

WRITINGS OF WILLIAM COWPER

by William Cowper

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by William Cowper, compiled for study and devotional reading.

9 Chapters

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01.00 Hymns on Occasional Subjects

Hymns on Occasional Subjects by William Cowper The following hymns by William Cowper appear in The works of The Rev. John Newton (New Haven, CT: Nathan Whiting, 1826), vol. 2. In the preface to the Olney Hymns, Newton himself remarks that all the hymns marked with a "C" indicate that they were written by his friend and associate William Cowper. This file contains all of Cowper's hymns that appear in Book II of the Olney hymns (a section titled: Hymns on Occasional Subjects). This electronic edition was made available by Shane Rosenthal for Reformation Ink. Original pagination has been retained for purposes of reference.

HYMNS BEFORE ANNUAL SERMONS TO YOUNG PEOPLE ON NEW YEAR'S EVENINGS
Prayer for a Blessing (Book II, Hymn 8, page 528) Bestow, dear Lord, upon our youth,

The gift of saving grace;

And let the seed of sacred truth

Fall in a fruitful place.

Grace is a plant, where'er it grows,

Of pure and heavenly root;

But fairest in the youngest shows,

And yields the sweetest fruit.

Ye careless ones, O hear betimes

The voice of sovereign love!

Your youth is stain'd with many crimes,

But mercy reigns above.

True, you are young, but there's a stone

Within the youngest breast;

Or half the crimes which you have done

Would rob you of your rest. For you the public prayer is made;

Oh! Join the public prayer!

For you the secret tear is shed:

Oh shed yourselves a tear!

We pray that you may early prove

The Spirit's power to teach;
You cannot be too young to love
That Jesus whom we preach.
Pleading for and with Youth (Book II, Hymn 11, page 529) Sin has undone our wretched race;
But Jesus has restored,
And brought the sinner face to face
With his forgiving Lord. This we repeat from year to year
And press upon our youth;
Lord, give them an attentive ear,
Lord, save them by Thy truth!
Blessings upon the rising race!
Make this a happy hour,
According to Thy richest grace,
And thine Almighty power.
We feel for your unhappy state
(May you regard it too),
And would a while ourselves forget
To pour our prayer for you.
We see, though you perceive it not,
The approaching awful doom;
Oh tremble at the solemn thought,
And flee the wrath to come!
Dear Saviour, let this new-born year
Spread an alarm abroad;
And cry in every careless ear,
"Prepare to meet thy God!"
Prayer for Children (Book II, Hymn 12, page 529)
Gracious Lord, our children see,
By Thy mercy we are free;

But shall these, alas! remain
Subjects still of Satan's reign?
Israel's young ones, when of old
Pharaoh threaten'd to withhold,
Then Thy messenger said, "No;
Let the children also go!" When the angel of the Lord,
Drawing forth his dreadful sword,
Slew with an avenging hand,
All the first-born of the land;
Then Thy people's door he pass'd,
Where the bloody sign was placed:
Hear us, now, upon our knees,
Plead the blood of Christ for these!
Lord, we tremble, for we know
How the fierce malicious foe,
Wheeling round his watchful flight,
Keeps them ever in his sight:
Spread Thy pinions, King of kings!
Hide them safe beneath Thy wings;
Lest the ravenous bird of prey
Stoop and bear the brood away. A CHRISTMAS HYMN Jehovah-Jesus (Book II, Hymn 38, page
540) My song shall bless the Lord of all,
My praise shall climb to His abode;
Thee, Saviour, by that name I call,
The great Supreme, the mighty God.
Without beginning or decline,
Object of faith and not of sense;
Eternal ages saw Him shine,
He shines eternal ages hence. As much when in the manger laid,

Almighty Ruler of the sky,
As when the six days' work He made,
Fill'd all the morning stars with joy. Of all the crowns Jehovah bears,
Salvation is His dearest claim;
That gracious sound well pleased He hears
And owns Emmanuel for His name. A cheerful confidence I feel,
My well placed hopes with joy I see;
My bosom glows with heavenly zeal,
To worship Him who died for me. As man He pities my complaint,
His power and truth are all divine;
He will not fail, He cannot faint;
Salvation's sure, and must be mine. On opening a Place for Social Prayer (Book II, Hymn 44, page 542)

Jesus! where'er Thy people meet,
There they behold Thy mercy seat;
Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,
And every place is hallow'd ground. For Thou, within no walls confined,
Inhabitest the humble mind;
Such ever bring Thee where they come
And going, take Thee to their home.
Dear Shepherd of Thy chosen few!
Thy former mercies here renew;
Her to our waiting hearts proclaim
The sweetness of Thy saving name.
Here may we prove the power of prayer,
To strengthen faith, and sweeten care;
To teach our faint desires to rise,
And bring all Heaven before our eyes.
Behold, at Thy commanding word

We stretch the curtain and the cord;

Come Thou, and fill this wider space,

And bless us with a large increase.

Lord, we are few, but Thou art near:

Nor short Thine arm, nor deaf Thine ear;

Oh rend the heavens, come quickly down,

And make a thousand hearts Thine own.

Welcome to the Table (Book II, Hymn 53, page 547) This is the feast of heavenly wine,

And God invites to sup;

The juices of the living Vine

Were press'd to fill the cup.

Oh! bless the Saviour, ye that eat,

With royal dainties fed;

Not heaven affords a costlier treat,

For Jesus is the bread. The vile, the lost, He calls to them;

Ye trembling souls, appear!

The righteous in their own esteem

Have no acceptance here.

Approach, ye poor, nor dare refuse

The banquet spread for you;

Dear Saviour, this is welcome news,

Then I may venture too.

If guilt and sin afford a plea,

And may obtain a place,

Surely the Lord will welcome me,

And I shall see his face.

Jesus hasting to suffer (Book II, Hymn 55, page 547) The Saviour, what a noble flame

Was kindled in his breast,

When hasting to Jerusalem,

He march'd before the rest.
Good will to men, and zeal for God,
His every thought engross;
He longs to be baptized with blood,
He pants to reach the cross! With all His suffering full in view,
And woes to us unknown,
Forth to the task His spirit flew,
'Twas love that urged Him on.

Lord, we return Thee what we can:
Our hearts shall sound abroad,
Salvation to the dying Man,
And to the rising God! And while Thy bleeding glories here
Engage our wondering eyes,
We learn our lighter cross to bear,
And hasten to the skies.

Exhortation to Prayer (Book II, Hymn 60, page 549)

What various hindrances we meet
In coming to a mercy seat!
Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there?
Prayer makes the darken'd cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw,
Gives exercise to faith and love,
Brings every blessing from above.
Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.
While Moses stood with arms spread wide,

Success was found on Israel's side;
But when through weariness they fail'd,
That moment Amalek prevail'd. Have you no words? Ah, think again,
Words flow apace when you complain,
And fill your fellow-creature's ear
With the sad tale of all your care. Were half the breath thus vainly spent
To heaven in supplication sent,
Your cheerful song would oftener be,
"Hear what the Lord has done for me." The Light and Glory of the Word (Book II, Hymn 62, page 550)
The Spirit breathes upon the word,
And brings the truth to sight;
Precepts and promises afford
A sanctifying light. A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none. The hand that gave it still supplies
The gracious light and heat;
His truths upon the nations rise,
They rise, but never set.
Let everlasting thanks be thine,
For such a bright display,
As makes a world of darkness shine
With beams of heavenly day. My soul rejoices to pursue
The steps of Him I love,
Till glory break upon my view
In brighter worlds above. On The Death of a Minister (Book II, Hymn 73, page 554)
His master taken from his head,
Elisha saw him go;
And in desponding accents said,
"Ah, what must Israel do?" But he forgot the Lord who lifts

The beggar to the throne;
Nor knew that all Elijah's gifts
Would soon be made his own.
What! when a Paul has run his course,
Or when Apollos dies,
Is Israel left without resource,
And have we no supplies?
Yes, while the dear Redeemer lives,
We have a boundless store,
And shall be fed with what He gives,
Who lives for evermore.

01.01 Hymns on The Christian Life

Hymns on The Christian Life

by William Cowper The following hymns by William Cowper appear in The works of The Rev. John Newton (New Haven, CT: Nathan Whiting, 1826), vol. 2. In the preface to the Olney Hymns, Newton himself remarks that all the hymns marked with a "C" indicate that they were written by his friend and associate William Cowper. This file contains all of Cowper's hymns that appear in Book III of the Olney hymns (a section titled: Olney Hymns on the Rise, Progress, Changes, and Comforts of the Spiritual Life). This electronic edition was made available by Shane Rosenthal for Reformation Ink. Original pagination has been retained for purposes of reference. The shining Light (Book III, Hymn 8, page 568) My former hopes are fled,

My terror now begins;

I feel, alas! that I am dead

In trespasses and sins.

Ah, whither shall I fly?

I hear the thunder roar;

The Law proclaims Destruction nigh,

And Vengeance at the door. When I review my ways,

I dread impending doom:

But sure a friendly whisper says,

"Flee from the wrath to come."

I see, or think I see,

A glimmering from afar;

A beam of day, that shines for me,

To save me from despair.

Forerunner of the sun,

It marks the pilgrim's way;

I'll gaze upon it while I run,

And watch the rising day.

Light shining out of Darkness (Book III, Hymn 15, page 571) God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform;

He plants his footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines Of never-failing skill, He treasures up his bright designs, And works his sov'reign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take, The clouds ye so much dread Are big with mercy, and shall break In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, But trust him for his grace;

Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face. His purposes will ripen fasts, Unfolding ev'ry hour; The bud may have a bitter taste, But sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err, And scan his work in vain;

God is his own interpreter, And he will make it plain.

Welcome Cross (Book III, Hymn 16, page 571-72)

'Tis my happiness below

Not to live without the cross,

But the Saviour's power to know,

Sanctifying every loss;

Trials must and will befall;

But with humble faith to see

Love inscribed upon them all,

This is happiness to me.

God in Israel sows the seeds

Of affliction, pain, and toil;

These spring up and choke the weeds

Which would else o'erspread the soil:

Trials make the promise sweet,

Trials give new life to prayer;

Trials bring me to His feet,

Lay me low, and keep me there. Did I meet no trials here,

No chastisement by the way,

Might I not with reason fear
I should prove a castaway?
Bastards may escape the rod,
Sunk in earthly vain delight;
But the true-born child of God
Must not, would not, if he might.
Afflictions sanctified by the Word (Book III, Hymn 17, page 572)
Oh how I love Thy holy Word,
Thy gracious covenant, O Lord!
It guides me in the peaceful way;
I think upon it all the day.
What are the mines of shining wealth,
The strength of youth, the bloom of health!
What are all joys compared with those
Thine everlasting Word bestows!
Long unafflicted, undismay'd,
In pleasure's path secure I stray'd;
Thou mad'st me feel thy chast'ning rod,
And straight I turned unto my God.
What though it pierced my fainting heart,
I bless'd Thine hand that caused the smart:
It taught my tears awhile to flow,
But saved me from eternal woe.
Oh! hadst Thou left me unchastised,
Thy precepts I had still despised;
And still the snare in secret laid
Had my unwary feet betray'd.
I love Thee, therefore, O my God,
And breathe towards Thy dear abode;

Where, in Thy presence fully blest,
Thy chosen saints for ever rest.
Temptation (Book III, Hymn 18, page 572) The billows swell, the winds are high,
Clouds overcast my wintry sky;
Out of the depths to Thee I call,
My fears are great, my strength is small.
O Lord, the pilot's part perform,
And guard and guide me through the storm;
Defend me from each threatening ill,
Control the waves, say, "Peace! be still."
Amidst the roaring of the sea
My soul still hangs her hope on Thee;
Thy constant love, thy faithful care,
Is all that saves me from despair.
Dangers of every shape and name
Attend the followers of the Lamb,
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
And leave it to return no more.
Though tempest-toss'd and half a wreck,
My Saviour through the floods I seek;
Let neither winds nor stormy main
Force back my shatter'd bark again.
Looking upwards in a Storm (Book III, Hymn 19, page 573)
God of my life, to Thee I call,
Afflicted at Thy feet I fall;
When the great water-floods prevail,
Leave not my trembling heart to fail!
Friend of the friendless and the faint,
Where should I lodge my deep complaint,

Where but with Thee, whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor! Did ever mourner plead with Thee,
And Thou refuse the mourner's plea?
Does not the word still fix'd remain,
That none shall seek Thy face in vain? That were a grief I could not bear,
Didst Thou not hear and answer prayer:
But a prayer-hearing, answering God
Supports me under every load.
Fair is the lot that's cast for me;
I have an Advocate with Thee;
They whom the world caresses most
Have no such privilege to boast.
Poor though I am, despised, forgot,
Yet God, my God, forgets me not:
And he is safe, and must succeed,
For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead. The Valley of the Shadow of Death (Book III, Hymn 20,
page 573) My soul is sad, and much dismay'd;
See, Lord, what legions of my foes,
With fierce Apollyon at their head,
My heavenly pilgrimage oppose.
See, from the ever-burning lake,
How like a smoky cloud they rise!
With horrid blasts my soul they shake,
With storms of blasphemies and lies. Their fiery arrows reach the mark,
My throbbing heart with anguish tear;
Each lights upon a kindred spark,
And finds abundant fuel there.
I hate the thought that wrongs the Lord;
Oh! I would drive it from my breast,

With Thy own sharp two-edged sword,
Far as the east is from the west.
Come, then, and chase the cruel host,
Heal the deep wounds I have received!
Nor let the power of darkness boast
That I am foil'd, and Thou art grieved!
Peace after a Storm (Book III, Hymn 23, page 574) When darkness long has veil'd my mind,
And smiling day once more appears,
Then, my Redeemer, then I find
The folly of my doubts and fears.
Straight I upbraid my wandering heart,
And blush that I should ever be
Thus prone to act so base a part,
Or harbour one hard thought of Thee!
Oh! let me then at length be taught
What I am still so slow to learn,
That God is love, and changes not,
Nor knows the shadow of a turn.
Sweet truth, and easy to repeat!
But when my faith is sharply tried,
I find myself a learner yet,
Unskilful, weak, and apt to slide.
But, O my Lord, one look from Thee
Subdues the disobedient will,
Drives doubt and discontent away,
And Thy rebellious worm is still.
Thou art as ready to forgive
As I am ready to repine;
Thou, therefore, all the praise receive;

Be shame and self-aborrence mine.

Mourning and Longing (Book III, Hymn 24, page 575) The Saviour hides His face;

My spirit thirsts to prove

Renew'd supplies of pardoning grace,

And never-fading love. The favor'd souls who know

What glories shine in Him,

Pant for His presence as the roe

Pants for the living stream.

What trifles tease me now!

They swarm like summer flies!

They cleave to everything I do,

And swim before my eyes.

How dull the Sabbath day,

Without the Sabbath's Lord!

How toilsome then to sing and pray,

And wait upon the Word! Of all the truths I hear,

How few delight my taste!

I glean a berry here and there,

But mourn the vintage past.

Yet let me (as I ought)

Still hope to be supplied;

No pleasure else is worth a thought,

Nor shall I be denied.

Though I am but a worm,

Unworthy of His care,

The Lord will my desire perform,

And grant me all my prayer.

Self-acquaintance (Book III, Hymn 26, page 576)

Dear Lord! accept a sinful heart,

Which of itself complains,
And mourns, with much and frequent smart,
The evil it contains.

There fiery seeds of anger lurk,
Which often hurt my frame;
And wait but for the tempter's work,
To fan them to a flame.

Legality holds out a bribe
To purchase life from Thee;
And Discontent would fain prescribe
How Thou shalt deal with me.

While Unbelief withstands Thy grace,
And puts the mercy by,

Presumption, with a brow of brass,

Says, "Give me, or I die!"

How eager are my thoughts to roam,
In quest of what they love!

But ah! when duty calls them home,

How heavily they move!

Oh, cleanse me in a Saviour's blood,

Transform me by Thy power,

And make me Thy beloved abode,

And let me roam no more.

Prayer for Patience (Book III, Hymn 28, page 576-77)

Lord, who hast suffer'd all for me,

My peace and pardon to procure,

The lighter cross I bear for Thee,

Help me with patience to endure. The storm of loud repining hush;

I would in humble silence mourn;

Why should the unburnt, though burning bush,
Be angry as the crackling thorn?
Man should not faint at Thy rebuke,
Like Joshua falling on his face,
When the cursed thing that Achan took
Brought Israel into just disgrace.
Perhaps some golden wedge suppress'd,
Some secret sin offends my God;
Perhaps that Babylonish vest,
Self-righteousness, provokes the rod.
Ah! were I buffeted all day,
Mock'd, crown'd with thorns and spit upon,
I yet should have no right to say,
My great distress is mine alone.
Let me not angrily declare
No pain was ever sharp like mine,
Nor murmur at the cross I bear,
But rather weep, remembering Thine.
Submission (Book III, Hymn 28, page 577) O Lord, my best desire fulfil,
And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to Thy will,
And make Thy pleasure mine.
Why should I shrink at Thy command,
Whose love forbids my fears?
Or tremble at the gracious hand
That wipes away my tears?
No, rather let me freely yield
What most I prize to Thee;
Who never hast a good withheld,

Or wilt withhold, from me.
Thy favor, all my journey through,
Thou art engaged to grant;
What else I want, or think I do,
'Tis better still to want.
Wisdom and mercy guide my way,
Shall I resist them both?
A poor blind creature of day,
And crush'd before the moth! But ah! my inward spirit cries,
Still binds me to Thy sway;
Else the next cloud that veils the skies
Drives all these thoughts away. The Happy Change (Book III, Hymn 44, page 583)
How bless'd Thy creature is, O God,
When with a single eye,
He views the lustre of Thy Word,
The dayspring from on high!
Through all the storms that veil the skies
And frown on earthly things,
The Sun of Righteousness he eyes,
With healing on His wings.
Struck by that light, the human heart,
A barren soil no more,
Sends the sweet smell of grace abroad,
Where serpents lurk'd before. The soul, a dreary province once
Of Satan's dark domain,
Feels a new empire form'd within,
And owns a heavenly reign. The glorious orb whose golden beams
The fruitful year control,
Since first obedient to Thy WOrd,

He started from the goal, Has cheer'd the nations with the joys

His orient rays impart;

But, Jesus, 'tis Thy light alone

Can shine upon the heart.

Retirement (Book III, Hymn 45, page 583)

Far from the world, O Lord, I flee,

From strife and tumult far;

From scenes where Satan wages still

His most successful war. The calm retreat, the silent shade,

With prayer and praise agree;

And seem, by Thy sweet bounty made,

For those who follow Thee.

There if Thy Spirit touch the soul,

And grace her mean abode,

Oh, with what peace, and joy, and love,

She communes with her God!

There like the nightingale she pours

Her solitary lays;

Nor asks a witness of her song,

Nor thirsts for human praise.

Author and Guardian of my life,

Sweet source of light Divine,

And, -- all harmonious names in one, --

My Saviour! Thou art mine.

What thanks I owe Thee, and what love,

A boundless, endless store,

Shall echo through the realms above,

When time shall be no more. The Hidden Life (Book III, Hymn 47, page 584) To tell the Saviour all my wants,

How pleasing is the task!
Nor less to praise Him when He grants
Beyond what I can ask. My laboring spirit vainly seeks
To tell but half the joy,
With how much tenderness He speaks,
And helps me to reply. Nor were it wise, nor should I choose,
Such secrets to declare;
Like precious wines their taste they lose,
Exposed to open air. But this with boldness I proclaim,
Nor care if thousands hear,
Sweet is the ointment of His name,
Not life is half so dear. And can you frown, my former friends,
Who knew what once I was,
And blame the song that thus commends
The Man who bore the cross?
Trust me, I draw the likeness true,
And not as fancy paints;
Such honor may He give to you,
For such have all His saints.
True Pleasures (Book III, Hymn 49, page 585)
Lord, my soul with pleasure springs
When Jesu's name I hear:
And when God the Spirit brings
The word of promise near:
Beauties too, in holiness,
Still delighted I perceive;
Nor have words that can express
The joys Thy precepts give.
Clothed in sanctity and grace,

How sweet it is to see
Those who love Thee as they pass,
Or when they wait on Thee.
Pleasant too to sit and tell
What we owe to love Divine;
Till our bosoms grateful swell,
And eyes begin to shine.
Those the comforts I possess,
Which God shall still increase,
All His ways are pleasantness,
And all His paths are peace.
Nothing Jesus did or spoke,
Henceforth let me ever slight;
For I love His easy yoke,
And find His burden light. The Christian (Book III, Hymn 50, page 585)
Honor and happiness unite
To make the Christian's name a praise;
How fair the scene, how clear the light,
That fills the remnant of His days! A kingly character He bears,
No change His priestly office knows;
Unfading is the crown He wears,
His joys can never reach a close.
Adorn'd with glory from on high,
Salvation shines upon His face;
His robe is of the ethereal dye,
His steps are dignity and grace.
Inferior honors He disdains,
Nor stoops to take applause from earth;
The King of kings Himself maintains

The expenses of His heavenly birth. The noblest creature seen below,
Ordain'd to fill a throne above;
God gives him all He can bestow,
His kingdom of eternal love! My soul is ravished at the thought!
Methinks from earth I see Him rise!
Angels congratulate His lot,
And shout Him welcome to the skies.
Lively Hope and Gracious Fear (Book III, Hymn 51, page 585-86) I was a grovelling creature once,
And basely cleaved to earth:
I wanted spirit to renounce
The clod that gave me birth. But God hath breathed upon a worm,
And sent me from above
Wings such as clothe an angel's form,
The wings of joy and love. With these to Pisgah's top I fly
And there delighted stand,
To view, beneath a shining sky,
The spacious promised land. The Lord of all the vast domain
Has promised it to me,
The length and breadth of all the plain
As far as faith can see.
How glorious is my privilege!
To Thee for help I call;
I stand upon a mountain's edge,
O save me, lest I fall!
Though much exalted in the Lord,
My strength is not my own;
Then let me tremble at His word,
And none shall cast me down. For the Poor (Book III, Hymn 57, page 588) When Hagar found the
bottle spent,

And wept o'er Ishmael;
A message from the Lord was sent
To guide her to a well. Should not Elijah's cake and cruse
Convince us at this day,
A gracious God will not refuse
Provisions by the way? His saints and servants shall be fed,
The promise is secure;
"Bread shall be given them," as He said,
"Their water shall be sure."
Repasts far richer they shall prove,
Than all earth's dainties are;
'Tis sweet to taste a Saviour's love,
Though in the meanest fare. To Jesus then your trouble bring,
Nor murmur at your lot;
While you are poor and He is King,
You shall not be forgot. My Soul thirsteth for God (Book III, Hymn 61, page 589-90)
I thirst, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share;
Thy wounds, Emmanuel, all forbid
That I should seek my pleasures there.
It was the sight of Thy dear cross
First wean'd my soul from earthly things;
And taught me to esteem as dross
The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.
I want that grace that springs from Thee,
That quickens all things where it flows,
And makes a wretched thorn like me
Bloom as the myrtle, or the rose.
Dear fountain of delight unknown!

