

EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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AN ARGUMENT

FOR THE

SALVATION OF INFANTS,

WITH

CONSOLATIONS FOR BEREAVED PARENTS,

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED POEMS,

On the same Subject.

*age*  
*Washington*  
BY

GEO. W. BETHUNE,

Minister of the Third Reformed Dutch Church, Philadelphia.

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*17*  
*1824 a*  
IN THE NAME OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS!

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PHILADELPHIA :

MENTZ & ROVOUDT, 53 NORTH THIRD STREET.

John C. Clark, Printer.

1846.



BV4907  
B4  
1846

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in May, 1846, by  
GEO. W. BETHUNE,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of  
Pennsylvania.

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TO  
THE MOTHER  
OF  
THE PRECIOUS CHILD,  
WHOSE  
EARLY ASSUMPTION TO HEAVEN  
WAS  
THE IMMEDIATE OCCASION  
OF  
THE FOLLOWING PAGES,  
THEY ARE  
RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED.



## PREFACE.

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THE Author, having long felt the want of a little book for the comfort of bereaved parents, has written the following pages in the hope that they may be useful. He would far rather have suggested to his publishers a reprint of some work by a more able pen, but could not find one answering the purpose. There are extant several treatises on the doctrine of Infant Salvation, which well repay a studious perusal; yet the style of those he has seen, is too elaborate and scholastic for the bruised spirit of a mourner; while occasional sermons on the death of little children have scarcely sufficient fullness for general application. What success has followed his endeavours to avoid such defects, the

reader must judge; but his aim has been to make the argument scriptural and the consolation evangelical.

He has written, also, from a strong conviction, that the scheme of Christian faith taught by the Articles of the Reformed Churches in harmony with those of Geneva, which has been so often foully accused of consigning departed infants to a miserable eternity, affords the only satisfactory hope of their salvation. In this, as in every other respect, the doctrine of free sovereign grace through the vicarious merits of Jesus Christ, will be found to be most accordant with the merciful glory of God and the divine teachings of our ever blessed Lord.

It was not thought necessary to confirm the positions taken by citing human authorities of the highest and best accredited orthodoxy, though they might easily have been noted, as they were plentifully at hand; but the scriptural references have been carefully made, that the reader might be led



to search and see whether these things are so. If, therefore, a clerical brother should miss what he may deem desirable in a monograph upon an important branch of theology, let him be so kind as to remember that the design of this essay is the comfort of the sorrowful, not the instruction of the learned. The latter task would be above the Author's pretensions; the former within his office as a minister of Him who was sent "to bind up the broken-hearted;" and all to whom this little book may come, will pardon his failures as they have the proof of his pains. Yet he is not without expectation of reward from the grateful blessing of those for whose bleeding affections there is Balm in Gilead, though the hand, which would apply it, may not be as skilful, as it means to be kind.

## NOTE.

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AFTER every part of this little book had been fully prepared, and a portion of it had passed through the press, the very full and valuable work of the Rev. Dr. Smyth, on the same subject, was published by Mr. Carter, to whose enterprise the Christian public is so largely indebted. Had the Author known the intentions of his most estimable and learned brother, he would certainly not have attempted to follow. He cannot now draw back; as engagements with his own excellent publishers require him to run the risk of comparison between his smaller volume and one which is evidently the fruit of much research and pious zeal. Still he hopes, that, though both have been written with the same purpose, there will be found sufficient variety in the manner to secure some gleanings of usefulness for the later publication.

APRIL, 1846.

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## THE ARGUMENT.

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### CHAPTER I.

Introduction. Death of Children. Anguish of bereaved Parents. Consolation in the Gospel. The doctrine of Infant Salvation stated.

It is a painful, but ascertained fact, that one-half of our human family die within seven years, the greater part of these within one year from the time of their birth. This were enough to excite the inquiry of a pious philanthropist after the reason and issue of so melancholy a dispensation; nor will he be satisfactorily answered by the Scriptural doctrine that death has passed, because of sin, upon all the descendants of the first Adam (Rom. v. 12), unless he can see what part the

little ones have in the mediation of the second Adam, Christ Jesus our Lord. If "life more abundantly" (John x. 10), "grace much more abounding," over the condemnation (Rom. v. 20), be granted to every sinner who trusts in the righteousness of Christ, so that death itself becomes the entrance upon a felicity incomparably transcending the happiness of man's original innocence; what is the purpose of "God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. i. 3), toward those, "who are, without their knowledge, partakers of the condemnation in Adam," and yet are not capable of the personal faith which unites to Christ? Why are they born under the condemnation, to die before they can be brought, through their own choice, under grace?

The interest of the question is vastly greater with those, who have been made to take the dust of their beloved ones from their warm bosoms, and lay them in the cold, corrupting grave. The



strength of parental love is in proportion to its duties and trials. The mother's love grows with the burden near her heart, and, forgetting all her past pains, she makes no account of future cares, "for joy that her child is born into the world" (John xvi. 21); the father, as he receives his offspring within his arms, is conscious of a new tie to life, of a fresh tenderness gushing from his soul, and of an intense motive for honourable exertion. The babe's helpless dependence, anxiety for its slender health, hope of its riper years, as the harvest of their present watchful zeal, increase their fondness, and bind them more closely around their precious charge. God himself uses the fidelity of the father and the mother to show his own: "As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him" (Ps. ciii. 13); "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget (it is possible that so monstrous a thing might occur), yet will I not forget

thee" (Isaiah xlix. 15); and, when he would express the extent of his regard for our souls, he says: "God *so* loved the world, that he gave *his only begotten Son*, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16).

Very bitter, then, must be a parent's anguish, if the object of all this tenderness, and nursing, and hope, be torn away; its cradle-bed made vacant; its voice hushed, no more to gladden the desolate house; the many day-dreams, brightly picturing for it a life, long, honoured and happy, dissipated by sad certainty; nothing left to tell of its brief being here, but a little mound in the burial-place, and that inextinguishable yearning known only in a heart, which has beat beneath the sweet pressure of a child gone to the tomb. It is a sorrow, which may be alleviated, and through the grace of Jesus sanctified, but never utterly stilled while the mourner lives. Other children may be given; the lap and the cradle again filled; but there is a

chamber in the soul sacred to the unfading image of the early lost; and dear, above every other spot of earth, will be the brief grave, where its changed loveliness was hidden to moulder "out of sight" (Gen. xxxiii. 4). God, by his prophet, compares the extreme grief of repentance over the sufferings of Christ, "to the bitter mourning of a father for his child" (Zech. xii. 10); and, in another place, speaks of a bereaved mother as inconsolable, "refusing to be comforted because they are not" (Jer. xxxi. 15).

Is there no solace for such affliction? No promise of life and immortality shedding its rays upon the infant's mortal sleep? No warrant for faith to follow the young spirit, which God gave and so soon took away, within the eternity whence Christian hope draws strength under every other trial? Must love bury her face in despair, and yet say, "It is well with the child!" "Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

Some may answer, that departed children are

in the hands of God; and, when He has revealed nothing positively, we should submit without question to Him, who will do no injustice. But it is because they are in the hands of God; because he has revealed mercy perfect in justice; because he delights in salvation, and has no pleasure in the death of the sinner; that we are encouraged to search after consolation in the books of his Gospel, which were "written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4).

The great, the only sufficient consolation for a bereaved Christian parent, that from which all other consolations must be derived, is a conviction of the child's immortal, sinless, blessed, perfect life in heaven; and the doctrine of infant salvation, though (like several other important doctrines of the evangelical creed) nowhere stated by so many words, is clearly taught throughout the Holy Scriptures, as will be shown by the following argument.

Let the ground of our reasoning be understood.

It is not denied that infants are comprehended by the fall of Adam. There is no avoiding the conclusion that they are; nor should we wish to avoid it, since that would shut them out of grace in Christ. "In Adam *all* die" (1 Cor. xv. 22). There is no exception. All, who are in Adam, die; and, as death entered by his sin (Rom. v. 12), all, who die, are in Adam, fallen with him, and, unless redeemed by the grace of the second Adam, involved by the consequences of his fall.

Nor is it denied that the moral nature of the infant is corrupt. "The Scripture hath concluded *all* under sin" (Gal. iii. 22). There is no exception. The image of God was lost by the race, when it was lost by Adam, and he begat his children "in his own likeness, after his own image" (Gen. v. 3); nor can it be restored but "by renewing grace" (Col. iii. 10); wherefore the apostle, writing to the converted Ephesians of the power of the Holy Spirit toward them and him,

says: "you hath he quickened, which were dead in trespasses and sins . . . . and were by *nature* the children of wrath even as others" (Ephes. ii. 1—3). The infant Jesus alone, of all our race, brought into the world a holy moral nature; because, unlike all others, he was not "shapen in iniquity," nor "conceived in sin" (Ps. li. 5), but by the "power of the Holy Ghost" (Luke i. 35). Were the Scriptures less explicit, the fact would be clear from the universal development of sinful tendencies in the lives of mankind, which must be attributed to a common source in our common nature.

Yet we do deny that the mortality of infants, or signs of their early sinfulness, are proofs against our doctrine. These show that infants need salvation, not that they are lost. Were they only, however perfectly, innocent, they could have no part in the redemption provided for sinners, the atonement for the guilty, the grace of pardon, the church of the sanctified. The Gospel, which pro-

claims the good news of a Saviour for us, would bring to light no life and immortality for them; nor could they join the song of the Christian family above: "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood!" Our belief is, that

**THEY ARE SAVED BY CHRIST.**

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE ARGUMENT.

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### CHAPTER II.

I. The purpose of the Redemption. II. The method of Salvation. III. The connexion of Christ's office as Judge with his work as Saviour.

OUR belief, that all, who die before they have passed the tender age of infancy, are saved by Christ, is drawn,

I. From the purpose of the redemption: The glory of God in the salvation of sinners.

The glory of divine justice is more fully displayed by the atonement necessary to the exercise of divine mercy, than it could have been by the immediate infliction of extreme punishment upon our whole race; because it shows the loving kindness of Him, whose authority has been rebelled against, and the impartial holiness of His sentences



denouncing wrath as the penalty of transgression. But this was not the great purpose. It was a consequence of the main design, which required a justification of mercy to the transgressor (Rom. iii. 23—26), a reconciliation of the sinner's pardon to the curse against the guilty (Gal. iii. 10—13). "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world;" the world was condemned already; "but that the world through him might be saved" (John iii. 17, 18). "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (v. 16). At the same time we are assured, that there is no other salvation, no "other name under heaven given among men whereby they can be saved" (Acts iv. 12). Is it, then, according to His purpose, who "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all" (Rom. viii. 32), "and is not willing that any should perish" (2 Peter iii. 9), to send away from his blessed Presence forever, so very large a part of all who are born into this sinful world, as they

constitute who die while yet infants; who have never consented to Adam's sin by any conscious sin of their own, never have insulted his known will, never rejected his Son, nor grieved his Holy Spirit, but were ushered into life, and brought under the condemnation of their race, without their personal act or knowledge? If so, then, so far as numbers are concerned, the apostacy exceeds the redemption, and the abodes of the lost will be fearfully more populous than the mansions of the saved in their Heavenly Father's house. Let us harbour no such thought, but reject it altogether as utterly discordant with the character and purpose of Him, who is "in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. v. 19). If the Scriptures have not declared expressly that the dying infant goes to his merciful bosom, it is because so obvious a truth needed no such testimony.

We draw our doctrine,

II. From the method of salvation, which is all of grace.

“When we were yet without strength,” says the apostle, “in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (Rom. v. 6). Sinful man was utterly unable to redeem himself, or in any way or degree to assist his own salvation; and, therefore, help was laid for him upon One mighty to save, the only begotten Son of God incarnate as our Elder Brother (Ps. lxxxix. 19). Salvation is the work of Christ alone, appointed by the Father and consecrated by the Holy Ghost, to be the Alpha and Omega, the Author and Finisher of a complete redemption. The only expiation for sin he has made in his sufferings; the only righteousness, which justifies the sinner, he has wrought out by his perfect obedience; the only sanctification of the carnal heart is through the energies of his Spirit; the only acceptance of the believer is consequent upon his intercession; the only defence of the saint is through his mediatorial mastery, and the resurrection of the redeemed only through his victory “over death and him that had the power of death.”

The perfect deliverance of his people from sin for the glory of God, was, indeed, the purpose of the Mediator, for that is their perfect salvation; as the apostle writes to Titus (ii. 14): "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." Good works are the moral consequences of his effectual grace: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephes. ii. 10). They are the fruits of faith, as many passages show; the obedience wrought in the new-born child of God by the Spirit of adoption (Rom. viii. 14); the foresigns of heaven; the beginnings of eternal life upon earth. So that the man of God should be "careful to maintain good works," from gratitude to Christ, from obedience to his heavenly Father, from reverence for the Holy Spirit which dwells in him, from a desire to vindicate religion before the world, and from constant anxiety to make his calling and election sure. But, as is evident from the

fact that they follow, not precede, grace, his good works can form no part of a sinner's justification with God; as the apostle writes to Titus (iii. 5, 6, 7): "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

That salvation is through faith, and promised only to the believer, as we know from many Scriptures, does not make it the less of grace; for faith is nothing else than a reliance upon the mercy offered, and, therefore, can have no more merit than a criminal's hearty acceptance of a free pardon. "By grace are ye saved through faith," says the apostle, "and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Ephes. ii. 8). The whole arrangement of salvation through faith is of grace, not at all of ourselves, it is the merciful bounty of God. In-

deed, faith itself is the effect of grace, being wrought in us by divine power: as the Psalmist prays: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law" (cxix. 18); and the apostle for the Ephesians: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints" (Ephes. i. 17, 18). We cannot have any knowledge of the truths which we are to believe, unless we be illuminated by the Spirit of God; for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). So also Jesus is declared to be "the Author and Finisher of our faith" (Heb. xii. 2); and for the same reason the disciples said to him: "Lord, in-

crease our faith!" looking to the Source of their faith for the enlargement of it.

We may see some reasons why salvation is granted only through faith. The blessed Saviour has wrought out his meritorious work on account of his people, taking, as the second Adam, the place of the first, that he might fulfil the conditions of life, which the other had failed to perform; and the sinner, having by his own act consented to the sin of his first parent, it is necessary that he should, by faith, ratify his acceptance of Christ's righteousness, as his Surety under the better covenant. Faith is also the great instrument of sanctification, because, through faith, the converted soul apprehends the meaning of divine truth; discerns the excellent constraining love of Christ, and feels the various motives to obedience presented by the Law and the Gospel. In short, without faith, we could not be Christians, for we should neither know Christ, nor love him, nor serve him. Faith is itself a principal and essential part of our

salvation here, being the sight of God and communion with him on earth, "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. xi. 1).

Since, then, salvation is all of grace, to which neither our faith nor our works can contribute any merit, why should we not believe that saving grace is communicated to the souls of dying infants? In their case, the evidence and testimony of good works, the evidence of grace within them, and their outward testimony to the power of grace, are not needed; for they are not capable of such moral acts.

Neither is personal faith necessary to their union with Christ. They are not capable of actual faith, have never consented to sin, nor rejected Christ. Will the merciful Jesus reject them because of such positive inability? They are, "without their knowledge, partakers of the condemnation in Adam;" may they not, "with-



out their knowledge, be received unto grace in Christ?"\*

Cut off before the age of moral action, they need not the illuminating, upholding, strengthening, moving power of faith; nor does their place in the world require from them a profession of it before men. The language of all Scripture, both Old and New, declares plainly, that under the dispensation of grace, which began with the first promise (Gen. iii. 15), sinners are condemned, because of their impenitence and unbelief. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11.) And our beloved Lord: "He that believeth is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only

\* Baptismal Office of the Reformed Dutch Church.

begotten Son of God; and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John iii. 18, 19). Unbelief, obstinate from impenitence, is the ground of their condemnation. The apostle also, in Romans, makes a long and elaborate argument to show that the heathen are not condemned without similar cause, since, though they had not the law specially revealed unto the Jews, they "were a law unto themselves," "their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the meanwhile, accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. ii. 12—15. Compare x. 18—21). Will Christ then reject from the benefits of his own infinitely precious atonement, the infant that dies before it has any conscience, or is capable of repentance and faith?

Again we say, let not the argument be misunderstood. It is not asserted that the dying infants of a fallen race are saved because of their inno-

cence. There is no salvation by innocence spoken of throughout the whole Bible. The doctrine is, that they are saved in Christ, the second Adam, through his expiation, his righteousness, his intercession. We believe, that He gathers them all under the wings of his covering atonement; that He clasps them safe in his almighty arms; and that the Father, for his sake, receives them among the little children of His love, to the blessed mansions of his heavenly house.

Neither, is it asserted that they are saved without being renewed by the Holy Ghost. Their moral natures are corrupt. They are not fit for heaven until they are born of the Spirit. Our hope for them proceeds from the assumption, that, through the mercy of Christ, the Holy Ghost does renew them and sanctify them for the inheritance of peace. If they are saved in Christ, his Spirit is certainly given them, for He sanctifies all whom he redeems. Their incapacity to discern the truth, which is the great medium of the Holy Ghost

(John xvii. 17; 1 Peter i. 22, 23), does not prevent their being subjects of his sanctifying power. There is a previous, immediate work of the Spirit upon every soul brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, preparing it for the understanding and reception of the truth. In the parable of the sower (Matt. xiii.), the hearer represented as "good ground" (8), understood the truth (23); he, represented by the beaten "way-side" (4), did not (19); which is the same with what the apostle teaches in an afore-cited passage: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 11—14). The more that the truth of God is pressed upon the carnal mind, the greater will be its enmity against the God of truth (Rom. viii. 7). There must be, as we have seen, an "illuminating" influence, an "opening of the eyes of the understanding," before the truth can have its effect; in a word, there must be a preparation of

the heart, a disposition, which is not natural, to receive and embrace the truth. This work of the Spirit cannot be expected in the case of reasoning persons, when the truth is not presented; as is shown by the command to preach the Gospel, and the absence of true religion where the truth is not proclaimed. There is a mystery here (every thing about regeneration is in mystery), which has made much dispute among theologians, without, it must be confessed, their throwing any light upon the matter. The fact, however, remains, that the Spirit ordinarily (we would say, always), when he converts sinners of intelligent years, does so *with* the presentation of truth; there is an adaptation of his process to their rational, accountable natures, which we do not attempt to explain, for our Lord, when questioned by Nicodemus, did not; yet there must be a work of the Spirit on the heart, opening it (Acts xvi. 14) to receive the truth effectually.

Now, why may not this gracious work, this

preparation to receive the truth, when its faculties are sufficiently developed, be wrought upon the heart of the infant, thus fitting it for the light of truth in heaven? Nay, we have recorded facts proving such gracious influence towards "little ones." Our divine Lord's human nature was sanctified in the womb of his blessed Virgin mother. If His extraordinary conception be supposed to put him beyond the reach of our citation, the case of his Fore-runner is certainly within it, and he "was filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke i. 15). When the happy children were singing hosannas to Him in the temple, our holy Master rebuked the caviling scribes by saying: "Have ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings I have perfected praise?" (Matt. xxi. 15. Ps. viii. 2.) The little ones are, if we may so speak, peculiarly fitted to be subjects of such saving influences. They offer no resistance of pride, or prejudice, or worldliness to the Holy Spirit, and thus, neither

“wound,” nor “grieve,” nor “despise” Him; wherefore our Saviour on one occasion, having set a little child in the midst of his disciples, said: “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God; whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. xviii. 3, 4); and on another occasion, when they would have kept little children from being brought to him: “Forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. xix. 14). If a little child is a pattern of Christianity, part, at least, of conversion is returning to the character of little children. God, as we have said, adapts his methods to the circumstances of individuals; those, who have the light of the Gospel, being responsible for the greater privileges which they enjoy; and those, who are intended for special works, being prepared for them, often from the most early age. If a little child be destined to attain intelligent years, it may be left to hear the

Gospel, and be tried, like the fig tree in the parable (Luke xiii. 8, 9), whether it will profit by the privilege or not; but, if God determine to take the young spirit out of this life, before it is capable of personal faith, he may sanctify it for heaven by his immediate regenerating power. Would it not be for the praise of the glory of His grace, who sent his only begotten Son, as the Restorer of fallen humanity, thus to make heaven glad with the salvation of those, whose condemnation can spring only from the sin of their first parent? Else what is the meaning of his own word, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven?"\*

III. The connexion of Christ's office as the final Judge of the world, with his work as Saviour, affords additional proof of our doctrine.

The apostle, on Mars' Hill, declares that "now God commandeth all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day, in the which he

\* Doddridge's Lectures, cxlviii. Scho. 8.



will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 30, 31); which is according to our blessed Lord's own declaration, as recorded by the Evangelist (Matt. xxv. 31—46).

There is especial fitness in the committal of final judgment to the hands of the Lord. By his susception of the Mediatorial office, he graciously undertook to save his people in a manner which should highly glorify the Divine justice. For this end, he so fully satisfied, in his own person, the law of God which men had broken, that he acquired the right to bestow eternal life upon as many as would accept the provision of his mercy (John i. 12). In token and reward of his perfect atonement, "God has highly exalted him, and given him a name (authority) which is above every name" (Phil. xi. 9); and "hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be Head over all things to his church" (Ephes. i. 22), that he

might accomplish the full and final triumph of all his people over all his and their enemies. "All power is given to him in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18); all providence is committed to his hands. When, therefore, the end is come, and in entire consistence with Divine justice, he admits into eternal glory all, who have believed on his name and heartily repented of their sins, justice still demands, that those, who would not repent and avail themselves of his atonement, should receive the condign punishment denounced by the law against the sinner. The Holy Mediator then assumes the office of vengeance, and glorifies justice by the condemnation of all, who refuse to accept the grace, which would have glorified justice in their pardon. This is necessary to fulfil the condition of his delegated power. Upon this principle, his exercise of judgment will proceed, as the Scriptures plainly show. It is they who will not believe (John iii. 36, Mark xvi. 16), or repent (Luke xvi. 3, 5), or do good works in his name and for his sake (Matt.

xxv. 40, 45), that shall be condemned. "Every one shall receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). The dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works (Rev. xx. 12). Nowhere in any account of Christ's judgment, do we read of men being called to account for their concern with the sin of Adam, or (directly) for their native corruption. A new test has been instituted by Christ: The acceptance or rejection of Himself. If men reject Him, then indeed, their original guilt comes upon them, fearfully aggravated by their impenitence under the Gospel (John iii. 18, 19); as the apostle says, "If the word spoken by angels (the law) was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. ii. 2, 3.)

