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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POEMS ON SERIOUS AND SACRED ***

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POEMS ON SERIOUS AND SACRED SUBJECTS,

PRINTED ONLY AS PRIVATE TOKENS OF REGARD,
FOR THE PARTICULAR FRIENDS OF THE AUTHOR.

....nec pia cessant
In tumulo officia.

MILTONI MANSUS.

A Christian's kindness ends not in the tomb.

Chichester:

PRINTED AT THE PRIVATE PRESS OF W. MASON.

1818.

ON THE FEAR OF DEATH:

AN EPISTLE TO A LADY.

1768.

THE FEAR OF DEATH.

Thou! whose superior, and aspiring mind
Can leave the weakness of thy sex behind;
Above its follies, and its fears can rise,
Quit the low earth, and gain the distant skies:
Whom strength of soul and innocence have taught
To think of death, nor shudder at the thought;
Say! whence the dread, that can alike engage
Vain thoughtless youth, and deep-reflecting age;
Can shake the feeble, and appal the strong;
Say! whence the terrors, that to death belong?
Guilt must be fearful: but the guiltless too
Start from the grave, and tremble at the view.
The blood-stained pirate, who in neighbouring climes,
Might fear, lest justice should o'ertake his crimes,
Wisely may bear the sea's tempestuous roar,
And rather wait the storm, than make the shore;
But can the mariner, who sailed in vain
In search of fancy'd treasure on the main,
By hope deceiv'd, by endless whirlwinds tost,
His strength exhausted, and his viands lost,
When land invites him to receive at last
A full reward for every danger past:

Can he then wish his labours to renew,
And fly the port just opening to his view?
Not less the folly of the timorous mind,
Which dreads that peace, it ever longs to find;
Which worn with age, and tost in endless strife
On this rough ocean, this tempestuous life,
Still covets pain, and shakes with abject fear,
When sickness points to death, and shews the haven near.
The love of life, it yet must be confest,
Was fixed by Nature in the human breast;
And Heaven thought fit that fondness to employ.
To teach us to preserve the brittle toy.
But why, when knowledge has improv'd our thought,
Years undeceived us, and affliction taught;
Why do we strive to grasp with eager hand,
And stop the course of life's quick-ebbing sand?
Why vainly covet, what we can't sustain?
Why, dead to pleasure, would we live to pain?
What is this sentence, from which all would fly?
Oh! what this horrible decree--to die?
Tis but to quit, what hourly we despise
A fretful dream, that tortures as it flies.--
But hold my pen!--nor let a picture stand
Thus darkly coloured by this gloomy hand:
Minds deeply wounded, or with spleen opprest,
Grow sick of life, and sullen sink to rest:
But when the soul, possest of its desires,
Glow with more warmth, and burns with brighter fires;
When friendship soothes each care, and love imparts
Its mutual raptures to congenial hearts;
When joyful life thus strikes the ravish'd eye,
'Tis then a task, a painful task to die.
See! where Philario, poor Philario! lies,
Philario late the happy, as the wise!
Connubial love, and friendship's pleasing power
Fill'd his good heart, and crown'd his every hour:
But sickness bids him those lost joys deplore,
And death now tells him, they are his no more.
Blest in each name of Husband, Father, Friend,
Must those strong ties, those dear connexions end?
Must be thus leave to all the woes of life
His helpless child, his unprotected wife?
While thus to earth these lov'd ideas bind,
And tear his lab'ring--his distracted mind:
How shall that mind its wretched fate defy?
How calm his trouble, and how learn to die?
In vain would Faith before his eyes display
The opening realms of never-ending day;
Superior love his faithful soul detains
Bound, strongly bound, in Adamantine chains.
But lo! the gates of pitying Heaven unfold:
A form, that earth rejoices to behold.
Descends: her energy with sweetness join'd,

Speaks the bright mission for relief design'd:
See! to Philario moves the flood of light;
And Resignation bursts upon his sight:
See! to the Cross, bedew'd with sacred gore,
Humbly she points, and bids the world adore;
Then sweetly breathing in his soul inspires
A Christian spirit, and devout desires.--
Hark! his last wish, his dying pray'r's begun:
"Lord, as in Heaven, on earth thy will be done!"
Calm is his soul; his painful struggles cease;
He bows adoring, and expires in peace.
O! Resignation; thou unerring guide
To human weakness, and to earthly pride,
Friend to Distress, who canst alone controul
Each rising tumult in the mad'ning soul;
'Tis thine alone from dark despair to save,
To soothe the woes of life, and terrors of the grave:
Thro' this rough world assist me with thy power!
Calm every thought! adorn my latest hour,
Sustain my spirit, and confirm my mind,
Serene tho' feeling, chearful tho' resign'd!
And thou! my friend, while thus in artless verse
Thy mind I copy, and thy thoughts rehearse;
Let one memorial, tho' unpolish'd, stand
Rais'd to thy friendship by this grateful hand!
By partial favour let my verse be tried,
And 'gainst thy judgement let thy love decide!
Tho' I no longer must thy converse share,
Hear thy kind counsel, see thy pleasing care;
Yet mem'ry still upon the past shall dwell,
And still the wishes of my heart shall tell:
O! be the cup of joy to thee consign'd,
Of joy unmix'd, without a dreg behind!
For no rough monitor thy soul requires,
To check the frenzy of too rash desires;
No poignant grief, to prove its latent worth,
No pain to wean it from the toys of earth;
Thy soul untroubled can alike survey
This gloomy world, and Heaven's immortal day:
Then while the current of thy blood shall flow,
While Heaven yet lends thee to thy friends below;
Round thee may pleasure spread a chearful scene,
Mild as thy heart, and as thy soul serene!
And O! when Time shall bid thee yield thy breath,
And take thy passage thro' the gates of death,
May that last path without a pang be trod,
And one short sigh conduct thee to thy God!

FELPHAM:

AN EPISTLE TO HENRIETTA OF LAVANT.

1814.

FELPHAM.

