Writers will decide the Question, is like going from *Jerusalem* to *Athens* for the Solution of a religious Doubt, even while the College of Apostles is sitting at the former

—The HOLY GHOST, speaking by the Prophet *Isaiab* of the Virgin's Son, enumerates several grand Distinctions, both of his Person, and his Office. He styles the Child, that should be born, *The WONDERFUL COUNSELLOR, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the MIGHTY GOD, the PRINCE OF PEACE* *.—The same inspired Writer, though eloquent above all Orators, and more sublime than the loftiest Poet, cries out in rapturous Astonishment; *Who can declare his Generation* †? What Pencil can pourtray, what Language can express, his matchless Excellencies? And may We not with equal Propriety demand; Who can declare the meritorious Perfection of his Righteousness? It is precious beyond Comparison: beyond Imagination precious.

The *Honours*, which our LORD receives, are proportioned to the illustrious Characters, which He sustains.—*John* the Baptist, than whom a greater Prophet, or a better Judge, was not born of Woman, professes Himself

un-

former Place.—The Word occurs five or six Times in *their* Writings. They use it, it is true, in the adjective Form. But the Adjective is very sufficient to settle the Signification of the Adverb. If I know the Meaning of *ισο*, I shall be at no loss to understand the Import of *ισα*.—See *Matt.* xx. 12. *Luke* vi. 34. *John* v. 18. *Acts* xi. 17. *Rev.* xxi. 16. In all which Places it expresses, not a bare *Resemblance* or *Likeness* only, but a real and proper *Equality*.

* *Isai.* ix. 6.

† *Isai.* liii. 8.

unworthy, to stoop down and unloose the Latchet of his Shoes* : unworthy, though a burning and shining Light in his Generation, to perform the meanest Service to this PRINCE of Heaven.—Stephen, who leads the Van in the noble Army of *Christian* Martyrs, beheld such a Representation of his crucified MASTER'S Glory ; as enabled Him to *exult* with divine *Delight*, even amidst the furious Assaults of his Persecutors, and under the violent Blows of his Murderers †. Assured, that JESUS has all Power in Heaven and Earth, by an Act of the most solemn Worship, He *commits* his departing *Soul*, that most important of all Trusts, to his REDEEMER'S Hand ‡.—Nor by the first Martyr alone, but in all Churches of the Saints, and in every Age of *Christianity*, has the LORD JESUS been addressed, as the constant Object of his People's *Adoration* ; and acknowledged, as the ever faithful *Depositary* of their eternal Interests.

When *Isaiab* beheld a visionary Manifestation of CHRIST||, the first-born Sons of Light were waiting around Him, in Postures of dutiful Submission. Those celestial Beings, whose very *Feet* are too bright for Mortals to view, veiled their *Faces* before his infinitely superior Effulgence. The Seraphs, who are
all

* *Mark* i. 7. † *Acts* vii. 56. ‡ *Acts* vii. 59.
|| *Isai.* vi. 1, 2, &c. *John* xii. 41.

all Zeal and all Love, celebrate his Perfections, and cry one to another, *The whole Earth is full of his Glory.*—And is not *Heaven* filled with his Honour? Does not *Heaven* resound with his Praise? The beloved Disciple, in a Vision no less clear and far more magnificent, beholds the LAMB that was slain, standing in the *midst* of a resplendent *Throne*, most beautifully adorned with a circling Rainbow, and terribly dignified by the Blaze of Lightnings, and the Sound of Thunders. Before this august Throne, and at the Disposal of the once slaughtered SAVIOUR, are *seven Lamps of burning Fire*; expressive of the DIVINE SPIRIT, in all the Variety of his miraculous Gifts, and sanctifying Graces*.—Four and twenty Elders, clothed in white Raiment, with Crowns on their Heads, and the Harps of GOD in their Hands, fall prostrate in deepest Homage before the LAMB. They strike the golden Strings, and sing that sublime eucharistic Hymn; *Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed Us to GOD by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation; and hast made Us, unto our GOD, Kings and Priests †.*

Behold the Hierarchies of Angels: they are in Number ten thousand Times ten thousand, and

* *Rev. iv. 5.*† *Rev. v. 9, 10.*

and Thousands of Thousands.—*Hark!* They raise their Voice, and awaken all the Powers of Harmony.—*Who* is the Subject, and *what* is the Burden of their Song? *Worthy is the LAMB that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Blessing.*—Nor these alone, but every Creature which is in Heaven, and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, join the immense Chorus. They cry, in loud responsive Strains of Melody and Devotion; *Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the LAMB for ever and ever* *.

This, You observe, is the devout Acknowledgment, not only of the Cherubim, the Seraphim, and the Spirits of just Men made perfect, but of *every Creature.*—The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars, which garnish the *Heavens*—Beasts and creeping Things, Mountains and Hills, fruitful Trees and all Cedars, which replenish the *Earth*—Metals and Minerals, Gems and Fossils, the subterraneous Riches of Nature, or Things which are *under the Earth*—Even all those Objects, which my *Theron* lately contemplated, do, in their way, magnify the *LORD JESUS*. They bear witness to his Power, as their *CREATOR*; they are subservient to his Interests, as our *MEDIATOR*; and,

* *Rev. v. 11, 12, 13.*

and, in *this* manner, they glorify his sacred Name.

Under such Views of the blessed REDEEMER, enlarged and elevated even to Astonishment, is it possible to *over-rate* the Worth of his mediatorial Obedience? Is it possible to lay *too much* Stress on his expiatory Sacrifice, or ascribe *too much* Efficacy to his vicarious Righteousness.

To the Honours, which He receives, let Us add the *Works*, which He has done. By these, in the Days of his Flesh, were displayed the Greatness of his Glory, and the Might of his Majesty.

Behold! says the Almighty FATHER; *my Servant*, He who condescends to become my Servant in the matchless Work of Redemption; *shall deal prudently*, shall conduct Himself with all the Dignity and all the Sanctity of Wisdom. In consequence of which, *He shall be exalted, be extolled, and be very high**.—The Paraphrase of the *Jewish* Commentators on this beautiful Climax is, though inadequate, not contemptible. “The MESSIAH, they
“ say, shall be higher than *Abraham*, more
“ illustrious than *Moses*, and exalted above
“ the Angels of Light, even above the *prime*
“ *Ministers* † of Heaven.”—What follows, is
an

* *Isai.* lii. 13.

† *Prime Ministers*, this is almost a literal Translation of their Words, מלאכי השרת

an Attempt to render this Exposition somewhat *less defective*.

Here, could You open my Chamber-door, and peep upon your Friend, You would find Him in the same Attitude, and under the same Perplexity, which were formerly observed in *Phocion*. Sitting one Day, amidst an Assembly of the People, and preparing to make a public Oration, He appeared uncommonly thoughtful. Being asked the Reason, “ I am “ considering, said He, how I may *shorten*, “ what I shall have Occasion to speak.”—The Compass of my Subject, would demand many Volumes; whereas, the Limits of my Letter, will allow but a few Paragraphs.

Our LORD gave Sight to the *Blind*. He poured Day upon those hopeless and benighted Eyes, which had never been visited with the least dawning Ray.—The *Dumb*, at his Command, found a ready Tongue, and burst into Songs of Praise. The *Deaf* were all Ear, and listened to the joyful Sound of Salvation.—The *Lame*, lame from their very Birth, threw aside their Crutches, and full of Transport and Exultation, leaped like the bounding Roe*.—He restored *Floridity* and *Beauty* to the

* We have the finest Representation of this Event, given Us by the inspired Historian, *Acts* iii. 8. *And He leaping up, stood, and walked, and entered with them into the Temple; walking, and leaping, and praising GOD.*—The
 G 2 very

the Flesh, emaciated by consuming Sickness, or encrusted with a loathsome Leprosy.—All Manner of *Diseases*, though blended with the earliest Seeds of Life, and riveted in the Constitution by a long inveterate Predominancy—*Diseases*, that baffled the Skill of the Physician, and mocked the Force of Medicine—*these* He cured, not by tedious Applications, but in the Twinkling of an Eye; not by costly Prescriptions, or painful Operations, but by a *Word* from his Mouth, or a *Touch* from his Hand; nay, by the *Fringe* of his Garment, or the bare Act of his Will.

Any *one* of these Miracles, had been enough to endear the Character, and eternize

very Language seems to exult, in a *redundant Flow* of expressive Phrases; just as a poor Cripple, that never knew either the Comfort of bodily Vigour, or the Pleasure of local Motion, may be supposed to do, when suddenly and unexpectedly blessed with both. He would exert his new acquired Powers again and again; first in one Attitude, then in another. Sometimes to try, whether He was really healed, and not under the pleasing Delusion of a Dream; sometimes from a Transport of conscious Delight, and to express the Sallies of Joy that sprung up in his Heart.

Though I acknowledge Mr. *Pope's* Description to be extremely beautiful,

—————*The Lamè their Crutch forego,
And leap exulting like the bounding Roe.*

Yet I cannot persuade myself, that it is to be compared with *St. Luke's* Draught, either in the Variety of Figures; in the Richness of Colouring; or in that Exuberance of Style, which, on this Occasion, is so happily significant, and so perfectly picturesque.

nize the Memory of another Person. But they were *common* Things, Matters of *daily* Occurrence, with our Divine MASTER. The Years of his public Ministry, were an uninterrupted Series of such healing Wonders; or, if any Intermiffion took place, it was only to make way for more invaluable Miracles of spiritual Beneficence.

Behold Him exercising his Dominion, over the *vegetable* Creation. A *Fig-Tree*, adorned with the most promising Spread of Leaves, but unproductive of the expected Fruit, *witbers away* at his Rebuke. It is not only stripped of its verdant Honours, but dried up from the very Roots *, and perishes for ever. A fearful, yet significant Intimation, of that final Ruin, which will overtake the *specious* Hypocrite. Who, while lavish in outward Profession, is destitute of inward Piety.

His Eye pierced through the whole *World of Waters*; discerned the Fish, that had just swallowed a Piece of Money; and guided its Course to *Peter's* Hook †. He makes, if it be his fovereign Pleasure, the great Deep his
Reve-

* *Mark* xi. 20.

† *Mat.* xvii. 27. How wonderful is this seemingly little Miracle! Or rather, what a *Cluster* of Wonders is comprized in this *single* Act!—That any Fish, with Money in its Mouth, should be caught—with Money just of such a Value—and in the very first Fish that offered itself—What a pregnant Display of *Omniscience* to know, of *Omnipotence* to over-rule, all these *fortuitous* Incidents!

Revenue; and bids the scaly Nations bring him their *Tribute*.

The *Waters* themselves, it may be said, are far more unmanageable, than their Inhabitants. Who can controul that *outrageous Element*? Which has destroyed so many gallant Fleets, with the Armies they bore; and which would laugh at the Opposition of the united World. —The *LORD JESUS* walks upon its rolling Surges*, and speaks its most tempestuous Agitations into a Calm. *The Waves of the Sea are mighty, and rage horribly*, but yet the *LORD*, who loved Us, and washed Us from our Sins in his own Blood, *is mightier*.

The *Winds* are yet more ungovernable, than the madding Ocean. When these are hurled † abroad, to shatter the Forests, and shake the
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* *He treadeth upon the Waves of the Sea*, is one of the Prerogatives, ascribed to the most high *GOD*, *Job* xix. 8. The original Word *בַּמַּוּתֵי* signifies a Sea, that rolls *Mountain-high*; and such, We have Reason to suppose, were the Waves on which our *LORD* walked; since the Vessel, to which He bent his Course, was *βασανιζομενον*, *lashed, battered, tormented*, by their vehement Concussions. *Matt.* xiv. 24.

† This is the literal Translation of that beautiful *Hebrew* Phrase, which occurs *Jonab* i. 4.—The sacred Writer, describing the stormy Messenger, which was dispatched to arrest a fugitive Servant, says *וַיִּזְעַק*—The *LORD* hurled forth a great Wind. The same Expression is applied to *Saul*, (*1 Sam.* xviii. 11.) when He darted his Javelin at *David*, with a Design to transfix and nail Him to the Wall.—What an elegant, and how awful an Image! Storms and Tempests,

the Shores, Who can *curb* their Rage? What can *withstand* their Impetuosity? Even the boisterous Winds hear the SAVIOUR's Voice; and, as soon as they hear, *obey*. His Voice, more powerful to restrain, than brazen Dungeons to confine, chides the furious Whirlwind. The furious Whirlwind is awed into immediate * Silence. That which a Moment ago, heaved the Billows to the Clouds, and filled with Outrage the howling Firmament; now, gently whispers among the Shrouds, and scarcely curls the smooth Expanse.

Something there is, even within the narrow Compass of our *own Breasts*, which affords Room for more signal Exertions of DEITY, than the turbulent Billows, or the resistless Storm. Agreeably to the Suggestion of a Prophet; *For lo! He that formeth the Mountains, and createth the Wind, and, as a more pregnant Proof of divine Perfection, declareth*

unto

pests, with all their irresistible Fury and dreadful Ravages, are like *missive Weapons* in the Hand of JEHOVAH. Which He launches with greater Ease and surer Aim, than the most expert Warrior emits the pointed Steel.

* *Immediate*—This Circumstance, as very much *aggrandizing* the Miracle, is, with great historical Propriety, remarked by the Evangelist. The Sea is known to have a prodigious *Swell*, and very tremendous Agitations, for a considerable Time after the tempestuous Wind ceases. On this Occasion, and in Obedience to its MAKER's Will, it departs from the *established* Laws of Motion.—No sooner is the Word spoken, but there is a *Calm*; not an advancing, but an *instantaneous* Calm; not a partial, but a *perfect* Calm. *Matt.* viii. 26. *Mark* iv. 39.

unto Man what is his Thought, the GOD of Hosts is his Name *; the Possessor of such surpassing Power and Wisdom, must unquestionably be the supreme LORD. And Who is this, but JESUS CHRIST? He knew, what was in Man †. He discerned the Secrets of the Heart; discerned the latent Purpose, before it disclosed itself in Action; even before it was uttered in Speech; nay, while it lay yet an uninformed Embrio in the Mind.

His Glance pierced into *Futurity*: espied Events, in all their Circumstances ‡, and with the greatest Perspicuity, before they came into Being. The *bidden* Things of Darkness were open, and the *Contingencies* of to-morrow were pre-

* *Amos* iv. 13.

† *John* ii. 25. This all-discerning Intelligence of the DEITY, is very emphatically expressed by the Psalmist, *Psal.* cxxxix. 1, 2, &c. Though the Sentiment, in *one* Clause, seems to be somewhat weakened by our Version. *There is not a Word in my Tongue*, would have a nobler Turn, and more extensive Meaning, if rendered; BEFORE the Word is on my Tongue, Thou, O LORD, knowest it altogether.

‡ *In all their Circumstances*.—See a very remarkable Exemplification of this Particular. *Mark* xiv. 13. *There shall meet You*—not barely a *Person*, but the Sex and Age are both specified—not two, or several, but *one* Man—not within any given Space of Time, but at the *very Instant* of your Arrival—not empty-handed, but bearing a *Vessel*—not of Wood or Metal, but an earthen *Pitcher*—filled, not with Wine or Milk, but with *Water*—carrying it into *that very House*, where the Preparation was made, and the Passover was to be celebrated.—What a Multitude of *Contingencies*! All minutely foretold by our LORD!

present, to his all-pervading Eye. Nay, the unthought-of Revolutions even of distant Ages, the astonishing Catastrophe of dissolving Nature, and the awful Process of everlasting Judgment, He clearly foresaw, and particularly foretold.

Nor does He only *penetrate* the Recesses, but *over-rule* the Operations of the Soul.—He so *intimidated* a Multitude of sacrilegious Wretches, that they fled, not before his drawn Sword, or bent Bow, but at the Shaking of his single Scourge *.—He so *awed*, by one short Remonstrance †, an Assembly of conceited and ostentatious *Pharisees*, that they could neither gain-say, nor endure the Energy of his Discourse. Though not to endure, was a tacit Acknowledgment

* *John* ii. 14, 15, &c. *St. Jerom* looks upon this Miracle, as one of the greatest, that our SAVIOUR wrought. And indeed the Circumstances are very extraordinary.—That *one* Man should undertake so *bold*, and execute so *hazardous* a Task—One Man, without a *Commission* from *Cæsar*; without any *Countenance* from the *Jewish* Rulers; without any *Arms*, either to terrify the Multitude, or defend Himself.—That He should cast out the whole Tribe of mercenary Traffickers; wrest, from those Worshippers of Wealth, their darling Idol; and trample under Foot their great *Diana*—And all, without Tumult or Opposition; not one of the sacrilegious Rabble, daring to “*move* the Hand, or open the Mouth, or peep.”—Whoever reflects on the *fierce* and *ungovernable* Nature of an incensed Populace; or considers the *bitter* and *outrageous* Zeal of *Demetrius* and the Craftsmen, on a less irritating Occasion; may possibly find Himself almost, if not altogether, of the *Latin* Father's Opinion.

† *John* viii. 7,

ledgment of Guilt, and must cover them with public Confusion.—With a Word, the most *mild* and *gentle** imaginable, He flung such Terror into a Band of armed Men; as blasted all their Courage, and laid them *stunned* and *prostrate* on the Ground.

All *Hearts are in his Hand. He turneth them, as the Rivers of Water, whithersoever He will* †; with as much Ease, and with the same efficacious Sway, as the Current of the Rivers is turned by every Inflection of the Channel.—*Follow me*, was his Call to *James* and *John*: *Follow me* ‡, was all He said to *Levi* the Publican. Though the first were engaged in all the Ardour of Business; though the last was sitting at the very Receipt of Custom; yet both He and they, without any Demur, or the least Delay, left their Employ, left their nearest Relations, and resigned their *earthly all*, to attend a poor and despised MASTER.—Their Acquaintance, no doubt, would remonstrate

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* *John* xviii. 6. † *Prov.* xxi. 1.

‡ *Mark* ii. 14. He said in the Beginning, *Let there be Light*; there was Light: *Let there be a Firmament*; 'twas spread abroad: *Let there be a World*; it arose of Nothing.—In the Days of his Flesh likewise, He speaks, and it is done. His Word is a Work. He says to the Disciples, *Follow me*; they come—to the Leper, *Be clean*; He is cleansed—to the Paralytic, *Arise, take up thy Bed, and walk*; 'tis all performed, as soon as commanded.—Surely then We must confess, This is *the Voice of a GOD, not of a Man!* Γενθησιω is our LORD's usual Word, when He grants a miraculous Cure: which exactly corresponds with that admired and magnificent Expression '77' *Gen.* i. 3.

a thousand Inconveniencies; their Enemies would not fail to censure them, as rash Enthusiasts; but all these Considerations were lighter than Dust, were less than nothing, when set in competition with *two Words only* from *JESUS of Nazareth*. Impressed, deeply impressed by his powerful Summons, such Loss they counted Gain, and such Obloquy Glory.

He planted Bowels of Compassion in the unfeeling avaricious Wretch; and *elevated*, beyond the Height of the Stars, Desires that lay *groveling* even below the Mire of the Swine. The *Slaves* of Sin He restored to the *Liberty* of Righteousness; and unhappy Creatures, who were degenerated into the Likeness of the Devil, He renewed after the Image of the blessed G O D.—These were the Effects of his personal Preaching; these are still the Conquests of his glorious Gospel; and do not these declare his Dominion over the Intellectual Oeconomy? That the *World* of *Minds*, as well as of material Nature, is open to his Inspection, and subject to his Controul?

The *Dead* seem to be more remote from human Cognizance, than the Secrets of the Breast; less liable to any human Jurisdiction, than the warring Elements. What Potentate can issue a *Writ* of *Release* to the Grave? Or
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cite the dislodged Soul, to re-enter the breathless Corpse?—Yet this, even this, our mighty MEDIATOR executed. He opened the Eyes, that were *sunk* in their Sockets, and *sealed* in the Tomb. He bid the Heart, that had forgot its vital Motion, spring into renewed and vigorous Life. The crimson Flood, long congealed by the icy Hand of Death; that had not only lost its Pulse by *Stagnation*, but likewise changed its very Texture by *Putrefaction**; circulates, at his Order, all florid and mantling with Health, through the wondering Veins.—The *Spirit*, that had taken its Flight into the *invisible* State, had taken its Place in eternal Habitations, returns, at our REDEEMER's Signal, to the Tenement of mouldering Clay; and, by the amazing Visit, proclaims his Sovereignty over those *unknown Realms*, and their mysterious Inhabitants.

As He recals from, so He admits into, the Abodes of future Happiness. In the very lowest Depths of his Humiliation, He disposed of the *Seats of Bliss*, and the *Thrones of Glory*. His Hands, when swollen with Wounds, and nailed to the Tree, evidently sustained *the Keys of Hell and of Death* †. Then, even then, He opened and He shut either the Gates of the Grave, or the Portals of Paradise. What He speaks

* *John xi. 39.*† *Rev. i. 18.*

speaks to the penitent Thief, is the Language of supreme Authority; *To Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise* *. 'Tis a royal *Mandamus*, not an humble Petition.

Does our LORD's Superiority extend to those malignant Beings, the Devil and his Angels? —Even these, in spite of all their *formidable Strength* †, and *inextinguishable Rage*, He makes his Footstool. He brake the Teeth of those infernal Lions; and rescued the helpless Prey, on which their bloody Jaws were closing. At his Command, they abandon their Conquests; and relinquish, however *indignant*, however *reluctant*, their long-accustomed Habitations. His *single* Command, more forcible than *ten thousand* Thunderbolts, dispossesses a whole Legion ‡ of those fierce and haughty Spirits: drives them, all terrified and deprecating severer Vengeance, to seek Rest in solitary Desarts, or to herd with the most sordid Brutes.

As the blessed *JESUS* treads upon the Necks of those Powers of Darkness, He receives the willing Services of the *Angels of Light*. They that

* *Luke* xxiii. 43.

† *Milton*, describing the Power of the apostate Angels, says;

—————*The least of Whom could wield
These Elements; and arm Him with the Force
Of all their Regions.* B. VI. 221.

‡ *Mark* v. 9.

that *excel* * in Strength, and are *active* as Flames of Fire, even they fulfil his Commandment, and hearken unto the Voice of his Words. They graced the Solemnity of his Birth; they attended Him, after his Temptation in the Wilderness; they were the first joyful Preachers of his triumphant Resurrection; and now He is seated on the Right-hand of the MAJESTY in the Highest,

—————*They stand with Wings outspread,
Listening to catch their Master's least Command,
And fly through Nature, e'er the Moment end.*

Behold

* Would any One see a Sketch of the Glory and Excellence of the angelic Nature? Let Him see it, in that inimitably fine Stroke of the sacred Pencil. *I saw another Angel come down from Heaven, having great Power, and the Earth was lightened with his Glory.* Rev. xviii 1. The last Clause is, I think, one of the most masterly Touches of descriptive Painting, extant in History, Poetry, or Oratory. *Milton* gives Us a Stricture of the same Kind, and on the same Subject. But the *poetic Flight*, though very sublime, is greatly inferior to the *apocalyptic Vision*.

—————*On He led
His radiant Files, dazzling the Moon.*

In this Case, We have a *whole* Brigade of celestial Warriors; in the former, only a *single* angelic Being. Those are represented, as irradiating the *Night*, and outshining the *Moon*: this, as exceeding the Brightness of the *Sun*; diffusing additional Splendors on the *Day*; and illuminating, not a vast Plain, not a vaster Kingdom, but the *whole Face* of the Globe.—If *such* be the Lustre of the Servant, what Images can display the Majesty of the LORD? Who has *thousand Thousands* of those glorious Attendants *ministering unto Him, and ten thousand Times ten thousand standing before Him?* Dan. vii. 10.

Behold Him, now, doing according to his Will, in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth—Swaying the Sceptre, over the Legions of Hell, and the Powers of Nature—exercising Dominion, in the Hearts of Men, in the Territories of the Grave, and Mansions of disembodied Spirits. Then let my *Theron* determine—under such Views of our SAVIOUR's unequalled Majesty, and unbounded Sovereignty, let Him determine—whether it be safer, to rest our infinite and eternal Interests, on *our own* Righteousness, rather than on *His*.

We have selected some few Manifestations of our REDEEMER's *excellent Greatness*. Even the Evangelical Historians, give us no larger a Proportion of his astonishing Deeds, than the First-fruits bear to a copious Harvest. Yet, were they all particularly enumerated, and circumstantially displayed, they would appear *inconsiderable*; compared with those far *more distinguished* Trophies of Almighty Power, which He has decreed, in some future Period, to erect*.

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* The Dignity of our LORD, considered as the CREATOR and PRESERVER of all Things, is not mentioned *Here*; because, it is professedly attempted, in *The Descant upon Creation*, subjoined to the first Volume of *Meditations among the Tombs*, &c. To which I beg Leave to refer my Readers. And shall more than make amends for the present Omission, by transcribing a Passage from the *Night-Thoughts*;

He will gather to his sacred Fold, the People of his antient Church; though they are *dispersed* into all Lands, and most inveterately *prejudiced* against the Truth of his Gospel.—How mighty was his Hand, how illustriously outstretched his Arm, when He made a Path through the Surges of the Ocean; drove the Torrent of *Jordan* backwards; and fetched Rivers of Waters from the flinty Rock! Far more mighty will be its Operations, when He shall remove the seemingly unsurmountable Obstructions, to the general *Restoration* of the *Jews*; shall throw all their religious Apprehensions into a new Channel; and cause Tears of penitential Sorrow to start from their stony Eyes, Confessions of unfeigned Faith to issue from their blaspheming Lips.—Yet thus it will assuredly be. In the Volume of the divine Book it is written, *They shall look on Him, whom they have pierced, and mourn* *. They shall
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Thoughts; which presents Us with a magnificent Display of this great Truth.

———*T H O U*, by whom all Worlds
Were made, and one redeem'd; whose regal Power
On more than adamantinè Basis fix'd;
O'er more, far more than Diadems and Thrones
Inviolably reigns; beneath whose Foot,
And by the Mandate of whose awful Nod,
All Regions, Revolutions, Fortunes, Fates,
Of High, of Low, of Mind and Matter, roll
Through the short Channels of expiring Time,
Or shoreless Ocean of Eternity.

Night-Thoughts, N^o IX.

* Zech. xii. 10.

adore as the MESSIAH, the despised *Galilean*; and fix all their Hopes of final Felicity on that very Person, whom their Fathers slew and hanged on a Tree.

Amazing *Revolution* in the religious World! Yet this, together with the *Destruction* of Antichrist, and the *Illumination* of the benighted *Gentiles*, may pass for *small* Incidents; compared with those *stupendous* Events, which will dignify, and signalize the closing Scene of Affairs.

Then, shall the *LORD JESUS* be manifested in unspeakable Glory; and exert such Acts of Omnipotence, as will be the *Terror* of Hell, the *Joy* of Heaven, the *Wonder* of Eternity.—Then, will He put an End to Time, and bid the Springs of Nature cease to operate. Then, shall his tremendous Trumpet rend the universal Vault, and pierce the Dormitories of the Dead.—Then, will He *shake the Earth out of its Place**, and before his majestic Presence the *Heavens shall flee away*†.—Then shall, not a
Nation

* *Job* ix. 6.

† How grand is the Idea, when *David* prays! *Bow thy Heavens, O LORD, and come down; touch the Mountains, and they shall smoke.* Much grander is the Image, when He says; *The Springs of Waters were seen, and the Foundations of the World were discovered, at thy Chiding, O LORD, at the Blast of the Breath of thy Displeasure.* Transcendently and inimitably grand is this Description, though given Us by the most plain and artless Writer in the World. *I saw a great white Throne, and HIM THAT SAT ON IT, from whose Face the*
 VOL. III. H *Heavens*

Nation only, but *Multitudes, Multitudes of Nations,*

Heavens and the Earth fled away, and there was no Place found for them. Rev. xx. 11.

In *Virgil's* admired Representation, *Jupiter* hurls his Thunder, and a Mountain falls at the Stroke;

—————*Ille flagranti*
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia Telo

Dejicit. Georg. I. 331.

In *Homer's* more terror-striking Piece, *Neptune* shakes the wide-extended Earth. The Mountains tremble to their Center; the Ocean heaves its Billows; and Cities reel on their Foundations.

—————*Αὐτὰρ ἐπερθε Ποσειδάων εἰναξε*
Γαίαν ἀπειρεσίην, ὄρων τ' αἰπεινά καρηνα,
Πάντες δ' ἐσσειούλο ποδες πολυπιδάκκιδες,
Και κορυφαί, Τρωάδε πόλις, και νηες Ἀχαιῶν.

Iliad. γ. 57.

Here, the SON of the eternal GOD *appears* only, and all Nature is alarmed: nor Heaven nor Earth can keep their Standing: they flee away, like the frightened Roe.—How *groveling* are the loftiest Flights of the *Grecian* and *Roman* Muse, compared with this Magnificence and Elevation of the *prophetic* Spirit!

Let Us consider the Passage a little more attentively. *Volet hæc sub Luce videri.* Masterly Performances, the more closely they are examined, the more highly they charm.—It is not said, A few Herds of the Forest, a few Kings, or Armies, or Nations; but the *whole System* of created Things.—It is not said, They were thrown into great Commotions, but they *fled* intirely away; not, they started from their Foundations, but they *fell into Dissolution*; not, they removed to a distant Place, but *there was found no Place for them*; they ceased to exist; they were no more.—And all this, not at the strict Command of the LORD *JESUS*; not at his awful Menace, or before his fiery Indignation; but at the *bare Presence* of his Majesty, sitting with serene but adorable Dignity on his Throne.

If this is not the *true Sublime*, in its utmost Scope, and richest Beauty, I must confess, I never saw it, nor ever expect to see it.

Nations, *be born in a Day** ; yea rather, in an Hour, in a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye.—All that are asleep in the Beds of Death ; even those who, perishing in *Tempests*, are sunk to the Bottom of the Ocean ; or, swallowed up by *Earthquakes*, are buried at the Center of the Globe ; all shall hear his Voice ; and hearing, shall awake ; and awaking, shall come forth.—Every human Body, though *Ages* have revolved, since it gave up the Ghost ; though *Worms* have devoured the Flesh, and Dissolution mouldered the Bones ; though its Parts have been *grinded* by the Teeth of Beasts, or *consumed* by the Rage of Fire ; dissipated in *viewless* Winds, or scattered over the *boundless* Globe ; lost to our Senses, and lost even to our Imagination ; yet will every human Body then be restored ; its Limbs reassembled, and not an Atom wanting ; its Frame rebuilt, and never be demolished more.

Then, shall the unnumbered Myriads of departed Spirits return from their separate Abodes ; and, commissioned by HIM *who is the Resurrection and the Life*, reanimate each his organized System.—Then, will Misery and Happiness, both *consummate*, and both *everlasting*, be awarded by the SAVIOUR's Sentence.—Then, will He condemn the *ungodly* World, and the rebellious Angels, to Chains of Dark-
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ness,

* *Isai.* lx. 8.

ness, and Dungeons of Despair. Then, will He invest the *Righteous* with the Inheritance of Heaven, and instate them in the Fulness of Joy. His Word will be Fate; *Immutability* seals, and *Eternity* executes, whatever He decrees.

And has *this* *JESUS*, so glorious, so majestic, so adorable—has HE vouchsafed to take our Nature, and become our Righteousness? Was HE made under the Law? Did HE fulfil all its Demands? Give perfect Satisfaction to the *penal*, and yield perfect Obedience to the *preceptive*? On purpose, that the Merit of *all* might be made over to Us?—Astonishing Condescension! Ineffable Grace! What Thanks are due, to such infinitely rich Goodness!—What a Remedy is here, for the Impotence and Guilt of fallen Man!—What a sure Foundation of Hope, and what an abundant Source of Joy, to every One that believeth?

It is declared by the Oracle of GOD, That *such an HIGH-PRIEST became Us*, was absolutely necessary for our obnoxious and ruined Condition, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners—and made higher than the Heavens* *. It appears, I flatter myself, from the Letter already in your Hand, That *CHRIST* fully answered the former Character; and
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* *Heb. viii. 26.*

from this Epistle, I hope it will appear, That He is the very Person described in the latter Clause.

Estimate now, my dear Friend, estimate if You can, the Glory and Excellency of this sublime Person. Then may You learn, how to state the *Worth* of his Righteousness, and the *Degree* of Affiance suited to his Merits. Rather you will perceive, that his spotless Birth, his perfectly obedient Life, his exquisitely bitter Death, are a Satisfaction of unknown Dignity; *precious**, far beyond all the Graces of Men, and all the Duties of Angels; *able* to save to the uttermost, all that rely on them, and come unto GOD through them.

Consonant to this, are the Sentiments of that penetrating Critic and profound Scholar, Dr. *Lightfoot*. Who, treating of our SAVI-OUR's Obedience, says—"Add to all this the
 "Dignity of his Person, who performed this
 "Obedience: that He was GOD as well as
 "Man: and his Obedience is infinite. Such
 "as, in its Validity, subdued Satan, and in
 "its All-sufficiency satisfied the Justice of
 "GOD."—After which, our celebrated Au-
 thor makes this important and delightful Im-
 provement; "Think, *Christian*, what a Stock
 " of

* This is expressed by the sacred Historian, with an Energy which no Translation can equal; την τιμην τα τελειημενε εν ελιμησαντο απο νιων Ισραηλ. Matt. xxvii. 9.

“ of Obedience and Righteousness, here is for
 “ thee, to answer and satisfy for thy Disobedi-
 “ ence and Unrighteousness, if Thou become
 “ a Child of the Covenant. Here is enough
 “ for every Soul that comes to Him, be they
 “ never so many. Like the Widow’s Oil in the
 “ Book of *Kings*, there is enough and enough
 “ again, as long as any Vessel is brought to
 “ receive it*.

We need not wonder, that *Gentiles*, who are ignorant of the REDEEMER; that *Jews*, who treat Him with contemptuous Scorn; that *Professors* of Religion, who deny his eternal GODHEAD; place little, if any Confidence in his Righteousness. But it is strange, that *Christians*, who know the SAVIOUR; who acknowledge his Divinity; and believe Him to be exalted above all Blessing and Praise—it is exceedingly strange, that they do not *rejoice* in Him; *make* their *Boast* of Him; and say, with a becoming Disdain, of every other Dependence, *Get ye hence †!*

Such an Assemblage of divine Perfections, must *warrant*, must *demand*, the most undivided, and the most unbounded Confidence.—There never was, no, not in all Ages, nor in all Worlds, any thing greater or richer, *more* dignified or exalted, than the Obedience of our LORD.—Nay; it is impossible for
 Men

* *Lightfoot’s Works*, Vol. II, p. 1258. † *Isai*, xxx. 22.

Men or Angels to imagine, what could be *so* suited to our Wants, *so* proper for our Reliance, or *so* sure to answer, more than answer all our Expectations.

Upon the Whole; let me intreat my *Theron* to contemplate our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, under that most illustrious Character, described by the Prophet, *A PRIEST upon his THRONE* *. Dignifying the sacerdotal Center by the regal Diadem; adding all the Honours of his *eternal Divinity*, to the Sacrifice of his *bleeding Humanity*.—Then, I promise myself, You will find it almost impossible, not to adopt the emphatical and ardent Protestation of the Apostle; *GOD forbid, that I should glory*, that I should confide, *save only in the Obedience and the Cross of CHRIST JESUS my LORD!*

When You made the Tour of *France* and *Italy*; and, crossing the *Alps*, gained the Summit of some commanding Ridge—When You looked round, with Astonishment and Delight, on the *ample Plains*, which, crouded with Cities, and adorned with Palaces, stretch their beauteous Tracts below—When You surveyed the *famous Rivers*, that roll in silent but shining Dignity; stating the Boundaries of Kingdoms, and wafting Plenty through the gladdened Nations—When You shot your transf-

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ported

* *Zech. vi. 13.*

ported View to the *Ocean*, whose unmeasurable Flood meets the Arch of Heaven, and terminates the Landschape with inconceivable Grandeur—Did You, then, choose to forego the Pleasure resulting from such a Prospect, in order to gaze upon the *naked Cragg* of some adjacent Rock? Or, could You turn your Eyes from those magnificent Objects, and fasten them with pleased Attention upon a *shallow Puddle*, that lay stagnating at your Feet?

You, Who have beheld the Scene, can accommodate the Simile, with peculiar Advantage. For which Reason, I shall wave the Application; and only beg leave to transcribe into my Paper a Wish, that is now warm on my Heart, and is often breathed in Supplication from my Lips—May the FATHER of our Spirits, and the Fountain of Wisdom, *give Us an inlightened Understanding, to KNOW Him that is true: grant Us the inestimable Blessing, that We may BE IN Him that is true, even in his SON JESUS CHRIST. For, this SAVIOUR is the true GOD, and that Privilege is Life eternal**.

My *Theron* needs no Arguments to convince Him, that such a Prayer is an Act of *rational* and *real* Friendship; is the most genuine and substantial Proof, that I am

His truly affectionate

ASPASIO,

* 1 John v. 20.



L E T T E R IX.

THERON to ASPASIO.

Dear ASPASIO,

YOUR two Letters have reached my Hand; and I hope, they have not missed my Heart. I might inform You, what Pleasure they gave me, and how highly I esteem them. But You desire no such Compliments: You desire to see me impressed with the Sentiments, and living under their Influence. This would be the most acceptable Acknowledgment to my *Aspasio*, because it would be the most happy Effect to his *Theron*. May every Day, therefore, bring a fresh Accession of *such* Gratitude to me, and of *such* Satisfaction to You!

To watch for my Soul, and pray for my Salvation, I am thoroughly convinced, is the truest Instance of rational and exalted Friendship. Every Claim to that amiable Character, is *defective* and *vain*, if it does not extend to our spiritual Interests, and our everlasting Welfare. For which Reason, I need not intreat *You* to continue and perpetuate this best

Ex.

Expression of social Kindness. Or if I do, it is rather to testify how much I prize the Favour, than to prompt your affectionate and ready Mind.

Your last found me at a Friend's House, that lies pretty near the *western Ocean*.—Yesterday, waked by the Lark, and rising with the Dawn*, I strolled into the fragrant Air, and dewy Fields. While, as *Shakespeare* with his usual Sprightliness expresses himself,

————— *Jocund Day*
Stood tip-toe on the misty Mountain's Top.

Sweet was the Breath of Morn, and sweet the Exhalations of the freshened Flowers—Grateful were the soft Salutes of the cooling Zephyrs, attended with the Charm of earliest Birds—Delightful the Sun, painting with his orient Beams the Chambers of the Firmament, and unveiling the Face of universal Nature.

My Mind, but little affected with these inferior Entertainments, was engaged in contemplating

* *Evandrum ex humili Testo Lux suscitatur alma,
 Et matutini Volucrum sub Culmine Cantus.* Virg.

Lux alma—A lovely Expression! Describing the Mildness, the Beauty, and the cheering Efficacy of the rising Sun. It is, I think, incapable of an *equal* Translation; but reminds me of a very fine Comparison in our *sacred Eclogues*, which represents the charming Appearance, and the benign Influence of the Gospel-church, at its first Opening on the *Gentile World*—*Who is this that looketh forth as the Morning?* Cant. VI. 10.

templating an Object of infinitely superior Dignity. In contemplating that ADORABLE BEING, who raised—from *nothing* raised this stupendous System of Things; and supports —with his *Word* supports the magnificent Frame. Who (to speak in the Language of his own SPIRIT) *openeth the Eyelids of the Morning, and commandeth the Day-spring to know its Place**. Commandeth the Light, by its punctual and pleasing Ministrations, to draw aside the Curtain of Darknefs; and discover the Skies, shining with Glories; and disclose the Earth, blooming with Beauties.

FATHER of Light and Life, said my transported Mind,

————— *Thou GOOD SUPREME!*
O teach me what is good! Teach me THY-
SELF.

Save me from Folly, Vanity, and Vice,
From every low Pursuit! and feed my Soul
With Faith, with conscious Peace, and Virtue
pure,
Sacred, substantial, never-fading Bliss †!

Wrapt in Wonder, and lost in Thought, I rambled carelessly along, till I was insensibly brought to the Shore. Which, in these Parts, is prodigiously high and strong: perfectly well

* *Job xxxviii. 12.*

† *Thomson's Winter.*

well fitted, to stand as an everlasting *Barrier* *, against the impetuous Stroke of conflicting Winds, and the ponderous Sweep of dashing Surges.—Not that the Omnipotent ENGINEER has any Need of these impregnable Ramparts. *Here*, it is true, they intervene; and not only repress the rolling Invader, but speak the amazing Majesty of their MAKER. In *other* Places, all such laboured Methods of Fortification are laid aside. The CREATOR shews the astonished World, that He is confined to no Expedients; but orders all Things according to the Pleasure of his own Will. He bids a low Bank of despicable Sand, receive and repel the most furious Shocks of assaulting Seas: And, *though the Waves thereof toss themselves with incredible Fierceness, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, and seem to menace universal Destruction, yet can they not pass over* † this slightest of Mounds.

A winding Passage broke the Declivity of the Descent; and led me, by a gradual Slope, to the Bottom,—The Moon being in her last Quarter,

* These, doubtless, are “the Doors and the Bars,” which the ALMIGHTY mentions in the Course of his awful Interrogatories to *Job*. The *massy* Doors, that can never be forced; the *solid* Bars, that can never be broke; and I may add, the *conspicuous* Columns, on which his Providence has inscribed that sovereign Mandate, *Ne plus ultra*. Or, as the Prohibition runs in his own majestic Words, *Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther*. *Job xxxviii, 10.*

† *Jer. v, 22.*

Quarter, and the Tide at its greatest Recess, I walked for a while, where briny Waves were wont to flow.—The ebbing Waters had left a vacant Space, several Furlongs broad; equal, in *Length*, to a very extended Vista; *smooth* on its Surface, as the most level Bowling-green; and almost as *firm*, as the best compacted Cawfay. Infomuch, that the Tread of a Horse scarce impresses it, and the Waters of the Sea never penetrate it. Exclusive of this wise Contrivance, the searching Waves would insinuate themselves into the Heart of the Earth. The Earth itself would be *hollow* as an Honey-Comb, or *bibulous* as a Sponge. And the Sea, soaking by Degrees through all its Cavities, would, in Process of Time, forsake its Bed, and mingle with the Plains and Mountains. But this closely cemented or glutinous Kind of Pavement, is like *claying* the Bottom of the universal Canal. So that the returning Tides consolidate, rather than perforate its Substance: as a *Fluid*, they prevent the Sun from cleaving it with Chinks; as a *viscous* Fluid, they shut up the Interstices of the Sand, and hinder the Water from exuding through its Pores.—Such, I hope, will be the Case, with this Soul of mine, and the Temptations that beset me. Beset me they do, they will. But may they never *win* upon my Affections, nor gain *Admittance* into my Heart!

Let

Let them make me humble, and keep me vigilant; teach me to walk closely with my GOD, and urge me to an incessant Dependence on *CHRIST*. Then, instead of being *ruinous*, they may become *advantageous*; and instead of shattering, will only cleanse the Rock, on which they dash.

The mighty Waters, restless even in their utmost Tranquillity, with a solemn * but placid Murmur, struck my Ear. The Billows, sometimes advancing to kiss the Sand; sometimes drawing back their curly Heads into the Deep; whitened, at their Extremities, into an agreeable Foam. Which, with the reflective Representation of the azure Canopy, formed the Appearance of a most spacious Mantle, tinged with a beautiful Blue, and edged with Fringes of Silver.—*Dignity* and *Elegance*, I find, are the inseparable Characteristics of the CREATOR's Workmanship. As *Comfort* and *Happiness*, I sometimes perceive, are the very Spirit of his Gospel, and the genuine Produce of his Commands.

On one Side, the *Atlantic* Main rolled its Surges from World to World.—What a Spectacle

* This is described with inimitable Propriety by *Homer*;

Βη δ' ἀκρων παρα θινι πολυφλοισβοιο θαλασσης.

And only not quite so beautifully by *Milton*;

He said; and as the Sound of Waters deep

Hoarse Murmur echo'd to his Words Applause.

tacle of Magnificence and Terror! What an irresistible Incitement to Reverence and Awe! How it fills the Mind, and amazes the Imagination! 'Tis the grandest and most august Object under the whole Heavens.—It reminds me of that apocalyptic Vision, which *John*, the enraptured Seer, beheld! *As it were a great Mountain burning with Fire, was cast into the Sea, and the third Part of the Sea became Blood; and the third Part of the Creatures which were in the Sea, and had Life, died; and the third Part of the Ships were destroyed**. I have not Penetration enough, to discover the spiritual Meaning of this Passage; but, I discern a most dreadful Grandeur, in its plain and literal Sense.—If We consider the wonderful Compass, and the terrible Force, of such an enormous Mass of Fire; if We consider its horrible and destructive Effects, on such a vast Body of Waters, as the third Part of the Ocean; how tremendous and astonishing is the Idea! Surely, nothing but divine Inspiration could suggest these Images; as None but an Almighty BEING can execute this Vengeance. Who would not fear an eternal KING, that has such Weapons and such Artillery, reserved against the Day of Battle and War †.

Spacious as the Sea is, GOD has provided a *Garment*, to cover it. Immense as the Sea is,
 GOD

* *Rev.* viii. 8, 9. † *Job* xxxviii. 23.

GOD has prepared *swadling Bands*, to inwrap it. Ungovernable as it may seem to Us, He over-rules it with as much Ease, as the Nurse manages a new-born *Infant* *. An Infant it is, before Almighty Power; and to an Infant it is compared, by JEHOVAH Himself: though, to our Apprehension, it raves like a *stupendous Madman*.—But, if HE command, it opens a peaceful Bosom, and receives his People. It smoothes the Way for their Passage, and stands as a Bulwark for their Defence. They march *through the midst of the Sea upon dry Ground, and the Waters are a Wall unto them on their Right-hand and on their left* †. If he reverses his Mandate, they drive down, with an irresistible Sweep, upon the Hosts of *Pharaoh*; and overwhelm the Chariots and Horses of *Egypt*. They pour Confusion upon Arrogance ‡, and disappoint the Designs of
Perse-

* Job xxxviii. 8, 9.

† *Exod.* xiv. 22.

‡ *Arrogance*—This is described with exquisite Delicacy, in the ΕΠΙΘΥΜΙΟΝ or triumphant Song of *Moses*. *The Enemy said, I will pursue; I will overtake; I will divide the Spoil; my Lust shall be satisfied upon them: I will draw my Sword, mine Hand shall destroy them.*—What swelling Words of Vanity are here! The very Spirit of a *Thrafo* breathes in every Syllable of this beautiful *Prosopopœia*. Never was the Language of *Bluster, Ferocity, and Rhodomontade*, so finely mimicked.—How noble is the Turn, and how exalted the Sentiment, that follows! *THOU didst blow with thy Wind; the Sea covered them; they sank as Lead in the mighty Waters.* The GOD of *Israel* need not summon all his Power, or level the right-aiming Thunder-bolts; He only blows with
his

Persecution and Cruelty.—If He says, *Be still*: the bellowing Surges are hushed; and the gentlest Lamb is not so quiet. If He says, *Destroy*: even the quiescent Waters kindle into Rage; they rise in their MAKER's Cause; and ten thousand Lions, stung with Hunger, and rushing upon the Prey, are not so fierce. When He bids them execute any other Commission; the Horse broke to the Bit, the Spaniel disciplined to the Signal, are not half so dutiful and obsequious.—And shall *our Passions* be more wild than the Winds, more turbulent than the Billows? Forbid it, Almighty LORD! Thou that *rulest the Raging of the Sea; and the Noise of his Waves*, restrain, subdue, and calm *the Madness of the People*.

The Eye travels hard. It wanders over a vast, vast Length of fluctuating Plains*. It reaches the Limits of the Hemisphere, where Skies and Waves seem to mingle. Yet it has scarce made *an Entry* upon the World of Waters. What I here discern, is no more than the *Skirts* of the great and wide Sea. Tracts incomparably broader, are still behind; and Tracts of unbounded Extent, are behind even those.—Great then, O my Soul, inconceivably great, is that adored and glorious
SOVE-

his Wind, and the great Mountain breaks like a Bubble. All this insolent and formidable Parade is quashed; sinks into Nothing; expires in Shame and Ruin. *Exod. xv. 9, 10.*

* ————— *Campisque natantes.* Lucret:

SOVEREIGN, who sitteth upon this Flood, as upon a Throne*. Nay, Who holds it, diffused as it is from Pole to Pole, in the Hollow of his Hand; and before whom, in all its prodigious Dimensions, it is but as the Drop of a Bucket.—How shall Reptiles of the Ground sink *low enough* in their own Apprehensions! What Humiliation can be sufficiently deep for sinful Mortals, before this “High and Holy ONE!” Yet how may they *rise* on the Wings of Hope! How may they *soar* on the Pinions of Faith! When, in the Language of his Prophet, and in his own SON’S Name, they thus address the everlasting GOD. *Awake! Awake! Put on Strength, O Arm of the LORD! Awake, for our Succour and Security, as in the antient Days, in the Generations of old. Art Thou not it, that hath cut Rahab, and wounded the Dragon? Art Thou not it, which hath dried the Sea, the Waters of the great Deep? That hath made the Depths of the Sea, a Way for the Ransomed to pass over †?*

How grand, surprisngly grand and majestic, are the *Works*, as well as the Nature, of an OMNIPOTENT Being! What are all the Canals in all the Countries of the Earth, compared with this immense Reservoir! What are all the superb Edifices, erected by royal Munificence, compared with yonder
Con-

* *Psal.* xxix. 10.† *Isaiab* li. 9, 10.

Concave of the Skies! And what are the most pompous Illuminations of Theatres and triumphant Cities, compared with the resplendent Source of Day! They are a *Spark*, an *Atom*, a *Drop*.—Nay, in every Spark, and Atom, and Drop, that proceeds from the Hand of the ALMIGHTY, there is the Manifestation of a Wisdom and a Power absolutely incomprehensible.

Let us examine a single Drop of Water, the very least Quantity, that the Eye can discern; only so much, as will just adhere to the Point of a Needle. In this almost imperceptible Speck, a famous Philosopher computes no less than *thirteen thousand* Globules. Amazing to conceive! Impossible to explicate!—If then, in so small a Speck, abundantly more than ten thousand Globules exist, what Myriads of Myriads must float in the unmeasured Extent of the Ocean!—Let the ablest Arithmetician try to comprehend in his Mind, not the internal Constitution, but only the *Number* of these fluid Particles. As well may He grasp the Winds in his Fist, or mete out the Universe with his Span, as execute the Task.—If then We are utterly unable to number (which is the *most superficial* of all Researches) even the most common Works of the great JEHOVAH; how can We pretend to lay open the Secrets, and penetrate the Re-

cesses of his infinite Mind! How can We pretend to investigate the whole Process, and solve all the Difficulties, of that *bighest* and *deepest* of the divine Schemes, REDEMPTION!

I have sometimes been offended, I must confess, when You have enlarged upon the *mysterious* Truths of *Christianity*. But I perceive, the Beam was in my own Eye, when I fancied, the Mote was in my Friend's. Is there, in every Ray of Light, and in every Particle of Matter, a Depth of Contrivance unfathomable by the Line of any human Understanding? And shall there be nothing abstruse or profound, nothing but what is level to our *scanty* Apprehensions, in the *great* * *Things* of GOD's Law, and the *glorious* † *Things* of his Gospel? To expect this, is just as wise in itself, and just as congruous to Nature, as to expect—a Sea, whose Cavities might have been digged by our Spade—a Sky, whose Arches are measurable by our Compass—a Sun, whose Orb may be included in our Lanthorns.

When therefore I read of ONE uncreated and eternal BEING, subsisting in THREE Divine PERSONS; when I hear of an infinitely pure and perfect GOD, made Flesh for the Redemption of sinful Men; when I meditate on the righteous and universal
JUDGE,

* רבי תורתִי Hof. viii. 12.

† Ταμεγαλεια του Θεου. Acts ii. 11.

JUDGE, reconciling the World unto Himself, by the Death of his own SON;—when a thousand curious and inquisitive Thoughts are ready to arise on the Occasion; I will bid them, first sound the Depths of a *single Drop*, and then apply their Plummet to the *boundless Ocean*. This, I am very sure, is not weak Credulity, nor wild Enthusiasm; but the maturest Dictate of Reason, and the very Precision of Truth.—Let then the great CREATOR make that sublime Declaration; *As the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways, than your Ways; and my Thoughts than your Thoughts**. Let every human Creature add that humble Acknowledgment; *O the Depths of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of GOD! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out †!* And not Devotion only, but Reason and Truth, will say *Amen* to both.

You see, *Aspasio*, how I am trying to adopt *your* Spirit. You will observe the willing Scholar, though not the great Proficient.—But stay! Is this right? To divert from such commanding Subjects, and take Notice of mere Punctilios?—My Friend may spare his Frowns. I am surpris'd and angry at myself. Away with the little Arts of Self-recommendation,

Self

* *Isai.* lv. 9.

† *Rom.* xi. 33.

Self should be forgot, should be *swallowed up* and *lost* in devout Astonishment, when We are viewing the Magnificence, and meditating on the Wonders of Creation.

Behind me, and far off to the North, *Cam-*
bria's dusky Coasts just, and but just, emerged,
Lost were all her Woods and Mountains. In-
stead of ornamented Towns, and cultivated
Plains, a *confused* Mist, or a low-hung Cloud,
seemed to hover on the Ocean's remotest Brim,
—*Behind me!* Remembrance is roused at the
Expression, and Conscience sharpens her Sting,
Ah! how often, and how long, have I treated
in this very Manner, the noblest Scenes, and
the sublimest Joys! Have *turned my Back*—
ungrateful and befotted Creature!—upon the
heavenly Country, and wandered from the Re-
gions of infinite Delight! Therefore now they
appear *dim*. I have scarcely a Glimpse of their
transcendent Excellencies. Or if I see them
by Faith, it is with frequent Intermissions,
and much Obscurity.—Turn me, O Thou
GOD of my Salvation, turn me from pur-
suing Phantoms, and attach me to thy blessed
Self. Let me henceforth steer an invariable
Course to IMMANUEL's Kingdom. May
its Treasures, as I advance, *open* to my View,
and its Glories *brighten* in my Eye. O! may
some Odours, better, far better, than *Sabaean*
spicy

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spicy Odours *, exhale from the delectable Hills, and the celestial Shores!—But chiefly thou eternal SPIRIT breathe upon my Soul, both by thy *convincing* and *comforting* Influences! Nor ever cease to swell my Sails, and speed my Progress; till I arrive at *the Land, that is very far off; and see the KING, the KING of Grace and of Glory, in all his ineffable Beauty †.*

On my Left-hand, a Range of *mountainous Cliffs* rose in a perpendicular Direction. The huge Pile extended, as far as the Sight could discern, its black Boundaries. Here, bending inwards to the Land; there, bellying out into the Deep; every where projecting a Shade, several Leagues a-croſs the Ocean.

The *Height* of these Cliffs so prodigious, that every human Creature who comes near the Summit, starts back *terrified* and *aghaſt*. Only a few straggling Goats venture to graze on the Top; and these, to a Person walking below, appear but as Specks of moving White. While the Sea-mews, that winnow the Air
about

* Alluding to those Lines in *Milton*.

————— *As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mofambic, off at Sea North-east Winds blow
Sabæan Odour, from the spicy Shore
Of Araby the bleſt, and many a League
Cbear'd with the grateful Smell old Ocean smiles.*

B. IV. 159.

† *Iſaiab xxxiii. 17.*

about the middle Steep, look like winged Animalcules, pursuing their little Sports in a different Region.—The *Aspect* of these Cliffs so *wild* and *horrid*, it is impossible to behold them without a shivering Dread. The Spectator is apt to imagine, that Nature had formerly suffered some violent Convulsions, or been shattered by the flaming Bolts; and that these are the dismembered Remains of the dreadful Stroke. The Ruins, not of *Persepolis* or *Palmyra*, but of the World!

Amazing! What adventurous daring Creature is yonder, gathering *Sampfire* from the Cavities of the Rocks! He has let Himself down several Fathom, beneath the bleak and dizzy Summit.—He gleans a poor Livelihood, from the Edges of Danger, shall I say? Rather, from the *Jaws* of *Death*. I cannot discern the Rope, to which He clings. He seems to be suspended over the tremendous Precipice, by a Thread, by a Hair, by Nothing.—I'll look no longer. The very Sight chills my Veins. While I view his perilous Elevation, I can think of nothing but a headlong Downfal, and fractured Bones; of Brains left to reek on the pointed Crag, and Blood streaming on the discoloured Beach.

Suppose (if the Mind can bear so shocking a Supposition) some poor Wretch, *exposed* on the Brow of this stupendous Promontory; with-

without any Support for his Feet; and *cleaving* only to a weak slender Shrub, that but just adheres to the Interstices of the Rock. What tumultuous Throbbings seize his Breast? What a dying Paleness invades his Cheeks? And what Agonies of Fear rend his Heart? As He hangs, *projecting over* the ragged Precipice; and surveys the Ocean deep, wonderous deep below!—The Bough gives way. His only Hope fails. It yields more and more to his Weight. Good Heavens! *He sinks! He sinks!* O! for some friendly Hand, to snatch him from perishing! Millions, Millions of Gold, were the cheap Purchase of such a Mercy.—There was a Time, my Soul, when thou wast in a Situation, equally shall I say? Infinitely more dangerous. Tottering, not only on the *Verge of Life*, but on the very *Brink of Hell*. Remember that compassionate Arm, which was stretched out, in the very Article of Need, to rescue Thee from imminent and everlasting Perdition. Never forget that gracious Voice, which said—in Accents sweeter than the Music of the Seraphic Choir—“ Deliver him from
“ going down into the Pit. Let his Health
“ be restored, and his Day of Grace be pro-
“ longed.”

In some Places, the hideous Ruins not only *tower* to the Skies, but *lean* over the Strand, Prominent and frightfully pendulous, they
nod

nod Horror, and threaten Destruction on all below. A Person congratulates Himself, when He has got clear of the bending Precipice; and can hardly forbear thinking, that the enormous Load is with-held by some unseen Hand, till the *execrable Wretch*, doomed to a most astonishing Vengeance, is come within Reach of the Blow. And truly, if he had the Strength of the Elephant, or the Firmness of the Behemoth, this would grind him to Powder, or even crush Him into Atoms.

How awful to consider, that there is a Day coming, when wicked Potentates, and haughty Monarchs, will beg of yonder Seas, to *yawn* compassionately deep, and hide them in their darkeſt Abyſſes; hide them from the piercing Eye, and avenging Sword, of inflexible Juſtice.—That there is a Day coming, when the ſoft Voluptuary, the wanton Beauty, and all the Ungodly of the Earth, will beſeech thoſe tremendous Ridges, with all their unſupportable Burden of craggy Rocks, to *ruih down* upon their guilty Heads *. If, by this means, they may be ſcreened from the infinitely more dreaded Weight of divine Indignation.

