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The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

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----- *quis talia fando*
Temperet à lacrymis?-----

Virg.

THE tenth book of *Paradise Lost* has a greater variety of persons in it than any other in the whole Poem. The Author upon the winding up of his action introduces all those who had any concern in it, and shews with great beauty the influence which it had upon each of them. It is like the last Act of a well written Tragedy, in which all who had a part in it are generally drawn up before the Audience, and represented under those circumstances in which the determination of the action places them.

I shall therefore consider this book under four heads, in relation to the celestial, the infernal, the human, and the imaginary persons, who have their respective parts allotted in it.

To begin with the celestial persons: The guardian Angels of *Paradise* are described as returning to Heaven upon the fall of man, in order to approve their vigilance; their arrival, their manner of reception, with the sorrow which appeared in themselves, and in those spirits who are said to rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, are very finely laid together in the following lines.

Up into Heav'n from Paradise in haste
Th' angelic guards ascended, mute and sad
For man, for of his state by this they knew,
Much wond'ring how the subtle fiend had stol'n
Entrance unseen. Soon as th' unwelcome news
From earth arriv'd at Heaven gate, displeas'd
All were who heard, dim sadness did not spare
That time celestial visages, yet mixt
With pity, violated not their blifs.
About the new-arriv'd, in multitudes

T B E.

*The Æthereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befell: they tow'rd's the throne supreme
Accountable made haste to make appear
With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,
And easily approv'd; when the most high
Eternal Father from his secret cloud
Amidst in thunder utter'd thus his voice.*

The same divine person, who in the foregoing parts of this Poem interceded for our first parents before their fall, overthrew the rebel Angels, and created the world, is now represented as descending to *Paradise*, and pronouncing sentence upon the three offenders. The cool of the evening being a circumstance with which holy Writ introduces this great scene, it is poetically described by our Author, who has also kept religiously to the form of words, in which the three several sentences were pass'd upon *Adam*, *Eve*, and the *Serpent*. He has rather chosen to neglect the numerousness of his verse, than to deviate from those speeches which are recorded on this great occasion. The guilt and confusion of our first parents standing naked before their judge, is touched with great beauty. Upon the arrival of *Sin* and *Death* into the works of the Creation, the Almighty is again introduced as speaking to his Angels that surrounded him.

*See with what heat these dogs of hell advance
To waste and havock yonder world, which I
So fair and good created, &c.*

The following passage is formed upon that glorious image of holy Writ, which compares the voice of an innumerable host of Angels, uttering *Hallelujahs*, to the voice of mighty thunderings, or of many waters.

*He ended, and the heav'nly audience loud
Sung Hallelujah, as the sound of seas,
Through multitude that sung: "Just are thy ways,
"Righteous are thy decrees in all thy works,
"Who can extenuate thee——"*

Though the Author in the whole course of his Poem, and particularly in the book we are now examining, has infinite allusions to places of scripture, I have only taken notice in my Remarks of such as are of a poetical nature, and which are woven with great beauty into the body of this

Fable. Of this kind is that passage in the present book, where describing *Sin* and *Death* as marching through the works of nature, he adds,

————— *Behind her Death*
Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse! —————

Which alludes to that passage in scripture so wonderfully poetical, and terrifying to the imagination. *And I looked, and behold a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with sickness, and with the beasts of the earth.* Under this first head of celestial persons we must likewise take notice of the command which the Angels received, to produce the several changes in nature, and fully the beauty of the creation. Accordingly they are represented as infecting the Stars and Planets with malignant influences, weakning the light of the Sun, bringing down the winter into the milder regions of nature, planting winds and storms in several quarters of the sky, storing the clouds with thunder, and in short, perverting the whole frame of the universe to the condition of its criminal inhabitants. As this is a noble incident in the Poem, the following lines, in which we see the Angels heaving up the earth, and placing it in a different posture to the Sun from what it had before the fall of man, is conceived with that sublime imagination which was so peculiar to this great author.

