

with a careless eye, they are regarded with a stupid indifference; but, when examined nicely with a good microscope, we explore new wonders on every fresh survey.

The fine thoughts of GOD have the attractive property of NOVELTY. Mankind is naturally pleased with new things; and when, at the same time, they are set in an agreeable light, this very much heightens the pleasure.

In all the parts of the scripture we have new wonders of GOD's perfections, intentions, and operations—new events of providence rising into view—new characters of great and wise and good men attracting our attention, and commanding our wonder, esteem, and imitation—new prospects of future worlds of happiness or misery rise before us.

If we consider the SUBLIME STYLE of the Bible, we have ten thousand glories which burst in upon our attentive and ravished souls with a brighter radiance than the starry heavens in the clearest night.

In the sacred writers of the OLD and NEW TESTAMENT, we have innumerable passages which rise to the utmost degree of sublimity.

In the divine authors, the words are ennobled by the vigour and brightness of the sense, contrary to the manner of many other authors, where the diction and ornaments of speech chiefly contribute

tribute to the sublimity; whilst the thoughts themselves are poor, low, common, and grovelling, if taken naked, and stripped of the fine language.

The SUBLIME is a just, grand, and wonderful thought; a striking image or conception of a great soul.

It strikes with the force of thunder, with a conquering voice; and with the terrible glory of lightening, with a rapid and irresistible fire.*

It appears beautiful either in the plain or figurative style: it admits all the ornaments of language, yet needs none of them; but commands and triumphs in its own native strength and majesty.

The true sublime will bear translation into all languages, and will be great and surprizing in all languages, and to all persons of understanding and judgment, notwithstanding the difference of their country, education, interest, and party.

It carries all before it by its own strength, and does not so much raise persuasion in the hearer or reader, as throw him into a delightful rapture or pleasing surprize, and transport him out of himself.

We admire it at first, without considering; and, upon mature consideration, we are convinced that we can never admire it too much.

* BLACKWALL'S Sacred Classics, vol. I.

It defies opposition, envy, and time; it triumphs over all resistance, and is infinitely advanced above cavil and criticism.

The sublime, says Longinus, is an image reflected from the greatness of the soul.

The sublime, in the scripture, is an image reflected from the greatness of God's soul in his conceptions, volitions, and affections.

'Tis the copy of God's heart in his doctrines, laws, threatenings, and promises.

An inward grandeur, vigour, and fire in God, is the common centre, from whence every ray of the sublime, either in thought, action, or expression, is darted out.

LONGINUS gives us two marks or characters, whereby we may know the true sublime; and both of them appear in all their resplendent glory in the writings of God.

I. C H A R A C T E R.

That is just, great, and wonderfully sublime, which, the more we consider it, the greater ideas we conceive of it, and the more lively sensations we receive from it, whose force we cannot withstand, which sinks deep, and makes powerful impressions on the mind.

II. C H A R A C T E R.

That is truly sublime in composition, which, whenever you hear or read it, always gives the
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same pleasure to a reader or hearer of TRUE TASTE, as if he himself had been the author of it. It causes even envy and cavilling to die away in the confluence of sweetness and rapture we feel.

BOILEAU describes the true sublime thus: "It is a certain fire and force in discourse, proper to elevate, transport, and to command the soul; and which proceeds, (1) from greatness and elevation of thought, and inward dignity and nobleness of feelings; or, (2) from magnificence of words, expressive images, and striking figures; or, (3) from an harmonious, lively, and animated force of expression.

"That is to say, from any one of these particulars regarded separately, or what perfectly makes the sublime from these three glorious particulars taken together." *

Let us now proceed, on the principles and rules of these great masters in eloquence, to give some specimens of the true sublime in the writings of the Bible; and let us see if there are not strong and convincing marks and evidences of the conceptions and genius of a God running through the various parts of this sacred and immortal volume.

Let all that have eyes, or ears, or sense, or taste, see if these are the words of a man, or
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* Smith's Longinus, 8vo.

the inventions of impostors, or enthusiasts, and madmen.

I. SPECIMEN.

From the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses.

