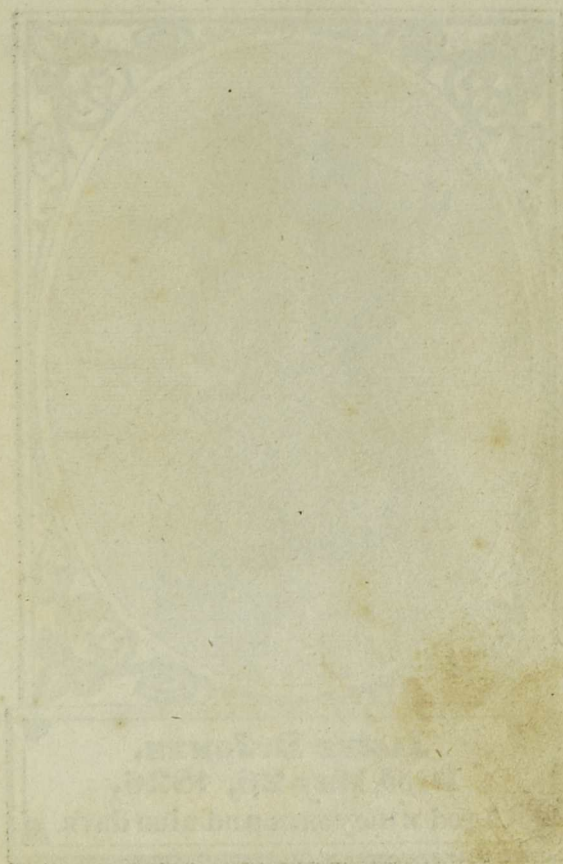


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THE HISTORY OF THE

EXAMPLES OF EARLY LIFE

OF

THE EARLY LIFE OF

JAMES O'CONNOR

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MEMOIRS, &c.

JAMES B. JONES, one of the subjects of these juvenile memoirs, was born on the 17th day of May, in the year 1817, at Tiverton, in the county of Devon. The birth of my dear little boy was an event of the most deep and lively interest to my parental feelings, and was associated with many tender and endearing incidents ; every one of which has now acquired a tenfold interest in my memory and affections, and is stamped with indelible characters on my heart. When the nurse, a Christian matron, of long standing in her profession, and of still longer in the church of Christ, first presented the baby to my arms, I received him as the special gift of God, and as one of the richest boons of Divine beneficence : While she, venerable saint, in the simplicity and fulness of her generous heart, witnessing the excited state of my feelings, and the tender blandishment of my paternal affection, bestowed upon me, and upon my child, many a hearty benediction, and expressed many a pious hope that my dear boy would become a bright example of early piety, and grow up to be a man after God's own heart.

We called him James Budge, giving him his father's Christian name, and his mother's maiden surname. He grew up and improved according to our most sanguine expectations, and appeared to possess healthy habits and a firm constitution : Of all our children we deemed him the most likely to arrive at manhood ; and we fondly hoped

that he would be the solace of our lives, and the support of our declining years. But the sovereign, wise, and infallible Arbiter has determined otherwise; and although our wounded hearts bled under the keenness and severity of the stroke, our faith inculcates an implicit submission to the irrevocable decree; and we are endeavouring with the man of patience to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

In his fourth year, we began to observe in him the early sparklings of intellect, and the lively sportings of juvenile reflection; for even at that tender age, his mother and I were often amused with his childish questions and child-like remarks; the combinations of his active imagination being as grotesque and diversified as those of the revolving kaleidoscope, a philosophical trifle, which at that time was greatly in vogue. But we had a higher satisfaction in observing, that the associations of his fancy were commonly of a religious character; sufficiently immature, on most occasions, it is true, to excite a smile; but on all occasions, they were clearly indicative that the solemn verities of the Christian religion had obtained an early lodgement in his heart; that a Divine influence had accompanied our instructions; and that our endeavours to impress the fear of God upon his tender feelings, had not been "in vain in the Lord."

On one occasion, which I well remember, while I was drawing his attention to the Supreme Being, as the Father of all mankind, and the Preserver of the human family, and was speaking to him of God's love to little children in supplying their wants and preserving them from accidents, and especially of his great love in giving "his only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption;" his little heart was so charmed and transported with the subject, that he jumped upon my knees, folded

his arm saround my neck, and, kissing me, exclaimed, " I love you, papa," and I love God Almighty : And when I go to heaven, I'll kiss HIM too !" The singularity of the thought startled me at first ; but upon recollection, I was pleased to find that it was supported by poetical and Rabbinical authority, and had probably the sanction of Divine inspiration itself. Many of my readers will recollect that beautiful couplet,

Like Moses, to thyself convey,
And kiss my happy soul away.

On another occasion, he said to me, " Papa, what's the reason that little children, when they die, go to heaven ?" The answer was, " Because Jesus Christ died for little children ; that's the reason why little children, when they die, go to heaven." This reply was so grateful to his pious feelings, that, for some time afterwards, he introduced the subject to almost every person that came in his way ; and every child he met was almost sure to be asked, " Do *you* know what's the reason that little children, when they die, go to heaven ?" Heaven was a subject to which he was always ready to lend his eager attention, and which he had a surprising aptitude to associate with every thing that came under his observation. While we lived at Hayle, near St. Ives, in the West of Cornwall, our habitation was seated on the margin of the estuary that leads into the bay ; so that at high water, particularly at the equinoxes, we had a bold expanse of sea before the door. On one such occasion, there being a full tide and a stiff breeze, I had James and his elder brother in an upper chamber, from the window of which their attention was quickly attracted by the descent of a large sea-gull upon the ruffled bosom of the water, where he rose and sunk majestically on the yielding waves. As they stood looking on, the gull sprung up from the surface of the waters, expanded his ample wings to their utmost limits, and soared upward in a line.

almost perpendicular to the skies. "Look, look!" cries the child, "look, brother William! Now when I die, I shall fly up into heaven like that bird!"