No longer sink below the brim;
But overflow, and pour me down
A living and life-giving stream! For sure of all the plants that share
The notice of thy Father's eye,
None proves less grateful to His care,
Or yields him meaner fruit than I.
Love constrained to Obedience (Book III, Hymn 62, page 590) No strength of nature can suffice
To serve the Lord aright:
And what she has she misapplies,
For want of clearer light.
How long beneath the law I lay
In bondage and distress;
I toll'd the precept to obey,
But toil'd without success.
Then, to abstain from outward sin
Was more than I could do;
Now, if I feel its power within,
I feel I hate it too.
Then all my servile works were done
A righteousness to raise;
Now, freely chosen in the Son,
I freely choose His ways.
"What shall I do," was then the word,
"That I may worthier grow?"
"What shall I render to the Lord?"
Is my inquiry now. To see the law by Christ fulfilled
And hear His pardoning voice,
Changes a slave into a child,
And duty into choice. The Heart healed and changed by Mercy (Book III, Hymn 63, page 590)

Sin enslaved me many years,
And led me bound and blind;
Till at length a thousand fears
Came swarming o'er my mind.
"Where," said I, in deep distress,
"Will these sinful pleasures end?
How shall I secure my peace
And make the Lord my friend?"
Friends and ministers said much
The gospel to enforce;
But my blindness still was such,
I chose a legal course:
Much I fasted, watch'd, and strove,
Scarce would shew my face abroad,
Fear'd almost to speak or move,
A stranger still to God.
Thus afraid to trust His grace,
Long time did I rebel;
Till despairing of my case,
Down at His feet I fell:
Then my stubborn heart He broke,
And subdued me to His sway;
By a simple word He spoke,
"Thy sins are done away."
Hatred of Sin (Book III, Hymn 64, page 590-91)
Holy Lord God! I love Thy truth,
Nor dare Thy least commandment slight;
Yet pierced by sin the serpent's tooth,
I mourn the anguish of the bite. But though the poison lurks within,

Hope bids me still with patience wait;
Till death shall set me free from sin,
Free from the only thing I hate. Had I a throne above the rest,
Where angels and archangels dwell,
One sin, unslain, within my breast,
Would make that heaven as dark as hell. The prisoner sent to breathe fresh air,
And blest with liberty again,
Would mourn were he condemn'd to wear
One link of all his former chain.
But, oh! no foe invades the bliss,
When glory crowns the Christian's head;
One look at Jesus as he is,
Will strike all sin forever dead. The New Convert (Book III, Hymn 68, page 592) The new-born
child of gospel grace,
Like some fair tree when summer's nigh,
Beneath Emmanuel's shining face
Lifts up his blooming branch on high. No fears he feels, he sees no foes,
No conflict yet his faith employs,
Nor has he learnt to whom he owes
The strength and peace his soul enjoys. But sin soon darts its cruel sting,
And comforts sinking day by day,
What seem'd his own, a self-fed spring,
Proves but a brook that glides away. When Gideon arm'd his numerous host,
The Lord soon made his numbers less;
And said, "Lest Israel vainly boast,
My arm procured me this success!"
Thus will He bring our spirits down,
And draw our ebbing comforts low,
That saved by grace, but not our own,

We may not claim the praise we owe.

True and False Comforts (Book III, Hymn 69, page 592) O God, whose favorable eye,

The sin-sick soul revives,

Holy and heavenly is the joy

Thy shining presence gives. Not such as hypocrites suppose,

Who with a graceless heart,

Taste not of Thee, but drink a dose

Prepared by Satan's art.

Intoxicating joys are theirs,

Who while they boast their light,

And seem to soar above the stars,

Are plunging into night.

Lull'd in a soft and fatal sleep,

They sin and yet rejoice;

Were they indeed the Saviour's sheep,

Would they not hear His voice? Be mine the comforts that reclaim

The soul from Satan's power;

That make me blush for what I am,

And hate my sin the more.

'Tis joy enough, my All in All,

At Thy dear feet to lie;

Thou wilt not let me lower fall,

And none can higher fly. A living and dead Faith (Book III, Hymn 71, page 593) The Lord receives his highest praise

From humble minds and hearts sincere;

While all the loud professor says

Offends the righteous Judge's ear. To walk as children of the day,

To mark the precepts' holy light,

To wage the warfare, watch, and pray,

Show who are pleasing in His sight. Not words alone it cost the Lord,
To purchase pardon for His own;
Nor will a soul by grace restor'd,
Return the Saviour words alone. With golden bells, the priestly vest,
And rich pomegranates border'd round,
The need of holiness express'd,
And called for fruit as well as sound.
Easy indeed it were to reach
A mansion in the courts above,
If swelling words and fluent speech
Might serve instead of faith and love. But none shall gain the blissful place,
Or God's unclouded glory see,
Who talks of free and sov'reign grace,
Unless that grace has made him free!

Abuse of the Gospel (Book III, Hymn 72, page 593-94)

Too many, Lord, abuse Thy grace
In this licentious day,
And while they boast they see Thy face,
They turn their own away.
Thy book displays a gracious light
That can the blind restore;
But these are dazzled by the sight,
And blinded still the more. The pardon such presume upon,
They do not beg but steal;
And when they plead it at Thy throne,
Oh! where's the Spirit's seal? Was it for this, ye lawless tribe,
The dear Redeemer bled?
Is this the grace the saints imbibe
From Christ the living head?

Ah, Lord, we know Thy chosen few
Are fed with heavenly fare;
But these, -- the wretched husks they chew,
Proclaim them what they are. The liberty our hearts implore
Is not to live in sin;
But still to wait at Wisdom's door,
Till Mercy calls us in. The Narrow Way (Book III, Hymn 73, page 594)
What thousands never knew the road!
What thousands hate it when 'tis known!
None but the chosen tribes of God
Will seek or choose it for their own. A thousand ways in ruin end,
One only leads to joys on high;
By that my willing steps ascend,
Pleased with a journey to the sky. No more I ask or hope to find
Delight or happiness below;
Sorrow may well possess the mind
That feeds where thorns and thistles grow. The joy that fades is not for me,
I seek immortal joys above;
There glory without end shall be
The bright reward of faith and love.
Cleave to the world, ye sordid worms,
Contented lick your native dust!
But God shall fight with all his storms,
Against the idol of your trust.
Dependence (Book III, Hymn 74, page 594) To keep the lamp alive,
With oil we fill the bowl;
'Tis water makes the willow thrive,
And grace that feeds the soul. The Lord's unsparing hand
Supplies the living stream;

It is not at our own command,
But still derived from Him.
Beware of Peter's word,
Nor confidently say,
"I never will deny Thee, Lord," --
But, -- "Grant I never may."
Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone;
And e'en an angel would be weak,
Who trusted in his own.
Retreat beneath his wings,
And in His gace confide!
This more exalts the King of kings
Than all your works beside. In Jesus is our store,
Grace issues from His throne;
Whoever says, "I want no more,"
Confesses he has done. Not of Works (Book III, Hymn 75, page 594-95)
Grace, triumphant in the throne,
Scorns a rival, reigns alone;
Come and bow beneath her sway;
Cast your idol works away!
Works of man, when made his plea,
Never shall accepted be;
Fruits of pride (vainglorious worm!)
Are the best he can perform.
Self, the god his soul adores,
Influences all his powers;
Jesus is a slighted name,
Self-advancement all his aim:

But when God the Judge shall come,
To pronounce the final doom,
Then for rocks and hills to hide
All his works and all his pride!
Still the boasting heart replies,
What the worthy and the wise,
Friends to temperance and peace,
Have not these a righteousness?
Banish every vain pretence
Built on human excellence;
Perish everything in man,
But the grace that never can.
Praise for Faith (Book III, Hymn 80, page 596) Of all the gifts Thine hand bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than my Redeemer's blood.
Faith too, the blood-receiving grace,
From the same hand we gain;
Else, sweetly as it suits our case,
That gift had been in vain.
Till Thou Thy teaching power apply,
Our hearts refuse to see,
And weak, as a distemper'd eye,
Shut out the view of Thee.
Blind to the merits of Thy Son,
What misery we endure!
Yet fly that Hand from which alone
We could expect a cure.
We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more,

To Thee our all we owe:

The precious Saviour, and the power

That makes Him precious too.

Grace and Providence (Book III, Hymn 81, page 597)

Almighty King! whose wondrous hand

Supports the weight of sea and land;

Whose grace is such a boundless store,

No heart shall break that sighs for more.

Thy providence supplies my food,

And 'tis Thy blessing makes it good;

My soul is nourish'd by Thy Word,

Let soul and body praise the Lord! My streams of outward comfort came

From Him who built this earthly frame;

Whate'er I want His bounty gives,

By whom my soul forever lives.

Either His hand preserves from pain,

Or, if I feel it, heals again;

From Satan's malice shields my breast,

Or overrules it for the best.

Forgive the song that falls so low

Beneath the gratitude I owe!

It means Thy praise: however poor,

An angel's song can do no more.

I will praise the Lord at all Times (Book III, Hymn 83, page 597-98)

Winter has a joy for me,

While the Saviour's charms I read,

Lowly, meek, from blemish free,

In the snowdrop's pensive head.

Spring returns, and brings along

Life-invigorating suns:
Hark! the turtle's plaintive song
Seems to speak His dying groans!
Summer has a thousand charms,
All expressive of His worth;
'Tis His sun that lights and warms,
His the air the cools the earth.
What! has autumn left to say
Nothing of a Saviour's grace?
Yes, the beams of milder day
Tell me of his smiling face.
Light appears with early dawn,
While the sun makes haste to rise;
See His bleeding beauties drawn
On the blushes of the skies.
Evening with a silent pace,
Slowly moving in the west,
Shews an emblem of His grace,

Points to an eternal rest. This article was made available on the internet via REFORMATION INK
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01.02 The Scripture Hymns

The Scripture Hymns

of William Cowper The following hymns by William Cowper appear in The works of The Rev. John Newton (New Haven, CT: Nathan Whiting, 1826), vol. 2. In the preface to the Olney Hymns, Newton himself remarks that all the hymns marked with a "C" indicate that they were written by his friend and associate William Cowper. This file contains all of Cowper's hymns that appear in Book I of the Olney hymns (a section titled: Hymns on Selected Passages of Scripture). This electronic edition was made available by Shane Rosenthal for Reformation Ink. Original pagination has been retained for purposes of reference.

Walking with God (Genesis 5:24) Oh! for a closer walk with God,

A calm and heavenly frame;

A light to shine upon the road

That leads me to the Lamb! Where is the blessedness I knew

When first I saw the Lord?

Where is the soul-refershing view

Of Jesus and his word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!

How sweet their memory still!

But they have left an aching void,

The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return!

Sweet the messenger of rest!

I hate the sins that made thee mourn

And drove thee from my breast. The dearest idol I have known,

Whate'er that idol be,

Help me to tear it from thy throne,

And worship only thee. So shall my walk be close with God,

Calm and serene my frame;

So purer light shall mark the road

That leads me to the Lamb.

Book I, Hymn 3, page 468 Jehovah-Jireh. The Lord will provide (Genesis 22:14) The saints should never be dismay'd,

Nor sink in hopeless fear;

For when they least expect His aid,

The Saviour will appear. This Abraham found: he raised the knife;

God saw, and said, "Forbear!

Yon ram shall yield his meaner life;

Behold the victim there."

Once David seem'd Saul's certain prey;

But hark! the foe's at hand;

Saul turns his arms another way,

To save the invaded land. When Jonah sunk beneath the wave,

He thought to rise no more;

But God prepared a fish to save,

And bear him to the shore.

Blest proofs of power and grace divine,

That meet us in His word!

May every deep-felt care of mine

Be trusted with the Lord.

Wait for His seasonable aid,

And though it tarry, wait:

The promise may be long delay'd,

But cannot come too late.

Book I, Hymn 6, page 469 Jehovah Rophi, I am the Lord that healeth thee (Exodus 15:1-27) Heal us, Emmanuel! here we are,

Waiting to feel Thy touch:

Deep-wounded souls to Thee repair

And, Saviour, we are such. Our faith is feeble, we confess,

We faintly trust Thy word;

But wilt Thou pity us the less?
Be that far from Thee, Lord!
Remember him who once applied,
With trembling, for relief;
"Lord, I believe," with tears he cried,
"Oh, help my unbelief!"
She too, who touch'd Thee in the press,
And healing virtue stole,
Was answer'd, "Daughter, go in peace,
Thy faith hath made thee whole."
Conceal'd amid the gathering throng,
She would have shunn'd Thy view;
And if her faith was firm and strong,
Had strong misgivings too.
Like her, with hopes and fears we come,
To touch Thee, if we may;
Oh! send us not despairing home,
Send none unheal'd away!

Book I, Hymn 14, page 472 Jehovah Nissi, The Lord my banner (Exodus 17:15) By whom was David taught

To aim the deadly blow,
When he Goliath fought,
And laid the Gittite low?
Nor sword nor spear the stripling took,
But chose a pebble from the brook.
'Twas Israel's God and King
Who sent him to the fight;
Who gave him strength to sling,
And skill to aim aright.

Ye feeble saints, your strength endures,
Because young David's God is yours. Who order'd Gideon forth,
To storm the invaders' camp.
With arms of little worth,
A pitcher and a lamp?
The trumpets made his coming known
And all the host was overthrown.
Oh! I have seen the day,
When with a single word,
God helping me to say,
"My trust is in the Lord,"
My soul hath quell'd a thousand foes
Fearless of all that could oppose. But unbelief, self-will,
Self-righteousness, and pride,
How often do they steal
My weapon from my side!
Yet David's Lord, and Gideon's friend,
Will help his servant to the end.
Book I, Hymn 17, page 473 Jehovah Shalem, The Lord send peace (Judges 6:25)
Jesus! whose blood so freely stream'd
To satisfy the law's demand;
By Thee from guilt and wrath redeem'd,
Before the Father's face I stand. To reconcile offending man,
Make Justice drop her angry rod;
What creature could have form'd the plan,
Or who fulfil it but a God? No drop remains of all the curse,
For wretches who deserved the whole;
No arrows dipt in wrath to pierce
The guilty, but returning soul.

Peace by such means so dearly bought,
What rebel could have hoped to see?
Peace by his injured Sovereign wrought,
His Sovereign fasten'd to a tree.
Now, Lord, Thy feeble worm prepare!
For strife with earth and hell begins;
Conform and gird me for the war;
They hate the soul that hates his sins.
Let them in horrid league agree!
They may assault, they may distress;
But cannot quench Thy love to me,
Nor rob me of the Lord my peace.

Book I, Hymn 22, page 475 Wisdom (Proverbs 8:22-31)

Ere God had built the mountains,
Or raised the fruitful hills;
Before he fill'd the fountains
That feed the running rills;
In me from everlasting,
The wonderful I am,
Found pleasures never wasting,
And Wisdom is my name.
When, like a tent to dwell in,
He spread the skies abroad,
And swathed about the swelling
Of Ocean's mighty flood;
He wrought by weight and measure,
And I was with Him then:
Myself the Father's pleasure,
And mine, the sons of men.

Thus Wisdom's words discover
Thy glory and Thy grace,
Thou everlasting lover
Of our unworthy race!
Thy gracious eye survey'd us
Ere stars were seen above;
In wisdom thou hast made us,
And died for us in love. And couldst thou be delighted
With creatures such as we,
Who, when we saw Thee, slighted,
And nail'd Thee to a tree?
Unfathomable wonder,
And mystery divine!
The voice that speaks in thunder,
Says, "Sinner, I am thine!"

Book I, Hymn 52, page 487 Vanity of the World (Ecclesiastes)

God gives his mercies to be spent;
Your hoard will do your soul no good.
Gold is a blessing only lent,
Repaid by giving others food. The world's esteem is but a bribe,
To buy their peace you sell your own;
The slave of a vainglorious tribe,
Who hate you while they make you known. The joy that vain amusements give,
Oh! sad conclusion that it brings!
The honey of a crowded hive,
Defended by a thousand stings.
'Tis thus the world rewards the fools
That live upon her treacherous smiles:
She leads them blindfold by her rules,

And ruins all whom she beguiles.
God knows the thousands who go down
From pleasure into endless woe;
And with a long despairing groan
Blaspheme the Maker as they go.
Oh fearful thought! be timely wise;
Delight but in a Saviour's charms,
And God shall take you to the skies,
Embraced in everlasting arms.

Book I, Hymn 55, page 488 O Lord, I will praise thee (Isaiah , 12i)

I will praise Thee every day
Now Thine anger's turn'd away;
Comfortable thoughts arise
From the bleeding sacrifice.
Here, in the fair gospel-field,
Wells of free salvation yield
Stream of life, a plenteous store,
And my soul shall thirst no more.
Jesus is become at length
My salvation and my strength;
And His praises shall prolong,
While I live, my pleasant song.
Praise ye, then, His glorious name,
Publish His exalted fame!
Still His worth your praise exceeds;
Excellent are all His deeds.
Raise again the joyful sound.
Let the nations roll it round!
Zion, shout! for this is He;

God the Saviour dwells in thee.

Book I, Hymn 58, page 489 The Contrite Heart (Isaiah 57:15) The Lord will happiness divine

On contrite hearts bestow;

Then tell me, gracious God, is mine

A contrite heart or no?

I hear, but seem to hear in vain,

Insensible as steel;

If aught is felt, 'tis only pain,

To find I cannot feel.

I sometimes think myself inclined

To love Thee if I could;

But often feel another mind,

Averse to all that's good. My best desires are faint and few,

I fain would strive for more;

But when I cry, "My strength renew!"

Seem weaker than before.

Thy saints are comforted, I know,

And love Thy house of prayer;

I therefore go where others go,

But find no comfort there.

Oh make this heart rejoice or ache;

Decide this doubt for me;

And if it be not broken, break,

And heal it, if it be.

Book I, Hymn 64, page 491 The future Peace and Glory of the Church (Isaiah 60:15-20)

Hear what God the Lord hath spoken,

"O my people, faint and few,

Comfortless, afflicted, broken,

Fair abodes I build for you.

Thorns of heartfelt tribulation
Shall no more perplex your ways;
You shall name your walls, Salvation,
And your gates shall all be Praise.
"There, like streams that feed the garden,
Pleasures without end shall flow,
For the Lord, your faith rewarding,
All His bounty shall bestow;
Still in undisturb'd possession
Peace and righteousness shall reign;
Never shall you feel oppression,
Hear the voice of war again.
"Ye no more your suns descending,
Waning moons no more shall see;
But your griefs forever ending,
Find eternal noon in me:
God shall rise, and shining o'er ye,
Change to day the gloom of night;
He, the Lord, shall be your glory,
God your everlasting light."

Book I, Hymn 65, page 492 Jehovah our Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6) My God, how perfect are Thy ways!

But mine polluted are;
Sin twines itself about my praise,
And slides into my prayer. When I would speak what Thou hast done
To save me from my sin,
I cannot make Thy mercies known,
But self-applause creeps in.
Divine desire, that holy flame

Thy grace creates in me;
Alas! impatience is its name,
When it returns to Thee. This heart, a fountain of vile thoughts.
How does it overflow,
While self upon the surface floats,
Still bubbling from below.
Let others in the gaudy dress
Of fancied merit shine;
The Lord shall be my righteousness,
The Lord forever mine.

Book I, Hymn 67, page 492-93 Ephraim repenting (Jeremiah 31:18-20) My God, till I received Thy
stroke,

How like a beast was I!
So unaccustom'd to the yoke,
So backward to comply. With grief my just reproach I hear;
Shame fills me at the thought,
How frequent my rebellions were,
What wickedness I wrought.
Thy merciful restraint I scorn'd,
And left the pleasant road;
Yet turn me, and I shall be turn'd;
Thou art the Lord my God.
"Is Ephraim banish'd from my thoughts,
Or vile in my esteem?
No," saith the Lord, "with all his faults,
I still remember him.
"Is he a dear and pleasant child?
Yes, dear and pleasant still;
Though sin his foolish heart beguiled,

And he withstood my will.

"My sharp rebuke has laid him low,

He seeks my face again;

My pity kindles at his woe,

He shall not seek in vain."

Book I, Hymn 68, page 493 The Covenant (Ezekiel 36:25-28) The Lord proclaims His grace abroad!

"Behold, I change your hearts of stone;

Each shall renounce his idol-god,

And serve, henceforth, the Lord alone.

"My grace, a flowing stream, proceeds

To wash your filthiness away;

Ye shall abhor your former deeds,

And learn my statutes to obey.

"My truth the great design ensures,

I give myself away to you;

You shall be mine, I will be yours,

Your God unalterably true.

"Yet not unsought or unimplored,

The plenteous grace I shall confer;

No your whole hearts shall seek the Lord,

I'll put a praying spirit there.

"From the first breath of life divine

Down to the last expiring hour,

The gracious work shall all be mine,

Begun and ended in my power."

Book I, Hymn 71, page 494 Jehovah-Shammah (Ezekiel 48:35) As birds their infant brood protect,

And spread their wings to shelter them,

Thus saith the Lord to His elect,

"So will I guard Jerusalem." And what then is Jerusalem,
This darling object of His cares?
Where is its worth in God's esteem?
Who built it? who inhabits there?
Jehovah founded it in blood,
The blood of His incarnate Son;
There dwell the saints, once foes to God
The sinners whom He calls His own.
There, though besieged on every side,
Yet much beloved and guarded well,
From age to age they have defied
The utmost force of earth and hell.
Let earth repent, and hell despair,
This city has a sure defence;
Her name is call'd, "The Lord is there,"
And who has power to drive him hence?
Book I, Hymn 72, page 494 Jehovah-Shammah (Zechariah 13:1)

There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains. The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there have I, as vile as he,
Wash'd all my sins away.
Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be saved, to sin no more.
E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream

Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die.
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing Thy power to save;
When this poor lisp'ing stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

Lord, I believe Thou hast prepared
(Unworthy though I be)
For me a blood-bought free reward,
A golden harp for me!
'Tis strung and tuned for endless years,
And form'd by power divine,
To sound in God the Father's ears
No other name but Thine.

Book I, Hymn 79, page 497 The Sower (Matthew 13:3)

Ye sons of earth prepare the plough,
Break up your fallow ground;
The sower is gone forth to sow,
And scatter blessings round. The seed that finds a stony soil
Shoots forth a hasty blade;
But ill repays the sower's toil,
Soon wither'd, scorch'd, and dead. The thorny ground is sure to balk
All hopes of harvest there;
We find a tall and sickly stalk,
But not the fruitful ear. The beaten path and highway side,
Receive the trust in vain;
The watchful birds the spoil divide,
And pick up all the grain. But where the Lord of grace and power

Has bless'd the happy field,
How plenteous is the golden store
The deep-wrought furrows yield!
Father of mercies, we have need
Of thy preparing grace;
Let the same Hand that give me seed
Provide a fruitful place!

Book I, Hymn 85, page 499-500 The House of Prayer (Mark 11:17)

Thy mansion is the Christian's heart,
O Lord, Thy dwelling place secure!
Bid the unruly throng depart,
And leave the consecrated door.
Devoted as it is to Thee,
A thievish swarm frequents the place,
They steal away my hopes from me,
And rob my Saviour of His praise.
There, too, a sharp designing trade
Sin, Satan, and the World maintain;
Nor cease to press me, and persuade
To part with ease, and purchase pain.
I know them, and I hate their din;
And weary of the bustling crowd;
But while their voice is heard within,
I cannot serve Thee as I would.
Oh! for the joy thy presence gives,
What peace shall reign when Thou art there;
Thy presence makes this den of thieves
A calm delightful house of prayer. And if Thou make Thy temple shine,
Yet self-abased, will I adore;

The gold and silver are not mine;

I give Thee what was Thine before.

Book I, Hymn 96, page 504 Lovest thou me? (John 21:16)

Hark my soul! it is the Lord;

'Tis Thy Saviour, hear His word;

Jesus speaks and speaks to thee,

"Say poor sinner, lovst thou me?"

"I deliver'd thee when bound,

And when bleeding, heal'd thy wound;

Sought thee wandering, set thee right,

Turn'd thy darkness into light.

"Can a woman's tender care

Cease towards the child she bare?

Yes, she may forgetful be,

Yet will I remember thee.

"Mine is an unchanging love,

Higher than the heights above,

Deeper than the depths beneath,

Free and faithful, strong as death.

"Thou shalt see my glory soon,

When the work of grace is done;

Partner of my throne shalt be;

Say, poor sinner, lovst thou me?"

Lord it is my chief complaint,

That my love is weak and faint;

Yet I love Thee and adore,

Oh! for grace to love Thee more!