Vain are their Cries; and vainer ſtill would be their Refuge, ſhould their paſſionate Requeſts be granted. Can Floods *conceal* the impious Wretches; when the Caverns of the
Ocean

**Rev.* vi. 12, 13, 14.

Ocean shall be laid bare, and the Foundations of the World be discovered? Can Rocks *secrete* an obnoxious Rebel; when Rocks, with all their marble Quarries, and adamantine Entrails, shall dissolve like melting Wax? When Hills, that plunge their Roots to the Centre, and lose their towering Heads in Air, shall start from their affrighted Base *, and flee away like a withered Leaf!—Good GOD! What racking Anguish must they feel! What inexpressibly severer Torment must they *fear*! Who can implore, ardently implore as a most desirable Favour,

* This brings to our Remembrance a most sublime Description of the DIVINE POWER, which arises in a beautiful Climax, and terminates in this grand Idea. *The Voice of the LORD is mighty in Operation, the Voice of the LORD is a glorious Voice. The Voice of the LORD breaketh the Cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the Cedars of Lebanon. He maketh them also to skip like a Calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young Unicorn.* Psal. xxix. 4, 5, 6.

The Voice of the LORD is mighty in Operation. This is the general Proposition; which, in the following Sentences, We see most magnificently illustrated.—*The Voice of the LORD breaketh the Cedars*; when He speaks in Thunder, and bids the Lightning execute his Orders, the Trees, the Cedar-Trees, those sturdiest Productions of the Earth, are shivered to Pieces.—*Yea, the LORD breaketh the Cedars of Lebanon*; which, for Stateliness and Strength, surpasses the Oaks of the Forest, almost as much as the Oak exceeds a Shrub.—It is a small Thing with *JEHOVAH*, to rend the Trunks, to tear up the Roots, and make those massy Bodies *skip like a Calf*; even *Lebanon and Sirion*, the Mountains on which they grow, tremble before their GOD. They are thrown into strange Commotions; they are ready to spring from their Foundations; and, with all their Load of Woods and Rocks, appear like some affrighted or some sportive Animal, that *starts with Horror, or leaps with Exultation.*

vour, what Imagination itself shudders to conceive.

In some Places, these mountainous Declivities lift their Brow aloft; plant their Basis deep; and, instead of *portending* a Fall, *defy* the Fury of the most impetuous Elements. Firmly consolidated, and stedfastly established, they have withstood the united, the repeated Assaults of Winds and Waves, through a long Series of revolving Ages.—The sacred Writers, I observe, select almost all the striking Images, which the whole Creation affords; in order to communicate their heavenly Ideas, with the greatest Advantage. *Isaiab*, describing the *Security* of the Righteous, takes his Comparison from the grand Spectacle before my Eyes. *He shall dwell on high: his Place of Defence shall be the Munitions of Rocks**; inaccessible as those lofty Ridges, immoveable as their everlasting Foundations.

Should it be asked, what these Munitions of Rocks may signify?—I find two Places of Refuge and Safeguard, pointed out in Scripture; to either of which, I believe, the Metaphor is applicable. *He had Horns*, says one of the divine Pindarics, *coming out of his Hand: there was the Hiding of his Power †*. Uncontrollable

* *Isai.* xxxiii. 16.

† *Habak.* iii. 4. *Horns* were an Emblem of *Strength*. *A Horn of Salvation*, is put for a mighty and effectual Salvation.

trouable and omnipotent Power was lodged in the great JEHOVAH's Hand; and this was the sure Defence, this the impregnable Garrison, for all his People.—The Church of *CHRIST* is said to be *in the Clefts of the Rock** : That *spiritual Rock*, of which the *Israelites* drank in the Wilderness; whose sacred Clefts were opened, when the bloody Spear tore up the

tion. *Luke* ii. 69. *Thou hast heard me from among the Horns of the Unicorns*; Thou hast rescued me from the most potent and formidable Enemies. *Psal.* xxii. 21. Here the Word seems to denote that Power of JEHOVAH, to which nothing is impossible. And more than seems, if We consult the next Clause.—*There was the hiding of his Power*; or, as it may be rendered, *his powerful Hiding*, a most secure Refuge, a Sanctuary absolutely inviolable. I have accommodated this Passage to a different Sense, *Meditat.* Vol. I. p. 183. But the true Signification, most suitable to the Context, and most subservient to the Prophet's Design, is, I apprehend, given by *Theron*. It is somewhat like a noble Sentiment in the *Night-Thoughts*; which, with a small Alteration, may serve as a Paraphrase on the Text :

And Nature's Shield the Hollow of his Hand.

* *Cant.* ii. 14. Should the Reader have an Inclination to see this sacred, but mysterious Book explained, I would refer him to Dr. *Gill's Exposition of the Canticles*. Which has such a copious Vein of sanctified Invention running through it, and is interspersed with such a Variety of delicate and brilliant Images, as cannot but highly entertain a *curious* Mind. Which presents Us also with such rich and charming Displays of the Glory of *CHRIST's* Person, the Freeness of his Grace to Sinners, and the Tenderness of his Love to the Church, as cannot but administer the most exquisite Delight to the *believing* Soul.—Considered in *both* these Views, I think, the Work resembles the Paradisiacal Garden, described by *Milton*; in which

*Blossoms and Fruits at once of golden Hue
Appear'd, with gay enamel'd Colours mix'd.*

the REDEEMER'S Side, and cut a wide and deadly Passage to his Heart. Surely, *the Inhabitants of this Rock* have Reason to *sing* *. What should disquiet them? Who can destroy them? Why should not the Voice of Joy be in their Dwellings, and that Hymn of holy Triumph in their Mouths? *We have a strong City: Salvation shall GOD appoint, Salvation itself, for Walls and Bulwarks* †.—Happy should I think myself, if I was interested in this SAVIOUR, and established on this Rock.

Yonder, on the Summit of the most conspicuous Cleft, is erected a grand and stately Pile. At the Top, my Glass discovers a magnificent Lanthorn; at the Foot, are the Huts of Fishermen, surrounded with various Sorts of Nets.—It is, I suppose, a *Light-house*. Intended to apprise the Sailor, of devouring Gulfs, and destructive Shoals; or else to conduct Him, into a safe Road, and secure Harbour.

Both the Situation and Design of the Building read me a Lesson: the one of awful Admonition, the other of comfortable Instruction.—*Comfortable Instruction*. How massy and ponderous is the Edifice! Yet, there is not the least Reason to be apprehensive of a Failure in the Foundation. Was the Structure ten thousand times larger, the solid Rock would support it, with the utmost Ease, and the utmost

* *Isai. lxii. 11.*† *Isai. xxvi. 1.*

most Steadiness. Such is *CHRIST*, such are his Merits, such his glorious Righteousness, to those wise and blessed Souls, who rest all the Weight of their everlasting Interests on Him alone. *Such*, did I say? Much surer. For *the Mountains may depart, and the Hills be removed**; but this divine and eternal Basis can never sink, can never be shaken.—*Awful Admonition*. For, it recalls to my Memory that alarming, yet welcome Text †, which You styled the spiritual Light-house. Which has been as serviceable to my distressed Mind and bewildered Thoughts, as such an illuminated Watch-tower to the wandering and benighted Mariner. May I often view it! Ever attend to its faithful Direction! And be led by its Influences, into the Haven, the desired Haven of Peace and Salvation!

How *changeable* is the Face of this liquid Element! Not long ago, there was nothing, from this stony Boundary, to the Horizon's utmost Verge, but the wildest Tumult and most horrible Confusion. Now, the stormy Flood has smoothed its rugged Brow, and the watery Uproar is lulled into a profound Tranquillity. Where *rolling Mountains* rushed and raged, threatening to dash the Clouds, and deluge

* *Isai.* liv. 10. † See *Rom.* ix. 30, 31, 32. and Vol. II. Letter V.

deluge the Earth; there the *gentlest Undulations* play, and only just wrinkle the Surface of the mighty Bafon. Where the dreadful Abyfs opened its wide and unfathomable Jaws, to swallow up the trembling Sailor, and his shattered Veffel; there a calm and clear Expanfe diffuses its ample Bofom, alluring the Fish to bask in the Sun, and inviting the Sea-fowl to watch for their Prey.

In this fair floating Mirror, I fee the Picture of every Cloud, that paffes through the Regions of the Sky. But in its uncertain and treacherous Temperature, I fee more plainly the inconstant and ever-variable Condition of human Affairs.—I durft not be Surety to the Mariner, for peaceful Seas and soothing Gales. I could not ascertain the Continuance of this Halcyon Weather, fo much as a fingle Day, or even to the next Hour. And let me not fondly promise myfelf an *uninterrupted* Tenor of Serenity in my Mind, or of Prosperity in my Circumftances. Sometimes, my Heart exults under the Smile of Heaven, and the Favour of GOD. But foon; ah! too foon I am clouded with Fear, and oppreffed with Corruption. I figh out that paffionate Acknowledgment, *Wretched Man that I am!* And add that wifeful Inquiry, *Who fhall deliver me?* For this difordered State of Things, the afflicted Patriarch's Complaint, is the moft appofite Motto,

to, and the most wholesome Memento; *Changes and War are around me**.—But there is a World, where disastrous Revolutions will be known no more. Where our Enjoyments will no longer *fluctuate* like the Ocean, but be more stedfast than the Rocks, and more immoveable than the Shores.

Here, I see an immense Collection of Waters, in a State of deep Repose. Could I extend my View to some remoter Tracts, I should behold every Thing smoother and calmer still. Not a Furrow sinks, nor a Ridge swells, the Surface of the Ocean. 'Tis all like a glassy Plain. The Waves are asleep. Echo is hushed. Not a Gale stirs. The Sea stagnates; the Mariner is *becalmed*; and the Vessel scarcely creeps.—Whereas, could I survey the Straits of *Magellan* or the Gut of *Gibraltar*, I should find a very striking Difference. There, the Waters press in with Vehemence, and rush forwards with Impetuosity. All is there in strong Agitation, and rapid Progress. The Ship is *whirled* through the narrow Passage; and rides, as it were, on the Wheels of the Surge, or on the Wings of the Wind.—This, my dear *Aspasio*, is a true Image of what I have been, and of what I am. Some Months ago, when I was insensible of Guilt, all my Prayers were listless, and all my Religion was a spiritual

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* *Job* x. 17.

Lethargy. I felt not in my Heart, what I uttered with my Tongue. *Hosannas* were but an empty Ceremony, and Confessions froze on my formal Lips.—But, since the SPIRIT of GOD has awakened me from my Dream, and convinced me of my Sinfulness, I can no longer be satisfied with indolent and yawning Devotions. Tryals and Temptations put strong Cries into my Mouth. My Soul mourns before the LORD: my Desires plead with the blessed GOD: and I am ready to say, as the Patriarch of old, “I cannot, I must not, *I will not let Thee go, unless Thou blest me* *.”

I see no Flocks of Sheep, with sober Assiduity, nibbling the grassy Plains. No sportive Lambs, with innocent Gaiety, frisking along the sunny Banks. Here are no Stables for the generous Steed, nor Pastures for the lusty Heifer. Nevertheless, these watery Regions are stocked with Colonies of *proper* and *peculiar* Inhabitants.—Who are clothed and accoutered in exact Conformity to the Clime. Not in swelling Wool, or buoyant Feathers; not in a flowing Robe, or a full-trimmed Suit; but with as much Compactness, and with as little Superfluity, as possible. They are clad, or rather *sheatbed* in *Scales*: which adhere closely to their Bodies, and are always laid in a Kind of natural Oil. Than which Apparel
nothing

* Gen. xxxii. 26.

nothing can be more *light*, and at the same Time nothing more *solid*. It hinders the Fluid from penetrating their Flesh; it prevents the Cold from coagulating their Blood; and enables them to make their Way through the Waters, with the utmost Facility.—They have each a curious Instrument *, by which they increase or diminish their specific Gravity: and sink like Lead, or float like a Cork; rise to what Height, or descend to what Depth, they please.

This is the Abode of *Leviathan*, hugest of living Creatures. Before whom the broad-limbed Elephant, and the tall-necked Camel, are mere Shrimps. A stretched-out Promontory, when He sleeps; a moving Island, when He swims; “making the Sea to boil like a “Pot,” when, unweildily wallowing, He takes his prodigious Pastime.—Here, the voracious *Shark*, that Tyrant of the fluid Kingdoms, and Assassin of the finny Nations, roams and commits his Ravages: imbrues his horrid Fangs, and marks his rapid Path, with Blood.—Here dwelt that *great*, and greatly surprising *Fish*, whose Fierceness and Avidity the Almighty SOVEREIGN employed as his Pursuivant, to arrest a fugitive Prophet. Whose ample Jaws, or capacious Entrails, were the Dungeon to confine a rebellious Subject, and the

* The Air-bladder.

the Cabin to lodge a penitent Offender. Whose Bulk and Strength and Speed were a kind of Vessel, transporting this Convict to *the Bottom of the Mountains, and the Bars of the Earth* *. After the Criminal was sufficiently chastised, and properly humbled, they served as a Galley with Oars, to convey Him safe to Land.

In the same Element resides, (at least takes up Part of his Residence) that formidable Monster, who is made without Fear, and *has not his Like upon Earth*. He esteemeth the pointed Iron as Straw, and ponderous Brass as rotten Wood. His Heart is as hard as a Piece of the nether Millstone, and his Scales are a Coat of impenetrable Mail. Strength not to be resisted, much less to be subdued, lies intrenched in his sinewy Neck. His Eyes are like the Eyelids of the opening Day; and when He rolls those glaring Orbs, there seems to be another Morn risen on Mid-noon. His Teeth are terrible, jagged for Rapine, and edged with Death. His Throat is as a burning Furnace; Clouds of Smoke roll from his Nostrils, and Flakes of Fire issue from his Mouth. None, no not the most resolute, dares provoke Him to the Combat, or even stir Him up from his Slumbers. He laugheth at the shaking of the Spear, and *Sorrow marcheth in Triumph before Him* †.

When-

* *Jonah* ii. 6.

† *Job* xli. 22. לפניו תרוץ ראבה *Maeror*, says Bochart, *præcedit tanquam Metator & Comes, tumidique Autscambulæ Regis.*

Whenever He raiseth Himself, the Mighty are afraid; wherever He advanceth, Ruin is there.—If a mere Creature is capable of spreading such Alarm and Dread; how *greatly* is the CREATOR himself to be feared! Who can turn the most harmless Inhabitant of the Ocean, into a ravenous Alligator, or a horrid Crocodile! Who can arm every Reptile of the Ground, with all the Force and Rage of a Lion!

'Tis impossible to enter on the Muster-roll, those scaly Herds, and that minuter Fry, which graze the Sea-weed, or stray through the coral Groves. They are innumerable, as the Sands that lie under them; countless, as the Waves that cover them.—Here are uncouth Animals, of *monstrous* Shapes *, and
amazing

gis. Terror and Anguish are a kind of *advanced Guard* to this Monarch among the Reptiles. Or, they go before the Monster, as the Man bearing a Shield went before the *Philistine* Giant.—The original Word occurs in no other Part of the sacred Book. I cannot recollect any Expression, which so fully represents its Meaning, as *Homer's* *κνδίων*, or *Xenophon's* *γαυρίασται*; both which are intended to describe the Ardor and Action of a high-mettled prancing Steed.

* *Monstrous Shapes*—Such as the *Sword-fish*; whose upper Jaw is lengthened into a strong and sharp Sword. With which He sometimes ventures to attack the Ships, though armed with Thunder; and is capable of piercing their Sides, though ribbed with Oak. This may be called the *Champion* of the Waters. Who, though never exceeding sixteen Feet in Length, yet, confiding in a Weapon at once so trusty and so tremendous, scruples not to give Battle even to the Whale Himself.—The *Sun-fish* has no Tail; seems to be all Head;

amazing Qualities *. Some, that have been discovered by the inquisitive Eye of Man; and many more, that remain among the Secrets of the hoary Deep.—Here are Sholes and Sholes,
of

and was it not for two Fins, which act the Part of Oars, would be one entire round Mass of Flesh.—The *Polypus*, remarkable for its numerous Feet, and as many Claws; by which it has the Appearance of a mere Insect, and seems fitted only to crawl. At the same Time, an Excrecence, arising on the Back, enables it to steer a steady Course in the Waves. So that it may pass under the twofold Character of a *Sailor* and a *Reptile*.—*Horace* intimates, that the *British* Ocean is famous for producing Sea-monsters;

*Te belluosus qui remotis
Obstrepit Oceanus Britannis.*

* *Amazing Qualities*—Among these may be reckoned the *Torpedo*, which benumbs on a sudden, and renders impotent, whatever Fish it assaults. And, which is a more extraordinary Property, strikes even the Fisherman's Arm, when He offers to lay hold on it, with a temporary Deadness. By this means, it possesses the double Advantage, of arresting its Prey, and securing itself.—The *Cuttle-fish*, furnished with a liquid Magazine, of a Colour and Consistence like Ink. Which, when pursued by an Enemy, the Creature emits, and blackens the Water. By this Artifice, the Foe is bewildered in the Chace; and while the One vainly gropes in the dark, the Other seizes the Opportunity, and makes his Escape.—The *Nautilus*, whose Shell forms a natural Boat. The dextrous Inhabitant unfurls a Membrane to the Wind, which serves him instead of a Sail. He extends also a Couple of Arms, with which, as with two slender Oars, He rows Himself along. When He is disposed to dive, He strikes Sail; and, without any Apprehension of being drowned, sinks to the Bottom. When the Weather is calm, and He has an Inclination to take his Pleasure, He mounts to the Surface; and, self-taught in the Art of Navigation, performs his Voyage without either Chart or Compass: is Himself the *Vessel*, the *Rigging*, and the *Pilot*.—For a more copious Illustration of this amusing and wonderful Subject, see *Nat. Displ.* Vol. III.

of various Characters, and of the most diversified Sizes; from the *cumbrous* Whale, whose Flouncings tempest the Ocean, to the *evanescent* Anchovy, whose Substance dissolves in the smallest *Fricassée*.—Some, lodged in their pearly Shells, and fattening on their rocky Beds, seem attentive to no higher Employ, than that of imbibing moist Nutriment. These, but a small Remove from vegetable Life, are almost rooted to the Rocks, on which they lie reposed. While others, active as the winged Creation, and swift as an Arrow from the *Indian* Bow, shoot along the yielding Flood, and range at large the spacious Regions of the Deep.

Here is the *Tortoise*, who never moves but under her own portable Pent-house. The *Lobster*, which, whether He sleeps or wakes, is still in a State of Defence, and clad in jointed Armour. The *Oyster*, a sort of living Jelly, ingarrisoned in a Bulwark of native Stone. With many other Kinds of Sea-reptiles, or, as the Psalmist speaks, *Things creeping innumerable* *.—I am surpris'd at the Variety of their Figure, and charmed with the Splendor of their Colours. Unsearchable is the Wisdom, and endless the Contrivance, of the all-creating God!—Some are rugged in their Form, and little better than hideous in their

K 4 Aspect.

* *Psal.* civ. 24.

Aspect. Their Shells seem to be the rude Production of a disorderly Jumble, rather than the regular Effects of Skill and Design. Yet We shall find, even in these *seeming* Irregularities, the *nicest* Dispositions. These Abodes, uncouth as they may appear, are adapted to the Genius of their respective Tenants, and exactly suited to their particular Exigencies. Neither the *Ionic* Delicacy, nor the *Corinthian* Richness, nor any other Order of Architecture, would have served their Purposes half so well, as this coarse and homely Fabric.

Some, on the other Hand, are extremely neat. Their Structure is all Symmetry and Elegance. No Enamel in the World is comparable to their Polish. There's not a *Room of State*, in all the Palaces of *Europe*, so brilliantly adorned, as the Dining-room and the Bed-chamber of the little Fish, that dwells in *Mother of Pearl*. Such a lovely Mixture of Red, and Blue, and Green, so delightfully staining the most clear and glistering Ground, is no where else to be seen. The royal Power may covet it, and human Art may mimic it; but neither the one, nor the other, nor both united, will ever be able to equal it.

But what I admire more, than all their Streaks, their Spots, and their Embroidery, is, The extraordinary Provision made for their *Safety*.—Nothing is more relishing and palatable

able than their Flesh. Nothing more heavy and sluggish than their Motions. As they have no Speed to escape, neither have they any Dexterity to elude the Foe. Were they naked or unguarded, they must be an easy Prey to every Free-booter, that roams the Ocean.—To prevent this fatal Consequence, what is only Clothing to other Animals, is to them a *Clothing*, a *House*, and a *Castle*. They have a Fortification, that grows with their Growth, and is a Part of themselves. By this means, they live secure amidst Millions and Millions of ravenous Jaws: by this means, they are *imparked*, as it were, in their own Shell; and, screened from every other Assault, are reserved for the Use and Pleasure of Mankind.

This is the Birth-place of *Cod*, the standing Repast of Lent, This is the Nursery of *Turbot*, for its exquisite Relish justly styled, The Pheasant of the Waters. Hence comes the *Sturgeon*, delicious even in Pickle, and a Regale for royal Luxury: Hence the *Flounders*, dappled with reddish Spots, and a Supply for vulgar Wants.—Here dwell the *Mackarel*, decked, when haled from their native Element, richly decked with the most glossy Dies; the *Herring*, whose Back is mottled with Azure, and his Belly sleek with Silver: the *Salmon*, in plainer Habit, but of larger Substance, and higher Esteem, than either or both the preceding.

ceding.—These, when shotten and lean, wander wildly up and down the vast Abyfs. When *plump* and *delicate*, they throng our Creeks, and swarm in our Bays: they repair to the Shallows, or haunt the running Streams.—Who bids these Creatures evacuate the Shores, and disperse themselves into all Quarters, when they become worthless and unfit for our Service? Who rallies and recalls the undisciplined Vagrants, as soon as they are improved into desirable Food? Who appoints the very Scene of our Ambushes, to be the Place of their Rendezvous? So that they come like Volunteers to our Nets?—Surely, the Furlow is signed, the Summons issued, and the Point of Reunion settled, by a Providence ever indulgent to Mankind; ever studious to treat Us with Dainties, and *load Us with Benefits**.

We have wondered at † our SAVIOUR's Penetration and Power—his *Penetration*, which, though the Sea was at a Distance, and Walls intervened, discerned the Fish, that had just swallowed a Piece of Money—his *Power*, which, without any Delay, brought the lawless Rambler, charged with the silver Spoil, to *Peter's* Hook. But is it not more wonderful, to observe such innumerable Multitudes of finny Visitants, annually approaching our Shores, and crowding our Banks? Which furnish

* *Pfal.* lxxviii. 19.

† See *Letter VIII.* p. 85.

nish our Tables with a wholesome and delicate *Repast*; at the same Time, that they yield to our Nation a *Revenue**, more certain, and no less considerable, than the Mines of *Peru*.

These approach, while those of *enormous* Size and *tremendous* Appearance abandon the Shores. The latter might endanger the Fisherman's Safety, and would certainly scare away the valuable Fish from our Coasts. They are therefore restrained by an invisible Hand, and abscond in the Abysses of the Ocean. Just as the wild Beasts of the Earth, impelled by the same over-ruling Power, hide themselves in the Recesses of the Forest.—A Ship, infected with a pestilential Distemper, is obliged to keep off at Sea, and perform *Quarantine*. In like manner, these Monsters of the Deep, are laid under a *providential* Interdict. As their Presence would always be pernicious, they are never suffered to come near; their *Quarantine* is *perpetual*.

*Ask now the Beasts, and they shall teach Thee;
and the Fowls of the Air, and they shall tell
Thee: or speak to the Earth, and it shall teach
Thee;*

* We are told by the afore-mentioned Author, That the Banks of *Newfoundland* alone, bring in to the Proprietors of that Fishery, a Revenue of several Millions every Year.—And they will, in all Probability, be an unimpaired Resource of Treasure, when the richest Mines now wrought in the World, are choked up or exhausted.

Thee * ; and the *Fishes of the Sea* shall declare unto *Thee*—That the LORD is *gracious*—That his tender Mercies are over *all* his Works—That to *Us* He is superabundantly and profusely good. Having ordered all Things in the Surges of the Ocean, as well as on the Surface of the Ground, for our rich Accommodation, and for our greatest Advantage.

One Circumstance, relating to the Natives of the Deep, is very peculiar, and no less astonishing. As they neither sow, nor reap; have neither the Produce of the Hedges, nor the Gleanings of the Field; they are obliged to *plunder* and *devour* one another, for necessary Subsistence. They are a kind of authorized Banditti, that make Violence and Murder † their professed Trade.—By this means, prodigious Devastations ensue; and, without proper, without very *extraordinary Recruits*, the whole Race must continually dwindle, and at length be totally extinct.—Were they to bring forth, like the most prolific of our terrestrial Ani-

* *Job* xii. 7, 8. The Earth is represented, as bearing witness to the immense Benignity of the blessed G O D. Some *Minutes*, or a short *Abstract*, of her Testimony on this Occasion, may be seen in *Letter VI*.

† To this, I believe, the Prophet alludes, in that remarkable Expression; *Thou makest Men as the Fishes of the Sea*. Thou sufferest Men to commit, without Restraint or Controul, all Manner of Outrages. What should be a civil Community, is a Scene of Oppression. The Weakest are a Prey to the Strongest, and every One seeks the Destruction of his Neighbour. *Habak.* i. 14.

Animals, a Dozen only, or a Score at each Birth ; the Increase would be unspeakably too small for the Consumption. The weaker Species would be destroyed by the stronger ; and, in Time, the stronger must perish, even by their successful Endeavours to maintain themselves.—Therefore, to supply Millions of Assassins with their Prey, and Millions of Tables with their Food, yet not to depopulate the watery Realms ; the Issue produced by every Breeder is almost incredible. They spawn, not by Scores or Hundreds, but by Thousands and by Millions *. A *single Mother* is pregnant with a *Nation*. By which amazing, but most needful Expedient, a periodical Reparation is made, proportionable to the immense Havoc.

As the Sea is peopled with animated Inhabitants, it is also variegated with *vegetable* Productions. Some, soft as Wool ; others, hard as Stone. Some rise, like a leafless Shrub ; some are expanded, in the Form of a Net ;
 some

* Mr. *Petit* found 342,144 Eggs in the hard Roe of a Carp, sixteen Inches long. Mr. *Lewenboeck* counted, in a Cod of an ordinary Size, 9,384,000 Eggs.—A Fecundity perfectly amazing ! But admirably adapted to the pressing Exigencies of the watery World ; admirably contrived for the Benefit and Delight of Mankind !—If We advert to this Peculiarity, it will give the utmost Emphasis to the Patriarch's *metaphorical* Expression, and an inimitable Beauty to his *prophetic* Wish, יָדְנוּ לָרֶבּ *Let these my Grandsons grow into a Multitude* ; let them multiply abundantly, even like the Fishes of the Ocean. Gen. xlviii. 16.

some grow with their Heads downwards, and seem rather hanging on, than springing from, the Juttings of the Rocks. These may with much greater Propriety, than the famous Plantations of *Semiramis*, be called *pensile* Gardens.—But, as You and I have never visited the Forests of the Ocean, nor taken so much as a single Turn among those submarine Groves; as *Moses*, *Joshua*, and *Jonah*, the only Writers that ever made the wonderful Tour, intent upon *more important* Themes, have left Us no Memoirs relating to this curious Point; I shall not venture to advance any thing particular on the Subject. Only one Remark I would offer in general—

The Herbs and Trees, which flourish on the dry Land, are maintained by the Juices, that permeate the Soil, and fluctuate in the Air. For this Purpose, they are furnished with *Leaves*, to collect the one; and with *Roots*, to attract the other. Whereas, the Sea-plants, finding sufficient Nourishment in the circumambient Waters, have no Occasion to detach a Party of Roots into the Ground, and forage the Earth for Sustenance. Instead therefore of *penetrating*, they are but just *tacked* to the Bottom; and adhere to some solid Substance, only with such a Degree of Tenacity, as may secure them from being tossed to and fro, by the random Agitation of the Waves.

We

We see from this, and numberless other Instances, what a *Diversity* there is, in the Operations of the great CREATOR's Hand. Yet every Alteration is an Improvement, and each new Pattern has a *peculiar Fitness* of its own. —The same Oeconomy takes place, such a Difference of Administration I mean, in his Government of the rational World. In “choosing an Heritage for his People,” and assigning a Condition to each of his Servants, there is a great Variety with respect to Individuals; yet a perfect Uniformity, and complete Harmony, with respect to the Whole.—Some He calls out to a Course of distinguished Labours. They make an illustrious Figure in Life, and appear *as a City set on an * Hill!* Others He consigns over to Obscurity. They are like the Prophets, whom good *Obadiab* hid in a Cave, and are styled *his secret Ones* †. *Those*, the Cedars, that stand conspicuous on the Top of *Lebanon*: *these*, the Violets, that lie concealed at the Foot of a Briar.

St. *Paul* was eminently qualified for busy Scenes, and the most extensive Services. He is introduced, therefore, into Places of Concourse. His Ministry lies amidst the most renowned and populous Cities. Even his *Imprisonment* at *Rome*, seems to have been a providential Expedient for fixing Him, as it were, on the
Stage

* *Matt.* v. 14.

† *Psal.* lxxxiii. 3.

Stage of public Observation, and in the very *Center* of universal Intelligence. Where his Preaching was like plunging a Stone into the Midst of a smooth Canal; which affects not only the neighbouring Parts of the Surface, but spreads the floating Circles over all the wide Expanse.—Whereas, the beloved *John*, who seems less fitted to bustle among a Croud, is sent into the unfrequented *solitary* Island; there to indulge the Flights of heavenly Contemplation; and receive, with uninterrupted Attention, the mysterious Visions of GOD.—*Job* shall have Thorns in his Path; have the Dunghil for his Seat; and be exposed, as a Mark, to all the Arrows of Tribulation. *Solomon* shall dip his Foot in Oil; shall be elevated on the Throne of Royalty; and surrounded with the most lavish Caresses of Heaven.

In all this seeming, this more than seeming Contrariety, there is a Display, not only of sovereign Authority, but of consummate Propriety.—The great HEAD of the Church, acts like a judicious *General*; and appoints such a Station to each of his Soldiers, as corresponds with the Ability He gives. He acts like the most skilful *Physician*; and prescribes such a Remedy for all his Patients, as is most nicely suited to their respective Case. He knows the precise Point of Time, the particular Place of Abode, the peculiar Circumstances
of

of Condition, which are most proper for each and every of his Children; and, like a tender as well as unerring *Father*, what He knows to be best, that He constantly allots.—I said, like a General, like a Physician, like a Father. But the Comparison is low; the Language is inexpressive; *CHRIST* is *all* that is implied in these Relations, and unspeakably *more*—O! that We may rejoice in the Superintendency of such a SAVIOUR; and not only *resign* Ourselves to his Will, but *thank* Him for managing the Reins; *thank* Him for directing our Paths. Since, whatever our froward and petulant Passions may suggest, The LORD's Ways are so far from being unequal, that He orders all Things *in Number, Weight, and Measure*.

All is so very different from the Prospects, which lately presented themselves, that I can hardly forbear asking, Whether I am not translated into a *new World*?—Where are the waving Hillocks, covered with the CREATOR's Bounty? Where are the fruitful Vallies, made vocal with his Praise? No cultured Field, no opening Blossom, not so much as a green Leaf appears. None of my late Entertainments remain, but only the cooling Zephirs. Which are no longer perfumed with the *Breath* of Flowers, but impregnated with the *Freshness*

of the Ocean.—Yet, though all those lovely Landfchapes are withdrawn; though the gurgling Fountain is silenced, and the blooming Garden loft: I am not far from the Origin, both of the Odours, which exhale from the one; and of the Crystal, which flows from the other. I am now upon the Margin of that *grand Refervoir*, which fupplies the Country with its Fertility, and the Parterre with its Beauty.—The Sea is the inexhaustible Cistern of the Univerfe. The Air and Sun conftitute the mighty *Engine*, which works without Intermiffion, to raife the liquid Treasure. While the Clouds ferve as fo many *Aqueducts*, to convey the genial Stores along the Atmosphere; and diftribute them, at feafonable Periods, and in regular Proportions, through all the Regions of the Globe.

I queftion, whether the united Application of Mankind could, with their utmoft Skill, and with all poffible Percolations, fetch a fingle Drop of *perfectly* fweet Water *, from this un-
mea-

* I have not forgotten, what was lately affirmed in our public Papers; That a certain ingenious Gentleman, I think in the City of *Durham*, had found out the Art of *sweetening* Sea-water.—What he produced, might probably approve itfelf to the Tafte, and not be without its Ufeulnefs. Yet I cannot but query, whether it will be found to have all thofe fine, balmy, falutiferous Qualities, which diftinguifh and recommend the *Rain-Water*. Which has been exhaled by the kindly Warmth of the Sun; has been filtrated by paffing and repaffing through the Regions of the Air; has been cla-
rified

measurable Pit of Brine. Yet the Action of the solar Heat draws off, every Hour, every Minute, Millions and Millions of Tons, in vaporous Exhalations. Which, being skilfully parceled out, and securely lodged in *the Bottles of Heaven* *, are sent abroad, sweetened and refined, without any brackish Tincture, or the least bituminous Sediment.—Sent abroad upon the Wings of the Wind, to *distil* in Dews, or *pour* themselves in Rain; to *ooze* from the Orifices of Fountains †; to *trickle* along the Veins of Rivulets; to *rise* in the Cavities of Wells; to *roll*, in many a headlong Torrent, from the Sides of Mountains; to *flow*, in copious Streams, amidst the Bosom of burning Desarts, and through the Heart of populous Kingdoms. In order to refresh and fertilize, to beautify and enrich, every Soil, in every Clime.

How amiable is the Goodness, and how amazing is the Power, of the World's adorable

rified in the highest and purest Tracts of the Atmosphere; has been farther refined and perfected by the searching Agency of the Winds.—I should very much wonder, if the *puny* Alembic could equal this *grand* Apparatus of Nature.

* So the Clouds are *elegantly* styled in sacred Writ, *Job xxxviii. 37.*

† We are obliged to *Clemens Romanus*, for the most just and elegant Representation of Fountains and their Usefulness, that perhaps any where exists. Αευναοι τε πηγαι πρὸ ἀπολαυσιν και υγιειαν δημιουργηθεισαι, διχα ελλειψως παρεχούαι τες πρὸ ζωνν ανθρωποις μαζες, 1 Epist ad Corinth. He calls *Fountains*, the *Breasts* or *Teats* of the Earth. The Comparifon, I believe, is his own; and nothing can exceed it, as to Propriety and Beauty.

able MAKER!—How *amiable his Goodness!* in distributing so largely, what is so absolutely necessary, and so extensively beneficial. That Water, without which We can scarce perform any Business, or enjoy any Comfort, should be every One's Property. Should stream by our Houses; should start up from the Soil; should drop down from the Clouds; should take a Journey, from the Ends of the Earth, and the Extremities of the Ocean, on purpose to serve Us.—How *amazing his Power!* That this boundless Mass of fluid Salt, so intolerably nauseous to the human Taste, should be the original Spring, which deals out every palatable Draught to Mankind, and quenches the Thirst of every Animal! Doubtless, the Power by which *this* is effected, can extract Comfort from our Afflictions, Advantage from our Calamities, and *make all Things work together for our Good* *.

Vast and various are the Advantages †, which We receive from the liquid Element: *vast*, as its unbounded Extent; *various*, as its ever-mutable Surface.—The sweet Waters glide

* Rom. viii. 28.

† The high *Value* which Mankind set upon this Element, and the many *Benefits* they receive from its Ministration, both these Particulars are very strongly expressed by the *Hebrews*. Who call a Pool or Reservoir of Water בְּרִכָּה; which denotes, in its primary Signification, a *Blessing*. Cant. vii. 4. *Isai*. vii. 3.

glide along the Earth, in spacious Currents: which not only exhilarate the adjacent Country, by their humid Train, and *exhaling* Moisture; but, by giving a brisk Impulse to the Air, prevent the unwholesome Stagnation of their own Vapours.—They pass by opulent Cities, and receiving all their Filth, rid them of a thousand Nuisances. Which, when once committed to these *fluid Scavengers*, are as effectually secreted, as if they were buried ever so deep in the Earth.—Yet, though they condescend to so mean an Employ, they are fitted for more honourable Services. They enter the Gardens of a Prince, and compose some of the most delightful Ornaments of the Place. They glitter upon the Eye, as they float in the ample *Canal*. They amuse the Imagination, as they ascend in curious *Jet d'Eaus*. They yield a nobler Entertainment, as, forming themselves into Sheets of sloping Silver, they fall in graceful or in grand *Cascades*.—If, instead of Beautifiers, You think proper to make use of them as *Drudges*, they ply at our Mills; they toil incessantly at the Wheel; and, by working the hugest Engines, take upon themselves an unknown Share of our Fatigue, and save Us a proportionable Degree of Expence.

So forcibly they act, when collected; and most surprisngly they insinuate, when *detached*. They throw themselves into the Body of a

Plant; they penetrate the minutest of its organized Tubes; and find a Passage through Meanders, *too small* for the Eye to discern, *too numerous* and intricate even for Imagination to follow.—How difficultly does a Labourer that serves the Mason, push his Way up the Rounds of a Ladder, bending under the Burden of Mortar on his Head! While these Servants in the Employ of Nature, carry their Load to a much greater Height; and climb with the utmost Ease, even without the Assistance of Steps or of Stairs. They convey the nutrimental Stores of Vegetation, from the *lowest Fibres* that are plunged into the Soil, to the very *topmost Twigs* that wave amidst the Clouds. They are the Caterers for the vegetable World: or (if I may be allowed the Expression) the *Sutlers*, that attend the whole *Host* of Plants; to furnish them with seasonable Refreshment, and necessary Provision. By means of which, *the Trees of the LORD are full of Sap, even the Cedars of Lebanon which HE hath planted**. And, notwithstanding their vast Elevation, and prodigious Diffusion; though they are abandoned by Man, and deprived of all Cultivation; yet, not a single Branch is destitute of Leaves, nor a single Leaf of Moisture.

Besides the salutary, cleanly, and serviceable Circulation of the Rivers; the Sea has a Libration,

* *Psal. civ. 16.*

bration, no less advantageous, and much more remarkable.—Every Day, this immense Collection of Waters, for the Space of five or six Hours, *flows* towards the Land; and, after a short Pause, *retires* again to its inmost Caverns; taking up nearly the same Time in its Retreat, as it required for its Access.—How *great* is the Power, that sets the whole fluid World in Motion! That protrudes to the Shores such an inconceivable Weight of Waters, without any Concurrence from the Winds, frequently in direct Opposition to all their Force! How *gracious* also is the Providence, which bids the mighty Element perform its tumbling Revolutions, with the most exact Punctuality! Was it suffered to advance, with a lawless and unlimited Swell; it might sweep over Kingdoms, and deluge whole Continents. Was it irregular and uncertain in its Approaches, Navigation would be at a Stand, and Trade become precarious.—But, being constant at its *stated Periods*, and never *exceeding* its *appointed Bounds*, it creates no Alarm to the Country, and affords very considerable Aids to Traffic.

The Tide, at its *Flow*, rushing up our large Rivers, clears and deepens the Passage; in many Places spreads a copious Flood, where a dry and empty Waste lay before.—Is the Sailor returned from his Voyage, and waiting at

the Mouth of the Channel? The *Flux* is ready to convey his Vessel to the very Doors of the Owner; and without any Hazard of striking on the Rocks, or of being fastened in the Sands. —Has the Merchant freighted his Ship? Would He have it transferred to the Ocean? The *Reflux* tenders its Service; and bears away the Load, with the utmost Expedition, and with equal Safety.—Behold, O Man! How greatly thou art beloved, how *highly favoured* by thy MAKER! In what Part of his Works has He forgotten or overlooked thy Welfare? Shew me a Creature, point out a Spot; in the Formation or Disposition of which, He has not been mindful of thy Interests? *He has made Thee to have Dominion over the Works of his Hands, and has put all Things in Subjection under thy Feet. All Sheep and Oxen; the Fowls of the Air, and the Fishes; yea, and the Surges of the Sea**, are subservient to thy Benefit. Even these, wild and impetuous as they are, yield their willing Backs, to receive thy Load; and like an indefatigable Beast of Burden, carry it to the Place, which Thou shalt nominate.

What preserves this vast Flood in a State of perpetual *Purity*? It is the universal Sewers, into which are discharged the Refuse and Filth of the whole World. That which would defile the Land, and pollute the Air, is transmitted to the Ocean, and neither Mischief nor

In-

* *Psal.* viii. 6, 7, 8.

Inconvenience ensue. Those Swarms of *Locusts*—which, while living were a Plague to *Pharaob*, by their loathed Intrusion; and when dead, might have caused a more dreadful Plague, by their noisome Stench—swept into the Sea, were neither pestilential, nor offensive. How then is this Receptacle of every Nuisance kept clean? Why does it not contract a noxious Taint, and diffuse a destructive Contagion? Such as would render it a *Grave* to the aquatic, and *Bane* to the terrestrial Animals?—’Tis owing, partly to its incessant Motion, partly to its saline Quality. By the One, it is secured from any *internal* Principle of Corruption; by the other, it works itself clear from every *adventitious* Defilement.

A Directory this, and a Pattern for me!—Thus may divine *Grace*, like the penetrating Power of Salt, cure the Depravity of my Heart, and rectify the Disorders of my Temper! Season my Words, and make all my Conversation favoury!—Thus may a continual Course of *Activity*, in my secular and my sacred Vocation, prevent the pernicious Effects of Indolence! Let me daily exercise, or be attempting to exercise, the Graces of Christianity. Lest Faith become feeble; lest Hope contract Dimness; and Charity wax cold.

Now the Tide begins to flow. Wave rises upon Wave, and Billow rolls over Billow.

No-

Nothing can divert, nothing retard its Progress; no, not for a Moment. Though *Canutus* be in the Way*; though his royal Authority, and strict Prohibition, nay, though all the Forces of his Kingdom oppose; it will never discontinue the advancing Swell, till it has reached the destined Point.—So, may I *always abound* in Communion with GOD, or in Beneficence to Men; resigning one religious

* Alluding to a memorable and instructive Story, recorded of King *Canutus*. Who, probably without having read, had nevertheless thoroughly learned, that excellent Lesson of *Horace*;

*Regum timendorum in proprios Greges,
Reges in ipsos Imperium est Jovis.*

Some of his abject and designing Flatterers, had the *impious Assurance* to tell Him, “His Power was more than human.”—To convince them of their Folly, and rebuke them for their Falshood, He ordered his royal Chair to be placed on the Extremity of the Shore, just as the Tide began to flow. Here He took his Seat, in the Presence of the *Parasites*, and many other Attendants. Then, with all that Dignity of Air, and Severity of Accent, which sovereign Authority knows how to assume, He said—“Thou
“Sea, the Land on which I sit is mine; nor has any One
“dared to invade my Rights, or disobey my Commands,
“without suffering the deserved Punishment. I charge Thee,
“therefore, on Pain of my highest Displeasure, not to enter
“these Territories, nor touch the Feet of *England’s* Monarch.”

When the rude Waves made bold to enter on the forbidden Ground; nay, when those uncourtly Things presumed to rush upon the royal Seat, and even to dash his Majesty’s Person; He started from his Throne, and bid every Beholder observe the *Impotence* of earthly Kings. Bid them remember, That HE alone is worthy of the Name, whom Winds and Waves and universal Nature obey.

ous or charitable Employ, only to enter upon another; and be *thus* pressing forward, *still* pressing forward, to the Prize of my high Calling in *CHRIST* & *JESUS*.—Differing from those regular Vicissitudes of the Ocean, only in one Particular; That *my* Endeavours never ebb, *my* Soul never draws back. Since this would be, if *temporary*, to my grievous Loss; if *final*, to my aggravated Perdition,

Consider the Sea in another Capacity, and it *connects* the remotest Realms of the Universe; by facilitating an Intercourse between their respective Inhabitants.—What short-sighted Beings are Mankind! How extremely superficial their Views! How unavoidable therefore their frequent Mistakes! The Antients looked upon this bottomless Deep, as an *unpassable* * Gulph. If our Fore-fathers were so egregiously mistaken in this Instance; let not Us too peremptorily pronounce upon any difficult or mysterious Point. Lest succeeding Generations, or a more inlightened State, should cover Us with the double Confusion, of *childish* Ignorance, and *foolish* Conceit.

We have clearly demonstrated, and happily experienced, the very Reverse of that grey-headed

* —————*Deus abscidit
Prudens Oceano dissociabili
Terras.*

Hor.

ed Surmise to be true. The Ocean, instead of being a Bar of Separation, is the great Bond of Union. For this Purpose, it is never *exhausted*, though it supplies the whole Firmament with Clouds, and the whole Earth with Rains. Nor ever *over-flows*, though all the Rivers in the Universe are perpetually augmenting its Stores, and pouring in their tributary Floods.—By means of this Element, We travel farther, than Birds of the strongest Pinion fly; and discover Tracts, which the *Vulture's Eye has never seen**. We make a Visit to Nations, that lie drowned in their midnight Slumbers, when every industrious Person on *this* Part of the Globe, is bestirring Himself in all the Hurry of Business. We cultivate an Acquaintance with the Sun-burnt *Negro*, and the shivering *Icelander*. We cross the flaming Line, We penetrate the frozen Pole, and wing our Way even round the World.

This is the great Vehicle of *Commerce*.—Not to mention the floating Castles, which contain whole Armies; which bear the Thunder, the fiery Tempests, and all the dreadful Artillery of War; what a Multitude of Ships, of the largest Dimensions, and most prodigious Burden, are continually passing and repassing this universal Thoroughfare! Ships, that
are

* *Job xxviii. 7.*

are freighted, not with Sacks, but with Harvests of Corn; that carry not Pipes, but Vintages of Wine; that are laden, not with Bars of Iron, Blocks of Marble, or Wedges of Gold, but with whole Quarries of massy Stone, and whole Mines of ponderous Metal. All which, lodged in these *volatile Storehouses*, and actuated by the Breath of Heaven, are wafted to the very Ends of the Earth: wafted, enormous and unwieldy as they are, more expeditiously than the light *Berlin* bowls along the Road; almost as speedily, as the nimble-footed *Roe* bounds over the Hills*.

Astonishing Ordination of eternal Wisdom! Yet most graciously contrived for the Benefit of Mankind! I can hardly satisfy my View, in beholding this rolling Chaos; I can never cease my Admiration, in contemplating its amazing Properties.—That an Element, so *unstable* and *fugitive*, should bear up such an immense Weight, as would bend the firmest Floors, or burst the strongest Beams!—That the *thin*, and *yielding* Air should drive on, with so much Facility and Speed, Bodies of such excessive Bulk, as the Strength of a Legion would

* A Ship, under a brisk and steady Gale, will sail at the Rate of 216 Miles in 24 Hours: persevering, if the Wind continues favourable, in the same rapid Career, for several Days together. A Course, which, considering both its *Swiftness* and *Duration*, cannot be equaled by the ablest Horse, perhaps not by the nimblest Creature that treads the Ground.

would be unable to move.—That the Air and the Water, acting in Conjunction, should carry to the Distance of many thousand Miles, what the united Force of Men and Machines could scarcely drag a single Yard.—Puny and despicable are *our* Attempts: but great and marvelous are *thy* Works, O LORD GOD Almighty! *If thou wilt work*, says the Prophet, *who or what shall let it* *? Neither the Meanness of the Instrument, nor the Greatness of the Event. A Sling and a Stone shall lay the gigantic Bravo in the Dust †. An Ox-Goad shall do more Execution than a Battery of Cannon ‡. Even *a Worm shall thresh the Mountains, and beat them small, and make the Hills as Chaff* ||. GOD ALL-SUFFICIENT is his Name, and out of Weakness He maketh his Strength perfect.—O! that We, my dear *Aspasio*—that I especially—may be strong in the LORD, and in the Power of his Might! Then, as the light Air is made to act with a more forcible Impulse, than the most vigorous Engines; as the fluid Water is made to sustain more ponderous Loads, than the most substantial Works of Masonry; so We, who in Ourselves are nothing but *Impotence*, shall be enabled to triumph over the Legions of Hell, and tread down all the Temptations of the World.

How

* *Isai.* xliii. 13. † *1 Sam.* xvii. 15. ‡ *Judg.* iii. 31.
 || *Isai.* xli. 15.

How are the Mariners conducted through this *fluid Common*, than which nothing is more wide, and nothing more wild? Here is no Track to be followed; no Posts of Direction to be consulted; nor any Shepherd's Hut, where a Traveler may ask the Way.—Are they guided by a Pillar of Fire in the Night, or a moveable Cloud in the Day? As the Sons of *Jacob* and *Joseph* were escorted through the eastern Desarts. No; but by a mean, contemptible, and otherwise worthless *Fossil*.—The Apostle *James* mentions it, as a very observable Fact; that the *Ships, which are so great, and driven of fierce Winds, yet are turned about with a very small Helm, whithersoever the Governor listeth* *. Is it not equally wonderful, that they should be led through such a pathless and unmeasurable Waste, by so small an Expedient, as the Intervention of the *Loadstone* †?—Till this surprising Mineral was discovered, and its Properties were improved, Navigation lay in its Cradle. Was, at best, a mere Infant, that crept timorously along the Coasts; was obliged to keep within sight of the Shores; and,

* *Jam.* iii. 4.

† I am aware, that other Expedients are used, for shaping a proper Course on the Ocean; such as making Observations from the Sun by mathematical Instruments. But these, I believe, are only subordinate Aids to the Needle. The *grand* Regulator is the Magnet. I have heard an experienced Sailor declare; He would rather be without his *Quadrant*, than without his *Compass*.

and, if driven out beyond the narrow Sphere of her Land-marks, could neither ascertain her Situation, nor pursue her Voyage. But this Guide—when every Beacon on the Top of the Hills, is vanished from the acutest Ken; when nothing but Skies are seen above, and Seas alone appear below—*this Guide* points out the proper Passage. This communicates an Intelligence, that shines clear in the thickest Darkness, and remains steady in the most tempestuous Agitations. This has given, not indeed Birth, but *Maturity* to Navigation; and turned her swadling Bands into *Wings*. This has emboldened her to launch into the Heart of the Ocean, and enabled her to range from Pole to Pole.

Thus does GOD, both in the Operations of Nature, and the Administrations of Providence, accomplish the most *important* Ends by the most *inconsiderable* Means.—When the formidable *Sisera* is to be cut off, the Blow shall be given, not by some puissant Champion, but by the Hand of a Woman *. When *Jericho* is to be demolished, those impregnable Fortifications shall fall, not beneath the Stroke of battering Engines, but before the Sound of Ram's Horns †.—When a hundred thousand *Midianites* are to be routed, the LORD of Hosts will gain this signal Victory, not by numerous

* *Judg.* iv. 9. † *Josb.* vi. 5.

merous Legions completely armed, but by a Handful of *Israelites*, accoutered only with Trumpets, Lamps, and Pitchers*.—Who would have thought, that from the Root of *Jesse*, a Root out of a dry Ground, should arise that great Tree, which *stretches her Boughs unto the Sea, and her Height unto the Heavens, and her Branches unto the Ends of the Earth?* That the despised *Galilean* and the Carpenter's Son, should be the SAVIOUR of the World, and the HEIR of all Things? Nay; that a Person, humbled like the meanest of Slaves, and executed like the vilest of Malefactors; nailed to a Cross, and laid prostrate among the Dead; that HE should restore Life and Immortality to ruined Sinners; should open the Gates of Grace and Glory on lost Mankind? That a few *illiterate* Mortals, taken from the Barge, the Oar, and the Net, should confute Philosophers, and convert Kings; should overthrow the Strong-holds of Idolatry, and plant *Christianity* on its Ruins!—This is a Circumstance, which, though a Stumbling-block to some People, has considerably strengthened my Faith. It is perfectly agreeable to the ALMIGHTY's *Manner*. It is (if I may so speak) the distinguishing *Turn* of his Hand, and the peculiar *Style* of his Works. Whence does He raise the charmingly beauteous
Flower?

* *Judg.* vii. 19.

Flower? Whence the magnificent Myriads of the Forest-oaks? Whence the boundless and inestimable Stores of the Harvest? From Principles which bear not the least Proportion to their Effects.—Besides; this most emphatically speaks THE GOD. It *shews the Lighting down of his glorious Arm* *; and absolutely precludes all the Pretensions of human Arrogance, or finite Power. It appropriates the Honour to that supreme AGENT, before whom the *Easy* and the *Arduous* are both alike. All Men that see it must confess, THIS HATH GOD DONE.

Through this Channel, are imported to our Island the choice Productions, and the peculiar Treasures, of every Nation under Heaven. So that We can breakfast upon a Dissolution of the *American Kernel* †; and see the rich nutrimental Liquor froth in our Cups, without ever tempting the foaming Brine. We can steep the delicately-flavoured *Chinese Leaf*, in the Waters of our own Well; or spend the Afternoon in our own Parlour, and be regaled with an Infusion of the finely-scented *Arabian Berry*. We can season the friendly Bowl with the Juices of the *Orange*, or refresh our clammy Palate with the Pulp
of

* *Isai.* xxx. 30.

† Called the *Cocoa*, which affords the principal Ingredient of *Chocolate*, and grows on a small Tree in *America*.

of the *Tamarind*; without feeling that fervent Heat, which imparts such a poignant Relish to the former; without suffering those scorching Beams, which give a Fever-cooling Virtue to the latter. We can pile upon our Salvers a Pyramid of *Italian* Figs; fill the Interstices with the Sky-dried Raisins of *Malaga*; and form a Summit for the inviting Structure, with the *Pistacia Nut* of *Aleppo*.—By this means, the Eastern Spices exhale their Odours on our Tables, and the Western Canes transfuse their Sweetness into our Viands. We clothe our Bodies with the vegetable Fleeces* of the South, and line our Apparel with warm furry Spoils from the North. We can wear the Pearl, polished in the Abysses of the *Persian* Gulph; and walk on the Carpets, manufactured in the Dominions of the *Great Mogul*; yet neither expose Ourselves to the Rage of boisterous Seas, nor the more dreaded Treachery of barbarous People.—In short; by this wonderful and invaluable Expedient of Navigation, every Tide conveys into our Ports the Wealth of the remotest Climes, and brings the Abundance of the Universe to be unladen
on

* *Cotton*, which is a Sort of Wool, encompassing the Seed of a Tree.—Its Fruit is of an oval Form, about the Size of a Nut. As it ripens, it grows black on the Outside; and, by the Heat of the Sun, opens in several Places, discovering the Cotton through the Clefts, which is of an admirable Whiteness. See *Chamb. Dict.*

on our Quays. *London* becomes a Mart of Nations; and almost every private House in the Kingdom, is embellished and accommodated from the four Quarters of the Globe.

Almost every private House—Is not this more like rhetorical Flourish, than real Truth? Are not all the Advantages I have mentioned, the peculiar Portion of the Rich? Is not the Sea, like the grand and gay World, somewhat *capricious* and *partial*? Bestowing lavishly her Favours on the Wealthy, at the same Time that She neglects the Needy?—Quite the Reverse. Like her sublime CREATOR, She is no Respector of Persons, but deals out her Liberalities to All; to the Wealthy, such as are suitable to their Circumstances; to the Indigent, such as are best adapted to their Condition. If She ornaments the Abodes of the first, She employs the Hands of the last; furnishes *these* with useful Labour, *those* with elegant Accommodations. What a Multitude of industrious People acquire a Livelihood, by preparing the Commodities intended for Exportation! And what a Multitude of dextrous Artificers maintain their Families, by manufacturing the Wares imported from abroad!

It is reckoned a valuable Species of Beneficence, to provide proper Work for the Poor. This withdraws them from many Temptations, and preserves them from much Wickedness.

ness. It hinders them from being a Burden to themselves, and a Nuisance to the Public. They might otherwise be *idle*, and as Vermine on the Body politic : or even *mutinous*, and as Vipers in the Bowels of the Nation. Whereas, by exerting themselves in a due Subordination, and with becoming Diligence, they are the very Sinews of the Community ; or like the grand Wheel in the Machine of State, whose incessant Activity distributes Plenty, and pours innumerable Conveniencies through the whole.—What a *Master* then, or rather what a *Mistress*, is the Sea ! How extensive her Correspondence, and how large her Demand for Workmen ! Into what Branch of Trade does she not enter ? What kind of ingenious Science, or useful Toil, does she not befriend ? How many Millions of honest but needy Persons are engaged in her Service ? And how amply are they repaid for their Pains !—*They that go down to the Sea in Ships, and occupy their Business in great Waters, these Men see the Works of the LORD, and his Wonders in the Deep.* They also that dwell among their own People, and abide in the Villages, even they enjoy the Bounty, and share the Advantages of the Ocean. For, though it is false Philosophy, to suppose the Waters *themselves* strained through subterranean Passages, into the inland Counties ; yet, it is an undeniable Truth, that

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their beneficial *Effects* are transfused into every Town, every Hamlet, and every Cottage.

Surely, the Inhabitants of our Isle, have Reason to turn the Prediction of *Moses*, concerning the Tribe of *Joseph*, into a devout and grateful Acknowledgment.—*Blessed of the LORD is * our Land. Blessed with the precious Things of Heaven, with the Dew, and with the Deep that coucheth beneath. With the precious Things brought forth by the Sun, and with the precious Things thrust forth by the Moon. With the chief Things of the ancient Mountains, and with the precious Things of the everlasting Hills: and with the precious Things of the Earth, and the Fulness thereof †.*—May we also enjoy the
Good-

* *Is* (so I would translate the Original) not *be*; in the *predictive*, not *precatory* Form. This implies a Fulness of Faith, and distinguishes Prophecy from Prayer; best suits the extraordinary Illumination of *Moses*; and does most Honour to the omniscient SPIRIT.

† *Deut.* xxxiii. 13, 14, 15, 16. Here seems to be a beautiful and poetical *Summary* of the Riches of Nature.—*The precious Things of Heaven*; or *Rain*, which descends from the upper; and *Dew*, which is formed in the lower, Regions of the Firmament.—*The Deep that coucheth beneath*; Seas, Rivers, Fountains, Wells, which lie in the Bosom of the Soil; and are Sources of Fertility and Plenty.—*The precious Things brought forth by the Sun*, must certainly denote the Herbs, Plants, Trees, and all Manner of *Vegetables*, with their respective Fruits.—*The precious Things thrust forth by the Moon*, may probably refer to the *mineral Kingdoms*; in the Formation of which, that Ruler of the Night may have a considerable Influence. The Moon is confessedly the Parent of Tides; and may put in Motion those bituminous
and

Let. 9. THERON to ASPASIO. 167

*Good-will of HIM, who dwelt in the Bush**, and the Grace of HIM, who hung on the Tree! May the eternal GOD be our Refuge, and his everlasting Arms underneath both Us and our Interests!—Happy then wilt Thou be, thrice happy, O *England!* Thy temporal Advantages, and thy spiritual Privileges considered, it may truly be said, *Who, or what Nation, is like unto Thee?*

This for my Country; now let me wish for myself;

GOD of all Worlds! Source and Supreme of Things!

From whom all Life, from whom Duration springs!

Intense O! let me for thy Glory burn,

Nor fruitless view my Days and Months return.