Incidents such as these might be adduced in great abundance; but they might be deemed too familiar for the public eye, and therefore must remain concealed in the sanctuary of my own remembrance; unless they should be drawn from thence occasionally, by the interrogations of my own family, or by those of the more select circles of society. A few of these juvenile anecdotes, however, I shall venture to commit to paper, and trust my apology, if not my justification, in so doing, to the generous sympathies of parental affection, and the tender charities of the human heart.

Early one Monday morning, in the time of Summer, he left his own bed and came to his mother, to tell her about his having been at church on the preceding day; when he surprised both his mother and myself by the number and accuracy of his recollections. He remembered the order of the service, and several isolated parts of the Liturgy verbatim; but he was the most interested in the Apostles' Creed, the substance of which he repeated. Having done this, he plied his mother with a number of questions about the nature of the Divine Being, and the manner of his existence. At length, he said, "Mamma, what can God Almighty do?" The answer was, "He can do every thing." He replied, "What, can He do whatever He pleases?" "Yes," said his mother in return. "Well then," proceeded he, "can He make a woman out of a great stone?" To which she replied that God made man out of the dust of the ground, and that He made the woman out of one of his ribs. But upon my reminding them of the words of John the Baptist, "For I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham;" he laid hold of them with great eager-

ness, and said in a tone of triumph, "There now, mamma, I thought He could make a woman out of a great stone; for the Bible says, that 'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.'"

During my temporary absence, on one occasion, he had got into a theological dispute with his brother; so that upon my return I found them stiffly maintaining their respective sides of the argument with, "Yes, he would;" and "No, he would not." James, to end the dispute, appealed to me, by saying with great earnestness, "Now, papa, suppose brother William were to go to heaven, and be a wicked boy there; would not God Almighty send him out again very sharply? I'm *sure* he would." Astonished at the singularity of the thought, I said, "Why, my dear James, that's a strange question indeed: How could it ever enter into your head that people should be wicked in heaven? If brother William were to go to heaven, he would not surely be a wicked boy there!" "But now suppose *if* he was?" I replied, "People cannot be wicked in heaven, James." "Why now," said the child, "did you not tell me, one day, papa, that Satan was a good man once?" "Yes," said I, "Satan was a good *angel* once." "Well," he replied, "and was not he in heaven then? and did not God send him out of heaven for being wicked?" And thus I found myself all at once more deeply involved in the argument that I had anticipated, and was glad to make as honourable a retreat as I could. It served, however, to convince me, that he who undertakes the task of instructing children, ought to possess the clearest conceptions of his subject, and be able to express his thoughts in the most concise and appropriate language.

His love to me was, in the highest degree, gratifying and flattering to my paternal feelings; and his opinion of my knowledge and integrity was the most elevated that his amiable mind could possibly conceive; nay, I will

freely confess, that to secure his good opinion of me was the object of my constant solicitude and ambition. On one occasion, I overheard him saying to the other children, "Papa never told a story in all his life; I am sure he never did." At another time, being engaged in a dispute with his brother, in which they seemed to have argued each other into a full conviction of their ignorance on both sides; James, upon seeing me enter the house, said, "Here's papa coming; I'm glad *he's* come: We'll ask him." "But," said the other, "Do you think papa knows, brother James?" "Knows!" he replied, "to be sure he does! He knows every thing! He knows better than every body except God Almighty." And I am happy to say, that as he so much admired integrity of speech in others, he was equally careful to practise it himself; being always scrupulous, and sometimes even over scrupulous to be verbally, as well as in substance, correct. His sister, whom we had the misfortune to lose about the same time that James was taken away, was in this respect equally distinguished. I have often heard them repeat Herbert's pointed stanza on integrity of speech, and have seen them greatly delighted with the following lines:—

Dare to be true: Nothing can need a lie:

A fault that needs it most, grows two thereby.

I never knew my dear boy to be detected in a falsehood, or an equivocation; so that we could always depend upon the truth and correctness of his statements. His memory also was so retentive, and his recollection so accurate, that if his mother had an errand that embraced a number of particulars, and required great accuracy of execution, James was always selected as the messenger.

In the important matter of keeping a secret, I had the most perfect confidence in his integrity, and I never knew him to betray my confidence. It is true, that, when very young, he did on one or two occasions betray the sim-

plicity of the child, by saying in the presence of others, "Papa, I have not told any body what you told me not to tell, and I won't tell." But of such inadvertencies he was quickly cured; and I never knew him to fall into that error afterwards. My dear child and myself were almost constant companions: His society was always acceptable and interesting to me; and he, on his part, always preferred my company to that of his juvenile acquaintance. My method of instruction was usually colloquial; and as I had a pleasure in encouraging his childish inquisitiveness, and studied to satisfy his numerous inquiries, we never wanted a topic of conversation, and often fell upon something that was both interesting and useful. He sometimes accompanied me in my journeys into the country; in which we were accustomed to beguile the lapse of time and the length of the way, by conversations upon subjects both literary and religious. As we rode home, one very dark night, in the neighbourhood of Leicester, he interrupted the silence that had for some time prevailed, by saying, "Papa, I was thinking about Mr. Wesley; how many miles he travelled to preach the Gospel to sinners: I dare say he used to be very much tired sometimes, especially at night. But it is all over now, and I am sure he is very glad that he took all that trouble to save sinners. Why, I suppose he converted hundreds and thousands, and most of them are gone after him to heaven. Well, I wish the Lord would make me a preacher of the Gospel. I should like to convert sinners: I should not mind the trouble, nor travelling in the dark, if I could but convert sinners." These delightful words, as may be easily supposed, touched the keenest feelings of my heart, and flattered my parental fondness into the pleasing, but alas, delusive hope, that God would one day bestow upon my dearest boy, a literal fulfilment of these pious desires. For my own part, if ever I have been betrayed into an impious wish to recall him from the

tomb, it has been when I have seen young men of splendid talents in the work of the ministry; for, on such occasions, I have said, If my dear James had been spared, he would probably have been employed with equal credit and equal success. On another occasion, as we were riding over the ridge of those bold hills, which lie between Sheffield and Penistone, the summits of which command an extensive view of the neighbouring country; after a long silence, in which his mind had been evidently absorbed in contemplation, he said, "Papa, can you guess what I was thinking about?" Of course I replied in the negative. "I was thinking," said he, "about the Devil taking up our Lord to the top of an exceeding high mountain, and showing him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them: and I was thinking it was just such a place as this." To this I replied, "And do you remember, James, that one of the Evangelists says, that the Devil showed our Lord all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them in a moment of time?" "Aye," said he, "that's a mysterious subject. It is more than I am able to comprehend."