Book I, Hymn 118, page 513-14 Contentment (Php 4:11)

Fierce passions discompose the mind,

As tempests vex the sea,
But calm, content and peace we find,
When, Lord, we turn to Thee. In vain by reason and by rule
We try to bend the will;
For none but in the Saviour's school
Can learn the heavenly skill.
Since at His feet my soul has sate,
His gracious words to hear,
Contented with my present state,
I cast on Him my care.
"Art thou a sinner, soul?" He said,
"Then how canst thou complain?
How light thy troubles here, if weigh'd
With everlasting pain!
"If thou of murmuring wouldst be cured,
Compare thy griefs with mine!
Think what my love for thee endured,
And thou wilt not repine.
"Tis I appoint thy daily lot,
And I do all things well;
Thou soon shalt leave this wretched spot,
And rise with me to dwell.
"In life my grace shall strength supply,
Proportion'd to thy day;
At death thou still shalt find me nigh,
To wipe thy tears away."
Thus I, who once my wretched days
In vain repinings spent,
Taught in my Saviour's school of grace,

Have learn'd to be content.

Book I, Hymn 131, page 519-20 Old Testament Gospel (Hebrews 4:2)

Israel in ancient days

Not only had a view

Of Sinai in a blaze,

But learn'd the Gospel too;

The types and figures were a glass,

In which thy saw a Saviour's face. The paschal sacrifice

And blood-besprinkled door,

Seen with enlighten'd eyes,

And once applied with power,

Would teach the need of other blood,

To reconcile an angry God. The Lamb, the Dove, set forth

His perfect innocence,

Whose blood of matchless worth

Whould be the soul's defence;

For he who can for sin atone,

Must have no failings of His own. The scape-goat on his head

The people's trespass bore,

And to the desert led,

Was to be seen no more:

In him our Surety seem'd to say,

"Behold, I bear your sins away."

Dipt in his fellow's blood,

The living bird went free;

The type, well understood,

Express'd the sinner's plea;

Described a guilty soul enlarged,

And by a Saviour's death discharged.

Jesus, I love to trace,
Throughout the sacred page,
The footsteps of Thy grace,
The same in every age!
Oh, grant that I may faithful be
To clearer light, vouchsaf'd to me!
Book I, Hymn 132, page 520 Sardis (Revelation 3:1-6)
"Write to Sardis," saith the Lord,
"And write what He declares,
He whose Spirit, and whose word,
Upholds the seven stars:
All thy works and ways I search,
Find thy zeal and love decay'd;
Thou art call'd a living church,
But thou art cold and dead.
"Watch, remember, seek, and strive,
Exert thy former pains;
Let thy timely care revive,
And strengthen what remains;
Cleanse thine heart, thy works amend,
Former times to mind recall,
Lest my sudden stroke descend,
And smite thee once for all.
"Yet I number now in thee
A few that are upright;
These my Father's face shall see,
And walk with me in white.
When in judgment I appear,
They for mine shall be confess'd;

Let my faithful servants hear,

And woe be to the rest!"

Book I, Hymn 138, page 522-23 This article was made available on the internet via REFORMATION INK (www.markers.com/ink). Refer any correspondence to Shane Rosenthal: Rosenthal2000@aol.com

S. Charity

Charity By William Cowper

CHARITY.

"""""""" _____ Qua nihil majus meliusve terris Fata donav?re, bonique divi;

Nec dabunt, quamvis redeant in aurum Tempora priscum.

-Hor. Lib. iv. Ode 2.

"""""""" _____ Fairest and foremost of the train that wait On man's most dignified and happiest state, Whether we name thee Charity or Love, Chief grace below, and all in all above, Prosper (I press thee with a powerful plea) A task I venture on, impell'd by thee:

Oh never seen but in thy blest effects, Or felt but in the soul that Heaven selects; Who seeks to praise thee, and to make thee known To other hearts, must have thee in his own.

Come, prompt me with benevolent desires, Teach me to kindle at thy gentle fires, And, though disgraced and slighted, to redeem A poet's name, by making thee the theme.

God, working ever on a social plan, By various ties attaches man to man:

He made at first, though free and unconfined, One man the common father of the kind; That every tribe, though placed as he sees best, Where seas or deserts part them from the rest, Differing in language, manners, or in face, Might feel themselves allied to all the race. When Cook-lamented, and with tears as just As ever mingled with heroic dust- Steer'd Britain's oak into a world unknown, And in his country's glory sought his own, Wherever he found man to nature true, The rights of man were sacred in his view;

He soothed with gifts, and greeted with a smile, The simple native of the new-found isle;

He spurn'd the wretch that slighted or withstood The tender argument of kindred blood; Nor would endure that any should control His freeborn brethren of the southern pole.

But, though some nobler minds a law respect, That none shall with impunity neglect, In baser souls unnumber'd evils meet, To thwart its influence, and its end defeat.

While Cook is loved for savage lives he saved, See Cortez odious for a world enslaved! Where wast thou then, sweet Charity? where then, Thou tutelary friend of helpless men?

Wast thou in monkish cells and nunneries found, Or building hospitals on English ground?

No.-Mammon makes the world his legatee Through fear, not love; and Heaven abhors the fee.

Wherever found (and all men need thy care), Nor age, nor infancy could find thee there. The hand that slew till it could slay no more, Was glued to the sword-hilt with Indian gore. Their prince, as

justly seated on his throne As vain imperial Philip on his own, Trick'd out of all his royalty by art,
That stripp'd him bare, and broke his honest heart, Died, by the sentence of a shaven priest, For
scorning what they taught him to detest.

How dark the veil that intercepts the blaze Of Heaven's mysterious purposes and ways!

God stood not, though he seem'd to stand, aloof; And at this hour the conqueror feels the proof:
The wreath he won drew down an instant curse, The fretting plague is in the public purse, The
canker'd spoil corrodes the pining state, Starved by that indolence their mines create.

Oh, could their ancient Incas rise again, How would they take up Israel's taunting strain!

Art thou too fallen, Iberia? Do we see The robber and the murderer weak as we?

Thou that hast wasted earth, and dared despise Alike the wrath and mercy of the skies, Thy pomp
is in the grave, thy glory laid Low in the pits thine avarice has made.

We come with joy from our eternal rest To see the oppressor in his turn oppress'd.

Art thou the god, the thunder of whose hand Roll'd over all our desolated land, Shook principalities
and kingdoms down, And made the mountains tremble at his frown? The sword shall light upon thy
boasted powers, And waste them, as thy sword has wasted ours.

?Tis thus Omnipotence his law fulfils, And vengeance executes what justice wills.

Again-the band of commerce was design'd To associate all the branches of mankind; And if a
boundless plenty be the robe, Trade is the golden girdle of the globe.

Wise to promote whatever end he means, God opens fruitful Nature's various scenes:

Each climate needs what other climes produce, And offers something to the general use; No land
but listens to the common call, And in return receives supply from all. This genial intercourse, and
mutual aid, Cheers what were else a universal shade, Calls nature from her ivy-mantled den, And
softens human rock-work into men.

Ingenious Art, with her expressive face, Steps forth to fashion and refine the race; Not only fills
necessity's demand, But overcharges her capacious hand:

Capricious taste itself can crave no more Than she supplies from her abounding store:

She strikes out all that luxury can ask, And gains new vigour at her endless task.

Hers is the spacious arch, the shapely spire, The painter's pencil, and the poet's lyre; From her the
canvas borrows light and shade, And verse, more lasting, hues that never fade.

She guides the finger o'er the dancing keys, Gives difficulty all the grace of ease, And pours a
torrent of sweet notes around Fast as the thirsting ear can drink the sound.

These are the gifts of art; and art thrives most Where Commerce has enrich'd the busy coast;

He catches all improvements in his flight, Spreads foreign wonders in his country's sight, Imports
what others have invented well, And stirs his own to match them, or excel.

?Tis thus, reciprocating each with each, Alternately the nations learn and teach;

While Providence enjoins to ev'ry soul A union with the vast terraqueous whole.

Heaven speed the canvas gallantly unfurl'd To furnish and accommodate a world, To give the pole the produce of the sun, And knit the unsocial climates into one.

Soft airs and gentle heavings of the wave Impel the fleet, whose errand is to save, To succour wasted regions, and replace The smile of opulence in sorrow's face.

Let nothing adverse, nothing unforeseen, Impede the bark that ploughs the deep serene, Charged with a freight transcending in its worth The gems of India, Nature's rarest birth, That flies, like Gabriel on his Lord's commands, A herald of God's love to pagan lands! But ah! what wish can prosper, or what prayer, For merchants rich in cargoes of despair, Who drive a loathsome traffic, gauge, and span, And buy the muscles and the bones of man? The tender ties of father, husband, friend, All bonds of nature in that moment end; And each endures, while yet he draws his breath, A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death. The sable warrior, frantic with regret Of her he loves, and never can forget, Loses in tears the far-receding shore, But not the thought that they must meet no more;

Deprived of her and freedom at a blow, What has he left that he can yet forego?

Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd, He feels his body's bondage in his mind;

Puts off his generous nature, and to suit His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.

Oh most degrading of all ills that wait On man, a mourner in his best estate!

All other sorrows virtue may endure, And find submission more than half a cure;

Grief is itself a medicine, and bestow'd To improve the fortitude that bears the load; To teach the wanderer, as his woes increase, The path of wisdom, all whose paths are peace; But slavery!-Virtue dreads it as her grave:

Patience itself is meanness in a slave;

Or, if the will and sovereignty of God Bid suffer it a while, and kiss the rod, Wait for the dawning of a brighter day, And snap the chain the moment when you may.

Nature imprints upon whate'er we see, That has a heart and life in it, Be free! The beasts are charter'd-neither age nor force Can quell the love of freedom in a horse:

He breaks the cord that held him at the rack;

And, conscious of an unencumber'd back, Snuffs up the morning air, forgets the rein;

Loose fly his forelock and his ample mane;

Responsive to the distant neigh, he neighs; Nor stops, till, overleaping all delays, He finds the pasture where his fellows graze.

Canst thou, and honour'd with a Christian name, Buy what is woman-born, and feel no shame?

Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead Expedience as a warrant for the deed? So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold To quit the forest and invade the fold: So may the ruffian, who with ghostly glide, Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside; Not he, but his emergence forced the door, He found it inconvenient to be poor. Has God then given its sweetness to the cane, Unless his laws be trampled on-in vain?

Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist, Unless his right to rule it be dismiss'd?

Impudent blasphemy! So folly pleads, And, avarice being judge, with ease succeeds. But grant the plea, and let it stand for just, That man make man his prey, because he must;

Still there is room for pity to abate And soothe the sorrows of so sad a state. A Briton knows, or if he knows it not, The Scripture placed within his reach, he ought, That souls have no discriminating hue, Alike important in their Maker's view; That none are free from blemish since the fall, And love divine has paid one price for all. The wretch that works and weeps without relief Has One that notices his silent grief.

He, from whose hand alone all power proceeds, Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds, Considers all injustice with a frown; But marks the man that treads his fellow down.

Begone!-the whip and bell in that hard hand Are hateful ensigns of usurp'd command. Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim To scourge him, weariness his only blame.

Remember, Heaven has an avenging rod, To smite the poor is treason against God!

Trouble is grudgingly and hardly brook'd, While life's sublimest joys are overlook'd:

We wander o'er a sunburnt thirsty soil, Murmuring and weary of our daily toil, Forget to enjoy the palm-tree's offer'd shade, Or taste the fountain in the neighbouring glade:

Else who would lose, that had the power to improve The occasion of transmuting fear to love?

Oh, 'tis a godlike privilege to save! And he that scorns it is himself a slave.

Inform his mind; one flash of heavenly day Would heal his heart, and melt his chains away.

'Beauty for ashes' is a gift indeed, And slaves, by truth enlarged, are doubly freed.

Then would he say, submissive at thy feet, While gratitude and love made service sweet, My dear deliverer out of hopeless night, Whose bounty bought me but to give me light, I was a bondman on my native plain, Sin forged, and ignorance made fast, the chain;

Thy lips have shed instruction as the dew, Taught me what path to shun, and what pursue;

Farewell my former joys! I sigh no more For Africa's once loved, benighted shore;

Serving a benefactor, I am free; At my best home, if not exiled from thee.

Some men make gain a fountain whence proceeds A stream of liberal and heroic deeds; The swell of pity, not to be confined Within the scanty limits of the mind, Disdains the bank, and throws the golden sands, A rich deposit, on the bordering lands:

These have an ear for his paternal call, Who make some rich for the supply of all;

God's gift with pleasure in his praise employ; And Thornton is familiar with the joy.

Oh, could I worship aught beneath the skies That earth has seen, or fancy can devise, Thine altar, sacred Liberty, should stand, Built by no mercenary vulgar hand, With fragrant turf, and flowers as wild and fair As ever dress'd a bank, or scented summer air.

Duly, as ever on the mountain's height The peep of morning shed a dawning light, Again, when evening in her sober vest Drew the grey curtain of the fading west, My soul should yield thee willing thanks and praise For the chief blessings of my fairest days; But that were sacrilege-praise is not thine, But his who gave thee, and preserves thee mine:

Else I would say, and as I spake bid fly A captive bird into the boundless sky, This triple realm adores thee-thou art come From Sparta hither, and art here at home.

We feel thy force still active, at this hour Enjoy immunity from priestly power, While conscience, happier than in ancient years, Owns no superior but the God she fears.

Propitious spirit! yet expunge a wrong Thy rights have suffer'd, and our land, too long.

Teach mercy to ten thousand hearts, that share The fears and hopes of a commercial care.

Prisons expect the wicked, and were built To bind the lawless, and to punish guilt; But shipwreck, earthquake, battle, fire, and flood, Are mighty mischiefs, not to be withstood; And honest merit stands on slippery ground, Where covert guile and artifice abound.

Let just restraint, for public peace design'd, Chain up the wolves and tigers of mankind; The foe of virtue has no claim to thee, But let insolvent innocence go free.

Patron of else the most despised of men, Accept the tribute of a stranger's pen;

Verse, like the laurel, its immortal meed, Should be the guerdon of a noble deed;

I may alarm thee, but I fear the shame (Charity chosen as my theme and aim) I must incur, forgetting Howard's name.

Blest with all wealth can give thee, to resign Joys doubly sweet to feelings quick as thine, To quit the bliss thy rural scenes bestow, To seek a nobler amidst scenes of woe, To traverse seas, range kingdoms, and bring home, Not the proud monuments of Greece or Rome, But knowledge such as only dungeons teach, And only sympathy like thine could reach; That grief, sequester'd from the public stage, Might smooth her feathers, and enjoy her cage;

Speaks a divine ambition, and a zeal, The boldest patriot might be proud to feel.

Oh that the voice of clamour and debate, That pleads for peace till it disturbs the state, Were hush'd in favour of thy generous plea, The poor thy clients, and Heaven's smile thy fee!

Philosophy, that does not dream or stray, Walks arm in arm with nature all his way;

Compasses earth, dives into it, ascends Whatever steep inquiry recommends, Sees planetary wonders smoothly roll Round other systems under her control, Drinks wisdom at the milky stream of light, That cheers the silent journey of the night, And brings at his return a bosom charged With rich instruction, and a soul enlarged. The treasured sweets of the capacious plan, That Heaven

spreads wide before the view of man.

All prompt his pleased pursuit, and to pursue Still prompt him, with a pleasure always new;

He too has a connecting power, and draws Man to the centre of the common cause, Aiding a dubious and deficient sight With a new medium and a purer light.

All truth is precious, if not all divine; And what dilates the powers must needs refine.

He reads the skies, and, watching every change, Provides the faculties an ampler range; And wins mankind, as his attempts prevail, A prouder station on the general scale. But reason still, unless divinely taught, Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought; The lamp of revelation only shews, What human wisdom cannot but oppose, That man, in nature's richest mantle clad, And graced with all philosophy can add, Though fair without, and luminous within, Is still the progeny and heir of sin.

Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride;

He feels his need of an unerring guide, And knows that falling he shall rise no more, Unless the power that bade him stand restore. This is indeed philosophy; this known Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own; And without this, whatever he discuss;

Whether the space between the stars and us;

Whether he measure earth, compute the sea, Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea; The solemn trifler with his boasted skill Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still:

Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.

Self-knowledge truly learn'd of course implies The rich possession of a nobler prize; For self to self, and God to man, reveal'd (Two themes to nature's eye for ever seal'd), Are taught by rays, that fly with equal pace From the same centre of enlightening grace.

Here stay thy foot; how copious, and how clear, The o'erflowing well of Charity springs here!

Hark! 'Tis the music of a thousand rills, Some through the groves, some down the sloping hills, Winding a secret or an open course, And all supplied from an eternal source. The ties of nature do but feebly bind, And commerce partially reclaims mankind;

Philosophy, without his heavenly guide, May blow up self-conceit, and nourish pride;

But, while his province is the reasoning part, Has still a veil of midnight on his heart:

'Tis truth divine, exhibited on earth, Gives Charity her being and her birth.

Suppose (when thought is warm, and fancy flows, What will not argument sometimes suppose?) An isle possess'd by creatures of our kind, Endued with reason, yet by nature blind.

Let supposition lend her aid once more, And land some grave optician on the shore:

He claps his lens, if haply they may see, Close to the part where vision ought to be; But finds that, though his tubes assist the sight, They cannot give it, or make darkness light.

He reads wise lectures, and describes aloud A sense they know not to the wondering crowd;

He talks of light and the prismatic hues, As men of depth in erudition use; But all he gains for his harangue is-Well,- What monstrous lies some travellers will tell! The soul, whose sight all-quickening grace renews, Takes the resemblance of the good she views, As diamonds, stripp'd of their opaque disguise, Reflect the noonday glory of the skies.

She speaks of Him, her author, guardian, friend, Whose love knew no beginning, knows no end, In language warm as all that love inspires;

And, in the glow of her intense desires, Pants to communicate her noble fires.

She sees a world stark blind to what employs Her eager thought, and feeds her flowing joys;

Though wisdom hail them, heedless of her call, Flies to save some, and feels a pang for all:

Herself as weak as her support is strong, She feels that frailty she denied so long;

And, from a knowledge of her own disease, Learns to compassionate the sick she sees.

Here see, acquitted of all vain pretence, The reign of genuine Charity commence.

Though scorn repay her sympathetic tears, She still is kind, and still she perseveres; The truth she loves a sightless world blaspheme, 'Tis childish dotage, a delirious dream! The danger they discern not they deny;

Laugh at their only remedy, and die. But still a soul thus touch'd can never cease, Whoever threatens war, to speak of peace.

Pure in her aim, and in her temper mild, Her wisdom seems the weakness of a child:

She makes excuses where she might condemn, Reviled by those that hate her, prays for them;

Suspicion lurks not in her artless breast, The worst suggested, she believes the best; Not soon provoked, however stung and teased, And, if perhaps made angry, soon appeased;

She rather waives than will dispute her right;

And, injured, makes forgiveness her delight.

Such was the portrait an apostle drew, The bright original was one he knew;

Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true. When one, that holds communion with the skies, Has fill'd his urn where these pure waters rise, And once more mingles with us meaner things, 'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings;

Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide, That tells us whence his treasures are supplied. So when a ship, well freighted with the stores The sun matures on India's spicy shores, Has dropp'd her anchor, and her canvas furl'd, In some safe haven of our western world, 'Twere vain inquiry to what port she went, The gale informs us, laden with the scent.

Some seek, when queasy conscience has its qualms, To lull the painful malady with alms; But charity not feign'd intends alone Another's good-theirs centres in their own;

And, too short-lived to reach the realms of peace, Must cease for ever when the poor shall cease.

Flavia, most tender of her own good name, Is rather careless of her sister's fame: Her superfluity the poor supplies, But, if she touch a character, it dies. The seeming virtue weigh'd against the vice, She deems all safe, for she has paid the price: No charity but alms aught values she, Except in porcelain on her mantel-tree.

How many deeds, with which the world has rung, From pride, in league with ignorance, have sprung! But God o'errules all human follies still, And bends the tough materials to his will. A conflagration, or a wintry flood, Has left some hundreds without home or food:

Extravagance and avarice shall subscribe, While fame and self-complacence are the bribe. The brief proclaim'd, it visits every pew, But first the squire's, a compliment but due: With slow deliberation he unties His glittering purse, that envy of all eyes!

And, while the clerk just puzzles out the psalm, Slides guinea behind guinea in his palm;

Till finding, what he might have found before, A smaller piece amidst the precious store, Pinch'd close between his finger and his thumb, He half exhibits, and then drops the sum.

Gold, to be sure!-Throughout the town 'tis told How the good squire gives never less than gold. From motives such as his, though not the best, Springs in due time supply for the distress'd; Not less effectual than what love bestows, Except that office clips it as it goes. But lest I seem to sin against a friend, And wound the grace I mean to recommend (Though vice derided with a just design Implies no trespass against love divine), Once more I would adopt the graver style, A teacher should be sparing of his smile.

Unless a love of virtue light the flame, Satire is, more than those he brands, to blame:

He hides behind a magisterial air His own offences, and strips others bare;

Affects indeed a most humane concern, That men, if gently tutor'd, will not learn; That mulish folly, not to be reclaim'd By softer methods, must be made ashamed; But (I might instance in St. Patrick's dean) Too often rails to gratify his spleen.

Most satirists are indeed a public scourge; Their mildest physic is a farrier's purge; Their acrid temper turns, as soon as stirr'd, The milk of their good purpose all to curd. Their zeal begotten, as their works rehearse, By lean despair upon an empty purse, The wild assassins start into the street, Prepared to poniard whomso'er they meet, No skill in swordmanship, however just, Can be secure against a madman's thrust; And even virtue, so unfairly match'd, Although immortal, may be prick'd or scratch'd. When scandal has new minted an old lie, Or tax'd invention for a fresh supply, 'Tis call'd a satire, and the world appears Gathering around it with erected ears: A thousand names are toss'd into the crowd;

Some whisper'd softly, and some twang'd aloud, Just as the sapience of an author's brain Suggests it safe or dangerous to be plain.

Strange! how the frequent interjected dash Quickens a market, and helps off the trash; The important letters that include the rest, Serve as key to those that are suppress'd;

Conjecture gripes the victims in his paw, The world is charm'd, and Scrib escapes the law.

So, when the cold damp shades of night prevail, Worms may be caught by either head or tail;

Forcibly drawn from many a close recess, They meet with little pity, no redress;

Plunged in the stream, they lodge upon the mud, Food for the famish'd rovers of the flood.

All zeal for a reform, that gives offence To peace and charity, is mere pretence: A bold remark; but which, if well applied, Would humble many a towering poet's pride.

Perhaps the man was in a sportive fit, And had no other play-place for his wit;

Perhaps, enchanted with the love of fame, He sought the jewel in his neighbour's shame;

Perhaps-whatever end he might pursue, The cause of virtue could not be his view. At every stroke wit flashes in our eyes; The turns are quick, the polish'd points surprise, But shine with cruel and tremendous charms, That, while they please, possess us with alarms; So have I seen (and hasten'd to the sight On all the wings of holiday delight), Where stands that monument of ancient power, Named with emphatic dignity, the Tower, Guns, halberts, swords, and pistols, great and small, In starry forms disposed upon the wall:

We wonder, as we gazing stand below, That brass and steel should make so fine a show;

But, though we praise the exact designer's skill, Account them implements of mischief still. No works shall find acceptance in that day, When all disguises shall be rent away, That square not truly with the Scripture plan, Nor spring from love to God, or love to man. As he ordains things sordid in their birth To be resolved into their parent earth;

And, though the soul shall seek superior orbs, Whate'er this world produces, it absorbs; So self starts nothing, but what tends apace Home to the goal, where it began the race.

Such as our motive is our aim must be;

If this be servile, that can ne'er be free:

If self employ us, whatsoe'er is wrought, We glorify that self, not Him we ought;

Such virtues had need prove their own reward, The Judge of all men owes them no regard.

True Charity, a plant divinely nursed, Fed by the love from which it rose at first, Thrives against hope, and, in the rudest scene, Storms but enliven its unfading green;

Exuberant is the shadow it supplies, Its fruit on earth, its growth above the skies. To look at Him, who form'd us and redeem'd, So glorious now, though once so disesteem'd; To see a God stretch forth his human hand, To uphold the boundless scenes of his command: To recollect that, in a form like ours, He bruised beneath his feet the infernal powers, Captivity led captive, rose to claim The wreath he won so dearly in our name;

That, throned above all height, he condescends To call the few that trust in him his friends;

That, in the heaven of heavens, that space he deems Too scanty for the exertion of his beams, And shines, as if impatient to bestow Life and a kingdom upon worms below; That sight imparts a

never-dying flame, Though feeble in degree, in kind the same.