Give

and saline Fluids, which, circulating through the Pores of the Earth, and fixing in Beds of homogeneous Matter, are supposed to commence Minerals.—As our sacred Philosopher has already specified the vegetable Productions, *the principal Things of the Mountains and Hills*, should signify the Sheep, Goats, and other valuable Animals that feed upon those vast Declivities. If so, *the precious Things of the Earth*, may express those Herds of larger Cattle, which have their Pasturage in the Plains, Vallies, and lower Grounds. A Sense, which recommends itself from this Consideration, That the Wealth of the Antients consisted chiefly in Cattle.—*The Fulness thereof*, may be a Kind of Recapitulation: a comprehensive Term, including the whole Produce of the terraqueous Globe; the *magnificent Liberality of JEHOVAH* to his People.

* *Deut. xxxiii. 16.*

*Give me with Wonder at thy Works to glow,
To grasp thy Vision, and thy Truths to know :
O'er Time's tempestuous Sea to reach thy Shore,
And live, and sing, where Time shall be no
more.*

You see, *Aspasio*, I have been studying the Volume of Nature; endeavouring to read its capital Characters, and learn some of its instructive Lessons. The Sea has been the Page; but how *superficial* is my Perusal, and no less *scanty* my Knowledge. Little, very little have I seen or conceived, relating to those Works of Wonder, which the vast unfathomable Deep contains—the Plants it produces, and the Creatures it nourishes—its stupendous Rocks, and subterranean Caves—the Heaps of Pearl, which are its native Growth; and the Loads of Gold, which it has gained by Shipwreck.—So superficial are my Views of *CHRIST*; so scanty is my Acquaintance with the Gospel.

You, I presume, are sitting at the Feet of that sublime TEACHER; and attending to the Dictates of *HIS* Mouth, in *whom are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge* *. Let me promise myself a Communication of your Thoughts, as I have freely transmitted a Specimen of *mine*. And I will make no Scruple to

* Col. ii. 3.

Let. 9. THERON to ASPASIO. 169

to acknowledge the Superiority of the Exchange; that I receive

Χρυσέα χαλχειών, εκατομβοί' εννεαβοίων.

Or, as the eloquent *Isaiab* speaks; *For Brass you will bring Gold, and for Iron you will bring Silver* *: rendering me, by this Intercourse, your more *obliged*, though it is scarce possible for me to be, more than I already am,

Your affectionate

THERON.

P. S. Monsieur Paschal, who was remarkably fond of *Brevity*, makes an odd Excuse for transgressing, on a particular Occasion, his favourite Rule. He intreats his Friend to pardon the unusual Length of his Epistle, by assuring Him, *That he had not Time to make it shorter*.—I cannot, it must be confessed, adopt this Philosopher's Apology. For, I have purposely lengthened my Letter, with a View of setting, in this *one* Circumstance, a Pattern for my *Aspasio*.

* *Isai. lx. 17:*

LET



L E T T E R X.

ASPASIO to THERON.

Dear THERON,

I THANK you for your *Letter*, because it entertains and improves me: I thank you for your *Postscript*, because it is my Encouragement and my Apology.—I am set down to write, with a copious Stock of Materials. It will be far more difficult to contract, than to enlarge. I must therefore acknowledge myself obliged to your Candour, for assigning me the *easier* Task.—That Prolixity, which, in others, might be an inexcusable Fault; is, in me, an Act of Complaisance, and Matter of Duty.

Though absent from You, I went with You in your late Ramble. Your descriptive Pen has made me Partaker of the *ideal Delight*: may Divine Grace enable me to share in the *spiritual Improvement*!—When you displayed the Beauties of the Morn, breaking forth from the Obscurity of Night; when you adopted that noble Aspiration from our philosophic Poet; I could not forbear adding—“ Thus may the
 “ gracious GOD, who commands the Light to
 “ shine out of the Midnight Darkness, shine
 “ into

“ into our Hearts; and give that *incompar-*
 “ *ably glorious* Knowledge, the Knowledge of
 “ his blessed SELF! Which, though discern-
 “ able through all the Tracts of Creation, and
 “ derivable from every Work of his Almighty
 “ Hand; yet no where beams forth with such
 “ *complete* and such *amiable* Lustre, as in the
 “ Person of *JESUS CHRIST**.”—Here we be-
 hold all the sublime Perfections of the DEITY;
 not only manifested with inimitable Splendor,
 but operating for our own Advantage. We
 behold them, as *Job* speaks, *for Ourselves* †;
 and cannot but receive inexpressible Refresh-
 ment and Joy from the View.

When you walked beneath the Shade of
 those huge, horrid, and enormous Clefs; both
 amused and alarmed at their stupendous Mag-
 nitude, and frightful Irregularity—When you
 cast your Eye upon the wide-expanded Sur-
 face of the Ocean—When you surveyed the
 far more unmeasurable Arches of the Sky—
 And meditated, in that awful Solitude, on the
 wildest and most magnificent Appearances of
 Nature—I felt the same Kind of devout Asto-
 nishment with yourself. While the Soul was
 wrapt in *pensive Stilness*, and *pleasing Dread* ‡,
 me-

* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

† *Job* xix. 27.

‡ It seems to have been such a Kind, not of *anxious* but
 of *pleasing Dread*, which seized the Disciples on the Mount
 of Transfiguration: *ησαν γαρ εκφοβοι*, for they were struck
 with a profound, but delightful Awe. *Delightful*, otherwise
Peter

methought, I heard a Voice, or something like a Voice, from the silent Spheres, as well as from the sounding Seas. It seemed to echo back, what the mighty Angel, whom *Jobn* saw flying in the midst of Heaven, once proclaimed; “Worship HIM, who made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and the Fountains of Water*.” “Worship Him, who stretched out that azure Pavilion with such amazing Grandeur: who measured yonder World of Waters, in the Hollow of his Hand: and before whom, this immense Range of mountainous Clifts, is but as Dust upon the Scale.”

When you described the *dismal Situation* of a Wretch, exposed on the Edges of the tremendous Precipice; hanging over the ragged Rocks, and the unfathomable Gulph; and cleaving only to a slender, treacherous, breaking Bough: how heartily did I join in your adoring Acknowledgments to that kind, interposing, blessed Hand, which rescued us both from an infinitely more threatening and dreadful Danger! Rescued us, as *Slaves*, from the Dominion of the Devil: snatched us, as *Brands*, from the inextinguishable Burnings. And bid Us (O marvelous, superabundant Goodness!) bid Us possess the *Liberty* of Righteousness;

Peter would not have proposed to build *Tabernacles* there, nor have wished to continue in those Circumstances, *Mark ix. 6.*

* *Rev. xiv. 7.*

Let. 10. ASPASIO to THERON. 173
teousness; bid us inherit the *Kingdom* of
Heaven.

When You mentioned the past Indolence, and the present Fervour of your Prayers, I could not forbear reiterating my Praises to GOD on your Behalf. This is a Proof, my dear *Theron*, that you are going in the Way everlasting; for it is written, *They shall come with Weeping, and with Supplications will I lead them* *. This is the Work of the HOLY GHOST, dwelling in your Heart; for what faith the Scripture? *I will pour upon them the Spirit of Grace and of Supplication* †. And our LORD Himself mentions this, as the Indication of a true Conversion; *Behold! He prayeth* ‡.—Had not *Saul* prayed before? Yes; and made long Prayers too. But he never, till that Instant, was sensible of his undone and damnable Condition. Never cried to GOD from the Depths of his Distress, or from the Depths of his Heart. Nor ever solicited the Throne of Grace, in the all-prevailing Name of *JESUS CHRIST*.—His Prayers, till then, were like the *Motes*, which fluctuate to and fro in the Air, without any vigorous Impulse, or any certain Aim. But, in that Hour, they were like the *Arrow*, which springs from the strained Bow; and, quick as Lightning, flies to the Mark.

I

* *Jer.* xxxiii. 8. † *Zechar.* xii. 10. ‡ *Acts* ix. 11.

I was pleased to find You, in the Proceſs of your Letter, inſenſibly forgetting the Narrative; and ſo engaged by the Subject, that you ſpoke not as the *Relater*, but as the *Bebolder*.—Thus may We always be affected, when We ſtudy the Oracles of Truth. Study them, not as cold unconcerned Critics, who are only to judge of their Meaning; but as Perſons *deeply intereſted* in all they contain. Who are particularly addreſſed in every Exhortation, and directed by every Precept. Whoſe are the Promiſes, and to whom belong the precious Privileges.—When We are enabled thus to *realize* and *appropriate* the Contents of that invaluable Book; then we ſhall taſte the Sweetneſs, and feel the Power of the Scriptures. Then We ſhall know, by happy Experience, that our divine MASTER's Words, are not barely Sounds and Syllables, but *they are Spirit, and they are Life* *.

I was ſtill more agreeably entertained with your Picture of *Commerce*, and of the Advantages We receive from *Navigation*. One Advantage, however, I can ſpecify, which is greater than any, greater than all, You have celebrated. An Advantage, that will endear and ennoble Navigation, ſo long as the Sun and Moon endure. The Goſpel, my dear Friend, the *glorious Goſpel* came to our Iſland
through

* *John* vi. 63.

through this Channel. The Volume that comprizes it, and the Preacher that published it, both were imported by Shipping. And may We not say, with the inraptured *Isaiab*? *How beautiful are the Feet of them, that bring glad Tidings of good Things* * ! It is pleasant to hear their Voice; pleasant to contemplate their Message; and pleasant even to behold the Ground on which they trod, or the very Waves over which they sailed.—This made the holy Prophet rejoice in Spirit, when he foresaw the extensive Spread of his MASTER'S Glory, and the certain Commencement of *our* Happiness. This put into his Mouth that affectionate and congratulatory Address; which is, in a very particular Manner, directed to Us and our Countrymen: *Sing unto the LORD a new Song, and his Praise from the Ends of the Earth: ye that go down to the Sea, and all that is therein; ye Isles, and the Inhabitants thereof. Let the Wilderness and the Cities thereof lift up their Voice; let the Inhabitants of the Rock sing, let them shout from the Top of the Mountains. Let them give Glory unto the LORD; and declare his Praise in the Islands* †.

We read, in *Ezekiel*, of the *most magnificent Fleet*, that ever ploughed the Seas. The Masts were of Cedar ‡, and the Benches of Ivory.

Fine

* *Ifai.* lii. 7. † *Ifai.* xlii. 10, 11, 12.

‡ *Ezek.* xxvii. 5.

Fine Linen, beautified with Embroidery, floated to the Winds, and formed the Sails. Blue and Purple rigged the Vessel, and clothed the meanest Mariner.—Let Us suppose, that the Freight of this splendid Navy, was proportioned, in Value, to its sumptuous Tackling. Yet how poor, how despicable were either, were both, if estimated with the Treasures of the Gospel: those *divine Treasures*, which spring from the Imputation of our REDEEMER's Righteousness! And which have much the same kindly Influence on *religious Practice*, as Navigation, with all her Improvements, has upon Traffic.—Give me leave to confirm this Assertion, by selecting a few Instances, and applying them in a few Interrogatories.

One of the Benefits, proceeding from the Imputation of *CHRIST's* Righteousness, is *Pardon*. Pardon, not partial, but complete. A Pardon of each Sin, be it ever so *heinous*; a Pardon of all Sins, be they ever so *numerous*. For thus saith GOD the LORD, who sent both his Prophets and Apostles, preaching Peace by *JESUS CHRIST*. *I will pardon ALL their Iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me †.*—To learn the desirable Nature of this Blessing, let Us step back into the Annals of History,
and

* Jer. xxxiii. 8.

and attend a traitorous and unhappy Nobleman to his *vindictive* Exit. His Body is demanded by the Ministers of Justice. Reluctant and trembling He is conducted to the Scaffold. There, the alarmed Criminal sees the mourning Block. Sees the glittering Ax. Sees the Coffin prepared for his Corpse. Sees thousands of anxious Spectators; waiting, with eager Looks and throbbing Hearts, the fearful Catastrophe. In a Word; he sees Death advancing, with all the Solemnities of *Horror* and *Woe*.—Time elapses. The preparatory Ceremonies are dispatched. The fatal Moment is arrived. No longer Respite can be allowed. He must submit to immediate Execution. Accordingly he prostrates himself to receive the Stroke. But—seized with new Terrors, at the poised Ax, and approaching Blow, He starts from the dangerous Posture.—Again he bends, and again snatches his Neck from the impending Edge.—A third Time, He lifts his pale Countenance, to the pitying Crowds, and departing Light.—Once more He bows to the Block, and once more raises his Head, in *wishful Expectation* of the royal Clemency.—Had a Messenger appeared, at this critical Instant, with a Shout of Joy upon his Tongue, and a sealed Pardon in his Hand; O! how transporting the News! How *inexpressibly welcome* the Favour!—What was denied to his pas-

tionate Desires; denied to the importunate Solicitations of his Friends; is freely offered to Us in the Gospel of *CHRIST*: a Pardon of infinitely higher Consequence; which obliterates Millions and Millions of rebellious Acts: which extends its blessed Effects, not merely through the little Span of Life, but beyond the Gates of the Grave—beyond the Boundaries of Time—through all the Ages of Eternity.

How unfathomable is that immense Flood, on which my *Theron* lately exercised his Contemplation! The toiling Plummets, with all their Length of Cordage, are unable to find a Bottom. Were the hugest Millstones, or the highest Towers, or the most spacious Cities, cast into this prodigious Gulph, they would be totally overwhelmed, and irrecoverably lost. Therefore the inspired Prophet, to shew the *boundless* Extent of the divine Mercies in *JESUS CHRIST*, and to denote the *Fulness* of their Pardon who are cleansed in the REDEEMER'S Blood, hath illustrated both by this grand Similitude. *Thou wilt cast all their Sins into the Depths of the Sea**—not one, or a few, but *all* their Sins—not barely behind thy Back, but into the *Sea*—and not into the shallower Parts, but into the very *Depths* of the Ocean—so that they shall never rise up in
Judg-

* *Micb. vii. 19,*

Judgment; never be taken notice of; no, nor ever be remembered any more.

With an Act of total Indemnity, let Us join a thorough *Restoration to Favour*.—If the Wrath of an earthly King be as *the Roaring of a Lion**; how much more tremendous is *his Indignation*, who is able to cast both Body and Soul into Hell! If the Favour of an earthly Sovereign be as *Dew upon the Grass*; how much more desirable and delightful HIS Loving-kindness, whom all Things in Heaven and Earth obey!—By the Righteousness of *JESUS CHRIST*, we are freed from all foreboding Apprehensions of the former, and established in the comfortable Possession of the latter. The Gospel renews and ratifies that joyful Proclamation of the angelic Host, *Peace on Earth, and Good-will to Men* †. GOD is not only pacified towards Believers, but well pleased with them in his dear SON. They are the Objects of his complacential Delight, and He rejoices over them to do them Good.

Nay, they are made Children, *Sons and Daughters of the LORD Almighty* ‡. And if Sons, then Heirs of GOD, and joint Heirs with *CHRIST* ||.—The chief Captain mentioned in the *Acts*, purchased his Freedom of the Imperial City *Rome*, with a great Sum of Money.

* *Prov.* xix. 12. † *Luke* ii. 14. ‡ *2 Cor.* vi. 18.
 § *Rom.* viii. 17.

ney*. If such a little transient Immunity, was so valuable in his Esteem; who can express the Worth, who can conceive the Dignity, of this divine Adoption? Yet it belongs to Those, who receive the Gospel, and are interested in *CHRIST*.—They have Access to the omnipotent BEING; such free and welcome Access, as a beloved Child to an indulgent Father. To Him they may fly for Aid, in every Difficulty; and from Him obtain a Supply, in all their Wants.—G O D, as the sacred Charter runs, IS THEIR G O D. All his lovely, all his adorable Perfections, are their glorious Inheritance, and exceeding great Reward. That eternal Power, to which nothing is impossible, exerts itself as their *Guard*; and that unerring Wisdom, from which nothing is concealed, acts as their *Guide*. His very Justice is no longer an incensed Adversary, demanding Vengeance or meditating Destruction; but a faithful *Guarantee*, to provide for the punctual Execution of the REDEEMER'S Treaty, and their complete Enjoyment of its various Blessings.—What a Privilege is this! Rather what a *Cluster* of Privileges is Here! Weigh the Kingdoms of the World; cast all the Glories of them into the Scale; and they will be found, when compared with these divine Prerogatives, *emptier* than the Bubble that bursts, *lighter* than the Spark that expires.

In

* *Acts* xxii. 25.

In the Gospel are given exceeding great and precious Promises. Of such *Value*, that they were procured by the Blood of *CHRIST*; of such *Certainty*, that they are ratified by the Oath * of *JEHOVAH*. So *durable*, that, though all *Flesh* is *Grass*, and all the *Goodness* thereof as the *Flower* of the *Grass*, this *Word* of our *GOD* abideth for ever †; so *efficacious*, that there are no such *Cordials* to revive our fainting, and no such *Bulwarks* to secure our endangered *Souls*. With these the *Bible* is as richly replenished, as the clear *midnight Sky* is bespangled with *Stars*. They are all *Yea and Amen*, consigned over as a sure *unalienable Portion*, to them that are in *JESUS CHRIST* ‡.

Another *Benefit*, given in *Consequence* of the *REDEEMER*'s *Righteousness*, is the *sanctifying SPIRIT*. A most *comprehensive Blessing* this! Our *SAVIOUR* intimates, that it includes every *heavenly Gift*, is an *Assemblage* of all good *Things* ||.—How *singular* a *Comfort* must it be to blind *Bartimeus*, to have his *Eyes* opened, and behold the *all-chearing Light* of the *Sun* §! So, and far more *comfortable*, are the *inlightening Influences* of the *blessed SPIRIT*; when they shine upon the *wretched Creature*, who sits in *Darkness* and

* *Heb.* vii. 17. † *1 Pet.* i. 23. ‡ *2 Cor.* i. 20.
 || Compare *Matt.* vii. 11. with *Luke* xi. 13. § *Mark*
 v. 52.

and the Shadow of Death.—How peculiar a Mercy for the impure and abhorred *Leper*, to be healed of his inveterate Disease! To feel the soothing Sensations of Ease, where Sores rankled and Pain raged! Instead of infeebling Languors and loathsome Deformity, Vigour braces his Limbs, and Comeliness blooms in his Countenance *. Equally benign and equally salubrious, is the Agency of the Divine SPIRIT, on our depraved, polluted, sensual Minds.—How signal was the Recovery, and how welcome the Change! When that unhappy Creature, so wildly agitated by a *mischievous Dæmon*, was reinstated in the peaceful Possession of Himself and his Faculties! When, instead of unnaturally cutting his own Flesh, or committing barbarous Outrages on innocent Travelers, He sat composed and attentive at the Feet of *JESUS* †! Receiving heavenly Instruction from his Lips, and learning the Meekness of Wisdom from his Example. So salutary and beneficial is the transforming Power of the HOLY GHOST the Comforter; softening the rugged, sweetening the morose, and calming the passionate Temper.—It is undoubtedly the utmost Improvement and the highest Happiness of our Nature, to have the Image of the blessed GOD re-instamped on our Hearts. This is an Earnest,
and

* *Matt. viii. 3.*† *Mark v. 15.*

and an Anticipation also, of endless Felicity. A *Bud*, that will bloom in Heaven, and open into immortal Glory. A *Dawn*, that will shine more and more, till the Sun of Righteousness arises, and brightens it into everlasting Day. This Bud the sanctifying SPIRIT ingrafts, this Dawn the Grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST diffuses, in the barren and benighted Soul.

In a Word; get this Righteousness, and You have a Title to all Blessings, whether they be present or future, bodily or spiritual, temporal or eternal. From the necessary Conveniencies, of Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on; even to the Crowns of Glory, and the Fulness of Joy; *all, all*, are owing to our REDEEMER'S Righteousness.—You see now, *Theron*, That our Scheme, has no Tendency to impoverish your spiritual Condition, or diminish your true Riches: any more than those Tracts of Water, which surround our Island, are detrimental to the Wealth of its Inhabitants. Detrimental! No; they are an inexhaustible Source of Treasure. They convey to our Use the choicest Accommodations, and the most elegant Delights. Such as would in vain be expected, if the whole Ocean was converted into the finest Meads, and most fertile Pastures. So—but to apply this Comparison, would forestal your principal Question.

“ Do not these Favours, though unspeakably precious in themselves, tend to the Introduction or Support of Ungodliness?”—Quite the Reverse. Have We *Redemption* through our SAVIOUR’s Blood, even the Forgiveness of our Sins? We are redeemed, not that We may sink in Supineness, or launch into Licentiousness, but that We may be a peculiar People, zealous of good Works*.—Are We made the *Children* of GOD? Then let our Light so shine before Men, that others, seeing our good Works, may glorify our FATHER which is in Heaven †. This is the genuine Consequence of such a Doctrine, and the proper Effect of such a Benefit.—Are We vested with sacred *Privileges*! This should admonish us to walk worthy of HIM, who hath called us to his Kingdom and Glory ‡. Shall the Citizens of Heaven be animated with no higher Views, than the Slaves of Appetite, and Drudges of the World?—Are We constituted *Heirs* of the *Promises*? The Grace which they ascertain, is intended to make Us Partakers of a Divine Nature ||; and the Encouragement which they administer, should incite Us to cleanse Ourselves from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of GOD §.—Such high Immunities are a most
en-

* Tit. ii. 14. † Matt. v. 16; ‡ 1 Thess. ii. 12;
§ 2 Pet. i. 4. § 2 Cor. vii. 1.

endearing Persuasive, not to disgrace, but magnify, not to provoke, but please, their unspeakably beneficent AUTHOR.

I might farther observe, that Holiness is one of the most distinguished Blessings in our System. Nay, is the very *central* Blessing, to which all the others verge; in which they all terminate.—Were We *chosen* from Eternity? It was for this Purpose, that We may be holy and unblameable in Love*,—Are We *called* in Time? It is to this Intent, that We may shew forth the Praises of Him, who hath called Us out of Darkness into his marvelous Light †.—Are We *created again* in CHRIST JESUS? It is, to capacitate Us for acceptable Service, and to furnish Us unto every good Work ‡. *I will put my Spirit within You, saith the LORD.* For what End? *That Ye may walk in my Statutes, and keep my Judgments, and do them* §. Here comes in your favourite Endowment, sincere Obedience. Far, very far from discarding sincere Obedience, We would only introduce it, under its due Character, and in its proper Order. *Under its due Character*; as the Fruit, not the Cause, of our Interest in CHRIST's Righteousness. *In its due Order*; as following, not preceding, the Gift of Justification,

These

* Eph. i. 4.
§ Ezek, xxxvi. 27.

† 1 Pet. ii. 9.

‡ Eph. ii. 10.

These Privileges, my dear *Tberon*, are salutary, as the Pool of *Bethesda**. They are restorative, as the Waters of *Siloam*†. Or like that sacred Stream flowing from the *Sanctuary*; which healed the Rivers, healed the Sea, and made even the Desert flourish ‡.—If Justification by the Righteousness of *CHRIST* had a Tendency to subvert the Foundation of Holiness; to confirm the hypocritical Professor, in his Neglect of moral Duties; or discourage the sincere Convert, from the Pursuit of real Virtue; it would, doubtless, be unworthy of any Acceptation, or rather worthy of universal Abhorrence. But I dare appeal, not only to the Nature of the Doctrine, and the Reason of Things, but to the Experience of All—Yes, of all who *have tasted, that the LORD is gracious* §. How were they affected, when they have been enabled to believe, that *GOD* is reconciled, has received the all-satisfying Atonement, and placed his *SON*'s Righteousness to their Account? That He regards them as his Children, and will receive them to his Glory?—Have they not, under *such* Convictions, felt their Hearts exulting with conscious Joy; and every Power of their Soul springing forwards, to glorify their heavenly *FATHER*—glorify Him by every Instance of Obedience, Fidelity, and Zeal?

Can

* *John* v. 4. † *John* ix. 7. ‡ *Ezek.* xlvii. 8, 9.
§ *1 Pet.* ii. 3.

Can such invaluable Benefits have a prejudicial Influence on our Practice, if, to the Consideration of their superlative Worth, We add that *unequaled Price*, by which they were purchased?—HE, who was high above all Height, humbled Himself to be made of a Woman, and born in a Stable; that We might be admitted into the Family of GOD, and exalted to the Mansions of Heaven. And will this great Humiliation, which is the Basis of our Happiness, prompt Us to look down with *Contempt* on Others, or entertain *arrogant Thoughts* of Ourselves?

The ONLY BEGOTTEN and the supreme Delight of the FATHER, was numbered with Transgressors, and ranked with Felons; that We might be joined to the innumerable Company of Angels, and associated with Saints in Glory everlasting. And will any One make this a Precedent or a Plea, for *walking in the Counsel of the Ungodly*; for *standing in the Way of Sinners*; or *sitting in the Seat of the Scornful* *.

All manner of Evil was spoken of the faultless JESUS; his blessed Name was vilified by blaspheming Tongues, and his unblameable Conduct blackened with the foulest Aspersions; on purpose that We may be applauded, when We are judged; and each hear those transporting

* *Psal. i. 1;*

porting Words, WELL DONE THOU GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT*! Will this embolden Us to *dishonour* our LORD, and *stain* our holy Profession? Shall We from hence be induced to open the Mouths of his Enemies, and give them Occasion to speak reproachfully?

HE went, galled with the Lashes of the Scourge, and penetrated with the pungent Thorns; He went, loaded with the execrable Cross, and marking the Way with his precious Blood; *thus* He went to his ignominious and tormenting Exit: that We may enter into *Sion* with Songs of Triumph on our Lips, and with everlasting Joy on our Heads. Does this invite Us to go, crowned with Rose-buds, to the House of *Riot*; or go, muffled in Disguise, to the *Midnight-Revel*? Will it not rather incline Us, to sit down at his pierced Feet, and bathe them with Tears, and take Delight † in mourning for our crucified LORD?

Behold! He hangs on the cursed Tree. There, there He hangs; rent with Wounds, and racked with Pain. He pours his Groans, and spills his Blood. He bows his Head, his
patient

* *Matt. xxv. 21.*

† This is a Case, in which *Homer's* τελαρπωμεσθα γοοιο may be literally and most eminently verified. *Iliad* Ψ.—The Sorrow, arising from such tender and grateful Views of our crucified LORD, is that evangelical godly Sorrow, which *worketh Repentance unto Salvation not to be repented of.* 2 Cor. vii. 10.

patient princely Head, and dies—astonishing, ravishing Consideration! He dies for *You* and *me*. And will this harden our Hearts, or arm our Hands, to crucify Him afresh by any allowed Iniquity? Does not Reason suggest, and Christianity dictate, and all that is ingenuous in force, the Apostle's important Inference? *If One died for All, then they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them* *.

He thought upon Us, long before the Foundations of the World were laid; He remembers Us, now he is exalted to the Right-hand of the MAJESTY in the Heavens; and will never, never forget Us, through all the Revolutions of Eternity. And is this a Motive to forget his Name; to disregard his Word; or to imitate the shameful Neutrality and Indifference of *Gallio*? Impressed with a Sense of this invariable and everlasting Kindness, surely, We shall declare Ourselves, as those Captives in *Babylon*, concerning their dear native City *Jerusalem*: *If I forget Thee, O blessed JESUS, Let my Right-hand forget her Cunning; if I do not remember Thee, let my Tongue cleave to the Roof of my Mouth* †.

Remember Thee!

Ay, my dear LORD, while Memory holds a Seat

In

* 2 Cor. v. 15.

† *Psal.* cxxxvii. 5, 6.

*In this devoted Breast—Remember Thee !
 Yes, from the Table of my Memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond Records,
 Which Youth and Observation copied there,
 And thy Remembrance all alone shall live
 Within the Book and Volume of my Brain*.*

Is it possible, *Theron*, for the Contemplation of such Goodness, to weaken the Motives, or relax the Springs of Obedience? As soon may *lenient Balms* kill, and rankest Poisons cure? —Is such a Belief calculated to discourage Duty, and patronize Licentiousness? Just as much, as *vernal Showers* are fitted to cleave the Earth with Chinks, or Summer-suns to glaze the Waters with Ice.—When *Anthony* made an Oration to the Soldiers, on Occasion of *Cæsar's* Death; when He shewed them their honoured Master's Robe, transfixed with so many Daggers; when He reminded them of the Victories they had won, under their assassinated Commander; when He farther informed them, that their murdered General had remembered them in his Will—had bequeathed all his fine Gardens, and beautiful Walks, to their Use and Delight;—Heavens! How they took Fire! *Revenge* sparkled in their Eyes: *Revenge* flamed in their Bosoms: *Revenge* was all their Cry. They flew to the Houses of
 the

* *Shakespeare.*

the Conspirators; laid them even with the Ground; and had they met the Owners, would have tore them Limb from Limb.—Some such Repentment against Sin, will a Sense of our adored REDEEMER's Sufferings excite: Especially, when set home by his BLESSED SPIRIT, and considered in Connection with those detestable Iniquities, which caused them; and with those invaluable Blessings, which were procured by them.—Nothing, nothing is so effectual, to beget the most *irreconcilable Abhorrence* of all Ungodliness; to make the Remembrance of it, bitter as Wormwood; the Temptations to it, horrible as Hell.

Let me remind You of an Incident, related by your favourite Historian *Xenophon*.—*Cyrus* had taken captive the young Prince of *Armenia*, together with his beautiful and blooming Princess; whom He had lately married, and of whom He was passionately fond. When both were brought to the Tribunal, *Cyrus* asked the Prince; what He would give, to be reinstated in his Kingdom?—He answered, with an Air of Indifference; “ That, as for his Crown, “ and *his own* Liberty, He valued them at a “ very low Rate. But, if *Cyrus* would restore “ his beloved Princess, to her native Dignity “ and hereditary Possessions, He should infinitely rejoice; and would willingly pay “ (this

“ (this He uttered with Tenderness and Ardour)
 “ would willingly *pay his Life* for the Pur-
 “ chase.”—Could such a Declaration, so highly
 endearing, alienate the Affections of the Prin-
 cess, or induce Her to violate her Fidelity?
 Let her own Conduct answer the Query.
 When all the Prisoners were dismissed with
 Freedom, it is impossible to express, how they
 were charmed with the royal Generosity. Every
 one extolled their common Benefactor to the
 Skies. Some celebrated his martial Accom-
 plishments. Some applauded his social Vir-
 tues. All were *prodigal* of their Praises, and
lavish in grateful Acknowledgments. And
 You, said the Prince, (addressing himself to
 his Bride) what think You of *Cyrus*?—I did
 not observe Him, replied the Princess.—Not
 observe Him!—Upon what then was your
 Attention fixed?—Upon that *dear* and *generous*
 Man, who declared, “ He would purchase
 “ my Liberty, at the Expence of his very
 “ Life*.”—Was her Heart impressed, were
 all her Thoughts ingrossed, by that benevo-
 lent *Offer*? And shall ours be less affected with
 the incomparably more tender and endearing
 Love of *CHRIST*?—He was not only willing,
 but *actually* laid down his Life for Us; a Life
 immensely precious, and of higher Dignity than
 all

* Εγώ μὲν καὶ τῆς ψυχῆς πρῶτα ἠμην ὡς μηποτέ λατρεύσασθαι ταυτήν. Xenoph. *De Cyri Instit.* Lib. III.

all Heavens.—He laid down his Life, not for amiable Persons, or worthy Creatures, but for vile Earth, and miserable Sinners.—*Purchasing* thereby for Us and our Children, Privileges of inestimable Worth, and of everlasting Duration.

Surely, such Beneficence, so unmerited, so unequalled, must win * the most reluctant, and melt the most obdurate Heart. The Heart, that is not wrought upon by this Miracle of Divine Compassion, must be Steel, must be Adamant; quite impenetrable, and absolutely incorrigible.—“ O Thou ever blessed, thou all-gracious REDEEMER, *thy Love to Us is wonderful; passing, I will not say, the Love* “ of

* *Beneficia*, says one of the Antients, *qui invenit, Compedes invenit*. Which fine Sentiment may almost serve as a Comment, on the beautiful and tender Declaration of GOD by his Prophet *Hosea*; *I drew them to Obedience with Cords of a Man, with Bands of Love*. Chap. xi. 14. HE who made, and intimately knows our Frame, knew that these Motives would be most powerful in Operation; most powerful on Creatures, capable of Love, and susceptible of Gratitude. Therefore He calls them, *The Cords of a Man*.—And if a Deliverance from temporal Bondage, if the Settlement of *Israel* in all the Plenty of *Canaan*, constituted so sweet an Incitement to Duty; doubtless, the everlasting Benefits mentioned by *Aspasio*, together with all the endearing Circumstances of their Procurement, must be abundantly more engaging.—May the SPIRIT from on High rend the *Veil* of Ignorance and Insensibility! Let into our Hearts the Knowledge and Faith of these great evangelical Truths! We shall then want no *farther* Demonstration, either of the Propriety of the Remark, or the Efficacy of the Principles.

“ of *Women* *, but the Power of Language, and
 “ the Reach of Thought! Who can hold out
 “ against such charming Attractives? Who
 “ can resist such heavenly Goodness?—Only
 “ let a *Sense* of thy Love be always warm, al-
 “ ways operative on our Minds. This shall
 “ be instead of a thousand *Arguments* to en-
 “ gage, instead of ten thousand *Motives* to
 “ quicken our Obedience.”—Other Motives
 may produce some external Services, or hypo-
 critical Performances. Terrors may extort the
 Drudgery of the Hand. Bribes may gain the
 Adulation of the Tongue. But this concili-
 ates the Will; this proselites the Affections;
 this captivates the very Soul; and makes all
 its Powers *like the Chariots of Ammi-nadib* †,
 ready, expedite, and active in Duty.

Hear the holy Apostle, giving an Account
 of Himself and his spiritual State. He speaks
 in Language somewhat similar, though greatly
 superior, to the Profession of the *Armenian Prin-*
cesses.—“ So great is the Glory, so rich is the
 “ Grace, so superabundant are the Merits of
 “ my REDEEMER, *that I am determined to*
 “ *know nothing but CHRIST JESUS and Him*
 “ *crucified* ‡.”—Ask the same zealous Apostle;
What prompted Him to such indefatigable Di-
 ligence, and animated Him with such invin-
 cible Fortitude? *Why* did He decline no Toil,
 and

* 2 Sam. i. 26.

† Cant. vi. 12.

‡ 2 Cor. ii. 2.

and dread no Danger; rejoice in Tribulation, and glory in the Reproach*; welcome Persecution, and defy Death? This is his Reply; “*The Love of CHRIST constraineth † me; bear-*“
 “*eth me on, with much the same strong, stea-*“
 “*dy, prevailing Influence, which Winds and*“
 “*Tide exert, when they waft the Vessel to its*“
 “*destined Harbour.*”

Shall we hear what another Disciple, one of the most advanced Proficients in Divine Love, says

* That supreme Affection to the blessed JESUS, which reigned in the Hearts of his primitive Disciples, could never have been so emphatically displayed by any Strokes of Eloquence, as by their own chearful and heroic Manner of expressing themselves, with relation to their Sufferings.—Far from regretting, *I take Pleasure* (says the Apostle) *in Afflictions*; and embrace them, when occurring in my Divine MASTER’s Service, with a real Complacency, εὐδοκῶ. 2 Cor. xii. 10.—*To You*, adds the same Apostle, and speaks in a congratulatory Strain, *it is given* (εὐχαριστήν) as a desirable Privilege, *to suffer* for the adorable JESUS, Philip. i. 29.—St. Luke, recording the abusive and cruel Outrages, committed on two Disciples, for preaching boldly in the Name of CHRIST, uses a Phrase remarkably gallant and spirited: *They departed from the Council rejoicing*, οἱ καὶ ἠξιώθησαν ἀλιμῶσθῆναι, *that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame*; had the Honour of being vilified and reproached, in so venerable and glorious a Cause.—This Passage is a fine Exemplification of the Figure, which Rhetoricians style *Oxymorum*. And Horace’s—*Dulce Periculum—Splendidè mendax—Quo beatus Vulnere*—seem flat and jejune upon the Comparison. Acts v. 41.

† Could You station a Coward, in the Midst of a numerous Army advancing to the Battle; or rather, could You place a Boat on the impetuous Cataracts of the Nile; You would see what is meant by the significant Word, σὺνελῆσθαι. 2 Cor. v. 14.

says upon the Subject? One, who learned his Knowledge, not in the School of Philosophy, but on his SAVIOUR's Bosom. *This is the Love of GOD, that we walk after his Commandments**. This is the natural Fruit, this the certain Evidence, of Love to that glorious, transcendent, and adorable BEING. What? Not that We supinely neglect, much less that We profanely violate, his sacred Precepts; but that with Af-
 fiduity and Delight, We make them the Rule of our Conduct.—*Charity edifieth †*: this Divine Love, far from razing the Foundations, far from demolishing the Structure, *buildeth up ‡* the fair Fabric of universal Godliness.

Let me borrow an Illustration from your own Leter. When a Pebble is cast into the smooth Canal, it moves the Center, and forms a Circle. The first creates a second: the second breaks into a third: they continue to multiply and expand themselves, till the whole Surface is covered with circular Undulations. Thus, the Love of an all-gracious REDEEMER ||, when *shed abroad in the Soul by the HOLY GHOST,*

* 2 John ver. 6. † 2 Cor. viii. 1. ‡ Οικοδομεσ.

|| I cannot but think, the Reasoning is much more just, and the Principle much more efficacious, in *Aspasio's* Manner of stating the Affair, than in the following famous Lines:

*Self-love but serves the virtuous Mind to wake,
 As the small Pebble stirs the peaceful Lake:
 The Center mov'd, a Circle strait succeeds,
 Another still, and still another spreads.*

Friend,

*GHOST**, will diffuse itself through every intellectual Faculty, and extend to every Species of Duty. Till the whole Heart is filled with the Image, and the whole Behaviour regulated by the Law, of the blessed GOD.— So that I am persuaded, there is a great deal of Truth and Solidity, as every One must acknowledge, there is a peculiar Spirit and Beauty, in the Apostrophe of our Poet ;

*Talk they of Morals? O thou bleeding Love!
Thou Maker of new Morals to Mankind,
The grand Morality is Love of THEE †.*

You

*Friend, Parent, Neighbour, first it will embrace,
His Country next, and next all human Race :
Wide and more wide th' O'erflowings of the Mind
Take every Creature in of every Kind.*

Self-love too often acts on the Affections, as a Blast on the Leaves, *shrivels* and *contracts* them. But the Love of *CHRIST*, like a vernal Sun on the tender Buds, *opens* and *expands* them ; till they become wide, as the Extent of his gracious Redemption ; wide as the Compass of his rational Creation.—By Self-love I am almost necessarily determined to *malign* the Persons, who cross my Inclinations, and obstruct my Interests. From the Love of *CHRIST*, I have a cogent Reason, and a most prevailing Inducement, to love my very *Enemies*.—How does St. *Peter* analyze this Subject? Not in Mr. *Pope's*, not in Lord *Bolingbroke's* Method. *Godliness*, or a supreme Love to the gracious GOD, He represents as the Root or *Trunk* : then *brotherly Kindness*, or an affectionate Regard to Relations, Friends, Neighbours, as some of the grand and master *Branches* : after this *Charity*, or a diffusive Good-will to all Mankind, as the Spread of *Boughs*, which complete and adorn the Tree. 2 *Pct.* i. 7,

* *Rom.* v. 3.

† *Night-Thoughts*, N^o IV.

You mentioned the *Loadstone*, as most signally and most extensively serviceable in the sea-faring Business. Such is *Faith*, so efficacious, in practical *Christianity*.—This, perhaps, You think a scanty and defective Principle. The Property of shewing the northern Part of the World, may seem equally mean and inconsiderable. But as the one is the very Soul of Navigation, the other is the very Life of Holiness.—It is somewhat like the Stone, which the *Babylonian* Monarch saw in his Dream, *cut from the Rock without Hands* *. Which, though despicable to human Appearance, was mighty in Operation; destroyed the superb Statue; became a great Mountain, and filled the whole Earth. Thus will Faith exert and diffuse its kindly Energy; to every Corruption, that it may be subdued; to every Virtue, that it may be cherished.

FAITH is a real Persuasion, That the blessed *JESUS* has shed his Blood *for me*, and fulfilled all Righteousness *in my stead*: that, through this great Atonement and glorious Obedience, He has purchased, even *for my* sinful Soul, Reconciliation with *G O D*, sanctifying Grace, and every spiritual Blessing †.

When

* *Dan. ii. 34.*

† This Definition of *Faith* may possibly, at the first View, startle and alarm even some pious People. But if they please to take it in *Connection*, with that Explanation and Adjustment, which are delivered in the *sixteenth* Dialogue, I hope,
all

When the ALMIGHTY sunk the Cavities of the Ocean, and replenished them with the liquid Element, He provided an inexhaustible Source of Moisture, for the Refreshment of every Animal, and the Nutriment of every Vegetable. In like manner, where-ever He works this true Faith, He plants the Seed of *universal* Holiness, and provides for the Propagation of *every* Virtue. This Persuasion of the Divine Good-will, overcomes our natural Reluctance, and excites a fervent Desire, to please our most merciful FATHER. This Experience of the abundant Grace of *CHRIST*, attracts and assimilates the Soul; turning it into his amiable Likeness, “ as the Wax is turned to the im-
“ printed Seal.”—What will be the Language of such a Person?

“ Did my exalted MASTER empty Himself
“ and become poor, that his most unworthy
“ Servant might be *filled with all the Fulness of*
“ *God**? And shall not I cheerfully deny my-
“ self the expensive Pleasures of the World,
“ that I may have somewhat to bestow on
“ his needy Children?—Has the Death of
“ *CHRIST*, as a Punishment, satisfied the most
“ rigorous Justice for my Sins; as a Price, has
“ it

all Cause of Dissatisfaction or Surprise will vanish. The Sentiment, I hope, will be found, not only comfortable for the Sinner, but agreeable to Scripture; and truly *unexceptionable*, as well as highly *desirable*.

* *Eph. iii. 19.*

“ it redeemed me from every Evil; and, as a
 “ Sacrifice, made my Peace with GOD Most
 “ High? And shall I not, by these *Mercies* of
 “ my dying LORD, be induced to present all
 “ the Members of my Body, and all the Fa-
 “ culties of my Soul, as a *living Sacrifice* * to
 “ his Honour? To be employed in his Service,
 “ and resigned to his Will?—Do I believe,
 “ that my SAVIOUR has not only rescued me
 “ from Hell, but established my Title to all
 “ the *Blessings* included in the Promises, and
 “ all the *Felicity* laid up in Heaven? And can
 “ I neglect to seek *those* invaluable Blessings, or
 “ forbear to aspire after *this* immense Felici-
 “ ty? Can I be so *ungrateful* as to affront, so
 “ *insensible* as to forget, the infinitely beneficent
 “ Procurer of both?—Am I persuaded, that
 “ the Prince of Peace is entered into Glory as
 “ my *Forerunner* †, and has prepared Mansions
 “ of Bliss for my final Reception? And shall I
 “ not follow Him thither in my Hopes and
 “ my Affections? Be as a Pilgrim below, and
 “ have my Conversation above?—Is not this
 “ a most sweet and effectual Method of gain-
 “ ing my Heart; and if my Heart, then all
 “ my Powers, to his blessed Self?”

Such, my dear *Theron*, will be the *Effects* of
 Faith, Therefore, it is not in vain, much less
 to the Discouragement of real Virtue, that the
 Scrip-

* *Rom. xii. 1.*

† *Heb. vi. 20.*

Scripture lays such a Stress upon Faith: so frequently urges the Importance and Necessity of Faith: represents Faith, as the principal Work of the Divine SPIRIT, and the great Instrument of receiving Salvation. Because it is a sure, a sovereign Means of *purifying the Heart* *, and never fails to *work by Love* †. — Was Faith, as some People are apt to imagine, like a Candle put under a Bushel, or like the Lamps that burn in Sepulchres; it would then be an insignificant Labour to inculcate it, and no better than an empty Flourish of Words, to celebrate it. But nothing is more certain, than that Faith is a *vital*, an *operative*, a *victorious* Principle.

CHRIST is a Store-house of all Good. Whatever is necessary to remove our Guilt, whatever is expedient for renewing our Nature, whatever is proper to fit Us for the eternal Fruition of GOD, all this is laid up in *CHRIST*. All this is received by Faith, for Application, Use, and Enjoyment.—Accordingly, when *Zaccheus* BELIEVED, He commenced a new Man: his Bowels yearned with Compassion: the rapacious Publican became a Father to the Poor ‡, and a Friend to the Needy in his Distress, — When the *Macedonians* BELIEVED, how eminently was their Spirit ennobled, and their Practice improved!

Though

* *Acts* xv. 9.† *Gal.* v. 6.‡ *Luke* xix. 8.

Though pressed with Afflictions, their Souls overflowed with Joy; and even in the deepest Poverty, they signalized themselves by the Abundance of their Liberality*.—When the *first Converts* BELIEVED, the Change in their Behaviour was so remarkable, the Holiness of their Lives so exemplary; that they won the Favour, and commanded the Respect, of all the People †.—In short; it is as impossible for the Sun to be in his meridian Sphere, and not to dissipate Darkness, or diffuse Light; as for Faith to exist in the Soul, and not exalt the Temper, and meliorate the Conduct.—That my dear *Theron* may be *established* in Faith, may *increase* in Faith, may *abound* in Faith, is the most affectionate Wish, that Thought can suggest, or Friendship adopt. May his Faith therefore be established like the Mountain-Oaks; enlarge like the progressive Stream; till it swells and spreads like the overflowing Flood ‡!

I

* 2 Cor. viii. 2. Here is, especially in the Original, as fine an *Antithesis*, perhaps, as ever was penned. Since my last Notes were so copious, I shall forego the Pleasure of particularizing the Beauties of this Clause. I leave it to the Lover of sacred Literature, to admire the Apostle's Expression, to be charmed with the Spirit of the *Macedonian* Believers, and to derive Edification from both.

† Acts ii. 47.

‡ These Images We may venture to style *beautiful*, because they are borrowed from the Apostle; βεβαιωμένοι εν τη πιστει. Col. ii. 7. ωροκοπη της πιστεως. Phil. i. 25. υπερ αυξανει η πιστις. 2 Thess. i. 3.

Let. II. ASPASIO to THERON. 203

I intended to have closed my Letter, and confirmed my Point, by a *very memorable* Story. But however your Patience may persevere, my Time fails, and my Hand is weary. The next Post, if nothing unexpected intervenes, shall bring You the Sequel. May it, when brought to my Friend, be as *a Nail fastened in a sure Place*, and give the Rivet of Conviction to all these important Truths!—In the mean Time, or rather at all Times, I remain

Cordially and invariably Yours,

ASPASIO.



LETTER XI.

ASPASIO to THERON.

Dear THERON,

F AITH in the imputed Righteousness of *JESUS CHRIST* is a fundamental Principle, in that invaluable System of sacred and divine Philosophy—**THE GOSPEL**. By which the **HEAVENLY TEACHER** is continually training up Millions of rational and immortal Creatures, for the true Perfection of their Nature;

Nature; for the final Fruition of their GOD; or, in other Words, for a State of consummate Happiness and everlasting Exaltation.—In this School, may You and I be humble *Students*, and daily *Proficients*! While Others are ambitious of glittering Distinctions, and sounding Titles, may it be our highest Aim, our greatest Glory, to answer the Character—of BELIEVERS! By this Character, the supreme LORD distinguishes his chosen People, and denominates the Heirs of Salvation.—This Character stands fairest in the Book of Life, and brightest in the Annals of Eternity.—This Character, however neglected or disesteemed among Men, will be remembered and had in Honour, when the pompous Names of *Statesman* and *Generalissimo* are known no more.

As Faith is of such singular and extensive Efficacy in genuine Christianity, methinks, I would have all our Meditations *terminate* on its glorious Object, and be calculated to *invigorate* so beneficial a Principle.—When we reflect on that stupendous Act, the Creation of the World out of Nothing; let Us remember, it was *HIS* Act, who *obtained eternal Redemption for Us*. When we contemplate that immense Theatre of Wonders, the Heavens and their shining Hosts; let Us not forget, that they are all *HIS* Work, who *brought in everlasting Righteousness* for Us.—Do We turn
our

our Thoughts to the Ocean, that spacious and magnificent Canal, which covers more than half the Globe? It was formed by *HIS* Word, and is obedient to *HIS* Will, who *loved Us and washed Us from our Sins in his own Blood*. Do We take a View of the Earth, that grand and inexhaustible Magazine, which furnishes such a Multiplicity of Conveniencies, for so many Millions of Creatures? It is all *HIS* Property, and wholly at *HIS* Disposal, who *emptied* Himself* for our Sake, and *had not where to lay his Head*.—For thus saith the inspired Philosopher; thus saith the Oracle of Faith; *All Things were made BY Him, and FOR Him*.

The great CREATOR has *enriched* this habitable Globe with a Profusion of Good. He has *adorned* it with a Variety, an Order, and a Beauty, which are perfectly charming. He has *ennobled* it with a Dignity, a Sublimity, and a Grandeur, which are at once delightful and astonishing. In all this, Reason cannot but discern a clear Manifestation of Power, a bright Display of Wisdom, and a rich Demonstration of Benignity.—But will the CREATOR himself vouchsafe to be made Flesh, on Purpose that He may *obey* and *die* for his guilty Creatures? This is what, neither the utmost Penetration of Men, nor the very superior Intelligence of Angels, could ever have demonstrated, discovered, or conceived.

* ΕΚΕΥΩΤΕΝ ΕΑΥΤΩΝ, *Phil. ii. 7.*

ceived. This exceeds whatever the Elements have produced, whatever the Sun has beheld, as much as the Extent and Magnificence of the planetary System exceed the Dimensions and the Furniture of a Shepherd's Hut.— To reveal this, is the blessed Peculiarity of the Gospel. To know this, is the distinguishing Prerogative of a Believer. To *apply* this, to *dwell* upon this, to *connect* this with all our Observations of the Universe, should be our favourite and habitual Employ. This will improve Wonder into Devotion, and raise the Delights of Science into the Joy of Salvation. This will render every philosophical Speculation a Strengtheners of our Faith; and make the various Scenes of Nature, a Guide to Grace, and a Step to Glory.—When this is done, then all Things attain their proper End; and as they are *by CHRIST*, so they are *for CHRIST*.

But I forget myself, my Business, and my Promise. I am to establish the Point by incontestable Fact, not to embellish it by loose Harangue. With Pleasure I address myself to discharge my Obligation; and exemplify, in a very memorable Instance, the *Power* of Faith on *religious* Practice.—From whence shall I fetch my Exemplification? From the Memoirs of the indefatigable Apostle of the Gentiles? Here I find one, most concisely, and at the same Time most forcibly displayed.

After

After these Things were ended, says the sacred Historian, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when He had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome*—Who can observe, and not admire, this plain unambitious Manner of relating a Series of Labours, the most signally successful, and most extensively useful? Nothing in human Conduct ever surpassed the Greatness of the one, and perhaps nothing in historical Composition ever equaled the Simplicity of the Other.

St. Paul had already reduced *Ephesus* and *Asia* to the Obedience of CHRIST. He had already brought *Macedonia* and *Achaia* into Subjection to the Gospel. He had long ago erected the Standard, and spread the Triumphs of Christianity in the Regions of *Arabia*. Yet, as if He had hitherto atchieved nothing, He bends his Forces towards *Jerusalem*. Then He marks out *Rome* for the Seat of his spiritual Warfare. After this, he forms the same beneficent Design upon *Spain*: including, in his comprehensive Plan, the Metropolis and the Boundaries † of the World.—The Universe is but

* *Acts* xix. 21.

† *Spain* was then supposed to be the Boundary of the *Western*, as the *Ganges* was reckoned the Extremity of the *Eastern* World.

*Omnibus in Terris quæ sunt a Gadibus usque
Auroram & Gangen.* Juv. Sat. x.

but just large enough, to be the Scene of his Action; and He never discontinues the *charitable Campaign*, but with the last Breath of his Life.

Which of your *Alexanders*, which of your *Cæsars*, which of all the Heroes celebrated in *Grecian* or *Roman* Story, can vie with the Zeal and Magnanimity of this poor, despicable Tent-maker? So *poor*, that he was constrained to work with his own Hands, for a Morfel of Bread: so *despicable*, that sometimes He had scarcely Clothes to cover his Nakedness, and was frequently treated as the Offscouring of all Things. Notwithstanding all these Discouragements, what did He not attempt, what did He not accomplish, for the Honour of his MASTER, and the Good of his Fellow-creatures?—He embarks in a Shallop; He has neither Shield nor Spear; yet he purposes to command the Ocean, and conquer the Globe. What *Greatness* of Soul was here! He expects * nothing but Poverty, Contempt, and Death; yet his Heart is big with the Hope of enriching, ennobling, and saving Ages and Generations. What *Benevolence* of Spirit was this!—Should you inquire, concerning this illustrious Champion of the Cross; *Who* were his potent Auxiliaries? None but the Divine SPIRIT.—*What* were his mighty Weapons?

* *Acts* xx. 23.

Weapons? Nothing but the Word of Grace.—*Whence* proceeded his intrepid, his enterprising, his all-conquering Resolution? Only from Faith, a lively Faith in *JESUS CHRIST*.

This, I think, is a sufficient Confirmation of my Doctrine.—Nevertheless I have another Instance to produce. One that was exhibited in an Age, when the glorious Object of our Faith, shone with dim Lustre, and with distant Beams. Yet it may justly be admired, and will hardly be eclipsed, by the most inlightened among the *Christian* Saints.—To keep You no longer in Suspence, the Case I mean, is that which *Moses* records, and the Apostle celebrates. *By Faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and He that had received the Promises, offered up his only begotten Son**.—As this is so singular an Example of the efficacious and triumphant Operation of Faith; unequaled in any Nation of the World, or under any Dispensation of Religion; You will give me leave to dwell a little on some of its marvelous Circumstances.

Abraham was an eminent and distinguished Servant of the Most High GOD. Favoured with peculiar Manifestations of the Divine Will, and dignified with the honourable Title
of

* *Heb.* xi. 17.

of his MAKER's Friend *. Yet even this Man, is harassed with a long Succession of Troubles; and, which was reckoned in those Ages the most deplorable Calamity, goes *childless* †.

Long He waits, worshiping GOD with the most patient Resignation. At length, an Oracle from the LORD gives Him Hope, gives Him Assurance of a Son. Joyfully he receives the Promise, and rests in humble Expectation of its Accomplishment.—Several Years run their Rounds, but no pleasing Infant prattles in his Arms, or is dandled upon his Knees. At last, the Handmaid becomes pregnant. But what a *Disappointment* was here! This is the Son of the Bond-woman, not of the free.

How afflicting the Case of this excellent Person! His Kinsfolk and Acquaintance see their Olive-branches, flourishing round about their Tables. Even his ungodly Neighbours have Children at their Desire, and leave the Residue of their Substance for their Babes. But *Abraham*, the Worshiper of the ALMIGHTY, the Favourite of Heaven—this *Abraham* is destitute of an Heir, to support his Name, to pro-

* 2 Chron. xx. 7. *Isai.* xli. 8.

† There was so much Gall in this Calamity, that it embittered every other Species of Happiness. Visited by this Affliction, the Patriarch could taste no Joy in his late signal Victory; all his worldly Prosperity was insipid; and He seems to have been incapable of relishing any other Comfort; *What wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless?* Gen. xv. 2.

propagate his Family, and inherit the Blessing.—O the Straits! to which the Believer is sometimes reduced! How does a sovereign Providence try his Faith, as it were in a Furnace of Fire! Not that it may be consumed, but refined, and come forth with augmented Lustre; to the Praise of *ever-faithful, all-sufficient* Grace.

GOD is pleased to renew the Grant, and assure Him more explicitly, That *Sarah* shall have a Son. But this Notice comes at a very late Period in Life; when *Sarah* is advanced in Years, and too old, according to the Course of Nature, to conceive. However, the pious Patriarch *staggers not through Unbelief*; but *hopes even against Hope* *?—Is it improbable? Is it difficult? Nay, is it to all human Appearance impossible? So much the fitter for the Exertion, and so much the more proper for the Display of Almighty Power.

At last, the Gift, so earnestly desired, is vouchsafed. *Sarah* has a *Child*—a *Son*—an *Isaac*. One who should be a Source of Consolation and Delight to his Parents; should *fill their Mouth with Laughter* †, and *their Tongue with Joy*.—With tender Care, doubtless, this pleasant Plant is reared. Many Prayers are put up, for his long Life, and great Happiness. The fond Parents watch over Him, as
over

* *Rom.* iv. 18, 20.

† *Psal.* cxxvi. 2. This is the Import of the *Hebrew* Name *Isaac*.

over the Apple of their own Eye. *Their* Life is bound up in the Life of the Lad.—He grows in Grace, as he grows in Stature. So amiable is his Temper, and so engaging his Behaviour, as could not fail of endearing him even to a Stranger; how much more to such indulgent Parents, after so long a State of Barrenness, and so many Expectations so frequently frustrated.

Now, methinks, we are ready to congratulate the happy Sire; and flatter Ourselves, that his Tribulations have an End. That the Storms, which ruffled the Noon of Life, are blown over; and the Evening of his Age is becoming calm and serene.—But *let not Him that girdeth on his Harness, boast Himself, as He that putteth it off**. Our Warfare on Earth is never accomplished, till We bow our Head, and give up the Ghost. The sharpest severest Trial is still behind. GOD, the supreme and uncontrollable GOD, demands the Child. 'Tis the divine Will, that He make his Exit, just as He arrives at Manhood.—“ *Abraham,*
 “ where now are all thy pleasing Prospects?
 “ How often didst Thou say, in thy fond de-
 “ lighted Heart; *This same shall comfort Us con-*
 “ *cerning our Trouble* †. *Many have been my Sor-*
 “ *rows; but this Child shall dry up my Tears, and*
 “ *bring me to my Grave in Peace.*—Alas! This
 “ lovely

* 1 Kings xx. 11.

† Gen. v. 29.

“ lovely Flower is to be cut down, in its full-
 “ left Bloom. All thy shining Hopes are over-
 “ cast in a Moment.”

