

*Moral and Sacred Poems (1744)*¹

Volume 1

[Baker List, #78]

Editorial Introduction:

Poetry played a prominent role in genteel culture in eighteenth-century Britain. In addition to well-selling collections by poets like John Dryden, Alexander Pope, and Edward Young, there were regular sections of poetry in most of the leading periodicals. The genre was embraced for political critique, moral instruction, philosophical argument, religious devotion, light diversion, and a range of other public purposes. John Wesley was typical of many in his day in keeping a manuscript notebook during his Oxford years where he copied poems that he found instructive or worthy of reading repeatedly (see the MS Poetry Miscellany in this collection).

While Wesley's manuscript collection includes several selections that he would have viewed as entertaining, it is clear that he particularly valued poems with strong moral and religious themes. Thus, he was sympathetic to a suggestion made by Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, in 1742 that public culture would greatly benefit from a collection of "chaste" moral and sacred poems. Wesley soon began work on such a collection. It was issued as a series of unbound leaflets, beginning in 1743. The last installment appeared in 1744 and the full compliment were bound as a three-volume set. While the target audience of Wesley's *Collection of Psalms and Hymns* series was Anglican worshipers, and the *Hymns and Sacred Poems* series was particularly aimed at those involved in the renewal movement, the hoped-for audience of this series was the larger public, particularly those of genteel society. Slow sales suggest that it was not well received in this setting. About 150 sets of the initial bound copies remained in the inventory at John Wesley's house in London at his death, nearly fifty years after its publication. Despite this lack of commercial success, the three-volume collection remains valuable as a window into Wesley's moral and theological emphases in the 1740s (note, for example, the footnotes he adds to his republication of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man* in this volume).

Wesley includes several prominent poets of the last century in this published set (some of which appeared in his earlier MS Poetry Miscellany). He also drew upon more recent works, without seeking permission from their original publishers, which drew him into copyright disputes in a couple of cases, notably over Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (in volume 2). Given the specific focus of this collection, there are only a few instances where he incorporates in this first volume verse that appeared in earlier volumes of his *Collections of Psalms and Hymns* or *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (shown in blue font in the Table of Contents).

While we have modernized capitalization in the transcription below, we have generally retained the spelling and punctuation of the original, correcting only the printer errors that are scattered through the text.

Edition:

John Wesley. *Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems*. 3 vols. Bristol: Farley, 1744.

¹This document was produced under the editorial direction of Randy L. Maddox, with the diligent assistance of Aileen F. Maddox. Last updated: January 21, 2013.

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**TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.**

Madam,

It has been a common remark for many years, that
poetry which might answer the noblest purposes,
has been prostituted to the vilest, even to confound
the

distinctions between virtue and vice, good and evil. And that to such a degree, that among the numerous poems now extant in our own language, there is an exceeding small proportion which does not more or less fall under this heavy censure. So that a great difficulty lies on those who are not willing, on the one hand, to be deprived of an elegant amusement, nor on the other to purchase it at the hazard of innocence or virtue.

Hence it is, that many have placed a chaste collection of English poems, among the chief desiderata of this age. Your mentioning this a year or two ago, and expressing a desire to see such a collection, determined me not to delay the design I had

long had, of attempting something in this kind. I therefore revised all the English poems I knew, and selected what appeared most valuable in them. Only Spenser's works I was constrained to omit, because scarce intelligible to the generality of modern readers.

I shall rejoice if the want, of which you complained, be in some measure supplied by the following collection; of which this at least may be affirmed, there is nothing therein contrary to virtue, nothing that can any way offend the chastest ear, or give pain to the tenderest heart. And perhaps whatever is really essential to the most sublime divinity, as well as the purest and most refined morality,

will be found therein. Nor is it a small circumstance, that the most just and important sentiments, are here represented with the utmost advantage, with all the ornaments both of wit and language, and in the clearest, fullest, strongest light.

I inscribe these poems to you, not only because you was the occasion of their thus appearing in the world; but also because it may be an inducement to many to read them. Your name indeed cannot excuse a bad poem: but it may recommend good ones to those who would not otherwise consider, whether they were good or bad. And I am persuaded they will not be unacceptable to you; were it only on this account, that many

of them describe what a person of quality ought,
and what, I trust, you desire to be.

My heart's desire and prayer to God for you is,
that you may never rest short of this: that
"whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are
venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever
things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely,
whatsoever things are honourable: if there be any
virtue, if there be any praise, you may think on these
things." And "my God shall supply all your need,
according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus!"

I am
Your Ladyship's obliged and
obedient servant for Christ's sake,

Oxford,
Aug. — 1744.

John Wesley.

A
COLLECTION
OF
MORAL AND SACRED
POEMS.

Morning Hymn.¹

These are thy glorious works, parent of good!
Almighty! thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair; thy self how wondrous then!
Unspeakable! who sitt'st above these heav'ns,
To us invisible, or dimly seen

¹John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk. 5, ln 153–208.

In these thy lowest works: yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought, and pow'r divine.
Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of light,
Angels! for ye behold him, and with songs,
And choral symphonies, day without night,
Circle his throne rejoicing: ye in heav'n:
On earth join all ye creatures to extol
Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.
Fairest of stars! last in the train of night,
If better thou belong not to the dawn,
Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
With thy bright cirlet, praise him in thy sphere
While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
Thou sun! of this great world both eye and soul,
Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st,
And when high noon hast gain'd, and when thou fall'st.
Moon! that now meet'st the orient sun, now fly'st
With the fix'd stars, fix'd in their orb that flies;
And ye five other wand'ring spheres! that move
In mystic dance not without song, resound
His praise, who out of darkness call'd up light.
Air, and ye elements! the eldest birth
Of nature's womb, that in quaternion run
Perpetual circle, multiform; and mix,
And nourish all things: let your ceaseless change
Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
Ye mists and exhalations! that now rise
From hill, or steaming lake, dusky, or grey,
'Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
In honour to the world's great Author rise:

Whether to deck with clouds th' uncolour'd sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling show'rs,
Rising, or falling, still advance his praise.
His praise, ye winds! that from four quarters blow,
Breathe² soft, or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines!
With every plant, in sign of worship wave.
Fountains! and ye that warble, as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs! warbling tune his praise.
Join voices, all ye living souls! ye birds,
That singing up to heaven-gate ascend,
Bear on your wings, and in your notes, his praise.
Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep!
Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill, or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail universal Lord! be bounteous still
To give us only good: and if the night
Have gather'd ought of evil, or conceal'd,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.

Creation.³

On heav'nly ground they stood, and from the shore
They view'd the vast immeasurable abyss,
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild;
Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds,
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heav'ns height, and with the centre mix the pole.

²Ori., "Breath."

³John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Bk 7, ln 210–492, 499–534, 548–50.

Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou deep, peace!
Said then th' omnific word, your discord end—

Nor staid; but on the wings of cherubim
Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
Far into CHAOS, and the world unborn;
For CHAOS heard his voice. Him all his train
Follow'd in bright procession, to behold
Creation, and the wonders of his might.
Then staid the fervid wheels, and in his hand
He took the golden compasses, prepar'd
In God's eternal store to circumscribe
This universe, and all created things.
One foot he center'd, and the other turn'd
Round through the vast profundity obscure;
And said, Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O world!

Thus God the heav'n created, thus the earth;
Matter unform'd and void! darkness profound
Cover'd th' abyss; but on the watry calm
His brooding wings the Spirit of God out-spread,
And vital virtue infus'd, and vital warmth
Throughout the fluid mass: but downward purg'd
The black, tartareous, cold, infernal dregs,
Adverse to life: then founded, then conglob'd
Like things to like; the rest to several place
Disparted; and between, spun out the air:
And earth self-balanc'd on her centre hung.

Let there be light! said God: and forthwith light
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
Sprung from the deep: and from her native east,
To journey through the aery gloom began,
Sphear'd in a radiant cloud; (for yet the sun
Was not) she in a cloudy tabernacle
Sojourn'd the while. God saw the light was good;
And light from darkness by the hemisphere
Divided: light the day, and darkness night
He nam'd. Thus was the first day ev'n and morn;
Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung
By the cælestial choirs, when orient light
Exhaling first from darkness they beheld:
Birth-day of heav'n and earth! with joy, and shout,
The hollow universal orb they fill'd;
And touch'd their golden harps, and hymning prais'd
God, and his works, Creator him they sung,
Both when first ev'ning was, and when first morn.

Again, God said, Let there be firmament
Amid the waters, and let it divide
The waters from the waters! and God made
The firmament, expanse of liquid pure,
Transparent, elemental air, diffus'd
In circuit to the uttermost convex
Of this great round: partition firm and sure,
The waters underneath from those above
Dividing: for as earth, so he the world
Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
Crystalline ocean, and the loud mis-rule

Of CHAOS far remov'd; lest fierce extremes
 Contiguous might distemper the whole frame:
 And heav'n he nam'd the firmament: so ev'n
 And morning chorus sung the second day.

The earth was form'd, but in the womb as yet
 Of waters (embryon immature) involv'd,
 Appear'd not: over all the face of earth
 Main ocean flow'd; not idle, but with warm
 Prolific humour softning all her globe,
 Fermented the great mother to conceive,
 Siate with genial moisture: when God said,
 Be gather'd now ye waters under heav'n
 Into one place, and let dry land appear!—
 Immediately the mountains huge appear
 Emergent, and their broad bare backs up-heave
 Into the clouds, their tops ascend the sky.
 So high as heav'd the tumid hills, so low
 Down sunk a hollow bottom, broad and deep,
 Capacious bed of waters! thither they
 Hasted with glad precipitance, up-roll'd,
 (As drops from dust conglobing) from the dry:
 Part rise⁴ in crystal wall, or ridge direct,
 For haste: such flight the great command impress'd
 On the swift floods: as armies at the call
 Of trumpet—
 Troop to their standard; so the watry throng,
 Wave rolling after wave, where way they found;
 If steep, with torrent rapture; if through plain,
 Soft-ebbing; nor withstood them rock or hill;
 But they, or under-ground, or circuit wide

⁴Ori., “use”; corrected in the errata.

With serpent-error wand'ring, found their way,
 And on the washy oose deep channels wore,
 Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
 All but within those banks, where rivers now
 Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.
 The dry land, earth; and the great receptacle
 Of congregated waters, he call'd seas;
 And saw that it was good; and said, Let th' earth
 Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed,
 And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind;
 Whose seed is in herself upon the earth!—
 He scarce had said, when the bare earth ('till then
 Desert, and bare, unsightly, unadorn'd)
 Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
 Her universal face with pleasant green;
 Then, herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowr'd
 Op'ning their various colours, and made gay
 Her bosom smelling sweet. And these scarce blown,
 Forth-flourish'd thick the clustring vine, forth crept
 The smelling gourd, up stood the corny reed
 Embattel'd in her field; and th' humble shrub,
 And bush, with frizled hair implicit. Last,
 Rose, as in dance, the stately trees, and spread
 Their branches hung with copious fruit; or gemm'd
 Their blossoms: with high woods the hills were crown'd;
 With tufts the vallies; and each fountain-side
 With borders long the rivers: that earth now
 Seem'd like to heav'n; a seat where gods might dwell,
 Or wander with delight, and love to haunt,

Her sacred shades: though God had yet not rain'd
Upon the earth, and man to till the ground
None was: but from the earth a dewy mist
Went up, and water'd all the ground, and each
Plant of the field; which, ere it was in th' earth
God made, and ev'ry herb, before it grew
On the green stem: God saw that it was good.
So ev'n and morn recorded the third day.

Again th' Almighty spake: Let there be lights
High in th' expanse of heaven, to divide
The day from night: and let them be for signs,
For seasons, and for days, and circling years;
And let them be for lights, as I ordain
Their office in the firmament of heav'n,
To give light on the earth!—and it was so.
And God made two great lights; (great for their use
To man) the greater to have rule by day,
The less by night, altern: and made the stars;
And set them in the firmament of heav'n,
T' illuminate the earth, and rule the day,
In their vicissitude, and rule the night;
And light from darkness to divide. God saw,
Surveying his great work, that it was good:
For of cælestial bodies first the sun
(A mighty sphere!) he fram'd; unlightsome first,
Tho' of ethereal mold: then form'd the moon
Globose; and ev'ry magnitude of stars;
And sow'd with stars the heav'n, thick as a field.
Of light by far the greater part he took,
Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and plac'd

In the sun's orb, made porous to receive
And drink the liquid light; firm to retain
Her gather'd beams; great palace now of light:
Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light:
And hence the morning planet gilds her horns:
By tincture or reflection they augment
Their small peculiar, though (from human sight
So far remote) with diminution seen.
First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,
Regent of day; and all th' horizon round
Invested with bright rays, jocund to run
His longitude through heav'ns high rode: the gray
Dawn and the Pleiades before him danc'd,
Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the moon,
But opposite in level'd west was set,
Her mirror, with full face borrowing her light
From him; for other light she needed none
In that aspect: and still that distance keeps
'Till night; then in the east her turn she shines,
Revolv'd on heav'n's great axle, and her reign
With thousand lesser lights dividual holds,
With thousand thousand stars! that then appear'd
Spangling the hemisphere; then first adorn'd
With their bright luminaries, that set and rose.
Glad ev'ning and glad morn crown'd the fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters generate
Reptil, with spawn abundant, living soul!
And let fowl fly above the earth, with wings
Display'd on th' open firmament of heav'n!

And God created the great whales, and each
Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
The waters generated by their kinds:
And every bird of wing after his kind:
And saw that it was good, and bless'd them, saying,
Be fruitful, multiply, and in the seas,
And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill!
And let the fowl be multiply'd on th' earth!
Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
Of fish, that with their fins and shining scales
Glide under the green wave in sculls, that oft
Bank the mid sea: part single, or with mate,
Graze the sea-weed their pasture; and thro' groves
Of coral stray; or, sporting with quick glance,
Shew to the sun their wav'd coats, dropt with gold:
Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
Moist nutriment; or under rocks their food,
In jointed armour, watch: on smooth, the seal,
And bended dolphins play; part, huge of bulk!
Wallowing unweildy, enormous in their gait,
Tempest the ocean: there leviathan,
Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
Stretch'd like a promontory, sleeps or swims;
And seems a moving land; and at his gills
Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out a sea.
Mean while the tepid caves, and fens, and shoars,
Their brood as numerous hatch from th' egg, that soon
Bursting with kindly rupture, forth disclos'd
Their callow young; but feather'd soon, and fledge,
They summ'd their pens; and soaring th' air sublime,

With clang despis'd the ground; under a cloud
In prospect: there the eagle and the stork,
On cliffs and cedar tops, their eyries build:
Part, loosly wing the region; part, more wise
In common, rang'd in figure wedge their way;
Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
Their aery caravan, high over seas
Flying, and over lands, with mutual wing
Easing their flight; (so steers the prudent crane
Her annual voyage) born on winds, the air
Floats as they pass, fann'd with unnumber'd plumes.
From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
Solac'd the woods, and spread their painted wings
'Till ev'n; nor then, the solemn nightingale
Ceas'd warbling, but all night tun'd her soft lays.
Others, on silver lakes and rivers bath'd
Their downy breast; the swan with arched neck
Between her white wings mantling proudly, rows
Her state with oary feet: yet oft they quit
The dank, and rising on stiff pennons, tour
The mid aëreal sky. Others on ground
Walk'd firm; the crested cock, whose clarion sounds
The silent hours; and th' other, whose gay train
Adorns him, colour'd with the florid hue
Of rainbows and starry 'eyes. The waters thus
With fish replenish'd, and the air with fowl,
Ev'ning and morn solemniz'd the fifth day.

The sixth, and of creation last, arose
With ev'ning harps and matin; when God said,
Let th' earth bring forth fowl living in her kind,

Cattle and creeping things, and beasts of th' earth,
Each in their kind!—the earth obey'd; and straight
Op'ning her fertile womb, teem'd at a birth
Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms,
Limb'd and full grown. Out of the ground up-rose,
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons
In forest wild, in thicket, brake or den:
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walk'd;
The cattle in the fields, and meadows green:
Those rare and solitary; these in flocks
Pasturing at once, and in broad herds up-sprung.
The grassy clods now calv'd, now half appear'd
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts; then springs as broke from bonds,
And rampant shakes his brinded mane: the ounce,
The libbard, and the tyger, (as the mole
Rising) the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks: the swift stag from under ground
Bore up his branching head: scarce from his mold
Behemoth (biggest born of earth) upheav'd
His vastness: fleec'd the flocks, and bleating, rose
As plants: ambiguous between sea and land,
The river-horse, and scaly crocodile.
At once comes forth whatever creeps the ground,
Insect or worm: those wav'd their limber fans,
For wings; and smallest lineaments exact
In all the liveries deck'd of summer's pride,
With spots of gold and purple, azure and green:
These as a line, their long dimension drew,
Streaking the ground with sinuous trace: not all

Minims of nature; some of serpent-kind,
Wondrous in length and corpulence, involv'd
Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept
The parsimonious emmet, provident
Of future: in small room large heart inclos'd!
(Pattern of just equality perhaps
Hereafter, join'd in her popular tribes
Of commonalty.) Swarming next, appeared
The female bee, that feeds her husband drone
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
With honey stor'd. The rest are numberless.

Now heav'n in all her glory shon, and roll'd
Her motions, as the great first mover's hand
first wheel'd their course: earth in her rich attire
Consummate, lovely smil'd; air, water, earth,
By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walk'd
Frequent; and of the sixth day yet remain'd.
There wanted yet the master-work, the end
Of all yet done; a creature, who not prone,
And brute as other creatures, but indu'd
With sanctity of reason, might erect
His stature, and upright with front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing; and from thence
Magnanimous, to correspond with heav'n:
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends; thither with heart, and voice, and eyes
Directed in devotion, to adore
And worship God supreme, who made him chief
Of all his works: therefore th' omnipotent
Eternal Father; (for where is not he
Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake.

Let us make now man in our image, man
In our similitude, and let them rule
Over the fish and fowl, of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
And ev'ry creeping thing that creeps the ground!

This said, he form'd thee, Adam, thee, O man!
Dust of the ground; and in thy nostrils breath'd
The breath of life; in his own image he
Created thee; in the image of God
Express; and thou becam'st a living soul.
Male he created thee; but thy consort
Female, for race: then bless'd mankind, and said
Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth;
Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
Over fish of the sea, and fowl of th' air,
And ev'ry living thing that moves on th' earth.

Here finish'd he, and all that he had made,
View'd, and behold! all was entirely good;
So ev'n and morn accomplish'd the sixth day.

Of Human Knowledge.⁵

Why did my parents send me to the schools,
That I with *knowledge* might enrich my mind,
Since the *desire to know* first made men fools,
And did corrupt the *root* of all mankind!

For when God's hand had written in the hearts
Of our first parents all the rules of good;
So that their skill infus'd surpass'd all arts
That ever were before, or since the flood:

And when their reason's eye was sharp and clear,
And (as an eagle can behold the sun)
Could have approach'd th' eternal light as near
As th' intellectual angels could have done:

Ev'n then to them the *spirit of lies* suggests,
That they were blind, because they saw not *ill*;
And breath'd into their incorrupted breasts
A curious *wish*, which did corrupt their *will*.

From that same ill, they strait desir'd to know;
Which ill being nought but a defect of good;
In all God's works the devil could not show
While man, their Lord, in his perfection stood.

So that themselves were first to do the ill,
Ere⁶ they thereof the knowledge could attain;
Like him that knew not poison's power to kill,
Until (by tasting it) himself was slain.

⁵John Davies (1569–1626), *The Original, Nature, and Immortality of the Soul, a poem: with an introduction concerning human knowledge* (London: W. Rogers, 1697), 1–10.

⁶Ori., “E'er”; but used in sense of “before.”

Ev'n so, by tasting of that fruit forbid,
Where they sought *knowledge*, they did *error* find;
Ill they desir'd to know, and ill they did;
And to give *passion* eyes, made *reason* blind.

For then their minds did first in *passion* see
Those wretched shapes of *misery* and *woe*,
Of *nakedness*, of *shame*, of *poverty*,
Which then their own *experience* made them know.

But then grew *reason* dark, that *she no more*
Could the fair forms of good and truth discern;
Batts they became, who *eagles* were before,
And this they got by their *desire to learn*.

Yet we, their wretched *offspring*, what do we?
Do not we still taste of the fruit forbid,
While with fond fruitless curiosity,
In books prophane we seek for knowledge hid?

What is this *knowledge*, but the sky stoll'n fire,
For which the *thief* still chain'd in ice doth sit;
And which the poor rude *satyr* did admire,
And needs would kiss, but burnt his lips with it?

What is it, but the cloud of empty rain,
Which when Jove's *guest* embrac'd, he monsters got?
Or the false *pails*, which oft being fill'd with pain,
Receiv'd the water, but retain'd it not?

In fine, what is it, but the fiery coach,
Which the *youth* sought, and sought his death withal?
Or the *boy's* wings, which when he did approach
The *sun's* hot beams, did melt and let him fall?

And yet, alas! when all our lamps are burn'd,
Our bodies wasted, and our spirits spent;
When we have all the learned *volumes* turn'd,
Which yield mens wits both help and ornament;

What can we know, or what can we discern,
When *error* clouds the windows of the mind?
The divers forms of things how can we learn,
That have been ever from our birth-day blind?

When *reason's* lamp, which (like the *sun* in sky)
Thro'out *man's* little world her beams did spread,
Is now become a sparkle, which doth lie
Under the ashes, half extinct and dead;

How can we hope that thro' the eye and ear,
This dying sparkle, in this cloudy place,
Can recollect those beams of knowledge clear,
Which were infus'd in the first minds by grace?

So might the heir, whose father hath in play
Wasted a thousand pounds of ancient rent,
By painful earning of one groat a day,
Hope to restore the patrimony spent.

The wits that div'd most deep, and soar'd most high,
Seeking man's powers, have found his weakness such:
"Skill comes so slow, and life so fast doth fly;
"We learn so little, and forget so much."^[5]

For this the wisest of all moral men
Said, "He knew nought, but that he nought did know."
And the great mocking-master mock'd not then,
When he said, "Truth was bury'd here below."

For how may we to other things attain,
When none of us his own soul understands?
For which the devil mocks our curious brain,
When *know thy self*, his oracle commands.

For why should we the busy soul believe,
When boldly she concludes of that and this;
When of her *self* she can no judgment give,
Nor how, nor whence, nor where, nor what she is?

All things without, which round about we see,
We seek to know, and have therewith to do:
But that whereby we *reason, live and be*,
Within ourselves, we strangers are thereto.

We seek to know the moving of each sphere,
And the strange cause o' th' ebbs and floods of Nile,
But of that *clock* which in our breasts we bear,
The subtile motions we forget the while.

We that acquaint ourselves with ev'ry *zone*,
And pass the *tropicks*, and behold each *pole*;
When we come home, are to ourselves unknown,
And unacquainted still with our own soul.

We study *speech*, but others we perswade;
We *physick* learn, but others cure with it:
W' interpret *laws* which other men have made,
But read not those which in our hearts are writ.

Is it because the mind is like the eye,
Thro' which it gathers knowledge by degrees;
Whose rays reflect not, but spread outwardly;
Not seeing itself, when other things it sees?

No, doubtless; for the mind can backward cast
Upon herself, her understanding light;
But she is so corrupt, and so defac'd,
As her own *image* doth herself affright.

As is the table of the lady fair,
Which for her lust was turn'd into a cow;
When thirsty, to a stream she did repair,
And saw herself transform'd she wist not how:

At first she startles, then she stands amaz'd;
At last with terror she from thence doth fly,
And loaths the wat'ry glass wherein she gaz'd,
And shuns it still, altho' for thirst she die.

Ev'n so *man's soul*, which did God's image bear,
And was at first fair, good, and spotless pure;
Since with her *sins*, her beauties blotted were,
Doth of all sights her own sight least endure.

For ev'n at first reflection she espies
Such strange *chimera's*, and such monsters there;
Such toys, such *anticks*, and such vanities,
As she retires and shrinks for shame and fear.

And as the man loves least at *home* to be,
That has a sluttish house, haunted with *sprites*;
So she, impatient her own faults to see,
Turns from her *self*, and in strange things delights.

For this, few *know themselves*: for merchants broke,
View their estate with discontent and pain;
And *seas* are troubled, when they do revoke
Their flowing waves into themselves again.

And while the face of outward things we find,
Pleasing and fair, agreeable and sweet,
These things transport, and carry out the mind,
That with herself, the mind can never meet.

Yet if *affliction* once her wars begin,
And threat the feeblèr *sense* with sword and fire,
The *mind* contracts herself, and shrinketh in,
And to herself she gladly doth retire;

As *spiders* touch'd, seek their web's inmost part;
As *bees* in storms back to their hives return;
As blood in danger gathers to the heart;
As men seek towns, when foes the country burn.

If ought can teach us ought, *affliction's* looks
(Making us pry into ourselves so near)
Teach us to *know ourselves* beyond all *books*,
Or all the learned *schools* that ever were.

This mistress lately pluck'd me by the ear,
And many a golden lesson hath me taught;
Hath made my *senses* quick, and *reason* clear,
Reform'd my *will*, and rectify'd my *thought*.

So do the *winds* and *thunders* cleanse the air;
So working seas settle and purge the wine;
So lopp'd and pruned trees do flourish fair,
So doth the fire the drossy gold refine.

Neither Minerva, nor the learned *muse*,
Nor rules of *art* nor *precepts* of the wise,
Could in my brain those beams of skill infuse,
As but the glance of this *dame's* angry eyes.

She within *lists* my ranging mind hath brought,
That now beyond myself I will not go;
Myself am *centre* of my circling thought,
Only *myself* I study, learn and know.

I know my *body's* of so frail a kind,
As force without, fevers within can kill:
I know the heavenly nature of my *mind*;
But 'tis corrupted both in *wit* and *will*:

I know my soul hath power to know all things;
Yet is she blind and ignorant in all:
I know I'm one of *nature's* little kings;
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.

I know my life's a *pain*, and but a *span*;
I know my *sense* is mock'd in ev'ry thing:
And, to conclude, I know myself a *man*,
Which is a *proud* and yet a *wretched* thing.

Know Thyself.⁷

O *ignorant* poor man! what dost thou bear,
Lock'd up within the casket of thy breast?
What jewels, and what riches hast thou there?
What heav'nly treasure in so weak a chest?

Look in thy *soul*, and thou shalt *beauties* find,
Like those which drown'd Narcissus in the flood:
Honour and *pleasure* both are in thy mind,
And all that in the world is counted *good*.

⁷John Davies (1569–1626), *The Original, Nature, and Immortality of the Soul, a poem: with an introduction concerning human knowledge* (London: W. Rogers, 1697), 106–8.

Think of her worth, and think that God did mean,
This worthy mind should worthy things embrace:
Blot not her beauties with thy thoughts unclean,
Nor her dishonour with thy passions base.

Kill not her *quick'ning pow'r* with surfeitings;
Mar not her *sense* with sensuality:
Cast not her serious *wit* on idle things;
Make not her *free-will* slave to vanity.

And when thou think'st of her *eternity*,
Think not that *death* against our nature is;
Think it a *birth*: and when thou go'st to die,
Sing like a swan, as if thou went'st to bliss.

And if thou, like a child, didst fear before,
B'ing in the dark where thou didst nothing see;
Now I have brought the *torch-light*, fear no more;
Now when thou dy'st, thou canst not hood-wink'd be.

And thou, my *soul*, which turn'st with curious eye,
To view the beams of thine own form divine,
Know, that thou can'st know nothing perfectly,
While thou art clouded with this flesh of mine.

Take heed of *over-weening*, and compare
Thy *peacock's* feet with thy gay *peacock's* train:
Study the best and highest things that are,
But of thyself an humble thought retain.

Cast down thyself, and only strive to raise
The glory of thy Maker's sacred name:
Use all thy pow'rs, that blessed pow'r to praise,
Which gives thee pow'r to *be*, and *use the same*.

**Perirrhantierium:
or, the
Church-Porch.⁸**

Thou whose sweet youth and early hopes inhance
Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure;
Hearken unto a verser, who may chance
Rhyme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure.
A verse may find him, who a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice.

Beware of lust; it doth pollute and foul
Whom God in baptism washt with his own blood.
It blots the lesson written in thy soul;
The holy lines cannot be understood.
How dare those eyes upon a Bible look,
Much less towards God, whose lust is all their book?

Drink not the third glass, which thou can'st not tame
When once it is within thee; but before
Mayst rule it, as thou list; and pour the shame,
Which it would pour on thee, upon the floor.
It is most just to throw that on the ground
Which would throw me there, if I keep the round.

⁸George Herbert, *The Temple* (Cambridge: Buck & Daniel, 1633), 1–16.

He that is drunken, may his mother kill
Big with his sister: he hath lost the reins,
Is out-law'd by himself: all kind of ill
Did with his liquor slide into his veins:
The drunkard forfeits man, and doth divest
All worldly right, save what he hath by beast.

Yet, if thou sin in wine or wantonness,
Boast not thereof, nor make thy shame thy glory.
Frailty gets pardon by submissiveness;
But he that boasts, shuts that out of his story:
He makes flat war with God, and doth defy
With his poor clod of earth the spacious sky.

Take not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain:
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse.
Lust, and wine plead a pleasure, avarice gain;
But the cheap swearer through his open sluice
Lets his soul run for nought, as little fearing.
Were I an *epicure*, I could bate swearing.

When thou dost tell another's jest, therein
Omit the oaths, which true wit cannot need:
Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sin.
He pares the apple that would cleanly feed.
Play not away the vertue of that name
Which is thy best stake, when griefs make thee tame.

The cheapest sins most dearly punisht are;
Because to shun them also is so cheap:
For we have wit to mark them, and to spare.
O crumble not away thy soul's fair heap.
If thou wilt die, the gates of hell are broad:
Pride and full sins have made the way a road.

Lie not; but let thy heart be true to God,
Thy mouth to it, thy actions to them both:
Cowards tell lies, and those that fear the rod;
The stormy working soul spits lies and froth.
Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie:
A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.

Fly idleness, which yet thou canst not fly
By dressing, mistressing, and complement.
If those take up thy day, the sun will cry
Against thee: for his light was only lent.
God gave thy soul brave wings; put not those feathers
Into a bed, to sleep out all ill weathers.

Art thou a *magistrate*? Then be severe:
If *studious*, copy fair what time hath blurr'd;
Redeem truth from his jaws: if souldier,
Chase base⁹ employments with a naked sword
Throughout the world. Fool not: for all may have,
If they dare try, a glorious life, or grave.

When thou dost purpose ought within thy pow'r,
Be sure to do it, though it be but small.
Constancy knits the bones, and makes us tower,
When wanton pleasure beckens us to thrall.
Who breaks his own bond, forfeiteth himself:
What nature makes a ship, he makes a shelf.

Do all things like a man, not sneakingly:
Think the *king* sees thee still; for his King does.
Simp'ring is but a lay-hypocrisy:
Give it a corner, and the clue undoes.

⁹Ori., "brave"; corrected in the errata.

Who fears to do ill, sets himself to task:
Who fears to do well, sure should wear a mask.

Slight those who say amidst their sickly healths,
Thou liv'st by rule. What doth not so *but* man?
Houses are built by *rule*, and common-wealths.
Entice the trusty sun, if that you can,
 From his *ecliptick* line; becken the sky.
 Who lives by rule then, keeps good company.

Who keeps no guard upon himself, is slack,
And rots to nothing at the next great thaw.
Man is a shop of rules, a well truss'd pack,
Whose every parcel under-writes a law.
 Lose not thyself, nor give thy humours way:
 God gave them to thee under lock and key.

By all means use sometimes to be alone.
Salute thy self: see what thy soul doth wear:
Dare to look in thy chest; for 'tis thine own:
And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.
 Who cannot rest 'till he good fellows find,
 He breaks up house, turns out of doors his mind.

Be thrifty, but not covetous: therefore give
Thy need, thine honour, and thy friend his due.
Never was scraper brave man. Get to live;
Then live, and use it: else, it is not true
 That thou hast gotten. Surely use alone
 Makes money not a contemptible stone.

In clothes, cheap handsomeness doth bear the bell.
Wisdom's a trimmer thing than shop e'er gave.

Say not then, this with that lace will do well;
But, this with my discretion will be brave.
 Much curiousness is a perpetual wooing
 Nothing with labour, folly long a doing.

In conversation boldness now bears sway.
But know that nothing can so foolish be
As empty boldness: therefore first essay
To store thy mind with solid bravery;
 Then march on gallant: get substantial worth;
 Boldness gilds finely, and will set it forth.

Laugh not too much: the witty man laughs least:
For wit is news only to ignorance.
Less at thine own things laugh; lest in the jest
Thy person share, and the conceit advance.
 Make not thy sport, abuses: for the fly
 That feeds on dung is coloured thereby.

Wit's an unruly engine, wildly striking
Sometimes a friend, sometimes the engineer.
Hast thou the knack? Pamper it not with liking:
But if thou want it, buy it not too dear.
 Many affecting wit beyond their pow'r,
 Have got to be a dear fool for an hour.

When baseness is exalted, do not bate
The *place* its honour, for the *person's* sake.
The shrine is that which thou dost venerate;
And not the beast that bears it on his back.
 I care not though the cloth of state should be
 Not of rich arras, but mean tapestry.

Thy friend put in thy bosom: wear his eyes
Still in thy heart, that he may see what's there.¹⁰
If cause require, thou art his sacrifice;
Thy drops of blood must pay down all his fear.
 But love is lost, the way of friendship's gone!
 Though David had his Jonathan, Christ his John.

In thy discourse, if thou desire to please,
Let all be courteous, useful, new, or witty.
Usefulness comes by labour, wit by ease;
Courtesy grows in court, news in the city.
 Get a good stock of these, then draw the card
 That suits him best of whom thy speech is heard.

Entice all neatly to what they know best;
For so thou dost thyself and him a pleasure:
(But a proud ignorance will lose his rest,
Rather then shew his cards) steal from his treasure
 What to ask further. Doubts well rais'd do lock
 The speaker to thee, and preserve thy stock.

If thou be master-gunner, spend not all
That thou canst speak, at once; but husband it,
And give men turns of speech: do not forestall
By lavishness thine own and others wit,
 As if thou mad'st thy will. A civil guest
 Will no more talk all, than eat all the feast.

Be calm in arguing: for fierceness makes
Error a fault, and truth discourtesy.
Why should I feel another man's mistakes
More than his sicknesses, or poverty?

¹⁰Ori., "there"; a printer's error.

In *love* I should: but *anger* is *not love*,
Nor *wisdom* neither: therefore gently move.

Calmness is great advantage: he that lets
Another chafe, may warm him at his fire,
Mark all his wandrings, and enjoy his frets;
As cunning fencers suffer heat to tire.
 Truth dwells not in the clouds: the bow that's there
 Doth often aim at, never hit the sphere.

Be useful where thou livest, that they may
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
Kindness, good parts, great places are the way
To compass this. Find out mens wants and will,
 And meet them there. All worldly joys are less
 Than that one joy of doing kindnesses.

Let thy mind still be bent, still plotting where,
And when, and how the business may be done.
Slackness breeds worms; but the sure traveller,
Though he alight sometimes, still goeth on.
 Active and stirring spirits live alone.
 Write on the others, "Here lies such an one."

Slight not the smallest loss, whether it be
In love or honour: take account of all;
Shine like the sun in every corner: see
Whether thy stock of credit swell or fall.
 Who say, "I care not," those I give for lost;
 And to instruct them will not quit the cost.

Scorn no man's love, though of a mean degree;
(Love is a present for a mighty king)

Much less make any one thine enemy.
As guns destroy, so may a little sling.
The cunning work-man never doth refuse
The meanest tool, that he may chance to use.

Keep all thy natural good, and naturalize
All *foreign* of that name; but scorn their ill:
Embrace their activeness, not vanities.
Who follows all things, forfeiteth his will.
If thou observest strangers in each fit,
In time they'll run thee out of all thy wit.

Affect in things about thee cleanliness,
That all may gladly touch thee as a flower.
Slovens take up their stock of noisomness
Beforehand, and anticipate their last hour.
Let thy minds sweetness have its¹¹ operation
Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation.

In alms regard thy means, and others merit.
Think heav'n a better bargain than to give
Only thy single market-money for it.
Join hands with God to make a man to live.
Give to all something, to a good poor man,
'Till thou change names, and be where he began.

Man is God's image; but a poor man is
Christ's stamp to boot: both images regard.
God reckons for him, counts the favour his:
Write, "So much giv'n to God"; thou shalt be heard.
Let thy alms go before, and keep heav'ns gate
Open for thee; or both may come too late.

¹¹Ori., "his"; corrected in the errata.

Restore to God his due in tithe and time:
A tithe purloin'd cankers the whole estate.
Sundays observe: think, when the bells do chime,
'Tis angels musick; therefore come not late.
God then deals blessings: if a king did so,
Who would not haste, nay give, to see the show?

Tho' *private* prayer be a brave design,
Yet *publick* hath more promises, more love:
And love's a weight to hearts, to eyes a sign.
We are all but cold suiters; let us move
Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven;
Pray with the most; for where most pray, is heaven.

When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.
God is more there than thou: for thou art there
Only by his permission. Then beware,
And make thyself all reverence and fear.
Kneeling ne're spoil'd silk stocking: quit thy state:
All equal are within the *churche's* gate.

Let vain or busy thoughts have there no part:
Bring not thy plow, thy plots, thy pleasures thither.
Christ purg'd his temple; so must thou thy heart.
All worldly thoughts are but thieves met together¹²
To cozen thee. Look to thy actions well:
For churches are either our heav'n or hell.

Judge not the preacher; for he is thy judge:
If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not.
God calleth preaching folly. Do not grudge
To pick out treasures from an earthen pot.

¹²Ori., "together"; a printer's error.

The worst speak something good: if all want sense,
God takes a text, and preacheth *patience*.

Sum up at night, what thou hast done by day;
And in the morning, what thou hast to do.
Dress and undress thy soul: mark the decay
And growth of it: if with thy watch, that too
Be down, then wind up both: since we shall be
Most surely judg'd, make thy accounts agree.

In brief, acquit thee bravely: play the man.
Look not on pleasures as they come, but go.
Defer not the least vertue: life's poor span
Make not an ell,¹³ by trifling in thy woe.
*If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains:
If well, the pain doth fade, the joy remains.*

Providence.¹⁴

O sacred providence, who from end to end
Strongly and sweetly movest! Shall I write,
And not of thee, through whom my fingers bend
To hold my quill? Shall they not do thee right?

Of all the creatures both in sea and land
Only to man thou hast made known thy ways;
And put the pen alone into his hand,
And made him secretary of thy praise.

¹³An old measurement equal to 45 inches.

¹⁴George Herbert, *The Temple* (Cambridge: Buck & Daniel, 1633), 109–14.

Beasts fain would sing; birds ditty to their notes;
Trees would be tuning on their native lute
To thy renown: but all their hands and throats
Are brought to man, while they are lame and mute.

Man is the world's *high-priest*: he doth present
The sacrifice for all; while they below
Unto the service murmur an assent,
Such as springs use that fall, and winds that blow.

Wherefore, most sacred Spirit, I here present
For me and all my fellows praise to thee:
And just it is that I should pay the rent,
Because the benefit accrues to me.

We all acknowledge both thy power and love
To be exact, transcendant, and divine;
Who dost so strongly and so sweetly move,
While all things have their will, yet none but *thine*.

For either thy *command* or thy *permission*
Lay hands on all: they are thy *right* and *left*.
The first puts on with speed and expedition;
The other curbs sins, stealing pace¹⁵ and theft.

Nothing escapes them both: all must appear,
And be dispos'd, and dress'd, and tune'd by thee,
Who sweetly temper'st all. If we could hear
Thy skill and art, what musick would it be!

Thou art in small things great, not small in any:
Thy even praise can neither rise nor fall.
Thou art in all things one, in each thing many:
For thou art infinite in one, and all.

¹⁵Ori., "peace"; likely a printer's error for Herbert's original "pace."

Thy store-house serves the world: the meat is set,
Where all may reach: each beast knows how to feed:
Birds teach us hawking: fishes have their net:
The great prey on the less, they on some weed.

Nothing ingendred doth prevent his meat;
Flies have their table spread, ere¹⁶ they appear.
Some creatures have in winter what to eat;
Others do sleep, and envy not their cheer.

How finely dost thou times and seasons spin!
And make a checker'd twist of night and day!
Which as it lengthens, winds, and winds us in,
As bowls go on, but turning all the way.

Each creature hath a wisdom for his good.
The pidgeons feed their tender off-spring, crying,
When they are callow; but withdraw their food
When they are fledge, that need may teach them flying.

Bees work for man; and yet they never bruise
Their master's flow'r, but leave it, having done,
As fair as ever, and as fit to use:
So both the flow'r doth stay, and honey run.

Sheep eat the grass, and dung the ground for more:
Trees after bearing, drop their leaves for soil:
Springs vent their streams, and by expense get store:
Clouds cool by heat, and baths by cooling boil.

Who hath the vertue to express the rare,
And curious vertues both of herbs and stones?
Is there an herb for that? O that thy care
Would show a root that gives expressions!

¹⁶Ori., "e'er"; but used in sense of "before."

E'n *poisons* praise thee. Should a thing be lost?
Should creatures want, for want of heed, their due?
Since where are poisons, antidotes are most;
Thy help stands close, and keeps the fear in view.

The sea, which seems to stop the traveller,
Is by a ship the speedier passage made;
The winds, who think they rule the mariner,
Are rul'd by him, and taught to serve his trade.

And as thy house is full, so I adore
Thy curious art in marshaling thy goods.
The hills with health abound; the vales with store;
The *south* with marble; the *north* with furs and woods.

Light without wind is glass: warm without weight
Is wool and furs: cool without closeness, shade;
Speed without pains, a horse: tall without height,
A servile hawk: low without loss, a spade.

All countries have enough to serve their need:
If they seek fine things, thou dost make them run
For their offence; and then dost turn their speed
To be commerce and trade from sun to sun.

Nothing wears cloaths but man; nothing doth need
But he to wear them. Nothing useth fire,
But man alone, to shew his heav'nly breed:
And only he hath fewel in desire.

When th' earth was dry, thou mad'st a sea of wet:
When that lay gather'd, thou didst broach the mountains:

When yet some places could no moisture get,
The winds grew gard'ners, and the clouds good fountains.

Rains, do not hurt my flowers; but gently spend
Your honey-drops: press not to smell them here:
When they are ripe, their odour will ascend,
And at your lodging with their thanks appear.

How harsh are thorns to pears! and yet they make
A better hedge, and needful reparation.
How smooth are silks compared with a stake,
Or with a stone! yet make no good foundation.

Sometimes thou dost divide thy gifts to man,
Sometimes unite. The Indian nut alone
Is cloathing, meat, and trencher, drink, and can,
Boat, cable, sail, and needle, all in one.

Most herbs that grow in brooks, are hot and dry.
Cold fruits warm kernels help against the wind.
The lemon's juice and rind cure mutually.
The whey of milk doth loose, the milk doth bind.

Thy creatures leap not, but express a feast,
Where all the guests sit close, and nothing wants.
Frogs marry, fish and flesh; bats, bird, and beast;
Sponges, non-sense and sense; mines, th' earth and plants.

But who hath praise enough? Nay, who hath any?
None can express thy works, *but* he that knows them:
And none can know thy works, which are so many,
And so compleat, but only he that owes them.

All things that are, though they have several ways,
Yet in their being join with one advice
To honour thee: and so I give thee praise
In all my other hymns, but in this twice.

Each thing that is, although in use and name
It go for one, hath many ways in store
To honour thee: and so each hymn thy fame
Extolleth many ways, yet this once more.

Isaiah xxxiv.¹⁷

1. Awake, and with attention hear,
Thou *drowsy world*, for it concerns thee near;
 Awake, I say, and listen well
To what from God, I, his *loud prophet* tell.
Bid both the *poles* suppress their stormy noise,
And bid the roaring *sea* contain its voice.
Be still thou *sea*, be still thou *air* and *earth*,
Still as old *chaos*, before motion's birth;
A dreadful *host* of *judgments* is gone out,
 In strength and number more
 Than e'er was rais'd by God before,
To scourge the rebel-world, and march it round about.

2. I see the *sword* of God brandish't above,
 And from it streams a dismal ray;
 I see the *scabbard* cast away:
How red anon with *slaughter* will it prove!

¹⁷Abraham Cowley, "Pindaric Odes 48–50," in *The Works of Mr. Abraham Cowley* (London: Henry Herringman, 1668), 215–17.

How will it *sweat* and *reek* in *blood*!
How will the *scarlet-glutton* be *o'er-gorg'd* with food!
And devour all the mighty *feast*!
Nothing soon but bones will rest.
GOD does a solemn *sacrifice* prepare;
But not of oxen, nor of rams,
Not of kids, nor of their dams,
Not of heifers, nor of lambs.
The *altar*, all the *land*, and all *men* in't the *victims* are,
Some wicked *men's* more guilty blood to spare,
The *beasts* so long have sacrificed been,
Since men their *birth-right* forfeit still by sin,
'Tis fit at last *beasts* their *revenge* should have,
And *sacrificed* men their better *brethren* save.