Child as he was, his character was dignified by a manly generosity; in confirmation of which I could relate many pointed incidents: But one only shall suffice. He had, among his juvenile treasures, a large handsome medal, which he valued highly. One day, however, while looking over his little trinkets, I observed that the medal was missing, and said, "James, what has become of your medal?" He replied, with great frankness, "Well, I'll tell you, papa. A little boy, in our school, had set his heart upon it; and one day, he brought me his dinner and several other things, and begged I would give him the medal for them. I saw that a dinner was a *great* thing to him: I had a dinner of my own at home, so I gave the medal to the boy, dinner and all."

My dear boy was fond of numbers; and although, from the state of his health, he had many interruptions in his arithmetical pursuits; yet, before the commencement of his last illness, he well understood the common rules of arithmetic, and could answer a plain question in the Rule of Three. As he had a retentive memory, I procured him a multiplication table as high as the square of twenty-five, which I intended he should have committed to memory: He had, indeed, gone far enough to multiply twenty-five by several of the numbers, before the commencement of his last illness, and would no doubt have completely succeeded in the undertaking, if the Lord had continued his health but a few months longer. But he is gone into a world, where decimals are no longer the measure and the bounds of his calculation; where every thing exists on the grand illimitable scale of immortality and eternal life.

I believe that he made religious duty a point of conscience when a mere infant; for on observing one morning, that he came down from his chamber in unusual haste, I said to him, "James, I fear you have forgotten to say your prayers?" He was greatly confused and said, "Yes, papa, I have. I'm very sorry; I'll go back again and say my prayers." And so saying, he returned to his chamber; but his wounded spirit was scarcely healed during that day. As he grew older, he became more and more attached to religious exercises; and in his last illness, it was exceedingly painful as well as pleasing, to observe what efforts he would make to rise up in his bed, and kneel in time of prayer; and this he did until almost the last day of his life; nor could any remonstrances of ours prevail upon him to remain in a recumbent posture during family worship, as long as he could possibly raise his head from his pillow. During his illness, we usually performed our family devotions in the room where he lay; but sometimes when he appeared to be sleeping, we were unwilling to awake

him, and therefore occupied some other part of the house for that purpose. When he awoke, however, he always sent for me to pray with him; saying, "Papa, I cannot be comfortable unless you pray with me." I have been many times called out of my bed to unite with my dear little boy in prayer to Almighty God in his behalf.

The quickness and correctness of his inferences were often such as would have been no discredit to a person of riper years. His sister and he had, one day, entered into a conversation upon the subject of human redemption, which interested and gratified my parental feelings in a high degree; when the following dialogue ensued: "Why, sister, you know that God himself is our Redeemer." "Nay, brother James, Jesus Christ is our Redeemer." "Well, sister, and Jesus Christ is God; and therefore God himself is our Redeemer."

While in the country with me a short time before his last illness, a piece of poetry in the Methodist Magazine had attracted his attention, which he committed to memory. On our return home he repeated the lines to his sister, who was equally pleased with them, and in like manner quickly got them by heart. In the course of the exercise, she called his attention to the last line; "May our justified souls find acceptance in heaven," by saying, "Then I suppose, brother James, we must be justified *before* we go to heaven?" "Yes, to be sure, sister," replied he, "and sanctified too, or we shall never get there." It was highly gratifying to me, to see that he was so much alive to the meaning and importance of those solemn words: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

His sister, who was about two years and a half older than he, was a child of great quickness of intellect, and of an exceedingly tender spirit: She was taken ill on the very same day that her brother sickened, and her disorder

being an inflammation of the bowels, in the short space of thirty-six hours, this promising child was numbered with the dead : But she was numbered among those happy dead who die in the Lord. She had been spending the Christmas holidays at Norton ; and during her visit had attended the worship of the Established Church, where she heard a sermon on the Ministry of Angels, which interested and delighted the child beyond all her powers of representation. It was evident to me that the sermon had been accompanied with a Divine influence on her mind ; for when she came home, her little heart was so full of the subject that she scarcely talked of any thing else but God, and angels, and heaven, and eternity. She spoke of the discourse to every person who was willing to lend her a hearing ; and was never tired of the subject. She remembered the method which the preacher had adopted in treating the subject, the prominent doctrines of the discourse, and the manner in which he had applied them to different characters. The clergyman himself had been surprisingly endeared thereby to the affections of the child ; so that nothing could gratify her more highly than a word of approval or admiration of the clergyman or his discourse. “ Dear Mr. — ! O, papa, I wish you had heard that discourse about the innumerable company of angels. I never heard any thing so delightful in all my life : O ! it was so much like heaven.” These and such like expressions were continually falling from her lips.

The following Sabbath was an exceedingly cold day ; and my two lovely children attended the morning service as usual, where I have reason to believe they took a cold from which they never recovered. They were, indeed, differently affected, but the cause was the same in both. My dear James sickened immediately ; but the erysipelas did not make its appearance until the morning of his sister’s decease. She, dear child, was seized with a

violent bowel complaint, which quickly prostrated her strength, and absorbed her spirits: The progress of the disorder was rapid and irresistible, and she slipped out of our hands before we were fully aware of her danger. On the night preceding her death, she appeared to be considerably easier; so that we were deluded into a hope that her symptoms were improved. But alas! alas! early on the following morning, I perceived that the child's speech was failing; and when I said to her, "My dear Elizabeth! my precious child! do you know you are dying? Do you know that you are going to heaven? Do you know that you are just going to join the innumerable company of angels?" she answered me only with a smile. She could do no more. Her eyelids fell;—her breathing became gradually shorter and shorter, and weaker and weaker, until, like a falling breeze, she finally expired. But who can describe my feelings, when the lifeless body of my dear child sunk into my arms, announcing her departure; when as I grasped the mortal part, I found that her happy spirit had slipped from my embraces, and had escaped to those of her heavenly Father? I involuntarily cried, "She's gone! she's gone!" Her poor mother "lifted up her voice and wept," and my dear little James, in the adjoining bed, answered us only in sighs and sobs; while the shaking of his bed beneath him, attested the powerful throbbings of his wounded heart.