GOD said, what? Let there be light, and there was light.—Most high GOD, possessor of heaven and earth.—Joseph is a fruitful bough.—I am that I am.—This is the finger of GOD.—Thus saith the LORD GOD, in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up.—I will get me honour upon Pharaoh.—Who is a GOD like unto thee, glorious in holiness; fearful in praises: doing wonders.—Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy, and mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire, and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the mount quaked greatly: and when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and GOD answered him by a voice.

Note, This sixth chapter of Exodus contains actions and words the most dreadfully sublime that ever entered into the conceptions of man; 'tis superior to all criticism, and defies all censure.—See a beautiful and devout illustration of this, and the xxth chapter, by Dr. Watts, in his Lyric Poems; which must astonish and please all persons who have eyes, or ears, or common sense.

GOD

GOD spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy GOD ; which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. " THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME."

And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking ; and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off ; and they said unto Moses, " Speak thou with us, and we will hear ; but let not GOD speak with us, LEST WE DIE." And Moses said, GOD is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not : and the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where GOD was.

They saw the GOD of Israel—under his feet a paved work of sapphire stone. Numbers xvi.

O ! GOD, the GOD of the spirits of all flesh— if these men die the common death of all men— then the Lord hath not sent me. GOD is not a man that he should lie : neither the son of man, that he should repent : hath he said, and shall he not do it ? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good ?

How shall I curse whom GOD hath not cursed ? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied ?

The words of Balaam are so sublime, so elegant, and admirably finished, that we must heartily agree to the observation of Dr. Lowth, in his incomparable *Prælectiones*. *Prælect.* xx. p. 273. 8vo. 1763.—Addam unum ex illis Balaamivaticiniis, quæ modo memoravi, et quorum sæpius mentionem facio: nihil enim habet poësis hebræa, in ullo genere limatius, aut exquisitius. Hoc autem, de quo loquor, abundat lætissimis ac splendidissimis imaginibus a natura petitis; ipso etiam colore ac flore quodam dictionis, et figurarum varietate, præcipue elucet. Hoc si nunc, aut si quæ aliquando alia, experiar, an Latino carmine adumbrari possint, vestræ erit humanitatis, Academici, conatus nostros in meliorem partem accipere.

Tuis, Jacobe, quantus est castris decor!
 Tuisque signis, Israel!
 Ut rigua vallis fertilem pandens sinum;
 Horti ut scatentes rivulis;
 Sacris Edenæ costi ut in sylvis virent,
 Cedrique propter flumina.
 Illi uda multo rore stillant germina,
 Foetusque alunt juges aquæ.
 Sancti usque fines promovebit imperi
 Rex usque victor hostium.
 Illum subactò duxit ab Nilo Deus,
 Novis superbum viribus,
 Qualis remotis liber in jugis oryx

Fert

Fert celsa cœlo cornua.
 Vorabit hostes ; ossa franget ; irritas
 Lacerabit hastas dentibus.
 Ut leo, recumbit ; ut læna, decubat ;
 Quis audeat laceffere ?
 Quæ quisque tibi precabitur, ferat bona !
 Mala quæ precabitur, luat ! *

You are this day as the stars of heaven ! He has took you out of the furnace.—Thy GOD is a consuming fire.—If the Lord's wrath be kindled, and ye quickly perish.—Cursed, cursed, cursed, cursed, no less than eighteen times.—Cursing and vexation.—The Lord shall make thy plagues wonderful.—Give ear, O ! heavens, —hear, O ! earth,—ascribe ye greatness to our GOD.—A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn to the lowest hell ; and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.—I will spend mine arrows upon them.—I kill. I make alive. I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever.—If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold of judgment : I will render to mine enemies : and will reward them that hate me.—I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh.—Happy art thou, O ! Israel ; who is like unto thee, O !
 people,

* A translation of Dr. Lowth's beautiful latin verses shall be given at the end of the Contemplations on the Inspiration of Scripture.

people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help: and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

That man must be dead to all true and sublime taste, who cannot see and relish, and delight in the above specimen of the grandeur and majesty of the stile of the holy scriptures!