Hail Felpham! Hail! in youth my favorite scene!
First in my heart of villages marine!
To me thy waves confirm'd my truest wealth,
My only parent's renovated health,
Whose love maternal, and whose sweet discourse
Gave to my feelings all their cordial force:
Hence mindful, how her tender spirit blest
Thy salutary air, and balmy rest;
Thee, as profuse of recollections sweet,
Fit for a pensive veteran's calm retreat,
I chose, as provident for sure decay,
A nest for age in life's declining day!
Reserving Eartham for a darling son,
Confiding in our threads of life unspun:
Blind to futurity!--O blindness, given
As mercy's boon to man from pitying Heaven!
Man could not live, if his prophetic eyes
View'd all afflictions, ere they will arise.
Think, gentle friend, who saw'st, in chearful hour
Thy poet planning a sequestered tower,
And gayly rearing, in affection's pride,
His little villa by the ocean's side;
Encircled then by friendly artists, three,
Full of sweet fancy, and of social glee,
Think what sensations must have pierc'd his breast
Had a prophetic voice this truth exprest:
O'er thy new fabric ere six year's have fled
Lonely thou'lt mourn all these dear inmates dead.
The unrelenting grave absorb'd them all,
And in the shade of this domestic wall,
Which, as it rose re-echoed to their voice,
And heard them in gay presages rejoice
Of future studies, works of special note!
That each, to deck these precincts, would devote.
Here robb'd of them, their leader, and their friend,
Of their kind visions feels the mournful end,
Afflicted, and alone!--Yet not alone!
Their hovering spirits make this scene their own.
O sweet prerogative of love sublime!
Which so can soften destiny, and time,
That grief-worn hearts, by Fancy's charm revive!
The lost are present! the deceas'd alive!
Yes! ye dear buried inmates of my mind!
Your converse still within these walls I find;
In hours of study, and in hours of rest,
You still to me my purest thoughts suggest:

My heart's propensities you cherish still
 To Heaven thanksgiving! and to earth good-will!
 In you I still behold affection's smile,
 Which can all troubles of the heart beguile;
 I hear your kind approbation of my zeal,
 When, anxious all your merits to reveal,
 Having consign'd your bones to sacred earth,
 My mind aspir'd to memorize your worth.
 Grateful employment of the feeling soul!
 That, in despite of sorrow's dark controul
 Keeps the pure form of deathless virtue bright
 By just commemoration's soothing light!
 For such employment thou wast aptly made,
 Thou dear sequester'd cell! in whose calm shade
 Thy lonely bard might suit his plaintive strain,
 To solemn music from the murmuring main!
 Belov'd marine retreat! I oft recall
 The night, I first repos'd within thy wall:
 A night devoted, at a friend's desire,
 To touch the chords of a sepulchral lyre!
 Touch'd not in vain!--The faithful tribute brought
 To cureless grief the lenitive, she sought;
 And Lushington, thro' tearful anguish, smil'd
 On truth's memorial of her darling child.
 Little I thought, when eager to bestow
 The heart's pure offering on parental woe,
 How soon my filial pride, and friend most dear,
 Would claim the "meed of a melodious tear."
 Dear sacred shades of Cowper! and my Son!
 Who, in my fond affection, liv'd as one!
 Congenial inmates! on whose loss I found
 The sweetest light of life in darkness drown'd!
 Oft have ye witness'd, while, in this calm cell,
 Ye watch'd the lonely bard, ye lov'd so well,
 Oft have ye witness'd, how his struggling mind
 Labour'd affliction's fetters to unbind,
 Ere his o'er-burthen'd faculties could cope
 With that ambitious task of tender hope,
 To render justice to you both; and frame }
 Memorials worthy of each honour'd name: }
 A debt the heart must feel! & truth, and nature claim! }
 Your smile, dear visionary guests of night!
 O'er my nocturnal hours breath'd new delight;
 Made me exult in labour, plann'd for you!
 Its progress from your inspiration grew:
 The toil was sweet, that your approbation cheer'd;
 For what your love inspir'd, that love endear'd.
 Nor unregarded by the fair, and great,
 Was your recluse in this sequester'd state;
 When I began, by just records, to prove
 How Cowper merited our country's love;
 The loveliest regent of poetic taste;
 First of the fair; with all attractions grac'd!

Friend of the muses! and herself a muse!
Her bright eyes dimm'd with sorrow's sacred dews,
The high-born beauty, in whose lot combin'd
All--that could charm and grieve a feeling mind,
Shar'd with me, in my cell, some pensive hours;
Herself most eloquent on Cowper's powers,
Urg'd to his willing Eulogist his claim
To public gratitude, and purest fame.
The memoir, as by gradual toil it grows,
Endears the tranquil scene, in which it rose;
And sheds, since public favor blest the page,
A soothing lustre on my letter'd age.
The dues of faithful memory fondly paid
To him, devotion's bard! dear sacred shade!
Then my paternal hand was prompt to raise
To that blest pupil, who had shar'd his praise
A similar record of tender truth;
The genuine portraiture of studious youth--
Task of such pleasing pain, as pierc'd the heart
Of Daedalus, the sire of antient art!
When, in fond zeal, his busy hand begun
To mould the story of his hapless son,
But falter'd, while, o'erwhelm'd in mournful thought,
He work'd, and wept upon the work, he wrought.
Ah peerless youth! whose highly-gifted hand
Could all varieties of skill command,
Ere illness undermin'd thy powers to use
The Sculptor's chizzel, and the Painter's hues!
Had thy ascending talents, unchain'd,
Of studious life the promis'd zenith gain'd,
Confederate arts would then have joy'd to see
Their English Michael Angelo in thee.
But never be it by true love forgot,
Thou hast a higher, and a happier lot!
The prime of blessings, in a world like this,
Is early transit to the realms of bliss:
Thence thy pure spirit oft will charm to rest
Those pangs of fond regret, that pierce my breast,
When recollection mournfully surveys
Unfinish'd products of thy studious days.
Ah what a host of filial fair designs:
Where, springing from the heart, the fancy shines,
Thy enterprising mind had here bestow'd,
To honour Felpham as thy sire's abode!
All to thy mental eyes were present here;
The scene, we join'd to deck, all yet endear,
Tho' hardly embryos of plastic grace,
Many yet want their features, and their place.
These vacant circlets, that still court mine eye,
Can I survey, without a bursting sigh,
When fond remembrance tells me that from these
Thy filial hand, tho' robb'd of strength and ease,
Yet inly conscious of ingenious power,