This being the rule of judgment by Christ, who

won his power to judge by dying to save, how can we believe, that those, who die at a tender age, will be sent away from the heaven, which he has purchased to bestow graciously upon his people? How can we believe, that they will be cast into that horrid place of torment, which he has threatened against the despisers of his word, and where the remorse of a guilty conscience is like “a worm that dieth not,” and “a fire that is not quenched?” They cannot be charged with impenitence, or unbelief, or wilful disobedience to his word; neither can they carry with them into eternity any conscience of sin; and, since He has been at such infinite expense to open a way of escape from the curse of the fall, he will surely save those, who can neither know their danger nor escape from it. Let us rather believe, that the Good Shepherd, who follows so zealously even the wilful wanderer from his fold, will gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom (Isaiah xl. 11). Blessed be His name!

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE ARGUMENT.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### IV. The favour of God in Christ towards little Children, as exhibited under the Old Testament.

THE foregoing inferences, fairly drawn from the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ, our ever blessed Lord, ought to satisfy every inquiring mind, and fill us with adoring, joyful gratitude, for such triumphs of redeeming love. The whole tenor of the Gospel is glad tidings of good will toward men. It speaks of mercy to the fullest extent (Heb. vii. 25), wherever its consistency with justice is not prevented by the obstinate impenitence of sinners; and claims our highest praise, by putting beyond doubt the goodness, forbearance and holiness of God. Thus, we should carefully avoid such in-

terpretations of the Gospel, as would make Christ a minister of sin (Gal. ii. 17), by affording the impenitent hopes of safety; but our caution becomes unbelief, when we confine the grace of salvation within closer limits than those which God has fixed. The great truth of the Gospel is, that God delights to save, of which He has given the strongest possible assurance in the mission of his own only begotten Son (John iii. 16). He has commanded his Gospel to be preached throughout the world, and so worded his invitations as to show, that whosoever will, may come and take of the waters of life freely (Rev. xxii. 17). Therefore, though He had given no tokens of regard for those, who, because of their tender age, cannot come unto him, nor put forth their hands to receive his grace; the silence itself, connected with the gracious spirit of what he has revealed, would warrant us in believing that not one of the little ones should perish. But He is not silent respecting them, nor has he refused them tokens of his

special regard, as may be shown abundantly from his Holy Scriptures.

IV. The favour of God in Christ toward little children, confirms our doctrine.

This favour appears in the very first promise of mercy, for it was by the seed of the woman that God declared the head of the serpent should be bruised (Gen. iii. 15). When, therefore, our first mother embraced her first-born, she saw proof of the coming salvation in her babe, and exclaimed: "I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Gen. iv. 1). So, throughout subsequent ages, believers under the Old Testament looked upon their offspring as peculiarly precious, because proofs of divine faithfulness. Farther to consecrate and encourage this sentiment, God appointed in the family of Abraham the rite of circumcision, by which the parent manifested his faith that God was the God of his child. It was not possible for them to believe the promise of a future Redeemer, without seeing that their babes were included by

its blessings. The child, if he lived to grow up, might cut himself off from the covenant by his own sin (Ex. xii. 15; xxxi. 14); the first-born of woman became the murder-cursed Cain; but the babe, as a babe, was from his birth an object of the divine favour and compassion.

Nor was this regard confined to the children of God's believing people; though, for obvious reasons, their privileges were greater. Among the grounds of condemnation, which, by his prophet, He denounces against the worshippers of Baal, not the least is, that they had shed the blood of many "innocents" (Jer. xix. 4);\* alluding, doubtless, as the fifth verse shows, to the cruel custom of sacrificing young children in honour of the demon. It was an aggravation of the crime that these children were descendants of the covenanted fathers, from whose faith their more immediate parents had apostatized; yet the prophet does not speak

\* Compare Ezekiel xvi. 17, "*my children.*"



of them in that character, but as "innocents," and, therefore, because of their helpless innocency, peculiarly objects of the divine care.\*

Another remarkable passage, often cited by advocates of our doctrine, occurs in the book of Jonah (iv. 10, 11), where God, answering with rebuke the unmerciful complaint of the disappointed prophet, says: "Should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left?" by which is meant infants. What we are particularly to remark, in these two citations, is the reason which God assigns for his tender concern respecting "little ones;" their personal innocence, their inca-

\* The author here adopts the opinion of some very able commentators; but he is aware that others refer the "innocent blood" also to the martyrdom of prophets and other just persons. Still, the sacrificed children are included, and the inference is strengthened by the babes being put in the same category with holy men.

capacity of actual moral wrong. Their adult fathers were guilty on their own account, and He might with justice have destroyed them; but the little ones, who "could not discern between their right hand and their left," the "innocent," were regarded by him with affectionate compassion.

Now, asks an excellent writer, commenting on the sixth of Jeremiah: "Can it be supposed that He, who undertook, in such tremendous language, to avenge their temporal injuries, was at the same time intending to destroy them forever; that He left those murdered babes an eternal prey to devils, in whose obscure and sanguinary orgies their innocent blood had been shed?"\* And again he says, on the ivth of Jonah, "Of the six score thousand Ninevite children, about sixty thousand were probably removed from life while they knew not their right hand from their left. It seems incredi-

\* Rev. Dr. Harris' "Grounds of Hope for the Salvation of all Dying in Infancy." London, 1821.

ble, that after these expressions of regard, such infants, dying without having forfeited this tender concern by personal transgression, should be excluded from the presence of God forever.”

Some may think that the force of these passages is neutralized by others, where God commanded little ones to be slain with their idolatrous parents, as in the case of the Midianites (Numbers xxxi. 17); but we have nowhere denied (what, indeed, every hour's observation should convince us of), that children may be involved by the temporal consequences of their parent's crimes, as those of Nineveh would have been if the repentance of the city had not turned away the divine vengeance, and as the little ones of idolatrous Israel were when sacrificed unto Baal. God in ancient times, as now, punished national sins with national calamities; and, when his decree went forth to destroy a nation by the sword, the children were not spared any more than they are from a pestilence or earthquake. Besides, his providence towards

Israel was peculiar. His design was, for wise reasons, to keep them in the land of Canaan as a separate people, their Abrahamic lineage pure, and their divine religion uncorrupt. Therefore, he cleared the land of those idolatrous nations which had possessed it, and provoked him to anger. Had any number, particularly of the males, been permitted to survive, there must have been constant insurrections, a depravation of their blood, and a tendency to idolatry. Severe as the measure was, and far from justifying imitation by men, it was as necessary to the conservation of Israel, as it was deserved by the Canaanite tribes. It is, however, by no means a proof that God pursued the little ones of his enemies with vengeance in another world. They passed from under the sword of Moses, punishing their nation for the capital crime of idolatry, before that judgment seat where every soul is tried by its own acts. If our doctrine be true, we see the light of saving mercy shed over the darkest and bloodiest pages of temporal providence.

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE ARGUMENT.

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### CHAPTER IV.

V. The favour of God in Christ to little Children, as shown under the New Testament.

WITH the fulness of time, the light of hope for the dying infant, which before was glimmering, became clear and bright.

V. Among the characteristics of Christianity, not the least remarkable and beautiful, is its tender favour towards little children.

The great Forerunner of our Lord came not in the strength of a full-grown man. The first intimation, that the kingdom of God was nigh at hand, was given in the promise of a little child: "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard;

and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his *birth*. And he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, *even from his mother's womb*" (Luke i. 13, 14, 15). So, when the promise was fulfilled, and the happy father held his son in his arms, he prophesied over him with gladness, and said, "Thou, *child*, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest!" (Luke i. 67—80.) The Harbinger of the Gospel was a *sanctified little child*.

Then, when to the humble shepherds in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night, the angel of the Lord came, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, what was his announcement of good tidings of great joy, which should be to all people? "Unto you *is born* this day, in the city of David, a *Saviour*, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, Ye

shall find **THE BABE** wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger” (Luke ii. 8, 12). They ran with haste unto Bethlehem, and there they found the blessed Virgin Mother gazing upon her mysterious **CHILD**, already named by the Holy Ghost, **JESUS**, the Saviour; **EMMANUEL**, God with us.

Wise men from the east, moved by traditions of ancient prophecy, the appearance of the star of which Balaam had spoken (Num. xxiv. 17), and, doubtless, by inspiration from on high, came with princely gifts to worship Him that was *born King of the Jews*; and “Lo! the star, which they had seen in the east, went before them till it came and stood near where **THE YOUNG CHILD** lay; and when they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw **THE YOUNG CHILD**, with Mary, his mother, and fell down and *worshipped* **HIM** (Matt. ii. 1—11).

Can any one read these passages, without perceiving that our divine Lord was a Saviour worthy

of all adoration and trust from his very birth? It was, indeed, necessary for Him to be born of a woman, that he might be truly man; and, having been born, to pass through the years which intervene before the full age, when, agreeably to Jewish rule, he might assume his office publicly. We see, also, in his feeble beginning, a parable of his cause, which, though apparently weak and of little worldly account at first, is destined to attain the highest glory. These, however, were not all the reasons why he came as a little child, yet a Saviour; passed through all the weaknesses, sorrows, and trials of infancy, being tried in all points as little ones are; and rewarded the care of his pious mother with child-like, affectionate observance. It was to teach us that he is the Saviour of little children, who bear his likeness more closely than the best disciple of mature years ever can, as well as of the adults who believe in his name. It was to claim the whole world of infancy as his own, however men might reject his grace.



It was to assure the anxious mother bending over his image in her child, that

“She may trust her sweet babe through the hour of danger,  
To the mercy of Him, who was laid in a manger.”

Nor did the “**HOLY CHILD JESUS**” wait long for an opportunity of saving his little fellows. The cruel Herod, fearful of losing his throne because the true King of the Jews was born, “sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under” (Matt. ii. 16); and, though the one he sought was carried beyond his malice, hundreds (or as some think, thousands) of babes and sucklings yielded their young lives to a persecution of the infant Saviour. On earth, “in Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and a great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they were not” (Luke ii. 18); but in heaven there was great joy,

as the happy angels bore on rejoicing wings to their Father's house the young redeemed, a numerous proof that Jesus had entered his kingdom and claimed little children for his own. The rage of Herod against the infant King, but sent the little ones to shout, among the blessed, His praises,

“ Who brought them there,  
Without a wish, without a care.”

Dear Matthew Henry, here sweetly though quaintly says: “A passive testimony was given hereby to the Lord Jesus, as when he was in the womb he was witnessed to by a little child leaping in the womb for joy at his approach; so now, at two years old, he had cotemporary witnesses to him of the same age. They shed their blood for him, who afterwards shed his blood for them. These were the *infantry* of the noble army of martyrs. If these infants were thus baptized with blood, though it were their own, into the church triumphant, it could not be said but that,

with what they got in heaven, they were abundantly recompensed for all they lost on earth. 'Out of the mouth of these babes and sucklings God did perfect praise, otherwise it is not good to the Almighty that he should thus afflict.' ” Good Jeremy Taylor speaks to the same import: “Jesus, when Himself was safe, might have secured these poor babes of Bethlehem, with thousands of diversions or avocations of Herod's purposes, or by discovering in some safe manner, not unknown to the divine wisdom, his own escape; but it did not so please God. He is Lord of his own creatures, and hath an absolute dominion over our lives, and he had an end to serve upon these babes, and an end of justice upon Herod; and to the children he made such compensation, that they had no reason to complain that they were so soon made stars, when they shone in their little orbs and participations of eternity; for so the sense of the church has been, that they having died the death of martyrs, though incapable of making the

choice, God supplied the defects of their will by his own entertainment of the thing.”\*

These auguries and promises of favour to little children, in our blessed Lord’s birth and nursing age, are most sweetly and richly confirmed by many passages and occasions of his riper ministry. Our beloved Master took peculiar pleasure in manifesting his tender love for little ones, and showed peculiar displeasure at those who doubted his willingness to receive them.

There are two remarkable instances of this preserved by the Evangelists; the one by Matthew xviii. 1—14, by Mark ix. 35—37, by Luke ix. 46—48; the other by Matthew xix. 13, 14, by Mark x. 14, and by Luke xviii. 15—17. We shall examine this last first, as the former presents us with additional matter for consideration.

Matt. xix. 13, 14. “Then were brought unto

\* “They were too young to fight, but not too young to be crowned with victory.”—*Cyprian*.

him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray (that he should touch them, Mark and Luke). And the disciples rebuked them (those that brought them, Mark), and when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased. But Jesus said, Suffer (the) little children (to come unto me, Mark and Luke) and forbid them not to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven (God, Mark, and Luke). (Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein, Mark). And he laid his hands on them (and he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, Mark) and blessed them."

Who they were, that brought these little ones to Jesus, we are not told; most likely it was their parents, perhaps, some benevolent lovers of children, who had faith in his blessing, yes, even in his touch. They were very little children, for Luke uses the same word, which is applied to the Babe in the manger. "Christ," says Matthew Henry in

his Sermon on Mark x. 16, "came to teach, to heal, and to bless. These little children were not brought to Him to be taught, for they were too young; nor to be healed, for we are not told that they were sick; but to be blessed, as his laying on them his hands signified." Now mark not only the tenderness of Jesus, but the reason he assigns for it. He takes them up in his arms; he lays their little heads in his holy bosom; he blesses them with divine authority. He does so the more emphatically, to rebuke those who would have kept them from him. The Master Himself, the Head of the church, the perfect Example of the church, clasps little children gladly to his heart. For what reason? Because of a tenderness, natural in so loving a spirit as his, toward helpless, smiling babes? That might well be. Or, that He might recommend little children to the care of his disciples? This was certainly true. But the main reason he gives himself: "Of such is the kingdom of God." What can this mean, for our Lord was

not wont to speak ambiguously when instructing his disciples, but that which the words express plainly. "Of such is the kingdom of God;" or, little children, as such, belong to God's kingdom by his gracious determination. If they should grow to years of personal responsibility, their circumstances would be different, and personal faith would be necessary for their salvation; because, then they would be no longer, except they were regenerate, such as his kingdom is made up of. But, if such as were of his kingdom died before they sinned by rejecting his grace, could they be rejected by Him, and sent away to the kingdom of Satan?

We are not to be turned from this ground, by the question, how can they, who are once of the kingdom of heaven, in after years lose their part of it? We take the words of our Lord as we find them, nor shall any theological dilemma stumble us into unbelief of them. God can reconcile difficulties which we cannot.

We, however, can see no difficulty here. The Master does not speak of any particular child or children, but of the character and state in which all infants are. While they remain in that state and retain that character, they are of the kingdom of God; when they pass from the one or lose the other, they are beyond the condition which is covered by the mercy of Christ. If any of those little ones live to bring condemnation on their souls by obstinate impenitence, it is clear that they never belonged to the elect of grace; but, if any die before such personal sin, it is equally clear that they are safe, because our Lord says, "Of such is the kingdom of God." He is speaking of them in the circumstances of little children, not as possible adults; just as God, under the Old Testament, promised blessing to the children of circumcision, thousands of whom, in riper years, lost the advantage of the covenant; though we doubt not that every one of them dying as infants were admitted to glory. When God determines the salvation of a soul, he



also determines the means of its preparation for heaven; and we know nothing of his particular purposes but by their results in personal character. The dying infant has the character to which heaven is promised.

It may be said in reply, that the Saviour is speaking of the character, which his disciples should cultivate, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven; not of the little children themselves. We admit the first; we deny the second. Little children are set before us as types, examples of that temper to which only the kingdom of God is promised; but what right has any one to say, that the Master did not mean the little children themselves, when he directly points to them? Besides, if it be true that all, who become as little children, are saved, is not the inference irresistible, that those, whom they become like, are saved also, when they go as little children before God? Why this perversicacious logic to shut out from heaven those, who die in the very arms of Christ? We

should tremble to adopt it, lest we come under the rebuke of those, who would have forbidden His little ones to come unto him. We can understand caution in so rendering Scriptures, that we give no encouragement to those who wilfully are impenitent; but what mischief can result from a belief, that He, who when on earth blessed little children, blesses them eternally when as little children they go to him in heaven? Let us rather, my reader, rejoice in a faith which gives to the Almighty, just and most merciful Saviour, the glory of so vast a salvation.

The other passage of which we spoke, occurs in Matthew xviiiith, from the first to the end of the fourteenth verse: "At the same time came the disciples of Jesus unto him, saying, who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them; and said, Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of

heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me. But, whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea. . . . Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do alway behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. How think ye, If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray. And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, He rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine that went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these

little ones should perish" (Compare Mark ix. 33 to the end, and Luke ix. 46—48).

Our Lord here answers the question of the Twelve, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? by showing them the character of a true Christian disciple, and the great regard he has for all those who bear such a character. To do this, he takes for his text a little child; not any particular child, but the one upon whom his eye chanced to fall. He "calls" the little one to him; from which and the term in the original, we may suppose that it was a "child" able to walk, though "little." He sets him in the midst of the listening circle, and says: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Childhood is the emblem of Christianity. Childlikeness is Christian character; and he, who is most like a little child, is

greatest in His kingdom, the most advanced and honoured disciple, because his "conversion" (8 v.) from a contrary spirit is the most thorough.

Having stated the character which He most approves, he goes on to show his extreme regard for all who possess it: "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me." This verse applies equally to little children and childlike disciples. In the next He speaks of faith, which shows that he is now referring more particularly to the true disciple: "Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, *which believe in me*, it were better that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Yet his regard for those, to whom he compares the docile, teachable, meek-minded believer, cannot be less than for the believer himself. He takes the believer's part, because the believer is like a little child. He gives several arguments, why all such little children and childlike believers

should receive from us this kind and considerate treatment.

(1.) They are identified with Himself. "Who-so receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me." They are united to him; he sympathizes with them; they are his own.

(2.) They are under the care of his angels. "Take heed, how ye despise one of these little ones; for in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven." Christ is the Lord of angels, Jehovah of Hosts; and he brings all his glorious retinue to serve him in his office of Saviour; as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says of the angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) In the Old Testament, angels were declared to be guardians of God's people (Ps. xci. 11, 12). Here our blessed Master confirms the truth. His angels are his people's angels, standing ready before God to be sent upon any mission that concerns the

welfare of his little ones: little children and child-like believers. Some find here the doctrine of particular guardian angel; whether that be true or not we are unprepared to say; but, certainly, all Christ's people are under the guardianship of Christ's angels. There is not one of all the radiant, winged spirits who do God's will in providence, that is not ready to be a servant of those whom Jesus numbers among his little ones.

(3.) They are peculiarly dear to Him, as Saviour of the lost (11—13); which he illustrates by an instance of a good shepherd seeking after a lost one from his flock, and bringing it back with joy. So does he love his "little ones" for the very pains it cost him to win them from ruin; and they are recommended to our love by the greatness of his love towards them and us.

(4.) The gracious will of our heavenly Father concerning them (14 verse): "Even so it is not the will of your Father, which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." The hea-

venly Father delights in the salvation of his little ones; and, therefore, they should be precious in our sight. Their Father is our Father; and He, who is willing to save us, is willing to save them. That childlike believers are included by the term little ones, may be cheerfully admitted; but the reference is most direct to little children; for it is not *such* little ones, but *these* little ones. The Master is not speaking *of* the Twelve, but *to* them. He is answering their question; and they are encouraged to trust in their heavenly Father's care, only so far as they were converted to be like little children. If it be our heavenly Father's will, that none who are like little children should perish; how can it be, that little children, who are set before them as emblems of simplicity and innocence, patterns for imitation, standards of character, should perish? It is difficult to understand, how any sincere reader can hesitate about such a plain inference. The words of our Lord do not render their salvation certain, if they should come to



years of intelligence. He is speaking of little children in age, and of those like little children in character. If the former should pass beyond the condition of little children, without possessing a childlike character, they would then be beyond the ground covered by this gracious text; but, if they died as little children, in either sense, it is not the will of our heavenly Father that they should perish. They are within the promise and safe. Those, whom the ever merciful Jesus unites with Himself; whom he commends in his name to the tenderness of his people; whom he commits to the guardianship of holy angels; and of whom it is the will of His Father, our Father and their Father, that not one should perish; must, dying in a state so fenced in, and made holy by his Saviour-sympathy, go to be among the blessed in that heaven, to the kingdom of which he has declared they belong, even while on earth.

These inferences are confirmed by our blessed Lord's rebuke to the chief priests and scribes,

when they were sore displeased at the hosannas of the children in the temple (Matt. xxi. 15, 16): "Jesus said unto them, Yea, have ye never read: Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, thou hast perfected praise?" This Scripture is taken from the second verse of the eighth Psalm, where we read: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, hast thou ordained strength, because of thine enemies; that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger." Whatever other meaning or reference these words of prophecy may have, the use which our Master makes of them, demonstrates an intention on the part of God, to derive even from babes and sucklings, a praise magnifying his grace by Jesus Christ, over all the power and arts and cavils of his and our enemies. Out of the mouth of such little ones he can ordain strength; his gracious influences can reach their young hearts, and throughout eternity, their hosannas, which were so welcome to Him in the temple on earth, shall swell his triumphs in the temple above. Neither

the little one, nor the suckling babe, shall be left in the power of the enemy. The strength of Him, who came as a "tender plant" (Is. liii. 2), (or, as the Septuagint translates, a tender or sucking child,\*) will redeem out of the power of the avenger, the world of infancy; their souls shall be His trophies of victory, and their immortal hosannas celebrate his complete conquest over him that had the power of death (Heb. ii. 14).

No, thou gentle, compassionate Saviour, who wert once the Babe of Bethlehem, and now upon thy throne, art worshipped as the Holy Child Jesus (Acts iv. 27), it is not thy will that any little one shall perish! The arms which were open to them on earth, will receive them in heaven. They shall lie there in that holy bosom, to which they were clasped here. Death is thy ministering angel, to bear them up to thee. Sweet, excelling heaven's ordinary praise, to thy ear must be the

\* See Joseph Mede's Sermon on Psalm viii. 2.

voices of their countless multitudes, as they bless thee in the song of the redeemed, thee once a Babe like them, and now their Elder Brother!

Dry your tears, bereaved parents, or turn them into floods of joy. The Voice that called them away, was his who said: They belong to my kingdom. The hand that took them from you, was His, who once laid his benediction on the infant's head. He has set them in the midst of his admiring disciples above. They are now the darling little ones of their heavenly Father's house. The angels, who watched over their cradle beds, are now rejoicing over their immortal beauty, as lambs safely folded where the spoiler can never come. Heed them not, who would bid you doubt; point them to the recorded censure of the Master, displeased at so unmerciful an unbelief. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." "Out of the mouth of" your "babe," Christ's "praise" is "perfected" in the temple on high!