Some say he bid his Angels turn ascance
The poles of earth twice ten degrees and more
From the Sun's axle; they with labour push'd
Oblique the centric globe. —————

We are in the second place to consider the infernal agents under the view which *Milton* has given us of them in this book. It is observed by those who would set forth the greatness of *Virgil's* plan, that he conducts his reader through all the parts of the earth which were discovered in his time. *Asia, Afric, and Europe* are the several scenes of his Fable. The plan of *Milton's* Poem is of an infinitely greater extent, and fills the mind with many more astonishing circumstances. *Satan* having surrounded the earth seven times, departs at length from *Paradise*. We then see him steering his course among the constellations, and after having traversed the whole creation, pursuing his voyage through the *Chaos*, and entering into his own infernal dominions,

His

His first appearance in the assembly of fallen Angels, is worked up with circumstances which give a delightful surprize to the reader; but there is no incident in the whole Poem which does this more than the transformation of the whole audience, that follows the account their leader gives them of his expedition. The gradual change of *Satan* himself is described after *Ovid's* manner, and may vie with any of those celebrated transformations which are looked upon as the most beautiful parts in that Poet's works. *Milton* never fails of improving his own hints, and bestowing the last finishing touches to every incident which is admitted into his Poem. The unexpected hiss which rises in this episode, the dimensions and bulk of *Satan* so much superior to those of the infernal spirits who lay under the same transformation, with the annual change which they are supposed to suffer, are instances of this kind. The beauty of the diction is very remarkable in this whole episode, as I have observed in the sixth paper of these remarks the great judgment with which it was contrived.

The parts of *Adam* and *Eve*, or the human persons, come next under our consideration. *Milton's* art is no where more shewn than in his conducting the parts of these our first parents. The representation he gives of them, without falsifying the story, is wonderfully contrived to influence the reader with pity and compassion towards them. Though *Adam* involves the whole species in misery, his crime proceeds from a weakness which every man is inclined to pardon and commiserate, as it seems rather the frailty of human nature, than of the person who offended. Every one is apt to excuse a fault which he himself might have fallen into. It was the excess of love for *Eve* that ruined *Adam* and his posterity. I need not add, that the author is justified in this particular by many of the fathers, and the most orthodox writers. *Milton* has by this means filled a great part of his Poem with that kind of writing which the *French* Critics call the *Tender*, and which is in a particular manner engaging to all sorts of readers.

Adam and *Eve*, in the book we are now considering, are likewise drawn with such sentiments as do not only interest the reader in their afflictions, but raise in him the most melting passions of humanity and commiseration. When *Adam* sees the several changes in nature produced about him, he appears in a disorder of mind suitable to one who had forfeited both his innocence and happiness: he is filled with horror, remorse, despair; in the anguish of his heart he expostulates with his Creator for having given him an unasked existence.

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
 To mould me man, did I solicit thee
 From darkness to promote me, or here place
 In this delicious garden? As my will
 Concurr'd not to my being, 'twere but right
 And equal to reduce me to my dust,
 Desirous to resign, and render back
 All I receiv'd

He immediately after recovers from his presumption, owns his doom to be just, and begs that the death which is threatned may be inflicted on him.

Why delays
 His hand to execute what his decree
 Fix'd on this day? why do I overlive,
 Why am I mock'd with death, and lengthen'd out
 To deathless pain? how gladly would I meet
 Mortality my sentence, and be earth
 Insensible! how glad would lay me down
 As in my mother's lap? there should I rest
 And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
 Would thunder in my ears, no fear of worse
 To me and to my Off-spring, would torment me
 With cruel expectation.

This whole speech is full of the like emotion, and varied with all those sentiments which we may suppose natural to a mind so broken and disturb'd. I must not omit that generous concern which our first father shews in it for his posterity, and which is so proper to affect the reader.