Resolv'd, in labour's first reviving hour,
To fashion portraits claiming just regard,
The Tuscan sculptor! and the Grecian bard!
Whom 'twas thy hope in marble to create
As honour'd guardians of thy poet's gate;
There is no spot within this Villa's bound,
E'en to the Turret's topmost airy round,
Which thy kind fancy, that no ills could check.
With sweet ideal projects fail'd to deck:
Eager to fix around, below, above,
Proofs of thy skill, and monuments of love!
Thy gay activity how passing sweet,
Ere this arising structure was complete!
When 'twas our joy its scaffolds to ascend,
And mark how bright its varied views extend;
To search how far the glass-assisted eye
May scenes of splendor, and of peace, descry!
The first, where, blazing in the gorgeous west,
The sun delights on Vecta's hills to rest,
And gild those fleets, that, when they cease to roam;
Come fraught with glory to her favorite home;
The second, where, in softer northern light,
Eartham, lov'd little hill, allures the sight,
And towering woods, that crown the loftier Nore,
Salute our seamen, as they near the shore!
Ye scenes, that live in memory's regard.
Whose quiet beauty charm'd your pensive bard!
In hopes his eye might long delight to trace,
Tho' distant, visible, your rural grace;
In hopes of tender love, not idle pride!
He rear'd his turret by the ocean's side,
Lofty, tho' little! that his sight might still
Enjoy sweet intercourse with Eartham-hill;
Where, while his heart with pure ambition glow'd,
The filial artist plann'd his own abode;
And by a telegraph, his skill design'd,
Endearing mark of his inventive mind,
He meant to hold, as mutual wants require,
Constant communion with his absent sire:
Fair purpose! furnishing much kind employ,
And oft a subject of ideal joy
To hearts, forbid by mercy to foresee,
How soon the heaven-taught youth, by heaven's decree
Must leave the favorite hill, that charm'd his eyes,
In early transit to serener skies!
Angel! yet visible to mental sight!
Still let me, pensive in my Turret's height,
Whose view of heaven unbroken, unconfin'd
Fixes the lifted eye and fills the mind;
Let love, ascending from earth's dark abyss,
Still commune with thee in thy scene of bliss!
Sole meditation on thy heavenly worth.
Transcending all the social joys of earth;

To purest fancy giving boundless scope,
Turns worldly trouble to celestial hope.

My stedfast friend! unchang'd by chance and time!
Pure in the wane of life, as in its prime;

Dear Henrietta, to whom justice pays
Her cordial tribute in these local lays;
'Tis the prime privilege of souls like thine,
To feast on heavenly thoughts in life's decline.
Faith to thy veteran bard exults to bring
Her living water from the Christian spring;
Hence the sweet vision, soft as evening's ray,
Shedding enchantment o'er the close of day:
Hence the persuasion, which all time endears,
That our true friendship, firm thro' changeful years,
In scenes exempt from clouds of pain and strife,
Has sure expectancy of endless life.

Epistle

TO THE BISHOP OF LANDAFF.

Christmas Day, 1811.

Epistle.

Thy fav'rite Prelate haste, my verse! to greet
Adorning nature in his sylvan seat!
His southern hermit, his unchanging friend,
Sends him such tribute, as the heart may send,
Love, that, in honouring a peaceful sage,
Invokes all blessings on his hallowed age.
Though many a mountain rears its head between
His wood-crown'd mansion, and my cell marine,
In mental vision I his form survey
Thro' various periods of our vital day;
Now as his manly figure struck my sight,
When first I heard his voice, with new delight,
Imparting science, or celestial truth,
With Latin eloquence, to English youth;
And now, as when, o'erpowering sceptic strife
In his mild vigor of maturer life:
His liberal spirit gain'd the world's applause,
The mitred champion of the Christian cause!
Oh ever friendly to a guileless bard,
Whose pure ambition sought thy kind regard;
How fervently I wish, that verse of mine,
Nor vain, nor languid, tho' in life's decline,
Might thro' thy heart the cheering glow diffuse,

That friendship welcomes from no venal muse,
When worth time-honour'd, still as frank as youth,
Owns that her words of praise are words of truth!
Benign Landaff! to liberal arts a friend!
May all those arts thy well-earned fame attend!
Grateful for all thy kindness to his sire,
My filial sculptor, with Promethean fire,
While yet a boy, confess'd a proud design,
To make thy spirit in his marble shine;
And, with expression eloquently just,
Charm future Christians by thy breathing bust,
That, hope, with many a plan devoutly bold,
The great disposer of our days controll'd;
Saw tortured youth angelically calm,
And call'd the martyr to his heav'nly palm.
If love, inherent in a parent's heart,
Sighs for that lost Marcellus of his art,
Still can I joy, that with rare length of days,
Heaven yet allows my hallow'd friend to raise,
(And with his own more energetic hand
Whose works the ravages of time withstand,)
A portrait of himself:--thou much-lov'd sage!
Far yet extend that biographic page,
Where conscious of existence well employ'd,
And mental treasures gratefully enjoy'd,
Thy virtuous age will morally display
The various labours of thy useful day:
And in thy own rich eloquence enshrin'd,
Leave thy instructive life, a lesson for mankind!

Epistle

TO JOHN SARGENT, ESQ.

OCTOBER, 1814.

Epistle.

Friend of my vernal and autumnal day,
In life's gay bloom, and in its slow decay:
Sargent! who leav'st thy hermit's studious cell,
To act thy busier part, and act it well,
In courts of rural justice to preside,
In temperate dignity unstain'd with pride.
Oft let us meet, that friendship's honour'd chain,
In its extension may new lustre gain;
So let us, cheer'd by memory's social blaze,
Live o'er again our long-departed days.
I thank kind Heaven, that made the pleasure mine
Beneath my roof to see thy virtues shine;

