





erely, there is a
fell on here, or
they might
The
and it was
er



2
Harriet Pearson's

Book 1819

RD

12

F

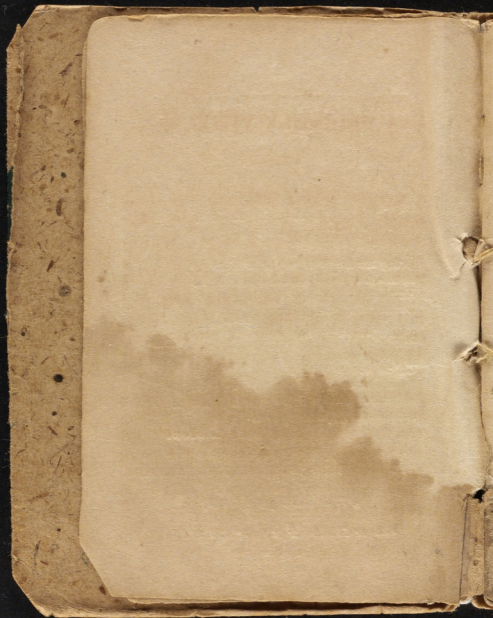
A
FRIENDLY VISIT
TO THE
HOUSE OF MOURNING.

In the day of adversity consider.
ECCL. vii. 14.

Many are the sayings of the Wise
In ancient and modern books enroll'd
Extolling Patience.....
But to th' afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails; or rather seems a tune
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his com-
plaint,
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above;
Secret refreshings that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold.

MILTON.

From Sidney's Press,
FOR I. COOKE & CO. NEW-HAVEN,
1812.



A FRIENDLY VISIT, &c.

YOUR present affliction, my dear friend, demands something more than the usual forms of condolence. Sorrow, which like yours, cannot be prevented, may yet be *alleviated* and *improved*. This is my design in addressing you, and if I seem to intrude upon your retirement, let my motive be my apology. Having felt how much *better it is to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting*; (Eccl. vii. 2.) having received my best *Lessons, Companions, and even Comforts* in it; I would administer from my little stock of experience: and while I thus endeavour to assist your meditations, shall rejoice if I may contribute, though but a mite, to your comfort.

Were I, indeed, acquainted with the peculiar circumstances of your loss, I

should employ particular considerations : but my present address can have only a *general* aim ; which is to acquaint the heart, at a favourable moment, with its grand concerns ; to give it a serious impression when *softened* ; and an heavenly direction when *moved* ; Let us, therefore, sit down humbly together in this house of mourning : If *the heart of the wise be found* (Eccl. vii. 4.) here, your experience, I hope, will prove that here also it is *formed* : and let us calmly contemplate some momentous Objects intimately connected with it, and viewed with peculiar advantage from it.

OUR GOD is the first of these objects . with him we seldom form any close acquaintance till we meet him in trouble. He commands silence now, that He may be heard ; and removes intervening objects, that He may be seen. A SOVEREIGN DISPOSER appears, who, as *Lord of all*, hath only resumed what he lent ; whose will is the law of his creatures ;

and who expressly declares his will in the present affliction. We should seriously consider, that all allowed repugnance to the determinations of his government, (however made known to us) is *sin*; and that every wish to alter the appointments of his wisdom is *folly*: *we know not what we ask*.—When God discovers himself in any matter, those who know him, *will keep silence before him*. (Hab. ii. 20.) *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him?* How just was the reply; ‘*Behold I am vile! what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.*’ (Job xl. 2, 4.)

This silent submission under trying dispensations, is variously exemplified as well as inculcated in the scriptures. An awful instance of sin and sorrow occurs in the family of Aaron; his sons disregarded a divine appointment, and *there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them; but Aaron held his peace*. (Lev. x. 2. 3.) Eli, in similar circumstances, silenced his heart with this single but sufficient confi-

deration, "*It is the Lord.*" (1 Sam. iii. 18.) David, under a stroke which he declares consumed him, observes, "*I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because THOU didst it.*" (Psa. xxxix. 9.) And Job, when stript of every comfort, blessed the name of Him who *took away*, as well as *gave*. (Job i. 21.) Whatever be the nature of your calamity, may it be attended with such an humble and child-like spirit as these possessed!

But the Sovereign Disposer is also the Compassionate Father, Among other instances of his tenderness, you may have observed the peculiar supports he affords under peculiar trials. Let us mark, and acknowledge, the hand which mingles mercy with judgment, and alleviation with distress. The parents I have just mentioned lost their children under circumstances far more distressing than yours:—The desire of your eyes (if not the idol of your heart) was, perhaps, almost a stranger: you strove hard to de-

tain it, but He, who took the young children into his arms and blessed them, took yours; and taking it, seemed to say, *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*; (John xiii. 7.) *patiently suffer this little one to come unto me, for of such is my kingdom* (Matt. x. 14.) composed:—*Verily I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father.* (Matt. xviii. 10.) “If I take away your child, I take it to myself—Is not this infinitely beyond any thing you could do for it? Could you say to it, if it had lived, ‘Thou shalt weep no more, the days of thy mourning are ended?’ (Isa. xxx. 19.) Could you shew it any thing in this world like *the glory of God, and of the Lamb?* (Rev. xxii. 23.) Could you raise it to any honor here like *receiving a crown of life?*” (James i. 12.)

The voice of a “Father of mercies and a God of all comfort,” (2. Cor. i. 3.) speaks as distinctly in the death as in the birth of an infant. “A

voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping ; Rachel, weeping for her children, refused to be comforted, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, ‘ Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.’ (Jer. xv. 17.) “ It is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish.” (Matt. xviii. 14.)

Is it a pious friend that has just yielded up his breath ? The same voice seems to say, ‘ Turn from him, or rather turn from his *clay*—his faded *garments*.—*He* himself “ is taken from the evil to come ; he is entered into peace.” (Isa. lvii. 1, 2.)

When the able Minister, the exemplary Parent, or the faithful Partner depart, a consternation often seizes the circles which they blessed. We are so stunned by the sudden blow, or occupied with the distressing circumstances, that we scarce-

ly can hear God saying, "Fear not, I, even I, am he that comforteth you :"
 (Isa. li. 12.) I, your Father, am yet alive ; I gave you your departed friend ; I sent every benefit which was conveyed through him ; trust me for blessings yet in store ; trust me with him, and with yourselves.'

Whatever notions one who lives *without God in the world* may form of dying, we should learn from his word to regard it merely as a Translation,—a change in which nothing is lost which is really valuable. As surely as we *believe that Jesus died and rose again*, so surely do we believe that *them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.* (1 Thess. iv. 14.) Taught of God, we should view Losses, Sicknes, Pain, and Death, but as the several trying stages by which a good man, like Joseph, is conducted from a *Tent* to a *Court*. *Sin* his disorder ; *Christ* his physician ; *Pain* his medicine ; the *Bible* his support ; the *Grave* his bed ; and

Death itself an Angel, expressly sent to releate the worn-out Labourer, or crown the faithful Soldier. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works follow them. (Rev. xiv. 13.)

But admitting the state of your departed Friend to be doubtful, yet in all cases that are really so, let us cultivate honourable thoughts of GOD; let us remember the FAITHFUL CREATOR. Righteousness is his throne, though clouds surround it. Whatever he has left *obscure* we may safely leave him to explain. Let us recollect that, amidst innumerable obscurities, he hath made things *clear* in proportion as they are *important*; and therefore repeatedly urges it upon our conscience, that the door is still open to us;—that it is awful to stand before it *unresolved*:—that we must trust him to-day;—and that to-mor-

row he will equally remove our conjectures and our complaints.

Perhaps you are ready to reply, "I have heard many such things: and I also could speak as you do, if your soul were in my soul's stead: (Job xvi. 2, 4.) but my heart, and my expectations are so crushed by this blow, that I can hear nothing but "thy bruise is incurable and thy wound grievous;—thou hast no healing medicines." (Jer. xxx. 12, 13.)

Beware, however, of falling into their sin who "limited the Holy one of Israel." (Psalm lxxviii. 41.) There is a charge continually brought against man, that in his troubles, the Source and the Resource are equally forgotten. "Though affliction cometh not forth of the dust, (Job v. 6.)—" yet none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth Songs in the Night? (Job xxxv. 10.) Endeavour then, in extremities, to recollect an ALL-SUFFICIENT FRIEND—a very present HELP in trouble. HE at least may add (as he

does in the passage just alluded to) ‘I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord.’ Cannot the voice which rebuked a tempestuous sea, calm our troubled spirits? Is his hand shortened at all, that he cannot *blefs our latter end*, like Job’s “more than the beginning? (Job xlii. 12.) Is it not the Lord “that maketh poor, and maketh rich; that bringeth low and lifteth up? (1 Sam. ii. 7.) Many, whose hearts have been desolate like yours, while they have looked *around*, have at length “looked UPWARD unto Him, and been lightened? (Psalm xxxiv. 5.) A single promise has afforded them not only relief, but strong consolation.