Abraham *; says GOD—*Abraham* knows the Voice. It was the Voice of condescending Goodness. He had often heard it with a Rapture of Delight.—Instantly He replies, “ *Here I am.* Speak, LORD; for thy Servant is all “ Attention.” Hoping, no doubt, to receive some fresh Manifestation of the divine *Good-Will*, to Himself and his Family; or some new Discovery of the Method, in which the divine *Wisdom* would accomplish the Promise, that *all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed in Him.*—*Take thy Son*: and might He not reasonably expect, that, since his Son was advanced to Years of Maturity, He should be directed, how to settle Him in the World with Honour and Advantage; where to find a virtuous and fruitful Partner of his Bed?—He is com-
 manded,

* The Sentence, with which the inspired Historian introduces this affecting Narrative, is unhappily translated in our Bibles; נסה את אברהם GOD did *tempt Abraham*.—This Expression seems, more than seems to clash with the Doctrine of St. *James*, chap. i. ver. 13. And cannot but sound harsh to those Ears, which have been accustomed to understand by *Tempter* and *Tempting*, Persons utterly odious, and Practices extremely pernicious.—Whereas, the true and natural Signification of the Original is, He *tried* or *explored*. GOD sounded the Depth, and measured the Height of his Servant's Faith; in order to erect an Everlasting Monument of the victorious Efficacy of this divine Principle; and exhibit an illustrious Pattern to all them, who should hereafter believe.

manded, not barely to take his *Son*, but his *only Son*; his *Son Isaac*; whom He *loved*. How must these affecting Images awaken all that soft Complacency, and all that tender Triumph, which are known only to the fond feeling Heart of a Parent! Must not such an Introduction, so remarkably endearing, heighten his Expectation of some signal Mercy, to be conferred on the beloved Youth; and would it not render the Blessing peculiarly acceptable, more than doubly welcome?—Was He not then startled? Was he not horribly amazed? When, instead of some renewed Expression of the Divine Favour, He received the following Orders. *Take now thy Son—thy only Son—Isaac—whom Thou lovest—and get thee into the Land of Moriab, and offer Him there for a Burnt-Offering, upon one of the Mountains which I will tell thee of**.—Was ever Message so alarming? Each Word more piercing to parental Ears, than the keenest Dagger to the Heart. Every Clause brings an additional Load of Misery; till the *whole* Command swells into the most accumulated and aggravated Woe.

Abraham, take thy Son.—Who, but *Abraham*, could have forbore remonstrating and pleading, on such an Occasion?—*Ananias*, being charged with a Commission to *Saul* the Persecutor, takes upon Him to argue the Case with

* *Gen.* xxii. 2.

with his Almighty SOVEREIGN. LORD, I have heard by Many concerning this Man, how much Evil He hath done to thy Saints at Jerusalem; and here He hath Authority from the chief Priests, to bind All that call upon thy Name *. Sure, it can never be safe or expedient, to present myself voluntarily before Him; who came hither breathing out Threatenings and Slaughter against me. What is this, but to court Danger; and run, with open Eyes, into Ruin?—Thus *Ananias*: and, with how much greater Appearance of Reason, might *Abraham* have replied?

“ LORD, Shall I lose my Child? Lose Him,
 “ almost as soon as I have received Him?
 “ Didst Thou give Him, only to tantalize thy
 “ Servant? Remember, gracious GOD, the
 “ Name He bears. *How* shall He answer its
 “ cheating Import? *How* shall He be a Source
 “ of Satisfaction to his Parents, or the Father
 “ of many Nations, if Thou takest Him away
 “ in the midst of his Days?

“ If Sin lies at the Door, let me *expiate* the
 “ Guilt. Let thousands of Rams, let every
 “ Bullock in my Stalls, bleed at thy Altar.
 “ My Wealth, blessed LORD, and all my
 “ Goods, are *nothing* in comparison of my
 “ *Isaac*. Command me to beg my Bread, to
 “ be stript of all my Possessions, and I will

P 4

“ blefs

* *Acts ix. 14.*

“ blefs thy holy Name. Only let my Child,
 “ my dear Child, be fpared.

“ Or, if nothing will appeafe thy Indigna-
 “ tion but human Blood, let *my Death* be the
 “ Sacrifice. Upon me be the Vengeance. I
 “ am old and grey-headed. The beft of my
 “ Days are paff, and the beft of my Services
 “ done. If this tottering Wall tumbles, there
 “ will be little, or no Cause for Regret. But,
 “ if the Pillar of my Houfe, and the Founda-
 “ tion of my Hopes—if *He* be fnatched from
 “ me, how fhall I endure to live? Or what
 “ Good will my Life do me? *O my Son! my*
 “ *Son! would GOD I might die for Thee* *.

“ If it muft be a blooming Youth, in the
 “ Prime of his Strength, be pleafed, moft mer-
 “ ciful GOD, to fetch it from fome *fruitful*
 “ Family. There are thofe, who abound in
 “ Children. Children are multiplied unto them,
 “ and though many were removed, yet would
 “ their Table be full. There are thofe, who
 “ have Flocks and Herds; whereas, I have
 “ only this one little Lamb †; the Solace of
 “ my Soul, and the Stay of my declining Years.
 “ And fhall *this* be taken away, while all *thofe*
 “ are left?”

Yes, *Abraham*; it is thy Son, and not An-
 other's, that is marked out for the Victim.—
 What Difrefs, had He not been fupported by
 Faith,

* 2 Sam. xviii. 33.

† 2 Sam. xii. 3.

Faith, what exquisite Distress must have overwhelmed this affectionate Parent! How could He refrain from crying out, and with a Flood of Tears?—"If the Decree cannot be reversed; if it must be the Fruit of my own Body; O! that *Ishmael*, the Son of the Hand-maid—How shall I speak it? My Heart bleeds at the Thought; at the Thought even of *his* expiring Agonies, and untimely *Death*. But as for *Isaac*, the Son of my beloved Spouse, the Son of my old Age, the Crown of all my Labours—I shall never survive such a Loss. The Blow that goes to his Heart, must be fatal to Us both.

"Yet, if He *must* die, and there is no Remedy; may He not at least expire by a natural Dissolution? May not some common Distemper unloose the Cords of Life, and lay Him down gently in the Tomb? May not his fond Mother and myself seal his closing Eyes, and soften his dying Pangs by our tender Offices?"—No, *Abraham*. Thy Son must be *slaughtered* on the Altar. He shall have no other Bed of Death, than the Pile of hewn Wood; no other Winding-sheet, than his own clotted Blood. The sacrificing Knife, and not any common Disease, shall bring Him to his End.—And think not to satisfy thy sorrowing Fondness, by paying Him the
 last

last Honours of a decent Interment. It is my Pleasure, that He be cut in Pieces; consumed to Ashes; and made a *Burnt-offering*. So that nothing shall remain, to be preserved, or embalmed. It shall not be in thy Power to sooth thy Grief, by resorting to his Grave, and weeping at his Sepulchre, and saying, *Here lies Isaac*.

“ But if all must be executed; GOD grant,
 “ these Eyes may never behold the dismal
 “ Tragedy! If my *Isaac* must be bound Hand
 “ and Foot for the Slaughter; if He must
 “ receive the Steel into his Bosom; and welter
 “ in his own innocent Blood; Heaven forbid,
 “ that I should *behold* so killing a Spectacle.”

Even this Mitigation cannot be granted. Thou must not only be an Eye-witness of his Agony, but be the *Executioner* of thy *Isaac*. Thy Hands must lift the deadly Weapon; thy Hands must point it to the beloved Breast; *thy own* Hands must urge its Way, through the gushing Veins, and shivering Flesh, till it be plunged in the throbbing Heart. GOD will not permit the Work to be done by Another. The Father, the Father must be the Butcher.

Is not the wretched Father *stunned* and *thunderstruck*? Does He not stand fixed in Horror, and speechless with Grief. What Words can be mournful enough to express his Sorrows?

—Un-

Let. II. ASPASIO to THERON. 219

—Unheard of, shocking Affair! Nature *recoils* at the very Thought! How then can the best of Fathers perform the Deed?—How shall He answer it to the Wife of his Bosom, the Mother of the lovely Youth?—How can He justify it to the World? They will never be persuaded, that the GOD of Goodness can delight in Cruelty, or authorize so horrid an Action.—Will they not take up a *taunting* Proverb, and say at every Turn? “ There
“ goes the Man, the Monster rather, that
“ has imbrued his Hands in his own Son’s
“ Blood! This is He that pretends to Piety;
“ and yet could be so savage, as to assassinate,
“ coolly and deliberately assassinate, a good, a
“ duteous, an only Child!”—Might not Thousands of such Reflections croud into his Thoughts, and rack his very Soul?

But GOD is unchangeable. Positive is his Word, and must be obeyed. Obeyed immediately too. Take *now* thy Son. The LORD’s Command requireth Speed. No Time is to be lost, in bidding Adieu to his Relations, or in fruitless Supplications for revoking the Doom.—Nay, *cheerfully* as well as instantly must this Command be fulfilled. The great JEHOVAH expects Alacrity in his Service.—Prodigious Tryal indeed! Yet not too great for a Faith, which the Divine SPIRIT infuses, and the Divine SPIRIT sustains.

The

The Patriarch knew full well, that Obedience is no Obedience, unless it be willing and chearful. Therefore He consults not with Flesh and Blood. He is deaf to the Arguings of carnal Reason, and regards not the Yearnings of paternal Affection. Without a *mur-muring* Word, without a *Moment's* Delay *, He sets forward on his Journey. Not so much as betraying the least Uneasiness, to alarm his Wife; nor heaving the least Sigh, to surprize his Attendants.—And canst Thou, *Abraham*, canst Thou persist in thy Purpose? Can thy Heart firmly resolve, can thy Hand steadily execute, this inexpressibly severe Task? Most triumphant Faith indeed! Deservedly art Thou styled, *The Father of the Faithful* †. Thy Faith is stronger than all the Ties of Affection; stronger than all the Pleas of Nature, or all the Terrors of Death—even of a Death, far more dreadful than thy own.

And now must He travel, during three tedious, and One would think, most melancholy Days. With his *Isaac* constantly before his Eyes; with the bloody Scene continually in his Apprehensions; and nothing to divert his Mind, from dwelling on every bitter Circumstance, and all the grievous Consequences.—

On

* For it is written, *He arose early in the Morning*. Ver. 3.
 † *Rom.* iv. 18.

On the third Day, Abraham lifted up his Eyes, and beheld afar off the appointed Place. His Servants are ordered to keep their Distance; while Himself with the Fire and the Knife in his Hands, and his Son with the Burden of Wood on his Shoulders, proceed on their Way, and ascend the Mountain.—Who does not pity the sweet Youth, toiling under that Load, which must soon reek with his Blood, and soon reduce Him to Ashes?—Mean while the intended Victim, wondering to see all these Preparations made, and no proper Animal near, asks this pertinent Question; My Father, behold the Fire and the Wood! But where is the Lamb for a Burnt-offering?—Sure, this endearing Speech, which discovered such a Knowledge of Religion, and such a Concern for its Duties, must rouse the Father's Anguish, and shake his Resolution. How can He be the Death of so much Innocence, and so much Piety?

Faith overcomes all Difficulties. Unmoved and inflexible, the Prophet replies; *GOD will provide Himself a Lamb for a Burnt-offering, my Son.*—Methinks, I shudder, as We draw near the direful Catastrophe. The Altar is built: the Wood laid in Order: all Things are prepared for the solemn Sacrifice.—And now the Father addresses Himself to the fatal Business.—It does not appear, that the amiable
and

and pious Youth *resisted* or *gainsayed*. He had Strength enough to oppose, and Speed enough to escape *. But since his CREATOR called, He was content to go. Nevertheless, that the Work of Destiny might be sure, and no one Circumstance relating to a Sacrifice omitted, *Abraham binds his Son*.

I have known a stubborn Malefactor, quite unalarmed, when sentenced to the ignominious Tree; not at all impressed, with all the Representations of eternal Judgment; yet, when a Person came to measure Him for his *Coffin*, the hardened Wretch was hard no longer. He started; turned pale; and trembled in every Joint.—Even such a Circumstance makes no Impression on *Abraham*; neither alters his Purpose, nor changes his Countenance. He measures his *Isaac*; measures those Limbs, which He had so frequently and so tenderly caressed; and if not for the Coffin, yet for immediate Slaughter.—Having bound Him, bound Him for the Sword and for the Flame, He *lays Him upon the Altar on the Wood*. There, now, lies *Isaac*; the dear, the dutiful, the religious *Isaac*! *Abraham's* Joy; *Sarah's* Delight; the Heir of the Promises! There
He

* According to the History of *Josephus*, *Isaac* was, when He offered himself to the Slaughter, about twenty-five Years old. Others think, his Age was thirty-three; which makes Him more exactly resemble his suffering LORD. Either Account will justify *Aspasio's* Supposition.

He lies, all meek and resigned; expecting, every Moment, the Stroke of Death to fall.— O Parents! Parents! Do not your Bowels yearn? Is not Humanity itself distressed at the Scene? Say, thou who art a Father, what thinkest Thou of *Abraham's* Obedience? Couldst Thou, to *such* a Son, have acted *such* a Part?—See! the Father, resolute to the very last, unsheaths the murdering Blade; makes bare the innocent Bosom; and marks the Place, where Life may find the speediest Exit. *His Heart is fixed!* He stretches his Arm; and now, even now is aiming the mortal Blow—When—rejoice O ye Worshipers of a gracious GOD! Break forth into Singing, Ye that are in Pain for the tried Parent! The LORD Almighty interposes, in this Article of extreme Need*. The Angel of the Covenant speaks from Heaven, and with-holds the willing

* Upon this most seasonable Interposition, the inspired Historian makes a very judicious and edifying Remark. Which seems to be greatly obscured, if not intirely spoiled, by our Translation; *In the Mount of the LORD it shall be seen.* I must confess, I have always been puzzled to find, not only a pertinent Sense, but any Sense at all, in these Words. Whereas, the Original is as clear in its Signification, as it is apposite to the Purpose.—*בְּהַר יְהוָה יֵרָאֵה* *In the Mount the LORD will be seen,* q. d. This memorable Event gave rise to, at least is an eminent Exemplification of, that *proverbial* Expression, which is commonly used at this Day. In the Mount of Difficulty, or in the very Crisis of Need, when Matters seem to be irretrievable and desperate, *then* the LORD appears as a present Help. Man's Extremity is GOD's Opportunity. See *Gen. xxii. 14.*

ling Hand, in the very Act to strike. GOD, who only intended to *manifest* his Faith, and make it *honourable*, bids Him desist. GOD applauds his Obedience; substitutes another Sacrifice in *Isaac's* stead; renews his Covenant with the Father; and not only reprieves the Life of the Son, but promises Him a numerous and illustrious Issue. Promises to make Him the Progenitor of the MESSIAH, and thereby a public Blessing to all the Nations of the Earth.

Tell me now, *Theron*, was there ever such an astonishing Effort of Obedience? Such a perfect Prodigy of Resignation? Yet THIS HATH FAITH DONE *.—If you should ask,

* *Heb. xi. 17. By Faith, Abraham, when He was tried, offered up Isaac.*—The Faith, of which such glorious Things are spoken, to which such admirable Atchievements are ascribed, throughout this whole Chapter, was a Faith in “the Seed of the Woman,” the promised MESSIAH.—Or, could it be demonstrated (which, I will venture to conclude, is impossible) that, in all these heroic Instances of Obedience, so nobly described by the eloquent Apostle, there was no believing Regard to *CHRIST*; no Apprehension of his unspeakable Love; no Application of his transcendent Merits; our Argument would not lose its Force, but strike with *redoubled* Energy. For, if a Belief in very *inferior* Manifestations of the divine Goodness, Faithfulness, and Power, wrought so efficaciously on those antient Worthies; how much more victoriously must the same Principle act, under far *brighter* Displays of all the supreme Perfections, in the Person of *JESUS CHRIST*!—I would only add, that so long as this Chapter remains in the Bible, it will furnish an unanswerable Confutation of those Objections,

ask, How was it possible for *Abraham* to perform all this, in the Manner described? The Answer is obvious. Because, *Abraham* BELIEVED; or, in other Words, was fully persuaded, that the GOD, who had given Him this Son from the *barren* Womb, was able to raise Him again from the *smoking* * Ashes. As the same GOD, who required this Sacrifice, had expressly declared, *In Isaac shall thy Seed be called*; the Patriarch doubted not, but in a Way known to infinite Wisdom, he would certainly accomplish the Promise. Hence he made no Dispute, and felt no Reluctance. His Faith banished every uneasy Apprehension, and neither Fear nor Sorrow had Place in his Breast. By Faith He was enabled, *speedily* and *cheerfully*, without so much as a parting Tear †, to obey this unparalleled Precept.

And

tions, which suppose the Doctrine of Faith to have an unkindly Influence on religious or virtuous Practice. Against all such Cavils, *it will stand fast for evermore as the Moon, and as the faithful Witness in Heaven.*

* He seems to have expected not only the certain, but the *immediate* Restoration of his slain Son. That he would be revived on the very Spot; before He left the Place; so as to accompany his Return. For, he says to his Servants, not *I*, but *We* will go, and worship, and *return*. נשובה Ver. 5.

† This Account, is so *very extraordinary*, that I shall not be surpris'd, if the Reader finds some Difficulty in giving his Assent to it. Especially, as He may have accustomed Himself to form very different Conceptions of this remarkable Affair; and may possibly be confirm'd in a different Train of

And if all this, which would otherwise have been utterly impracticable, was wrought by Faith; You need not suspect, of *Weakness* and *Insufficiency*, so approved a Principle. Far from enervating, it will invigorate every good Disposition; and instead of damping, will give Life to every religious Duty.—Cherish Faith, and You will of course cultivate Obedience. Water this Root, and the Branches of universal
God-

Ideas, by seeing a Representation of the Story in a celebrated *Print*. Where the Father appears, clasping his Son in a tender Embrace; bedewing Him with his Tears; and suffering as much through Grief, as the devoted Youth is going to suffer by the Knife.—But the *Engraver*, I apprehend, had not so attentively examined the Circumstances of the sacred Narrative, nor so carefully compared them with other Passages of Scripture, as a judicious, ingenious, and worthy *Friend* of mine. From whom I learnt to consider this wonderful Transaction in the above-represented View. And I must confess, the more I revolve it in my Mind, the more I am convinced of its Propriety.

I flatter myself, the Reader will be of the same Opinion, if he pleases to consult the Tenth Chapter of *Leviticus*. Where *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the Sons of *Aaron*, are devoured by Fire from before the LORD. Yet *Aaron* is not allowed to mourn, even at such a terrible and afflictive Visitation. And when, through the Frailty of human Nature, He could not wholly refrain, He durst not presume to eat of the Sin-offering. *Such Things*, says He, *have befallen me, if I had eaten of the Sin-offering, should it have been accepted in the Sight of the LORD?*—Let me add, that we find not the least Indication of such *agonizing* Sorrow, nor indeed of *any* Sorrow at all, in the History as related by *Moses*. Neither could *Abraham* have been a proper Type of the eternal FATHER, making his only begotten SON a Sacrifice for Sin, if He had not offered Him *willingly*. And indeed to offer *willingly*, seems to have been absolutely *necessary* in every acceptable Oblation. See 2 *Cor.* ix. 7.

Godliness will assuredly partake the beneficial Effects; will spread their Honours, and bring forth their Fruits.—Through the *Power* of Faith, the Saints have wrought Righteousness, in all its magnanimous and heroic Acts.—The *Doctrine* of Faith is called by St. Paul, *A Doctrine according to Godliness* *; exquisitely contrived to answer all the Ends, and secure every Interest of real Piety.—The *Grace* of Faith St. Jude styles, *Our most holy Faith* †; intimating, that it is not only productive of Holiness, but that the most *refined* and *exalted* Holiness arises from this Stock.

Let Us then be diligent to obtain, and careful to increase, Faith in *JESUS CHRIST*. Let Us maintain the same zealous Solitude for this leading capital Grace, as the renowned *Epaminondas* expressed for his Shield. When that gallant General was, in an Engagement with the Enemy, struck to the Ground; his Soldiers carried him off, breathless and fainting, to his Tent. The very Moment he opened his Eyes, and recovered the Use of Speech, he asked—not whether his Wound was mortal? not whether his Troops were routed? But whether his *Shield* was safe?—May We be enabled, my dear Friend, to keep our Shield safe! May We be *strong*, be *steady*, be *lively* in Faith! Then, I doubt not, We shall give Glory to GOD, receive

* 1 Tim. vi. 3.

† Jude 20.

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ceive Comfort to Ourselves, and abound in the
Works of the LORD.

Nothing can be more *pertinent* to my Purpose, than the Apostle's Prayer; That We *may know what is the Hope of our Calling in CHRIST JESUS, and what is the exceeding Greatness of his Power to themward who believe.* And nothing can be more *expressive* of the very Soul of

Your affectionate

ASPASIO.



L E T T E R XII.

ASPASIO to THERON.

IT is very probable, while I am reading yours, You are perusing mine. But how unlike is my Friend to the Representation He receives! How unlike the satisfied, unsuspecting, chearful *Abraham!* Why this *dejected* Air in your Temper? Why those *pensive* Strokes in your Letter?—Let me anticipate your Reply, and make Answer to myself.—This Gloom, I trust, is a Sign of approaching Day. Just before the Morning Dawn, the nocturnal Darkness is blackest. And just before the Appearance of the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,
the

the Penitent's Distress is frequently the deepest. I promise myself, the Hour is at Hand, which will *put off your Sackcloth, and gird You with Gladness.*

Another favourable Prefage is, That You take the direct and certain Way, to obtain substantial Comfort. The Righteousness of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*, after which You inquire, about which You are solicitous, is a never-failing Spring of Consolation. Because it acquits from all Sin; secures from all Condemnation; and renders the Believer unblamable and unprovable in the Sight of GOD. Therefore says the HOLY GHOST, *His Name is as Ointment poured forth**: even that divinely precious Name—by which He has been celebrated in the preceding Epistles; by which He is distinguished in the Scriptures of Truth; by which, I hope, He will be more and more revealed in my *Tberon's* Mind—THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. The Discovery of Him under this most amiable and glorious Capacity, will indeed be like breaking open a Vial of the richest Unguents. Which not only fill the Room, and regale the Sense, with their delightful Fragrance; but refresh the Spirits, and *rejoice the very Heart.*—Might my Writing, or my Discourse, be as the *Alabaster-box* to contain, to convey, and present these reviv-
ing

* Cant. i. 3.

ing Odours; how highly should I think myself honoured, and how signally my Endeavours blessed!

You ask, “How this Righteousness of the “Divine REDEEMER becomes ours?”—It is a Question, which I receive with the utmost Pleasure; and, with equal Pleasure, shall attempt an Answer. Or rather, as the SPIRIT of our GOD prompted the first, may the same unerring Guide suggest the last!—This He has abundantly done by his Prophets and Apostles. So that I need only have Recourse to their Writings, and collect some of the Hints, which lie treasured up in those Storehouses of Wisdom.

There We are often told of Union with *CHRIST*. Believers are said to be *in CHRIST**, and to be *one with CHRIST* †.—What is still higher, and implies a greater Degree of Nearness, They are *Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones* ‡.—And, which denotes the most intimate Connection imaginable, *They that are joined to the LORD JESUS, are one Spirit* || with Him!—As these Expressions appear dark, and their Sense lies deep, it has pleased our all-condescending INSTRUCTOR to illustrate them, by a Variety of significant Types, and lively Similitudes. This Remark
very

* Col. i. 2.
|| 1 Cor. vi. 17.

† Heb. ii. 11.

‡ Eph. v. 30.

very opportunely reminds me of an Engagement, which, some Time ago, I undertook to execute, but have hitherto omitted—To make it evident, that the blessed Doctrine, for which We have been pleading, *is deducible from several Scripture Images.* A short Descant upon some of the principal, will, I hope, at once discharge my former Obligation, and satisfy your present Inquiry.

This was shadowed forth by the costly, odoriferous, flowing Unguent, which was poured upon *Aaron's Head*; and *ran down upon his Beard, and descended to the Skirts* of his Clothing.* So, the Merits of our great HIGH-PRIEST are derived down to all the Faithful; even those of the meanest Station in Life, and the lowest Attainments in Religion.

Was it not typified by that instructive Vision, which the Prophet *Zechariah* saw? *I have looked, and behold! A Candlestick all of Gold, with a Bowl upon the Top of it, and his seven Lamps thereon, and seven Pipes to the seven Lamps,*
which

* *Psal. cxxxiii. 2.* What We render *Skirts*, is, in the Original, פִּי מְדוּתָיו *The Mouth*, or, as the Word is translated (*Job xxx. 18.*) *The Collar* of his Garments. It is hardly supposeable, that the consecrating Oil flowed down to the very Bottom of the sacerdotal Vestments. But it might probably reach the upper Hem, or the Opening round the Neck; what the *Greeks* call περιραχῆλιον — This Sense will sufficiently preserve the Gradation; *The Head*; the *Beard*; the *Clothes.* Which seem to denote *CHRIST*, his more advanced Saints, and Believers of a lower Class.

which were upon the Top thereof: And two Olive-trees by it, one upon the right Side of the Bowl, and the other upon the left Side thereof; which, through two golden Pipes, empty the golden Oil out of themselves*. The Bowls and the Lamps were a proper Emblem of Believers: who are, by Nature, dry Vessels, and destitute of all Good; yet should shine as Lights, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation.—The Olive-trees, arrayed in Verdure, and abounding with Sap; always emptying themselves, yet ever full; are a very just Representation of *CHRIST*, of his unchangeable Love, and his inexhaustible Grace.—The golden Pipes, through which the Olive-branches transmit their Oil, seem to be figurative of Faith, in its various and repeated Actings. By means of which, the unspeakable Benefits of a REDEEMER are communicated to our Souls, and replenish these empty Basons.

Another Type the Apostle mentions. *The first Adam*, He says, *was a Figure of Him that was to come* †. So eminent a Figure, and corresponding in so many Instances, that He styles our *LORD JESUS the last Adam* ‡. And why? Because, like the first, He was a *Covenant-head* to his People, and transacted in their Stead, Inasmuch, that what He did, and what

* Zechar. iv. 2, 3, 12.

† Rom. v. 14.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 45.

what He suffered, is placed to their Account. Is *Adam's* Sin imputed to all his natural Offspring? So is *CHRIST's* Righteousness to all his spiritual Seed.—The Consequences of both, render the Doctrine more plain, and the Truth more undeniable. All Men are *judged, condemned, dead**; doomed inevitably to the Death of the Body, and justly liable to the Death of the Soul, on the Score of *Adam's* Transgression. All Believers are *acquitted, justified, saved†*; saved from the first Death, and made Heirs of the Resurrection; saved from the second Death, and intitled to Life eternal; by virtue of *CHRIST's* Obedience.

This Union with *CHRIST*, was not only prefigured by Types, but is displayed by a Variety of Similitudes, taken from the most familiar Occurrences of Life. By which it appears, that our Divine MASTER would have Us live under the *habitual Belief* of this momentous Truth, and in the *constant Enjoyment* of this distinguished Privilege.—You cannot visit a Friend, or view your Children; You cannot enter your Garden, discourse with your Spouse, or contemplate your own Body, without a Representation and a Remembrancer of this precious Blessing.

CHRIST

* *Rom. v. 15, 16.*

† *Rom. v. 19, 21.*

CHRIST says to his Disciples, *Henceforth I call You not Servants but Friends* *. Friends are a second Self †. St. Paul, speaking of *Onesimus*, uses this remarkable Phrase, *Receive Him, as Myself*; and which is still more emphatical, *Receive him, that is mine own Bowels* ‡. CHRIST's Friendship must assuredly be of the most tender and exalted Kind. It must be equal, it must be infinitely superior, to *Jonathan's*.—*Jonathan* loved *David* as his own Soul. But CHRIST loved Sinners with a Love stronger than Death. They were dearer to Him than his own inestimable Life.—*Jonathan* exposed Himself to imminent Danger, in vindicating *David's* Conduct. JESUS surrendered himself to certain Death, in making Reconciliation for our Offences.—*Jonathan* interceded once and again with his Father in *David's* Behalf. CHRIST ever liveth to make Intercession for Transgressors.—*Jonathan* stripped Himself of the Robe that was upon Him, and gave it to *David*, and his Garment, even to his Sword, and his Bow, and his Girdle ||. Our REDEEMER, without stripping Himself, has clothed Us (such is the Prerogative of a Divine Person!) with the Robe of his Righteousness, and with the Garment of his Salvation. He has

* *John* xv. 15.† *Horace* calls *Virgil*, *Animæ Dimidium meæ*.‡ *Philem.* 13, 17.|| *1 Sam.* xviii. 4.

has configned over to Us all the Merit of his holy Life and propitiatory Death.

CHRIST stands related to his People, not as a Friend only, but as a *Parent*. He is called by a Prophet, *THE EVERLASTING FATHER* *; and We are said, by an Apostle, to be *his Children* †.—Children look upon themselves, as interested in the Wealth of their Parents. They expect, and not without reasonable Ground, to reap Benefit from it, while the Parents live; and to become Possessors of it, when they die. Accordingly the Father says in the Gospel; *Son, all that I have is thine* ‡.—Since the high and holy *IMMANUEL* vouchsafes to be our *FATHER*, can we suppose Him less generous than an earthly Parent? Or that *his Children* shall have less to hope, than the Heirs of an earthly Progenitor? Doubtless, We may, We ought to regard all his communicable Goods, all the Benefits resulting from his meritorious Sufferings and perfect Obedience, as our Portion.—Especially, since He is the *Testator* || also; has bequeathed them to Us by Will; and, having submitted to Death, they become legally ours.

I am the Vine, says our *LORD*, *Ye are the Branches* §. They that believe, are ingrafted into *CHRIST*.—Take Notice of a Cyon. What
are

* *Isai. vi. 9.* † *Heb. ii. 13.* ‡ *Luke xv. 31.*
|| *Heb. ix. 16.* § *John xv. 5.*

are the Consequences of its *Ingrafture*? It is embodied with the Substance of the Tree, and partakes of its Fatness. The Sap, attracted by the Root, circulates into it; gives it vegetable Life; fills it with Buds, decks it with Blossoms, and loads it with Fruit.—If then we are one with *CHRIST*, as much as the Branch is one with the Stock, it must follow, even upon the Principles of common Experience, that his *Wisdom* is ours, to enlighten Us; his *Righteousness* is ours, to justify Us; his *Spirit* is ours, to sanctify Us; his *Redemption* is ours, to make Us completely and eternally happy.

CHRIST is united to his People by a Tie, closer and dearer than the parental. They are not only his Children, but his *Spouse*. He is often called their Bridegroom, and is not ashamed to avow the tender Engagement: *I will betroth Thee to Me for ever; yea, I will betroth Thee unto me in Righteousness, and in Judgment, and in Loving-kindness, and in Mercies. I will even betroth Thee unto Me in Faithfulness* *. The condescending GOD multiplies, diversifies, accumulates his Words. And this, with admirable Propriety, as well as surpassing Goodness. The Honour is so *high*, and the Favour so *great*, We should hardly know how to believe it, and hardly venture to apply it. Left there-

* *Hof.* xi. 19, 20.

therefore, by a single Expression, it should not be sufficiently established, it stands ratified by repeated Asseverations, and with all the Energy of Language. So that, be the Grace ever so astonishing, We are assured, the Fact is equally certain; He that is *our* MAKER, is also *our* HUSBAND*.

Let Us consider what follows, upon such an Union. We may take for an Example, the Case of *Boaz* and *Ruth*. Soon as their Nuptials were solemnized, she that was poor, became rich: from a Gleaner in the Field, she commenced *Mistress* of the Harvest: and, from abiding by the Maidens, had a Seat at the Master's Table.—And if we are united to *CHRIST* by a Marriage Contract, the same Effects will take place. We that were poor, are rich in Him. We, who had Nothing, possess all Things in *CHRIST*. We that dwell in Dust, are made *to sit together* with our divine HUSBAND in heavenly Places †.

If you choose some modern Exemplification, what can be more pertinent, than the remarkable Instance of your Neighbour *Arietta*? She was lately left a Widow, by the dissolute and extravagant *Bellarion*. Her Circumstances miserably embarrassed, and the little Estate deeply mortgaged. Her Friends looked shy, and her Creditors became clamorous.

Every

* *Isai.* liv. 9.

† *Eph.* ii. 6.

Every Day made some new Discovery of Debts, contracted by the Deceased; and the Affairs of the Survivor appeared, every Day, with a more melancholy Aspect.—But, having won, first the Compassion, then the Affection, of the wealthy and illustrious *Philander*; how happily is the Face of Things altered! All her *Debts* devolve upon Him, and all his *Dignity* is derived to Her*. He stands responsible, for whatever She *owes*; and She is a Sharer, in whatever He *possesses*. Though little less than ruined by her late Husband, She is more than restored by her present; and has Reason to rejoice in his Affluence, and to glory in his Honours.—Have not We also Reason to rejoice in our heavenly BRIDEGROOM? Since a far more glorious Exchange subsists between Him and his mystical Spouse. He has bore the *Curse*, that We may inherit the *Blessing*. *Sin* was charged on Him, that *Righteousness* might be imputed to Us. In a Word; He has sustained all our Miseries, that He might impart to Us all his Benefits. Has the Law any Demand? It must go to Him for Satisfaction. Have We any Wants? We may look to Him for a Supply. TO HIM, *Theron*, in whom it
has

* *Ubi Tu Caius, ibi Ego Caia*, was the Roman Maxim: Agreeably to this Rule, which has obtained among all civilized Nations, the Scripture calls *the Church* by the Name of her divine *Husband*. Compare *Jerem. xxiii. 5, 6*, with *Jerem. xxxiii. 15, 16*.

has pleased the FATHER, that all Fulness should dwell *.

If any Thing can express an Union, more intimate and inseparable than the conjugal, it is that of the Members with the *Head*. And this Image is used by the HOLY GHOST, to shadow forth the Connection between *CHRIST* and the Faithful. He is the *Head over all Things*, with respect to Rule and Supremacy; but a Head of Union and Influence, with Respect *to the Church* †.—The Head and the Members constitute one natural Body; *CHRIST* and his Church compose one mystical Body. What Kindness is done, what Injury is offered to the Members, the Head regards them as done to itself. Accordingly, *CHRIST* says to the outrageous *Saul*, who made Havock of the Church; *Saul, Saul, why persecutest Thou ME* ‡? He declares, concerning those indigent *Christians*, to whose Necessities We administer Relief; *Inasmuch as Ye have done it unto them, Ye have done it unto ME* ||.—The Animal Spirits formed in the Head, are formed for the Benefit of the whole Body, and designed for the Use of all the Members. So the Righteousness wrought by *JESUS CHRIST*, is wrought out for his whole mystical Body, and intended for the Advantage of all his People; to be the
Cause

* *Col. i. 19.*

† *Eph. i. 22.*

‡ *Act. ix. 4.*

|| *Matt. xxv. 40.*

Cause of their Justification, and the Purchase of their Salvation.

Being then so nearly related, so closely united to the blessed *JESUS*, it is no Wonder, that Believers are now loved with the same fatherly Love, and will hereafter be Partakers of the same heavenly Glory.—What might We not expect from the Divine REDEEMER, if He vouchsafed to acknowledge but *one* of these endearing Names? Since He is related to Us by *all* the Ties of Affinity and Affection; may We not promise Ourselves, and with the Assurance of Hope, every good Thing; *Even all the Fulness of GOD* * our Saviour?—Does not each of these tender Relations, subsisting between *CHRIST* and his Saints, imply an intimate Property in one another, and a mutual Participation of all that belongs to either? *My Beloved is mine, and I am his*, is the undoubted Effect of this divine Union.

How pleasing, yet how amazing the Thought! Shall We, who say to Corruption, *Thou art my Father*; and to the Worm, *Thou art my Mother and my Sister* †; shall *We* be permitted to say, concerning the HEAD of all Principality and Power, *We are Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones* ||?—What a Mercy might

* *Eph.* iii. 19. † *Job* xvii. 14. || *Eph.* v. 30.

might We esteem it, not to be confounded before a MAJESTY so exalted and sublime ! What a Favour, to obtain the least propitious Regard from the KING immortal and invincible ! What an Honour, to be admitted into his Family, and numbered among the Meanest of his Servants !—But to be his *adopted* Children ; to be his *espoused* Bride ; to be the *Members* of his sacred Body—To have HIM for our everlasting *Father*, HIM for the *Bridegroom* of our Souls, HIM for our heavenly *Head* ; who is the MAKER of all Worlds, and the Object of Worship to all Creatures ! What Words can duly celebrate, what Heart can sufficiently admire, the Condescension and the Love of our adorable *JESUS* ? Or who can justly question the Fruits of such a Fellowship, and Consequences of such an Union ? Question them ! No, the Fruits are as infallibly sure, as the Privilege is inexpressibly great.

Let me once again introduce a great and venerable Witness of both these Truths. “ *La-*
 “ *ban* spake high, when He said ; *These Chil-*
 “ *dren are mine, and all these Things thou seest*
 “ *are mine.* But how high and glorious is
 “ that, which may be said of a justified Per-
 “ son ! All thou hearest of *CHRIST* is thine ;
 “ his Life is thine, his Death is thine, his Obe-
 “ dience, Merit, Spirit, all thine*.”—Rich
 and

* See Dr. *Lightfoot's* Works, Vol. II. p. 1077.

and important Words! Than which nothing can give Us a juster or fuller Explanation of the Apostle's Assertion, *We are Partakers of CHRIST**; *We are complete in CHRIST*†.

When some foreign Ladies, of the first Quality, paid a Visit to *Leonidas's* Queen; the Talk turned upon their rich Clothes, their costly Jewels, and splendid Equipage. After they had severally displayed their own Grandeur, they inquired after her Majesty's Finery. What *She* had to distinguish Her from the Vulgar? —She replied, *My illustrious Husband* ‡.—What else? *My illustrious Husband*.—And as often as They repeated the same Question, She returned the same Answer.—Could this Queen speak in such admiring, rejoicing, self-gratulating Terms, of her royal Consort? And shall not vile Sinners look upon their REDEEMER—that all-glorious, yet all-condescending Bridegroom; who is full of Grace and Truth, full of Merit and Righteousness —shall not *they much more* look upon HIM as their Honour and their Joy; the Object of their Dependence, and the Cause of their Boasting?

I

* *Heb.* iii. 14.† *Col.* ii. 10.

‡ The amiable and heroic *Panthea* expresses Herself in much the same Manner, concerning her gallant Husband *Abra dates*; *Συ γὰρ ἐμοί γε μέγιστος κόσμος ἐστίν.* *Xenoph.* *Cyropæd.* Lib. VI.

I should find it difficult to refrain from the farther Prosecution of so engaging a Topic, did I not propose to wait upon You very speedily. Then I shall have an Opportunity of pouring into your Bosom all the Fulness of my Heart, with regard to this delightful Subject.—In the mean time, let me exhort my dear Friend to be of good Comfort. *Heaviness may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning**. This Sorrow of which You complain, may be the Seed of spiritual and eternal Consolation.

While I am writing, there appears full in my View, one of the finest *Rainbows*, I ever beheld. *It compasseth the Heaven with a glorious Circle*; so glorious, that it is no Disparagement of the Almighty CREATOR, to say, *the Hands of the MOST HIGH have bended it †*.—On what Foundation, would I ask, is that beautiful and stately Arch raised? From what Source, do all its radiant and lovely Colours spring? It is raised on a *gloomy* Assemblage of Vapours; and all its rich Tinctures spring from a *louring* Cloud.—Thus does the blessed GOD, on a Conviction of Guilt and a Sense of Ruin, spread Faith, paint Holiness, and diffuse Gladness. May all these, e'er long, arise in my *Theron's* Breast! And each be—
bright,

* *Psal.* xxx. 5. † *Ecclus.* xliii. 12.

244 ASPASIO to THERON. Let. 12.
bright, as that resplendent Bow—*lasting*, as
the Sun that creates it!

In the mean time, it is the ardent Desire of
my Soul, and shall be my frequent Prayer to
GOD, *That both our Hearts may be comforted,*
being knit together in Love, unto all Riches of the
*full Assurance of Understanding**, in this great
Mystery of Godliness.—What Vigour of Ex-
pression, what Exuberance of Ideas, and,
above all, what distinguished Privileges are
Here!—*Assurance—Full Assurance—Riches of*
the full Assurance—All Riches of the full Af-
surance of Understanding—in reference to our
Union with *CHRIST*, and its unutterably pre-
cious Effects!—Can the Orator express more?
Can the Sinner wish for more? Can the Saint,
I had almost said, can the Archangel enjoy
more?—May this be the Portion of my dear
Theron, and of

His ever faithful

ASPASIO.

* Col. ii. 2.

D I A-



DIALOGUE XV.



SPASIO had taken Leave of his Friend *Camillus*, and was come to revisit *Theron*. Whose Thoughts seemed to be in a State of much Fluctuation, and no small Anxiety. Hoping, that some proper Conversation on the *Grace* and *Privileges* of the everlasting Gospel, might compose and comfort his Mind. Might, while his Heart was softened by humbling Convictions, fix the Stamp of genuine Christianity; and deliver his whole Soul into the Mould* of evangelical Religion.

When

* *Deliver into the Mould*—This is the literal Translation, and exact Sense of St. Paul's Phrase; Εἰς οὐ παρεδόθητε τυποῦ διδασχῆς. Rom. vii. 17.—Which, as it contains a beautiful *Allusion*, conveys also a very *instruētive Admonition*. Intimating, that our Minds, all pliant and ductile, should be conformed to the refined Precepts of the Gospel, as liquid Metals take the Figure of some elegant Mould, into which they are cast.

*When Sorrow wounds the Breast, as Ploughs
the Glebe,
And Hearts obdurate feel her soft'ning Show'r,
Her Seed celestial then glad Wisdom sows:
Her golden Harvests triumph in the Soil.*

He arrived pretty late in the Evening: and, being somewhat weary with the Journey, soon withdrew to his Repose.—The next Morning, as *Theron* walked abroad, to taste the cool Delights of the Dawn; He was agreeably surpris'd, by meeting *Aspasio*.

Ther. So soon awake, my worthy Friend! And after so much Fatigue on the preceding Day!—I had not the least Expectation of your Company, till Breakfast. Then indeed I promised myself a double Regale—The Refreshments exhibited on the Table; and those *wholesome Words of our LORD JESUS CHRIST**, which, more precious than Manna, drop—

Asp. How, *Theron*!—Have you also learnt those soothing Arts, which polish the Speech, to deprave our Sentiments? Could I have suspected the enchanting Wiles of *Flattery*, from my sincere, my tried, my bosom Friend?

Ther. Your Friend is still sincere, and his Words are very remote from *Flattery*.—How welcome to the windbound *Mariner*, weary with

* 1 *Tim.* vi. 3:

with Expectation, and sick with Disappointments, is the Visit of a propitious Gale! How welcome to the *Fields*, parched with Drought, and gasping for Moisture, are copious Showers of Rain! How acceptable to the *Israelites*, traveling through the inhospitable Desarts, and pining away for want of the Fruits of the Earth, was the miraculous Supply of heavenly Bread!—Yet, neither propitious Gales to the wind-bound Mariner, nor copious Showers to the thirsty Soil, nor heavenly Bread to the famished *Israelites*, could be more welcome, than your late Conversation, and later Correspondence, to my anxious Soul.

Asp. Why I thought you looked upon *my* Notions as chimerical. Is *Theron* also become credulous? Like one of Us weak-headed Believers!—Has *He* quitted the Strong-holds of Reason? Is *He* vanquished by the Sling-stone of Faith? Or can *He* submit to this strange Method of Salvation, by embracing the Righteousness, and relying on the Obedience of Another?

Ther. I find, my Reason was a feeble Guide; or I myself not faithful to its genuine Dictates. I was blinded with Prejudice. I was intoxicated with Pride. A vain Conceit of my moral Powers betrayed me, as I fear it has betrayed many, into a Contempt of the evangelical Righteousness. I held, what I

thought an Honour to human Nature. I now retract my Opinion. My *true* Glory and *real* Happiness I would derive from the blessed *JESUS*.—No more Banter, *Aspasio* :—Have done :—I am serious, and very much in earnest. So much in earnest, that if all my Acquaintance of the *Pparisaical* Turn, or all my Brothers of the Smile, should rally me on the Subject; I would frankly acknowledge my Error, and as freely sign my Recantation.

Asp. My dear *Theron*, I applaud your Resolution. You have no more Cause to be ashamed of such a Practice, than *Philip* had to be ashamed of the Imperfection in his Limbs. When being observed to go lame, with a Wound received in Battle, he had this Consolation suggested by one of his Courtiers : “ Never blush, my royal Sir, for a Defect, which
“ puts You in mind of your *Valour*, every
“ Step You take.”—To sacrifice our Prejudices, in the Search of Truth, is no less honourable, than to be marked with a Scar, in the Defence of our Country.

I beg Pardon for my Pleasantry. Since you are so very serious, a gay Air was quite unseasonable.—You cannot often complain, that I am guilty of this Fault. Nor can You easily imagine, the Satisfaction I shall enjoy; if, either my Letters, or my Discourse, have administered *any Advantage* to my Friend. I shall

shall note it down, among the distinguished Blessings of my Life; and have an additional Obligation, to love the beneficent AUTHOR of all Good.

But, as I cannot be a Furtherer of your Happiness, without the greatest Delight; so I cannot be a Witness of your Solitude, without a painful Regret. You must therefore permit me to ask the Cause of that unusual *Vebemence*, I observe in your Speech; and of that deep *Concern*, which I read in your Countenance.

Ther. I have been considering very attentively, What is the *present* State, and what is likely to be the *final* Condition of my Soul.

—————*My Hopes and Fears*

*Start up alarmed; and o'er Life's narrow Verge
Look down—on what? A fathomless Abyss,
A vast Eternity!*

My *Sins*, at the same time, like an armed Host, are set in dreadful Array, and surround me on every Side.—*Justice*, like an injured and incensed Foe, unsheaths the Sword, and makes a loud Demand for Vengeance.—No Righteousness of *my own* presents itself, to which I may fly for Refuge.—The Method of Salvation, in which I formerly confided, is a Bridge *broken down*; and leaves me, without any Possibility of Escape, abandoned to the approaching Enemy.

To

To a Person in such deplorable Circumstances, how reviving, how delightful, is the very Thought of being interested in the great REDEEMER's Righteousness!—I don't wonder now at a Saying of *Luther's*; which I have sometimes exploded, as strangely extravagant: “That, upon the Discovery of this glorious Righteousness, the Gates of Paradise seemed to fly open before Him, and the Dawn of Heaven was all in view.”

Talking in this manner, they came to an elevated *Terrace*. Which, about an Hour before, had been shaved by the Scythe, and emitted all the Freshness of new-mown Herbage.—On one Side, a fine *Champaign Country* stretched its wide Dimensions.—On the other, a *Flower-Garden* exhibited the last Ornaments of the Year.—Here, You might still see the tufted Vermilion, and the full-blown Ivory, glittering through Spangles of liquid Crystal.—There, You might trace the Footsteps of the early Cattle, by many a recent Print on the dewy Lawn.—On the Walls and Espaliers, Autumn had spread her Stores; and was beginning to beautify their Rinds with many a *ruddy Streak*, or to breathe over their glossy Skins her delicate and *inimitable Bloom*.

Asp. See, said *Aspasio*, the Wisdom and Bignity, which, in amiable and inseparable
Con-

Conjunction, display themselves through the whole Oeconomy of the Universe! *GOD has made every Thing beautiful in his Time**; every Thing serviceable in its Place. A little while ago, the flowery Meads delighted our Eyes, and the melodious Birds charmed our Ears: now, the tasteful Fruits are preparing their Dainties; and presenting Us with a Collation, to regale our Palate.—The whole Earth, and all the Seasons, are rich with our CREATOR's Goodness. Yea, the whole Earth, and all that replenishes it, all that surrounds it, are full of his Presence. *He, HE it is, who*

*Warms in the Sun, refreshes in the Breeze,
Glowes in the Stars, and blossoms in the Trees;
Lives through all Life, extends through all Extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.*

An habitual Belief of this Truth, gives Nature her *loveliest* Aspect, and lends her the most consummate Power to please. The Breath of Violets, and the Blush of Roses; the Music of the Woods, and the Meanders of the Stream; the aspiring Hill, the extended Plain, and all the Decorations of the Landſchape; *then* appear in their highest Attractives; *then* touch the Soul with the most refined Satisfaction; when GOD is seen—when GOD is heard—and GOD enjoyed in all.— — — —

—Is

* *Ecclef. iii. 11.*

— — — Is *Theron* lost in Thought, and deprived of Speech? Is He alone silent, while all Things speak their MAKER's Praise? — Does Faith throw a Shade over the Works of Creation? Does it not heighten their Beauties, and enliven their Graces? — The *religious* is the only *true* Philosopher; and the Pleasures of Imagination never acquire their proper Relish, till they are ripened by the Exercise of Devotion. With this View then, since my Friend forbears, let *me* attempt to speak: not to increase his Knowledge, but to cherish Faith, and cultivate Devotion in Us both.

The spacious Canopy * over our Heads, is painted with Blue; and the ample Carpet under our Feet, is tinged with Green. These Colours, by their *soft* and *cheering* Qualities, yield a perpetual Refreshment to the Eye †. Whereas, had the Face of Nature glittered with White, or glowed with Scarlet; such ardent and dazzling Hues would, instead of exhilarating,

* If the Reader has Patience to go through the following Essay, He will find it, in the Issue, not altogether foreign to the main Subject.—If He pleases to consider it, as a kind of *practical Comment*, on that lovely Celebration of providential Goodness, *His tender Mercies are over all his Works*—This may possibly alleviate the Toil of perusing, and reconcile Him to the Length of the Descant.

† ————— Gay Green,
Thou smiling Nature's universal Robe!
United Light and Shade! Where the Sight dwells,
With growing Strength, and ever-new Delight.

Thomson's Spring.

ing, have fatigued the Sight.—Besides; as the several brighter Colours are interspersed, and form the Pictures in this magnificent Piece; the Green and the Blue constitute an admirable *Ground*, which shews them all, in their highest Lustre, and to the utmost Advantage.

Had the *Air* been considerably *grosser*, it would have dimmed the Rays of the Sun, and darkened the chearful Day. Our Lungs had been clogged in their vital Functions: Men had been suffocated, without the strangling Noose; or drowned, without the overwhelming Flood.—Was it several Degrees more *subtle*, Birds would not be able to wing their Way through the Firmaments; nor could the Clouds be sustained, in so attenuated an Atmosphere. It would elude the Organs of Respiration: We should gasp for Breath, with as much Difficulty, and with as little Success, as Fishes out of their native Element.

The *Ground* also is wrought into the most proper Temperature. Was it of a *firmer* Consistence, it would be impenetrable to the Plough, and unmanageable by the Spade.—Was it of a *laxer* Composition, it would be incapable of supporting its own Furniture. The light Mould would be swept away by whirling Winds; or the oozy Globe soaked into Sloughs by the descending Rains.—Because, every Situation suits not every Plant; but that which
is

is a Nurse to one, often proves a Step-mother to others ; therefore, the Qualities of the Earth are so abundantly diversified, as properly to accommodate every Species of Vegetation. We have a Variety of intermediate Soils, from the *loose* disjointed Sand, to the *stiff* cohesive Clay : from the rough Projections of the *craggy* Clift, to the softly swelling Bed of the smooth Par-terre.

The *Sea* carries equal Evidences of a most wise and gracious Ordination.—Was it *larger*, We should want Land for the Purposes of Pasturage, and the Operations of Husbandry. We should be destitute of sufficient Room for Mines and Forests ; our subterranean Warehouses, and our aerial Timber-Yards.—Was it *smaller*, it would not be capable of recruiting the Sky, with a proper Quantity of vaporous Exhalations ; nor of supplying the Earth, with the necessary Quota of fructifying Showers.

Do We not discern very apparent Strokes of Skill, and the most pregnant Proofs of Goodness, in each individual Object ? In the various *Tenants* of the Globe, and the several *Appurtenances* of this great Dwelling ? — It is needless to expatiate upon the more eminent and conspicuous Beauties ; all that *shines* in the Heavens, and all that *smiles* on the Earth. These speak to every Ear, these shew to every Eye,
the

the adorable Munificence of their MAKER.— It is needless to launch into the Praises of the Valleys, delicately clothed with Herbage; or of the Fields, richly replenished with Corn. Even the *ragged* Rocks, which frown over the Flood; the *caverned* Quarries, which yawn amidst the Land; together with the Mountains, those *shapeless* and *enormous* Protuberances, which seem to load the Ground, and incumber the Skies; even these contribute their Share, to increase the general Pleasure, and augment the general Usefulness. They variegate the Prospect; raise an agreeable Horror in the Beholder; and inspire his Breast with a religious Awe. They add new Charms to the wide Level of our Plains; and shelter, like a Screen, the warm Lap of our Vales.

We are delighted with the solemn Gloom, and magnificent Aspect, of the Forest. One, who saw the Cedars of *Lebanon*, was transported with Admiration, at their ample Trunks, and towering Heads; their diffusive Spread, and verdant Grandeur. Compared with which, the stately Elm is but a Reed; and the branching Oak, a mere Shrub.—Was our Sight qualified for the Search, We should discover a *Symmetry* and a *Dignity*, altogether as perfect, and far more wonderful, in those Groves of *Moss* *, which

* See, for a Proof of this Remark, the Explanation of the *tenth Plate*, in that very curious, very entertaining, and

which adhere to the rude Stone. We should contemplate, with greater Surprise, if not with greater Rapture, those diminutive Plantations; which strike their hasty Roots in the mouldy Confection, or wave their curious Umbrage over the perished Pickle *.

Who is not charmed with the Vine, and its generous warming Juices? With the Melon, and its delicious cooling Pulp? Yet, were all our Trees to produce Fruits of such exalted Qualities, or of such an agreeable Relish, what would become of the *Birds!* How small a Scantling of such choice Delicacies, would voracious Man resign to their Enjoyment?—That Provision may be made for the meanest *Vagrant* of the Air, as well as for the most renowned Sovereign of a Nation; there is, in all

no less instructive Piece, intitled *Micrographia Restaurata*.—Where our Author compares the Size of this little Vegetable, with the Dimensions of those vast Trees, which grow in the vigorous Climates of *Guinea* and *Brazil*. The Trunks of which are, according to the Report of Travelers, twenty Feet in Diameter. Whereas, the Body of this minute Plant, measures no more than the sixtieth Part of an Inch. So that, upon a Calculation, the Thickness of the one exceeds that of the other, 2,985,984 Millions of Times.—So prodigiously various are the Works of the CREATOR!

* That whitish kind of Down, which shags the putrefying Pickle; which incrusts the Surface of some corrupted Liquors; and constitutes what We call *Mouldiness*; is really a Cluster of little Plants. Each has a Root and a Stalk: Each spreads its Branches, and produces Seed in Abundance.

*Radicesque suas habet, exilemque Coronam,
Frondesque, Fructumque gerit, velut ardua Quercus.*

all Places, a large Growth of Shrubs, covered annually with a Harvest of coarse and hardy Berries. So *coarse* in their Taste, that they are unworthy the Acceptance of Man: so *hardy* in their Make, that they endure the extremest Severities of the Weather; and furnish the feathered Tribe with a standing Repast, amidst all the Desolations of Winter.

The Fir, with her silver Bark, and shapely Cone; the Beech*, with her quivering Leaves, and embowering Shade; are stately Decorations of our rural Seats. But, if there were no intangling *Thickets*, no prickly *Thorns*, where would the Farmer procure Fences, so closely wattled, or so strongly armed †? How could

* The *Fir*, *Beech*, &c. These, and such like Trees, are called in *Hebrew*, נהלים *Isai*. vii. 19. Which Word is rendered, but I think very improperly, *Bushes*. It rather signifies the *grand* and most *admired* Plants. It is intended as a Contrast to the *coarse* and *despicable* Thorns, mentioned in the preceding Clause. And both taken together express all Sorts of Trees, from the towering Cedar to the groveling Shrub.

† Something to this Purpose is hinted in the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, by יראת שניר ושיב *Terriculamentum Sentium & Veprium*: The Terror of Thorns and Briars. Meaning those sharp and ragged Mounds, with which Vineyards, Corn-fields, and other cultivated Spots, were usually inclosed. Which *deterred* the most adventurous Cattle from forcing, or attempting to force, a Passage.—The Words are somewhat obscure, and have been greatly misunderstood. But, thus interpreted, they afford an easy Sense, and perfectly coincide with the Context. Implying, “That Places, “formerly fenced about with Abundance of Care, should “lie open, and exposed to every wandering Foot. That

could He guard the Scene of his Labours, or secure his vegetable Wealth, from the Flocks and the Herds? Those roving Plunderers, which accede to no Treaty, but that of *forcible* Restraint; submit to no Laws, but those of the *coercive* Kind.

Most People are fond of the Purslane's fleshy Leaves, and the ramified Fatness of the Brocoli: the Potato's mealy Orbs, and the Lentile's succulent Pods. We spare no Toil, We grudge no Expence, to have them flourish in our Gardens, and served up at our Tables.— But there are innumerable Herbs, which pass under the contemptible Character of *Weeds*; and yet are altogether as desirable to many Classes of Creatures, as these culinary Gifts to Mankind. Who shall be at the Pains to plant, to water, to cultivate, such despicable Productions? Man would rather *extirpate*, than *propagate*, these Incumbrances of his Acres. Therefore PROVIDENCE vouchsafes to be their Gardener. PROVIDENCE has wrought off their Seeds into such a Lightness of Substance, that they are carried abroad with the Undulations of the Air. Or, if too heavy to be wafted by the Breeze, they are fastened to Wings of Down, which facilitate their Flight. Or else,
are

“ Tillage should be discontinued; and the whole Country
 “ degenerate into a confused, disorderly Waste; without
 “ either the Distributions of Property, or the Improve-
 “ ments of Industry.” *Isai. vii. 25. Vid. Vitring. in loc.*

are inclosed in a springy Case ; which, forcibly bursting, shoots them abroad on every Side. —By some such means, the reproducing Principle is disseminated ; the universal Granary filled ; and the universal Board furnished. The buzzing Insect, and the creeping Worm, have each his *Bill of Fare*. Each enjoys a never-failing Treat, equivalent to our finest Venison, or to the “ Fat of Kidneys of Wheat *.”

As the Seeds of some are most artfully scattered abroad, when ripe ; the Seeds of others are most carefully *guarded*, till they come to Maturity ; and, by both Contrivances, every Species is not barely preserved, but in a manner eternized.—Some are lodged in the Center of a large *Pulp* ; which is, at once, their Defence, and their Nourishment. This We find exemplified in the tasteful Apple, and the juicy Pear.—Some, besides the surrounding Pulp, are inclosed in a thick *Shell*, hard and impenetrable as Stone. We cannot pluck and eat one of those downy Peaches, or incrimsoned Nectarines, which so beautifully emboss the Wall, without finding a Proof of this Precaution.—Cast your Eye upon the Walnuts, which stud the Branches of that spreading Tree. Before these are gathered, the Increase of the Cold, and the Emptiness of the Gardens,

* *The Fat of Kidneys of Wheat*, Deut. xxxii. 14. A Sentence, rich with Elegance ! Such as would have shone in *Pindar*, or been admired by *Longinus*.

dens, will sharpen the Appetite of the Birds. To secure the fine Kernel from the Depredations of their busy assailing Bills, it is fortified with a strong *Inclasure* of Wood, and with the Addition of a disgustful bitter *Rind*.

If *Grass* was as scarce as the *Guernsey-Lilly*; or as difficultly raised as the delicate *Tuberose*; how certainly, and how speedily, must many Millions of *Quadrupeds* perish with *Famine*! Since all the *Cattle* owe their chief *Subsistence* to this *Vegetable*, by a singular *Beneficence* in the *Divine Oeconomy*, *it waiteth not*, like the *Corn-field* and the *Garden-bed*, *for* the annual *Labours of Man*. When once sown, though ever so frequently cropped, it revives with the returning *Season*, and flourishes in a kind of *perennial Verdure*. It covers our *Meadows*; diffuses itself over the *Plains*; springs up in every *Glade of the Forest*; and spreads a *Side-board* in the most *sequestred Nook*.

