



UNIVERSITÄTS-  
BIBLIOTHEK  
PADERBORN

## Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

N° 363. Saturday, April 26.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53621](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53621)

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<sup>o</sup> 363.

Saturday, April 26.

-----*Crudelis ubique**Luctus, ubique pavor, et plurima mortis imago.* Virg.

**M**ILTON 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

There is a beauty of the same kind in a Tragedy of *Sophocles*, where *Oedipus*, after having put out his own eyes, instead of breaking his neck from the palace battlements (which furnishes so elegant an entertainment for our *English* Audience) desires that he may be conducted to Mount *Citharon*, in order to end his life in that very place where he was exposed in his infancy, and where he should then have died, had the Will of his parents been executed.

As the Author never fails to give a poetical turn to his sentiments, he describes in the beginning of this book the acceptance which these their prayers met with, in a short Allegory formed upon that beautiful passage in holy Writ; *And another Angel came and stood at the Altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar, which was before the Throne: and the smook of the incense which came with the prayers of the Saints ascended up before God.*

— *To heav'n their prayers*  
*Flew up, nor mis'd the way by envious winds*  
*Blown vagabond or frustrate: in they pass'd*  
*Dimensionless through heav'nly doors, then clad*  
*With incense, where the golden Altar fumed,*  
*By their great Intercessor, came in sight*  
*Before the Father's throne——*

We have the same thought expressed a second time in the intercession of the *Messiah*, which is conceived in very emphatic sentiments and expressions.

Among the poetical parts of Scripture which *Milton* has so finely wrought into this part of his narration, I must not omit that wherein *Ezekiel* speaking of the Angels who appeared to him in a vision, adds, that *every one had four faces, and that their whole bodies, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings were full of eyes round about.*

— *The Cohort bright*  
*Of watchful Cherubim; four faces each*  
*Had, like a double Janus, all their shape*  
*Spangled with eyes——*

The assembling of all the Angels of heaven to hear the solemn decree passed upon man, is represented in very lively ideas. The Almighty is here described as remembering Mercy in the midst of Judgment, and commanding

manding *Michael* to deliver his message in the mildest terms, lest the spirit of man, which was already broken with the sense of his Guilt and Misery, should fail before him.

— *Yet least they faint  
At the sad sentence rigorously urg'd,  
(For I behold them softned, and with tears  
Bewailing their excess) all terror hide.*

The conference of *Adam* and *Eve* is full of moving sentiments. Upon their going abroad after the melancholy night which they had passed together, they discover the Lion and the Eagle pursuing each of them their prey towards the eastern gates of *Paradise*. There is a double beauty in this incident, not only as it presents great and just Omens, which are always agreeable in Poetry, but as it expresses that Enmity which was now produced in the animal creation. The Poet, to shew the like changes in nature, as well as to grace his Fable with a noble prodigy, represents the Sun in an eclipse. This particular incident has likewise a fine effect upon the imagination of the Reader, in regard to what follows; for at the same time that the Sun is under an eclipse, a bright cloud descends in the western quarter of the heavens, filled with an host of Angels, and more luminous than the Sun it self. The whole Theatre of Nature is darkned, that this glorious Machine may appear in all its lustre and magnificence.

— *Why in the east  
Darkness e'er day's mid-course, and morning light  
More orient in that western cloud that draws  
O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,  
And slow descends, with something heav'nly fraught?  
He err'd not, for by this the heav'nly bands  
Down from a sky of jasper lighted now  
In Paradise, and on a hill made halt;  
A glorious apparition—*

I need not observe how properly this Author, who always suits his parts to the Actors whom he introduces, has employed *Michael* in the expulsion of our first Parents from *Paradise*. The Archangel on this occasion neither appears in his proper shape, nor in that familiar manner with which *Raphael* the sociable spirit entertained the Father of mankind before

fore the Fall. His person, his port, and behaviour are suitable to a spirit of the highest rank, and exquisitely described in the following passage.

—Th' Archangel soon drew nigh,  
Not in his shape celestial, but as man  
Clad to meet man; over his lucid arms  
A military vest of purple flow'd  
Livelier than Melibæan, or the grain  
Of Sarra, worn by Kings and Heroes old  
In time of Truce; Iris had dipt the wooff.  
His starry helm, unbuckled, shew'd him prime  
In manhood where youth ended; by his side  
As in a glistring zodiac hung the sword,  
Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the spear.  
Adam bow'd low: he kingly from his state  
Inclined not, but his coming thus declared.

Eve's complaint upon hearing that she was to be removed from the Garden of *Paradise* is wonderfully beautiful: the sentiments are not only proper to the subject, but have something in them particularly soft and womanish.