Like him the soul, thus kindled from above, Spreads wide her arms of universal love;

And, still enlarged as she receives the grace, Includes creation in her close embrace.

Behold a Christian!-and without the fires The Founder of that name alone inspires, Though all accomplishment, all knowledge meet; To make the shining prodigy complete, Whoever boast that name-behold a cheat! Were love, in these the world's last dotting years, As frequent as the want of it appears, The churches warm'd, they would no longer hold Such frozen figures, stiff as they are cold;

Relenting forms would lose their power, or cease; And e'en the dipp'd and sprinkled live in peace:

Each heart would quit its prison in the breast, And flow in free communion with the rest. And statesman, skill'd in projects dark and deep, Might burn his useless Machiavel, and sleep: His budget, often fill'd, yet always poor, Might swing at ease behind his study door, No longer prey upon our annual rents, Or scare the nation with its big contents:

Disbanded legions freely might depart, And slaying man would cease to be an art. No learned disputants would take the field, Sure not to conquer, and sure not to yield;

Both sides deceived, if rightly understood, Pelting each other for the public good. Did Charity prevail, the press would prove A vehicle of virtue, truth, and love; And I might spare myself the pains to shew What few can learn, and all suppose they know.

Thus have I sought to grace a serious lay With many a wild, indeed, but flowery spray, In hopes to gain, what else I must have lost, The attention pleasure has so much engross'd. But if unhappily deceived I dream, And prove too weak for so divine a theme, Let Charity forgive me a mistake, That zeal, not vanity, has chanced to make, And spare the poet for his subject's sake.

S. Expostulation

Expostulation By William Cowper

EXPOSTULATION.

'''''''''' _____ Tantane, tam patiens, nullo certamine tolli

Dona sines?

-Virg.

'''''''''' _____ Why, weeps the muse for England? What appears In England's case to move the muse to tears? From side to side of her delightful isle Is she not clothed with a perpetual smile? Can Nature add a charm, or Art confer A new-found luxury, not seen in her? Where under heaven is pleasure more pursued, Or where does cold reflection less intrude? Her fields a rich expanse of wavy corn, Pour'd out from Plenty's overflowing horn;

Ambrosial gardens, in which art supplies The fervour and the force of Indian skies; Her peaceful shores, where busy Commerce waits To pour his golden tide through all her gates; Whom fiery suns, that scorch the russet spice Of eastern groves, and oceans floor'd with ice, Forbid in vain to push his daring way To darker climes, or climes of brighter day; Whom the winds waft where'er the billows roll, From the World's girdle to the frozen pole; The chariots bounding in her wheel-worn streets, Her vaults below, where every vintage meets; Her theatres, her revels, and her sports; The scenes to which not youth alone resorts, But age, in spite of weakness and of pain, Still haunts, in hope to dream of youth again;

All speak her happy: let the muse look round From East to West, no sorrow can be found; Or only what, in cottages confined, Sighs unregarded to the passing wind.

Then wherefore weep for England? What appears In England's case to move the muse to tears? The prophet wept for Israel; wish'd his eyes Were fountains fed with infinite supplies; For Israel dealt in robbery and wrong;

There were the scorner's and the slanderer's tongue;

Oaths, used as playthings or convenient tools, As interest biass'd knaves, or fashion fools;

Adultery, neighing at his neighbour's door;

Oppression labouring hard to grind the poor; The partial balance and deceitful weight; The treacherous smile, a mask for secret hate;

Hypocrisy, formality in prayer, And the dull service of the lip were there. Her women, insolent and self-carress'd, By Vanity's unwearied finger dress'd, Forgot the blush that virgin fears impart To modest cheeks, and borrow'd one from art; Were just such trifles, without worth or use, As silly pride and idleness produce;

Curl'd, scented, furbelow'd, and flounced around, With feet too delicate to touch the ground, They stretch'd the neck, and roll'd the wanton eye, And sigh'd for every fool that flutter'd by.

He saw his people slaves to every lust, Lewd, avaricious, arrogant, unjust;

He heard the wheels of an avenging God Groan heavily along the distant road;

Saw Babylon set wide her two-leaved brass To let the military deluge pass;

Jerusalem a prey, her glory soil'd, Her princes captive, and her treasures spoil'd;

Wept till all Israel heard his bitter cry, Stamp'd with his foot, and smote upon his thigh; But wept, and stamp'd, and smote his thigh in vain, Pleasure is deaf when told of future pain, And sounds prophetic are too rough to suit Ears long accustom'd to the pleasing lute:

They scorn'd his inspiration and his theme, Pronounc'd him frantic, and his fears a dream; With self-indulgence wing'd the fleeting hours, Till the foe found them, and down fell the towers.

Long time Assyria bound them in her chain, Till penitence had purged the public stain, And Cyrus, with relenting pity moved, Return'd them happy to the land they loved;

There, proof against prosperity, a while They stood the test of her ensnaring smile, And had the grace in scenes of peace to shew The virtue they had learn'd in scenes of woe. But man is frail, and can but ill sustain A long immunity from grief and pain;

And, after all the joys that Plenty leads, With tiptoe step Vice silently succeeds. When he that ruled them with a shepherd's rod, In form a man, in dignity a God, Came, not expected in that humble guise, To sift and search them with unerring eyes, He found conceal'd beneath a fair outside, The filth of rottenness, and worm of pride; Their piety a system of deceit, Scripture employ'd to sanctify the cheat; The Pharisee the dupe of his own art, Self-idolised, and yet a knave at heart. When nations are to perish in their sins, 'Tis in the church the leprosy begins; The priest, whose office is, with zeal sincere, To watch the fountain and preserve it clear, Carelessly nods and sleeps upon the brink, While others poison what the flock must drink;

Or, waking at the call of lust alone, Infuses lies and errors of his own: His unsuspecting sheep believe it pure;

And, tainted by the very means of cure, Catch from each other a contagious spot, The foul forerunner of a general rot.

Then truth is hush'd, that Heresy may preach; And all is trash that reason cannot reach;

Then God's own image on the soul impress'd Becomes a mockery and a standing jest; And faith, the root whence only can arise The graces of a life that wins the skies, Loses at once all value and esteem, Pronounced by graybeards a pernicious dream:

Then Ceremony leads her bigots forth, Prepared to fight for shadows of no worth;

While truths, on which eternal things depend, Find not, or hardly find, a single friend: As soldiers watch the signal of command, They learn to bow, to kneel, to sit, to stand;

Happy to fill religion's vacant place, With hollow form, and gesture, and grimace.

Such, when the Teacher of his church was there, People and priest, the sons of Israel were;
Stiff in the letter, lax in the design And import of their oracles divine; Their learning legendary,
false, absurd, And yet exalted above God's own word;
They drew a curse from an intended good, Puff'd up with gifts they never understood.
He judged them with as terrible a frown, As if not love, but wrath, had brought him down:
Yet he was gentle as soft summer airs, Had grace for others' sins, but none for theirs;
Through all he spoke a noble plainness ran- Rhetoric is artifice, the work of man; And tricks and
turns, that fancy may devise, Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies. The astonish'd vulgar
trembled while he tore The mask from faces never seen before;
He stripp'd the impostors in the noonday sun, Shew'd that they follow'd all they seem'd to shun;
Their prayers made public, their excesses kept As private as the chambers where they slept; The
temple and its holy rites profaned By mummeries He that dwelt in it disdain'd;
Uplifted hands, that at convenient times Could act extortion and the worst of crimes, Wash'd with a
neatness scrupulously nice, And free from every taint but that of vice.
Judgment, however tardy, mends her pace When obstinacy once has conquer'd grace.
They saw distemper heal'd, and life restored, In answer to the fiat of his word;
Confess'd the wonder, and with daring tongue Blasphemed the authority from which it sprung.
They knew, by sure prognostics seen on high, The future tone and temper of the sky;
But, grave dissemblers! could not understand That sin let loose speaks punishment at hand.
Ask now of history's authentic page, And call up evidence from every age;
Display with busy and laborious hand The blessings of the most indebted land;
What nation will you find, whose annals prove So rich an interest in Almighty love? Where dwell
they now, where dwelt in ancient day A people planted, water'd, blest, as they?
Let Egypt's plagues and Canaan's woes proclaim The favours pour'd upon the Jewish name; Their
freedom purchased for them at the cost Of all their hard oppressors valued most: Their title to a
country not their own Made sure by prodigies till then unknown; For them the states they left made
waste and void; For them the states to which they went destroy'd; A cloud to measure out their
march by day, By night a fire to cheer the gloomy way; That moving signal summoning, when best,
Their host to move, and, when it stay'd, to rest. For them the rocks dissolved into a flood, The
dews condensed into angelic food, Their very garments sacred, old yet new, And Time forbid to
touch them as he flew;
Streams, swell'd above the bank, enjoin'd to stand While they pass'd through to their appointed
land; Their leader arm'd with meekness, zeal, and love, And graced with clear credentials from
above;
Themselves secured beneath the Almighty wing; Their God their captain,[1] lawgiver, and king;

Crown'd with a thousand victories, and at last Lords of the conquer'd soil, there rooted fast, In peace possessing what they won by war, Their name far publish'd, and revered as far; Where will you find a race like theirs, endow'd With all that man e'er wish'd, or heaven bestow'd?

They, and they only, amongst all mankind, Received the transcript of the Eternal Mind; Were trusted with his own engraven laws, And constituted guardians of his cause;

Theirs were the prophets, theirs the priestly call, And theirs by birth the Saviour of us all. In vain the nations, that had seen them rise With fierce and envious, yet admiring, eyes, Had sought to crush them, guarded as they were By power divine and skill that could not err. Had they maintain'd allegiance firm and sure, And kept the faith immaculate and pure, Then the proud eagles of all-conquering Rome Had found one city not to be o'ercome; And the twelve standards of the tribes unfurl'd Had bid defiance to the warring world. But grace abused brings forth the foulest deeds, As richest soil the most luxuriant weeds.

Cured of the golden calves, their fathers' sin, They set up self, that idol god within;

View'd a Deliverer with disdain and hate, Who left them still a tributary state;

Seized fast his hand, held out to set them free From a worse yoke, and nail'd it to the tree:

There was the consummation and the crown, The flower of Israel's infamy full blown;

Thence date their sad declension, and their fall, Their woes, not yet repeal'd, thence date them all.

Thus fell the best instructed in her day, And the most favour'd land, look where we may.

Philosophy indeed on Grecian eyes Had pour'd the day, and clear'd the Roman skies; In other climes perhaps creative art, With power surpassing theirs, perform'd her part; Might give more life to marble, or might fill The glowing tablets with a juster skill, Might shine in fable, and grace idle themes With all the embroidery of poetic dreams;

?Twas theirs alone to dive into the plan That truth and mercy had reveal'd to man;

And, while the world beside, that plan unknown, Deified useless wood or senseless stone, They breathed in faith their well-directed prayers, And the true God, the God of truth, was theirs. Their glory faded, and their race dispersed, The last of nations now, though once the first, They warn and teach the proudest, would they learn, Keep wisdom, or meet vengeance in your turn:

If we escaped not, if Heaven spared not us, Peel'd, scatter'd, and exterminated thus;

If vice received her retribution due, When we were visited, what hope for you? When God arises with an awful frown, To punish lust, or pluck presumption down; When gifts perverted, or not duly prized, Pleasure o'ervalued, and his grace despised, Provoke the vengeance of his righteous hand, To pour down wrath upon a thankless land:

He will be found impartially severe, Too just to wink, or speak the guilty clear.

Oh Israel, of all nations most undone!

Thy diadem displaced, thy sceptre gone;

Thy temple, once thy glory, fallen and razed, And thou a worshipper e'en where thou mayst, They services, once holy without spot, Mere shadows now, their ancient pomp forgot;

Thy Levites, once a consecrated host, No longer Levites, and their lineage lost, And thou thyself o'er every country sown, With none on earth that thou canst call thine own;

Cry aloud, thou that sittest in the dust, Cry to the proud, the cruel, and unjust;

Knock at the gates of nations, rouse their fears;

Say wrath is coming, and the storm appears; But raise the shrillest cry in British ears.

What ails thee, restless as the waves that roar, And fling their foam against thy chalky shore?

Mistress, at least while Providence shall please, And trident-bearing queen of the wide seas- Why, having kept good faith, and often shewn Friendship and truth to others, find'st thou none?

Thou that hast set the persecuted free, None interposes now to succour thee.

Countries indebted to thy power, that shine With light derived from thee, would smother thine.

Thy very children watch for thy disgrace, A lawless brood, and curse thee to thy face.

Thy rulers load thy credit, year by year, With sums Peruvian mines could never clear; As if, like arches built with skilful hand, The more 'twere press'd the firmer it would stand. The cry in all thy ships is still the same, Speed us away to battle and to fame.

Thy mariners explore the wild expanse, Impatient to descry the flags of France:

But, though they fight as thine have ever fought, Return ashamed without the wreaths they sought.

Thy senate is a scene of civil jar, Chaos of contrarities at war; Where sharp and solid, phlegmatic and light, Discordant atoms meet, ferment, and fight; Where obstinacy takes his sturdy stand, To disconcert what policy has plann'd; Where policy is busied all night long In setting right what faction has set wrong; Where flails of oratory thresh the floor, That yields them chaff and dust, and nothing more.

Thy rack'd inhabitants repine, complain, Tax'd till the brow of labour sweats in vain;

War lays a burden on the reeling state, And peace does nothing to relieve the weight;

Successive loads succeeding broils impose, And sighing millions prophesy the close. Is adverse Providence, when ponder'd well, So dimly writ, or difficult to spell, Thou canst not read with readiness and ease Providence adverse in events like these?

Know then that heavenly wisdom on this ball Creates, gives birth to, guides, consummates all;

That, while laborious and quick-thoughted man Snuffs up the praise of what he seems to plan, He first conceives, then perfects his design, As a mere instrument in hands divine:

Blind to the working of that sacred power That balances the wings of every hour, The busy trifler dreams himself alone, Frames many a purpose, and God works his own.

States thrive or wither as moons wax and wane, E'en as his will and his decrees ordain;

While honour, virtue, piety, bear sway, They flourish; and, as these decline, decay: In just resentment of his injured laws, He pours contempt on them and on their cause;

Strikes the rough thread of error right athwart The web of every scheme they have at heart;

Bids rottenness invade and bring to dust The pillars of support, in which they trust, And do his errand of disgrace and shame On the chief strength and glory of the frame.

None ever yet impeded what he wrought, None bars him out from his most secret thought;

Darkness itself before his eye is light, And hell's close mischief naked in his sight.

Stand now and judge thyself-Hast thou incurr'd His anger who can waste thee with a word, Who poises and proportions sea and land, Weighing them in the hollow of his hand, And in whose awful sight all nations seem As grasshoppers, as dust, a drop, a dream?

Hast thou (a sacrilege his soul abhors) Claim'd all the glory of thy prosperous wars?

Proud of thy fleets and armies, stolen the gem Of his just praise, to lavish it on them?

Hast thou not learn'd, what thou art often told, A truth still sacred, and believed of old, That no success attends on spears and swords Unblest, and that the battle is the Lord's? That courage is his creature; and dismay The post, that at his bidding speeds away, Ghastly in feature, and his stammering tongue With doleful humour and sad presage hung, To quell the valour of the stoutest heart, And teach the combatant a woman's part? That he bids thousands fly when none pursue, Saves as he will by many or by few, And claims for ever, as his royal right, The event and sure decision of the fight?

Hast thou, though suckled at fair freedom's breast, Exported slavery to the conquer'd East?

Pull'd down the tyrants India served with dread, And raised thyself, a greater, in their stead?

Gone thither, arm'd and hungry, return'd full, Fed from the richest veins of the Mogul, A despot big with power obtain'd by wealth, And that obtain'd by rapine and by stealth? With Asiatic vices stored thy mind, But left their virtues and thine own behind?

And, having truck'd thy soul, brought home the fee, To tempt the poor to sell himself to thee?

Hast thou by statue shoved from its design, The Saviour's feast, his own blest bread and wine, And made the symbols of atoning grace An office-key, a picklock to a place, That infidels may prove their title good By an oath dipp'd in sacramental blood? A blot that will be still a blot, in spite Of all that grave apologists may write; And though a bishop toil'd to cleanse the stain, He wipes and scours the silver cup in vain. And hast thou sworn, on every slight pretence, Till perjuries are common as bad pence, While thousands, careless of the damning sin, Kiss the book's outside, who ne'er look within?

Hast thou, when Heaven has clothed thee with disgrace, And, long provoked, repaid thee to thy face (For thou hast known eclipses, and endured Dimness and anguish, all thy beams obscured, When sin has shed dishonour on thy brow; And never of a sabler hue than now), Hast thou, with heart perverse and conscience sear'd, Despising all rebuke, still persevered, And, having chosen evil, scorn'd the voice That cried, Repent!-and gloried in thy choice?

Thy fastings, when calamity at last Suggests the expedient of a yearly fast, What mean they?
Canst thou dream there is a power In lighter diet at a later hour, To charm to sleep the threatening
of the skies, And hide past folly from all-seeing eyes? The fast that wins deliverance, and
suspends The stroke that a vindictive God intends, Is to renounce hypocrisy; to draw Thy life upon
the pattern of the law; To war with pleasure, idolized before; To vanquish lust, and wear its yoke
no more.

All fasting else, whate'er be the pretence, Is wooing mercy by renew'd offence.

Hast thou within thee sin, that in old time Brought fire from heaven, the sex-abusing crime, Whose
horrid perpetration stamps disgrace, Baboons are free from, upon human race?

Think on the fruitful and well-water'd spot That fed the flocks and herds of wealthy Lot, Where
Paradise seem'd still vouchsafed on earth, Burning and scorch'd into perpetual dearth, Or, in his
words who damn'd the base desire, Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire:

Then nature, injured, scandalized, defiled, Unveil'd her blushing cheek, look'd on, and smiled;

Beheld with joy the lovely scene defaced, And praised the wrath that laid her beauties waste.

Far be the thought from any verse of mine, And farther still the form'd and fix'd design, To thrust
the charge of deeds that I detest Against an innocent unconscious breast; The man that dares
traduce, because he can With safety to himself, is not a man: An individual is a sacred mark, Not
to be pierced in play, or in the dark; But public censure speaks a public foe, Unless a zeal for virtue
guide the blow. The priestly brotherhood, devout, sincere, From mean self-interest and ambition
clear, Their hope in heaven, servility their scorn, Prompt to persuade, expostulate, and warn, Their
wisdom pure, and given them from above, Their usefulness ensured by zeal and love, As meek as
the man Moses, and withal As bold as in Agrippa's presence Paul, Should fly the world's
contaminating touch, Holy and unpolluted:-are thine such?

Except a few with Eli's spirit blest, Hophni and Phineas may describe the rest. Where shall a
teacher look, in days like these, For ears and hearts that he can hope to please?

Look to the poor-the simple and the plain Will hear perhaps thy salutary strain:

Humility is gentle, apt to learn, Speak but the word, will listen and return.

Alas! not so; the poorest of the flock Are proud, and set their faces as a rock;

Denied that earthly opulence they choose, God's better gift they scoff at and refuse. The rich, the
produce of a nobler stem, Are more intelligent, at least-try them.

Oh vain inquiry! they without remorse Are altogether gone a devious course; Where beckoning
pleasure leads them, wildly stray; Have burst the bands, and cast the yoke away.

Now borne upon the wings of truth sublime, Review thy dim original and prime. This island, spot of
unreclaim'd rude earth, The cradle that received thee at thy birth, Was rock'd by many a rough
Norwegian blast, And Danish howlings scared thee as they pass'd; For thou wast born amid the
din of arms, And suck'd a breast that panted with alarms.

While yet thou wast a grovelling, puling chit, Thy bones not fashion'd, and thy joints not knit, The Roman taught thy stubborn knee to bow, Though twice a Caesar could not bend thee now. His victory was that of orient light, When the sun's shafts disperse the gloom of night.

Thy language at this distant moment shews How much the country to the conqueror owes;

Expressive, energetic, and refined, It sparkles with the gems he left behind;

He brought thy land a blessing when he came, He found thee savage, and he left thee tame;

Taught thee to clothe thy pink'd and painted hide, And grac'd thy figure with a soldier's pride;

He sow'd the seeds of order where he went, Improved thee far beyond his own intent, And, while he ruled thee by the sword alone, Made thee at last a warrior like his own.

Religion, if in heavenly truths attired, Needs only to be seen to be admired; But thine, as dark as witcheries of the night, Was form'd to harden hearts and shock the sight;

Thy druids struck the well-hung harps they bore With fingers deeply dyed in human gore; And while the victim slowly bled to death, Upon the rolling chords rung out his dying breath. Who brought the lamp that with awaking beams Dispell'd thy gloom, and broke away thy dreams, Tradition now decrepit and worn out, Babblers of ancient fables, leaves a doubt: But still light reach'd thee: and those gods of thine, Woden and Thor, each tottering in his shrine, Fell broken and defaced at their own door, As Dagon in Philistia long before. But Rome with sorceries and magic wand Soon raised a cloud that darken'd every land; And thine was smother'd in the stench and fog Of Tiber's marshes and the papal bog.

Then priests with bulls and briefs, and shaven crowns, And griping fists and unrelenting frowns, Legates and delegates with powers from hell, Though heavenly in pretension, fleeced thee well; And to this hour, to keep it fresh in mind, Some twigs of that old scourge are left behind.[2] Thy soldiery, the Pope's well-managed pack, Were train'd beneath his lash, and knew the smack, And, when he laid them on the scent of blood, Would hunt a Saracen through fire and flood.

Lavish of life, to win an empty tomb, That proved a mint of wealth, a mine to Rome.

They left their bones beneath unfriendly skies, His worthless absolution all the prize.

Thou wast the veriest slave, in days of yore, That ever dragg'd a chain or tugg'd an oar;

Thy monarchs arbitrary, fierce, unjust, Themselves the slaves of bigotry or lust, Disdain'd thy counsels, only in distress Found thee a goodly sponge for power to press.

Thy chiefs, the lords of many a petty fee, Provoked and harass'd, in return plagued thee;

Call'd thee away from peaceable employ, Domestic happiness and rural joy, To waste thy life in arms, or lay it down In causeless feuds and bickerings of their own.

Thy parliaments adored, on bended knees, The sovereignty they were convened to please;

Whate'er was ask'd, too timid to resist, Complied with, and were graciously dismiss'd; And if some Spartan soul a doubt express'd, And, blushing at the tameness of the rest, Dared to suppose the subject had a choice, He was a traitor by the general voice.

Oh, slave! with powers thou didst not dare exert, Verse cannot stoop so low as thy desert;

It shakes the sides of splenetic disdain, Thou self-entitled ruler of the main, To trace thee to the date, when yon fair sea, That clips thy shores, had no such charms for thee; When other nations flew from coast to coast, And thou hadst neither fleet nor flag to boast.

Kneel now, and lay thy forehead in the dust;

Blush if thou canst; not petrified, thou must;

Act but an honest and a faithful part;

Compare what then thou wast with what thou art; And God's disposing providence confess'd, Obduracy itself must yield the rest.- Then thou art bound to serve him, and to prove, Hour after hour, thy gratitude and love. Has he not hid thee and thy favour'd land, For ages, safe beneath his sheltering hand, Given thee his blessing on the clearest proof, Bid nations leagued against thee stand aloof, And charged hostility and hate to roar Where else they would, but not upon thy shore? His power secured thee when presumptuous Spain Baptized her fleet invincible in vain; Her gloomy monarch, doubtful and resign'd To every pang that racks an anxious mind, Ask'd of the waves that broke upon his coast, What tidings? and the surge replied-All lost! And when the Stuart, leaning on the Scot, Then too much fear'd, and now too much forgot, Pierced to the very centre of the realm, And hoped to seize his abdicated helm, 'Twas but to prove how quickly, with a frown, He that had raised thee could have pluck'd thee down.