This was an unexpected and powerful stroke to us all: so that it required no common effort in us to say, "The will of the Lord be done." We had, indeed, every consolation we could have desired, in her early piety, and in the very auspicious circumstances which preceded her illness and death: but the suddenness of our dear Elizabeth's removal deprived us of those extraordinary consolations which we had under the protracted and sanctified illness of our dear little boy, and which we have no doubt, under

similar circumstances, would have equally distinguished the sick and the dying moments of his dear sister. It is worthy of notice, that a little girl of her age, a member of the family that she visited, and who heard the discourse on the ministry of angels, before spoken of, but who had heard nothing of Elizabeth's illness, said to her mother on the morning of the child's departure: "Mother, I dreamed last night, that I saw Elizabeth Jones in the midst of a great company of angels."

Our kind friend, Mr. Montgomery, whose religious sympathies are always accessible and always active in the cause of Christian charity, favoured us on this trying occasion with the following tender lines; which proved a seasonable emollient to our wounded spirits.

LINES in memory of Elizabeth Jones, a child of great religious sensibility; who had been much affected under a discourse on the ministry of angels, which she heard a short time before her decease. She died at Sheffield, after an illness of about thirty-six hours, on Wednesday, January 18th, 1826, aged eleven years and three months:

Visions of angels, beautiful and kind,
Turn'd to a Paradise thine infant mind;
They seem'd at home within so pure a breast,
Yet vanish'd soon, for here was not *their* rest,
Nor *thine*;—like those in Jacob's dream, they trod
A ladder rising to the throne of God;
And taught thy little steps that easier way,
From night on earth to heaven's unbroken day.
Angels ere long, but not in vision, spread
Their golden pinions round thy dying bed;
And in their arms thy ransom'd spirit bore,
With songs of joy, where death can be no more.
Dwell there, sweet saint, in bliss with Him above,
Who loved thee with an everlasting love;
And wait the answer to thine only prayer
Yet unfulfill'd,—that *we* may meet thee there.

My readers will forgive me, if I add one notice more of our departed daughter. Since her decease, the lady to

whose seminary she belonged, she handed to us a letter, of which the following is a copy. It was one of her school exercises, and was addressed to a young lady of the same establishment, and of her own name.

“SHEFFIELD, *Tuesday, Dec. 20, 1825.*

“*My dear Friend,*—According to your request, I now sit down to write you a few lines ; but so many things occur to my mind, I hardly know which of them to select for the subject of my present communication. After a little consideration, I have fixed upon religion. Religion, undoubtedly, is of so excellent a nature, and its purposes are so benevolent and glorious, that every person to whom it is offered, ought to esteem it as the greatest blessing. Let you and me, my dear Elizabeth, embrace this great salvation in the days of our youth. We shall thereby finally secure the favour of God ; so that, whether we die soon, or are spared long, we shall be happy in life, ready for death, and fit for eternal felicity. I am, my dear Elizabeth, your affectionate friend,

E. JONES.”

The death of our amiable daughter, young as she was, proved to both her mother and myself, a privation the most appalling and irreparable. We were, for the moment, prostrated under the suddenness and violence of the blow, and were bruised and crushed under the pressure of the fall. But the state of our dear little boy, whose sickness grew more alarming every day, served, by its seasonable re-action, to keep our energies alive, and to call away our attention from the dead to the dying. The erysipelas quickly sealed up both his eyes, and spread itself over every part of his face ; it afterwards invaded the scalp, and extended its ravages entirely over the region of his head ; nor was its progress arrested until it had travelled a considerable way down the course of the spine. Under these painful circumstances we had the happiness of witnessing in him,

the unspeakable advantages of juvenile piety, and of contemplating the dignity which personal religion confers upon human beings, when under the severest sufferings, and the heaviest privations. He would often express a desire to die, if it were pleasing to the Almighty; but he never betrayed any symptoms of impatience, or any want of resignation to the will of God: on the contrary, he would say to his mother, "Is it right for me to wish to die, mamma? because, if it were improper, I would rather suffer twelve months longer, as much as I have suffered, than displease the Almighty; but if the Lord pleases, I should like to die." Our dear little boy, against all our calculations, got the better, at length, of the erysipelas; but the disorder had so completely broken up his constitution, that he fell into a decline, which, in the course of a few months, brought all his sufferings to a close. During the progress of the disorder, his symptoms rose and sunk repeatedly; sometimes flattering us with the hopes of a speedy recovery, and at other times menacing us with a precipitate and sudden removal; but under all this painful alternation on our part, we had the pleasure of witnessing in him a growing preparation for heaven, and a brightening prospect of eternal glory. It was highly gratifying to my feelings, and was a topic of frequent thanksgiving to God, that although his sufferings were excessive, and his spasms, at times, the most excruciating, his spirits never failed him, nor did his mind ever lose its native activity and vigour. He never evinced any alarm at the prospect of death, nor did he ever seem to view the subject under any other aspect than that of being "absent from the body, and present with the Lord." He would often request me to come and sit by his bed, and talk about God and heaven: and if I flagged in my discourse, he would quicken my attention by saying, "Tell me something more, papa; I'm never tired in hearing of heaven." One evening, while

his mother was talking to him, as she was accustomed to do, on his favourite subject, she happened to say, "My dear boy, when you get to heaven, you will be wiser than Dr. C., and know more than the wisest men in the world." On hearing this, he looked at me very earnestly, and said, "Do you think, papa, that is quite correct?" I answered, "Perhaps it needs some little qualification; you will not, I presume, immediately on your admission into heaven, have more general or scientific knowledge than all the wise and good men of the present world possess; but you will know more of God and of Jesus Christ, and also of the eternal world, than they at present know." He then replied, "I thought it was something in that way."

