

THE POOR MAN'S MORNING PORTION

Without me, ye can do nothing.—*John 15:5.*

DEAREST Jesus! I know this in theory, from thy gracious teachings, as well as I know that I am by nature a sinner; but I am for ever failing in this knowledge, when I come to put it into practice. Teach me, Lord, how to preserve the constant remembrance of it upon my mind, that I may never go forth to the holy warfare to subdue a single foe but in thy strength, and never make mention of any thing but thy righteousness, and thine only! Be convinced, my soul, every day, more and more, of this most precious truth, and behold it proved from all the circumstances around thee. See and remark the total inability either of God's judgments or God's mercies to induce the least alteration upon the heart of man, without his grace. Behold the prosperous sinner, bathing in a full river of blessings: himself in health, his circumstances flourishing, his children like olive branches round his table, wealth pouring in upon him from every quarter; and yet he lives without God, and without Christ in the world; and as he lives, so he dies, in the vanity of his mind. See him amidst distinguishing preservations, in battles by sea or land, still preserved, while floating carcasses, or opened graves, are all around him: do these things bring his heart to God? Not in the least. The sum total of his character may be comprised in a few words: *Neither is God in all his thoughts.* Look at him in the opposite side of the representation: let such an one be visited with chastisements; in his own person, sickness; in his family, misery; in his substance, want; in short, in all that concerns him, a life of sorrow, care, anxiety, disappointment, ruin: perhaps to all these, a body long the dwelling-place of some loathsome disease, under which he groans, and at length dies, and dies the same unawakened sinner as he had lived. And suppose these accumulated evils had been distinguished also with some more peculiar maladies, in perils in the sea, in perils in the war, in perils among men. Nay, let him be maimed in his limbs, let him be rotting in a prison, let him be worn out with misery from evil upon evil, like waves of the sea following each other; yet still he continues the same hardened unsubdued sinner, under all, and as unconscious of God's rods as the prosperous sinner before described is of God's blessings. Are these things so, my soul, and hast thou seen them? Yes, in numberless instances: Oh then learn, that without Jesus thou canst do nothing! Outward circumstances, unaccompanied with inward grace, leave men just where they found them; and plain it is, that grace alone can change the heart. Lord Jesus, let these loud and crying truths day by day lead my soul to thee! Be thou all in all, my hope, my guide, my strength, my portion; for without thee I can do nothing.¹

¹ Robert Hawker, [*The Poor Man's Morning Portion*](#) (New York; Pittsburg: Robert Carter, 1845), 196–197.