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE ARGUMENT.

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### CHAPTER V.

VI. The multitude of the Redeemed out of all nations, includes all Infants. Vindication of Providence. The glory of Christ in his little ones.

VI. THE multitude of the redeemed.

“I beheld,” says the apostle in the Revelation (vii. 9, 10), “and lo, a great multitude, whom no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb!”

Such a promise of so glorious a consummation is an unspeakable relief, and a most welcome rebuke to our hearts, over which melancholy doubts

will come, as we think of man's vast family, and of the small number comparatively, who have given open proof of being reconciled to God, by the infinitely meritorious death of his Son. How few even of the called are chosen! and, though, doubtless, God has children unknown to the world, how many of those who profess his name, walk unworthily of their high vocation! How large a portion of mankind the Gospel has never reached! It shall yet prevail, we are assured by the word which cannot lie, over the whole earth, from the rising even to the setting of the sun; but how many nations, and tribes, and tongues, rose and passed away under heathen darkness, before the advent of Jesus! Since then, how many lands, islands and continents, teeming with population, have remained ignorant of God and imbruted by idolatry! How slow the progress of truth, while every moment thousands are dying into eternity, without the revelation of hope!

Has Christ, then, we painfully inquire, Christ, who was sent out of Divine love to "the world"

(John iii. 16); Christ, who made a propitiation for the sins, not of one nation, but of "the whole world;" Christ, to whose redemption is promised a gracious success, "much more abounding" over the apostacy (Rom. v. 20, 21); has he no trophies of his saving power, from those long, dark centuries, and the vast regions which have lain or still lie under the shadow of death?

The holy words of the beloved apostle, assures us that He has; and that there is not, has not been, never shall be, a nation, or kindred, or people, or tongue, which will not be found to have swelled that great multitude, which no man can number, who shall stand, sinless and victorious, before the throne, ascribing salvation to God, who sitteth thereon, and to the Lamb. Yet the Scriptures positively assert, that there is no salvation but in Christ, nor any other name under heaven given among men, whereby they can be saved (Acts iv. 12); that they who are "without Christ," "having no hope," are "without God" (Ephes. ii.

12), "having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them" (Ephes. iv. 18); and that "the wicked shall be cast into hell, with all the nations (or heathen) which forget God" (Ps. ix. 17). These and other passages put it beyond question, that the heathen are not absolved from their moral accountability for their actual sins, nor are received into grace through Christ; though, doubtless, God in his judgment will mercifully consider their ignorance; and their never having rejected the Saviour, renders them far less guilty than the impenitent of Christian lands. The apostle Peter, indeed, at the conversion of Cornelius, says, that "Of a truth God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him" (Acts x. 34, 35); nor should we dare deny to the sovereignty of God, the power of inspiring some among heathen nations with a longing after truth and duty, to which He will have a



gracious regard; but, from what we know of the heathen, such instances must be rare; and the words of Peter, it must be recollected, were spoken in reference to one, who, living among many Jews, had a knowledge of the true God, whom he served as far as he had light.

It is difficult, therefore, to account for the multitude of the redeemed out of all nations, except by believing that all among the heathen, who die before they have reached the age of accountability, are saved by the grace of Him, who has claimed early childhood as a part of his kingdom; a part, as John Newton says, so greatly "exceeding the aggregate of adult believers, that comparatively speaking, his kingdom may be said to consist of little children."\* They are born without their

\* The whole passage, from which the above quotation is made, bears so closely upon our argument, that we subjoin it.

"I think it at least highly probable, that when our Lord says, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and

knowledge of heathen parents, but by no intelligent act have they consented to idolatry, or sin of any kind; for what shall they be condemned by

forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,' he does not only intimate the necessity of our becoming like little children in simplicity, as a qualification without which (as he expressly declares in other places) we cannot enter into his kingdom; but informs us of a fact, that the number of infants who are effectually redeemed unto God by his blood, so greatly exceeds the aggregate of adult believers, that, comparatively speaking, his kingdom may be said to consist of little children. The apostle speaks of them as not having sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression (Rom. v. 14); that is, with the consent of their understanding and will. And when he says, 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,' he adds, 'that every man may give an account of what he hath done in the body, whether it be good or bad' (2 Cor. v. 10). But children, who die in their infancy, have not done any thing in the body, either good or bad. It is true, they are by nature evil, and must, if saved, be the subjects of a supernatural change. And though we cannot conceive

Him, who, while he will by no means clear the guilty, so “delighteth in mercy,” that he was born of a woman to die upon the cross, the Saviour of Man ?

how this change is to be wrought, yet I suppose few are so rash as to suppose it impossible that any infants can be saved. The same Power that produces this change in some can produce it in all ; and, therefore, I am willing to believe, till the Scripture forbids me, that infants of all nations and kindreds, without exception, who die before they are capable of sinning after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who have done nothing in the body, of which they can give an account, are included in the election of grace. They are born for a better world than this ; they just enter this state of tribulation ; they quickly pass through it ; ‘their robes are washed white in the blood of the Lamb ;’ and they are admitted for his sake before the throne. Should I be asked to draw the line, to assign the age at which children begin to be accountable for actual sin, it would give me no pain to confess my ignorance. ‘The Lord knoweth.’”  
(*Works of Rev. John Newton. Am. Ed. Vol. IV. pp. 552, 553. Serm. 48.*)

With what glory does this faith of ours invest the adorable Redeemer, upon whose word we trust, and whom we hope to worship with sinless praises among the shining host forever! Scarcely can we see that his victory over the last enemy complete, if death be permitted to hold the sweetest, fairest, least stained, and largest portion of our sin-stricken race, in his gloomy prison-house; and the harvest of salvation will be scanty, compared to the destroying angel's, if the young blossoms of humanity, cut down by his hasty sickle, may never rise again to praise their Creator's skill in the garden of the Lord. The "mighty Reaper" has not gathered the thick harvest for his own garner. He goes forth in all ages, through all lands, among all nations and kindreds, rescuing from sin, and crime, and sorrow, and eternal doom, the infant images of Christ and Christianity. He bears them far away, to be crowned with life and immortality, where they shall be safe in their Father's house, and on their Saviour's bosom. He anticipates

their sad repentance for actual sins; their possible rejection of grace; the severe discipline necessary to educate and purify the adult transgressor for the company of angels. Not one of all the angels, who do ever behold the face of our Father which is in heaven, serves more effectually the Redeeming Jehovah of Hosts; for, through death, Christ abolishes the power of death over the kingdom of infancy, transforms it into the greatest and most beautiful portion of his heavenly kingdom, and, gathering the lambs in his arms, fills the fold above with their happy myriads.

The most mysterious passages in the providence of God toward man are thus richly illuminated. From the submerging waters of the old world; the fires of Sodom and Gomorrah; the houses of Egypt wailing for their first-born; the battle fields of Canaan; the burning arms of Moloch; the waves of Asiatic rivers; the groves of the Druids; the murderous grasp of parents steeled against their hated offspring; the crowded pits, which serve for graves

to outcast foundlings;\* from the breadth of every continent, the shores of every island, where cruel heathenism has reigned, still reigns, or may yet reign, as well as from the consecrated chambers of Christian bereavement; Christ has called his little ones, and, by his own strong and gentle arm, caught them to his bosom. There has never been a moment, since the earth was peopled by its multiplying tribes, that the angels have not been busy in the holy delight of carrying up to God multitudes of babes and sucklings, to perfect his praise and chaunt hosannas within the upper temple, victorious through atoning, sanctifying grace, over the enemy and avenger.

With what satisfaction will the Elder Brother of man look from his high throne, the reward of his mediatorial humiliations, upon the purchase of his sufferings; and see, mingled with the sealed host of glorified believers, and with cherubim and sera-

\* See the next chapter.

phim, the great multitude, whom no man can number, of infant souls, whose lessons of holy worship shall have been taught them in heaven, before they have learned a single sin on earth. The martyrs, and those that reach the skies through great tribulation, stand nearest the throne, because the fires which purified them for bliss were hotter than those of less favoured Christians; but, surely, they, who stand next to them, must be the far more numerous army of little ones, whose spirits, stained by no actual sin, needed no such furnace of refining flame. Heaven has many joys, joys which no man has seen or could express, and all its joys must be from beholding the glory of the Lamb as it sheds blessing, and beauty, and truth, over all; but it were worth centuries of Christian service and trial here to reach, at last, the threshold of our Father's house, and look upon the happy family of his little children, growing in wisdom, and strength, and praise, under his delighted eye and perfect teaching!

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE ARGUMENT.

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### CHAPTER VI.

The Gospel the only scheme of pity for little Children.  
Cruelty of Heathenism. Infanticide. Classic philosophy. Sacramental Regeneration. Salvation by works. The Infant saved by Christ alone.

A MOST ungrateful wrong would be done to the glorious plan of salvation by free grace through Jesus Christ, if we did not remark how rich, beyond all comparison, are the comforts which it affords in the death of little ones. No other scheme offers us any reasonable hope.

Heathenism, cruel to all, is especially cruel toward infants. The apostle (Rom. i. 31), characterizes the nations who have departed from the true God, as “without natural affection;” and in



nothing is this more clearly seen, than their unnatural treatment of their helpless offspring. The Old Testament Scriptures often allude to the custom of sacrificing young children, prevalent among the eastern idolaters. Heathenism, like all superstitions, is a spirit of fear; and the parent offered the life of his child, as the most acceptable proof he could give of devotion to the demon he worshipped. Thus the prophet Micah makes Balaam say to Balak: "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah vi. 7.) Nor was it confined to the Syrian abominations, but can be traced as accompanying idolatry, more or less, every where; in Africa, Asia, and Europe to the farthest north, throughout Polynesia, and among different races on the American continent.

Infanticide was, and is, yet more prevalent. Even among the most polished nations of antiquity, the exposure of new-born infants, for various reasons, was so common, that an historian

of the second century after Christ (*Ælian*\*) praises the Thebans as singular in having a law against it. The rules of several States sternly insisted upon the destruction of such babes as did not promise, from their physical structure, good service to a warlike people. Philosophers in high repute to this day, as masters of various science, embodied the horrid expedient with their political theories, and advocated the murder of unborn infants as a check upon population.† The massacre of the new-born male Israelites by their Egyptian masters, was in perfect accordance with national policy at the time, revolting as it appears to us. Some of the Pacific Islands were nearly depopulated by such inhuman practices, before the arrival of Christian teachers among them. Throughout India, where superstition makes the slaughter of a

\* *Various Histories*, ii. 7.

† *Plato*, *Republic*, v. 6. *Aristotle*, *Politics*, vii. 15, 16. *Pliny*, *Natural History*, xxxix. 27.

brute impiety, human offspring are doomed without pity; and the Hindoo woman counts it mercy to save, by immediate assassination, her female child from her mother's misery. The Chinese, wonderful as their civilization is in many respects, scruple not at a wholesale destruction of children they deem superfluous; the crime is never punished; the government connive at it, and the police in some cities assist in it. Mohammed condemned it as existing among the more ancient Arabs; but the sun-brightened waters of the Bosphorus, and the fruitful Nile, engulf very many victims, whom no law defends from parental cruelty.

No classic philosophy could discover blessing for infants after death; nor was it consistent with any, even the best, of their theories. If, indeed, the spirit of the babe survived, there was no alternative to the belief, that its immortality would be the same state of undeveloped faculties in which it left the world. Hence they say nothing of the in-

fant's future being beyond this life;\* or suppose it to be a scarcely conscious existence among the sombre shadows of an eternal twilight.†

\* In the apologue of Alcinous, the most remarkable passage in classic writings respecting futurity, Plato says, that what Eros told of infants is not worth relating. Plato, Republic, x.

† The popular sentiment was not more cheering. We have many epitaphs and sad elegies on the death of children, showing the deep sorrow of bereaved parents; but none in the classic anthologies breathe "a lively hope." One of the most touching (from the Greek of Leonidas of Tarentum) is subjoined; and how exquisitely mournful is the desire of the broken-hearted mother, for whom life has no remaining charm, to join her child in "eternal night!"

Unhappy child! Unhappy I, whose tears  
 Rain on the urn that hides thy blighted years!  
 Thou'rt early gone, Amyntas—I alone,  
 Bereft of thee, through life's long pang must groan;  
 Disgusted with each morn's returning light,  
 Yearning for refuge in eternal night.  
 Sweet spirit, guide thy mother where thou art;  
 There only can be still my aching heart.

*(By the Author, from the Anthology.)*

Revelation alone defends the life of the little one by making it sacred to God; under the Old Testament in the promise of a Messiah, under the New in the blessing of Christ; and the same grace, which guards its cradle-helplessness from the unnatural hands of enemies here, promises the full redemption of its innocent spirit from the malice of its great enemy hereafter. Bless God, ye affectionate parents, whether your children are in your arms or in a Christ-consecrated grave, that we live not in the regions of the shadow of death, but under the peaceful, holy, hope-giving sunlight of the Gospel; which came in the person of a nursling Babe, on the bosom of a humble, pious mother, (whom no popish folly shall keep us from calling, after angelic example and according to prophetic command,) the "blessed" Virgin!

If we in any degree relax our hold on the doctrine of free grace, we lose the strength of this precious comfort. The infant has no promise of

salvation, but through the gracious tenderness of Jesus.

Thus, however edifying the commanded Christian rite of baptism is, if we confound it, as many have done, with spiritual regeneration, and make the outward washing the necessary medium of the inward, renewing grace, a babe dying before it can ask the holy washing by its own faith, is rendered dependent for its preparation to enter heaven, upon the fidelity of others; and, so, the greater part of our mortal race are, by no fault of their own, shut out of salvation. For this reason the Roman Catholics generally, if not universally, deny heaven to unbaptized infants\* (except those slain as martyrs); and assign to them, on the confines of purgatory, a separate *limbus*, or place of their own, scarcely more lightened by divine love than

\* "Infants, unless they be regenerated by God through the grace of baptism, are begotten by their parents, believers or unbelievers, to everlasting misery and perdition."—*Council of Trent*.

that the heathen dreamed of. Hence, also, the eagerness of that people to confer baptism upon all whom they can by any means reach. But theirs is at best, as Bishop Hall says, "The hard sentence of a bloody religion;" and part of that system, the policy of which is to claim the prerogative of dispensing heavenly gifts, to make earthly gain of them. It is difficult, nay, impossible, for others, who teach the same doctrine of sacramental regeneration, to avoid the same distressing conclusion;\* the supposition of uncovenanted mercy will not avail them, for there is no such mercy written of in the Scriptures; and, if it be necessary to enter heaven, that we be personally and visibly united to an outward church on earth, the infant, dying unbaptized, must have some other destiny, than eternal life in the presence of God.

A like difficulty clings about the doctrines

\* It is the doctrine of the Oxford Tracts, that no unbaptized person can enter heaven. See *Pusey on Baptism, and Bridges' Sacramental Instruction*.

of Justification by good works, and of Election because of foreseen good works. Such saving conditions cannot be predicated of dying little ones. They have neither present nor anticipated merit of their own. They must be elected if saved, and saved if elected, only by free sovereign grace.

Nor (as was said in the beginning of this treatise) should our hope for them be based upon their innocence. The Scriptures warrant no such expectation; but, on the contrary, declare the whole race of Adam involved by the consequences of his fall, and, as a visible proof of this, death has passed upon all alike. It is in Christ alone, Christ the second Adam, Christ the Almighty Saviour, Christ the only Mediator between God and man, that they can be saved; but in him there is plenteous redemption, and He has claimed them for his kingdom; nor shall any be able to pluck them out of his hand.

Blessed be thy name, O Lord Jesus Christ, for



our knowledge of thy full salvation, free as it is full, which embraces as securely the souls of babes and sucklings, as thine arms did embrace fondly their little forms, when unbelieving men would have kept them from thee! Their Hosannas were grateful to thine ear, when thy glory was hidden from the wise and prudent; how surpassingly sweet must they be to thee now, as thou dost look from thy cross-bought throne upon the countless throng in sinless, immortal beauty, forever safe from sin, and sorrow, and shame, through thine abounding love!

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE CONSOLATION.

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### CHAPTER VII.

Affliction from God and comfort only from Him, through Jesus Christ, to the penitent. Lessons of affliction for the unconverted. Exhortation to repentance and faith.

“AFFLICTION cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground” (Job v. 6). There is an infinitely wise, omnipotent, ever active, ever present Will, ruling over, ordering and disposing all. Afflictions, of whatever kind, are from God; they are laid upon us by his hand; so there can be no true comfort under them but from God; for if, “when He giveth quietness, none can make trouble,” when He maketh trouble, none can give quietness. A worldly spirit may be callous to trials, which would sorely better cultivated

affections ; it may drown grief in silly amusement, selfish pleasure, or absorbing occupation ; it may, after some lapse of time, forget ; but the true heart, whose sensibilities are the more acute as they are nicer, that shrinks from the unseemliness of hollow mirth, and would not purchase an age of stupid ease by one hour of forgetfulness, thirsts for comfort which reason will approve, and religion alone can afford, a reconciliation of present darkness with hope, an assurance that, though we see it not, God is working all for good.

Comfort from God can reach us only through Jesus Christ. He is the only Mediator, the only channel of communication between God and man. We are all sinners. Death has come upon us all by sin ; and death, with its painful precedents and sad consequents, occasions the greater part of our troubles here. There is no healing of our sorrows, but through the cleansing away of our sins. So long as we remain unpardoned, unjustified, unreconciled to God, He has "a controversy" with

us. He is our angry Sovereign; and our sufferings, whether of body or soul, are proofs of His displeasure and of our condemnation, foreshadowings of death eternal, more than portents, the beginning of eternal wo; except we use them as warnings to a hearty repentance. But, when, through his gracious assistance, we turn from our sins unto God, and, by faith in his name, become united to Christ, God, for Christ's sake, accepts us in Him; we are taken under his paternal care, and all our trials are changed into proofs of his faithful love, disciplining us for heaven by weaning us from earth. God is on our side; all providence is in the hands of Christ; therefore nothing can be against us, but all things must work together for good to them that love God (Rom. viii. 28).

We have, then, no comfort in the Gospel for such afflicted persons as refuse to submit themselves unto God by accepting his grace through Christ. There is not a promise applicable to them

in all the word of life. We do not say this harshly, or without feeling for them in their trouble; but in candour and truth. Out of Christ "God is a consuming fire;" and the blessed Saviour himself has said, that "he which believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God;" and "he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 18, 36). God has demonstrated at once the richness of his mercy and the difficulty of its consistency with his justice, by the provision he has made for its exercise in the mediation of Christ; so that, while he freely offers rest and satisfaction to those willing to be saved from sin and sorrow in the way he has appointed, all who refuse his grace are under greater condemnation. Very melancholy, then, is their condition, who, notwithstanding the warnings of God's afflictive hand, refuse to bow themselves in faith at the cross, and thus suffer without the blessing of God in this life,

or the hope of comfort in the life to come! They are adding to their sin in breaking the law, and their greater sin in denying the Gospel, the yet farther obstinacy of hardening their hearts under his rebuke and judgments.

Therefore, we do most earnestly entreat any afflicted, yet unbelieving sinner, who may read these pages, to seek, without delay, the salvation and the comfort which is found only in Jesus.

Your sorrow should convince you, that you are in the hands of God; and that, however independent you have desired to be of Him, he can take away, in a moment, all you hold dear or precious. Heavy as your affliction is, it needed but a slight stroke of his rod to lay it upon you; and if you suffer now so keenly, how can you expect to endure his unrestrained wrath, his punishing fires, forever? The happiness you have lost came from Him; he has taken away what he gave; and, if your thirst be so great at the drying up of a rill

that once flowed down to you from the Fountain of Life, of what satisfaction do you deprive yourself in refusing the overflowing Spring of all joy? O cease your despair over the dry dust of the empty channel; and let it be a path to lead you upward to Him, whose blessing is as full of joy as it is of mercy!

Your sorrow may also teach you how very unmindful you have been of God; how very ungrateful you have been for his care, and how criminally idolatrous of his creatures. Before your trouble came, you thought little, perhaps not at all, of His goodness, from whom you received the gift whose loss you now deplore; you held it as your own, instead of a treasure lent you for God's glory; and you enjoyed the pleasure, and cherished high hopes of future enjoyment, without any reference to his will. Now that the idol has been cast down broken to the dust, your heart is empty and desolate; you say in your spirit: "My god is taken away, and what have I left!" Ah! dear friend,

the emptiness of your desolate heart now, proves that it never was the temple of God; but that you have lived without him.

Your sorrow, if you will use it aright, is sent to you for good. Affliction is one of the means by which God prepares our hard hearts for the reception of his truth; as "He maketh the earth soft with showers" for the reception and blessing of the seed-grain. When God utterly forsakes impenitent sinners, he abandons them to their pride and worldly desires, and lets them have a full swing of their godless plans. Their worldly prosperity may be great; they may "not be in trouble, nor plagued as other men; their eyes may stand out with fatness, and they have more than heart could wish" (Ps. lxxiii. 3—9). Nothing occurs to break the tide of their enjoyments, to humble their pride, or to remind them of God, judgment, and eternity. Thus are they given over to strong delusions, believing lies, and, perhaps, "without any bands in their death," they go, from a life of



undisturbed indulgence, to the ceaseless pangs of death eternal (2 Thess. ii. 10—12). Not so has God dealt with you. He has sent trouble into your dwelling, and sorrow into your heart. He has broken the routine of your worldly engagements, and the succession of your cherished joys. He has mercifully forced you to look upon death, and feel your kindred to the grave. Very hard, indeed, must your heart be, very blind your reason and conscience, if you have no thought of His power, your responsibility, and the endless future. The world, which absorbed all your hopes and cares, is now made dark. You see the perishableness of its best things, and its insufficiency to sustain or to cheer when the hour of suffering comes. The gourd, which sprang up as it were in a night, and made you forget the sheltering wings of the Eternal, has withered; and you cry out from anguish of spirit, "It is better for me to die than to live" (Jonah iv. 5—10)! Nay, you have turned to look, if no more, at religion, and wonder whether

you might not obtain some of the comfort, which Christian faith seems to afford your pious friends. They may have come around you, and spoken more closely than ever before, of your immortal interest; perchance, asking leave to pray at your side, and laying some book of Christian advice on your table. Even the usages of society require, for a time, your seclusion from the gaieties and interchanges of the world. Your sadness itself disposes you to serious reflection.