Whenever his mind was under a cloud, or his religious enjoyment had suffered any diminution, he would disclose his feelings to his mother, and desire her to ask me to come and pray with him; and generally, after some time spent in these delightful exercises, he would appear to be greatly comforted, and say, "Thank you, papa, I am very happy again; all my fears and doubts are gone away."

After coughing severely on one occasion, he burst into tears; his mother, on observing them, asked if he was in great pain; he replied, "No, mamma." She said, "Are you unhappy, my dear child?" He answered, "O no, mamma; these are not tears of grief: they are tears of joy." On another occasion, being in great pain, which powerfully excited the tender sympathies of his mother, she said, "Are you happy, my dear boy?" To which he replied, "O yes, mamma; and I was just thinking, that if a father would not afflict his child willingly, I am sure the Lord would not willingly afflict me. I know it is all for my good."

The remarks which fell from his lips during his affliction were often highly interesting, as they betokened a mind habituated to reflection, and accustomed to treasure up in

his memory any passing incident or piece of information which he might meet with, particularly on religious subjects. One evening, after a long silence, in which his thoughts appeared to be engaged about something that interested his feelings, he said, "I have been thinking a great deal about Judas Iscariot betraying his Lord and Master. What a foolish thing it was! It would have been foolish if he had done it to gain all the world, but it was only the small sum of three pounds fifteen shillings, English money."

Mr. Dixon's servant calling one day to inquire how he was, he said, after the servant was departed, "Thomas is a converted man; what a blessing it will be to Thomas's children that their father is become religious—he will take them to the chapel, and teach them to read the Bible, and they will learn to fear God while they are young. I have often thought of what Thomas said on the way, when he was taking us to Handsworth Woodhouse. He said, that after he was converted every thing was new to him: And I am sure it is exactly so with *me*." At one time, when his symptoms appeared to be a little more favourable, and some person was speaking of his recovery, he said, "I do not expect to recover; but if I were to get better, I should like to meet in class, and belong to the society; yet I know, that meeting in class alone will not save me: I must meet with God there."

Like many older and more experienced Christians, although he usually found no difficulty in committing his soul to the care of God, he sometimes felt a shrinking at the horrors of the grave. He said to his mother, therefore, on one occasion, "Mamma, I have been thinking about the preachers' vault in the chapel-yard; as there are so many people buried in it, I think I should like to be buried in some other place. I am afraid they will be moving my body about after I am buried" His mother endeavoured

to call his attention away from the grave, and direct his thoughts to the happiness of the future state. He made no reply at the time, but a few days afterwards he called his mother to him, and said, "Now, mamma, while I think on it, I will just tell you that I feel no concern at all about being buried in the preachers' vault: It is all removed now. I am quite easy about it, for I am sure that God will take care of my body, as well as my soul."

He was exceedingly tender of his mother's feelings, and often anticipated the effect of his departure upon them; and this he did by suggesting the most seasonable and appropriate consolations. One day, he said to her, "Mamma, I was thinking about my clothes. I have observed how much you have been affected at seeing any thing which belonged to my dear sister. Now, when I am dead, you must not grieve at seeing my clothes; for you must think at the same time, how much better I shall be clothed in heaven." Dear boy, he used often to anticipate his being clothed with immortality. His sympathising mother seldom left her station at the side of his bed; but while she was performing the numerous and tender offices of maternal kindness to her afflicted son, the remembrance of her departed daughter would sometimes break in upon her spirits like the whelming tide. Sigh would follow sigh, sob succeed to sob, and tear roll down after tear. "O my dear Elizabeth!—My poor Elizabeth! My precious child!" were exclamations that often interrupted the silence of our sick chamber, and drew from my dear little boy, as well as from myself, the looks and tears of sympathy on his broken-hearted mother. During one of these scenes of painful excitement, which happened while I was absent, the child, thinking his mother's grief was carried beyond its proper limits, administered the following gentle but convincing reproof:—"Mamma, I don't like to hear you talk in that way; because it looks as though you did not think my

sister is gone to heaven. You call her *poor*, but if she is in heaven, she cannot be poor; she is rich,—she is happier than any of us.” But these words, tender as they were, only served to open wider the sluices of his mother’s sorrow; so that she passionately exclaimed, “Gone to heaven? O! If I should not meet my dear Elizabeth in glory, I fear heaven itself would not be heaven to me.” These incautious words started a question which was of too deep an interest to be overlooked by the inquisitive mind and tender feelings of the child. He however said nothing in reply, until I returned to his chamber, when the following dialogue ensued:—

Child.—Papa, I have an important question to ask you, and I do hope you will be able to satisfy me.

Father.—Well, my dear, tell me what it is, and I will endeavour to do so.

C.—Suppose I were to die, and go to heaven, and not find some persons there that were nearly related to me, and whom I very much loved; persons that I very much wished to see in heaven, and was much disappointed in not finding them there; do you think I could be happy myself in heaven?

F.—My dear boy, in answering that question, I must ask you several questions.

C.—Well, Papa.

F.—You say these persons were related to you.

C.—Yes, Papa, very nearly related.

F.—Were they related to the Almighty also?

C.—To be sure, Papa; because you know he made them.

F.—*Nearly* related?

C.—O yes; much nearer than father, or mother, or brother, or sister.

F.—You say you loved these persons?

C.—Yes, papa, very much.

F.—Did the Almighty love them as much as you?

C.—To be sure he did ; for he gave his Son to die for them.

F.—Did the Almighty desire to bring them to heaven ?

C.—Yes, that I'm sure he did.

F.—And must it not then be a disappointment to God himself, if, after all he has done to bring them to heaven, they are not saved at the last ?

C.—O yes, papa, it must be the greatest disappointment of all to him.