II. SPECIMEN.

From Joshua to the end of Job.

Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one good thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your GOD spake concerning you: all are come to pass unto you; and not one thing hath failed thereof.—As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.

Hear, O! ye kings; give ear, O! ye princes: I will sing unto the Lord: I will sing praise to the LORD GOD of Israel. Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water: the mountains melted from before the Lord; even that Sinai, from before the LORD GOD of Israel.—They fought from heaven; the stars, in their courses, fought against Sisera; the river Kishon swept them away; that ancient river, the river Kishon: O! my soul, thou hast trodden down strength.

So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord! but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.

But will God, in very deed, dwell with men on the earth! Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven; the heaven of heavens, with all their host; the earth, and all things that are therein; the seas, and all that is therein; and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.

Blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.—Then a SPIRIT passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes: there was silence.—And I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his maker?—or, as the original hebrew ought to be translated, “ Shall mortal man be justified by God, or be just before God: shall a man be pure with or before his maker?”—Behold, he putteth no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly:

how much less on them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth, or like the moth!—God doth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number.—Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.—Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered?—He overturneth the mountains in his anger; he makes the pillars of the earth tremble; he commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.—He alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; he doth great things past finding out, and wonders without number. Who can hinder him? who will say to him, what dost thou?

Man is of a few days, and full of trouble: he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also like a shadow, and continueth not.

Man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more.—O! earth, cover not thou my blood.—The thunder of his power, who can understand? Terrors shall take hold on him; (viz.) the sinner, like waters.—With God is terrible majesty.—God thundereth marvellously with

with his voice.—Dost thou know the wondrous works of him that is perfect in knowledge?—Stand still, O! *Job*, and consider the wondrous works of GOD!

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?—when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of GOD shouted for joy?—or who shut up the sea with doors?—and said, Hitherto thou shalt come, and no farther: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.—Have the gates of death been opened to thee, or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, here we are: who can number the clouds in wisdom, or who can stay the bottles of heaven?

Hast thou cloathed the horse's neck with thunder?—Doth the eagle mount up at thy command?

Hast thou an arm like GOD, or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

III. SPECIMEN.

From the book of Psalms.

I will love thee, O Lord, my strength!—in my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my GOD: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. Then the earth shook and trembled: the

the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils; and fire out of his mouth devoured; coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down, and darkness was under his feet: and he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he flew on the wings of the wind.—The Lord also thundered in the heavens: and the Highest gave his voice hailstones and coals of fire.—He sent out his arrows—he shot out lightnings—then the channels of the waters were seen—the foundations of the world were discovered, at thy rebuke, O! Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils: he sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters!

Lift up your heads, O! ye gates; and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is the king of glory? the Lord strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle—the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory!

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the vast expanse sheweth his handy work!—The sun, as a bridegroom in his beauty, comes out of his chamber; and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

The SUBLIME and PATHETIC united.

I am poured out like water, all my bones are
out

out of joint—my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels—my strength is dried up—my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, I am brought down to the dust of death, dogs compassed me—they pierced my hands and my feet—I may tell all my bones, they look and stare upon me—they parted my garments, and for my vesture they cast lots.

IV. SPECIMEN.

From the Psalms.

Give to the Lord, O! ye mighty; give unto Jehovah glory and strength—the voice of the Lord is upon the waters—the God of glory thundereth—the voice of the Lord is powerful—the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars—the voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire; i. e. the thunder and lightnings directed by the eye and hand of God—the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh—the voice of the Lord discovereth the forest—the Lord sitteth king for ever.

Note, That this psalm ends all this dreadful thunder and terror, with the perfect safety and strong consolation to all true believers: “The Lord will give strength to his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace.” How soothing, and how sweet a comfort is this to all that love and fear God!

Thy

Thy throne, O ! GOD, is for ever and ever !—
gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O ! most mighty
—ride prosperously—thy right hand shall teach
the terrible things—thine arrows are sharp in
the hearts of thine enemies.—N. B. This con-
queror always reaches the very heart ; the people
fall before his face ; they cannot flee away as
they often do before other conquerors !