3. So will they fall, so will they flee,
Such will the *creatures* wild distraction be,
When at the final doom
Nature and *time* shall both be slain,
Shall struggle with *death's pangs* in vain,
And the whole *world* their *funeral-pile* become.
The wide-stretch'd *scrawl* of *heav'n*, which we
Immortal as the Deity think,
With all the beauteous *characters* that in it
With such deep *sense* by God's own *hand* were writ,
Whose *eloquence* tho' we understand not, we admire,
Shall crackle, and the parts together shrink
Like *parchment* in a fire.
Th' exhausted *sun* to the *moon* no more shall lend;
But truly then headlong into the *sea* descend.

The glittering *host* now in such fair array,
So proud, so well appointed, and so gay,
Like fearful *troops* in some strong ambush ta'en
Shall some fly routed, some fall slain,
Thick as ripe *fruit*, or *leaves* in *autumn* fall,
With such a violent *storm* as blows down *tree* and *all*.

4. And thou, O cursed *land*,
Which wilt not see the *precipice* where thou dost stand,
 Tho' thou stand'st just upon the brink,
Thou of this poison'd *bowl* the bitter dregs shall drink.
 Thy *rivers* and thy *lakes* shall so
 With human blood o'erflow;
That they shall fetch the slaughter'd corps away,
Which in the fields around unburied lay
And rob the *beasts* and *birds* to give the *fish* their prey.
The rotting corps shall so infect the air,
Beget such *plagues*, and putrid *venoms* there,
 That by thine own *dead* shall be slain
 All thy few *living* that remain.
 As one who buys, *surveys* a ground,
So the *destroying-angel* *measures* it around;
 So careful and so strict he is,
Lest any *nook* or *corner* he should miss;
 He walks about the perishing nation,
Ruin behind him stalks and empty *desolation*.
5. Then shall the *market* and the *pleading-place*
Be choak'd with *brambles*, and o'ergrown with *grass*.

The *serpents* through thy *streets* shall rowl,
And in thy lower rooms the *wolves* shall howl,
And thy gilt chambers lodge the *raven* and the *owl*;
And all the wing'd *ill-omens* of the air,
Though no *new ills* can be *foreboded* there.
The *lion* then shall to the *leopard* say,
 Brother leopard come away;
Behold a land which God has giv'en us in prey!
Behold a land from whence we see
Mankind expulst *his* and *our* common *enemy*!
The *brother-leopard* shakes himself, and does not stay.

6. The gluttred *vulturs* shall expect in vain
 New *armies* to be slain:
 Shall find at last the business done,
Leave their consumed *quarters*, and be gone.
 Th' unburied *ghosts* shall sadly moan,
 The *satyrs* laugh to hear them groan.
 The *evil-spirits* that delight
To dance and revel in the *mask of night*;
The *moon* and *stars*, their sole *spectators*, shall affright.
 And if of lost *mankind*
 Ought happen to be left behind,
 If any *reliques* but remain,
They in the *dens* shall lurk, *beasts* in the *palaces* shall reign.

Life and Fame.¹⁸

1. Oh life, thou *nothing's younger brother!*
 So *like*, that one may take *one* for the *other!*
 In all the cobwebs of the schoolmen's trade
 We no such nice distinction woven see,
 As 'tis *to be*, or *not to be*.
Dream of a *shadow!* a *reflection* made
 From the false glories of the *watry row*,
 Is a more *solid* thing than *thou*.
 Vain weak-built *isthmus!* which dost proudly rise
 Up between *two eternities*;
 Yet can'st not *wave*, nor wind *sustain*,
 But *broken* and *o'erwhelm'd* the oceans meet again.

2. And with what rare *inventions* do we strive,
 Ourselves then to survive?
 Some with vast costly *tombs* would purchase it,
 And by the *proofs* of *death* pretend to *live*.
 Here lies the great—false *marble* where?
 Nothing but *small* and *sordid dust* lies there.
 Some build enormous mountain-*palaces*,
 The *fools* and *architects* to please:
 A lasting *life* in well-hewn *stone* they rear:
 So he who on the Egyptian shore
 Was slain so many hundred years before,

¹⁸Abraham Cowley, "Pindaric Odes 39–40," in *The Works of Mr. Abraham Cowley* (London: Henry Herringman, 1668), 206–7.

Lives still (Oh *life* most *happy* and most *dear!*
Oh *life* that *epicures* envy to hear!)
Lives in the *ruins* of his *amphitheatre*.

3. Cæsar an higher place does claim
In the *seraphick entity* of *fame*:
 He since that *toy* his *death*
Does fill all mouths, and *breathes*¹⁹ in all mens *breath*.
 —The two *immortal syllables* remain;
 But O! ye learned men explain,
 What *essence*, what *existence* this
 In *six poor letters* is?
In those alone does the *great Cæsar live*;
 'Tis all the *conquer'd world* could give!
 We *poets* madder yet than all,
With a refin'd *fantastick vanity*,
Think we not only *have* but *give eternity*.
 Fain would I see that *prodigal*,
 Who his *tomorrow* would bestow,
For all old Homer's *life* ere²⁰ since he *dy'd* till *now*.

Life.²¹

“Nascentes Morimur.” Manil.²²

- [1.] We're ill by these *grammarians* us'd;
We are abus'd by *words*, grossly abus'd;
From the *maternal tomb*,
 To the *grave's* fruitful *womb*,

¹⁹Ori., “breaths.”

²⁰Ori., “e'er”; but used in sense of “before.”

²¹Abraham Cowley, “Pindaric Odes 45–46,” in *The Works of Mr. Abraham Cowley* (London: Henry Herringman, 1668), 212–13.

²²Marcus Manilius, *Astronomica*, IV.16.

We call her *life*; but *life's* a *name*
That nothing here can truly claim:
Tho' wretched *inn*, where we scarce stay to *bait*,
We call our *dwelling-place*;
We call one *step* a *race*:
But *angels* in their full enlighten'd *state*,
Angels who *live*, and know what 'tis to *be*,
Who all the *nonsense* of our *language* see,
Who words, our ill-drawn *pictures* scorn,
When we by' a *foolish figure* say,
"Behold an old man dead!" then they
Speak properly, and cry, "Behold a man-child born."

2. My *eyes* are opened, and I see
Through the *transparent fallacy*:
Because we wisely seem to talk
Like *men* of *business*; and for *business* walk
From place to place,
And mighty *voyages* we take,
And mighty *journeys* seem to make
Because we *fight* and *battles* gain;
Some *captives* call and say, "The rest are slain:"
Because we heap up *yellow earth*, and so
Rich, valiant, wise, and virtuous seem to grow:
Because we draw a long *nobility*
From *hieroglyphick* proofs of *heraldry*,
And *impudently* talk of a *posterity*;
We grow at last by *custom* to believe,
That really we live:
Whilst all these *shadows* that for *things* we take,
Are but the empty *dreams* which in death's *sleep* we make.

**The
Plagues of Egypt.**²³

1. Is this thy *bravery, man*, is this thy *pride*?
Rebel to God, and *slave* to all beside!
Captiv'd by every thing! and only *free*
 To fly from thine *own liberty*!
All *creatures* the Creator said *were thine*;
No *creature* but might since say, "Man is mine!"
In black Egyptian *slavery* we lye;
And sweat and toil in the vile drudgery
 Of tyrant sin;
To which we *trophies* raise, and wear out all our breath,
In building up the *monuments* of *death*;
We, the *choice race*, to God, and *angels* kin!
In vain the *prophets* and *apostles* come
 To call us home,
Home to the promis'd Canaan above,
Which does with nourishing *milk*, and pleasant honey flow;
And even i' th' way to which we should be fed
 With *angels tasteful bread*:
 But we alas! the *flesh-pots* love,
We love the very *leeks*, and sordid roots below.

²³Abraham Cowley, "Pindaric Odes 54–65," in *The Works of Mr. Abraham Cowley* (London: Henry Herringman, 1668), 221–32.

2. In vain we *judgments* feel, and wonders see;
In vain did God to descend hither deign,
He was his *own ambassador* in vain,
Our Moses and our *guide* himself to be!
 We will not let *our selves* to go,
And with worse hardned hearts do our *own Pharoahs* grow;
 Ah, lest at last we perish so!
Think, stubborn man, think of th' Egyptian *prince*,
(Hard of *belief*, and *will*, but not so hard as thou)
Think with what dreadful proofs God did convince
The feeble arguments that humane power could show;
 Think what plagues attend²⁴ on thee
Who Moses God dost now refuse, more oft than Moses he.
3. If from some god you come (said the proud *king*)
 With half a smile and half a frown;
(But say, what God's to Egypt yet unknown?)
What *sign*, what *powers*, what *credence* do you bring?
 Behold his *seal*, behold his hand,
Cries Moses, and casts down th' *almighty wand!*
 Th' *almighty wand* scarce touch'd the earth,
 When with an undiscerned birth,
 Th' *almighty wand* a *serpent* grew,
And his long half in painted folds behind him drew,
 Upwards his threatning tail he threw,
 Upwards he cast his threatning *head*,
 He gape'd and hist aloud,
With flaming eyes survey'd the trembling crowd,

²⁴Ori., "atrend"; a printer's error.

And like a *basilisk* almost *look'd* the assembly dead;
Swift fled th' *amazed king*, the *guards* before him fled!

4. Jannes and Jambres stopp'd their flight,
 And with proud words allay'd th' affright.
The god of *slaves!* (said they) how can he be
More powerful than their *master's deity?*
 And down they cast their *rods*,
And muttered secret sounds that charm the *servile* gods.
 The evil spirits their charms obey,
And in a subtle cloud they snatch the *rods* away,
And *serpents* in their place the airy *juglers* lay.
 Serpents in Egypt's monst'rous land
 Were ready still at hand,
And all at the *old serpent's* first command.
 And they too gape'd, and they too hist,
 And they their threat'ning tails did twist;
But strait on both the Hebrew *serpent* flew;
Broke both their active *backs*, and both it slew,
 And both almost at once devour'd;
 So much was over-power'd
 By God's miraculous *creation*
His *servant-nature's* slightly wrought and feeble *generation!*
5. On the fame'd bank the prophets stood
Touch'd with their *rod* and *wounded* all the *flood*;
Flood now no more, but a long *vein* of putrid *blood*.
 The helpless *fish* were found
 In their strange *current* drown'd;

The herbs and trees wash'd by the *mortal tide*
About it *blush'd* and *dy'd*.
Th' amazed *crocodiles* made haste to ground:
From their vast trunks the dropping gore they spy'd,
Thought it their *own*, and dreadfully aloud they cry'd.
Nor all thy *priests*, nor *thou*
Oh *king!* could'st ever show
From whence thy wand'ring Nile begins his course;
Of this *new* Nile thou see'st the *sacred* source;
And as thy land *that* does o'reflow,
Take heed lest *this* do so.
What *plague* more just could on thy *waters* fall?
The Hebrew *infant's murder* stains them all.
The kind, *instructing punishment* enjoy;
Whom the *red river* cannot *mend* the Red-Sea shall *destroy*.

6. The *river* yet gave one *instruction* more,
And from the rotting fish and unconcocted gore,
Which was but *water* just before,
A loathsome *host* was quickly made,
That scale the *banks*, and all the land invade,
As when the Nile forsakes his sacred *bed*
(But like a *friend* he visits all the land
With welcome presents in his hand)
So did this *living tide* the fields o'erspread.
In vain the alarmed country tries
To kill their noisome enemies;
From th' unexhausted *source* still new *recruits* arise,
Nor does the *earth* these greedy *troops* suffice,
The *towns* and *houses* they possess,
The *temples* and the *palaces*;

Nor Pharoah, nor his gods they fear;
Both their important croakings hear.
Unsatiated yet, they mount up higher,
Where never *sun-born-frog* durst to aspire,
And in the silken *beds* their slimy members place;
A *luxury* unknown before to all the *watry race*.

7. The *water* thus her *wonders* did produce;
But both were to no use.
The *sorcerer's* *mimick* power serv'd for excuse.
Try what the *earth* will do (said God) and, lo!
They stroke the *earth* a *fertile* blow,
And all the *dust* did strait to stir begin;
One would have thought some sudden *wind* 't had been;
But lo, 'twas nimble *life* was got within!
And all the little *springs* did move,
And every *dust* did an arm'd *virmine* prove,
Of an unknown and new created kind,
Such as the *magick* *gods* could neither *make* nor *find*.
The wretched shameful *foe* allow'd no rest
Either to man or beast.
Not Pharoah from the unquiet plague could be,
With all his change of raiment free;
The devils themselves confest
This *was* God's hand; and 'twas but just
To punish thus man's pride, to punish *dust* with *dust*.
8. Lo! the *third* *element* does his plagues prepare,
And swarming clouds of *insects* fill the air,

With sullen noise they take their flight,
And march in *bodies* infinite;
In vain 'tis day *above*, 'tis still *beneath* them *night*.
Of harmful *flies* the *nations* numberless
Compos'd this mighty army's spacious boast;
Of different *manners*, different *languages*
And different *habits* too they wore,
And different *arms* they bore:
And some like Scythians liv'd on *blood*,
And some on *green* and some on *flowry food*,
And Accaron the airy prince, led on this various *host*.
Houses secure not men, the populous ill
Did all the houses fill.
The country all around
Did with the cries of tortured cattle sound;
About the fields enrag'd they flew,
And wish'd the plague that was t' ensue.

9. From *poisonous stars* a mortal *influence* came,
(The mingled malice of their flame)
A skilful angel did the ingredients take,
And with just hands the sad *composure* make,
And over all the land did the full *viol* shake.
Thirst, giddiness, and putrid heats,
And *pinning pains* and *shiv'ring sweats*
On all the cattle, all the beasts did fall;
With *deform'd death* the country's covered all.
The labouring *ox* drops down before the *plow*;
The crowned *victims* to the *altar* led
Sink, and prevent the *lifted blow*.
The generous *horse* from the *full manger* turns his head,

Does his lov'd floods and pastures scorn,
Hates the shrill trumpet and the horn,
Nor can his lifeless nostril please,
With the once ravishing smell of all his dappled *mistresses*.
The starving *sheep* refuse to feed,
They bleat their innocent souls out into air;
The faithful *dogs* lie gasping by them there;
Th' astonish'd *shepherd* weeps and breaks his tuneful reed.

10. Thus did the *beasts* for *man's rebellion* die;
God did on man a gentler medicine try,
And a disease for physick did apply.
Warm ashes from the furnace Moses took;
The sorcerers did with wonder on him look;
And smil'd at th' unaccustom'd spell,
Which no Egyptian *rituals* tell.
He flings the *pregnant ashes* thro' the air,
And speaks a mighty prayer,
Both which the *ministring winds* around all Egypt *bear*.
As gentle eastern gales with downy wings
Hatching the tender *springs*,
To th' unborn *buds* with vital whispers say,
Ye *living buds* why do ye stay?
The passionate *buds* break thro' the *bark* their way:
So wheresoe'er this *tainted wind* but blew,
Swelling *pains* and *ulcers* grew;
It from the body call'd all *sleeping poisons* out,
And to them added new;
A noisome *spring* of *sores*, as thick as *leaves* did sprout.

11. *Heaven* itself is angry next;
 Wo to *man* when *heaven* is vex!
 With sullen brow it frown'd,
And murmur'd first in an imperfect sound.
 'Till Moses lifting up his hand,
Waves th' expected *signal* of his *wand*,
And all the full-charge'd *clouds* in ranged squadrons move,
 And fill the spacious *plains* above,
Through which the rolling *thunder* first does play,
And opens wide the tempests noisy way.
 And strait a *stony shower*
 Of monstrous *hail* does downward pour;
 Such as ne'er *winter* yet brought forth,
From all her stormy *magazines* of the *north*.
It all the *beasts* and *men* abroad did slay,
O'er the defaced corps like *monuments*, it lay;
The houses and strong-bodied trees it broke,
 Nor ask'd aid from the *thunder's* stroke.
The *thunder* but for *terror* through it flew;
 The hail alone the work could do.
 The dismal *lightnings* all around,
Some flying thro' the *air*, some running on the *ground*,
 Some swimming o'er the *water's* face,
 Fill'd with *bright horror* every place;
One would have thought their *dreadful day* to have seen,
The very *hail* and *rain* itself had *kindled* been.

12. The infant *corn*, which yet did scarce appear,
 Escape'd this general *massacre*
 Of every thing that grew,
 And the well stor'd Egyptian *year*
 Began to cloath her fields and trees anew:
 When lo! a *scorching wind* from the burnt countries blew!
 And endless *legions* with it drew
 Of greedy *locusts*, who where-e'er
 With sounding wings they flew,
 Left all the earth depopulate and bare;
 As if *winter* itself had march'd by there.
 What e'er the *sun* and Nile
 Gave with large bounty to the thankful soil,
 The wretched *pillagers* bore away,
 And the whole *summer* was their prey;
 'Till Moses with a prayer
 Breath'd forth a violent western wind,
 Which all these *living clouds* did headlong bear
 (No *stragglers* left behind)
 Into the *purple sea*, and there bestow
 On the luxurious *fish* a feast they ne'er did know.
 With *untaught joy* Pharaoh the news does hear,
 And little thinks *their fate* attends on *him* and *his* so near.
13. What *blindness* or what *darkness* did there e'er
 Like this *undocil king's* appear?
 What e'er but that which now does represent
 And paint²⁵ the *crime* out in the *punishment*?

²⁵Ori., "point"; likely a printer's error, restored to Cowley's original term.

From the deep, baleful caves of *hell* below,
 Where the old *mother night* does grow,
 Substantial night, that does disclaim
 Privation's empty name,
Through secret conduits monstrous *shapes* arose,
Such as the sun's whole force could not oppose,
 They with a *solid cloud*
 All heaven's *eclipsed face* did shrowd,
Seem'd with large *wings* spread o'er the sea and earth
To brood up a new *chaos* his deformed birth.
 And every *lamp* and every *fire*,
Did at the dreadful sight *wink* and *expire*,
To th' *empyrean source* all *streams of light* seem'd to retire.
The *living men* were in their *standing-houses buried*;
 But the *long night* no *slumber* knows,
 But the *short death* finds no *repose*.
Ten thousand terrors through the darkness fled,
And *ghosts* complain'd, and spirits murmured;
 And *fancy's* multiplying sight
View'd all the *scenes invisible of night*.

14. Of God's dreadful anger these
 Were but the first light *skirmishes*;
The *shock* and bloody *battle* now begins,
The plenteous *harvest* of full ripen'd sins.
 It was the time when the still *moon*
 Was mounted softly to her *noon*.
Michael the warlike *prince*, does downward fly
 Swift as the journeys of the sight,
 Swift as the race of light,

And with his *winged will* cuts thro' the yielding sky;
 He pass'd thro' many a star, and as he pass'd,
 Shone (like a *star* in them) more brightly there,
 Than *they* did in their *sphere*.
 On a tall *pyramid's* pointed head he stopt at last,
 And a mild look of sacred *pity* cast
 Down on the sinful land where he was sent,
 T' inflict th' *tardy punishment*.
 Ah! yet (said he) yet stubborn king repent;
 Whilst thus unarm'd I stand,
 Ere²⁶ the keen *sword* of God fill my *commanded hand*;
 Suffer but yet *thy self*, and *thine* to live;
 Who would alas! believe
 That it for *man* (said he)
 So hard to be *forgiven* should be,
 And yet for God so easy to *forgive!*

15. He spoke, and downwards flew,
 And o'er his shining *form* a well-cut *cloud* he threw
 Made of the blackest *fleece* of night.
 And close-wrought to keep in the powerful *light*,
 Yet wrought so *fine* it hindred not his *flight*.
 But through the key-holes and the chinks of doors,
 And thro' th' narrowest *walks* of crooked *pores*,
 He past more swift and free,
 Than in wide air the wanton *swallows* flee.
 He took a *pointed pestilence* in his hand,
 The *spirits* of thousand mortal poisons made
 The strongly-temper'd blade,
 The sharpest *sword* that e'er was laid

²⁶Ori., "E'er"; but used in sense of "before."

Up in the *magazines* of God, to scourge a wicked land.
Through Egypt's wicked land his march he took,
And as he march'd, the *sacred first-born* strook
 Of every womb; none did he spare;
None from the meanest beast to Cenchre's *purple heir*.

16. The swift approach of endless *night*,
Breaks ope the wounded *sleepers* rolling eyes;
 They awake the rest with dying cries,
 And *darkness* doubles th' affright.
The mixed sounds of *scatter'd deaths* they hear,
And lose their parted *souls* 'twixt *grief* and *fear*.
Louder then all, the shrieking *women's* voice
Pierces this *chaos* of confused noise.
 As brighter *lightning* cuts a way,
 Clear and distinguish'd thro' the *day*.
Whilst *health*, and *strength*, and *gladness* does possess
 The festal Hebrew *cottages*;
 The blest *destroyer* comes not there,
 To interrupt the sacred cheer,
That new²⁷ begins their well-reformed *year*.
Upon their doors he read and understood,
 God's *protection* writ in blood;
Well was he skill'd i' th' *character divine*;
And tho' he pass'd by it in haste,
 He bow'd and worship'd, as he past,
The mighty *mystery* through it's *humble sign*.

²⁷Ori., "now"; likely a printer's error, restored to Cowley's original term.

17. The *sword* strikes now too deep and near,
 Longer with its edge to play;
 No diligence or cost they spare
 To haste the Hebrews now away,
 Pharaoh himself chides their delay;
 So kind and bountiful is *fear!*
 But, O! the *bounty* which to *fear* we owe,
 Is but like *fire* struck out of *stone*;
 So hardly got, and quickly gone,
 That it scarce out-lives the *blow*.
 Sorrow and fear soon quit the *tyrant's* breast,
Rage and *revenge* their place possess:
 With a vast host of *chariots* and of *horse*,
 And all his powerful kingdom's ready force,
 The *travelling nation* he pursues;
 Ten times o'er-come, he still the unequal war renews,
 Fill'd with proud hopes at last (said he)
 Th' Egyptian gods, from Syrian *magick* free,
 Will now revenge *themselves* and *me*;
 Behold! what passless rocks on either hand,
 Like *prison-walls* about them stand!
 Whilst the *sea* bounds their flight before:
 And in our injured *justice* they must find
 A far worse stop than *rocks* and *seas* behind,
 Which shall with crimson gore
 New paint the *water's name*, and *double dye* the *shore*.

[18.] He spoke and all his host
 Approv'd with shouts th' *unhappy boast*,
 A bidden *wind* bore his vain *words* away,
 And drown'd them in the neighbouring sea.

No means t' escape the faithful²⁸ *travellers* spy,
 And with degenerate fear to die,
 Curse their new-gotten *liberty*.
 But the great *guide* well knew he led them right,
 And saw a *path* hid yet from human sight.
 He strikes the waves, the waves on either side
 Unloose their close *embraces* and divide;
 And backward press, as in some solemn show
 The crowding people do,
 (Though just before no space was seen)
 To let th' admired *triumph* pass between.
 The *wond'ring* army saw, on either hand,
 The no less *wond'ring* waves, like *rocks* of *chrystal* stand.
 They march'd betwixt, and boldly trod
 The *secret* paths of God;
 And here and there, all scatter'd in their way,
 The sea's old spoils and gaping *fishes* lay
 Deserted on the sandy plain.
 The *sun* did with astonishment behold
 The inmost chambers of the open'd main;
 For whatsoe'er of old
 By his *own* *priests*, the *poets*, has been said,
 He never sunk 'till then into the *ocean's* bed.

19. Led chearfully by a bright *captain* flame,
 To th' other shore at morning dawn they came,
 And saw behind th' unguided foe
 March disorderly and slow.
 The *prophet* strait from the Idumæan strand
 Shakes his *imperious* wand.

²⁸Cowley reads "faithless"; it is unclear if this is a purposeful change.

The upper waves that highest crowded lie,
 The beck'ning *wand* espy.
Strait their first right-hand *files* begin to move,
 And with a murmuring wind,
 Give the word *march* to all behind.
The left-hand *squadrons* no less ready prove,
 But with a joyful louder noise,
 Answer their distant fellows voice,
 And haste to meet them make,
As several *troops* at once a common *signal* take.
What tongue the amazement and th' affright can tell
 Which on the Chamian *army* fell,
When on both sides they saw the roaring main
 Broke loose from his *invisible chain*?
They saw the *monstrous death* and *watry war*,
Come rolling down loud ruin from afar.
In vain some backward, and some forward fly
 With helpless haste; in vain they cry
 To their *caelestial beasts* for aid;
 In vain their guilty *king* they upbraid,
In vain on Moses *he*, and Moses's God does call,
 With a *repentance, true too late*;
They're compass round with *devouring fate*,
That draws, like a strong *net*, the mighty *sea* upon them *all*.

**Paraphrase
on the
CXLVIIIth Psalm.²⁹**

O azure vaults! O chrystal sky!
The world's transparent canopy;
Break your long silence, and let mortals know,
With what contempt ye look on things below.

Wing'd squadrons of the God of war,
Who conquer wheresoe'er you are:
Let echoing anthems make his praises known
On earth his foot-stool, as in heaven his throne:

Great eye of all, whose glorious ray
Rules the bright empire of day.
O praise his name, without whose purer light,
Thou hadst been hid in an abyss of night.

Ye moon and planets, who dispense,
By God's command, your influence,
Resign to him, as your Creator's due,
That veneration which men pay to you.

Fairest, as well as first of things,
From whom all joy, all beauty springs,
O praise th' Almighty Ruler of the globe,
Who useth thee for his empyreal robe:

²⁹Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, "A Paraphrase of the CXLVIII Psalm," in John Dryden, ed., *Examen Poeticum*, 2nd ed. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1706), 32–36. Published by Wesley previously in *CPH* (1738), 17–20.

Praise him ye loud *harmonious spheres*,
Whose sacred stamp all nature bears,
Who did all forms from the rude *chaos* draw,
And whose command is th' universal law.

Ye *watry mountains* of the sky,
And ye so far above our eye,
Vast ever-moving orbs, exalt his name,
Who gave its being to your glorious frame.³⁰

Ye dragons whose contagious breath,
Peoples the dark retreats of death,
Change your fierce hissing into joyful song,
And praise your Maker with your forked tongue.

Praise him ye *monsters* of the *deep*,
That in the sea's vast bosom sleep,
At whose command the foaming billows roar,
Yet know their limits: tremble and adore.

Ye *mists* and *vapours*, *hail* and *snow*,
And you who through the concave blow;
Swift executors of his holy word,
Whirlwinds and *tempests*, praise the Almighty Lord.

Mountains, who to your Maker's view,
Seem less than mole-hills do to you,
Remember how, when first Jehovah spoke,
All heaven was fire, and Sinai hid in smoke.

Praise him *sweet offspring* of the ground,
With heavenly nectar yearly crown'd:
And ye tall *cedars*, celebrate his praise,
That in his temple sacred altars raise.

³⁰Ori., "fame"; a printer's error, restored to Roscommon's original term.

Idle *musicians* of the *spring*
Whose only care's to love and sing,
Fly thro' the world, and let your trembling throat
Praise your Creator with the sweetest note.

Praise him each savage³¹ furious *beast*,
That on his stores do daily feast.
And you *tame slaves* of the laborious plow,
Your weary knees to your Creator bow.

Majestick *monarchs, mortal gods*,
Whose power hath here no periods,
May all attempts against your crown be vain,
But still remember by whose power you reign.

Let the wide world his praises sing,
Where Tagus and Euphrates spring:
And from the Danube's frosty banks, to those,
Where from an unknown head great Nilus flows.

You that dispose of all our lives,
Praise him from whom your power derives.
Be true and just like him, and fear his word,
As much as malefactors do your sword.

Praise him old *monuments* of *time*,
O praise him in your youthful prime.
Praise him fair idols of our greedy sense,
Exalt his name, sweet age of innocence:

Jehovah's name shall only last,
When heaven, earth, and all is past.
Nothing great God, is to be found in thee,
But unconceivable eternity.

³¹Ori., "salvage"; corrected in the errata.

Exalt, O Jacob's sacred race,
The God of gods, the God of grace:
Who will above the stars your empire raise,
And with his glory recompence your praise.

A Hymn to Darkness.³²

1. Darkness, thou first kind parent of us all,
 Thou art our great original!
 Since from thy universal womb
Does all thou shad'st below, thy num'rous offspring, come.
2. Thy wond'rous birth is ev'n to time unknown,
 Or, like eternity, thou 'dst none:
 Whilst light did its first being owe
Unto that awful shade, it dares to *rival* now.
3. Say in what distant region dost thou dwell!
 To reason inaccessible:
 From form, and duller matter, free,
Thou soar'st above the reach of man's philosophy.
4. Involv'd in thee, we first receive our breath,
 Thou art our refuge too in death:
 Great monarch of the grave and womb!
Where e'er our souls shall go, to thee our bodies come.

³²Thomas Yalden, "A Hymn to Darkness," in John Dryden, ed., *Examem Poeticum*, 2nd ed. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1706), 132–37. Included by Wesley earlier in MS Poetry Miscellany, 127–28.

5. The silent globe is struck with awful fear,
 When thy majestick shades appear:
 Thou dost compose the air and sea;
And earth a sabbath keeps sacred to rest and thee.
6. In thy serener shades our ghosts delight,
 And court the umbrage of the night:
 In vaults, and gloomy caves, they stray,
But fly the morning's beams, and sicken at the day.
7. Tho' solid bodies dare exclude the light,
 Nor will the brightest ray admit:
 No substance can thy force repel;
Thou reign'st in depths below, do'st at the center dwell.
8. The sparkling gems, and ore in mines below,
 To thee their beauteous lustre owe:
 Tho' form'd within the womb of night,
Bright as their sire they shine with native rays of light.
9. When thou dost raise thy venerable head,
 And art in genuine night array'd:
 Thy negro beauties then delight,
Beauties like polish'd jet, with their own darkness bright.

10. Thou dost thy smiles impartially bestow,
And know'st no diff'rence here below:
All things appear the same by thee,
Tho' light distinction makes, thou giv'st equality.
11. Calm, as the bless'd above, the Anchorites dwell,
Within their peaceful, gloomy cell:
Their minds with heav'nly joys are fill'd,
The pleasures light denies, thy shades for ever yield.
12. When the Almighty did on Horeb stand,
Thy shades inclos'd the hallow'd land:
In clouds of night he was array'd,
And venerable darkness his pavillion made.
13. When he appear'd arm'd in his pow'r and might,
He veil'd the beatifick light:
When terrible with majesty,
In tempests he gave laws, and clad himself with thee.
14. Ere³³ the foundation of the earth was laid,
Or brighter firmament was made:
Ere³⁴ matter, time, or place were known,
Thou monarch darkness sway'dst these spacious realms alone.

³³Ori., "E'er"; but used in sense of "before."

³⁴Ori., "E'er"; but used in sense of "before."

15. But now the moon (though gay with borrow'd light)
 Invades thy scanty lot of night:
 By rebel subjects thou 'rt betray'd,
The anarchy of stars depose their monarch shade.
16. Yet fading light its empire must resign,
 And nature's pow'r submit to thine:
 A universal ruin shall erect thy throne,
And fate confirm thy kingdom evermore thy own.

Horace, Lib. 2. Ode 14.³⁵

**“Eheu Fugaces, Posthume, Posthume
Labuntur Anni,” &c.**³⁶

1. Ah! no, 'tis all in vain, believe me 'tis,
 This pious artifice.
Not all these pray'rs and alms can buy
One moment tow'rd eternity.
Eternity! that boundless race,
Which time himself can never run:
(Swift, as he flies with an unweary'd pace)
Which, when ten thousand, thousand years are done,

³⁵William Congreve, in John Dryden, ed., *Examen Poeticum; being the third part of Miscellany Poems*, 2nd edn. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1706), 229–33.

³⁶“Alas! Posthumous, Posthumous, the flying years glide by”

Is still the same, and still to be begun.
Fix'd are those limits, which prescribe
A short extent to the most lasting breath;
And though thou cou'dst for sacrifice lay down
Millions of other lives to save thy own,
'Twere fruitless all: not all would bribe
One supernumerary gasp from death.

2. In vain's thy inexhausted store
Of wealth, in vain thy pow'r,
The rich, the great, the innocent and just
Must all be huddl'd to the grave,
With the most vile and ignominious slave,
And undistinguish'd lie in dust.
In vain the fearful flies alarms,
In vain he is secure from wounds of arms,
In vain avoids the faithless seas,
And is confin'd to home and ease,
Bounding his knowledge to extend his days.
In vain are all those arts we try,
All our evasions, and regret to die:
From the contagion of mortality,
No clime is pure, no air is free:
And no retreat
Is so obscure, as to be hid from fate.

3. Thou must, alas! thou must, my friend:
(The very hour thou now dost spend
In studying to avoid, brings on thine end,)

Thou must forego the dearest joys of life;
Leave the warm bosom of thy tender wife,
And all the much-lov'd off-spring of her womb,
To moulder in the cold embraces of a tomb.
All must be left, and all be lost;
Thy house, whose stately structure so much cost,
Shall not afford
Room for the stinking carcass of its lord.
Of all thy pleasant gardens, grots and bow'rs,
Thy costly fruits, thy far-fetch'd plants and flow'rs,
Nought shalt thou save;
Unless a sprig of rosemary thou have,
To wither with thee in the grave:
The rest shall live and flourish, to upbraid
Their transitory master dead.

Horace, Lib. 2. Ode 3.³⁷

“Oequam Memento”³⁸

1. Be calm, my Delius, and serene,
However fortune change the scene!
In thy most dejected state,
Sink not underneath the weight;
Nor yet, when happy days begin,
And the full tide comes rolling in,
Let a fierce unruly joy
The settled quiet of thy mind destroy:

³⁷John Dryden, in Dryden, ed., *Examen Poeticum; being the third part of Miscellany Poems*, 2nd edn. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1706), 321–24.

³⁸An even temper.

However fortune change the scene,
Be calm, my Delius, and serene!

2. Be thy lot good, or be it ill,
Life ebbs out at the same rate still:
Whether with busy cares opprest,
You wear the sullen time away;
Or whether to sweet ease and rest
 You sometimes give a day;
 Carelesly laid,
 Underneath a friendly shade,
By pines and poplars mixt embraces made;
 Near a river's sliding stream,
Fetter'd in sleep, bless'd with a golden dream.

3. Here, here, in this much envy'd state,
Let ev'ry blessing on thee wait;
And let the roses short-liv'd flow'r,
The smiling daughter of an hour,
 Flourish on thy brow:
Enjoy the *very, very* now!
While the good hand of life is in,
While yet the fatal sifters spin.

4. A little hence, my friend, and thou
Must into other hands resign
Thy gardens and thy parks, and all that now
Bears the pleasing name of thine!
Thy meadows, by whose planted sides,

Silver Tyber gently glides,
Thy pleasant houses; all must go;
The gold that's hoarded in 'em too:
A jolly heir shall set it free,
And give th' imprison'd monarchs liberty.

5. Nor matters it, what figure here,
Thou dost among thy fellow-mortals bear;
How thou wert born, or how begot;
Impartial death matters it not:
 With what titles thou dost shine,
 Or who was first of all thy line:
 Life's vain amusements! amidst which we dwell;
Nor weigh'd, nor understood, by the grim god of hell!
6. In the same road (alas!) all travel on!
By all the same sad journey must be gone!
Our blended lots together lie,
Mingled in one common urn:
Sooner or later out thy fly:
The fatal boat then wafts us to the shore,
Whence we never shall return,
 Never!—never more?

**The
Character
of a
Good Parson.**³⁹

Imitated from Chaucer.

A parish-priest was of the pilgrim-train;
An awful, rev'rend, and religious man.
His eyes diffus'd a venerable grace,
And charity itself was in his face.
Rich was his soul, tho' his attire was poor;
(As God had cloth'd his own ambassador;) }
For such, on earth, his bless'd Redeemer bore. }
Of sixty years he seem'd; and well might last
To sixty more, but that he liv'd too fast;
Refin'd himself to soul, to curb the sense;
And made almost a sin of abstinence.
Yet, had his aspect nothing of severe,
But such a face as promis'd him sincere.
Nothing reserv'd or sullen was to see: }
But sweet regards; and pleasing sanctity: }
Mild was his accent, and his action free. }
With eloquence innate his tongue was arm'd;
Tho' harsh the precept, yet the preacher charm'd.

³⁹John Dryden, "The Character of a Good Parson," in *Fables Ancient and Modern, Translated into Verse* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1700), 531–36.

For, letting down the golden chain from high,
He drew his audience upward to the sky:
And oft, with holy hymns, he charm'd their ears:
(A musick more melodious than the spheres,)
For David left him, when he went to rest,
His lyre; and after him, he sung the best.
He bore his great commission in his look:
But sweetly temper'd awe; and softned all he spoke.
He preach'd the joys of heav'n, and pains of hell;
And warn'd the sinner with becoming zeal: }
But on eternal mercy lov'd to dwell.
He taught the gospel rather than the law:
And forc'd himself to drive; but lov'd to draw.
For fear but freezes minds; but love, like heat,
Exhales the soul sublime, to seek her native seat.
To threats, the stubborn sinner oft is hard:
Wrapp'd in his crimes, against the storm prepar'd;
But, when the milder beams of mercy play,
He melts, and throws his cumb'rous cloak away.

Lightning and thunder (heav'n's artillery)
As harbingers before th' Almighty fly:
Those but proclaim his stile,⁴⁰ and disappear;
The stiller sound succeeds; and God is there.

Still of his little, he had some to spare,
To feed the famish'd, and to clothe the bare:
For mortify'd he was to that degree,
A poorer than himself he wou'd not see.
True priests, he said, and preachers of the word
Were only stewards of their Sov'reign Lord;

⁴⁰I.e., "style."

Nothing was theirs; but all the publick store,
Intrusted riches, to relieve the poor.
Who, shou'd they steal, for want of his relief,
He judg'd himself accomplice with the thief.

Wide was his parish; not contracted close
In streets, but here and there a straggling house;
Yet still he was at hand, without request,
To serve the sick; to succour the distress'd:
Tempting, on foot alone, without affright,
The dangers of a dark tempestuous night.

All this, the good old man perform'd alone,
Nor spar'd his pains; for curate he had none.
But duly watch'd his flock, by night and day,
And from the prowling wolf redeem'd the prey,
And hungry sent the wily fox away.

}

The proud he tam'd, the penitent he chear'd:
Nor to rebuke the *rich* offender fear'd.
His preaching much, but more his practice wrought;
(A living sermon of the truths he taught;)
For this by rules severe his life he squar'd:
That all might *see* the doctrine which they *heard*.
For priests, he said, are patterns for the rest:
(The gold of heav'n, who bear the God impress'd)
But when the precious coin is kept unclean,
The Sov'reign's image is no longer seen.
If they be foul, on whom the people trust,
Well may the baser brass contract a rust.

The prelate, for his holy life, he priz'd;
The worldly pomp of prelacy despis'd,

His Saviour came not with a gaudy show;
Nor was his kingdom of the world below.
Patience in want, and poverty of mind,
These marks of church and churchmen he design'd,
And living taught; and dying left behind. }
The crown he wore was of the pointed thorn:
In purple he was crucify'd, not born.
They who contend for place and high degree,
Are not his sons, but those of Zebedee.

Such was the saint; who shone with every grace,
Reflecting, Moses-like, his Maker's face.
God saw his image lively was express'd;
And his new work, as in creation, bless'd.

**The
Meditation.**⁴¹

1. It must be done (my soul) but 'tis a strange,
 A dismal and mysterious change,
When thou shalt leave this tenement of clay,
And to an unknown somewhere wing away;
When time shall be eternity, and thou
Shalt be thou know'st not what, and live thou know'st not how.

2. Amazing state! No wonder that we dread
 To think of death, or view the dead.
Thou'rt all wrapt up in clouds, as if to thee
Our very knowledge had antipathy.
Death could not a more sad retinue find,
Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.

3. Some courteous ghost, tell this great secrecy,
 What 'tis you are, and we must be.
You warn us of approaching death, and why
May we not know from you what 'tis to die?
But you, having shot the gulph, delight to see
Succeeding souls plunge in with like uncertainty.

⁴¹By John Norris. Found in *A Collection of Miscellanies* (Oxford: J. Crosely, 1687), 31–32; which Wesley knew. But Wesley is likely taking in this instance from *The Christian Poet; or Divine Poems on the Four Last Things ... by the Rev. Mr. Pomfret ...and others* (London: n.p., 1735), 63–65 [see next poem below].

4. When life's close knot by writ from destiny,
Disease shall cut, or age untye;
When after some delays, some dying strife,
The soul stands shivering on the ridge of life;
With what a dreadful curiosity
Does she launch out into the sea of vast eternity!
5. So when the spacious globe was delug'd o'er,
And lower holds could save no more,
On th' utmost bough th' astonish'd sinners stood,
And view'd th' advances of th' encroaching flood.
O'ertopp'd at length by th' element's increase,
With horror they resign'd to the untry'd abyss.

A
Prospect of Death.⁴²

1. Since we can die but once, and after death
Our state no alteration knows;
But when we have resign'd our breath,
The immortal spirit goes
To endless joys, or everlasting woes:
Wise is the man who labours to secure
That mighty and important stake;
And by all methods, strives to make

⁴²By John Pomfret. Wesley is most likely taking from *The Christian Poet; or Divine Poems on the Four Last Things ... by the Rev. Mr. Pomfret ...and others* (London: n.p., 1735), 61–63. Also found in Pomfret's *Miscellany Poems on Several Occasions* (London: John Place, 1702), 100–111; but no other evidence Wesley read this volume.

His passage safe, and his reception sure.
Meerly to die no man of reason fears;
 For certainly we must,
 As we are born, return to dust:
'Tis the last point of many ling'ring years.
 But whither then we go,
 Whither, we fain would know,
But human understanding cannot show.
 This makes us tremble, and creates
 Strange apprehensions in the mind;
Fills it with restless doubts, and wild debates
Concerning what, we living cannot find.
 None know what death is but the dead;
Therefore we all by nature, dying dread,
As a strange, doubtful way, we know not how to tread.

2. When to the margin of the grave we come,
And scarce have one black painful hour to live,
No hopes, no prospect of a kind reprieve,
To stop our speedy passage to the tomb:
 How moving and how mournful is the sight?
 How wond'rous pitiful, how wond'rous sad?
Where then is refuge, where is comfort to be had,
 In the dark minutes of the dreadful night,
To cheer our drooping souls for their amazing flight?
 Feeble and languishing in bed we lie,
 Despairing to recover, void of rest,
 Wishing for death, and yet afraid to die:
 Terrors and doubts distract our breast,
With mighty agonies, and mighty pains opprest.

3. Our face is moisten'd with a clammy sweat;
Faint and irregular the pulses beat;
 The blood unactive grows,
 And thickens as it flows,
Depriv'd of all its vigour, all its vital heat.
 Our dying eyes roll heavily about,
 Their light just going out;
 And for some kind assistance call;
 But pity, useless pity's all
 Our weeping friends can give,
 Or we receive;
Tho' their desires are great, their powers are small.
 The tongue's unable to declare
The pains and griefs, the miseries we bear,
How insupportable our torments are.
Musick no more delights our deaf'ning ears,
Restores our joys, or dissipates our fears;
But all is melancholly, all is sad,
 In robes of deepest mourning clad:
For every faculty, and every sense,
Partakes the woe of this dire exigence.

[4.] Then we are sensible too late,
 'Tis no advantage to be rich or great:
For all the fulsome pride of pageantry and state,
 No consolation brings;
Riches and honours then are useless things;
 Tastless or bitter all;
And like the book which the apostle eat,
 To the ill-judging palate sweet,
But turn at last to nauseousness and gall.

Nothing will then our drooping spirits cheer
But the remembrance of good actions past.
Virtue's a joy that will forever last,
And makes pale death less terrible appear;
Takes out his baneful sting, and palliates our fear;
 In the dark anti-chamber of the grave
 What would we give, even all we have,
 All that our cares and industry had gain'd,
All that our fraud, our policy, our art obtain'd;
 Could we recall those fatal hours again,
 Which we consum'd in senseless vanities,
 Ambitious follies, and luxurious ease?
For then they urge our terrors and increase our pain.

5. Our friends and relatives stand weeping by,
 Dissolv'd in tears to see us die;
And plunge into the deep abyss of wide eternity.
 In vain they mourn, in vain they grieve,
 Their sorrows cannot ours relieve.
They pity our deplorable estate;
 But what, alas, can pity do
 To soften the decrees of fate?
Besides, the sentence is irrevocable too.
 All their endeavours to preserve our breath,
 Tho' they do unsuccessful prove,
Show us how much, how tenderly they love,
But cannot cut off the entail of death.
Mournful they look and croud about our bed,
 One with officious haste
Brings us a cordial we want sense to taste:
Another softly raises up our head;

This wipes away the sweat; that, sighing cries,
See what convulsions, what strong agonies
Both soul and body undergo!

His pains no intermission know;
For every gasp of air he draws, returns in sighs.
Each would his kind assistance lend,
To serve his dear relation or his dearer friend;
But still in vain with destiny they all contend.