F.—Well then, my dear child, do you think that God himself can be happy in heaven if they are not saved ?

C.—Yes, to be sure, papa : He must be happy ; because you know God cannot be unhappy.

F.—Now, my dear James, if the Almighty, who was the nearest related to them, and loved them infinitely more than any other person did, can be happy if such persons are not saved, why may not you be happy ?

C.—I see, papa, it must be so : Thank you, I am quite satisfied now.

F.—My dear child, that question is founded on a false assumption ; because it assumes that we have good feelings towards persons which the Almighty does not possess ; whereas it was God himself that planted those good feelings in our hearts. Besides, on the supposition we should not find some persons in heaven that we desired and even expected to see there, we shall have no person to blame but themselves. And least of all could we blame the Almighty : For he desired more than any other being, and did infinitely more than any other being, to bring them to eternal glory.

Yet he was very sensible, during our repeated and painful afflictions, how greatly his mother was indebted to divine support ; for while she was attending upon him, he would say to her, “ Mamma, I often look at you, and wonder at you : Formerly, when any one of us was only a

little poorly, you looked so pale, and could scarcely eat your dinner ; but now, when you have lost my dear sister and little Henry too, * and though I am so ill, you seem quite different from what you used to be. I am sure the Lord is very kind to you, or you could not bear it as you do."

The ascendancy of his reason over his animal sympathies was another interesting feature of his character. This we had opportunities of observing on many occasions ; but particularly in the undaunted resolution with which he generally took his numerous and often-repeated doses of the most offensive medicine. An instance of this kind, I will take the liberty of relating : On one occasion, when his mother's resolution failed her in administering the wonted draught, she said to me—" I really cannot ask him to take any more medicine." Well knowing his character, I said, " Give it to me ; I can soon get him to take it." Going to the side of his bed, I said to him, " Come, my dear boy, I have brought your medicine." He replied, " O, papa, it is very unpleasant. I had rather not take any more." " Well, but surely you do not mean to say that its being unpleasant, and your not choosing to take any more, are sufficient reasons why you should not take it ?" He replied, " No, papa ; but I believe it will not do me any good." I said, " Well, my dear boy, but you must not set up your opinion against that of the doctor ; for you must think the doctor knows what is likely to do you good, much better than you can know !" " Yes," he replied, " but I do not think he knows so well as you do." " Well, my dear, will you take it upon *my* recommendation ?" " Yes, papa, I will." " Then, my dear boy, I shall be very much pleased if you will take it." The words were scarcely uttered, when he took the cup out of my hand and drank the nauseous potion at a single draught.

* The Lord has taken away four of our dear children in the space of about twelve months.

It was gratifying in the highest degree, to observe the dignity of spirit with which Christianity could inspire the heart of a child like him. His body wasted by lingering disease, his countenance stung up into convulsions with spasmodic seizures, and the unwilling tear trickling down from swimming eyes, would often excite our tenderest sympathy, and draw from our hearts the soothing of parental condolence. But our compassion served only to rouse the magnanimity of his soul; so that he would generally reply, "My dear Mamma, don't you be troubled: I don't suffer so much as you think I do, by a great deal; and you know it will soon be all over."

As he drew nearer and nearer to the close of life, he manifested a growing spirituality of mind, and a scrupulous delicacy about his own conduct and speech, as well as about the deportment of others. Miss S. happening to shew him a fashionable cap which had been sent her as a present, he said, "O Miss S. that cap is too much like the world." He sometimes desired his mother not to bring persons to see him who did not talk about God and heaven; and when he heard the brawlings and profaneness of people in the street, he would say "O, how sorry I am to hear the people shouting and talking in such a manner! it does so pain me I cannot describe." His mother's health having suffered considerably, by her almost constant attendance on her dear little son, the doctor thought it improper in her to sleep in the same chamber with him. This was a painful prohibition to both the mother and child; but the consent of the child was more easily gained than that of his mother; as he manifested, on this trying occasion, the greatest docility of disposition, a spirit of truly Christian resignation. One morning not long after this separation, he sent the nurse to inquire if he might be removed for a few minutes to his mother's bed, to which she readily consented. When he was removed he began to say to his

mother that he had had an unhappy night, and that he had been greatly tempted ; but he did not describe the nature of the temptation. His mother began to soothe his spirits, by reminding him of the goodness of God to him on former occasions, and by calling to his remembrance some encouraging passages of the Holy Scriptures ; and her words were accompanied with such a divine influence on his heart, that his burden was completely removed, and his soul was filled with consolation : His feelings were so truly ecstatic, that he burst out in the praises of God, and said, “ O my dear mamma, I am so happy—I am so happy : I cannot live—I cannot live, I am so happy. O how I should like to die. I should like to go to heaven now !” His happiness at that time was such, that his emaciated body would not have been able to support it for many minutes in succession. But it pleased the Lord to temper the brilliancy of these gracious manifestations, and to spare him for future communications of his goodness.

On the evening of the 16th, in our family devotions, we had a season of unusual access to God in prayer ; the power of the Lord was eminently present, and our dear child himself did indeed rejoice with a joy that was truly unspeakable and full of glory. When we rose up from our knees, he repeated the whole of Mr. Pope’s admirable piece on the dying Christian. I had often admired that invaluable composition ; but never did I see so many of its splendid beauties, or feel, half so keenly, its touching appropriateness and truth of description, as I did on that memorable evening ; while my dear little boy sat up in his bed, wasted in body, but magnified in spirit,—presenting a form, in which life and death, mortality, and immortality, stood forth in their opposite and boldest features,—and, while the dying child repeated feebly, yet distinctly, tremulously, but confidently,—not as the production of another

person, but as the inspiration and language of his own feelings,—

“ Vital spark of heavenly flame !
Quit, O quit this mortal frame :
Trembling, hoping, ling’ring, flying,
Oh the pain, the bliss of dying !”

And there was, all the while, such a striking disproportion, between the feebleness of his body and the energy of his mind, and between the weakness of his voice and the fervour of his spirit, as gave an indescribable expression to every antithesis in the poetry, and delivered an invaluable paraphrase on that noble sentiment of the Psalmist, “ When my flesh and my heart faileth, the Lord is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.”