Let us, therefore, my dear friend, “turn again to this strong hold as prisoners of hope: even to-day can he render double unto us. (Zech. ix. 12.) Let us look to *Abraham’s God*, and his encouragement is ours; “Fear not,—I am GOD ALMIGHTY—q. d.” (Gen. xvii. 1.) I

am all sufficient in all cases: I am enough; "and able to do exceeding abundantly above all you ask or think." (Eph. iii. 20.) I have taken away thy *gourd*, but dost thou well to be angry?—have I left nothing for thankfulness?—this world however cannot be your *home*, nor its objects your *consolation*: they are all too poor for the soul of man. Look unto Me and be saved: (Isa. xlv. 22)—"Acquaint thyself with Me and be at peace:" (Job xii 21.)—"Follow Me and you shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John viii. 12.) However dark and distressing the present state of things may appear, "commit thy fatherless children to my care, I will preserve them alive; and let the widows trust in me." (Jer. xlix. 11.)

Still the beloved object is gone, and your heart follows it. You can scarcely receive counsel from infinite Wisdom, or comfort from Omnipotence. To every fresh encouragement you are ready to

reply, "Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?—shall the dead arise and praise thee?—shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction?" (Psalm lxxxviii. 10, 11.) His word repeatedly assures you they shall; and that "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice;" (John. v. 28.) but it informs you also, that he can do abundantly more for the living than merely restore their dead friends, or revive their fainting spirits;—it teaches you that he can sanctify the separation,—that he can give a divine life to the survivor, "though dead in trespasses and sins," (Eph. ii. 1.) and inseparably unite both in his kingdom. If the Comforter could make up for the loss of *Christ's* bodily presence; yea, make it even "expedient that he should go away;" (John xvi 7.) how much more can he supply the place of every creature!

May this COMFORTER, writing his word in your mind, help you to say with a

confidence highly honourable to himself and his Gospel, 'My poor perishing gourd is, indeed, withered a day before I expected it ;—my broken reed is gone ;—but God is left,—“ a father to the fatherless,—an husband to the widow,” (Psalm lxviii. 5.)—“ and now Lord, what wait I for ? truly my hope is in thee. (Psalm xxxix. 7.) Thou canst give me, “ in thine house, a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters, even, an everlasting name which shall not be cut off ;” (Isa. lvi. 5.) and therefore, “ though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine, yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the GOD OF MY SALVATION.” (Hab. iii. 17, 18.)

Once more ; let us endeavour, at such seasons as these, to recognize a GRACIOUS MONITOR. Whenever the Lord *strikes*, he *speaks*. Let us listen at such a time as this with humble attention, yet with holy confidence, for it is the voice of a *Friend*,

—a wonderful *Counsellor*. Let us with the Prophet resolve to ascend the tower of observation, and observe *what He will say unto us, and what we shall answer when we are reprov'd*. If with him we thus watch our dispensation, *at the end*, like his, “it shall speak.” (Hab. ii. 1—3.)

God is continually raising up witnesses, and sending them in his name “to found the alarm in Zion.” (Joel ii. 1.) He charges them to admonish wise, as well as the foolish Virgins, to beware of slumbering, since the bridegroom is at hand: and when one is called away, to cry to those that remain, “Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.” (Matt. xxiv. 44.) Some indeed, like the sons of Lot, desperately scorn the admonition, and treat it as the fear of dotage.” (Gen. xix. 14.) Some, like those in the Acts, “are in doubt, saying one to another, ‘What meaneth this?—and others mocking reply, ‘These men are full of new

wine." (Acts ii. 12, 13.) But TRUTH, like a rock furiously assaulted, but unshaken, remains to scorn its scorers: and while the witnesses continue to bear a faithful and consistent testimony, God, sooner or later, appears in vindication of their integrity and his own word. Entering a careless family, he smites the first-born; and, as one that *will* be heard, calls aloud, "Awake, thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. v. 14.)

And is it not, my afflicted friend, an infinite mercy, if, by *any* means, God will enter with such a *light*—that he will rouse such a *sleeper*?—that, by his minister *Death*, he will arrest the attention of him who has slighted every other minister?—What patience! what long-suffering! to take such a one apart; bring him from noise and occupation into the secret and silent chamber; speak to his heart; and seal the most important truths on it, by the most affecting impressions! Is it

not saying, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I make thee as Admah?*' Certain it is, that questions, which before only reached the ear, often now, like barbed arrows, remain fixed in the conscience—conscience, no longer stifled or amused, discovers the **CONTENDER**, and, trembling before him, cries, 'Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God.†

This, I say, is often the case, and should it be realized in yours, as it has been in that of your present Visitor; if, instead of flying for relief to every object but God, you are brought humbly to his feet with patient submission, serious inquiry, fervent prayer, holy resolution, and firm reliance; if, in a word, by the severest stroke, the *enchantment* is also broken,—your soul 'escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler,† and returned to its

* Hosea xi, 8. † Jer. xxiii, 18, ‡ Psa. cxxiv, 7.

proper REST ; what reason will you have to say,

Those we call *wretched* are a chosen band.
Amid my List of Blessings infinite,
Stand this the foremost,—‘ *That my heart
has bled.*’

For *All* I bless Thee ;—Most, for the *se-
vere* ;

Her death,—*my own* at hand——

But death at hand (as an old writer expresses it) should be death in view, and lead us to consider next

OUR PROSPECTS from this House of Sorrow, as the inhabitants of a present and future world. * Many suppose that they can best contemplate the *present* world by crowding the ‘ House of Mirth ;* their whole deportment, however, shews that it makes them much too giddy for serious observation : ‘ having eyes, they see not. ’ †

Look at the deceased, and contemplate present things. His days an *hand-breadth* ;

* Eccl. vii. 4. † Mark viii. 18.

—his beauty consumed like the *moth-fretten garment* ;—his cares and pleasures a *dream* ;—his attainments as the *grass*, which flourisheth in the morning, and in the evening is cut down and withereth ;—his years a *tale* ;—his strength, *labour and sorrow*. So soon is the whole *cut off and fled*, that we cannot help repeating with the Psalmist, ‘ Verily—every man—at his best estate—is altogether VANITY,’†—or ‘ a vapour that appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away.’‡

Few, perhaps, reflect, when they follow a friend to the grave, that life itself exhibits little more than a funeral procession, where friend follows friend, weeping to-day and wept for to-morrow.—While we are talking of one, another passes—we are alarmed, but behold a third ! There is, however, relief in this very reflection : ‘ My friend is gone, but am I weeping as if I were to *stay* ? Is he sent for in the *morning* ? in the *afternoon* I

Psal. xxxix. and xc. † James iv. 18.

shall certainly be called.' Inconsolable distress, therefore, may ungird our loins, may waste our hours, and cause us to make fatal mistakes in the journey, but does not bring us forward a single step towards meeting our friends in that state, where present joys and sorrows will be recollected only as the dream of a distempered night.

If, after many former admonitions, an ENEMY still urged us to climb ; and, as we ascended, pointed ' to the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them ;* if our hearts have been the dupes of the vanishing prospect, and our ears eagerly heard the proposal, ' all these things will I give thee ;† let us now hear the voice of a FRIEND, calling us, though in an unexpected way, ' to commune with our heart and be still ;‡ to know, at least in this our day of visitation, the things which belong to our peace ;'§ and also

* Matt. iv. 8. † Matt. iv. 9. ‡ Psa. iv. 4.

§ Luke xix. 42.

what those things are which 'hide them from our eyes.'

It is at such seasons as these, that we more clearly detect the lies of life. It is in the House of Mourning that, what the scripture calls lying vanities, lie peculiarly naked and exposed. Let us here examine what so lately dazzled us. What now is the 'purple and fine linen*' that caught our eye? What is it to fare sumptuously only for a *day*? Who is he that cries, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry?† I trust you now feel the deep misery and utter ruin of that dying creature, who can say nothing better to his soul than *this*. You can scarcely help crying out, 'What sottishness, what madness this, in a moment so interesting as *Life*?—with a prospect so awful as *Eternity*?'

The truth is, God speaks variously and incessantly to man respecting his prospects

both present and future ; but present things seize his heart, blind his eyes, stupefy his conscience, and carry him away captive. Now ‘affliction is God speaking louder,’ and striving with the heart of man :—crying, as he has lately in your house, ‘Arise and depart, this is not your rest ; it is polluted ;’ and, if you persist in attempting to make a rest of it, ‘will destroy you with a sore destruction.’*

Our plan, indeed, is the very reverse of his : we love our native soil, and try to strike our roots deeper and deeper into it : firmly fixed in earth, we would fain draw our whole life, strength, and nourishment, from it. And here we not only ‘fade as a leaf,’† but, with ‘every tree that beareth not good fruit, be hewn down and cast into the fire,’‡ did not mercy interpose.

