

The Gourd.

God is a Jealous God, and cannot give
His Glory to another! Earthly love
Must be subordinate to that of Heaven,
Or else must die! The throne of the affections
Must be surrender'd to the King of kings,
And can admit no rival occupant;
Omnipotence must legislate supreme,
And be the All in All! The earthly Gourd
It is permitted thee to cherish fondly,
But not too fondly;—to be glad for it;
But warning accents from the blighted booth
Of Nineveh, forbid thee to be glad
“Exceedingly.” If treasured as the pledge
Of thy Creator’s love, then all is well;
The boon attains the end for which bestow’d,—
The Giver glorified! But when it tends

To alienate affections which are His,
Seal'd is its doom, and bows the cumberer
Before the wing'd sentence, "Cut it down!"
How oft, in one brief day, the canker-worm
Has thus perform'd its work, and round the bower
Of earthly bliss lie strewn the sad rebukes
Of overweening love—the wither'd blossoms
Cherish'd too fondly! Traitor to thy trust!
Thou didst receive thy Gourd to draw thee
upwards;
It wedded thee to earth, and therefore fell!
Thou must be taught by the severest lessons,
That God permits of no competing love:—
"The idol must be utterly abolish'd!"

How many bleeding bosoms have been open'd
By these clay-idols, Dagon that must fall
Before the ark! Unless we rather choose
(Fearful alternative!) that God give place
To these our Dagon, and thus forfeit Heav'n
For some poor child of dust. Christian! rejoice,
That the decision of this question lies
Not with thyself; or else, alas! how oft
Imperishable interests would be made

Do homage at some shrine of creature-love!—
The altar kiss of some clay-deity,
And barter immortality for Time!

Thy Gourd has fallen! Yet had its kindly shade
Been spared for future years to bless thy bower,
It would have lived but only to decay.
Those bursting buds and blossoms, early pluck'd
(Say not *too* early), would at last have dropp'd
As wither'd flowers. Let the Great Husbandman
Select the time to take His own; and if
For transplantation He may deem it fit,
Before the chilling frosts of life have nipp'd it,
Would'st thou retain it longer in the blasts
Of an ungenial clime? Be thine to praise Him,
That, in selecting for the severing blow,
He took the ripest for Himself. The tree
Mark'd for the axe was not the cumberer—
The leafless, fruitless, unproductive one,
Fit fuel for the fire: No,—*It* is spared
(In mercy spared), to see if, peradventure,
The sharp incisions of the pruning-knife
May fructify its boughs. 'Tis the exotic
Which has been taken to a kindlier soil,

To bloom unfading in far happier climes,
Where tempest is unknown ! Think of the storms
That tender sapling has in love been saved ;
Although, perchance, unfretted with a cloud
Up to the hour it fell ; who could predict
What might be brooding in the far horizon, —
What travailings and sorrows might be pent
Within the womb of Time ? Who could foretell
That ere to-morrow's sun had run his race,
Some hurricane, now slumb'ring, forth might
speed

In giant might, its footsteps track'd with woe,
Blighting all loveliness ; reminding us
That cloudless sunshine trusted cannot be
On this side Heav'n ?

Then weep not ; but alike
Adore a "taking" and a "giving" God.
Deem not these blossoms prematurely pluck'd.
Let those who make this fleeting earth their all,
And its horizon bound their happiness,
Talk of *untimely Graves* ! No flower can drop
Too soon, if ripe for glory. Early pluck'd,
Is early bliss. If the great clock of time

Has in life's dawn of morning toll'd its knell,
And number'd earthly hours, it hastens Heaven.
An early death-bed is an early Crown !
Now unfulfill'd one wish alone remains,—
That those beloved on earth, endear'd by bonds
Defying dissolution, left behind
To rough the winter's blast, may soon arise,
The deathless glory of the soul to share,
“ Not lost, but gone before.”

Often methinks

Upon the striking contrast in the way
That Earth and Heaven the closing scene of death
Regard. On *Earth*,—a spectacle of tears !
Bedew'd each cheek, and swollen every eye ;
In speechless agony, each knee is bent
Round the saint's couch, importunate for life,
While still life's pulses beat. In *Heaven*,—a
prayer
Is utter'd also for the dying one
By mightier than mortal Intercessor ;
Immanuel pleads ; but His is not the prayer
For an extension of the transient breath ;
He pleads for life immortal as His own.

While from below ascend the burden'd sighs
Of weeping relatives, 'tis thus He prays :
"Father, I WILL!" (Oh! blessed thought! it is
The *will* of dying, ever-living love!
Who would not trust it, if they cannot trace?)
"Father, I WILL this dying sufferer
I have redeem'd, be with Me where I am,
To share the glory Thou hast given Me."
The prayer is heard! Omnipotence responds—
"Son, Thou art ever with Me, all I have
Is Thine." To execute the embassy,
Eager, a glorious retinue attend.
"Go, Angels,—speed ye to the dying pillow,
And waft the spirit into Abraham's bosom!"

Say, Mourner, wouldst thou have preferr'd that
heard

Had been the prayer of Earth, or that of Heaven?
Eternal bliss deferr'd, or realised?
The Cross continued, or the Kingdom won?
Warfare protracted, or eternal *rest*?
Keep in abeyance selfish love, and say
Wouldst thou arrest these bright celestials,
As up they bear their trophy to the skies,

And bring him back to earth? Couldst thou
entreat

The Righteous Intercessor to revoke
This wondrous "WILL," and at the gate of Heaven,
When Victory was bursting on his lips,
Recall the sainted Pilgrim, to resume
The din of Battle, and the Vale of Tears?