The happiest day was yet to come—a day of unspeakable triumph to my dear little boy—a day that will never be forgotten by those persons who saw him on that memorable occasion—a day that is indelibly imprinted on the table of my heart. Hitherto, although he was evidently, to us, in possession of the Divine favour, and was the subject of a *real* conversion to God ; and though he had been favoured with some extraordinary manifestations of the Holy Spirit, and could rejoice in the hope of eternal felicity, yet there was no particular day which *we* could identify as the day of his reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ ; but the time now drew near, in which the Lord was about to bestow upon him the most formal and decisive evidence, that he was born of God, and made an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

On the morning of Wednesday, the 17th day of May, the day on which he completed his ninth year, he said to his mother, “ Mamma, I should like to have a birth-day cake ; this will be my last birth-day, and I should like to send a bit of cake to several persons that have been very kind to me.” His mother, therefore, prepared a cake, accord-

ing to his desire, and brought it up to him. He was highly delighted by his mother's kindness and being bolstered up on his little bed for the purpose, he took a knife, and divided the cake into small pieces, which he sent to different persons chiefly in the families of my colleagues in the ministry, saying, "Give my love to them, and tell them it is my birth-day cake, and that this is the last birth-day I shall ever have." In the course of the day, he was exceedingly devout in his spirit, and spoke less than usual, being apparently absorbed in the contemplation of his approaching change. I left him early in the afternoon to attend a Missionary meeting a few miles from Sheffield, and did not return until about nine o'clock in the evening. In my absence, however, the Lord had been with him, and had poured into his soul the most copious and ecstatic consolations of his Holy Spirit. When this extraordinary visitation descended upon him, he knew not for a while how to give utterance to his feelings, until at length he said, "My dear mamma, do come to me—do let me kiss you—I am so happy I do not know what to do; God has done so much for me." He now broke through every restraint, and poured forth a torrent of gratitude and praise. When I returned in the evening, I found him bolstered up in his bed; his countenance lighted up into a celestial glow; his brilliant eyes sparkling with heavenly joy; and his fluent tongue uttering some of the most surprising words which were ever dropped from the mouth of a child. His happy mother, whose tears were streaming over her face, and whose grateful adorations were breaking forth in rapid succession, sat at the table with pen and paper, catching the expressions which fell from his lips. When I entered the room he began by saying, "O Papa, I am happy! I am very happy. I have often heard you speak of my being born at Tiverton, and say how happy you were on that day; but I think I am happier to-day than you

were that day. The day of my death will be better than the day of my birth. God loves me, and has pardoned my sins : O Papa, I am so happy that I shall not want any pill to make me sleep to-night. I shall do very well now without medicine. O, I shall very soon be in heaven, and then I *shall* be happy—then I shall be *quite* happy.” And, locking towards his mother, he said, “ No, mamma, this will soon be all over, and I shall be in heaven : and O, how happy I shall be there ! *There* will be no taking unpleasant medicine—no taking pills to make me sleep—no dressing of my neck—no trouble of putting on my clothes, and taking them off again—no sleepless nights there, and no wishing it were morning. Then I *shall* be happy ! ! I hope I shall meet you all in heaven !” and then looking earnestly at me, he said, “ Papa, I am almost sure I shall meet *you* there.” His elder brother standing weeping at the foot of the bed, he said to me, “ I hope you will take brother William with you into the circuit, and talk to him, and pray with him as you have done with me. You do not know what good it has done me ; God has often visited my heart at those times ; and the last time I was with you at Thorncliffe, I felt the Spirit of God in my heart all the day.”

His little sister was the next object of his pious solicitude. He began by speaking of certain childish foibles, to which she had been addicted, pointing out the serious consequences of sinning against God. He then, as in the case of his brother, appealed to me, by saying, “ Papa, I hope you will talk to sister Marianne, and pray with her as you have done with me.” Dear child ! he believed, in the simplicity of his child-like heart, that, as the Lord had rendered my feeble endeavours successful in his case, no person could resist either my advice or my prayers. He concluded his remarks on that subject by saying, “ I hope, Marianne will be a good girl, and I hope she will go to

heaven ; for, you know, papa, she will have *another* motive to wish to go to heaven when I am there." O those blessed words, "*Another motive to wish to go to heaven !*" how many times since that affecting day have they been brought to my recollection, and applied to my heart ! Every happy death that has taken place, within the circle of my acquaintance, or the sphere of my information, has suggested to my feelings, " Another motive to wish to go to heaven." Every evening, and every morning, as they have succeeded each other, has proclaimed in my ears, and announced to the inmost feelings of my heart, " Another motive to wish to go to heaven."

Miss S., a young lady who had paid great attention to him during his illness, was kneeling down and supporting him in the bed, when he said to me, " Papa, it makes me so happy to hope that I have been of some use to Miss S. She is not altogether right at present : she is not converted yet : but she is getting into a good way." Then turning to her, he said, " I do hope you will get to heaven, Miss S. I pray for you, but you must pray for *yourself*. O ! what a miserable world was this to me before I was converted to God. When I was at Melton-Mowbray, I went down to the river a fishing, and got into the mud, where I had like to have been drowned ; but a man came by and took me out. If I had died then, I fear I should not have gone to heaven, for I was not then prepared to die." —His mother said to him, " My dear James, although I love you very much, yet now I see you so happy, I am almost willing to part with you ; but if you had not been prepared for heaven, your death would have been a very different subject to me." He replied, " O yes, mamma ; but it is *not* so with me ; I am prepared : God has been very good to me ; I think he has been kinder to me than to any body. Papa, *mine is an affecting case ; but at the same time, it is a glorious one. Who would have thought*

that God would be so kind to such a little boy as I am ; I am happy : O, I am very happy. I wish you would tell other little boys how good the Lord has been to me ; perhaps it may do them good ; perhaps they may come to the Lord Jesus Christ and be happy also."

