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**The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.**

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

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any set of articles which they so violently oppose. Let me therefore advise this generation of wranglers, for their own and for the public good, to act at least so consistently with themselves, as not to burn with zeal for irreligion, and with bigotry for nonsense.

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N<sup>o</sup> 186. *Wednesday, October 3.*

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*Coelum ipsum petimus stultiâ-----*

Hor.

**U**PON my return to my lodgings last night, I found a letter from my worthy friend the Clergy-man, whom I have given some account of in my former papers. He tells me in it that he was particularly pleased with the latter part of my yesterday's Speculation; and at the same time enclosed the following Essay, which he desires me to publish as the sequel of that discourse. It consists partly of uncommon reflections, and partly of such as have been already used, but now set in a stronger light.

“ A Believer may be excused by the most hardened Atheist for endeavouring to make him a convert, because he does it with an eye to both their interests. The Atheist is inexcusable who tries to gain over a Believer, because he does not propose the doing himself or believer any good by such a conversion.

“ The prospect of a future state is the secret comfort and refreshment of my soul; it is that which makes nature look gay about me; it doubles all my pleasures, and supports me under all my afflictions. I can look at disappointments and misfortunes, pain and sickness, death itself, and, what is worse than death, the loss of those who are dearest to me, with indifference, so long as I keep in view the pleasures of eternity, and the state of Being in which there will be no fears nor apprehensions, pains nor sorrows, sickness nor separation. Why will any man be so impertinently officious, as to tell me all this is only fancy and delusion? Is there any merit in being the messenger of ill news? If it is a dream, let me enjoy it, since it makes me both the happier and better man.

“ I



“ I must confess I do not know how to trust a man who believes nei-  
“ ther heaven nor hell, or in other words, a future state of rewards and  
“ punishments. Not only natural self-love, but reason, directs us to pro-  
“ mote our own interest above all things. It can never be for the inte-  
“ rest of a believer to do me a mischief, because he is sure upon the bal-  
“ lance of accompts to find himself a loser by it. On the contrary, if he  
“ considers his own welfare in his behaviour towards me, it will lead him  
“ to do me all the good he can, and at the same time restrain him from  
“ doing me an injury. An unbeliever does not act like a reasonable crea-  
“ ture, if he favours me contrary to his present interest, or does not di-  
“ stress me when it turns to his present advantage. Honour and good-  
“ nature may indeed tie up his hands; but as these would be very much  
“ strengthened by reason and principle, so without them they are only  
“ instincts, or wavering unsettled notions, which rest on no foundations.

“ Infidelity has been attacked with so good success of late years, that  
“ it is driven out of all its out-works. The Atheist has not found his post  
“ tenable, and is therefore retired into Deism, and a disbelief of revealed  
“ religion only. But the truth of it is, the greatest number of this set of men,  
“ are those who, for want of a virtuous education, or examining the  
“ grounds of religion, know so very little of the matter in question, that  
“ their infidelity is but another term for their ignorance.

“ As folly and inconsiderateness are the foundations of infidelity, the  
“ great pillars and supports of it are either a vanity of appearing wiser  
“ than the rest of mankind, or an ostentation of courage in despising the  
“ terrors of another world, which have so great an influence on what  
“ they call weaker minds; or an aversion to a belief that must cut them  
“ off from many of those pleasures they propose to themselves, and fill  
“ them with remorse for many of those they have already tasted.

“ The great received articles of the Christian religion, have been so  
“ clearly proved from the authority of that divine revelation in which  
“ they are delivered, that it is impossible for those who have ears to  
“ hear and eyes to see, not to be convinced of them. But were it possi-  
“ ble for any thing in the Christian faith to be erroneous, I can find no ill  
“ consequences in adhering to it. The great points of the incarnation  
“ and sufferings of our Saviour, produce naturally such habits of virtue in  
“ the mind of man, that, I say, supposing it were possible for us to be  
“ mistaken in them, the Infidel himself must at least allow that no other  
“ system of religion could so effectually contribute to the heightning of  
“ morality. They give us great ideas of the dignity of humane nature,