When Providence thy fondest wishes crown'd,
Casting thy lot on fair, and southern ground:
When the gay songs of Eartham's friendly grove
Proclaim'd the triumph of thy prosperous love--
Tis sweet to plant a friend in genial land,
And see his branches round the world expand!
I share thy joy, the heart's parental feast
To learn thy filial pilgrim in the East,
Thy youthful Harry, is among the prime,
Whom learning honours in her Indian clime:
Nor less the joy to hear thy eldest-born,
Whom gifts of sacred eloquence adorn,
Has, with Cicestria's liberal applause,
Those gifts exerted in the noblest cause:
Pleas'd to promote the most sublime emprise
That Christian charity could e'er devise;
To blend her votaries of every name
In one harmonious universal aim;
To make the word of God, that truest wealth,
The heart's nutrition, and the spirit's health
As common as the food, by heavenly power
Pour'd from the skies, a life-preserving shower,
On deserts pour'd, in hopeless hunger's track,
When He, who gather'd little, felt no lack.
My friend of many years! we both have found
Darkness and sunshine on the chequer'd ground,
In different paths appointed to our feet:
You in the world--your host in his retreat!
Yet blest be Heaven, that grants us to behold
Wonders of Providence like those of old,
When mortals in the waste, they murmuring trod,
Saw, and rever'd the guidance of their God,
We have beheld, and with one heart and voice
Hail'd the bright scene, that bids the globe rejoice;
Nature releas'd from devastation's flood,
And peace emerging from a sea of blood.
Wonders yet happier to devotion's eyes
In blissful vision will now widely rise,
From pure diffusive zeal in Britain sprung,
Bidding the Gospel speak in every tongue;
Till its effect earth's utmost bounds attest,
Jesus enthron'd in every human breast,
And all his subjects, as his mercy will'd,
Feeling within themselves his joy fulfill'd.
Yes, my time-honoured friend, with one accord
We bless the promised advent of our Lord,
In heavenly prospect, tho' we still sustain
Our unexhausted share of earthly pain.
But whatsoever ills yet undisplay'd
May o'er our eve of life throw deeper shade,
We have the constant comfort to possess
An antidote against the mind's distress;

That settled trust in Providence divine.
Which lets the Christian at no lot repine:
But, when most tried, his faith's prime power employ,
And make affliction minister to joy.
We both have past thro' many a troubled day,
And felt adversity's heart-searching sway:
But when most wounded, both have kiss'd the rod,
And blest the pangs assign'd us by our God;
To wean us from a world, which, Nature sees,
None estimate aright, or quit with ease,
But souls Heaven-taught, that, free from doubt's alarm,
Hail death their herald to the Saviour's arms.
We both, my friend, in mind sedate and firm
Enter'd with thankfulness life's latest term.
And I might claim (could years such right assume)
First to attain the quiet of the tomb;
There show me still the friendship of our youth,
And still speak of me with indulgent truth.
May'st thou, less worn by griefs of many a year,
Still rich in filial gems, that earth endear!
Thy public duties long with grace discharge,
Esteem'd and honour'd by the world at large.
Thy elder, idler friend that world may spare,
And yet allow his name a station there;
For he long literary zeal has shown,
To honour merit, that surpassed his own:
And hop'd to live beyond his mortal days,
In England's memory, and friendship's praise.
High hopes! o'er which his holier thoughts aspire,
And make the peace of God his paramount desire.

Epistle.

TO MRS. HANNAH MORE

ON

Her Recent Publication--Practical Piety.

JUNE 1811.

Epistle

Hail! hallow'd sister! of a saintly band!
Whose hearts in homage to their God expand!
Who, by the kind Urania taught to sing,
See palms celestial in their culture spring;
And, while devotion wafts them to the skies,
Teach weaker mortals on their wings to rise!

Hannah! whom truth, with a parental smile,
Ranks with her favorites of our letter'd isle;
Thou in wide fields, by tribes of learning fill'd,
By folly vainly view'd, by wisdom till'd;
Where grain and weed arise in mingled birth,
To nourish, or oppress, the race of earth;
Well hast thou ply'd thy task of virtuous toil,
And reap'd distinction's tributary spoil:
Long has thy country, with a fond acclaim,
Joy'd in thy genius, gloried in thy fame;
Progressive talents in thy works beheld,
Thine earlier volumes by thy last excell'd!
The noblest motive sway'd thy moral pen,
Intent to meliorate the sons of men
From that now distant year, when faith design'd
Thy sacred dramas for the youthful mind;
To this rich season of thy honour'd age,
When, with the fervour of a Christian sage,
Thine eve of life, with dew from Heaven impearl'd
Shows piety in practice to the world.
Well I remember, tho' long years have past,
Long years with dark calamity o'ercast,
Well I remember, and with grateful pride,
How to my heart thy friendly verse supplied
The glow of exultation; for thy praise
Shed gracious honour on my sportive lays.
When 'twas my aim to clear from thorns of strife
The budding roses of domestic life,
And teach young nymphs, in irritation's hour,
To triumph over spleen's insidious power.
O that, while glowing with celestial hope,
Gently we haste down life's autumnal slope,
Each well convinc'd, and with a mind serene,
From long experience of our chequer'd scene,
Convinc'd no blessings of this earth transcend
The countless value of a Christian friend;
O that just sympathy, and warm esteem,
Kindling to vivid inspiration's beam.
Would to my lyre, tho' in an aged hand,
Supply, at gratitude's devout command,
Praise, such as purest minds delight to hear,
When truth and nature prove that praise sincere!
But vain such wishes, for in virtue's cause
Thou hast receiv'd angelical applause:
No thirst for weaker praise that mind can feel,
Which Porteus cheer'd with evangelic zeal:
Porteus, complete in every graceful part!
A bard in spirit! with a hermit's heart!
In heaven's pure service never cold, or faint,
Till new existence glorified the saint!
How sweet with those, whom still on earth we prize,
To bless a recent inmate of the skies!
On buried friends to let fond memory dwell,