Peculiar is the grace by thee possess'd, Thy foes implacable, thy land at rest;

Thy thunders travel over earth and seas, And all at home is pleasure, wealth, and ease.

'Tis thus, extending his tempestuous arm, Thy Maker fills the nations with alarm, While his own heaven surveys the troubled scene, And feels no change, unshaken and serene.

Freedom, in other lands scarce known to shine, Pours out a flood of splendour upon thine;

Thou hast as bright an interest in her rays As ever Roman had in Rome's best days.

True freedom is where no restraint is known That Scripture, justice, and good sense disown. Where only vice and injury are tied, And all from shore to shore is free beside.

Such freedom is-and Windsor's hoary towers Stood trembling at the boldness of thy powers, That won a nymph on that immortal plain, Like her the fabled Phoebus woo'd in vain;

He found the laurel only-happier you The unfading laurel, and the virgin too![3] Now think, if pleasure have a thought to spare;

If God himself be not beneath her care;

If business, constant as the wheels of time, Can pause an hour to read a serious rhyme;

If the new mail thy merchants now receive, Or expectation of the next, give leave;

Oh think, if chargeable with deep arrears For such indulgence gilding all thy years, How much, though long neglected, shining yet, The beams of heavenly truth have swell'd the debt. When

persecuting zeal made royal sport With tortured innocence in Mary's court, And Bonner, blithe as shepherd at a wake, Enjoy'd the show, and danced about the stake, The sacred book, its value understood, Received the seal of martyrdom in blood.

Those holy men, so full of truth and grace, Seem to reflection of a different race, Meek, modest, venerable, wise, sincere, In such a cause they could not dare to fear;

They could not purchase earth with such a prize, Or spare a life too short to reach the skies. From them to thee convey'd along the tide, Their streaming hearts pour'd freely when they died;

Those truths, which neither use nor years impair, Invite thee, woo thee, to the bliss they share.

What dotage will not vanity maintain?

What web too weak to catch a modern brain? The moles and bats in full assembly find, On special search, the keen-eyed eagle blind. And did they dream, and art thou wiser now?

Prove it-if better, I submit and bow.

Wisdom and goodness are twin-born, one heart Must hold both sisters, never seen apart. So then-as darkness overspread the deep, Ere nature rose from her eternal sleep, And this delightful earth, and that fair sky, Leap'd out of nothing, call'd by the Most High; By such a change thy darkness is made light, Thy chaos order, and thy weakness might; And He, whose power mere nullity obeys, Who found thee nothing, form'd thee for his praise. To praise him is to serve him , and fulfil, Doing and suffering, his unquestion'd will;

?Tis to believe what men inspired of old, Faithful, and faithfully inform'd, unfold;

Candid and just, with no false aim in view, To take for truth what cannot but be true; To learn in God's own school the Christian part, And bind the task assign'd thee to thine heart:

Happy the man there seeking and there found:

Happy the nation where such men abound!

How shall a verse impress thee? by what name Shall I adjure thee not to court thy shame? By theirs whose bright example, unimpeach'd, Directs thee to that eminence they reach'd, Heroes and worthies of days past, thy sires? Or his, who touch'd their hearts with hallow'd fires? Their names, alas! in vain reproach an age, Whom all the vanities they scorn'd engage; And his, that seraphs tremble at, is hung Disgracefully on every trifler's tongue, Or serves the champion in forensic war, To flourish and parade with at the bar.

Pleasure herself perhaps suggests a plea, If interest move thee, to persuade e'en thee; By every charm that smiles upon her face, By joys possess'd, and joys still held in chase, If dear society be worth a thought, And if the feast of freedom cloy thee not, Reflect that these, and all that seems thine own, Held by the tenure of his will alone, Like angels in the service of their Lord, Remain with thee, or leave thee at his word; That gratitude, and temperance in our use Of what he gives, unsparing and profuse, Secure the favour, and enhance the joy, That thankless waste and wild abuse destroy.

But, above all, reflect how cheap soe'er Those rights, that millions envy thee, appear, And though resolved to risk them, and swim down The tide of pleasure, heedless of his frown, That blessings truly sacred, and when given Mark'd with the signature and stamp of Heaven, The word of prophecy, those truths divine, Which make that heaven, if thou desire it, thine (Awful alternative! believe, beloved, Thy glory, and thy shame if unimproved), Are never long vouchsafed, if push'd aside With cold disgust or philosophic pride; And that, judicially withdrawn, disgrace, Error, and darkness, occupy their place. A world is up in arms, and thou, a spot Not quickly found, if negligently sought, Thy soul as ample as thy bounds are small, Endur'st the brunt, and dar'st defy them all; And wilt thou join to this bold enterprise A bolder still, a contest with the skies?

Remember, if He guard thee and secure, Whoe'er assails thee, thy success is sure; But if He leave thee, though the skill and power Of nations sworn to spoil thee and devour, Were all collected in thy single arm, And thou couldst laugh away the fear of harm, That strength would fail, opposed against the push And feeble onset of a pigmy rush.

Say not (and if the thought of such defence Should spring within thy bosom, drive it thence) What nation amongst all my foes is free From crimes as base as any charged on me? Their measure fill'd, they too shall pay the debt, Which God, though long forborne, will not forget. But know that wrath divine, when most severe, Makes justice still the guide of his career, And will not punish, in one mingled crowd, Them without light, and thee without a cloud.

Muse, hang this harp upon yon aged beech, Still murmuring with the solemn truths I teach;

And, while at intervals a cold blast sings Through the dry leaves, and pants upon the strings, My soul shall sigh in secret, and lament A nation scourged, yet tardy to repent.

I know the warning song is sung in vain; That few will hear, and fewer heed the strain; But if a sweeter voice, and one design'd A blessing to my country and mankind, Reclaim the wandering thousands, and bring home A flock so scatter'd and so wont to roam, Then place it once again between my knees; The sound of truth will then be sure to please; And truth alone, where'er my life be cast, In scenes of plenty, or the pining waste, Shall be my chosen theme, my glory to the last.

----- [1] Vide Josh. v. 14.

[2] Which may be found at Doctor's Commons.

[3] Alluding to the grant of the Magna Charta, which was extorted from King John by the barons at Runnymede near Windsor.

S. Hope

Hope By William Cowper

HOPE.

"""""""" _____Doceas iter, et sacra ostia pandas.-Virg. Aen. 6.

"""""""" _____ Ask what is human life-the sage replies, With disappointment lowering in his eyes, A painful passage o'er a restless flood, A vain pursuit of fugitive false good, A scene of fancied bliss and heartfelt care, Closing at last in darkness and despair. The poor, inured to drudgery and distress, Act without aim, think little, and feel less, And nowhere, but in feign'd Arcadian scenes, Taste happiness, or know what pleasure means.

Riches are pass'd away from hand to hand, As fortune, vice, or folly may command; As in a dance the pair that take the lead Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed, So shifting and so various is the plan By which Heaven rules the mix'd affairs of man;

Vicissitude wheels round the motley crowd, The rich grow poor, the poor become purse-proud;

Business is labour, and man's weakness such, Pleasure is labour too, and tires us much, The very sense of it foregoes its use, By repetition pall'd, by age obtuse.

Youth lost in dissipation we deplore, Through life's sad remnant, what no sighs restore; Our years, a fruitless race without a prize, Too many, yet too few to make us wise.

Dangling his cane about, and taking snuff, Lothario cries, What philosophic stuff- O querulous and weak!-whose useless brain Once thought of nothing, and now thinks in vain; Whose eye reverted weeps o'er all the past, Whose prospect shews thee a disheartening waste; Would age in thee resign his wintry reign, And youth invigorate that frame again, Renew'd desire would grace with other speech Joys always prized, when placed within our reach. For lift thy palsied head, shake off the gloom That overhangs the borders of thy tomb, See nature gay, as when she first began With smiles alluring her admirer man;

She spreads the morning over eastern hills, Earth glitters with the drops the night distils; The sun, obedient, at her call appears To fling his glories o'er the robe she wears;

Banks clothed with flowers, groves fill'd with sprightly sounds, The yellow tilth, green meads, rocks, rising grounds, Streams, edged with osiers, fattening every field Where'er they flow, now seen, and now conceal'd; From the blue rim, where skies and mountains meet, Down to the very turf beneath thy feet, Ten thousand charms, that only fools despise, Or pride can look at with indifferent eyes, All speak one language, all with one sweet voice Cry to her universal realm, Rejoice!

Man feels the spur of passions and desires, And she gives largely more than he requires; Not that, his hours devoted all to care, Hollow-eyed abstinence, and lean despair, The wretch may pine,

while to his smell, taste, sight, She holds a paradise of rich delight; But gently to rebuke his awkward fear, To prove that what she gives she gives sincere, To banish hesitation, and proclaim His happiness her dear, her only aim.

?Tis grave philosophy's absurdest dream, That Heaven's intentions are not what they seem, That only shadows are dispensed below, And earth has no reality but woe.

Thus things terrestrial wear a different hue, As youth or age persuades; and neither true.

So, Flora's wreath through colour'd crystal seen, The rose or lily appears blue or green, But still the imputed tints are those alone The medium represents, and not their own. To rise at noon, sit slipshod and undress'd, To read the news, or fiddle, as seems best, Till half the world comes rattling at his door, To fill the dull vacuity till four;

And, just when evening turns the blue vault gray, To spend two hours in dressing for the day; To make the sun a bauble without use, Save for the fruits his heavenly beams produce;

Quite to forget, or deem it worth no thought, Who bids him shine, or if he shine or not;

Through mere necessity to close his eyes Just when the larks and when the shepherds rise; Is such a life, so tediously the same, So void of all utility or aim, That poor Jonquil, with almost every breath, Sighs for his exit, vulgarly called death: For he, with all his follies, has a mind Not yet so blank, or fashionably blind, But now and then perhaps a feeble ray Of distant wisdom shoots across his way; By which he reads, that life without a plan, As useless as the moment it began, Serves merely as a soil for discontent To thrive in; an encumbrance ere half spent.

Oh! weariness beyond what asses feel, That tread the circuit of the cistern wheel; A dull rotation, never at a stay, Yesterday's face twin image of to-day;

While conversation, an exhausted stock, Grows drowsy as the clicking of a clock. No need, he cries, of gravity stuff'd out With academic dignity devout, To read wise lectures, vanity the text:

Proclaim the remedy, ye learned, next; For truth self-evident, with pomp impress'd, Is vanity surpassing all the rest. That remedy, not hid in deeps profound, Yet seldom sought where only to be found, While passion turns aside from its due scope The inquirer's aim, that remedy is Hope.

Life is his gift, from whom whate'er life needs, With every good and perfect gift, proceeds;

Bestow'd on man, like all that we partake, Royally, freely, for his bounty's sake;

Transient indeed, as is the fleeting hour, And yet the seed of an immortal flower;

Design'd, in honour of his endless love, To fill with fragrance his abode above; No trifle, howsoever short it seem, And, howsoever shadowy, no dream; Its value, what no thought can ascertain, Nor all an angel's eloquence explain.

Men deal with life as children with their play, Who first misuse, then cast their toys away;

Live to no sober purpose, and contend That their Creator had no serious end. When God and man stand opposite in view, Man's disappointment must, of course, ensue. The just Creator condescends to write, In beams of inextinguishable light, His names of wisdom, goodness, power,

and love, On all that blooms below, or shines above; To catch the wandering notice of mankind,
And teach the world, if not perversely blind, His gracious attributes, and prove the share His
offspring hold in his paternal care.

If, led from earthly things to things divine, His creature thwart not his august design, Then praise is
heard instead of reasoning pride, And captious cavil and complaint subside.

Nature, employ'd in her allotted place, Is handmaid to the purposes of grace; By good vouchsafed
makes known superior good, And bliss not seen by blessings understood: That bliss, reveal'd in
Scripture, with a glow Bright as the covenant-insuring bow, Fires all his feelings with a noble scorn
Of sensual evil, and thus Hope is born.

Hope sets the stamp of vanity on all That men have deem'd substantial since the fall, Yet has the
wondrous virtue to educe From emptiness itself a real use; And while she takes, as at a father's
hand, What health and sober appetite demand, From fading good derives, with chemic art, That
lasting happiness, a thankful heart.

Hope, with uplifted foot, set free from earth, Pants for the place of her ethereal birth, On steady
wings sails through the immense abyss, Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss, And
crowns the soul, while yet a mourner here, With wreaths like those triumphant spirits wear.

Hope, as an anchor, firm and sure, holds fast The Christian vessel, and defies the blast.

Hope! nothing else can nourish and secure His new-born virtues, and preserve him pure.

Hope! let the wretch, once conscious of the joy, Whom now despairing agonies destroy, Speak, for
he can, and none so well as he, What treasures centre, what delights, in thee. Had he the gems,
the spices, and the land, That boasts the treasure, all at his command; The fragrant grove, the
inestimable mine, Were light, when weigh'd against one smile of thine.

Though clasp'd and cradled in his nurse's arms, He shines with all a cherub's artless charms, Man
is the genuine offspring of revolt, Stubborn and sturdy, a wild ass's colt; His passions, like the
watery stores that sleep Beneath the smiling surface of the deep, Wait but the lashes of a wintry
storm, To frown and roar, and shake his feeble form. From infancy through childhood's giddy
maze, Froward at school, and fretful in his plays, The puny tyrant burns to subjugate The free
republic of the whip-gig state.

If one, his equal in athletic frame, Or, more provoking still, of nobler name, Dare step across his
arbitrary views, An Iliad, only not in verse, ensues: The little Greeks look trembling at the scales,
Till the best tongue or heaviest hand prevails.

Now see him launch'd into the world at large;

If priest, supinely droning o'er his charge, Their fleece his pillow, and his weekly drawl, Though
short, too long, the price he pays for all.

If lawyer, loud whatever cause he plead, But proudest of the worst, if that succeed.

Perhaps a grave physician, gathering fees, Punctually paid for lengthening out disease; No
Cotton, whose humanity sheds rays, That make superior skill his second praise.

If arms engage him, he devotes to sport His date of life so likely to be short; A soldier may be anything, if brave, So may a tradesman, if not quite a knave.

Such stuff the world is made of; and mankind To passion, interest, pleasure, whim, resign'd, Insist on, as if each were his own pope, Forgiveness, and the privilege of hope; But conscience, in some awful silent hour, When captivating lusts have lost their power, Perhaps when sickness, or some fearful dream, Reminds him of religion, hated theme!

Starts from the down, on which she lately slept, And tells of laws despised, at least not kept;

Shews with a pointing finger, but no noise, A pale procession of past sinful joys, All witnesses of blessings foully scorn'd, And life abused, and not to be suborn'd.

Mark these, she says; these, summon'd from afar, Begin their march to meet thee at the bar;

There find a Judge inexorably just, And perish there, as all presumption must.

Peace be to those (such peace as earth can give) Who live in pleasure, dead e'en while they live; Born capable indeed of heavenly truth; But down to latest age, from earliest youth, Their mind a wilderness through want of care, The plough of wisdom never entering there.

Peace (if insensibility may claim A right to the meek honours of her name) To men of pedigree, their noble race.

Emulous always of the nearest place To any throne, except the throne of grace.

Let cottagers and unenlighten'd swains Revere the laws they dream that Heaven ordains;

Resort on Sundays to the house of prayer, And ask, and fancy they find, blessings there.

Themselves, perhaps, when weary they retreat To enjoy cool nature in a country seat, To exchange the centre of a thousand trades, For clumps, and lawns, and temples, and cascades, May now and then their velvet cushions take, And seem to pray for good example sake;

Judging, in charity no doubt, the town Pious enough, and having need of none.

Kind souls! to teach their tenantry to prize What they themselves, without remorse, despise: Nor hope have they, nor fear, of aught to come, As well for them had prophecy been dumb;

They could have held the conduct they pursue, Had Paul of Tarsus lived and died a Jew; And truth, proposed to reasoners wise as they, Is a pearl cast-completely cast away.

They die.-Death lends them, pleased, and as in sport, All the grim honours of his ghastly court.

Far other paintings grace the chamber now, Where late we saw the mimic landscape glow: The busy heralds hang the sable scene With mournful ?scutcheons, and dim lamps between;

Proclaim their titles to the crowd around, But they that wore them move not at the sound; The coronet, placed idly at their head, Adds nothing now to the degraded dead, And e'en the star, that glitters on the bier, Can only say-Nobility lies here.

Peace to all such-'twere pity to offend, By useless censure, whom we cannot mend, Life without hope can close but in despair, 'Twas there we found them, and must leave them there. As when two pilgrims in a forest stray, Both may be lost, yet each in his own way; So fares it with the multitudes beguiled In vain opinion's waste and dangerous wild;

Ten thousand rove the brakes and thorns among, Some eastward, and some westward, and all wrong. But here, alas! the fatal difference lies, Each man's belief is right in his own eyes; And he that blames what they have blindly chose, Incurs resentment for the love he shews.

Say, botanist, within whose province fall The cedar and the hyssop on the wall, Of all that deck the lanes, the fields, the bowers, What parts the kindred tribes of weeds and flowers?

Sweet scent, or lovely form, or both combined, Distinguish every cultivated kind; The want of both denotes a meaner breed, And Chloe from her garland picks the weed.

Thus hopes of every sort, whatever sect Esteem them, sow them, rear them, and protect, If wild in nature, and not duly found, Gethsemane! in thy dear hallow'd ground, That cannot bear the blaze of Scripture light, Nor cheer the spirit, nor refresh the sight, Nor animate the soul to Christian deeds, (Oh cast them from thee!) are weeds, arrant weeds.

Ethelred's house, the centre of six ways, Diverging each from each, like equal rays, Himself as bountiful as April rains, Lord paramount of the surrounding plains, Would give relief of bed and board to none, But guests that sought it in the appointed One; And they might enter at his open door, E'en till his spacious hall would hold no more.

He sent a servant forth by every road, To sound his horn and publish it abroad, That all might mark-knight, menial, high, and low- An ordinance it concern'd them much to know.

If, after all, some headstrong, hardy lout Would disobey, though sure to be shut out, Could he with reason murmur at his case, Himself sole author of his own disgrace?

No! the decree was just and without flaw; And he that made had right to make the law; His sovereign power and pleasure unrestrain'd, The wrong was his who wrongfully complain'd.

Yet half mankind maintain a churlish strife With him the Donor of eternal life, Because the deed, by which his love confirms The largess he bestows, prescribes the terms.

Compliance with his will your lot insures, Accept it only, and the boon is yours. And sure it is as kind to smile and give, As with a frown to say, Do this, and live.

Love is not pedlar's trumpery, bought and sold;

He will give freely, or he will withhold; His soul abhors a mercenary thought, And him as deeply who abhors it not;

He stipulates indeed, but merely this, That man will freely take an unbought bliss, Will trust him for a faithful, generous part, Nor set a price upon a willing heart. Of all the ways that seem to promise fair, To place you where his saints his presence share, This only can; for this plain cause, express'd In terms as plain-himself has shut the rest. But oh the strife, the bickering, and debate, The tidings of unpurchased heaven create! The flirted fan, the bridle, and the toss, All speakers,

yet all language at a loss. From stucco'd walls smart arguments rebound; And beaux, adepts in everything profound, Die of disdain, or whistle off the sound.

Such is the clamour of rooks, daws, and kites, The explosion of the levell'd tube excites. Where mouldering abbey walls o'erhang the glade, And oaks coeval spread a mournful shade, The screaming nations, hovering in mid air, Loudly resent the stranger's freedom there, And seem to warn him never to repeat His bold intrusion on their dark retreat.

Adieu, Vinoso cries, ere yet he sips The purple bumper trembling at his lips, Adieu to all morality! if grace Make works a vain ingredient in the case. The Christian hope is-Waiter, draw the cork- If I mistake not-Blockhead! with a fork!

Without good works, whatever some may boast, Mere folly and delusion-Sir, your toast. My firm persuasion is, at least sometimes, That Heaven will weigh man's virtues and his crimes With nice attention in a righteous scale, And save or damn as these or those prevail.

I plant my foot upon this ground of trust, And silence every fear with-God is just. But if perchance, on some dull, drizzling day, A thought intrude, that says, or seems to say, If thus the important cause is to be tried, Suppose the beam should dip on the wrong side;

I soon recover from these needless frights, And-God is merciful-sets all to rights.

Thus between justice, as my prime support, And mercy, fled to as the last resort, I glide and steal along with heaven in view, And,-pardon me, the bottle stands with you.

I never will believe, the Colonel cries, The sanguinary schemes that some devise, Who make the good Creator, on their plan, A being of less equity than man.

If appetite, or what divines call lust, Which men comply with, e'en because they must, Be punish'd with perdition, who is pure?

Then theirs, no doubt, as well as mine, is sure.

If sentence of eternal pain belong To every sudden slip and transient wrong, Then Heaven enjoins the fallible and frail A hopeless task, and damns them if they fail. My creed (whatever some creed-makers mean By Athanasian nonsense, or Nicene), My creed is, he is safe that does his best, And death's a doom sufficient for the rest.

Right, says an ensign; and for aught I see, Your faith and mine substantially agree; The best of every man's performance here Is to discharge the duties of his sphere. A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair, Honesty shines with great advantage there.

Fasting and prayer sit well upon a priest, A decent caution and reserve at least. A soldier's best is courage in the field, With nothing here that wants to be conceal'd;

Manly deportment, gallant, easy, gay; A hand as liberal as the light of day. The soldier thus endow'd, who never shrinks, Nor closets up his thoughts, whate'er he thinks, Who scorns to do an injury by stealth, Must go to heaven-and I must drink his health.

Sir Smug, he cries (for lowest at the board, Just made fifth chaplain of his patron lord, His shoulders witnessing by many a shrug, How much his feelings suffer'd, sat Sir Smug), Your office

is to winnow false from true;

Come, prophet, drink, and tell us, What think you?

Sighing and smiling as he takes his glass, Which they that woo preferment rarely pass, Fallible man, the church-bred youth replies, Is still found fallible, however wise; And differing judgments serve but to declare, That truth lies somewhere, if we knew but where. Of all it ever was my lot to read, Of critics now alive or long since dead, The book of all the world that charm'd me most Was, -well-a-day, the title-page was lost; The writer well remarks, a heart that knows To take with gratitude what Heaven bestows, With prudence always ready at our call, To guide our use of it, is all in all.

Doubtless it is. To which, of my own store, I superadd a few essentials more; But these, excuse the liberty I take, I wave just now, for conversation's sake.

Spoke like an oracle, they all exclaim, And add Right Reverend to Smug's honour'd name. And yet our lot is given us in a land Where busy arts are never at a stand; Where science points her telescopic eye, Familiar with the wonders of the sky; Where bold inquiry, diving out of sight, Brings many a precious pearl of truth to light; Where nought eludes the persevering quest, That fashion, taste, or luxury suggest. But above all, in her own light array'd, See Mercy's grand apocalypse display'd! The sacred book no longer suffers wrong, Bound in the fetters of an unknown tongue; But speaks with plainness art could never mend, What simplest minds can soonest comprehend.

God gives the word, the preachers throng around, Live from his lips, and spread the glorious sound: That sound bespeaks salvation on her way, The trumpet of a life-restoring day;

?Tis heard where England's eastern glory shines, And in the gulfs of her Cornubian mines. And still it spreads. See Germany send forth Her sons^[1] to pour it on the farthest north:

Fired with a zeal peculiar, they defy The rage and rigour of a polar sky, And plant successfully sweet Sharon's rose On icy plains, and in eternal snows.

O blest within the inclosure of your rocks, Not herds have ye to boast, nor bleating flocks; Nor fertilizing streams your fields divide, That shew, reversed, the villas on their side; No groves have ye; no cheerful sound of bird, Or voice of turtle in your land is heard; Nor grateful eglantine regales the smell Of those that walk at evening where ye dwell; But Winter, arm'd with terrors here unknown, Sits absolute on his unshaken throne;

Piles up his stores amidst the frozen waste, And bids the mountains he has built stand fast;

Beckons the legions of his storms away From happier scenes, to make your land a prey;

Proclaims the soil a conquest he has won, And scorns to share it with the distant sun.