We seldom, however, discern mercy in its *first* approach. Is it *Mercy* that tears me up by the roots ?—that cuts the fibres

* Mic. xi. 10. † Isa. lxiv. ‡ Matt. iii. x.

of sweetest union?—does it prune away the branches? nip the loveliest buds? and cover the earth with blossoms?—Yes, verily,—since the very life of the whole often depends upon the removal of a part, Mercy will wound to heal: regard to the tree will strip off its most flourishing suckers: the great Husbandman will not fail to adopt the sharpest means for the improvement of his choicest plants: ‘for every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.’* ‘Though the Lord cause grief,’ yet it is in ‘comassion,’ and ‘according to the multitude of his mercies, for he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men: † but soon or late instructs all his children to say, ‘I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right; and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.’ ‡

Let not, therefore, the change of the present scene discompose but direct us: it

* John xv. 2. † Lam. iii. 32, 33. ‡ Psa. cix. 75.

changes, in order to present the only unchangeable one. By thus rending the veils which men try to throw over a dying state, and discovering TEKEL† written on every creature, the most careless are often so roused, that they seem to awake and recover themselves: they appear, for a time at least, to become ‘wise, to understand these things,’ and seriously to ‘consider their latter end.’‡ May this salutary impression, however, my dear friend, never be worn from *your* mind, but lead you habitually to look from this fading, to that abiding prospect which is to be found only in the ETERNAL WORLD,—and on which it may be necessary here to drop a reflection or two.

I think you must often have remarked that the urgency and bustle of present things, not only raise a cloud of dust before our future prospects, but early beget a false principle that the *present* is the *only one*. You must also have observed that

† i. e. wanting. Dan. v. 27. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 29.

ten thousand false maxims, which daily fly through the world, take their rise from this prime falsehood. Whereas, in fact, the present life, instead of being the *whole*, is comparatively *nothing*;—a *Stage*, a *Porch*, a *Dream*, a weary day's *Journey*. What is this drop to the ocean before us? What this moment to Eternity? As a Theatre indeed, in which God exhibits the wonders of his providence and grace; or as a Stage, on which we are to act our parts without any opportunity of repetition; the present state is infinitely grand and important: but surely no greater imposition can be put upon the Pilgrim than to persuade him that he is at *Home*; or to make him forget and drown his eternal interests in such a vision of the night as Life.

Do you not, my dear friend, sensibly perceive this? While you sit here, does not the cloud break, and the mist subside? Have you not already so realized *a better, that is an heavenly country*, as to

admire him who pitched only a *tent* here but steadfastly looked for *a city that hath foundations*? (Heb. xi. 16, 9, 10.) Are you not ready 'to take hold of this Jew,' saying 'We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.' (Zech. vii. 23.)

Seeing this, you only see truths ever exhibited in the scriptures, and living principles in all who are 'taught of God;' (John v. 45.) for he alone can enable us to use his own discoveries; and how gracious is he, when he removes any object which might prevent our thus seeing Himself, his kingdom, and his righteousness? or whose removal may prove the occasion of our *seeking* them?

Just before the flood, there were, doubtless, among their 'men of renown,' (Gen. vi. 4.) admired projectors; but there appears to have been but one *truly* wise man among them; one who seriously regarded his Prospects. And he, 'being warned of God of things not seen as yet,

moved with fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his house.* Now such a man is the Christian. He feels 'the world passing away, with the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.† "I feel," says he, "that however finely they dress the pageant of this world, it 'passeth by;'‡ to a creature like me, going, hastening, such an *Ark* is worth more than ten thousand dying worlds. Let the gay laugh; 'let the despisers wander and perish;'§ with such Prospects before me, I *must* be serious. He that cannot lie has revealed the *terrors* as well as the glories of a future state: He speaks of 'a worm that dieth not, and a fire that is not quenched,'|| as well as of 'a fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.' (Psa. xvi. 11.) I must not, I dare not, shut my eyes against these awful realities. I will not sacrifice my soul to a jest, nor miss the single oppor-

* Heb. xi. 7. † John ii. 17. ‡ 1 Cor. vii. 31.
§ Acts xiii. 41. || Mark ix. 44.

tunity afforded me for its salvation. He that calls for thy whole heart is worthy of it : while the things which have hitherto engrossed it, though they cannot *satisfy*, I find they can *ruin it*—‘ I will therefore arise and go to my Father,’ (Luke xv. 18.) to my Saviour, who has promised to ‘ cast out none that come unto Him.’ [John vi. 37.] Yea, doubtless, I ‘ count all things but loss, that I may be found in him,’ [Philip iii. 8, 9.] the true ARK, the only REFUGE, which God has provided for perishing finners.”

Such a man, indeed, is the *Christian*, but the Christian, after all, is but a *Man*. In a state like this, he needs to be continually reminded of his own principles. Even the *wise* Virgin slumbers though the Bridegroom is at hand. But a cry is often made in the family, before that which will at midnight awaken the world: one like that in the house of Pharaoh for his first-born ; or that so lately heard in *yours*. A cry, which, while it rouses the

Sleeper, fills his eyes with tears and his heart with pangs; often produces such views of God, of the present, and of the eternal state, as all other monitors would have attempted in vain.

Here then, my afflicted, but, I hope, instructed friend, let us study the heavenly science of gaining by *losses*, and rising by *depressions*. Leaving the wilderness, like Moses, let us ascend the mount of scriptural discovery, and survey a prospect of which his was but a shadow, Let us look from vicissitude and desolation to what alone is 'incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away;' [1 Pet. i. 4.] and in the house of affliction and death, let us contemplate a house 'not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' [2 Cor. v. 1.] How refreshing to look from a family bereft of its companions and comforts to 'Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; to an innumerable company of angels; and to the general assembly and church of

the first-born which are written in heaven!" [Heb. xii. 22, 23.] the only family which cannot be divided; the only friendship which shall not disappoint our warmest expectation.

Glorious as this prospect is, (perhaps you are ready to reply) "I have been long in the habit of viewing it very indistinctly. My attention has been so fixed on one below, that I live looking *into* the Grave rather than *beyond* it. My spirits are so broken, my heart so wounded, and my eyes so dim with watching and weeping, that I can hardly recollect what I read. If serious reflection composes me for a few moments, I soon relapse, and seem to lose sight of every support. I indeed severely feel what you say concerning the *present* life, but I view the glories of the *future* like a starving creature, who, looking through the gate of the wealthy, surveys a plenty which but increases his anguish."

There is, however, this difference at

least between your cases ; the plenty which *you* see is *yours*, if you are really willing to accept it. You never received a gift which was so freely bestowed, or so suited to your necessity, as that ‘gift of God,’ which is ‘eternal life through Jesus Christ.’ [Rom. vi. 23.] In order to view this more distinctly, let us consider the sufficiency of

OUR PROVISIONS—‘For wisdom hath built her house, she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, and furnished her table. She also crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither ; and to him that wanteth understanding she saith, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled ; forsake the foolish and live.’ [Prov. ix, 1—6.]

Man, indeed, is daily reminded by the Thorns at his feet, by the Sweat of his brow, and by the Dust to which he is returning, that his paradise is *lost* : [Gen. iii. 18, 19.] but paradise *regained* is con-

sidered rather as an idea ; a subject for Poetry. That book, however, which I hope you have chosen as your best companion in the House of Mourning, like the vision of Jacob, not only shews the heavens opened, but discovers a gracious Medium of communication and intercourse, as it were ‘a ladder let down from heaven to earth. [Gen. xxviii. 12.] A medium so suited to the state of man, that the weakest and vilest, who is humble enough to take hold of it as God’s ordinance ; advance a step at a time ; and call for strength to proceed ; may climb by it from Earth to Heaven.*

Are you, my dear friend, among the number of those, who stand before God not only as stript of their *comforts*, but humbled under sin as the cause of all the desolations with which our fallen state abounds ? Open your book at the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah. You will there perceive the most precious privilege of

* Compare Genesis xxviii. with John i. 51.

Paradise restored : the Creator descending to the condition and wants of his creature, and once more holding *communion* with him. The *broken-hearted*, the *captives*, and the *mourner*, are here shewn One mighty to save and to relieve : and, that such should not mistake their friend, when our Lord stood up in the synagogue to read, he selected this passage, and, having read it, he closed the book with saying, ‘ This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.’ [Luke iv. 22.] I am, as if he had said, this Deliverer and ‘ Desirer of nations ;* the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever : † blessed are they that mourn ; for they shall be comforted : ‡—blessed are ye that hunger now ; for ye shall be filled :—blessed are ye that weep now ; for ye shall laugh.’ §

I scarcely need observe that, in an address like this, (a bow drawn at a venture) formal statements of the different topics would be improper ; and, therefore I shall not attempt to describe, in their order, the

* Hag. ii. 7. † Heb. xiii. 8. ‡ Matt. v. 4.