Must I then leave thee, *Paradise*? thus leave  
Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades,  
Fit haunt of Gods? where I had hope to spend  
Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day  
That must be mortal to us both. O flow'rs  
That never will in other climate grow,  
My early vilitation and my last  
At Even, which I bred up with tender hand  
From the first opening bud, and gave you names;  
Who now shall rear you to the Sun, or rank  
Your tribes, and water from th' ambrosial fount?  
Thee, lastly, nuptial bowre, by me adorn'd  
With what to sight or smell was sweet: from thee  
How shall I part, and whither wander down  
Into a lower world, to this obscure  
And wild, how shall we breathe in other air  
Less pure, accusom'd to immortal fruits?

A a a 2

Adam's

*Adam's* speech abounds with thoughts which are equally moving, and of a more masculine and elevated turn. Nothing can be conceived more sublime and poetical than the following passage in it.

*This most afflicts me, that departing hence  
As from his face I shall be hid, deprived  
His blessed count'nance; here I could frequent,  
With worship, place by place where he vouchsafed  
Presence divine, and to my sons relate,  
On this mount he appear'd, under this tree  
Stood visible, among these pines his voice  
I heard, here with him at this fountain talk'd.  
So many grateful Altars I would rear  
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone  
Of lustre from the brook, in memory  
Or monument to ages, and thereon  
Offer sweet smelling gums and fruits and flowers.  
In yonder nether world where shall I seek  
His bright appearances, or footsteps trace?  
For though I fled him angry, yet recall'd  
To life prolong'd and promised race, I now  
Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts  
Of glory, and far off his steps adore.*

The Angel afterwards leads *Adam* to the highest mount of *Paradise*, and lays before him a whole Hemisphere, as a proper stage for those visions which were to be represented on it. I have before observed how the plan of *Milton's* Poem is in many particulars greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Aeneid*. *Virgil's* Hero, in the last of these Poems, is entertained with a sight of all those who are to descend from him; but though that Episode is justly admired as one of the noblest designs in the whole *Aeneid*, every one must allow that this of *Milton* is of a much higher nature. *Adam's* vision is not confined to any particular tribe of mankind, but extends to the whole species.

In this great review which *Adam* takes of all his sons and daughters, the first objects he is presented with exhibit to him the story of *Cain* and *Abel*, which is drawn together with much closeness and propriety of expression. That curiosity and natural horror which arises in *Adam* at the sight of the first dying man, is touched with great beauty.

*But have I now seen Death? is this the way  
I must return to native dust? O sight*

*Of*

*Of terror foul and ugly to behold,  
Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!*

The second Vision sets before him the image of Death in a great variety of appearances. The Angel, to give him a general idea of those effects which his guilt had brought upon his posterity, places before him a large Hospital, or Lazar-house, fill'd with persons lying under all kinds of mortal diseases. How finely has the Poet told us that the sick persons languish'd under lingering and incurable distempers, by an apt and judicious use of such imaginary Beings as those I mentioned in my last paper.

*Dire was the tossing, deep the groans, Despair  
Tended the sick, busy from couch to couch;  
And over them triumphant Death his dart  
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoked  
With vows as their chief good and final hope.*

The passion which likewise rises in *Adam* on this occasion is very natural.

*Sight so deform what heart of rock could long  
Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,  
Tho' not of woman born; compassion quell'd  
His best of man, and gave him up in tears.*

The discourse between the Angel and *Adam* which follows, abounds with noble morals.

As there is nothing more delightful in poetry than a contrast and opposition of incidents, the Author, after this melancholy prospect of death and sickness, raises up a scene of mirth, love, and jollity. The secret pleasure that steals into *Adam's* heart as he is intent upon this vision, is imagined with great delicacy. I must not omit the description of the loose female troupe, who seduced the sons of God, as they are called in scripture.

*For that fair female troupe thou saw'st, that seem'd  
Of Goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,  
Yet empty of all good, wherein consists  
Woman's domestick honour and chief praise;  
Bred only and compleated to the taste  
Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,*

To.

To dress and trouble the tongue, and roul the eye,  
 To these that sober race of men, whose lives  
 Religious tittled them the sons of God,  
 Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,  
 Ignobly to the trains and to the smiles  
 Of those fair Atheists —————

The next vision is of a quite contrary nature, and filled with the horrors of war. Adam at the sight of it melts into tears, and breaks out in that passionate speech,

————— O what are these  
 Death's ministers, not men: who thus deal death  
 Inhumanly to men, and multiply  
 Ten thousand fold the sin of him who slew  
 His brother: for of whom such massacre  
 Make they but of their brethren, men of men?