Since the *Nutrimment of Vegetables* themselves, lies hid under the *Soil*, or floats up and down in the *Air*: *beneath*, they plunge their *Roots* * into the *Ground*, and disperse every *Way* their *fibrous Suckers*, to explore the *latent*, and attract the proper *Nourishment*: *above*, they expand a *Multitude of Leaves* *, which, like so many open *Mouths*, catch the
Rains

* * *Job* most beautifully alludes to these two Sources of vegetable *Fertility*; *My Root was spread out by the Waters, and the Dew lay all Night upon my Branch, Job xxix. 19.*

Rains as they fall; imbibe the Dews as they distil; and transmit them, through their nice Orifices, to the Heart of the Plant, or the Lobes of the Fruit.

I have touched upon the *insensible* Creation; and pointed out the Care of a condescending Providence, exercised over these *lowest* Formations of Nature.—The *animal* World, *Theron*, falls to your Share. It is yours to descant upon those higher Orders of Existence; and shew Us the Goodness of GOD, extending its indulgent Regards to them and their Interests; as tenderly, as officiously, as a Hen spreadeth her Wings * over her infant Brood.

Ther. The Subject is in good Hands. Let *Part the second* be of the same Strain with *Part the first*, and there will be no Occasion to wish for a new Speaker. As to myself, I have very little Inclination to talk. But I have an Ear open and attentive to your Discourse.

Asp. You put me in mind of the Philosopher, who presumed to read a Lecture on the Art of War, in the Presence of *Hannibal*. But his Impertinence was *voluntary*, mine is *constrained*.—Since You injoin me this Office, let Us pass, from the vegetable, to the animal World. Here, We shall find no Tribe, no
Indi-

* This seems to be the Image used by the *Psalmist*, Psal. cxlv. 9. And a most amiable Image, as well as a most picturesque Representation, it is.

Individual neglected. The superior Classes want no Demonstration of their excellent Accomplishments. At the first Glimpse, they challenge our Approbation; they command our Applause. Even the *more ignoble* Forms of animated Existence, are most wisely circumstanced, and most liberally accommodated.

They all generate in that particular Season, which is sure to supply them with a Stock of Provision, sufficient both for themselves, and their increasing Families.—The Sheep yean, when there is a Profusion of *nutrimental Herbage* on the Soil, to fill their Udders, and create Milk for their Lambs.—The Birds lay their Eggs, and hatch their Young, when *Myriads* of new-born, tender *Insects* swarm on every Side. So that the Caterer, whether it be the male or female Parent, needs only to alight on the Ground, or make a little Excursion into the Air; and they find a Feast ready dress'd, and all at free Cost, for the clamant Mouths at home.

Their Love to their Offspring, while they continue in a helpless State, is *invincibly* strong. Whereas, the very Moment they are able to shift for themselves; when the parental Affection would be attended with much Solitude, and productive of no Advantage; it *vanishes*, as though it had never been.—The Hen, that marches at the Head of her little Brood, would
fly

fly in the Eyes of a Mastiff, or even encounter a Lion, in their Defence. Yet, within a few Weeks, she abandons her Chickens to the wide World, and not so much as knows them any more.

If the GOD of *Israel* inspired *Bezaleel* and *Aboliab* with *Wisdom, and Understanding, and Knowledge in all Manner of Workmanship*: the GOD of Nature has not been wanting, in his Instructions to the puny Inhabitants of the Bough.—The *Skill*, with which they erect their Houses, and adjust their Apartments, is inimitable. The *Caution*, with which they secrete their Abodes from the searching Eye, or intruding Foot, is admirable. No General, though fruitful in Expedients, could plan a more artful Concealment. No Architect, with his Rule and Line, could build so commodious a Lodgment.—Give the most celebrated Artificer the same Materials, which these weak and unexperienced Creatures use. Let a *Jones*, or a *De Moivre*, have only some rude Straws or ugly Sticks; a few Bits of Dirt, or Scraps of Hair; a sorry Lock of Wool, or a coarse Sprig of Moss; and what Works, fair with Delicacy, or fit for Service, could *they* produce?

We extol the Commander, who knows how to take Advantage of the Ground: who can make the Sun and Wind fight for Him, as well as his Troops: and, by every Circumstance,

embarrasses the Forces of the Enemy, but expedites the Action, and advances the Success of his own. Does not this Praise belong to our *feathery Leaders*? Who pitch their Tent, or (if You please) fix their pensile Camp, on the dangerous Branches, that wave aloft in the Air, or dance over the Eddies of the Stream. By which judicious Disposition, the vernal Gales rock their Cradle, and the murmuring Waters lull their Young: while both concur to terrify the Shepherd, and keep the School-Boy at a trembling Distance.—Some hide their little Household from View, amidst the Shelter of intangled Furze. Others remove it from Reach, in the Center of a thorny Thicket. And, by one Stratagem or another, they are generally as *secure* and *unmolested*, in their feeble Habitations; as the Foxes, that intrench themselves deep in the Earth; or as the Conies, that retire to the Rock for their * Citadel,

If the *Swan* has large sweeping Wings, and a copious Stock of Feathers, to spread over her callow Brood; the *Wren* makes up by Contrivance, what is deficient in her Bulk.—Small as she is, she intends † to bring forth, and will

* *Prov.* xxx. 26.

† *Aspasio* has ventured to say, *She intends*—And one is almost tempted to think, from the Preparation which the little Creature makes, that She had really sat down, and counted the Cost, and concerted her Scheme. As though She had deliberated with Herself—“ I shall lay, not a Couple of
“ Eggs,

will be obliged to nurse up, a very numerous Issue. Therefore, with the correctest Judgment She designs, and with indefatigable Assiduity finishes, a Nest proper for her Purpose. It is a neat *Rotund*; lengthened into an *Oval*, bottomed and vaulted with a *regular Concave*. To preserve it from Rain, it has several Coatings of Moss: to defend it from Cold, it has but one Window, and only a single Door: to render it both elegant and comfortable, it has *Carpets* and *Hangings* of the finest softest Down.—By the Help of this curious Mansion, our little Lady becomes the Mother of Multitudes. The vivifying Heat of her Body is, during the Time of Incubation, exceedingly augmented. Her House is like an Oven, and greatly assists in hatching her Young. Which no sooner burst the Shell, than they find themselves screened from the Annoyance of the Weather; and most agreeably reposed, amidst the Ornaments of a Palace, and the Warmth of a Bagnio.

Perhaps, We have been accustomed to look upon the *Insects*, as so many *rude* Scraps of
Creation,

“Eggs, but near a Score. From these I am to produce a
“House full of Young. But how shall I have Warmth
“ (unless Art supply, what Nature has denied) sufficient to
“ hatch the Embrios, or cherish the Infants?”—The Truth, I believe, is; That, in all her seeming Foresight, and circumspect Behaviour, She acts, She knows not what. Only She acts, what eternal WISDOM knows to be necessary, and what all-condescending GOODNESS prompts Her to perform.

Creation, and to rank them amongst the *Refuse* of Things. Whereas, if We examine them, without Prejudice, and with a little Attention, they will appear some of the most polished Pieces of divine Workmanship. — Many of them are decked with the richest Finery. Their *Eyes* are an Assemblage * of Microscopes; whose Mechanism is nice beyond Expression. Their *Dress* is a Vesture of resplendent Colours; set with an Arrangement of the most brilliant Gems. Their *Wings* are the finest Expansions imaginable: Cambric is mere Canvass; and Lawn is coarse as Sackcloth, compared with those inimitable Webs. The *Cases*, which inclose their Wings, glitter with the most glossy Varnish; are scooped into ornamental Flutings; are studded with radiant Spots; or pinked with elegant Holes. — Not one among them but is equipped with Weapons,

* The *common Fly*, for instance. Who is surrounded with a Multitude of Dangers, and has neither Strength to resist her Enemies, nor a Place of Retreat to secure Herself: For which Reason, She had need to be very vigilant, and always upon her Guard. Yet her Head is so fixed, as to be incapable of turning, in order to observe what passes, either behind or around her. — Providence therefore, surprisingly wise in its Contrivances, and equally rich in its Gifts, has furnished her, not barely with a *Retinæ*, but with more than a *Legion* of Eyes. Infomuch, that a single Fly is supposed to be Mistress of no less than eight thousand. Every one of which is lined with a distinct optic Nerve. — By means of this costly and amazing Apparatus, the little Creature sees on every Side, with the utmost Ease and with instantaneous Speed; yet without any Motion of the Eye, or any Flexion of the Neck.

ons, or endued with Dexterity, that qualify them to seize their Prey, or escape their Foe; to dispatch the Business of their respective Station, and enjoy the Pleasures of their particular Condition.

Now I am in a talking Humour, give me leave to celebrate the Endowments, and assert the Honours of my puny Clients. Yet, not so much to support *their* Credit, as to magnify their *all-gracious* CREATOR.—What? If the Elephant is distinguished by a prodigious *Proboscis*? His meanest Relations of the reptile Line, are furnished with curious *Antennæ*; remarkable, if not for their enormous Magnitude, yet for their ready Flexibility, and acute Sensation. By which they explore their Way, even in the darkest Road: they discover and avoid, whatever might defile their neat Apparel, or endanger their tender Lives.

Every one admires that majestic Creature the *Horse*; his graceful Head, and ample Chest; his arching Neck, and flowing Mane; his cleanly turned Limbs, and finely-adjusted Motions. With extraordinary Agility, He flings Himself over the Ditch; and with a rapid Career, pours Himself through the Plain. With unwearied Application, He carries his Rider from one End of the Country to another; and with undaunted Bravery, rushes into the fiercest Rage, and amidst the thickest Havock of the Battle.

Battle.—Yet, the *Grasshopper* springs with a Bound, altogether as brisk, if not more impetuous.—The *Ant*, in proportion to its Size, is equally nimble; equally strong; and will climb Precipices, which the most courageous Courser dares not attempt to scale.—If the *Snail* is slower in her Motions, She has no need to tread back the Ground which She has passed. Because, her House is a Part of her travelling Equipage: and whenever She departs, She is still under her own Roof; wherever She removes, is always at Home.

The *Eagle*, 'tis true, is privileged with Pini-
ons, that outstrip the Wind. Elevated on which,
She looks down on all that soars; and sees fly-
ing Clouds, and straining Wings, far below.
Her optic Nerve so strong, that it meets and
sustains the dazzling Beams of Noon: her wide
surveying Glance so keen, that from those
towering Heights, it discerns the smallest Fish,
which sculks at the Bottom of the River.—
Yet, neither is that poor Outcast, the groveling
and gloomy *Mole*, disregarded by divine Pro-
vidence. Because she is to dig a Cell in the
Earth, and dwell, as it were, in a perpetual
Dungeon, her Paws serve her for a Pick-axe
and Spade. Her Eye, or rather her visual
Speck, is sunk deep into a Socket, that it may
suffer no Injury from her rugged Situation:
it requires but a very scanty Communication
of

of Light, that she may have no Reason to complain of her darkling Abode. I called her subterranean Habitation a Dungeon ; and some People, perhaps, may think it a Grave. But I revoke the Expresssion. It yields her all the Safety of a fortified *Castle*, and all the Delight of a decorated *Grot*.

Even the *Spider*, though abhorred by Mankind, is evidently the Care of all-sustaining Heaven. She is to live upon Plunder ; to support Herself, by trappanning the idle, insignificant, fauntering Fly. Suitably to such an Occupation, she possesses a Bag of glutinous Moisture. From this she spins a clammy *Thread*, and weaves it into a tenacious *Net*. Expert as any practised Sportsman, she always spreads it in the most opportune Places. Sensible that her Appearance would create Horror, and deter the Prey from approaching the Snare, when watching for Sport, she retires from Sight. But constantly keeps within Distance, so as to receive the very first Intelligence of what passes in the Toils ; and be ready to launch, without a Moment's Delay, upon the struggling Captive. And what is very observable, when Winter chills the World, and no more Insects ramble amidst the Air, foreseeing that her Labour would be vain, she discontinues her Work, and abandons her Stand.

I must by no means forget the little Monarchy, that inhabits the Hive. The *Bees* are to subsist, not as a lawless Banditti, but as a regular Community. 'Tis theirs, to earn a decent Livelihood by honest Industry; not to glut themselves with Carnage, or enrich themselves by Rapine. For which Reason, they are actuated by an invariable Inclination to Society. They possess the truest Notions of Oeconomy, and have enacted the wisest Laws for Government.—Their indulgent CREATOR has made them a Present of all necessary Implements, both for constructing their *Combs*, and for composing their *Honey*. They have each a portable Vessel, with which they bring Home their collected Sweets: and they have all the most commodious Storehouses, in which they deposit their delicious Wares.—Though made for Peace, they know how to handle the Sword. They can take up Arms with the utmost Resolution and Intrepidity, when Arms are requisite to guard their Wealth, or repel their Foes.—Without making Botany their Study, they can readily distinguish every Plant, that is most likely to yield the Materials proper for their Business. Without serving an Apprenticeship in the Laboratory, they are complete Practitioners in the Art of Separation and Refinement. They are aware, without borrowing their Information from an Almanack, that
the

the vernal Gleams, and Summer Suns, continue but for a Season. Mindful of this Admonition *, they improve to the utmost every shining Hour ; and lay up a Stock of balmy Treasure, sufficient to supply the whole State, till the Blossoms open a-fresh, and their flowery Harvest returns.

Let the *Peacock* boast, if he pleases, his elegant Topknot and lofty Mien ; his Neck adorned with varying Dyes, and his Train bespangled with a Round of Stars. — Yet let him know, that the despised *Butterfly*, and even the loathed *Caterpillar*, display an Attire no less sumptuous ; and wear Ornaments, altogether as genteel, though not quite so magnificent. — If Beauty fits in State on that lordly Bird, she shines in Miniature on the vulgar Insect. And if the Master of this lower Creation, is ennobled with the *Powers of Reason* ; the meanest Classes of sensitive Existence, are endued with the *Faculty of Instinct*. Which gives them a Sagacity, that is neither derived from Observation, nor waits for the Finishings of Experience : which, without a Tutor, teaches them all necessary Skill ; and enables them, without a Pattern, to perform every needful Operation. And, what is far more surprising, never misleads them, either into erroneous Principles, or pernicious Practices :

* *Venturæque Hyemis memores, Æstate Laborem
Experiuntur, & in medium quæsita reponunt.*

Practices: never fails them, in the nicest or most arduous of their Undertakings.

Can you have Patience to follow me, if I step into a different Element, and just visit the *watery World*?—Not one among the innumerable Myriads, which swim the boundless Ocean, but is watched over by that exalted EYE, whose Smiles irradiate the Heaven of Heavens. Not one, but is supported by that Almighty HAND, which crowns Angels and Archangels with Glory.—The condescending GOD, has not only created, but *beautified* them. He has given the most exact Proportion to their Shape, the gayest Colours to their Skin, and a polished Smoothness to their Scales. The Eyes of some are surrounded with a scarlet Circle; the Back of others is diversified with crimson Stains. View them, when they glance along the Stream, or while they are fresh from their native Brine; and the burnished Silver is not more bright, the radiant Rainbow is scarce more glowing, than their vivid, glistening, glossy Hues.

Yet, notwithstanding the Finery of their Apparel, We are under painful Apprehensions for their Welfare.—How can the poor Creatures live, amidst the suffocating Waters?—As they have neither Hands nor Feet, how can they help themselves, or how escape their
Enemies?

Enemies?—We are soon freed from our Fears by observing, that they all possess the beneficial, as well as ornamental Furniture of *Fins*. These when expanded, like Masts above, and Ballast below, poise their floating Bodies, and keep them steadily upright.—We cannot forbear congratulating them on the *flexible* Play, and *vigorous* Activity of their Tails. With which they shoot themselves through the Paths of the Sea, more swiftly than Sails and Oars can waft the Royal Yatch.—But we are lost in Wonder, at the exquisite Contrivance, and delicate Formation of their *Gills*. By which they are accommodated, even in that dense Medium, with the Power of Breathing, and the Benefits of Respiration. A Piece of Mechanism this, indulged to the meanest of the Fry; yet surpassing, infinitely surpassing, in the Fineness of its Structure, and the Felicity of its Operation, whatever is curious in the Works of Art, or commodious in the Palaces of Princes.

Ther. Some Persons, *Aspasio*, have the Art of giving *Dignity* to trivial, and *Spirit* to jejune Topics. I cannot but listen, with a pleased Attention, to your Discourse; though it descends to the lowest Scenes, and meanest Productions of Nature.—To make such philosophical Remarks, was usually *my* Province; to add the religious Improvement, *yours*. But

my Thoughts, at present, are wholly taken up with the Consideration of my SAVIOUR's Righteousness. I can hardly turn my Views, or divert my Speech, to any other Subject. All those amiable Appearances of the external Creation, which I was wont to contemplate with Rapture, afford but a languid Entertainment to my Mind.—Till my Interest in this Divine REDEEMER is ascertained, the Spring may bloom ; the Summer shine ; and Autumn swell with Fruits : but it will be Winter, cheerless, gloomy, desolate *Winter* in my Soul.

Asp. You say, *Theron*, You attended to my cursory Hints. Then, your own superior Discernment could not but perceive, how every Part of the exterior World is adjusted, in the most excellent and gracious Manner.—Not the *coarsest* Piece of inactive Matter, but bears the Impress of its MAKER's fashioning Skill.—Not a *single* Creature, however insignificant, but exhibits evident Demonstrations of his providential Care.—His Hand is liberal, profusely liberal, to all that breathes, and all that has a Being.

Let me only ask — and to introduce this Question, with the greater Propriety ; to give it a more forcible Energy on our Minds ; was the principal Design of the preceding Remarks — Let me ask ; *Does GOD take Care for Oxen* * ?

Is

* 1 Cor. ix. 9.

Is He a generous Benefactor to the meanest Animals, to the lowest Reptiles? Are his magnificent Regards extended farther still, and vouchsafed even to the most worthless Vegetables? And shall they be withheld from *You*, my dear Friend, and from *me*? — Not one among all the numberless Productions, which tread the Ground, or stand rooted to the Soil, wants any Convenience, that is proper for its respective State. And will his heavenly FATHER deny *Theron*, what is so necessary to his present Comfort, and his final Happiness? Impossible *!

Ther. I wish for, but I can hardly hope to partake of, that spiritual Blessing; which always

* I know not how to forbear transcribing a Paragraph, from one of our periodical Papers; which contains a Proposal for *adapting* natural Philosophy to the Capacity of *Children*. Wishing, at the same time, that the ingenious Author would enlarge his Sketch into a Treatise; and execute the Plan, which He has so judiciously projected, and of which He has given Us so delicate a Specimen.

After some Remarks on the Sagacity of Birds, their Industry, and other surprising Properties, He adds; “ — Is it
 “ for Birds, O LORD, that Thou hast joined together so
 “ many Miracles, which they have no Knowledge of? Is
 “ it for Men who give no Attention to them? Is it for the
 “ Curious, who are satisfied with admiring, without raising
 “ their Thoughts to Thee? Or is it not rather visible, that
 “ thy Design has been to call Us to thyself, by such a Spec-
 “ tacle? To make Us sensible of thy Providence and in-
 “ finite Wisdom; and to fill Us with *Confidence* in thy
 “ Bounty, who watchest, with so much Care and Tender-
 “ ness, over Birds, though two of them are sold but for a
 “ Farthing?”

ways included my whole Happiness, and now ingrosses my whole Concern.

Asp. *Not hope to partake of!* — What Foundation, what Shadow of Pretence, has this desponding Temper, either in Reason, or in Scripture? Is it not written, in the Book of divine Revelation? Is it not apparent, through the whole Compass of Nature? That the Almighty LORD, “ who governeth the World “ with the Palm of his Hand *,” is remote, infinitely remote, from a niggardly Disposition. He not only provideth for the Wants, but even *satisfies the Desire of every living Thing †.*

Consider those stately *Poppies*, which are now the principal Ornament of the Garden. They have no Tongue to request the least Favour. Yet the ever-gracious MAKER, clothes them from his own Wardrobe, and decks them with exquisite Beauty.— Observe the *young Ravens*, that sit carelessly croking on yonder Boughs. Do they cry for Food? It is in hoarse unmeaning Accents. Yet the all-supporting GOD, overlooks their Ignorance; and supplies their every Need, from his own spontaneous Bounty.— If He attends to the former, though incapable of asking; if he accommodates the latter, though insensible of their Benefactor; can He *disregard* our pressing Wants? Will He *reject* our earnest Petitions? Especially, when We
seek

* *Ecclus.* xviii. 3. † *Psal.* cxlv. 16.

seek such pure and exalted Gifts, as it is both his Delight and his Honour to bestow.

O! my Friend, look abroad into universal Nature, and look away every disquieting Thought.

Ther. Did You inquire what Pretence I have, for this desponding Temper? Alas! I have more than a Pretence. I have a Reason. A Reason too obvious; my great *Unworthiness!*

Asp. Pray, where was the Worthiness of the stiff-necked *Israelites*? Yet the LORD *bare them, and carried them, all the Days of old**.—Where was the Worthiness of *Saul* the Blaphemer? Yet the blessed *JESUS* made Him a chosen Vessel, and set Him as a Signet on his Right-hand.—You deserve nothing at the Hand of GOD our Saviour. Neither did *Joseph's* Brethren deserve any Kindness, from the Viceroy of *Egypt*. Yet he delivered *them* from Famine, who sold *Him* to Slavery. He settled them in the choicest Territories, who cast Him into the horrible Pit. He shewed Himself a Friend and a Father to those unnatural Relations; who were his actual Betrayers, and his intentional Murderers.—And can You persuade yourself, will You harbour a Suspicion, That *CHRIST* is less compassionate than *Joseph*? Shall a frail Mortal out-vie *IMMANUEL* in Beneficence?

T 3

Ther.

* *Isai.* lxiii. 9.

Ther. Is not *some* Righteousness of our own indispensibly required, in order to our Participation of the Righteousness of *CHRIST*?

Asp. Yes, such a Righteousness as the *Samaritan* Woman, and *Zaccheus* the Publican possessed. Or such as the *Philippian* Jailor, and the profligate *Corinthians* might boast.—*Zaccheus* was a Man of infamous Character, and Chief among the Extortioners. The Jailor was a barbarous Persecutor, and in Purpose a Self-murderer. Yet our *L O R D* says of the former, *This Day*, without injoining any Course of previous Preparation, *is Salvation come to thine House* *. *St. Paul* directs the latter, without insisting upon any antecedent Righteousness, to *believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST*; and assures the poor alarmed Sinner, that, in so doing, He should *be saved* †.

So that nothing is required, in order to our Participation of *CHRIST* and his Benefits, but a Conviction of *our* Need, a Sense of *their* Worth, and a Willingness to receive them in the appointed Way: receive them, as the freest of Gifts, or as Matter of mere Grace. *Come, and take freely* ‡, is our *MASTER*'s Language; without staying to get any graceful Qualities, is his Meaning.

Ther. Surely, to come without any Holiness, without any *decent* Preparative, must be a gross
Indignity

* *Luke* xix. 9. † *Acts* xvi. 31. ‡ *Rev.* xxii. 17.

Indignity to the Divine *JESUS*. Whoever presents a Petition to any earthly Sovereign, will think it absolutely necessary, not to appear in a slovenly *Deſhabille*, much leſs in filthy Raiment. Does not our LORD Himſelf, in the Parable of the Wedding-Garment, inculcate this very Point, and caution Us againſt a presumptuous Approach?

Aſp. In the Parable You mention, *CHRIST* is both the Bridegroom, the Feaſt, and the Wedding-Garment *. And *who* are invited to an Union with this Bridegroom? To partake of this Feaſt? To be arrayed with this Wedding-Garment? — The Meſſengers are ſent, not to the Manſion-houſes of the Rich, or the Palaces of the Mighty; but to the *High-ways and Hedges*. Where Miſery mourns; and Poverty pines; and Baſeneſs hides her Head.— *To whom* is their Meſſage addreſſed? To the *Poor*, the *Maimed*, the *Halt*, the *Blind* †. Perſons, who have no amiable or recommending Endowments, but every *loathſome* and *diſguſtful* Property. Yet theſe (mark the Paſſage, my dear Friend; mark well the encouraging Circumſtance) *theſe* are not only not forbidden, but intreated—importuned—and, by all the Arts of Perſuaſion, by every weighty or winning Motive, *compelled to come in*. — And after all this,

* *Matt.* xxii. 11. *Hæc Veſtis eſt Juſtitia CHRISTI.*
 Bengel. in Loc. † *Luke* xiv. 21.

this, surely, it cannot be an Act of Presumption to accept, but must be a Breach of Duty to refuse the Invitation.

Ther. You take no Notice of the Man, who was found without a Wedding-Garment. Which is by far the most *alarming* Incident, and that which gives me no small Uneasiness.

Assp. And does my *Theron* take proper Notice of the Divine Declaration? *I have prepared my Dinner*, says the KING eternal. *All Things are ready**. “ Whatever is necessary
“ for the Justification, the Holiness, the complete
“ Salvation of Sinners, is provided in
“ the Merit and the Grace of my SON.
“ Let them come therefore, as to a nuptial
“ Banquet; and freely enjoy my Munificence;
“ and feast their Souls with the royal
“ Provision.”

The Man without a Wedding-Garment, denotes the specious *superficial* Professor; who is called by *CHRIST*'s Name, but has never put on *CHRIST JESUS* by Faith.—Shall I tell You more plainly, whom this Character represents? You yourself, my dear *Theron*, was some Months ago, in the State of this unhappy Creature. When You trusted in Yourself, and thought highly of your own, thought meanly of your SAVIOUR's Righteousness,

I

* *Matt.* xxii. 4.

I congratulate my Friend, on his happy Deliverance from so dangerous a Condition. You and I are now like the returning Prodigal. Let us remember, that He had no Recommendation, either of Person, of Dress, or of Circumstance. None but his Nakedness, his Misery, and his Vileness. Yet He was received—received with inexpressible Indulgence; and clothed with that first, that *best*, that divinest *Robe**, the Righteousness of *JESUS CHRIST*.

Let Us accustom Ourselves to consider this incomparable Robe, under its evangelical Character. It is not a Matter of Bargain, nor the Subject of Sale, but a Deed of Gift. *The Gift of Righteousness*, says the Apostle. And Gifts, We all know, are not to be *purchased*, but *received*.

Ther. Is nothing then, nothing to be done on our Part?—No Heavenly-mindedness to be exercised? No Victory over our Lufts gained? No Fruits of Sanctification produced?

Asp. These legal Apprehensions! How closely they cleave to my *Theron's* Mind! But, I hope, the Word of GOD, which pierceth to the dividing asunder the Soul and Spirit, will give the severing Blow.—And what says that sacred Word? It describes the Gospel, as a *Will*

OF

* *Luke xv. 22.*

or *Testament**; and all its glorious Blessings, as *Legacies* bequeathed by the dying *JESUS*. —When your old Acquaintance *Charicles*, left You a handsome Legacy; what did you *do*, to establish your Title, and make it your own?

Ther. My Title was pre-established, by my Friend's Donation. I had nothing to do, but to claim, to accept, and to possess.

Asp. Do the very same, in the present Case. They who believe, are Heirs, undoubted *Heirs of the Righteousness which is by Faith*†.—Sure you cannot suppose, that *CHRIST*'s Kindness is less sincere, or that *CHRIST*'s Donations are less valid, than those of an earthly Testator.

Ther. This Illustration hardly reaches the Point. I speak not of doing any thing, by way of *Merit*, but by way of *Qualification*.

Asp.

* *Heb.* ix. 16, 17. This Notion not only runs through the Scriptures, but stands conspicuous even in their Title-page.—What are they called? *THE OLD* and *THE NEW TESTAMENT*.—What is a Testament? An authentic Deed, in which Estates are transmitted, and Legacies bequeathed. In other Testaments, some *earthly* Possession; in this, the *heavenly* Patrimony, even all the Riches of Grace, and the everlasting Inheritance of Glory.—Did we consider the Scriptures in this Light, it would be a most engaging Invitation, to search them with Assiduity and Pleasure. What Child is willing to continue ignorant of a deceased Parent's last Will and Testament? Who does not covet to know, what Honours, Hereditaments, and Wealth devolve to his Enjoyment, by such an interesting and venerable Conveyance?

† *Heb.* xi. 7.

Asp. I can think of no Qualification, unless it be our extreme Indigence: This, indeed, it will be proper to have: and this, I presume, you are not without. Other Qualification, neither Reason prescribes, nor Scripture requires.

Reason prescribes no other.—The Gifts of the great eternal SOVEREIGN are intended, not to recognize our imaginary Worth, but to aggrandize the View of his own Mercy and Grace. To answer *such* a Design, the Unworthy and the Sinners are duly qualified; nay, are the *only* qualified Persons.

Scripture requires no other.—The ever-merciful SAVIOUR says not; They are unqualified for my Merits. They have no valuable or noble Acquirements. But this is his tender Complaint; *They will not come to me*, just as they are; with all their Sins about them; with all their Guilt upon them; *that they may have Life* *.—Pray, take notice of this Text; and you will see that Sanctification, Heavenly-mindedness, and a Victory over our Lusts, are not the Qualities which He *requires*, but the Blessings which He will *confer*.

Ther. “The Unworthy and Sinners, the “*only qualified!*” Of this Expression I cannot but take particular Notice.—Then *Judas* should stand in the first Rank of qualified Persons; and

* *John v. 40.*

and the devout Centurion, *whose Prayers and Alms had come up as a Memorial before GOD,* was thereby unqualified for the Favour of Heaven.

Asp. If you observed my Expression, I spoke in the hypothetical Manner. Made a Supposition, rather than advanced an Assertion. *If* there be any Qualification, this is the only one. But, strictly speaking, there is no such Thing. The impulsive Cause of all GOD's Goodness exists in himself. *He has Mercy,* not because this or that Person is amiable, is meet, or qualified, but *because he will have Mercy.*—And as for our Need of Mercy and Reconciliation, arising from our Sinfulness, this can no more constitute a real Qualification for the Blessings, than an Act of Rebellion can qualify for the first Honours of the State.

But this We must allow, that such Need, such Misery, such Sinfulness, illustrate the *Freeness*, and manifest the *Riches* of divine Grace. And this We should never forget, that the grand End which GOD proposes, in all his favourable Dispensations to fallen Man, is, to demonstrate the Sovereignty, and advance THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE. The LORD, promising a very extraordinary Deliverance to *Israel*, says; *not for your Sakes, be it known unto You, do I this *signal Act of Kindness.*

* *Ezek.* xxxvi. 32.

ness. What then is the Inducement? We find it in the following Declaration; *I, even I am HE, that blotteth out your Transgressions FOR MY OWN SAKE* *. A Ray of the same undeserved and illustrious Goodness beams forth, in that great evangelical Text; *Not by Works of Righteousness, which We have done, whether they be initial or habitual, but according to his Mercy He saved us* †.

Ther. This is such a Gift!—To be interested in all the Merits of *CHRIST*! To have his immaculate Righteousness imputed to my Soul! — So that from henceforth there shall be no Fear of Condemnation, but a comfortable Enjoyment of freest Love, and a delightful Expectation of completest Glory!

Asp. If this rich Donation, surpass your very Thoughts, and fill You with grateful Astonishment; it is so much the better adapted to display, what the Scripture very emphatically

* *Isai.* xliii. 25. לְמַעַן *For my own sake.* Which teaches Us, that *GOD*, and nothing in the Creature, is the original, entire, sole Cause of all Grace and every gracious Vouchsafement. It is not only *by Him* and *through Him*, but *to Him*, and for the Honour of his adorable Majesty, that We are pardoned, accepted, saved. *TO THE PRAISE OF THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE*, is a proper Motto for all the Dispensations of his Goodness. It has been inscribed by the Hand of Truth and Inspiration, *Eph.* i. 6. Time and Eternity, instead of erasing the Lines, will stamp them deeper, and open them wider.

† *Tit.* iii. 5.

phatically styles, the *abundant*, the *superabundant*, the *exceeding abundant* * Grace of our GOD.—GOD hath Pleasure in the Prosperity of his Servants. He is a boundless Ocean of Love; ever flowing, yet absolutely inexhaustible. See! What an innumerable Variety of Benefits, are transmitted from yonder Sun, to gladden all the Regions of Nature! Yet the Sun is but a *Spark*; its highest Splendor, no more than a *Shade*; its uninterrupted and most profuse Communications of Light, a poor diminutive *Scantling*; compared with the Riches of Divine *Benignity*.

The Servant in the Parable, who owed ten thousand Talents, craved only some kind Forbearance. Whereas, his generous Lord gave him an Acquittance in full; *I forgave Thee all that Debt* †.—You wonder, and very deservedly, at such vast Generosity. But, what had been your Admiration, if the noble Master had admitted this obnoxious Slave, to a Share in his Dignity? What, if he had made Him the Heir of his House, and settled his whole Estate upon so mean a Wretch? This perhaps, You would say, exceeds the Bounds of Credibility. Yet GOD Almighty's stupendous Beneficence exceeds all this. He not only spares guilty Creatures, but makes them his *Children*;

* Ὑπερβαλλυσα χάρις. 2 Cor. ix. 14.—Ὑπερπερισσευσεν ἡ χάρις. Rom. v. 20.—Ὑπερπλεονασεν ἡ χάρις. 2 Tim. i. 14.
† Matt. xviii. 32.

dren; makes them *Inheritors* of his Kingdom; and, as an Introduction to all, or rather as the Crown of all, makes them *Partakers* * of his SON.

Ther. The Gift is inestimable; of more Value than all Worlds. It will render me blessed and happy, Now and for Ever. And may so unworthy a Creature look for a Blessing, so superlatively excellent?

Asp. Unworthy!—My dear Friend, dwell no longer upon that obsolete Topic. The greatest *Unworthiness* is no Objection in *CHRIST*'s Account, when the Soul is convinced of Sin, and the Heart desirous of a SAVIOUR. And as for *Worthiness*, this is as much disavowed by the Gospel, as *equivocal* Generation † is exploded by the Discoveries of our improved Philosophy.—Nay farther, this Notion is diametrically *contrary* to the Gospel, and totally *subversive* of the Covenant of Grace.

Ther. In what Respects?

Asp. Because, it would make our own Duty and Obedience the Terms. Whereas, the Terms were *CHRIST*'s Suffering, and
CHRIST's

* *Heb.* iii. 14.

† The *Ancients* imagined, that many Vegetables and Insects were produced by, I know not what, plastic Power in the Sun and other Elements. This is called *equivocal* Generation. Whereas, the *modern* Philosophers maintain, that every Individual of this Kind, derives its Being from some Parent-Vegetable or Parent-Animal. This is styled *univocal* Generation.

CHRIST's Obedience. *These* are the Hinge on which that great Transaction turns, and on which the Hope of the World hangs.

Ther. Be more particular, *Aspasio*.

Asp. The first Covenant was made with *Adam*, for Himself and Us. Breaking it, He lost his original Righteousness, and became subject to Death. Was, at once, a *Bankrupt* and a *Rebel*.—Now You cannot suppose, that the Almighty MAJESTY would enter into a fresh Covenant, with an *insolvent* and *attainted* Creature. It pleased, therefore, the SECOND PERSON of the adorable TRINITY, to undertake our Cause; to become our Surety; and put Himself in our Stead. *With Him* the second Covenant was made. He was charged with the Performance of the Conditions: thereby to obtain Pardon and Righteousness, Grace and Glory, for all his People. *I have made a Covenant with my CHOSEN * ONE;*
is

* *Pfal.* lxxix. 3. It is generally allowed, that this Psalm, in its *sublimest* Sense, is referable to *CHRIST*; and, in its *full* Extent, is referable *only* unto *CHRIST*. If so, I think, it would be more significant and emphatical, to render בְּחִירִי *My chosen One*.—This will furnish out a very clear and cogent Argument to prove, that the Covenant of Grace was made with our *LORD JESUS*. Just such an Argument as the Apostle uses, to convince the *Galatians*, That the Promises of the Covenant were made to the same Divine PERSON, *Gal.* iii. 16.—From both which Premises this important Conclusion follows; That Justification and every spiritual Blessing are the *Purchase* of *CHRIST's* Obedience; are lodged in Him as the great *Proprietary*; are *communicated* to Sinners, only through the Exercise of *Faith*, or in a Way of Believing. See *Zech.* ix. 11.

is the Language of the MOST HIGH. And the Terms were (You will permit me to repeat the momentous Truth) not your Worthiness or mine, but the Incarnation, the Obedience, the Death of GOD's ever-blessed SON.

Ther. Has Man then no Office assigned, no Part to act, in the Covenant of Grace?

Asp. He has: but it is a Part, which my Friend seems very loth to discharge. His Part is to *accept* the Blessings, *fully purchased* by the SAVIOUR, and *freely offered* to the Sinner. His Part is, not to dishonour the REDEEMER's gracious Interposition, and infinitely sufficient Performance, by hankering after any Merit of his own.

Ther. If this be the Nature of the New Covenant, I must confess, I have hitherto been ignorant of the Gospel.

Asp. And from hence arises your present Distress. From hence your Averseness to receive Comfort.—You are a Philosopher, *Theron*; and have been accustomed to examine nicely the Proportion of Objects, rather than to weigh them in the Balance of the Sanctuary. Here you find all Proportion swallowed up and lost. This quite overthrows all your Conclusions, drawn from the Fitness of Things. Here, *Man* is nothing, less than nothing, while *Grace* is all in all.—And should

we not, however unworthy in Ourselves, magnify the Grace of our GOD?

Ther. Most certainly.

Asp. How can this be done, but by expecting great and superlatively precious Blessings from his Hand?—*Alexander*, You know, had a famous, but indigent Philosopher, in his Court. Our Adept in Science, was once particularly straitened in his Circumstances. To whom should He apply, but to his Patron, the Conqueror of the World? His Request was no sooner made, than granted. *Alexander* gives Him a Commission, to receive of his Treasurer whatever He wanted. He immediately demands, in his Sovereign's Name, a hundred Talents*.—The Treasurer, surpris'd at so large a Demand, refus'd to comply: but waits upon the King, and represents the Affair. Adding withal, how unreasonable He thought the Petition, and how exorbitant the Sum.—*Alexander* heard Him with Patience: but, as soon as He had ended his Remonstrance, replied; “ Let the Money be instantly paid. I am delighted with this Philosopher's way of thinking. He has done me a singular Honour; and shew'd, by the Largeness of his Request, what a high Idea He has conceived, both of my superior Wealth, and my royal Munificence.”

Thus,

* About ten thousand Pounds.

Thus, my dear *Theron*, let us honour, what the inspired Penman styles, *The marvelous Loving-kindness of JEHOVAH*. From the King, whose Name is the LORD of Hosts; let Us expect—not barely what corresponds with our low Models of Generosity—much less what We suppose proportioned to our fancied Deserts—but what is suitable to the unknown Magnificence of his Name, and the unbounded Benevolence of his Heart. Then We shall cheerfully and assuredly trust, that *CHRIST JESUS* will be made of *GOD* to Us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption.

Ther. I have not only no Merit, but great Guilt*. Was, by Nature, a Child of Wrath. Have been, by Practice, a Slave of Sin. And, what

* I believe, No One experienced in the spiritual Life will suspect, that *Theron* speaks out of Character.—Conscience, when once alarmed, is a stubborn and unceremonious Thing. It pays no Deference to Wealth: it never stands in awe of Grandeur: neither can it be soothed by the Refinements of Education, or the Attainments of Learning. And We generally find, that a most unaccountable Propensity to *Self-worthiness*, strongly possesses the new-awakened Convert. He is perpetually raising Objections, founded on the Want of personal Merit; notwithstanding all our Remonstrances, to quiet his Fears, and remove his Jealousies. It is truly a hard Task, for a Mind, naturally leavened with legal Pride, to come naked and miserable to *CHRIST*—to come, divested of every Recommendation but that of extreme Wretchedness; and receive, from the Hand of unmerited Benignity, the free Riches of evangelical Grace.

what is worse, am still corrupt; have still a carnal Heart.—And has not such a Wretch forfeited all Title to the Divine Favour? Nay, does He not deserve the Vengeance of eternal Fire?

Ans. That We all deserve this Misery, is beyond Dispute. I am truly glad, that We are sensible of our Demerit. Here our Recovery begins. Now We are to believe, that the *LORD JESUS* has satisfied Divine Justice; has paid a glorious Price, on purpose to obtain for such ill-deserving, such Hell-deserving Creatures, all Pardon, all Holiness, and everlasting Happiness. According to the Import of that charming Scripture, *When We were Enemies* (and what is there in an Enemy, to bespeak Favour, or deserve Benefits?) *We were reconciled to GOD by the Death of his SON**. —As it is Pride, to entertain high Notions of our own Accomplishments, or to expect eternal Life on the Score of our own Obedience; so it will be an Affront to the Grandeur of *CHRIST*'s Merits, and the Freeness of his Grace, if We suppose our Crimes too heinous to be forgiven, or our Persons too vile to be accepted.

You have *great Guilt*. But is this a Reason, why You should be excluded from the Blessings of the Covenant? Contemplate the
State

* *Rom. v. 10.*

State of that forlorn and wretched Outcast, described in the sixteenth of *Ezekiel*. An Infant *in its Blood*: this represents a Sinner, who has nothing to excite Love, but all that may provoke Abhorrence. Yet, what says the HOLY ONE of *Israel*? *When I saw Thee*, not washed, and purified, and made meet for my Acceptance, but *polluted in thy Blood**; loathsome with Defilement, and laden with Iniquity: then, even then *I said unto Thee, Live: I spread my Skirt over Thee; and Thou becamest mine*. This is the Manner of his Proceeding, not barely to one Nation, but to all his People; not in one Period of Time only, but through all Generations.

You are *still corrupt*: One that is sensible of his Corruption, and acknowledges his Sinfulness! Then You are the *very Person*, for whom the SAVIOUR's Righteousness is intended; to whom it is promised.—You are a Governor of the County-hospital, *Theron*. You have been industrious in promoting, and are active in supporting, that excellent Institution; where Medicine with her healing Stores, and Religion with her heavenly Hopes, act as joint
Hand-

* The Words are peculiarly emphatical; not only doubled, but redoubled. To denote, at once, the *Strangeness* of the Fact, yet the *Certainty* of the Favour. *When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own Blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy Blood, Live: yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy Blood, Live.* *Ezek. xvi. 6.*

Handmaids to Charity. What are the Circumstances, which render any Persons the proper Objects, for an Admission into your Infirmary ?

Ther. Their Poverty, and their Distemper. Without *Poverty*, they would not need; and free from *Distemper*, they would not prize, the Benefit of our modern *Bethesda*.

Afp. Apply this to the Case under Consideration. The whole World is in a State of spiritual Disorder. *CHRIST* is styled, by an inspired Writer, *The LORD our Healer* *, The Gift of his Righteousness, the Balm of his Blood, and the Influences of his SPIRIT, are the sovereign Restorative. And sure it cannot be a fanciful Persuasion of our Health, but a feeling Conviction of our Disease, that renders Us proper Objects of his recovering Grace.—*He came, not to call the Righteous, the Righteous in their own Eyes, but Sinners † ; self-condemned and ruined Sinners, to exercise Repentance, and find Mercy.*

Ther. But, if any foolish and refractory Patients have abused our Beneficence; it is a standing unalterable Rule of the House, never to admit them a second Time; however pressing their Exigencies, or however powerful their Recommender. I have, not once only, but through the whole Course of my
Life,

* *Exod. xv. 26,*

† *Matt. ix. 13.*

Life, abused the marvelous Loving-kindness of the LORD.

Asp. And is not the LORD superior to all his Creatures, in Acts of *Pardon*, as well as of *Power*? Yes; as those Heavens are higher, than this prostrate Earth; so much more enlarged and extensive is the divine Clemency—than the widest Sphere of human Kindness, shall I say? Rather than the boldest Flights of human Imagination. Your Statutes are inexorable, in Case of one notorious Irregularity committed. *But the free Gift of Grace is vouchsafed, notwithstanding many Offences, unto Justification* *. It is ~~the~~ *Glory* of our Almighty RULER, and redounds to the Honour of his crucified SON, *to pass over* † not a single Transgression only, but a Multitude of Provocations; to be as unequalled in Mercy, as He is supreme in Majesty.

Theron paused.—These Considerations seemed to operate: This Anodyne to take effect.—Desirous to improve the favourable Juncture, and set Home the needed Consolation, *Aspasio* added:

How often did the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, disregard the Warnings, and reject the Counsels, of our blessed LORD! How justly might He have sworn in his Wrath; “ They shall
“ never hear the joyful Sound of my Gospel
“ more.

* *Rom.* v. 16.

† *Prov.* xix. 11.

“ more. The Blessings, which they have so
 “ wantonly despised, and so wickedly abused,
 “ shall be irrevocably withdrawn.”—Instead
 of passing such a Sentence, hear the Charge,
 which, after his Resurrection, He gives to his
 Apostles: *That Repentance and Remission of Sins*
should be preached, in my Name, to all Nations,
 BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM*.—At *Jerusalem,*
 LORD! Have not the Men of that ungrate-
 ful and barbarous City, been deaf to thy ten-
 derest Importunities? Did they not persecute
 Thee even unto Death? Are not their Wea-
 pons still reeking, as it were, with thy Blood;
 and their Tongues still shooting out Arrows,
 even bitter Words? By which they would
 murder thy Character, as they have already
 crucified thy Person. Yet these Wretches (and
 could any be more inhuman? Could any be
 more unworthy?) are not only not abhorred,
 but unto them is the Message of Grace, and
 the Word of Salvation sent. Nay, to shew
 the unparalleled Freeness of our REDEEMER'S
 Grace, These are *first* upon the heavenly List.
 The glad Tidings of Pardon and Life,
 which are to be published through the World,
must begin (amazing Mercy!) MUST BEGIN at
Jerusalem,

Ther. Thus much I may venture to profess
 in my own Behalf: That I long for this Bless-
 ing

* *Luke xxiv. 47.*

ing—I pray for this Blessing—But I cannot see my Title, to this comprehensive and inestimable Blessing, *clear*.

Asp. I behold it perfectly clear, and ascertained by your own Confession.—Some Days ago, a worthy Clergyman, who lately came to fettle in the Neighbourhood, did Himself the Honour of making one at your Table. After Dinner, You shewed Him your Library; We took a Walk in your Garden; and made the agreeable Tour of the Fish-Ponds. Then—with that amiable Frankness of Mien and Accent, which is so peculiar to my Friend, and exceedingly endears all his Favours—You told Him; “ That He was as welcome
 “ to any Book in your Study, as if the whole
 “ Collection was his own. That if, on a
 “ Visit from some Acquaintance of superior
 “ Rank, He should wish to be accommodated
 “ with a more delicate Entertainment than
 “ usual; the Productions of your Waters,
 “ and of your Hot-beds, were intirely at his
 “ Service. And that his Acceptance of your
 “ Offers, without the least Shyness or Reserve,
 “ would be the most pleasing Compliment,
 “ He could pay You on the Occasion.”

What says the great PROPRIETOR of all Good? *If any Man*, however unworthy his Person, or obnoxious his Character, *thirst*; *thirst* for the Blessings of my evangelical Kingdom;
 dom;

dom; *let Him come unto me*, the Fountain of these living Waters, *and drink his Fill**.—You Yourself acknowledge, that You long for the sacred Privileges of the Gospel. Your Heart is awakened into habitual and lively Desires after the Salvation of *CHRIST*. What is this but, in the spiritual Sense, to thirst? To You therefore the Promise is made. To You the Riches of this benign Dispensation belong.

That Clergyman has not the least Suspicion of being disappointed, in case He should send for a Brace of Carp from your Canal, or a fine Melon from your Garden.—Why is He so confident? Because He has done You any signal Service? No; but because You have passed your Word, and made the generous Offer.—And why should You harbour the least Doubt, concerning the Divine Veracity? Why should You call in question your Right to these heavenly Treasures? Since it is founded on a Grant, altogether as *free*, altogether as *clear*, as your own indulgent Concession; and infinitely more *firm*, than any human Engagement. Founded on the Fidelity of that sublime BEING, who “remembers his Covenant and Promise to a thousand Generations.”

Ther. It is impossible to confute, yet difficult to believe, what You urge.

Asp.

* *John vii. 37.*

Asp. What I urge, is not of the Voice of a few dubious Passages, nicely culled from the Book of GOD, or forcibly wrested by the Interpretation of Man. The whole Tenour of Inspiration runs, with the greatest Perspicuity, and the greatest Uniformity, in this delightful Strain.—Let me, out of a Multitude, produce another Express from the Court of Heaven. *Ho! every One that thirsteth, come Ye to the Waters, even He that hath no Money. Come Ye, buy and eat: yea; come, buy Wine and Milk, without Money and without Price*.*—*Wine and Milk*, undoubtedly signify the Pardon of our Sins, and the Justification of our Persons; the Communications of sanctifying Grace, and the Hope of eternal Glory. These are nourishing and refreshing to the Soul, as Milk the richest of Foods, and as Wine the best of Cordials, are to the Body. These, You see, are to be obtained, *without Money*, and *without Price*: without any Merit of our own; without any Plea deduced from Ourselves; by poor, undone, perishing Bankrupts.—They are to be enjoyed by *every One*, that unfeignedly esteems them, and earnestly seeks them. No Exception is made. No exclusive Clause added. It is not said, *Whoever is worthy*, but *whoever will*, let Him take of the Water of Life freely †.—To leave no Room
for

* *Isai. lv. 1.*† *Rev. xxii. 17.*

for any misgiving Apprehensions, the kind Invitation is renewed ; the invaluable Tender is reconfirmed ; and both are pressed upon Us with the most affectionate Vehemence.

Had our heavenly BENEFACTOR permitted Us to draw up this Instrument of Conveyance, and word it according to our own Wish ; what Language could We have contrived, to render either the Grant more free, or our Claim more secure ?

Ther. These are chearing Truths. They amount to little less than a Demonstration. And I am ready to declare, in the Language of *Agrippa* ; *Almost* Thou persuadest me to commence a Believer.

Asp. And why, my dear Friend, why not *altogether* ? Can You distrust the Sincerity of the divine Overtures ? If the Overtures are real, your Title is unquestionable.—Nay ; there is more than an Overture. You have an *actual* Gift, from the Almighty MAJESTY. *To Us*, says the Prophet—including all that wait for the Redemption of *CHRIST*, and the Consolation of *Israel*—*a Child is born**. *To Us*—He repeats the precious Truth ; to declare his exuberant Joy †, and denote the absolute Cer-

* *Isai.* ix. 6.

† *Virgil* has copied the Prophet's *fine Manner*. He represents Joy, uttering her Sentiments, in the same spirited Strain, with the same reiterated Earnestness :

—————*Humilemque videmus*
Italiam. Italiam primus conclamat Achates,
Italiam læto Socii Giamore salutant,

Certainty * of the Thing—*a Son is given*. Even GOD's own SON, the ever blessed *JESUS*, to be our PROPITIATION, our SURETY, our complete REDEEMER.

Just cast a Look upon yonder neat Lodge. Though placed in the Center of a spacious Field, it seems to be contiguous with the Extremity of the Vista. The Eye, traveling over such a Length of Ground, has almost lost the Windows, and the decent Ornaments of the Front. But I shall not soon lose the Idea of that amiable Munificence; which, as I was rambling one pleasant Morning, and accidentally called at the House, I learned from its present Owner.—He was, I find, one of your Servants. Had spent several Years in your Family. When He settled in the World, You bestowed upon him that commodious Box, and a pretty adjacent Farm; to possess, without Molestation or Controul, during his Life.—Does He not reckon the little Estate, by virtue of your Donation, to be his own? As much his own, for the Time prescribed, as if He had paid an Equivalent in Money? — Since the LORD JEHOVAH *has given Us his SON* and all his unutterable Merits; why should We not, with an Assurance of Faith, receive the incomparable Gift? Why should We not confide in it, as firmer than the firmest Deed?

and

* See *Gen. xli. 32.*

and far more inviolable, than any royal Patent?—Especially, since it has been sealed to Us, in every sacramental Ordinance; and witnessed by every good Motion of the HOLY SPIRIT in our Hearts.

Ther. My Servant never affronted my Authority. If He had vilified my Character, or insulted my Person, should I then have been inclined to make the same advantageous Settlement?

Asp. Herein appears the infinite Superiority of the divine Bounty. GOD is rich in Mercy, not only to the Obedient and Grateful, but to the Unthankful and Unworthy. *To the LORD our GOD*, says the Prophet, *belong Mercies and Forgivenesses*; in Measure superabundant, and in Continuance unwearied. And this, *notwithstanding We have* offended Him, by our manifold Failures in Duty. Nay, have *rebelled* * *against him*, by flagrant Violations of his Law.

In

* *Dan. ix. 9.* The Original is מרדני than which no Expression, in the *Hebrew Language*, bears a more obnoxious Signification. It denotes the most *audacious* and the most *flagitious* Impiety. It denotes that *Rebellion, which is as the Sin of Witchcraft*; and that *Stubbornness, which is as the Iniquity of Idolatry*. Yet, all virulent and execrable as it is, it does not suppress the Yearnings of divine Pity, nor supersede the Exercise of divine Forgiveness.—With a Word derived from the same Root, *Saul*, when exasperated almost to Madness, upbraids *Jonathan*. And we know, Persons so extremely incensed, never speak in the softest Terms; never touch the Subject with a Feather, but make their Tongue like a sharp Sword.

May

In sweet Concert with this prophetic Lesson, sings the transported *Psalmist*; *Thou, LORD, in thy sacred Humanity, hast ascended upon high: ascended, from the low Caverns of the Tomb, to the highest Throne in the highest Heavens.—Thou hast led Captivity captive: hast abolished Death, that universal Tyrant; and subdued those Powers of Darkness, which had enslaved the whole World.—Like a glorious and triumphant Conqueror, Thou hast also received Gifts; not merely for thy own Fruition, but to confer on Others, by way of honorary and enriching Largeness.—What are those Gifts, Theon?*

Theon. The Gifts of the Gospel, I suppose: Pardon of Sin, the Influences of the HOLY SPIRIT, and those other Privileges of *Christianity*; which constitute the present Happiness of Mankind, and prepare them for future Bliss.

Assp. You rightly judge.—And for whom were these royal, these heavenly Donatives received?

Theon.

May I venture to add? That our Translators seem to mistake the proper Application of the afore-mentioned Passage. They represent *Saul's* Inveſtive, flying as wide of the Mark, as it is *over-charged* with Malice.—*Son of the perverse rebellious Woman!* This might be asserted, without the least Impeachment of *Jonathan's* personal Loyalty.—Besides, is it not excessively indecent, as well as absolutely unreasonable, to reflect upon the Mother, for the Misdemeanours of the Son?—Surely, the Clause should be rendered, in perfect Consistence with the Genius of the Original; *Thou Son of perverse Rebellion*; or, more agreeably to the *English* Idiom, *Thou perverse rebellious Wretch!* 1 Sam. xx. 30.

Ther. Let me recollect—*Thou receivedst Gifts* — not for fallen Angels, but *for Men*—And not for thy Friends, but for thy *Enemies*—yea, *for the Rebellious* also *. — Merciful Heaven! What a Word is this! And does it come from the GOD of Truth? — Gifts! Divine Gifts! Gifts of unspeakable Value, and eternal Duration! And these to be conferred on Enemies, on the Rebellious! Wretches who were destitute of all gracious Qualifications; who deserved not the least Favour; but had Reason to expect the Frowns of Indignation, and the Sword of Vengeance!

Asp. Thus it is written, in those sacred Constitutions; which are far more stedfast and unalterable, than the Law of the *Medes* and *Persians*. — Thus it is spoken, by the Mouth of that almighty BEING; with whom there is no Variableness, nor the least Shadow of Turning.—Let Us not, my dear Friend, by unreasonable Unbelief, frustrate all these Promises, and reject our own Mercies. Let us not, by an evil Heart of Unbelief, make GOD a Lyar; and make Ourselves, of all Creatures, most miserable.

But see! — The Clouds, that hung their agreeable Sables, to damp the Ardour, and abate the Glare of Day, are departing. The Sun

* *Psal.* lxxviii. 18.

Sun has been colouring their fleecy Skirts, and spreading over the floating Screen a Variety of interchangeable Hues. Now He begins to edge them with Gold, and shine them into Silver. A sure Indication, that (like the *glittering*, but *transitory* Toys, they represent) they will soon be swept from the Horizon, and seen no more. —The bright Orb, while We are speaking, bursts the Veil; and, from a voluminous Pomp of parting Clouds, pours a Flood of Splendor over all the Face of Nature.—We shall quickly perceive this open Situation, too hot to consist with Pleasure: and must be obliged to seek for Shelter, in the shady Apartments of the House.

Will you admit me, *Theron*, into those shady Apartments? May I hope to obtain this Favour?

Ther. Hope to obtain! *Aspasio*!—I am surprised at your Question. I thought You had known me better: and am sorry, it should be needful to assure You, that my House is as much your own, as it is mine. The more freely You command it, the more highly you will oblige me.

Asp. May I believe You, *Theron*? Do you speak from your Heart? Or must I conclude, that You plausibly profess, what You have no Intention to perform?—Would you be pleased, if I should obstinately persist in these

dishonourable Suspicions, notwithstanding all your friendly Protestations?

Ther. My dear *Aspasio*, I see your Design. I see, and am ashamed. Ashamed to think, that I should fancy myself more punctual in my Professions, than **G O D** is true to his Word. — *L O R D*, I believe. *Help Thou mine Unbelief!*





DIALOGUE XVI.



U R Friends had agreed upon making a Visit to *Philenor*. They rode through a fine, open, fruitful Country. Which was covered with Crops of ripened Corn; and occupied by several Parties of Rustics, gathering in the copious *Harvest*.

The *Rye*, white and hoary as it were with Age, waved its bearded Billows, and gave a dry husky Rustle before the Breeze.—The *Wheat*, laden with Plenty, and beautifully brown, hung the heavy Head; and invited, by its bending Posture, the Reaper's Hand. Platts of *Barley*, and Acres of *Oats*, stood white or whitening in the Sun. Upright, and perfectly even, as though the Gardener's Shears had clipped them at the Top, they gratified the Spectator's Eye, but gladdened the Farmer's

Heart.—*Beans*, partly clad in native Green, partly transformed and tawny with the parching Ray, were preparing the last Employ for the crooked Weapon.—Some of the Grain lay flat, in regular Rows, on the new-made Stubble. Some was erected, in graceful Shocks, along the bristly Ridges. Some, conveyed homewards on the loaded Waggon, nodded over the groaning Axle.

The Villages seemed to be empty, and all their Inhabitants poured into the Plains. Here were Persons of each Sex, and of every Age.—The lusty *Youths*, stooping to their Work, plied the Sickle; or swept, with their Scythes, the falling Ranks.—The buxom *Lasses* followed, binding the Handfuls into Sheaves, or piling the Swarths into hasty Cocks.—Dispersed up and down were the *Children* of the Needy, glean- ing the scattered Ears, and picking their scanty Harvest.—Nor were the *old* People absent; but crawling into the Sun, or sitting on a shady Eminence, they beheld the Toils—the pleasing Toils they once sustained.