-Yet truth is yours, remote, unenvied isle! And peace the genuine offspring of her smile; The pride of letter'd ignorance that binds In chains of error our accomplish'd minds, That decks, with all the splendour of the true, A false religion, is unknown to you.

Nature indeed vouchsafes for our delight The sweet vicissitudes of day and night:

Soft airs and genial moisture feed and cheer
Field, fruit, and flower, and every creature here;
But brighter beams than his who fires the skies
Have risen at length on your admiring eyes,
That shoot into your darkest caves the day,
From which our nicer optics turn away.

Here see the encouragement grace gives to vice,
The dire effect of mercy without price!

What were they? what some fools are made by art,
They were by nature, atheists, head and heart.
The gross idolatry blind heathens teach
Was too refined for them, beyond their reach. Not e'en the
glorious sun, though men revere
The monarch most that seldom will appear, And though his
beams, that quicken where they shine, May claim some right to be esteem'd divine,
Not e'en the sun, desirable as rare,
Could bend one knee, engage one votary there;

They were, what base credulity believes
True Christians are, dissemblers, drunkards, thieves. The
full-gorged savage, at his nauseous feast, Spent half the darkness, and snored out the rest,
Was one, whom justice, on an equal plan, Denouncing death upon the sins of man,
Might almost have indulged with an escape,
Chargeable only with a human shape.

What are they now?—Morality may spare
Her grave concern, her kind suspicions there; The wretch
who once sang wildly, danced, and laugh'd, And suck'd in dizzy madness with his draught,
Has wept a silent flood, reversed his ways, Is sober, meek, benevolent, and prays,
Feeds sparingly, communicates his store, Abhors the craft he boasted of before,
And he that stole has learn'd to steal no more.

Well spake the prophet, Let the desert sing,
Where sprang the thorn, the spiry fir shall spring, And
where unsightly and rank thistles grew, Shall grow the myrtle and luxuriant yew.

Go now, and with important tone demand
On what foundation virtue is to stand, If self-exalting
claims be turn'd adrift, And grace be grace indeed, and life a gift; The poor reclaim'd inhabitant, his
eyes Glistening at once with pity and surprise, Amazed that shadows should obscure the sight
Of one, whose birth was in a land of light, Shall answer, Hope, sweet Hope, has set me free,
And made all pleasures else mere dross to me.

These, amidst scenes as waste as if denied
The common care that waits on all beside, Wild as if
nature there, void of all good, Play'd only gambols in a frantic mood (Yet charge not heavenly skill
with having plann'd A plaything world, unworthy of his hand), Can see his love, though secret evil
lurks In all we touch, stamp'd plainly on his works;

Deem life a blessing with its numerous woes,
Nor spurn away a gift a God bestows.

Hard task indeed o'er arctic seas to roam!
Is hope exotic? grows it not at home?

Yes, but an object, bright as orient morn,
May press the eye too closely to be borne; A distant
virtue we can all confess, It hurts our pride, and moves our envy, less.

Leuconomus (beneath well-sounding Greek I slur a name a poet must not speak) Stood pilloried
on infamy's high stage, And bore the pelting scorn of half an age, The very butt of slander, and the
blot For every dart that malice ever shot. The man that mention'd him at once dismiss'd
All mercy from his lips, and sneer'd and hiss'd; His crimes were such as Sodom never knew, And perjury
stood up to swear all true; His aim was mischief, and his zeal pretence, His speech rebellion

against common sense; A knave, when tried on honesty's plain rule; And when by that of reason,
a mere fool; The world's best comfort was, his doom was pass'd;

Die when he might, he must be damn'd at last.

Now, Truth, perform thine office; waft aside The curtain drawn by prejudice and pride, Reveal (the
man is dead) to wondering eyes This more than monster in his proper guise.

He loved the world that hated him: the tear That dropp'd upon his Bible was sincere;

Assail'd by scandal and the tongue of strife, His only answer was a blameless life; And he that
forged, and he that threw the dart, Had each a brother's interest in his heart.

Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed, Were copied close in him and well transcribed.

He followed Paul; his zeal a kindred flame, His apostolic charity the same.

Like him, cross'd cheerfully tempestuous seas, Forsaking country, kindred, friends, and ease;

Like him he labour'd, and like him content To bear, it, suffer'd shame where'er he went.

Blush, calumny! and write upon his tomb, If honest eulogy can spare thee room, Thy deep
repentance of thy thousand lies, Which, aim'd at him, have pierced the offended skies; And say,
Blot out my sin, confess'd, deplored, Against thine image, in thy saint, O Lord! No blinder bigot, I
maintain it still, Than he who must have pleasure, come what will;

He laughs, whatever weapon Truth may draw, And deems her sharp artillery mere straw;

Scripture indeed is plain; but God and he On Scripture ground are sure to disagree;

Some wiser rule must each him how to live, Than this his Maker has seen fit to give;

Supple and flexible as Indian cane, To take the bend his appetites ordain;

Contrived to suit frail nature's crazy case, And reconcile his lusts with saving grace. By this, with
nice precision of design, He draws upon life's map a zig-zag line, That shews how far 'tis safe to
follow sin, And where his danger and God's wrath begin. By this he forms, as pleased he sports
along, His well-poised estimate of right and wrong; And finds the modish manners of the day,
Though loose, as harmless as an infant's play.

Build by whatever plan caprice decrees, With what materials, on what ground you please, Your
hope shall stand unblamed, perhaps admired, If not that hope the Scripture has required. The
strange conceits, vain projects, and wild dreams, With which hypocrisy for ever teems (Though
other follies strike the public eye, And raise a laugh), pass unmolested by; But if, unblameable in
word and thought, A man arise, a man whom God has taught, With all Elijah's dignity of tone, And
all the love of the beloved John, To storm the citadels they build in air, And smite the untemper'd
wall; 'tis death to spare. To sweep away all refuges of lies, And place, instead of quirks
themselves devise, Lama sabachthani before their eyes; To prove that without Christ all gain is
loss, All hope despair, that stands not on his cross;

Except the few his God may have impress'd, A tenfold frenzy seizes all the rest.

Throughout mankind, the Christian kind at least, There dwells a consciousness in every breast,
That folly ends where genuine hope begins, And he that finds his heaven must lose his sins.

Nature opposes, with her utmost force, This riving stroke, this ultimate divorce, And, while Religion
seems to be her view, Hates with a deep sincerity the true: For this, of all that ever influenced man,
Since Abel worshipp'd, or the world began, This only spares no lust, admits no plea, But makes
him, if at all, completely free;

Sounds forth the signal, as she mounts her car, Of an eternal, universal war;

Rejects all treaty, penetrates all wiles, Scorns with the same indifference frowns and smiles;

Drives through the realms of sin, where riot reels, And grinds his crown beneath her burning
wheels!

Hence all that is in man, pride, passion, art, Powers of the mind, and feelings of the heart,
Insensible of Truth's almighty charms, Starts at her first approach, and sounds to arms!

While Bigotry, with well-dissembled fears, His eyes shut fast, his fingers in his ears, Mighty to
parry and push by God's Word With senseless noise, his argument the sword, Pretends a zeal for
godliness and grace, And spits abhorrence in the Christian's face.

Parent of Hope, immortal Truth! make known Thy deathless wreaths and triumphs all thine own.
The silent progress of thy power is such, Thy means so feeble, and despised so much, That few
believe the wonders thou hast wrought, And none can teach them but whom thou hast taught.

Oh see me sworn to serve thee, and command A painter's skill into a poet's hand!

That, while I trembling trace a work divine, Fancy may stand aloof from the design, And light and
shade, and every stroke, be thine.

If ever thou hast felt another's pain, If ever when he sigh'd hast sigh'd again, If ever on thy eyelid
stood the tear That pity had engender'd, drop one here. This man was happy-had the world's good
word, And with it every joy it can afford;

Friendship and love seem'd tenderly at strife, Which most should sweeten his untroubled life;

Politely learn'd, and of a gentle race, Good breeding and good sense gave all a grace, And
whether at the toilet of the fair He laugh'd and trifled, made him welcome there, Or, if in masculine
debate he shared, Ensured him mute attention and regard.

Alas! how changed! Expressive of his mind, His eyes are sunk, arms folded, head reclined;

Those awful syllables, hell, death, and sin, Though whisper'd, plainly tell what works within; That
conscience there performs her proper part, And writes a doomsday sentence on his heart!

Forsaking and forsaken of all friends, He now perceives where earthly pleasure ends;

Hard task! for one who lately knew no care, And harder still as learnt beneath despair! His hours
no longer pass unmark'd away, A dark importance saddens every day;

He hears the notice of the clock, perplex'd, And cries, Perhaps eternity strikes next!

Sweet music is no longer music here, And laughter sounds like madness in his ear: His grief the world of all her power disarms;

Wine has no taste, and beauty has no charms:

God's holy Word, once trivial in his view, Now by the voice of his experience true, Seems, as it is, the fountain whence alone Must spring that hope he pants to make his own.

Now let the bright reverse be known abroad;

Say man's a worm, and power belongs to God. As when a felon, whom his country's laws Have justly doom'd for some atrocious cause, Expects in darkness and heart-chilling fears, The shameful close of all his misspent years;

If chance, on heavy pinions slowly borne, A tempest usher in the dreaded morn, Upon his dungeon walls the lightning play, The thunder seems to summon him away; The warder at the door his key applies, Shoots back the bolt, and all his courage dies:

If then, just then, all thoughts of mercy lost, When Hope, long lingering, at last yields the ghost, The sound of pardon pierce his startled ear, He drops at once his fetters and his fear; A transport glows in all he looks and speaks, And the first thankful tears bedew his cheeks.

Joy, far superior joy, that much outweighs The comfort of a few poor added days, Invades, possesses, and o'erwhelms the soul Of him, whom Hope has with a touch made whole.

?Tis heaven, all heaven, descending on the wings Of the glad legions of the King of kings;

?Tis more-'tis God diffused through every part, ?Tis God himself triumphant in his heart.

O welcome now the sun's once hated light, His noonday beams were never half so bright. Not kindred minds alone are call'd to employ Their hours, their days, in listening to his joy;

Unconscious nature, all that he surveys, Rocks, groves, and streams must join him in his praise.

These are thy glorious works, eternal Truth, The scoff of wither'd age and beardless youth;

These move the censure and the illiberal grin Of fools that hate thee and delight in sin: But these shall last when night has quench'd the pole, And heav'n is all departed as a scroll. And when, as justice has long since decreed, This earth shall blaze, and a new world succeed, Then these thy glorious works, and they who share That hope which can alone exclude despair, Shall live exempt from weakness and decay, The brightest wonders of an endless day.

Happy the bard (if that fair name belong To him that blends no fable with his song) Whose lines, uniting, by an honest art, The faithful monitor's and poet's part, Seek to delight, that they may mend mankind, And, while they captivate, inform the mind:

Still happier, if he till a thankful soil, And fruit reward his honourable toil: But happier far, who comfort those that wait To hear plain truth at Judah's hallow'd gate: Their language simple, as their manners meek, No shining ornaments have they to seek; Nor labour they, nor time, nor talents, waste, In sorting flowers to suit a fickle taste;

But, while they speak the wisdom of the skies, Which art can only darken and disguise, The abundant harvest, recompence divine, Repays their work-the gleaning only mine.

----- [1] The Moravian missionaries in Greenland.-See Krantz.

S. The Life of William Cowper

The Life of William Cowper By William Cowper

William Cowper was born on the 26th of November 1731, at Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire, of which village his father, the Rev. John Cowper, was rector. He was of noble ancestry, and many of his immediate relatives moved in the upper ranks of life. His mother, Ann Donne, a daughter of Roger Donne, Esq., of Ludham Hall in Norfolk, died when he was only six years of age, leaving two children,-William, the subject of this memoir, and a younger brother, John. Her affection and tenderness made a deep impression on his young mind. Fifty years afterwards, on receiving her picture, he dwells as fondly on the cherished features as if he had just mourned her death. He writes to his cousin, Mrs. Bodham, who had sent him the portrait-'I received it the night before last, and viewed it with a trepidation of nerves and spirits somewhat akin to what I should have felt had the dear original presented herself to my embraces. I kissed it, and hung it where it is the last object that I see at night, and, of course, the first on which I open my eyes in the morning.' His feelings, indeed, were all of the intense kind. 'I never received a little pleasure from anything in my life,' he writes; 'if I am pleased, it is in the extreme.'

Few incidents of his early life have been preserved, and much obscurity rests on the circumstances which made him a stranger from his father's house almost immediately after his mother's death. Though his father lived to the year 1756, Cowper appears never to have lived at home, excepting for a brief period of nine months, when he was eighteen years of age. When only six years of age, he was sent to the school of Dr. Pitman, in Market Street, on the borders of Hertfordshire. Here he continued two years-a period embittered by the cruelty of a boy of fifteen years of age, 'whose savage treatment,' says Cowper, 'impressed such a dread of his figure upon my mind, that I well remember being afraid to lift up my eyes upon him higher than his knees; and that I knew him by his shoe-buckles better than any other part of his dress.' It is characteristic of the gentle spirit of the poet, that he refrains from mentioning the name of his persecutor. In consequence of an affection in the eyes which threatened to deprive him of sight, he was sent to an eminent oculist in London, in whose house he remained until he was ten years of age, when he had so far recovered as to be able to attend Westminster School. An attack of small-pox, three years afterwards, completed the restoration of his eyesight. At Westminster he continued till he was eighteen, having acquired a considerable knowledge of the Latin and Greek classics. He was then apprenticed for three years to an attorney; but, in an uncongenial employment, and under a careless master, he derived few advantages from his situation. 'I was bred to the law,' he writes; 'a profession to which I was never much inclined, and in which I engaged, rather because I was desirous to gratify a most indulgent father, than because I had any hope of success in it myself.' 'I did actually live three years with Mr. Chapman, a solicitor,' he says; 'there was I and the future Lord Chancellor' (Thurlow) 'constantly employed, from morning to night, in giggling and making giggle, instead of studying the law.' It was at this period that he formed an attachment to his cousin, Theodora Cowper, the sister of Lady Hesketh, to whom so many of his letters are addressed. Though this affection was returned, obstacles, arising from her father's aversion to the

marriage of parties so nearly related, and from his own limited income, prevented their union. She was never married, and lived until the year 1824. On leaving Mr. Chapman, he took chambers in the Inner Temple, London, where he lived for twelve years. Here, instead of devoting himself to the study of the law, he yielded to the natural bent of his disposition, and amused himself with literature, and occasionally contributed verses and essays (none of which are now known) to the periodicals of the day.

Shortly after entering the Temple, the first symptoms of that malady appeared from which he was destined to suffer so dreadfully. 'I was struck,' he says, 'with such a dejection of spirits, as none but they who have felt the same can have the least conception of. Day and night I was upon the rack, lying down in horror, and rising up in despair.' This despondency lasted for nearly twelve months. Cowper's melancholy has been attributed to his religious views; but at this time he was entirely ignorant of true religion. Men of science in modern times will not hazard the unphilosophical opinions which were once entertained on this subject; derangement is now understood to be a disease which has its principal seat in the nervous system, and in which accident determines the particular mental delusion by which the patient is oppressed. When thirty-one years of age, he was appointed reading-clerk and clerk of the private committees of the House of Lords, a situation which he resigned for the inferior post of clerk of the journals in the same house of parliament. This appointment seemed at first to afford him considerable pleasure. 'If I succeed,' he writes to Lady Hesketh, 'in this doubtful piece of promotion, I shall have at least this satisfaction to reflect upon, that the volumes I write will be treasured up with the utmost care for ages, and will last as long as the English constitution, a duration which ought to satisfy the vanity of any author who has a spark of love for his country.' These prospects were destroyed by a party dispute, regarding the right of appointment, which rendered it necessary that he should appear at the bar of the House of Lords. The idea of appearing in such a situation entirely unhinged his mind, and drove him to repeated attempts to commit suicide. His friends, on learning his condition, immediately surrendered the appointment; and, as his malady still continued, put him under the care of Dr. Cotton, in St. Alban's, a physician equally fitted to minister to the mind and the body. With him he remained for two years. It is from this period he dates his conversion. His religious education had been almost entirely neglected. He had made himself acquainted with the evidences of Christianity, but was ignorant of Christianity itself. So early as his schoolboy days at Market Street, indeed, he had serious impressions on his mind, which returned very vividly at intervals while in the Temple; but until now, he was without any clear understanding of the nature of the gospel as a proclamation of mercy from God to sinners through Christ Jesus, and had no personal experience of its power to confer peace. From St. Alban's he removed to lodgings in Huntingdon. The chief recommendation of Huntingdon was, that being within fifteen miles of Cambridge, he was enabled to meet once a week with his brother John, a young man of great excellence; but it was too dull a residence to detain him long, had Providence not thrown in his way the family of the Unwins, whose friendship proved the greatest happiness of his life. To their mutual satisfaction, he became a boarder in the family, which at this time consisted of Mr. Unwin and his wife, their son and daughter. Cowper thus describes his first impressions of them:-'The old gentleman is a man of learning and good sense, and as simple as Parson Adams. His wife has a very uncommon understanding, has read much to good purpose, and is more polite than a duchess. The son, who belongs to Cambridge, is a most amiable young man; and the daughter quite of a piece with the rest of the family.' There must have been something remarkably attractive

about Cowper, for, with all his shyness, he had more and better friends than almost any poet we could name. To know him was to love him, and few loved him by halves; indeed, the devotion paid to him partook more of the mingled respect and affection which is rendered to an accomplished female than what are enjoyed by his sex. With the Unwins he live on the most cordial terms. 'I am much happier,' he writes to Major Cowper, 'than the day is long, and sunshine and candle-light alike see me perfectly contented.' No certain information has been obtained of his means of subsistence. He inherited some money from his father; and a subscription made at this time by his friends placed him in comfortable circumstances. It is believed that Miss Theodora Cowper privately contributed fifty pounds a year. He does not seem to have obtained much for the copyright of his poems. The crown granted him £300 a year in 1794; but too late to be of much advantage. The sudden death of Mr. Unwin, by a fall from his horse, caused the removal of the Unwins from Huntingdon; and Cowper removed with them. The Rev. John Newton, whose acquaintance they had recently made, engaged for them a house in Olney, to which they removed in October 1767. The warmest friendship grew out of this connexion; there was a private passage between the vicarage and the house in which they lived, and seven hours, we are told, rarely passed without the two families being together. Here Cowper spent two or three years in great comfort. His employments were various,-he learned to draw, he cultivated flowers, and he handled the tools of the carpenter with considerable address. 'There is not a squire in all the country,' he writes, 'who can boast of having made better squirrel-houses, hutches for rabbits, or bird-cages, than myself. I had even the hardiness to take in hand the pencil. Many figures were the fruit of my labours, which had at least the merit of being unparalleged by any production of art or nature.' And he talks of sending 'tables, such as they were, and joint-stools, such as never were.' Three hares which he tamed afforded him much amusement. His account of them, which was inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine, has often been reprinted. He also visited the houses of the villagers, administering spiritual counsel and relieving the wants of the poor, which he was the better enabled to do from a fund placed at his disposal by the benevolent Thornton, so celebrated for his philanthropy. At the suggestion of Newton, he began his contributions to that collection so well known as the 'Olney Hymns.' These were commenced in the year 1771, but, owing to a return of the melancholy disease under which he laboured, not completed till 1779. The death of his brother, to whom he was warmly attached, and which took place in 1770, has been supposed to furnish the cause of the new attack of his malady; but he never was entirely free from it,-his mind was like the coast of Holland, which requires the embankments to be constantly renewed to exclude the encroachments of the tide; and it is scarcely worth while, when so many causes were in operation, to ask which was the greatest. The attack lasted for four years, during which he was watched by Mrs. Unwin with a self-devotion and tenderness which happily found its reward in seeing him restored to the full measure of his former powers, though it left him with weakened nerves and a constant tendency to relapse into moodiness. Thus, after Newton had left Olney for London, he writes-'It is no attachment to the place that binds me here, but an unfitness for every other. I lived in it once, but now I am buried in it, and have no business with the world on the outside of my sepulchre.' Cowper had now reached the age of fifty, and was as yet unknown to the world. 'A few light and agreeable poems, two hymns written at Huntingdon, with about sixty others composed at Olney, are almost the only known poetical productions of his pen between the years 1749 and 1780.' The long pent-up stream of his genius was now to break out. At the suggestion of Mrs. Unwin, he wrote 'Table Talk,' the first poem in the present collection of his works, to which

were afterwards added, 'The Progress of Error,' 'Truth,' 'Expostulation,' 'Hope,' 'Charity,' 'Conversation,' and 'Retirement.' These were all written in little more than a year, and were published in one volume in 1781. It met with a favourable reception from the critics of the day, and slowly found its way into the esteem of the public. The vein thus opened was not allowed to remain unwrought. 'Dejection of spirits,' he informs Lady Hesketh, 'which may have prevented many a man from becoming an author, made me one. I find constant employment necessary, and therefore take care to be constantly employed.' 'When I can find no other occupation, I think; and when I think, I am very apt to do it in rhyme. Hence it comes to pass, that the season of the year which generally pinches off the flowers of poetry unfolds mine, such as they are, and crowns me with a wintry garland.' About this time he formed an acquaintance with a highly-accomplished woman, Lady Austen; she was wealthy, had seen much of the world, and possessed a liveliness of manner which charmed away his melancholy. After three years' intimacy, this friendship was unfortunately broken up by the not unnatural jealousy of Mrs. Unwin, who was afraid it might end in a nearer connexion. To Lady Austen we owe the amusing ballad of 'John Gilpin,' and his great poem the 'Task.' A merry tale which she told to amuse the poet was the groundwork of the first; it soon became a universal favourite, though few suspected the melancholy Cowper to be the author. Surprise has been expressed that it should have been written while suffering from despondency; but it is the very nature of this disease to admit of violent alternations from the liveliest gaiety to the deepest gloom. The 'Task' was begun in the summer of 1783, and completed before the close of 1784. Lady Austen, who, as an admirer of Milton, was partial to blank verse, had often solicited Cowper to try his power in that species of composition. To his objection that he knew of no suitable subject, she replied, 'Oh, you can never be in want of a subject-you can write upon any; write upon this sofa.' The idea struck him, he took up the pen and began,- 'I sing the Sofa, I who lately sung Faith, Hope, and Charity.' The poem thus casually suggested grew into six books, and is deservedly the most popular of his larger poems. Many passages in his first volume are not inferior to the best pieces of the 'Task;' but in the 'task' he takes a wider range, and flies with freer and bolder wing. This work brought him into immediate notice, and drew attention to his former publications. His attached cousin, Lady Hesketh, who had been abroad, hastened to renew her correspondence. His letters to her are the most finished and delightful specimens of epistolary writing in the language. The strong aversion which John Foster expressed to composition was unknown to Cowper. He wrote from choice, and was quite capable of extracting amusement from the most trivial incidents of daily life; so that, though he was almost a recluse in his habits, and his letters sometimes embraced no other subjects than the death of a viper, or the loss of one of his hares, or the overturning of a market-woman's cart, they are full of wit and sensibility. Lady Hesketh proved a most valuable friend. Finding his residence at Olney neither commodious nor cheerful, she rented and furnished for him a house bordering on a handsome park at the neighbouring village of Western Underwood, and throughout his life her purse and her services were always at his disposal. He says touchingly, on leaving Olney-'I found that I not only had a tenderness for that ruinous abode, because it had once known me happy in the presence of God, but that even the distress I had suffered for so long time on account of His absence, had endeared it to me as much.' In 1785 he began a translation of Homer's Poems, and worked with great assiduity and pleasure at the task. It was finished in 1790, and published in two quarto volumes in 1791. He next undertook to edit an edition of Milton's Poetical Works, and with this view translated his Latin Poems; but the work was never completed. A poem, entitled 'The Seven Ages,' was

begun, but only a few lines were written. His beautiful lines to Mrs. Unwin, beginning- 'The twentieth year is well nigh past Since first our sky was overcast;

Ah, that this might be the last, My Mary'- and his lines 'On Receipt of his Mother's Picture,' were written at this period, and exhibit the unabated force of his mind and imagination. Of the remainder of his life we have little to record. Mrs. Unwin fell into an infirm state of health, and his own mind became extremely depressed. Lady Hesketh flew to his help, and he rallied so far as to be able to visit his biographer, Hayley; but soon he relapsed. His relation, Dr. Johnson, removed him from Weston to North Tudderham in Norfolk, and from thence to various places, for change of air and scene, but without perceptible advantage to his health. In 1796, Mrs. Unwin died. 'In the dusk of the evening of her death, he attended Dr. Johnson to survey the corpse, and after looking a very few moments, he started suddenly away, with a vehement but unfinished sentence of passionate sorrow. He spoke of her no more.' Dr. Johnson's attentions to him were never surpassed in delicacy and self-denial. Any other man would have shrunk from undertaking the charge of an infirm hypochondriac, who rarely spoke, and seemed to derive no pleasure from either the world or religion. The cloud which had now settled over his intellect was never removed. He had long lived under the delusion, that the mercy of God, which is free to all the world besides, was denied to him. There were momentary intervals in which a ray of hope gleamed upon his mind, but they were transitory; and it is melancholy to record, that that hope of which he had sung so sweetly to others was denied to himself in his last hours. But though the nature of his disease had banished hope from his mind, his life and writings prove that he had long rested his faith on Christ Jesus as his Saviour, and warrant the assurance that death translated him to eternal glory. His death took place on the 25th April 1800. He was buried in St. Edmund's Chapel, in the Church of East Dereham. Lady Hesketh erected a marble tablet to his memory. 'Cowper,' says Hayley, 'was of a middle stature, rather strong than delicate in the form of his limbs; the colour of his hair was a light brown, that of his eyes a bluish-gray, and his complexion ruddy.' In manner he was reserved, but to females he was extremely engaging. His character was a singular compound of strength and delicacy. Manly in his thoughts and writings, he was almost a woman in the readiness with which he surrendered himself to the direction of others in matters of business. With a keen sense of the ludicrous and a sharp pen, he never willingly wounded a single human being; and, rigid himself in his attention to virtue and piety, he judged the actions of other men in a spirit of the most liberal charity. Cowper's Poems need no panegyric of ours; they have taken a permanent place among the literary treasures of the English language. They were the genuine utterance of his own heart; and their manly thought, vigour, and simplicity, their mingled humour and pathos, the variety and the felicity of their descriptions of men and things, and the elevated strain of Christian sentiment by which they are pervaded, have secured their popularity while our language endures. Edinburgh, June 1, 1853.