6. Our father, pale with grief and watching grown,
Takes our cold hand in his, and cries, Adieu!
Adieu, my child, now I must follow you:
Then weeps and gently lays it down.
Our sons who in their tender years,
Were objects of our cares, and of our fears;
Come trembling to our bed, and kneeling, cry,
Bless us, O father! now before you die;
Bless us, and be you blest to all eternity.
Our friend, whom equal to ourselves we love,
Compassionate and kind,
Cries, will you leave me here behind,
Without me fly to the blest seats above?
Without me, did I say? Ah no!
Without thy friend thou can'st not go:
For tho' thou leav'st me grov'ling here below,
My soul with thee shall upward fly,
And bear thy spirit company,
Thro' the bright passage of the yielding sky.
Even death that parts thee from thy self shall be
Incapable to separate
(For 'tis not in the power of fate)

My friend, my best, my dearest friend, and me:
 But since it must be so, farewell;
For ever? No: for we shall meet again,
And live like gods, tho' now we die like men,
In the eternal regions where just spirits dwell.

7. The soul, unable to maintain
 The fruitless and unequal strife,
 Finding her weak endeavours vain,
 To keep the counterscarp of life,
By slow degrees retires toward the heart,
 And fortifies that little fort
With all the kind artilleries of art;
Botanick legions guarding every port.
But death, whose arms no mortal can repel,
 A formal siege disdains to lay,
 Summons his fierce battalions to the fray,
And in a minute storms the feeble citadel.
 Sometimes we may capitulate, and he
 Pretends to make a solid peace,
 But 'tis all sham, all artifice;
That we may negligent and careless be;
For if his armies are withdrawn to day,
 And we believe no danger near,
But all is peaceable, and all is clear,
His troops return some unsuspected way,
While in the soft embrace of sleep we lie,
The secret murd'rer stabs us, and we die.

8. Since our first parents fall,
Inevitable death descends on all,
 A portion none of human race can miss:
 But that which makes it sweet, or bitter, is,
The fears of misery or certain hopes of bliss:
For when the impenitent and wicked die
 Loaded with crimes, and infamy,
 If any sense at that sad time remains,
 They feel amazing terrors, mighty pains.
 The earnest of that vast stupendous woe;
Which they to all eternity must undergo;
 Confin'd in hell with everlasting chains.
 Infernal spirits hover in the air,
Like rav'nous wolves, to seize⁴³ upon the prey,
And hurry the departed souls away
 To the dark receptacles of despair;
Where they must dwell 'till that tremendous day,
 When the loud trump shall call them to appear
Before a judge most terrible, and most severe,
 By whose just sentence they must go
To everlasting pains, and endless woe.
9. But the good man, whose soul is pure,
 Unspotted, regular, and free
From all the stains of lust and villany,
 Of mercy, and of pardon sure;
Looks thro' the darkness of the gloomy night,
And sees the dawning of a glorious day;
Sees crouds of angels ready to convey

⁴³Ori., "sieve"; corrected in the errata.

His soul, when e'er she takes her flight
To the surprizing mansions of immortal light.
Then the cœlestial guards around him stand,
Nor suffer the black dæmons of the air
T' oppose his passage to the promis'd land;
Or terrify his thoughts with wild despair,
But all is calm within, and all without is fair.
And when the soul's releas'd from dull mortality,
 She passes up in triumph thro' the sky,
 Where she's united to a glorious throng
 Of angels, who with a cœlestial song,
Congratulate her conquest as she flies along.
 There joy in full perfection flows,
 And in endless circle moves,
Thro' the vast round of beatifick love,
 Which no cessation knows.

**An Ode.
Inscribed to the Memory of the
Hon. Col. George Villiers,
Drowned in the River Piava, in the
Country of Friuli. 1703.⁴⁴**

In Imitation of Horace, Ode 28. Lib. I.

“Te maris & terræ numeroque carentis arenæ
Mensorem cohibent, Archyta,” &c.⁴⁵

Say, dearest Villiers, poor departed friend,
(Since fleeting life thus suddenly must end)
Say, what did all thy busy hopes avail,
That anxious thou from pole to pole didst sail;
Ere⁴⁶ on thy chin the springing beard began
To spread a doubtful down, and promise man?
What profited thy thoughts, and toils, and cares,
In vigour more confirm'd, and riper years?
To wake ere⁴⁷ morning-dawn to loud alarms,
And march 'till close of night in heavy arms;
To scorn the summer suns and winter snows,
And search thro' ev'ry clime thy country's foes?
That thou might'st fortune to thy side ingage;
That gentle peace might quell Bellona's rage;
And Anna's bounty crown her soldier's hoary age?

}

⁴⁴Matthew Prior, *Poems on Several Occasions. A New Edition, with some additions* (London: T. Johnson, 1720), 162–65.

⁴⁵“You, Archytas, who measured sea and land ... are now confined within a handful of dust; ...”; Horace, *Odes*, I.xxviii.1–2 (Loeb).

⁴⁶Ori., “E'er”; but used in sense of “before.”

⁴⁷Ori., “e'er”; but used in sense of “before.”

In vain we think that free-will'd man has pow'r
To hasten or protract th' appointed hour.
Our term of life depends not on our deed:
Before our birth our funeral was decreed.
Nor aw'd by foresight, nor mis-led by chance,
Imperious death directs his ebon lance;
Peoples great Henry's tombs; and leads up Holben's dance.

}

Alike must ev'ry state, and ev'ry age
Sustain the universal tyrant's rage:
For neither William's pow'r, nor Mary's charms
Could or repel, or pacify his arms:
Young Churchill fell, as life began to bloom:
And Bradford's trembling age expects the tomb.
Wisdom and eloquence in vain would plead
One moment's respite for the learned head:
Judges of writings and of men have dy'd;
Mecænas, Sackville, Socrates, and Hyde:
And in their various turns the sons must tread
Those gloomy journeys, which their sires have led.

The ancient sage, who did so long maintain,
That bodies die, but souls return again,
With all the births and deaths he had in store,
Went out Pythagoras, and came no more.
And modern As——l, whose capricious thought
Is yet with stores of wilder notions fraught.
Too soon convinc'd, shall yield that fleeting breath,
Which play'd so idly with the darts of death.

Some from the stranded vessel force their way;
Fearful of fate, they meet it in the sea:

Some who escape the fury of the wave,
Sicken on earth, and sink into a grave:
In journeys or at home, in war or peace,
By hardships many, many fall by ease.
Each changing season does its poison bring;
Rheums chill the winter, agues blast the spring:
Wet, dry, cold, hot, at the appointed hour,
All act subservient to th' Almighty's pow'r:
And when obedient nature knows his will,
A fly, a grapestone, or a hair can kill.

For restless Proserpine for ever treads
In paths unseen, o'er our devoted heads;
And on the spacious land, and liquid main
Spreads slow disease, or darts afflictive pain:
Variety of deaths confirms her endless reign.

}

On sad Piava's banks the goddess stood,
Show'd her dire warrant to the rising flood;
When what I long must love, and long must mourn,
With fatal speed was urging his return;
In his dear country, to dispense his care,
And arm himself by rest for future war;
To chide his anxious friends officious fears,
And promise to their joys his elder years.

Oh! destin'd head; and oh! severe decree;
Nor native country thou, nor friend shalt see;
Nor war hast thou to wage, nor year to come,
Impending death is thine, and instant doom.

Hark! the imperious goddess is obey'd:
Winds murmur; snows descend; and waters spread:

Oh! kinsman, friend,—Oh! vain are all the cries
Of human voice; strong destiny replies;
Weep you on earth; for he shall sleep below:
Thence none return; and thither all must go.

Whoe'er thou art, whom choice or business leads
To this sad river, or the neighb'ring meads;
If thou may'st happen on the dreary shores
To find the object which this verse deploras,
Cleanse the pale corps with a religious hand
From the polluting weed and common sand;
Lay the dead hero graceful in a grave;
(The only honour he can now receive)
And fragrant mould upon his body throw:
And plant the warrior lawrel o'er his brow:
Light lye the earth; and flourish green the bough.

}

So may just heav'n secure thy future life
From foreign dangers, and domestick strife:
And when th' infernal judges dismal pow'r
From the dark urn shall throw thy destin'd hour;
When yielding to the sentence, breathless thou
And pale shalt lie, as what thou buriest now;
May some kind friend the piteous object see,
And equal rites perform, to that which once was thee.

Charity.
A
Paraphrase
on the
Thirteenth Chapter of the First Epistle to
the Corinthians.⁴⁸

Did sweeter sounds adorn my flowing tongue,
Than ever man pronounc'd, or angel sung:
Had I all knowledge, human and divine,
That thought can reach, or science can define;
And had I pow'r to give that knowledge birth,
In all the speeches of the babling earth:
Did Shadrack's zeal my glowing breast inspire,
To weary tortures, and rejoice in fire:
Or had I faith like that which Israel saw,
When Moses gave them miracles, and law:
Yet, gracious CHARITY, indulgent guest,
Were not thy pow'r exerted in my breast;
Those speeches would send up unheeded pray'r:
That scorn of life would be but wild despair:
A cymbal's sound were better than my voice:
My faith were form: my eloquence were noise.

⁴⁸Matthew Prior, *Poems on Several Occasions. A New Edition, with some additions* (London: T. Johnson, 1720), 279–81.

CHARITY, decent, modest, easy, kind,
Softens the high, and rears the abject mind;
Knows with just reins, and even hand to guide,
Betwixt vile shame, and arbitrary⁴⁹ pride.
Not soon provok'd, she easily forgives;
And much she suffers, as she much believes.
Soft peace she brings where-ever she arrives:
She builds our quiet, as she forms our lives;
Lays the rough paths of peevish nature ev'n;
And opens in each heart a little heav'n.

Each other gift, which GOD on man bestows,
Its proper bounds, and due restriction knows;
To one fixt purpose dedicates it's pow'r;
And finishing its act, exists no more.
Thus, in obedience to what heav'n decrees,
Knowledge shall fail, and prophecy shall cease:
But lasting CHARITY's more ample sway,
Nor bound by time, nor subject to decay,
In happy triumph shall for ever live,
And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive.

As thro' the artist's intervening glass,
Our eye observes the distant planets pass;
A little we discover, but allow,
That more remains unseen, than art can show:
So whilst our mind its knowledge wou'd improve
(Its feeble eye intent on things above)
High as we may, we lift our reason up,
By *faith* directed, and confirm'd by *hope*:
Yet are we able only to survey
Dawnings of beams, and promises of day.

⁴⁹Ori., "arbitrary"; corrected in the errata.

Heaven's fuller effluence mocks our dazl'd sight;
Too great its swiftness, and too strong its light.

But soon the mediate clouds shall be dispell'd:
The sun shall soon be face to face beheld,
In all his robes, with all his glory on,
Seated sublime on his meridian throne.

Then constant FAITH, and holy HOPE shall dye,
One lost in certainty, and one in joy:
Whilst thou, more happy pow'r, fair CHARITY,
Triumphant sister, greatest of the three,
Thy office, and thy nature still the same,
Lasting thy lamp, and unconsum'd thy flame,
Shalt still survive—
Shalt stand before the host of HEAV'N confest,
For ever blessing, and for ever blest.

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**SOLOMON
ON THE
VANITIES OF THE WORLD.⁵⁰**

* * * * *

KNOWLEDGE.

**The
First Book.**

⁵⁰Matthew Prior, *Poems on Several Occasions. A New Edition, with some additions* (London: T. Johnson, 1720), 355–448.

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The Argument.

Solomon seeking happiness from *knowledge*, convenes the learned men of his kingdom; requires them to explain to him the various operations and effects of nature; discourses of vegetables, animals, and man; proposes some questions concerning the origin, and situation of the habitable earth; proceeds to examine the *system* of the visible heaven; doubts if there may not be a plurality of worlds; enquires into the nature of spirits and angels; and wishes to be more fully informed, as to the attributes of the supreme *being*. He is imperfectly answered by the *rabbins*, and doctors; blames his own curiosity; and concludes, that as to human science, ALL IS VANITY.

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**Texts Chiefly Alluded to in This
Book.**

“The words of the preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem.”—Eccles. Chap. i. Ver. 1.

“‘Vanity of vanities,’ saith the preacher, ‘vanity of vanities, all is vanity.’”—[Eccles. Chap. i.] Ver. 2.

“I communed with mine own heart, saying, ‘Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom, than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.’”
—[Eccles. Chap. i.] Ver. 16.

“He spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.”
—1 Kings, Chap. iv. Ver. 33.

“I know, that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.”
—Eccles. Chap. iii. Ver. 14.

“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.”
—[Eccles. Chap. iii.] Ver. 11.

“For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that
increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.”
—[Eccles.] Chap. i. Ver. 18.

“And further, by these, my son, be admonished: of
making many books there is no end; and much
study is a weariness of the flesh.”
—[Eccles.] Chap. xii. Ver. 12.

KNOWLEDGE.

**The
First Book.**

Ye sons of men, with just regard attend,
Observe the preacher, and believe the friend,
Whose serious MUSE inspires him to explain,
That all we act, and all we think is vain.
That in this pilgrimage of seventy years,
O'er rocks of perils, and thro' vales of tears
Destin'd to march, our doubtful steps we tend,
Tir'd with the toil, yet fearful of its end,
That from the womb we take our fatal shares
Of follies, passions, labours, tumults, cares;
And at th' approach of death shall only know
The truths which from these pensive numbers flow,
That we pursue false joy, and suffer real woe.

}

Happiness, object of that waking dream,
Which we call life, mistaking; fugitive theme
Of my pursuing verse, ideal shade,
Notional good, by fancy only made,

And by tradition nurs'd, fallacious fire,
Whose dancing beams mis-lead our fond desire,
Cause of our care, and error of our mind:
O! had'st thou ever been by heav'n design'd
For Adam, and his mortal race; the boon
Entire had been reserv'd for Solomon:
On me the partial lot had been bestow'd;
And in my cup the golden draught had flow'd.

But O! ere⁵¹ yet original man was made;
Ere⁵² the foundations of this earth were laid;
It was, opponent to our search, ordain'd,
That joy, still sought, should never be attain'd.
This, sad experience cites me to reveal;
And what I dictate, is from what I feel.

Born as I was, great David's fav'rite son,
Dear to my people, on the Hebrew throne
Sublime, my court with Ophir's treasures blest,
My name extended to the farthest east,
My body cloath'd with every outward grace,
Strength in my limbs, and beauty in my face,
My shining thought with fruitful notions crown'd,
Quick my invention, and my judgment sound.
Arise (I commun'd with my self) arise;
Think, to be happy; to be great, be wise:
Content of spirit must from science flow;
For 'tis a godlike attribute, to know.

I said; and sent my edict thro' the land:
Around my throne the letter'd Rabbins stand,

⁵¹Ori., "e'er"; but used in sense of "before."

⁵²Ori., "E'er"; but used in sense of "before."

Historic leaves revolve, long volumes spread,
 The old discoursing, as the younger read:
 Attent I heard, propos'd my doubts, and said:

}

The *vegetable* world, each plant, and tree
 Its seed, its name, its nature, its degree
 I am allow'd, as *fame* reports, to know;
 From the fair *cedar*, on the craggy brow
 Of Lebanon nodding supremely tall,
 To creeping *moss*, and *hyssop* on the wall:
 Yet just and conscious to my self, I find
 A thousand doubts oppose the searching mind.

I know not why the *beach* delights the glade
 With boughs extended, and a rounder shade;
 Whilst tow'ring *firrs* in *conic* forms arise,
 And with a pointed spear divide the skies:
 Nor why again the changing *oak* should shed
 The yearly honour of his stately head;
 Whilst the distinguish'd *yew* is ever seen,
 Unchang'd his branch, and permanent his green.
 Wanting the sun why does the *caltha* fade?
 Why does the *cypress* flourish in the shade?
 The *fig* and *date*, why love they to remain
 In middle station, and an even plain;
 While in the lower marsh the *gourd* is found;
 And while the hill with *olive*-shade is crown'd?
 Why does one climate, and one soil endue
 The blushing *poppy* with a crimson hue;
 Yet leave the *lilly* pale, and tinge the *violet* blue?
 Why does the fond *carnation* love to shoot
 A various colour from one parent root;

}

While the fantastic *tulip* strives to break
In two-fold beauty, and a parted streak?
The twining *jasmine*, and the blushing *rose*,
With lavish grace their morning scents disclose:
The smelling *tub'rose* and *junquale* declare,
The stronger impulse of an evening air.
Whence has the tree (resolve me) or the flow'r
A various instinct, or a diff'rent pow'r?
Why should one earth, one clime, one stream, one breath
Raise this to strength, and sicken that to death?

Whence does it happen, that the plant which well
We name the *sensitive*, should move and feel?
Whence know her leaves to answer her command,
And with quick horror fly the neighb'ring hand?

Along the sunny bank, or wat'ry mead,
Ten thousand stalks their various blossoms spread:
Peaceful and lowly in their native soil,
They neither know to spin, nor care to toil;
Yet with confess'd magnificence deride
Our vile attire, and impotence of pride.
The *cowslip* smiles, in brighter yellow dress'd,
Than that which veils the nubile virgin's breast.
A fairer red stands blushing in the *rose*,
Than that which on the bridegroom's vestment flows.
Take but the humblest *lilly* of the field;
And if our pride will to our reason yield,
It must by sure comparison be shown,
That on the regal seat great David's son,

Array'd in all his robes, and types of pow'r,
Shines with less glory than that simple flow'r.

Of fishes next, my friends, I would enquire,
How the mute race engender, or respire;
From the small fry that glide on Jordan's stream
Unmark'd, a multitude without a name,
To that *leviathan*, who o'er the seas
Immense rolls onward his impetuous ways, }
And mocks the wind, and in the tempest plays.
How they in warlike bands march greatly forth
From freezing waters, and the colder north,
To southern climes directing their career,
Their station changing with th' inverted year.
How all with careful knowledge are indu'd, }
To chuse their proper bed, and wave, and food:
To guard their spawn, and educate their brood.

Of birds, how each according to her kind
Proper materials for her nest can find;
And build a frame, which deepest thought in man
Would or amend, or imitate in vain.
How in small flights they know to try their young,
And teach the callow child her parent's song.
Why these frequent the plain, and those the wood,
Why ev'ry land has her specific brood.
Where the tall *crane* or winding *swallow* goes,
Fearful of gathering winds, and falling snows:
If into rocks, or hollow trees they creep,
In temporary death confin'd to sleep;
Or conscious of the coming evil, fly
To milder regions, and a southern sky.

Of beasts and creeping insects shall we trace
The wond'rous nature, and the various race;
Or wild or tame, or friend to man or foe,
Of us what they, or what of them we know?

Tell me, ye studious, who pretend to see
Far into nature's bosom, whence the *bee*
Was first inform'd her vent'rous flight to steer
Thro' tractless paths, and an abyss of air.
Whence she avoids the slimy marsh, and knows
The fertile hills, where sweeter herbage grows,
And honey-making flow'rs their opening buds disclose. }
How from the thicken'd mist, and setting sun
Finds she the labour of her day is done?
Who taught her against winds and rains to strive,
To bring her burden to the certain hive,
And thro' the liquid fields again to pass
Duteous, and hark'ning to the sounding brass?

And, O thou sluggard, tell me why the *ant*
'Midst summer's plenty thinks of winter's want:
By constant journies careful to prepare
Her stores; and bringing home the corney ear,
By what instruction does she bite the grain,
Lest hid in earth, and taking root again,
It might elude the foresight of her care?
Distinct in either insect's deed appear
The marks of thought, contrivance, hope, and fear. }

Fix thy corporeal, and internal eye
 On the young *gnat*, or new-engender'd *fly*;
 On the vile *worm*, that yesterday began
 To crawl; thy fellow-creature, abject man!
 Like thee they breath, they move, they taste, they see,
 They show their passions by their acts like thee:
 Darting their stings, they previously declare
 Design'd revenge, and fierce intent of war:
 Laying their eggs, they evidently prove
 The genial pow'r, and full effect of love.
 Each then has organs to digest his food,
 One to beget, and one receive the brood:
 Has limbs and sinews, blood, and heart, and brain,
 Life and her proper functions to sustain;
 Tho' the whole fabric smaller than a grain. }
 What more can our penurious reason grant
 To the large *whale* or castled *elephant*,
 To those enormous terrors of the Nile,
 The crested *snake*, and long-tail'd *crocodile*,
 Than that all differ but in shape and name,
 Each destin'd to a less, or larger frame?

For potent nature loves a various act,
 Prone to enlarge, or studious to contract:
 Now forms her work too small, now too immense,
 And scorns the measures of our feeble sense.
 The object spread too far, or rais'd too high,
 Denies its real image to the eye:
 Too little, it eludes the dazl'd sight;
 Becomes mixt blackness, or unparted light.
 Water and air the varied form confound;
 The strait looks crooked, and the square grows round.

Thus while with fruitless hope, and weary pain,
 We seek great nature's pow'r, but seek in vain;
 Safe sits the goddess in her dark retreat;
 Around her, myriads of *ideas* wait,
 And endless shapes, which the mysterious queen
 Can take or quit, can alter or retain:
 As from our lost pursuit she wills to hide
 Her close decrees, and chasten human pride.

Untam'd and fierce the *tiger* still remains:
 He tires his life in biting of his chains:
 For the kind gifts of water, and of food,
 Ungrateful, and returning ill for good,
 He seeks his keeper's flesh, and thirsts his blood:
 While the strong *camel*, and the gen'rous *horse*,
 Restrain'd and aw'd by man's inferior force,
 Do to the rider's will their rage submit,
 And answer to the spur, and own the bit;
 Stretch their glad mouths to meet the feeder's hand,
 Pleas'd with his weight, and proud of his command.

Again; the lonely *fox* roams far abroad,
 On secret rapine bent, and midnight fraud;
 Now haunts the cliff, now traverses the lawn;
 And flies the hated neighborhood of man:
 While the kind *spaniel*, and the faithful *hound*,
 Likest that *fox* in shape and species found,
 Refuses thro' these cliffs and lawns to roam;
 Pursues the noted path, and covets home;
 Does with kind joy domestic faces meet,
 Takes what the glutton child denies to eat;
 And dying, licks his long-lov'd master's feet.

By what immediate cause they are inclin'd
In many acts, 'tis hard, I own, to find.
I see in others, or I think I see,
That strict their principles, and ours agree.
Evil like us they shun, and covet good;
Abhor the poison, and receive the food.
Like us they love or hate; like us they know,
To joy the friend, or grapple with the foe.
With seeming thought their action they intend,
And use the means proportion'd to the end.
Then vainly the philosopher avers,
That reason guides our deed, and instinct their's.
How can we justly diff'rent causes frame,
When the effects entirely are the same?
Instinct and reason how can we divide?
'Tis the fool's ignorance, and the pedant's pride.

The combatant too late the field declines;
When now the sword is girded to his loins.
When the swift vessel flies before the wind;
Too late the sailor views the land behind.
And 'tis too late now back again to bring
Enquiry, rais'd and tow'ring on the wing:
Forward she strives, averse to be withheld
From nobler objects, and a larger field.

Consider with me this ætherial space,
Yielding to earth and sea the middle place.
Anxious I ask ye, how the pensile ball
Should never strive to rise, nor fear to fall.
When I reflect, how the revolving sun
Does round our globe his crooked journies run;

I doubt of many lands, if they contain
Or herd of beast, or colony of man:
If any nations pass their destin'd days
Beneath the neighb'ring sun's directer rays:
If any suffer on the polar coast,
The rage of Arctos, and eternal frost.

May not the pleasure of omnipotence
To each of these some secret good dispense?
Those who amidst the torrid regions live,
May they not gales unknown to us receive;
See daily show'rs rejoice the thirsty earth,
And bless the flow'ry buds succeeding birth?
May they not pity us, condemn'd to bear
The various heav'n of an obliquer sphere;
While by fix'd laws, and with a just return,
They feel twelve hours that shade, for twelve that burn;
And praise the neighb'ring sun, whose constant flame
Enlightens them with seasons still the same?
And may not those, whose distant lot is cast
North beyond Tartary's extended waste;
Where thro' the plains of one continual day,
Six shining months pursue their even way;
And six succeeding urge their dusky flight,
Obscur'd with vapours and o'erwhelm'd in night:
May not, I ask, the natives of these climes
(As annals may inform succeeding times)
To our quotidian change of heav'n prefer
Their one vicissitude, and equal share
Of day and night, disparted thro' the year?
May they not scorn our sun's repeated race,
To narrow bounds prescrib'd, and little space,

Hast'ning from morn, and headlong driv'n from noon,
Half of our daily toil yet scarcely done?
May they not justly to our climes upbraid
Shortness of night, and penury of shade;
That ere⁵³ our weary'd limbs are justly blest
With wholsom sleep, and necessary rest;
Another sun demands return of care,
The remnant toil of yesterday to bear?
Whilst, when the solar beams salute their sight,
Bold and secure in half a year of light,
Uninterrupted voyages they take
To the remotest wood, and farthest lake;
Manage the fishing, and pursue the course
With more extended nerves, and more continu'd force.
And when declining day forsakes their sky;
When gath'ring clouds speak gloomy winter nigh;
With plenty for the coming season blest,
Six solid months (an age) they live, releas'd
From all the labour, process, clamour, woe,
Which our sad scenes of daily action know:
They light the shining lamp, prepare the feast,
And with full mirth receive the welcome guest:
Or tell their tender loves (the only care
Which now they suffer) to the listn'ng fair;
And rais'd in pleasure, or repos'd in ease
(Grateful alternates of substantial peace)
They bless the long nocturnal influence shed
On the crown'd goblets, and the genial bed.

How shall we next o'er earth and seas pursue
The vary'd forms of every thing we view;

⁵³Ori., "e'er"; but used in sense of "before."

That all is chang'd, tho' all is still the same,
Fluid the parts, yet durable the frame?
Of those materials, which have been confess'd
The pristine springs, and parents of the rest,
Each becomes other. Water stop'd gives birth
To grass and plants, and thickens into earth:
Diffus'd it rises in a higher sphere;
Dilates its drops and softens into air:
Those finer parts of air again aspire;
Move into warmth, and brighten into fire:
That fire once more by thicker air o'ercome,
And downward forc'd, in earth's capacious womb
Alters its particles: is fire no more;
But lies resplendent dust, and shining oar;
Or running thro' the mighty mother's veins,
Changes its shape; puts off its old remains;
With wat'ry parts its lessen'd force divides;
Flows into waves, and rises into tides.

Disparted streams shall from their chanel's fly,
And deep surcharg'd by sandy mountains lye,
Obscurely sepulcher'd. By eating rain,
And furious wind, down to the distant plain
The hill, that hides his head above the skies,
Shall fall: the plain by slow degrees shall rise
Higher than erst had stood the summit-hill:
For time must nature's great behests fulfill.

Thus by a length of years, and change of fate,
All things are light or heavy, small or great:
Thus Jordan's waves shall future clouds appear;
And Egypt's *pyramids* refine to air.

Thus later age shall ask for Pison's flood;
And travellers enquire, where Babel stood.

Now where we see these changes often fall,
Sedate we pass them by, as natural:
Where to our eye more rarely they appear,
The pompous name of prodigy they bear:
Let active thought these close *mæanders* trace:
Let human wit their dubious bound'ries place.
Are all things miracle; or nothing such?
And prove we not too little, or too much?

For that a branch cut off, a wither'd rod
Should at a word pronounc'd revive and bud:
Is this more strange, than that the mountain's brow,
Strip'd by December's frost, and white with snow,
Should push, in spring, ten thousand thousand buds;
And boast returning leaves, and blooming woods?
That each successive night from opening heav'n
The food of angels should to man be giv'n;
Is this more strange, than that with common bread
Our fainting bodies every day are fed;
Than that each grain and seed consum'd in earth,
Raises its store, and multiplies its birth;
And from the handful, which the tiller sows,
The labour'd fields rejoice, and future harvest flows?

Then from whate'er we can to sense produce
Common and plain, or wond'rous and abstruse,
From nature's constant or eccentric laws,
The thoughtful soul this gen'ral inference⁵⁴ draws,
That an effect must presuppose a cause. }

⁵⁴Ori., "influence"; corrected in the errata.

And while she does her upward flight sustain,
 Touching each link of the continu'd chain,
 At length she is oblig'd and forc'd to see
 A first, a source, a life, a deity;
 What has for ever been, and must for ever be.

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This great existence thus by reason found,
 Blest with all pow'r, with all perfection crown'd:
 How can we bind or limit his decree,
 By what our ear has heard, or eye may see?
 Say then: Is all in heaps of water lost,
 Beyond the islands, and the mid-land coast?
 Or has that God, who gave our world its birth,
 Sever'd those waters by some other earth,
 Countries by future plowshares to be torn,
 And cities rais'd by nations yet unborn?
 Ere⁵⁵ the progressive course of restless age
 Performs three thousand times its annual stage;
 May not our pow'r and learning be supprest;
 And arts and empire learn to travel west?

Now let us leave this earth, and lift our eye
 To the large convex of yon' azure sky:
 Behold it like an ample curtain spread,
 Now streak'd and glowing with a morning red;
 Anon at noon in flaming yellow bright,
 And chusing sable for the peaceful night.
 Ask reason now, whence light and shade were giv'n,
 And whence this great variety of heav'n:
 Reason our guide, what can she more reply,
 Than that the sun illuminates the sky;
 Than that night rises from his absent ray,
 And his returning lustre kindles day?

⁵⁵Ori., "E'er"; but used in sense of "before."

But we expect the morning red in vain:
'Tis hid in vapours, or obscur'd by rain.
The noontyde yellow we in vain require:
'Tis black in storm, or red in light'ning fire.
Pitchy and dark the night sometimes appears,
Friend to our woe, and parent of our fears:
Our joys and wonder sometimes she excites,
With stars unnumber'd, and eternal lights.
Send forth, ye wise, send forth your lab'ring thought:
Let it return with empty notions fraught,
Of airy columns every moment broke,
Of circling whirlpools, and of spheres of smoke:
Yet this solution but once more affords
New change of terms, and scaffolding of words:
In other garb my question I receive;
And take the doubt the very same I gave.

Lo! as a giant strong the lusty sun
Multiply'd rounds in one great round does run,
Twofold his course, yet constant his career,
Changing the day, and finishing the year.
Again when his descending orb retires,
And earth perceives the absence of his fires;
The moon affords us her alternate ray,
And with kind beams distributes fainter day:
Yet keeps the stages of her monthly race,
Various her beams, and changeable her face.
Each planet shining in his proper sphere,
Does with just speed his radiant voyage steer:
Each sees his lamp with diff'rent lustre crown'd:
Each knows his course with diff'rent periods bound;

And in his passage thro' the liquid space,
Nor hastens, nor retards his neighbour's race.
Now, shine these planets with substantial rays?
Does innate lustre gild their measur'd days?
Or do they (as your schemes, I think, have shown)
Dart furtive beams, and glory not their own,
All servants to that source of light, the sun?

Again I see ten thousand thousand stars,
Nor cast in lines, in circles, nor in squares:
(Poor rules, with which our bounded mind is fill'd,
When we would plant, or cultivate, or build)
But shining with such vast, such various light,
As speaks the hand, that form'd, them, infinite:
How mean the order and perfection sought
In the best product of the human thought,
Compar'd to the great harmony that reigns
In what the spirit of the world ordains!

Now if the sun on earth transmits his ray,
Yet does not scorch us with too fierce a day;
How small a portion of his pow'r is giv'n
To orbs more distant, and remoter heav'n?
And of those stars, which our imperfect eye
Has doom'd and fix'd to one eternal sky,
Each by a native stock of honor great,
May dart strong influence, and diffuse kind heat,
It self a sun; and with transmissive light
Enliven worlds deny'd to human sight:
Around the circles of their ambient skies
New moons may grow or wane, may set or rise;
And other stars may to those suns be earths;
Give their own elements their proper births;

Divide their climes, or elevate their pole;
See their lands flourish, and their oceans roll;
Yet these great orbs thus radically bright,
Primitive founts, and origins of light,
May each to other (as their diff'rent sphere
Makes or their distance, or their height appear)
Be seen a nobler, or inferior star;
And in that space, which we call air and sky,
Myriads of earths, and moons, and suns may lie
Unmeasur'd, and unknown by human eye.

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In vain we measure this amazing sphere,
And find and fix its centre here or there;
Whilst its circumf'rence, scorning to be brought
Ev'n into fancy'd space, illudes our vanquish'd thought.

Where then are all the radiant *monsters* driv'n,
With which your guesses fill'd the frighten'd heav'n?
Where will their fictitious images remain?
In paper schemes, and the Chaldean's brain.

This problem yet, this offspring of a guess,
Let us for once a child of truth confess;
That these fair stars, these objects of delight,
And terror to our searching dazl'd sight,
Are worlds immense, unnumber'd, infinite:
But do these worlds display their beams, or guide
Their orbs, to serve thy use, to please thy pride?
Thy self but dust, thy stature but a span,
A moment thy duration; foolish man!
As well may the minutest emmet say,
That Caucasus was rais'd to pave his way:

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The snail, that Lebanon's extended wood
 Was destin'd only for his walk, and food;
 The vilest cockle, gaping on the coast
 That rounds the ample seas, as well may boast,
 The craggy rock projects above the sky,
 That he in safety at its foot may lie;
 And the whole ocean's confluent waters swell,
 Only to quench his thirst, or move and blanch his shell.

A higher flight the ven'trous *goddess* tries,
 Leaving material worlds, and local skies:
 Enquires, what are the beings, where the space,
 That form'd and held the *angels* ancient race.
 For rebel Lucifer with Michael fought
 (I offer only what tradition taught)
 Embattl'd cherub against cherub rose;
 Did shield to shield, and pow'r to pow'r oppose: }
 Heav'n rung with triumph: hell was fill'd with woes.
 What were these forms of which your volumes tell,
 How some fought great, and others recreant fell?
 These bound to bear an everlasting load,
 Durance of chain, and banishment of God;
 By fatal turns their wretched strength to tire;
 To swim in sulph'rous lakes, or land on solid fire:
 While those exalted to primæval light,
 Excess of blessing, and supreme delight,
 Only perceive some little pause of joys
 In those great moments, when their God employs
 Their ministry, to pour his threaten'd hate
 On the proud king, or the rebellious state:

Or to reverse Jehovah's high command,
 And speak the thunder falling from his hand,
 When to his duty the proud king returns;
 And the rebellious state in ashes mourns.
 How can good angels be in heav'n confin'd;
 Or view that presence, which no space can bind?
 Is God above, beneath, or yon', or here?
 He who made all, is he not ev'ry where?
 O how can wicked angels find a night
 So dark, to hide them from that piercing light,
 Which form'd the eye, and gave the pow'r of sight?

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Now, when my mind has all this world survey'd,
 And found, that nothing by it self was made;
 When thought has rais'd it self by just degrees,
 From vallies crown'd with flow'r, and hills with trees;
 From smoaking min'rals, and from rising streams;
 From fatt'ning Nilus, or victorious Thames;
 From all the living, that four-footed move
 Along the shore, the meadow, or the grove;
 From all that can with finns, or feathers fly
 Thro' the aërial or the wat'ry sky;
 From the poor reptil with a reas'ning soul,
 That miserable master of the whole;
 From this great object of the body's eye,
 This fair half-round, this ample azure sky,
 Terribly large, and wonderfully bright
 With stars unnumber'd, and unmeasur'd light;
 From essences unseen, celestial names,
 Enlight'ning spirits, and ministerial flames,
 Angels, dominions, potentates, and thrones,

All that in each degree the name of creatures⁵⁶ owns:
 Lift we our reason to that sov'reign cause,
 Who blest the whole with life, and bounded it with laws;
 Who forth from nothing call'd this comly frame,
 His will and act, his word and work the same;
 To whom a thousand years are but a day;
 Who bad the light her genial beams display;
 And set the moon, and taught the sun his way;
 Who waking time, his creature, from the source
 Primæval, order'd his predestin'd course:

Himself, as in the hollow of his hand,
 Holding, obedient to his high command,
 The deep abyss, the long continu'd store,
 Where months, and days, and hours, and minutes pour
 Their floating parts, and thenceforth are no more.
 This Alpha and Omega, first and last,
 Who like the potter in a mould has cast
 The world's great frame, commanding it to be
 Such as the eyes of sense and reason see;
 Yet if he wills, may change or spoil the whole:
 May take yon' beauteous, mystic, starry roll,
 And burn it, like a useless parchment scroll:
 May from its *basis* in one moment pour
 This melted earth—
 Like liquid metal, and like burning oar:
 Who, sole in pow'r, at the beginning said;
 Let sea, and air, and earth, and heav'n be made:
 And it was so—and when he shall ordain
 In other sort, has but to speak again,

⁵⁶Ori., "cratures."

And they shall be no more: of this great theme,
This glorious, hallow'd, everlasting name,
This God, I would discourse—

The learned elders sat appall'd, amaz'd;
And each with mutual look on other gaz'd.
Nor speech they meditate, nor answer frame:
Too plain, alas! their silence spake their shame:
'Till one, in whom an outward mien appear'd,
And turn superior to the vulgar herd,
Began; that human learning's furthest reach
Was but to note the doctrines I could teach;
That mine to speak, and their's was to obey:
For I in knowledge more, than pow'r did sway;
And the astonish'd world in me beheld
Moses eclips'd, and Jesse's son excell'd.
Humble a second bow'd, and took the word;
Foresaw my name by future age ador'd.
O live, said he, thou wisest of the wise!
As none has equall'd, none shall ever rise
Excelling thee—

Parent of wicked, bane of honest deeds,
Pernicious flatt'ry! thy malignant seeds
In an ill hour, and by a fatal hand
Sadly diffus'd o'er virtue's gleby land,
With rising pride amidst the corn appear,
And choak the hopes and harvest of the year.

And now the whole perplex'd⁵⁷ ignoble crowd
Mute in my questions, in my praises loud,
Echo'd the word: whence things rose, or how
They thus exist, the aptest nothing know:

⁵⁷Ori., “preplex'd”; corrected in the errata.

What yet is not, but is ordain'd to be,
All veil of doubt apart, the dullest see.

My prophets, and my sophists finish'd here
Their civil efforts of the verbal war:
Not so my Rabbins, and logicians yield:
Retiring still they combat: from the field
Of open arms unwilling they depart,
And skulk behind the subterfuge of art.
To speak one thing mix'd dialects they join;
Divide the simple, and the plain define;
Fix fancy'd laws, and form imagin'd rules,
Terms of their art, and jargon of their schools,
Ill-grounded maxims by false gloss enlarg'd,
And captious science against reason charg'd.

Soon their crude notions with each other fought:
The adverse sect deny'd, what this had taught;
And he at length the amplest triumph gain'd,
Who contradicted what the last maintain'd.

O wretched impotence of human mind!
We erring still excuse for error find;
And darkling grope, not knowing we are blind.

Vain man! since first thy blushing sire essay'd
His folly with connected leaves to shade;
How does the crime of thy resembling race,
With like attempt that pristine error trace?
Too plain thy nakedness of soul espy'd,
Why dost thou strive the conscious shame to hide
By masks of eloquence, and veils of pride?

With outward smiles their flatt'ry I receiv'd;
 Own'd my sick mind by their discourse reliev'd;
 But bent and inward to my self again
 Perplex'd, these matters I revolv'd: in vain.
 My search still tir'd, my labour still renew'd,
 At length I ignorance, and knowledge view'd,
 Impartial; both in equal balance laid:
 Light flew the knowing scale; the doubtful heavy weigh'd.

Forc'd by reflective reason, I confess,
 That human science is uncertain guess.
 Alas! we grasp at clouds, and beat the air,
 Vexing that spirit we intend to clear.
 Can thought beyond the bounds of matter climb?
 Or who shall tell me, what is space or time?
 In vain we lift up our presumptuous eyes
 To what our Maker to their ken denies: }
 The searcher follows fast; the object faster flies. }
 The little which imperfectly we find, }
 Seduces only the bewilder'd mind }
 To fruitless search of something yet behind. }
 Various discussions tear our heated brain:
 Opinions often turn; still doubts remain; }
 And who indulges thought, increases pain. }

How narrow limits were to wisdom giv'n?
 Earth she surveys: she thence would measure heav'n:
 Thro' mists obscure, now wings her tedious way:
 Now wanders dazl'd with too bright a day;
 And from the summit of a pathless coast
 Sees *infinite*, and in that sight is lost.

Remember, that the curs'd desire to know,
Off-spring of Adam, was thy source of woe;
Why wilt thou then renew the vain pursuit,
And rashly catch at the forbidden fruit?
With empty labour and eluded strife
Seeking by knowledge,⁵⁸ to attain to life;
For ever from that fatal tree debarr'd,
Which flaming swords and angry *cherubs* guard.

⁵⁸Ori., "knowlecge"; corrected in the errata.

PLEASURE.

**The
Second Book.**

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The Argument.

Solomon again seeking happiness, enquires if wealth and greatness can produce it: begins with the magnificence of gardens and buildings, the luxury of music and feasting; and proceeds to the hopes and desires of love. In two episodes are shewn the follies and troubles of that passion. Solomon still disappointed, falls under the temptations of libertinism and idolatry; recovers his thought, reasons aright, and concludes, that as to the pursuit of pleasure, and sensual delight, ALL IS VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT.

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**Texts Chiefly Alluded to in This
Book.**

“I said in my own heart, ‘Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure.’”
—Ecclesiastes, Chap. ii. Vers. 1.

“I made me great works, I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards.”
—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. ii.] Vers. 4.

“I made me gardens and orchards; and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits.”
—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. ii.] Vers. 5.

“I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.”
—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. ii.] Vers. 6.

“Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and behold all was vanity and vexation of spirit; and there was no profit under the sun.”
—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. ii.] Vers. 11.

“I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts.”
—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. ii.] Vers. 8.

“I sought in mine heart to give my self unto wine (yet acquainting mine heart with wisdom) and to lay hold on folly, ’till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under heaven, all the days of their life.”—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. ii.] Vers. 3.

“Then I said in my heart, ‘As it happeneth unto the fool, so it happeneth even unto me; and why was I then more

“‘wise?’ Then I said in my heart, ‘That this also is vanity.’”—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. ii.] Vers. 15.

“Therefore I hated life, because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me.”
—[Ecclesiastes,] Chap. ii. Vers. 17.⁵⁹

“Dead flies cause the ointment to send forth a stinking savour: so doth the little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.”
—[Ecclesiastes,] Chap. x. Vers. 1.

“The memory of the just is blessed, but the memory of the wicked shall rot.”
—Proverbs, Chap. x. Vers. 7.

⁵⁹Ori., “Vers. 27”; a printer’s error.

PLEASURE.

**The
Second Book.**

Try then, O man, the moments to deceive,
That from the womb attend thee to the grave:
For weary'd nature find some apter scheme:
Health be thy hope; and PLEASURE be thy theme:
From the perplexing and unequal ways,
Where study brings thee; from the endless maze,
Which doubt persuades to run, forewarn'd recede,
To the gay field, and flow'ry path, that lead
To jocund mirth, soft joy, and careless ease:
Forsake what may instruct, for what may please:
Essay amusing art, and proud expence;
And make thy reason subject to thy sense.

I commun'd thus: the pow'r of wealth I try'd,
And all the various luxe of costly pride.
Artists and plans reliev'd my solemn hours:
I founded palaces, and planted bow'rs.

Birds, fishes, beasts of each exotic kind
 I to the limits of my court confin'd.
 To trees transferr'd I gave a second birth;
 And bid a foreign shade grace Judah's earth.
 Fish-ponds were made, where former forests grew;
 And hills were levell'd to extend the view.
 Rivers diverted from their native course,
 And bound with chains of artificial force,
 From large cascades in pleasing tumult roll'd;
 Or rose thro' figur'd stone, or breathing gold.
 From furthest Africa's tormented womb
 The marble brought, erects the spacious dome,
 Or forms the pillars long-extended rows,
 On which the planted grove, and pensile garden grows.

The workmen here obey the master's call,
 To gild⁶⁰ the turret, and to paint the wall;
 To mark the pavement there with various stone;
 And on the jasper steps to rear the throne:
 The spreading *cedar*, that an age had stood,
 Supreme of trees, and mistress of the woods,
 Cut down and carv'd, my shining roof adorns;
 And Lebanon his ruin'd honor mourns.

A thousand artists shew their cunning pow'r,
 To raise the wonders of the iv'ry tow'r.
 A thousand maidens ply the purple loom,
 To weave the bed, and deck the regal room;
 'Till Tyre confesses her exhausted store,
 That on her coast the *murex* is no more;
 'Till from the Parian isle, and Libya's coast,
 The mountains grieve their hopes of marble lost;

⁶⁰Ori., "guild"; but used in sense of "covering with a thin layer of gold."

And India's woods return their just complaints
Their brood decay'd, and want of *elephants*.⁶¹

My full design with vast expence atchiev'd,
I came, beheld, admir'd, reflected, griev'd.
I chid the folly of my thoughtless hast:
For, the work perfected, the joy was past.

To my new courts sad thought did still repair;
And round my gilded roofs hung hov'ring care.
In vain on silken beds I sought repose;
And restless oft from purple couches rose:
Vexatious thought still found my flying mind,
Nor bound by limits, nor to place confin'd;
Haunted my nights, and terrify'd my days;
Stalk'd thro' my gardens, and pursu'd my ways,
Nor shut from artful bow'r, nor lost in winding maze.