§ Luke vi. 21.

various provisions comprehended in that scheme of redemption, usually termed the Gospel. It may be necessary, however, to remark, that the whole is a proposal to the *broken heart*, answering all its objections, and meeting all its wants: and that such a proposal will be cordially received only in proportion as this disposition prevails.

As it is the *Sick* who best know how to value a physician, the *Debtor* a surety, and the *Criminal* a pardon; so it is the awakened conscience alone which will embrace a constitution calculated to humble the *pride*, and mortify the *corruptions*, as well as relieve the *wants*, of man. If 'without shedding of blood there can be no remission,' [Heb. ix. 22] he, who is earnest to obtain it, will rejoice to find it though on the *accursed tree*: and, however the *preaching of this cross* shall be esteemed 'foolishness among them that perish,' [1 Cor. i. 31.] such an one will not only rejoice in the provision, but magnify the means. 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the

world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world' [Gal. vi. 14.]

Our Lord represents the blessings of his kingdom under the parable of a magnificent feast, which a *King made for the marriage of his Son*; but when *all things were ready*, and invitations repeatedly sent, he points out the ruin of the world in its indisposition to accept his gracious proposal. *They made light of it*, and went *their ways*! However different their pursuits, they all agreed to reject the invitation; they began with *one consent* to make excuse: some urged reasons, and some abused the messengers; but what is this more than the history of human nature in every age? [Matt. xxii. 1—6.]

Let us, however, my dear friend, never forget that the gate lately mentioned, tho' strait, is *open*; and that only *unbelief* and *indisposition* stand without. Christ has declared that all things are *ready*; may his gracious influence, accompanying this humbling providence, form in you a spiritual taste for them! Certain I am, that whenever this is attained, his name will be

as ointment poured forth ;'—[Cant. i. 3.]
it will give a savor even to obsolete poetry.

Christ is a path—if any be misled ;
He is a robe—if any naked be ;
If any chance to hunger—he is bread ;
If any be a bondman—he is free ;
If any be but weak—how strong is he !
To dead men life he is ; to sick men
health ;
To blind men sight ; and to the needy
wealth ;
A pleasure without loss ; a treasure without
stealth.

To prepare the heart for the reception
of this treasure, as a God of order, he is
pleased to use a system of means ; one of
which I hope he is now employing for your
soul's health. I love to indulge hope, for
affliction is a seed time ; and let me freely
inquire, since God has called you aside,
has spoken so emphatically, and you have
had leisure for serious meditation, do not
the provisions of the Gospel appear new,
sufficient, and exactly suited to your case ?

Do you not mark that Gold which the thief cannot steal? that Foundation which no no tempest can shake? that Life over which death hath no power? and that Peace which the world can neither give nor take away? Does not the religion of JESUS, that is so forgotten and degraded among men, stand forward now as the *one thing needful*? Does not his friendship appear now to be 'that better part which shall not be taken away;' [Luke x. 42.] and which alone can help in extremities? In the wreck of human affairs, indeed, it is that God often makes his truth appear; and causes his Gospel, (like a plank thrown out to the perishing mariner) to be properly known and prized.

"These are the great occasions which force the mind to take refuge in religion: When we have no help in ourselves, what can remain but that we look up to a higher and a greater Power? and to what hope may we not raise our eyes and hearts, when we consider that the *GREATEST Power is the BEST?*"

“Surely there is no [truly wise] man who, thus afflicted, does not seek succour in the Gospel which has brought *Life and Immortality to Light*. The precepts of EMICURUS, who teaches us to endure what the Laws of the Universe make necessary, may silence, but not *content* us. The dictates of ZENO, who commands us to look with indifference on external things, may dispose us to conceal our sorrow, but cannot *assuage* it. Real alleviation of the loss of friends, and rational tranquility in the prospect of our own dissolution, can be received only from the promises of Him in whose hands are life and death, and from the assurances of another and better state, in which all tears will be wiped from the eyes, and the whole soul shall be filled with joy. Philosophy may infuse STUBBORNNESS, but Religion only can give PATIENCE.”*

In health and ease, ingenious speculations may amuse and satisfy us; but I think you now feel with me, that when

* Johnson,

"He takes away the desire of our eyes with a stroke," (Ezek. xxiv. 16.) our sorrows are too deep to be alleviated by the mere Orator or Philosopher; we even turn in disgust from him who would thus trifle with our case; we need a support the world cannot afford. 'I faint,' says the wounded soul: 'I want an almighty arm to lean on now; yea, a very tender and compassionate one too;—one like that of the Son of Man. I need a "merciful and faithful High Priest, who, having been tempted, knows how to succour the tempted;" (Heb. ii. 17, 18.) that Man of Sorrows, that Brother born for adversity, who, being *acquainted with grief*, can enter into my case, and commune with me in all the peculiarities of my distress. I now need one, who can quiet me on his own breast, and speak to me with his *own voice*, "Weep not, the child is not dead, but sleepeth." (Luke viii. 52.) "Weep not, thou afflicted, tossed with tempest,—when thou passest

through the waters I will be with thee." (Isa. xliii. 2.) It is true, this is the land of death, but "I am the resurrection and the life;" (John xi. 25.) this is, indeed, a "dry and thirsty land where no water is;" (Psa. lxiii. 1.) but I will lead you to "fountains of living waters: I will wipe away all tears from your eyes." (Rev. vii. 17.)

You are ready, perhaps, to say, 'O that I knew where I might find him;'—but religion has been with me rather a case of necessity than the high privilege of communing with such a comforter. I feel the misery of living at such a distance from my heavenly friend, (especially at this time) but want liberty to approach nearer:—Could I, indeed repose on the bosom you just mentioned—"but, alas! my understanding is clouded, my faith weak, sense strong, and Satan busy in filling my thoughts with false notions, difficulties, and doubts respecting a fu-

ture state, and the efficacy of prayer."*
 Though I see very gracious proposals made to returning sinners, I tremble to venture:—Death itself reminds me of transgression:—My thoughts fly every where but to God.

We readily acknowledge that among other views of death, it should be regarded as the *wages of sin*.† It is also natural for convinced sinners to tremble before a Judge who charges even angels with folly.—However Pride may boast, or Ignorance presume, he who measures by the standard of a law which is so spiritual as to regard a corrupt desire, will conclude with the apostle, that "every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) A view of the divine character, and of his own, led not only a publican to smite upon his breast, as the seat of apostacy and pollution, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner, (Luke xviii.

13.) but so perfect and upright a man as Job to *abhor himself*, and repent "in dust and ashes: (Job xlii. 19.) I may add that, as *we* become proficient in their school, we shall be more ready to *confess* than to *complain*:—we shall learn to justify God in any instance of his righteous displeasure; and humbly own, that he has laid upon us far less than our iniquities deserve. (Psalm ciii. 10.)

But while the Christian, as a penitent, looks upon him whom he has pierced and *mourns*; as a believer, he looks at him who was wounded for transgression, and *hopes*. He finds it as desperate to doubt the *remedy*, as to deny the *disorder*.—Having formerly rushed headlong with the *presumptuous*, he now fears perishing with the "fearful and unbelieving." (Rev. xxi. 8.) He sees an atonement of God's own providing; he pleads upon God's own authority the merit of that blood "which cleanseth from all sin; (1 John i. 7.) and by thus receiving "the record

which God gives of his Son, he set his seal to it that God is true. (John iii. 33.)

Is this my dear friend, in any degree your case?—Fearful, wandering, and wounded as your heart is, does it yet discover a resting place?—Instead of wishing to evade the charge of “ manifold sins and wickedness committed by thought, word and deed, against the Divine Majesty; is the remembrance of them grievous, and the burden of them intolerable? ” Do you sincerely desire to be freed from this burden, and to enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God? that heavenly communion and rest which has been mentioned? “ Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world ! ” (John i. 29.) “ Behold him exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins ? ” (Acts v. 31.) Come to him as a sinner, and touch, with humble confidence, but the “ hem of his garment, and you shall be made whole : ” (Matt. ix. 21.) Wait upon

him, and you shall obtain both strength and liberty ; “ for if the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed.” (John viii. 36.)

Respecting your sense of weakness, let me add that *Provision* made for fallen nature, corresponding to its various wants, is at once a *character* and an *evidence* of our Religion. It is a glorious peculiarity of it, that its *promises* correspond with its *precepts*. To use the language which best conveys its meaning, “ The kingdom of God is not in WORD only, but also in POWER.” (1 Cor. iv. 20.) He who enlightens the blind eyes, undertakes to “ strengthen the weak hands, and to confirm the feeble knees.” (Isa. xxxvi. 3—6.) The Spirit of wisdom and understanding is said to be also a Spirit of *might*, of *grace*, “ and of supplication.” (Compare Zech. xii. 10. with Eph. i. 19.) It is peculiar to *our* Teacher that he *enables* as well as instructs his disciples : he first presents a *prospect* of the inheri-

tance, then a *title* to it through his death^d and together with these, affords, *strength* to rise and pursue it.—Turn to the thirty-sixth chapter of Ezekiel, and you will find your case amply provided for, (Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27.) but recollect that it is added, “I will yet for this be inquired of, to do it for them.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 37.) “Is any afflicted? let him pray.” (James v. 13.)

