

was too strong for them. They abandoned prayer, and quitted their hold on God. The false lights of ambition and vanity led them astray. Snares and temptations beset them, and they fell :—and the day that dawned so fair, went down in grief and guilt.

Nor is this the only danger that awaits men in the second stage of the religious life. They may tarry in this, as others have tarried in the first. They may never go on to perfect freedom and peace. They may remain entangled in the mere instrumentalities of Religion ; and without lapsing into vice and absolute worldliness, become scrupulous and formal. They may tie themselves down to duty, and punctiliously fulfil every letter of the outward law, without the faith and the love which sanctify and gladden the heart. It is of immense importance to the religious sentiment in this phasis of spiritual growth, that it should be associated with a rational and benevolent theology, which will divest it of all narrowness and gloom, and harmonise it with the great interests of humanity. For such a theology by unfolding a wide and cheerful view of the designs of Providence, and of man's business and destination in this terrestrial scene, quickens his onward progress, and facilitates the transition to a yet higher stage of religious development.

Arrived at this, the mind surveys the whole world in a religious light, and impregnates every part of life with a religious spirit. In going to God, we do not separate ourselves from the world ; for it is only through the world—in the very midst of its cares, temptations and trials—its active duties, its absorbing interests, and its exciting joys—that we can rightly draw nigh to God, and hold communion with Him—blessing every scene with the con-