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Yet take thy bent, my soul; another sense
Indulge; add musick to magnificence:
Essay, if harmony may grief controll;
Or pow'r of sound prevail upon the soul.
Often our seers and poets have confest,
That music's force can tame the furious beast;
Can make the wolf, or foaming boar restrain
His rage; the lion drop his crested mane.⁶²
Attentive to the song; the lynx forget
His wrath to man, and lick the minstrel's feet.
Are we, alas! more savage yet than these?
Else music sure may human cares appease.

I spake my purpose; and the chearful choir
Parted their shares of harmony: the lyre

⁶¹Ori., "*elephant*"; corrected in the errata.

⁶²Ori., "main"; but used in sense of "growth of long hair on the back of the neck and shoulders."

Soften'd the timbrel's noise: the trumpet's sound
 Provok'd the Dorian flute (both sweeter found
 When mix'd:) the fife the viol's notes refin'd;
 And ev'ry strength with ev'ry grace was join'd.
 Each morn they wak'd me with a sprightly lay:
 Of opening heav'n they sung, and gladsome day.
 Each evening their repeated skill express'd
 Scenes of repose, and images of rest:
 Yet still in vain: for music gather'd thought:
 But how unequal the effects it brought?
 The soft *ideas* of the chearful note,
 Lightly receiv'd, were easily forgot:
 The solemn violence of the graver sound
 Knew to strike deep, and leave a lasting wound.

And now reflecting, I with grief descry
 The sickly lust of the fantastic eye;
 How the weak organ is with seeing cloy'd,
 Flying ere⁶³ night what it at noon enjoy'd.
 And now (unhappy search of thought!) I found
 The fickle ear soon glutted with the sound,
 Condemn'd eternal changes to pursue,
 Tir'd with the last, and eager of the new.

I bad the virgins and the youth advance,
 To temper music with the sprightly dance.
 In vain! too low the mimic-motions seem:
 What takes our heart, must merit our esteem.
 Nature, I thought, perform'd too mean a part,
 Forming her movements to the rules of art;
 And vex'd I found, that the musician's hand
 Had o'er the dancer's mind too great command.

⁶³Ori., "e'er"; but used in sense of "before."

I drank; I lik'd it not: 'twas rage; 'twas noise;
An airy scene of transitory joys.
In vain I trusted, that the flowing bowl
Would banish sorrow, and enlarge the soul.
To the late revel, and protracted feast
Wild dreams succeeded, and disorder'd rest;
And as at dawn of morn fair reason's light
Broke thro' the fumes and phantoms of the night,
What had been said, I ask'd my soul, what done;
How flow'd our mirth, and when the source begun,
Perhaps the jest that charm'd the sprightly croud,
And made the jovial table laugh so loud,
To some false notion ow'd its poor pretence,
To an ambiguous word's perverted sense,
To a wild sonnet, or a wanton air,
Offence and torture to the sober ear.
Perhaps, alas! the pleasing stream was brought
From this man's error, from another's fault;
From topics which good-nature would forget,
And prudence mention with the last regret.

Add yet unnumber'd ills, that lye unseen
In the pernicious draught; the word obscene
Or harsh, which once elanc'd must ever fly
Irrevocable; the too prompt reply,
Seed of severe distrust, and fierce debate;
What we should shun, and what we ought to hate.

Add too the blood impoverish'd, and the course
Of health suppress'd, by wine's continu'd force.

Unhappy man! whom sorrow thus and rage
To diff'rent ills alternately engage.

Who drinks, alas! but to forget; nor sees,
That melancholy sloth, severe disease,
Mem'ry confus'd, and interrupted thought,
Death's harbingers, lye latent in the draught:
And in the flow'rs that wreath the sparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiss, and poys'nous serpents roll.

Remains there ought untry'd, that may remove
Sickness of mind, and heal the bosom?—Love,
Love yet remains: indulge his genial fire,
Cherish fair hope, solicit young desire,
And boldly bid thy anxious soul explore
This last great remedy's mysterious pow'r.

Why therefore hesitates my doubtful breast?
Why ceases it one moment to be blest;
Fly swift, my friends; my servants, fly; employ
Your instant pains to bring your master joy.
Let all my wives and concubines be dress'd:
Let them to-night attend the royal feast;
All Israel's beauty, all the foreign fair,
The gifts of princes, or the spoils of war.
Before their monarch they shall singly pass,
And the most worthy shall obtain the grace.

I said: the feast was serv'd: the bowl was crown'd:
To the king's pleasure went the mirthful round:
The women came: as custom wills, they past:
On one (O that distinguish'd one!) I cast
The fav'rite glance: O! yet my mind retains⁶⁴
That fond beginning of my infant pains.
Mature the virgin was of Egypt's race
Grace shap'd her limbs; and beauty deck'd her face:

⁶⁴Ori., "returns"; likely a printer's error, restored to original term.

Easy her motion seem'd, serene her air:
 Full, tho' unzon'd, her bosom rose: her hair
 Unty'd, and ignorant of artful aid,
 Adown her shoulders loosely lay display'd;
 And in the jetty curls ten thousand *cupids* play'd.

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Fix'd on her charms, and pleas'd that I could love,
 Aid me my friends, contribute to improve
 Your monarch's bliss, I said; fresh roses bring
 To strow my bed; 'till the impov'rish'd spring
 Confess her want; around my am'rous head
 Be dropping myrrhe, and liquid amber shed,
 'Till Arab has no more. From the soft lyre,
 Sweet flute, and ten-string'd instrument, require
 Sounds of delight: and thou, fair nymph, draw nigh;
 Thou, in whose graceful form, and potent eye
 Thy master's joy long sought at length is found;
 And as thy brow, let my desires be crown'd;
 O fav'rite virgin, that hast warm'd the breast,
 Whose sov'reign dictates subjugate the east!

I said; and sudden from the golden throne
 With a submissive step I hasted down.
 The glowing garland from my hair I took,
 Love in my heart, obedience in my look;
 Prepar'd to place it on her comely head:
 O fav'rite virgin! (yet again I said)
 Receive the honours destin'd to thy brow;
 And O above thy fellows happy thou!
 Their duty must thy sov'reign word obey.
 Rise up, my love; my fair one, come away.

What pang, alas! what ecstasy of smart
Tore up my senses, and transfix'd my heart;
When she with modest scorn the wreath return'd,
Reclin'd her beauteous neck, and inward mourn'd?

Forc'd by my pride, I my concern suppress'd,
Pretended drowsiness, and wish of rest;
And sullen I forsook th' imperfect feast:
Ordering the eunuchs, to whose proper care
Our eastern grandeur gives th' imprison'd fair,
To lead her forth to a distinguish'd bow'r,
And bid her dress the bed, and wait the hour.

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Restless I follow'd this obdurate maid
(Swift are the steps that love and anger tread)
Approach'd her person, courted her embrace,
Renew'd my flame, repeated my disgrace:
By turns put on the suppliant, and the lord:
Threaten'd this moment, and the next implor'd:
Offer'd again the unaccepted wreath,
And choice of happy love, or instant death.

Averse to all her am'rous king desir'd,
Far as she might, she decently retir'd:
And darting scorn, and sorrow from her eyes,
What means, said she, King Solomon the wise?

This wretched body trembles at your pow'r:
Thus far could fortune: but she can no more.
Free to her self my potent mind remains:
Nor fears the victor's rage, nor feels his chains.

'Tis said, that thou can'st plausibly⁶⁵ dispute,
Supreme of seers, of angel, man, and brute;

⁶⁵Ori., "plausible."

Can'st plead, with subtil wit and fair discourse,
 Of passion's folly, and of reason's force.
 That to the tribes attentive thou can'st show,
 Whence their misfortunes, or their blessings flow.
 That thou in science, as in pow'r art great;
 And truth and honour on thy edicts wait.
 Where is that knowledge now, that regal thought,
 With just advice, and timely counsel fraught?
 Where now, O judge of Israel, does it rove—
 What in one moment dost thou offer? Love—
 Love? why 'tis joy or sorrow, peace or strife:
 'Tis all the colour of remaining life:
 And human mis'ry must begin or end,
 As he becomes a tyrant, or a friend.
 Would David's son, religious, just, and grave,
 To the first bride-bed of the world receive
 A foreigner, a heathen, and a slave?]
 Or grant, thy passion has these names destroy'd;
 That love, like death, makes all distinctions void;
 Yet in his empire o'er thy abject breast,
 His flames and torments only are exprest:
 His rage can in my smiles alone relent,
 And all his joys solicit my consent.

Soft love, spontaneous tree, its parted root
 Must from two hearts with equal vigour shoot:
 Cherish'd with hope, and fed with joy it grows:]
 Its chearful buds their opening bloom disclose;
 And round the happy soil diffusive odor flows.]
 If angry fate that mutual care denies;
 The fading plant bewails its due supplies:]
 Wild with despair, or sick with grief, it dies.]

By force beasts act, and are by force restrain'd:
The human mind by gentle means is gain'd.
Thy useless strength, mistaken king, employ:
Sated with rage, and ignorant of joy,
Thou shalt not gain what I deny to yield;
Nor reap the harvest, tho' thou spoil'st the field.
Know, Solomon, thy poor extent of sway;
Contract thy brow, and Israel shall obey:
But wilful love thou must with smiles appease;
Approach his awful throne by just degrees;
And if thou would'st be happy, learn to please.

}

Not that those arts can here successful prove:
For I am destin'd to another's love.
Beyond the cruel bounds of thy command,
To my dear equal, in my native land,
My plighted vow I gave: I his receiv'd:
Each swore with truth: with pleasure each believ'd.
The mutual contract was to heav'n convey'd:
In equal scales the busy angels weigh'd
Its solemn force, and clap'd their wings and spread
The lasting roll, recording what we said.

Now in my heart behold thy poniard stain'd:
Take the sad life which I have long disdain'd:
End, in a dying virgin's wretched fate,
Thy ill-starr'd passion, and my steadfast hate.
For long as blood informs these circling veins;
Or fleeting breath its latest pow'r retains;
Hear me to Egypt's vengeful gods declare,
Hate is my part: be thine, O king, despair.

Now strike, she said, and open'd bare her breast:
Stand it in Juda's chronicles confest,
That David's son, by impious passion mov'd,
Smote a she slave, and murther'd what he lov'd.

Asham'd, confus'd I started from the bed;
And to my soul yet uncollected said:
Into thy self, fond Solomon, return;
Reflect again, and thou again shalt mourn.
When I through number'd years have pleasure sought;
And in vain hope the wanton phantom caught;
To mock my sense, and mortify my pride,
'Tis in another's pow'r and is deny'd.
Am I a king, great heav'n! does life or death
Hang on the wrath, or mercy of my breath;
While kneeling I my servant's smiles implore;
And one mad dam'sel dares dispute my pow'r?

To ravish her? That thought was soon depress'd,
Which must debase the monarch to the beast.
To send her back? O whither, and to whom?
To lands where Solomon must never come;
To that insulting rival's happy arms,
For whom, disdain'g me, she keeps her charms.

My soul thus strugling in the fatal net,
Unable to enjoy, or to forget;
I reason'd much, alas! but more I lov'd;
Sent and recall'd, ordain'd and disapprov'd:
'Till hopeless plung'd in an abyss of grief,
I from necessity receiv'd relief:
Time gently aided to assuage my pain;
And wisdom took once more the slacken'd rein.

But O how short my interval of woe!
Our griefs how swift: our remedies how slow!
Another nymph (for so did heav'n ordain,
To change the manner, but renew the pain)
Another nymph, amongst the many fair,
That made my softer hours their solemn care
Before the rest affected still to stand;
And watch'd my eye, preventing my command.
Abra, she so was call'd, did soonest hast
To grace my presence; Abra went the last:
Abra was ready ere⁶⁶ I call'd her name;
And tho' I call'd another, Abra came.

Her equals first observ'd her growing zeal;
And laughing gloss'd, that Abra serv'd so well.
To me her actions did unheeded dye,
Or were remark'd but with a common eye;
'Till more appris'd of what the rumour said,
More I observ'd peculiar in the maid.

The sun declin'd had shot his western ray;
When tir'd with bus'ness of the solemn day,
I purpos'd to unbend the evening hours,
And banquet private in the women's bow'rs.
I call'd, before I sat, to wash my hands:
For so the precept of the law commands.
Love had ordain'd, that it was Abra's turn
To mix the sweets, and minister the urn.

With awful homage, and submissive dread
The maid approach'd on my declining head
To pour the oyls: she trembled as she pour'd;
With an unguarded look she now devour'd

⁶⁶Ori., "e'er"; but used in sense of "before."

My nearer face, and now recall'd her eye,
And heav'd and strove to hide a sudden sigh.
And whence, said I, canst thou have dread, or pain?
What can thy imagin'ry⁶⁷ sorrow mean?
Secluded from the world, and all its care,
Hast thou to grieve or joy, to hope or fear?
For sure, I added, sure thy little heart
Ne'er felt love's anger, or receiv'd his dart.

Abash'd she blush'd, and with disorder spoke:
Her rising shame adorn'd the words it broke.

If the great master will descend to hear
The humble series of his hand-maid's care;
O! while she tells it, let him not put on
The look, that awes the nations from the throne:
O! let not death severe in glory lye
In the king's frown, and terror of his eye.

Mine to obey; thy part is to ordain:
And tho' to mention, be to suffer pain;
If the king smiles, whilst I my woe recite;
If weeping I find favour in his sight;
Flow fast my tears, full rising his delight.

}

O! witness earth beneath, and heav'n above;
For can I hide it? I am sick of love:
If madness may the name of passion bear;
Or love be call'd, what is indeed despair.

Thou sov'reign pow'r, whose secret will controls
The inward bent and motion of our souls!
Why hast thou plac'd such infinite degrees
Between the cause and cure of my disease?

⁶⁷Ori., "imag'ry"; corrected in the errata.

The mighty object of that raging fire,
In which unpity'd Abra must expire,
Had he been born some simple shepherd's heir,
The lowing herd, or fleecy sheep his care;
At morn with him I o'er the hills had run,
Scornful of winter's frost, and summer's sun,
Still asking, where he made his flock to rest at noon. }
For him at night, the dear expected guest,
I had with hasty joy prepar'd the feast;
And from the cottage o'er the distant plain,
Sent forth my longing eye to meet the swain;
Wav'ring, impatient, toss'd by hope and fear; }
'Till he and joy together should appear;
And the lov'd dog declare his master near.

Or if kind heav'n propitious to my flame
(For sure from heav'n the faithful ardor came)
Had blest my life, and deck'd my natal hour
With height of title, and extent of pow'r:
Without a crime my passion had aspir'd,
Found the lov'd prince, and told what I desir'd.

Then I had come, preventing Sheba's queen,
To see the comliest of the sons of men;
To hear the charming poet's am'rous song,
And gather honey falling from his tongue;
To take the fragrant kisses of his mouth,
Sweeter than breezes of her native south;
Likening his grace, his person, and his mein
To all that great or beauteous I had seen.
Serene and bright his eyes, as solar beams
Reflecting temper'd light from crystal streams;

Ruddy as gold his cheek; his bosom fair
As silver; the curl'd ringlets of his hair
Black as the raven's wing; his lip more red,
Than eastern coral, or the scarlet thread;
His stature all majestic, all divine,
Strait as the palm-tree, strong as is the pine.
Saffron and myrrhe are on his garments shed:
And everlasting sweets bloom round his head.
What utter I? Where am I? Wretched maid!
Dye, Abra, dye: too plainly hast thou said
Thy soul's desire to meet his high embrace,
And blessings stamp'd upon thy future race;
To bid attentive nations bless thy womb,
With unborn monarch's charg'd, and Solomons to come.

Here o'er her speech her flowing eyes prevail.
O foolish maid! and O unhappy tale!
My suff'ring heart for ever shall defy
New wounds, and danger from a future eye.
O! yet my tortur'd senses deep retain
The wretched mem'ry of my former pain,
The dire affront, and my Egyptian chain.

As time, I said, may happily efface
That cruel image of the king's disgrace;
Imperial reason shall resume her seat;
And Solomon once fall'n, again be great:
Betray'd by passion, as subdu'd in war,
We wisely should exert a double care,
Nor ever ought a second time to Err.

This Abra then—
I saw her; 'twas humanity: it gave
Some respite to the sorrows of my slave.
Her fond excess proclaim'd her passion true;
And generous pity to that truth was due.
Well I entreated her, who well deserv'd;
I call'd her often; for she always serv'd.
Use made her person easy to my sight;
And ease insensibly produc'd delight.

Whene'er I revell'd in the women's bow'rs
(For first I sought her but at looser hours)
The apples she had gather'd smelt most sweet:
The cake she kneaded was the sav'ry meat:
But fruits their odor lost, and meats their taste;
If gentle Abra had not deck'd the feast.
Dishonour'd did the sparkling goblet stand:
Unless receiv'd from gentle Abra's hand:
And when the virgins form'd the evening choir,
Raising their voices to the masters lyre;
Too flat I thought this voice, and that too shrill;
One show'd too much, and one too little skill:
Nor could my soul approve the music's tone;
'Till all was hush'd, and Abra sung alone.

And now I could behold, avow, and blame
The several follies of my former flame;
Willing my heart for recompence to prove
The certain joys that lye in prosp'rous love.
For what, said I, from Abra can I fear,
Too humble to insult, too soft to be severe?
The dam'sel's sole ambition is to please:
With freedom I may like, and quit with ease:

She soothes, but never can enthrall my mind:
Why may not peace and love for once be join'd?

Great heav'n! how frail thy creature man is made!
How by himself insensibly betray'd!
In our own strength unhappily secure,
Too little cautious of the adverse pow'r;
And by the blast of self-opinion mov'd,
We wish to charm, and seek to be belov'd.
On pleasure's flowing brink we idly stray,
Masters as yet of our returning way:
Seeing no danger, we disarm our mind;
And give our conduct to the waves and wind:
Then in the flow'ry mead, or verdant shade
To wanton dalliance negligently laid,
We weave the chaplet, and we crown the bowl;
And smiling see the nearer waters roll;
'Till the strong gusts of raging passion rise;
'Till the dire tempest mingles earth and skies;
And swift into the boundless ocean born,
Our foolish confidence too late we mourn:
Round our devoted heads the billows beat;
And from our troubl'd view the lessening lands retreat.

My conqueror now, my lovely Abra held
My freedom in her chains: my heart was fill'd
With her, with her alone: in her alone
It sought its peace and joy: while she was gone,
It sigh'd, and griev'd, impatient of her stay:
Return'd, she chas'd those sighs, that grief away:
Her absence made the night: her presence brought the day.

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The ball, the play, the mask by turns succeed.
For her I made the song: the dance with her I lead.
I court her various in each shape and dress,
That luxury may form, or thought express.

To-day beneath the palm-tree on the plains
In Deborah's arms and habit Abra reigns:
The wreath denoting conquest guides her brow:
And low, like Barak, at her feet I bow.
The mimic chorus sings her prosp'rous hand;
As she had slain the foe, and sav'd the land.

To-morrow she approves a softer air;
Forsakes the pomp and pageantry of war;
The form of peaceful Abigail assumes;
And from the village with the present comes:
The youthful band depose their glitt'ring arms;
Receive her bounties, and recite her charms:
Whilst I assume my father's step and mein,
To meet with due regard my future queen.

If hap'ly Abra's will be now inclin'd
To range the woods, or chace the flying hind;
Soon as the sun awakes, the sprightly court
Leave their repose, and hasten to the sport.
In lessen'd royalty, and humble state,
Thy king, Jerusalem, descends to wait,
'Till Abra comes. She comes: a milk-white steed,
Mixture of Persia's, and Arabia's breed,
Sustains the nymph: her garments flying loose
(As the Sydonian maids, or Thracian use)

And half her knee, and half her breast appear,
By art, like negligence, disclos'd, and bare.⁶⁸
Her left hand guides the hunting courser's flight:
A silver bow she carries in her right:
And from the golden quiver at her side,
Rustles the ebon arrow's feather'd pride.

If tir'd this evening with the hunted woods,
To the large fish-pools, or the glassy floods,
Her mind to-morrow points; a thousand hands
To-night employ'd, obey the king's commands,
Upon the wat'ry beach an artful pile
Of planks is join'd, and forms a moving isle.
A golden chariot in the midst is set;
And silver cygnets seem to feel its weight.
Abra, bright queen, ascends her gaudy throne,
In semblance of the Grecian Venus known:
Tritons and sea-green naiads round her move;
And sing in moving strains the force of love:
Whilst as th' approaching pageant does appear;
And echoing crouds speak mighty Venus near;
I, her adorer, too devoutly stand
Fast on the utmost margin of the land,
With arms and hopes extended, to receive
The fancy'd goddess rising from the wave.

O subject reason! O imperious love!
Whither yet further would my folly rove?
Is it enough, that Abra should be great
In the wall'd palace, or the rural seat?
That masking habits, and a borrow'd name
Contrive to hide my plenitude of shame?

⁶⁸Ori., "bear"; corrected in the errata.

No, no, Jerusalem combin'd must see
 My open fault, and regal infamy.
 Solemn a month is destin'd for the feast:
 Abra invites: the nation is the guest.
 To have the honour of each day sustain'd,
 The woods are travers'd, and the lakes are drain'd:
 Arabia's wilds, and Ægypt's are explor'd:
 The edible creation decks the board:
 Hardly the *phenix* 'scapes—
 The men their lyres, the maids their voices raise,
 To sing my happiness, and Abra's praise.
 And slavish bards our mutual loves rehearse
 In lying strains, and ignominious verse:
 While from the banquet leading forth the bride,
 Whom prudent love from public eyes should hide;
 I show her to the world, confess'd and known
 Queen of my heart, and partner of my throne.

And now her friends and flatt'ers fill the court:
 From Dan, and from Beersheba they resort:
 They barter places, and dispose of grants,
 Whole provinces unequal to their wants.
 They teach her to recede, or to debate;
 With toys of love to mix affairs of state;
 By practis'd rules her empire to secure;
 And in my pleasure make my ruin sure.
 They gave, and she transferr'd the curs'd advice,
 That monarchs should their inward soul disguise,
 Dissemble and command, be false and wise;
 By ignominious arts for servile ends
 Should compliment their foes, and shun their friends.

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And now I leave the true and just supports
Of legal princes, and of honest courts,
Barzillai's, and the fierce Benaiah's heirs;
Whose sires, great part'ners in my father's cares,
Saluted their young king at Hebron crown'd,
Great by their toil, and glorious by their wound.
And now, unhappy council, I prefer
Those whom my follies only made me fear,
Old Corah's brood, and taunting Shimei's race;
Miscreants who ow'd their lives to David's grace;
Tho' they had spurn'd his rule, and curs'd him to his face. }

Still Abra's pow'r, my scandal still increas'd;
Justice submitted to what Abra pleas'd:
Her will alone could settle or revoke;
And law was fix'd by what she latest spoke.

Israel neglected, Abra was my care:
I only acted, thought, and liv'd for her.
I durst not reason with my wounded heart:
Abra possess'd; she was its better part.
O! had I now review'd the famous cause,
Which gave my righteous youth so just applause;
In vain on the dissembl'd mother's tongue
Had cunning art, and sly persuasion hung;
And real care in vain, and native love
In the true parent's panting breast had strove;
While both deceiv'd had seen the destin'd child
Or slain, or sav'd, as Abra frown'd, or smil'd.

Unknowing to command, proud to obey,
A life-less king, a royal shade I lay.

Unheard the injur'd orphans now complain:
 The widow's cries address the throne in vain.
 Causes unjug'd disgrace the loaded file;
 And sleeping laws the king's neglect revile.
 No more the elders throng'd around my throne,
 To hear my maxims, and reform their own.
 No more the young nobility were taught,
 How Moses govern'd, and how David fought.
 Loose and undisciplin'd the soldier lay;
 Or lost in drink and game the solid day:
 Porches and schools, design'd for public good,
 Uncover'd, and with scaffolds cumber'd stood,
 Or nodded, threat'ning ruin—
 Half pillars wanted their expected height;
 And roofs imperfect prejudic'd the sight.
 The artists grieve; the lab'ring people droop:
 My father's legacy, my country's hope,
 God's temple lies unfinish'd—

The wise and grave deplor'd their monarch's fate,
 And future mischiefs of a sinking state.
 Is this, the serious said, is this the man,
 Whose active soul thro' every science ran?
 Who by just rule and elevated skill
 Prescrib'd the dubious bounds of good and ill?
 Whose golden sayings, and immortal wit,
 On large *phylacteries* expressive writ,
 Were to the forehead of the Rabbins ty'd,
 Our youth's instruction, and our age's pride?
 Could not the wise his wild desires restrain?
 Then was our hearing, and his preaching vain!

What from his life and letters were we taught,
But that his knowledge aggravates his fault?

In lighter mood the humorous and the gay
(As crown'd with roses at their feasts they lay)
Sent the full goblet, charg'd with Abra's name,
And charms superior to their master's fame:
Laughing some praise the king, who let 'em see,
How aptly luxe and empire might agree:
Some gloss'd, how love and wisdom were at strife;
And brought my proverbs to confront my life.
However, friend, here's to the king, one cries:
To him who was the king, the friend replies.
The king for Judah's, and for wisdom's curse,
To Abra yields; could I, or thou do worse?
Our looser lives let chance or folly steer:
If thus the prudent and determin'd err.
Let Dinah bind with flowers her flowing hair;
And touch the lute, and sound the wanton air:
Let us the bliss without the sting receive,
Free, as we will, or to enjoy, or leave.
Pleasures on levity's smooth surface flow:
Thought brings the weight, that sinks the soul to woe.
Now be this maxim to the king convey'd,
And added to the thousand he has made.

Sadly, O reason, is thy pow'r express'd,
Thou gloomy tyrant of the frighted breast!
And harsh the rules, which we from thee receive;
If for our wisdom we our pleasure give;
And more to think be only more to grieve.

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Yet thy insulting dictates shall be heard:
Virtue for once shall be her own reward:
Yes; rebel Israel, this unhappy maid
Shall be dismiss'd: the crowd shall be obey'd:
The king his passion, and his rule shall leave,
No longer Abra's, but the people's slave.
My coward soul shall bear its wayward fate:
I will, alas! be wretched, to be great;
And sigh in royalty, and grieve in state.

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I said: resolv'd to plunge into my grief
At once so far, as to expect relief
From my despair alone—
I chose to write the thing I durst not speak,
To her I lov'd; to her I must forsake.
The harsh epistle labour'd much to prove,
How inconsistent majesty, and love.
I always should, it said, esteem her well;
But never see her more: it bid her feel
No future pain for me; but instant wed
A lover more proportion'd to her bed;
And quiet dedicate her remnant life
To the just duties of an humble wife.

She read; and forth to me she wildly ran,
To me, the ease of all her former pain.
She kneel'd, intreated, struggl'd, threaten'd, cry'd,
And with an alternate passion liv'd, and dy'd:
'Till now deny'd the liberty to mourn,
And by rude fury from my presence torn,
This only object of my real care,
Cut off from hope, abandon'd to despair,

In some few posting fatal hours is hurl'd
From wealth, from pow'r, from love, and from the world.

Here tell me, if thou dar'st, my conscious soul,
What diff'rent sorrows did within thee roll?
What pangs, what fires, what racks didst thou sustain?
What sad vicissitudes of smarting pain?
How oft from pomp and state did I remove,
To feed despair, and cherish hopeless love?
How oft, all day, recall'd I Abra's charms,
Her beauties press'd, and panting in my arms?
How oft, with sighs, view'd every female face,
Where mimic fancy might her likeness trace?
How oft desir'd to fly from Israel's throne,
And live in shades with her and love alone?
How oft, all night, pursu'd her in my dreams;
O'er flow'ry vallies, and thro' crystal streams;
And waking, view'd with grief the rising sun,
And fondly mourn'd the dear delusion gone?

When thus the gather'd storms of wretched love,
In my swoln bosom, with long war had strove;
At length they broke their bounds: at length their force
Bore down whatever met its stronger course:
Lay'd all the civil bonds of manhood waste;
And scatter'd ruin as the torrent past.

So from the hills, whose hollow caves contain
The congregated snow, and swelling rain;
'Till the full stores their ancient bounds disdain;

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Precipitate⁶⁹ the furious torrent flows:
 In vain would speed avoid, or strength oppose:
 Towns, forests, herds, and men promiscuous drown'd,
 With one great death deform the dreary⁷⁰ ground:
 The echo'd woes from distant rocks resound.

And now, what impious ways my wishes took;
 How they the monarch, and the man forsook;
 And how I follow'd an abandon'd will,
 Thro' crooked paths, and sad retreats of ill;
 How Judah's daughters now, now foreign slaves,
 By turns my prostituted bed receives:
 Thro' tribes of women how I loosely rang'd
 Impatient; lik'd to-night, to-morrow chang'd;
 And by the instinct of capricious lust,
 Enjoy'd, disdain'd, was grateful, or unjust:
 O, be these scenes from human eyes conceal'd,
 In clouds of decent silence justly veil'd!
 O, be the wanton images convey'd
 To black oblivion, and eternal shade!
 Or let their sad *epitome* alone,
 And outward lines to future age be known,
 Enough to propagate the sure belief,
 That vice engenders shame; and folly broods o'er grief.

Bury'd in sloth, and lost in ease I lay:
 The night I revell'd; and I slept the day.
 New heaps of fewel damp'd my kindling fires;
 And daily change extinguish'd young desires.
 By its own force destroy'd, fruition ceas'd;
 And always weary'd, I was never pleas'd.

⁶⁹Ori., "Precipiate"; a printer's error.

⁷⁰Ori., "deary"; a printer's error.

No longer now does my neglected mind
Its wonted stores, and old *ideas* find.
Fix'd judgment there no longer does abide,
To take the true, or set the false aside.
No longer does swift mem'ry trace the cells,
Where springing wit, or young invention dwells.
Frequent debauch to habitude prevails:
Patience of toil, and love of virtue fails.
By sad degrees impair'd my vigor dyes;
Till I command no longer ev'n in vice.

The women on my dotage build their sway:
They ask; I grant: they threaten; I obey.
In regal garments now I gravely stride,
Aw'd by the Persian dam'sel's haughty pride.
Now with the looser Syrian dance, and sing,
In robes tuck'd up, opprobrious to the king.

Charm'd by their eyes, their manners I acquire;
And shape my foolishness to their desire.
Seduc'd and aw'd by the Philistine dame,
At Dagon's shrine I kindle impious flame.
With the Chaldean's charms her rites prevail;
And curling frankincense ascends to Baal.
To each new harlot I new altars dress;
And serve her god, whose person I caress.

Where, my deluded sense, was reason flown?
Where the high majesty of David's throne?
Where all the maxims of eternal truth,
With which the living God inform'd my youth?
When with the lew'd Egyptian I adore
Vain idols, deities that ne'er before

In Israel's land had fix'd their dire abodes,
 Beastly divinities, and droves of gods:
 Osiris, Apis, pow'rs that chew the cud,
 And *dog* Anubis, flatt'rer for his food:
 When in the woody hill's forbidden shade
 I carv'd the marble, and invok'd its aid:
 To shrubs and plants my vile devotion paid;
 When in the fens to snakes and flies, with zeal
 Unworthy human thought, I prostrate fell;
 And set the bearded leek, to which I pray'd:
 When to all beings sacred rites were giv'n;
 Forgot the arbiter of earth and heav'n.

Thro' these sad shades, this *chaos* in my soul,
 Some seeds of light at length began to roll.
 The rising motion of an infant ray
 Shot glimm'ring thro' the cloud, and promis'd day.
 And now one moment able to reflect,
 I found the king abandon'd to neglect, }
 Seen without awe, and serv'd without respect.
 I found my subjects amicably joyn,
 To lessen their defects, by citing mine.
 The priest with pity pray'd for David's race;
 And left his text, to dwell on my disgrace.
 The father, whilst he warn'd his erring son, }
 The sad examples which he ought to shun,
 Describ'd, and only nam'd not Solomon.
 Each bard, each sire did to his pupil sing,
 A wise child better than a foolish king.

Into my self my reason's eye I turn'd;
 And as I much reflected, much I mourn'd.

A mighty king I am, an earthly god:
Nations obey my word, and wait my nod,
I raise or sink, imprison or set free;
And life or death depends on my decree.
Fond the *idea*, and the thought is vain:
O'er Judah's kings ten thousand tyrants reign.
Legions of lust, and various pow'rs of ill
Insult the master's tributary will:
And he, from whom the nations should receive
Justice and freedom, lyes himself a slave,
Tortur'd by cruel change of wild desires,
Lash'd by mad rage, and scorch'd by brutal fires.

O reason! once again to thee I call:
Accept my sorrow, and retrieve my fall.
Wisdom, thou say'st, from heav'n receiv'd her birth;
Her beams transmitted to the subject earth.
Yet this great empress of the human soul
Does only with imagin'd pow'r controul;
If restless passion by rebellious sway
Compells the weak usurper to obey.

O troubled, weak, and coward, as thou art!
Without thy poor advice the lab'ring heart
To worse extremes with swifter steps would run,
Not sav'd by virtue, yet by vice undone.

Oft have I said; the praise of doing well
Is to the ear, as oynment to the smell.
Now if some flies perchance, however small,
Into the alabaster urn should fall;
The odors of the sweets inclos'd would dye;
And stench corrupt (sad change!) their place supply.

So the least faults, if mix'd with fairest deed,
Of future ill become the fatal seed:
Into the balm of purest virtue cast,
Annoy all life with one contagious blast.

Lost Solomon! pursue this thought no more:
Of thy past errors recollect the store:
And silent weep, that while the deathless muse
Shall sing the just; shall o'er their head diffuse
Perfumes with lavish hand; she shall proclaim
Thy crimes alone; and to thy evil fame
Impartial, scatter damps and poisons on thy name.

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Awaking therefore, as who long had dream'd,
Much of my women, and their gods asham'd,
From this abyss of exemplary vice
Resolv'd, as time might aid my thought, to rise;
Again I bid the mournful goddess write
The fond pursuit of fugitive delight:
Bid her exalt her melancholy wing,
And rais'd from earth, and sav'd from passion, sing
Of human hope by cross event destroy'd,
Of useless wealth, and greatness unenjoy'd,
Of lust and love, with their fantastic train,
Their wishes, smiles, and looks deceitful all, and vain.

POWER.

**The
Third Book.**

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The Argument.

Solomon considers man through the several stages and conditions of life; and concludes in general, that we are all miserable. He reflects more particularly upon the trouble and uncertainty of greatness and power; gives some instances thereof from Adam down to himself; and still concludes that ALL is VANITY. He reasons again upon life, death, and a future being; finds human wisdom too imperfect to resolve his doubts; has recourse to religion; is informed by an angel, what shall happen to himself, his family, and his kingdom, 'till the redemption of Israel: and, upon the whole, resolves to submit his enquiries and anxieties to the will of his Creator.

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**Texts Chiefly Alluded to in This
Book.**

“Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.”
—Ecclesiastes, Chap. xii. Vers. 6.

“The sun ariseth, and the sun⁷¹ goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose.”
—Ecclesiastes, Chap. i. Vers. 5.

“The wind goeth towards the south, and turneth about unto the north. It whirleth about continually; and the wind returneth again, according to his circuit.”
—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. i.] Vers. 6.

“All the rivers run into the sea: yet the sea is not full. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.”
—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. i.] Vers. 7.

“Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”—Ecclesiastes, Chap. xii. Vers. 7.

“Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt-offering, and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house.”
—ii Chronicles, Chap. vii. Vers. 1.

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea we wept, when we remembered Sion,” &c.
—Psalm cxxxvii. Vers. 1.

⁷¹Ori., “san”; a printer’s error.

“No man can find out the work that God maketh,
from the beginning to the end.”
—Ecclesiastes, Chap. iii. Vers. 11.⁷²

“Whatsoever God doth, it shall be for ever:
nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken
from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear
before him.”—[Ecclesiastes, Chap. iii.] Vers. 14.

“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter;
fear God, and keep his commandments; for
this is the whole duty of man.”
—Ecclesiastes, Chap. xii. Vers. 13.

⁷²Ori., “Vers. ii”; a printer’s error.

POWER.

**The
Third Book.**

Come then, my soul: I call thee by that name,
Thou busie thing, from whence I know I am:
For knowing that I am, I know thou art;
Since that must needs exist, which can impart.
But how thou cam'st to be, or whence thy spring:
For various of thee priests and poets sing.

Hear'st thou submissive, but a lowly birth;
Some sep'rate particles of finer earth,
A plain effect, which nature must beget,
As motion orders, and as atoms meet;
Companion of the body's good or ill;
From force of instinct more than choice of will;
Conscious of fear or valor, joy or pain,
As the wild courses of the blood ordain;
Who as degrees of heat and cold prevail,
In youth dost flourish, and with age shalt fail;

'Till mingled with thy part'ner's latest breath
Thou fly'st, dissolv'd in air, and lost in death.

Or if thy great existence would aspire
To causes more sublime; of heav'nly fire
Wer't thou a spark struck off? a sep'rate ray,
Ordain'd to mingle with terrestrial clay;
With it condemn'd for certain years to dwell,
To grieve its frailties, and its pains to feel;
To teach it good and ill, disgrace or fame;
Pale it with rage, or redden it with shame:
To guide its actions with informing care,
In peace to judge, to conquer in the war;
Render it agile, witty, valiant, sage,
As fits the various course of human age;
'Till as the earthly part decays and falls,
The captive breaks her prison's mould'ring walls;
Hovers a-while upon the sad remains,
Which now the pile, or sepulchre contains;
And thence with liberty unbounded flies,
Impatient to regain her native skies.

Whate'er thou art, where-e'er ordain'd to go
(Points which we rather may dispute, than know)
Come on, thou little inmate of this breast,
Which for thy sake from passions I divest:
For these, thou say'st, raise all the stormy strife,
Which hinder thy repose, and trouble life.
Be the fair level of thy actions laid,
As temp'rance wills, and prudence may perswade:

Be⁷³ thy affections undisturb'd and clear,
 Guided to what may great or good appear;
 And try if life be worth the liver's care.

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Amass'd in man there justly is beheld
 What thro' the whole creation has excell'd:
 The life and growth of plants, of beasts the sense,
 The angel's forecast and intelligence:
 Say from these glorious seeds what harvest flows:
 Recount our blessings, and compare our woes.
 In its true light let clearest reason see
 The man dragg'd out to act, and forc'd to be;
 Helpless and naked on a woman's knees
 To be expos'd or rear'd as she may please;
 Feel her neglect, and pine from her disease.
 His tender eye by too direct a ray
 Wounded, and flying from unpractis'd day;
 His heart assaulted by invading air,
 And beating fervent to the vital war;
 To his young sense how various forms appear;
 That strike his wonder, and excite his fear?
 By his distortions he reveals his pains:
 He by his tears, and by his sighs complains;
 'Till time and use assist the infant wretch,
 By broken words, and rudiments of speech.
 His wants in plainer characters to show,
 And paint⁷⁴ more perfect figures of his woe,
 Condemn'd to sacrifice his childish years
 To babling ign'rance, and to empty fears;
 To pass the riper period of his age,
 Acting his part upon a crowded stage;

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⁷³Ori., "By"; a printer's error.

⁷⁴Ori., "point"; a printer's error.

To lasting toils expos'd, and endless cares,
To open dangers, and to secret snares;
To malice which the vengeful foe intends,
And the more dangerous love of seeming friends.
His deeds examin'd by the people's will,
Prone to forget the good, and blame the ill:
Or sadly censur'd in their curs'd debate,
Who in the scorner's, or the judge's seat
Dare to condemn the virtue which they hate.
Or would he rather leave this frantic scene;
And trees and beasts prefer to courts and men?
In the remotest wood and lonely grott
Certain to meet that worst of evils, thought;
Diff'rent ideas to his mem'ry brought:
Some intricate, as are the pathless woods;
Impetuous some, as the descending floods:
With anxious doubts, with raging passions torn,
No sweet companion near, with whom to mourn;
He hears the echoing rock return his sighs;
And from himself the frighted hermit flies.

Thus, thro' what path soe'er of life we rove,
Rage companies our hate, and grief our love:
Vex'd with the present moment's heavy gloom,
Why seek we brightness from the years to come?
Disturb'd and broken like a sick man's sleep,
Our troubl'd thoughts to distant prospects leap:
Desirous still what flies us to o'ertake:
For hope is but the dream of those that wake:

But looking back, we see the dreadful train
 Of woes, a-new which were we to sustain
 We should refuse to tread the path again. }
 Still adding grief, still counting from the first;
 Judging the latest evils still the worst;
 And sadly finding each progressive hour
 Heighten their number, and augment their pow'r:
 'Till by one countless sum of woes opprest,
 Hoary with cares, and ignorant of rest,
 We find the vital springs relax'd and worn: }
 Compell'd our common impotence to mourn.
 Thus, thro' the round of age, to childhood we return. }
 Reflecting find, that naked from the womb
 We yesterday came forth; that in the tomb
 Naked again we must to-morrow lye,
 Born to lament, to labor, and to dye.

Pass we the ills, which each man feels or dreads,
 The weight or fall'n, or hanging o'er our heads;
 The bear, the lyon, terrors of the plain,
 The sheepfold scatter'd, and the shepherd slain;
 The frequent errors of the pathless wood,
 The giddy precipice, and the dang'rous flood:
 The noisom pest'lence, that in open war
 Terrible, marches thro' the mid-day air,
 And scatters death; the arrow that by night
 Cuts the dank mist, and fatal wings its flight;
 The billowing snow and violence of the show'r,
 That from the hills disperse their dreadful store, }
 And o'er the vales collected ruin pour;

The worm that gnaws the ripening fruit, sad guest,
Canker or locust hurtful to infest
The blade; while husks elude the tiller's care,
And eminence of want distinguishes the year.

Pass we the slow disease, and subtil pain,
Which our weak frame is destin'd to sustain;
The cruel stone, with congregated war
Tearing his bloody way; the cold catarrh
With frequent impulse, and continu'd strife,
Weak'ning the wasted seats of irksome life;
The gout's fierce rack, the burning fever's rage,
The sad experience of decay; and age
Her self the sorest ill; while death, and ease,
Oft and in vain envok'd, or to appease,
Or end the grief, with hasty wings reced
From the vext patient, and the sickly bed.

Nought shall it profit, that the charming fair,
Angelic, softest work of heav'n, draws near
To the cold shaking paralytic hand,
Senseless⁷⁵ of beauty's touch, or love's command,
Nor longer apt, or able to fulfill
The dictates of its feeble master's will.

Nought shall the psaltry, and the harp avail,
The pleasing song, or well repeated tale;
When the quick spirits their warm march forbear;
And numbing coldness has unbrac'd the ear.

The verdant rising of the flow'ry hill,
The vale enamell'd, and the crystal rill,

⁷⁵Ori., "Senless"; a printer's error.

The ocean rolling, and the shelly shoar,
Beautiful objects, shall delight no more;
When the lax'd sinews of the weaken'd eye
In wat'ry damps, or dim suffusion lye.
Day follows night; the clouds return again
After the falling of the later rain:
But to the aged-blind shall ne'er return
Grateful vicissitude: he still must mourn
The sun, and moon, and ev'ry starry light
Eclips'd to him, and lost in everlasting night.

Behold where age's wretched victim lies:
See his head trembling, and his half-clos'd eyes:
Frequent for breath his panting bosom heaves:
To broken sleeps his remnant sense he gives;
And only by his pains, awaking finds he lives.

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Loos'd by devouring time the silver cord
Dissever'd lies: unhonor'd from the board
The crystal⁷⁶ urn, when broken, is thrown by;
And apter utensils⁷⁷ their place supply.
These things and thou must share one equal lot,
Dye and be lost, corrupt and be forgot;
While still another, and another race
Shall now supply, and now give up the place.
From earth all came, to earth must all return,
Frail as the cord, and brittle as the urn.

But be the terror of these ills suppress'd:
And view we man with health and vigor blest.
Home he returns with the declining sun,
His destin'd task of labor hardly done;

⁷⁶Ori., "christian"; likely a printer's error, restored to Prior's original term.

⁷⁷Ori., "untensils"; a printer's error.

Goes forth again with the ascending ray,
 Again his travel for his bread to pay,
 And find the ill sufficient to the day.

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Hap'ly at night he does with horror shun
 A widow'd daughter, or a dying son:
 His neighbor's off-spring he to-morrow sees;
 And doubly feels his want in their increase:
 The next day, and the next he must attend
 His foe triumphant, or his buried friend.
 In ev'ry act and turn of life he feels
 Public calamities, or household ills:
 The due reward to just desarts refus'd:
 The trust betray'd, the nuptial bed abus'd:
 The judge corrupt, the long depending cause,
 And doubtful issue of misconstru'd laws.
 The crafty turns of a dishonest state,
 And violent will of the wrong-doing great:
 The venom'd tongue injurious to his fame,
 Which nor can wisdom shun, nor fair advice reclaim.