But I must not pass by the temptation you mentioned with respect to the efficacy of prayer: you will, perhaps, too readily object, ‘Here it is that I sink; I prayed earnestly for the life of the deceased; I thought at one time I saw signs of a recovery, but the event makes me fear that I was not heard, and that I have no FRIEND left now in Earth or Heaven.’

A little consideration will, I hope, shew you your mistake, and prove that a petition may be graciously accepted, when its particular object is not granted. Did not our LORD declare that his Father

heard him always? (John xi. 42.) Are we not told that when "in the days of his flesh he had offered up prayers, with strong crying and tears, unto Him that was able to save him from death, he was HEARD in that he feared?" (Heb. v. 7.) But consider, I pray you, how he was heard: Certainly not by having the cup *taken away*, (a cup at which human nature, however perfect, must recoil) but in being accepted when he prayed; in being supported while he drank it; and in victoriously accomplishing his grand design through drinking it to the very dregs.

To come nearer to our own condition, we find St. PAUL going to CHRIST for deliverance from some severe trial which he calls a *thorn in the flesh*; he tells that he also was heard, and in the same way as his Master; not by being released from suffering, but by receiving something more honorable and advantageous; namely, that *Grace* which not only supports a

Believer through his trials, but puts a healing virtue into them.

Far removed from the holy resignation of our Master, we too much resemble in our prayers, the impatience of our children. I remember when a sick one of mine has had some medicine to take, he has called loudly to me to come and assist him against those who were endeavoring to force it down: he, probably, wondered at my refusing to relieve him; but the little sufferer did not consider, though often told, that he was not to be helped in that way; he did not recollect, that while I tenderly felt his cry, the very compassion I felt for him, and the desire I had to relieve him, kept me from taking away the bitter draught.

The truth is (and it is a truth frequently told to us) that our heavenly Father always sends his children the things they ask or better things. He answers their petitions in *kind* or in *kindness*. But while we think only of our *Ease*, He consults

our *Profit*:—We are urgent about the *Body*, He about the *Soul*: We call for present *Comfort*, He considers our everlasting *Rest*: and, therefore, when he sends not the very things we ask, he hears us by sending greater “than we can ask, or think.” (Eph. iii. 20.)

Is any, therefore, afflicted? let him pray; not only in the public sanctuary, or in the retired closet, but let him consider that there is “a new and living way consecrated through the vail” (Heb. x. 20.) of a Redeemer’s human nature, from every scene of retirement or action, to a *MERCY SEAT*; where he “satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul, with goodness; especially such as sit in darkness and the shadow of Death.” (Psa. cvii. 9, 10.) Our very misery and infirmity should, in defect of other preachers, point out the seat of our relief; and direct such frail and depraved creatures to the common Friend of the *wearry* and *heavy laden*.

Pouring into his bosom all our complaints, we at once obey his command, honor his character, and obtain his assistance: "for we have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. iv. 15, 16.)

Is it not a time of need with you? endeavor, at his command, to approach with an holy confidence, for the "supply of all your need according to his riches in glory;" (Philip. iv. 19.) and, at this time particularly, for the illumination and comfort of his Holy Spirit. He whom you supplicate not only *invites*, but *reasons* with you. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." [Luke xi. 13.]

The religion of education and custom obtains, more or less, every where ; but serious, vital, spiritual religion is *a case of necessity* with us all. We summon our forces, we ransack our stores, " we spend our money for that which is not bread, and our labor for that which satisfieth not ;" [Isa. lv. 1.] we look every way, and call to every thing, till each in return loudly replies, " It is not in me." [Job xxvii. 14.] Well, indeed, will it be, if, after all our fruitless efforts, we are brought to feel that the provisions of the Gospel are the only *bread* for a hungry soul, the only *balm* for a wounded heart.

However foreign, my dear friend, these truths were from your consideration when we first sat down together, if it shall please Him, who " commanded the light to shine out of darkness," [2 Cor. iv. 6.] to shine into your heart, and effectually discover the *exceeding riches of his Grace* in these provisions ; then, though *you sit*

weeping over your loss, we are assured from unquestionable authority, that Angels are rejoicing [Luke xv. 10.] for your unspeakable gain. We are certain also, that not only every *real* friend will cry, "This day is salvation come to the house" [Luke xix. 9.] where we lately wept; but that, drying your tears, you yourself will be compelled to express your grateful sense of the correction you now deplore, and sing, and sing, with a companion and fellow-proficient in the school of affliction, [Psa. cxix. 67—71.]

Father, I bless thy gentle hand;
 How kind was thy chastising rod
 That forc'd my conscience to a stand,
 And brought my wand'ring soul to God!

Foolish and vain, I went astray
 Ere I had felt thy scourges, Lord;
 I left my guide—I lost my way;
 But now I love and keep thy word.

And here, suffer me to drop a word
 or two respecting these

OUR COMPANIONS in the house of mourning. Society is peculiarly pleasant when we are benighted on a journey : and especially that of a citizen of the place to which we are going. It is encouraging to travel with those, who are convinced, that if "they are chastened of the Lord, it is that they should not be condemned with the world." (1 Cor. xi. 32) "Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven : " (Matt. v. 3.) and here they are educating for it. Here they sit at the foot of the Cross, and receive lessons of faith and patience, of humility and temperance,

"Blessed also are the pure in heart ; for they here see God ;" (Matt. v. 3.) who never so unveils himself as in seasons of distress. In sight of his character and word, they bow before his providence, yea, trust him in the stroke ; for hope is made to arise here, as light in darkness. Here the spiritual Husbandman is taught to *go forth weeping, and bearing the pre-*

ious seed of faith and love, penitence and prayer; assured "that he shall again with joy, bringeth his sheaves with him." (Psa. cxxvi. 6.) Here also the heavenly Scholar acquires "the tongue of the learned, then he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." (Isa. l. 4.) And here the true soldier of Jesus Christ is found "fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life" (Tim. vi. 12.) in the very valley and shadow of death.—He is here instructed to 'cast down imaginations,' (2 Cor. x. 5.) those reasonings which peculiarly infest and darken the house of mourning; and taking the "shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit; he wrestles not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers" (Eph. vi. 12—16, 17.) a mighty though secret conflict which God shall one day declare to the world; and which, when explained, will leave its most celebrated heroes 'silent in darkness.' (1 Sam. ii. 9.)

‘Go thy way forth by the footsteps of thy flock,’ (Cant. i. 8.) for in this house they all have left the prints of their feet. Here stood Jacob weeping over his beloved Rachel; (Gen. xxxv. 20.) and here Aaron deplored his sons. (Lev. x. 3.) Here we trace the steps of David going up to his chamber, and crying with a loud voice, ‘Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son! my son!’ (2 Sam. xvii. 33.) and those of Ezekiel, who, forbidden to cry, silently resigned ‘the desire of his eyes to the stroke.’ (Ezek, xxiv. 16.) But enumeration is vain: hither came all the sons of God, the only-begotten not excepted, for JESUS himself stood *and wept* at the grave of a friend. (John xi. 35.)

With such company, is it not far ‘better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting?’ (Eccl. vii. 2.) I knew one of these, ‘a man who had seen affliction by a rod’ (Lam. ii. 1.) like yours;—a man who walked and wept

in solitude, but with no expectation of being overheard. There is something sacred in grief, and we cannot listen to its effusions with too much candour: great candour, indeed, is here required, but, if afforded, it may procure you at least, a *Companion*, as you pass through this vale of tears.

* * * * *
 * * * * *
 * * * * *

‘Set thee up way-marks;’ (Jer. xxxi. 21.) I desire here to set them up, and to record the severest of my visitations in the house of my pilgrimage. Lord, prepare me for the next!’

‘I perceive I could not have properly sympathized with a friend in a similar case before this stroke. I could not have *understood* it.

I have, at times, so felt the importance of eternal things, that I thought the loss of any present comfort would be intolerable:—but I had no idea how much de-

pended on being *ready*, when the Son of Man came in such a providence.'

'I feel I now stand in the right position to see the *world* and the *word*;—they both appear under aspects entirely new.'

'When I find "my joys packed up and gone;" my heart slain; the delight of my eyes taken away;—when I recollect who is gone before her, who is following, and what remains for the world to offer; my heart cries, *I loathe it, I would not live always*; 'I thank God that I am also to go.'

'I perceive I did not know how much my life was bound up in the life of a creature: when *she* went, nothing seemed left: one is not; and the rest seem a few thin and scattered remains.'

'And yet how much better for my lamb to be suddenly housed, to slip unexpectedly into the fold to which I was conducting her, than remain exposed here?—perhaps become a victim?'