This is the most joyful Period of the Coun- tryman's Life; the long expected Crown of all his Labours. For this, He broke the stub- born Glebe, and manured the impoverished Soil. For this, He bore the sultry Beams of Summer, and shrunk not from the pinching Blasts of Winter. For this, He toiled away
the

the Year, in a Round of ceaseless but willing Activity. Knowing, that *the Husbandman must labour, before He partakes of the Fruits* *.— And will not the blessed Hope of everlasting Life; will not the bright Expectation of consummate Bliss, animate Us with an equally chearful Resolution, both to resist the Temptations, and discharge the Duties of our present State?

Short seemed the Way, and quick passed the Time, as they traveled through such Scenes of rural Abundance, and rural Delight.— Before they were aware, the Horses stopped at *Philenor's* Seat. Where they found, to their no small Disappointment, that the Master was gone abroad. They alighted however, and took a Walk in the *Gardens*.

The Gardens, at proper Intervals, and in well-chosen Situations, were interspersed with Pieces of *Statuary*. At the Turn of a Corner, You are — not shocked with a naked Gladiator, or a beastly *Priapus* — but agreeably surpris'd with the Image of *Tully*. He seems to
be

* 2 *Tim.* ii. 6. *Beza* thinks, that in settling the Construction of this Verse, the Adverb *πρωτον* should be connected with the Participle *κοπιωσις*. If so, the Translation exhibited above, may bid fair for Acceptance; and, one of the most celebrated Historians, may have the Honour of commenting on the greatest of the Apostles; *Næ illi falsi sunt, qui diversissimas Res expectant, Ignaviæ Voluptatem, & Præmia Virtutis.* *Salust.* They are, beyond all Dispute, most egregiously mistaken, who hope to unite those incompatible Things, the Pleasures of Indolence, and the Rewards of Industry.

be juſt riſen from his Seat, and upon the Point of addreſſing Himſelf to ſome important Oration. A reverential Awe appears in his Countenance; like one ſenſible, that he is to plead before the Rulers of the World. Sedate, at the ſame time, and collected in Himſelf; like one conſcious of ſuperior Eloquence, and emboldened by the Juſtice of his Cauſe. His thoughtful Aſpect, and gracefully expanded Arm, ſpeak to the Eye, before the Tongue has uttered a Syllable.

You enter an Alley, lined on either Side with a verdant Fan; and having no Variety of Objects to diversify the intermediate Space, your View is conducted to a magnificent Building at the End. As You walk along, contemplating the maſterly Performance in Architecture, an unexpected Opening diverts your Attention; and preſents You with ſome fine Imitation of virtuous or heroic Life.—Not the *Macedonian* Madman; nor *Sweden's* royal Knight-errant; nor *Cæſar*, infamouſly renowned for his ſlaughtered Millions; but the truly gallant *Czar*. A drawn Sword in his Hand, and a commanding majeſtic Sternneſs on his Brow. The Weapon is held in the moſt menacing Poſture; and many a Spectator has been obſerved to ſtart back, with Apprehenſions of Fear. It is that gloriouſly ſevere Attitude, in which the grateful Citizens of *Narva* beheld Him, and
in

in which all Posterity will admire Him ; when He turned upon his own victorious, but un-governable Troops, and threatened to drench the Dagger in their Hearts, if they did not immediately desist from Rapine * and Slaughter ; immediately allow Quarter to their vanquished Foes.

Under a circular Dome, supported by Pillars of the *Doric* Order, and in a Spot where several Walks center, stands—not the *Venus a Medicis* ; corrupting, while it captivates, the World—but a *Spartan* Mother. Her Habit decent and venerable ; somewhat like the *Juno Matrona* of the *Romans*, as She is finely depicted in Mr. *Spence's Polymetis*. Her Air stately and resolved ; expressive of Dignity, yet mingled with Softness. She holds a Shield : is in the very Act of delivering it to her Son ; a Youth, setting out for the Army, and going to hazard his Life, in the Defence of his Country. She is supposed to add that spirited and magnanimous Exhortation, which is engraven on the Protuberance of the Buckler — η ταν, η επι τας — *Bring it back, my Son, as thy Trophy ; or, be brought back upon it, as thy Bier.*

I

* “ As soon as the Soldiers were Masters of the Town, “ (*Narva*) they fell to Plunder, and gave themselves up to “ the most enormous Barbarities. The *Czar* ran from Place “ to Place, to put a stop to the Disorder and Massacre. He “ was even obliged to kill with his own Hand several *Muscovites*, who did not hearken to his Orders.”

Voltaire's Hist. Charl. XII.

I am particularly pleased, said *Theron*, with the Contrivance of this last Ornament. It is regulated by one of the most refined Rules of Art; not to lavish away all the Beauty at a single View, but to make a skilful Reserve for some future Occasion.—The Dome and the Columns afford Pleasure, when beheld at a considerable Distance. The fine Figure in the midst displays its Graces, on a nearer Approach. By which means, the Attention is kept awake, and the Entertainment continues new.

But what I principally admire, is the *Spirit* or *Style* of the Decorations in general. They put me in mind of a very just Remark, which Mr. *Pope* has somewhere made. It is, if I remember right, to this Effect.—“ A Man not
 “ only shews his Taste, but his Virtue, in the
 “ Choice of his Ornaments. A proper Piece of
 “ History, represented in Painting on a rich
 “ Man’s Walls, (*or exhibited in Imagery amidst*
 “ *his Gardens*) is very often a better Lesson,
 “ than any He could teach by his Conversa-
 “ tion. In this Sense, the Stones may be said
 “ to speak, when Men cannot, or will not.”
 — All but the *comparative* or *satyrical* Part of the Observation, I would apply to the Prospect before Us, and its worthy Owner.

Asp. *Philenor’s* Gardens, I think, are more chaste and delicate in their Ornaments, than a certain *collegiate Church*. In the latter Place,
 We

We might reasonably expect a Purity and a Decorum, if We should not meet with the Symbols of Piety and Incitements to Religion. —What would a judicious Observer say, if, in one of those solemn and venerable Edifices, He should see a huge brawny Fellow stuck up against the Wall; with his Posteriors half bare; his whole Body more than half naked; and in an Attitude none of the most decent*?—Excuse me, *Theron*. I confess myself ashamed of the Description. How then can the Spectacle become the House of Divine Worship?

Ther. But perhaps this same brawny Fellow may represent a *Heathen* Demigod; one of the Idols worshipped by Antiquity; the tutelary Deity of *Valour*.

Asp.

* Referring to the Monument, lately erected for MAJOR GENERAL FLEMMING, in *Westminster-Abbey*. Where, under the General's Bust, are placed *Hercules* and *Pallas*. *Hercules*, with his Club and Lyon's Skin, in the Manner related above. *Pallas*, with a Mirrour and a Serpent at her Side.—As this Church has been the Burial Place of the most illustrious Personages, for many Centuries; as it is the Place, where *all* our Kings receive their Crowns, and *many* of them deposit their Ashes; as it is singularly eminent for its Antiquities and Monuments; there is a large Resort both of Natives and Foreigners, to view its grand and awful Curiosities. Whatever, therefore, is erected in an Edifice so distinguished, should not only have an Air of *Elegance* in the Execution, but a *Beauty of Holiness* in the Design.—It was thought, by a very fine and a very candid Writer, that *mere Impropropriety* of Taste, in ornamenting one of the Monuments, called for his Censure. Surely then a Violation of *Decency*, and an Approach to *Paganism*, call more loudly for public Animadversion, and proper Reformation. See *Spectr.* Vol. I. N^o 26.

Asp. And will this justify the Practice? Does not this add Profaneness to Immodesty? Are We *Christians* to thank *Hercules* for the Valour of our Warriors, and make our Acknowledgments to *Pallas* for the Conduct of our Generals? Shall We *Christians* behold with Admiration, or recognize as our Benefactors, what the Apostle has stigmatized under the Character of *Devils* *?

If HE, who overthrew the Tables of the Money-changers, had taken a Walk in these famous Cloysters, I am apt to suspect, He would have paid no very agreeable Compliment to this fine Piece of Statuary. *Take these Things hence*, would probably have been his Command; and, *make not the Precincts of your Temple a Chamber of Pagan Imagery*, his Rebuke †.—Neither is it at all unlikely, that the Image itself, notwithstanding its inimitable Workmanship, might have shared the Fate of its Kinsman *Dagon*;

—————*When the captive Ark*
Maim'd his brute Image, Head and Hands
lopp'd off
In his own Temple, on the Groundsell Edge
When He fell flat, and sham'd his Worshippers †.

Tber. But how should the Artist represent the great Achievements and the shining Qualities

* 1 Cor. x. 20. † John ii. 16. † Milton, B. I. 458.

lities of his Hero, if You will not allow Him to make use of these *significant* Emblems ?

Asp. I question, whether they are so very significant. The Mirrour seems to characterize a Fop, rather than a Soldier. It leads Us to think of a soft *Narcissus*, admiring Himself; rather than a sagacious General, planning the Operations of the Campaign. — Besides; is sacred Literature so destitute of proper Emblems, that We must borrow the Decorations of our Churches and the Trophies of our Conquerors, from the Dreams of Superstition or the Delusions of Idolatry ? How just and expressive are those emblematical Representations, exhibited in *Ezekiel's* Vision ! Where Activity and Speed are signified by *Hands* in Conjunction with *Wings*; and the deep, the complicated, yet ever harmonious Schemes of Providence, by *a Wheel in the Middle of a Wheel*. With what Propriety and Force are the noblest Endowments pictured, in the Revelations of *St. John*, and their grand Machinery ! Superior Wisdom and Benevolence of Heart, are described by the Face of *a Man*; Strength of Mind and Intrepidity of Spirit, by the Visage of *a Lion*; Calmness of Temper and indefatigable Application, by the Features of *an Ox*; a penetrating Discernment, and an expeditious Habit of acting, by the Form of *a flying Eagle* *.

These

* *Rev. iv. 7.*

These Hieroglyphics are graceful, are pertinent, and such as every Spectator will understand. Whereas, the Devices of our new monumental Encomium are, I fear, to the Unlearned hardly intelligible; to the Serious, little better than profane; and to every Beholder, indelicate if not immodest.—*Philenor*, I imagine, would blush to admit them into his Walks or Avenues. And I am sorry to find them received into the most antient *, most renowned, and most frequented Church in the Kingdom.

Talking in this Manner, they come to a curious Grove, formed on that uncommon Plan, proposed by Mr. *Addison*, in one of his *Spectators*.—It consisted wholly of *Evergreens*. *Firs*, clad in verdant Silver, pointed their resinous Leaves, and shot aloft their towering Canes. *Laurels* arrayed in glossy Green, spread their ample Foliage, and threw abroad their rambling Boughs.—*Bay-trees* were expanded into a Fan, that no Weather could tarnish; or rounded into a Column, that knew not how to moulder. While the *Laurustinus* ran out into a beautiful

* Some Antiquarians trace back the Origin of this Church, even to the Reign of *Lucius*. Which is more than the Space of 1500 Years. Others suppose, that *Sebert*, King of the *East-Saxons*, about the Year of our LORD 605, built the first religious Structure on this Spot. All agree, that it was re-edified and enlarged by *Edward the Confessor*; and that the present stately and magnificent Fabric, was founded by *Henry the third*.

tiful Irregularity of Shape ; and compacted her reddening Gems, in order to unfold her whitening Bloom. — In one Place lay a Dale, gently sinking, and coated with the *Chamomile's* natural Frieze ; which never changes its Colour, never loses its Gloss. Near it, and scooped, You would imagine, from the same Hollow, arose a Mount, softly swelling, and shagged with *Furze* ; gay with perennial Verdure, and generally decked with golden Blossoms. — Here, You are led through a serpentine Walk, and Hedges of *Box* ; and find, perhaps, a solitary Pyramid or a capacious Urn, each composed of unfading *Yew*. There You look through a strait Alley, fenced on either Side, and arched over Head, with mantling *Philirea* ; and see, at the Extremity, an Obelisk sheathed in *Ivy*, and ornamented with fable Clusters, as with Wreaths of living Sculpture.—Scattered up and down, were several Sorts of *Holly* ; some striped with White ; some spotted with Yellow ; some preparing to brighten and beautify the Scene, with Berries of glowing Scarlet.

The Heads of the Trees, arising one above another, in a gradual Slope, from the diminutive Mazerean to the lofty Cypress ; the several Shadings of their green Attire, greatly diversified, and judiciously intermixed ; afford, especially in the Winter-season, a most *in-*
livened

livened and *lovely* Prospect.—As the Sun-shine is, by the Frequenters of this Grove, usually more coveted than the Shade ; it is so disposed, as to admit, in one Part or another, every Gleam of fine Weather, which exhilarates the Winter.

Asp. There must be something unspeakably pleasing in a Plantation, which appears lively and fruitful, when all its Neighbours of the Woodland Race, are barren, bleak, or dead. But, how much more chearing and delightful must it be ; when *decrepit* Age, or bodily Infirmities, have impaired the Vigour, and laid waste the Gratifications of our youthful Prime ; to find a solid *undecaying* Pleasure, in the Favour of GOD, and the Hope of Glory!—Now indeed the feathered Tribes resort to the more flowing Umbrage of the Poplar and the Ash. But amidst *December's* Cold, You shall observe them forsaking the *leafless* Woods, and flocking to this friendly Receptacle ; hopping across the sunny Walks, or sheltering themselves, in the wet and stormy Day, under these *trusty* Boughs. So, the many thoughtless Creatures, that turn their Back upon Religion, amidst the soft and soothing Caresses of Prosperity ; will want, extremely want, its *sovereign Supports*, under the sharp and distressing Assaults of Adversity, Sicknes, and Death.—This Collection, it is true, may not equal the Groves of
annual

annual Verdure, in Floridity of Dress; but it far exceeds them, in the Duration of its Ornaments. Ere long, yonder shewy Branches will be stript of their Holiday Clothes: whereas, *these* will retain their Honours, when *those* are all Rags or Nakedness. Thus will it be with every Refuge for our poor, imperfect, sinful Souls; excepting only the Righteousness of our *LORD JESUS CHRIST*. Every Thing else will *fade as a Leaf**. This, my *Theron*, and this alone is an *Evergreen*: always free for our Acceptance, and always effectual to save.

Ther. An Evergreen it is. But, like the ruddy and golden Fruits, which hang on the uppermost Boughs of those lofty Trees in the Orchard, it seems to be quite out of my Reach.

Asp. Are You sensible, That You *need* this immaculate and perfect Righteousness of our SAVIOUR?

Ther. Was *Jonah* sensible, how much He needed the cooling Shelter of his Gourd; when the Sun smote fiercely upon his Temples, and all the Fervours of the fiery East were glowing around Him?—So is your *Theron* sensible, that, without a far better Righteousness than his own, He must inevitably be condemned by the Sentence of the Law, and cannot stand before the high and holy GOD.

Asp.

* *Isai.* lxiv. 6.

Asp. Remember then what our LORD says to such Persons ; *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you Rest**.—How *gracious* is the Invitation ! *Come unto me,* the Giver of every good Gift, and the overflowing Source of Happiness.—How *extensive* is the Offer ! *All that are weary* under the Servitude of Sin, *and heavy laden* with the Burden of Guilt. ALL these are called, and *You*, my Friend, in the Number. They have, not a Ticket, a Bond, or some inferior Pledge of Assurance ; but they have a *Promise*, from Faithfulness and Truth itself. *I will give them Rest*, says the Strength of *Israel* ; whose Will is Fate, and his Word the Basis of the Universe.—And if *CHRIST* will give You Rest ; He will wash You in that Blood, which atones ; and invest You with that Righteousness, which justifies. Since nothing short of these Mercies, can afford true Satisfaction to the awakened Conscience.

Permit me to ask farther—Do you earnestly *desire* this Righteousness ?

Ther. Will yonder *Hirelings*, when fatigued with the Heat and Burden of a long, laborious, sultry Day, desire the Shades of the Evening, and the Repose of the Night ?—I can truly, on this Occasion, adopt the Words of the Prophet ; *The Desire of my Soul is to thy Name* †, blessed *JESUS*, and to the *Remembrance* of thy Righteousness. The very Men-
tion

* *Matt.* xi. 28.

† *Isai.* xxvi. 8.

tion of this spotless Righteousness is Music to my Ears. Every fresh, though distant Discovery of it, gleams Pleasure upon my Mind. And that would be a blessed Day, a Day greatly to be distinguished, which should bring it *near* to my View, and *home* to my Soul.

Asp. Behold! says the SAVIOUR of the World, *I stand at the Door, and knock. If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in unto Him, and will sup with Him, and He with me**.—Have you not sometimes, *Theron*, been overtaken by the dark and tempestuous Night? When, chilled with Cold, and almost drowned in the Rain, You arrived late at the House of some valued Friend, was You not *willing* to gain Admittance? Perhaps, You thought every Moment an Hour, till the hospitable Door opened: till you exchanged the dismal Gloom, and the driving Storm, for the chearful Light and the amiable Company within.—The adored IMMANUEL professes Himself *equally* willing to come unto You, who hearken to his Voice, and consent to his Overtures. Equally willing to make his Abode with You; to manifest his Glories in You; and communicate his Merits to You.—All which will be *refreshing* to the sinful Soul, as the most sumptuous Banquet to the famished Stomach and craving Appetite.

Ther.

* *Rev.* iii. 20.

Tber. I cannot open my Heart.

Asp. *CHRIST* has the Key of *David*. He openeth, and none can shut; He shutteth, and none can open*. And what says this all-powerful REDEEMER? Who does whatsoever pleaseth Him, in Heaven and Earth, in the Sea, and in all deep Places, even in the Depths of the human Heart. Blessed are they, that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled †. — Since You hunger after the Righteousness, and thirst for the Spirit, of the crucified holy *JESUS*, He himself has pronounced You blessed. He himself has engaged, You shall enjoy the Desire of your Soul; and not barely enjoy, but enjoy it abundantly. You shall be filled, filled with the Fruits of the everlasting Gospel; be enriched with your REDEEMER's Obedience, and adorned with his Image.—Then be not, my dear *Tberon*, be not faithless, but believing.

Tber. This I believe, *Aspasio*—That I am a lost Sinner; under the Curse of the Law, and liable to the Wrath of GOD. That there is no Relief for my Distress, but in *CHRIST* and his transcendent Merits. HE, and He alone, is able to save me from my Guilt, and all its dismal Train of Miseries. He is a SAVIOUR fully proportioned to my Wants; exactly suited to my several Necessities.—I believe,

* *Rev.* iii. 7. † *Matt.* v. 6.

believe, and am persuaded, That, if I was interested in the Divine *JESUS*, my Soul should live.

Asp. Be persuaded likewise, That there is no *clogging* Qualification, no Worth to be possessed, no Duty to be performed, in order to your full Participation of *CHRIST* and his Riches. Only believe, and they are all your own. *CHRIST dwelleth in our Hearts*—How? By legal Works, and laborious Pre-requisites? No; but *by Faith**. *He that believeth on the SON, hath*—a chimerical? far from it; a real and a substantial Happiness; even *everlasting Life* †.

Ther. Ah! my *Aspasio*! I cannot believe. I feel my Impotency. My Mind is, as You formerly hinted, like the withered Arm.

Asp. It is no small Advantage, *Theron*, to be convinced of our Inability in this Respect. This is, if not the Beginning of Faith, the Sign of its Approach; and shews it to be, if not in the Soul, yet at the very Door.—Fear not, my Friend. He that bids You stretch out, will strengthen the withered Arm. He first makes Us sensible of our Weakness, and then *fulfils all the good Pleasure of his Will, and the Work of Faith with Power* ‡.

Can You doubt of his Willingness? Then go to Mount *Calvary*. *There* listen to the *Sounding*

* *Eph.* iii. 17.

† *John* iii. 36.

‡ *2 Theff.* i. 11.

You will please to remember, that Sinners are said to *believe*, not through their own Ability, but through the Aids of *Grace* *. And You will permit me to ask, How you became acquainted with *my* Notion of Faith ?

Ther. I am not so inattentive a Reader of your Letters, as to forget your Definition of this momentous Article. *Faith*, you say, is
 “ A real Persuasion, that the blessed *JESUS*
 “ has shed his Blood *for me*, and fulfilled all
 “ Righteousness in *my Stead*: that, through
 “ this great Atonement and glorious Obedi-
 “ ence, He has purchased even for my sinful
 “ Soul, Reconciliation with GOD, sanctify-
 “ ing Grace, and all spiritual Blessings †.”

Asp. I am obliged to you, *Theron*, for the Honour You do my Letter; and I hope, You will pay an equal Regard to the Determination of our Church. You once apprehended, that my Attachment to the Church of *England* was unsettled and wavering. Judge now, who has most thoroughly imbibed her Doctrines, and is most invariably tenacious of her true Interests.—In the first Part of the Homily concerning the Sacrament, We have this Definition of Faith; “ It is a Belief, not only
 “ that the Death of *CHRIST* is available
 “ for the Remission of Sins, and Reconcilia-
 “ tion with GOD, but also that He made a
 “ full

* *Acts* xviii. 27.

† See Letter X.

“ full and sufficient Sacrifice *for Thee*, a perfect Cleansing *for thy Sins* *. So that thou mayst say with the Apostle, That he loved Thee, and gave Himself for Thee.”

My Notion of Faith, You see, is evidently the Voice of the Establishment; and, I think, it gives Us a *clear intelligible* Sense, suited to the most common Acceptation of the Word. Such as would naturally arise in the Mind of a Stranger, who, without any Biass on his Judgment, should inquire into the Purport of our Religion, or consider the Language of our Bible.

Theb. How suited to the most *common Acceptation* of the Word?

Asp. When You sent a Message to your Tenant—who, in his last Sickness, expressed so much Uneasiness on account of his numerous Family, and embarrassed Circumstances—assuring Him, that you had cancelled the Bond, and forgiven his Debt. When You told the poor Woman—whose Husband fell from the loaded Waggon, and broke both his Legs—that you would order a Surgeon to attend Him, and would continue his weekly Pay. *How* did they regard, *how* receive your promised Kindness? So let Us credit the gracious Declarations of our GOD; so accept his bene-

* Answerable to this, was the Doctrine of the *primitive Church*; η πιστις ιδιοποιειται του Θεου. *Chrysost.*

beneficent Offers; and then we shall answer the Import of the Word—then we shall truly *believe*.

Ther. I named the Object of my Compassion in one of the Instances, and made a *personal* Application in the other. Neither of which is done in the Scriptures.

Asp. Though We are not particularly named, yet We are very exactly described, by our *Family*, our *Inclination*, our *Practice*.—What says eternal Wisdom, when she makes a Tender of her inestimable Blessings? *To You, O Men*, not to fallen Angels, *I call; and my Voice is to the Sons of Men**.—What says the holy Apostle, when He publishes the Counsels of Heaven? *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that CHRIST JESUS came into the World to save—the Upright? the Unblameable? Was this the Case, our Hopes would be covered with a Cloud; or rather, totally and finally eclipsed. But see! they are clear as the Light, and conspicuous as the Noon-Day. For He came to save Sinners †.*—Consonant to all which, is the Declaration of another sacred Envoy. *He, the PRINCE of Peace, the KING of Saints, the MONARCH of the Universe, suffered for—whom? They, in whose Behalf this matchless Ransom was paid, must have an undeniable Right, to look upon Redemption as their own. And blessed, for ever blessed be GOD, it is most peremptorily said, He suffered for the Un-*

* *Prov.* viii. 4.

† *1 Tim.* i. 15.

Unjust; for the Transgressors*.—Are We not of the *human* Family? Are we not *Sinners* by Inclination? Are We not *Transgressors* by Practice? If we are (and upon these Questions Incredulity itself will scarcely demur) let Us not frowardly reject, rather let us thankfully receive, those spiritual Treasures, which, by virtue of the afore-cited Conveyance, devolve to *such* Persons.

Ther. What! Can *that* be an Inducement, *that* an Encouragement to a firm assured Trust, which I should think more likely to overthrow and destroy all our Pretensions?

Asp. This may probably seem strange, but it is true. It is also a most precious and invaluable Truth. Such as I would hold fast, and never, never let go. When I search for my own Endowments, I find nothing that I dare venture to plead. Being, in my best Moments, and amidst my choicest Duties, a Sinner. As this is, at all times, my undoubted Character; I have, at all times, an undoubted Warrant to say, The uncreated WISDOM calleth me: the blessed *JESUS* came to save me:

* 1 Pet. iii. 18. *For the Transgressors.* This seems to be the Meaning of *αδικων*. It signifies, not those only who have *defrauded*, or *over-reached* their Neighbour, but Those also who have *transgressed* the Commands of GOD; who have violated the Precepts, of either or both the Tables. It is opposed to *δικαιος*. Which, We are sure, denotes a Person who has fulfilled, not barely social Duties, but all kind of Righteousness.

me: the great MESSIAH suffered Death for me.

Let me illustrate the Point. *Romulus*, You know, the Founder of the *Roman* Empire, was a poor Prince: had but a Handful of Subjects, and very scanty Territories. What Expedient could He devise, to enlarge the Boundaries of the one, and augment the Number of the other? He issued a Proclamation, addressed to Outlaws and Criminals; all that were involved in Debt, or obnoxious to Punishment. Promising, that as many as would come and settle under his Dominion, should be secured from Prosecution, and vested with considerable Privileges.—A Person in these Circumstances, upon hearing the welcome Invitation, hangs down his Head, and with a dejected Air, cries; “ I am a *Debtor*, I am a “ *Criminal*, and therefore unworthy of the “ royal Protection.” What Answer should be made to such a dispirited Complainer? Make the same to Yourself, whenever You are inclined to renew the present Objections.—Remembering, that the infinite and eternal SOVEREIGN, to display the Magnificence of his Majesty, and manifest the Riches of his Goodness, has commissioned his Ambassadors to publish in every Nation under Heaven—
 “ That all unhappy Sinners, who are *oppressed*
 “ by the Devil and liable to Damnation, may
 “ come

“ come to *CHRIST*, and rely on *CHRIST*.
 “ May, in this Manner, obtain Pardon, Right-
 “ teousness, and all the Privileges of Children.”

Ther. At this Rate, the *vilest Miscreants* have as clear, nay have the very same Offer of *CHRIST* and his Salvation, as the highest Saint. And if they accept that Offer, have the same Title to both.

Asp. The highest Saints actually receive *CHRIST* and his Salvation. The vilest Miscreants are graciously invited to enjoy the Blessings. The former have gathered the *Manna*, and use it to their unspeakable Comfort. It lies round about the Tents of the latter; and whoever will, may take, may eat, and his Soul shall live.

In respect to the Offer of *CHRIST*, there is no Difference. All have sinned, and must sue for spiritual Blessings, under the Character of guilty Creatures; must receive them, as the Issues of infinite Mercy.—*Isaiab* was a Saint of no inferior Rank; yet He breathes the Spirit I am describing, and acts the Part I am vindicating. Turn to that Epitome of the Gospel, his *fifty-third* Chapter. There You find Him claiming a Share in the greatest of all Privileges, Pardon through the Blood of *CHRIST*. How does He advance and maintain his Claim? Not in the Capacity of a *sanctified*, but under the Character of a *sinful* Person.

fon. These are his Words, *The LORD hath laid on Him*, that is, on *CHRIST JESUS*, *the Iniquity of Us all*. Of Me and my Brethren in Piety, does He mean? Rather, of me and my Fellow-Transgressors. In the preceding Verse, He explains Himself, and resolves our Question. *All We, like Sheep, have gone astray*; yet *our Miscarriages, our Demerit, our Guilt*, the GOD of transcendently rich Grace has charged on his own SON.

Should You ask the highest Saints, On what their Hopes are grounded? This, or something to this Effect, would be their Reply——“ On
 “ the full Grant and free Exhibition of *CHRIST*,
 “ recorded in the Word of Truth. There We
 “ find it written, *To You is preached the Re-*
 “ *mission of Sins* *. *The Promise is to You and*
 “ *to your Children* †. *We beseech You in*
 “ *CHRIST's Stead, be ye reconciled to GOD* ‡.
 “ —We remember, *Theron*, though You seem
 “ to have forgotten, the wretched Outcast,
 “ *polluted* in its Blood, yet accepted by the
 “ *HOLY ONE of Israel*; We remember the
 “ heavenly Gifts, received by the triumphant
 “ *REDEEMER*, for *Enemies* and for the *Rebel-*
 “ *lious*; nor can We easily forget the Promise
 “ of Forgiveness which was made, and the
 “ Blessing of Forgiveness which was vouch-
 “ safed, even to the *Murderers* of the LORD
 “ of Glory ||.”

The

* *Aets* xiii. 38. † *Aets* xi. 39. ‡ 2 *Cor.* v. 20.
 || Alluding to *Dialogue XV*,

The free Exhibition of *CHRIST* in the Word of Truth, is *their* Foundation, and indeed is the *only* Foundation of Faith. An Apostle, after all the Labours of his exemplary Life, can have no better. And a reclaimed Harlot or a penitent Thief, in the first Moments of their Conversion, may have the same.—You remind me of a valuable Person, whom I once numbered among my Acquaintance, and whose Way of Thinking was somewhat similar to your own. Will You give me Leave to relate his Case?

Ther. Most gladly. It will be some kind of Consolation to hear, that Others have laboured under the same Difficulties with myself, and been subject to the same Distresses. If I am informed of their *Deliverance* from these Distresses, it will be like shewing me an opened Door, for effecting my own Escape. If I am likewise acquainted with the *Manner* of their Deliverance, this will furnish me with a Clue to guide my Steps, and with a Pattern to direct my Efforts.

Asp. This Person was roused from a Habit of Indolence and Supineness, into a serious Concern for his eternal Welfare. Convinced of his depraved Nature and aggravated Guilt, He had Recourse to the Scriptures, and to frequent Prayer. He attended the Ordinances of Christianity, and fought earnestly for an
assured

assured Interest in *CHRIST*. But found no steadfast Faith, and tasted very little Comfort. At length, He applied to an eminent Divine, and laid open the State of his Heart. Short, but weighty, was the Answer he received. “ I perceive, Sir, the Cause of all your Distress. You do not, you will not, come to *CHRIST* as a Sinner. This Mistake stands between your Soul and the Joy of Religion. This detains you in the Gall of Bitterness; and take heed, O! take heed, lest it consign you over to the Bond of Iniquity.”—This Admonition never departed from the Gentleman’s Mind; and it became a happy Means of removing the Obstructions to his Peace. Remember this little History, *Theron*; and may it prove as efficacious for your Good, as it is pertinent to your Circumstances!

But we digress from our grand Subject. Since you disapprove *my* Account of Faith, I must desire you to favour me with a Description of your own. For, as you rightly observe, this is a *very momentous* Article. It is the Channel of Conveyance for all spiritual Good; therefore should be made and kept as clear as possible. It is the main Arch in the Structure of practical Godliness; therefore should be raised and turned with the utmost Care.

Ther. To trust in *CHRIST* as an all-sufficient SAVIOUR, and rely on Him for *whole* Salvation, is not this real Faith?

Asp.

Asp. If you trust in the All-Sufficiency of his *Will*, as well as of his Power, You practise the very Thing I recommend. This is what the Prophet teaches. *Let* the convinced Sinner, and the doubting Soul, *trust in the Name of the LORD*, and *stay upon his GOD* *. Let Him not only reverence *CHRIST*, as the incarnate GOD, and therefore *mighty* to save; but also receive *CHRIST* as *his GOD*, and therefore *willing* to save.

Ther. Palæmon's Account is this—*Faith*, He says, is a firm Persuasion, that *JESUS CHRIST* has shed his Blood, and fulfilled all Righteousness; has sustained the Punishment due to Sin, and obtained full Reconciliation with GOD. That all this Grace, and each of these Benefits, are free, perfectly free for You, for me, for others. That, in consequence of this Persuasion, the Sinner having fled to *CHRIST*, and trusted in *CHRIST*, is sometimes enabled to look upon all this as his own.

Asp. I have the highest Regard for *Palæmon's Judgment*; and I cannot but think, my Opinion is, in some measure, confirmed even by his.—The Act of *flying to CHRIST*, implies a Persuasion, that He suffered in *my* Stead, and that his Death is *my* Safeguard. Would the Manslayer of old have betaken Himself to the

* *Isai.* l. 10.

the City of Refuge, if He had not first been persuaded, that it was intended for *his* Protection?—The Act of *trusting in CHRIST*, is much of the same Nature; and either presupposes or includes a Persuasion, that his Righteousness is mine, and the Cause of my Justification. Would any Person, of the least Prudence, erect his House upon a Piece of Ground, without a previous Conviction, that the Spot was his own?

So that I am still inclined to abide by the good old *Protestant* Doctrine, which has been so signally instrumental in demolishing the Superstitions of *Popery*, and is so eminently conducive to the Holiness and the Happiness of Christians. Especially, as I apprehend, the Determinations of Scripture, and the Experience of scriptural Saints, are all on my Side.

Ther. Where has Scripture determined on your Side?

Assp. In the noblest Description of Faith, that Language itself can form. The Writer to the *Hebrews*, having mentioned the Life of Faith *, the Perseverance of Faith †, and the End or Reward of Faith †, proceeds to a Definition of this leading Grace. *Now Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen ‡.*—*The Evidence* ||, exhibiting
not

* *Heb.* x. 38.
|| Ελεῖς Χρ.

†† *Heb.* x. 39.

‡ *Heb.* xi. 1.

not a faint Surmise, but a clear Demonstration, both of invisible Blessings, and of our Right to enjoy them.—*The Substance* *, realizing what is promised; and giving Us, as it were, a *Possession* of good Things that are remote, a *present Possession* of good Things that are future.

Ther. One would conclude, *Aspasio*, from your Explanation of the Text, that no Persons have true Faith, but those only who have a full Assurance. Yet this seems to be quite inconsistent with such Passages of Scripture, as make mention of *little Faith* and *great Faith*; of some Christians, that were *strong*, of others that were *weak* in the Faith.

Asp. This is undoubtedly contrary to the Scriptures, You quote. It is what I never affirm; neither can it be deduced from any of my Assertions. I would only maintain, that an *Appropriation* of *CHRIST* is essential to Faith: that None have the proper scriptural Faith, but those who are taught by the enlightening *SPIRIT* to say, *He shed his Blood for me*: though many have the proper scriptural Faith, who cannot say this without some Mixture of Fluctuation and Doubt.

We believe, and are sure †, was the Language of the Disciples. The former is *true*, the latter is *triumphant Faith*. Some receive *CHRIST*,
if

* ΠΡΟΣΑΨΙΣ.

† *John* vi. 69.

if I may so speak, only with one of their Fingers, others with both their Arms. Yet Each receiving Him really, each is saved by Him eternally.—There are, in the Household of GOD, *Babes, Young Men, and Fathers*: There is, in the Subject We are considering, *Faith, Assurance of Faith, and full Assurance of Faith*. To have the first, is necessary; to have the second, is delightful; to possess the last, is Heaven begun in the Heart.

Ther. I am glad to find, that true Faith may consist with some Remainders of Doubt. That a Person may be subject to the one, without being deprived of the other. But I interrupt your Discourse.

Asp. Faith is styled, *A looking unto JESUS**. But if we do not look unto JESUS as our own, as the Propitiation for our Sins, what Comfort, or what Benefit can We derive from the Sight?—*A Receiving of CHRIST†*. But can I have any Pretence to receive Him, or take possession of his Merits. unless I am convinced, that they are intended for me? This is what neither the Dictates of Conscience will allow, nor the Laws of Reason authorize.—*A Resting upon CHRIST‡*. But how can We rest on a Surety, if He has not interposed in our Behalf? Or how confide in a Payment, which We believe to be made for Others, not for Ourselves?

Let

* Heb. xii. 2. † John i. 12. ‡ Psal. xxxvii. 7.

Let Us change our Situation, and view the Point in another Light. Consider the blessed and glorious Object of our Faith. *CHRIST* is represented by the Similitude of Bread, *heavenly Bread*, for the hungry Soul. Faith is characterized by *eating* the Food *. And can this be done without a personal Application? —*CHRIST* is held forth under the Image of *living Waters* †, ever running, and always free for the thirsty Appetite. But let them run ever so copiously, let them be presented ever so freely, all this will neither quench the Thirst, nor refresh the Spirits, unless they are *drank*. To do this is the Business of Faith.—*CHRIST* is described as a *Garment* ‡, to accommodate and beautify destitute and defiled Creatures. Faith is expressed by wearing this commodious Garment, and being adorned with this beautiful Clothing. And can any Idea, or any Expression, more strongly denote an actual Appropriation?

Ther. It is evident, that many holy People in former Ages, were not possessed of Assurance. It is no less certain, that many excellent Persons in our own Times, fall short of this exalted Pitch. What is the Language of *David*? It is all Despondency. *I am cast out of the Sight of thine Eyes.* To the same melancholy Tune is the Harp of *Asaph* strung; *Is*
his

* *John* vi. 58.

† *John* iv. 10.

‡ *Isa.* lxi. 10.

his Mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his Promise fail for evermore? The same jealous and distrustful Air breathes in the Complaint of the Church; *The LORD hath forsaken me, and my LORD hath forgotten me**.—Why then should *Aspasio* set up a Rule, stricter and higher, than those eminent Saints attained?

Asp. My dear Friend, I set it not up as a strict Rule, but I set it forth as a distinguished Blessing. This Blessing was certainly enjoyed by the holy Men of old; but, like every other Species of Felicity in this World, it was enjoyed after an *imperfect* Manner.—They had an assured Persuasion of GOD's present Favour, and of their own final Happiness. Nevertheless, this Assurance, like all their other Graces, was liable to the Assaults of outward Temptation, and inward Corruption. Which might, for a while, *impair* the Vigour of their Faith, though not *destroy* its Being. As, under a transient Swoon, the Spirits fail, the Colour departs, but the vital Principle subsists.

You may farther observe, concerning those pious Persons, that, when they cease to exercise this chearful Faith, they confess and lament the Failure; *I said, This is my Infirmary*†. They chide themselves for it; *Why art Thou cast down, O my Soul?* They encourage themselves

* *Isai.* xlix. 14.

† *Psal.* lxxvii. 10.

selfes against it; *Hope in GOD**: it is thy Privilege, and thy Duty.—Nay, the Church, even under her darkeſt Apprehenſions, ſtill ſpeaks the Sentiment, ſtill retains the Grace, for which I am pleading. *My LORD*, uttered by her Lips, argues an *applicatory* Faith in her Heart.—So copious and pregnant are the Evidences of this precious Doctrin! It is confirmed by that very Paſſage, which was produced for its Confutation.

Ther. If this be the Sentiment of the Church in general, is it alſo the Temper of her *particular* Members? Were *they* animated by this firm and lively Faith?

Aſp. Hear the Declaration of the Pſalmiſt; *Bleſs the LORD, O my Soul; and all that is within me, bleſs his holy Name.* What is the Cauſe of this holy Exultation, and devout Praise? Is it, becauſe GOD poſſibly *may*, becauſe He probably *will*? No; but becauſe He actually *does* forgive: *Who forgiveth all thine Iniquities* †.—Take Notice of *Job's* Belief, and *Job's* Support, amidſt all his unexampled Sufferings: *I know, that my REDEEMER liveth* ‡; not only that there is a Redeemer, but that He is, together with all his ſaving Benefits, *mine*. Which, being a Truth ſo ſweet and delightful, is expreſſed a ſecond Time; *whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf*, to my own Advantage, and for my own

* *Pſal.* xlii. 5. † *Pſal.* ciii. 3. ‡ *Job* xix. 25.

own Comfort : see Him exerting his Almighty Power and infinite Mercy, to rescue my Body from the Grave, and to deliver my Soul from Hell.—What was *David's* Security against the malicious Attempts of his Enemies, both temporal and spiritual? *The LORD is my Light and my Salvation, whom then shall I fear? The LORD is the Strength of my Life, of whom then shall I be afraid**? He says not, I wish, I pray, for the divine Favour and the divine Succour ; but I am persuaded, they both *are* mine : my inestimable Portion, and my inviolable Safeguard.

Ther. Is this the Language of Believers under the new Testament Dispensation ?

Asp. Their Faith, You may depend upon it, could not be weaker or lower, whose Light was much stronger, and whose Advantages were much higher.—You hear *St. Thomas* making a Profession, which intirely excludes Doubting ; *My LORD, and my GOD †.* *St. Paul* answers in the same heroic Strain ; *I know Whom I have believed, I am persuaded ‡.* With both which *St. John* is exactly consonant ; *JESUS CHRIST, who bath loved Us, and washed Us from our Sins in his own Blood.*

We will suppose *Palemon's* Faith, to be sound and genuine ; yet, compared with this, it is certainly of the *enfeebled* and *infantile* Kind,

Whereas,

* *Psal.* xxvii. 1. † *John* xx. 28. ‡ *2 Tim.* i. 12.

Whereas, I would have my *Theron* possess the manly, the generous, the triumphant Faith. Not such as hangs in Suspence, like a hovering Meteor *; but such as abides fixed and stable, like the Stars of Heaven. Which, if they are obscured for a little Moment, by some passing Cloud, are sure to surmount the Obstruction, and will shine forth again with undiminished Lustre.

Ther. Was not this a Privilege peculiar to the Apostles ?

Asp. By no Means. All Believers are Brethren, and have like precious Faith †. CHRIST died for Us, says the Apostle: not barely for me his Ambassador, but for You who are his Followers, and to whom I address this Epistle. —Why should I multiply Proofs? Since the beloved Disciple declares; *These Things have I written unto You that believe on the Name of the SON of GOD, that Ye may know that Ye have eternal Life ‡.*

Ther. True, *Aspasio*. This coincides with my Apprehensions, and corroborates my Cause. The Scriptures are written—first, that We may believe, and be intitled to eternal Life—next, that We may have the Knowledge of our Belief,

* This Situation of Mind is most appositely described by St. Luke, Μη μετεωριζεσθε. Be not like the Meteor, which is neither fixed in the Sky, nor fallen to the Earth: but pendulous and fluctuating between them both. Chap. xii. 29.

† 2 Pet. i. 1.

‡ 1 John v. 13.

Belief, and a Consciouſness of our Title. The inspired Divine ſuppoſes his Correfpondents to poſſeſs the former, yet not to have attained the latter.

Aſp. I query, whether He makes ſuch a Suppoſition. He ſeems to write, not with a View of leading them to either, but of *confirming* them in both.—He intimates, that the Privilege and the Comfort ſhould *go together*. And why ſhould We ſtudy to ſeparate them? Will this turn to our Advantage? Muſt it not iſſue in our Loſs?—Beſides; according to your own Interpretation, whoever falls ſhort of this chearing Knowledge, falls ſhort of *one* great End, for which the Scriptures were written. He receives not his full Reward. He only *gleans*, where He might *reap*.

If I am not miſtaken, this enters into the very Eſſence of the Goſpel. Is the Honey in the evangelical Hive. What ſays the Apoſtle of the Gentiles? *I preached unto You the Goſpel**. And what is the Subſtance of this evangelical Diſpenſation? *That CHRIST died for our Sins †*.—That ſo exalted a Perſon, as the SON of GOD, and LORD of Glory, ſhould *die*, is wonderful—That He ſhould die for *Sins*, the moſt abominable Objects, and for Sinners, the moſt deteſtable Creatures, is abundantly more wonderful—That He ſhould die, not for
Sins

* 1 Cor. xv. 1.

† 1 Cor. xv. 3.

Sins in general, but for *our Sins* in particular, this is inexpressibly wonderful, and at the same time infinitely comfortable. And indeed till this is preached, the Doctrine is not Gospel: till this is believed, the Conviction is not Faith. At least, not such Faith, as I wish for my *Ftheron*.

Ther. Will not this *discourage* Some, and *offend* Others, who are not arrived at such a firm Persuasion?

Asp. I would not offend the meanest, nor discourage the weakest of my REDEEMER'S Servants.—As for *Offence*; that cannot be given, and ought not to be taken, when all We advance, is strictly conformable to the unerring Rule of Truth.—With regard to *Discouragement*; this surely cannot ensue, from informing the Sinner, that He has a Right to apply *CHRIST*, and all *CHRIST*'s Merits to Himself. In this Case, to *doubt* is to be discouraged. All Suspence is uneasy. But when it relates to our spiritual Interests and our immortal State, I think, it must be little less than insupportably afflictive.—This can never be the Will of our most gracious CREATOR and merciful REDEEMER.—This is absolutely inconsistent with that Peace and Joy, which are the Birth-right of the Believer.—There are also several Duties which can hardly be performed, several Graces which can scarcely be
 exer-

exercised, so long as this Spirit of Diffidence prevails.

Ther. Name them, *Aspasio*.

Asp. I am afraid, lest I should seem to arrogate the Office of a *Teacher*; which neither becomes my Character, nor is agreeable to my Temper.

Ther. Pray, my dear Friend, let Us wave Ceremony, and have nothing to do with Compliments. My Soul is in Jeopardy. My present Comfort, and my everlasting Happiness, are at stake. And shall We suffer any little Punctilios to overbear such weighty Considerations?—Suppose, You are a Teacher; I have great Need, and am very desirous, to become your Scholar. For I freely confess, that, knowing as I may seem in some other Instances, I am very ignorant in the great Peculiarities of the Gospel. Nay, though I have read the Scriptures in a *critical* View, I have been an utter Stranger to their spiritual Meaning. Here, I am uninstructed as a Babe; here therefore, I ought to be teachable as a Babe. Yes; in this Respect I would become as a *little Child**, that I may *enter into* the Knowledge, and possess the Privileges of *the Kingdom of Heaven*.

Asp. Your Answer, *Theron*, shall be a Law.—What think You of *Delight in GOD*? This is a Christian Grace. But *how can two walk toge-*

* *Luke* xviii. 17.

together, except they be agreed? We never covet an Intimacy with the Person, who declares Himself our Enemy. Nay; if We do but suspect, that He bears Us a secret Ill-will, We shall be jealous of trusting Him, and averse to approach him. This was the Case of our first Parents, immediately after the Fall. Instead of drawing near to their CREATOR, with Pleasure and Gratitude; they fled from Him, with Anxiety and Terror. And why? Because they were under the alarming Apprehensions of his Displeasure.—Whereas, let Us once believe, what the Apostle affirms; *When We were Enemies, We were reconciled to GOD by the Death of his SON**. Let Us cordially credit, what the Prophet repeatedly declares; *Therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto You; and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have Mercy upon You †*. Then We shall seek his Face with Alacrity. Our Affections will be on the Wing to salute their Almighty BENEFACTOR. We shall *joy in GOD through our LORD JESUS CHRIST ‡*.

Prayer is one of the Duties, I would specify. I wish my dear *Theron* the Spirit of Grace and Supplication. This will be better, incomparably better and more advantageous, than a Key to hidden Treasures. But how can you pray with humble Boldness, or with lively
 Hope,

* *Rom. v. 10.*

† *Isai. xxx. 18.*

‡ *Rom. v. 11.*

Hope, unless You believe? Believe, that *CHRIST* has expiated your Guilt, and is your Intercessor with the *FATHER*. Then, and then only, can You *have*, what the Apostle calls, *Boldness and Access with Confidence* *. Mark these vigorous Expressions; and at your Leisure consider, whether they countenance the timid and misgiving Temper. At present observe, how yonder Lark soars in the Sky, as if She would carry her Song to the very Gates of Heaven. An Image *this*, of believing Prayer. Should a Fowler shoot her through the Wing, how would she fall, impotent and fluttering, to the Ground! An Emblem *that*, of distrustful Prayer.

Once again; A true Christian, instead of dreading, *loves* the Day of *CHRIST*'s final and glorious *Appearing* †. *St. Peter* tells Us, He *looks for* it, with pleasing Expectations, as *Sisera's* Mother for the triumphant Return of her Son. He *hastens* to it in ardent Desires, as
the

* *Eph. iii. 12.* Προσαγωγή, *Access with a hearing and graceful Assurance*; such as those Petitioners enjoy, who are introduced to the royal Presence by some distinguished Favourite.—Παρησια, *A Boldness or unrestrained Liberty of Speech*; such as Children use, when they present their Addresses, and make known their Requests, to an indulgent Father.—Εν ωπεριθησει, *With a well-grounded and steady Confidence*, that We shall obtain both a favourable Acceptance, and a gracious Audience.—And all this, *through the Faith of CHRIST*; by the Worthiness of his Person, by the Merit of his Blood, and the Prevalence of his Intercession.

† *2 Tim. iv. 8.*

the enamoured Bridegroom to the wished for Hour of his Nuptials *. Which, I think, can neither be a rational nor a practicable Thing, unless We have some chearing and established Hope †, that, *when He shall appear, We shall be like Him, and see Him as He is.*

Ther. If this is the Case, what can be the Reason, why so many People are totally destitute of all Assurance? Have no Notion of it, and never aspire after it? Nay, would be much surpris'd, perhaps highly disgust'd, at the very Mention of such a Doctrine?

Asp. If People never aspire after it, I very much question, whether they are truly awakened, or really in earnest. They are like the Men of *Ephraim*, whom the Prophet styles *a Cake not turned ‡*; neither Bread, nor yet Dough. Or, as our LORD explains the Proverb, in his Charge against the Church of *Laodicea*, They are *neither hot nor cold ||*; but, content with the Form, are unconcerned about the Power of Godliness——Was I to declare myself more plainly upon this Inquiry, it should be in the calm and moderate Words of a judicious Divine; “ I do not affirm that, without a full
“ Assur-

* 2 *Pet.* iii. 12.

† *John* iii. 2. The Apostle's Expression, which comprehends both Himself and his Fellow-christians, is *οιδαμεν, We know.* This, in the very lowest Acceptation, must imply what *Aspasio* calls an *established Hope.*

‡ *Hos.* vii. 8. || *Rev.* iii. 15.

“ Assurance, there is no Faith. But this I
 “ maintain, that, where-ever the latter exists,
 “ there will be a sincere Pursuit of the for-
 “ mer.”

Among the Reasons, why so few Persons attain this eminent Blessing, We may reckon the following.—They understand not the perfect *Freeness* of Grace, nor the *immense* Merits of *CHRIST*.—They never consider the unspeakable *Value* of an assured Faith; neither are they aware, that it is intended for the Enjoyment of *Sinners*.—Either they seek it not at all; or else they seek it, where it is not to be found; from some Works of Righteousness in themselves, rather than from the gracious Promise of *GOD* in his Word. Which is altogether as ill-judged, and as sure to issue in Disappointment, as if a Person should look for Ice amidst the torrid Zone, or expect to find spicy Islands under the northern Pole.

But whether People consider it or no, the Value of an assured Faith is indeed unspeakable. When this is wrought in the Heart, Peace will stand firm, and Afflictions drop their Sting. Prayer will return laden with Treasures, and Death will approach stript of its Terrors.—When this takes place in the Soul, all the sweet Passages of Scripture, all the tender Love of *CHRIST*, all the precious Promises of the Gospel, will appear with new Charms.

Charms. You will then, as You peruse each sacred Page, *taste that the LORD is gracious* *. You will reap a Benefit, and enjoy a Delight, as much superior to those of the doubting Reader, as the Pleasure of eating this delicious Peach is superior to the mere Description of its agreeable Relish.

Bear with me a Moment longer, *Theron*. For You can hardly imagine, what an Improvement and Exaltation this will give, to every *Truth* You contemplate, and every *Object* You behold.—When You contemplate the renowned and astonishing Events, recorded in the History of Nations, how highly delightful must it be to say; “ All these passed under
“ the Superintendency of *that Hand*, which
“ was pierced with Nails, and fastened to the
“ Cross for Me.”—When You behold the Magnificence of Creation, and the Richness of its Furniture; the Grandeur of Nature, and the Variety of her Works; what a heightened Pleasure must they impart, if your Thoughts make Answer to your Eyes; “ All these were
“ brought into Existence by *that adorable PER-*
“ *SON*, who sustained my Guilt, and wrought
“ out my justifying Righteousness.”

Ther. If We feel an Aversion to Sin, and prize the blessed *JESUS* above all Things; if the prevailing Bias of our Affections be to
the

* 1 *Pet.* ii. 3.

the divine REDEEMER, and the habitual Breathing of our Souls after a Conformity to his Image; may We not suppose Ourselves possessed of the *Truth* and *Reality*, though We have not the *Confidence* and *Rejoicing* of Faith? —I say *We*; because I apprehend, this is not my peculiar Case, but common to myself and many Others. I ask, therefore, in their Name and in my own, May We not suppose our Condition safe, though We dare not presume to use the Language of the Spouse, *My Beloved is Mine, and I am his?*

Ans. For You and your Associates to use such Language, is neither more nor less than to declare; “ I am persuaded, that *CHRIST* “ is faithful: that He *says* what He thinks, “ and will *do* what He says.” And is there any Presumption, or any Indecency Here? Surely the Presumption, at least the Indecency lies, in questioning his Fidelity, or suspecting his Veracity.—You ask, Whether such a State is *safe*, and such a Faith *real*? I would answer, Why should not such a State be *happy*, as well as safe? And such a Faith be *assured*, as well as real? Why should You, or Any One, plead the Cause of Unbelief, and veil it with the specious Pretext of Humility? Let these Persons know, whatever their Names or their Circumstances are, that they have as good a *Right* to adopt the Words You mention, as *Philenor* has

has to call these Gardens his own.—Yet they will do well to remember, that these Qualifications, however amiable, are by no means the *Ground* of their Right. They are to advance their Claim, and hold fast the Blessing, not as Men ornamented with fine Endowments, but as poor, indigent, guilty Sinners. For *such* the SAVIOUR is provided ; to *such* his Benefits are proposed ; and on *such* his Grace will be magnified.

But see, *Theron!* Yonder black and low-hung Cloud points this Way. It seems big with a Shower ; it marches on apace ; and will soon be over our Heads. We must instantly fly to Shelter.

Ther. It is well We have this Summer-house for our Shelter. The thickest Boughs would be insufficient to screen Us. I think, I never saw a more impetuous Burst of Rain. A Shower ! No, 'tis a descending *Deluge*. The large, ropy, reeking Drops, come down like a Torrent *. How the Roof resounds, and the

* *Come down like a Torrent.*—This is the Import of that strong picturesque Word זרמן *Psal.* lxxvii. 17. In this Manner, *The Clouds poured out Water ; the Air thundered ; and thine Arrows went abroad.*—Mr. Addison, if I remember right, admires the Psalmist's Description of a *Storm at Sea* ; because, it dwells only upon the grand and most striking Circumstances ; without descending, like *Virgil's* enervated Representation, to such little Particulars, as the Cries of Men, and the Noise of Oars. *Clamorque Virûm, Stridorque Rudentum.*—This Description of a *Tempest* is, I think, equally admirable on the same Account. The three greatest and

the Channels begin to roar!—Surprising! What a dreadful *Flash* was there! A Sheet of sulphureous Fire, launched from the dismal Gloom, and wrapping the whole Skies in a Blaze!—Not a Moment's Interval, between the Lightning's Rage, and the *Thunder's* Roar. How sudden and vast the Explosion! What a deep, prolonged, tremendous Peal ensues! It seems as if the Poles of Earth, and the Pillars of Nature cracked; or as though the Arch of Heaven was dashed to Pieces, and mingling with the Ruins of the World.

See, my dear *Aspasio*! See the direful Havock; the horrid Effects of this elementary Tumult.—Yonder Oak, which reared its towering Head aloft, and spread wide its graceful Branches, is, in the Twinkling of an Eye, turned into a *naked Trunk*. There it stands, singed and tore; stripped of its verdant Honours,

most terrible Peculiarities are selected; and expressed with all the Conciseness, yet with all the Vigour, that Language can unite.

I have not met with any Commentator, that enters into the Spirit of the next Verse. And in our Liturgy-Translation, its Majesty sinks into Meanness, its Propriety degenerates into Tautology. Whereas, it is by no means a vain Repetition, but most significantly displays the *Effects* of what was described, in the foregoing Lines. *The Voice of thy Thunder was in the Heaven*; it not only resounded, but resounded from Pole to Pole, and filled כָּל־הַשָּׁמַיִם the vast Circumference of the Skies. *The Lightnings lightened the World*; they not only shone, but shone far and near, and illuminated the whole World with their Blaze. *The Earth trembled to its Center, and its Inhabitants shook with Horror*.

nours *, and surrounded with its own shattered Fragments. How fearful is the Artillery of Heaven *!

Asp. And why—why did not the Blow fall on this guilty Breast? Why was not the fiery Bolt, which flew so near, commissioned to pierce our Hearts?—If our heavenly FATHER has been so tenderly careful of these *Bodies*, will He not be much more gracious to our immortal *Souls*? Will he not clothe them with that immaculate Robe, which is the only Security from the Stroke of eternal Vengeance?—And let me ask, Can this be a Security to Us, unless We are vested with it! Could this Building, though very substantial, have secured Us from the rushing Rains, if We had not betaken Ourselves to its friendly Covert!

CHRIST is represented, in the Prophecy of *Isaiab*, by this very Image; as a *Place of Refuge*, and as a *Covert from the Storm and from Rain* †. That is, His Merits and Death are a sure Protection, from the Curse of the Law, and the Damnation of Hell. No Fury of the Elements so terrible as *these*; no Bulwark of Stone so impregnable as *those*.—If this is a proper

** Does not this give Us the most awful and grand Sense of *Psalms* xxix. 9? *The Voice of the LORD*, when uttered in Thunder, and accompanied with Lightning, יְהוָה יַעֲרֹבֵת, not, *discovereth the thick Bushes*, but *strips the Forests*; lays bare the branching Woods; reduces the most magnificent and flourishing Cedars to naked and withered Trunks.

† *Isai.* iv. 6.

per Emblem of *CHRIST*, to what shall We liken *Faith*? To a Persuasion, that the Shelter of the Summer-house is *free* for our Use? That we are welcome to avail Ourselves of the commodious Retreat? Would this defend Us from the Inclemencies of the Weather? Would this keep Us dry, amidst (what You call) the descending Deluge? Would this bare Persuasion, unless reduced to Practice, be any Manner of Advantage to our Persons?—No. We must actually *fly* to the Shelter, and We must actually *apply* the SAVIOUR; otherwise, I see not what Comfort or Benefit can be derived from either.

Ther. May I then, from this Instant, look upon *CHRIST*, his glorious Person, his perfect Righteousness, and his precious Death, as my *certain* Inheritance? May I firmly believe, that, through this grand and immensely meritorious Cause, I shall have Pardon and Acceptance, true Holiness and endless Salvation?

Assp. Why should You not believe all this *firmly*? You have the same Reason to believe with a steady Confidence, as to believe with any Degree of Affiance. It is the free Promise of the Gospel, addressed to *Sinners*, that warrants the latter; and the very same Promise, under the same Circumstances of *unmerited* Munificence, authorizes the former.

