

when better never to have been born ! It is a far greater thing if he have taken her as his own child, than if he had left her to you, only as yours. If you have faith to look into the unseen world, and behold her taken into the society of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect, how much more hath God done for her and you, than if he had left her to your care and provision in this wretched world ? We are told there is joy in heaven for the conversion of a sinner : much more for the glorification of a convert ! That joy ought to swallow up in very great part your sorrow. The good Lord frame your spirit suitably to these things, in whom I am

Your truly respectful servant (very sensible of your case)

Love Lane, Aldermanbury,
London, Sept. 29, 1694.

J. HOWE.

THE TWO FOLLOWING ARE TO A NEW MARRIED
COUPLE.

(Who were persons of distinction,) that were written on the same sheet of paper, that was directed to the Lady with whom Mr. HOWE had been long acquainted.

Most Honoured Sir,

I Thankfully acknowledge the favour of your welcome lines, which ought to be most entirely so, both upon the account of the author, and the matter of them. For though my opportunity for so desirable an acquaintance hath been but little as to the circumstance, it hath been much as to the substance of what I know of you, in ways that gave me greatest assurance, before I had the happiness of oral converse with you. Nor could any thing be more grateful to me, than to read you from your own hand so related, and so well pleased (as I doubt not you will be daily more and more) with your relation, and the other accessory correlates, with whom God hath cast your lot.

I believe you have much reason to bless God (who orders all things to the best advantage to such as sincerely give themselves up to his conduct) that he led you not into such a condition and state of life as he now at length hath brought you into, before you were well acquainted with the rules and duties of it, better than to need help from such a one as I. But among the many other precepts that concern that case, I dare adventure to recommend those of 1. Cor. 7, 29, 30, 31 : and pursuantly thereto, to offer to your thoughts, that this can be but a partial temporary felicity, and so far only so at all, as it is enjoyed only as mediate, and subservient to the full and final felicity which we are professedly seeking and waiting for: so far ought it to be, to oppose it, or let it be an obstruction thereto. Which is the nature of all good things that have only the goodness of the means, and not of the end, that their goodness is variable,

and by misapplication may degenerate into a hurtful evil. Within the compass of such things is the truth of those words, to be confined; *nil prodest, quod non lædere possit idem*. It is beyond the measure of any created good to be universally so. That therefore which in its own place is a real good, applied to the particular purpose which it is capable of serving, out of that place, and being trusted, valued and delighted in beyond the measure which God and the nature of the thing have stated and set, may become a hurt to us.

But there can be no greater or more endearing obligation to use any mercy for God, than an habitual fixed sense of its having been received from him, and a deeply radicated and often repeated agnition of his sovereign hand in ordering it to be our lot, with all the circumstances that have had any reference thereto. For what ingenuous heart can endure to oppose to him, or employ against him, the (apprehended) fruit of his own favour and kindness? a pledge of his paternal love and care so understood! And therefore the greater the gift is (still considered under that strict notion) the stronger is the inducement to honour and serve the giver with it, and to enjoy according to prescription, what we enjoy not but by his vouchsafement.

If to all this I should add a request to you to be exceeding kind to my most dear and honoured friend, it were the greatest impertinence in all the world. For she having such a temper to work upon, will make you so whether you will or no: and I might as well use arguments to persuade a fragrant flower, to send forth its grateful odours, when a most benign orient sun is plying it with its cherishing morning beams. Such may you long be, both of you mutually (sun and flower) to each other, shining and flourishing with all the influence and under the continual blessing of heaven. So shall you communicate a part of that joy, which I most sincerely wish you, to

SIR,

Your very faithful and affectionate humble servant,

J. HOWE.

WHATSOEVER leisure (most dear and honoured madam) you may suppose me to have, I had little reason to suppose — and yourself to have much, from the reading of one another, to cast your eyes upon any thing I could write. But if after this paper shall have lain one quarter of a year somewhere near your dressing-box, you find it not unseasonable to bestow a glance upon it, you will then at length find your disappointment. For it will tell you nothing but what you well knew, or might easily guess before; that having a constant most affectionate respect and honour for you, I cannot but be highly pleased, that you are so.

And methinks it should not much surprise you, if I farther say, I would have you somewhat to alter (or make your exception to) your own rule, and not shew the less kindness to— for that he is a married man. This will not be strange to you, if you remember some of your last winter lines.

After this hath made you smile a little, as that of yours did me, then think that this novelty in your condition will neither make nor allow you to smile always, though I hope it will add a great deal to the comfort and pleasantness of your days.—And you may sometime have occasion to think seriously together, of the sense of those words, Luke 14. 26. And always remember the subordination that all creature-love must be in, to that of the supreme object of our love. How pleasant a thing will it be to have hearts united and consenting in the resolution of loving him perpetually above all, to whom we owe our all, and who is altogether lovely! to consult and conspire together, how most to promote his interest, and improve in acquaintance with him, and conformity to him. This I believe your heart to be much formed to before-hand. The great care must be, that such resolutions do not gradually languish. We find many are apt by unobserved degrees to starve the good affections and inclinations, which they would abhor to assassinate by a sudden violence. I write securely, that such an intimation will by so great a kindness as yours, be very well taken, from

Your Ladyship's

Most affectionate humble servant,
J. HOWE.

THE FOLLOWING,

Was written upon occasion of the decease of both the Parents of the Lady aforesaid, within about eight months of each other,

Most Honoured, Dear Madam,

WHEN I heard of your former great loss, I was confined by distemper to my bed: and I received information of the other, when I was going a great journey to accompany my wife and daughter to the bath, from whence they are not returned as yet, and I came home from my journeyings but last week. I have not in the mean time forgot your Ladyship's affliction, nor been without the apprehension how tender a sense your loss of two such parents must be accompanied with. Nor should I now mention it, did I not apprehend it may yet be reflected on to better purpose, than only to renew your sorrow. And that it may, I pray you, let it be remembered in the first place, with serious gratitude, (for we are required in every thing to give thanks) that God continued to you the comfort of