And grateful truth their bright endowments tell!
Careless, if envy, with a spleenful sneer,
Reviles that eulogy she bates to bear,
Saying with freedom's ill-assum'd pretence,
'Tis noxious flattery, o'erwhelming sense.
Peace! scornful pride! nor with malignant aim
Belie the voice of consecrated fame,
Thy subtlest arts, the pious to debate.
End, with strict justice, in thy own disgrace.
How weak were friendship could she shake with dread
Of thy detraction 'gainst her worthies dead!
No! such detraction makes her zeal more just
To every claim of their yet speaking dust.
Save me, good heaven! and all whom I regard,
(Or hasty muse, or irritable bard,)
Save us, good heaven! in mild and temperate age,
From wounded vanity's vindictive rage!
To genuine friendship pure delight is given,
Next to the favor of approving heaven;
And that delight is most sublimely felt.
When nature in vain tears, has ceased to melt:
When sorrow, quell'd by purer love's controul,
To sweet reflection yields the chasten'd soul,
Contemplating, thro' clouds to sunshine turn'd,
The sure beatitude of those--she mourn'd:
This sunshine yet to us the heavens assign
In Porteus, still thy friend! in Cowper, mine!
When tender fancy, on affection's plume,
Emerging from the shadows of the tomb
Aspires to trace, in visionary flight,
The just made perfect, thro' the realms of light!
How glows the soul, with more than earthly joy,
In fondly imaging their blest employ!
How oft, dear Cowper! at the close of day,
When contemplation sheds her mental ray,
I seem, through optics of the mind to see
Thy sainted spirit, from incumbrance free!
Marking how quick, in various hearts, arise
Those seeds of virtue, that thy verse supplies!
What joy, not speakable by mortal tongue,
What praises, to the harp of seraph sung,
May glad thee, now repaid for all thy woes,
While boundless vision to thy spirit shows
How e'en thy earthly song, by heaven inspired.
Attain'd the glorious aim, thy heart desired:
Destin'd to spread, uncramp'd by time or space,
Progressive goodness thro' the human race!
Thou monitor! by youth and age revered!
By wisdom prized! to tenderness endear'd!
While men and angels bid thy fame extend,
And nature owns thee her benignant friend;
Could there be mortals so perversely blind,
As coarsely to revile thy tender mind,

Basely applying, with malignant glee,
The hateful title Misanthrope, to thee!
Let just oblivion wrap in endless night
Such baleful fruits of worth-defaming spight:
Truth ne'er could Cowper's want of zeal reprove,
As fervent as a saint in friendly love.
Hannah! to whose effulgent mind belong
Continual plaudits from the sons of song,
Be witness how, in his sequester'd bowers,
Cowper acknowledging thy various powers,
Ever on thee, thy verse, thy prose, bestow'd
Applause, where cloudless admiration glow'd
With warmth, that jealousy could ne'er perplex;
He praised thee, as the glory of thy sex,
In verbal power, in intellectual grace,
Never inferior to man's lordly race!
Congenial spirits, warm'd with kindly zeal,
Each others merits ye were sure to feel
For one, true virtue's favorite employ,
Her happiest exercise! her highest joy.
One glorious motive sway'd each active mind
Whether the bard, to rhymes no more confin'd,
Rapidly sketch'd with glance intensely keen,
His bird's-eye prospect of our human scene,
Or the fair moralist, in polish'd prose,
Describ'd the living manners as they rose.
One glorious motive clear in each we prize.
Bright as the vestal flame, which never dies.
The philanthropic wish, from heaven inspir'd,
That keeps the toiling mind in toil untir'd;
The wish, unstain'd by every selfish aim.
Free from the thirst of lucre and of fame;
The wish most valued, when best understood,
To make the pen an instrument of good,
Recalling mortals lost in false delight,
To find true favour in their Saviour's sight.
The Bard, enfranchised from his earthly fate,
Now soars, from this probationary state
To join the seraphs of sublimer tone,
Whose harps are vocal round the Almighty throne:
On earth his laurels no destruction fear
From cold neglect, or envy's blighting leer.
Verse, in whose influence the good rejoice,
Is sure to echo from the human voice,
While praise, as faithful as the mystic dove,
Flows from the lips, of gratitude and love.
Cowper still lives, to truth's clear optics given,
Endear'd to earth, and recompens'd by heaven!
And O dear lady! who like him, canst feel
For erring mortals anxious friendly zeal,
And deck, like him, thy monitory page
With charms attractive both to youth and age,
Whose pure instruction, with a skill refin'd,

Suits both the lowly, and the lofty mind:
Like Cowper, thou canst bear, with calm disdain,
While pity saves thee from resentment's pain,
The dark insidious enmity of those
Who, self-entitled friends, and secret foes,
If they applaud thy talents, still deride
Thy warm devotion, as fanatic pride,
Tho' such devotion, undebased by art,
Proves its clear source in tenderness of heart;
Sincerely Christian, it forgives the lie
That dares its nature, and its truth deny.
When, rich in honours, as in length of days,
And satisfied with just affection's praise,
Thy spirit to a purer world ascends,
To share the fellowship of sainted friends,
May this sweet vision of the blest be thine,
To trace how widely, with a guide divine.
Thy active mind, while resident below,
In soften'd hearts taught piety to grow,
Aiding benighted souls to view the day,
And drive depravity's dark clouds away:
What bliss, to welcome in those realms of light
Young angels! owning thou hast helped their flight,
And from the Saviour of the world to hear
"Those, who befriended earth--to heaven are dear!"

Monitory Verses

_To a Young Lady, who indulged too gloomy
ideas of our sublunary state._

Dear nymph of a feeling, and delicate mind!
Whose eye the rash tears of timidity blind,
When fancy alarm'd takes a heart-chilling hue,
And the prospect of life is all dark in thy view,
Let me, as thy monitor, mild and sincere,
To thy spirit the gift of existence endear!
And shew thee, if darkened by fear or chagrin,
The sunshine of friendship can gild every scene!
Those, who true to the Ruler of every hour,
Rely on his mercy, and trust in his power;

Whatso'er is their lot, may, by viewing it right,
Convert all its darkness to visions of light
When mortals of hope the fair presage assume,
Even death's sable pall is no object of gloom:
They smile on the path which their best friends have trod,
And rejoice, when they feel, they are summon'd to God.
Be it long, my young friend, ere such joy can be thine,
First embrace all the gifts, faith exults to resign.

The best prelude to death is, without mental strife.
To be grateful for all the pure pleasures of life:
And many pure pleasures to mortals are given,
Sick or well, rich or poor, by the bounty of heaven,
If we all draw them forth (by well acting our part,)
From that mine of delight, an affectionate heart!

Epistle

TO A FRIEND, ON THE DIVINITY OF OUR SAVIOUR.

Inconcussa tenens dubio vestigia mundo.

1815.

Epistle.