You

You have heard my Opinion, hear now what our LORD Himself says; *Let Him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let Him take the Water of Life freely* *. He may partake of my spiritual and unspeakable Blessings, as freely as He makes use of the most common Refreshments; as freely as He drinks of the running Stream. This is his royal Proclamation.—Hear his gracious Invitation. *Look unto Me, and be ye saved* †; saved from your disquieting Fears, by Justification; saved from your domineering Corruptions, by Sanctification; saved from every Evil, by complete and eternal Redemption. To whom is this most affectionate Call directed? Not to a few distinguished Favourites, but to *all the Ends of the Earth*. None are excepted; none are prohibited; and can my *Theron* imagine, that *He* is excluded?—Nay farther; Hear his earnest Intreaty, his tender and repeated Importunity; *As though GOD did beseech You by Us; We pray You, in CHRIST's Stead, be ye reconciled to GOD* ‡: accept his great Salvation: and enjoy the Comforts of his Grace.

Should not this three-fold Cord be strong enough to draw my dear Friend; let me add, what must absolutely supersede all Objections, the plain, express, peremptory Command of the ALMIGHTY: *This is his Command, that*
We

* *Rev.* xxii. 17. † *Isa.* xlv. 22. ‡ *2 Cor.* v. 20.

We should believe on the Name of his Son JESUS CHRIST *. Pray, examine the Language; Not He *allows* only; or barely *advifes*; but He *commands*. We are not only permitted, but strictly required. It is not only our Privilege, but GOD's positive Injunction.—Upon the Discovery of such a SAVIOUR, methinks, every Heart should cry; “O! that I might be
 “ permitted to approach Him! To solicit an
 “ Interest in Him! How gladly would I wait,
 “ ever so long a Time, in ever so mean a
 “ Posture, if I might at the last receive Him
 “ as my Portion?”—The superabundant Goodness of GOD, prevents our Wisheſ, and exceeds our Hopes. “I freely give my SON,
 “ faith the LORD, and all his Riches to You.
 “ I beſeech You, as a compassionate *Friend*,
 “ not to refuse Him. I injoin You, as an un-
 “ controulable *Sovereign*, to believe on Him.”
 —How gracious! supremely and amazingly gracious is this Command! And give me leave to hint, it is the greatest and most important Command, that ever issued from the Throne of Glory. If this be neglected, no other can be kept; if this be observed, all others will be easy.—Now, *Theron*, will You not look upon *CHRIST* and his all-sufficient Merits, as your own? Is not your Warrant clear and unexceptionable? Is not your Obligation strong and indispenſible?

Ther.

* 1 *Joh.* iii. 23.

Ther. Truly, *Aspasio*, this puts all my mistrustful Apprehensions to the Stand. Here is a Proclamation from the blessed GOD—seconded by his Invitation—accompanied by his Intreaty—and all enforced by his Command. I know not what can be a fuller Proof of your Point, or a stronger Inducement to believe.

Asp. Yes, *Theron*; I can produce (if such a Thing be possible) stronger Proof still. Such as, I hope, will totally rout Unbelief, and drive all her Forces from the Field.

GOD has not only commanded You, to live under the sweet Persuasion, that his SON is your SAVIOUR; but he has given you the grandest *Ratification* of this precious Truth.—He has passed his Word; He has made you a firm Promise; nay, He has given you *many* and *various* Promises, of this inestimable Blessing. And *GOD is not a Man, that He should lie; or the Son of Man, that he should repent.* Heaven and Earth may drop into Nothing, sooner than one Promise, or indeed one Jot or Tittle of his Promise, should fall to the Ground.

Besides this, He has given You, if I may so speak, a Note under his own Hand. He has *recorded* his Promises in the Bible, and *written* them with an everlasting Pen. So that they will stand conspicuous and indelible, like a

Bill drawn upon Heaven, and a Basis laid for Faith, so long as the Sun and Moon endure.

Nay, He has confirmed all, by the most solemn Sanction imaginable; by his *Oath*; by *his own Oath*; by the Oath of a *GOD*. Though his Word is sure, and his Promise immutable, He adds (astonishing Condescension! adorable Benignity!) He adds his Oath to all. He not only speaks, but swears; swears by Himself; swears by his own eternal Existence; that his Promises belong to whom? Mark this Particular with the most exact Attention. To whom do these Promises belong, which are ratified in this unequalled and inviolable Manner? To the Holy, the Upright, the Accomplished? To those, says the Scripture, *who fly for Refuge to the Hope set before them* *. The Hope set before them in the Propitiation, the Righteousness, the ineffable Merits of *CHRIST*.

This You do, *Theron*: I know You do. Therefore, as surely as *GOD* is true, as certainly as *GOD* exists, they are all your own. I would humbly, yet boldly apply to my Friend, what the great *JEHOVAH* speaks by the Prophet; “ *As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe Thee with them all, as with an Ornament, and bind them on Thee as a Bride doth* †. I appeal to all my Perfections, for
“ the

* *Heb.* vi. 17, 18.

† *Isai.* xlix. 18.

“ the Truth of this sacred Engagement ;
 “ and let every one of my sublime Attri-
 “ butes witness against me, if I violate my
 “ Word.”

Ther. May I then believe, firmly believe, assuredly believe, that *JESUS* the Mediator, and all the glorious Benefits of his Mediation, are mine? Pardon me, *Aspasio*, for reiterating the Question. I am really, with respect to the Obedience of Faith, too much like that *Saxon* Monarch, who, for his Remissness and Inactivity, was surnamed *The Unready* *.

Asp. I do more than pardon you, *Theron*. I feel for you, and I sympathize with you. If there is *some* of the *Saxon* Prince's Disease running in your Religion ; I am sure, there is too much of it in mine ; and I fear, it is an *epidemical* Distemper. But let Us reflect a Moment—Suppose any Neighbour of Substance and Credit, should bind himself by a deliberate *Promise*, to do you some particular Piece of Service—if he should add to his Promise a *Note* under his own Hand—if he should corroborate both by some authentic *Pledge*—if he should establish all by a most awful and solemn *Oath*—Could you suspect the Sincerity of his Engagement, or harbour any Doubt with regard to its Execution? This would be most unreasonable in any One ; and to your gener-
 ous

* *Ethelred.*

ous Temper, I am very certain, it would be impossible.—Let us remember, that **GOD** has given us all this Cause for an Assurance of Faith, and more. Nay; I will defy the most timorous and suspicious Temper, to demand from the *most treacherous* Person on Earth, a greater, stronger, fuller Security, than the **GOD** of infinite Fidelity has granted to you and me. —After all this, one would think, Diffidence itself could not hesitate, nor the most jealous Incredulity demur. Shall we, can we withhold that Affiance from the unchangeable **CREATOR**, which we could not but repose on a fallible Creature?

Ther. You rouse and animate me, *Aspasio*. O! that I may arise, and with the divine Assistance, shake off this Stupor of Unbelief! Certainly, it can never be honourable to **GOD**, nor pleasing to *CHRIST*, nor profitable to Ourselves.

Asp. If it be, then cherish it, indulge it, and never relinquish it.—But how can it be *honourable to GOD*? It depreciates his Goodness; it is a Reproach to his Veracity; nay, the Apostle scruples not to affirm, that it *makes him a Liar* *. Whereas, they who believe his Testimony, glorify his Faithfulness; glorify his Beneficence; and, as *John* the Baptist speaks, *set to their Seal, that GOD*
is

* 1 *John* v. 10.

is true *.—I have been informed, that, when the late *Electoꝛ* of *Hanover* was declared, by the Parliament of *Great-Britain*, Successor to the vacant Throne; several Persons of Distinction waited upon his Highness, in order to make timely Application for the most valuable Preferments. Several Requests of this Nature were granted, and each was confirmed by a kind of promissory Note. Among the rest, one Gentleman solicited for the *Mastership* of the *Rolls*. Being indulged in his Desire, he was offered the same Confirmation, which had been vouchsafed to other successful Petitioners. Upon which, he seemed to be under a graceful Confusion and Surprize; begged that he might not put the royal Donor to such unnecessary Trouble; at the same time declaring, that he looked upon his Highness's *Word*, as the very best Ratification of his Suit.—With this Conduct, and this Compliment, the Elector was not a little pleased. “ This is the
 “ Gentleman, he said, who does me a real
 “ Honour; treats me *like a King*; and who-
 “ ever is disappointed, He shall certainly be
 “ gratified.” So, We are assured by the Word of Revelation, that He, *who staggered not* through Unbelief, gave, and in the most signal, the most acceptable Manner, *Glory to GOD* †.

Is

* *John* iii. 33.† *Rom.* iv. 20.

Is it *pleasing to CHRIST*?—Quite the reverse. It dishonours his Merit; it detracts from the Dignity of his Righteousness; it would enervate the Power of his Intercession. Accordingly you may observe, there is nothing which our LORD so frequently reprov'd in his Followers, as this Spirit of Unbelief.—What says He to his Disciples, when He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration? *O faithless and perverse * Generation!* They were perverse, because faithless,—What says He to the Travelers, whom He overtook in their Journey to *Emmaus*? *O Fools, and slow of Heart to believe †!* They were Fools, because slow to believe.—What says He to the Apostles, after his Resurrection? *JESUS upbraided them with their Unbelief ‡.* He took no notice of their cowardly

* Διεσραμμενη. *Matt. xvii. 17.* A believing State of Mind, is like some *well arranged* and beautiful System of Limbs. Unbelief *dislocates* the Parts, *distorts* the harmonious Frame, and disfigures its comely Proportion.

† Ανοητοι. *Luke xxiv. 25.* Not *thoughtless*, but *stupid* Creatures; void of Understanding; as we say in *English*, *without common Sense*; or, as *Horace* would have said in *Latin*,

O tribus Anticyris Caput insanabile †

‡ *Mark xvi. 14.* The Word is not *επέλιμνησεν*, as in *Luke xvii. 3.* not *ελεγχεν*, as in *Tit. i. 13.* but *ωνειδισε*, which signifies, not barely a Rebuke, but a Rebuke accompanied with *keen* and *stinging* Reflections; such as may cover the Face with Blushes, and wound the Heart with Anguish.—It is used, by the Evangelist *Luke*, and by the Apostle *Peter*, to describe those Calumnies, Invectives, and Reproaches, with which the Persecutors of Christianity endeavoured to *gall* and *afflict* the *Christians*. *Luke vi. 22.* *1 Pet. iv. 14.*

—Though

cowardly and perfidious Behaviour; He inveighed against none of their other Follies and Infirmities; but He upbraided them with their Unbelief. Not *gently rebuked*. No; this was a Fault, so unreasonable in itself, so reproachful to their MASTER, so pernicious to themselves, that He *severely reprimanded* them for it; with an Air of Vehemence, and with a Mixture of Invective.

Is it *profitable to Ourselves*?—Nothing less. It damps our Love, and diminishes our Comfort. It subjects Us to that Fear, which hath Torment; and disqualifies Us for that Obedience, which is filial. In a Word; this distrustful and unbelieving Temper weakens every Principle of Piety, and impoverishes the whole Soul. Whence come spiritual Oscitancy and Remissness? Whence proceed Sterility and Unfruitfulness in the Knowledge of *CHRIST*? St. *Peter* ascribes them all to an habitual Unbelief. Such Persons, he says, *have forgotten that they were purged from their former Sins* *. —In the Regenerate, where it remains, it is very detrimental; for *they that will not believe, shall not be established* †: In the Unregenerate, where

— Though our *LORD JESUS* was most amiably tender and gentle; yet, when Severity was necessary and wholesome, He knew how to be severe. Our all-wise *PHYSICIAN* could apply the *Caustic*, as well as administer the *Cordial*.

* 2 *Pet.* i. 8, 9. † *Isai.* vii. 9.

where it prevails, it is absolutely destructive; and though it may not kill like an Apoplexy, it wastes like a Consumption. *They could not enter in, because of Unbelief* *.

Let Us then, my dear Friend, *cast away this Sin, which so easily besets Us* both. It clogs our Feet; it hampers all our Powers; and hinders Us from *running*, with Alacrity and Speed, *the Race that is set before Us*.—What says *David*? *GOD hath spoken in his Holiness* †; hath made an exprefs and inviolable Promise, that I shall be Ruler of his People *Israel*. *I will rejoice therefore*; Away with every alarming Apprehension; I will even exult and triumph. Nay more; *I will divide Shechem, and mete out the Valley of Succoth*; I will look upon the whole Land as my own. I will divide it, and dispose of it, just as if it was already in my Possession.—Why should not you and I also say? *GOD hath spoken in his Holiness*; hath expressly and solemnly declared, *The Promise of an all-sufficient SAVIOUR is to You*. *We will rejoice therefore*; confiding in this most faithful Word, We will bid adieu to all disquieting Fears, and make our Boast of this glorious REDEEMER. Yes; notwithstanding all our Unworthiness, *CHRIST* and his Atonement, *CHRIST* and his Righteousness, are ours. Amidst all
our

* *Heb. iii. 19.*† *Psal. lx. 6.*

our Temptations, this is our Anchor; its Hold is firm, and its Ground immoveable *.

Ther. I have heard some People distinguish, between the Faith of *Reliance*, and the Faith of *Assurance*; between the *reflex* and the *direct* Act of Faith. Methinks, I approve these Sentiments, though I dislike the Terms. The Sentiments are finely adapted to the Relief of human Infirmary, though the Terms are rather too abstruse for ordinary Capacities to understand.

Asp. I cannot say, that I am very fond, either of the one, or of the other. In my Opinion, they both partake too much of the Subtilty of the Schools; and are more likely to create Perplexity, than to administer godly Edifying. For which Reason, I should choose to drop the difficult Phrases, and not to dwell on the nice Distinctions.—Yet, if We must not dismiss them, without some Notice, I would just remark—

That, what they call Faith of *Reliance*, includes or presupposes a Degree of Assurance. Who would rely upon a Satisfaction made, without

* This very important Doctrine is more copiously displayed, in a Sermon of Mr. *Erskine's* on the *Assurance of Faith*, Vol. III. p. 201.—Was I to read, in order to refine my Taste, or improve my Style; I would prefer Bp. *Atterbury's* Sermons, Dr. *Bates's* Works, or Mr. *Seed's* Discourses. But was I to read, with a single View to the Edification of my Heart, in true Faith, solid Comfort, and evangelical Holiness; I would have Recourse to Mr. *Erskine*, and take his Volumes for my Tutor.

without being first persuaded, that the Satisfaction is for Him and his Iniquities? Reliance, separated from this Persuasion, seems to be neither comfortable, nor reasonable.—As to those, who are zealous Advocates for the *reflex* Act of Faith; who advise Us, to prove our Title to Comfort, by genuine Marks of Conversion; and teach Us, on this Column to fix the Capital of Assurance; I would rather propose a Question, than advance Objections.—Is not this somewhat like placing the Dome of a Cathedral upon the Stalk of a Tulip?

Ther. No, say They; it was the Practice of the Apostle Himself; and He has left it upon Record, as a Pattern for all Posterity to copy. *We know that We are passed from Death unto Life, because We love the Brethren.*

Asp. Observe, *Theron*, the Process of the Apostle's Reasoning. It is like the Form of an inverted Cone; where You have first the Point, and from thence proceed to the Base. So the sacred Writer begins with the less, and ascends to the greater Proof. He says, in one of the following Verses; *Hereby perceive We the Love of GOD **, because He laid down his Life, not merely

* I *John* iii. 16. The Word *GOD* is not in the Original. It was omitted by the Apostle, just as the particular Name is omitted by *Mary*, when She speaks to the Gardener; *Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence*; and by the *Church*, when She addresses the sacred Object of her Affection; *Let Him kiss me with the Kisses of his Mouth: John* xx. 15. *Cantic.* i. 1.—
In

merely for Sinners, but *for Us* in particular.— Here, You see, is Assurance by the direct Act of Faith. From this Truth believed, from this Blessing received, the Love of the Brethren takes its Rise. Which may very justly be admitted as an Evidence, that our Faith is real, and our Assurance no Delusion. As yonder Leaves may serve to distinguish the particular Species, and ascertain the healthy State, of the Trees on which they grow.

When your Tenants bring in their Rent, this affords no contemptible Evidence, that the Lands, which they respectively occupy, are yours. But this is a Proof which does not occur, either every Day or every Week; it is occasional only, and of the subordinate Kind. —The *grand* Demonstration, that which is always at hand, and always forcible, is, your Possession of the *Deeds* of Conveyance. Thus, the Promise of GOD in his divine Word is our Charter, or the authentic Conveyance of our Right to Pardon and Salvation. Make just the same Difference between this Promise and
your

In all which Places, there is a Language, a very emphatical Language, even in the Silence. It declares, how deeply the Heart was penetrated, how totally the Thoughts were possessed, by the beloved and illustrious Subject. It expresses also the superlative Dignity and Amiableness of the Person meant: as though *He*, and *He alone*, either was, or deserved to be, known and admired by *All*. For which Reason, to mention his Name, or display his Excellencies, seemed as *needleless*, as to shew Light to the opened Eye.

your own Holiness, as You make between the Writings of your Estate and the Receival of the Revenues, You will then judge aright, because your Judgment will coincide with the Apostle's.

Besides ; this Method of seeking Peace and Assurance, I fear, will embarrass the simple-minded ; and cherish, rather than suppress, the Fluctuations of Doubt. For, let the Marks be what You please, a Love of the Brethren or a Love of all Righteousness, a Change of Heart or an Alteration of Life ; these good Qualifications are sometimes like the Stars at Noon-Day, *not easily*, if at all, discernable ; or else they are like a Glow-worm in the Night, *glimmering*, rather than shining. Consequently will yield, at the best, but a feeble, at the worst, a very precarious Evidence.—If, in such a manner, We should acquire some little Assurance, how soon may it be unsettled by the Incurfions of Temptation, or destroyed by the Prevalence of Sin ! At such a Juncture, how will it keep its Standing ! How retain its Being ! It will be as a tottering Wall, before the Tempest ; or as *the Rush without Mire, and the Flag without Water* *.

Instead therefore of poring on our own Hearts, to discover, by inherent Qualities, our Interest in *CHRIST*, I should rather renew my Application

* *Job* viii. 11.

cation to the free and faithful Promise of the LORD; assert and maintain my Title, on this *unalterable* Ground.—“ Pardon is mine, “ I would say, Grace is mine, *CHRIST* and “ all his spiritual Blessings are mine. Why? “ because I am conscious of sanctifying Ope- “ rations in my own Breast? Rather because “ *GOD hath spoken in his Holiness*; because all “ these precious Privileges are consigned over “ to me in the everlasting Gospel, with a *Clear- “ ness* unquestionable as the Truth, with a “ *Certainty* inviolable as the Oath of GOD.”

Cast your Eye into yonder Meadow. Take notice of that industrious *Fisherman*; how intent He is upon the Pursuit of his Business. He has just thrown his Net, and taken a considerable Booty. You do not see Him spending his Time in idle Triumphs, on Account of his Success. He does not stand to measure the Dimensions of the Fish, or compute the Value of his Prize. But having, without Delay, secured the Captives; He prepares for *another* Cast, and hopes for *another* Draught.— So let Us, instead of exulting in any past Acquisitions, seek afresh to the inexhaustible Fullness of our SAVIOUR, for renewed Communications. That, having Life and having Peace from Him, We may have them *more abundantly* *. Then will be fulfilled the Saying that is written; *The Just*, the righteous in

B b 2

JESUS

* *John x. 10.*

JESUS CHRIST—*shall live*, shall be delivered from Condemnation and Death; shall persevere and advance in the Life of Comfort and Holiness—how? By reflecting on his own Attainments? No; but *by* the Exercise of *Faith**. By cleaving inseparably to *CHRIST*, and by depending incessantly on *CHRIST*.

This, I verily think, nay this, the Apostle testifies, is the most effectual Way of feeding that Lamp, and quickening that Flame; which, having cheered Us in our earthly Pilgrimage, will be brightened up into immortal Glory in the Heavens.

Here they went in; and, after a slight Refreshment, took Coach.—As they were returning Home, *Theron* observed, with Concern, the changed and melancholy Aspect of Things, in the Territories of the Husbandman. The Fields of Corn, which a little while ago, were gracefully erect, or softly inclining to the Breeze, lay sunk and flatted under the impetuous Rains.—Such, added *Aspasio*, such I apprehend will be our Faith, if it aspires not after Assurance, or if its Assurance is erected on any Endowments of our own. O! that it might be *rooted*, like those full-grown Oaks, under which We lately walked! and *grounded* †, like

* *Rom. i. 17.*

† *Rooted and grounded*, ερριζωμενοι και τεθεμελιωμενοι. These are the Apostle's beautiful Ideas, or rather expressive Similitudes, each comprehended in a single Word. *Eph. iii. 18.*

like that well-built Edifice, which is still in our View!—I join with my *Aspasio* in this Wish; and must beg of Him to inform me, how I may attain so desirable a Blessing.—You have cured me, *Theron*, of making Apologies: O! that I might be as successfully instrumental, in delivering my Friend from his Doubts! That the Gospel might come to Us, as it came to the *Thessalonians*, *not in Word only, but in Power, and in the HOLY GHOST, and in much Assurance**!

Prayer is the first Expedient. Every good Gift is from above, and cometh down from the FATHER of Lights. *CHRIST* is not only the Object, but the Author and Finisher of our Faith. *LORD, increase our Faith*, was the Request of the Disciples, and should be the prevailing Language of our Hearts.

Seek the *blessed SPIRIT*. That He may testify of GOD, testify of *CHRIST*; and bear witness with our Spirit.—Testify of GOD, that *He hath given unto Us eternal Life*.—Testify of *CHRIST*, that *this Life is in his SON*†.—Bear witness with our Spirit, that *We are the Children of GOD*‡.—By doing this, He is an *Earnest* § of our eternal Happiness and Glory: He is a *Seal* || of our Security and Perseverance unto the Day of Redemption.

Lay

* *1 Theff. i. 5.* † *1 John v. 11.* ‡ *Rom. viii. 16.*
 § *2 Cor. i. 22.* || *Eph. i. 13.*

374 D I A L O G U E X V I .

Lay up many of the divine *Promises* in your Memory. Stock that noble Cabinet with this invaluable Treasure. *Faith cometh by bearing**, by meditating on, and praying over, this Word of Life, and Word of Grace.—And never, never forget the *Freeness*, with which the Promise is made, and its good Things are bestowed. You are to receive the one, and apply the other, not with a full, but with an empty Hand; not as a righteous Person, but as an unworthy Sinner.


* *Rom. x. 17.* On which Account the Scriptures are styled, *The Words of Faith.* 1 *Tim. iv. 6.*



D I A



DIALOGUE XVII.

 HE next Morning, *Tberon* ordered a cold Collation to be prepared, and his Pleasure-Boat to hold itself in Readiness.—Breakfast being dispatched, and some necessary Orders, relating to the Family, given—Now, says He to *Aspasio*, let me fulfil my Promise; or rather let us execute our mutual Engagement; and consign the Remainder of this mild and charming Day, to a rural Excursion.

We will take our Rout along one of the *finest Roads* in the World. A Road, incomparably more curious and durable, than the famous Causeys raised by those puissant Hands which conquered the Globe. A Road, that has subsisted from the Beginning of Time; and, though frequented by innumerable Carriages, laden with the heaviest Burdens, has

never been gulled, never wanted Repair, to this very Hour.—Upon this, they step into the Chariot, and are conveyed to a large *navigable River*, about three Quarters of a Mile distant from the House.—Here they launch upon a new Element, attended by two or three Servants, expert at handling the Oar, and managing the Nets.

Is this the Road, replied *Aspasio*, on which my Friend bestows his Panegyric? It is indeed more curious in its Structure, and more durable in its Substance, than the celebrated *Roman* Causeys. Though I must assure you, that the latter are very high in my Esteem. I admire them far beyond *Trajan's* Pillar, or *Caracalla's* Baths; far beyond the idle Pomp of the *Panttheon*, or the worse than idle Magnificence of the *Amphitheatre*. They do the truest Honour to the Empire; because, while they were the Glory of *Rome*, they were a general Good*; and not only a Monument of her Grandeur, but a Benefit to Mankind.

But more than all these Works, I admire that excellent and divinely gracious Purpose,
to

* These Roads ran through all *Italy*, and stretched themselves into the Territories of *France*. They were carried across the *Alps*, the *Pyrenean* Mountains, and through the whole Kingdom of *Spain*. Some of them, towards the South, reached even to *Æthiopia*; and some of them, towards the North, extended as far as *Scotland*. The Remains of several of them continue in *England* to this Day; though they were made, it may be, above 1500 Years ago.

to which Providence made the Empire itself subservient. It was a kind of Road or Causeway, for the *everlasting Gospel*; and afforded the Word of Life a free Passage, to the very Ends of the Earth. The *evangelical Dove* mounted the Wings of the *Roman Eagle*; and flew, with surprising Expedition, through all Nations.—Who would have thought, that insatiable Ambition and the most bloody Wars, should be paving a Way for the PRINCE of Humility and Peace? How remote from all human Apprehension, was such a Design; and how contrary to the natural Result of Things, was such an Event! How remarkably therefore was that Observation of the Psalmist verified; *His Ways are in the Sea, and his Paths in the great Waters, and his Footsteps are not known**!

Conversing on such agreeable Subjects, they were carried by the Stream, through no less agreeable Scenes. They pass by Hills, clothed with hanging Woods; and Woods, arrayed in varying Green. Here, excluded from a Sight of the out-stretched Plains, they are entertained with a Group of *unsubstantial* Images, and the Wonders of a *mimic* Creation.—Another Sun shines, but stript of his blazing Beams, in the watery Concave: while Clouds sail along the downward Skies, and sometimes dis-

* *Psal.* lxxvii. 19.

disclose, sometimes draw a Veil over, the radiant Orb. Trees, with their inverted Tops, either flourish in the fair Serene below ; or else paint, with a pleasing Delusion, the pellucid Flood. Even the Mountains are there, but in a headlong Posture ; and, notwithstanding their prodigious Bulk, they quiver in this floating Mirror, like the poplar Leaves which adorn their Sides.

Soon as the Boat advances, and disturbs the placid Surface ; the Waves, pushed hastily to the Bank, bear off, in broken Fragments, the *liquid Landſcape*. The ſpreading Circles ſeemed to prophecy, as they rolled ; and pronounced the Pleaſures of this preſent State—the Pomp of Power, the Charm of Beauty, and the Echo of Fame—pronounced them *transient*, as their ſpeedy Paſſage ; *empty*, as their unreal Freight.—Seemed to prophecy ? It was more. Imagination heard them utter, as they ran ;

Thus paſs the ſhadowy Scenes of Life away !

Anon, they emerge from this fluid Alley, and dart amidſt the Level of a ſpacious Meadow. The Eye, lately *immured*, though in pleaſurable Confinement, now *expands* her delighted View, into a Space almoſt boundleſs, and amidſt Objects little ſhort of innumerable.—Transported for a while, at the numberleſs Variety of beauteous Images, poured in ſweet
Con-

Confusion all around, she hardly knows, where to fix, or which to pursue. Recovering, at length, from the pleasing Perplexity; she glances, quick and instantaneous, across all the intermediate Plain, and marks the distant *Mountains*. How Cliffs climb over Cliffs, till the huge Ridges gain upon the Sky: how their diminished Tops are dressed in Blue, or wrapped in Clouds: while all their leafy Structures, and all their fleecy Tenants, are lost in Air.

Soon she quits these aerial Summits, and ranges the ruffet *Heath*: here, shagged with Brakes, or tufted with Rushes: there, interspersed with straggling Thickets, or solitary Trees; that seem, like disaffected Partisans, to shun each other's Shade.—A *Spire*, placed in a remote Valley, peeps over the Hills. *Sense* is surpris'd at the amusive Appearance; is ready to suspect, that the Column rises, like some enchanted Edifice, from the rifted Earth. But *Reason* looks upon it, as the Earnest of a hidden Vale, and the sure Indication of an adjacent Town. Performing, in this Respect, much the same Office to the Eye, as *Faith* executes with regard to the Soul, when it is *the Evidence of Things not seen*.*.

Next, she roves, with increasing Pleasure, over spacious Tracts of fertile Glebe, and cultured *Fields*. Where Cattle, of every graceful Form,

* *Heb. xi. 1.*

Form, and every valuable Quality, crop the tender Herb, or drink the crystal Rills.—Presently, she dwells with the highest Complacency, on *Towns* of Opulence and Splendor; which spread the sacred Dome, and lift the social Roof. *Towns*, no longer surrounded with the stern forbidding Majesty, of unpassable Entrenchments, and impregnable Ramparts; but incircled with the delicate, the inviting Appendages of Gardens and Orchards: *those*, decked with all the soft Graces of Art and Elegance; *these*, blushing and pregnant with the more substantial Treasures of fruitful Nature.—Wreaths of ascending Smoke, intermingled with Turrets and lofty Pinnacles, seem to contend which shall get *farthest* from the Earth, and *nearest* to the Skies. Happy for the Inhabitants! If such was the habitual Tendency of their Desires*; if no other Contention was known in their Streets.

Villas,

* This Comparison, I think, cannot appear vulgar to those Persons, who have read, and who reverence, *The Book of Canticles*. There, the Church, ascending continually in her Affections, to her beloved *JESUS*, and to her heavenly Home, is characterized by this very Similitude. *Who is this that cometh out of the Wilderness like Pillars of Smoke?* Cantic. iii. 6.—Though it must be confessed, that this Similitude, like many of the Illustrations used in Scripture, might have a Sort of *local* Propriety; peculiar to the People of that Age, Country, and Religion. It might probably refer to those Columns of Smoke, which arose from the *Burnt-Offering*, or fumed from the Altar of *Incense*. If so, this Circumstance

Villas, elegant and magnificent, seated in the Center of an ample Park, or removed to the Extremity of a lengthened Lawn: not far from a beautiful Reservoir of standing Waters, or the more salutary Lapse of a limpid Stream. — *Villages*, clad in homely Thatch, and lodged in the Bosom of clustering Trees. Rustics, singing at their Work; Shepherds, tuning their Pipes, as they tend their Flocks; Travelers, pursuing each his respective Way, in easy and joyous Security.

How pleasing, said *Aspasio*, is *our* Situation! How delightful is the Aspect of all Things! One would almost imagine, that nothing could exceed it, and that nothing can increase it. Yet there is a Method of *increasing* even this
copious

stance must give a Solemnity and Dignity to the Idea, of which many Readers are not at all aware, and which indeed no modern Reader can fully conceive.

May I take leave to mention another Comparison of this Kind? *The Enemies of the LORD shall consume as the Fat of Lambs; yea, even as the Smoke shall they consume away.* Psal. xxxvii. 20.—*As the Fat of Lambs*, is not to *Us* a striking Representation. But to those who attended the Altar, who saw the unctuous and most combustible Parts of the Victim blazing in the sacred Fire, it presented a very lively Image. Which was still more apposite and significant, if the *Psalms* was sung, while the Sacrifice was burning.—None I believe, in such a Case, could forbear either observing or admiring the beautiful *Gradation*: “ They shall perish as yonder *Fat*, which is so easily set on fire; and, when once in a Flame, is so speedily consumed. Nay, they shall be as the *Smoke*, which is still more transient. Whose light unsubstantial Wreaths, but just make their Appearance to the Eye; and, in a Moment, vanish into empty Air.”

copious Delight, and of *heightening* even this exquisite Pleasure.—Let me desire my Friend, answered *Theron*, to explain his Remark; and not only to explain, but to exemplify.—If We view, resumed *Aspasio*, our own *prosperous*, and compare it with the *afflicted* Condition of Others, the Method I propose, will be reduced to Practice. Such a dark and mournful Contrast, must throw additional Brightness, even upon the brightest Scene.

Above Us, the Skies smile with Serenity; below Us, the Fields look gay with Plenty; all around Us, the sportive Gales

*Fanning their odoriferous Wings dispense
Native Perfumes; and whisper, whence they stole
Those balmy Spoils.*

With Us all Circumstances are as *easy*, as the Wafture of the Boat; as *smooth*, as the Flow of the Stream.—But let Us not forget those grievous Calamities, which befall our Brethren, in some remote Tracts of the Earth, or distant Parts of the Ocean. How many Sailors are struggling, vainly struggling, with all the Fury of rending Winds, and dashing Waves! While their Vessel, flung to and fro by *tempestuous* Billows, is mounted into the Clouds, or plunged into the Abyfs. Possibly, the miserable Crew hear their Knell sounded, in the shattered Mast; and see Destruction entering, at the
burst-

bursting Planks. Perhaps, this very Moment, they pour the last, dismal, dying Shriek; and sink, irrecoverably sink, in the all-overwhelming Surge.—The Traveler, in *Africa's* barren Wastes, pale even amidst those glowing Regions, pale with prodigious Consternation, sees sudden and surprising Mountains rise. Sees the sultry Desert, ascending the Sky, and sweeping before the Whirlwind. What can He do? Whither fly? How escape the approaching Ruin? Alas! while He attempts to rally his Thoughts; attempts to devise some feeble Expedient; He is overtaken by the choking Storm, and suffocated amidst the *sandy Inundation*. The driving Heaps are, now, his Executioner; as the drifted Heaps will, soon, be his Tomb.

While *We* possess the valuable Privileges, and taste the delicious Sweets of *Liberty*, how many Partakers of our common Nature, are condemned to perpetual Exile, or hammered to the Oar for Life! How many are immured in the Gloom of Dungeons, or buried in the Caverns of the Mines; never to behold the all-inlivening Sun again!—While Respect waits upon our Persons, and Reputation attends our Characters: are there not some unhappy Creatures, led forth by the Hand of *vindictive Justice*, to be Spectacles of Horror, and Monuments of Vengeance? Sentenced, for their enormous Crimes, to be broke Limb
by

by Limb on the Wheel, or to be impaled alive on the lingering Stake. To these, the strangling Cord, or the deadly Stab, would be a most welcome Favour. But they must feel a *thousand* Deaths, in undergoing *one*. And this, too probably, is but the Beginning of their Sorrows; will only consign them over to infinitely more terrible Torment.—While Ease and Pleasure, in sweet Conjunction, smooth our Paths, and soften our Couch: how many are tossing on the Fever's fiery Bed, or toiling along Affliction's thorny Road! Some, under the *excruciating*, but necessary Operations of Surgery: their Bodies ripped open, with a dreadful Incision, to search for the torturing Stone; or their Limbs lopped off by the bloody Knife, to prevent the Mortification's fatal Spread. Some *emaciated* by pining Sickness, are deprived of all their animal Vigour; and transformed into Spectres, even before their Diffolution*. These are ready to adopt the Complaint of the *Psalmist*; *I am withered like Grass; my Bones are burnt up, as it were a Firebrand; I go hence like the Shadow that departeth*. While *Health*, that staple Blessing; which gives every other Entertainment its Flavour and its Beauty; adds the Gloss to all We see,

* A very little Excursion of Thought will easily convince the Reader, that there is no Period of Time, in which some of these Calamities do not befall our Fellow-creatures, in one Part of the World or another.

fee, and the Gout to all We taste; Health plays at our Hearts; dances in our Spirits; and mantles in our Cheeks, as the generous Champain lately sparkled in our Glafs.

We are blest with a calm Possession of Ourselves; with Tranquility in our Consciences, and an habitual Harmony in our Temper. Whereas Many, in the doleful *Cells* of *Lunacy*, are gnashing their Teeth, or wringing their Hands; rending the Air with Vollies of horrid Execrations, or burdening it with Peals of disconsolate Sighs. And O! what Multitudes are held in *splendid Vassalage*, by their own domineering Passions, or the Vanities of a bewitching World. Far less innocently, far more deplorably disordered *, than the fettered Madman, they are gnawed by the invenomed Tooth of Envy; they are agitated by the wild Sallies of Ambition; or feel the malignant Ulcer of Jealousy,

* *Give me any Plague*, says an apocryphal Writer, *but the Plague of the Heart*. Ecclus. xxv. 13. Upon which judicious and weighty Apothegm, *Masmissa's* Speech in Mr. Thomson's *Sophonisba*, is a very pertinent and affecting Paraphrase.

*O! save me from the Tumult of the Soul!
From the wild Beast within!—For, circling Sands,
When the swift Whirlwind whelms them o'er the Lands;
The roaring Deeps, that to the Clouds arise,
While thwarting thick the mingled Lightning flies;
The Monster-brood, to which this Land gives Birth,
The blazing City, and the gaping Earth;
All Deaths, all Tortures, in one Pang combin'd,
Are gentle to the Tempest of the Mind.*

Jealousy, rankling in their Breasts. In Some, Avarice, like a ravening Harpy, gripes. In Some, Revenge, like an implacable Fury, rages. While Others are goaded by lordly and imperious Lusts, through the loathsome *Sewers* of impure Delight; and left, at last, in those hated and execrable *Dens*, where Remorse rears her sneaky Crest, and Infamy sharpens her hissing Tongue.— — —
— — — — — — — — —

Why this long Pause? replied *Theron*. Your Observations are as useful, as they are just. We should all be acquainted, at least in Speculation acquainted, with Grief; and send our Thoughts, if not our Feet, to visit the Abodes of Sorrow.—That, in this School, We may learn a sympathizing Pity, for our distressed Fellow-creatures; and see, in this Glass, our inexpressible Obligations to the Goodness of Providence. Which has crowned our Table with Abundance, and replenished our Cup with Delicacies; permitting neither Penury to stint the Draught, nor Adversity to mingle her Gall.—Go on, I must Intreat You, with your Description of *comparative Felicity*. We have a large Circuit still to make, before We arrive at our intended Port. And I could wish, that your Discourse might keep Pace with the Current.

Since

Since You approve the Subject, answered *Aspasio*, I will pursue it a little farther.—We, the Inhabitants of this favoured Isle, breathe an Air of the most *agreeable* Temperature, and most *wholsome* Qualities. But how many Nations languish under brazen Skies, vaulted as it were with Fire? They welter amidst those Furnaces of the Sun, till their “Visage is burnt, and black as a Coal*.”—What is far more disastrous, Beds of Sulphur and combustible Materials, lie in subterraneous Ambush, ready to spring the *irresistible Mine*. Ere long—perhaps, on some Day of universal Festivity †, or in some Night of deep Repose—to be touched by Heaven’s avenging Hand. Then, with what outrageous Violence will they burst!

* *Lam.* iv. 8.

† There is a remarkable Passage in *Psal.* lviii. 10. which seems to denote some such *unexpected*, but *speedy* and *inevitable* Doom. It is obscured, not a little, by the Version admitted into our Liturgy. I believe, the true Translation may be seen in the following *Italics*, and the true Sense learnt from the *interwoven* Paraphrase.—Speedily, or *before your Pots can perceive the Warmth of blazing Thorns, shall HE* that ruleth over all, sweep away the Wicked: *sweep him away by a Stroke of righteous Indignation*, as by a fierce and mighty Tempest; so that, *even from the Fulness of his Sufficiency*, and the Height of his *Prosperity*, He shall be plunged into utter Destruction.—The Word *רָאָה*, which is very unhappily rendered *raw*, signifies a State of *Prosperity* or *pleasurable Enjoyment*. 1 *Sam.* xxv. 6.—The whole Verse, in a Gradation of striking Images, gives Us a most awful Display of divine Vengeance. Vengeance, quite sudden, utterly irresistible, and overtaking the secure Sinner, amidst all the Caresses of, what the World calls, *Fortune*.

burst! Rock the Foundations of Nature!
Wrench open the ponderous Jaws of Earth!
And swallow up astonished Cities, in the dark,
tremendous, closing Chasm!

These *Earthquakes*, it may be, both precede and portend, *the Pestilence that walketh in Darkness, and the Sickness that destroyeth at Noon-day* *. They are, at once, a fearful Omen, and a ruinous Blow. The stagnating Atmosphere, rank with malignant Vapours, becomes a Source of deadly Infection: or, replete with poisonous Animalcules, is one vast incumbent Cloud of *living Bane*. If the active Gales arise, they arise only to stir the Seeds of Disease, and diffuse the fatal Contagion far and near.—Unhappy People! The *Plague*, that severe Minister of divine Indignation, fixes her Headquarters in their blasted Provinces; and sends Death abroad, on his pale Horse †, to empty their Houses, depopulate their Towns, and crowd their Graves.

Our Island is seldom visited with either of these dreadful Judgments; and has never sustained any very considerable Calamity from the former. However, let Us not be presumptuously secure. We have, not long ago, received an awful Warning. The Rod has been shaken, or rather the Sword has been brandished, over our Territories.—Who can forget

* *Psal.* xci. 6.

† *Rev.* vi. 8.

get the general Consternation, that seized our *Metropolis*, on Occasion of the late Earthquake? And not without Reason. For, of all divine Visitations, this is the most terribly vindictive. The Whirlwind is *slow* in its Progress; War is *gentle* in its Assaults; even the raging Pestilence is a *mild* Rebuke; compared with the inevitable, the *all-over-whelming* Fury of an Earthquake. When it begins, it also makes an End *. Puts a Period, in a few Minutes, to the Work of Ages. Ruins all, without Distinction; and there is no Defence from the destructive Stroke.

Should almighty Vengeance stir up again those fierce subterranean Commotions: should the most high GOD bid strong Convulsions tear the Bowels of Nature, and make the Foundations of the World tremble like a Leaf: What, O ye *careless ones* †, What will You do? Whither will You fly?—See! the Pavement sinks under your Feet. Your Houses are tottering over your Heads. The Ground, on every Side, cracks and opens like a gaping Grave; or heaves and swells like a rolling Sea. A Noise of *Crashing* ‡ is heard from without, occasioned by the rending Streets, and falling Structures. Thunders, infernal Thunders ||, bellow

* 1 Sam. iii. 12. † *Isai.* xxxii. 11. ‡ *Zeph.* i. 10.

|| Before the Overthrow of *Catania* by an Earthquake, a Noise was heard, vast and horrid, as if all the Artillery in the World was discharged at once.

bellow from beneath ; mingled with despairing Shrieks, and dying Groans from those wretched Creatures, who are jammed between the closing Earth, or going down alive into the horrible Pit *.—Where now will You fly ? To
your

* Very memorable, and equally tremendous, is the Account of the Earthquake, that visited *Sicily*, in the Year 1693. —It shook the whole Island. The Mischief it caused, is amazing. Fifty-four Cities and Towns, beside an incredible Number of Villages, were either demolished, or greatly damaged. *Catania*, one of the most famous and flourishing Cities in the Kingdom, was intirely destroyed. Of 18,914 Inhabitants, 18000 perished.

Another Earthquake almost as dreadful, and in the same Year, spread Desolation through the Colony of *Jamaica*. In two Minutes Time, it shook down, and laid under Water, nine Tenths of the Town of *Port-royal*. In less than a Minute, three Quarters of the Houses, and the Ground they stood on, together with the Inhabitants, were quite sunk : and the little Part left behind, was no better than Heaps of Rubbish. —The Shake was so violent, that it threw People down upon their Knees, or their Faces, as they were running about for Shelter. The Ground heaved and swelled, like a rolling Sea ; and several Houses, still standing, were shuffled some Yards out of their Places. The Earth would crack and yawn ; would open and shut, quick and fast. Of which horrid Openings, two or three hundred might be seen at once. In some whereof, the People went down, and were seen no more. In some they descended, and rose again in other Streets, or in the Middle of the Harbour. Some swiftly closing, seized the miserable Creatures, and pressed them to Death ; leaving their Heads, or half their Bodies above Ground, to be a Spectacle of Terror, and a Prey to Dogs. Out of others would issue whole Rivers of Water, spouted to a great Height in the Air, and threatening a Deluge to that Part, which the Earthquake spared.—Scarce a Planting-house or Sugar-work was left standing in all the Island. Two thousand Lives were lost, and a thousand Acres of Land sunk. The whole was attended with frightful Noises,
with

your strong Towers? They are shattered in Pieces.—To the stronger Rocks? They are thrown out of their Place.—To the open Fields? They are a frightful Gulph, yawning to devour You.—Where-ever You fly; in the Wildness of your Distraction, where-ever you seek for Shelter; It shall be, *as if a Man fled from a Lion, and a Bear met Him; or went into the House, and leaned his Hand upon the Wall, and a Serpent bit Him* *.

Yet, there is *one* Place of Refuge, which will prove an inviolable Sanctuary, and a perfect Security. I mean, the great, the gracious, the adorable REDEEMER'S Righteousness. Hither let Us betake ourselves. Now, before the Day of Desolation cometh, let us betake Ourselves to *this Strong-hold*. Then, shall We have no Reason to fear, though the Earth be moved, and though the Hills be carried into the Midst of the Sea. For thus saith GOD, the omnipotent and faithful GOD; *The Sun and the Moon shall be darkened, and the Stars shall withdraw their Shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Sion, and utter his Voice from Jerusalem. The Heavens and the Earth shall shake; but the LORD JESUS CHRIST, will*
be

with brimstone Blasts, and offensive Smells. The noisome Vapours belched forth, corrupted the Air, and brought on a general Sickness; which swept away more than three thousand of those, who escaped the Fury of the Earthquake. See *Chamb. Dict.* on the Word *Earthquake*.

* *Amos* v. 19.

be the Hope of his People, and the Strength of the Children of Israel *.—Or, if the true Believer is involved, in the same undistinguished Ruin with the Ungodly; even this shall turn to his Gain. It shall exempt Him from the lingering Pains, and the melancholy Solemnities of a dying Bed. Like *Elijah's* fiery Chariot, it shall speedily waft his Soul to the Bosom of his SAVIOUR. While the hideous Cavern, that whelms his Body in the Center, shall be its Chamber of Rest, till the beloved BRIDE-GROOM comes, and the Day of Resurrection dawns.

We lift up our Eyes, and behold the radiant Colours, which flush the Forehead of the Morning: We turn, and gaze upon the no less beautiful Tinges, which impurple the Cheek of Evening. We throw around our View, and are delighted with numberless Forms of Fertility, that both decorate and enrich our Plains.—Whereas, other Countries are over-run with immense Swarms of *Locusts*: which intercept, where-ever they fly, the fair Face of Day; and destroy, where-ever they alight, the green Treasures of the Ground.

Ah! what avails it, that the laborious Hind sows his Acres; or the skilful Husbandman prunes his Vineyard? That Spring, with her
prolific

* *Jael* iii, 16, 17.

prolific Moisture, swells the Bud; or, with her delicate Pencil, paints the Blossom? Nor Grain, nor Fruit, can hope for Maturity; while these *rapacious* and *baleful* Creatures infest the Neighbourhood. They ravage the Gardens. They strip the Trees, and shave the Meadows. Scarce a single Leaf remains on the Boughs, or so much as a single Stalk in the Furrows. *A Fire devoureth before them, and behind them a Flame burneth: the Land is as the Garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate Wilderness: yea, and nothing can escape them* *.

Now, let the dreadful Artillery roar from all its iron Throats, and disgorge the heaviest Glut of mortal Hail. Now, Ye Sons of Slaughter; Men *skilful to destroy* †; now hurl the sulphureous Globes, which kindle into a Hurricane of Fire, and burst in ragged Instruments of Ruin.—To no Purpose. The linked Thunderbolts are turned into Stubble; the bursting Bombs are accounted as Straw. These Armies
of

* *A Fire devoureth before them, and behind them a Flame burneth.* Joel ii. 3. This is one of those *bold* and *expressive* Metaphors, in which the *Hebrew* Language delights, and by which it is eminently distinguished. It signifies a *total Devastation* of the vegetable Produce. Such as must ensue, if a raging and resistless Fire attended the Progress of these pernicious Animals: burning with such vehement Impetuosity, that None could quench it; spreading such extensive Havock, that nothing could escape it.

† *Ezek. xxi. 31,*

of the Air, laugh at all the formidable Preparations of War; and *when they fall on the Sword, they shall not be wounded**—Surprising and awful Destination of the everlasting GOD! At once, to stain the Pride, and chastise the Guilt of Man! These are a despicable and puny Race; clad in no Coat of Mail, but crushed by the slightest Touch. They wear neither Sword, nor Scymeter, nor any offensive Weapon. Yet, in spite of opposing Legions, they carry on their Depredations, and push their Conquests. *Terror* marches in their Front, and *Famine* brings up the Rear. They spread universal Devastation, as they advance; and frequently give the Signal, for the Pestilence to follow. Potent Armies lose their Hands, and haughty Tyrants tremble for their Dominions.

O!

* The Prophet *Joel*, foretelling the Plague of *Locusts*, gives, under the Image of an *embattled Host*, a most awful Display, of their terrible Appearance; their impetuous Progress; the horrible Dread they raise, as they advance; and the irreparable Mischief they leave, as they depart. Adding, amongst other amazing Circumstances, *When they fall upon the Sword, they shall not be wounded*. Which implies, I apprehend, that no Method of Slaughter should prove destructive to their Troops; or, that every Expedient, contrived for their Suppression, should be utterly baffled. Being, through their immense Numbers as *invincible*, as if every one was absolutely *invulnerable*. For, though Millions and Millions should perish, by the Weapons of War; even such a Blow, in reference to their whole *collective* Body, should scarce be perceived as a Loss, scarce be felt as a Wound; neither diminishing their Strength, nor retarding their March. *Joel* ii. 8.

O! that the Natives of *Great-Britain* would bethink themselves! Would break off their Sins by Righteousness, and their Iniquities by cherishing the Influences of the Divine SPIRIT! Lest this *overflowing Scourge* *, under which some neighbouring Kingdoms have severely smarted, should be commissioned to visit *our* Borders, and avenge the Quarrel of its MAKER's Honour.—Distant as those countless Legions are, with interposing Seas between; yet, if GOD lift up a Standard from far, or but hiss † unto them from the Ends of the

* *Overflowing Scourge*, Isai. xxviii. 15. It is the Property of a Scourge to *lash*, of a River to *overflow*. The sacred Writer, by an elegant *παρονομασια* which He often uses, has connected these different Ideas and different Effects. The vindictive Visitation, with which He threatens the disobedient *Jews*, shall *pierce deep* as a Scourge, and *spread wide* as an Inundation. They shall feel it to their very Souls; and it shall involve the whole Nation in Misery, Anguish, and Ruin.

There seems to be such a Form of Expression in the Service of our Church. When We pray, in behalf of our Fellow-christians; “*pour* upon them the continual *Dew* of thy “*Blessing*.” That which may be refreshing and salutary as the Dew, yet copious and abundant as the Shower.

† *Hiss* unto them. Isai. v. 26. With great Significancy, and peculiar Grandeur, the Prophet applies this Expression to the LORD GOD of Hosts, *influencing* the most powerful Armies, *q. d.* “They come, without a Moment’s “*Delay*, and, from the remotest Regions of the Earth, to “*execute* all his Pleasure. Formidable and Innumerable as “*they* are, they come—I say not, upon his *repeated* In- “*junctions*, or at his *strict* Command—but at the *first*, the “*very smallest* Intimation of his Will.”—Such as the Shepherds used to their Flocks; such as the Bee-men, of old,

the Earth; *they come with Speed swiftly*.—Who will convey this Wish to the Ears, who will transmit it to the Hearts, of my Countrymen? That our Land may always appear, as it does at present, like the Darling of Providence. May always resound with the Voice of Joy, and be filled with the Fruits of Plenty. May always wear the Robe of Beauty, and be adorned with the Smile of Peace.

How great are the Advantages of *Peace!* said *Theron*. Peace at her Leisure plans, and leads out Industry to execute, all the noble and commodious Improvements, which We behold on every Side. Peace sets the Mark of Property on our Possessions, and bids Justice guarantee them to our Enjoyment. Peace spreads over Us the Banner of the Laws, while We taste, free from Outrage, and secure from Injury, the Milk and Honey of our honest Toil*.

Amidst

to their Swarms; or such as We, in these Days, to some of our domestic Animals.—The Hebrew שָׁרָק I would not translate, *At his Whistle*; because this Phrase, in our Language, creates a vulgar Sound, and conveys a low Idea: but such is the Import of the Original. Which denotes all that *unconcerned Ease* of Action, without any of the *offensive Familiarity* of Diction.

* *Pax optima Rerum*, says the *Latin Poet*.—But the *Oriental*s, I think, discover the most superlative Esteem for this Blessing, by making it the constant Form of their Salutations, and the Subject of their most cordial Wishes for their Friends; PEACE BE UNTO THEE!—In this *short Sentence*, they seem to have comprised a *whole Volume* of Mercies: meaning, by their single שָׁלוֹם, all that the *Greeks* expressed by their
their

—Amidst the tumultuous Confusions of *War*, who could have a Heart to contrive, or a Hand to accomplish, any such Works of Dignity and Use? In those Days of Darknes and Distracti^on, how languid to the Sight are all the dewy Landschapes of Spring? How insipid to the Taste are all the delicious Flavours of Autumn?—When the Nation is over-run with Armies, and embroiled in Slaughter, a *trembling Heart, and Fattling of Eyes, and Sorrow of Mind**, are the dismal Distinction of the Times. Instead of a calm Acquiescence in our Portion, our very Life hangs in continual Suspence.

But what are all the Benefits of *external Peace*, though displayed in the fairest Light, and invivened by the strongest Contrasts—What are they all, compared with the Blessings of the Gospel? By which Sinners may have *Peace with GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD*.

This.

their χαίρειν, υγιαίνειν, ευπραττειν; *i. e.* A Confluence of that *Joy of Mind, that Health of Body, that Prosperity of outward Circumstances, which complete the Happiness of Mankind.*

We have a fine Description of Peace, and its various Blessings, 1 *Maccab.* xiv. 8, 9, &c. The Picture is very exact, though perfectly artless. Nothing should hinder me from transcribing the Passage, but a Fear of being too *diffusive* in my Notes. Lest the Reader, who expects a *Treat*, should complain of a *Glutt*: or have Reason to object, that the *Side-board* is more copiously furnished than the *Table*.

* *Deut.* xxviii. 65.

This, resumed *Aspasio*, suggests a fresh Instance of Happiness, which *We* possess, and *Others* want; never to be omitted in our Catalogue of peculiar Mercies. I might add, never to be forgotten, by any *Christian*, on any Occasion.—While many Kingdoms of the Earth, are ignorant of the true GOD, and know neither the Principles of Piety, nor the Paths of Happiness; *the Day-spring from on High hath visited Us, to give the Knowledge of Salvation, and to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace.*—While Millions of *rebellious Angels*, cast from their native Thrones, are reserved in Chains of Darkness, unto the Judgment of the great Day; We, though rebellious and apostate Sinners of Mankind, are delivered from the Wrath to come. The holy *JESUS* (blessed be his redeeming Goodness!) has endured the Cross, and despised the Shame, on purpose to rescue Us from those doleful and ignominious Dungeons; where the Prisoners of Almighty Vengeance

———— *Converse with Groans,
Unrespited, unpitied, unrepriev'd,
Ages of hopeless End.*

Yes, my dear *Theron*; let me repeat your own important Words; “ What are all the
“ Benefits of external Peace, though displayed
“ in the fairest Light, and invivened by the
“ strongest

“strongest Contrasts—What are they all, compared with the *Blessings* of the *Gospel*?” —This brings the Olive-branch from Heaven, and glad Tidings of Reconciliation with our offended GOD. This composes the Tumult of the Mind; disarms the warring Passions; and regulates the extravagant Desires. This introduces such an Integrity of Heart, and Benevolence of Temper, as constitute the Health of the Soul. This spreads such an uniform Beauty of Holiness through the Conduct, as is far more amiable, than the most engaging Forms of material Nature.

O! that Thou wouldest bow the Heavens! That Thou wouldest come down, *celestial Visitant*; and make thy stated, thy favourite Abode in our Isle! That every Breast might be animated with thy Power; and every Community, every Individual, might wear thy resplendent Badge!—Then should it be the *least* Ingredient of our public Felicity, That the Sword of Slaughter is beaten into a Ploughshare, and the once bloody Spear bent into a Pruning-hook. It shall be the *lowest* upon the List of our common Blessings, That *Violence is no more heard in our Land, Wasting and Destruction within our Borders. Our very Officers will be Peace, and our Exactors * Righteousness. We shall*

* *Isai. lx. 17.* Officers and Exactors signify Persons, vested with public Authority: who have it in their Power, to rule with

shall call (and the Event will correspond with the Name) *our Walls Salvation, and our Gates Praise*. Then shall every Harp be taken down from the Willows, and every Voice burst into a Song.—“ Let other Climes—will be the general Acclamation—

“ Let other Climes support Myriads of those curious *Insects*, which draw the delicate Thread, that softens into Velvet, stiffens into Brocade, or flows in glossy Satten; that reflects a lovelier Glow on the Cheek of Beauty, and renders Royalty itself more majestic. We are presented with infinitely *finer Robes*, in the imputed Righteousness of our REDEEMER, and the inherent Sanctification of his SPIRIT. Which beautify the very Soul, and prepare it for the illustrious Assembly—of Saints in Light—of Angels in Glory.

“ Let

with Rigour. But these, instead of abusing their Power, shall conduct the Administration, with all possible Equity and Gentleness; with a *parental* Tenderness, rather than a *magisterial* Austerity. So that, though the Title and Office of an Exactor may remain; nothing of the domineering Insolence, or oppressive Severity, shall continue.—The Prophet, who always delivers his Sentiments with the utmost Emphasis, says; They shall be, not barely *peaceable* and *righteous*, but possessed of these Qualities in the highest Degree. Or, which implies more, than any other Words can express, They shall be *Peace* and *Righteousness* itself.—The same beautiful Figure is used in the next Clause, which describes the inviolable *Security* of the City, together with the universal both *Joy* and *Piety* of the Inhabitants.

“ Let eastern Rocks sparkle with Diamonds,
 “ and give Birth to Gems of every dazzling
 “ Tincture. We have, hid in the Field of our
 “ Scriptures, the *Pearl* of great *Price*; the
 “ *white* and precious *Stone* * of perfect Abso-
 “ lution; a Diadem, which will shine with
 “ undiminished Lustre, when all the brilliant
 “ Wonders of the Mine are faded, extinguish-
 “ ed, lost.

“ Let richer Soils nourish the noblest Plants,
 “ and warmer Suns concoct their exquisite
 “ Juices; the Lemon, pleasingly poignant;
 “ the Citron, more mildly delicious; or that
 “ Pride of vegetable Life, and Compendium of
 “ all the Blandishments of Taste, the Pine-
 “ apple. We enjoy far more exalted Dainties,
 “ in having Access to the *Tree of Life*; whose
 “ *Leaves are for the Healing of the Nations* †;
 “ whose Boughs are replenished with a never-
 “ failing Abundance of heavenly Fruits; and
 “ the Nutriment they dispense, is Bliss and
 “ Immortality.

“ Let *Iberian* Vines swell the translucent
 “ Cluster, and burst into a Flood of generous
 “ Wine: let the *Tuscan* Olive extract the Fat-
 “ ness of the Earth, and melt into a soft mel-
 “ lifluous Stream. We shall neither envy,
 “ nor covet these inferior Gifts, so long as
 “ We may draw Water out of the Wells of
 “ Salva-

* *Rev.* ii. 17.

† *Rev.* xxii. 2.

“ Salvation. So long as We may receive that
 “ *Unction from the HOLY ONE* *, those In-
 “ fluences of the COMFORTER, which not
 “ only make a chearful Countenance, but
 “ gladden the very Heart. Imparting such a
 “ *refined* Satisfaction, as the whole World can-
 “ not give ; such a *permanent* Satisfaction, as
 “ no Calamities can take away.

“ Let *Ethiopian* Mountains be ribbed with
 “ Marble, and *Peruvian* Mines emboweled
 “ with Gold. We want neither the impene-
 “ trable Quarry, nor the glittering Ore ; hav-
 “ ing, in our adored MESSIAH, a sure *Foun-*
 “ *dation* for all our eternal Hopes, and an in-
 “ exhaustible *Fund* of the divinest Riches.

