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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

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tery, that it deserves to be looked upon as one of the most useful and noble productions in our *English* verse. The Reader cannot but be pleased to find the depths of Philosophy enlivened with all the charms of Poetry, and to see so great a strength of reason, amidst so beautiful a redundancy of the imagination. The Author has shewn us that design in all the works of Nature, which necessarily leads us to the knowledge of its first cause. In short, he has illustrated, by numberless and incontestable instances, that divine wisdom, which the son of *Sirach* has so nobly ascribed to the supreme Being in his formation of the world, when he tells us, that *he created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his works.*

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N<sup>o</sup> 345. Saturday, April 5.

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*Sanctius hic animal, mentisque capacius alta  
Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cætera posset.  
Natus homo est-----*

Ov. Met.

**T**HE accounts which *Raphael* gives of the battel of Angels, and the Creation of the world, have in them those qualifications which the Critics judge requisite to an Epifode. They are nearly related to the principal Action, and have a just connection with the Fable.

The eighth book opens with a beautiful description of the impression which this discourse of the Arch-angel made on our first Parents. *Adam* afterwards, by a very natural Curiosity, enquires concerning the motions of those Celestial bodies which make the most glorious appearance among the six days works. The Poet here, with a great deal of art, represents *Eve* as withdrawing from this part of their conversation to amusements more suitable to her sex. He well knew, that the Epifode in this book, which is filled with *Adam's* account of his passion and esteem for *Eve*, would have been improper for her hearing, and has therefore devised very just and beautiful reasons for her retiring.

So spake our Sire, and by his count'nance seem'd  
 Ent'ring on studious thoughts abstruse: which Eve  
 Perceiving where she sat retired in sight,  
 With lowliness majestic from her seat,  
 And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,  
 Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,  
 To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom,  
 Her nursery: they at her coming sprung,  
 And touch'd by her fair tendance gladlier grew.  
 Yet went she not, as not with such discourse  
 Delighted, or not capable her ear  
 Of what was high: such pleasure she reserv'd,  
 Adam relating, she sole auditress;  
 Her husband the relater she preferr'd  
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask  
 Chose rather: he, she knew, would intermix  
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute  
 With conjugal caresses; from his lip  
 Not words alone pleas'd her. O when meet now  
 Such pairs in love, and mutual honour joyn'd!

The Angel's returning a doubtful answer to *Adam's* enquiries, was not only proper for the moral reason which the Poet assigns, but because it would have been highly absurd to have given the sanction of an Archangel to any particular system of philosophy. The chief points in the *Ptolemaic* and *Copernican* hypothesis are described with great conciseness and perspicuity, and at the same time dressed in very pleasing and poetical images.

*Adam*, to detain the Angel, enters afterwards upon his own history, and relates to him the circumstances in which he found himself upon his creation; as also his conversation with his Maker, and his first meeting with *Eve*. There is no part of the Poem more apt to raise the attention of the reader, than this discourse of our great ancestor; as nothing can be more surprizing and delightful to us, than to hear the sentiments that arose in the first man while he was yet new and fresh from the hands of his Creator. The Poet has interwoven every thing which is delivered upon this subject in holy writ with so many beautiful imaginations of his own, that nothing can be conceived more just and natural than this whole Epifode. As our Author knew this subject could not but be agree-

able to his Reader, he would not throw it into the relation of the six days works, but reserved it for a distinct Episode, that he might have an opportunity of expatiating upon it more at large. Before I enter on this part of the Poem, I cannot but take notice of two shining passages in the dialogue between *Adam* and the Angel. The first is that wherein our Ancestor gives an account of the pleasure he took in conversing with him, which contains a very noble moral.

*For while I sit with thee, I seem in heav'n,  
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear  
Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst  
And hunger, both from labour, at the hour  
Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,  
Tho' pleasant; but thy words with grace divine  
Imbu'd, bring to their sweetness no satiety.*

The other I shall mention is that in which the Angel gives a reason why he should be glad to hear the story *Adam* was about to relate.

*For I that day was absent, as befell,  
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,  
Far on excursion towards the gates of hell,  
Squar'd in full legion (such command we had)  
To see that none thence issued forth a spy,  
Or enemy, while God was in his work,  
Lest he, incens'd at such eruption bold,  
Destruction with creation might have mix'd.*

There is no question but our Poet drew the image in what follows from that in *Virgil's* sixth book, where *Aeneas* and the Sibyl stand before the Adamantine Gates, which are there described as shut upon the place of torments, and listen to the groans, the clank of chains, and the noise of iron whips, that were heard in those regions of ruine and sorrow.