He then said, " Papa, come sing for me ; and sing, ' O disclose thy lovely face.' " And much as my feelings were excited, I thought it my duty to comply with his wishes : so that I began to sing, and the dear child accompanied, with feeble voice indeed, but a with more than equal devotion. I shall long remember the earnestness of *his* spirit, and the tears that rolled over the cheeks of all present, while we sang—

" O disclose thy lovely face,
Quicken all my drooping powers ;
Gasps my fainting soul for grace,
As a thirsty land for showers."

When we had gone through the hymn, and every voice but his own was silent, he said with great earnestness, and with a look and manner that betokened the most confident expectation of future felicity,—

" Jesus smiles, and says, Well done,
Good and faithful servant thou !
Enter and receive thy crown,
Reign with me triumphant now."

I was now afraid that his extraordinary efforts would quite exhaust his strength and spirits, or bring on violent spasms, and be followed by a painful and distressing reaction, and therefore requested him not to speak any longer. This required no little effort ; but he complied, with the utmost cheerfulness, and laid down his head upon his pillow. After a short silence, however, he said to me, " Papa, I was thinking of my birth-day. I am nine years old to-day, and the world is nearly six thousand years old. Only nine years old, and yet this is my last

birth-day. What a little age mine is in comparison with the age of the world ! It seems to me like nothing at all." I replied, " Yes, my dear boy, but you will live after this world has been destroyed ; and there will come a period in future duration, when your age will exceed the age of the world, as much as the age of the world now exceeds your age ; and then you will say, I used to talk of the old world, and I have been in existence as many ages as the world existed minutes !" " Ah," said he " that's a subject which puzzles me very much. I can easily think of *going* to heaven ; I find no difficulty in that ; but I cannot think what it is to be there for ever. Eternity is a subject which I cannot comprehend." I sat up with him that night, fully expecting it would have been his last ; and such, I believe, were his own expectations. His mind seemed to be perfectly absorbed in the contemplation of that event ; for after every transient sleep, he would utter something about the happiness of heaven ; and on one occasion he started up suddenly, and said, " Is *this* heaven ; *Is* it heaven ? Am I *got* to heaven ? O, no : I thought I had been in heaven." He, however, survived the night, and was spared to stay with us a few days longer.

About a week afterwards, when the surgeon called, he said, " Mr. H., how long do you think I am likely to live ?" Mr. H. replied that it was very uncertain, as circumstances might happen either to shorten or prolong his life. " But," said he, " suppose neither of these were to happen, how long do you think I may continue ?" Mr. H. replied, that it was possible he might continue two or three weeks. " Ah," said the dear child, " I was hoping you would say only two or three days." And in this respect the Lord was pleased to give him more than all his desire ; for, early on the next morning but one, he was with Jesus in Paradise.

The final close now drew near apace ; although there was nothing in his symptoms, the following day, which might induce us to think that his end was so near. His dark eye sparkled with unusual animation ; his features had a surprising prominence of expression ; his intellect had all its native quickness and vivacity, and his conversation had the intelligence and interest of the conversation of a person in the highest health and vigour. In some respects, he resembled a dying Patriarch, more than a child of nine years old. As a proof of his perfect composure of mind in the prospect of certain and immediate dissolution, I might just notice, that in the course of this day he said to his mother, “ Mamma, I was feeling at my hair, (his head had been shaved while he was afflicted with the erysipelas,) and I think you might cut off a little on this side. You kept a lock of my sister’s hair, and I should like you to keep a lock of mine.” His mother, who often inquired into the state of his mind, happening to say, “ My dear boy do you still hope that the Lord has pardoned your sins ?,” he replied, “ No mamma, I do not call it *hope* ; it is more than *hope* ; I *know* that the Lord has pardoned my sins. I am happy ! I am very happy ; and I know that if I die now, I shall go to heaven.”

On the following night, which was his last, he rested tolerably well. Early in the morning, he desired to be taken out of his bed, and placed on the sofa, and the change seemed to be a great relief to him. He then desired the nurse to go down and take her breakfast, and his mother came back for a moment into my chamber. She had, however, scarcely left his room, when we heard him call for his mother. As his voice appeared to be stifled, our fears took the alarm at once. His mother returned to his chamber, and I followed her ; but, oh ! what were our feelings, when we saw our dear little boy, sitting upon the

sofa and vomiting a stream of blood ! He could just look at me and say, “ Is this *death*, papa ? Am I dying now ? ” I replied, “ Don’t be alarmed, my dear child : Only lift up your heart to God, and you will be with Him very quickly in glory.” He said no more—his head fell gently upon his bosom, and his happy spirit, freed from all the pains and sorrows of mortality, entered at once into the joy of his Lord. As I stood and gazed upon his lifeless little body, his own words came fresh to my mind, which he spoke to his mother a few days before his death. “ Mamma,” said he, “ when my soul leaves my body, how long will it be in getting to heaven ? ” But without waiting for a reply, he added, “ A quarter of an hour ? No : Not a quarter of a minute. I shall be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” No, my lovely little boy, if it be not now profaneness to call thee by such a name, thy liberated spirit shall not wander up and down a solitary and unprotected ghost : Angels have already carried thee into Abraham’s bosom. “ And the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed thee, and shall lead thee unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from thine eyes.”

Thus, by the Divine blessing, have I brought this little undertaking to a close. It has kept his mother’s feelings and my own under constant excitement, as every succeeding paragraph has been written in tears. The words of my dear little boy have been continually sounding in my ears, and thrilling through my heart :—“ Mine is an affecting case, papa ; but at the same time it is a glorious one. Who would have thought that God would be so kind to such a little boy as I am ? I wish you would tell other little boys how good the Lord has been to me ; perhaps it may do them good ; perhaps they may come to the Lord Jesus Christ and be happy also.” And now, my dear child, in the fulfilment of thy pious request, I publish this

small volume, which, as a little skiff, I launch upon the surface of this world's sea, committing it to the care of *Him* whom winds and seas obey. And may the Almighty God direct its course, and make it a welcome and successful visitant to many towns, to many families, and to many human hearts !

THE END.

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