Happy the mortal man, who now at last
 Has thro' this doleful vale of mis'ry past;
 Who to his destin'd stage has carry'd on
 The tedious load, and laid his burden down;
 Whom the cut brass, or wounded marble shows
 Victor o'er life, and all her train of woes.
 He happyer yet, who privileg'd by fate
 To shorter labor, and a lighter weight,
 Receiv'd but yesterday the gift of breath,
 Order'd to-morrow to return to death.
 But O! beyond description happyest he,
 Who ne'er must roll on life's tumultuous sea;

Who with bless'd freedom from the gen'ral doom
Exempt, must never force the teeming womb,
Nor see the sun, nor sink into the tomb.

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Who breaths, must suffer; and who thinks, must mourn;
And he alone is bless'd, who ne'er was born.

“Yet in thy turn, thou frowning preacher, hear:
“Are not these general maxims too severe?
“Say: cannot pow'r secure its owner's bliss?
“And is not wealth the potent sire of peace?
“Are victors bless'd with fame, or kings with ease?[""]

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I tell thee, life is but one common care;
And man was born to suffer, and to fear.

“But is no rank, no station, no degree
“From this contagious taint of sorrow free?[""]

None, mortal, none: yet in a bolder strain
Let me this melancholy truth maintain:
But hence, ye worldly, and prophane, retire:
For I adapt my voice, and raise my lyre
To notions not by vulgar ear receiv'd:
Ye still must covet life, and be deceiv'd:
Your very fear of death shall make ye try
To catch the shade of immortality;
Wishing on earth to linger, and to save
Part of its prey from the devouring grave;
To those who may survive ye, to bequeath
Something entire, in spite of time, and death;

A fancy'd kind of being to retrieve,
And in a book, or from a building live.
False hope! Vain labor! Let some ages fly:
The dome shall moulder and the volume dye:
Wretches, still taught, still will ye think it strange
That all the parts of this great fabric change:
Quit their old station, and primæval frame;
And lose their shape, their essence, and their name?

Reduce the song: our hopes, our joys are vain:
Our lot is sorrow; and our portion pain.

What pause from woe, what hopes of comfort bring
The name of wise or great, of judge or king?
What is a king? A man condemn'd to bear
The public burden of the nation's care;
Now crown'd some angry faction to appease;
Now falls a victim to the people's ease:
From the first blooming of his ill-taught youth,
Nourish'd in flatt'ry, and estrang'd from truth:
At home surrounded by a servile crowd,
Prompt to abuse, and in detraction loud:
Abroad begirt with men, and swords, and spears;
His very state acknowledging his fears:
Marching amidst a thousand guards, he shows
His secret terror of a thousand foes:
Seeking to settle what for ever flies;
Sure of the toil, uncertain of the prize.

But he returns with conquest on his brow;
Brings up the triumph, and absolves the vow:

The captive generals to his carr are ty'd:
The joyful citizens tumultuous tyde
Echoing his glory, gratify his pride.
What is the triumph? Madness, shouts, and noise,
One great collection of the people's voice.
The wretches he brings back, in chains relate,
What may to-morrow be the victor's fate.
The spoils and trophies born before him, show
National loss, and epidemic woe,
Various distress, which he and his may know.
Does he not mourn the valiant thousands slain;
The heroes, once the glory of the plain,
Left in the conflict of the fatal day,
Or the wolf's portion, or the vulture's prey?
Does he not weep the lawrel, which he wears,
Wet with the soldier's blood, and widow's tears?

See, where he comes, the darling of the war!
See millions crowding round the gilded carr!
In the vast joys of this ecstatic hour,
And full fruition of successful pow'r,
One moment and one thought might let him scan
The various turns of life, and fickle state of man.

Are the dire images of sad distrust,
And popular change obscur'd a-mid the dust,
That rises from the victor's rapid wheel?
Can the loud clarion, or shrill fife repel
The inward cries of care? Can nature's voice
Plaintive be drown'd, or lessen'd in the noise;
Tho' shouts as thunder loud afflict the air;
Stun the birds now releas'd, and shake the iv'ry chair?

Yon' crowd (he might reflect) yon' joyful crowd,
Pleas'd with my honors, in my praises loud
(Should fleeting vict'ry to the vanquish'd go;
Should she depress my arms, and raise the foe)
Would for that foe with equal ardor wait
At the high palace, or the crowded gate;
With restless rage would pull my statues down,
And cast the brass a-new to his renown.

O impotent desire of worldly sway!
That I who make the triumph of to-day,
May of to-morrow's pomp one part appear,
Ghastly with wounds, and lifeless on the bier!
Then (vileness of mankind!) then of all these,
Whom my dilated eye with labor sees,
Would one, alas! repeat me good, or great?
Wash my pale body, or bewail my fate?
Or, march'd I chain'd behind the hostile carr,
The victor's pastime, and the sport of war;
Would one, would one his pitying sorrow lend,
Or be so poor, to own he was my friend?

Avails it then, O reason, to be wise?
To see this cruel scene with quicker eyes?
To know with more distinction to complain,
And have superior sense in feeling pain?

Let us revolve that roll with strictest eye,
Where safe from time distinguish'd actions lye;
And judge if greatness be exempt from pain,
Or pleasure ever may with pow'r remain.⁷⁸

⁷⁸Ori., "premain"; corrected in the errata.

Adam, great *type*, for whom the world was made,
 The fairest blessings to his arms convey'd,
 A charming wife; and air, and sea, and land,
 And all that move therein, to his command
 Render'd obedient: say, my pensive muse,
 What did these golden promises produce?
 Scarce tasting life, he was of joy bereav'd:
 One day, I think, in *paradise* he liv'd;
 Destin'd the next his journey to pursue,
 Where wounding thorns, and cursed thistles grew.
 Ere⁷⁹ yet he earns his bread, a-down his brow,
 Inclined to earth, his lab'ring sweat must flow:
 His limbs must ake, with daily toils oppress'd;
 Ere⁸⁰ long-wish'd night brings necessary rest:
 Still viewing with regret his darling Eve,
 He for her follies, and his own must grieve.
 Bewailing still a-fresh their hapless choice;
 His ear oft frighted with the imag'd voice
 Of heav'n, when first it thunder'd; oft his view
 A-ghast, as when the infant light'ning flew;
 And the stern *cherub* stopp'd the fatal road,
 Arm'd with the flames of an avenging God.
 His younger son on the polluted ground,
 First fruit of death, lies plaintive of a wound
 Giv'n by a brother's hand: his eldest birth
 Flies, mark'd by heav'n, a fugitive o'er earth.

Each age sinn'd on, and guilt advanc'd with time:
 The son still added to the father's crime;
 'Till God arose, and great in anger said:
 Lo! it repenteth me, that man was made.

⁷⁹Ori., "E'er"; but used in sense of "before."

⁸⁰Ori., "E'er"; but used in sense of "before."

Withdraw thy light, thou sun! be dark, ye skies!
And from your deep abyss, ye waters, rise!

The frightened angels heard th' Almighty Lord;
And o'er the earth from wrathful viols pour'd
Tempests and storms, obedient to his word. }
Mean time, his providence to Noah gave
The guard of all, that he design'd to save.
Exempt from general doom the patriarch stood;
Contemn'd the waves, and triumph'd o'er the flood.

The winds fall silent; and the waves decrease:
The dove brings quiet, and the olive peace:
Yet still his heart does inward sorrow feel,
Which faith alone forbids him to reveal.
If on the backward world his views are cast;
'Tis death diffus'd, and universal waste.
Present (sad prospect!) can he ought descry,
But (what affects his melancholy eye)
The beauties of the ancient fabric lost,
In chains of craggy hill, or lengths of dreary coast:
While to high heav'n his pious breathings turn'd,
Weeping he hop'd, and sacrificing mourn'd;
When of God's image only eight he found
Snatch'd from the wat'ry grave, and sav'd from nations drown'd;
And of three sons, the future hopes of earth,
The seed, whence empires must receive their birth,
One he foresees excluded heav'nly grace,
And mark'd with curses, fatal to his race.

Abraham, potent prince, the friend of God,
Of human ills must bear the destin'd load;

By blood and battles must his pow'r maintain,
And slay the monarchs, ere⁸¹ he rules the plain;
Must deal just portions of a servile life
To a proud handmaid, and a peevish wife;
Must with the mother leave the weeping son,
In want to wander, and in wilds to groan;
Must take his other child, his age's hope,
To trembling Moria's melancholy top,
Order'd to drench his knife in filial blood;
Destroy his heir, or disobey his God.

Moses beheld that God; but how beheld?
The deity in radiant beams conceal'd,
And clouded in a deep abyss of light;
While present, too severe for human sight,
Nor staying longer than one swift-wing'd night. }
The following days, and months, and years decreed
To fierce encounter, and to toilsome deed,
His youth with wants and hardships must engage:
Plots and rebellions must disturb his age.
Some Coràh still arose, some rebel slave,
Prompter to sink the state, than he to save:
And Israel did his rage so far provoke,
That what the God-head wrote, the prophet broke,
His voice scarce heard, his dictates scarce believ'd,
In camps, in arms, in pilgrimage, he liv'd;
And dy'd obedient to severest law
Forbid to tread the promis'd land, he saw.

My father's life was one long line of care,
A scene of danger, and a state of war.

⁸¹Ori., "e'er"; but used in sense of "before."

Alarm'd, expos'd, his childhood must engage
The bear's rough gripe, and foaming lion's rage.
By various turns his threaten'd youth must fear
Goliath's lifted sword, and Saul's emitted spear.
Forlorn he must, and persecuted fly;
Climb the steep mountain, in the cavern lye;
And often ask, and be refus'd to dye.

}

For ever, from his manly toils, are known
The weight of pow'r, and anguish of a crown.
What tongue can speak the restless monarch's woes;
When God, and Nathan were declar'd his foes?
When ev'ry object his offence revil'd,
The husband murder'd, and the wife defil'd,
The parent's sins impress'd upon the dying child?
What heart can think the grief which he sustain'd;
When the king's crime brought vengeance on the land
And the inexorable prophet's voice
Gave famine, plague, or war; and bid him fix his choice?

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He dy'd; and Oh! may no reflection shed
Its pois'nous venom on the royal dead:
Yet the unwilling truth must be express'd;
Which long has labor'd in this pensive breast:
Dying he added to my weight of care:
He made me to his crimes undoubted heir:
Left his unfinish'd murder to his son,
And Joab's blood intail'd on Judah's crown.

Young as I was, I hasted to fulfill
The cruel dictates of my parent's will.

Of his fair deeds a distant view I took;
 But turn'd the tube upon his faults to look;
 Forgot his youth, spent in his country's cause.
 His care of right, his rev'rence to the laws:
 But could with joy his years of folly trace,
 Broken and old in Bathsheba's embrace;
 Could follow him, where-e'er he stray'd from good,
 And cite his sad example; whilst I trod
 Paths open to deceit, and track'd with blood. }
 Soon docile to the secret acts of ill,
 With smiles I could betray, with temper kill:
 Soon in a brother could a rival view;
 Watch all his acts, and all his ways pursue.
 In vain for life he to the altar fled:
 Ambition and revenge have certain speed.
 Ev'n there, my soul, ev'n there he should have fell;
 But that my interest did my rage conceal.
 Doubling my crime, I promise, and deceive;
 Purpose to slay, whilst swearing to forgive.
 Treaties, persuasions, sighs, and tears are vain:
 With a mean lye curs'd vengeance I sustain;
 Joyn fraud to force, and policy to pow'r;
 'Till of the destin'd fugitive secure,
 In solemn state to parricide I rise;
 And, as God lives, this day my brother dies.

Be witness to my tears, celestial muse!
 In vain I would forget, in vain excuse
 Fraternal blood by my direction spilt;
 In vain on Joab's head transfer the guilt:
 The deed was acted by the subject's hand;
 The sword was pointed by the king's command.

Mine was the murder: it was mine alone;
Years of contrition must the crime atone:
Nor can my guilty soul expect relief,
But from a long sincerity of grief.

With an imperfect hand, and trembling heart,
Her love of truth superior to her art,
Already the reflecting muse has trac'd
The mournful figures of my actions past.
The pensive goddess has already taught,
How vain is hope, and how vexatious thought;
From growing childhood to declining age,
How tedious ev'ry step, how gloomy ev'ry stage.
This course of vanity almost compleat,
Tir'd in the field of life, I hope retreat
In the still shades of death: for dread and pain,
And grief will find their shafts elanc'd in vain,
And their points broke, retorted from the head,
Safe in the grave, and free among the dead.

Yet tell me, frighted reason! what is death?
Blood only stopp'd, and interrupted breath?
The utmost limit of a narrow span,
And end of motion which with life began?
As smoke that rises from the kindling fires
Is seen this moment, and the next expires:
As empty clouds by rising winds are tost,
Their fleeting forms scarce sooner found than lost:
So vanishes our state; so pass our days;
So life but opens now, and now decays:
The cradle and the tomb, alas! so nigh;
To live is scarce distinguish'd from to dye.

Cure of the miser's wish, and coward's fear,
Death only shews us, what we knew was near.
With courage therefore view th' appointed hour;
Dread not death's anger; but expect his pow'r;
Nor nature's law with fruitless sorrow mourn;
But dye, O mortal man! for thou wast born.

Cautious thro' doubt; by want of courage, wise,
To such advice the reas'ner still replies.

Yet measuring all the long continu'd space,
Ev'ry successive day's repeated race,
Since time first started from his pristine goal,
'Till he had reach'd that hour, wherein my soul
Joyn'd to my body swell'd the womb; I was,
(At least I think so) nothing: must I pass
Again to nothing, when this vital breath
Ceasing, consigns me o'er to rest, and death?
Must the whole man, amazing thought! return
To the cold marble, or contracted urn?
And never shall those particles agree,
That were in life this individual he?
But sever'd, must they join the general mass,
Thro' other forms, and shapes ordain'd to pass;
Nor thought nor image kept of what he was?
Does the great word that gave him sense, ordain,
That life shall never wake that sense again?
And will no pow'r his sinking spirits save
From the dark caves of death, and chambers of the grave?

Each evening I behold the setting sun
With down-ward speed into the ocean run:

Yet the same light (pass but some fleeting hours)
Exerts his vigor, and renews his pow'rs;
Starts the bright race again: his constant flame
Rises and sets, returning still the same.
I mark the various fury of the winds:
These neither seasons guide, nor order binds:
They now dilate, and now contract their force:
Various their speed, but endless is their course.
From his first fountain and beginning ouze,
Down to the sea each brook, and torrent flows:
Tho' sundry drops or leave, or swell the stream;
The whole still runs, with equal pace, the same.
Still other waves supply the rising urns;
And the eternal flood no want of water mourns.

Why then must man obey the sad decree,
Which subjects neither sun, nor wind, nor sea?

A flow'r, that does with opening morn arise,
And flourishing the day at evening dyes;
A winged eastern blast, just skimming o'er
The ocean's brow, and sinking on the shore;
A fire⁸² whose flames thro' crackling stubble fly;
A meteor shooting from the summer sky;
A bowl a-down the bending mountain roll'd;
A bubble breaking, and a fable told;
A noon-tide shadow, and a mid-night dream
Are emblems, which with semblance apt proclaim
Our earthly course: but, O my soul! so fast
Must life run off; and death for ever last?

⁸²Ori., "fier"; corrected in the errata.

This dark opinion, sure, is too confin'd:
Else whence this hope, and terror of the mind?
Does something still, and somewhere yet remain,
Reward or punishment, delight or pain?
Say: shall our relicks second birth receive?
Sleep we to wake, and only dye to live?
When the sad wife has clos'd her husband's eyes,
And pierc'd the echoing vault with doleful cries;
Lies the pale corpse not yet entirely dead?
The spirit only from the body fled,
The grosser part of heat and motion void,
To be by fire, or worm, or time destroy'd;
The soul, immortal substance, to remain,
Conscious of joy, and capable of pain?
And if her acts have been directed well,
While with her friendly clay she deign'd to dwell;
Shall she with safety reach her pristine seat?
Find her rest endless, and her bliss compleat?
And while the buried man we idly mourn;
Do angels joy to see his better half return?
But if she has deform'd this earthly life
With murd'rous rapine, and seditious strife;
Amaz'd, repuls'd, and by those angels driv'n
From the ætherial seat, and blissful heav'n,
In everlasting darkness must she lye,
Still more unhappy, that she cannot die?

Amid two seas on one small point of land
Weary'd, uncertain, and amaz'd we stand:
On either side our thoughts incessant turn:
Forward we dread; and looking back we mourn.

Losing the present in this dubious hast;
And lost our selves betwixt the future, and the past.
These cruel doubts contending in my breast,
My reason stagg'ring, and my hopes oppress'd,
Once more I said: once more I will enquire,
What is this little, agile, pervious fire,
This flutt'ring motion, which we call the mind?
How does she act? and where is she confin'd?
Have we the pow'r to guide her, as we please?
Whence then those evils, that obstruct our ease?
We happiness pursue; we fly from pain;
Yet the pursuit, and yet the flight is vain:
And, while poor nature labours to be blest,
By day with pleasure, and by night with rest;
Some stronger pow'r eludes our sickly will;
Dashes our rising hope with certain ill;
And makes us with reflective trouble see,
That all is destin'd, which we fancy free.

That pow'r superior then, which rules our mind,
Is his decree by human pray'r inclin'd?
Will he for sacrifice our sorrows ease?
And can our tears reverse his firm decrees?
Then let religion aid, where reason fails:
Throw loads of incense in to turn the scales;
And let the silent sanctuary show,
What from the babling schools we may not know, }
How man may shun, or bear his destin'd part of woe.

What shall amend, or what absolve our fate?
Anxious we hover in a mediate state,

Betwixt infinity and nothing; bounds,
Or boundless terms, whose doubtful sense confounds.
Unequal thought; whilst all we apprehend,
Is, that our hopes must rise, our sorrows end;
As our Creator deigns to be our friend.

I said;—and instant bad the priests prepare
The ritual sacrifice, and solemn pray'r.
Select from vulgar herds, with garlands gay,
A hundred bulls ascend the sacred way.
The artful youth proceed to form the choir;
They breath the flute, or strike the vocal wire.
The maids in comely order next advance;
They beat the tymbrel, and instruct the dance.
Follows the chosen tribe from Levi sprung,
Chanting by just return the holy song.
Along the choir in solemn state they past.
—The anxious king came last.
The sacred hymn perform'd, my promis'd vow
I paid; and bowing at the altar low.

Father of heav'n! I said, and judge of earth!
Whose word call'd out this universe to birth;
By whose kind pow'r and influencing care
The various creatures move, and live, and are;
But, ceasing once that care, withdrawn that pow'r,
They move (alas!) and live, and are no more:
Omni-scient Master, omni-present King,
To thee, to thee, my last distress I bring.

Thou, that can'st still the raging of the seas,
Chain up the winds, and bid the tempests cease;

Redeem my ship-wreck'd soul from raging gusts
 Of cruel passion, and deceitful lusts:
 From storms of rage, and dang'rous rocks of pride,
 Let thy strong hand this little vessel guide
 (It was thy hand that made it) thro' the tide.
 Impetuous of this life: let thy command
 Direct my course, and bring me safe to land.

If, while this weary'd flesh draws fleeting breath,
 Not satisfy'd with life, afraid of death,
 It hap'ly be thy will, that I should know
 Glimpse of delight, or pause from anxious woe;
 From *now*, from instant *now*, great Sire, dispell
 The clouds that press my soul; from *now* reveal
 A gracious beam of light; from *now* inspire
 My tongue to sing, my hand to touch the lyre;
 My open'd thought to joyous prospects raise;
 And, for thy mercy, let me sing thy praise.
 Or, if thy will ordains, I still shall wait
 Some new *here-after*, and a future state;
 Permit me strength, my weight of woe to bear;
 And raise my mind superior to my care.
 Let me, howe'er unable to explain
 The secret lab'rynths of thy ways to man,
 With humble zeal confess thy awful pow'r;
 Still weeping hope, and wond'ring still adore.
 So in my conquest be thy might declar'd:
 And, for thy justice, be thy name rever'd.

My pray'r scarce ended, a stupendous gloom
 Darkens the air; loud thunder shakes the dome:
 To the beginning miracle succeed
 An awful silence, and religious dread.

Sudden breaks forth a more than common day:
 The sacred wood, which on the altar lay,
 Untouch'd, unlighted glows—
Ambrosial odor, such as never flows
 From Arab's gum, or the Sabæan rose,
 Does round the air evolving scents diffuse:
 The holy ground is wet with heav'nly dews:
 Celestial music (such Jessides' lyre,
 Such Miriam's timbrel would in vain require)
 Strikes to my thought thro'⁸³ my admiring ear,
 With ecstasy too fine,⁸⁴ and pleasure hard to bear:
 And lo! what sees my ravish'd eye? What feels
 My wond'ring soul? An opening cloud reveals
 An heav'nly form embody'd, and array'd
 With robes of light. I heard: the angel said.

Cease, man of woman born, to hope relief
 From daily trouble, and continu'd grief.
 Thy hope of joy deliver to the wind:
 Suppress thy passions; and prepare thy mind.
 Free and familiar with misfortune grow:
 Be us'd to sorrow, and inur'd to woe.
 By weak'ning toil, and hoary age o'ercome,
 See thy decrease; and hasten to thy tomb.
 Leave to thy children tumult, strife, and war,
 Portions of toil, and legacies of care.
 Send the successive ills thro' ages down;
 And let each weeping father tell his son,
 That deeper struck, and more distinctly griev'd,
 He must augment the sorrows he receiv'd.

The child to whose success thy hope is bound,
 Ere⁸⁵ thou art scarce interr'd, or he is crown'd;

⁸³Ori., “tho’”; a printer’s error.

⁸⁴Ori., “find”; a printer’s error.

⁸⁵Ori., “E’er”; but used in sense of “before.”

To lust of arbitrary sway inclin'd
(That cursed poyson to the prince's mind!)
Shall from thy dictates and his duty rove,
And lose his great defence, his people's love.
Ill counsell'd, vanquish'd, fugitive, disgrac'd,
Shall mourn the fame of Jacob's strength effac'd.
Shall sigh, the king diminish'd, and the crown
With lessen'd rays descending to his son.
Shall see the wreaths, his grandsire knew to reap
By active toil, and military sweat,
Pining incline their sickly leaves, and shed
Their falling honours from his giddy head.
By arms, or pray'r, unable to assuage
Domestic horror, and intestine rage,
Shall from the victor, and the vanquish'd fear,
From Israel's arrow, and from Judah's spear:
Shall cast his weary'd limbs on Jordan's flood,
By brother's arms disturb'd, and stain'd with kindred-blood.

Hence lab'ring years shall weep their destin'd race
Charg'd with ill omens, sully'd with disgrace,
Time by necessity compell'd, shall go
Thro' scenes of war, and epocha's of woe.
The empire lessen'd in a parted stream,
Shall lose its course—
Indulge thy tears: the heathen shall blaspheme:
Judah shall fall, oppress'd by grief and shame;
And men shall from her ruins know her fame.

New Ægypt yet, and second bonds remain,
A harsher Pharaoh, and a heavier chain.

Again obedient to a dire command,
Thy captive sons shall leave the promis'd land.
Their name more low, their servitude more vile,
Shall, on Euphrates' bank, renew the grief of Nile.

These pointed spires that wound the ambient sky,
Inglorious change! shall in destruction lye
Low, levell'd with the dust: their heights unknown,
Or measur'd by their ruin. Yonder throne,
For lasting glory built, design'd the seat
Of kings for ever blest, for ever great,
Remov'd by the invader's barb'rous hand,
Shall grace his triumph in a foreign land.
The tyrant shall demand yon' sacred load
Of gold and vessels set a-part to God,
Then by vile hands to common use debas'd;
Shall send them flowing round his drunken feast,
With sacrilegious taunt, and impious jest.

Twice fourteen ages shall their way complete:
Empires by various turns shall rise and set;
While thy abandon'd tribes shall only know
A diff'rent master, and a change of woe:
With down-cast eye-lids, and with looks a-gast,
Shall dread the future, or bewail the past.

Afflicted Israel shall sit weeping down,
Fast by the streams, where Babel's waters run;
Their harps upon the neighb'ring willows hung,
Nor joyous hymn encouraging their tongue,
Nor chearful dance their feet; with toil oppress'd,
Their weary'd limbs aspiring but to rest.
In the reflective stream the sighing bride,

Viewing her charms impair'd, abash'd shall hide
 Her pensive head; and in her languid face
 The bridegroom shall fore-see his sickly race:
 While pond'rous fetters vex their close embrace. }
 With irksome anguish then your priests shall mourn
 Their long-neglected feasts despair'd return,
 And sad oblivion of their solemn days.
 Thenceforth their voices they shall only raise,
 Louder to weep. By day your frightened seers
 Shall call for fountains to express their tears;
 And wish their eyes were floods: by night from dreams.
 Of opening gulphs, black storms, and raging flames,
 Starting amaz'd, shall to the people show
 Emblems of heav'nly wrath, and mystic types of woe.

The captives, as their tyrant shall require,
 That they should breath the song, and touch the lyre,
 Shall say: can Jacob's servile race rejoice,
 Untun'd the music, and disus'd the voice?
 What can we play (they shall discourse) how sing
 In foreign lands, and to a barb'rous king?
 We and our fathers from our childhood bred
 To watch the cruel victor's eye, to dread
 The arbitrary⁸⁶ lash, to bend, to grieve
 (Out-cast of mortal race!) can we conceive
 Image of ought delightful, soft, or gay?
 Alas! when we have toyl'd the long-some day;
 The fullest bliss our hearts aspire to know,
 Is but some interval from active woe;
 In broken rest, and startling sleep to mourn,
 'Till morn, the tyrant, and the scourge return.

⁸⁶Ori., "arbitrary"; corrected in the errata.

Bred up in grief, can pleasure be our theme?
Our endless anguish does not nature claim?
Reason, and sorrow are to us the same. }

This is the series of perpetual woe,
Which thou, alas! and thine are born to know.
Illustrious wretch! repine not, nor reply:
View not, what heav'n ordains, with reason's eye }
Too bright the object is: the distance is too high.
The man who would resolve the work of fate,
May limit number, and make crooked strait:
Stop thy enquiry then; and curb thy sense;
Nor let dust argue with omnipotence.
'Tis God who must dispose, and man sustain,
Born to endure, forbidden to complain,
Thy sum of life must his decrees fulfill; }
What derogates from his command, is ill;
And that alone is good, which centers in his will. }

Yet that thy lab'ring senses may not droop,
Lost to delight, and destitute of hope;
Remark what I, God's messenger, aver
From him, who neither can deceive nor err.
The land at length redeem'd, shall cease to mourn;
Shall from her sad captivity return.
Sion shall raise her long-dejected head;
And in her courts the law again be read.
Again the glorious temple shall arise,
And with new lustre pierce the neighb'ring skies.
The promis'd seat of empire shall again
Cover the mountain, and command the plain;
And from thy race distinguish'd, One shall spring,
Greater in act than victor, more than king

In dignity and pow'r, sent down from heav'n,
To succour earth. To him, to him, 'tis giv'n,
Passion, and care, and anguish to destroy.
Thro' him soft peace, and plenitude of joy
Perpetual o'er the world redeem'd shall flow.
No more may man inquire, nor angel know.

Now, Solomon, rememb'ring who thou art,
Act thro' thy remnant life the decent part.
Go forth: be strong: with patience, and with care
Perform, and suffer: to thy self severe,
Gracious to others, thy desires suppress'd,
Diffus'd thy virtues, first of men, be best.
Thy sum of duty let two words contain:
O may they graven in thy heart remain!
Be humble, and be just. The angel said:
With upward speed his agil wings he spread;
Whilst on the holy ground I prostrate lay.
By various doubts impell'd, or to obey,
Or to object: at length (my mournful look
Heav'n-ward erect) determin'd, thus I spoke:

Supreme, all-wise, Eternal Potentate!
Sole Author, sole Disposer of our fate!
Enthron'd in light, and immortality,
Whom no man fully sees, and none can see!
Original of beings! Pow'r divine!
Since that I live, and that I think, is thine;
Benign Creator, let thy plastic hand
Dispose its own effect. Let thy command
Restore, great Father, thy instructed son;
And in my act may *thy great will be done*.

**The
Humble Enquiry.**

A French Sonnet Imitated. 1695.⁸⁷

“Grand Dieu, tes Jugemens, &c.”

1. Grace rules below, and sits enthron'd above,
How few the sparks of wrath! how slow they move,
And drop and die in boundless seas of love!
2. But me, vile wretch! should pitying love embrace
Deep in its ocean, hell it self would blaze,
And flash, and burn me thro' the boundless seas.
3. Yea, Lord, my guilt to such a vastness grown
Seems to confine thy choice to wrath alone,
And calls thy power to vindicate thy throne.
4. Thine honour bids, “Avenge thine injur'd name”;
Thy slighted loves a dreadful glory claim,
While my moist tears might but incense thy flame.

⁸⁷Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 20–21.

5. Should heaven grow black, almighty thunder roar,
And vengeance blast me, I could plead no more,
But own thy justice dying, and adore.
6. Yet can those bolts of death that cleave the flood
To reach a rebel, pierce this sacred shroud
Ting'd in the vital stream of my Redeemer's blood?

Death and Eternity.⁸⁸

1. My thoughts, that often mount the skies,
Go, search the world beneath,
Where nature all in ruin lies,
And owns her sovereign, death.
2. The tyrant how he triumphs here!
His trophies spread around!
And heaps of dust and bones appear
Thro' all the hollow ground.
3. These skulls, what ghastly figures now!
How loathsome to the eyes!
These are the heads we lately knew
So beauteous and so wise.

⁸⁸Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 28–30.

4. But where the souls, those deathless things,
That left this dying clay?
My thoughts, now stretch out all your wings,
And trace eternity.
5. O that unfathomable sea!
Those deeps without a shore!
Where living waters gently play,
Or fiery billows roar.
6. Thus must we leave the banks of life,
And try this doubtful sea;
Vain are our groans, and dying strife,
To gain a moment's stay.
7. There we shall swim in heav'nly bliss,
Or sink in flaming waves,
While the pale carcase thoughtless lies,
Among the silent graves.
8. Some hearty friend shall drop his tear
On our dry bones, and say,
"These once were strong, as mine appear,
"And mine must be as they."^[b]

9. Thus shall our mould'ring members teach
What now our senses learn:
For dust and ashes loudest preach
Man's infinite concern.

**Sun, Moon and Stars,
Praise Ye the Lord.⁸⁹**

1. Fairest of all the lights above,
Thou sun, whose beams adorn the spheres,
And with unweary'd swiftness move,
To form the circles of the years;
2. Praise the Creator of the skies,
That dress'd thine orb in golden rays:
Or may the sun forget to rise,
When he forget his Maker's praise.
3. Thou reigning beauty of the night,
Fair queen of silence, silver moon,
Whose gentle beams, and borrow'd light,
Are softer rivals of the noon;

⁸⁹Source: Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 45–47. Published by Wesley earlier in *CPH* (1737), 70–71.

4. Arise, and to that sov'reign pow'r
Waxing and waning honours pay,
Who bid thee rule the dusky hours,
And half supply the absent day.
5. Ye glittering stars, who gild the skies
When darkness has its curtains drawn,
Who keep your watch, with wakeful eyes,
When business, cares, and day are gone;
6. Proclaim the glories of your Lord,
Dispers'd thro' all the heav'nly street,
Whose boundless treasures can afford
So rich a pavement for his feet.
7. Thou heav'n of heav'ns, supremely bright,
Fair palace of the court divine,
Where, with inimitable light,
The Godhead condescends to shine;
8. Praise thou thy great inhabitant,
Who scatters lovely beams of grace
On every angel, every saint,
Nor veils the lustre of his face.

9. O God of glory, God of love,
Thou art the sun that makes our days:
With all thy shining works above,
Let earth and dust attempt thy praise.

True Learning.
Partly Imitated from a French Sonnet
of Mr. Poiret.⁹⁰

1. Happy the feet that shining *truth* has led
With her own hand to tread the path she please,
To see her native lustre round her spread,
 Without a veil, without a shade,
All beauty, and all light, as in her self she is.
2. Our senses cheat us with the pressing crowds
Of painted shapes they thrust upon the mind:
The truth they shew lies wrap'd in sev'nfold shrowds,
 Our senses cast a thousand clouds
On unenlightned souls, and leave them doubly blind.
3. I hate the dust that fierce disputers raise,
And lose the mind in a wild maze of thought:
What empty triflings, and what subtil ways,

⁹⁰Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 51–53.

To fence and guard by rule and rote!
Our God will never charge us, that we knew them not.

4. Touch, heavenly Word, O touch these curious souls;
Since I have heard but one soft hint from thee,
From all the vain opinions of the schools
 (That pageantry of knowing fools)
I feel my powers releas'd, and stand divinely free.
5. 'Twas this Almighty Word that all things made,
He grasps whole nature in his single hand;
All the eternal truths in him are laid,
 The ground of all things, and their head,
The circle where they move, and center where they stand.
6. Without his aid I have no sure defence,
From troops of errors that besiege me round;
But he that rests his reason and his sense
 Fast here, and never wanders hence,
Unmoveable he dwells upon unshaken ground.
7. Infinite TRUTH, the life of my desires,
Come from the sky, and join thy self to me;
I'm tir'd with hearing, and this reading tires;
 But never tir'd of telling thee,
'Tis thy fair face alone my spirit burns to see.

8. Speak to my soul alone, no other hand
Shall mark my path out with delusive art:
All nature silent in his presence stand,
Creatures, be dumb at his command,
And leave his single voice to whisper to my heart.
9. Retire, my soul, within thy self retire,
Away from sense and every outward show:
Now let my thoughts to loftier themes aspire,
My knowledge now on wheels of fire
May mount, and spread above, surveying all below.
10. The Lord grows lavish of his heav'nly light,
And pours whole floods on such a mind as this:
Fled from the eyes she gains a piercing sight,
She dives into the infinite,
And sees unutterable things in that unknown abyss.

God's Absolute Dominion.⁹¹

1. Lord, when my thoughtful soul surveys
Fire, air and earth, and stars and seas,
I call them all thy slaves;
Commission'd by my Father's will,
Poysons shall cure, or balms shall kill;

⁹¹Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 60–62.

Vernal suns, or *zephyr's* breath,
May burn or blast the plants to death
That sharp December saves.
What can winds or planets boast
But a precarious pow'r?
The sun is all in darkness lost,
Frost shall be fire, and fire be frost,
When he appoints the hour.

2. Lo, the Norwegians near the polar sky
Chafe their frozen limbs with snow,
Their frozen limbs awake and glow,
The vital flame touch'd with a strange supply
Rekindles, for the God of life is nigh;
He bids the vital flood in wonted circles flow.
Cold steel expos'd to northern air,
Drinks the meridian fury of the midnight *Bear*,
And burns th' unwary stranger there.

3. Enquire, my soul of ancient fame,
Look back two thousand years, and see
Th' Assyrian prince transform'd a brute,
For boasting to be absolute:
Once to his court the God of Israel came,
A *King* more absolute than he:
I see the furnace blaze with rage
Sevenfold: I see amidst the flame
Three Hebrews of immortal name;
They move, they walk across the burning stage
Unhurt, and fearless, while the tyrant stood

A statue; fear congeal'd his blood:
Nor did the raging element dare
Attempt their garments, or their hair;
It knew the Lord of nature there.
Nature, compell'd by a superior cause,
Now breaks her own eternal laws,
Now seems to break them; and obeys
Her sov'reign King in different ways.
Father, how bright thy glories shine!
How broad thy kingdom, how divine!
Nature, and miracle, and fate, and chance are thine.

4. Hence from my heart, ye idols, flee,
Ye sounding names of vanity!
No more my lips shall sacrifice
To chance and nature, tales and lies:
Creatures without a God can yield me no supplies.
What is the sun, or what the shade,
Or frosts, or flames, to kill or save?
His favour is my life, his lips pronounce me dead;
And as his awful dictates bid
Earth is my mother, or my grave.

**Young Men and Maidens, Old Men and
Babes, Praise Ye the Lord,
Psalm cxlviii. 12.⁹²**

1. Sons of Adam, bold and young,
In the wild mazes of whose veins
A flood of fiery vigor reigns,
And weilds your active limbs, with hardy sinews strung;
Fall prostrate to th' eternal throne
Whence your precarious pow'rs depend;
Nor swell as if your lives were all your own,
But chuse your Maker for your friend;
His favour is your life, and your support;
His hand can stretch your days, or cut your minutes short.

2. Virgins, who roll your artful eyes,
And shoot delicious danger thence;
Swift the lovely lightning flies,
And melts out reason down to sense;
Boast not of those withering charms
That must yield their youthful grace
To age and wrinkles, earth and worms;
But love the Author of your smiling face;
That heavenly bridegroom claims your blooming hours.

⁹²Source: Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 69. Published by Wesley earlier in *CPH* (1738), 75–76.

O make it your perpetual care
To please that everlasting fair;
His beauties are the sun, and but the shade is yours.

3. Infants, whose different destinies
Are wove with threads of different size;
But from the same spring-tide of tears,
Commence your hopes, and joys, and fears,
(A tedious train!) and date your following years:
Break your first silence in his praise
Who wrought your wondrous frame:
With sounds of tenderest accent raise
Young honours to his name;
And consecrate your early days
To know the pow'r supreme.

4. Ye heads of venerable age,
Just marching off the mortal stage,
Fathers, whose vital threads are spun
As long as e'er the glass of life would run,
Adore the hand that led your way
Thro' flow'ry fields a fair long summer's day:
Gasp out your soul to praise the sovereign pow'r
By whom ye soon shall live, to die no more.

**Flying Fowl, and Creeping Things,
Praise Ye the Lord, Ps. cxlviii. 10.⁹³**

1. Sweet flocks, whose soft enamell'd wing
Swift and gently cleaves the sky;
Whose charming notes address the spring
With an artless harmony.
Lovely minstrels of the field,
Who in leafy shadows sit,
And your wond'rous structures build,
Awake your tuneful voices with the dawning light;
To nature's God your first devotions pay,
Ere⁹⁴ you salute the rising day,
'Tis he calls up the sun, and gives him every ray.

2. Serpents, who o'er the meadows slide,
And wear upon your shining back
Num'rous ranks of gaudy pride,
Which thousand mingling colours make:
Let the glancings of your eyes
Rebate their baleful fire;
In harmless play twist and unfold
The volumes of your scaly gold:
That rich embroidery of your gay attire,
Proclaims your Maker kind and wise.

⁹³Source: Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 71. Published by Wesley earlier in *CPH* (1738), 76–77.

⁹⁴Ori., “E'er”; but used in sense of “before.”

3. Insects and mites, of mean degree,
That swarm in myriads o'er the land,
Moulded by wisdom's artful hand,
And curl'd and painted with a various die;
In your innumerable forms
Praise him that wears th' ethereal crown,
And bends his lofty counsels down
To despicable worms.

**The
God of Thunder.**⁹⁵

1. O the immense, th' amazing height,
The boundless grandeur of our God,
Who treads the worlds beneath his feet,
And sways the nations with his nod!
2. He speaks; and lo, all nature shakes,
Heav'n's everlasting pillars bow;
He rends the clouds with hideous cracks,
And shoots his fiery arrows through.
3. Well, let the nations start and fly
At the blue lightning's horrid glare,

⁹⁵Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 81–82.

Atheists and emperors shrink and die,
When flame and noise torment the air.

4. Let noise and flame confound the skies,
And drown⁹⁶ the spacious realms below,
Yet will we sing the thunderer's praise,
And send our loud *hosannas* through.
5. Celestial King, thy blazing power
Kindles our hearts to flaming joys,
We shout to hear thy thunders roar,
And echo to our Father's voice.
6. Thus shall the God our Saviour come,
And lightnings round his chariot play:
Ye lightnings, fly to make him room,
Ye glorious storms, prepare his way.

**Fire, Air, Earth and Sea,
Praise Ye the Lord.**⁹⁷

1. Earth, thou great footstool of our God
Who reigns on high; thou fruitful source
Of all our raiment, life and food;
Our house, our parent, and our nurse;
Mighty stage of mortal scenes,
Drest with strong and gay machines,
Hung with golden lamps around;

⁹⁶Ori., "down"; a printer's error.

⁹⁷Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 89–91.

(And flow'ry carpets spread the ground)
Thou bulky globe, (prodigious mass,
That hangs unpillar'd in an empty space!)
While thy vast weight rests on the feeble air,
Bless that almighty word that fix'd and holds thee there.

2. *Fire*, thou swift herald of his face,
Whose glorious rage, at his command,
Levels a palace with the sand,
Blending the lofty spires in ruin with the base:
Ye heav'nly flames, that singe the air,
Artillery of a jealous God,
Bright arrows that his sounding quivers bear
To scatter deaths abroad;
Lightnings, adore the sovereign arm that flings
His vengeance, and your fires, upon the heads of kings.

3. Thou vital element, the *air*,
Whose boundless magazines of breath
Our fainting flame of life repair,
And save the bubble *man* from the cold arms of death:
And ye, whose vital moisture yields
Life's purple stream a fresh supply;
Sweet *waters*, wandring thro' the flowry fields,
Or dropping from the sky;
Confess the pow'r whose all-sufficient name
Nor⁹⁸ needs your aid to build, or to support our frame.

⁹⁸Ori., "Not"; a printer's error.

4. Now the rude *air*, with noisy force,
 Beats up and swells the angry sea,
 They join to make our lives a prey,
 And sweep the sailors hopes away,
Vain hopes, to reach their kindred and the shores!
 Lo, the wild seas and surging waves
 Gape hideous in a thousand graves:
Be still, ye floods, and know your bounds of sand,
 Ye storms, adore your Master's hand;
The winds are in his fist, the waves at his command.

5. From the eternal emptiness
 His fruitful word by secret springs
 Drew the whole harmony of things
 That form this noble universe:
 Old nothing knew his pow'rful hand,
 Scarce had he spoke his full command,
Fire, air, earth and *sea* heard the call,
And leap'd from nothing to this beauteous all;
 And still they dance, and still obey
The orders they receiv'd the great creation-day.

Happy Frailty.⁹⁹

1. “How meanly dwells th’ immortal mind!
“How vile these bodies are!
“Why was a clod of earth design’d
“To enclose a heavenly star?
2. “Weak cottage where our souls reside!
“This flesh a tott’ring wall;
“With frightful breaches gaping wide
“The building bends to fall.
3. “All round it storms of trouble blow,
“And waves of sorrow roll;
“Cold waves and winter storms beat through,
“And pain the tenant-soul.
4. “Alas! how frail our state!” said I;
And thus went mourning on,
’Till sudden from the cleaving sky
A gleam of glory shone.
5. My soul all felt the glory come,
And breath’d her native air;

⁹⁹Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 99–101.

Then she remember'd heaven her home,
And she a prisoner here.

6. Straight she began to change her key,
And joyful in her pains,
She sung the frailty of her clay
In pleasurable strains.
7. "How weak the pris'n is where I dwell!
"Flesh but a tottering wall,
"The breaches chearfully foretel,
"The house must shortly fall.
8. "No more, my friends, shall I complain,
"Tho' all my heart-strings ake;
"Welcome disease, and every pain,
"That makes the cottage shake.
9. "Now let the tempest blow all round,
"Now swell the surges high,
"And beat this house of bondage down,
"To let the stranger fly.
10. "I have a mansion built above
"By the eternal hand;
"And should the earth's old basis move,
"My heav'nly house must stand.

11. “Yes, for ’tis there my Saviour reigns,
“I long to see the God)
“And his immortal strength sustains
“The courts that cost him blood.”
12. Hark, from on high my Saviour calls:
“I come, my Lord, my Love:”
Devotion breaks the prison-walls,
And speeds my last remove.

Casimiri Epigramma 100.¹⁰⁰

*In sanctum Ardalionem qui ex mimo
Christianus factus martyrium passus est.*

*Ardalio sacros deridet carmine ritus,
Fastaque non æqua voce theatra quatit.
Audiit omnipotens; “Non est opus inquit, hiulco
“Fulmine; tam facilem, gratia, vince virum.”
Deserit illa polos, and deserit iste theatrum,
Et tereti sacrum volvit in ense caput.
“Sic sic, inquit, abit nostræ comædia vitæ;
“Terra vale, cælum plaude, tyranne feri.”¹⁰¹*

¹⁰⁰Isaac Watts, *Horæ Lyricæ* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 112.

¹⁰¹Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, *Lyricorum Libri IV: epodon lib unus alterque epigrammatum* (Cambridge: Richard Green, 1684), 206 (Epigram #100).

Englised.

“On St. Ardalion, who from a stage-player
became a Christian, and suffered
martyrdom.”¹⁰²

1. Ardalion jeers, and in his comick strains
The mysteries of our bleeding God profanes,
While his loud laughter shakes the painted scenes.
2. Heaven heard, and strait around the smoaking throne
The kindling lightning in thick flashes shone,
And vengeful thunder murmur'd to be gone.
3. Mercy stood near, and with a smiling brow
Calm'd the loud thunder; “There’s no need of you;
“Grace shall descend, and the weak man subdue.”
4. Grace leaves the skies, and he the stage forsakes,
He bows his head down to the martyring ax,
And as he bows, this gentle farewell speaks;
5. “So goes the comedy of life away;
“Vain earth, adieu, heaven will applaud to day;
“Strike, courteous tyrant, and conclude the play.”^[*]

¹⁰²Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 113.