— *Fast we found, fast shut  
The dismal Gates, and barricadoed strong;  
But long e'er our approaching heard within  
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song,  
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.*

*Adam*

*Adam* then proceeds to give an account of his condition and sentiments immediately after his Creation. How agreeably does he represent the posture in which he found himself, the delightful Landskip that surrounded him, and the gladness of heart which grew up in him on that occasion.

— *As new waked from soundest sleep,  
Soft on the flowry herb I found me laid  
In balmy sweat, which with his beams the Sun  
Soon dried, and the reaking moisture fed.  
Streight toward heav'n my wondering eyes I turnd,  
And gaz'd awhile the ample sky, till rais'd  
By quick instinctive motion up I sprung,  
As thitherward endeavouring, and upright  
Stood on my feet: about me round I saw  
Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,  
And liquid lapse of murmuring streams; by these,  
Creatures that liv'd, and mov'd, and walk'd, or flew,  
Birds on the branches warbling; all things smil'd:  
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflow'd.*

*Adam* is afterwards described as surprized at his own Existence, and taking a Survey of himself, and of all the works of Nature. He likewise is represented as discovering by the light of Reason, that he and every thing about him must have been the effect of some Being infinitely good and powerful, and that this Being had a right to his worship and adoration. His first address to the Sun, and to those parts of the Creation which made the most distinguished figure, is very natural and amusing to the imagination.

— *Thou Sun, said I, fair light,  
And thou enlight'ned earth, so fresh and gay,  
Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,  
And ye that live and move, fair creatures tell,  
Tell if you saw, how came I thus, how here?*

His next Sentiment, when upon his first going to sleep, he fancies himself losing his Existence, and falling away into nothing, can never be sufficiently admired. His Dream, in which he still preserves the consciousness of his Existence, together with his removal into the Garden which was prepared for his reception, are also circumstances finely imaged, and grounded upon what is delivered in sacred story. These

These and the like wonderful incidents in this part of the work, have in them all the Beauties of Novelty, at the same time that they have all the Graces of Nature. They are such as none but a great Genius could have thought of, though, upon the perusal of them, they seem to rise of themselves from the subject of which he treats. In a word, though they are Natural they are not Obvious, which is the true character of all fine writing.

The impression which the interdiction of the Tree of Life left in the mind of our first Parent, is described with great strength and judgment; as the image of the several beasts and birds passing in review before him is very beautiful and lively.

— Each bird and beast behold

Approaching two and two, these cowering low

With blandishment; each bird stoop'd on his wing:

I nam'd them as they pass'd—

Adam, in the next place, describes a conference which he held with his Maker upon the subject of Solitude. The Poet here represents the supreme Being, as making an Essay of his own work, and putting to the tryal that Reasoning faculty with which he had endued his Creature. Adam urges, in this divine Colloquy, the impossibility of his being happy, though he was the Inhabitant of *Paradise*, and Lord of the whole Creation, without the conversation and society of some rational creature, who should partake those blessings with him. This Dialogue, which is supported chiefly by the beauty of the thoughts, without other poetical ornaments, is as fine a part as any in the whole Poem: the more the Reader examines the justness and delicacy of its Sentiments, the more he will find himself pleased with it. The Poet has wonderfully preserved the character of Majesty and Condescension in the Creator, and at the same time that of Humility and Adoration in the Creature, as particularly in the following lines,

Thus I presumptuous; and the vision bright,  
As with a smile more brightned, thus reply'd, &c.

— I with leave of speech implor'd

And humble deprecation thus reply'd.

Let not my words offend thee, heavenly power,

My Maker, be propitious while I speak, &c.

Adam

*Adam* then proceeds to give an account of his second sleep, and of the Dream in which he beheld the formation of *Eve*. The new passion that was awakened in him at the sight of her is touched very finely.

*Under his forming hands a Creature grew,  
Manlike, but different sex; so lovely fair,  
That what seem'd fair in all the world, seem'd now  
Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her contain'd,  
And in her looks, which from that time infus'd  
Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,  
And into all things from her air inspir'd  
The spirit of love and amorous delight.*

*Adam's* distress upon losing sight of this beautiful Phantom, with his exclamations of joy and gratitude at the discovery of a real Creature, who resembled the apparition which had been presented to him in his dream; the approaches he makes to her, and his manner of courtship, are all laid together in a most exquisite propriety of Sentiments.