Milton, to keep up an agreeable variety in his Visions, after having raised in the mind of his Reader the several ideas of terror which are conformable to the description of war: passes on to those softer images of triumphs and festivals, in that vision of lewdness and luxury which ushers in the flood.

As it is visible that the Poet had his eye upon *Ovid's* account of the universal Deluge, the Reader may observe with how much judgment he has avoided every thing that is redundant or puerile in the *Latin* Poet. We do not here see the wolf swimming among the sheep, nor any of those wanton imaginations which *Seneca* found fault with, as unbecoming the great catastrophe of Nature. If our Poet has imitated that verse in which *Ovid* tells us that there was nothing but sea, and that this sea had no shore to it, he has not set the thought in such a light as to incur the censure which Critics have passed upon it. The latter part of that verse in *Ovid* is idle and superfluous, but just and beautiful in *Milton*.

*Jamque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant,  
 Nil nisi pontus erat, deërant quoque littora ponto.*

Ovid.

————— Sea cover'd sea,  
 Sea without shore —————

Milton.

In *Milton* the former part of the description does not forestall the latter. How much more great and solemn on this occasion is that which follows in our *English* Poet, ———— And



————— *And in their palaces*  
*Where luxury late reign'd, sea monsters whelp'd*  
*And stabled*—————

than that in *Ovid*, where we are told that the Sea-calves lay in those places where the goats were used to browze? The Reader may find several other parallel passages in the *Latin* and *English* description of the Deluge, wherein our Poet has visibly the advantage. The sky's being over-charged with clouds, the descending of the rains, the rising of the seas, and the appearance of the rainbow, are such descriptions as every one must take notice of. The circumstance relating to *Paradise* is so finely imagined and suitable to the opinions of many learned Authors, that I cannot forbear giving it a place in this paper.

————— *Then shall this mount*  
*Of Paradise by might of waves be mov'd*  
*Out of his place, push'd by the horned flood,*  
*With all his verdure spoil'd, and trees adrift*  
*Down the great river to the op'ning gulf,*  
*And there take root an island salt and bare,*  
*The haunt of Seals and Orcs and Sea-mews clang.*

The transition which the Poet makes from the vision of the Deluge, to the concern it occasioned in *Adam*, is exquisitely graceful, and copied after *Virgil*, though the first thought it introduces is rather in the spirit of *Ovid*.

*How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold*  
*The end of all thy off-spring, end so sad,*  
*Depopulation; thee another flood*  
*Of tears and sorrow, a flood thee also drown'd,*  
*And sunk thee as thy sons; 'till gently rear'd*  
*By th' Angel, on thy feet thou stoodst at last*  
*Though comfortless, as when a father mourns*  
*His children, all in view destroy'd at once.*

I have been the more particular in my quotations out of the eleventh book of *Paradise Lost*, because it is not generally reckoned among the most shining books of this Poem; for which reason the Reader might be apt to overlook those many passages in it which deserve our admiration. The eleventh and twelfth are indeed built upon that single circumstance

cumstance of the removal of our first parents from *Paradise*; but though this is not in it self so great a subject as that in most of the foregoing books, it is extended and diversified with so many surprizing incidents and pleasing Epifodes, that these two last books can by no means be looked upon as unequal parts of this divine Poem. I must further add, that had not *Milton* represented our first parents as driven out of *Paradise*, his Fall of man would not have been compleat, and consequently his Action would have been imperfect.

---

N<sup>o</sup> 369. Saturday, May 3.

---

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus----*

Hor.

---

**M**ILTON, after having represented in vision the history of mankind to the first great period of nature, dispatches the remaining part of it in narration. He has devised a very handsome reason for the Angel's proceeding with *Adam* after this manner; though doubtless the true reason was the difficulty which the Poet would have found to have shadowed out so mix'd and complicated a story in visible objects. I could wish, however, that the author had done it, whatever pains it might have cost him. To give my opinion freely, I think that the exhibiting part of the history of mankind in Vision, and part in Narrative, is as if an History-painter should put in colours one half of his subject, and write down the remaining part of it. If *Milton's* Poem flags any where, it is in this narration, where in some places the author has been so attentive to his divinity, that he has neglected his poetry. The narration, however, rises very happily on several occasions, where the subject is capable of poetical ornaments, as particularly in the confusion which he describes among the builders of *Babel*, and in his short sketch of the plagues of *Ægypt*. The storm of hail and fire, with the darkness that overspread the land for three days, are described with great strength. The beautiful passage which follows, is raised upon noble hints in scripture. — *Thus*