Hide me from the face
 Of God, whom to behold was then my height
 Of happiness: yet well if here would end
 The misery, I deserv'd it, and would bear
 My own deservings; but this will not serve;
 All that I eat, or drink, or shall beget,
 Is propagated curse. O voice once heard
 Delightfully, encrease and multiply,
 Now death to bear!

In me all

Posterity

*Posterity stands curst: fair patrimony
That I must leave you, sons! O were I able
To waste it all my self, and leave you none!
So disinherited how would you bless
Me now your curse! ah, why should all mankind
For one man's fault thus guiltless be condemned,
If guiltless? but from me what can proceed
But all corrupt* —————

Who can afterwards behold the father of mankind extended upon the earth, uttering his midnight complaints, bewailing his existence, and wishing for death, without sympathizing with him in his distress?

*Thus Adam to himself lamented loud
Through the still night, not now, as e'er man fell
Wholesome and cool and mild, but with black air
Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom,
Which to his evil conscience represented
All things with double terror: on the ground
Outstretcht he lay, on the cold ground, and oft
Curs'd his creation, death as oft accus'd
Of tardy execution.* —————

The part of *Eve* in this book is no less passionate, and apt to sway the reader in her favour. She is represented with great tenderness as approaching *Adam*, but is spurned from him with a spirit of upbraiding and indignation conformable to the nature of man, whose passions had now gained the dominion over him. The following passage wherein she is described as renewing her addresses to him, with the whole speech that follows it, have something in them exquisitely moving and pathetic.

*He added not, and from her turn'd: but Eve
Not so repuls'd, with tears that ceas'd not flowing,
And tresses all disorder'd, at his feet
Fell humble, and embracing them besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint.
For sake me not thus, Adam; witness Heav'n
What love sincere and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unwitting have offended,
Unhappily deceiv'd; thy suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not,*

Wherson

Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
 Thy counsel in this uttermost distress,
 My only strength and stay: forlorn of thee
 Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
 While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
 Between us two let there be peace, &c.

Adam's reconciliation to her is worked up in the same spirit of tenderness. *Eve* afterwards proposes to her husband, in the blindness of her despair, that to prevent their guilt from descending upon posterity, they should resolve to live childless; or, if that could not be done, they should seek their own deaths by violent methods. As those sentiments naturally engage the reader to regard the mother of mankind with more than ordinary commiseration, they likewise contain a very fine moral. The resolution of dying, to end our miseries, does not shew such a degree of magnanimity as a resolution to bear them, and submit to the dispensations of Providence. Our author has therefore, with great delicacy, represented *Eve* as entertaining this thought, and *Adam* as disapproving it.

We are, in the last place, to consider the imaginary persons, or *Death* and *Sin*, who act a large part in this book. Such beautiful extended Allegories are certainly some of the finest compositions of Genius; but, as I have before observed, are not agreeable to the nature of an Heroic Poem. This of *Sin* and *Death* is very exquisite in its kind, if not considered as a part of such a work. The truths contained in it are so clear and open, that I shall not lose time in explaining them; but shall only observe, that a Reader who knows the strength of the *English* tongue, will be amazed to think how the Poet could find such apt words and phrases to describe the actions of those two imaginary persons, and particularly in that part where *Death* is exhibited as forming a bridge over the *Chaos*; a work suitable to the Genius of *Milton*.