S. The Progress of Error

The Progress of Error By William Cowper THE PROGRESS OF ERROR.

Sing, muse (if such a theme, so dark, so long
May find a muse to grace it with a song),
By what unseen and unsuspected arts
The serpent Error twines round human hearts;

Tell where she lurks, beneath what flowery shades,
That not a glimpse of genuine light pervades,
The poisonous, black, insinuating worm
Successfully conceals her loathsome form.

Take, if ye can, ye careless and supine,
Counsel and caution from a voice like mine!

Truths, that the theorist could never reach,
And observation taught me, I would teach. Not all,
Whose eloquence the fancy fills,
Musical as the chime of tinkling rills,
Weak to perform, though mighty to pretend,
Can trace her mazy windings to their end;

Discern the fraud beneath the specious lure,
Prevent the danger, or prescribe the cure. The clear
harangue, and cold as it is clear,
Falls soporific on the listless ear;

Like quicksilver, the rhetoric they display
Shines as it runs, but, grasp'd at, slips away.

Placed for his trial on this bustling stage,
From thoughtless youth to ruminating age,
Free in his will to choose or to refuse,
Man may improve the crisis, or abuse;

Else, on the fatalist's unrighteous plan,
Say, to what bar amenable were man? With nought in
charge he could betray no trust:

And, if he fell, would fall because he must;

If love reward him, or if vengeance strike,
His recompence in both unjust alike.

Divine authority within his breast
Brings every thought, word, action, to the test;

Warns him or prompts, approves him or restrains,
As reason, or as passion, takes the reins.

Heaven from above, and conscience from within,
Cries in his startled ear-Abstain from sin! The
world around solicits his desire,
And kindles in his soul a treacherous fire;

While, all his purposes and steps to guard,
Peace follows virtue as its sure reward; And pleasure
brings as surely in her train
Remorse, and sorrow, and vindictive pain.

Man, thus endued with an elective voice,
Must be supplied with objects of his choice,
Where'er he turns, enjoyment and delight,
Or present or in prospect, meet his sight:

Those open on the spot their honey'd store;

These call him loudly to pursuit of more. His unexhausted mine the sordid vice
Avarice shews, and virtue is the price.

Here various motives his ambition raise- Power, pomp, and splendour, and the thirst of praise;

There beauty woos him with expanded arms;

E'en bacchanalian madness has its charms. Nor these alone, whose pleasures less refined Might well alarm the most unguarded mind, Seek to supplant his inexperienced youth, Or lead him devious from the path of truth;

Hourly allurements on his passions press, Safe in themselves, but dangerous in the excess!

Hark! how it floats upon the dewy air!

O what a dying, dying close was there!

'Tis harmony, from yon sequester'd bower, Sweet harmony, that soothes the midnight hour!

Long ere the charioteer of day had run His morning course the enchantment was begun; And he shall gild yon mountain's height again, Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain. Is this the rugged path, the steep ascent, That virtue points to? Can a life thus spent Lead to the bliss she promises the wise, Detach the soul from earth, and speed her to the skies?

Ye devotees to your adored employ, Enthusiasts, drunk with an unreal joy, Love makes the music of the blest above, Heaven's harmony is universal love; And earthly sounds, though sweet and well combined, And lenient as soft opiates to the mind, Leave vice and folly unsubdued behind.

Gray dawn appears; the sportsman and his train Speckle the bosom of the distant plain;

'Tis he, the Nimrod of the neighbouring lairs;

Save that his scent is less acute than theirs, For persevering chase, and headlong leaps, True beagle as the stanchest hound he keeps.

Charged with the folly of his life's mad scene, He takes offence, and wonders what you mean; The joy the danger and the toil o'errepays- 'Tis exercise, and health, and length of days.

Again impetuous to the field he flies;

Leaps every fence but one, there falls and dies;

Like a slain deer, the tumbrel brings him home, Unmiss'd but by his dogs and by his groom.

Ye clergy, while your orbit is your place, Lights of the world and stars of human race;

But, if eccentric ye forsake your sphere, Prodigies ominous and view'd with fear: The comet's baneful influence is a dream;

Yours real, and pernicious in the extreme.

What then! are appetites and lusts laid down With the same ease that man puts on his gown? Will avarice and concupiscence give place, Charm'd by the sounds-Your Reverence, or your Grace?

No. But his own engagement binds him fast;

Or, if it does not, brands him to the last
What atheists call him-a designing knave,
A mere church juggler, hypocrite, and slave.

Oh, laugh or mourn with me the rueful jest,
A cassock'd huntsman and a fiddling priest!

He from Italian songsters takes his cue:

Set Paul to music, he shall quote him too.

He takes the field. The master of the pack
Cries-Well done, saint! and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of sanctity? Is this
To stand a waymark on the road to bliss?

Himself a wanderer from the narrow way,
His silly sheep, what wonder if they stray?

Go, cast your orders at your bishop's feet,
Send your dishonour'd gown to Monmouth-street!
The sacred function in your hands is made-
Sad sacrilege-no function, but a trade!

Occiduous is a pastor of renown;
When he has pray'd and preach'd the Sabbath down,
With wire and catgut he concludes the day,
Quavering and semiquavering care away.
The full concerto swells upon your ear;

All elbows shake. Look in, and you would swear
The Babylonian tyrant with a nod
Had summon'd them to serve his golden god.
So well that thought the employment seems to suit,
Psaltery and sackbut, dulcimer and flute.

O fie! 'tis evangelical and pure:

Observe each face, how sober and demure!

Ecstasy sets her stamp on every mien;

Chins fallen, and not an eyeball to be seen.

Still I insist, though music heretofore
Has charm'd me much (not e'en Occiduous more),
Love, joy, and peace make harmony more meet
For Sabbath evenings, and perhaps as sweet.
Will not the sickliest sheep of every flock
Resort to this example as a rock;

There stand, and justify the foul abuse
Of Sabbath hours with plausible excuse?

If apostolic gravity be free
To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?

If he the tinkling harpsichord regards
As inoffensive, what offence in cards?

Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay!

Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play.

O Italy!-Thy Sabbaths will be soon
Our Sabbaths, closed with mummery and buffoon.

Preaching and pranks will share the motley scene,
Ours parcelled out, as thine have ever been,
God's worship and the mountebank between.

What says the prophet? Let that day be blest
With holiness and consecrated rest.

Pastime and business, both it should exclude,
And bar the door the moment they intrude;

Nobly distinguish'd above all the six By deeds in which the world must never mix.

Hear him again. He calls it a delight, A day of luxury observed aright, When the glad soul is made Heaven's welcome guest, Sits banqueting, and God provides the feast. But triflers are engaged and cannot come; Their answer to the call is-Not at home.

O the dear pleasures of the velvet plain, The painted tablets, dealt and dealt again!

Cards, with what rapture, and the polish'd die, The yawning chasm of indolence supply!

Then to the dance, and make the sober moon Witness of joys that shun the sight of noon.

Blame, cynic, if you can, quadrille or ball, The snug close party, or the splendid hall, Where Night, down stooping from her ebon throne, Views constellations brighter than her own.

?Tis innocent, and harmless, and refined, The balm of care, Elysium of the mind.

Innocent! Oh, if venerable Time Slain at the foot of Pleasure be no crime, Then, with his silver beard and magic wand, Let Comus rise archbishop of the land;

Let him your rubric and your feasts prescribe, Grand metropolitan of all the tribe. Of manners rough, and coarse athletic cast, The rank debauch suits Clodio's filthy taste.

Rufillus, exquisitely form'd by rule, Not of the moral but the dancing school, Wonders at Clodio's follies, in a tone As tragical as others at his own.

He cannot drink five bottles, bilk the score, Then kill a constable, and drink five more; But he can draw a pattern, make a tart, And has the ladies' etiquette by heart.

Go, fool; and, arm in arm with Clodio, plead Your cause before a bar you little dread; But know, the law that bids the drunkard die Is far too just to pass the trifler by.

Both baby-featured, and of infant size, View'd from a distance, and with heedless eyes, Folly and Innocence are so alike, The difference, though essential, fails to strike.

Yet Folly ever has a vacant stare, A simpering countenance, and a trifling air; But Innocence, sedate, serene, erect, Delights us, by engaging our respect.

Man, Nature's guest by invitation sweet, Receives from her both appetite and treat;

But, if he play the glutton and exceed, His benefactress blushes at the deed. For Nature, nice, as liberal to dispense, Made nothing but a brute the slave of sense.

Daniel ate pulse by choice-example rare!

Heaven bless'd the youth, and made him fresh and fair.

Gorgonius sits, abdominous and wan, Like a fat squab upon a Chinese fan:

He snuffs far off the anticipated joy;

Turtle and venison all his thoughts employ;

Prepares for meals as jockeys take a sweat, Oh, nauseous!-an emetic for a whet! Will Providence o'erlook the wasted good?

Temperance were no virtue if he could. That pleasures, therefore, or what such we call, Are hurtful, is a truth confess'd by all. And some, that seem to threaten virtue less Still hurtful in the abuse, or by the excess. Is man, then, only for his torment placed The centre of delights he may not taste?

Like fabled Tantalus, condemn'd to hear The precious stream still purling in his ear, Lip-deep in what he longs for, and yet curst With prohibition and perpetual thirst?

No, wrangler-destitute of shame and sense; The precept, that enjoins him abstinence, Forbids him none but the licentious joy, Whose fruit, though fair, tempts only to destroy.

Remorse, the fatal egg by Pleasure laid In every bosom where her nest is made, Hatch'd by the beams of truth, denies him rest, And proves a raging scorpion in his breast. No pleasure? Are domestic comforts dead? Are all the nameless sweets of friendship fled? Has time worn out, or fashion put to shame, Good sense, good health, good conscience, and good fame?

All these belong to virtue, and all prove That virtue has a title to your love. Have you no touch of pity, that the poor Stand starved at your inhospitable door? Or if yourself, too scantily supplied, Need help, let honest industry provide.

Earn, if you want; if you abound, impart:

These both are pleasures to the feeling heart. No pleasure? Has some sickly eastern waste Sent us a wind to parch us at a blast? Can British Paradise no scenes afford To please her sated and indifferent lord? Are sweet philosophy's enjoyments run Quite to the lees? And has religion none?

Brutes capable would tell you 'tis a lie, And judge you from the kennel and the sty.

Delights like these, ye sensual and profane, Ye are bid, begg'd, besought, to entertain;

Call'd to these crystal streams, do ye turn off Obscene to swill and swallow at a trough?

Envy the beast, then, on whom Heaven bestows Your pleasures, with no curses at the close.

Pleasure admitted in undue degree Enslaves the will, nor leaves the judgment free.

'Tis not alone the grape's enticing juice Unnerves the moral powers, and mars their use;

Ambition, avarice, and the lust of fame, And woman, lovely woman, does the same. The heart, surrender'd to the ruling power Of some ungovern'd passion every hour, Finds by degrees the truths that once bore sway, And all their deep impressions, wear away; So coin grows smooth, in traffic current pass'd, Till Caesar's image is effaced at last. The breach, though small at first, soon opening wide, In rushes folly with a full-moon tide, Then welcome errors, of whatever size, To justify it by a thousand lies. As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone, And hides the ruin that it feeds upon; So sophistry cleaves close to and protects Sin's rotten trunk, concealing its defects.

Mortals, whose pleasures are their only care, First wish to be imposed on, and then are. And lest the fulsome artifice should fail, Themselves will hide its coarseness with a veil. Not more

industrious are the just and true To give to Virtue what is Virtue's due- The praise of wisdom, comeliness, and worth, And call her charms to public notice forth- Than Vice's mean and disingenuous race To hide the shocking features of her face. Her form with dress and lotion they repair;

Then kiss their idol, and pronounce her fair. The sacred implement I now employ Might prove a mischief, or at best a toy; A trifle, if it move but to amuse;

But, if to wrong the judgment and abuse, Worse than a poniard in the basest hand, It stabs at once the morals of a land.

Ye writers of what none with safety reads, Footing it in the dance that Fancy leads;

Ye novelists, who mar what ye would mend, Snivelling and drivelling folly without end; Whose corresponding misses fill the ream With sentimental frippery and dream, Caught in a delicate soft silken net By some lewd earl, or rake-hell baronet:

Ye pimps, who, under virtue's fair pretence, Steal to the closet of young innocence, And teach her, inexperienced yet and green, To scribble as you scribbled at fifteen;

Who, kindling a combustion of desire, With some cold moral think to quench the fire;

Though all your engineering proves in vain, The dribbling stream ne'er puts it out again:

O that a verse had power, and could command Far, far away, these flesh-flies of the land, Who fasten without mercy on the fair, And suck, and leave a craving maggot there!

Howe'er disguised the inflammatory tale, And cover'd with a fine-spun specious veil;

Such writers, and such readers, owe the gust And relish of their pleasure all to lust. But the muse, eagle-pinion'd, has in view A quarry more important still than you;

Down, down the wind she swims, and sails away, Now stoops upon it, and now grasps the prey.

Petronius! all the muses weep for thee; But every tear shall scald thy memory: The graces too, while Virtue at their shrine Lay bleeding under that soft hand of thine, Felt each a mortal stab in her own breast, Abhorr'd the sacrifice, and cursed the priest.

Thou polish'd and high-finish'd foe to truth, Graybeard corrupter of our listening youth, To purge and skim away the filth of vice, That so refined it might the more entice, Then pour it on the morals of thy son, To taint his heart, was worthy of thine own!

Now, while the poison all high life pervades, Write, if thou canst, one letter from the shades, One, and one only, charged with deep regret, That thy worst part, thy principles, live yet;

One sad epistle thence may cure mankind Of the plague spread by bundles left behind.

?Tis granted, and no plainer truth appears, Our most important are our earliest years; The mind, impressible and soft, with ease Imbibes and copies what she hears and sees, And through life's labyrinth holds fast the clue That Education gives her, false or true.

Plants raised with tenderness are seldom strong;

Man's coltish disposition asks the thong; And without discipline the favourite child, Like a neglected forester, runs wild. But we, as if good qualities would grow Spontaneous, take but little pains to sow:

We give some Latin and a smatch of Greek;

Teach him to fence and figure twice a week; And having done, we think, the best we can, Praise his proficiency, and dub him man. From school to Cam or Isis, and thence home; And thence with all convenient speed to Rome, With reverend tutor, clad in habit lay, To tease for cash, and quarrel with all day; With memorandum-book for every town, And every post, and where the chaise broke down; His stock, a few French phrases got by heart, With much to learn, but nothing to impart; The youth, obedient to his sire's commands, Sets off a wanderer into foreign lands.

Surprised at all they meet, the gosling pair, With awkward gait, stretch'd neck, and silly stare, Discover huge cathedrals built with stone, And steeples towering high, much like our own; But shew peculiar light by many a grin At Popish practices observed within.

Ere long some bowing, smirking, smart abb?

Remarks two loiterers that have lost their way;

And, being always primed with politesse For men of their appearance and address, With much compassion undertakes the task To tell them more than they have wit to ask;

Points to inscriptions wheresoe'er they tread, Such as, when legible, were never read, But being canker'd now and half worn out, Craze antiquarian brains with endless doubt;

Some headless hero, or some Caesar shews- Defective only in his Roman nose;

Exhibits elevations, drawings, plans, Models of Herculaneum pots and pans; And sells them medals, which, if neither rare Nor ancient, will be so, preserved with care.

Strange the recital! from whatever cause His great improvement and new lights he draws, The squire, once bashful, is shamefaced no more, But teems with powers he never felt before;

Whether increased momentum, and the force With which from clime to clime he sped his course (As axles sometimes kindle as they go), Chafed him, and brought dull nature to a glow; Or whether clearer skies and softer air, That make Italian flowers so sweet and fair, Freshening his lazy spirits as he ran, Unfolded genially, and spread the man;

Returning, he proclaims, by many a grace, By shrugs and strange contortions of his face, How much a dunce, that has been sent to roam, Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.

Accomplishments have taken virtue's place, And wisdom falls before exterior grace:

We slight the precious kernel of the stone, And toil to polish its rough coat alone. A just deportment, manners graced with ease, Elegant phrase, and figure form'd to please, Are qualities that seem to comprehend Whatever parents, guardians, schools, intend;

Hence an unfurnish'd and a listless mind, Though busy, trifling; empty, though refined;

Hence all that interferes, and dares to clash With indolence and luxury, is trash;

While learning, once the man's exclusive pride, Seems verging fast towards the female side.

Learning itself, received into a mind By nature weak, or viciously inclined, Serves but to lead philosophers astray, Where children would with ease discern the way. And of all arts sagacious dupes invent, To cheat themselves and gain the world's assent, The worst is-Scripture warp'd from its intent. The carriage bowls along, and all are pleased If Tom be sober, and the wheels well greased; But if the rogue be gone a cup too far, Left out his linchpin, or forgot his tar, It suffers interruption and delay, And meets with hindrance in the smoothest way. When some hypothesis absurd and vain Has fill'd with all its fumes a critic's brain, The text that sorts not with his darling whim, Though plain to others, is obscure to him. The will made subject to a lawless force, All is irregular, and out of course; And Judgment drunk, and bribed to lose his way, Winks hard, and talks of darkness at noonday. A critic on the sacred book should be Candid and learn'd, dispassionate and free;

Free from the wayward bias bigots feel, From fancy's influence, and intemperate zeal; But above all (or let the wretch refrain, Nor touch the page he cannot but profane), Free from the domineering power of lust; A lewd interpreter is never just.

How shall I speak thee, or thy power address, Thou god of our idolatry, the Press? By thee religion, liberty, and laws, Exert their influence and advance their cause: By thee worse plagues than Pharaoh's land befell, Diffused, make Earth the vestibule of Hell;

Thou fountain, at which drink the good and wise, Thou ever-bubbling spring of endless lies;

Like Eden's dread probationary tree, Knowledge of good and evil is from thee! No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest Till half mankind were like himself possess'd.

Philosophers, who darken and put out Eternal truth by everlasting doubt;

Church quacks, with passions under no command, Who fill the world with doctrines contraband, Discoverers of they know not what, confined Within no bounds-the blind that lead the blind; To streams of popular opinion drawn, Deposit in those shallows all their spawn. The wriggling fry soon fill the creeks around, Poisoning the waters where their swarms abound.

Scorn'd by the nobler tenants of the flood, Minnows and gudgeons gorge the unwholesome food. The propagated myriads spread so fast, E'en Leuwenhoeck himself would stand aghast, Employ'd to calculate the enormous sum, And own his crab-computing powers o'ercome. Is this hyperbole? The world well known, Your sober thoughts will hardly find it one.

Fresh confidence the speculatist takes From every hair-brain'd proselyte he makes; And therefore prints: himself but half deceived, Till others have the soothing tale believed.

Hence comment after comment, spun as fine As bloated spiders draw the flimsy line.

Hence the same word that bids our lusts obey Is misapplied to sanctify their sway.

If stubborn Greek refuse to be his friend, Hebrew or Syriac shall be forced to bend;

If languages and copies all cry, No- Somebody proved it centuries ago.

Like trout pursued, the critic in despair Darts to the mud, and finds his safety there:

Women, whom custom has forbid to fly
The scholar's pitch (the scholar best knows why),
With all the simple and unletter'd poor,
Admire his learning, and almost adore.

Whoever errs, the priest can ne'er be wrong,
With such fine words familiar to his tongue.

Ye ladies! (for, indifferent in your cause,
I should deserve to forfeit all applause)
Whatever shocks or gives the least offence
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide),
Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side.

None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.

Committed once into the public arms,
The baby seems to smile with added charms.

Like something precious ventured far from shore,
'Tis valued for the danger's sake the more.

He views it with complacency supreme,
Solicits kind attention to his dream;
And daily, more enamour'd of the cheat,
Kneels, and asks Heaven to bless the dear deceit.
So one, whose story serves at least to shew
Men loved their own productions long ago,
Woo'd an unfeeling statue for his wife,
Nor rested till the gods had given it life.

If some mere driveller suck the sugar'd fib,
One that still needs his leading-string and bib,
And praise his genius, he is soon repaid
In praise applied to the same part-his head;
For 'tis a rule that holds for ever true,
Grant me discernment, and I grant it you.

Patient of contradiction as a child,
Affable, humble, diffident, and mild;

Such was Sir Isaac, and such Boyle and Locke;
Your blunderer is as sturdy as a rock.
The creature is so sure to kick and bite,
A muleteer's the man to set him right.

First Appetite enlists him Truth's sworn foe,
Then obstinate Self-will confirms him so.

Tell him he wanders; that his error leads
To fatal ills; that, though the path he treads
Be flowery, and he see no cause of fear,
Death and the pains of hell attend him there:
In vain; the slave of arrogance and pride,
He has no hearing on the prudent side.
His still refuted quirks he still repeats;

New raised objections with new quibbles meets;

Till, sinking in the quicksand he defends,
He dies disputing, and the contest ends-
But not the mischiefs; they, still left behind,
Like thistle-seeds, are sown by every wind.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill;

Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will;

And, with a clear and shining lamp supplied,
First put it out, then take it for a guide.

Halting on crutches of unequal size,
One leg by truth supported, one by lies,
They sidle to the goal with awkward pace,
Secure of nothing-but to lose the race.