All these circumstances show that God has not abandoned you; but is calling you through his providence, concurring with his word, to turn from your past errors and find peace in his blessed service. O that you would not be disobedient to the heavenly voice! You are not prepared to deny the truth or the necessity of religion. You are not willing to die without a hope in Christ; but have had some vague intention, at some more convenient season, to seek the favour of God. When can you expect a better opportunity? God,

who has promised blessing to the mourner; Christ, who was the Man of sorrows; and the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of consolation, are especially near us in times of affliction. You have more leisure, and less interruption, from the tempting allurements of a worldly life. The interest of pious friends is awakened on your behalf, and they will assist you by their sympathies, advices, and prayers. Your heart, broken with grief, is more easy to be broken by contrition. There are scores of holy texts addressed to you, which were silent in your days of ease and pleasure. There is an aching void in your bosom, craving to be filled with what the world cannot give. If ever salvation was brought nigh to you, it is now. "To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts!"

In a little while, the advantage of your present sorrow will pass away. The strong urgencies of life will draw you from your melancholy retreat. You will become, at least, more accustomed to your trial. Fresh engagements will thicken

around you. Fresh cares, if not pleasures, will occupy your thoughts and affections. You may become (start not at the suggestion, but look around and see to how many it has happened, and why not to you?) as worldly as though you had never been afflicted. Then, if God still have mercy in store for you, it will need another and sharper stroke to arouse you again. Your conscience will have been made callous by repeated wounds; and each added cicatrice harden your heart against the impressions of grace. Put not your merciful Father to such severity! Presume not thus upon his long-suffering goodness! Resist not the striivings of his compassionate spirit; but by a humble faith and earnest repentance, turn your sorrow into joy; and out of the bitterness of death extract the sweet assurance of everlasting peace!

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE CONSOLATION.

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### CHAPTER VIII.

Afflictions of the believer not strange. No chastisement without actual suffering. Sorrow not forbidden, but should be regulated. I. Our afflictions part of Providence; as regards ourselves: as regards others: as regards the divine glory.

To the true believer, every trial abounds in comfort; so much so, that the apostle James begins his strong epistle by exhorting his brethren "to count it all joy when they fall into divers temptations" (or trials, for the words are synonymous); and again he tells them, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation" (i. 12); which, indeed, he might well say, since our divine Lord set him the example, when he pronounced "those that mourn,"

“blessed,” because “they shall be comforted” (Matt. v. 4). Instead of thinking afflictions strange or mysterious; when we consider our many infirmities, and the great need we are in of being chastened from our sin, we should rather wonder at our suffering so little; especially, as we are told, that it is “through much tribulation we are to enter the kingdom of God” (Acts xiv. 22); and remember out of what great tribulation the martyrs and confessors reached their rank at the foot of the throne (Rev. vii. 14). The Scriptures, throughout, speak of God’s people as a people of sorrow, for they are stored full of promises to the sad and the weary and the heavy laden; nay, the prophetic command to the Messiah was, “Comfort ye my people” (Is. xl. 1), and the name by which his people waited for Him was, “The Consolation of Israel” (Luke ii. 25). Theirs must be a condition of trial, whose God is “the God of all comfort” (2 Cor. i. 3). If we were free from trial, the doubt might well arise in our minds, whether we

were true followers of our great Example, the Man of Sorrows; or children of our heavenly Father, "for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" (Heb. xii. 7.) None can follow after Jesus, except they bear a cross; and none be partakers of the promises, except through faith and patience they inherit them.

Because there is comfort for the believer in every trial, it does not follow, that pain is taken out of it. If we did not suffer, we should not be tried. That is no chastisement, which causes no suffering. Comfort itself supposes sorrow; for it is the alleviation, not the extinction of grief. The strongest faith, the most assured hope, the humblest submissiveness, do not render us insensible to affliction; for, then, it would cease to be affliction. Callousness, under what God means for chastening, would be despitefully resisting it, as an obstinate child braces himself to a dogged indifference under his father's rod; which is what the author of the epistle to the Hebrews condemns, when he

says: "My son, *despise* not thou the chastenings of the Lord" (Heb. vii. 5). There never could be greater faith, or hope, or submission, than Jesus manifested; yet there never was sorrow like his sorrow, and through his actual sufferings we are saved. The Christian is, from his renewed nature, more sensitive to trial, because his affections are stronger, and his sensibilities more refined. Our religion, unlike the philosophical attempts of the Stoics, who would make men insensible to grief through insensibility to joy, by increasing our joys, increases our sense of sorrow. Our perfect joy, when all sorrow shall have passed away, is to come. They know not the mind of Christ, who pronounce sorrow necessarily rebellion. There is a sorrow "which worketh death," but it is "the sorrow of the world;" and there is "a godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation" (2 Cor. vii. 9, 10). Jesus once said to a mourner, "Weep not" (Luke vii. 18); but it was when he meant to give back the child she



wept for, into her bosom. He himself wept at the tomb of his friend, though in another moment he called Lazarus forth to life. Nay, the Holy Ghost expressly tells us, that, “Now no chastening *for the present* seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby” (Heb. xii. 11); the grievous exercise at the time being necessary to “the peaceable fruit of righteousness” afterward.

Chide not yourself, then, afflicted believer, because you cannot help but mourn; neither strive vainly to dam up the tide of your sorrow. God meant that you should mourn, when he sent affliction upon you; and he commands you to pour out all your sorrows before him. You will gain nothing by the attempt to stifle your grief; for you cannot, except by stifling your heart. Tears are the relief which Nature has provided, that brain and heart may not burst; and Jesus has sanctified them against that hour, when he shall wipe the

last tear from the face of his chosen (Rev. xxi. 1). It were treason to humanity, and rebellion against the God who made us, not to weep when a portion of our life and a gift of his blessing is taken away. The Father has smitten you with his rod; kiss it as you weep; then turn your face into his bosom, like a penitent, trustful child, to sob out all your sorrows there.

Yet, here there must be caution. If we are not to despise the chastening of the Lord, neither are we "*to faint*, when we are rebuked of him." If all were comfort, there were no sorrow; if all were sorrow, no comfort; the Gospel would fail of its end, and the Christian lose his character. Thus the wise, tender-hearted Flavel writes at the beginning of his "*Token for Mourners*:" "To be above the stroke of passion, is a condition equal to angels; to be in a state of sorrow without the sense of sorrow, is a disposition beneath beasts; but duly to regulate our sorrows and bound our passions under the rod, is the wis-

dom, duty and excellence of a Christian. He, that is without natural affections, is deservedly ranked among the worst of heathens; and he, that is able rightly to manage them, deserves to be numbered among the best of Christians. Though when we are sanctified, we put on the divine nature; yet, till we are sanctified, we put not off the infirmities of human nature. Whilst we are within the reach of troubles, we cannot be without the danger, nor ought we to be without the fear of sin; and it is as hard for us to escape sin, being in adversity, as becalming in prosperity.”

Our aim under affliction, therefore, should be, so to regulate our sorrows by the help of divine grace, that we may have the advantage of such divine comfort as the Gospel freely affords. In order to do this,

1. Let us consider our afflictions as part of God's providence.

*As regards ourselves.* It is a most joyful truth, the belief of which distinguishes us from atheists

and heathen, that “the Lord reigneth” (Ps. xcvi. 1); because his wisdom and power being infinite, there can be neither error nor failure in his disposition of things; and he has by a gracious covenant made his providence the care of a tender, faithful Father over all those who love and trust in him (Ps. ciii. 11—14). We should see not only the hand of God, but the hand of our heavenly Father, full of mercy and loving kindness, in all that befalls us, whether afflictive or otherwise; and, therefore, should believe it to be best for us because it is his will.

Our own knowledge is so very small, and our strength less, that we would not for a moment think of taking the general conduct of our affairs out of His hands; shall we then wish to alter any particular instance of His doing, because it gives us present pain, and we cannot see the precise reason for it? It is His doing, therefore it must be right; and, if it be painful, He meant that it should be. It may very well be mysterious, for his thoughts and

ways are incomparably above ours; we must be as wise as God, or God as limited in comprehension as ourselves, before we can understand all the reasons of his Providence; but we ought to be sure that He is as faithful in mercy, as He is sovereign in ruling: "Clouds and darkness are round about him;" but "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne" (Ps. xcvi. 2). There is the ground of our confidence, and there should be the source of our comfort.

A landsman at sea understands little how a vessel is worked; he sees her often heading almost back from her course; making many strange and contrary traverses; sometimes stript of her canvass, when all to him seems fair; sometimes strong sails set upon her, when the storm is driving fiercely; yet he trusts in the presiding skill, nor would dare to give, much less countermand, an order; for, in the extremity of his own ignorance, he has the comfort of knowing that the pilot knows. So in the hour of gloom, let us trust

in God; for to Him the night shineth as the day; and what to us appears adverse, to Him is the guidance of our prosperity.

He would be an unfaithful physician, who should spare the caustic, the probe, or the knife, because of the patient's shrinking; or suffer the disease to triumph, rather than cause a few sickening qualms, which might throw off the evil. So should we see in the very painfulness of our afflictions, a proof that their severity was needed for our moral well-being, since our merciful Lord, the Good Physician, would not unnecessarily afflict us.

A parent would be cruel, who should suffer his child to put its little hand into the flame; or refuse it nothing that it craved, however pernicious; or suffer it to keep what it was turning to mischief against itself; or allow it the extravagance of passion unchecked by chastisement. It is the parent's office to employ superior wisdom and larger experience for the good of the child, even against

its rebellious will. So, since God has assured us that He is our most merciful and faithful Father, we should readily submit to our restraints, deprivations, losses and sufferings, as so many proofs that a wise, unerring love, is dealing with us in the best manner for our profit.

The passenger thanks his pilot, when the port is safely gained; the patient rewards his physician, when his painful cure is effected; the grown-up man looks back with satisfaction upon the parental discipline of his youth; and, though we see not the reason of them now, we shall bless God in heaven, and ought to bless him on earth, for all the trials we meet along our way there.

Our personal sorrows are more to us than they can be to another, or another's can be to us; yet they are not extraordinary. They must be great, indeed, if they bear any comparison with those of Job or Daniel, or the stoned prophets, or the Maccabees, or the apostles, or the early confessors and martyrs, or the Huguenots and mountain Chris-

tians, or the saints of God in Scotland and England and the Low Countries, under their persecutions; or, above all, with the sorrows of Him, who is our Forerunner, Head and Example. All God's best saints have been afflicted like their Master, "the stricken of God." It is God's fixed method, that obedience must be learned through suffering (Heb ii. 10, v. 8). We professed our willingness to endure his chastisements, when we entreated him for Christ the Sufferer's sake, to be our almighty and most merciful Father. It were then most unreasonable and presumptuous to expect that God would, in our case, vary his determined rule, and *miraculously* (for that is a miracle which is a deviation from the regular course of Providence) work our sanctification without afflicting us. Nay, to decline chastisement, is to refuse the proof of our adoption: "For, if we endure chastisement, God dealeth with us as with sons; for what son is he, whom the father chasteneth not? But if we be without chastisements, whereof *all*



*are partakers*, then are we bastards and not sons" (Heb. xii. 7, 8). The end of our chastisement is "our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness" (10 v.).

When, therefore, our sorrows blind us to the faithfulness of God, and we love Him less, and not more, on account of them; when we wish our circumstances otherwise, and are more anxious for the removal of our afflictions than our profit from them; when they sink our affections to the earth, instead of lifting them up where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father; we may be sure that our grief is excessive; that we are making our trials hurtful where God meant them for good; and that what we have lost or been disappointed in, is still an idol, absorbing our hearts from Him, who should be "the strength of our hearts and our portion forever."

When, on the contrary, be our sorrows and pains never so great, we feel our hearts drawn nearer to God, to Christ, his people, his cause and

heaven; the promises sweeter and sin more hateful; our self-examinations closer, and our desires after holiness stronger; our grief is not excessive, and we may believe that there is sown for us in our afflictions a harvest of righteous peace; for, then, are we of that blessed number whom the apostle Peter addresses, when he says: "Ye greatly rejoice (in the hope of the incorruptible, undefiled, unfading inheritance), though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter i. 6—9).

Our afflictions are part of God's providence,  
*As regards others.* It is a narrow and irrational selfishness to look upon what concerns us, as separated from what concerns others. We are necessarily, intimately, and throughout, connected with them. Each of us is but a single individual of a vast family, over which God is watching by his providence. Our joys and our sorrows come to us through our kindred with the race. We, therefore, judge very imperfectly, when we look not beyond ourselves in judging of the reasons which God has for afflicting us.

Our afflictions are necessary to accomplish His will in the world; we, if faithful, shall have our compensation in sharing the good of the general result; and the hope of this should be our consolation. It often occurs in human affairs, that one or a few must temporarily suffer for the advantage of the many; and we applaud those who, out of a magnanimous, public-spirited resolution, submit cheerfully to become honourably devoted

for the welfare of friends, their country, the world or the church. Parents toil, deny themselves, and bear pain for their offspring; the soldier perils his life for his native land; the man of science for discovery; the philanthropist for mankind; the confessor under persecution for the cause of his faith: nay, our highest Example devoted himself to sorrow, toil, shame and death, for his people. This thought should nobly reconcile us to our personal sorrows. We may not, as was said before, see how God is accomplishing good to others through our trials; but we ought to believe that He will. Our horizon is very small, our experience very brief; but God comprehends all the vast future as well as the present.

Paul's imprisonment at Rome must have been painful to him, and mysterious to the churches who needed his active ministry; the same may be said of John's exile to Patmos; yet but for the first we should not have had several glowing epistles, nor but for the second, the sublime heaven-

opening Revelation, which Scriptures have been the strengthening food of Christians from their time, and shall be until time shall be no more. We are not apostles, and ought not to expect such eminent distinction of usefulness; but in our sphere, our trials may be comparatively as useful as theirs.

Do we mourn the death of a pious friend? It is a great sorrow to us; but it is gain to him. Shall we, because of our loss, selfishly grudge it to him, that he is now free from life's ills, secure from earth's temptations, and beyond time's changes; that, from the stormy sea we are sailing on, he has reached a quiet haven; that he is glad, with the holy angels, in the presence of God; that he is immortal, and sinless, and sorrowless, and filled with an enrapturing knowledge which here he was ever longing after? Or is your bosom made desolate of your child? It is a great sorrow to you; but how kind a Providence has it been to the little one, who only touched its lip to the bitter cup which you are now drinking, and changed the

care of an imperfect, frail, sinful, short-sighted, though fond parent, for the eternal arms of its heavenly Father? These are strong instances; but in every occasion of sorrow to us, there is occasion of good, though we may not see it, to some other or many others, which we could not, without the most unkind covetousness, wish were denied them, that we might have our own personal ease and quiet.

God designs and calls every Christian to exert some degree of useful influence among his fellow men. Our trials may be necessary to purify our spirits, restrain our earthward propensities, make our zeal more single for the truth, and so fit us for the sphere, the work and purpose to which we are designed. The forty years of secluded pastoral life in the desert, to which Moses was exiled, must have been a long, severe trial, for one trained in the court, and among the learned men of Egypt; but it was, for that very reason, necessary to educate his spirit in patience, labour, and meekness,

that he might wisely and steadily govern Israel while wandering in the desert. The same was true of David: "Before I was afflicted," says the royal penitent, "I went astray; but now have I kept thy word" (Ps. cxix. 67). The apostles were all schooled, by suffering, for their great work of establishing the church, and it is most delightful, in their epistles, to mark the change of the rash, presumptuous, hot-headed Peter, into the sympathizing comforter of the weaker brethren; and of the intolerant John, who, with his brother, would have called down fire upon the Samaritan's head, into the loving preacher of the gentlest charity. Nay, Jesus himself was the Man of Sorrows, that he might, even on the throne of his glory, have a sense of our infirmities, and know how to succour those that are tempted. The lowest soldier in the ranks is disciplined long and hardly, before he is thought fit for the burdens, the privations, and the obedience of a campaign. It is a great work which we have to do; many

immortal interests are connected with our instrumentality; nor should we be impatient of any training, however sorrowful for the time, which may make us more useful in the cause of salvation. At the least, we can, by divine grace, set such an example of patience and quietness under the divine hand, as may be very edifying and convincing of the Gospel's efficacy, to those who see our demeanour. Job was stript of all the human heart holds dear, wealth, station, friends, children, health, and even his good name; but his example put to shame the boast of the tempter, gratified the holy angels with a sublime spectacle of triumphant faith, and lives on the sacred page for the encouragement and learning of God's afflicted saints in all ages.

When, therefore, our troubles render us insensible to the well-being of others, turning all our cares and thoughts inward with a moody, isolated grief; we may be sure that our sorrow is excessive. But when, in the midst of our own pains, we can



yet weep with others that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice, so that our aim is to render our afflictions occasions of their benefit, and it is a comfort to find them profited by our losses; such a use of sorrow lifts us up to a sympathy with the suffering Saviour and his devoted martyrs.

Our afflictions are part of God's providence,

*As regards His own glory.* It is the true Christian's great and only comfort in life and death, to believe that he is not his own, that he is "bought with a price," and "belongs unto his faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ." To be the instrument of his heavenly Father's glory, the servant of his Redeemer's honour, and this not only in time but throughout eternity, is his high honour and chief ambition. Hence it is our first Christian duty to resolve all our will into the will of God, and to choose that, and only that, which He chooses for us; because the end being His glory, He knows best, and has the right of determining, how to bring it about. To insist upon having our

way, is breaking the covenant by which we bound ourselves to his service; to question the wisdom of any arrangement of His, is drawing back from our willing consecration to His praise. Shall a faithful servant dispute with his master, or a loyal subject with his prince, because ordered to a difficult task or a perilous post? Then it is that he has the best opportunity of proving his fidelity and allegiance.

All the events of human history, in the lives of persons and the affairs of nations, are working together for the glory of God. From the beginning He has been weaving them into the garment of praise, with which he will enrobe himself at the close, for the admiration of eternity. Our sorrows and joys, however insignificant we may seem, are mingled in the mighty web. God alone can discover all their connexion, the interlinking of circumstances so slight compared with the vast whole; but He does know, for He has arranged them; and that should be enough to satisfy us.

We have already seen how He deems chastisement systematically necessary to our sanctification from sin, which it is the purpose of His grace to accomplish; and how He uses our experience of trial for the moral good or rebuke of others, which is His glory. There is no spectacle on earth in which He displays so much of his gracious power, as that of a believer pressed by troubles, persecutions, or sufferings, yet steadfast and patient, and humbly trustful under all. None have been more frequent in the history of his church, and none have gained more triumphs from the world. When trial comes upon us, it is a call to share with those who came out of great tribulation, and with the Man of Sorrows Himself, in giving the testimony of a virtue, which, "though He slay us," will yet "trust in him;" wherefore, "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation," for he is invited to the higher ranks of the glorified armies, and bright, above heaven's ordinary garniture, is the crown of life awaiting him. It is a privilege

to speak for Christ, to work for Christ, to live for Christ; but it is a yet higher order of service to suffer for Christ. It is a badge of our sonship, which we receive by our union to the suffering Son of God; for, says the apostle, "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii. 17, 18). Again, he writes to Timothy: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we believe not, he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. ii. 11—13). The afflictions, laid upon us, are part of that suffering in which we are to glorify God, as well as persecutions or martyrdoms from Christ's enemies. If we faint under personal or domestic sorrows, we could never

have endured the rack, or the flame, or the cross.

The grand results of Providence are in eternity. There the Almighty Reaper will gather the full harvest of his glory which is sown in time. Our life in heaven will be immortal; and our work in heaven perpetual praise to God and the Lamb. How God will employ actively the glorified faculties of his people, we are but imperfectly told; but "his servants shall serve him" (Rev. xxii. 3), and their offices will be of a most elevated character. To fit us for that heavenly life and exalted service is the end of our discipline, by affliction, here; as the apostle Peter says; "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The apostle Paul has the same thought, when he "reckons that the sorrows of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which

shall be revealed *in us*;" not merely "the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which shall be wrought out *for us*, but the glory of God which shall be revealed *in our heavenly perfection*. Thus should we look upon our trials as the refining fire, purging away, by divine grace, the dross from our characters; the discipline necessary to set us free from the stains and infirmities which sin has brought upon our faculties; the process by which God is preparing us for the higher exercises of our immortality. It is but for a short time, a moment compared with eternity, that we shall suffer; and our afflictions, severe as they may be now, are light, compared to the glorious rewards. If we be faithful under trial, every pang, every tear, we may be sure, is making us more vigorous for our heavenly employment; and in proportion as we suffer now, we shall rise to the fuller enjoyment of those raptures and dignities, which are eternally found in glorifying God. Should not this hope of shining in the Redeemer's

glory ; manifesting the praises of Him who hath called us into marvellous light, and serving God, our heavenly Father, with a higher energy, reconcile us to all the trials of our preparatory purification ?

When, therefore, our sorrows deaden our zeal for the divine glory, and we are not comforted by the expectation that through our trials, patiently borne, God will accomplish the praise of his grace; our grief is excessive. But when, in the extremities of distress, we yield ourselves to the divine disposal, anxious that God may display his wisdom and power through our example here, and our higher service hereafter ; we have fellowship with “ Jesus, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. xii. 1) ; for the joy, which made him obedient in sorrow until death, was the glory of God in the eternal redemption of his church.

Thus, though we have considered the Providence of God, as regards ourselves, as regards

others, and as regards his own glory, we see that our own highest good is closely connected with usefulness to our fellow men, and inseparably with the divine glory. When we make God's will our will, he makes our interest his interest. All things are ours if we be Christ's. This is a branch from the tree of life, enough to sweeten all the bitter waters of our sorrow. "O who can value," exclaims Flavel, "the comfort that is tasted by the soul upon the trial and discovery of its sincerity, when, after some sore temptation, wherein God has helped us to maintain our integrity; or after some close pinching affliction, wherein we have discovered in ourselves a sweet resignation to, and contentment with the will of God, an heart cleaving to the Lord, purged and made more spiritual under the rod; we can turn to the Lord, and appeal to him as the prophet did: 'But thou, O Lord, knowest me; thou hast seen me and tried mine heart towards thee' (Jer. xii. 3). I say, who can value such an advantage? Who would ex-



change such a comfort for all the gold and silver in the world? How many trials soever God brings his people under, to be sure neither his own glory, nor their interests, shall receive any damage by them!"

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE CONSOLATION.

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### CHAPTER IX.