Since the subject I am upon gives me an opportunity of speaking more at large of such shadowy and imaginary persons as may be introduced into Heroic Poems, I shall beg leave to explain my self in a matter which is curious in its kind, and which none of the Critics have treated of. It is certain *Homer* and *Virgil* are full of imaginary persons, who are very beautiful in Poetry when they are just shewn without being engaged in any series of action. *Homer* indeed represents *Sleep* as a person, and ascribes a short part to him in his *Iliad*; but we must consider that
 though

though we now regard such a person as entirely shadowy and unsubstantial, the heathens made Statues of him, placed him in their temples, and looked upon him as a real Deity. When *Homer* makes use of other such Allegorical persons, it is only in short expressions, which convey an ordinary thought to the mind in the most pleasing manner, and may rather be looked upon as poetical phrases than allegorical descriptions. Instead of telling us that men naturally fly when they are terrified, he introduces the persons of *Flight* and *Fear*, who, he tells us, are inseparable companions. Instead of saying that the time was come when *Apollo* ought to have received his recompence, he tells us that the *Hours* brought him his reward. Instead of describing the effects which *Minerva's Aegis* produced in battel, he tells us that the brims of it were encompassed by *Terrour, Rout, Discord, Fury, Pursuit, Massacre, and Death*. In the same figure of speaking, he represents *Victory* as following *Diomedes*; *Discord* as the mother of funerals and mourning; *Venus* as dressed by the *Graces*; *Bellona* as wearing *Terrour* and *Consternation* like a Garment. I might give several other instances out of *Homer*, as well as a great many out of *Virgil*. *Milton* has likewise very often made use of the same way of speaking, as where he tells us, that *Victory* sat on the right hand of the *Messiah* when he marched forth against the rebel Angels; that at the rising of the Sun the *Hours* unbarr'd the gates of *Light*; that *Discord* was the daughter of *Sin*. Of the same nature are those expressions, where describing the singing of the Nightingale, he adds, *Silence was pleased*; and upon the *Messiah's* bidding peace to the *Chaos*, *Confusion heard his voice*. I might add innumerable instances of our Poet's writing in this beautiful figure. It is plain that these I have mentioned, in which persons of an imaginary nature are introduced, are such short Allegories as are not designed to be taken in the literal sense, but only to convey particular circumstances to the Reader after an unusual and entertaining manner. But when such persons are introduced as principal Actors, and engaged in a Series of adventures, they take too much upon them, and are by no means proper for an Heroic Poem, which ought to appear credible in its principal parts. I cannot forbear therefore thinking that *Sin* and *Death* are as improper Agents in a work of this nature, as *Strength* and *Necessity* in one of the Tragedies of *Æschylus*, who represented those two persons nailing down *Prometheus* to a Rock, for which he has been justly censured by the greatest Critics. I do not know any imaginary person made use of in a more sublime manner of thinking than that in one of the Prophets, who describing God as descending

scending from heaven, and visiting the sins of mankind, adds that dreadful circumstance, *Before him went the Pestilence*. It is certain this imaginary person might have been described in all her purple spots. The *Fever* might have marched before her, *Pain* might have stood on her right hand, *Phrenzy* on her left, and *Death* in her rear. She might have been introduced as gliding down from the tail of a Comet, or darted upon the earth in a flash of lightning: she might have tainted the Atmosphere with her breath; the very glaring of her eyes might have scattered Infection. But I believe every Reader will think, that in such sublime writings the mentioning of her, as it is done in Scripture, has something in it more just, as well as great, than all that the most fanciful Poet could have bestowed upon her in the richness of his imagination.

N^o 363. Saturday, April 26.

----- *Crudelis ubique*

Luctus, ubique pavor, et plurima mortis imago. Virg.

MILTON has shewn a wonderful art in describing that variety of passions which arose in our first Parents upon the breach of the Commandment that had been given them. We see them gradually passing from the triumph of their Guilt through Remorse, Shame, Despair, Contrition, Prayer, and Hope, to a perfect and compleat Repentance. At the end of the tenth book they are represented as prostrating themselves upon the ground, and watering the earth with their tears: to which the Poet joins this beautiful circumstance, that they offer'd up their penitential prayers on the very place where their Judge appeared to them when he pronounced their sentence.

— *They forthwith to the place
Repairing where he judg'd them, prostrate fell
Before him reverent, and both confess'd
Humbly their faults, and pardon begg'd, with tears
Watering the ground*—

There