

ful for ; but there is no accounting for taste. The neighbors used to say, that all your troubles must needs be a judgment upon you ; but I who knew how good you were, thought it very hard you should suffer so much ; but now I see you reduced to an alms-house, I beg your pardon, madam, but I am afraid the neighbors were in the right, and that so many misfortunes could never have happened to you unless you had committed a great many sins to deserve them ; for I always thought that God is so just that he *punishes us for all our bad actions, and rewards us for all our good ones.*

“ Ay, Betty ; but he does it in his own way, and at his own time, and not according to our notions of good and evil ; for his ways are not as our ways. God, indeed, punishes the bad and rewards the good ; but he does not do it fully and finally in this world. Indeed he does not set such a value on outward things as to make riches, and rank, and beauty, and health, the rewards of piety ; that would be acting like weak and erring men, and not like a just and holy God. Our belief in a future state of rewards and punishments is not always so strong as it ought to be, even now ; but how totally would our faith fail if we regularly saw every thing made even in this world. We shall lose nothing by having pay-day put off. The longest voyages make the best returns. So far am I from thinking that God is less just, and future happiness less certain, because I see the wicked sometimes prosper, and the righteous suffer in this world, that I am rather led to believe that God is more just, and heaven more certain : for in the first place, God will not put off his favorite children with so poor a lot as the good things of this world ; and next, seeing that the best men here below do not often attain to the best things, why, it only serves to strengthen my belief that they are not the best things in His eye ; and He has most assuredly reserved for those that love Him, such good things as ‘ eye hath not seen nor ear heard.’ God, by keeping man in Paradise while he was innocent, and turning him into this world as soon as he had sinned, gave a plain proof that he never intended this world, even in its happiest state, as a place of reward. My father gave me good principles and useful knowledge ; and while he taught me, by a habit of constant employment, to be, if I may so say, independent of the world, he, at the same time, led me to a constant sense of dependence on God.”

“ I do not see, however,” interrupted Mrs. Betty, “ that your religion has been of any use to you. It has been so far from preserving you from trouble, that I think you have had more than the usual share.”