Farther considerations to regulate grief. II. Our remaining mercies. We deserve nothing, yet have Christ, the unspeakable gift of God. III. Our duties. Sorrow should not make us unfaithful. Zeal of Christ in his affliction. Consolation in doing good. IV. The sympathy of Christ for his people. The God-man. The Man of Sorrows. His strength perfect in our weakness. V. The Rest awaiting us. No satisfaction promised here. Salvation by hope. The far more exceeding and eternal glory.

II. We should consider the mercies of God, which remain to us.

We may have lost what to us was a highly prized treasure and unspeakable delight: all our attention is drawn to our bereavement; our hearts

deprived of their cherished joy, present to us, like our homes, only a melancholy vacuum; we are absorbed by what is gone; and so are tempted to say, All is lost.

But is this true? Has God taken all from us? All our friends are not departed, though the dearest one may be. Even now, kind sympathizing hearts are beating for us; and gentle hands are ready to render us a not unwelcome ministry, and low-breathed voices are uttering words of promise or of prayer. It is true, our tears flow faster at such attempts to console us; and we feel, not without bitterness, how vain is the best intention of human friendship to make up for the absence of what we mourn after. Yet, let us suppose the reverse, that the last earthly friend had been taken, and we were utterly alone in the world; poor, despised, overlooked by the crowd of busy mortals; without one tongue to say, Look up, and be hopeful! one hand to clasp ours in mute eloquence of consenting sorrow, one heart to pray by our side; that

we were driven to caves or dens of the earth, or our pangs mocked by cruel persecutors! Yet, such have been the trials, through which many of God's best people have passed, their nearest relatives and bosom friends tortured to death before their eyes, their children impaled and borne aloft on the soldier's spear, or dashed against the flints. Is it nothing that you are spared from such aggravated anguish, and are permitted the privilege of an unmolested grief and Christian ministrations?

You are now so taken up with your grief, as to think little of what remains to you; but, would you be willing to part with surviving friends or spared supports! Consider that all came from God, what is left and what is taken; that all belong to God, lent you only to use and enjoy for his glory; and now, because he has recalled a portion of his own into his own hands, will you despise what he still allows you to have? All the virtue which his creatures have to bless us, is derived from Him; and, because one stream is

dried up, can He send no waters of life by those which are flowing on? Even if he has taken all, and there remains to you not one, of all the kindred you have loved, to love you, not one of all your former stays to support you, have you not Himself, through Jesus Christ, your heavenly Father, Friend, Portion and Strength, forever? Is it not your duty, have you not professed it to be your privilege, your desire and aim, to love Him with all your heart and mind and strength; to love him better than friend, father, mother, sister, wife, husband, child, brother? And now, if, since he has taken, in his wise and sovereign and merciful will, any of all these from you, you shut yourself up to despair, is it not a proof that you had given them an idolatrous place in your affections, and were loving and serving his creatures "more than the Creator, who is God over all blessed forever?" Do you not repeat the lament of the unhappy heathen, who cried after his idols: "Ye have taken away my gods,

and what have I more?" (Gen. xxxi. 30; Judges xviii. 24.) Ask of yourself, whether you would be willing to give up the love and care of your covenant God and affectionate Redeemer, to get back all for which you are mourning? Or, whether it becomes one who has the eternal God for his portion, the privileges of his communion on earth, and the expectation of partaking his glory in heaven, to bemoan and despair, as though in the grave were buried all his riches and hope? Truly, if our bereavements show that we have been so taken up with God's gifts, which he intended to increase our love for him, that we value him and his comforts less than they; it was high time for him to remove the causes of our infidelity, and compel us back to our only proper trust.

What are we, that we thus quarrel with and chide God, because "it pleases the Father to bruise us and to put us to grief;" because for his own glory, he has called back a life that he gave; because he has crossed our wishes in carrying on

his own purposes? Are we like the holy angels, who deserve nothing but joy? Have we been ever faithful to Him, and in the use of his gifts always glorified his name? Ah! my afflicted friend, we are nothing but sinners; and so far from wondering that we are called to suffer, we should rather wonder that we are not in endless, unrelieved, remediless wo! Have we not confessed that we deserve His wrath? Do we not know that we are saved from it only by the unspeakable sorrows and agonies of His incarnate Son? When He has put forth his strong hand and lifted us up from the depths of our guilt, corruption and despair, to give us the earnest of an eternal and blissful heaven; should we not bless Him, and rejoice in Him, whatever sorrows He leaves in our cup? When our salvation cost such sorrows of the Son of God, should we refuse whatever passing sorrows are needed for our sanctification?

It is a clear sign of our grief being excessive,

when it so clouds our sight, that we cannot see the goodness and the grace of God in his remaining favours, or find consolation in Himself; but, when our thanks mingle with our sufferings, and we cling to his compassion with a penitent, hopeful spirit, weeping in the very arms of his love, our sorrow is safe, sweet, sanctified and salutary.

### III. We should consider our duties.

We are not our own, but belong to God, by the threefold indenture of creation, redemption, and dedication. All our powers and all our time are by right his. It is robbery to withhold or alienate them, in any degree, from his service (Mal. iii. 8). It cannot be, that we have nothing to do, when there is so much to be done, so few to do it, and so little time to do it in; when there are so many souls to be converted, so many destitute to be relieved, so many poor children to be taught, so many sorrowing ones to be comforted, so many weak ones to be built up; when the church of Christ is yet so small, the number of



faithful, energetic labourers still smaller, making the absence or inactivity of any one to be severely felt; and when our lives, in which we have the opportunity of working for God on earth, are fast passing away, and, in a moment, when we think not, may be brought to a close.

Our blessed Lord was continually bowed down with the weight of sorrows, yet he never intermitted his labours, or relaxed his zeal for us on that account, but wrought the more while it was day, because the night was coming when no man can work. In the same spirit, he tolerated no remissness on the part of those, who professed to serve him; for when one said: "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father," the Master's answer was: "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. viii. 21, 22); not that he forbids a proper respect for the dust of the beloved dead, but that no feeling of the kind should hinder us from following him. Thus, the apostles and early Christians, in the midst of the most bitter persecutions

and sad bereavements, laboured on so zealously, that the church has never since equalled their zeal or successes.

Shall we, then, because God has laid his rod upon us, think ourselves absolved from duties, for the neglect of which we deserve chastisement? Because some earthly comfort is gone, shall we turn away from the path of life, or the labours which earn eternal reward through grace? Shall we refuse to serve the best interests of the living, in our feeding of sorrow for the dead? Or, shall our incomparably less suffering make us deserters from His cause, who by his sufferings and through his sufferings, wrought out eternal redemption for us?

Besides, as the path of duty is the only path of safety, so it is only in the practice of duty that we can expect comfort. We reason with our friends in affliction, entreating them forth from their shadowed chambers; where grief, constantly indulged, becomes morbid, and the physical powers give

way, until disease of body aggravates disease of mind; to take exercise in the open air, to inhale the odorous, breezy breath of nature, to feel the sun, and to look upon the faces of their kind. We account it a happy thing, when business or other urgencies of life, compel a mourner to shake off the ashes from his sackcloth, and divide his thoughts with grief. But there is no engagement or exercise so healthful to an afflicted spirit, as doing good. As we mingle with those of the outer world, for the purpose of helping them in their distresses and dangers, we see that there are other mourners, and some, perchance, far more to be pitied than ourselves; we learn to compare the wants and perils of souls without hope, against our religious comforts, small as our moody blindness has thought them to be; and we find an occupation for our hearts and minds and hands and means and time, which, according to the retributive rules of Providence, brings a reward of peaceful satisfaction. This was, in fact, our blessed

Master's way of comforting himself; for, if, in his sad journeyings, bowing under our sins, vexed by "the contradictions of sinners against himself," he found a leper, or a blind man, or a paralytic, or one dumb from his birth, or a mourner over the recent dead, or a sinner who would listen to his word, he but stayed his steps to work a cure, or raise the dead, or convert the lost, and his spirit grew strong, as from heavenly meat and wine (Matt. iv. 32, 34).

So, Christian, when thy heart grows faint,  
Amid the toils that throng the saint,  
Seek thou some blessing to impart  
Unto some other human heart,  
And thou thy Master's joy shalt share,  
E'en while his cross thy shoulders bear.

The joy of the Saviour was in doing good; and, therefore, when, anticipating the sorrows which were to come upon his disciples, he would comfort them beforehand, he gave them his commandments, especially the commandment of love, and

said: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John xv. 10, 11).

If, therefore, our sorrows so discompose our minds, as to dissuade and hinder us from attempting our manifest Christian duties, and we shut ourselves up selfishly from the world, in which we are commanded to set an example like light, and to diffuse a saving influence like salt, it is very clear that our grief is excessive, and our zeal, so easily shaken, very insufficient; but, if, though we carry within us a sad heart, we yet seek to carry the grace of our Saviour, where the Man of Sorrows carried it when he was on earth, and hath left us to carry it in his name, we have the promise, nay, the present blessing of our Lord's strength and sympathy.

IV. We should consider the sympathy of Christ with his people.

It was necessary for our Lord to become incarnate, that as our Elder Brother, our Kinsman-Redeemer, he might on earth fulfil the law which we had broken, and die the death which we deserved to die, thus accomplishing our deliverance from wrath, and setting an example for us to follow his steps. The weight of sorrow was, therefore, part of the burden which he undertook to bear as our Mediator. From the fact of his incarnation as the Man of Sorrows, however, we derive the most precious assurance of his nearness to us, and sympathy with us. His example being set us in sorrows, shows that sorrow is the frequent, nay, the ordinary experience of his followers; but, blessed be his name! it shows us, also, that he has a "feeling of our infirmities, having been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15); and "in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them

that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18). How very close must God be to his people, when he dwelt in the heart that was aching and agitated by human fears and pains and griefs! How very near may his people draw to Him, when he still dwells in the once afflicted and crucified, but now glorious humanity of our Elder Brother, at the right hand of the Majesty on high! He is the Head, and we are of his body the members; and, instant as the nerves conduct every sensation of the body to the presiding head, does He feel all that his people feel of joy or sorrow. He is our Divine Head, and as He is human to feel with us, is he God Almighty, to help, sustain, and comfort us; so that, having such "a great High Priest, who has passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God," we may come with "boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. iv. 14, 16).

This very consideration should teach us, that our sorrows bring us nearer to Jesus than our

worldly prosperity ever could permit. He had little experience of joy on earth. His joy lay in the future, and the expectation of final success. He had no fellowship with the rich, the noble, the luxurious, or the honoured. If we would find the places which he hallowed by his presence, we must go to the poor man's house, the beggar's haunt by the way-side, the bed of the sick, and the chamber of mourning. Wherever piety dwells in sorrow, wherever a penitent soul is bowing in sackcloth, there he was, and there, by his Spirit, he still is. He did not take away our death by his own, but he took the sting out of it; so he has not removed our salutary sorrows, but purged them of all their bitterness. He took upon him our infirmities, that he might wrap our weakness about his strength. He, who bore with success most glorious all our penal sufferings, can enable us to bear all the sufferings needed for our sanctification. He does not remove the trial from us, though we are so unwise as to wish



that he would; but he says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." It is His glory to make "his strength perfect in our weakness." When we are weak in ourselves, "we have omnipotence in him" (2 Cor. xii. 8, 9). So far from murmuring, therefore, because of our trials, if we had the spirit of Paul we should rather glory in our infirmities, that Christ's own power might rest upon us.

When we look in upon our hearts, and contemplate only our sorrows, it is no wonder that we bow under the burden; but, when we look out of ourselves to Christ, and remember his sorrows for us on earth, and his almighty sympathy for us in glory, the thought of sharing his cup, of being baptized so deeply with his baptism, should fill us with a lively joy. O, what is any loss we can sustain, compared to the gain of finding Christ, of being closely united to him, and of the assurance that, as we have suffered with him, we shall enter into his joy! Christ is infinitely more precious than all he can take away, for he

will not, cannot so deny himself, as to deny us his Presence now, and his Glory hereafter.

This should moderate our sorrows, nay, even turn them into joy; and excessive, indeed, must be the grief, which shuts from our hearts the free, unbounded, unspeakable consolations of a once suffering Saviour's sympathy, and a now glorified Saviour's power.

V. We should consider the Rest which awaits us.

The purpose of our religion is to prepare for eternity. It has many advantages for this life, but they are only as the manna and the stream, to refresh us until we reach our promised inheritance beyond Jordan. Our best, truest comforts, are grasped by hope reaching its hand far within the veil. With our regenerated desires, and new spiritual aims, it may be emphatically said, that "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19). "All the articles of our faith lead us where Christ

sitteth at the right hand of God.”\* All our present blessings come from above, and we look up to pray, expecting them down. The manna is bread from heaven, not the growth of earth; and the stream of living waters flows from the rock Christ in glory. Of such account is this hope, in our spiritual life, that it is reckoned one of the three most necessary graces: “Now abideth these three, faith, hope, charity” (1 Cor. xiii. 13). If we are saved by faith, we are saved also by hope (Rom. viii. 24). If “love be the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. xiii. 10), “hope is as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast” (Heb. vi. 19); strengthening and confirming us under the troubles, and against the temptations of earth. Hope, according to the apostle, is next to love in the climax of Christian attainment here: “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we

\* Communion Service of the Reformed Dutch Church

have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" and to the cultivation of this sanctifying hope, our trials from without, joined to love of the truth within, greatly contribute; for the apostle goes on: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (Rom. v. 1—5). The Rest of the people of God "remaineth" for them (Heb. iv. 9); it is not here; on the contrary, the command to them says: "Arise ye and depart; for this is not your rest, because it is polluted" (Micah ii. 10); and all God's providence concerning them is arranged, if it be used aright, to wean their affections from earth, and fix them upon heaven.

Our afflictions, therefore, should be considered in reference to their eternal consequences. The

Scripture does not deny that they are grievous *now* (“no affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous”); our blessed Lord, during all his life here, was afflicted; and, “as he endured his cross and shame, so are we to endure our trials, for the joy set before us, looking unto him for strength and patience; which we cannot do, except we look beyond time and above earth, to his throne at the right hand of God” (Heb. xii. 1, 2). Severe as they may be, we should be reconciled to all our sufferings, as Jesus was to his, by the assurance that in them is sown the seed of an eternal harvest, the peaceable fruits of righteousness for ourselves, and of greater glory to God, whose wise grace thus accomplishes our greater salvation. Our trials may be severe; the refining furnace is always hot; but Jesus, ever merciful as well as faithful, is watching the fire, and “he will not suffer us to be tried above that we are able by his help to bear” (1 Cor. x. 13); and there is a “need be,” not only for every trial, but for the

degree of it. We shall, if "patience have her perfect work" (James i. 4), find an immortal blessing for every pang we feel, and an immortal joy for every tear we shed. Those who shall have come out of the greatest tribulation, will have the highest strain of thanksgiving. This made some of the early Christians covetous of persecution, ambitious of martyrdom, eager after tortures; and, although in that respect we should not imitate them, for we have no right rashly to venture where God has not called us, yet we ought to be more than reconciled to afflictions from God's hand, by the method which made Paul to rejoice in his trials, "of looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; because the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal;" for, then, our heaviest sorrows will be light, and our longest sorrows but for a moment, since they are working out for us a far

more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18).

The Rest which God provides for us is perfect and eternal. “The former things,” the temporal circumstances which rendered the preparatory discipline necessary, “shall be done away.” “The Lord God shall wipe away every tear,” the last tear, “from our eyes.” “There shall be no more death;” no more sickness, no more languor, no more sad decay, no pang of the dying, no changing to corruption of the beloved face; no more watching by the painful bed; no more hiding the once cherished form out of sight in the cold, dark, damp ground; no sad funeral, no grave, no mourning weeds in heaven: “Neither sorrow;” the sorrows of repentance shall cease, for there will be no more sin; the sorrows of bereavement, for there will be no more loss; the sorrows of personal anguish, for there will be no more suffering; the sorrows of sympathy, for all will be happy as ourselves: “Nor

crying;" the groans which echo through our dwellings long after the stricken breast is still, the shriekings under intolerable pangs, the low moanings of the mourner abandoned to grief that refuses to be comforted, the wail of the widowed heart, the sobbings of the orphan scarce conscious of its deprivation, are never heard among the many mansions of our Father's house: "Neither shall there be any more pain," for our bodies will be immortal in youthful vigour, and our spirits ravished with an unceasing, ever-increasing bliss (Rev. xxi. 4).

The pious friends, the blessed little children, whom we mourn, have already entered that deathless, sorrowless, sinless, exulting Rest; shall we, by selfish grief, regret their escape from the anguish we feel? There has the Master, after suffering and dying to purchase the right, gone to prepare places for us, and in a little while he will come to receive us up to himself: shall we refuse to bear for His sake, who has provided for us so rich



an inheritance, whatever trials He considers needed for our good and his glory? Surely, that grief must be excessive, which clings despairingly to earth, instead of longing with a consoling hope after the Rest above.

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE CONSOLATION.

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### CHAPTER X.

Special consolation for Christians bereaved of Children. Adapted to parental hopes. I. The covenant with God. The promise of God fulfilled by the death of the Child.

FULL of comfort as Christians, in any sorrow, may find the Scriptures, those bereaved of their little ones have especial reasons to bless the name of Him, "who gave and hath taken away;" for, besides sharing "many exceeding great and precious promises," which are the common gracious property of afflicted saints, the form and circumstances of their trial suggest the richest and sweetest compensations.

The exquisite anguish of their bereavement arises

from the exquisite tenderness and strength of parental love. Each class of our duties requires a corresponding, qualifying affection: love is the fulfilling of every law (Romans xiii. 10): and none less tender or strong than that which parents have toward their offspring, could sufficiently animate, encourage, or sustain them, in the discharge of those patient, anxious offices, necessary for the uprearing and education of children out of the helplessness of infancy, through the thoughtless waywardness of youth, to self-governing maturity.

Affection descends. Faithful children love and reverence their parents as the authors of their being, and the kind guardians of their early years; but it is an affection of gratitude for benefits received. Faithful parents cherish their children from a high, God-implanted instinct, as their own life; regard them as parts of their own being; labour, care, sacrifice for them more than for themselves; and love them the better for the very labours, cares,

sacrifices, which they cost. They deeply enjoy this affection, and are most happy in the exercise, the hopes, and successes of their guardianship; but their enjoyment is from the benefits which they confer, and their happiness from their children's happiness. They anticipate and endeavour to secure their children's virtue, accomplishments, prosperity, honour, usefulness, eternal welfare. Their aims stretch far beyond their own death, to bless their children's children.

No comfort, therefore, can uphold a parent under the loss of a child, which is not addressed to this affection, nor can it be consoled except by the revival and assurance of its hopes. Here the Gospel proves the excellency of its merciful power; for, assuming the little one's immortal happiness to have been demonstrated, a Christian parent should have unspeakably greater satisfaction in its removal from this world to a better, than there is any warrant for expecting from its continuance here. The grace of Jesus demands no stoical apathy. He,

who, dying in agony, comforted from his cross the mother of his humanity, about to be bereaved of the best son that ever blessed a maternal bosom, sees, from his throne, the sword which is piercing your heart also, sorrow-stricken mourner! Well he knows that the tears of your anguish must have way; but, as you loved the child with an unutterable, unselfish tenderness, which would have given your life to save its life from sin, or suffering, or sorrow, he bids you look up and find a more than compensating joy in its assumption to the bosom of God. For consider, believer,

I. The covenant you have with God.

“As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.” Change, death, oblivion, are the history of man upon earth. When the grave takes one from our own household, our windows are darkened against the sunlight, we sit in solitude, and bury ourselves in

gloom; but the world is bustling on without, the laugh of passers by, the whoop of playing children, the rattle of carriages, distant strains of music, reach our melancholy retreat, and we wonder how others can be so busy, or gay, or thoughtless, when all things seem to us so desolately sad. Yet is our trial no incredible or miraculous novelty. Though we can hardly realize that such beauty, such sweetness, such promise, has passed from our arms and our homes, none besides ourselves would have pronounced it improbable. It is the lot of man to die. The hold of little children upon life is very slight. The chances of their dying or living are at least equal. Scarcely a household among our circle of friends, but has been visited by similar sorrow, which we thought not strange, though we sympathised with the mourners. How many, once living, are now lying in dust! The little babe, the strong man, the hoary grandsire; the beggar, buried by shallow charity; the rich man, who was embalmed and had a long sumptuous fu-

neral; the slave, who fell wearily into a sleep no task-master's scourge could break; the king, who built for himself a tomb like a fortress! How, with rare exceptions, are they forgotten! We know well nigh as little of him whose mummied corpse is torn by modern curiosity from the cell of a heaven-daring pyramid, built in his pride three thousand years ago; as of the shipwrecked mariner, whose bones are crumbling,

“ Where rolls the Oregon,  
And hears no sound save its own dashings.”

“ Man's days are as grass;” and the field-flowers of a past summer, with their little lives under sunshine and shade, storm and shower, will be as much remembered as he, with the sorrows and joys which to him were so important. We must soon follow; friends will weep for us, bury us, put up a marble memorial; and, perchance, before the damp moss shall have grown over our names, we shall be forgotten, as though we never had been.

The places which knew us, shall know us no more.

Sad, indeed, is this story of humanity, but to the Christian sadder far, from his knowledge that all this change, death and infamy, are the fruits of sin; nay, unless sin be expiated and repented of, the foreshadowings of eternal gloom, misery and shame. Repulsive as the idea of annihilation is, it were slight, to the horror of a miserable immortality; and there is no anguish over the grave so great, as that which shudders at the recollection of the lost one having

“died and left no sign”

of preparation to meet his dread ordeal.

Nothing can reconcile us to, or sustain us under such a lot for ourselves and those we love, but the covenant of mercy with God, by Jesus Christ, our Saviour, Resurrection, and Life. In strong contrast to the melancholy picture, comes the light of promise. “The mercy of the Lord is



from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them" (Psalms ciii. 15—18). Convinced of the world's insufficiency; more deeply convinced of the corrupting guilt, which has made us children of wrath by reason of sin; earnest after restoration to holiness and a perfect enjoyment of God, you have embraced this covenant; you have called God your Father, and asked Him to take you among the number of his children, assured, that being His in so gracious a relation, "all your concerns will be his also; and all have been resigned to him, that they may be wisely administered by him, and incomparably better blessings bestowed and secured, than any which the most afflictive Providence can remove."\*

As a sincere, believing, penitent Christian, you

\* Doddridge.

have desired that your heavenly Father would deal with you as is best for his own glory, in your sanctification for heaven; and give, withhold, or take away, according to his all-wise, ever faithful, fatherly will. Your treasure is in heaven, and your heart is fixed where your treasure is laid up, so that the events of this life are valuable to you, only as they affect your eternal interests; and, as we have had occasion more than once to say, you cannot, or should not, be surprised at being called to affliction, which is the baptism of your Elder Brother, the discipline of your heavenly Father, and the foretold experience of all his children.

