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

In Four Volumes

**Addison, Joseph**

**London, 1721**

No 571. Friday, July 23.

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person who is actually under its dominion, it has also a bad influence on the mind even in its sober moments; as it insensibly weakens the understanding, impairs the memory, and makes those faults habitual which are produced by frequent excesses.

I should now proceed to shew the ill effects which this vice has on the bodies and fortunes of men; but these I shall reserve for the subject of some future paper.

N<sup>o</sup> 571.      *Friday, July 23.*

----- *Coelum quid querimus ultra?*

Luc.

**A**S the work I have engaged in, will not only consist of papers of humour and learning, but of several Essays moral and divine, I shall publish the following one, which is founded on a former SPECTATOR, and sent me by a particular friend, not questioning but it will please such of my Readers as think it no disparagement to their understandings to give way sometimes to a serious thought.

S I R,

**I**N your paper of *Friday* the 9th instant, you had occasion to consider the ubiquity of the God-head, and, at the same time, to shew, that as he is present to every thing, he cannot but be attentive to every thing, and privy to all the modes and parts of its existence; or, in other words, that his Omniscience and Omnipresence are coexistent, and run together through the whole infinitude of space. This consideration might furnish us with many incentives to devotion and motives to morality, but as this subject has been handled by several excellent writers, I shall consider it in a light wherein I have not seen it placed by others.

*First*, How disconsolate is the condition of an intellectual Being who is thus present with his Maker, but, at the same time, receives no extraordinary benefit or advantage from this his presence!

*Secondly*, How deplorable is the condition of an intellectual Being, who feels no other effects from this his presence but such as proceed from divine wrath and indignation!

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly*, How happy is the condition of that intellectual Being, who is sensible of his Maker's presence from the secret effects of his mercy and loving-kindness!

*First*, How disconsolate is the condition of an intellectual Being, who is thus present with his Maker, but, at the same time, receives no extraordinary benefit or advantage from this his presence! Every particle of matter is actuated by this Almighty Being which passes through it. The heavens and the earth, the stars and planets, move and gravitate by vertue of this great principle within them. All the dead parts of nature are invigorated by the presence of their Creator, and made capable of exerting their respective qualities. The several instincts, in the brute creation, do likewise operate and work towards the several ends which are agreeable to them by this divine energy. Man only, who does not co-operate with this holy spirit, and is unattentive to his presence, receives none of those advantages from it, which are perfective of his nature and necessary to his well-being. The Divinity is with him, and in him, and every where about him, but of no advantage to him. It is the same thing to a man without religion, as if there were no God in the world. It is indeed impossible for an infinite Being to remove himself from any of his creatures, but though he cannot withdraw his essence from us, which would argue an imperfection in him, he can withdraw from us all the joys and consolations of it. His presence may perhaps be necessary to support us in our existence; but he may leave this our existence to it self, with regard to its happiness or misery. For, in this sense, he may cast us away from his presence, and take his holy spirit from us. This single consideration one would think sufficient to make us open our hearts to all those infusions of joy and gladness which are so near at hand, and ready to be poured in upon us; especially when we consider, *Secondly*, The deplorable condition of an intellectual Being who feels no other effects from his Maker's presence, but such as proceed from divine wrath and indignation!

We may assure our selves, that the great Author of Nature will not always be as one, who is indifferent to any of his creatures. Those who will not feel him in his love, will be sure at length to feel him in his displeasure. And how dreadful is the condition of that creature, who is only sensible of the Being of his Creator by what he suffers from him! He is as essentially present in hell as in heaven, but the inhabitants of those accursed places behold him only in his wrath, and shrink within their flames to conceal themselves from him. It is not in the power of imagination to conceive the fearful effects of Omnipotence incensed.

But

But I shall only consider the wretchedness of an intellectual Being, who, in this life, lies under the displeasure of him, that at all times and in all places is intimately united with him. He is able to disquiet the soul, and vex it in all its faculties. He can hinder any of the greatest comforts of life from refreshing us, and give an edge to every one of its slightest calamities. Who then can bear the thought of being an out-cast from his presence, that is, from the comforts of it, or of feeling it only in its terrors? How pathetic is that expostulation of *Job*, when, for the trial of his patience, he was made to look upon himself in this deplorable condition! *Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am become a burden to my self?* But, *Thirdly*, how happy is the condition of that intellectual Being, who is sensible of his Maker's presence from the secret effects of his mercy and loving-kindness!

The Blessed in heaven behold him face to face, that is, are as sensible of his presence as we are of the presence of any person whom we look upon with our eyes. There is doubtless a faculty in spirits, by which they apprehend one another, as our senses do material objects; and there is no question but our souls, when they are disembodied, or placed in glorified bodies, will by this faculty, in whatever part of space they reside, be always *sensible* of the divine presence. We, who have this veil of flesh standing between us and the world of spirits, must be content to know that the spirit of God is present with us, by the effects which he produceth in us. Our outward senses are too gross to apprehend him; we may however taste and see how gracious he is, by his influence upon our minds, by those virtuous thoughts which he awakens in us, by those secret comforts and refreshments which he conveys into our souls, and by those ravishing joys and inward satisfactions, which are perpetually springing up, and diffusing themselves among all the thoughts of good men. He is lodged in our very essence, and is as a soul within the soul, to irradiate its understanding, rectify its will, purify its passions, and enliven all the powers of man. How happy therefore is an intellectual Being, who, by prayer and meditation, by virtue and good works, opens this communication between God and his own soul! Though the whole creation frowns upon him, and all nature looks black about him, he has his light and support within him, that are able to cheer his mind, and bear him up in the midst of all those horrors which encompass him. He knows that his Helper is at hand, and is always nearer to him than any thing else can be, which is capable of annoying or terrifying him. In the midst of calumny or contempt, he attends to that Being who  
whispers

whispers better things within his soul, and whom he looks upon as his Defender, his Glory, and the Lifter up of his head. In his deepest solitude and retirement, he knows that he is in company with the greatest of Beings; and perceives within himself such real sensations of his presence, as are more delightful than any thing that can be met with in the conversation of his creatures. Even in the hour of death, he considers the pains of his dissolution to be nothing else but the breaking down of that partition, which stands betwixt his soul, and the sight of that Being, who is always present with him, and is about to manifest it self to him in fullness of joy.

If we would be thus happy, and thus sensible of our Maker's presence, from the secret effects of his Mercy and Goodness, we must keep such a watch over all our thoughts, that, in the language of the Scripture, his soul may have pleasure in us. We must take care not to grieve his holy spirit, and endeavour to make the meditations of our hearts always acceptable in his sight, that he may delight thus to reside and dwell in us. The light of nature could direct *Seneca* to this doctrine, in a very remarkable passage among his Epistles; *Sacer inest in nobis spiritus bonorum malorumque custos, et observator, et quemadmodum nos illum tractamus, ita et ille nos.* There is a holy spirit residing in us, who watches and observes both good and evil men, and will treat us after the same manner that we treat him. But I shall conclude this discourse with those more emphatical words in divine revelation, *If a man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*



Friday,