Dear Disputant! whose mind would boldly soar,
And all theology's domain explore!
I love the candid fervency of soul,
That scorns a dogmatist's austere controul;
Let liberal scholars, as they surely ought,
Claim, and allow, a latitude of thought!
As friends I honour, with a love benign,
Many, whose creeds may vary far from mine:
Secure from error I no mortal deem;
But all, who truly seek for truth, esteem.
Yet with a mild regret, and kind concern
I see temerity's ambition burn,
When zeal, self-blinded in a mental mist,
Denies, that hallow'd mysteries exist;
And deems, that reason, which no fears appall,
Has self-sufficiency to clear them all:
Tis reas'ning pride, not reason, just, and sore.
Which in religion finds no point obscure;
Which, measuring Godhead with an earthly line,
Would rob the Saviour of his rights divine.
There are, who call Him, by their dreams beguil'd,
Mere man; of mortal geniture the child!
Tho' sanction'd, by his Sire's almighty breath,
His Son! a sovereign o'er life, and death!
'Tis not for mortals, in their transient hour,
To pierce the secrets of primordial power;
Or guess, how God, on his eternal throne,
To filial spirit could impart his own:
But how can earth deny, by truth unblam'd,
Divinity, that Heaven itself proclaim'd.
Reason opposes pride's degrading plan.
To sink the Saviour to a simple man:
Were He no more, could He, so born, presume

With Heaven to mediate for all nature's doom?
No! for, so born, Himself must then require
A mediator with th' eternal Sire:
Disclaim his Godhead, you at once imply
His deeds are doubtful, and his word a lie.
If not a God, most guilty of mankind,
His doctrine tends the human race to blind.
Surpassing e'en the fiend, who caus'd our fall,
By sharing worship with the Sire of all!
O ye! whose reas'ning pride can so mistake
The truths, He meekly spoke for mercy's sake!
More humbly grateful, learn ye to rejoice
In all the dictates of his cheering voice!
Who, to console his grief-dejected flock,
Show'd, how their faith is built upon a rock;
And, in the closing of his earthly strife,
Made manifest Himself as Lord of Life!
And tho' to death, the most disgraceful, driven,
Possessing all the powers of earth, and Heaven.
Pure source of light! and safety to the lost,
Without Thee on a sea of darkness tost!
Sovereign of grace, and kindness so sublime,
Thou view'st with pity their ungrateful crime,
Who, while they load Thee with degrading praise,
Would darken in thy crown its heavenly rays.
And O! how truly pitiable are those,
By nature mild, nor truth's intended foes,
Whose strange illusion yet miscalls Thee, man,
Tho' chosen to fulfil redemption's plan!
Who of Thy Godhead want that sacred sense,
That cordial glow of gratitude intense,
Which forms the bliss of their enlighten'd zeal,
Who all the merits of thy mercy feel!
Who hail Thee quitting thy bright throne above,
Sublime example of celestial love!
To clear, for them, a debt, they could not pay,
And change their darkness to eternal day!
How passing sweet to pure devotion's soul,
Are proofs of thy unlimited controul!
While the true Christian's mental eyes survey
Thy heavenly origin, and healing sway.
Only begotten Son of Sire supreme,
Whose quickening bounty was thy vital beam,
Ere nature lived, when, with thy filial aid,
The vast foundation of all worlds was laid!
When the paternal God was pleas'd to see
A blight reflection of Himself in Thee!
The splendour of his glory! form'd to share
His purest power, his providential care,
And, in consummating his gracious will,
At length annihilate all cureless ill!
To faith's pure eyes how ravishingly clear
Signs of her Lord's Divinity appear!

While earth and Heaven invite her to behold
How the fair series of those signs unfold!
A blest Redeemer, and without a trace
Of man's corruption in his ruin'd race,
Announc'd by mercy to our fallen sire,
Soon made that contrite criminal respire:
Age after age, of prophecy the breath.
Softening the horrors in the doom of death,
While nature strove with sin's dark woes to cope,
Shed thro' her lighten'd heart religious hope.
Thro' patriarchal times, in vision clear,
Types of the great Deliverer appear:
At length, when centuries have roll'd away.
And faith stands watching for her promis'd day,
She sees her Saviour from a virgin sprung,
His advent by attending angels song!
And wisdom usher'd by the guiding Star,
Hails Him, with gifts of homage, from afar.
The voice of Heaven proclaims his promis'd birth,
And conscious nature feels her friend on earth.
His uninstructed youth divinely sage,
Transcends the knowledge of experienc'd age:
The weak receive the strength, his will can give,
The dead obedient to his mandate live,
In power as mighty, as in mercy kind,
He dies, the ransom of redeem'd mankind!
Lord of Existence! He expires to prove
His matchless effort of celestial love;
And ratify, while He resigns his breath,
His glorious conquest o'er the gates of death!
A massive tomb receives his sacred corse;
And foes would guard it with a watchful force:
Vain boast of folly's disbelieving rout!
Who thus confirm the Deity, they doubt!
The grave beholds the heavenly victor rise,
And soar triumphant to his native skies.
His troubled servants still to calm and cheer
See Him, in human tenderness appear!
And while the slow of faith He mildly blames,
"My Lord! my God!" his doubt-freed saint exclaims.
Were He not God, and worthy of our trust,
Could He admit such worship from the just?
And bless the conscious of his heavenly right,
Whose faith demands no evidence of sight?
Yet grace divine full evidence has given;
Witness! Thou earth! by his dread sufferings riven!
Witness! Thou speaking firmament above!
When God proclaim'd Him offspring of his love!
Pleas'd to that blessed offspring to impart
Prerogative divine, dominion of the heart!
Exulting angels hail his sovereign sway;
Attest his glory, his commands obey;
And usher Him, whom e'en the demons own

As Earth's Redeemer, to his heavenly throne:
Thence, while mankind receive a second birth,
He ratifies the word, He spoke on earth;
And pleas'd to see his rescued servants live,
He gives them, what the world had not to give;
Internal peace! the duteous mind's repose!
With powers to foil the most malignant foes!
This vital sunshine of enlighten'd hearts,
This to his firm adherents He imparts;
When duly grateful for his kind controul,
They bless his empire o'er the willing soul,
For in his own, as in his Father's name,
He claims their boundless love; a righteous claim!
A claim, in which the proofs of Godhead shine!
Celestial attributes! and grace divine!
Hear how beyond the scope of mortal voice,
He bids his servants in his word rejoice,
Bids them for every good on Him depend!
As dearer far than every earthly friend,
Regard Him, parents, children far above;
And die with transport to secure his love.
Were He mere man, must not such orders seem
Distracted arrogance, an impious dream?
So of men's lives He only might dispose;
From whose divinity their safety flows,
Who left the bosom of His heavenly Sire,
To merit, what none other might acquire,
A sacred right with that dread Sire to plead,
To change the doom, his justice had decreed,
And save the guilty from perdition's storm;
Celestial victim in a human form!
Whose mediation, soft'ning wrath supreme,
Taught nature to revive, in mercy's beam.
Gracious Restorer of a race condemn'd,
Tho' by the thankless tribes revil'd, contemn'd.
Yet gratitude, and truth, who round Thee fly,
With all thy menial angels of the sky,
Viewing thy gifts with rapturous amaze,
Hail thy beneficence with heavenly praise:
All bear eternal witness, that Thou art
Justly a Sovereign in the human heart.
Man cannot yield too much, when, at thy call
To Thee his grateful zeal resigns his all;
Whate'er he may resign, yet more he gains,
While in his heart his blest Redeemer reigns;
By thy kind words he is inform'd aright,
And Thee exulting owns his path, his light!
Whether we ponder, with a mind serene,
The gracious marvels of thy earthly scene,
Or the firm promise to thy servants given,
Just ere they saw Thee re-ascend to Heaven;
Or the fulfilment of thy grand bequest,
The promis'd Comforter of man distrest!