With yourself, by this covenant, it was your high and most cherished privilege to consider your offspring included; for "his mercy is unto children's children;" as the Lord said to Abraham, "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and between thee and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after

thee" (Gen. xvii. 7); or, by the apostle to the gaoler at Philippi, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house" (Acts xvi. 31). It would have been an unspeakable grief to you, if you could not have brought your children with you to the Lord. Like the mother of Samuel, you may have asked your child of the Lord, and long before its birth, dedicated it to him (1 Sam. i. 11). When it was born, you rejoiced to think that you had gotten a child from the Lord (Gen. iv. 1), and were happy in the belief that he had intrusted it to you, as a rich treasure, to be kept and watched over for his praise; saying with pious, grateful Hannah, "For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him; therefore, also, I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord" (1 Sam. i. 27, 28). Your prayer was, that the little one, like John, the Forerunner (Luke i. 15), and like John's greater Master (Is. xlix. 1), might be called and sanctified

from the womb. Often have you knelt by the cradle side, or sat, holding your darling in your arms, pleading, with an earnestness which would not be denied, that He, in whom is your trust, would take the young life under his direction and overshadowing wings. Often have you asked grace to prepare the babe, through its growing years, by instruction, example, and salutary restraint, for an immortal blessedness. Often have you shuddered at the evil which is in the world, lest it might be led astray from the path of life, and end its mortal course miserably. Often have you thought, that, rather than see it grow up in shame, profligacy, or hardened impenitence, you would give it back, its dust to earth, and its spirit to God.

Now, my beloved mourning friend, has the covenant failed? Has God not kept his engagement, or have you drawn back from yours? Your child has been taken from you only by the hand of Him, to whom you dedicated it. Hannah

lent her child to the Lord, that he might serve before the Lord in Shiloh, where was his tabernacle; your child has been taken to serve before the Lord within the eternal Temple of the heavenly Jerusalem. The great promise of the covenant for your child has been fulfilled; it *is* saved; it is in the bosom of the Father; it has been called and sanctified as from the womb; and you have had the inestimable privilege, the highest honour which a parent can have, of giving from the fruit of your body, a glorified, immortal chorister and priest and king, to swell the heavenly song, and advance the heavenly worship. You have not been permitted to discharge the office of its instructor and guardian, which, from your knowledge of your own frailty, you know would have been imperfectly filled; but God has done it for you; accomplished, in a few days, what your whole life might have failed to secure, and brought the babe, without the pangs of regeneration, the sorrows of repentance, the crucifixion of self-denial,

or the fightings of faith against temptation, to the blissful goal where you desired, yet might have failed, to bring it. You doubted not His truth, when you made the covenant with him; will you doubt Him now that He has kept it, in the eternal redemption of the child you mourn?

# EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

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## THE CONSOLATION.

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### CHAPTER XI.

II. The little one escaped from pain. III. The little one forever free from sin. IV. The little one perfect in the knowledge of God. To go and be with Christ and his little ones is far better. The author's parting words.

II. The little one has escaped from all pain.

The Reformed Church, in her prayer at the baptism of children, calls "this life nothing but a continual death." For we are born under sentence of death, and life is one long disease from the cradle to the grave. It is very rarely, that any one goes through his pilgrimage, without much acute suffering, and the mortal agony is sure to come. How many, whose beginning is

of healthful promise, develope, as they grow, the seeds of constitutional suffering, perhaps, specially inherited from their parents! Some dwindle into helpless idiocy; some grow blind, or deaf, or dumb; some are consumptive, or asthmatic, or dropsical; some are crippled by weakness or accident; so that all their days are a torture and burden, not only to themselves, but also to the friends who look upon them and nurse them.

If they escape such suffering, they are often weary, exposed to heat and storm and cold, compelled to make arduous journeys, or to labour hardly for a pittance; it may be, imprisoned, or exiled, or famished. Who would think, if they knew not the fact, that the old man tottering on his staff, his limbs rheumatic or gouty, his back bent, his brow seamed with deep wrinkles, his eyes dim, his ears dull, his hand tremulous, his voice broken and faint, was once a fair-browed, leaping, sportive, laughter-tongued child? We pity him for the long journey he has made, and



cannot with kindness regret when it comes to an end. He has lost all the relish of his enjoyments, and retains but the consequences of infirmity, imprudence, toil or excess. Is it right to mourn, that the departed little one did not pass through the same experience to reach the same end, which it attained in a few days?

You hoped better things for your child, pictured to yourself its rosy youth, its vigorous manhood, its green old age; the hope was natural, but had it any warrant? All the while it was with you, you were anxious lest, being well, it might become sick; a chill from an open window, a sun-stroke, a surfeit, a fall, infection, contagion, epidemic, were all dreaded; you held it to your bosom, covered it at night, allowed it to play, fearfully apprehensive, for you knew not what an hour might bring upon it. When it was sick, how painful was it to see its flushed or pale cheek, its spasmodic contractions, and its little eye, appealing for relief no mortal kindness or skill could afford;

to hear its cries, its moanings even in the sleep which was not rest; to feel the hot brow, the galloping pulse, or the beat of the current growing less and less; until, as death brought his cruel work to a close, you well nigh prayed that the struggle might cease, and its sufferings be over, forever.

Now its pains are all over. The little body is sleeping hushed and calm, returning to dust, that it may be raised incorruptible, immortal, beautiful, among those happy mansions, where "the inhabitant shall no more say, I am sick" (Is. xxxiii. 24); where they "hunger no more, neither thirst any more," where "the sun doth not light upon them, nor any heat," neither shall there be any more pain, "for the former things have passed away;" "and the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. vii. 16, 17; xxi. 4). How earnestly did you implore the phy-

sician to search for some means of healing the disease, and relieving the pain of your precious sufferer! How did you pray God to bless the remedies used! Yet human skill, however then blessed with success, could have given no security, no sovereign prophylactic against future illness. But the Great, the Good Physician, who healed the sick and lame and blind and leprous with his touch, nay, stood beside the tomb, Conqueror of Death, the Resurrection and the Life, has heard your prayer, and restored your little one to immortal health and beauty, bearing it in the arms of his holy angels to a blessed clime, where all is new and bright and serene and full of joy, that never again it might know the ills of mortal being. Very sweet was it for you to look upon your child, laughing in your arms, or playing with its fellows on the shaded sod and among the flowers; but now it is rejoicing on its heavenly Father's bosom, or under the Tree of Life, in the sinless, thornless, unfading Paradise of the redeemed.

Would you call it back to the sick-bed, the uncertain life, the certain death, which must await it here? Would you replace the crown encircling its brow by wrinkles and gray hairs, hush its glad song for the sighing, the groaning, the moans of earth? Would you take it from the arms of God, even to your own? Would you ask that it might return, to become itself a parent, and suffer the anguish which is now tearing your heart-strings? No, Christian parent, you loved your child, you love it still too well!

III. The little one is forever free from sin.

Sin is the greatest of all a Christian's troubles, because not only the occasion but the provocation of them. The sorrows, which it brings upon him, are the most distressing, from the fact that they prove the displeasure of his Maker. His great hope for eternity is perfect deliverance from sin; Christ is most precious to him as the Saviour from sin; the Holy Ghost most desired as the Sanctifier of his sinful nature; and he longs for the hour

when he shall serve God without any admixture of error or fault. But so long as he is on earth, sin within him and temptation without him, keep him in constant trouble. The denial of his carnal tendencies, can be compared only to crucifixion; there is no moment when he must not watch and pray; nay, he must wrestle in hard fight, with invisible, mighty, ever-active, subtle and most malicious enemies, who, but for omnipotent succour, would certainly overcome and destroy him. "O, wretched man that I am!" exclaimed even the strong apostle Paul, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24.) The early church would have been in despair, but for the assurance, that "the God of peace would shortly bruise Satan under their feet" (Rom. xvi. 20). The promise to faith is victory over the world (1 John v. 4). The crown of life will be given to him, who, having "endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. ii. 3), shall have overcome even as Christ overcame (Rev. iii. 21).

With all the exceeding great and precious promises of our Lord and Saviour, what anxiety and fear and trembling are in our hearts, lest we should come short at last! (Heb. iv. 1.) Through what tribulation must we not pass, in our danger-thronged pilgrimage, before, purified as it were by fire, we can enter the kingdom of God! (Acts xiv. 22.)

Had the little one lived to make a journey as long as ours, its experience would have been the same, perhaps, far worse. The seeds, the occasions of sin were in its human nature. It would have transgressed the commandments of God, and have been in peril of eternal death; the flesh would have urged it, the world tempted it, Satan assailed and deceived it, for aught you know, fatally. Your own sinfulness and infirmity for good, proves your child, as well as yourself, to have been of a fallen family. You may have promised to yourself, every possible pains and prayer and prudence, to train it up for God; and, certain-

ly His promises are very strong to sincere, prayerful, hard-working faith; but, with all your consciousness of repeated failures and oft-broken vows, can you be sure that your faith would have been so firm and zealous, as to secure the blessing? Adam had his Cain, Noah his Ham, Abraham his Ishmael, Isaac his Esau, Jacob more than one ingrate, Aaron his Nadab and Abihu, Eli his Hophni and Phinehas, Samuel his Joel and Abiah, David his Absalom, and Josiah his Jehoiakim; nor are we without daily instances of profligate children breaking the hearts of pious parents, and bringing down their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. It is trying to think, that such could possibly be the issue of a life so dear and promising as that of your departed little one; yet such, you see, it might have been, even if you had all the faith and spiritual advantage of those sainted parents we have named. Think of the deeper anguish you might suffer, from the profigacy, the disgrace, the thankless hard-heartedness,

the hopeless death, of a babe now safe in glory, had it been left here to grow up in sin! O, what bitter sorrow was that of Aaron, when his impious sons were smitten down, and he could do nothing but "hold his peace!" (Lev. x. 3.) What desolate despair was in the cry of David, "O, my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O, Absalom my son, my son!" (2 Sam. xviii. 33.) But, what a contrast of pious, hopeful resignation, was the spirit of David, when the little child of Bathsheba, though the child of his sin, was taken from him: "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But, now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him*, but he shall not return to me!" (2 Sam. xii. 22, 23.) The full-grown, beautiful, darling, but wicked Absalom, died without hope; the separation, so far as mortal could see, was eternal; the little child, as yet uncon-



demned for actual sin, was safe, where a pious faith would bring his father again to his company.

Your little one is safe, safe from the pollutions of the flesh, safe from the temptations of the world, safe from the malice of Satan; safe from sin, from guilt, from eternal death; safe in the holy arms of Jesus, singing a better song than ever saint sung on earth, without a stain upon its conscience, a tear in its eye, or a shadow on its soul; washed in the Saviour's blood; clothed in a purer, more lustrous garment than little Samuel's linen ephod, the fine linen of the saints, the righteousness of Jesus; the palm of victory in the hand that never struck a blow, a crown upon the head without a scar, and sweeter hosannas on its pure lips, than those that rung around the delighted Saviour within the temple below; safe in bliss, safe in holiness, safe now, and safe forever! The least in that kingdom is greater than the greatest here. Would you bring the holy, happy little one back to earth, from that sinless home, when

your earnest prayer was that it might be brought by the Saviour's grace, and your best hope for yourself that you may be also? No, believing mourner, your child is gone before and entered the inheritance; some space remains for you to travel; but gird up your loins, and go to seek the beloved, who cannot return to you!

IV. The little one is now perfect in the knowledge of God.

The education of children is the most important, delightful, yet anxious duty of Christian parents. To train them up in useful religious knowledge for an honourable life here, and eternal life hereafter, requires the most watchful, patient, skilful care; because, in early years, the elements of adult character are gathered, and principles of future action are established. No pious parent can contemplate the progress of a child towards maturity without deep solicitude. How many obstacles impede the discharge of this sacred office? The father has the cares of his business upon him;

the mother of her family and household. Not a few are conscious of wanting the information, or tact, or time, to teach aright. They are obliged to call in the aid of other teachers, perhaps to send the child away from them, where they may have advantages not enjoyed at home.

The affairs of life, and the accomplishment of manners, require much study and attention. Religion, the most important of all, if not thrust into the back ground, has but a small part of the child's thoughts. The very art, which is the key of knowledge, opens, in hurtful books, stores of corruption. The graceful refinements which adorn the body and the mind for a position in society, expose to the temptations of worldliness. The companionship, necessary to success, is full of dangerous associations. The pious parent is harassed by conflicting extremes; and, after the utmost pains, liable to severe disappointments, for both time and eternity. How often has your prayer been put up for grace to guide your child

safely through the mazes of the world to the inheritance of the righteous?

Your prayer has been heard. God has relieved you of your office, and become, in his holy house, your child's best Teacher. Your little one, now, needs no instruction to provide for the wants of this life, to guard against the dishonesties of men, or to win the uncertain favour of a false world; no painful studies and restraints to secure laborious science; no chastisements to check the yet pliant passion, or to make folly timely bitter. It has gone to a world, where they neither hunger nor thirst; where the sweat of toil is never on the brow, nor the weight of care upon the brain; where, in the society of the holy blessed, there is none to tempt, defraud, or cajole; where the only accomplishment is holiness, and the only business praise.

God is now your little one's Teacher, and you should think of it as gone to the best school, to learn the best truth, and enter upon the best pur-

suits. It has attained, what you so earnestly hope to attain, the sight of God face to face.

None can teach like God, for he knows the spirit he has made, and declares, by immediate communication, what is dimly revealed here through the shadowed glass of his mediate revelations. The angels, and the redeemed spirits of just men made perfect, are the companions and fellow students of your little one. All heaven, all creation, are open for your child's learning; and God employs its glorified powers in services expressly adapted to expand them and fill them with delight. There is now no sin to cloud its perceptions, to warp its judgment, or distract its thoughts. Babe as it was when it left this world a little while since, your child is wiser now than all the academies, and universities, and learned societies, in the world; for it knows HIM, whose chain of effect and cause it is the proper business of science to trace, even the First, Great, Only Cause of all. Its life is now the life of angels who excel in strength,

admiring with the cherubim, burning among the seraphim, and glorifying, like a mirror reflecting light, the WISDOM upon the throne. There is a crowd of little ones around Jesus, Himself a Holy Child; they are at his feet, looking up into his divine face, listening to his gracious words, receiving his constant benedictions, and uttering his unceasing praise; your child is among them.

Yet is its immortality only begun; its knowledge, though perfect in kind, is ever growing in degree: changed from glory to glory, its happy spirit will eternally expand in all that constitutes the excellence of spiritual being, love, knowledge, holiness, and joy.

Would you bring the lost, the saved one, back to the weakness of infancy; the waywardness and pains of childhood; the errors, the follies of youth; the mistakes and the struggles of manhood; the second childhood and imbecility of age? Can you not spare your child for a few years, to be educated in such a school, by such a Teacher, with

such companions? Would you, could you, call the white-robed chorister from among his rejoicing fellows, chaunting hallelujahs to the glorified ear of Christ? No, far rather strive to follow, faintly and at as long an interval, as you must amidst the impediments of earth, and sin, and infirmity, its celestial progress, becoming yourself, by imitation of Jesus, more and more like a little child; until, in some bright hour, Jesus shall send his angel for you, and make you as happy, holy, glorious as your child.

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Beloved friends, in sympathy with whose sorrows these pages have been written, not without prayer and searching of the Scriptures, by one who desires humbly to call himself your servant, "brother and companion in tribulation, and in the patience and kingdom of Jesus Christ;" your Master, "whose I am and whom I serve," has said to you,

**SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME!**

*O forbid them not*, by one repining thought, one vain regret, one unbelieving fear! Weep, for Jesus wept; but sorrow not without hope: they sleep in Jesus; they shall be raised from the dust incorruptible, made like to Christ's most glorious body, and enter the fulness of redemption. Weep, for nature must have relief; but weep in faith on the bosom of Him, who, from the cross, comforted his only parent; yet a little while and He will take you up, where you shall weep no more.

EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS! AMEN.



# CONSOLATORY VERSES,

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

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## EARLY LOST, EARLY SAVED.

GEO. W. BETHUNE.

Within her downy cradle there lay a little child,  
And a group of hovering angels unseen upon her  
smiled ;

A strife arose among them, a loving, holy strife,  
Which should shed the richest blessing over the  
new-born life.

One breathed upon her features, and the babe in  
beauty grew,

With a cheek like morning's blushes, and an eye  
of azure hue ;

Till every one who saw her, were thankful for the  
sight

Of a face so sweet and radiant with ever fresh de-  
light.

Another gave her accents, and a voice as musical  
As a spring bird's joyous carol, or a rippling  
streamlet's fall ;  
Till all who heard her laughing, or her words of  
childish grace,  
Loved as much to listen to her, as to look upon  
her face.

Another brought from heaven a clear and gentle  
mind,  
And within the lovely casket the precious gem en-  
shrined ;  
Till all who knew her wondered, that God should  
be so good,  
As to bless with such a spirit our desert world and  
rude.

Thus did she grow in beauty, in melody and truth,  
The budding of her childhood just opening into  
youth ;  
And to our hearts yet dearer, every moment than  
before,  
She became, though we thought fondly, heart  
could not love her more.

Then out-spake another angel, nobler, brighter  
than the rest,

As with strong arm, but tender, he caught her to  
his breast :

“Ye have made her all too lovely for a child of  
mortal race,

But no shade of human sorrow shall darken o'er  
her face.

“Ye have tuned to gladness only the accents of  
her tongue,

And no wail of human anguish shall from her lips  
be wrung ;

Nor shall the soul that shineth so purely from  
within

Her form of earth-born frailty, ever know the taint  
of sin.

“Lulled in my faithful bosom, I will bear her far  
away,

Where there is no sin nor anguish, nor sorrow,  
nor decay ;

And mine a boon more glorious than all your gifts  
shall be—

Lo! I crown her happy spirit with immortality!”

Then on his heart our darling yielded up her gentle breath,  
For the stronger, brighter angel, who loved her best, was DEATH!



AN EXPOSTULATION WITH ONE WHO  
PITIED A DYING CHILD.

CAROMAIA.

You "pity her?" Oh! why  
Pity the tender child,  
So patient and so mild,  
Laid early down to die?  
Gentle and kind the mission  
Of Death, the good physician,  
Who at her side stands nigh.

She looks upon his brow,  
And reads there very plain,  
How he will ease her pain,  
And make her well; and how  
He'll bear her spirit whither  
It never more can wither,  
As it is drooping now.

Early she is laid down ;  
Before life's morning-smile,  
Joyful, and free from guile,  
Was darkened by a frown ;  
Early she leaves all sorrow ;  
Early she bids good-morrow  
To heaven, and harp, and crown.

You pity her ? Why so ?  
Her heart has never grieved,  
Has never been deceived,  
Has never dreamed of wo ;  
Why keep her here to suffer,  
To know the earth much rougher,  
Than childhood e'er can know ?

*Pity*, you should not say,  
To those whom God has called  
To join the disenthralled,  
The saints of upper day ;  
Who live at home in heaven,  
Where sins are all forgiven,  
And tears all wiped away !

But pity the bereft,  
Whose tearful eyes are dim,  
Nor see the Love of Him  
Who has their hearts-strings cleft ;  
Who in the night awaken,  
To murmur for joys taken,  
And muse o'er sorrows left.

Who think they yet must brave  
Many a giant storm,  
Rearing his dismal form,  
Over life's changeful wave !  
Such, such are to be pitied,  
Not they who are committed  
To a calm, early grave.

I would not wish to reap  
Ere I have scattered seeds,  
Or done appointed deeds ;  
Yet I could almost weep,  
That I were not now dying  
As that sweet child is, lying  
In my last HAPPY sleep !

## ON A FAIR INFANT.

MILTON.

O fairest flower, no sooner shown than blasted,  
Soft, silken primrose, fading timelessly,  
Summer's chief honour, if thou hadst outlasted  
Bleak Winter's force that made thy blossom  
dry ;

For he, being amorous on that lovely dye  
That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss,  
But killed, alas ! and then bewailed his fatal bliss.

Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,  
Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb,  
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,  
Hid from the world in a low delved tomb,  
Could Heaven, for pity, thee so strictly doom ?  
Oh, no ! for something in thy face did shine  
Above mortality, that showed thou wast divine.

Ah ! wert thou of the golden-winged host,  
Who, having clad thyself in human weed,  
To earth from thy prefixed seat didst post,  
And after short abode fly back with speed,  
As if to show what creatures heaven doth breed ;

Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire,  
To scorn the sordid world, and unto heaven as-  
pire.

But, oh! why didst thou not stay here below?  
To bless us with thy heaven-loved innocence,  
To slake his wrath whom sin hath made our foe,  
To turn swift-rushing black Perdition hence,  
Or drive away the slaughtering Pestilence,  
To stand 'twixt us and our deserved smart?  
But thou canst best perform that office where thou  
art.

Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child,  
Her false-imagined loss cease to lament,  
And wisely think to curb thy sorrows wild;  
Think what a present thou to God has sent,  
And render him with patience what he lent;  
This, if thou do, he will an offspring give,  
That, till the world's last end, shall make thy name  
to live.



## HYMN TO NIGHT.

GEO. W. BETHUNE.

Yes! bear them to their rest;  
The rosy babe tired with the glare of day,  
The prattler fall'n asleep ev'n in his play;  
    Clasp them to thy soft breast,  
        O Night,  
Bless them in dreams with a deep-hushed delight!

Yet must they wake again;  
Wake soon to all the bitterness of life,  
The pang of sorrow, the temptation strife,  
    Aye, to the conscience—pain.  
        O Night,  
Canst thou not take with them a longer flight?

Canst thou not bear them far,  
Ev'n now all innocent, before they know  
The taint of sin, its consequence of wo,  
    The world's distracting jar,  
        O Night,  
To some eternal, holier, happier height?

Canst thou not bear them up,  
Through star-lit skies, far from this planet dim  
And sorrowful, ev'n while they sleep, to Him,  
Who drank for us the cup,  
O Night,  
The cup of wrath for souls in faith contrite ?