V. SPECIMEN.

From the Psalms.

The mighty GOD, even the Lord hath spoken
—out of Sion, the perfection of beauty, GOD
hath shined—our GOD shall come, and shall not
keep silence : a fire shall devour before him, and
it shall be very tempestuous round about him.

The great Fenelon, of Cambray, says, “ Never
did any greek or latin ode reach the loftiness of
this psalm : it surpasses the utmost stretch of hu-
man invention.”

*Dialogues on Eloquence, p. 151. Edition of
Stevenson, 8vo. 1722.*

GOD is our refuge and strength ; a very present
help in trouble—we will not fear, though the
earth be removed ; though the mountains be
carried into the depths of the sea—there is a
river, the streams whereof make glad the city of
GOD—GOD shall help her, (i. e. the church)
and that right early.

This

This was the glorious psalm of Dr. Martin Luther, who used to say, on any fresh appearance of danger from his enemies, "Come, let us sing the 46th psalm, and then let them do their worst."

The sublime pathos of repentance was never better expressed than in the 51st psalm: "Against thee, thee only have I sinned—I was shapen in iniquity—deliver me from blood guiltiness—create in me a clean heart—wash me thoroughly from my sin—take not thy holy spirit from me—restore to me the joys of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free or princely SPIRIT!

The sublime contempt which GOD flings on all wicked men, is admirably expressed in the 62d psalm: "The sons of Adam, or the mean man, are vanity—the sons of the nobleman, (i. e. Ish, the great man) are a lie—to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity; or, as the hebrew originally expresses it, they go up sooner than vanity: that is, put vanity into one scale, and throw in men of low and high degree into the other scale, they will be altogether lighter than vanity itself.—Was ever such a picture of the worthless and insignificant character of bad men! What an infinite disdain does GOD express, in these words, for all worldly grandeur! What an ineffable contempt is poured on all the glory of all wicked men in
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their most flourishing state of honour and magnificence !

We shall give specimens of the sublime stile of the scriptures from the other psalms, from Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and the lesser prophets ; and from the New Testament, especially the book of Revelations, in another part of this work : at present we must, with great regret and reluctance, omit them, lest this head should be disproportionable to the following particulars, to which let us now address ourselves.

III. GOD stirred up or excited the PENMEN to write and publish the REVELATIONS OR DISCOVERIES which he made to their SOULS.

If we accurately trace out the principal motives which excite to writing and to action, we shall find that they are such as are addressed to fear, hope, gratitude, ambition, glory, shame, and pleasure. All these springs of action GOD worked upon when he excited the sacred penmen to write the discoveries of his perfections and operations in the holy scriptures.

I. FEAR is a serious and awful sense of the sovereign perfections of GOD, which inspires us with a dread of offending his majesty, and an ardent care of pleasing him in all things.

If ever any men in the world possessed the holy fear of GOD in a transcendent degree, the prophets

prophets and apostles were the men : they write with most sacred reverence of the supreme Being : they durst not for a moment displease him by refusing to write down his will : even a Balaam, (the only bad man that ever proclaimed any prophecies of the Old Testament) declares that if Balak would give him his house full of silver and gold, he could not conceal or diminish, or add to the words which GOD commanded him to speak.

If we enter into the spirit and temper of Moses, and the prophets and apostles, we may justly conclude, concerning each of them, that they had such feelings and thoughts as those which follow. Let us begin with Moses, in the wilderness : let us behold him taking up his pen to begin his first book, called Genesis : let us sit by him, or look over him, while he writes,

Did ever any man before, since the creation of the world, feel so much of the tremendous nature and majesty of GOD in his mind ? Did he not feel the whole weight of Deity upon his soul ? Did not he see GOD in his incomprehensible glory ? and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I do exceedingly fear and quake. *

Where shall we find such a great and venerable man : such a holy and heavenly writer in all the authors of the pagan world ?

2. HOPE.

* We must beg our readers to apply this thought to the other penmen.