Ascending to Christ in Heaven.¹⁰³

1. 'Tis pure delight, without alloy,
 Jesus, to hear thy name,
My spirit leaps with inward joy,
 I feel the sacred flame.
2. My passions hold a pleasing reign,
 While love inspires my breast,
Love, the divinest of the train,
 The sovereign of the rest.
3. This is the grace must live and sing,
 When faith and fear shall cease,
Must sound from every joyful string
 Thro' the sweet groves of bliss.
4. Let life immortal seize my clay;
 Let love refine my blood;
Her flames can bear my soul away,
 Can bring me near my God.
5. Swift I ascend the heavenly place,
 And hasten to my home,

¹⁰³Isaac Watts, *Horae Lyricae* (London: Humfreys, 1709), 146–47.

I leap to meet thy kind embrace,
I come, O Lord, I come.

6. Sink down, ye separating hills,
Let guilt and death remove,
'Tis love that drives my chariot-wheels,
And death must yield to love.

**From
Mrs. Eliz. Rowe.**

Hymn.¹⁰⁴

1. In vain the dusky night retires,
And sullen shadows fly:
In vain the morn with purple light
Adorns the eastern sky:
2. In vain the gaudy rising sun
The wide horrizon gilds,
Comes glitt'ring o'er the silver streams,
And cheers the dewy fields:
3. In vain, dispensing vernal sweets
The morning breezes play;

¹⁰⁴Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Hymn V," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:35–36.

In vain the birds with chearful songs
Salute the new-born day:

4. In vain! unless my Saviour's face
 These gloomy clouds controul,
And dissipate the sullen shades
 That press my drooping soul.
5. O! visit then thy servant, Lord,
 With favour from on high:
Arise, my bright immortal sun!
 And all these shades will die.
6. When, when, shall I behold thy face
 All radiant and serene,
Without these envious dusky clouds
 That make a veil between?
7. When shall that long-expected day
 Of sacred vision be,
When my impatient soul shall make
 A *near approach* to thee?

A
Pastoral
on the Nativity of our Saviour.¹⁰⁵

In Imitation of an Italian Pastoral.

Menalcas.

Some mighty things these awful signs portend!
Amaz'd we see new stars the skies ascend;
A thousand strange usurping lights appear,
And dart their sudden glories thro' the air;
A dazzling day, without the sun, returns,
And thro' the midnight's dusky horror burns.

Palemon.

And in the depth of winter, spring appears,
For lo! the ground, a sudden verdure wears;
The op'ning flow'rs display their gaudiest dye,
And seem with all the summer's pride to vie.

Uranio.

Nor without myst'ry are these joys that roll
In torrents thro' my now prophetic soul,
And softly whisper to my ravish'd breast,
That more than all the tribes the race of Judah's blest.

¹⁰⁵Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:37–42.

Menalcas.

But see, the eastern skies disclose a light
Beyond the noontide's flaming glories bright;
This way its course the sacred vision bends,
And with much state and solemn pomp descends.
Sonorous voices echo from a-far,
And softly warble thro' the trembling air:
The circling spheres the charming sound prolong,
And answer all the cadence of their song:
And now the sacred harmony draws near,
And now a thousand heav'nly forms appear.

Angels.

Immortal glory give to God on high,
Thro' all the lofty stations of the sky;
Let joy on earth, and endless peace ensue,
The great Messiah's born, thrice happy men! to you.

Uranio.

The great Messiah born! transporting sound!
To the wide world spread the blest accents round:
What joy these long-expected tidings bring!
To us is born a Saviour and a King.

Angels.

An infant in a virgin's arms he lies,
Who rides the winds, and thunders thro' the skies;
The God to whom the flaming seraphs bow,
Descends to lead the life of mortals now.

Menalcas.

—Surprising pow'r of love!
Ev'n God himself thy mighty force does prove;
Thou rul'st the world below, and govern'st all above. }

Palemon.

You shining messengers, be farther kind,
And tell us where the wondrous child to find.

Angels.

Come on, we'll lead you to the poor abode,
Where in a manger lies th' incarnate God;
Reduc'd to lodge among the sordid beasts,
Who all the spacious realms of light possess'd;
And he whose humble ministers we were,
Becomes a tender virgin's helpless care.
Thro' heav'n, but now, the hasty tidings rung,
And anthems on the wond'rous theme they sung.

Palemon.

But to what happy maid of human race
Has heav'n allotted this peculiar grace?

Angels.

Ye echoing skies, repeat Maria's name;
Maria thro' the starry worlds proclaim:

In her bright face celestial graces shine,
Her mind's enrich'd with treasures all divine,
From David's royal house descends her noble line.
But see the humble seat, the poor abode,
That holds the virgin with the infant God.

}

Menalcas.

Thee, virgin-born, thus prostrate, I adore,
And offer here the choice of all my store.
Untill'd the earth shall now vast harvests yield,
And laughing plenty crown the open field.
Clear rivers in the desarts shall be seen,
And barren wastes cloath'd in eternal green.
Instead of thorns the stately fir shall rise,
And wave his lofty head amidst the skies;
Where thistles once, shall fragrant myrtles grow,
The beauteous rose on ev'ry bush shall glow,
And from the purple grape rich wines, unpress'd shall flow.

}

Palemon.

Great star of Jacob, that so bright dost rise,
Turn, lovely infant, thy auspicious eyes;
This soft and spotless wool to thee I bring,
My earliest tribute to the new-born King.
With thee each sacred virtue takes its birth,
And peace and justice now shall rule the earth.
Thou shalt the bliss of *paradise* restore,
And wars and tumults shall be heard no more.
The wolf and lamb shall now together feed,
And with the ox the lions savage breed.

The child shall with the harmless serpent play,
And lead, unhurt, the gentle beast away.
And where the sun ascends the shining east,
And where he ends his journey in the west,
Thy glorious name shall be ador'd and blest.

}

Uranio.

The hope of Israel, hail!—with humble zeal
To thee, unquestion'd Son of God, I kneel:
All hail to thee! of whom the prophets old
Such mighty things to our forefathers told.
Thy kingdom shall from sea to sea extend,
And reach the spacious world's remotest end.
The spicy isle, and Saba's wealthy king,
To thee from far shall costly presents bring.
Thy steadfast throne shall stand for ever fast,
And thy dominion time itself out-last.

This, gentle lamb, the best my flocks afford,
I bring an off'ring to all nature's Lord.

Angels.

And we, the regents of the spheres, thus low
Before mankind's illustrious Saviour bow:
Astonish'd, in an infant's form we see
Disguis'd th' ineffable divinity:
Who arm'd with thunder, on the fields of light
O'ercame the potent seraphim in fight.
Thus humbled—O unbounded force of love!
Subdu'd by that, from all the joys above,
Thou cam'st the wretched life of man to prove.
And thus our ruin'd numbers wilt supply,
And fill the desolations of the sky.

}

**The
Conflagration.**

An Ode.¹⁰⁶

1. Supine as men before the deluge lay,
 In melting joys and luxury dissolv'd,
Till swift destruction swept them all away,
 The stupid world will then be found;
In all licentiousness and sin involv'd,
When loud to judgment the last trumpets sound.
 Then time shall be no more,
Nor months and years proportion'd by the sun;
 Which ne'er again shall run,
With vig'rous pride, the shining zodiac o'er.

2. And now begins the universal wreck;
The wheels of nature stand, or change their course,
And backward hurrying with disorder'd force,
 The long establish'd laws of motion break.
The refluent rivers to their fountains run,
Their antient paths and well-known channels shun.
 The seas their sandy banks deride,
 And know their bounds no more,
Against the rocks with stormy pride,

¹⁰⁶Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:86–92.

The angry billows roar:
Now swelling, like transparent mounts appear,
Which to the clouds their lofty summits rear,
And mingle with the virgin waters there:
Here, like the mouth of hell, vast whirlpools yawn,
And down the rapid gulph whole floods and isles are drawn.

3. Prodigious thunders shake the sky,
As from their cells with clam'rous rage they break;
 Prodigious lightnings kindle as they fly,
And trace the clouds with many a fiery streak:
 While in the darken'd air
With horrid beams malignant comets glare.
 Encountring tempests strive,
Which mighty winds across each other drive;
Loos'd from the spacious cavities below,
From all the adverse points of heav'n they blow,
And murmur from afar with stormy sound;
While burning bolts and hail-stones rake the ground.
Resistless whirlwinds bluster here and there,
Trees from their roots, stones from their rocks they tear.

4. The central fire within its prison raves,
And all the globe with strong concussions shakes,
 As from its urn in sulph'rous waves
 The dreadful element breaks;
Thro' all the gloomy vaults around it flows,
Thro' ev'ry cleft and winding fissure glows,

And wild excursions makes.
Its course no subterranean damp oppose,
From vein to vein the active particles take fire,
And towards the surface of the globe aspire;
Whole groves, and hills, and buildings undermine,
Whole groves, and hills, and palaces drop in:
Wide gapes the direful gulph, and where
Tall mountains stood, prodigious chasms appear.

With wilder fury here
The fierce materials outward rush,
And where, ev'n now, a level plain was spread,
Vast rocks and frowning steeps erect their hideous head;
From whose dark entrails livid torrents gush,
And glowing cataracts spout:
Like Ætna now the new *volcano* roars,
Unweildy stones, and burning craggs throws out,
With show'rs of sand, and seas of melted oars.

5. While louder still on high the trumpets sound,
And reach the dreary kingdoms under-ground.
Hell's deep foundations the strange echoes shake,
With terrors fill each raging fiend,
The earth with strong concussions rend,
And wide disclose the vast infernal lake,
With all the execrable dens below,
The dwellings of unutterable woe.
Thick steams from the unbottom'd gulph arise,
And blacken all the skies:
The startled sun winks at the horrid sight,
And robs the moon of all her silver light,

While ev'ry gay, ethereal flame expires,
Or to its first original retires.
Now mightier pangs the whole creation feels;
Each planet from its shatter'd axis reels,
And orbs immense on orbs immense drop down,
Like scatt'ring leaves from off their branches blown.

6. Again the great archangel's summons fly
Thro' earth, thro' hell, and all the vaults on high.
Wide fly the portals of eternal day,
 To give the King of Glory way:
 And lo! the Son of God descends,
Heav'n's everlasting frame beneath him bends;
 On loursing clouds he sits enthron'd,
Whence ruddy flames, and pointed lightnings play,
And bellowing thunders with shrill voices sound:
To judge the world he comes with awful state,
Ten thousand times ten thousand on him wait,
Divine his form, ineffable his air,
At once benignant, solemn, and severe;
 Around him dart refulgent beams,
And from his eyes approachless glory streams.

7. The waters see, and downward sink,
The mountains melt like wax before the fire,
 The folding heav'ns together shrink,
And with a mighty noise the clashing orbs retire.
Despairing, trembling, mad, the vitious fly,
And to the falling rocks for shelter cry;
To hell's impenetrable shades would run,

The face of their vindictive judge to shun.
The shudd'ring fiends t' avoid his sight,
Beneath the burning deeps would hide;
Unable now to bear celestial light,
Or the resplendence of his looks abide.

8. Unmov'd alone the virtuous now appear,
And in their looks a calm assurance wear,
Nor hell, nor all its horrors fear.
From east, from west, from north and south they come,
To take from the most righteous judge their doom;
Who thus, to them, with a serene regard;
(The books of life before him laid,
And all the secret records wide display'd)
"According to your works be your reward:
"As my reproach and cross you did not fear,
"To men and angels I approve you here;
"Possess immortal kingdoms as your due,
"Prepar'd from an eternal date for you."
9. The glitt'ring legions shout above,
And down ten thousand heav'nly guardians fly,
T' attend their joyful charges to the sky:
And upward now, with wond'rous state they move,
Melodious welcomes they receive on high,
With shining robes, victorious palms and crowns,
Celestial dignities, and everlasting thrones;
While beauty, life, and joy, with love divine,
Break from their eyes, and on their faces shine.

10. Th' apostate spirits rage, as when they fell
From off th' ethereal battlements to hell,
To see the humble race of man supply
Their once illustrious stations in the sky.
The sinners gnash their teeth for envy too;
To whom thus speaks the wrathful deity.
 "From me, accurst! for ever go,
 "And dwell with endless burnings, night and woe.
 "In vain in your adversity you cry,
 "Inexorable to your cries I'll be,
 "As you were once to me."
11. Like stings these fatal accents wound,
And all the wretched sinners pleas confound;
Opprest with shame, confusion, and despair,
They sink, nor can the heavy judgment bear.
Th' unfathom'd deep to swallow them gapes wide;
 And now without controul
 The fiery surges roll,
And hell extends itself on ev'ry side:
Where, without intermission, without end,
Howling and lamentations loud ascend;
With flames and hellish smother, which appear
To form about the globe a dreadful atmosphere.
12. Why vice was prosp'rous, virtue why distrest,
 With all the deep-writ sense,
The dark mysterious ways of providence,
To men and angels now are manifest.

**On the Death of
Mr. Thomas Rowe.**¹⁰⁷

In what soft language shall my thoughts break free,
My dear Alexis, when I talk of thee?
Ye muses, graces, all ye gentle train
Of weeping loves, assist the pensive strain!
But why should I implore your moving art?
She needs no muse, who can invoke her heart.

Whatever noble warmth could recommend
The just, the active, and the constant friend,
Was all his own—but, oh! a dearer name,
And softer ties my endless sorrow claim;
Lost in despair, from every comfort torn,
The lover I, and tender husband mourn.
Whate'er to such superior worth was due,
Whate'er excess the fondest passion knew,
My vows to heaven were all for thee,
And love inspir'd me first with piety.
Thy love (sweet study) busied all my days,
And my full soul's ambition was thy praise.

Why has my heart this fond engagement known?
Or why has heav'n dissolv'd the tie so soon?
Why was the charming youth so form'd to move?
Or why was all my soul so turn'd for love?

¹⁰⁷Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:112–15.

O he would talk—'twas ecstasy to hear,
 The list'ning soul hung trembling on the ear:
 Eternal music dwelt upon his tongue,
 Soft and transporting as some seraph's song:
 List'ning to him, my cares were charm'd to rest,
 And love, and silent rapture fill'd my breast;
 Unheeded the gay moments took their flight,
 For time was only measur'd by delight.

I hear the lov'd, the melting accents still,
 And still the kind, the tender transport feel:
 Again I see the sprightly passions rise,
 And life and pleasure sparkle in his eyes.
 My fancy paints him now with ev'ry grace,
 But, the thin¹⁰⁸ shade eludes my fond embrace;
 The smiling vision takes its hasty flight,
 And scenes of horror swim before my sight.
 Grief, and despair in all their terrors rise,
 A dying lover pale and gasping lies.
 Each dismal circumstance appears in view,
 Thy death (sad scene) will be for ever new.
 Thy anguish, with the quickest sense I feel,
 And the soft accents o'er my silence steal.

My wife! my tenderest love, my latest care!
 Heav'n for thy sake will hear a dying prayer:
 Will guard and comfort thee when I am dead;
 When from these aking eyes thy form is fled:
 When these cold hands, that now thy grasp implore,
 Shall tremble at the touch of thine no more.
 How I have lov'd, thy bleeding heart can tell—
 And we shall meet—till that dear time—farewell!

¹⁰⁸Ori., "thin" corrected to "the thin" in the errata.

He ceas'd; and hovering angels catch'd his breath,
And his quench'd eyes dissolv'd their beams in death.

But, oh! what words, what numbers can express,
What thought conceive the height of my distress?
Why did they tear me from thy breathless clay?
I should have staid, and wept my life away.
Yet gentle shade, where'er thou now dost dwell,
Where'er thy spirit does the rest excell;
One moment listen to my grief, and take
The softest vows that love and truth can make.

For thee my thoughts all pleasure shall forego;
For thee my tears shall never cease to flow;
For thee at once I from the world retire,
To feed, in silent shades, the faithful fire.
My bosom all thy image shall retain,
The full impression there shall still remain.
As thou hast taught my constant heart to prove
The noblest height and elegance of love;
That sacred passion I to thee confine,
Grasp thee in death, and am for ever thine.

**The
Resignation.**¹⁰⁹

'Tis done! the darling idol I resign,
 Unfit to share a heart so justly thine;
 Nor can the heav'nly call unwelcome be,
 That still invites my soul more near to thee:
 Thou dost but take the dying lamp away,
 To bless me with thy own unmingled day.
 Ye shades, ye phantoms, and ye dreams, adieu!
 With smiles I now your parting glories view.
 I see the hand; I worship, I adore,
 And justify the great disposing pow'r.
 Divine advantage! O immortal gain!
 Why should my fond, ungrateful heart complain?
 Whate'er of beauty in his ample round
 The sun surveys, in thee is brighter found;
 Whate'er the skies, in all their splendid cost,
 Their beamy pride, and majesty can boast;
 Whate'er the restless mind of man desires;
 Whate'er an angel's vaster thought admires:
 In thee 'tis found in its unchanging height,
 Thou first great spring of beauty and delight!
 What have I lost of excellent, or fair,
 Or kind, or good, that thou can'st not repair?
 What have I lost of truth or amity,
 But what deriv'd its gentle source from thee?

¹⁰⁹Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:118–20.

At one kind look, one sparkling glance of thine,
Created pride must languish and decline.

'Tis done, at last, the great deciding part!
The world's subdu'd, and thou hast all my heart:
It pants for joys which that can ne'er bestow;
And spreads itself too wide for all below;
It leaves the vast creation far behind,
And presses forward, free and unconfin'd.
I see a boundless prospect still before,
And dote upon my former joys no more;
Celestial passions kindle in my soul,
And ev'ry low, inglorious thought controul.
O come! ye sacred gusts, ye pure delights,
Ye heav'nly sounds, ye intellectual sights;
Ye gales of paradise, that lull to rest,
And fill with silent calms the peaceful breast;
With you, transporting hopes that boldly rise,
And swell in blissful torrents, to the skies;
That soar with angels on their splendid wings,
And search th' *arcana* of celestial things.
Here let me dwell, and bid the world adieu,
And still converse, ye glorious scenes, with you.
Keep far away, for ever far from hence,
Ye gawdy shews, and flatt'ring snares of sense;
Ye gay varieties on earth, adieu!
However soft, and pleasing to the view.
And all ye dazzling wonders of the skies,
Ev'n you my now aspiring thoughts despise;
No more your blandishments my heart detain,
Beauty and pleasure make their court in vain;

Objects divine, and infinite in view,
Seize all my pow'rs, ye fading toys, from you.

'Tis finish'd now, the great deciding part!
The world's subdu'd, and thou hast all my heart;
It triumphs in the change, it fixes here,
Nor needs another seperation fear.
No various scenes to come, no change of place
Shall e'er thy image from my soul efface;
Nor life, nor death, nor distant height above,
Nor depths below, shall part me from thy love.

Psalm lxiii.¹¹⁰

O GOD, my first, my last, my stedfast choice,
My boundless bliss, the spring of all my joys!
I'll worship thee before the silver moon,
With silent pace has reach'd her cloudy noon;
Before the stars the midnight skies adorn,
Long, long before the slow approach of morn.
Thee I'll invoke, to thee glad anthems sing,
And with my voice join each harmonious string:
The midnight echoes at thy name shall wake,
And on their wings the joyful burthen take;
While one bright smile from thee, one pleasing ray,
Thro' the still shades shall dart celestial day.

As the scorch'd trav'ler in a desart land,
Tracing with weary steps, the burning sand;

¹¹⁰Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:124–26.

And fainting underneath the fierce extremes
Of raging thirst, longs for refreshing streams;
So pants my soul, with such an eager strife
I follow thee, the sacred spring of life.

Open the boundless treasures of thy grace,
And let me once more see thy lovely face;
As I have seen thee in thy bright abode,
When all my pow'rs confest the present God.

There I could say, and mark the happy place,
'Twas there I did his glorious footsteps trace;
'Twas there (O let me raise an altar there!)
I saw as much of heav'n as mortal sense could bear;
There from his eyes I met the heav'nly beam
That kindled in my soul this deathless flame.

Life, the most valu'd good that mortals prize,
Compar'd to which, we all things else despise;
Ev'n life itself, my God, without thy love,
A tedious round of vanity would prove.
Grant me thy love, be that my glorious lot,
Swallow'd in that, be all things else forgot.
And while these heav'nly flames my breast inspire,
I'll call up all my pow'rs, and touch the tuneful lyre;
With all the eloquence of grateful lays,
I'll sing thy goodness, and recite thy praise.
The charming theme shall still my soul employ,
And give me foretastes of immortal joy;
With silent rapture, not to be exprest,
My eager wishes here shall richly feast.
When sullen night its gloomy curtains spreads,

And soothing sleep its drowzy influence sheds;
 I'll banish flatt'ring slumbers from my eyes,
 And praise thee till the golden morning rise;
 Those silent hours shall consecrated be,
 And thro' the list'ning shades I'll send my vows to thee.

**On the Works of
 Creation.¹¹¹**

Beauty complete, and majesty divine,
 In all thy works, ador'd Creator, shine.
 Where'er I cast my wond'ring eyes around,
 The God I seek in ev'ry part is found.
 Pursuing thee, the flow'ry fields I trace,
 And read thy name on ev'ry spire of grass.
 I follow thee thro' many a lonely shade,
 And find thee in the solitary glade.
 I meet thee in the kind, refreshing gale,
 That gently passes thro' the dewy vale.
 The pink, the jess'min, and the purple rose,
 Perfum'd by thee, their fragrant leaves disclose.
 The feather'd choir that welcome in the spring,
 By thee were taught their various notes to sing.
 By thee the morning in her crimson vest,
 And ornaments of golden clouds, is drest.
 The sun in all his splendor, wears thy beams,
 And drinks in light from thy exhaustless streams.

¹¹¹Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:142–43.

The moon reveals thee by her glimm'ring ray;
 Unnumber'd stars thy glorious paths display.
 Amidst the solemn darkness of the night,
 The thoughts of God my musing soul delight.
 Thick shades and night thy dread pavilion form;
 In state thou rid'st upon the flying storm;
 While thy strong hand its fiercest rage restrains,
 And holds the wild, unmanag'd winds in reins.
 What sparklings of thy majesty appear,
 When thro' the firmament swift lightnings glare?
 When peals of thunder fill the skies around,
 I hear thy voice in the tremendous sound.

But while I here thy faintest shadows trace,
 I pine to see the glories of thy face;
 Where beauty in its never-changing height,
 And uncreated excellence, shines bright.
 When shall the heav'nly scene, without controul,
 Open in dazzling triumph on my soul?
 My pow'rs, with all their ardor, shall adore,
 And languish for terrestrial charms no more.

On Love.¹¹²

Ye stars that sparkle in the midnight skies,
 Propitious love shines out in all your eyes;
 Nor does the moon the glorious truth conceal,
 But darts soft glances thro' her gloomy veil.
 The sun comes forth in majesty above,
 And kindles, as he goes, the flames of love;

¹¹²Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:143–44.

With gentle beams he warms the teeming earth,
And gives ten thousand various forms their birth.
Whatever shape thou wear'st, thy bright abode
Was from eternity, the mind of God:
There thou hast triumph'd in the splendid height
Of uncreated and essential light;
The spring, the fountain of the life divine,
The constant end of ev'ry great design.

Spirit of nature, its informing soul!
Thou dost the pow'rs of heav'n and earth controul:
All the degrees of life and sense that rise
In fields, or floods, or thro' the spacious skies;
All feel the force of thy inspiring flame,
And joy and triumph in thy mighty name.
O, thou art all in all! the highest end,
That boundless grace and wisdom could intend!
And lengths and breadths, and depths and heights above,
Shall finally be swallow'd up of love:
No further changes then; but fully blest
The Maker, and his finish'd works shall rest.

Devout Soliloquies.**Soliloquy I.**¹¹³

Eternal Maker, hail! Hail pow'r divine!
 The heav'ns and earth, the day and night are thine.
 Matter and form to thee their being owe,
 From thee, their great original, they flow:
 When yet the mingled mass unactive lay,
 Thou gav'st it motion by thy quick'ning ray:
 Chaos and night thy pow'rful mandate heard,
 And light, and glorious order, soon appear'd.
 If thou but hide thy face, the creatures mourn,
 But life and pleasure with thy smile return.
 Thy gentle smile dependent nature chears,
 Revives its hopes, and dissipates its fears.
 The earth and skies thro' various changes run;
 But thou, whose wond'rous being ne'er begun,
 Can'st ne'er thro' all eternity decay,
 While time's swift flood bears all things else away.
 By thy direction, the fair orbs above,
 In perfect order, thro' the ether move;
 And all that's lovely, all that's pure below,
 Immediately from thy bright essence flow.
 Fountain of life! from thy immortal flame
 All ranks of intellectual beings came:
 Our Maker thou, our great original,
 We own thy right, and thee our Father call.

¹¹³Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:175.

[Devout Soliloquies.]

Soliloquy II.¹¹⁴

Celestial love, my ever-charming theme,
 Ten thousand blessings rest upon thy name!
 From the divinity thou hast thy source,
 And God himself attests thy wond'rous force.

Some angel, speak in your immortal strain,
 How love does o'er th' immense Creator reign;
 But Oh! that glorious truth what angel can explain?]
 You saw him quit the pleasures of the sky,
 And veil the glories of the deity:
 You saw him born, and wond'ring heard him weep,
 Wond'ring you saw the world's protector sleep;
 You saw him wander here despis'd, unknown,
 Without a place, to rest his head, his own;
 You knew his grief and inward agony;
 You saw the heav'nly Lover bleed and die.

Victorious love, how infinite thy pow'r!
 How great thy triumph in that solemn hour!
 The sun, the moon, and sparkling stars on high,
 Stood witness to the vanquish'd deity.

Strike up your golden harps, ye sons of light,
 Some mighty genius the vast song indite;
 And Oh! ye sons of men, unite your voice,
 Let all the ransom'd tribes on earth rejoice:
 Ye ransom'd tribes, peculiarly from you

¹¹⁴Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:176–77.

Unbounded thanks, and endless praise are due.
 Triumph and shout, begin th' eternal strains,
 To him that dy'd, but now for ever reigns;
 To him that lov'd, and wash'd us in his blood,
 And made us kings, and chosen priests to God:
 For worthy is the Lamb, that once was slain,
 Of praise and blessing in the highest strain.

[Devout Soliloquies.]

Soliloquy III.¹¹⁵

Whatever various turns my life shall see,
 Of downy peace, or hard adversity;
 Let smiling suns shine on my prosp'rous ways,
 Or low'ring clouds obscure my gloomy days;
 The praises of my God shall still employ
 My tongue, and yield my thoughts perpetual joy:
 For he is all my glory, all my boast,
 Be ev'ry name but his forever lost!
 My trust alone is his¹¹⁶ almighty name,
 All other aids my tow'ring thoughts disclaim.
 In God, my glorious Saviour, I'll rejoice,
 And still exalt him with my grateful voice.
 His angels, he himself surrounds the just,
 And guards the saints who in his promise trust.
 O taste and see, how blest, how highly blest
 Are they who on his boundless mercy rest!
 He, with indulgent care, their wants supplies,
 And guides their steps with ever-watchful eyes;

¹¹⁵Elizabeth Singer Rowe, *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:177–78.

¹¹⁶Ori., “his is”.

His gracious ears are open to their pray'r,
And hear, with self-compassion, all their care;
Mercy and truth, thro' all his gracious ways
To human race, shine¹¹⁷ with distinguish'd rays.
O let my tongue on the blest subject dwell,
The wonders of his love to men and angels tell!
Angels and men their glad assent shall join,
And mix their loud applauding notes with mine.

[Devout Soliloquies.]

Soliloquy IV.¹¹⁸

O speak! and in the music of thy voice
My soul shall antedate immortal joys:
The tempting calls of sense shall all be drown'd
In the superior sweetness of that sound:
Nature and studious art would strive in vain
To reach the charms of that victorious strain.
O let me hear thee but in whispers break
Thy silence, and in gentle accents speak!
Such accents as ne'er ravish'd mortal ears,
Such as the soul in calm retirement hears;
More charming than the notes which angels play,
When they conduct a dying saint away;
While raptur'd he resigns his parting breath,
And smiles on all the solemn pomp of death.

When wilt thou speak, and tell me thou art mine?
O how I long to hear that word divine!
When that transporting sound shall bless my ear,
Fly sullen grief, and ev'ry mortal care;

¹¹⁷Ori., "thine"; corrected in the errata.

¹¹⁸Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy VI," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:179–81.

Fly days and hours, and measur'd time with speed,
And let the blest eternity succeed!

'Till then the rolling orbs my love shall hear,
And let the whole creation lend an ear.
Witness, ye crystal streams, that murm'ring flow,
For you the secret of my passion know:
Ye fields, the glades, and ev'ry shady grove,
The sweet retirements, and delights of love,
I call ye all to witness to my flame,
For you have learnt the dear inspiring name;
In gentle echoes you have oft reply'd,
And in soft breezes thro' the valleys sigh'd;
The valleys, mossy caves, and open lawn,
The silent ev'ning, and the chearful dawn:
Thou moon, and ev'ry fair conspicuous star,
Whose silver rays the midnight horrors chear;
And thou¹¹⁹ bright lamp of day, shalt witness prove
To the perpetual favour of my love.
Angels, for you the solemn truth can tell,
And ev'ry pious midnight sigh reveal;
Be witness that my raptur'd vows aspire,
To the high theme of your immortal lyre.

But Oh! my life, my hope, to thee alone
I strive to make my ardent wishes known;
To thee alone, to thee I would reveal
My tender cares, to thee I dare appeal.
Thou that dost all my secret soul behold,
Pierce all its depths, and ev'ry veil unfold,
Ev'n thou, my glorious judge, thy self shalt prove
Th' eternal witness of my truth and love.

¹¹⁹Ori., "then"; corrected in the errata.

[Devout Soliloquies.]

Soliloquy V.¹²⁰

Why does the sun with constant glory burn?
 Why does the day to guilty man return?
 To guilty man, whose insolence and pride
 The glories of th' eternal sun would hide?
 Why do the stars¹²¹ with nightly splendor shine,
 While mists from hell obscure the light divine?
 Back to your fountain turn your lucid streams,
 To holier regions lend your gentle beams.

O let me weep in some sequester'd shade,
 Whose dark recess no light shall e'er invade;
 Where mortal joys shall offer no relief,
 To intermit the just, the serious grief;
 O could my tears the publick vengeance stay,
 And yet suspend the desolating day!
 But see it comes! the threat'ning tempests rise,
 Presaging darkness gathers in the skies.

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[Devout Soliloquies.]

Soliloquy VI.¹²²

If e'er again I find my soul's delight,
 With love's soft fetters I'll restrain his flight:
 And e'er I with the darling treasure part,
 The sparks of life shall quit my trembling heart:

¹²⁰Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy VIII," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:181–82.

¹²¹Ori., "stsr"; corrected in the errata.

¹²²Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy X," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:182–83.

That life, which soon would prove a tiresome load,
Without the charming hopes to find my God.
O thou that dost my panting breast inspire
With all the ardour of celestial fire,
Thee I must find, or in the search expire!
In vain the tempting world its glory shews,
All it can give would yield me no repose;
Renounc'd at once let all its proffers be,
My bliss shall be compleatly full in thee:
Here is my rest, my vain pursuits are o'er;
Here let me fix, and never wander more.

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**Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.**

Soliloquy I.¹²³

Absolve the penance of mortality,
And let me now commence the life divine.
I sicken for enlargement—where's the bar?
Thy spirit is not straitned, thou canst raise
Thy creature to what eminence thou wilt.
Unmerited the brightest ranks above
Receiv'd their flame and purity from thee.

I dare not article with the Most-High,
Nor boast, but of my wants and indigence.

¹²³Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Devout Soliloquies: Soliloquy III," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:194–95.

Let me be poor, necessitous and low,
Or any thing, that thou mayst be advanc'd!
If I must glory, let me glory here,
That I can make no claim, nor ask reward.
O be thy goodness free! give like thy self,
And be thy own magnificence the rule!
Still undiminish'd from thy endless store,
Eternal bounty cannot lessen thee.

Why shouldst thou bound thy self, and check the course
Of thy own glorious nature; which is all
O'erflowing love, and pure beneficence?
'Tis thy delight and glory to dispense
Treasures of wisdom, life, and heav'nly love,
To souls that pine and languish after thee.

O thou canst never lavish out thy store!
The sun, that from his radiant exaltation
Looks down, and blesses universal nature,
Nor from the meanest worm keeps back his rays,
That sun is but a feeble type of thee.

Millions of happy spirits draw in life
And pleasure from thy smiles; yet still the springs,
The fresh, the ever rising springs of joy
Unwasted flow—thou to thy glorious self
Art all-sufficient; thou, the plenitude¹²⁴
Of thy own bliss; and canst thou not supply
The utmost wishes of created minds?

¹²⁴Ori., “plenitude”; corrected in the errata.

**[Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.]**

Soliloquy II.¹²⁵

Let God himself, to whom I dare appeal,
Let God, my glorious judge, be witness here!
Unfold my inmost soul, for thou shalt find
No rival form, no image but thy own.
So sure I love thee, I would stake my bliss,
My immortality on this high truth.

Is this existence real, or a dream?
Is light, is life, or is the sacred name
Of virtue dear? Do I love happiness?
'Tis sure I do! and Oh! 'tis full as sure
I love my God. If this is not a truth,
I do not breathe, I have nor hopes nor fears,
I know not where, I know not what I am,
But wander in uncertainty and doubt.
If this is not a truth, why have I shut
My eyes on all the beauty of the world?
Why have I stop'd my ears to ev'ry call
Of glory and delight? Why do I shun
The paths of pleasure? Why despise the joys,
The entertainments of society?
And lost to all in solitary shades
Give up my hours, and ev'ry thought to thee?
My God, I cry, the treasure of my soul,
Give me my God, and let the world forsake me!

¹²⁵Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy IV," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:195–96.

[Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.]

Soliloquy III.¹²⁶

These eyes have never seen thy lovely face,
No accent of thy voice has reach'd my ear,
And yet my heart's acquainted well with thee;
To thee it opens all its secret store
Of joy and grief, and whispers ev'ry care.

I've known the names of father, husband, friend;
But when I think of thee, these tender ties,
These soft engagements vanish into air.

Amidst the gentlest blandishments¹²⁷ and charms,
The smiles and flattering looks of human things,
My soul springs forward, and lays hold on thee;
Calls thee her only portion and defence,
Nor knows a thought of diffidence or fear.

Let nature fail, let darkness hide the stars,
And cover with a sable veil the sun;
Unchang'd and fix'd the truth of God remains,
Nor knows the least decay—here let me rest,
With full assurance and unshaken faith.

O thou unbounded, self-sufficient being!
How rich am I! how happy! how secure!
How full my portion in possessing thee!
One gentle, one transporting smile of thine,
Thou darling of my soul! contains more wealth
Than this, or thousand brighter worlds can boast.
'Tis thou thy self art my immediate bliss,
My paradise, my everlasting heav'n!

¹²⁶Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy VI," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:198–99.

¹²⁷Ori., "bandishments"; a printer's error.

[Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.]

Soliloquy IV.¹²⁸

My great Redeemer lives! I know he lives!
I feel the sacred, the transporting truth
Exulting in my soul: he lives to plead
My cause above (unworthy as I am!)
He there appears to intercede for me.

My record is on high, and the blest Spirit
With gentle attestations pleads within;
Divine the voice, 'tis all celestial truth,
I yield my glad assent; triumphant hope,
And heavenly consolations fill my soul.

I must, I will rejoice; 'tis God himself
Is my exceeding joy: he kindly smiles
And heav'n and earth look gay; while all the clouds
That conscious guilt spread o'er my shudd'ring soul
Vanish before those reconciling eyes.

Ye pow'rs of darkness, where are all your threats?
Speak out your charge, the black indictment read!
I own the dreadful, the amazing score;
But who condemns, when God does justify?
Who shall accuse, when freely he acquits?
He calls me blest, and what malignant pow'r
Shall call the blessing back? who shall reverse
What the Most-High has said?—nor life, nor death,
Nor depth below, nor endless height above
Shall part me from his everlasting love.

¹²⁸Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy X," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:202–3.

[Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.]

Soliloquy V.¹²⁹

How slowly moves the sun? how dull the wheels
Of nature? roll along, ye planets, fly
In shorter rounds, and measure out my day,
This tedious day, this interval of woe!

I wait with longing looks, and mark the skies,
As men impatient for the breaking morn.
This world has nothing worth a careless thought;
I have no treasure here, 'tis all above,
And there my heart in fix'd attention dwells.
With just disdain I cast a languid look
Around the vain creation; then repine
And half pronounce those various products evil,
Which God himself approv'd and call'd¹³⁰ them good:
Yet independent of the sov'reign bliss,
They yield no solace, give me no repose.

What have I here to hold my soul from thee?
To entertain me one short, fleeting hour?
I have no friend on earth, and none would have.
I'm grown a stranger here, my heart disowns
Acquaintance here; I'm sick of this vain world,
Its tiresome repetitions load my sense:
The sun's bright eye, in all its circuit, views
No equal entertainment, none to hold
My heart in these inhospitable realms.

¹²⁹Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy XXVII," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:222–23.

¹³⁰Ori., "call"; corrected in the errata.

Yet if I must a stranger here remain,
O condescend to visit these abodes,
And speak in frequent whispers to my soul!
Let me converse with thee, and hear thy voice;
Retir'd from men in some wild solitude
My hours would sweetly pass, nor seek delight
Beyond that heav'nly bliss; there I could rest
Superior to the turns of human things.

These eyes no more should view the impious ways
Of human race; these ears no longer hear
The daring blasphemies that loudly rage
Against that gracious mediating pow'r,
That keeps avenging thunder from their heads.

O let me die in peace, dismiss me hence!
I'm but a sojourner, a stranger here;
Wand'ring thro' darksome ways and gloomy wilds,
Beset with hellish snares, and oft betray'd
By a deceitful, treach'rous heart within:
Tir'd with perpetual toil I cast my eyes,
To yonder peaceful worlds, and long for rest.

**[Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.]**

Soliloquy VI.¹³¹

O thou whose wisdom leads the countless stars
In constant order thro' their shining course,
And sets the blazing sun his annual race!
All nature owns thy law; the raging winds,
And foaming billows in their swelling pride
Reluctant sink at thy commanding voice.

But I with prostrate homage at thy feet
Devote my will obsequious to thy sway.
I have no choice, no conduct, no design,
No wav'ring wish that I can call my own;
For I am wholly, absolutely thine:
And as the potter turns the ductile clay
Am I in thy almighty forming hands?
O thou canst mould and fashion ev'ry thought,
My passions turn, and make me what thou wilt:
Thy hand can trace the characters divine,
And stamp celestial beauty on my soul.

Creating Spirit, speak the potent word,
"Let there be light!" and cloudless day will rise.
Dispel the clouds of ignorance and sin,
Banish whate'er opposes thy designs
Of love and grace; and freely work thy will.

¹³¹Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy XXVIII," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:224–25.

[Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.]

Soliloquy VII.¹³²

Look down, with pity, gracious Lord, look down,
From thy unbounded heights of happiness,
On me a wretched, but a suppliant sinner.
Thy times are always; mine will soon be past,
And measur'd out; while thine are still unchang'd:
In boundless life, and undiminish'd bliss
Thou sitt'st¹³³ secure; while all created things
In a perpetual motion glide along,
And ev'ry instant change their fleeting forms.

O be not slack to hear! my time is wing'd,
See how my sun declines! 'tis sinking fast,
And dying into darkness; night is near,
The fatal night of death, when I shall sleep
Unactive in the damp and gloomy grave.

This is th' important hour, the hour of grace
And offer'd life; salvation hangs upon it.
Nor let my importunity offend thee,
'Tis now, 'tis now or never I must speed;
This day, this hour, this fleeting moment's more
Than I can boast, or truly call my own;
Ev'n now it flies—'tis gone—'tis past for ever!

But Oh! the strict account I have to give
Remains uncancell'd; yet my pardon stands
Perhaps unseal'd, or not to me confirm'd.

¹³²Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy XXXIV," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:231–32.

¹³³Ori., "sett'st"; corrected in the errata.

Regard my anguish while I call aloud
For mercy, and a signal of thy love.
Before I die, O let my longing soul
Receive an earnest of its future bliss!

**[Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.]**

Soliloquy VIII.¹³⁴

Thou who canst make a passage thro' the sea,
And find a way amidst the rolling waves;
Thou who canst open wide and none can shut,
Unfold the gates of brass! break all the bars
Of opposition! let the mountains sink,
And ev'ry valley rise to level plains!
Be darkness light, and let the smiling sun
Of righteousness, the bright, the morning star
Arise in all the glories of the Godhead!

Shine out, and let the clear distinguish'd rays
Convince thy proudest foes, and cheer the hopes
Of those that love thee, love thee, tho' unseen;
Whose wounded ears now bear the loud reproach
Of thy insulting foes, whose fainting hearts
Bleed in the wide dishonours of thy name.

O rend the skies! divide the firmament!
Break the long standing pillars of the earth!
Let the hills tremble! let the forests flame,
To make thy greatness known! be thou confest!
Be thou in full divinity reveal'd!
And let the wreck of nature grace thy triumph!

¹³⁴Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy XXXVIII," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:236–38.

Set open wide the everlasting gates!
Ye heav'nly arches, lift your heads on high,
And let the King of Glory in the pomp
Of majesty ineffable descend!
The nations then shall own thee for their God,
And ev'ry tongue confess th' almighty judge.

When shall these eyes behold that welcome day,
That glorious, happy, long-expected period?
When shall my voice join with the gen'ral shout
Of nations, languages, and tribes redeem'd?
When shall I hail the triumphs of that day,
When thou shalt rise in the full heights of glory,
Darken the sun, confound the brightest star,
Blaze in the splendor of the Deity,
Thy Father's image perfectly exprest?

Then shall the loud, the universal shout,
"Tis finish'd!" echo thro' the wide creation;
Loud triumphs sound, and hallelujahs ring,
"The glory, the dominion is the LORD's,
"And GOD omnipotent shall reign for ever."

**[Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.]**

Soliloquy IX.¹³⁵

Thy word is past, look on these sacred lines,
This heav'nly volume; here, great God, are writ
The records of thy truth, thy ancient works,
The bright memorials of thy pow'r and love;

¹³⁵Elizabeth Singer Rowe, "Soliloquy XXXIX," *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:238–39.

To thy immortal honour, to the joy
Of ev'ry saint, they stand collected here.

Confirm thy promis'd grace, which I have made
My boast, my triumph and peculiar aid.
O make me not asham'd! for I have spoke
With confidence undaunted for thy name,
Thy honour and approv'd veracity.
And now I come distrest, and looking round
On human helps in vain; these lying aids
Excite my scorn, I view them with contempt.
Counsel and wisdom, friendship's gentle voice
Is a deceitful sound: I dare not rest
Below the skies for guidance or protection;
On thee alone, and not on erring man
I cast my self: O kindly guide my steps
In all the paths of righteousness and peace!
On thee alone, the everlasting rock,
On thee alone I rest; my father's God,
My mother's early trust, to thee I look,
O let my soul rejoice, rejoice in God,
Boast in his truth, and triumph all the day
In his almighty name, and gracious aid!
Be his veracity and truth my song!

There is no help, nor confidence below:
But who relies on thy almighty arm,
A sure defence shall find; who on thy word
Securely rests, shall never be deceiv'd.

Can the Most-High deceive? Can he recall
His sacred oath, and make his promise vain?

O that be far from thee, the truth divine,
Th' eternal rectitude, whose plighted word
Stands firmer than the basis of the earth!
And when its mighty pillars to the depth
Of their foundations sink, when yonder skies,
Grown old, shall crack thro'¹³⁶ all their crystal orbs;
Thou undecay'd in endless equity,
The glory and unspotted truth shalt shine.

**[Devout Soliloquies.
In Blank Verse.]**

Soliloquy X.¹³⁷

I will not let thee go without a blessing;
By thy great name I enter my protest
Never to leave thee, till I see thy word
Accomplish'd to my vows, till thou with full
And cloudless demonstration to my soul
Reveal thy promis'd grace—regard my sighs,
My secret pantings to be near to thee!
Wilt thou for ever fly my earnest search,
Shut out my pray'r, and keep this painful distance?

Where is the obstacle, the fatal bar,
The curst partition, that divides my soul
From all its joys? 'Tis sin, detested sin!
From hence arise these separating clouds,
These sullen shadows that conceal thy face,
And darken all the prospect of my bliss.

But thou the fair, the bright, the morning star,
Canst with thy darting glories chase these shades

¹³⁶Ori., “tho'”; a printer's error.

¹³⁷Elizabeth Singer Rowe, “Soliloquy XLII,” *The Miscellaneous Works in Prose and Verse of Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe*, 2 vols. (London: R. Hett & R. Dodsley, 1739), 1:245–46.

And break the thick, the complicated night.
In great forgiveness thou wilt raise thy name;
And much forgiven, I shall love thee much,
And stand a glorious instance of thy grace:
Where sin abounds, its lustre shall abound.
My grateful heart and tongue to praises tun'd,
Shall tell with transport the amazing heights
Of love, of wisdom, of redeeming grace.