To Him, for them who slept  
A babe all lowly on his mother's knee,  
And, from that hour to cross-crowned Calvary,  
In all our sorrows wept,  
O Night,  
That on our souls might dawn heaven's cheering  
light ?

Go lay their little heads  
Close to that human breast, with love divine  
Deep beating ; while His arms immortal twine  
Around them as He sheds,  
O Night,  
On them a brother's grace of God's own boundless  
might.

Let them, immortal, wake  
Among the deathless flowers of Paradise,

Where angels' songs of welcome with surprise  
This their last sleep may break ;  
O Night,  
And to celestial joys their kindred souls invite.

There can come no sorrow ;  
The brow shall know no shade, the eye no tears ;  
Forever young through heaven's eternal years  
In one unfading morrow,  
O Night,  
Nor sin, nor age, nor pain, their cherub beauty  
blight.

Would we could sleep as they  
So stainless and so calm ; at rest with thee,  
And only wake in immortality.  
Bear us with them away,  
O Night,  
To that eternal, holier, happier height.



#### ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

She glanced into our world, to see  
A sample of our misery ;  
Then turned away her languid eye  
To drop a tear or two, and die.

She tasted of life's bitter cup,  
Refused to drink the portion up ;  
But turned her little head aside,  
Disgusted with the taste, and died.

She listen'd for a while to hear  
Our mortal griefs, then turned her ear  
To angel harps and songs, and cried  
To join their notes celestial, sighed, and died.

Sweet babe no more, but angel now,  
Before the throne behold her bow,  
Her soul enlarged to angel size,  
Joins in the triumph of the skies ;  
Adores the God that brought her there,  
Without a wish, without a care ;  
That washed her soul in Calvary's stream :  
That shortened life's distressing dream,  
Short pain, short grief, dear babe, was thine,  
Now joys eternal and divine.

## THE DYING.

THOMAS HOOD.

“ We watched her breathing through the night,  
Her breathing soft and low,  
As in her breast the wave of life  
Kept heaving to and fro.

“ So silently we seemed to speak,  
So slowly moved about,  
As we had lent her half our powers  
To eke her living out.

“ Our very hopes belied our fears,  
Our fears our hopes belied—  
We thought her dying when she slept,  
And sleeping when she died.

“ For when the morn came dim and sad,  
And chill with early showers,  
Her quiet eyelids closed—she had  
Another morn than ours.”

## LITTLE CHILDREN.

*“The smallest planet is nearest the sun. Ye stand  
nearest to God, ye little ones.”*

Nearest to God in childhood! It is true,  
For then the heart wears not the deepened stain  
That after years bear to it;—morn’s sweet dew  
Has not yet sought in the blue sky, again,  
Its first fair home;—Hope’s sunshine is unshaded,  
Joy’s opening blossoms have not drooped or faded;  
Life’s verdant paths have not been sadly trod  
By weary feet!—the heart is near to God.

Yes, ye are near to God, ye little ones!  
Nearer than those whose bright eyes have  
grown dim  
With bitter tears—to whose sad heart there comes  
No day unmarked by suffering and sin.  
Ye have not found, amid earth’s blooming bowers,  
Shadows with sunbeams blended, thorns with flow-  
ers;  
Ye sport in sinless mirth on the green sod  
’Neath the blue sky;—yes, ye are near to God.

And near are ye to human hearts—more near  
Than aught else can be ; for the soul *will* love,  
E'en in the shadows of its dwelling here,  
Aught that reminds it of its home above.  
Ye whisper to us of a sky unclouded—  
Of joy, by grief's dark mantle ne'er enshrouded—  
Of paths by mortal footstep never trod ;  
Blessings upon you!—Ye *are* near to God.



## THE FAREWELL TO THE DEAD.

MRS. HEMANS.

Come near !—ere yet the dust  
Soil the bright paleness of the settled brow,  
Look on your brother and embrace him now,  
In still and solemn trust !  
Come near !—once more let kindred lips be pressed  
On his cold cheek ; then bear him to his rest !

Look yet on this young face !  
What shall the beauty from amongst us gone,  
Leave of its image, even where most it shone,  
Gladdening its hearth and race ?

Dim grows the semblance on man's heart im-  
pressed—

Come near, and bear the beautiful to rest.

Ye weep, and it is well!

For tears befit earth's partings!—Yesterday  
Song was upon the lips of this pale clay,

And sunshine seemed to dwell

Where'er he moved—the welcome and the blessed!

Now gaze! and bear the silent unto rest!

Look yet on him, whose eye

Meets yours no more, in sadness or in mirth!

Was he not fair amidst the sons of earth,

The beings born to die?

—But not where death has power may love be  
blessed—

Come near! and bear ye the beloved to rest!

How may the mother's heart

Dwell on her son, and dare to hope again?

The spring's rich promise hath been given in vain,

The lovely must depart!

Is he not gone, our brightest and our best?

Come near! and bear the early-called to rest!



Look on him ! is he laid  
To slumber from the harvest or the chase ?  
—Too still and sad the smile upon his face,  
    Yet that, even that, must fade !  
Death holds not long unchanged his fairest guest,  
Come near ! and bear the mortal to his rest !

His voice of mirth had ceased  
Amidst the vineyards ! there is left no place  
For him whose dust receives your vain embrace,  
    At the gay bridal feast !  
Earth must take earth to moulder on her breast ;  
Come near ! weep o'er him ! bear him to his rest !

Yet mourn ye not as they  
Whose spirit's light is quenched !—for him the  
    past  
Is sealed. He may not fall, he may not cast  
    His birthright's hope away !  
All is not here of our beloved and blessed—  
—Leave ye the sleeper with his God to rest !

## THE JOY OF THE DEAD.

GILES FLETCHER.

No sorrow now hangs clouding on their brow,  
No bloodless malady impales their face,  
No age drops on their hairs his silver snow,  
No nakedness their bodies doth embrace,  
No poverty themselves and theirs disgrace;  
    No fear of death the joy of life devours,  
    No unchaste sleep the precious night deflours,  
No loss, no grief, no change, wait on their wingéd  
    hours,

And if a sullen cloud, as sad as night,  
In which the sun may seem embodiéd,  
Deprived of all his dross, we see so white,  
Burning in melting gold his watery head,  
Or round with ivory edges silveréd;  
    What lustre superexcellént will He  
    Lighten on those that shall his sunshine see,  
In that all-glorious court in which all glories be!

## O, STAY THOSE TEARS.

ANDREWS NORTON.

O, stay thy tears! for they are blest  
Whose days are past; whose toil is done.  
Here midnight care disturbs our rest;  
Here sorrow dims the noonday sun.

For labouring virtue's anxious toil,  
For patient sorrow's stifled sigh,  
For faith that marks the conqueror's spoil,  
Heaven grants the recompense to die.

How blest are they whose transient years,  
Pass like an evening meteor's flight;  
Not dark with guilt, nor dim with tears;  
Whose course is short, unclouded, bright.

How cheerless were our lengthened way,  
Did heaven's own light not break the gloom;  
Stream downward from eternal day,  
And cast a glory round the tomb!

Then stay thy tears; the blest above  
Have hailed a spirit's heavenly birth;

Sung a new song of joy and love,  
And why should anguish reign on earth?



### WEEP NOT FOR HER!

NOCTES AMBROSIANÆ.

Weep not for her! Her span was like the sky,  
Whose thousand stars shine beautiful and bright;  
Like flowers, that know not what it is to die;  
Like long-linked, shadeless months of polar  
light;  
Like music floating o'er a waveless lake,  
While echo answers from the flowery brake:  
Weep not for her!

Weep not for her! She died in early youth,  
Ere hope had lost its rich romantic hues;  
When human bosoms seemed the homes of truth,  
And earth still gleamed with beauty's radiant  
dews.  
Her summer prime waned not to days that freeze;  
Her wine of life was run not to the lees:  
Weep not for her!

Weep not for her! By fleet or slow decay,  
It never grieved her bosom's core to mark  
The playmates of her childhood wear away,  
Her prospects wither, or her hopes grow dark;  
Translated by her God, with spirit shriven,  
She passed, as 'twere in smiles, from earth to  
heaven!

Weep not for her!

Weep not for her! It was not her's to feel  
The miseries that corrode amassing years,  
'Gainst dreams of baffled bliss the heart to steel,  
To wander sad down age's vale of tears,  
As whirl the wither'd leaves from friendship's tree,  
And on earth's wintry world alone to be:

Weep not for her!

Weep not for her! She is an angel now,  
And treads the sapphire floors of paradise;  
All darkness wiped from her refulgent brow,  
Sin, sorrow, suffering, banished from her eyes;  
Victorious over death, to her appear  
The vista'd joys of heaven's eternal year:

Weep not for her!

Weep not for her! Her memory is the shrine  
 Of pleasant thoughts, soft as the scent of flowers,  
 Calm as on windless eve the sun's decline,  
 Sweet as the song of birds among the bowers,  
 Rich as the rainbow, with its hues of light,  
 Pure as the moonshine of an autumn's night:  
 Weep not for her!

Weep not for her! There is no cause for wo;  
 But rather nerve the spirit, that it walk  
 Unshrinking o'er the thorny paths below,  
 And from earth's low defilements keep thee back;  
 So, when a few fleet severing years have flown,  
 She'll meet thee at heaven's gate, and lead thee on!  
 Weep not for her!



### LOW SHE LIES, WHO BLEST OUR EYES.

MRS. NORTON.

Low she lies, who blest our eyes  
 Through many a sunny day;  
 She may not smile, she will not rise,—  
 The life has past away!

Yet there is a world of light beyond,  
Where we neither die nor sleep;  
She is there, of whom our souls were fond,—  
Then, wherefore do we weep?

The heart is cold, whose thoughts were told  
In each glance of her glad bright eye;  
And she lies pale, who was so bright,  
She scarce seem'd made to die.  
Yet we know that her soul is happy now,  
Where the saints their calm watch keep;  
That angels are crowning that fair young brow,—  
Then, wherefore do we weep?

Her laughing voice made all rejoice,  
Who caught the happy sound;  
There was a gladness in her very step,  
As it lightly touched the ground.  
The echoes of voice and step are gone,  
There is silence still and deep;  
Yet we know that she sings by God's bright  
throne.  
Then, wherefore do we weep?

The cheek's pale tinge, the lid's dark fringe,  
That lies like a shadow there,  
Were beautiful in the eyes of all—  
And her glossy golden hair!  
But though that lid may never wake  
From its dark and dreamless sleep;  
She is gone where young hearts do not break,—  
Then wherefore do we weep?

That world of light with joy is bright,  
This is a world of wo;  
Shall we grieve that her soul has taken flight,  
Because we dwell below?  
We will bury her under the mossy sod,  
And one long bright tress we'll keep;  
We have only given her back to God,—  
Then wherefore do we weep?



### TO AN INFANT IN HEAVEN.

THOMAS WARD.

Thou bright and star-like spirit!  
That in my visions wild,  
I see, mid heaven's seraphic host—  
O! canst thou be my child?



Our hopes of thee were lofty,  
But have we cause to grieve?  
O! could our fondest, proudest wish  
A nobler fate conceive?

The little weeper, tearless,  
The sinner snatched from sin;  
The babe to more than manhood grown,  
Ere childhood did begin.

And I, thy earthly teacher,  
Would blush thy power to see;  
Thou art to me a parent now,  
And I, a child to thee!

What bliss is born of sorrow,  
'Tis never sent in vain,—  
The heavenly surgeon maims to save,  
He gives no useless pain.

Our God, to call us homeward,  
His only Son sent down,  
And now, still more to tempt our hearts,  
Has taken up our own.

## OH! SAY NOT 'TWERE A KEENER BLOW.

T. H. BAYLY.

Oh! say not 'twere a keener blow,  
To lose a child of riper years;  
You cannot feel a mother's wo,  
You cannot dry a mother's tears;  
The girl who rears a sickly plant,  
Or cherishes a wounded dove,  
Will love them most while most they want  
The watchfulness of love!

Time *must* have changed that fair young brow!  
Time *might* have changed that spotless heart!  
Years *might* have taught deceit,—but now  
In love's confiding dawn we part!  
Ere pain or grief had wrought decay,  
My babe is cradled in the tomb;  
Like some fair blossom torn away  
Before its perfect bloom.

With thoughts of peril and of storm,  
We see a bark first touch the wave;  
But distant seems the whirlwind's form,  
As distant—as an infant's grave!

Though all is calm, that beauteous ship  
Must brave the whirlwind's rudest breath ;  
Though all is calm, that infant's lip  
Must meet the kiss of death !



### DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

WILLIS GAYLORD CLARK.

Young mother, he is gone !  
His dimpled cheek no more will touch thy breast ;  
No more the music tone  
Float from his lips, to thine all fondly pressed ;  
His smile and happy laugh are lost to thee ;  
Earth must his mother and his pillow be.

His was the morning hour,  
And he hath passed in beauty from the day,  
A bud, not yet a flower,  
Torn, in its sweetness, from the parent's spray ;  
The death-wind swept him to his soft repose,  
As frost, in spring-time, blights the early rose.

Never on earth again  
Will his rich accents charm thy listening ear,  
Like some Eolian strain,  
Breathing at eventide serene and clear ;  
His voice is choked in dust, and on his eyes  
The unbroken seal of peace and silence lies.

And from thy yearning heart,  
Whose inmost core was warm with love for him,  
A gladness must depart,  
And those kind eyes with many tears be dim ;  
While lonely memories, an unceasing train,  
Will turn the raptures of the past to pain.

Yet mourner, while the day,  
Rolls like the darkness of a funeral by,  
And hope forbids one ray  
To stream athwart the grief-discoloured sky ;  
There breaks upon thy sorrow's evening gloom,  
A trembling lustre from beyond the tomb.

'Tis from the better land !  
There, bathed in radiance that around them springs,  
Thy loved one's wings expand ;  
As with the choiring cherubim he sings,

And all the glory of that God can see,  
Who said, on earth, to children, "Come to me."

Mother, thy child is blessed ;  
And though his presence may be lost to thee,  
And vacant leave thy breast,  
And miss'd a sweet load from thy parent knee ;  
Though tones familiar from thine ear have passed,  
Thou'lt meet thy first-born with his Lord at last.

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### MY CHILD.

REV. JOHN PIERPONT.

I cannot make him dead !  
His fair sunshiny head  
Is ever bounding round my study chair ;  
Yet, when my eyes, now dim  
With tears, I turn to him,  
The vision vanishes,—he is not there !

I walk my parlour floor,  
And through the open door,  
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair ;  
I'm stepping toward the hall,  
To give the boy a call ;  
And then bethink me that—he is not there !

I thread the crowded street ;  
A satchelled lad I meet,  
With the same beaming eyes and coloured hair,  
And, as he's running by,  
Follow him with my eye,  
Scarcely believing that—he is not there!

I know his face is hid  
Under the coffin lid ;  
Closed are his eyes ; cold is his forehead fair ;  
My hand that marble felt ;  
O'er it in prayer I knelt ;  
Yet my heart whispers that—he is not there!

I cannot *make* him dead !  
When passing by the bed,  
So long watched over with parental care ;  
My spirit and my eye  
Seek it inquiringly,  
Before the thought comes that—he is not there !

When, at the cool, gray break  
Of day, from sleep I wake,  
With my first breathing of the morning air

My soul goes up, with joy,  
To Him who gave my boy,  
Then comes the sad thought that—he is not there!

When at the day's calm close,  
Before we seek repose,  
I'm with his mother, offering up our prayer,  
Whate'er I may be *saying*,  
I am, in spirit, praying  
For our boy's spirit, though—he is not there!

Not there! Where, then, is he?  
The form I used to see  
Was but the raiment that he used to wear.  
The grave, that now doth press  
Upon that cast-off dress,  
Is but his wardrobe locked; *he* is not there!

He lives!—In all the past  
He lives; nor, to the last,  
Of seeing him again will I despair;  
In dreams I see him now;  
And, on his angel brow,  
I see it written, “Thou shalt see me *there!*”

Yes, we all live to God!  
 FATHER, thy chastening rod  
 So help us, thine afflicted ones, to bear,  
 That, in the spirit land,  
 Meeting at thy right hand,  
 T'will be our heaven to find that—he is *there!*



### ON THE DEATH OF A SON.

W. B. O. PEABODY.

\* \* \* \* \*

I never trusted to have lived  
 To say farewell to thee,  
 And almost said in agony,  
 It ought not so to be;  
 I hoped that thou within the grave  
 My weary head shouldst lay,  
 And live beloved, when I was gone,  
 For many a happy day.

With trembling hand, I vainly tried  
 Thy dying eyes to close;  
 And almost envied, in that hour,  
 Thy calm and deep repose;



For I was left in loneliness,  
With pain and grief oppressed,  
And thou wast with the sainted,  
Where the weary are at rest.

Yes, I am sad and weary now,  
But let me not repine,  
Because a spirit, loved so well,  
Is earlier blessed than mine ;  
My faith may darken as it will,  
I shall not much deplore,  
Since thou art where the ills of life  
Can never reach thee more.



ON SEEING AN INFANT PREPARED FOR  
THE GRAVE.

MRS. SIGOURNEY.

Go to thy sleep, my child,  
Go to thy dreamless bed,—  
Gentle and undefiled,  
With blessings on thy head :—

Fresh roses in thy hand,  
    Buds on thy pillow laid,  
Haste from this fearful land  
    Where flowers so quickly fade.

Before thy heart had learn'd  
    In waywardness to stray,  
Before thy feet had turn'd  
    The dark and downward way;  
Ere sin had sear'd thy breast,  
    Or sorrow woke the tear,  
Rise to thy home of rest  
    In yon celestial sphere.

Because thy smile was fair,  
    Thy lip and eye so bright;  
Because thy cradle-care  
    Was such a fond delight,  
Shall Love with weak embrace  
    Thy outspread wing detain?  
No!—Angel,—seek thy place  
    Amid the cherub train.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE DEPARTED.

T. K. HERVEY.

I know thou art gone to thy home of rest ;  
Then why should my soul be sad ?  
I know thou art gone where the weary are blest ;  
And the mourner looks up and is glad ;  
Where Love has put off, in the land of its birth,  
The stain it had gathered in this,  
And Hope, the sweet singer that gladdened the  
earth,  
Lies asleep on the bosom of Bliss.

I know thou art gone where thy forehead is starred  
With the beauty that dwelt in thy soul,  
Where the light of thy loveliness cannot be marred,  
Nor thy heart be flung back from its goal.  
I know thou hast drunken of Lethe, that flows  
Through a land where they do not forget,  
That sheds over memory only repose,  
And takes from it only regret.

This eye must be dark, that as yet is not dimmed,  
Ere again it may gaze upon thine ;

But my heart has revealings of thee, and thy  
home,

In many a token and sign :

I never look up with a vow to the sky,

But a light, like thy beauty, is there ;

And I hear a low murmur, like thine, in reply,

When I pour out my spirit in prayer.

In *thy* far away dwelling, wherever it be,

I believe thou hast visions of *mine* ;

And thy love, that made all things as music to me,

I have not yet learned to resign :

In the hush of the night—on the waste of the sea,

Or alone with the breeze on the hill,

I have ever a presence that whispers of thee,

And my spirit lies down and is still.

And though like a mourner that sits by a tomb,

I am wrapped in a mantle of care ;

Yet the grief of my bosom—O call it not gloom—

Is not the black grief of despair.

By sorrow revealed, as the stars are by night,

Far off a bright vision appears,

And Hope, like a rainbow, a creature of light,

Is born, like the rainbow, in tears.

THOUGHTS WHILE MAKING A GRAVE FOR  
A FIRST CHILD, BORN DEAD.

N. P. WILLIS.

Room, gentle flowers! my child would pass to  
heaven!

Ye looked not for her yet with your soft eyes,  
O, watchful ushers at Death's narrow door!  
But lo, while you delay to let her forth,  
Angels beyond, stay for her! One long kiss  
From lips all pale with agony, and tears,  
Wrung after anguish had dried up with fire  
The eyes that wept them, were the cup of life  
Held as a welcome to her. Weep, O mother!  
But not that from this cup of bitterness  
A cherub of the sky has turned away.

One look upon her face ere she depart!  
My daughter! it is soon to let thee go!  
My daughter! with thy birth has gushed a spring  
I knew not of; filling my heart with tears,  
And turning with strange tenderness to thee!  
A love—O God, it seems so, which must flow  
Far as thou fleest, and 'twixt heaven and me,  
Henceforward, be a sweet and yearning chain,  
Drawing me after thee! And so farewell!

'Tis a harsh world in which affection knows  
No place to treasure up its loved and lost,  
But the lone grave! Thou, who so late was sleep-  
ing

Warm in the close folds of a mother's heart,  
Scarce from her breast a single pulse receiving,  
But it was sent thee with some tender thought—  
How can I leave thee *here!* Alas, for man!  
The herb in its humility may fall,  
And waste into the bright and genial air,  
While we by hands that ministered in life  
Nothing but love to us, are thrust away,  
The earth thrown in upon our just cold bosoms,  
And the warm sunshine trodden out forever!

Yet have I chosen for thy grave, my child,  
A bank where I have lain in summer hours,  
And thought how little it would seem like death,  
To sleep amid such loveliness. The brook  
Tripping with laughter down the rocky steps  
That lead us to thy bed, would still trip on,  
Breaking the dread hush of the mourners gone;  
The birds are never silent that build here,  
Trying to sing down the more vocal waters;  
The slope is beautiful with moss and flowers;  
And, far below, seen under arching leaves,

Glitters the warm sun on the village spire,  
Pointing the living after thee! And this  
Seems like a comfort; and, replacing now  
The flowers that have made room for thee, I go  
To whisper the same peace to her who lies  
Robbed of her child, and lonely. 'Tis the work  
Of many a dark hour, and of many a prayer,  
To bring the heart back from an infant gone!  
Hope must give o'er, and busy fancy blot  
Its images from all the silent rooms,  
And every sight and sound familiar to her  
Undo its sweetest link; and so, at last,  
The fountain that, once loosed, must flow forever,  
Will hide and waste in silence. When the smile  
Steals to her pallid lip again, and Spring  
Wakens its buds above thee, we will come,  
And, standing by thy music-haunted grave,  
Look on each other cheerfully and say,  
*A child that we have loved is gone to heaven,  
And by this gate of flowers she passed away!*

## THE GRAVE.

JAMES G. BROOKS.

The grave! the grave! oh, happy they  
Whom death hath seized in early spring,  
Who sleep within the house of clay,  
Gathered when life is blossoming.  
The grave! the grave! ah! sorrow there  
May aim her many shafts in vain,  
And the dark spectre of despair  
Stalks powerless in that domain.