"I cried, 'O Lord, spare my child!'

he did—but not at I meant ; he snatched it from danger, and took it to his own home.”

‘ I have often prayed, ‘ Lord, soften my heart ! humble my pride ! destroy my levity ! ’ I knew enough of his way to fear the *means* ; and he has, in mercy towards me, regarded my soul more than my *feelings*.’

‘ I prayed earnestly for her life : duty compelled me to say, ‘ *Thy will be done,*’ but I *meant* nothing.’

‘ O my God, how long hast thou come ‘ seeking fruit on this tree ? ’ [Luke xiii. 7.] how much hast thou done to cultivate it?—shall it still remain fruitless ? shall it be cut down after all ?’

‘ My passions formed impressions that she would live ; but I now plainly perceive I am called to regard *God* and not *impressions*.’

‘ I have been long like one in a fever, attended at times with a strong delirium : I begged hard that I might not be bled,

but he meant a cure, and pierced my heart.'

O how slender, how brittle, the thread on which hangs all my earthly joys!

'I wish ever to be asking, 'Am I ready, should he send again and take —— or ——, or myself?'—*Setting my house in order* will not make death approach sooner; but, that it will render his coming much easier, I feel by sad experience.'

'When I pass by the blaze of dissipation and intemperance, I feel a moment's relief. I say to my heart, Be still; at least she is not left to follow these *ignes fatui*: how much better is even the grave for my T——, than *the end of these things*?

'It is vain for me to wish, as I have done, to leave the world and go to my Father, that I might enquire into the whole of the case; the reasons, the steps, the issue, &c. In a short time I shall—but he says enough now, if I have ears to hear.'

'In the mean time, help me, O my

God and Father, to recollect that I received this drop of earthly comfort from a spring which still remains! help me to feel that nothing essential is altered! *for with thee is the fountain of life*—part of myself is already gone to thee, help what remains to follow.” * * * * *

If this humble attempt to improve your affliction has been attended with any success, your will readily admit a few concluding hints with respect to

OUR DUTY in such circumstances.—And one of the first, and principal duties of the state, is, as hath been expressed, to ACKNOWLEDGE GOD in it. It was charged upon some, that they ‘returned not to him that smote them,’ nor ‘sought the Lord’ (Isa. ix. 13.) in their distress. On the contrary, the clear apprehension Job had of a divine hand in his afflictions, is as instructive as his patience under them. While Grief ‘rent his mantle,’ ‘Faith ‘fell down and worshipped—The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed

be the name of the Lord.' (Job i. 21.) Let us learn from him never to lose sight of the *Author*, by an undue regard to the mere *circumstances* of our loss. We may think and speak of the symptoms and stages of the late removal ; of the physicians, of the remedies, &c. in their supposed right or wrong application ; but not so as to forget that an unerring Providence presided over the whole, yea, actually *conducted* every part on reasons as righteous as inscrutable.

Whatever may appear to *us* peculiar in a sick chamber, the whole was but God's intended method of removing one, who had lived his *full* (i. e. his *appointed*) time. ' Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months is with thee : thou hast appointed him his bounds which he cannot pass.' (Job xiv. 5, 6. Instead of fixing our attention upon means and creatures, of which we know so very little, let us turn to Him who wrought by these instruments, and merely effected his own

determinations by them. 'Cease from man, for wherein is he to be accounted of?' [Isa. ii. 22.] Let not the creature hide the Creator, nor present things remain the fatal screen of the future; but, in every occurrence, mark the great Cause, 'of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things: [Rom. xi. 36] who numbereth the very hairs of our head, and without whom even a sparrow falls not to the ground.' [Matt. xi. 29, 30.]

While others, therefore, are wandering without an object, and bereaved without a comforter, yea, are going to their worst enemies for relief, let us endeavour to say with Peter, 'Lord, to whom shall we go but to THEE?' [John vi. 68.] Consider the great Physician as now proposing a most serious question to your conscience, 'Wilt thou be made whole?' [John v. 6.] May the language of your heart be that of the apostle's, 'If by *any* means;' [Phil. iii. 11.] then, though seemingly swallowed up of this grief, like Jonah, you shall

find a resource *in* it, and finally be preserved *by* it. [Jonah ii. 7-10.] This dart, like that which once pierced an imposthume in battle, shall bring health with its wound; and you shall be enabled with many that are gone before you, to say, 'The Lord hath chastened me sore, but he hath not given me over unto death.' [Psa. cxviii. 18.]

Duty also directs you to MODERATE YOUR GRIEF. Our heavenly Father, who 'knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust, [Psa. ciii. 14.] allows us to mourn when he afflicts us: he often, in his providence, calls us to it, and charges us to 'weep with them that weep:' [Rom. xii. 15.] but he admonishes us also of a danger on each hand. 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.' [Heb. xii. 5.] If we seriously profess Christianity, our very profession implies, (not only a subjection to our Lord's will, but) that we have special resources in

our affliction ; several of which have been already named : that, among other of our privileges, there is ‘ a peace from God which passeth all understanding, to keep our hearts and minds [Phil. iv. 7.] through Life and Death ; and that we have many reasons for ‘ not sorrowing as others who have no hope.’ [Thes. iv. 18.] Besides which, Christians have a post of honour to maintain : an ‘ high calling [Philip. iii. 14.] to demonstrate and commend : we shall (like the pilot in a storm) be brought to our principles ; and, ‘ as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, [2 Cor. vi. 10.] should prove that we have them not now to learn.

On the contrary, there is such a thing as nursing and cherishing our grief ; employing a ‘ busy meddling memory to muster up past endearments,’ and perpetuate a vast variety of tender and heart-rending circumstances. There is a tearing open the wound afresh by images and remembrances, and thereby multiplying

those pangs which constitute the very bitterness of death itself. Our melancholy exceedingly affects this voluntary torture; it seeks expedients, and will listen to the most unjust and aggravated accusations which can approach a tender conscience respecting the deceased. But conscience should rather be concerned to repress such a disposition. It is a temptation,—It desperately strives to retain what God has determined to remove:—in some cases it seeks to penetrate an abyss he forbids even conjecture to explore: and, while it unfit the mourner for the pressing duties of his situation, it leads to that ‘forrow of the world which worketh death [2 Cor. vii. 10] to his body, soul, and Christian character. How different and superior the sentiments of DAVID! ‘His servants said unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child while it was alive, but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread.’ And he said, While the child

was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live; but now he is dead, wherefore should I fast?—can I bring him back again?—I SHALL GO TO HIM, BUT HE SHALL NOT RETURN TO ME.' [2 Sam. xii. 21—23.]

Present circumstances also admonish you to KNOW YOUR OPPORTUNITY, and to improve this season as peculiarly favourable for spiritual advancement. There is a *tide* in the concerns of religion; the scripture calls it the 'day of visitation,' [Luke xix. 44.] and sends us to the *stork* and to the *swallow* [Jer. viii. 7.] for instruction respecting it. Your heart is now so soft, its fascinations withdrawn, and the call loud & affecting; endeavour, therefore, to take the benefit of a remedy you feel so expensive.

If, in a sense, 'Smitten Friends are Angels sent on errands full of love,' instead of weeping over their tombs, let us listen to the voice which properly arises

from them ; especially if it be our privilege to bury one who, like Abel, ' being dead, yet speaketh,' and who would be ready to say to his mourners, ' Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children,' (Luke xxiii. 28.) ' I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith,' (2 Tim. iv. 7.) and received my crown. I cannot now come to weep with you, but you may ascend and rejoice with me, where there is ' no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, for the former things are passed away.' (Rev. xxi. 4.) If you truly love me, prepare to follow me. If you earnestly wish to see me again, seek not the living among the dead, but arise, and become ' a follower of them, who thro' faith and patience inherit the promises.' Take that heavenly lamp, which ' shineth as a light in a dark place ;' walk humbly by it ' till the day dawn, and the day star arise in your heart.' (2 Pet. i. 19.) Haste, my beloved, towards the things

which 'eye hath not seen;' (1 Cor. ii. 9.) and, ere the eternal day break, and the present shadows flee away, 'run with patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus.' (Heb. xii. 1, 2.) How will my cup overflow to meet you among those who daily 'come hither out of great tribulation:' and, having 'washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, serve him day and night in his temple!' (Rev. vii. 14, 15.)

Embrace every method God hath recommended for maintaining communion with him, and obtaining relief from him. The various ordinances of his House, the encouragements of his Word, the society of his Children, and, especially, Prayer. Often speak to Him who 'seeth in secret,' (Matt. vi. 18.) and 'is nigh unto all that call unto him,' (Psa. cxlv. 18.) though, with the Woman of Canaan, you can only say, 'Lord, help me.' (Matt. xv. 23.) Not only an high commendation, but a miracle followed her request. She urged

it under the greatest discouragements, but you have both a command and a promise, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.' (Psa. l. 15.)