JESUS! my only hope, my advocate,
My gracious mediator, O defend
My trembling guilty soul, from all the storms
Of wrath divine! be thou a hiding-place,
A covert from the wind, a safe retreat
From all the terror of avenging pow'r,
And justice infinite! Thy blood can cleanse
My deepest stains, and purify my soul
From all its native, and contracted guilt:
In that clear fountain of immortal life
Let me be cleans'd and throughly sanctify'd.
I come a helpless, miserable wretch,
And throw my self, and all my future hopes
On mercy infinite; reject me not,
Thou Saviour of the sinful race of men!

**An
Allegory
on
Man.**¹³⁸

A thoughtful being, long and spare,
Our race of mortals call him *care*:
(Were Homer living, well he knew
What name the gods have call'd him too)
With fine mechanic genius wrought,
And lov'd to work, tho' no one bought.

This being, by a model bred
In Jove's eternal sable head,
Contriv'd a shape impower'd to breathe,
And be the *worldling* here beneath.

The *man* rose staring, like a stake;
Wond'ring to see himself awake!
Then look'd so wise, before he knew
The bus'ness he was made to do;
That pleas'd to see with what a grace
He gravely shew'd his forward face,

¹³⁸Thomas Parnell, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1721), 141–47.

Jove talk't of breeding him on high,
An *under-something* of the sky.

But ere¹³⁹ he gave the mighty *nod*,
Which ever binds a *poet's* god:
(For which his curls ambrosial shake,
And mother *earth's* oblig'd to quake:)
He saw old mother *earth* arise,
She stood confess'd before his eyes;
But not with what we read she wore,
A castle for a crown before:
As yet with wreaths alone she drest,
And trail'd a landskip-painted vest.
Then thrice she rais'd (as Ovid said)
And thrice she bow'd, her weighty head.

Her honours made, great Jove, she cry'd,
This *thing* was fashion'd from my side;
His hands, his heart, his head are mine;
Then what hast thou to call him thine?

Nay rather ask, the *monarch* said,
What boots his hand, his heart, his head,
Were what I gave remov'd away?
Thy part's an idle shape of clay.

Halves, more than halves! cry'd honest *care*,
Your pleas wou'd make your titles fair,
You claim the body, you the soul,
But I who join'd them, claim the whole.

As thus they wrangled, *time* came by;
(There's none that paints him such as I,

¹³⁹Ori., "e'er"; but used in sense of "before."

For what the fabling *ancients* sung
Makes Saturn old, when *time* was young,)
As yet his winters had not shed
Their silver honours on his head;
He just had got his pinions free
From his old sire *eternity*.
A serpent girdled round he wore,
The tail within, the mouth before;
His vest, for day, and night, was py'd;
A bending sickle arm'd his side;
And spring's new months his train adorn;
The other seasons were unborn.

Known by the gods, as near he draws,
They make him *umpire* of the cause.
O'er a low trunk his arm he laid,
(Where since his *hours* a *dial* made;)
Then leaning heard the nice debate,
And thus pronounc'd the words of *fate*:

Since *body* from the parent *earth*,
And *soul* from Jove receiv'd a birth,
Return they where they first began;
But since their *union* makes the *man*,
Till Jove and *earth* shall part these two,
To *care*, who join'd them, *man* is due.

He said, and sprung with swift career
To trace a circle for the year;
Where ever since the *seasons* wheel,
And tread on one another's heel.

'Tis well, said Jove, and for consent
Thund'ring he shook the firmament.
Our umpire *time* shall have his way;
With *care* I let the creature stay:
Let bus'ness vex him, av'rice blind,
Let doubt and knowledge rack his mind,
Let error act, opinion speak,
And want afflict, and sickness break,
And anger burn, dejection chill,
And joy distract, and sorrow kill.
Till arm'd by *care*, and taught to mow,
Time draws the long-destructive blow;
And wasted *man*, whose quick decay
Comes hurrying on before his day,
Shall only find, by this decree,
The *soul* flies sooner back to *me*.

A
Night-Piece,
on
Death.¹⁴⁰

By the blue taper's trembling light,
No more I waste the wakeful night,
Intent with endless view to pore
The schoolmen and the sages o'er.
Their books from wisdom widely stray,

¹⁴⁰Thomas Parnell, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1721), 152–57.

Or point at best the longest way.
I'll seek a readier path, and go
Where wisdom's surely taught *below*.

How deep yon azure dies the sky!
Where orbs of gold unnumber'd lye,
While thro' their ranks in silver pride
The nether crescent seems to glide.
The slumb'ring breeze forgets to breathe,
The lake is smooth and clear beneath,
Where once again the spangled show
Descends to meet our eyes below.
The grounds which on the right aspire,
In dimness from the view retire:
The left presents a place of graves,
Whose wall the silent water laves.
That steeple guides thy doubtful sight
Among the livid gleams of night.
There pass with melancholy state,
By all the solemn heaps of fate,
And think, as softly—sad you tread
Above the venerable dead,
Time was, like thee they life possest,
And time shall be, that thou shalt rest.

Those graves with bending osier bound,
That nameless heave the crumbled ground,
Quick to the glancing thought disclose
Where *toil* and *poverty* repose.

The flat smooth stones that bear a name,
The chissel's slender help to fame,

(Which ere¹⁴¹ our sett of friends decay
Their frequent steps may wear away.)
A *middle race* of mortals own,
Men, half ambitious, all unknown.

The marble tombs that rise on high,
Whose dead in vaulted arches lie,
Whose pillars swell with sculptur'd stones,
Arms, angels, epitaphs and bones,
These (all the poor remains of state)
Adorn the *rich*, or praise the *great*.

Ha! while I gaze, pale Cynthia fades,
The bursting earth unveils the shades!
All slow, and wan, and wrap'd with shrouds,
They rise in visionary crouds,
And all with sober accent cry,
"Think, mortal, what it is to die."

Now from yon black and fun'ral yew,
That bathes the charnel-house with dew,
Methinks I hear a *voice* begin;
(Ye ravens cease your croaking din,
Ye tolling clocks, no time resound
O'er the long lake and midnight ground)
It sends a peal of hollow groans,
Thus speaking from among the bones:

When man my scythe and darts supply,
How great a *king of fears* am I!
They view me like the last of things:
They make, and then they dread, my stings.

¹⁴¹Ori., "e'er"; but used in sense of "before."

Fools! if you less provok'd your fears,
No more my spectre-form appears.
Death's but a path that must be trod,
If man wou'd ever pass to God:
A port of calms, a state of ease
From the rough rage of swelling seas.

Why then thy flowing sable stoles,
Deep pendent cypress, mourning poles,
And plumes of black, that as they tread,
Nod o'er the 'scutcheons of the dead?

Nor can the parted body know,
Nor wants the soul, these forms of woe:
As men who long in prison dwell,
With lamps that glimmer round the cell,
When e'er their suffering years are run,
Spring forth to greet the glitt'ring sun.
Such joy, tho' far transcending sense,
Have pious souls at parting hence.
On earth, and in the body plac'd,
A few, and evil years they waste:
But when their chains are cast aside,
See the bright scene unfolding wide,
Clap the glad wing, and tow'r away,
And mingle with the blaze of day.

**Hymn
to
Contentment.**¹⁴²

Lovely, lasting peace of mind!
Sweet delight of human-kind!
Heav'nly born, and bred on high,
To crown the fav'rites of the sky
With more of happiness below,
Than victors in a triumph know!
Whither, O whither art thou fled,
To lay thy meek, contented head!
What happy region dost thou please
To make the seat of calms and ease?

Ambition searches all its sphere
Of pomp and state to meet thee there.
Encreasing avarice would find
Thy presence in its gold enshrin'd.
The bold advent'rer ploughs his way
Thro' rocks amidst the foaming sea
To gain thy love; and then perceives
Thou wert not in the rocks and waves.
The silent heart which grief assails,
Treads soft and lonesome o'er the vales,
Sees daisies open, rivers run,

¹⁴²Thomas Parnell, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1721), 158–63.

And seeks (as I have vainly done)
Amusing thought; but learns to know
That solitude's the nurse of woe.
No real happiness is found
In trailing purple o'er the ground:
Or in a soul exalted high,
To range the circuit of the sky,
Converse with stars above, and know
All nature in its forms below:
The rest it seeks in seeking dies,
And doubts at last for knowledge rise.

Lovely, lasting peace, appear!
This world itself if thou art here,
Is once again with Eden blest,
And man contains it in his breast.

'Twas thus as under shade I stood,
I sung my wishes to the wood,
And lost in thought, no more perceiv'd
The branches whisper as they wav'd:
It seem'd, as all the quiet place
Confess'd the presence of the grace.
When thus she spoke—Go rule thy will,
Bid thy wild passions all be still,
Know God—and bring thy heart to know,
The joys which from religion flow:
Then ev'ry grace shall prove its guest,
And I'll be there to crown the rest.

Oh! by yonder mossy seat,
In my hours of sweet retreat;

Might I thus my soul employ,
With sense of gratitude and joy:
Rais'd as ancient prophets were
In heav'nly vision, praise and pray'r;
Pleasing all men, hurting none,
Pleas'd and blest with God alone:
Then while the gardens take my sight,
With all the colours of delight;
While silver waters glide along,
To please my ear, and court my song:
I'll lift my voice and tune my string,
And thee, great *source of nature* sing.

The sun that walks his airy way,
To light the world, and give the day;
The moon that shines with borrow'd light;
The stars that gild the gloomy night;
The seas that roll unnumber'd waves;
The wood that spreads its shady leaves;
The field whose ears conceal the grain,
The yellow treasure of the plain;
All of these, and all I see,
Should be sung, and sung by me:
They speak their Maker as they can,
But want and ask the tongue of man.

Go search among your idle dreams
Your *busy* or your *vain* extreams,
And find a life of equal bliss,
Or own the *next* begun in *this*.

**The
Hermit.**¹⁴³

Far in a wild, unknown to publick view,
From youth to age a rev'rend *hermit* grew;
The moss his bed, the cave his humble cell,
His food the fruits, his drink the chrystal well:
Remote from man, with God he pass'd the days,
Pray'r all his business, all his pleasure praise.

A life so sacred, such serene repose,
Seem'd heav'n itself, 'till one suggestion rose;
That vice should triumph, virtue vice obey,
This sprung some doubt of providence's sway:
His hopes no more a certain prospect boast,
And all the tenour of his soul is lost:
So when a smooth expanse receives imprest
Calm nature's image on its watry breast,
Down bend the banks, the trees depending grow,
And skies beneath with answering colours glow:
But if a stone the gentle sea divide,
Swift ruffling circles curl on ev'ry side,
And glimmering fragments of a broken sun,
Banks, trees and skies in thick disorder run.

To clear this doubt, to know the world by sight,
To find if books or swains, report it right;

¹⁴³Thomas Parnell, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1721), 164–80.

(For yet by swains alone the world he knew
Whose feet came wand'ring o'er the nightly dew)
He quits his cell, the pilgrim-staff he bore,
And fixt the scallop in his hat before;
Then with the sun a rising journey went,
Sedate to think and watching each event.

The morn was wasted in the pathless grass,
And long and lonesome was the wild to pass;
But when the *southern* sun had warm'd the day,
A youth came posting o'er a crossing way;
His rayment decent, his complexion fair,
And soft in graceful ringlets wav'd his hair.
Then near approaching, "Father, hail!"^[1] he cry'd;
And "Hail, my son," the rev'rend sire reply'd;
Words follow'd words, from question answer flow'd
And talk of various kinds deceiv'd the road;
Till each with other pleas'd, and loth to part,
While in their age they differ, join in heart:
Thus stands an aged elm in ivy bound,
Thus youthful ivy clasps an elm around.

Now sunk the sun; the closing hour of day
Came onward, mantled o'er with sober grey;
Nature in silence bid the world repose:
When near the road a stately palace rose:
There by the moon thro' ranks of trees they pass,
Whose verdure crown'd their sloping sides of grass.
It chanc'd the noble master of the dome
Still made his house the wand'ring stranger's home:
The pair arrive; the liv'ry'd servants wait;
Their lord receives them at the pompous gate.

The table groans with costly piles of food,
And all is more than hospitably good.
Then led to rest, the day's long toil they drown,
Deep sunk in sleep, and silk, and heaps of down.

At length 'tis morn, and at the dawn of day
Along the wide canals the zephyrs play;
Fresh o'er the gay parterres the breezes creep,
And shake the neighb'ring wood to banish sleep.
Up rise the guests, obedient to the call:
An early banquet deck'd the splendid hall;
Rich luscious wine a golden goblet grac'd,
Which the kind master forc'd the guests to taste.
Then pleas'd and thankful, from the porch they go;
And, but the landlord, none had cause of woe;
His *cup* was vanish'd; for in secret guise
The younger guest purloin'd the glittering prize.

As one who spies a serpent in his way,
Glist'ning and basking in the summer ray,
Disorder'd stops to shun the danger near,
Then walks with faintness on, and looks with fear:
So seem'd the sire; when far upon the road,
The shining spoil his wiley partner show'd.
He stopp'd with silence, walk'd with trembling heart,
And much he wish'd, but durst not ask to part:
Murm'ring he lifts his eyes, and thinks it hard,
That generous actions meet a base reward.

While thus they pass the sun his glory shrouds,
The changing skies hang out their sable clouds;
A sound in air presag'd approaching rain
And beasts to covert scud across the plain.

Warn'd by the signs the wand'ring pair retreat,
 To seek for shelter at a neighbouring seat.
 'Twas built with turrets, on a rising ground,
 And strong, and large, and unimprov'd around;
 Its owner's temper, tim'rous and severe,
 Unkind and griping, caus'd a desert there.

As near the miser's heavy doors they drew,
 Fierce rising gusts with sudden fury blew:
 The nimble light'ning mixt with showers began,
 And o'er their heads loud-rolling thunder ran.
 Here long they knock, but call or knock in vain,
 Driv'n by the wind, and batter'd by the rain.
 At length some pity warm'd the master's breast,
 ('Twas then his threshold first receiv'd a guest)
 Slow creaking turns the door with jealous care,
 And half he welcomes in the shiv'ring pair;
 One frugal faggot lights the naked walls,
 And nature's fervor thro' their limbs recalls:
 Bread of the coarsest¹⁴⁴ sort, with eager wine,
 (Each hardly granted) serv'd them both to dine;
 And when the tempest first appear'd to cease,
 A ready warning bid them part in peace.

With still remark the pond'ring *hermit* view'd
 In one so rich a life so poor and rude;
 And why should such (within himself he cry'd)
 Lock the lost wealth a thousand want beside?
 But what new marks of wonder soon took place,
 In ev'ry settling feature of his face!
 When from his vest the young companion bore
 That *cup* the gen'rous landlord own'd before,

¹⁴⁴Ori., "coursest"; corrected in the errata.

And paid profusely with the precious bowl
The stinted kindness of the churlish soul.

But now the clouds in airy tumults fly,
The sun emerging opes an azure sky;
A fresher green the smelling leaves display,
And glittering as they tremble, cheer the day:
The weather courts them from the poor retreat,
And the glad master bolts the wary gate.

While hence they walk the pilgrim's bosom wrought
With all the travel of uncertain thought;
His partner's acts without their cause appear,
'Twas there a vice, and seem'd a madness here:
Detesting that, and pitying this he goes,
Lost and confounded with the various shows.

Now night's dim shades again involve the sky,
Again the wand'rer's want a place to lye,
Again they search, and find a lodging nigh. }
The soil improv'd around, the mansion neat,
And neither poorly low nor idly great:
It seem'd to speak its master's turn of mind,
Content, and not for praise, but virtue kind.

Hither the walkers turn with weary feet,
Then bless the mansion and the master greet:
Their greeting fair, bestow'd with modest guise,
The courteous master hears and thus replies:

Without a vain, without a grudging heart,
To him who gives us all I yield a part;

From him you come, for him accept it here,
A frank and sober, more than costly cheer.
He spoke and bid the welcome table spread,
Then talk'd of virtue till the time of bed,
When the grave household round his hall repair,
Warn'd by a bell, and close the hours with pray'r.

At length the world renew'd by calm repose
Was strong for toil, the dappled morn arose;
Before the pilgrims part, the younger crept,
Near the clos'd cradle where an infant slept,
And writh'd his neck: the landlord's little pride,
O strange return! grew black, and gasp'd and dy'd.
Horror of horrors! what! his only son!
How look'd our *hermit* when the fact was done?
Not hell, tho' hell's black jaws in sunder part,
And breathe blue fire could more assault his heart.

Confus'd and struck with silence at the deed,
He flies, but trembling fails to fly with speed.
His steps the youth pursues; the country lay
Perplex'd with roads, a servant show'd the way;
A river cross'd the path; the passage o'er
Was nice to find, the servant trod before;
Long arms of oaks an open bridge supply'd,
And deep the waves beneath the bending glide.
The youth, who seem'd to watch a time to sin,
Approach'd the careless guide and thrust him in;
Plunging he falls, and rising lifts his head,
Then flashing turns, and sinks among the dead.

Wild sparkling rage, inflames the father's eyes,
He bursts the bands of fear, and madly cries,

“Detested wretch”—but scarce his speech began,
When the strange partner seem'd no longer man:
His youthful face grew more serenely sweet;
His robe turn'd white, and flow'd upon his feet;
Fair rounds of radiant points invest his hair;
Celestial odours breathe thro' purpled air;
And wings whose colours glitter'd on the day,
Wide at his back their gradual plumes display.
The form ethereal bursts upon his sight,
And moves in all the majesty of light.

Tho' loud at first the pilgrim's passion grew,
Sudden he gaz'd, and wist not what to do;
Surprize in secret chains his words suspends,
And in a calm his settling temper ends.
But silence here the beauteous angel broke,
(The voice of musick ravish'd as he spoke).

Thy pray'r, thy praise, thy life to vice unknown,
In sweet memorial rise before the throne:
These charms success in our bright region find,
And force an angel down, to calm thy mind;
For this commission'd, I forsook the sky:
Nay, cease to kneel—thy fellow-servant I.

Then know the truth of government divine,
And let these scruples be no longer thine.

The Maker justly claims that world he made,
In this the right of providence is laid;
Its sacred majesty thro' all depends
On using second means to work his ends:
'Tis thus, withdrawn in state from human eye,
The power exerts his attributes on high,

Your actions uses, nor controuls your will,
And bids the doubting sons of men be still.

What strange events can strike with more surprize,
Than those which lately strook thy wondring eyes?
Yet taught by these confess th' almighty just:
And where you can't unriddle, learn to trust!

The *great, vain man*, who far'd on costly food,
Whose life was too luxurious to be good;
Who made his iv'ry stands with goblets shine,
And forc'd his guests to morning draughts of wine,
Has with his cup the graceless custom lost,
And still he welcomes, but with less of cost.

The mean, suspicious wretch, whose bolted door
Ne'er mov'd in duty to the wand'ring poor;
With him I left the cup to teach his mind
That heav'n can bless, if mortals will be kind.
Conscious of wanting worth, he views the bowl,
And feels compassion touch his grateful soul.
Thus artists melt the sullen oar of lead,
With heaping coals of fire upon its head;
In the kind warmth the metal learns to glow,
And loose from dross the silver runs below.

Long had our *pious friend* in virtue trod,
But now the child half wean'd his heart from God;
(Child of his age) for him he liv'd in pain,
And measur'd back his steps to earth again.
To what excesses had his dotage run?
But God to save the father, took the son.
To all but thee in fits he seem'd to go,

(And 'twas my ministry to deal the blow)
The poor fond parent humbled in the dust,
Now owns with tears the punishment was just.

But how had all his fortune felt a wrack,
Had that false servant sped in safety back?
This night his treasur'd heaps he meant to steal,
And what a fund of charity wou'd fail!

Thus heav'n instructs thy mind: "This tryal o'er,
[“]Depart in peace; resign and sin no more.”

The bending *hermit* here a pray'r begun,
“Lord! as in heaven, on earth thy will be done.”
Then gladly turning, sought his antient place,
And pass'd a life of piety and peace.

**To the Right Honourable
Robert Earl of Oxford,
and
Earl of Mortimer.
With
Dr. Parnel's Poems.
By Mr. Pope.¹⁴⁵**

Such were the notes thy once-lov'd poet sung,
Till death untimely stop'd his tuneful tongue.
Oh just beheld, and lost! admir'd, and mourn'd!
With softest manners, gentlest arts, adorn'd!
Blest in each science, blest in ev'ry strain!
Dear to the muse, to Harley dear in vain!

For him thou oft' hast bid the world attend,
Fond to forget the statesman in the friend;
For Swift¹⁴⁶ and him, despis'd the farce of state,
The sober follies of the wise and great;
Dextrous, the craving, fawning croud to quit,
And pleas'd to 'scape from flattery to wit.

¹⁴⁵Alexander Pope, *Miscellany Poems* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1726), 1:176.

¹⁴⁶Ori., "Swift"; corrected in the errata.

Absent or dead, still let a friend be dear,
(A sigh the absent claims, the dead a tear)
Recall those nights that clos'd thy toilsome days;
Still hear thy Parnell in his living lays:
Who careless now of int'rest, fame, or fate,
Perhaps forgets that Oxford e'er was great;
Or deeming meanest what we greatest call,
Behold thee glorious only in thy fall.

And sure if aught, below the seats divine
Can touch immortals, 'tis a soul like thine.
A soul supreme, in each hard instance try'd,
Above all pain, all anger, and all pride,
The rage of pow'r, the blast of publick breath;
The lust of lucre, and the dread of death.

In vain to desarts thy retreat is made;
The muse attends thee to the silent shade:
'Tis hers, the brave man's latest steps to trace,
Rejudge his acts, and dignify disgrace.
When int'rest calls off all her sneaking train,
When all the oblig'd desert, and all the vain:
She waits, or to the scaffold, or the cell,
When the last ling'ring friend has bid farewell.
Ev'n now she shades thy ev'ning walk with bays,
(No hireling she, no prostitute to praise)
Ev'n now observant of the parting ray,
Eyes the calm sun-set of thy various day,
Thro' fortune's cloud one truly great can see,
Nor fear to tell that Mortimer is he.

Epitaph.¹⁴⁷

A pleasing form, a firm, yet cautious mind,
Sincere, tho' prudent; constant, yet resign'd;
Honour unchang'd; a principle profest,
Fixt to one side, but mod'rate to the rest:
An honest courtier, and a patriot too,
Just to his prince, and to his country true;
Fill'd with the sense of age, the fire of youth,
A scorn of wrangling, yet a zeal for truth;
A gen'rous faith, from superstition free;
A love to peace, and hate of tyranny;
Such this man was; who now from earth remov'd,
At length enjoys that liberty he lov'd.

Stanza's.
From the French of
Malherbe.¹⁴⁸

At length, my soul! thy fruitless hopes give o'er,
Believe, believe the treach'rous world no more.
Shallow, yet swift, the stream of fortune flows,
While some rude wind will always discompose;

¹⁴⁷[On William Trumball] Alexander Pope, *Miscellany Poems* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1726), 1:200.

¹⁴⁸Alexander Pope, *Miscellany Poems* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1726), 1:204–5.

As children birds, so men their bliss pursue,
Still out of reach, tho' ever in their view.

In vain, for all that empty greatness brings,
We lose our lives amidst the courts of kings,
And suffer scorn, and bend the supple knee;
The monarch dies—one moment's turn destroys
Long future prospects, and short present joys:
Oh unperforming, false mortality!

All is but *dust*, whence once their breath is fled;
The fierce, the pompous majesty lies dead!
The world no longer trembles at their pow'r!
Ev'n in those tombs where their proud names survive,
Where still in breathing brass they seem to live,
Th' impartial worms that very *dust* devour.

The lofty styles of happy, glorious, great,
The lords of fortune, arbiters of fate,
And gods of war, lie lost within the grave!
Their mighty minions then come tumbling down,
They lose their flatt'ers as they lose their crown,
Forgot of ev'ry friend, and ev'ry slave!

Messiah.

**A
Sacred Eclogue,
In Imitation of Virgil's *Pollio*.¹⁴⁹**

Ye nymphs of Solyma! begin the song:
To heav'nly themes sublimer strains belong.
The mossy fountains and the sylvan shades,
The dreams of Pindus and th' Aonian meads,
Delight no more—O thou my voice inspire,
Who touch'd Isaiah's hallow'd lips with fire!

Rapt into future times, the bard begun,
A virgin shall conceive, a virgin bear a son!
From Jesse's^(a) root behold a branch arise,
Whose sacred flow'rs with fragrance fills the skies.
Th' ethereal Spirit o'er its leaves shall move,
And on its top descends the mystick dove.
Ye heav'ns!^(b) from high the dewy nectar pour,
And in soft silence shed the kindly show'r!
The sick^(c) and weak the healing plant shall aid,
From storms a shelter, and from heat a shade.

^(a) Isaiah, Cap. xi. v. 1.

^(b) [Isaiah,] Cap. xlv. v. 8.

^(c) [Isaiah,] Cap. xxv. v. 4.

All crimes shall cease, and antient fraud shall fail,
 Returning Justice^(d) lift¹⁵⁰ aloft her scale;
 Peace o'er the world her olive wand extend,
 And white-rob'd innocence from heav'n descend.
 Swift fly the years, and rise th' expected morn!
 Oh spring to light, auspicious babe, be born;
 See nature hastes her earliest wreaths to bring,
 With all the incense of the breathing spring:
 See lofty Lebanon^(e) his head advance,
 See nodding forests on the mountains dance,
 See spicy clouds from lowly Sharon¹⁵¹ rise,
 And Carmel's flow'ry top perfumes the skies!
 Hark! a glad voice the lonely desart cheers,
 Prepare the way!^(f) a God, a God appears!
 A God, a God! the vocal hills reply,
 The rocks proclaim th' approaching Deity.
 Lo! earth receives him from the bending skies:
 Sink down ye mountains, and ye valleys rise!
 With heads declin'd, ye cedars, homage pay!
 Be smooth ye rocks, ye rapid floods give way!
 The Saviour comes, by antient bards foretold;
 Hear him,^(g) ye deaf, and all ye blind behold!
 He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
 And on the sightless eye-ball pour the day:
 'Tis he th' obstructed paths of sound shall clear,
 And bid new musick charm th' unfolding ear;
 The dumb shall sing, the lame his crutch forego,

^(d) [Isaiah,] Cap. ix. v. 7.

^(e) [Isaiah,] Cap. xxxv. v. 2.

^(f) [Isaiah,] Cap. xl.¹⁵² v. 3, 4.

^(g) [Isaiah,] Cap. xlii. v. 18. [and Isaiah,] Cap. xxxv. v. 5, 6.

¹⁵⁰Ori., "left"; corrected in the errata.

¹⁵¹Ori., "Saron"; corrected in the errata.

¹⁵²Ori., "Cap. xi."; a printer's error.

And leap exulting like the bounding roe.
 No sigh, no murmur the wide world shall hear,
 From ev'ry face he wipes off ev'ry tear:
 In adamantin^(h) chains shall death be bound,
 And hell's grim tyrant feel th' eternal wound.
 As the¹⁵³ good Shepherd⁽ⁱ⁾ tends his fleecy care,
 Seeks freshest pasture and the purest air,
 Explores the lost, the wand'ring sheep directs,
 By day o'ersees them, and by night protects;
 The tender lambs he raises in his arms,
 Feeds from his hand, and in his bosom warms:
 Thus shall mankind his guardian care engage,
 The promis'd Father^(k) of the future age.
 No more shall nation^(l) against nation rise,
 Or ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes,
 Or fields with gleaming steel be cover'd o'er,
 The brazen trumpet kindles rage no more;
 But useless lances into scythes shall bend,
 And the broad falchion in a plow share end.
 Then palaces shall rise; the joyful son^(m)
 Shall finish what his short-liv'd sire begun;
 Their vines a shadow to their race shall yield,
 And the same hand that sow'd, shall reap the field.
 The swain in barren deserts⁽ⁿ⁾ with surprize
 Sees¹⁵⁴ lillies spring, and sudden verdure rise,
 And starts amidst the thirsty wilds to hear
 New falls of water murm'ring in his ear.

^(h) [Isaiah,] Cap. xxv. v. 8.

⁽ⁱ⁾ [Isaiah,] Cap. xl. v. 11.

^(k) [Isaiah,] Cap. ix. v. 6.

^(l) [Isaiah,] Cap. ii. v. 4.

^(m) [Isaiah,] Cap. lxxv. v. 21, 22.

⁽ⁿ⁾ [Isaiah,] Cap. xxxv. v. 1, 7.

¹⁵³Ori., "he"; corrected in the errata.

¹⁵⁴Ori., "See"; corrected in the errata.

On rifted rocks, the dragon's late abodes,
 The green reed trembles,¹⁵⁵ and the bulrush nods.
 Waste sandy valleys,^(o) once perplex'd with thorn,
 The spiry firr, and shapely box adorn;
 To leafless shrubs the flow'ring palms succeed,
 And od'rous myrtle to the noisome weed.
 The lambs^(p) with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
 And boys in flow'ry bands the tyger lead;
 The steer and lion at one crib shall meet,
 And harmless serpents^(q) lick the pilgrim's feet.
 The smiling infant in his hand shall take
 The crested basilisk and speckled snake,
 Pleas'd, the green lustre of the scales survey,
 And with their forky tongue and pointless sting shall play.
 Rise, crown'd with light, imperial Salem^(r) rise!
 Exalt thy tow'ry head, and lift thy eyes!
 See, a long race^(s) thy spacious courts adorn;
 See future sons and daughters yet unborn
 In crouding ranks on ev'ry side arise,
 Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
 See barb'rous nations^(t) at thy gates attend,
 Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend;
 See thy bright altars throng'd with prostrate kings,
 And heap'd with products of Sabæan^(u) springs!

^(o) [Isaiah,] Cap. xli. v. 19. and [Isaiah,] Cap. iv.¹⁵⁶ v. 13.

^(p) [Isaiah,] Cap. xi. v. 6, 7, 8.

^(q) [Isaiah,] Cap. lxxv. v. 25.

^(r) [Isaiah,] Cap. lx. v. 1.

^(s) [Isaiah,] Cap. lx. v. 4.

^(t) [Isaiah,] Cap. lx. v. 3.

^(u) [Isaiah,] Cap. lx. v. 6.

¹⁵⁵Ori., "tumbles"; a printer's error.

¹⁵⁶Ori., "Cap. iv.,"; a printer's error.

For thee Idume's spicy forests blow,
And seeds of gold in Ophir's mountains glow.
See heav'n its sparkling portals wide display,
And break upon thee in a flood of day!
No more the rising sun^(w) shall gild the morn,
Nor ev'ning Cynthia fill her silver horn,
But lost, dissolv'd in thy superior rays,
One tyde of glory, one unclouded blaze
O'erflow thy courts: the light himself shall shine
Reveal'd, and God's eternal day be thine!
The seas^(x) shall waste, the skies in smoke decay;
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away;
But fix'd his word, his saving pow'r remains;
Thy realm for ever lasts, thy own Messiah reigns!

^(w) [Isaiah,] Cap. lx. v. 19, 20.

^(x) [Isaiah,] Cap. li. v. 6. and [Isaiah, Cap.] liv. v. 10.

Epistle
to
James Craggs, Esq.;
Secretary of State.¹⁵⁷

A soul as full of worth, as void of pride,
Which nothing seeks to show, or needs to hide,
Which nor to guilt, nor fear, its caution owes,
And boasts a warmth that from no passion flows:
A face untaught to feign! a judging eye,
That darts severe upon a rising lye,
And strikes a blush thro' frontless flattery. }
All this thou wert; and being this before,
Know, kings and fortune cannot make thee more.
Then scorn to gain a friend by servile ways,
Nor wish to lose a foe these virtues raise;
But candid, free, sincere, as you began,
Proceed—a minister, but still a man;
Be not (exalted to whate'er degree)
Ashamed of any friend, not ev'n of me.
The patriot's plain, but untrod path pursue;
If not, 'tis I must be asham'd of you.

¹⁵⁷Alexander Pope, *The Works of Alexander Pope* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1736), 2:63.

**To
Mr. Addison.**¹⁵⁸

See the wild waste of all devouring years!
 How Rome her own sad sepulchre appears,
 With nodding arches, broken temples spread
 The very tombs now vanish'd like their dead!
 Imperial wonders, rais'd on nations spoil'd,
 Where mix'd with slaves the groaning martyr toil'd:
 Huge theatres, that now unpeopled woods,
 Now drain'd a distant country of her floods;
 Fanes, which admiring gods with pride survey;
 Statues of men, scarce less alive than they;
 Some felt the silent stroke of mould'ring age,
 Some hostile fury, some religious rage;
 Barbarian blindness, Christian zeal conspire,
 And papal piety, and gothic fire,
 Perhaps, by its own ruins sav'd from flame,
 Some bury'd marble half preserves a name,
 That name, the learn'd with fierce disputes pursue,
 And give to Titus old Vespasian's due.

Ambition sigh'd: she found it vain to trust
 The faithless column and the crumbling bust;
 Huge moles, whose shadow stretch'd from shore to shore,
 Their ruins ruin'd, and their place no more!
 Convinc'd, she now contracts her vast design,

¹⁵⁸Alexander Pope, *The Works of Alexander Pope* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1736), 2:64–66.

And all her triumphs shrink into a coin:
A narrow orb each crowed conquest keeps,
Beneath her palm here sad Judea weeps.
Now scantier limits the proud arch confine,
And scarce are seen the prostrate Nile or Rhine,
A small Euphrates thro' the piece is roll'd,
And little eagles wave their wings in gold.

The medal, faithful to its charge of fame,
Thro' climes and ages bears each form and name:
In one short view subjected to our eye
Gods, emp'rors, heroes, sages, beauties lie,
With sharpen'd sight pale antiquaries pore,
Th' inscription value, but the rust adore;
This the blue varnish, that the green endears,
The sacred rust of twice ten hundred years!
To gain Pescennius one employs his schemes,
One grasps a Cecrops in exstatic dreams;
Poor Vadius, long with learned spleen devour'd;
Can taste no pleasure since his shield was scour'd;
And Curio, restless by the fair one's side,
Sighs for an Otho, and neglects his bride.

Theirs is the vanity, the learning thine:
Touch'd by thy hand, again Rome's glory shine,
Her gods, and god-like heroes rise to view,
And all her faded garlands bloom anew.
Nor blush, these studies thy regard engage;
These pleas'd the fathers of poetic rage;
The verse and sculpture bore an equal part,
And art reflected images to art.

Oh when shall Britain conscious of her claim,
 Stand emulous of Greek and Roman fame,
 In living medals see her wars enroll'd,
 And vanquish'd realms supply recording gold?
 Here, rising bold, the patriot's honest face;
 There warriors frowning in historick brass:
 Then future ages with delight shall see
 How Plato's, Bacon's, Newton's looks agree;
 Or in fair series laurell'd bards be shown,
 A Virgil there, and here an Addison.
 Then shall thy Craggs (and let me call him mine)
 On the cast ore, another Pollio shine;
 With aspect open, shall erect his head,
 And round the orb in lasting notes be read,
 "Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,
 "In action faithful, and in honour clear;
 "Who broke no promise, serv'd no private end,
 "Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend,¹⁵⁹
 "Enobled by himself, by all approv'd,
 "And prais'd, unenvy'd, by the muse he lov'd.^[b']

¹⁵⁹Ori., "frined."

**Epitaph
on
Mrs. Corbet,
Who died of a Cancer in her Breast.¹⁶⁰**

Here rests a woman, good without pretence,
Blest with plain reason, and with sober sense;
No conquest she, but o'er herself desir'd,
No arts essay'd, but *not* to be admir'd.
Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,
Convinc'd, that virtue only is our own.
So unaffected, so compos'd a mind,
So firm, yet soft; so strong, yet so refin'd;
Heav'n as its purest gold, by tortures try'd;
The saint sustain'd it, but the woman dy'd.

¹⁶⁰Alexander Pope, *The Works of Alexander Pope* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1736), 2:156.

**On the Monument of the Honourable
Robert Digby, and of his Sister Mary,
erected by their Father the Lord Digby,
in the Church of Sherborne in
Dorsetshire, 1727.¹⁶¹**

Go! fair example of untainted youth,
Of modest wisdom, and pacific truth:
Compos'd in suff'rings, and in joy sedate,
Good without noise, without pretension great!
Just of thy word, in every thought sincere,
Who knew no wish, but what the world might hear:
Of softest manners, unaffected mind,
Lover of peace, and friend of human kind.
Go live! for heav'n's eternal year is thine,
Go! and exalt thy moral to divine.

And thou blest maid! attendant on his doom,
Pensive hast follow'd to the silent tomb,
Steer'd the same course to the same quiet shore,
Not parted long, and now to part no more!
Go then! where only bliss sincere is known,
Go! where to love and to enjoy are one.

Yet take these tears, mortality's relief,
And till we share your joys, forgive our grief:
These little rites, a stone, a verse, receive,
'Tis all a father, all a friend can give!

¹⁶¹Alexander Pope, *The Works of Alexander Pope* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1736), 2:156–57.

**On
Mr. Elijah Fenton,
At Easthamstead in Berks, 1730.**¹⁶²

This modest stone, what few vain marbles can,
May truly say, "Here lies an honest man,"
A poet, blest beyond the poet's fate,
Whom heav'n kept sacred from the proud and great:
Foe to loud praise, and friend to learned ease,
Content with science in the vale of peace.
Calmly he look'd on either life, and *here*
Saw nothing to regret, or *there* to fear;
From nature's temp'rate feast rose satisfy'd,
Thank'd heav'n that he had liv'd, and that he dy'd.

**On
Mr. Gay,
In Westminster-Abbey, 1732.**¹⁶³

Of manners gentle, of affections mild;
In wit, a man; simplicity, a child:
With native humour, temp'ring virtuous rage,
Form'd to delight, at once, and lash the age:

¹⁶²Alexander Pope, *The Works of Alexander Pope* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1736), 2:158–59.

¹⁶³Alexander Pope, *The Works of Alexander Pope* (London: Bernard Lintot, 1736), 2:159–60.

Above temptation, in a low estate,
And uncorrupted, ev'n among the great!
A safe companion, and an easy friend,
Unblam'd thro' life, lamented in thy end.
These are thy honours! not that here thy bust
Is mix'd with heroes, or with kings thy dust;
But that the worthy and the good shall say
Striking their pensive bosoms—Here lies GAY.

[blank]

**AN
ESSAY
ON
MAN.**

[blank]

The Design.

Having proposed to write some pieces on human life and manners, such as (to use my Lord Bacon's expression) come home to men's business and bosoms, I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering man in the abstract, his nature and his state: since to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in; and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of human nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few, clear points: there are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind, as in that of the body; more good will accrue to man-

kind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels as will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last, and I will venture to say, they have less sharpen'd the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice, more than advanced the theory, of morality. If I could flatter my self that this essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible, and in forming out of all, a temperate, yet not inconsistent, and a short, yet not imperfect system of ethics.*

This I might have done in prose; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retain'd by him afterwards. The other may seem odd, but is true; I found I could express them more shortly this way than

* I believe this is as perfect a system of ethics, as can well be form'd independent of the Christian system.

in prose itself; and nothing is truer than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instructions depends on their conciseness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in detail, without becoming dry and tedious; or more poetically, without sacrificing perspicuity to ornament, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these without diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

What is now publish'd, is only to be consider'd as a general map of man, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extent, their limits, and their connection, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow. Consequently these epistles in their progress (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will become less dry, and more susceptible of ornament. I am here only opening the fountains and clearing the passage; to deduce the rivers, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, would be a talk more agreeable.

[blank]

AN
ESSAY
ON
MAN.¹⁶⁴

Epistle I.

Awake! my St. John! leave all meaner things
To low ambition and the pride of kings.
Let us (since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us, and to die)
Expatriate free o'er all this scene of man; 5
A mighty maze! but not without a plan:
A wild, where weeds and flow'rs promiscuous shoot,
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield, 10

¹⁶⁴Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man, Being the First Book of Ethic Epistles. To Henry St. John, L. Bolinbroke; with the Commentary and Notes of William Warburton* (London: W. Bowyer, 1743). Wesley read Pope's Essay when it first appeared (see his Oxford Diary, February 12, 1734). But his republication here utilizes the recent edition with added notes by William Warburton. Wesley reproduces a few of these notes, often to differ from Warburton!

The latent tracts, the giddy heights explore
 Of all who blindly creep, or sightless soar,
 Eye nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
 And catch the manners living as they rise,
 Laugh where we must, be candid where we can, 15
 "But vindicate the ways of God to man."

Say first, of God above, or man below,
 What can we reason, but from what we know?
 Of man, what see we but his station here,
 From which to reason, or to which refer? 20
 Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the God be known,
 'Tis ours to trace him, only in our own.
 He who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
 See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
 Observe how system into system runs, 25
 What other planets, and what other suns?
 What vary'd being peoples every star?
 May tell, why heav'n made all things as they are.
 But of this frame the bearings, and the ties,
 The strong connections, nice dependencies, 30
 Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
 Look'd thro'?' or can a part contain the whole?

Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
 And drawn supports, upheld by God, or thee?

Of the nature and state of man with respect to
 the *universe*, Ver. 17, &c.¹⁶⁵] He can reason only
 from things known,* and judge only with regard to
 his own system.

* *Is not revelation left out of the account here?*¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵Wesley gives here his first extract from Warburton's notes on Pope's *Essay on Man*. In these notes "Ver." refers to a *line* of the poem; thus "Ver. 17, &c." means "line 17 and following."

¹⁶⁶This comment is Wesley's own reaction to Warburton's note (and Pope's approach that it describes).

Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find 35
 Why form'd so weak, so little and so blind?
 First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess
 Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?
 Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
 Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade? 40
 Or ask of yonder argent fields above,
 Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove?

Of systems possible, if 'tis confest
 That wisdom infinite must form the best,
 Where all must full or not coherent be, 45
 And all that rises, a rise in due degree;
 Then, in the scale of life and sense, 'tis plain
 There must be, some where, such a rank as man;
 And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
 Is only this, if God has *plac'd him wrong?* 50

Respecting man, whatever wrong we call
 May, must be right, as relative to *all*.
 In human works, though labour'd on with pain,
 A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain;
 In God's, one single can its end produce, 55
 Yet serves to second too some other use.
 So man, who here seems principal alone,
 Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
 Touches some wheel, or verges to some gole;
 'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole. 60

Ver. 36, &c.] He is not therefore a judge of his
 own perfection or imperfection, but is certainly
 such a being as is suited to his place and rank in
 the creation.

When the proud steed shall know, why man restrains
 His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
 When the dull ox, why now he breaks the clod,
 Now wears a garland, an Ægyptian god;
 * Then shall man's pride and dulness comprehend 65
 His actions, passions, beings, use and end;
 Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and why
 This hour a slave, the next a deity?

Then say not man's imperfect, heav'n in fault;
 Say rather, man's as perfect as he ought; ** 70
 His being measur'd to his state and place,
 His time a moment, and a point his space.

Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of fate,
 All but the page prescrib'd, their present state,
 From brutes what men, from men what spirits know, 75
 Or who could suffer being here below?
 The Lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to day,
 Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?

* *Exactly the sentiment of Chicali, the Cherikee Indian, "He that sitteth in heaven knows why he made man. We know nothing."—But did Jesus of Nazareth teach nothing more than this?*

** *Yea say rather, man is a fallen spirit.*¹⁶⁷

Ver. 73.] His happiness depends on his ignorance to a certain degree.

Ver. 75, &c.] See this pursued in Epist. 3.
 Ver. 67, &c. 81, &c.

¹⁶⁷These two comments are Wesley's insertions; not part of Warburton's notes.

Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
 And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood. 80
 Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,
 That each may fill the circle mark'd by heav'n,
 Who sees with equal eye, as God of *all*,
 A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
 Atoms, or systems, into ruin hurl'd, 85
 And now a bubble burst, and now a world!

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
 Wait the great teacher, death, and God adore!
 What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
 But gives that hope to be thy blessing now. 90
 Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
 † Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest:
 The soul uneasy, and confin'd at home,
 Rests, and expatiates, in a life to come.

Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind 95
 Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
 His soul, proud science never taught to stray
 Far as the solar walk, or Milky Way;
 Yet simple nature to his hope has giv'n
 Behind the cloud-topt hill, an humbler heav'n, 100

Ver. 87.]—And on his hope of a relation to a future state.

Ver. 90.] Further open'd in Epist. 2. Ver. 219. Epist. 3. Ver. 76.

† *Yes, blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and his sin cover'd.*¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸Wesley's inserted comment.

Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
 Some happier island in the watry waste,
 Where slaves once more their native land behold,
 No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold;
 To be, contents his natural desire, 105
 He asks no angel's wing, nor seraph's fire,
 But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
 His faithful dog shall bear him company.
 Go, wiser thou! and in thy scale of sense
 Weigh thy opinion against providence: 110
 Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such,
 Say, here he gives too little, there too much;
 Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
 Yet cry, if man's unhappy, God's unjust;
 If man, alone, engross not heaven's high care, 115
 Alone made perfect here, immortal there;
 Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
 Re-judge his justice, be the God of God!