That spirit, which, as man's unfailing friend,
'Twas thine, from thy celestial throne, to send
The Spirit of thy Sire! of truth! and peace!
By whose blest influence base passions cease;
And Christians, worthy of their Lord, combine
In the pure bond of charity divine!
Conscious from whom, their new sensations flow!
To whom their renovated hearts they owe!
And conscious, while their heavenly, guide they bless,
Their gratitude is safe from all excess!
In sentient beings, if their love and zeal
Should rise proportion'd to the aid, they feel,
Unbounded, as thy benefits, should be
The thankful homage of our hearts to Thee.
Divine Deliverer! whose grace bestows
Exemption from unutterable woes!
Such gifts on men, as they can ne'er requite,
Made, from the slaves of darkness, sons of light!
Thou filial Deity! whose merits rise
To such amazing height in human eyes,
A justly humble mind, that feels their sway
Too great for earthly language to display,
Conceives, e'en seraphs, tho' in glory's beam,
May find their voice unequal to the theme!
And seems to view them in their heavenly seat,
Mute, from pure adoration, at thy feet:
Thou blest Restorer of corrupted man
From all the snares of Satan's dark divan!
Thou, who with true compassion, hast survey'd
Lost wanderers perishing without thy aid!
To whose pure eyes all wonders are reveal'd,
That live in mortals, from themselves conceal'd!
Who view'st with favor, when they most aspire,
Their narrow faculties, and vast desire!
O prosper, and sustain my anxious thought,
Pondering thy attributes, as mortals ought!
That while I strive to make thy nature known,
My zeal may tend to purify my own.
Pardon the daring aim of grateful love,
If, in research, man's intellect above,
I vainly seek such heavenly things to know,
As Thou to mortals hast not deign'd to show,
Veiling the mode of thy celestial birth
From beings blind to mysteries of earth!
Thy geniture, and thy redeeming power
Transcend the known extent of nature's dower:
But pity weak mortality--that tries
To reach, what may elude all human eyes!
The knowledge man desires, is found by none:
The Eternal Sire, He only, knows the Son:
Taught by this truth, be it our wish alone
To know Him, only as he would be known,
By grace divine! his bounty's blest effect

On those, who hail Him with devout respect!
Thou filial Deity in manly shape!
Whose eye no deeds, no thoughts of man, escape!
Thy servants have no wound, Thou dost not feel,
No sorrow, that thy aid can fail to heal!
In all the trials, I was born to bear,
Many, and sharp, have fallen to my share;
I bless them, leading me to feel, and see,
Our sweetest comfort is our trust in Thee.
Calm acquiescence in thy sacred will
Becomes an antidote to every ill;
As tasks, ensuring favour in thy sight,
Grief turns to joy, and anguish to delight;
Till all the chasten'd heart exults to bless
A Martyr's triumph o'er subdued distress!
Saviour! whose image pure maternal prayer,
Fix'd in my heart, with just dominion there,
Thou never banish'd thence! tho' in my youth,
I heard rash sceptics, scoffing at thy truth,
Deride thy Gospel, and thy deeds revile,
As the false tales of an impostor's guile:
Blest! that no impious wit had power to blind
Thy dawn of favour in my opening mind!
There, in maturer seasons, grief, and pain,
As heavenly agents, have confirmed thy reign.
My spirit's guardian! soother of my woes!
Still of my chequer'd days illumine the close!
All mortals feel, their trespasses require
An Intercessor with th' eternal Sire;
And on their minds thy cheering favours shine,
Who feel, thou art an arbiter divine;
Who thy dominion o'er the soul confess,
And, as their final Judge, thy Godhead bless!
Deign to befriend me in my dying hour!
Thou clear Vicegerent of thy Father's power!
And, while, within a grateful heart, I own
My hopes to view Thee on thy heavenly throne.
With all thy merits on my soul imprest,
May faith's firm wings convey me to thy breast!
Such, friendly disputant of studious mind!
Ever to good, in active life, inclin'd!
Such are my thoughts, my views, my hopes, my creed,
Adverse, I own, to those, for which you plead!
And which, to speak without reserve, I deem
A rash surmise, a dark Socinian dream!
Tho' tenets diversely our fancy strike,
May both, in purity of heart alike,
Still trust the hope, to that endowment given,
To reach the glorious certainty of Heaven!
Where, when the pardon'd round their Lord unite
Their errors will be lost in beatific light.

A COLLECTION OF HYMNS

1817.

Hymn to Humility

Of all the Christian virtues chief
With modest charms, and mild relief,
Most apt to heal the wounds of pride, and spleen,
To thee, humility; I bend;
O let me feel, thou art my friend!
Rule thou my bosom, as its gentle queen!

'Tis thine benignly to repress
All proud conceit, all vain excess;
To give the chaste'n'd mind its proper tone;
To make it keep in sight
The worth of others with delight,
And never look too fondly on its own.

Teach me, with active zeal, to wake
At nature's sigh, for pity's sake,
When pride in dreams of apathy will nod!
Still guided by thy Christian breath,
Keep me, thro' scenes of life, and death,
To mortals kind, and dutiful to God.

Hymn to Contrition.

Tenderest Herald of the sky,
Nature's safeguard from perdition,
Friend of sweet, tho' tearful eye,
Call'd by angels meek Contrition--

Bid me with a due concern
Sigh for recollected error,
And to purer conduct turn,
Full of hope, and free from terror!

