

of water would be quite struck off and separate from the rest, and tossed through the air like a flying river; but the common motion of the waves was to climb up the hills, or inclined fragments, and then return into the valleys and deeps again, with a perpetual fluctuation going and coming, ascending and descending, till the violence of them being spent by degrees, they settled at last in the places allotted for them; where "bounds are set, that they cannot pass over, that they return not again to cover the earth."

Noah's Flood.

Thus the flood came to its height; and it is not easy to represent to ourselves this strange scene of things, when the deluge was in its fury and extremity; when the earth was broken and swallowed up in the abyss, whose raging waters rose higher than the mountains, and filled the air with broken waves, with a universal mist, and with thick darkness, so its nature seemed to be in a second chaos; and upon this chaos rode the distressed ark that bore the small remains of mankind. No sea was ever so tumultuous as this, nor is there anything in present nature to be compared with the disorder of these waters. All the poetry, and all the hyperboles that are used in the description of storms and raging seas, were literally true in this, if not beneath it. The ark was really carried to the tops of the highest mountains, and into the places of the clouds, and thrown down again into the deepest gulfs; and to this very state of the deluge and of the ark, which was a type of the church in this world, David seems to have alluded in the name of the church (Psalm, xlii. 7): "Abyss calls upon abyss at the noise of thy cataracts or water-spouts; all thy waves and billows have gone over me." It was no doubt an extraordinary and miraculous providence that could make a vessel so ill manned live upon such a sea; that kept it from being dashed against the hills, or overwhelmed in the deeps. That abyss which had devoured and swallowed up whole forests of woods, cities, and provinces, nay, the whole earth, when it had conquered all and triumphed over all, could not destroy this single ship. I remember in the story of the Argonauts, when Jason set out to fetch the golden fleece, the poet saith, all the gods that day looked down from heaven to view the ship, and the nymphs stood upon the mountain-tops to see the noble youth of Thessaly pulling at the oars; we may with more reason suppose the good angels to have looked down upon this ship of Noah's, and that not out of curiosity, as idle spectators, but with a passionate concern for its safety and deliverance. A ship whose cargo was no less than a whole world; that carried the fortune and hopes of all posterity; and if this had perished, the earth, for anything we know, had been nothing but a desert, a great ruin, a dead heap of rubbish, from the deluge to the conflagration. But death and hell, the grave and destruction, have their bounds.

The concluding part of his work relates to the final conflagration of the world, by which, he supposes, the surface of the new chaotic mass will be restored to smoothness, and 'leave a capacity for another world to rise from it.' Here the style rises to a dignity almost worthy

of the sublimity of the theme; the passage was aptly termed by Addison the author's funeral oration over this globe.

The Final Conflagration.

But 'tis not possible from any station to have a full prospect of this last scene of the earth, for 'tis a mixture of fire and darkness. This new temple is filled with smoke while it is consecrating, and none can enter into it. But I am apt to think, if we could look down upon this burning world from above the clouds, and have a full view of it in all its parts, we should think it a lively representation of hell itself; for fire and darkness are the two chief things by which that state or that place is to be described; and they are both here mingled together, with all other ingredients that make that Tophet that is prepared of old (Isaiah, xxx.). Here are lakes of fire and brimstone, rivers of melted glowing matter, ten thousand volcanoes vomiting flames all at once, thick darkness, and pillars of smoke twisted about with wreaths of flame, like fiery snakes; mountains of earth thrown up into the air, and the heavens dropping down in lumps of fire. These things will all be literally true concerning that day and that state of the earth. And if we suppose Beelzebub and his apostate crew in the midst of this fiery furnace and I know not where they can be else, it will be hard to find any part of the universe, or any state of things, that answers to so many of the properties and characters of hell as this which is now before us.

But if we suppose the storm over, and that the fire hath gotten an entire victory over all other bodies, and subdued everything to itself, the conflagration will end in a deluge of fire, or in a sea of fire, covering the whole globe of the earth; for when the exterior region of the earth is melted into a fluid like molten glass or running metal, it will, according to the nature of other fluids, fill all vacuities and depressions, and fall into a regular surface, at an equal distance everywhere from its centre. This sea of fire, like the first abyss, will cover the face of the whole earth, make a kind of second chaos, and leave a capacity for another world to rise from it. But that is not our present business. Let us only, if you please, to take leave of this subject, reflect upon this occasion on the vanity and transient glory of all this habitable world; how by the force of one element breaking loose upon the rest, all the varieties of nature, all the works of art, all the labours of men, are reduced to nothing; all that we admired and adored before, as great and magnificent, is obliterated or vanished; and another form and face of things, plain, simple, and everywhere the same, overspreads the whole earth. Where are now the great empire of the world, and their great imperial cities? Their pillars, trophies, and monuments of glory? Shew me where they stood, read the inscription, tell me the victor's name! What remains, what impressions, what difference or distinction do you see in this mass of fire? Rome itself, eternal Rome, the great city, the empress of the world, whose domination and superstition ancient and modern, make a great part of the history of this earth, what is become of her now? She laid her foundations deep, and her palaces were strong and sumptuous: she glorified herself, and lived deliciously, and said in her heart, I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow. But her hour is come: she is wiped away from the face of the earth, and buried in perpetual oblivion.