“ Be it so ; that our *Isis* is but a creeping
 “ Drop ; and the *Thames* itself, no more than
 “ a scanty Rivulet ; compared with the mag-
 “ nificent Sweep of the *Ganges*, or the stupen-
 “ dous Amplitude of *Rio de la Plata* †. The
 “ wretched

* 1 *John* ii. 20.

† This River is near two hundred Miles broad, where it discharges itself into the Sea. It pours such an immense Quantity of the liquid Element into the *Atlantic Ocean*, that fresh Water may be taken up for the Space of many a League. It continues thus *amazingly vast* through a Course of six hundred Miles : when it divides into two mighty Branches, the *Parana* and the *Paraguay*. Which, having run in separate Channels, several thousand Miles along the Country, unite at last ; and form, by their Conflux, this magnificent and spacious Stream. Which is supposed to be the largest River in the World.—To frame a proper Idea of this prodigious Torrent, We should imagine a River, taking its Rise beyond

“ wretched Natives, even on the Banks of
 “ those stately Rivers, are at a Distance from
 “ all the Springs of true Consolation. Where-
 “ as, We have a Fountain, We have a River,
 “ that issues from the Ocean of eternal Love.
 “ With incomparable Dignity, and with equal
 “ Propriety, it is styled *The River of Life* *. It
 “ visits the House of the Mourner, and re-
 “ vives the Spirit of the Sorrowful. It makes
 “ glad the City, and makes happy the Ser-
 “ vants of our GOD. It quickens even the
 “ Dead; and every human Creature, that drinks
 “ of its Water, lives for ever.

“ Let *Asiatic* Islands boast their Mountains
 “ of Myrrh, and Hills of Frankincense. Let
 “ *Arabian* Groves, with a superior Liberality,
 “ distil their healing Gums; and ripen, for
 “ vigorous Operation, their vital Drugs. We
 “ have a *more sovereign* Remedy, than their
 “ most powerful Restoratives, in the great
 “ MEDIATOR’s atoning Blood. We have
 “ a *more refreshing* Banquet, than all their
 “ mingled Sweets, in commemorating his Pas-
 “ sion, and participating his Merits.

“ In short; We have an Equivalent, far
 “ more than an Equivalent, for all those choice

“ Pro-

beyond *Jerusalem*; and, after having received all the Wa-
 ters of *Europe* into its capacious Bed, making its Entry on
 the *British* Ocean, by a Mouth extended from *Dover* to
Bristol.

* *Rev.* xxii. 1.

“ Productions, which bloom in the Gardens,
 “ or bask in the Orchards of the Sun. We
 “ have a Gospel, rich in precious Privileges,
 “ and abounding with inestimable Promises :
 “ We have a SAVIOUR, full of *forgiving*
 “ *Goodness*, and liberal of *renewing Grace*. At
 “ whose auspicious Approach, Fountains spout
 “ amidst the burning Desert; under whose
 “ welcome Footsteps, the sandy Waste smiles
 “ with Herbage; and beneath his potent Touch,
 “ *The Wilderness buds and blossoms as a Rose* *.
 “ Or, to speak more plainly, the desolate and
 “ barren Soul brings forth those Fruits of the
 “ SPIRIT, which are infinitely more orna-
 “ mental, than the filken Gems of Spring; in-
 “ finitely more beneficial, than the salubrious
 “ Stores of Autumn.

“ We have a SAVIOUR—Tell it out
 “ among the Heathen; that all the Nations
 “ on Earth, may partake of the Gift, and
 “ join in the Song—A SAVIOUR We have,
 “ whose radiant Eye brightens the gloomy
 “ Paths of Affliction. Whose efficacious
 “ Blessing makes *all Things work together, for*
 “ *the Good* † of his People. Death gilded by
 “ his propitious Smile, even Death itself looks
 “ gay. Nor is the Grave, under his benign
 “ Administration, any longer a Den of De-
 “ struction; but a short and shady Avenue to
 “ those

* *Isai.* xxxv. 1.† *Rom.* viii. 28.

“ those immortal Mansions ; whose *Foundations*
 “ *are laid with Sapphires ; whose Windows are*
 “ *of Agate ; the Gates of Carbuncle ; and all the*
 “ *Borders of pleasant Stones*.*”

Pardon my Rhapsody, dear *Theron*. Your own Remark, added to the grand and lovely Views, have warmed, have animated, have almost transported me.—*Theron* answered not a Word : but seemed fixed in Thought.—While He is indulging his Contemplation, We may just observe some other Peculiarities of the Prospect.

Here and there, a lonely *Cottage* scarcely lifts its humble Head. No pompous Swell of projecting Steps, furrounds the Door : no appendent Wings of inferior Offices, skirt the Edifice : no stately Hall, flabbed with Marble, and roofed with Sculpture, receives the gazing Stranger. But young-eyed Health, and white-robed Innocence, with sweet-featured Contentment, adorn the Habitation. While Virtue lends her Graces, and Religion communicates her Honours, to dignify the Abode : rendering the blameless Hutt superior, in *real* Majesty, to a dissolute Court.

At some Distance, appear the hoary Remains of an antient *Monastery*. Sunk beneath the Weight of revolving Years, the once venerable

* *Ijai*. liv. 12.

nerable Fabric is levelled with the Dust. The lofty and ornamented Temple, lies rudely overgrown with Moss, or still more ignobly covered with Weeds. The Walls, where faint-ed Imagery stood, or *idolized* Painting shone, are clasped with twining Ivy, or shagged with horrid Thorn.—Through Isles, that once echoed to the Chantor's Voice, mingled with the Organ's majestic Sound, the hollow Winds roar, and the dashing Storm drives. Where are, now, the silent Cells, the vocal Choirs, the dusky Groves? In which the *romantic* Saints prolonged their lonely Vigils, by the midnight Taper; or poured their united Prayers, before the Lark had waked the Morn; or strolled, in ever-musing Melancholy, along the Moonlight Glade.—Surely, those mouldering Fragments teach, and with a much better Grace, with a much stronger Emphasis, what formerly their unsocial and gloomy Residentiaries professed. They teach the *Vanity* of the World, and the *transitory* Duration of all that is most stable, in this Region of Shadows.

Behold, on yonder Eminence, the rueful Memorials of a magnificent *Castle*. All dismantled, and quite demolished, it gives a Shading of Solemnity to the more lively Parts of Nature's Picture; and attempers the rural Delight, with some Touches of alarming Dread.—*War*, destructive *War*, has snatched the
Scythe

Scythe from the Hand of Time, and hurried on the Steps of Destiny. Those broken Columns, and battered Walls; those prostrate Towers, and Battlements dashed to the Ground; carry evident Marks of an immature Down-fal. They were built for Ages, and for Ages might have stood, a Defence and Accommodation to Generations yet unborn; if haply they had escaped the dire Assaults of hostile Rage.—But, what Vigilance of Man, can prevent the Miner's dark Approach? Or what Solidity of Bulwark, can withstand the bellowing Engine's impetuous Shock?

Those, perhaps, were the Rooms, in which *licentious* Mirth crowned with Roses the sparkling Bowl, and tuned to the Silver-sounding Lute the Syren's enchanting Song. Those, the Scenes of voluptuous Indulgence, where Luxury poured her Delicacies: where Beauty, insidious Beauty, practised her Wiles; and spread, with bewitching Art, her wanton Snares.—Now, instead of the riotous Banquet, and Intrigues of lawless Love, the Owl utters her hated Screams by Night, and the Raven flaps her ominous Wing by Day.—Where are the Violet-couches, and the Woodbine-bowers; that fanned, with their breathing Sweets, the polluted Flame? The Soil seems to suffer for the Abuses of the Owner. Blasted and dishonoured, it produces nothing but ragged

Briars, and noisome Nettles; under whose odious Covert, the hissing Snake glides, or the croaking Toad crawls.—Fearful Intimation of that *ignominious* and *doleful* Catastrophe, which awaits the Sons of Riot! When their momentary Gratifications will drop like the faded Leaf; and leave nothing behind, but Pangs of Remorse, keener far than the pointed Thorn, and more invenomed than the Viper's Tooth.

Perhaps, they were the beauteous and honoured Abodes, where *Grandeur* and *Politeness* walked their daily Round, attended with a Train of guiltless Delights. Where amiable and refined *Friendship* was wont to sit and smile; looking Love, and talking the very Soul. Where Hospitality, with Oeconomy always at her Side, stood beckoning to the *distressed*, but *industrious* * Poor; and showered
Bless-

* I say distressed, but *industrious* Poor—Because, I would not be understood, as encouraging, in any Degree, the Relief of our *common Beggars*.—Towards the former, I would cultivate a tender and ever-yearning Compassion; I would anticipate their Complaints; and, as a sacred Writer directs, would even *SEEK to do them Good*.—But as to the latter, I frankly own, that I look upon it as my Duty, to discourage such Cumberers of the Ground. They are, generally speaking, lusty Drones; and their habitual *Begging*, is no better than a specious *Robbing* of the public Hive. For such *sturdy* Supplicants, who are able to undergo the Fatigue of Traveling; able to endure the Inclemencies of the Weather; and consequently much more able, were they equally willing, to exercise themselves in some Species of
laudable

Blessings from her liberal Hand.—But War, detested War, has stretched over the social and inviting

laudable Industry—For these, the *House of Correction* would be a far more salutary Provision, than any Supply from our Table; and *Confinement to Labour*, a much more beneficial Charity, than the Liberality of the Purse.

We should remember, and *they* should be taught, that the Law ordained by the Court of Heaven, is, *If a Man will not work, neither shall He eat*. If then *We* contribute to support them in Idleness, do *We* not counteract and frustrate this wise Regulation, established by the great SOVEREIGN of the Universe?—Is it not also a *Wrong* to the deserving Poor, if *We* suffer these Wens on the Body politic to draw off the Nourishment, which ought to circulate amongst the valuable and useful Members?—Money or Victuals bestowed on these worthless Wretches, is not real Beneficence, but the *Earnest-penny* of Sloth. It pays them, for being public Nuisances; and hires them, to be good for nothing.

Let *Us* then unanimously join, to shake off these *dead Weights* from our Wheels, and dislodge these *Swarms* of *Vermin* from our State. Let *Us* be deaf to their most importunate Clamours; and assure Ourselves, that, by this determined Inflexibility, *We* do *GOD*, *We* do our *Community*, *We* do *them*, the most substantial Service.—Should they implore by the *injured* Name of *JESUS*; for the Honour of the *LORD JESUS*, let *Us* resolutely withhold our Alms. Their Meaning is,—“ I cannot go on, in my
“ present shameful and iniquitous Course; I can no longer
“ continue to act the *wicked and slothful Servant*; unless *You*
“ will administer some kindly pernicious Assistance. For
“ *CHRIST*'s sake, therefore, assist me to dishonour my Christ-
“ ian Name, and to live more infamously than the vilest Beasts.
“ For *CHRIST*'s sake, help me to be a Reproach and Burden
“ to my native Country; and to persist in the Way, that
“ leads to eternal Destruction.”—This is the *true Import* of their Petitions. And, whether the Sanction of that most venerable Name, added to *such* a Request, should move our Commiseration, or excite our Abhorrence, let every thinking Person judge.

I trust, the Reader will be so candid, as to excuse this long digressive Note; and do me the Justice to believe, That I
am

inviting Seat, *the Line of Confusion, and the Stones of Emptiness* *. Now, alas! nothing but Defolation and Horror haunt the savage Retreat. The ample Arches of the Bridge, which so often transmitted the wondering Passenger along their penfible Way, lie buried in the dreary Mote.—Those Relics of the mafly Portals, naked and abandoned, feem to bemoan their melancholy Condition. No fplendid Chariots, with their gay Retinue, frequent the folitary Avenues. No needy Steps, with chearful Expectations, befiege the once bountiful Gate. But all is a miserable, forlorn, hideous Pile of Rubbifh.

Since Riches fo often take to themfelves Wings, and fly away: fince Houfes, great and fair, reel upon their Foundations, and fo foon tumble into Duft: how wife, how falutary, is our divine MASTER's Advice! *Make to yourfelves Friends with the Mammon of Unrighteoufnefs; that, when the World fails around You, when the Springs of Nature fail within You; they,*

am not pleading againft, but for the *real* Poor: not to *harden* any One's Heart, but rather to *direct* every One's Hand.—Give, out of Gratitude to *CHRIST*, out of Compaffion to the Needy, and be for ever bleffed. But give not to incorrigible Vagrants; to maintain Impiety, and pamper Indolence; left it be demanded, one Day, *who hath required this at your Hand?* Left, by fupporting diffolute Creatures in that abandoned Sloth, which is the Nurfe of all Vice, We become Partakers of their Guilt, and acceffary to their Ruin.

* *Ifai.* xxxiv. 11,

they, as Witnessers of your Charity, and Vouchers for the Sincerity of your Faith, *may receive You into everlasting Habitations**.—This is to lay up Treasure for Ourselves †: Whereas, whatever else We amass, is for our Heirs, for our Successors, for We know not Who. This Wealth is truly and emphatically called *our own* ‡: it is an Advowson; We have the Perpetuity. Whereas, whatever else We possess, is ours only for a Turn, or in Trust.

See the dreadful, dreadful Ravages of *civil Discord!* Where-ever that infernal Fury stalks, She marks her Steps in Blood, and leaves opulent Cities a ruinous Heap ||.—What Thanks then,

* Luke xvi. 9. † Matt. vi. 20. ‡ Luke xvi. 12.

|| The Effects of what *Virgil* calls *Bella, horrida Bella*, were never displayed in Colours that glow, and with Figures that alarm, like those which are used by the Prophet *Jeremiah*. Chap. iv. 19, &c. As this is perhaps the greatest Master-piece of the Kind, the Reader will permit me to enrich the Notes, with a Transcript of the Passage.

First We see, or rather We feel, the Effects of War on the *human-Mind*; the keenest Anguish, and the deepest Dismay. *My Bowels! My Bowels! I am pained at my very Heart. My Heart maketh a Noise in me; I cannot hold my Peace: because Thou hast heard, O my Soul, the Sound of the Trumpet, the Alarm of War.—Destruction upon Destruction is cried; for the Land is spoiled. Suddenly are my Tents spoiled, and my Curtains in a Moment.—How long shall I see the Standard, and hear the Sound of the Trumpet?*

Then We see the dismal Devastations of War; and who does not shudder at the Sight? The whole Country laid in Ruins! Deprived of all its Ornaments, and all its Inhabitants! Reduced to a Solitude, and a Chaos. *I beheld the Earth, and lo! it was without Form and void: and the Heavens,*

then, what ardent and ceaseless Thanks, are due to that all-superintending, ever-gracious LORD, who has dashed the Torch from her Hand; has broke her murderous Weapons; and driven the baleful Pest from our *Island!*—May the same almighty Goodness shortly banish the accursed Monster from all Lands! Banish the Monster, with her hated Associate Rapine, and her insatiable Purveyor Ambition, to the deepest, deepest Hell. Branded with everlasting Infamy, and bound in adamantine Chains, *there* let them gnash their Teeth, and bite the inevitable Curb!—While *Peace*, descending from her native Heaven, bids her Olives spring amidst the joyful Nations: and *Plenty*, in League with Commerce, scatters Blessings from her copious Horn. While *Gladness* smiles in every Eye; and *Love*, extensive universal Love, leveling the Partition-wall of Bigotry, cements every Heart in brotherly Affection.

Near those Heaps of Havock, lies the Spot, ever-memorable and still revered, on which an
obsti-

vens, and they had no Light.—I beheld the Mountains, and lo! they trembled, and all the Hills moved lightly.—I beheld, and lo! there was no Man, and all the Birds of the Heavens were fled.—I beheld, and lo! the fruitful Place was a Wilderness, and all the Cities thereof were broken down, at the Presence of the LORD, and by his fierce Anger.

If, after all this Profusion of Imagery, *bold and animated* even to Astonishment, We can have any Relish for the cold Correctness of a *heathen* Genius, We may find something of the same Nature in *Horace*, Lib. II. Od. 1.

obstinate and fatal Battle was fought.—The Husbandman, as He breaks his fallow Lands, or rend the grassy Turf, often discovers the horrid Implements, and the more horrid Effects, of that bloody Conflict. He starts, to hear his Coulter strike upon the Bosses of a rusty Buckler, or gride over the Edge of a blunted Sword. He turns pale, to see human Bones thrown up before his Plough; and stands aghast to think, that, in cutting his *Furrow*, He opens a *Grave*. —The grey-headed Sire often relates to his Grandsons, hanging with eager Attention on the Tale, and trembling for the Event—relates the dismal, the glorious Deed of that important Day.—How, the Fields, now covered with waving Crops, were then loaded with mangled and ghastly Corpses. How the Pastures, now green with Herbage, were then incrimsoned with human Gore.—“ On *that* “ extended Common, He says, where the busy “ Shepherd is erecting his hurdled Citadel, the “ Tents were spread, and the Banners display- “ ed; the Spears bristled in Air, and the bur- “ nished Helmets glittered to the Sun. On “ *yonder* rising Ground, where the frisking “ Lambs play their harmless Frolics, stood “ the martial Files, clad in Mail, and ranged “ in Battle-array; stood War, with all its col- “ lected Horrors, like some black portentous “ Cloud, ready to burst into an immediate “ Storm

“ Storm—On the *nearer* Plain, where the
 “ quiet Steed grazes in Safety, and those so-
 “ ber Oxen chew the juicy Herb, the fierce
 “ Incourer mixed. There, the Javelins,
 “ launched from nervous Arms, and aimed by
 “ vengeful Eyes, flew and reflew, whizzing
 “ with Death. The Arrows lightened * from
 “ the Strings ; and drenched their keen Points,
 “ and dipped their feathered Wings in Blood.
 “ —Soon as this Shower of missive Steel
 “ ceased, instantly outsprung Thousands of
 “ flaming Swords. They clash on the brazen
 “ Shields ; they cut their Way through the
 “ riven Armour ; and sheath their Blades in
 “ many a gallant dauntless Heart.—Here, on
 “ this distinguished Level, the proud presump-
 “ tuous Enemy, confident of Victory, and
 “ boasting of their Numbers, poured in like
 “ a Flood. There, a bold determined Batta-
 “ lion, of which myself was a Part, planted
 “ themselves like a Rock, and broke the fierce
 “ Attack.

“ Then, adds the brave old Warrior, then
 “ the coward Herd fled before the Vengeance
 “ of our conquering Arms. Then, these Hands
 “ strewed

* *Habak.* iii. 11. ברק חניתך literally translated, pre-
 sents Us with that beautifully bold Figure, *The Lightning of*
thy Spear.—Which, with innumerable other Graces of
 Speech, that give Dignity and Spirit to our modern Com-
 positions, are borrowed from the Language of *Sion* ; are
 transplanted from the School of the Prophets.—See the
 same Elegance of Style, *Nabum* iii. 3. *Heb. Bib.*

“ strewed the Plains with a Harvest, different
 “ far from their present Productions. Then,
 “ *the Fathers*, smitten with inexpressible Dread,
 “ *looked not back on their Children* *; though
 “ shuddering at the lifted Spear, or screaming
 “ under the brandished Sword. *The Fathers*
 “ *looked not back on their Children*, though they
 “ fell among the Slain, gashed with deadly
 “ Wounds;

* For this very striking, and most terrific Image, We are obliged to the Prophet *Jeremiah*. Who, in a few Words, but with all the Pomp of Horror, describes the Din of approaching War, and the Consternation of a vanquished People. *At the Noise of the Stamping of the Hoofs of his strong Horses, at the Rushing of his Chariots, and at the Rumbling of his Wheels, the Fathers shall not look back unto their Children, for Feebleness of Hands*, Jerem. xlvii. 3.

Not to mention the Thunder-like Sound of the Diction; and that in a Language much less sonorous than the original; I appeal to every Reader, Whether the *last* Circumstance does not awaken the Idea of so tremendous a Scene, and so horrible a Dread, as no Words can express. *Virgil* has imitated the Prophet's Manner, in that very delicate descriptive Touch; where, representing the prodigious Alarm, excited by the Yell of the infernal Fury, He says;

Et trepidæ Matres pressere ad Pectora Natos.

That is, *Each frightened Mother clasped the Infant to her fluttering Bosom.*

No One, I believe, need be informed, that the Pannic is painted, with a very superior Energy, by *the Poet of Heaven*. In the *Pagan's* Draught, the Effect of Fear results from the Constitution, and coincides with the Bias of Humanity. Whereas, in the *Prophet's* Picture, it counter-acts, it suspends, it intirely over-bears the tenderest Workings and strongest Propensities of Nature; though instigated, on one Hand, by the most importunate Calls of exquisite Distress! and stimulated, on the other, by all the Solicitations of the most yearning Compassion.

“ Wounds ; or lay expiring, in Groans of
 “ Agony, under our Feet.”

The Eye is pleas'd with the elegant Gaiety of the Parterre ; the Ear is soothed with the warbling Melody of the Grove ; but *grand* Objects, and the *Magnificence* of Things, charm and transport the whole Man. The Mind, on such Occasions, seems to *expand* with the Scene, and secretly exults in the Consciousness of her Greatness.—Intent upon these large and excursive Views, our Friends scarce advert to the minuter Beauties, which address them on every Side. The *Swan*, with her snowy Plumes, and loftily bending Head ; with all her superb Air and lordly State, rows unnoticed by.—Equally unnoticed is both the Array and the Action of the *Duck* ; her glossy Neck and finely chequered Wings ; her Diving into the Deep, or her Darting up into Day.—The *Swallow*, skimming the Air in wanton Circles, or dipping her downy Breast in the Flood, courts their Observation in vain.—Nor could the *finny Shoales* obtain their Regard, though they played before the Boat in sportive Chace ; or, glancing quick to the Surface, shewed their pearly Coats, bedropt with Gold.—Thus they, engaged in sublime, neglect inferior Speculations. And if the Sons of Religion overlook the *diminutive, transient,*
delu-

delusory Forms of Pleasure, that float on the narrow Stream of Time, or flit along the scanty Bounds of Sense ; it is only to contemplate and enjoy a Happiness in their GOD, which is *elevated, substantial, and immortal*. Compared with which, whatever the Eye can survey, from Pole to Pole, from the rising to the setting Sun, is a Cockle-shell, a Butterfly, a Bubble.

From this open and enlarged Scene, they enter the Skirts of a vast, umbrageous, venerable *Forest*.—On either Side, the sturdy and gigantic Sons of Earth, rear their aged Trunks, and spread their branching Arms. Trees, of every hardy Make, and every majestic Form, in agreeable Disorder, and with a wild kind of Grandeur, fill the aerial Regions. The huge, expansive, roaming Boughs unite themselves over the Current, and diffuse “ their “ Umbrage, broad and brown as Evening.” The timorous *Deer* start at the Clashing of the Waves. Alarmed with the unusual Sound, they look up, and gaze for a Moment : then, fly into Covert, by various Ways, and with precipitate Speed ; vanishing, rather than departing, from the Glade.

How *awful* to reflect, as they glide along the shelving Shores, and the moss-grown Banks ; as they sail under the pendent Shades of quivering Poplar, of whistling Fir, and

the solemn-founding Foliage of the Oak—how awful to reflect, “ These were the lonely
 “ Haunts of the *Druids*, two thousand Years
 “ ago ! Amidst these dusky Mazes, and sym-
 “ pathetic Glooms, the pensive Sages strayed.
 “ Here, they fought, they found, and with all
 “ the Solemnity of superstitious Devotion,
 “ they gathered their *Mistletoe* *. Here, the
 “ visionary Recluses shunned the tumultuous
 “ Ways of Men, and traced the mysterious
 “ Paths of Providence. Here, they explored
 “ the Secrets of Nature, and invoked their
 “ fabled Gods.”

Sometimes wrapt in a sudden Reverie of Thought, sometimes engaged in Conversation on the solemn Appearance of Things, the Voyagers scarce perceive their Progress. Before they are aware, the venerable Scene is lost ; and they find themselves advanced upon the

* If the Reader pleases, He may see these pompous Solemnities described, in *Vanierii Præd. Rust.* pag. 125, &c. Where, the curious *Narrative* of *Pliny*, is embellished with the harmonious *Numbers* of *Virgil*.—With regard to the Reflections, occasioned by this Account ; the Compliments lavished on the *French*, their *Religion*, and their *Monarch* ; I believe, the judicious *Protestant* will agree with me, That, as our charming Author has copied the Language, and entered into the Spirit of the Antients ; He has also caught a Tincture of their Superstition. Imbibing, together with *all* their Elegancies and Graces, *some* of their fanciful and legendary Levities.

*Verùm ubi plura nitent in Carmine, non Ego paucis
 Offendar Maculis.*

the Borders of a *beautiful Lawn*. The Forest, retiring to the Right-hand, in the Shape of a Crescent, compos'd what *Milton* styles, "A "verdurous Wall of stateliest Aspect;" and left, in the Midst, an ample Space for the Flourishing of Herbage.

Here, said *Theron*, if You please, We will alight ; and leave the Bearer of our *floating Sedan*, to pursue his ceaseless Course—to enrich the Bosom of other Vallies, and lave the Feet of other Hills—to visit Cities, and make the Tour of Counties—to reflect the Image of many a splendid Structure, which adorn his Banks ; and, what is far more amiable, to distribute, all along his winding Journey, innumerable Conveniencies both for Man and Beast : acquiring, the farther He goes, and the more Benefits He confers, a deeper Flow, and a wider Swell ; to the remarkable Confirmation of that beneficent Maxim, *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth*.

Theron and *Aspasio*, walking across the spacious Amphitheatre, seated themselves at the Extremity of the Bend. Before them, lay a *verdant Area*, quite even ; perfectly handsome ; but far from gay. *Green* was all the Dress, without any Mixture of gaudy Flowers, or glittering Colours. Only, now-and-then, a gentle Breeze, skimming over the undulating Mead, impressed a varying wavy Gloss on

its Surface. The whole seemed to resemble the grave and sober Ornaments of *maturer Age*, when it has put off the Trappings, and bid adieu to the Levities of Youth.—The broad, transparent Stream, ran parallel with the Lips * of the Channel ; and drew a Line of Circumvallation, as it were, to guard the calm Retreat. It appeared, where shaded with Boughs, like a Barrier of *polished Steel* ; where open to the Sun, like a Mirror of *flowing Crystal*.—The eastern Edges of the River, were barricadoed with a kind of mountainous Declivity ; on whose rude and rocky Sides, the timorous Rabbit burrowed, and the bearded Goat browsed.—Not far from the Summit, two or three Fountains gushed : which, uniting their Currents as they trickled down the Steep, formed a natural *Cascade* : here, it was lost in the rushy Dells, or obscured by the twisting Roots ; there, it burst again into View, and playing full in the Eye of Day, looked like a Sheet of spouting Silver.

In this romantic Retirement, said *Theron*, We are quite sequestered from Society. We seem to be in a World of our own ; and should almost be tempted to forget, that We are incompassed with a kindred Species ; did not
the

* The *Greek*, which is above all Languages happy, in its beautiful Variety of *compound Words*, very neatly expresses this Appearance by—ισοχειλης τη γη.

the *Musick* of those silver-tongued *Bells*, poured from a distant Steeple, and gliding along the gentle Stream, bring Us News of human Kind.

Escaped from Man, and his busy Walks, methinks, We are come to the House of Tranquility. Such a deep, undisturbed Composure reigns all around. It is as if some august Personage was making his *Entrance*, or some majestic Being was upon the Point to *speak*, and all Nature stood fixed in attentive Expectation. No Place better fitted to soothe, or to inspire, a *contemplative Sedateness*.

Observe the Simplicity and Grandeur of those surrounding Trees: the beautiful Plainness of their Verdure, and the prodigious Stateliness of their Aspect. What a *Speck* are our Gardens, and what a mere *Dwarf* are our Groves, compared with these vast Plantations? Here is none of your nice Exactness, but all is irregularly and wildly great. Here are no Traces of the Shears, nor any Footsteps of the Spade, but the Handy-work of the DEITY is apparent in all.—Give *me* the Scenes, which disdain the puny Assistance of Art, and are infinitely superior to the low Toils of Man. Give *me* the Scenes, which scorn to *bribe* our Attention, with a little borrowed Spruceness of Shape; but, by their own native Dignity, *command* our Regard. I love the Prospects,

which, the Moment they are beheld, strike the Soul with Veneration, or transport it with Wonder; and cry aloud, in the Ear of Reason, *Ascribe Ye Greatness to our GOD.*—Such, I think, in a very eminent Degree, is the Forest;

————— *High waving o'er the Hills,
Or to the vast Horizon wide diffus'd,
A boundless deep Immensity of Shade.*

Asp. Solomon's refined Genius seems to have been fond of the same Situation, and delighted with the same Objects. Therefore, at a great Expence, and in the most curious Taste, He built *The House of the Forest.*—*Isaiab's* divine Imagination was charmed with the same grand Spectacle. More frequently, than any of the Prophets, He derives his Illustrations from it. One Comparison I particularly remember. Speaking of the *Assyrian* King, and his military Forces, He likens them to such an Assemblage of Trees: *numerous*, as their amazing Multitudes: *strong*, as their massy Trunks. Yet, numerous and potent as they were, they should all be brought low, and laid in the Dust. *For behold! the LORD, the LORD of Hosts shall lop the Bough with Terror, and the High Ones of Stature shall be hewn down, and the Haughty shall be humbled; and he shall cut down*

down the Thickets of his Forest with Iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.*

Then He passes, by a most beautiful Transition, to his darling Topic, the Redemption of Sinners. He gives Us, together with one of the finest Contrasts † imaginable, a View of the MESSIAH and his great Salvation. When those lofty Cedars are leveled with the Ground, *there shall come a Rod, a Twig shall spring from the Stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his Roots ‡.* Which, notwithstanding its mean Original, and unpromising Appearance, shall rear its Head to the Skies, and extend its Shade to the Ends of the Earth.

Ther. You do well, *Aspasio*, to recal my roving Thoughts. This magnificent Solitude had captivated my Imagination, and I was giving a Loofe to the usual Sallies of my Fancy. But, with a willing Compliance, I turn to a more excellent Subject.—Only I must assure you, that your Remark awakens a painful Idea in my Mind, though a joyful one in your own. For, my Hopes, which were once high and lifted up, are now too much like that devoted prostrate Forest.

Asp.

* *Ifai.* x. 33, 34.

† This fine Contrast, and that artful Transition are, by the injudicious Division of the two Chapters, very much obscured, if not quite lost, to many Readers. The Chapters, I think, should by no means be separated; but, the tenth and the eleventh, as a Continuation of the same Prophecy, should be united.

‡ *Ifai.* xi. 1.

Asp. My dear *Theron*, give me leave to say, they were never rightly founded. They were, what *Shakespeare* calls, *the baseless Fabric of a Vision*. Now the shadowy and transient Hopes are demolished, that solid and everlasting Joys may succeed. Let them rest on *CHRIST*, the infinitely glorious REDEEMER, and they shall never be overthrown, never be removed any more.

Cast a Look upon yonder Ivy. What can be more feeble? It has not Strength enough to withstand the slightest Blast. Nay, if left to itself, its own Weight would crush it to the Earth. Yet, by twining around the Oak, how high it rises, and how firm it stands! An Emblem of our State, and a Pattern for our Imitation.—Thus let Us, who in ourselves are nothing, of ourselves can do nothing, let us fly to *CHRIST*; rely on *CHRIST*; and, as *Barnabas* that true Son of Consolation speaks, *cleave to the LORD JESUS CHRIST, with full Purpose of Heart* *. Let us determine to know nothing, to desire nothing, to depend on nothing, but *JESUS CHRIST* and Him crucified. Let this be the Motto for our Faith, this the Language of our Souls, *CHRIST is All*. Then shall our Hopes, though hitherto smitten with a Blast, revive as the Corn: Then shall

* *Acts* xi. 23.

shall our Virtues, though in themselves weaker than the Ivy, mount like the Cedars.

Ther. You can hardly imagine, how a Sense of Guilt and Unworthiness oppresses my Mind. I am often discouraged, and cannot bring myself to be stedfast in Faith, or joyful through Hope.

Asp. You cannot bring yourself, but GOD Almighty's Power and Grace can bring to pass these desirable Effects. And hear what the Prophet says farther, upon the charming Topic which introduced our Discourse. Whenever the eloquent *Isaiab* undertakes to display a Truth, He gives it all the Energy, all the Beauty, and every heightening Touch, that it is capable of receiving.—This humble Shoot, springing from the Stem of *Jesse*, shall rise to such a Pitch of Elevation; that it shall be conspicuous far and near, and stand for an *Ensign of the People*. It shall be seen, not like a Beacon upon the Top of an Hill, by the *Israelites* only, or the Natives of a single Territory; but like the great Luminaries of Heaven, shall be visible in every Country, and by the whole inhabited World.—*To it shall the Gentiles seek*; not only from the remotest, but from the most barbarous and idolatrous Climes. These, even these Persons, though savage in their Nature, and detestable in their Manners, shall be freely admitted, shall find Rest under

under his Shadow. Nay, the Refreshment which He yields, and the Comfort which they receive, shall be not seasonable only, but of sovereign Efficacy; *his Rest shall be glorious* *.

From this we learn, that all the Blessings of *CHRIST*'s Mediation are designed for *Gentiles*; for the most abandoned and abominable Sinners.—That they are so full and consummate, as to create a Calm of Tranquility, a *glorious Rest*, in the most troubled, afflicted, guilty Consciences.—And I dare challenge even my *Theron*'s misgiving Mind, to specify any *Want* which is not supplied, any *Grievance* which is not redressed by the Righteousness of *JESUS CHRIST*. I formerly encountered your *Objections*, let me now combat your *Scruples*.

Ther. Sometimes, I have a deep and distressing Conviction of my extreme Sinfulness.—'Tis like a sore Burden, too heavy for me to bear.—'Tis like the vilest Filth, and renders me odious to myself; how much more lothesome to the All-seeing Eye?—It appears like a Debt of ten thousand Talents, and I have nothing, no, not any thing to pay.—Then I experience, what the *Psalmist* so pathetically laments; *My Sins have taken such Hold upon me, that I am not able to look up: yea, they are more in Number than the Hairs of my Head,* and my
Heart

* *Isai.* xi. 10.

Heart is ready to fail; my Hopes are upon the Point to expire.

Asp. Then, *Theron*, fly to that just and righteous ONE, who is the Strength of our Hearts; the Life of our Hopes; and our Portion for ever.

If Sin is a fore *Burden*; look unto *CHRIST*, who bore it all, in his own Body on the Tree; and removed, intirely removed that tremendous Load, which would otherwise have sunk the whole World into the nethermost Hell.—If Sin renders us *filthy*; let Us have Recourse to that Blood of Sprinkling, which cleanses, not from a few Stains only, but from all Guilt. By which the most defiled Transgressors become fair as the fairest Wool, nay whiter than the virgin Snows*.—If Sin is a *Debt* †; subjecting Us to Wrath, and binding Us over to Punishment; let Us confide in that gracious SURETY, who has taken the Debt upon himself,

* *Psal.* li. 7.

† By these three Images, the *Psalmist* displays the horrible and destructive Malignity of Sin, together with the free Nature and invaluable Worth of evangelical Forgiveness. *Blessed is he whose Transgression*, as an insupportable Load, (נִסִּי) *is bore, or taken away*; *whose Sin*, as being the most abominable Filth, (כִּסִּי) *is covered*; *unto whom the LORD imputeth not* (לֹא יִחַשְׁבֶּה) *that most ruinous of all Debts, Iniquity*.—It is pleasing to observe the *Vehemence* and *Ardour*, with which the royal Penitent speaks on this favourite Topic. He breaks out with a Kind of holy *Abruptness*, and pours his Soul in a *Variety* of warm Expressions. As one who thought, he could not possibly enter upon the Subject too soon, or dwell upon it too long. *Psal.* xxxii. 1, 2.

self, and made it all his own. And not only so, but has paid it; paid it to the uttermost Farthing, to the very last Mite: So that Justice itself can demand no more.

Let me confirm and illustrate this comfortable Truth, by a scriptural Similitude. No Similitudes are more exact, and none so striking. *I have blotted out as a thick Cloud your Transgressions, and as a Cloud your Sins**. A little while ago, the whole Expanse of the Sky was covered with Clouds. Nothing could more strongly represent, a Multitude of Corruptions besieging the Heart, and a Multitude of Iniquities overspreading the Life.—But where is now that immense Arrangement of gloomy Vapours? The Sun has shone them, and the Wind has swept them, clean away. There are none, neither great nor small, remaining. From one End of the wide extended Hemisphere to the other, we see nothing but the clear and beautiful Blue of the Firmament. So, saith the SPIRIT of GOD to the true Believer, *so totally* is your Guilt, however horrid and enormous, done away through the dying *JESUS*.

Ther. It is not possible to conceive, nor will the whole Creation afford, a more exquisitely fine Comparison. Perhaps, nothing can so emphatically describe the most prodigious
Multi-

* *Isai.* xliv. 22.

Multitude, intirely obliterated, without the *least Trace* of their former Existence.—But I am not only chargeable with *past* Iniquities; I am also liable to *daily* Miscarriages. I relapse into Sin. When I have been cleansed, I defile myself afresh; and when I would do Good, Evil is present with me.—My best Hours are not free from sinful Infirmities, nor my best Duties from sinful Imperfections. Which, like a Worm at the Core of the Fruit, eat away the Vigour of my Graces, and tarnish the Beauty of my Services.

Asp. Because You are daily sinning, there is a *Fountain opened for Sin and for Uncleanness* *. The Blood and Atonement of *CHRIST* are compared to a heavenly Fountain. In which polluted Sinners may wash daily, wash hourly; and be constantly, perfectly clean.—A *Cistern* may fail, may be broke or exhausted. But it is the Property of a *real* Fountain, never to be dried up, always to yield its Waters. Such is the Efficacy of *CHRIST*'s Death; not to be diminished by universal and incessant Use. It *removes the Iniquity of the Land* †. It *takes away the Sin of the World* ‡. It is new, for our Application, every Morning; new, for this blessed Purpose, every Moment. On which Account, it makes complete Provision for our Cleansing, our Restoration, and our Comfort.

—Espe-

* *Zech.* xiii. 1.

† *Zech.* iii. 9.

‡ *John* i. 29.

—Especially, as it is not only sovereign in itself, and ever free for our Approach, but is ever pleaded by a great HIGH-PRIEST in our behalf. Therefore, the inspired Casuist directs Us to *this* Source of Consolation, under all the Upbraidings of Conscience, and all the Accusations of Satan. *If any Man sin, We have an Advocate with the FATHER, JESUS CHRIST the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our Sins* *.

We have for our Advocate, not a *mean* Person, but HIM of whom it was said, *This is my beloved SON*—Not a *guilty* Person, who stands in need of Pardon for Himself, but *JESUS CHRIST the Righteous*—Not a mere Petitioner, who relies purely upon Liberality; but one that has *merited*, fully merited whatever He asks; *He is the Propitiation for our Sins*, has paid our Ransom, and purchased our Peace—In consequence of which, He *claims* rather than asks our renewed, our irrevocable Forgiveness—This he claims, not from an *unrelenting* Judge, but from his FATHER and our FATHER—And can *such a Plea* meet with a Repulse? Can *such an Advocate* miscarry in his Suit?—If the Prophets of old were reckoned *The Chariots of Israel and the Horsemen thereof* †; be-

* 1 John ii. 1.

* 2 Kings ii. 12. xiii. 14. There is a *peculiar* Beauty, and most *opposite* Significancy, in this *proverbial* Saying, as used

because, like their Ancestor *Jacob*, they had Power with GOD, and prevailed in Prayer: O! what a Defence! what a Security, is the divinely excellent, and ever prevailing Intercession of *JESUS CHRIST!*

“Your Graces, You complain, are sullied, and your Services defective.”—Then, my dear Friend, renounce them in Point of Confidence; and gladly receive, cordially embrace, the all-perfect Righteousness of your LORD. So shall your Justification be *complete*; and your Services, though deficient in themselves, be “*accepted* in the beloved.”—I have somewhere seen, painted upon a flat Surface, an aukward and disagreeable Countenance: In which was nothing regular, nothing graceful, but every Feature disproportionate. Yet, this very Face, received on and reflected from a cylindrical Mirror, has put off its Deformity; the Lineaments were well adjusted; Symmetry connected every Part, and Beauty smiled throughout the whole.—Like the *former* our Virtues appear; when compared with the immaculate

Purity

used by the antient *Israelites*. *Horses* and *Chariots* were deemed, in those Ages, the principal Strength of the Battle, the most formidable Apparatus of War. Of these the *Israelites* were intirely destitute. Their GOD had expressly forbidden them to multiply *Horses*; and We never read of their bringing any considerable Number of Cavalry into the Field.—But, so long as they enjoyed the Presence of their Prophets, they wanted *not this Arm of Flesh*. They had more than an Equivalent for *Chariots* and *Horsemen*, in the *servant*, the *effectual* Prayers of those holy Men.

Purity of GOD, or the sublime Perfection of his Law. But they acquire the Amiability of the *latter*, when presented to the FATHER by our divine MEDIATOR, and recommended by his inconceivably precious Oblation *.

Milton, taking his Hint from the Revelations of St. *John*, represents our great HIGH-PRIEST, in this glorious and delightful Attitude. Represents Him, offering up the Supplications and penitential Duties of our first Parents; mixing with them the Incense of his own Merits; and thus interceding before the Throne.

*See, FATHER! what first Fruits on Earth
are sprung*

*From thy implanted Grace in Man! These Sighs
And Prayers, which in this golden Censer mix'd
With Incense, I thy PRIEST before Thee
bring.*

————— *Now therefore bend thine Ear
To Supplication; hear his Sighs though mute!
Unskil-*

* *They*, the Persons and Performances of frail Men, *shall come up with Acceptance on mine Altar, saith the LORD.* *Isai.* lx. 7.— Which is explained by St. *Peter's* Comment; *Ye are an holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable unto GOD by JESUS CHRIST.* *1 Pet.* ii. 5. And still farther ascertained by St. *Paul's* Practice. Who, when He addresses the MAJESTY of Heaven with any Petition, or presents the Tribute of Praise, presumes not to do either the one or the other, but in the blessed MEDIATOR's Name. Because, secluded from this grand Recommendation, they would be *offensive*, to the awful JEHOVAH, “ as Smoke “ in his Nostrils;” accompanied with it, they are *acceptable*, “ as the sweet smelling Incense.”

*Unskilful with what Words to pray, let ME
Interpret for Him; ME his Advocate
And Propitiation. All his Works on ME,
Good, or not good, ingraft: MY Merit those
Shall perfect; and for these MY Death shall
pay*.*

The Poet's Words are very *emphatical*. Yet Words can no more express the *Prevalence* of our LORD's Negotiation, than the Picture of the Sun can diffuse its Splendor, or convey its Warmth.

Ther. My spiritual Wants are many. I have many Duties to discharge, and many Temptations to withstand: many Corruptions to mortify, and many Graces to cultivate, or rather to acquire. Yet have I no Stock, and no Strength of my own.

Asp. I rejoice, that my *Theron* is sensible of his own Indigence. The good LORD keep Us both, in this Respect, as little Children; whose whole Dependence is upon their Nurse's Care, or their Parent's Bounty! Then may we, having such a Sense of our Poverty, and having a great HIGH-PRIEST over the House of GOD, come boldly to the Throne of Grace. We may apply, through the Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, for all needful Succour, and for every desirable Blessing.—

If

* Par. Lost. B. XI. l. 22, &c.

If *Solomon* could say; *LORD*, remember *David*, and all his *Trouble*. If *Moses* could say; *LORD*, remember *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* thy *Servants*. How much more confidently may we say; “ *LORD*, remember *JESUS*, the “ Son of thy Love! Remember *JESUS*, and “ all his Sufferings; *JESUS* and all his Me- “ rits. Shall *they* be sent empty away, who “ have their *SAVIOUR*’s Obedience to plead?” —No verily. Though they are altogether unworthy in themselves, yet worthy is the *LAMB* that was slain, for whose Sake their Petitions should be granted, and their every Necessity supplied.

Let me repeat to you a most beautiful and encouraging Portion of Scripture. Which you may look upon, under all your Wants, as *Charte Blanche* put into your Hand by *GOD* all-sufficient. *Having therefore, Brethren, Boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of JESUS; by a new and living Way which he has consecrated for Us, through the Veil, that is to say, his Flesh; And having an HIGH-PRIEST over the House of GOD; let us draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith**.

The Apostle, in this Place, and throughout this whole Epistle, alludes to the *Mosaic Ordinances*; in order to shew, that the Privileges of the *Christian Dispensation*, were typified by, yet

* *Heb. x. 19, 20, 21, 22.*

yet are greatly superior to, those of the *Jewish*.—Among the *Jews*, none but the *High-Priest*, was permitted to set a Foot within the Holy of Holies; and He, only on the solemn Day of Expiation. Whereas, *all Christians* are allowed to enter into the immediate Presence of the most High GOD; may have the nearest Access to HIM who dwells in the Heaven of Heavens; and this, not once in the Year only, but at all Times, and on all Occasions.—The High-Priest never made that awful Approach, but with the Blood of a *slaughtered* Animal. We have Blood of infinitely richer Value, to atone for our Failings, and recommend our Addresses; even the Blood of the *crucified* JESUS.—*Aaron* entered through the Veil of the Temple; a Way, that was soon to become antiquated, and for ever to be abolished. *We* enter by a far more noble Way; by the Flesh of our blessed REDEEMER, given as a propitiatory Sacrifice for our Sins. Which Way is both *new* and *living*; such as never waxes old, will subsist to the End of Time, and leads to eternal Life.—Trusting in this Sacrifice, and entering by this Way, which are consecrated on Purpose for our Use, We may not only draw near, but draw near *with Boldness*, with an humble filial Confidence; and present our Supplications with *Faith*—

with *Affurance* of Faith—with *full* Assurance of Faith.

How strong is the Contrast ! How fine the Gradation ! And how precious the Doctrine ! What shall we fear, if we believe this Text ? What can we lack, if we improve this Privilege ?

Ther. There may come Seasons of *Desertion*, when all Graces are languid, if not dead : When the Light of GOD's Countenance is suspended, if not turned into Darknes : and the Man is more like a lifeless Log, than a zealous *Christian*. These Frames of Mind I have heard mentioned, and I begin to know something of them by Experience.

Asp. Then *Theron*, when you *walk in Darknes*, and see no *Light* of sensible Comfort, *trust in the Name*, the unchangeable Grace, of the LORD ; and *stay upon* the Righteousness, the consummate Righteousness, of your GOD*. This is not barely my Advice, but the Direction of an infallible Guide. This agrees also with the Character of a real *Christian*, as it is most exactly drawn by an unerring Pen ; *We rejoice in CHRIST JESUS and have no Confidence in the Flesh* † ; no Reliance on any Thing of
our

* *Iai.* 1. 10.

† *Phil.* iii. 3. *Exactly drawn*—Perhaps, there is no where extant a finer, a more complete, or so lively a *Picture* of the true *Christian*. 'Tis in *Miniature*, I own : but it comprehends

our own, either for present Joy, or future Glory.

To rely on the Elevation of our Spirits, or the Inlargement of our Devotion, is like building our House upon the *Ice*: which may abide for a Season; but, upon the first Alteration of Weather, ceases to be a Foundation, and becomes “Water that runneth apace.” Whereas, to derive our Consolation from the MEDIATOR’s Righteousness, and JEHOVAH’s Faithfulness, is to build our Edifice upon the *Rock*: which “may not be removed, but standeth fast for ever.” The former of these, even amidst all our Changes, is invariably the same. The latter, notwithstanding all our Unworthiness, is inviolably sure. Therefore, the *Fruit* of that Righteousness is Peace, and the *Effect* of this Faithfulness is, if not rapturous Joy, yet *Quietness and Assurance for ever* †.

So that, when it is Winter in my Soul, and there seems to be a Dearth on all my sensible Delights, I would still say with the Psalmist;

“*Why*

prehends all the *master* Lines and every *distinguishing* Feature. *We are they, who worship GOD in the Spirit*; with the spiritual Homage of a renewed Heart; with Faith, Love, Resignation. *And rejoice in CHRIST JESUS*; in Him look for all our Acceptance with GOD; from Him derive all the Peace of our Minds; and on Him place all the Hope of our final Felicity. *And have no Confidence in the Flesh*; renouncing ourselves, in every View, as unprofitable Servants; disclaiming all our own Works and Attainments, as defective Services. * *Ijai. xxxii. 17.*

“ *Why art thou so disquieted, O my Soul? CHRIST*
 “ is the same amidst all thy Derelictions. *He*
 “ *is a green Fir-Tree* *, that never loses its Ver-
 “ dure. Under his Shadow Thou mayst always
 “ find Repose. His Merit and Atonement are
 “ still mighty to save; they constitute an ever-
 “ lasting and infinite Righteousness. The Pro-
 “ mises of GOD, through his Mediation, *are*
 “ *yea and amen* †, are unquestionably and una-
 “ lienably thine.”

Ther. 'Tis very probable, I may meet with
Afflictions; Death in my Family, or Disease
 in my Person. Disappointments may frustrate
 my Designs. Providence may wear a frown-
 ing Aspect, as though the LORD had a Con-
 troversy with his sinful Creature, and was mak-
 ing Him to possess the Iniquities of his Youth.
 And what will be sufficient to support and to
 cheer, in such a gloomy Hour ‡ ?

Ass. The Righteousness of *CHRIST*.—
 Nothing is so sovereign, to calm our Fears,
 and remove all Apprehensions of the di-
 vine Wrath. Apprehensions of the divine
 Wrath, would draw the Curtains of Horror
 around our sick Beds, and throw upon our
 lan-

* *Hof.* xiv. 8.

† *2 Cor.* i. 20.

‡ The Sufficiency of *CHRIST*'s Righteousness, to an-
 swer all these important and delightful Ends, is excellently
 displayed in Mr. *Rawlin's* Sermons, on *CHRIST the Right-*
eousness of his People. In which the Public have seen the
 grand and amiable Essentials of the Gospel, delivered in
 masculine Language; defended by nervous Reasoning; and
 animated by a lively Devotion.

languishing Eye-lids the Shadow of Death*. But a believing Improvement of *CHRIST*'s Satisfaction for our Offences, *clears up* the mournful Scene, and *takes away* the Sting of Tribulation.

Attending to this great Propitiation, the Sufferer sees his Sins forgiven, and his *GOD* reconciled. From whence he concludes, that the severest Afflictions are only fatherly Corrections; shall not exceed his Ability to bear; and shall assuredly obtain a gracious Issue. He can fetch Comfort from that cheering Word, *I will be with him in Trouble*: And expect the Accomplishment of that most consolatory Promise, *I will deliver Him, and bring him to Honour* †.—These Supports have enabled the Saints, to kiss the Rod, and bless the Hand, which chastised them. To possess their Souls, not in Patience only, but in Thankfulness also. While they have *looked inward*, and discerned their absolute Need of these bitter but salutary Medicines: Have *looked upward*, and beheld the Cup in a most wise and tender *PHYSICIAN*'s Hand: Have *looked forward*, with a joyful Hope, to that better World; where *GOD* will wipe away all Tears from their
Eyes,

* Alluding to that Description of Tribulation and Anguish, which, I believe, no Person of Sensibility can read without shuddering; *My Face is foul with Weeping, and on my Eye-lids is the Shadow of Death.* Job xvi. 16.

† *Psal.* xci. 15.

Eyes, and there shall be no more Sorrow, nor any more Pain.

Ther. The last Occasion of Need is the trying Hour of *Death*, and the tremendous Day of *Judgment*. Will this Righteousness carry Us, with Safety, through the darksome Valley; and present us, with Acceptance, at the dreadful Tribunal?

Asp. It will: It will.—This silences all the Curses of the Law, and disarms Death of every Terror. To believe in this Righteousness, is to meet Death at our SAVIOUR'S Side; or rather, like good old *Simeon*, with the SAVIOUR in our Arms.—*They overcame*, says the beloved Disciple, they overcame the last Enemy, not by natural Fortitude, or philosophic Resolution, but *by the Blood of the LAMB**; by a believing Application of the victorious REDEEMER'S Merit.—*I know*, adds the heroic Apostle, *whom I have believed* †; I am assured, that my *JESUS* is infinitely faithful, and will not desert me; that his Ransom is absolutely sufficient, and cannot deceive me. Therefore, with a holy Bravery, He bids Defiance to Death; or rather, triumphs over it, as a vanquished Enemy; *Thanks be to GOD, who giveth Us the Victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST* ‡!—Nay, through the wonderful

* *Rev.* xii. 11: † *2 Tim.* i. 12: ‡ *1 Cor.* xv. 57.

derful Efficacy of *CHRIST*'s Propitiation, *Death is ours* * ; not our Foe, but our Friend and Deliverer. We may number it among our Treasures ; and rest satisfied, That *to die, is Gain.*

What? Though our Flesh see Corruption. Though this Body, vile at present, be made viler still, by dwelling amidst Worms, and mouldering in the Dust; yet through HIS Righteousness, who is the Resurrection and the Life, it shall shake off the Dishonours of the Grave: It shall rise to a new and illustrious State of Existence: It shall be made like the *glorious* and *immortal* Body of our triumphant LORD.—If the Body be so refined, so exalted; what will be the Dignity, what the Perfection, of the Soul! Or rather, of Soul and Body both, when they are happily and indissolubly united, at the Resurrection of the Just! —Shall they have any thing to fear, when the Judgment is set, and the Books are opened? 'Tis probable there will be no Accusation, 'tis certain *there is no Condemnation, to them that are in CHRIST JESUS* †. Who shall lay any Thing to their Charge? *It is GOD*—not Man, or Angel, or any Creature, but GOD —*that justifies* them. The GOD whose Law was broke, the GOD to whom Vengeance be-
longeth,

* 1 Cor. iii. 22.

† Rom. viii. 1.

longeth, He Himself pronounces them *innocent*, because their Iniquities have been laid upon *CHRIST*; He Himself pronounces them *righteous*, because they are interested in the Obedience of their REDEEMER; on these Accounts, He Himself pronounces them *blessed*, and gives them an *abundant Entrance* into the Joy of their LORD.

But what can express, or who can imagine their Happiness, when they take up their Abode, in the Palaces of Heaven; amidst the Choirs of Angels; and under the Light of GOD's Countenance! When they possess *the Hope of Righteousness* *; when they wear *the Crown of Righteousness* †; and receive that great, that eternal Salvation, which is a proper Recompence for the Humiliation and Agonies of *JESUS CHRIST the righteous* ‡.

Come then, my dear *Theron*, let Us henceforth be as Branches, ingrafted into the heavenly Vine; derive all our Sap, all our Moisture, all our Consolation, from his Fulness. Let Us live upon our all-sufficient REDEEMER, as the *Israelites* subsisted on their Manna from Heaven, and their Waters from the Rock; and not wish for *other*, as we cannot possibly enjoy *better* Sustenance.

Ther.

* Gal. v. 5. † 2 Tim. iv. 8. ‡ 1 John ii. 1.

Ther. Is this the Meaning of our LORD's Exhortation, when he shews the Necessity of *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood?*

Asp. 'Tis the very same. A repeated and incessant Application of our SAVIOUR's Merits, for all the Purposes of Piety and Salvation, is the Kernel of this Nut, the Meaning of this Metaphor.—*When* we habitually advert to *JESUS CHRIST*, as dying for our Sins, and rising again for our Justification; performing all Righteousness, that we may be intitled to an eternal Crown; and interceding in Heaven, that we may be filled with all the Fulness of GOD: *Then* we eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood. Then we derive a Life of solid Comfort, and real Godliness, from his mediatorial Offices; just as we derive the Continuance of our natural Life, from the daily Use of alimentary Recruits.

Ther. Your Discourse brings to my Remembrance that magnificent and beautiful Passage in Scripture, where *CHRIST* is called THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. Your Doctrine sets the Comparison in a very advantageous Light; gives it the utmost Force, and the greatest Propriety.—The Righteousness of *CHRIST*, according to your Account, is as extensively useful in the *Christian* Life, as the Beams of that grand Luminary are in material Nature.—

The

The Sun fills the *Air* ; where it diffuses Light, and creates Day.—The Sun penetrates the *Ocean* ; from whence it exhales Vapours, and forms the Clouds.—In the *vegetable* Creation, the Sun raises the Sap, and protrudes the Gems ; unfolds the Leaves, and paints the Blossom ; distends the Fruit, and concocts the Juices.—Turn we to the *animal* World ; the Sun delights the Eye, and gladdens the Heart. It awakens Millions of Insects into Being ; and imparts that general Joy, which every sensible Creature feels. Indeed, *there is nothing hid from the Heat thereof.*

Asp. Thus the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that true and only *Sun of Righteousness*, arises on his People *with Healing in his Wings* *. So various, so efficacious, and so extensive are his Influences. Like a *Sun*, He inlightens and invivens : like *Wings*, He cherishes and protects : like a Remedy, He *heals* and restores. And all, by virtue of his Righteousness, on account of his *Righteousness*.—Nor can We doubt, nor need We wonder, if We consider its Nature and its Author. Its *Nature* ; it is consummately excellent, has every Kind, and every Degree of Perfection. Its *Author* ; it is the Righteousness and Obedience of that incomparable PERSON, in whom *dwells all the Fullness of the GODHEAD.*

It

* *Mal.* iv. 2.

It must therefore—You will permit me to sum up in a Word, what has been displayed at large—It must be fully answerable to the *Demands of the Law*, even in its highest Purity, and utmost Exactness.—It is infinitely superior to the *Demerit of Sin*, and intirely absolves from all Guilt, intirely exempts from all Condemnation. It is a most valid and never failing Plea, against the *Accusations of Satan*, and the Challenges of Conscience.—It establishes an undoubted *Title to every Blessing*, whether in Time or in Eternity, whether of Grace or of Glory.—It is a sure Support for the Christian, in an Hour of *Desertion*, and in the Agonies of *Death*. Casting Anchor on this Bottom, He may dismiss every Fear, and ride out every Storm. Leaning upon this Staff, He may go down to the Repose of the Grave; and neither be appalled at the solemn Harbingers of Dissolution, nor terrified at its far more awful Consequences.—The Merit of this Righteousness, and the Power of its DIVINE AUTHOR, will unseal the Tomb; will bring forth the sleeping Dust from the Chambers of Putrefaction; and build up the whole Man into Immortality and Glory. By this He will be presented *without Spot* *; presented *faultless* †; yea, be presented *perfect* ‡, and with *exceeding Joy*, before the Throne.

What

* *Eph. v. 27.*

† *Jude 24.*

‡ *Col. i. 28.*

What a Gift then is *the Righteousness of CHRIST!*—Blessed be GOD, for all the indulgent Dispensations of Providence! Blessed be GOD, for all the beneficial Productions of Nature! But above all, blessed be GOD, for the transcendent and unspeakable Gift—of *CHRIST and HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS.*



A
T A B L E

O F T H E

T E X T S,

More or less *illustrated* in this W O R K.

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