Faults in the life breed errors in the brain,
And these reciprocally those again.
The mind and conduct mutually imprint
And stamp their image in each other's mint;

Each, sire and dam of an infernal race,
Begetting and conceiving all that's base.

None sends his arrow to the mark in view, Whose hand is feeble, or his aim untrue. For though, ere yet the shaft is on the wind, Or when it first forsakes the elastic string, It err but little from the intended line, It falls at last far wide of his design; So he who seeks a mansion in the sky, Must watch his purpose with a steadfast eye; That prize belongs to none but the sincere, The least obliquity is fatal here. With caution taste the sweet Circean cup;

He that sips often, at last drinks it up.

Habits are soon assumed; but when we strive To strip them off, 'tis being flay'd alive.

Call'd to the temple of impure delight, He that abstains, and he alone, does right.

If a wish wander that way, call it home;

He cannot long be safe whose wishes roam. But if you pass the threshold, you are caught;

Die then, if power Almighty save you not.

There hardening by degrees, till double steel'd, Take leave of nature's God, and God reveal'd;

Then laugh at all you trembled at before;

And, joining the freethinkers' brutal roar, Swallow the two grand nostrums they dispense- That Scripture lies, and blasphemy is sense.

If clemency revolted by abuse Be damnable, then damn'd without excuse.

Some dream that they can silence, when they will, The storm of passion, and say, Peace, be still: But 'Thus far and no farther,' when address'd To the wild wave, or wilder human breast, Implies authority that never can, That never ought to be the lot of man.

But, muse, forbear; long flights forebode a fall;

Strike on the deep-toned chord the sum of all.

Hear the just law-the judgment of the skies!

He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies; And he that will be cheated to the last, Delusions strong as hell shall bind him fast. But if the wanderer his mistake discern, Judge his own ways, and sigh for a return, Bewilder'd once, must he bewail his loss For ever and for ever? No-the cross!

There and there only (though the deist rave, And atheist, if Earth bear so base a slave);

There and there only is the power to save.

There no delusive hope invites despair; No mockery meets you, no deception there. The spells and charms, that blinded you before, All vanish there, and fascinate no more.

I am no preacher, let this hint suffice- The cross once seen is death to every vice;

Else He that hung there suffer'd all his pain, Bled, groan'd, and agonised, and died, in vain.

Truth

Truth By William Cowper

TRUTH.

"""""""" _____ Pensantur trutin'-Hor. Lib. ii. Ep. 1.

"""""""" _____ Man, on the dubious waves of error toss'd, His ship half founder'd, and his compass lost, Sees, far as human optics may command, A sleeping fog, and fancies it dry land;

Spreads all his canvas, every sinew plies;

Pants for it, aims at it, enters it, and dies!

Then farewell all self-satisfying schemes, His well-built systems, philosophic dreams;

Deceitful views of future bliss, farewell!

He reads his sentence at the flames of hell.

Hard lot of man-to toil for the reward Of virtue, and yet lose it! Wherefore hard?- He that would win the race must guide his horse Obedient to the customs of the course;

Else, though unequal'd to the goal he flies, A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.

Grace leads the right way: if you choose the wrong, Take it and perish; but restrain your tongue;

Charge not, with light sufficient and left free, Your wilful suicide on God's decree.

O how unlike the complex works of man, Heav'n's easy, artless, unencumber'd plan! No meretricious graces to beguile, No clustering ornaments to clog the pile; From ostentation, as from weakness, free, It stands like the cerulian arch we see, Majestic in its own simplicity.

Inscribed above the portal, from afar Conspicuous as the brightness of a star, Legible only by the light they give, Stand the soul-quickenings words-believe, and live.

Too many, shock'd at what should charm them most, Despise the plain direction, and are lost.

Heaven on such terms! (they cry with proud disdain) Incredible, impossible, and vain!- Rebel, because 'tis easy to obey; And scorn, for its own sake, the gracious way.

These are the sober, in whose cooler brains Some thought of immortality remains; The rest too busy or too gay to wait On the sad theme, their everlasting state, Sport for a day, and perish in a night; The foam upon the waters not so light. Who judg'd the Pharisee? What odious cause Exposed him to the vengeance of the laws? Had he seduced a virgin, wrong'd a friend, Or stabb'd a man to serve some private end? Was blasphemy his sin? Or did he stray From the strict duties of the sacred day?

Sit long and late at the carousing board?

(Such were the sins with which he charged his Lord.) No-the man's morals were exact. What then?

?Twas his ambition to be seen of men; His virtues were his pride; and that one vice Made all his virtues gewgaws of no price;

He wore them as fine trappings for a show, A praying, synagogue-frequenting beau. The self-applauding bird, the peacock, see- Mark what a sumptuous pharisee is he!

Meridian sunbeams tempt him to unfold His radiant glories, azure, green, and gold:

He treads as if, some solemn music near, His measured step were govern'd by his ear; And seems to say-Ye meaner fowl give place;

I am all splendour, dignity, and grace! Not so the pheasant on his charms presumes, Though he, too, has a glory in his plumes.

He, Christian-like, retreats with modest mien To the close copse or far sequester'd green, And shines without desiring to be seen. The plea of works, as arrogant and vain, Heaven turns from with abhorrence and disdain; Not more affronted by avow'd neglect, Than by the mere dissembler's feign'd respect.

What is all righteousness that men devise?

What-but a sordid bargain for the skies! But Christ as soon would abdicate his own, As stoop from heaven to sell the proud a throne. His dwelling a recess in some rude rock;

Book, beads, and maple dish, his meagre stock; In shirt of hair and weeds of canvas dress'd, Girt with a bell-rope that the Pope has bless'd;

A dust with stripes told out for every crime, And sore tormented, long before his time; His prayer preferr'd to saints that cannot aid, His praise postponed, and never to be paid;

See the sage hermit, by mankind admired, With all that bigotry adopts inspired, Wearing out life in his religious whim, Till his religious whimsy wears out him. His works, his abstinence, his zeal allow'd, You think him humble-God accounts him proud.

High in demand, though lowly in pretence, Of all his conduct this the genuine sense- My penitential stripes, my streaming blood, Have purchased heaven, and proved my title good.

Turn eastward now, and fancy shall apply To your weak sight her telescopic eye. The Bramin kindles on his own bare head The sacred fire, self-torturing his trade! His voluntary pains, severe and long, Would give a barbarous air to British song; No grand inquisitor could worse invent, Than he contrives to suffer well content. Which is the saintlier worthy of the two?

Past all dispute, yon anchorite, say you. Your sentence and mine differ. What's a name?

I say the Bramin has the fairer claim.

If sufferings Scripture nowhere recommends, Devised by self, to answer selfish ends, Give saintship, then all Europe must agree Ten starveling hermits suffer less than he. The truth is (if the truth may suit your ear, And prejudice have left a passage clear) Pride has attain'd a most luxuriant growth, And poison'd every virtue in them both.

Pride may be pamper'd while the flesh grows lean;

Humility may clothe an English dean; That grace was Cowper's-his, confess'd by all- Though placed in golden Durham's second stall. Not all the plenty of a bishop's board, His palace, and his lacqueys, and 'My Lord,'

More nourish pride, that condescending vice, Than abstinence, and beggary, and lice;

It thrives in misery, and abundant grows: In misery fools upon themselves impose. But why before us Protestants produce An Indian mystic or a French recluse? Their sin is plain; but what have we to fear, Reform'd and well instructed? You shall hear.

Yon ancient prude, whose wither'd features shew She might be young some forty years ago, Her elbows pinion'd close upon her hips, Her head erect, her fan upon her lips, Her eyebrows arch'd, her eyes both gone astray To watch yon amorous couple in their play, With bony and unkerchief'd neck defies The rude inclemency of wintry skies, And sails with lappet head and mincing airs Duly at clink of bell to morning prayers. To thrift and parsimony much inclined, She yet allows herself that boy behind; The shivering urchin, bending as he goes, With slipshod heels and dewdrop at his nose, His predecessor's coat advanced to wear, Which future pages yet are doom'd to share, Carries her Bible tuck'd beneath his arm, And hides his hands to keep his fingers warm.

She, half an angel in her own account, Doubts not hereafter with the saints to mount, Though not a grace appears on strictest search, But that she fasts, and item, goes to church.

Conscious of age, she recollects her youth, And tells, not always with an eye to truth, Who spann'd her waist, and who, where'er he came, Scrawl'd upon glass Miss Bridget's lovely name; Who stole her slipper, fill'd it with tokay, And drank the little bumper every day. Of temper as envenom'd as an asp, Censorious, and her every word a wasp; In faithful memory she records the crimes, Or real, or fictitious, of the times;

Laughs at the reputations she has torn, And holds them dangling at arm's length in scorn.

Such are the fruits of sanctimonious pride, Of malice fed while flesh is mortified:

Take, madam, the reward of all your prayers, Where hermits and where Bramins meet with theirs; Your portion is with them.-Nay, never frown, But, if you please, some fathoms lower down.

Artist, attend-your brushes and your paint- Produce them-take a chair-now draw a saint.

Oh, sorrowful and sad! the streaming tears Channel her cheeks-a Niobe appears! Is this a saint? Throw tints and all away- True piety is cheerful as the day, Will weep indeed and heave a pitying groan For others' woes, but smiles upon her own.

What purpose has the King of saints in view?

Why falls the gospel like a gracious dew? To call up plenty from the teeming earth, Or curse the desert with a tenfold dearth? Is it that Adam's offspring may be saved From servile fear, or be the more enslaved? To loose the links that gall'd mankind before. Or bind them faster on, and add still more? The freeborn Christian has no chains to prove, Or, if a chain, the golden one of love: No fear attends to quench his glowing fires, What fear he feels his gratitude inspires. Shall he, for such deliverance freely wrought, Recompense ill? He trembles at the thought. His Master's interest and his own combined Prompt every movement of his heart and mind:

Thought, word, and deed, his liberty evince, His freedom is the freedom of a prince.

Man's obligations infinite, of course His life should prove that he perceives their force; His utmost he can render is but small- The principle and motive all in all.

You have two servants-Tom, an arch, sly rogue, From top to toe the Geta now in vogue, Genteel in figure, easy in address, Moves without noise, and swift as an express, Reports a message with a pleasing grace, Expert in all the duties of his place;

Say, on what hinge does his obedience move? Has he a world of gratitude and love?

No, not a spark-'tis all mere sharper's play;

He likes your house, your housemaid, and your pay;

Reduce his wages, or get rid of her, Tom quits you, with-Your most obedient, sir. The dinner served, Charles takes his usual stand, Watches your eye, anticipates command;

Sighs, if perhaps your appetite should fail;

And, if he but suspects a frown, turns pale;

Consults all day your interest and your ease, Richly rewarded if he can but please;

And, proud to make his firm attachment known, To save your life would nobly risk his own.

Now which stands highest in your serious thought?

Charles, without doubt, say you-and so he ought;

One act, that from a thankful heart proceeds, Excels ten thousand mercenary deeds.

Thus Heaven approves as honest and sincere The work of generous love and filial fear; But with averted eyes the omniscient Judge Scorns the base hireling and the slavish drudge. Where dwell these matchless saints? old Curio cries.

E'en at your side, sir, and before your eyes, The favour'd few-the enthusiasts you despise.

And, pleased at heart because on holy ground, Sometimes a canting hypocrite is found, Reproach a people with his single fall, And cast his filthy raiment at them all.

Attend! an apt similitude shall shew Whence springs the conduct that offends you so.

See where it smokes along the sounding plain, Blown all aslant, a driving, dashing rain, Peel upon peel redoubling all around, Shakes it again and faster to the ground;

Now flashing wide, now glancing as in play, Swift beyond thought the lightnings dart away.

Ere yet it came the traveller urged his steed, And hurried, but with unsuccessful speed;

Now drench'd throughout, and hopeless of his case, He drops the rein, and leaves him to his pace.

Suppose, unlook'd-for in a scene so rude, Long hid by interposing hill or wood, Some mansion, neat and elegantly dress'd, By some kind hospitable heart possess'd, Offer him warmth, security, and rest;

Think with what pleasure, safe, and at his ease, He hears the tempest howling in the trees;

What glowing thanks his lips and heart employ, While danger past is turn'd to present joy. So fares it with the sinner, when he feels A growing dread of vengeance at his heels: His conscience like a glassy lake before, Lash'd into foaming waves, begins to roar; The law, grown clamorous, though silent long, Arraigns him, charges him with every wrong- Asserts the right of his offended Lord, And death, or restitution, is the word: The last impossible, he fears the first, And, having well deserved, expects the worst.

Then welcome refuge and a peaceful home;

O for a shelter from the wrath to come!

Crush me, ye rocks; ye falling mountains, hide, Or bury me in ocean's angry tide!- The scrutiny of those all-seeing eyes I dare not-And you need not, God replies; The remedy you want I freely give; The Book shall teach you-read, believe, and live!

?Tis done-the raging storm is heard no more, Mercy receives him on her peaceful shore: And Justice, guardian of the dread command, Drops the red vengeance from his willing hand. A soul redeem'd demands a life of praise;

Hence the complexion of his future days, Hence a demeanour holy and unspeck'd, And the world's hatred, as its sure effect.

Some lead a life unblameable and just, Their own dear virtue their unshaken trust:

They never sin-or if (as all offend) Some trivial slips their daily walk attend, The poor are near at hand, the charge is small, A slight gratuity atones for all. For though the Pope has lost his interest here, And pardons are not sold as once they were, No Papist more desirous to compound, Than some grave sinners upon English ground. That plea refuted, other quirks they seek- Mercy is infinite, and man is weak; The future shall obliterate the past, And heaven, no doubt, shall be their home at last.

Come, then-a still, small whisper in your ear- He has no hope who never had a fear; And he that never doubted of his state, He may perhaps-perhaps he may-too late. The path to bliss abounds with many a snare;

Learning is one, and wit, however rare. The Frenchman, first in literary fame (Mention him, if you please. Voltaire?-The same), With spirit, genius, eloquence, supplied, Lived long, wrote much, laugh'd heartily, and died; The Scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew Bon-mots to gall the Christian and the Jew; An infidel in health, but what when sick?

Oh-then a text would touch him at the quick;

View him at Paris in his last career, Surrounding throngs the demi-god revere;

Exalted on his pedestal of pride, And fumed with frankincense on every side, He begs their flattery with his latest breath, And, smother'd in't at last, is praised to death!

Yon cottager, who weaves at her own door, Pillow and bobbins all her little store;

Content though mean, and cheerful if not gay, Shuffling her threads about the live-long day, Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;

She, for her humble sphere by nature fit, Has little understanding, and no wit, Receives no praise; but though her lot be such (Toilsome and indigent), she renders much;

Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true- A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew; And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes, Her title to a treasure in the skies.

Oh, happy peasant! Oh, unhappy bard! His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;

He praised perhaps for ages yet to come, She never heard of half a mile from home:

He, lost in errors, his vain heart prefers, She, safe in the simplicity of hers. Not many wise, rich, noble, or profound In science win one inch of heavenly ground. And is it not a mortifying thought The poor should gain it, and the rich should not?

No-the voluptuaries, who ne'er forget One pleasure lost, lose heaven without regret;

Regret would rouse them, and give birth to prayer, Prayer would add faith, and faith would fix them there. Not that the Former of us all in this, Or aught he does, is govern'd by caprice; The supposition is replete with sin, And bears the brand of blasphemy burnt in. Not so-the silver trumpet's heavenly call Sounds for the poor, but sounds alike for all:

Kings are invited, and would kings obey, No slaves on earth more welcome were than they; But royalty, nobility, and state, Are such a dead preponderating weight, That endless bliss (how strange soe'er it seem), In counterpoise, flies up and kicks the beam.

?Tis open, and ye cannot enter-why?

Because ye will not, Conyers would reply- And he says much that many may dispute And cavil at with ease, but none refute.

Oh, bless'd effect of penury and want, The seed sown there, how vigorous is the plant! No soil like poverty for growth divine, As leanest land supplies the richest wine.

Earth gives too little, giving only bread, To nourish pride, or turn the weakest head: To them the sounding jargon of the schools Seems what it is-a cap and bells for fools: The light they walk by, kindled from above, Shews them the shortest way to life and love:

They, strangers to the controversial field, Where deists, always foil'd, yet scorn to yield, And never check'd by what impedes the wise, Believe, rush forward, and possess the prize.

Envy, ye great, the dull unletter'd small:

Ye have much cause for envy-but not all.

We boast some rich ones whom the Gospel sways, And one who wears a coronet, and prays;

Like gleanings of an olive-tree, they shew Here and there one upon the topmost bough.

How readily, upon the Gospel plan, That question has its answer-What is man?

Sinful and weak, in every sense a wretch; An instrument, whose chords, upon the stretch, And strain'd to the last screw that he can bear, Yield only discord in his Maker's ear;

Once the blest residence of truth divine, Glorious as Solyma's interior shrine, Where, in his own oracular bode, Dwelt visibly the light-creating God; But made long since, like Babylon of old, A den of mischiefs never to be told: And she, once mistress of the realms around, Now scatter'd wide and nowhere to be found, As soon shall rise and re-ascend the throne, By native power and energy her own, As nature, at her own peculiar cost, Restore to man the glories he has lost.

Go-bid the winter cease to chill the year, Replace the wandering comet in his sphere.

Then boast (but wait for that unhop'd-for hour) The self-restoring arm of human power. But what is man in his own proud esteem?

Hear him-himself the poet and the theme: A monarch clothed with majesty and awe, His mind his kingdom, and his will his law;

Grace in his mien, and glory in his eyes, Supreme on earth, and worthy of the skies, Strength in his heart, dominion in his nod, And, thunderbolts excepted, quite a God! So sings he, charm'd with his own mind and form, The song magnificent-the theme a worm!

Himself so much the source of his delight, His Maker has no beauty in his sight.

See where he sits, contemplative and fix'd, Pleasure and wonder in his features mix'd, His passions tamed and all at his control, How perfect the composure of his soul!

Complacency has breathed a gentle gale O'er all his thoughts, and swell'd his easy sail: His books well trimm'd, and in the gayest style, Like regimental coxcombs, rank and file, Adorn his intellects as well as shelves, And teach him notions splendid as themselves: The Bible only stands neglected there, Though that of all most worthy of his care;

And, like an infant troublesome awake, Is left to sleep for peace and quiet sake.

What shall the man deserve of human kind, Whose happy skill and industry combined Shall prove (what argument could never yet) The Bible an imposture and a cheat? The praises of the libertine profess'd, The worst of men, and curses of the best. Where should the living, weeping o'er his woes; The dying, trembling at the awful close; Where the betray'd, forsaken, and oppress'd; The thousands whom the world forbids to rest; Where should they find (those comforts at an end, The Scripture yields), or hope to find, a friend?

Sorrow might muse herself to madness then, And, seeking exile from the sight of men, Bury herself in solitude profound, Grow frantic with her pangs, and bite the ground.

Thus often Unbelief, grown sick of life, Flies to the tempting pool, or felon knife. The jury meet, the coroner is short, And lunacy the verdict of the court.

Reverse the sentence, let the truth be known, Such lunacy is ignorance alone;

They knew not, what some bishops may not know, That Scripture is the only cure of woe. That field of promise how it flings abroad Its odour o'er the Christian's thorny road! The soul, reposing on assured relief, Feels herself happy amidst all her grief, Forgets her labour as she toils along, Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song. But the same word, that, like the polish'd share, Ploughs up the roots of a believer's care, Kills too the flowery weeds, where'er they grow, That bind the sinner's Bacchanalian brow.

Oh, that unwelcome voice of heavenly love, Sad messenger of mercy from above!

How does it grate upon his thankless ear, Crippling his pleasures with the cramp of fear! His will and judgment at continual strife, That civil war embitters all his life; In vain he points his powers against the skies, In vain he closes or averts his eyes, Truth will intrude-she bids him yet beware; And shakes the sceptic in the scorner's chair.

Though various foes against the Truth combine, Pride above all opposes her design;

Pride of a growth superior to the rest, The subtlest serpent with the loftiest crest, Swells at the thought, and, kindling into rage, Would hiss the cherub Mercy from the stage. And is the soul indeed so lost?-she cries, Fallen from her glory, and too weak to rise?

Torpid and dull, beneath a frozen zone, Has she no spark that may be deem'd her own?

Grant her indebted to what zealots call Grace undeserved, yet surely not for all!

Some beams of rectitude she yet displays, Some love of virtue, and some power to praise; Can lift herself above corporeal things, And, soaring on her own unborrow'd wings, Possess herself of all that's good or true, Assert the skies, and vindicate her due.

Past indiscretion is a venial crime; And if the youth, unmellow'd yet by time, Bore on his branch, luxuriant then and rude, Fruits of a blighted size, austere and crude, Maturer years shall happier stores produce, And meliorate the well-concocted juice.

Then, conscious of her meritorious zeal, To justice she may make her bold appeal; And leave to Mercy, with a tranquil mind, The worthless and unfruitful of mankind, Hear then how Mercy, slighted and defied, Retorts the affront against the crown of pride.

Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorr'd, And the fool with it, who insults his Lord. The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought Is not for you-the righteous need it not.

Seest thou yon harlot, wooing all she meets, The worn-out nuisance of the public streets, Herself from morn to night, from night to morn, Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn? The gracious shower, unlimited and free, Shall fall on her, when Heaven denies it thee. Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift- That man is dead in sin, and life a gift. Is virtue, then, unless of Christian growth, Mere fallacy, or foolishness, or both?

Ten thousand sages lost in endless woe, For ignorance of what they could not know?- That speech betrays at once a bigot's tongue, Charge not a God with such outrageous wrong!

Truly, not I-the partial light men have, My creed persuades me, well employ'd, may save;

While he that scorns the noon-day beam, perverse, Shall find the blessing, unimproved, a curse.

Let heathen worthies, whose exalted mind Left sensuality and dross behind, Possess, for me, their undisputed lot, And take, unenvied, the reward they sought, But still in virtue of a Saviour's plea, Not blind by choice, but destined not to see. Their fortitude and wisdom were a flame Celestial, though they knew not whence it came, Derived from the same source of light and grace, That guides the Christian in his swifter race; Their judge was conscience, and her rule their law; That rule, pursued with reverence and with awe, Led them, however faltering, faint, and slow, From what they knew to what they wish'd to know. But let not him that shares a brighter day Traduce the splendour of a noontide ray, Prefer the twilight of a darker time, And deem his base stupidity no crime; The wretch, who slights the bounty of the skies, And sinks, while favour'd with the means to rise, Shall find them rated at their full amount, The good he scorn'd all carried to account.

Marshalling all his terrors as he came, Thunder, and earthquake, and devouring flame, From Sinai's top Jehovah gave the law- Life for obedience-death for every flaw. When the great Sovereign would his will express, He gives a perfect rule, what can he less? And guards it with a sanction as severe As vengeance can inflict, or sinners fear:

Else his own glorious rights he would disclaim, And man might safely trifle with his name.

He bids him glow with unremitting love To all on earth, and to himself above;

Condemns the injurious deed, the slanderous tongue, The thought that meditates a brother's wrong:

Brings not alone the more conspicuous part, His conduct, to the test, but tries his heart.

Hark! universal nature shook and groan'd, 'Twas the last trumpet-see the Judge enthroned:

Rouse all your courage at your utmost need, Now summon every virtue, stand and plead.

What! silent? Is your boasting heard no more? That self-renouncing wisdom, learn'd before, Had shed immortal glories on your brow, That all your virtues cannot purchase now.

All joy to the believer! He can speak- Trembling yet happy, confident yet meek.

Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot, And cut up all my follies by the root, I never trusted in an arm but thine, Nor hoped, but in thy righteousness divine: My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled, Were but the feeble efforts of a child;

Howe'er perform'd, it was their brightest part, That they proceeded from a grateful heart:

Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood, Forgive their evil and accept their good:

I cast them at thy feet-my only plea Is what it was, dependence upon thee:

While struggling in the vale of tears below, That never fail'd, nor shall it fail me now.

Angelic congratulations rend the skies, Pride fall unpitied, never more to rise, Humility is crown'd, and Faith receives the prize.

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