In reas'ning pride (my friend) our error lies;
 All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies. 120
 Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
 Men would be angels, angels would be gods.
 Aspiring to be gods, if angels fell,
 Aspiring to be angels, men rebel:
 And who but wishes to invert¹⁶⁹ the laws 125
 Of ORDER, sins against th' eternal cause.

Ver. 109.] The pride of aiming at more
 knowledge and perfection, and the impiety of
 pretending to judge of the dispensations of
 providence, the causes of his error and misery.

¹⁶⁹Ori., "invest"; corrected in the errata.

Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine?
 Earth for whose use? Pride answers, "'Tis for mine:
 "For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,
 "Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flow'r; 130
 "Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew
 "The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
 "For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings,
 "For me, health gushes from a thousand springs;
 "Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise: 135
 "My footstool earth, my canopy the skies.^[17]

What would this man? Now upward will he soar,
 And little less than angel, would be more;
 Now looking downward, just as griev'd appears
 To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears. 140
 Made for his use all creatures if he call,
 Say what their use, had he the pow'rs of all?
 Nature to these, without profusion kind,
 The proper organs, proper pow'rs assign'd;
 Each seeming want compensated of course, 145
 Here, with degrees of swiftness, there, of force;

Ver. 127.] The absurdity of conceiting himself
 the final cause of the creation.

*I doubt this is very hardly consistent with the
 scriptural account of things.*¹⁷⁰

Ver. 138.] The unreasonableness of the
 complaints against providence, and that to possess
 more faculties would make us miserable.

Ver. 146.] Here, with degrees of swiftness, there,
 of force. It is a certain axiom in the anatomy of

¹⁷⁰Wesley's inserted comment.

All in exact proportion to the state,
 Nothing to add, and nothing to abate.
 Each beast, each insect, happy in its own,
 Is heav'n unkind to man, and man alone? 150
 Shall he alone whom rational we call,
 Be pleas'd with nothing, if not bless'd with all?

The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
 Is, not to act, or think, beyond mankind;
 No pow'rs of body or of soul to share; 155
 But what his nature and his state can bear.
 Why has not man a microscopic eye?
 For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
 Say what the use, were finer optic's giv'n,
 T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the heav'n? 160
 The touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
 To smart and agonize at ev'ry pore?
 Or quick efluvia darting thro' the brain,
 Dye of a rose in aromatic pain?
 If nature thunder'd in his opening ears, 165
 And stunn'd him with the music of the spheres,
 How would he wish, that heav'n had left him still
 The whispering zephyr, and the purling rill?
 Who finds not providence all-good and wise,
 Alike in what it gives, and what denies? 170

Far as creation's ample range extends,
 The scale of sensual, mental pow'rs ascends:

creatures, that in proportion as they are form'd for
 strength, their swiftness is lessen'd; or as they are
 form'd for swiftness, their strength is abated.

Mark how it mounts, to man's imperial race
 From the green myriads in the peopl'd grass!
 What modes of sight, betwixt each wide extream 175
 The mole's dim curtain, and the lynx's beam:
 Of smell, the headlong lioness between,
 And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
 Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood,
 To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood: 180
 The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
 Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
 In the nice bee, what sense so subtly true
 From pois'nous herbs extracts the healing dew.
 How instinct varies, in the groveling swine, 185
 Compar'd half reas'ning elephant! with thine;
 'Twixt that, and reason, what a nice barrier,
 For ever sep'rate, yet for ever near;
 Remembrance and reflection how ally'd;
 What thin partitions sense from thought divide: 190
 And middle natures, how they long to join,
 Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
 Without this just gradation could they be
 Subjected these to those, or all to thee?

Ver. 177.]—the headlong lioness—The manner
 of the lions hunting their prey in the deserts of
 Africa is this: at their first going out in the
 nighttime they set up a loud roar, and then listen to
 the noise made by the beasts in their flight, pursuing
 them by the ear, and not by the nostril. It is probable
 the story of the jackall's hunting for the lion was
 occasion'd by observing the defect of scent in that
 terrible animal.

The pow'rs of all subdu'd by thee alone, 195
 Is not thy reason all those pow'rs in one?
 See, thro' this air, this ocean, and this earth,
 All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
 Above, how high, progressive life may go?
 Around how wide? how deep extend below? 200
 Vast chain of being! which from God began,
 Natures æthereal, human, angel, man,
 Beast, bird, fish, insect! what no eye can see,
 No glass can reach! from infinite to thee,
 From thee to nothing! on superior pow'rs 205
 Were we to press, inferior might on ours:
 Or in the full creation leave a void,
 Where one step broken the great scale's destroy'd;
 From nature's chain whatever link you strike,
 Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike. 210

And if each system in gradation roll,
 Alike essential to th' amazing whole;
 The least confusion but in one, not all
 That system only, but the whole must fall.
 Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly, 215
 Planets and suns rush lawless thro' the sky,
 Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurl'd,
 Being on being wreck'd, and world on world,
 Heav'n's whole foundations to their centre nod,
 And nature tremble, to the throne of God! 220

Ver. 197.] How much farther this gradation and
 subordination may extend? Were any part of which
 broken, the whole connected creation must be
 destroy'd.

All this dread ORDER break!—For whom? For thee,
Vile worm!—O madness! Pride! Impiety!

What if the foot ordain'd the dust to tread,
Or hand to toil, aspir'd to be the head? 225
What if the head, the eye or ear repin'd
To serve mere¹⁷¹ engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim
To be another in this gen'ral frame:
Just as absurd, to mourn the task or pains,
The great directing mind of all ordains. 230

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
That chang'd thro' all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in th' æthereal frame, 235
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glow in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives thro' all life, extends thro' all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent,
Breaths in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart; 240
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns;
To him, no high, no low, no great, no small:
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all.

Cease then, nor ORDER imperfection name: 245
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.

Ver. 222.] The extravagance,¹⁷² impiety, and
pride of such a desire.

Ver. 245.] The consequence of all, the absolute

¹⁷¹Ori., “more”; a printer’s error.

¹⁷²Ori., “exrravagance”; a printer’s error.

Know thy own point: this kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, heav'n bestows on thee.
Submit—in this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear: 250
Safe in the hand of one disposing pow'r,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see:
All discord, harmony not understood: 255
All partial evil, universal good:
And spight of pride, in erring reason's spight,
One truth is clear; "Whatever *is*, is *right*."

submission due to providence, both as to our
present and future state.

[AN
ESSAY
ON
MAN.]

Epistle II.

Know then thy self, presume not God to scan;
 The proper study of mankind is man.
 Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
 A being darkly wise, and rudely great;
 With too much knowledge for the *sceptic* side, 5
 With too much weakness for the *stoic*'s pride,
 He hangs between; in doubt to act, or rest,
 To deem himself a part of god, or beast;
 In doubt, his mind or body to prefer,
 Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err; 10
 Alike in ignorance his reason such,
 Whether he thinks too little, or too much:
 Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd;
 Still by himself abus'd, or disabus'd;
 Created half to rise, and half to fall; 15
 Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
 Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd:
 The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

Go wondrous creature! mount where science guides,
 Go measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides, 20

Of the nature and state of *man* as an *individual*.
 The business of man not to pry into God, but to
 study himself. His middle nature, his power,
 frailties, and the limits of his capacity.

Show by what laws the wandering planets stray,
Correct old time, and teach the sun his way.
Go soar with Plato to th' 'empyrean sphere,
To the first good, first perfect, and first fair;
Or tread the mazy round his follow'rs trod, 25
And *quitting sense* call *imitating* God;
As eastern priests in giddy circles run,
And turn their heads to imitate the sun.
Go, teach eternal wisdom how to rule—
Then drop into thy-self, and be a fool! 30

Superior beings, when of late they saw
A mortal man unfold all nature's law,
Admir'd such wisdom in an earthly shape,
And shew'd a Newton as we show an ape.

Could he, whose rules the whirling comet bind, 35
Describe, or fix, one movement of the mind?
Who saw the stars here rise, and there descend,
Explain his own beginning, or his end?
Alas what wonder! man's superior part
Uncheck'd may rise, and climb from art to art; 40
But when his own great work is but begun,
What reason weaves, by passion is undone.

Two principles in human nature reign;
Self-love, to urge, and reason, to restrain;
Nor this a good, nor that a bad we call, 45
Each works its end, to move, or govern all:
And to their proper operation still
Ascribe all good, to their improper, ill.

Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul:
 Reason's comparing balance rules the whole, 50
 Man but for that, no action could attend,
 And but for this, were active to no end,
 Fix'd like a plant on his peculiar spot,
 To draw nutrition, propagate, and rot;
 Or, meteor like, flame lawless thro' the void, 55
 Destroying others, by himself destroy'd.
 Most strength the moving principle requires;
 Active its task, it prompts, impells, inspires:
 Sedate and quiet the comparing lies,
 Form'd but to check, delib'rate, and advise. 60
 Self-love still stronger, as its objects nigh;
 Reason's at distance, and in prospect lie;
 That sees immediate good, by present sense,
 Reason the future, and the consequence;
 Thicker than arguments, temptations throng, 65
 At best more watchful this, but that more strong.
 The action of the stronger to suspend,
 Reason still use, to reason still attend:
 Attention, habit, and experience gains,
 Each strengthens reason, and self-love restrains. 70

Let subtile schoolmen teach these friends to fight,
 More studious to divide, than to unite,

Ver. 43.] The *two principles* of man, *self love*
 and *reason*, both necessary, 49; self-love the
 stronger, and why? 57: their end the same, 51.

And grace and virtue, sense and reason split,
 With all the rash dexterity of wit.
 Wits just like fools, at war about a name, 75
 Have full as oft, no meaning, or the same.
 Self-love and reason to one end aspire,
 Pain their aversion, pleasure their desire:
 But greedy that its object would devour,
 This taste the honey, and not wound the flower: 80
 Pleasure, or wrong or rightly understood,
 Our greatest evil, or our greatest good.

Modes of self-love the PASSIONS we may call;
 'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all:
 But since not every good we can divide, 85
 And reason bids us for our own provide;
 Passions tho' selfish, if their means be fair,
 List under reason, and deserve her care:
 Those that imparted, court a nobler aim,
 Exalt their kind, and take some virtue's name. 90

In lazy apathy let stoics boast
 Their virtue fix'd; 'tis fix'd as in a frost,
 Contracted all, retiring to the breasts;
 But strength of mind is exercise, not rest:
 On life's vast ocean diversely we sail, 95
 Reason the card, but passion is the gale:
 Nor God alone in the still calm we find;
 He mounts the storm, and walks upon the wind.

Ver. 83.] The *passions*, and their use.

Passions, like elements, tho' born to fight,
 Yet mix'd and softened, in his work unite: 100
 These, 'tis enough to temper and employ;
 But what composes man can man destroy?
 Suffice that reason keeps to nature's road,
 Subject, compound them, follow her and God.

Love, hope, and joy, fair pleasure's smiling train, 105
 Hate, fear, and grief, the family of pain,
 These mix'd with art, and to due bounds confin'd,
 Make, and maintain, the balance of the mind:
 The lights and shades, whose well accorded strife
 Gives all the strength and colour of our life. 110

Pleasures are ever in our hands or eyes,
 And when in act they cease, in prospect rise;
 Present to grasp, and future still to find,
 The whole employ of body and of mind.
 All spread their charms, but charm not all alike, 115
 On diff'rent senses diff'rent objects strike;
 Hence diff'rent passions more or less inflame,
 As strong, or weak, the organs of the frame;
 And hence one master passion in the breast,
 Like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest. 120

As man, perhaps, the moment of his breath,
 Receives the lurking principle of death:
 The young disease that must subdue at length,
 Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength:
 So, cast and mingled with his very frame, 125
 The mind's disease, its ruling passion came:

Each vital humour which should feed the whole,
 Soon flows to this, in body and in soul;
 Whatever warms the heart, or fills the head,
 As the mind opens, and its functions spread, 130
 Imagination plies her dang'rous art,
 And pours it all upon the peccant part.

Nature its mother, habit is its nurse;
 Wit, spirit, faculties, but make it worse;
 Reason itself but gives it edge and pow'r, 135
 As heav'n's blest beam turns vinegar more sowre;
 We, wretched subjects tho' to lawful sway,
 In this weak queen, some fav'rite still obey.
 Ah! if she lend not arms as well as rules,
 What can she more, than tell us we are fools? 140
 Teach us to mourn our nature, not to mend,
 A sharp accuser, but a helpless friend!

Let pow'r or knowledge, gold or glory please,
 Or oft more strong than all, the love of ease:
 Thro' life, 'tis follow'd, ev'n at life's expence: 145
 The merchant's toil, the sage's indolence.
 The monk's humility, the hero's pride,
 All, all alike, find reason on their side.

Th' *eternal act*, educing good from ill,
 Grafts on this passion our best principle; * 150

Ver. 149.] It's providential use, in fixing our
principle, and ascertaining *virtue*.

* *True; the best heathen principle: the best
 which mere nature knows.*¹⁷³

¹⁷³Wesley's inserted comment.

'Tis thus, the mercury of man is fix'd,
 Strong grows the virtue with his nature mixt,
 The dross cements what else were too refin'd,
 And in one int'rest body acts with mind.

As fruits ungrateful to the planter's care, 155
 On savage stocks inserted, learn to bear;
 The surest virtues thus from passions shoot,
 Wild nature's vigour working at the root.
 What crops of wit and honesty appear,
 From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear! 160
 See anger, zeal and fortitude supply;
 Ev'n av'rice, prudence; sloth, philosophy;
 Lust, thro' some certain strainers well refin'd
 Is gentle love, and charms all womankind:
 Envy, to which th' ignoble mind's a slave, 165
 Is emulation in the learn'd or brave?
 Nor virtue, male, or female, can we name,
 But what will grow on pride, or grow on shame.

* Thus nature gives us (let it check our pride)
 The virtue nearest to our vice ally'd; 170
 Reason the byass turns to good from ill,
 And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.
 The fiery soul abhor'd in Catiline,
 In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine.

Ver. 170.] *Virtue* and *vice* join'd in our mixt
 nature; the limits near; yet the things separate, and
 evident. The office of reason.

* *These also are sure truths, if understood of
 merely natural men.*¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴Wesley's inserted comment.

The same ambition can destroy or save, 175
And makes a patriot as it makes a knave.

This light and darkness in our chaos join'd,
What shall divide? The god within the mind.

Extremes in nature equal ends produce, 180
In man, they join to some mysterious use:
Tho' each by turns the others bound invade,
As in some well-wrought picture, light and shade,
And oft so mix, the diff'rence is too nice
Where ends the virtue, or begins the vice.

Fools! who from hence into the notion fall, 185
That vice or virtue there is none at all!
If white and black, blend, soften, and unite
A thousand ways, is there no black or white?
Ask your own heart; and nothing is so plain;
'Tis to mistake them, costs the time and pain. 190

Vice is a monster of so frightful mein,
As to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.
Virtuous and vicious every man must be, 195
Few in th' extreme but all in the degree;

Ver. 191.] Vice odious in itself, and how we
deceive ourselves into it.

Ver. 195, &c.] The *ends of providence* and
general good answer'd in our passions and
imperfections. How usefully these are distributed
to all orders of men.

'Tis but by parts we follow good or ill.
 † For, vice or virtue, *self* directs it still;
 Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal:
 But *heav'n's* great view is one, and that the *whole* 200
 That counter-works each folly and caprice;
 That disappoints th' effect of ev'ry vice:
 That, virtue's ends from vanity can raise,
 Which seeks no int'rest, no reward but praise;
 And build on wants, and on defects of mind, 205
 The joy, the peace, the glory of mankind. *

Heav'n forming each on other to depend,
 A master, or a servant, or a friend,
 Bids each on other for assistance call,
 Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all. 210
 Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
 The common int'rest, or endear the tye:
 ** To these we owe true friendship, love sincere,
 Each home-felt joy that life inherits here:
 Yet from the same we learn, in its decline, 215
 Those joys, those loves, those int'rests to resign,

† I.e. *In unbelievers.*

* *This needs some grains of allowance.*

Ver. 207.] How useful these are to *society* in general, and to *individuals* in particular.

** *Surely, no. If there be any consolation of love, if any true peace or solid joy, we owe it only to the love of GOD shed abroad in our hearts.*¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵All three comments in italics are Wesley's insertion.

Taught half by reason, half by mere decay,
To welcome death, and calmly pass away.

'Till then opinion gilds with varying rays
Those painted clouds that beautify our days; 220
Each want of happiness by hope supply'd,
And each vacuity of sense by pride,
These build as fast as knowledge can destroy:
In folly's cup still laughs the bubble, joy;
One prospect lost, another still we gain; 225
And not a vanity is giv'n in vain;
Ev'n mean SELF-LOVE becomes, by force divine,
The scale to measure others wants by thine.
See! and confess, one comfort still must rise,
'Tis this, tho' *man's a fool*, yet *God is wise*. 230

[AN
ESSAY
ON
MAN.]

Epistle III.

Here then we rest; “The universal cause
“Acts to one end, but acts by various laws.”
In all the madness of superfluous health,
The trim of pride, the impudence of wealth,
Let this great truth be present night and day; 5
But must be present, if we preach, or pray.

Look round our world; behold the chain of love
Combining all below and all above.
See, plastic nature working to this end,
The single atoms each to other tend, 10
Attract, attracted to, the next in place,
Form’d and impell’d, its neighbour to embrace.
See matter next, with various life endu’d,
Press to one centre still, the general good.
See dying vegetables life sustain, 15
See life dissolving vegetate again.
All forms that perish, other¹⁷⁶ forms supply,
By turn they catch the vital breath and die;
Like bubbles on the sea of matter born,
They rise, they break, and to that sea return. 20

Ver. 1.] Of the nature and state of MAN with
respect to *society*. The whole universe one system
of society.

¹⁷⁶Ori., “others”; corrected in the errata.

Nothing is foreign: parts relate to whole:
 One all-extending, all-preserving soul
 Connects each being, greatest with the least:
 Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast:
 All serv'd, all serving! nothing stands alone; 25
 The chain holds on, and where it ends, unknown.

Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good,
 Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?
 Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
 For him as kindly spread the flow'ring lawn. 30
 Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
 Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
 Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?
 Loves of his own, and raptures swell the note.
 The bounding¹⁷⁷ steed you pompously bestride, 35
 Shares with his Lord the pleasure and the pride.
 Is thine alone the seed that strows the plain?
 The birds of heav'n shall vindicate their grain.
 Thine the full harvest of the golden year?
 Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer. 40
 The hog that plows not, nor obeys thy call,
 Lives on the labours of this Lord of all.

Know, nature's children all divide¹⁷⁸ her care;
 The fur that warms a monarch, warm'd a bear;
 While man exclaims, "See all things for my use! 45
 "See man for mine," replies a pamper'd goose:

Nothing made wholly for itself, nor yet all
 animals wholly for another, but the happiness of
 mutual.

¹⁷⁷Ori., "boundidg"; a printer's error.

¹⁷⁸Ori., "divides"; corrected in the errata.

What care to tend, to lodge, to cram, to treat him?
 All this he knows, but not that 'tis to eat him:
 And just as short of reason, man will fall,
 Who thinks all made for one, not one for all. 50

Grant, that the pow'rful still the weak controul,
 Be man the wit, and tyrant of the whole:
 Nature that tyrant checks; he only knows
 And helps, another creature's wants and woes. 55
 Say, will the falcon, stooping from above,
 Smit with her varying plumage, spare the dove?
 Admires the jay, the insect's gilded wings,
 Or hears the hawk, when Philomela sings?
 Man cares for all; to birds he gives his woods,
 To beasts his pastures, and to fish his floods; 60
 For some, his int'rest prompts him to provide,
 For more his pleasure; for yet more his pride:
 That very life his learned hunger craves,
 He saves from famine, from the savage saves,
 Nay feasts the animal he dooms his feast, 65
 And till he ends the being, makes it blest,
 Which sees no more the stroke, or feels the pain,
 Than favour'd man, by touch æthereal slain.
 The creature had his feast of life before;
 Thou two must perish, when¹⁷⁹ thy feast is o'er. 70

Ver. 67.] Several of the ancients, and many of
 the orientals since, esteemed those who were struck
 by lightning as sacred persons, and the particular
 favourites of heaven.

¹⁷⁹Ori., "whom"; corrected in the errata.

To each unthinking being heav'n a friend,
 Gives not the useless knowledge of its end;
 To man imparts it; but with such a view
 As while he dreads it, makes him hope it too:
 The hour conceal'd, and so remote the fear, 75
 Death still draws nearer, never seeming near.
 Great standing miracle! that heav'n assign'd
 Its only thinking thing, this turn of mind.

Whether with reason, or with instinct blest,
 Know, all enjoy that pow'r which suits 'em best, 80
 To bliss, alike, by that direction tend,
 And find the means proportion'd to their end.
 Say, where full instinct is the unerring guide,
 What pope or council can they need beside?
 Reason, however able, cool at best, 85
 Cares not for service, or but serves when prest,
 Stays still we call, and then not often near;
 But honest instinct comes a volunteer.
 This too serves always, reason never long;
 One *must* go right, the other *may* go wrong. 90
 See then the acting and comparing pow'rs
 One in their nature, which are two in ours;
 And reason raise o'er instinct as you can,
 In this 'tis God directs, in that 'tis man.

Ver. 79.] Reason or instinct alike operate to the
 good of each individual, and they operate also to
society, in all animals.

Who taught the nations of the field and wood To shun their poison, and to choose their food? Prescient, the tide or tempests to withstand, Build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand? Who made the spider parallels design, Sure as Demoivre, without rule or line?	95 100
Who bid the stork, Columbus like, explore Heav'ns not his own, and worlds unknown before? Who calls the council, states the certain day? Who forms the phalanx, and who points the way?	
God, in the nature of each being, founds Its proper bliss, and sets its proper bounds: But as he fram'd a whole, the whole to bless On mutual wants built mutual happiness: So from the first eternal ORDER ran, And creature link'd to creature, man to man.	105 110
Whate'er of life all quickening æther keeps, Or breaths thro' air, or shoots beneath the deeps, Or pours profuse on earth; one nature feeds The vital flame, and swells the genial seeds. Not man alone, but all that roam the wood, Or wing the sky, or roll along the flood, Each loves itself, but not itself alone, Each sex desires alike, 'till two are one: Nor ends the pleasure with the fierce embrace; They love themselves, a third time, in their race.	 115 120

Ver. 111.] How far *society* carried by *instinct*.

Thus beast and bird their common charge attend,
 The mothers nurse it, and the sires defend;
 The young dismiss'd to wander earth or air,
 There stops the instinct, and there ends the care;
 The link dissolves, each seeks a fresh embrace; 125
 Another love succeeds, another race.
 A longer care man's helpless kind demands;
 That longer care contracts more lasting bands:
 Reflection, reason, still the ties improve,
 At once extend the int'rest and the love: 130
 With choice we fix, with sympathy we burn;
 Each virtue in each passion takes it turn;
 And still new needs, new helps, new habits rise,
 That graft benevolence on charities.
 Still as one brood, and as another rose, 135
 These nat'ral love maintain'd, habitual those;
 The last scarce ripen'd into perfect man,
 Saw helpless him from whom their life began.
 Mem'ry and forecast, just returns engage,
 That pointed back to youth, this on to age; 140
 While pleasure, gratitude, and hope combin'd
 Still spread the int'rest, and preserv'd the kind.

Nor think, in *nature's state* they blindly trod;
 The state of nature was the reign of God:
 Self-love and social, at her birth began, 145
 Union the bond of all things and of man.

Ver. 127.] How much farther *society* is carried
 by *reason*.

Ver. 143.] Of the *state of nature*: that it was
social.

Pride then was not; nor arts, that pride to aid;
 Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade;
 The same his table, and the same his bed;
 No murder cloath'd him, and no murder fed. 150
 In the same temple, the resounding wood,
 All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God:
 The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,
 Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest:
 Heav'ns attribute was universal care, 155
 And man's prerogative to rule, but spare.
 Ah how unlike the man of times to come!
 Of half that live, the butcher, and the tomb;
 Who, foe to nature, hears the gen'ral groan,
 Murders their species, and betrays his own. 160
 But just disease to luxury succeeds,
 And ev'ry death its own avenger breeds;
 The fury passions from that blood began,
 And turn'd on man a fiercer savage, man.

See him from nature rising slow to art! 165
 To copy instinct then was reason's part;
 Thus then to man the voice of nature spake—
 "Go! from the creatures thy instructions take;
 "Learn from the birds what food the thickets yield;
 "Learn from the beasts, the physick of the field: 170
 "Thy arts of building from the bee receive;
 "Learn of the mole to plow, the worm to weave;
 "Here too all forms of social union find,
 "And hence let reason, late, instruct mankind:

Ver. 166.] Reason instructed by instinct in the invention of *arts*, and in the *forms* of society.

“Here subterranean works and cities see 175
 “There, towns aëreal on the waving tree:
 “Learn each small people’s genius, policies;
 “The ants republick, and the realm of bees:
 “How these in common all their stores bestow,
 “And anarchy without confusion know, 180
 “And these for ever, tho’ a monarch reign,
 “Their sep’rate cells and properties maintain.
 “Mark what unvary’d laws preserve their state,
 “Laws wise as nature, and as fix’d as fate.
 “In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw, 185
 “Entangle Justice in her net of law,
 “And right too rigid harden into wrong,
 “Still for the strong too weak, the weak too strong.
 “Yet go! and thus o’er all the creatures sway,
 “Thus let the wiser make the rest obey, 190
 “And for those arts mere instinct could afford,
 “Be crown’d as monarchs, or as gods ador’d.^[b’]

Great *nature* spoke; observant men obey’d;
 Cities were built, societies were made:
 Here rose one little state; another near 195
 Grew by like means, and join’d thro’ love, or fear.
 Did here the trees with ruddier burdens bend,
 And there the streams in purer rills descend?
 What war could ravish, commerce could bestow,
 And he return’d a friend, who came a foe. 200
 Converse and love mankind might strongly draw,
 When love was liberty, and nature law.

Thus states were form'd; the name of king unknown,
 Till common int'rest plac'd the sway in one.
 'Twas *virtue* only (or in arts, or arms, 205
 Diffusing blessings, or averting harms)
 The same which in a sire the sons obey'd,
 A prince the father of a people made.

Till then, by nature crown'd, each patriarch sate,
 King, priest, and parent of his growing state; 210
 On him, their second providence, they hung,
 Their law his eye; their oracle, his tongue:
 He from the wond'ring furrow call'd their food,
 Taught to command the fire, controul the flood;
 Draw forth the monsters of th' abyss profound, 215
 Or fetch th' aëreal eagle to the ground;
 Till, drooping, sickning, dying, they began
 Whom they rever'd as God, to mourn as man:
 Then, looking up from sire to sire, explor'd
 One great, first Father, and that first ador'd. 220
 Or plain tradition that this all begun,
 Convey'd unbroken faith, from sire to son,
 The worker from the work distinct was known,
 And simple reason never sought but one:
 Ere¹⁸⁰ wit oblique had broke that steady light, 225
 Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right,
 To virtue in the paths of pleasure trod,
 And own'd a Father when he own'd a God.

Ver. 204.] Origine of *monarchy*.

Ver. 209.] [Origine] of *patriarchal government*.

¹⁸⁰Ori., "E'er"; but used in sense of "before."

Love all the faith, and all th' allegiance then;
 For nature knew no right divine in men. 230
 No ill could fear in God: and understood
 A sovereign being but a sovereign good.
 True faith, true policy, united ran,
 That was but love of God, and this of man.

Who first taught souls enslav'd, and realms undone, 235
 Th' enormous faith of many made for one?
 That proud exception to all nature's laws,
 T' invert the world, and counter-work its cause?
 Force first made conquest, and that conquest, law;
 Till superstition taught the tyrant awe, 240
 Then shar'd the tyranny, and lent it aid,
 And gods of conqu'rors, slaves of subjects made.

So drives *self-love*, thro' just and thro' unjust,
 To one man's pow'r, ambition, lucre, lust:
 The same self-love, in all, becomes the cause 245
 Of what restrains him, government and laws.
 For what one likes, if others like as well,
 What serves one will, when many wills rebel?
 How shall he keep what sleeping or awake
 A weaker may surprise, a stronger take? 250
 His safety must his liberty restrain;
 All join to guard what each desires to gain.

Ver. 229.] Origine of *true religion* and
government, from the principle of *love*; and of
superstition and *tyranny*, from that of *fear*.

Ver. 243.] The influence of *self-love* operating
 to the *social* and publick good.

Forc'd into virtue thus by self-defence,
 Ev'n kings learn'd justice and benevolence:
 Self-love forsook the path it first pursu'd, 255
 And found the private in the publick good.
 'Twas then, the studious head, or gen'rous mind,
 Foll'wer of God, and friend of human kind,
 Poet or patriot, rose, but to restore
 The faith and moral¹⁸¹ *nature* gave before; 260
 Re-lum'd her ancient light, nor kindled new;
 If not God's image, yet his shadow drew:
 Taught pow'rs due use to people and to kings,
 Taught, nor to slack nor strain its tender strings;
 The less and greater set so justly true, 265
 That touching one must strike the other too;
 Till jarring int'rests of themselves create
 Th' according music of a well-mix'd state.
 Such is the WORLD's great harmony that springs
 From union, order, full consent of things! 270
 Where small and great, where weak and mighty, made,
 To serve, not suffer, strengthen, not invade,
 More pow'rful each, as needful to the rest,
 And in proportion as it blesses, blest,
 Draw to one point, and to one centre bring 275
 Beast, man, or angel, servant, lord, or king.

Ver. 257.] Restoration of true religion and
 government on their first principle. Mixt
 governments; with the various forms of each, and
 the *true use of all*.

¹⁸¹Ori., "morals"; a printer's error.

For forms of government let fools contest,
Whate'er is best administred, is best:
All must be false, that thwart this one, great end,
And all of God, that bless mankind, or mend. 280

Man, like the gen'rous vine supported lives,
The strength he gains is from the embrace he gives.
On their own axis, as the planets run,
Yet make at once their circle round the sun;
So two consistent motions act the soul, 285
And one regards itself, and one the whole.

* Thus God and nature link'd the gen'ral frame,
And bade self-love and social be the same.

** On the scriptural hypothesis one would say,
Thus the all-wise GOD, since the fall of man,
over-rules the sins and follies of mankind, and
brings good out of evil.¹⁸²*

¹⁸²Wesley's inserted comment.

[AN
 ESSAY
 ON
 MAN.]

Epistle IV.

O happiness! our being's end and aim!
 Good, pleasure, ease, content! whate'er thy name:
 That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
 For which we bear to live, and dare to die;
 Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies, 5
 O'erlook'd, seen double, by the fool, and wise.
 Plant of cælestial seed! if dropt below,
 Say, in what mortal soil thou deign'st to grow?
 Fair-opening to some court's propitious shine, 10
 Or deep with diamonds in the flaming mine,
 Twine'd with the wreaths parnassian laurels yield,
 Or reap'd in iron harvests of the field?
 Where grows—where grows it not? if vain our toil,
 We ought to blame the culture, not the soil:
 Fix'd to no spot is happiness sincere, 15
 'Tis no where to be found, or ev'ry where,
 'Tis never to be bought, but always free,
 And fled from monarchs, St. John! dwells with thee.

Ask of the learn'd the way, the learn'd are blind,
 This bids to serve, and that to shun mankind; 20

Of the nature and state of MAN with respect to
 HAPPINESS.

Some place the bliss in action, some in ease;
 Those call it pleasure, and contentment these:
 Who thus define it, say they more or less
 Than this, that happiness is happiness?
 One grants his pleasure is but rest from pain; 25
 One doubts of all; one owns ev'n virtue vain.

Take *nature's* path, and mad *opinions* leave,
 All states can reach it, and all heads conceive:
 Obvious her goods, in no extreme they dwell,
 There needs but thinking right, and meaning well; 30
 And mourn our various portions as we please,
 Equal is *common* sense, and *common* ease.

Remember, man, "the universal cause
 "Acts not by partial but by gen'ral laws,"^[27]
 And makes what happiness we justly call, 35
 Subsist not in the good of one, but all.
 There's not a blessing individuals find,
 But some way leans and hearkens to the kind.
 No bandit fierce, no tyrant mad with pride,
 No cavern'd hermit, rest self-satisfy'd; 40
 Who most to shun or hate mankind pretend,
 Seek an admirer, or wou'd fix a friend.
 Abstract what others feel, what others think,
 All pleasures sicken, and all glories sink.

Ver. 27.] HAPPINESS the END of all men and
attainable by all.

Ver. 33.] GOD governs by *general* not
particular laws; intends happiness to be *equal*,
 and to be so, it must be *social*, since all particular
 happiness depends on general.

Each has his share; and who would more obtain, 45
 Shall find, the pleasure pays not half the pain.

ORDER is heav'n's great law; and this confest,
 Some are, and must be, greater than the rest,
 More rich, more wise: but who infers from hence
 That such are happier, shocks all common sense. 50
 Heav'n to mankind impartial we confess,
 If all are equal in their happiness:
 But mutual wants this happiness increase,
 All nature's diff'rence keeps all nature's peace.
 Condition, circumstance is not the thing: 55
Bliss is the same, in subject, or in king,
 In who obtain defence, or who defend,
 In him who is, or him who finds a friend.
 Heav'n gives thro' every member of the whole
 One common blessing, as one common soul. 60
 But fortune's gifts if each alike possess,
 And each were equal, must not all *contest*?
 If then to all men happiness was meant,
 God in externals could not place content.

Fortune her gifts may variously dispose, 65
 And these be happy call'd, unhappy those:
 But heav'n's just balance equal will appear,
 While those are plac'd in hope, and these in fear:

Ver. 47.] It is necessary for ORDER and the
 common peace, that *external goods* be *unequal*,
 therefore happiness is not constituted in these.

Ver. 65.] The balance of human happiness kept
 equal (notwithstanding externals) by HOPE and
 FEAR.

Not present good or ill, the joy or curse,
But future views, of better or of worse. 70

Oh sons of earth! attempt ye still to rise
By mountains pil'd on mountains to the skies?
Heav'n still with laughter the vain toil surveys,
And buries madmen in the heaps they raise.

Know, all the good that individuals find, 75
Or God and nature meant to mere mankind,
Reason's whole pleasures, all the joys of sense,
Lie in three words, health, peace, and competence.
But health consists with temperance alone,
And peace, O *virtue!* peace is all thy own; 80
The good or bad the gifts of fortune gain;
But these less taste them, as they worse obtain.

O blind to truth, and God's whole scheme below!
Who fancy bliss to vice, to virtue woe:
Who sees, and follows, that great scheme the best, 85
Best knows the blessing, and will most be blest.

“But sometimes virtue starves while vice is fed.”
What then? Is the reward of virtue, bread?
That, vice may merit; 'tis the price of toil:
The knave deserves it when he tills the soil; 90
The knave deserves it when he tempts the main,
Where folly fights, for tyrants, or for gain.
The good man may be weak, be indolent,*
Nor is his claim to plenty, but content.

Ver. 75.] In what the happiness of *individuals*
consists, and that the *good* MAN has the advantage
even in this world.

* *I deny that.*¹⁸³

¹⁸³Wesley's inserted comment.

But grant him riches, your demand is o'er? 95
 "No—shall the good want health, the good want pow'r?^(b)
 Add health, and pow'r, and ev'ry earthly thing:
 "Why bounded pow'r? Why private? Why no king?^(b)
 Nay, why external for internal giv'n, 100
 Why is not man a god, and earth a heav'n?
 Who ask and reason thus, will scarce conceive
 God gives enough while he has more to give:
 Immense the pow'r, immense were the demand;
 Say, at what part of nature will they stand? 105

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy,
 The soul's calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy,
 Is virtue's prize: a better would you fix?
 Then give humility a coach and six,
 Justice a conqu'ror's sword, or truth a gown, 110
 Or publick spirit its great cure, a crown:
 Rewards, that either would to virtue bring
 No joy, or be destructive of the thing.
 How oft by these at sixty are undone
 The virtues of a saint at twenty-one! 115

For riches can they give, but to the just,
 His own contentment, or another's trust?
 Judges and senates have been bought for gold,
 Esteem and love were never to be sold.

Ver. 108.] That *external goods* are not the proper rewards of *virtue*, often inconsistent with, or destructive of it; but that all these can make no man happy without *virtue*. Instanc'd in each of them.

Ver. 116.] RICHES.

O fool! to think, God hates the worthy mind,
 The lover, and the love, of human kind,
 Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear;
 Because he wants a thousand pounds a year!

Honour and *shame* from no condition rise;
 Act well your part, there all the honour lies. 125
 Fortune in men has some small diff'rence made,
 One flaunts in rags, one flutters in brocade.
 The cobbler apron'd, and the parson gown'd,
 The fryar hooded, and the monarch crown'd.
 "What differ more (you cry) than crown and cow!?"¹ 130
 I'll tell you, friend; a wise man and a fool.
 You'll find, if once the monarch acts the monk,
 Or cobbler like, the parson will be drunk,
 Worth makes *the man*, and want of it *the fellow*
 The rest, is all but leather or prunella. 135

Stuck o'er with *titles*, and hung round with strings
 That thou may'st be, by kings, or whores of kings.
 Thy boasted blood, a thousand years or so,
 May from Lucretia to Lucretia flow;
 But by your father's worth if your's you rate, 140
 Count me these only who were good and great.
 Go! if your antient but ignoble blood
 Has crept thro' scoundrels ever since the flood,
 Go! and pretend your family is young;
 Nor own your fathers have been fools so long. 145

What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
 Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards.

Look next on *greatness*, say where greatness lies?
 “Where, but among the heroes and the wise?”^[2]
 Heroes are much the same, the point’s agreed,
 From Macedonia’s madman to the Swede: 150
 The whole strange purpose of their lives, to find
 Or make an enemy of all mankind;
 Not one look backward, onward still he goes,
 Yet ne’er looks forward farther than his nose.
 Nor less alike the politic and wise, 155
 All sly, slow things, with circumspective eyes;
 Men in their loose, unguarded hours they take,
 Not that themselves are wise, but others weak.

But grant that those can conquer, these can cheat,
 ’Tis phrase absurd to call a villain great: 160
 Who wickedly is wise, or madly brave,
 Is but the more a fool, the more a knave.
 Who noble ends by noble means attains,
 Or failing, smiles in exile or in chains,
 Like good Aurelius let him reign, or bleed 165
 Like Socrates, that man is great indeed.

What’s *fame*, that fancy’d life in other’s breath,
 A thing beyond us, ev’n before our death.
 Just what you hear, you have, and what’s unknown
 The same (my Lord) if Tully’s or your own. 170

Ver. 147.] GREATNESS.

Ver. 167.] FAME.

All that we feel of it begins and ends
 In the small circle of our foes or friends;
 To all beside, as much an empty shade
 An Eugene living, as a Cæsar dead,
 Alike, or when, or where, they shone or shine, 175
 Or on the Rubicon, or on the Rhine.
 A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod;
 An honest man's the noblest work of God:
 Fame but from death, a villain's name can save,
 As Justice tears his body from the grave; 180
 When what t' oblivion better were resign'd
 Is hung on high, to poison half mankind.
 All fame is foreign, but of true desert,
 Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart.
 One self-approving hour whole years outweighs 185
 Of stupid starers, and of loud huzza's;
 And more true joy Marcellus exil'd feels,
 Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

In *parts* superior what advantage lies!
 Tell (for *you* can) what is it to be wise? 190
 'Tis but to know, how little can be known;
 To see all others faults, and feel our own;
 Condemn'd, in business or in arts, to drudge
 Without a second, or without a judge:
 Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land? 195
 All fear, none aid you, and few understand.
 Painful preheminance! your self to view
 Above life's weakness, and its comforts too.

Bring then these blessings to a strict account,
 Make fair deductions, see to what they mount? 200
 How much of other each is sure to cost?
 How each for other oft is wholly lost?
 How inconsistent greater goods with these?
 How sometimes life is risqu'd, and always ease?
 Think, and if still the things thy envy call, 205
 Say, wouldst thou be the man to whom they fall?
 To sigh for ribbands if thou art so silly,
 Mark how they grace Lord Umbra or Sir Billy:
 Is *yellow dirt* the passion of thy life?
 Look but on Gripus, or on Gripus' wife: 210
 If *parts* allure thee, think how Bacon shin'd,
 The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind;
 Or ravish'd with the whistling of a name,
 See Cromwell, damn'd to everlasting fame!

If all, united, thy ambition call, 215
 From antient story learn to scorn them all.
 There, in the rich, the honour'd, fam'd, and great,
 See the false scale of happiness compleat!
 In hearts of kings or arms of queens who lay,
 (How happy!) those to ruin, these betray: 220
 Mark by what wretched steps their glory grows,
 From dirt and sea-weed as proud Venice rose;
 In each how guilt and greatness equal ran,
 And all that rais'd the hero, sunk the man.
 Now Europe's laurels on their brows behold, 225
 But stain'd with blood, or ill exchange'd for gold:
 Then see them broke with toils, or sunk in ease,
 Or infamous for plunder'd provinces.

Oh wealth ill-fated! which no act of fame
 E'er taught to shine, or sanctify'd from shame! 230
 What greater bliss attends their close of life?
 Some greedy minion, or imperious wife,
 The trophy'd arches, story'd halls invade,
 And haunt their slumber in the pompous shade.
 Alas! not dazled with their noon-tide ray, 235
 Compute the morn and evening with the day:
 The whole amount of that enormous fame,
 A tale! that blends their glory with their shame.

Know then this truth (enough for man to know)
 "VIRTUE alone is happiness below:" 240
 The only point where human bliss stands still,
 And tastes the good without the fall to ill;
 Where only, merit constant pay receives,
 Is bless'd in what it takes, and what it gives;
 The joy unequal'd, if its end it gain, 245
 And if it lose, attended with no pain;
 Without satiety, tho' e'er so bless'd,
 And but more relish'd as the more distress'd;
 The broadest joy unfeeling folly wears,
 Less pleasing far than virtue's very tears: 250
 Good, from each object, from each place acquir'd;
 For ever exercis'd, yet never tir'd?
 Never elated, while one man's oppress'd,
 Never dejected, while another's bless'd;

Ver. 240.] That VIRTUE only constitutes a
 happiness, whose object is *universal*, and whose
 prospect *eternal*.

And where no wants, no wishes can remain, 255
 Since but to wish more virtue, is to gain.

See! the sole bliss heav'n could on ALL bestow,
 Which who but feels, can taste, but thinks, can know:
 Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
 The bad must miss, the good untaught will find; 260
 Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
 But looks thro' nature up to nature's God;
 Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,
 Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal, and divine;
 Sees, that no being any bliss can know; 265
 But touches some above, and some below;
 Learns, from this union of the rising whole,
 The first, last purpose of the human soul;
 Till lengthen'd on to faith, and unconfin'd,
 It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind. 270
 He sees why nature plants in man alone
 Hope of known bliss, and faith in bliss unknown:
 (Nature, whose dictates to no other kind
 Are giv'n in vain, but what they seek, they find)
 Wise in the present: she connects in this 275
 His greatest *virtue* with his greatest *bliss*,
 At once his own bright prospect to be blest,
 And strongest motive to assist the rest.

Self-love thus push'd to social, to divine,
 Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine: 280

Ver. 258, &c.] That the *perfection of happiness*
 consists in a *conformity* to the *order of providence*
 here, and a *resignation* to it, here and hereafter.

Is this too little for the boundless heart?
 Extend it, let thy enemies have part:
 Grasp the whole worlds, of reason, life and sense,
 In one close system of benevolence,
 Happier, as kinder! in whate'er degree, 285
 And height of *bliss* but height of CHARITY.

God loves from whole to parts: but human soul
 Must rise from individuals to the whole.
 * *Self-love* but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
 As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake; 290
 The centre mov'd, a circle strait succeeds;
 Another still, and still another spreads;
 Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace,
 His country next, and next all human race,
 Wide, and more wide, th' o'erflowings of the mind 295
 Take ev'ry creature in, of ev'ry kind;
 Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
 And heav'n beholds its image in his breast.

Come then, my friend! my genius, come along,
 Oh master of the poet, and the song! 300
 And while the muse now stoops, or now ascends,
 To man's low passions, or their glorious ends,
 Teach me like thee, in various nature wise,
 To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
 Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer 305
 From grave to gay, from lively to severe;

* *A fine thought! But is it consistent with
 scripture? I am afraid not.*¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴Wesley's inserted comment.

Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, or polite to please.
O! while along the stream of time, thy name
Expanded flies, and gathers all its fame, 310
Say, shall my little bark attendant sail,
Pursue the triumph, and partake the gale?
When statesmen, heroes, kings, in dust repose,
Whose sons shall blush their fathers were thy foes:
Shall then this verse to future age pretend 315
Thou wert my guide, philosopher and friend?
That urg'd by thee, I turn'd the tuneful art
From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart;
For wit's false mirror held up nature's light;
Shew'd erring pride, whatever IS, is RIGHT; 320
That REASON, PASSION, answer ONE great AIM;
That true SELF-LOVE and SOCIAL are the SAME;
That VIRTUE only makes our BLISS below;
And all * our knowledge is, OUR-SELVES to KNOW.

** Or rather, to know the only true GOD and
Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.¹⁸⁵*

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.

¹⁸⁵Wesley's inserted comment.