And, while you search the Scriptures and attend the Church, you will at once be instructed and encouraged by marking in both, those footsteps which we lately considered. They are, indeed, not so explicit in the latter, but attention to the scriptural account of the Christian character, will greatly assist you in distinguishing real Christians from those who equally forward and corrupt, have at all times assumed their name, and mixed in their society, to their grief and scandal. (Phil. iii. 18, 19.) Leaving these unhappy *exceptions* to their proper Judge, follow the unerring *Rule* he has put into your hand, and those who walk by it; particularly, such as are your companions in affliction. You will see them passing before you with not only the same wounds in their hearts,

but almost the same words on their lips. Study their course ; mark their progress ; observe how they held his arm, pleaded at his throne, reposed in his bosom, and magnified his truth, who walked with them in a furnace which, like that of the three children, burnt nothing but their bonds.' (Dan. iii. 25.)

But who is sufficient for these things ?

A fourth direction will serve for a reply. To improve the opportunity you discern, and to keep pace with those you approve, SEEK DIVINE ASSISTANCE ; or, as St. Paul has expressed it, ' Be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ.' (2 Tim. ii. 1.) If, on the one hand, Religion has vast proposals to make ; on the other, to be truly religious is a mighty aim, and can be accomplished only ' through HIM that loved us,' (Rom. viii. 37.) Opposing Omnipotence to difficulty, was their *secret*, who so gloriously overcame a world that was not worthy of them : read their history in the eleventh chapter of the He-

brews, and see what an implicit reliance, called Faith, a seeing 'Him, who is invisible,' will perform. That invaluable record seems to say, 'Our fathers trusted in thee : they trusted, and thou didst deliver them : they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.' Psa. xxii, 4, 5.)

We are, indeed, called to *aim* and to *act*, and have the greatest promises annexed to the endeavor : but are as frequently reminded that we 'are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but that our sufficiency is of God. (2 Cor. iii. 5.) Christ encourages no one to advance on the ground of his own strength, any more than on that of his own *desert* : he is as jealous of the power of his Arm as of the merit of his Blood. He admitted infirmity and misery to be presented as a *complaint*, but never as an *objection*. I have observed it not uncommon, for this to be a season of peculiar temptation ; a spiritual enemy stands ready to defeat every spiritual opportunity :

but our help is near, and our example, in such conflicts, excellent. 'For this thing I besought the Lord thrice:—and he said unto me, 'My GRACE is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' May you be enabled to add with the apostle, 'Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest on me.'—(2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.)

Again, that you may seek cheerfully this assistance, REGARD YOUR ENCOURAGEMENTS. To recover our alienated minds, and gain our confidence, God meets us in a way suited to our necessities, and to our fears. Resist, as the vilest temptation, any doubt of that *Good Will to Man*, which was sung at the Redeemer's birth. What hath God not done in order to commend his love? By every expression of tender concern, he, in the person of a *Man of sorrows*, invites the guilty, the weary, the trembling and the tempted, to come unto him; assuring them that he

will neither 'break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.' (Mat. xii. 20.)

If 'God is love,' (John iv. 16.) 'Christ is God stooping to the senses, and speaking to the heart of man : ' ever saying, 'Look to my Cross, take my Yoke, and lean upon my Arm, and ye shall find rest.' He fought the house of mourning to comfort the sisters of Lazarus : he met a widow following her only child, and, 'when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.' (Luke viii. 23.) May he meet you at this time, my dear friend, with consolations which none but himself can afford : and then, at the very grave, shall that saying be brought to pass, 'Death is swallowed up in victory.' [1 Cor. xv. 54.] Let those fear, who despise our heavenly *Friends, our Prospects, Provisions, Companions,* and sense of *Duty* : God with us, and all things in God, is light in darkness, life in death. The words which lived him, who styles himself 'your

brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ,' (Rev. i. 9.) remain to cheer a solitude darker, if possible, than his.—
 'Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death.' (Rev. i. 17, 18.)

To conclude :—The late event solemnly repeats its Author's charge, 'BE YE ALSO READY.' (Matt. xxiv. 44.) Your Friend is gone: your following is certain: it may be sudden; it may be next. But should it take place this night, and find you provided with nothing better for the change than the miserable subterfuges of the profane, or the scarcely less miserable supports of the formal, what an alarm (if you are not left to the most affecting delusion or stupidity) will it not occasion! What an awful transition, to pass from the SAVIOUR to the JUDGE! without love to him; without even an acquaintance

with him; unwilling, unreconciled, un-renewed! And to Him who has often invited you, warned you, and, at times, affected your conscience with the truths we have been considering!—What a subject for eternal reflection, ‘You would not come to him that you might have life.’ (John v. 40.)

God forbid, however, that this should be *your* case! I only suppose it, lest it should; and it is too common to render the supposition improper. From such a danger we cannot be too secure; and, therefore, having lately seen how soon ‘the night cometh when no man can work,’ (John ix. 4.) let us seek *to-day*, in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, that peace and safety which you must be conscious can never be found out of it, and which it may be too late to seek to-morrow.

Some things belonging to our important change are wisely hid from us; nothing, however, is more plain than that

it is *near*, and therefore demands our most serious attention : that it is finally *decisive*, (Matt. xxv. 46.) and therefore warns us to watch against those errors, which eternity cannot rectify ; and, that the hour is *uncertain*, and, therefore, calls us to stand prepared. With our *loins girded*, and our *lights burning*, may we thus wait for our Lord !

Impressed with such views, I have often wished to take the afflicted by the hand, and lead them to a Resource their passions have obscured. I have wished them to see that the Christian hope is then most alive and full of immortality, when every other hope perishes. These wishes, and the request of a friend, (who was solicitous to obtain something of this kind more compendious than he had yet seen) have drawn from me some imperfect hints.—Imperfect, however, as they are, like a few words, presented by the road's side to the eye of the weary traveller, they may afford you some present direction and re-

lief. And should He, who is pleased to employ the feeblest means in his greatest work, conduct you by them, (though but a single step on your way) towards a *Morning without clouds*—a *House without mourning*, the service of your affectionate Friend will obtain a high reward.

LETTERS

TO A YOUNG LADY.

MY DEAR LUCY,

THOUGH I myself have sustained an heavy loss by the death of your excellent mother, who lived so much in my friendship and esteem, and by her letters and society had conferred upon me some of the sweetest pleasures in human life, yet you alas ! are the principal sufferer by this afflicting dispensation. It would give me the sincerest pleasure, if I knew how to alleviate your grief, or afford you a moment's consolation.

I need not press on you the doctrines of religion. You have, doubtless, considered who it is, that has deprived you of this invaluable parent ; a God of infinite wisdom who never strikes, but at the fit-

test moment ; a God of equal goodness, who, without the strongest reasons, would not afflict ; and a being of unbounded power, who is abundantly able to make up your loss, and open to you a thousand sources of comfort.

Christianity should exclude all *unreasonable* sorrow. If we believe that our friends are dead in God ; we know that this life is only a vapour, that our separation is but for a moment, and that we shall soon be restored to them in a world, where life is without pain, and where friendship is immortal.

Though you are, in the *literal* sense, an orphan, yet the number of your friends, to whom you are so justly dear, will render your situation neither solitary nor defenceless. The sensible, the elegant, and the good, will think themselves honoured by your acquaintance. They will give you credit for inheriting all the amiable qualities of a mother, who was revered, as far as known, whilst nature has so

strongly imprinted, on your face the resemblance of her features.

The scene is still fresh upon my memory, when in her last moments, she so strongly recommended you to my protection. And though she paid a compliment to my abilities, which only a partial friendship could have excited, she did nothing more than strict justice to the warmth of my affection. I shall really think myself complimented by your correspondence. If you will call me father or brother, you will give an unusual lustre to my name. This fond heart shall vibrate to your wishes and your happiness: and if you will occasionally visit my little cot, it shall put on all its loveliest charms, and smile in all its gayest attire, to receive so dear and so amiable a stranger. The roses of my humble garden shall, if possible, be doubly sweet; my jessamines shall emit an unusual fragrance: and if nature will but obey, I will order the *general scenery* to be delightful.

We shall reap, I am assured, *mutual* benefits by this acquaintance. If I am able to communicate to you any little knowledge, you will more than repay it by that ease, delicacy, refinement, confidence, and expansion, which the mind never effectually feels, but in the friendship of a sensible and an interesting woman, such a friendship is the richest cordial of life. Either of the sexes without it, are never what they should be. Like the best figures, *mutilated*, they appear to disadvantage. Unnatural expedients may be tried to supply its place. Business, ambition, an *overstrained* prudence, or peculiar situations may lead us to deny ourselves so sweet a pleasure; but in fact, all human projects and successes are *insipid* without it. They are roseless thorns, a winter without a spring. Pleasures have not their relish, and sorrow wants a bosom to recline on. Our manners have not their proper softness; our morals

their purity, and our souls feel an uncomfortable void.