They sleep! the selfish and the vile,  
Can never more their feelings wring;  
Unkind deceit, and heartless guile,  
And envy, never more can sting:  
And love, which only lives to mourn,  
Can never blight their hearts again,  
For on the cold and senseless urn,  
His wasting mildews fall in vain.

Then weep not, weep not for the dead,  
The cold clay doth not heed the tear;  
But weep for those who bow the head  
In life, when hope holds nothing dear;



Weep for the living, who conceal  
The moody madness of the breast;  
Mourn not the dead, they cannot feel!  
Mourn not the dead, they are at rest!



### I HEAR THY VOICE, O SPRING.

W. J. PABODIE.

I hear thy voice, O Spring,  
Its flute-like tones are floating through the air,  
Winning my soul with their wild ravishing,  
From earth's heart-wearying care.

Divinely sweet thy song,—  
But yet methinks, as near the groves I pass,  
Low sighs on viewless wings are borne along,  
Tears gem the springing grass.

For where are they, the young,  
The loved, the beautiful, who, when, thy voice,  
A year ago, along these valleys rung,  
Did hear thee and rejoice?

Thou seek'st for them in vain—  
 No more they'll greet thee in thy joyous round;  
 Calmly they sleep beneath the murmuring main,  
 Or moulder in the ground.

Yet peace, my heart, be still!  
 Look upward to yon azure sky, and know  
 To heavenlier music now their bosoms thrill,  
 Where balmier breezes blow.

For them hath bloomed a Spring,  
 Whose flowers perennial deck a holier sod,  
 Whose music is the song that seraphs sing,  
 Whose light, the smile of God.



## A PSALM OF DEATH.

### *The Reaper and the Flowers.*

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

“Dear beauteous Death! the jewel of the just,  
 Shining nowhere but in the dark,  
 What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,  
 Could we outlook that mark!”

There is a Reaper, whose name is Death,  
 And with his sickle keen,

He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,  
And the flowers that grow between.

“ Shall I have nought that is fair,” saith he,  
“ Have nought but the bearded grain ?  
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,  
I will give them all back again.”

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,  
He kissed their drooping leaves ;  
It was for the Lord of Paradise,  
He bound them in his sheaves.

“ My Lord hath need of the flowerets gay,”  
The Reaper said, and smiled :  
“ Dear tokens of the earth are they,  
Where he was once a child.”

“ They shall all bloom in fields of light,  
Transplanted by my care,  
And saints upon their garments white,  
These sacred blossoms wear.”

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,  
The flowers she most did love,  
But she knew she should find them all again,  
In the fields of light above.

O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,  
The Reaper came that day :  
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,  
And took the flowers away.



### THE DYING BOY.

J. H. BRIGHT.

It must be sweet in childhood to give back  
The spirit to its Maker, ere the heart  
Has grown familiar with the paths of sin,  
And sown—to garner up its bitter fruits.  
I knew a boy, whose infant feet had trod  
Upon the blossoms of some seven springs,  
And when the eighth came round and called him  
out,  
To revel in its light, he turned away,  
And sought his chamber, to lie down and die.

'Twas night—he summoned his accustomed friends,  
And, on this wise, bestowed his last bequest :

Mother, I'm dying now !  
There's a deep suffocation in my breast,  
As if some heavy hand my bosom pressed ;  
And on my brow

I feel the cold sweat stand :  
My lips grow dry and tremulous, and my breath  
Comes feebly up. Oh! tell me, is this death ?  
Mother, your hand—

Here—lay it on my wrist,  
And place the other thus beneath my head,  
And say, sweet mother, say, when I am dead,  
Shall I be missed?

Never beside your knee,  
Shall I kneel down again at night to pray,  
Nor with the morning wake, and sing the lay  
You taught to me.

Oh! at the time of prayer,  
When you look round, and see a vacant seat,  
You will not wait then for my coming feet—  
You'll miss me there.

Father, I'm going home!  
To the good home you spoke of—that blest land  
Where it is one bright summer always, and  
Storms never come.

I must be happy then;  
From pain and death you say I shall be free,  
That sickness never enters there, and we  
Shall meet again.

Brother, the little spot  
I used to call *my* garden, where long hours  
We've staid to watch the budding things and  
flowers,  
Forget it not!

Plant there some box or pine,  
Something that lives in winter, and will be  
A verdant offering to my memory,  
And call it mine.

Sister, my young rose-tree,  
That all the spring has been my pleasant care,  
Just putting forth its leaves, so green and fair,  
I give to thee.

And when its roses bloom,  
I shall be gone away, my short life done ;  
But will you not bestow a single one  
Upon my tomb ?

Now, Mother, sing the tune  
You sung last night ; I'm weary and must sleep.  
Who was it called my name ? Nay, do not weep,  
You'll all come soon !

Morning spread o'er the earth her rosy wings,  
And that meek sufferer, cold and ivory pale,  
Lay on his couch asleep. The gentle air  
Came through the open window, freighted with  
The savoury odours of the early spring :  
He breathed it not : the laugh of passers by  
Jarred like a discord in some mournful tune,  
But wakened not his slumber. He was dead.

## A DIRGE.

Beautiful on thy fair brow,  
Brother, death is sitting now !  
Calmly as on mother's breast,  
Weary child, thou slumberest,  
That deep sleep, which ne'er again  
Wakes to mortal grief and pain.

Round thee, in the waning year,  
Leaves are falling sad and sear,  
Soon will winter's sighing blast,  
O'er thee strew them thick and fast—  
But in thy green spring-tide, thou,  
Gentle brother, liest low.

Flowers are fading on thy bier,  
Hands of love had scattered here—  
Meetly thus the sweets they fling  
O'er thee of their withering,  
In thy bright young bloom, like them,  
Severed from the natal stem.

Yet, O brother, not for thee  
Flow our tears of agony !  
Even midst the darkness left  
O'er the home of thee bereft,



From thy spirit's radiant track  
Who, O who would call thee back!

When the rainbow shines o'erhead,  
Mourn we for the dew-drop fled?  
Or, when springs the flower on high,  
That the buried seed should die?  
Far less bright than thou art now,  
Flower of earth, or heavenly bow.

Brother, like some silenced tone  
Of sweet music, art thou gone!  
Ere thy light of youth grew dim,  
God hath taken thee to Him,  
—Welcome were the hour to me,  
Brother, to lie down with thee!



#### TO A DYING INFANT.

Sleep, little baby! sleep!  
Not in thy cradle bed,  
Not on thy mother's breast  
Henceforth shall be thy rest,  
But with the quiet dead.

Yes—with the quiet dead,  
    Baby, thy rest shall be.  
Oh! many a weary heart,  
Weary of life's dull part,  
    Would fain lie down with thee.

Flee, little tender nursling!  
    Flee to thy grassy nest;  
There the first flowers shall blow,  
The first pure flakes of snow  
    Shall fall upon thy breast.

Peace! peace! the little bosom  
    Labours with shortening breath—  
Peace! peace! that tremulous sigh  
Speaks his departure nigh—  
    These are the damps of death.

I've seen thee in thy beauty,  
    A thing all life and glee;  
But never then wert thou  
So beautiful as now,  
    Baby, thou seem'st to me.

\* \* \* \* \*

THE THREE SONS; OR, FAITH  
TRIUMPHANT.

BY REV J. MOULTRIE, A.M.

I.

I have a son, a little son,  
A boy just five years old,  
With eyes of thoughtful earnestness,  
A mind of gentle mould.

They tell me that unusual grace  
In all his ways appears,  
That my child is grave, and wise of heart,  
Beyond his childish years.

I cannot say how this may be,  
I know his face is fair,  
And yet his chiefest comeliness  
Is his sweet and serious air.

I know his heart is kind and fond,  
I know he loveth me,  
But he loveth yet his mother more,  
With grateful fervency.

But that which others most admire,  
Is the thought that fills his mind,  
The food for grave, inspiring speech,  
He everywhere doth find.

Strange questions doth he ask of me,  
When we together walk ;  
He scarcely thinks as children think,  
Or talks as children talk.

Nor cares he much for childish sports,  
Dotes not on bat or ball,  
But looks on manhood's ways and works,  
And aptly mimics all.

His little heart is busy still,  
And oftentimes perplexed  
With thoughts about this world of ours,  
And thoughts about the next.

He kneels at his dear mother's knees,  
She teaches him to pray,  
And strange, and sweet, and solemn, then,  
Are the words which he will say.

Oh, should my gentle child be spared,  
To manhood's years, like me,  
A holier and a wiser man  
I trust that he will be.

And when I look into his eyes,  
And on his thoughtful brow,  
I dare not think what I should feel,  
Were I to lose him now.

## II.

I have a son, a second son,  
A simple child of three ;  
I'll not declare how bright and fair  
His little features be.

I do not think his light blue eye  
Is like his brother's keen,  
Nor his brow so full of childish thought  
As his hath ever been.

But his little heart's a fountain pure,  
Of kind and tender feeling,  
And his every look 's a gleam of light,  
Rich depths of love revealing.

When he walks with me, the country folk,  
Who pass us in the street,  
Will shout for joy, and bless my boy,  
He looks so mild and sweet.

A playfellow is he to all,  
And yet, with cheerful tone,  
Will sing his little song of love,  
When left to sport alone.

His presence is like sunshine, sent  
To gladden home, the earth,  
To comfort us in all our griefs,  
And sweeten all our mirth.

Should he grow up to riper years,  
God grant his heart may prove,  
As sweet a home for heavenly grace,  
As now for earthly love.

And if, beside his grave, the tears  
Our aching eyes must dim,  
God comfort us for all the love  
Which we shall lose in him!

## III.

I have a son, a third sweet son,  
His age I cannot tell,  
For they reckon not by years and months,  
Where he hath gone to dwell.

To us, for fourteen anxious months,  
His infant smiles were given,  
And then he bade farewell to earth,  
And went to live in heaven.

I cannot tell what form is his,  
What looks he weareth now,  
Nor guess how bright a glory crowns  
His shining seraph brow.

The thoughts that fill his sinless soul,  
The bliss which he doth feel,  
Are numbered with the secret things  
Which God will not reveal.

But I know, for God hath told me this,  
That he is now at rest,  
Where other blessed infants are,  
On their Saviour's loving breast.

Whate'er befalls his brethren twain,  
His bliss can never cease ;  
Their lot may here be grief and fear,  
But his is certain peace.

It may be that the tempter's wiles  
Their souls from bliss may sever,  
But, if our own poor faith fail not,  
*He* must be ours forever.

When we think on what our darling is,  
And what we still must be ;  
When we muse on *that* world's perfect bliss,  
And *this* world's misery ;

When we groan beneath this load of sin,  
And feel this grief and pain,  
Oh, we'd rather lose our other two,  
Than have him here again.



A DESIRE AFTER DEATH, AS THE  
ENTRANCE INTO LIFE.

*“ Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.”*

CAROMAIA.

Sweet it would be to lay  
My head and heart to rest  
Beneath the sod, where they  
Would be no more opprest ;  
Where they would feel no pain,  
Nor palpitate with grief,  
Nor long and pant in vain,  
For calm and sure relief.

But sweeter, better far,  
To feel my spirit fly  
Where the good angels are,  
Beyond the starry sky ;  
Free for a while from flesh,  
For ever freed from sin,  
Pure, spotless, joyful, fresh,  
To feel heaven's life begin !

But sweetest, best of all,  
The resurrection-day,

When Christ from sleep shall call  
 My re-created clay,  
 (In his own likeness made)  
 To rise; and clothe my soul  
 With light that shall not fade,  
 While endless ages roll.



LINES SUGGESTED BY THE FOLLOWING  
 PASSAGE IN A FRIEND'S LETTER.

GEO. W. BETHUNE.

Last week I buried my sweet little Mary; she was three years and two months old, and had been ill four weeks. She was born on the Sabbath, taken sick on the Sabbath, and buried on the Sabbath. During her illness she seemed to take great consolation in repeating the many hymns she had learned. "Mother," said she one day, "I will meet you on the way to Jordan." We thought she was asleep, but she was gone. The choir sang, in the most touching manner, at the grave, "Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb," &c. (*Rev. J. N. Danforth.*)

Tw'as on a blessed morning of the blessed day of  
 rest,  
 I clasp'd thee as a gift from God, first to a father's  
 breast;

And sweetly didst thou nestle there, a thing of  
holy love,  
Till soul shone out thy pleasant face, like sun-  
shine from above ;  
And the accents of thy lispings tongue seemed, to  
my partial thought,  
Like music, from the angel guards around thy pil-  
low, caught.  
We called thee by her precious name, who poured  
the rich perfume  
With tears upon her Master's feet, and watched  
his early tomb:  
I loved thee well, how tenderly God only knows,  
but thou  
Art clasp'd unto the heart of One, who loves thee  
better, now.

'Twas on another blessed day, midst the Sabbath's  
holy hush,  
When first we marked upon thy cheek the fever's  
hectic flush—  
And a shuddering sense of mortal ill ran through  
thy gentle frame,  
Till we dared not speak the fearful thoughts that  
o'er our spirits came ;

And many a weary, sleepless night, and weary,  
sleepless day,

We watched, beside thy burning bed, thy young  
life pass away.

Yet, there was joy amidst our grief, and hope, no  
tears could dim,

As we listened to thy whispered prayers, and  
sweetly warbled hymn :

Oh faithfully we watched thee then, amidst thy  
pangs, but thou

Art fallen asleep on Jesus' breast, and He will  
watch thee now.

And yet another Sabbath came, but we left the  
House of God

To seek for thee a narrow house, beneath the ver-  
dant sod ;

And many a bitter tear was shed, as we sadly  
asked for room,

To hide our loved one from our sight within the  
silent tomb.

Yet upward through those tears to heaven, each  
eye in hope was cast,

That there will dawn for thee a day, the holiest  
and the last ;

A day of endless life and joy, of fadeless, cloudless  
light,

When God Almighty and the Lamb shall chase  
away the night.

Oh! lovely wert thou in our eyes, my beautiful,  
but thou

Wilt wake with God's own likeness then upon thy  
cherub brow.

Thou mayest not come again to us, we would not  
call thee back

To tread with us, midst toil and gloom, the pil-  
grim's desert track :

But oh! that He, the lowly One, would grant us  
grace to be

Like thee in childlike gentleness, and meek sim-  
plicity;

Then shall we follow where thou art, and in the  
trying day,

When we must tread the vale of death, thou'lt  
meet us on our way—

A radiant messenger of God, sent from the holy  
throng

Around the throne, to welcome us with angel harp  
and song :

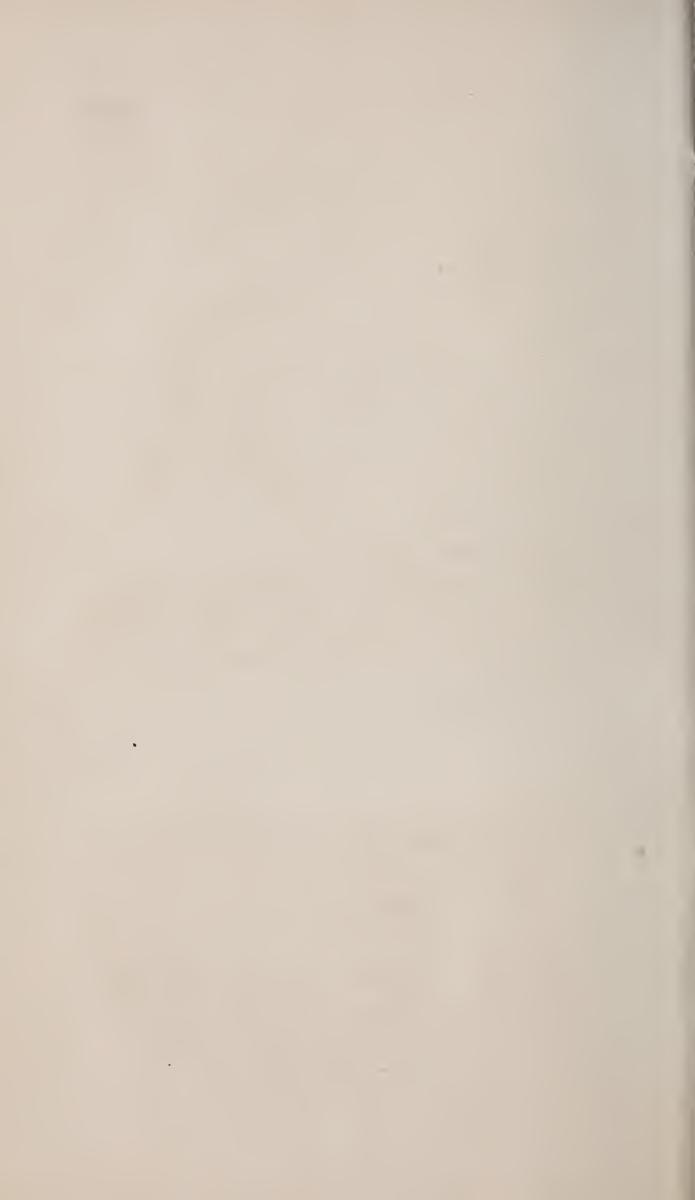
Oh blest will be our meeting then, in that pure  
home on high,  
Where sin no more shall cloud the heart, or sor-  
row dim the eye!



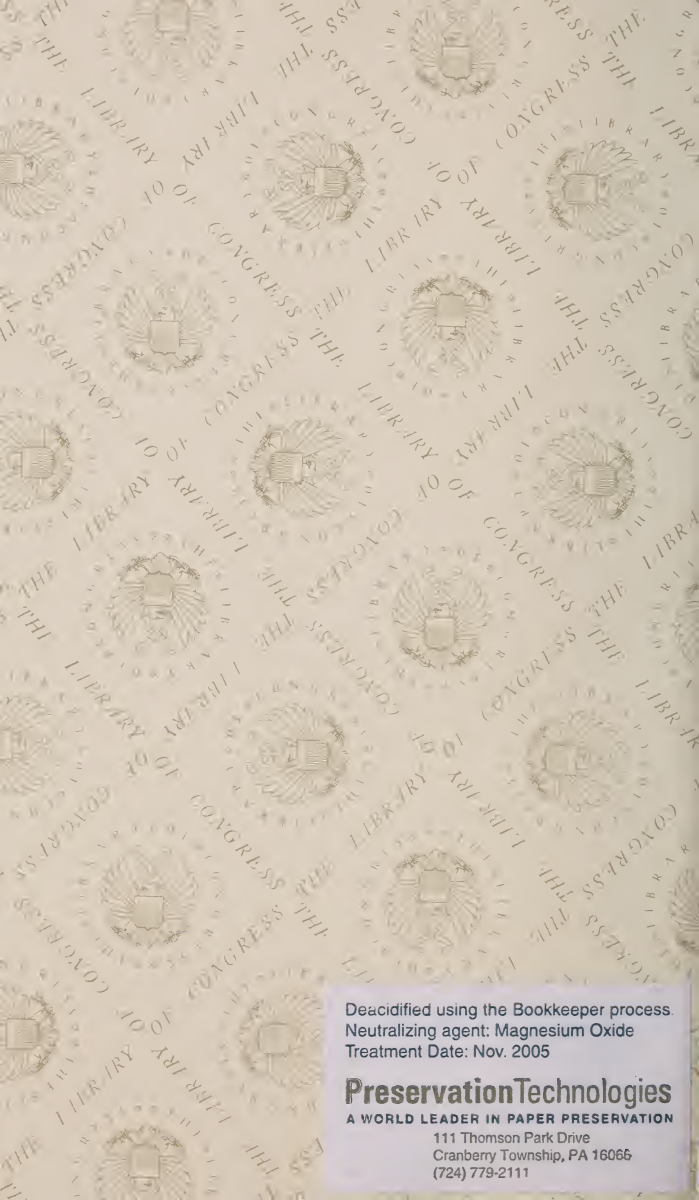










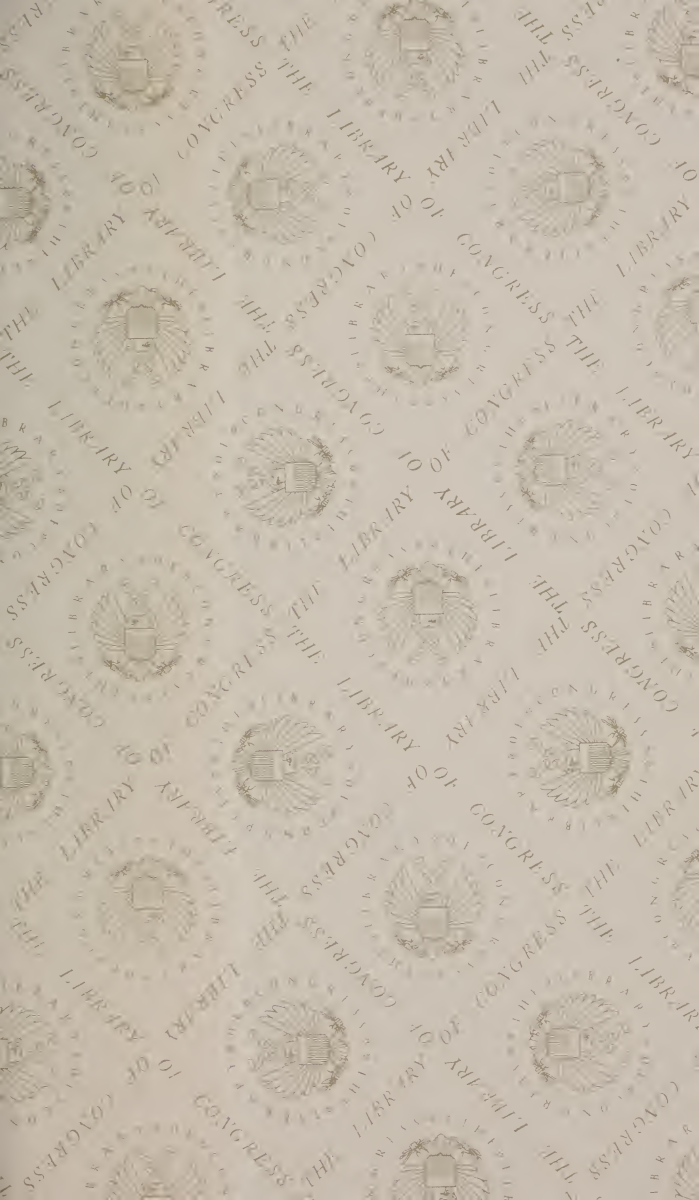


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