

erous enough on other occasions, here are ever faithful, and cruelly muster up, in a long succession, all the amiable qualities of our departed friends, and thus tear open our wounds, to bleed afresh. Imagination is set to work, and stuffs up their garments in their former shape, when we miss them at bed or table. It is truly surprising, when our judgment is fully convinced, that God's paths are not only truth, but mercy, to such as fear him; and when our faith reads designs of love in our trials; that this has so little influence in silencing the murmurs of our souls. Yet surely, it is pleasing to God, who knows our frame, and remembers we are dust, to look upon us, surrounded with all the frailties inseparable from human nature in its present state, lying low in the dust, and weeping with a feeling smart of our pain and loss; and at the same time acquiescing in his whole disposal of us and ours, as best for us, and, from the inmost recesses of our soul, striving to imitate Christ's prayer, "Not my will, but thine be done."—It were well if, instead of poring upon our wounds, and refusing to be comforted, our faith traced out our friends in the regions of immortality, where (to use Milton's phrase) they walk with God, high in salvation, and the climes of bliss. Though the partition which now divides us from the eternal world is otherwise impenetrable, revelation informs us, that there the righteous are in a state of inconceivable happiness. As to what happiness consists in, and their various employments, we are left much in the dark, as perhaps not fit to be revealed in this state. Yet surely it is pardonable, to cast some conjectures over this wall, that for a while divides us from our friends, as it is impossible to confine our active souls under the canopy of our moon and stars. Now, except where revelation gives here and there a hint of the heavenly state, analogy is our best guide into these scenes, that eye hath not seen. I remember to have seen long ago a book of Dr. Watt's, called, *Death and Heaven*, where he has happily indulged his fancy in assigning various employments for the blessed. He thinks, too, that there may be some solemn stated periods of worship in heaven, beyond what is their common service, either to commemorate some of the past transactions of the Godhead, or to celebrate some new discovery of God. And, truly, considering the infinite nature of God his glorious acts of creation and redemption, and the finite capacity of the highest orders of creatures, there must be new discoveries of God made to the blessed through all eternity, as they can only receive such discoveries in succession.—Perhaps some such manifestation has been lately made, unknown till now in heaven itself by finite minds. A new song has been composed on this occasion, by Michael, Gabriel, Moses, David, or some other masterly hand, to celebrate this new discovery; and the concert was incomplete, till a messenger was dispatched for your dear child, to assist in singing the chorus, as her sweet, soft, melodious voice was so well tuned before to the songs of Zion.—Our Lord once entered Jerusalem with a grand retinue, and must have an ass to ride on, that he might fulfil an ancient prophecy. A messenger was dispatched for the ass, and, if the owners quarrelled him, had orders to tell "that the Lord had need of him." If your heart grudge or quarrel, that your child is so soon loosed from you, saying, "Why was my dear child so soon snatched from me, in the bloom of youth, when I expected she should be the comfort of my old age, and sooth my pains and distresses?" Why, the same answer stands on record for you, *The Lord hath need of her. He had need of more virgins in his train; and your dear*

child was pitched upon. Therefore rejoice in her honor and happiness. Our Lord has gone to heaven to prepare mansions for his people, and he sends his spirit to prepare his people for these mansions. And after they have served an apprenticeship to their future employment, that they may be fit to act agreeably to the great end of their calling, and fill their thrones to the honor of that God who called them to glory, He then crowns them with endless happiness. Some have a longer time of probation than others. The great dresser of God's garden knows best when to transplant his fruit-bearing tree. In his perfect wisdom, we ought always to acquiesce. If I were to reason from analogy, I might ask Mrs. W———ce, when she was with child of her departed daughter, if she desired to keep her in that close union with herself, any longer than her full time was come; that is, when the child was perfectly formed for this world, and fit to exercise its senses upon the various objects that this world approves? Nay. Did she not wish for the happy minute of separation, though she knew the pangs and throes of child-bearing? And why should you, or Mrs. W———ce, who rejoiced at her first birth, mourn at her being admitted into the number of the spirits of the just made perfect, when it is certain that many who rejoiced with you at her birth, hailed her arrival on the coasts of bliss. Among those who rejoiced with you at her first birth, and saluted her on the heavenly shore, we may safely mention Mr. and Mrs. H———g, and others of your pious relations and neighbors, who have got crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, since her first birth.

"But I see that this subject would lead me beyond the bounds of a letter. I have only to add, that from my very soul I sympathise with you and your whole family in your loss, which is your daughter's gain and glory. That the Lord may bless your remaining children, preserve them to be the comfort of your age, form them to be vessels of honor meet for the Master's use, and fill your own soul with those consolations which flow neither from wife, child, or friend, or anything this world can give, or take away, is the sincere prayer of Sir, &c."

The second letter, on the same subject as the preceding, is from Mr. William Stevenson, an Elder of the Church of Scotland. He had a small property in the parish of Straiton, and belonged to the Kirk Session of the famous Mr. Walker, Minister of that parish, before his translation to Edinburgh. He was a man of a modest and humble spirit, and when he heard of the death of the children of Mr. Adam, Minister of Dalrymple, and afterwards of Falkirk, he wished to comfort him by a letter a friend had sent to himself while under a similar affliction. It was superior he thought to any thing he could write, but not finding it, he penned the following:—

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR;

"I remember I was a stranger in the land of Egypt, and know something of the heart of a stranger. I therefore humbly desire to cast in my mite of Christian sympathy with you and your kind spouse, under that afflicting dispensation, the death of your dear children. You will readily grant I have drunk deeper in that cup than you have yet done, having only, of seven pleasant, healthful, and hopeful children, one little girl left; having laid in a grave three sons and three daughters, all of an endear-