Though this part of the Poem is worked up with great warmth and spirit, the love which is described in it is every way suitable to a state of innocence. If the Reader compares the description which *Adam* here gives of his leading *Eve* to the nuptial bower, with that which Mr. *Dryden* has made on the same occasion in a Scene of his *Fall of Man*, he will be sensible of the great care which *Milton* took to avoid all thoughts on so delicate a subject, that might be offensive to religion or good manners. The Sentiments are chaste, but not cold, and convey to the mind ideas of the most transporting passion, and of the greatest purity. What a noble mixture of rapture and innocence has the Author joined together, in the reflection which *Adam* makes on the pleasures of love, compared to those of sense.

*Thus have I told thee all my state, and brought  
My story to the sum of earthly Bliss  
Which I enjoy, and must confess to find  
In all things else delight indeed, but such  
As us'd or not, works in the mind no change,  
Nor vehement desire, these delicacies  
I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits and flowers,  
Walks, and the melody of birds; but here  
Far otherwise, transported I behold,*

Trans-

Transported touch, here passion first I felt,  
 Commotion strange; in all enjoyments else  
 Superiour and unmov'd, here only weak  
 Against the charm of Beauty's powerful glance.  
 Or Nature fail'd in me, and left some part  
 Not proof enough such object to sustain,  
 Or from my side subducting, took perhaps  
 More than enough; at least on her bestow'd  
 Too much of ornament, in outward shew  
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.

—When I approach  
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems  
 And in herself compleat, so well to know  
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say  
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;  
 All higher knowledge in her presence falls  
 Degraded: Wisdom in discourse with her  
 Loses discountenanc'd, and like folly shews;  
 Authority and Reason on her wait,  
 As one intended first, not after made  
 Occasionally; and to consummate all,  
 Greatness of mind, and nobleness their seat  
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe  
 About her, as a guard angelic plac'd.

These Sentiments of love, in our first Parent, gave the Angel such an insight into humane nature, that he seems apprehensive of the evils which might befall the species in general, as well as *Adam* in particular, from the excess of this passion. He therefore fortifies him against it by timely admonitions; which very artfully prepare the mind of the Reader for the occurrences of the next book, where the weakness, of which *Adam* here gives such distant discoveries, brings about that fatal event which is the subject of the Poem. His discourse, which follows the gentle rebuke he received from the Angel, shews that his love, however violent it might appear, was still founded in Reason, and consequently not improper for *Paradise*.

Neither her outside form so fair, nor ought  
 In procreation common to all kinds  
 (Though higher of the genial bed by far,

And



*And with mysterious reverence I deem)  
So much delights me as those graceful acts,  
Those thousand decencies that daily flow  
From all her words and actions mixt with love  
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd  
Union of mind, or in us both one soul;  
Harmony to behold in wedded pair.*

Adam's speech, at parting with the Angel, has in it a deference and gratitude agreeable to an inferior nature, and at the same time a certain dignity and greatness suitable to the Father of mankind in his state of Innocence.

N<sup>o</sup> 351. *Saturday, April 12.*

----- *In te omnis domus inclinata recumbit.* Virg.

**I**F we look into the three great heroic Poems which have appeared in the world, we may observe that they are built upon very slight foundations. *Homer* lived near 300 years after the *Trojan* war, and, as the writing of history was not then in use among the *Greeks*, we may very well suppose, that the tradition of *Achilles* and *Ulysses* had brought down but very few particulars to his knowledge, though there is no question but he has wrought into his two Poems such of their remarkable adventures as were still talked of among his contemporaries.

The story of *Aeneas*, on which *Virgil* founded his Poem, was likewise very bare of circumstances, and by that means afforded him an opportunity of embellishing it with fiction, and giving a full range to his own invention. We find, however, that he has interwoven, in the course of his Fable, the principal particulars, which were generally believed among the *Romans*, of *Aeneas* his voyage and settlement in *Italy*.

The Reader may find an abridgment of the whole story as collected out of the antient Historians, and as it was received among the *Romans*, in *Dionysius Halicarnassens*.