All, who have thy succour tried.
Near to Heaven's expanding portal,
Blessing Thee, their chosen guide,
Joy, in ceasing to be mortal.

Hand-maid of the Saviour's throne,
Sent by Him to check depression,
Make my chaste'n'd soul thy own,
Guarding it from all transgression.

Hymn to the Saviour.

Saviour! pure source of life and zeal intense,
Whose words were peace, whose deeds beneficence,
Around thy servant ever may I see
The sunshine of the soul deriv'd from Thee.

While their true faith enlighten'd Christians prove,
By mutual aid, and evangelic love,
By sins environ'd, may we strive alone
To pardon others, and repent our own.

So may we, comforted by words from Heaven,
That clearly prove the penitent forgiven,
With trust beyond the confidence of youth,
Rest on our guardian God--the God of Truth!

TWO HYMNS

Written for the Asylum of Female Orphans.

I.

Parent to those, whose infant days
No human parent know;
To thee, O Charity! the praise
Of filial love shall flow.

Base want, and vice, a foe to all!
Round us their snares had thrown.
Had not thy arm, at pity's call,
Embrac'd us for thine own.

O blest the land! where all to Thee
A tender homage pay!
Where indigence and wealth agree
To venerate thy sway!

That land the wrath of Heaven may spare.
When ruthless nations groan;
Her guarded orphan's grateful prayer
May rise to mercy's throne.

Parent to those, whose infant days
No human parent know;
To Thee, O Charity, the praise
Of filial love shall flow.

II.

We have no parent but our God;
Yet will we not in grief despair;
For He this vale of sorrow trod,
To make the desolate his care.

The voice of innocence and youth,
To Thee, meek Saviour! may ascend;
Thou God of Tenderness, and Truth,
Of Infancy Thou art the Friend.

Thro! tears, that fill the orphan's eye,
With humble confidence we see
Calamity, an holy tie!
That binds our helpless tribe to Thee.

For charity, angelic power!
Thy fav'rite delegate below!
Makes industry, our peaceful dower!
A guard from indigence and woe.

We have no parent, but our God;
In Him we trust, who reigns above:
Children He blest, when here He trod,
And we are children of his love.

A Morning Hymn.

Awake my soul! in cheerful mood,
Thy matin thanks to pay!
The God, who gives thee rest, and food,
Directs thee to be gay.

The Jewish world was dark, and cold,
There doubts and fears annoy:
Thy Shepherd to his happier fold
Brings light, and peace, and joy.

Cease then, O Christian! cease to grieve
In tempest, or in calm!
Smile on affliction, and receive
Her consecrated palm!

A Collection of Hymns.

Hymn written for the Rev. Mr. Walker, of

Chichester.

Where may zeal due succour find,
Man, for thy unguarded mind?
To shield thee, when temptations reign,
From folly's snare, and vice's bane?

The law of God, a Saviour's law,
Justly heard with grateful awe,
That alone pure light supplies
To the simple, and the wise.

He, whose heart, however tried,
Keeps the word of God his guide,
He walks secure, and undismay'd
Amid misfortune's darkest shade.

He, tho' tempests round Him roll,
Feels a sacred calm of soul;
Breathing, to his latest breath,
Joy in life, and hope in death.

Hymn.

Since the Evening of Life will soon close,
While I live, may I justly incline
To diffuse peace of heart among those,
Whose lives may be guided by mine!

To Christ may I lead them to own
The charms of his tender controul,
And with gratitude gaze on His throne.
Whom to serve is the joy of the soul!

Hymn to the Creator.

Source of all kind, all potent thought!
Thou God of Goodness, and of Power!
In Thee my soul, by trouble taught,
Shall trust, as in protection's tower.

The surest friend, the safest guard,
In thy sweet mercy may I see!
And solitude itself regard,
As blessed intercourse with Thee!

Lord! in whose hands are life, and death,
So let me live, so let me die,
That love may grace my vital breath,
And faith, and hope, my final sigh!

Hymn on Charity.

Nor faith, nor hope, whate'er their force,
Can aught avail the soul,
Should charity not guide its course
To glory's heavenly goal.
The songs of wisdom, tho' they soar
To notes that seraphs swell,
If she be wanting, are no more
Than folly's tinkling bell.

A thousand shapes, as bright as morn,
Sweet Charity assumes,
And all the hues of Heaven adorn
Her variegated plumes.
'Tis she with consolation's voice
That stills affliction's storm,
She bids despairing want rejoice
In bounty's radiant form.

But with what semblance is she seen,
That more her power endears,
Than when with mild instruction's mien
Her infant train she rears?
Then she the earth-bound spirit lifts
Above the valley's clod,
Then gives the richest of her gifts,
The knowledge of her God.

Hymn for Christmas Day.

Saviour inspire the voice of earth,
To hail the day that gave Thee birth;
The Heavens resound in blest accord,
Hosanna! to the highest! praise the Lord.

Let hymns of gratulation flow
From Adam's race redeem'd from woe;
For Paradise to man restored,
Hosanna! to the highest! praise the Lord.

Wisdom, and power, and peace proclaim
The new-born Saviour's blessed name,
His glory stars to stars record,
Hosanna! to the highest! praise the Lord.

Nature to Him in homage fall;
He comes--the Judge, the Lord of all:
His welcome sound on every chord,
Hosanna! to the highest! praise the Lord.

Hymn to the Saviour.

Lord, who in mercy's tender tone
Invitest every child of dust,
To seek protection from thy throne,
And in thy guardian grace to trust.

To thy true votary impart
Hope, from all doubt, all terror free,
Make every movement of my heart
A glow of gratitude to Thee!

Hymn.

Lord whose eyes every heart in existence survey,
Who canst regulate all with thy merciful sway,
From mine may thy grace, as a guardian, discard
Whatever might render it--selfish and hard:
O keep it from evil propensities free,
Ever mild to mankind, ever grateful to Thee:
This heart ever feels, with thy image imprest,
The more it is Christian--the more it is blest!

Hymn.

Make us, O God! in whom we breathe, and move,
Worthy to love Thee, and to win thy love!
Thy word informs us how thy love is won,
By grateful trust in thy beloved Son!
Through every season may such trust encrease!
We know it duty, and we feel it peace.

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