“ and of the love which the supream Being bears to his creatures, and  
“ consequently engage us in the highest acts of duty towards our Creator,  
“ our neighbour, and our selves. How many noble arguments has Saint  
“ *Paul* raised from the chief articles of our religion, for the advancing  
“ of morality in its three great branches? To give a single example in  
“ each kind: What can be a stronger motive to a firm trust and reliance  
“ on the mercies of our Maker, than the giving us his Son to suffer for  
“ us? What can make us love and esteem even the most inconsiderable  
“ of mankind, more than the thought that Christ died for him? Or what  
“ dispose us to a stricter guard upon the purity of our own hearts, than  
“ our being members of Christ, and a part of the society of which that  
“ immaculate person is the head? But these are only a specimen of those  
“ admirable enforcements of morality which the Apostle has drawn from  
“ the history of our blessed Saviour.

“ If our modern infidels considered these matters with that candour  
“ and seriousness which they deserve, we should not see them act with  
“ such a spirit of bitterness, arrogance, and malice: they would not be  
“ raising such insignificant cavils, doubts, and scruples, as may be started  
“ against every thing that is not capable of mathematical demonstration;  
“ in order to unsettle the minds of the ignorant, disturb the publick peace,  
“ subvert morality, and throw all things into confusion and disorder. If  
“ none of these reflections can have any influence on them, there is one  
“ that perhaps may; because it is adapted to their vanity, by which they  
“ seem to be guided much more than their reason. I would therefore  
“ have them consider, that the wisest and best of men in all ages of the  
“ world, have been those who lived up to the religion of their country,  
“ when they saw nothing in it opposite to morality, and to the best  
“ lights they had of the divine nature. *Pythagoras's* first rule directs us  
“ to worship the Gods as it is ordained by law, for that is the most nat-  
“ ural interpretation of the precept. *Socrates*, who was the most re-  
“ nowned among the heathens both for wisdom and virtue, in his last  
“ moments desires his friends to offer a cock to *Æsculapius*; doubtless  
“ out of a submissive deference to the established worship of his country.  
“ *Xenophon* tells us, that his Prince (whom he sets forth as a pattern of  
“ perfection) when he found his death approaching, offered sacrifices on  
“ the mountains to the *Persian Jupiter*, and the Sun, according to the  
“ custom of the *Persians*; for those are the words of the historian. Nay,  
“ the *Epicureans* and atomical philosophers shewed a very remarkable  
“ modesty in this particular; for, though the being of a God was entirely  
“ repugnant



“ repugnant to their schemes of natural philosophy, they contented themselves with the denial of a Providence, asserting at the same time the existence of Gods in general; because they would not shock the common belief of mankind, and the religion of their country.

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N<sup>o</sup> 189. *Saturday, October 6.*

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---- *Patrie pietatis imago.*

Virg.

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**T**HE following letter being written to my bookseller, upon a subject of which I treated some time since, I shall publish it in this paper, together with the letter that was inclosed in it.

Mr. *Buckley,*

“ **M**R. SPECTATOR having of late descanted upon the cruelty of  
“ parents to their children, I have been induced (at the request  
“ of several of Mr. SPECTATOR’s admirers) to inclose this letter, which  
“ I assure you is the original from a father to his son, notwithstanding  
“ the latter gave but little or no provocation. It would be wonderfully  
“ obliging to the world, if Mr. SPECTATOR would give his opinion of  
“ it in some of his Speculations, and particularly to

(Mr. *Buckley*) *Your humble Servant.*

SIRRAH,

“ **Y**OU are a sawcy audacious rascal, and both fool and mad, and I  
“ care not a farthing whether you comply or no; that does not  
“ raze out my impressions of your insolence, going about railing at me,  
“ and the next day to sollicit my favour: these are inconsistencies, such  
“ as discover thy Reason depraved. To be brief, I never desire to see  
“ your face; and, Sirrah, if you go to the work-house, it is no disgrace to  
“ me for you to be supported there; and if you starve in the streets, I’ll  
“ never give any thing underhand in your behalf. If I have any more of  
“ your scribbling nonsense, I will break your head the first time I set  
“ fight on you. You are a stubborn beast; is this your gratitude for my giv-  
“ ing