



ON THE

ETERNITY OF THE SUPREME BEING.

BY CHRISTOPHER SMART, M. A.

HAIL, wond'rous Being, who in power supreme
 Exists from everlasting, whose great name
 Deep in the human heart, and every atom
 The Air, the Earth, or azure Main contains
 In undecypher'd characters is wrote—
 INCOMPREHENSIBLE!—O what can words,
 The weak interpreters of mortal thoughts,
 Or what can thoughts (tho' wild of wing they rove
 Thro' the vast concave of th' ætherial round)
 If to the Heaven of Heavens they'd wing their way
 Adventurous, like the birds of night they're lost,
 And delug'd in the flood of dazzling day.—

May then the youthful, uninspired Bard
 Presume to hymn th' Eternal; may he soar
 Where Seraph, and where Cherubin on high
 Resound th' unceasing plaudits, and with them
 In the grand Chorus mix his feeble voice?

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He may—if Thou, who from the witless babe
Ordainest honour, glory, strength, and praise,
Uplift th' unpinion'd Muse, and deign'it t' assist,
GREAT POET OF THE UNIVERSE, his song.

Before this earthly Planet wound her course
Round Light's perennial fountain, before Light
Herself 'gan shine, and at th' inspiring word
Shot to existence in a blaze of day,
Before "the Morning-Stars together fang,
And hail'd Thee Architect of countless worlds
Thou art—all-glorious, all-beneficent,
All Wisdom and Omnipotence thou art.

But is the æra of Creation fix'd
At when these worlds began? Could ought retard
Goodness, that knows no bounds, from blessing ever,
Or keep th' immense Artificer in sloth?
Avaunt the dust-directed crawling thought,
That Puissance immeasurably vast,
And Bounty inconceivable, could rest
Content, exhausted with one week of action—
No—in th' exertion of thy righteous power,
Ten thousand times more active than the Sun,
Thou reign'd, and with a mighty hand compos'd
Systems innumerable, matchless all,
All stamp'd with thine uncounterfeited seal.

But yet (if still to more stupendous heights
The Muse unblam'd her aching sense may strain)

Perhaps

perhaps wrapt up in contemplation deep,
 The best of Beings on the noble theme
 Might ruminatè at leisure, Scope immense
 Th' eternal Power and Godhead to explore,
 And with itself th' omniscient mind replete.
 This were enough to fill the boundless All,
 This were a Sabbath worthy the Supreme !
 Perhaps enthron'd amidst a choicer few,
 Of Spirits inferior, he might greatly plan
 The two prime Pillars of the Universe,
 Creation and Redemption—and a while
 Pause—with the grand presentiments of glory.

Perhaps—but all's conjecture here below,
 All ignorance, and self-plum'd vanity—
 O Thou, whose ways to wonder at's distrust,
 Whom to describe's presumption (all we can—
 And all we may—) be glorified, be prais'd.

A Day shall come, when all this Earth shall perish,
 Nor leave behind ev'n Chaos ; it shall come
 When all the armies of the elements
 Shall war against themselves, and mutual rage,
 To make Perdition triumph ; it shall come,
 When the capacious atmosphere above
 Shall in sulphureous thunders groan, and die,
 And vanish into void ; the earth beneath
 Shall sever to the center, and devour
 Th' enormous blaze of the destructive flames.
 Ye rocks, that mock the raving of the floods ;

And proudly frown upon th' impatient deep,
 Where is your grandeur now? Ye foaming waves,
 That all along th' immense Atlantic roar,
 In vain ye swell; will a few drops suffice
 To quench the inextinguishable fire?
 Ye mountains, on whose cloud-crown'd tops the cedars
 Are lessen'd into shrubs, magnificent piles,
 That prop the painted chambers of the heavens,
 And fix the earth continual; Athos, where;
 Where, Tenerif's thy stateliness to-day?
 What, Ætna, are thy flames to these?—No more
 Than the poor glow-worm to the golden sun.

Nor shall the verdant vallies then remain
 Safe in their meek submission; they the debt
 Of nature and of justice too must pay.
 Yet I must weep for you, ye rival fair,
 Arno and Andalusia; but for thee
 More largely and with filial tears must weep,
 O Albion, O my country! Thou must join,
 In vain dissever'd from the rest, must join
 The terrors of th' inevitable ruin.

Nor thou, illustrious monarch of the day;
 Nor thou, fair queen of night; nor you, ye stars,
 Tho' million leagues and million still remote,
 Shall yet survive that day; Ye must submit,
 Sharers, not bright spectators of the scene.

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But tho' the earth shall to the center perish,
 Nor leave behind ev'n Chaos; tho' the air
 With all the elements must pass away,
 Vain as an ideot's dream; tho' the huge rocks,
 That brandish the tall cedars on their tops,
 With humbler vales must to perdition yield;
 Tho' the gilt Sun, and silver-tressed Moon
 With all her bright retinue, must be lost;
 Yet Thou, Great Father of the world, surviv'st
 Eternal, as thou wert: Yet still survives
 The soul of man immortal, perfect now,
 And candidate for unexpiring joys.

He comes! He comes! the awful trump I hear;

The flaming sword's intolerable blaze

I see; He comes! th' Archangel from above.

" Arise, ye tenants of the silent grave,

" Awake incorruptible and arise:

" From east to west, from the antarctic pole

" To regions hyperborean, all ye sons,

" Ye sons of Adam, and ye heirs of Heaven—

" Arise, ye tenants of the silent grave,

" Awake incorruptible and arise."

'Tis then, nor sooner, that the restless mind

Shall find itself at home; and like the ark,

Fix'd on the mountain-top, shall look aloft

O'er the vague passage of precarious life;

And, winds and waves and rocks and tempests past,

Enjoy the everlasting calm of Heaven;

'Tis

'Tis then, nor sooner, that the deathless soul
 Shall justly know its nature and its rise:
 'Tis then the human tongue new-tun'd shall give
 Praises more worthy the eternal ear.
 Yet what we can, we ought;—and therefore, Thou,
 Purge Thou my heart, Omnipotent and Good!
 Purge Thou my heart with hyssop, lest like Cain
 I offer fruitless sacrifice, and with gifts
 Offend and not propitiate the Ador'd.
 Tho' Gratitude were blest with all the powers
 Her bursting heart could long for, tho' the swift,
 The fiery-wing'd Imagination soar'd
 Beyond Ambition's wish—yet all were vain
 To speak Him as he is, who is INEFFABLE.
 Yet still let reason thro' the eye of faith
 View Him with fearful love; let truth pronounce,
 And adoration on her bended knee
 With heaven-directed hands confess His reign.
 And let th' Angelic, Archangelic band
 With all the Hosts of Heaven, Cherubic forms,
 And forms Seraphic, with their silver trumps
 And golden lyres attend:—“ For Thou art holy,
 “ For Thou art One, th' Eternal, who alone
 “ Exerts all goodness, and transcends all praise.”