They, who talk degradingly of women, do not know the value of the treasure they despise. They have not sufficient taste to relish their excellencies, or purity enough to court their acquaintance.— They have taken the portraits of *abandoned* women, and they think their features applicable to all.

The softer sex, it is certain, are exceedingly injured by their education. If they were what they *should* be, they are those lights in the picture of human life, that are intended to cheer all its darkness and its shades.

LETTER II.

THE education of women is unfortunately directed rather to such accomplishments, as will enable them to make a

noise and sparkle in the world, than to those qualities, which might ensure their comfort here, and happiness hereafter. Boarding schools consult but little those domestic qualifications, which are confessedly the highest point of usefulness in your sex, and still less that solid piety and virtue, which alone, to an intelligent creature, can be the source of any real heart-felt enjoyment.

Though religion is indispensibly necessary to *both* sexes, and in every possible character and station, yet a woman seems, more peculiarly, to need its enlivening supports, whilst her frame must be confessed to be admirably calculated for the exercise of all the tender and devout affections.

The timidity, arising from the natural weakness and delicacy of your frame; the numerous diseases, to which you are liable; that exquisite sensibility, which in many of you vibrates to the slightest touch of joy or sorrow; the tremulous

anxiety you have for friends, children, a family, which nothing can relieve, but a sense of their being under the protection of God; the sedentariness of your life, naturally followed with low spirits or *ennui*, whilst we are seeking health and pleasure in the field; and the many lonely hours, which in almost every situation, are likely to be your lot, will expose you to a number of *peculiar* sorrows, which you cannot, like the men, either drown in wine, or divert by dissipation.

From the era, that you become marriageable, the sphere of your anxieties and afflictions will be enlarged. The generality of men are far from acting on such strict principles of honour and integrity, in their connexions with you, as they would rigidly observe, in matters of a much more trivial importance. Some delight in sporting with your nicest sensibilities, and afterwards exposing with an *illiberal* triumph, the fondness of a credulous and unsuspecting heart; others, from

fashion merely, and to be called men of gallantry, will say a thousand civil things, and show as many preferences; with no other view, than to amuse the moment, or acquire a fantastic, visionary honour. A third sort of men (yes it is possible that there should be *male coquettes*!) will do and say every thing to inspire you with fondness, and get possession of your heart, without proceeding to that explanation, which nature has intended to come from *us*, and which the delicacy of your sex, whatever you may *suffer*, will not permit you to demand. Others, without any particular designs upon you, or improper attentions, (for attachments spring up *insensibly*, and are as possible in one sex, as the other) may be too agreeable for your safety and repose, and leave you to a silent, heartfelt concern, which will prey *doubly* in proportion to its *concealment*—or even when the indissoluble knot of marriage is tied, and you have resigned every thing, till it comes to your name and person, it

may be to a man of *mere* integrity, who knows nothing of those many, little, tender attentions, which involve so great a share of a woman's happiness—it may be to a person of great *ambition*, who has neither leisure nor inclination for soft domestic scenes—it may be to a fashionable *Insipid*, who, for the sake of flirting with some elegant fair, and giving your *jealousy* the widest range, leaves your charms and the endearments of his *children* to perish in neglect—nay stakes perhaps, his very *last* thousand on the uncertainty of game, when the unhappy throw may consign both you and your helpless babes to poverty and ruin—or it may be to a person of a peevish, ill natured, saturnine cast, *artfully* concealed, till he had you in possession, which no attention can alter, no charms can sweeten, and no vivacity can cheer. Under these, or indeed any *other* distresses, religion is the only true and unfailing resource; and its hopes and prospects, the only solid basis of con-

solation. In your many, *solitary* moments, what can afford the mind so sovereign a relief, as the exercise of devotion to an all present God? and, when domestic sorrows cluster upon you, which you cannot reveal to any friend on *earth*, what method have you left, but to pour them into the bosom of your Father in *heaven*, who is confessedly the friend of the friendless, always willing to hear their cries, and always able to protect.

The period, my dear girl, I trust, is distant, when such afflictions shall attack your glowing sensibility. They *may* come, however, when I am no more; when this tongue cannot give a word of comfort, nor these eyes drop a sympathizing tear. If they *should*, remember my advice, and let your friendship strew a few purple flowers over the grave of

Your very faithful and affectionate

A
MINISTER'S ADVICE
TO A
YOUNG LADY.

THY wining grace will lose its power to
charm,
Thy smile to vanquish, and thy breast to
warm
The reign of beauty like the blooming
flower,
Is but the pride and pageant of an hour ;
To day its sweets perfume the ambient air,
To-morrow sees its shrunk, nor longer
fair ;
Such the extent of all *external* sway ;
At best, the glory of a short liv'd day ;
Then let the mind your noblest care en-
gage ;
Its beauties last beyond the flight of age :

'Tis *mental* charm protract each dying
 grace,
 And renovate the bloom that deck'd the
 beauteous face.

Let every virtue reign within thy breast,
 That Heav'n approves, or makes its own-
 er blest ;

To candour, truth, and charity divine,
 The modest, decent, lovely virtues join :
 Let wit, well temper'd, meet with sense
 refin'd,

And every thought express the polish'd
 mind :

A mind above the meanness of deceit ;
 Of honour pure—in conscious virtue great ;
 In every change that keeps one steady aim,
 And feels that joy and virtue are the same.
 And O ! let prudence o'er each thought
 pre side

Direct in public, and in private guide ;
 Teach thee the snares of artifice to shun,
 And know, not *feel*, how others were un-
 done :

Teach thee to tell the flatterer from the
 friend,

And those who love, from those who but
pretend.

Ah ne'er let flatt'ry tempt you to believe ;
For man is false, and flatters to deceive ;
Adores those charms his falsehood would
disdain,

And laughs at confidence he strives to gain,
And if delight your bosom e'er would
taste,

O shun the viscious, dread the faithless
breast !

Infection breathes, where'er they take
their way,

And weeping innocence becomes a prey :
The slightest blasts, a female bliss destroy,
And taint the source of all her sweetest
joy ;

Kill every blossom, over run each flow'r,
And wrest from beauty all its charming
power.

The dying bud may burst to life again,
And herbs o'erspread the snow-invested
plain ;

Green leaves may clothe thy wintery wi-
dow'd trees,

And where frost nipt, may fan the western
breeze :

‘ But beauteous woman no redemption
knows

The wounds of honour time can never
close ;’’

Her virtue sunk, to light can never rise,
Nor lustre beam from once guilt clouded
eyes.

Fix’d be thy mind, those pleasures to
pursue,

That reason points as permanent and true ;
Think not that bliss can mingle with a
throng,

Whirl’d by a tide of idle forms along :

Think not that Pleasure lives with Pomp
and State,

Or soothes the bosoms of the rich and
great ;

Think not to meet her at the ball or play,
Where flirt the frolicksome, and haunt the
gay :

Think not she flutters on the public walk,
Or prompts the tongue that pours unmean-
ing talk ;

Or loves the breath of compliment, to feel,
Or stamps on crowns her estimable seal.

True Female Pleasure, of more modest
kind,
Springs from the heart, and lives within
the mind ;
From noisy mirth, and grandeur's route
she flies,
And in domestic duties wholly lies.
As fades the flow'r, that's rear'd with ten-
der care,
When left expos'd to storms and chilling
air :
So fades the fair, in reason's sober eye,
That braves the crowd, nor heeds the dan-
ger nigh ;
Who giddy roves, with Folly's motley
queen,
Nor loves the transports of a life serene.
Be thine the friendship of a chosen *few*,
To every virtue uniformly true ;
Be thine, the converse of some kindred
mind,
Candid to all, but not to errors blind ;
Prudent to check or warn unguarded youth,

And guide thy steps in innocence and truth.
 Those who regard, will fulsome language
 wave ;
 And, in the friend sincere, forget the
 slave ;
 Will make, like me, your happiness its
 care,
 Nor wink at specks, that render you less
 fair.

From *books* too, draw much profit and
 delight,
 At early morning, and at latest night ;
 But far, O far ! from thy chaste eyes re-
 move
 The bloated page, that paints licentious
 love ;
 That wakes the passions, but not mends
 the heart,
 And only leads to infamy and art !
 Let Addison's and Johnson's moral page,
 And Hawkesworth's pleasing style, the
 hours engage.
 From Milton feel the warm poetic fire,
 Whom all the nymphs of Helicon inspire,

With Thomson, round the varied Seasons
 rove ;
 His chaste ideas ev'ry heart improve.
 Let tuneful Pope instruct you how to sing,
 To frame the lay, and raise the trembling
 wing.

Such be thy joys ; and thro' this varied
 life,
 Whether a maid, a mother, or a wife ;
 May fair content for ever fill thy breast,
 And not an anxious care disturb thy rest ;
 May love, the purest passion of the skies,
 Play round thy heart, and sparkle in thine
 eyes ;
 May all thy worth be virtue's sweet reward,
 And goodness only claim thy just regard.

