

JUVENILE PIETY;

ILLUSTRATED IN THE LIFE OF

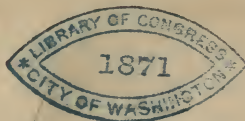
MARGARET ANN WALTON.

DAUGHTER OF THE REV. W. C. WALTON, LATE OF HARTFORD, CONN.

WITH REMARKS ON THE

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

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FRONTISPIECE.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS little memoir was prepared many years since, and at a time when very few biographies of pious children were published, and in circulation. The developments of religious feelings in its subject were so early and remarkable, her conscientiousness, devotion, and earnest desires to do good, were so unusual in a child of her years, that it was thought that a brief history of her life would exert a beneficial influence upon other children. This expectation, has been, to a considerable extent, realized. Several children have been led, by the example of Margaret Ann to delight in prayer, exercise faith in the promises of God, and improve opportunities afforded to direct others to the Saviour. They have also been taught to love the Bible, to study its holy truths, to reverence its Author, and to feel that the great mission of life is to make preparation for eternity.

The memoir also illustrates the power of family religion. Margaret did not enjoy the advantages afforded at the present day of studying the lives of others, and moulding her character upon models furnished by our various benevolent Societies. There were then but few books and papers adapted to the capacity and sympathies of children. But she did enjoy the best parental instruction and the prayers of parents who labored conscientiously and zealously to train up their household in the fear and love of God. She was a flower that budded and blossomed in a garden where the atmosphere was congenial to the highest and purest culture. She early felt the warmest of parental affection. She was carefully protected from the rude blasts of worldly influences. The dews of Divine grace, in answer to prayer, descended upon her, and she yielded the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, gentleness. There was strength too, as well as beauty in her character. Her mind was nourished by the great truths of our holy religion. Thus she was prepared to be early transplanted to the celestial Paradise where she enjoys immortal bloom, where the fragrance of her piety rises as perpetual incense before the throne.

We need the history of her life, her infant

prayers, her sweet and simple counsels, her happy death, to teach us the value of family religion and parental culture. Amid the external aids and facilities afforded at the present day for the religious education of the young, we are liable to overlook the paramount importance of *home influences*. These, after all, are the most potent, and those upon which the greatest reliance must be placed. The other means are but auxiliaries; important indeed and effective, but still auxiliaries.

It will add to the interest of those who may trace the footsteps of this little child in her short journey to heaven, to know that her beloved father, who so tenderly watched over her, and who left this memento of his parental affection, has gone to meet her in her new and glorious home. Welcomed by her angelic spirit, he is rejoicing with her in the blessings of redeeming love, and mingling his voice with hers in singing the praises and loving kindness of the Saviour.

In the meridian of life, as though the sun should set at noon, in the midst of his usefulness as an able, faithful and successful minister of the gospel, from the bosom of an affectionate family and a beloved church, he was summoned to the courts above.

How unspeakably delightful for the members

of Christian families, after the trials and storms of this life are passed, to meet in heaven no more to part—to meet an unbroken circle around the great white throne, to cast their crowns at the Saviour's feet, and with united voices to ascribe to him the glory of their salvation! After the pangs of separation here, the watching for the last breath, the final struggle, the funeral rites, the habiliments, of mourning, the dark, long shadow, which hangs over the pathway of the survivors, how enrapturing to feel that there shall be no more sickness, sorrow, or death—that the bright world is safely reached where all tears shall be wiped away!

R. W. C.

JUVENILE PIETY.



CHAPTER I.

MARGARET ANN WALTON was born in Charlestown, Jefferson County, Virginia, on the 11th day of March, 1818. She was a first-born child ; and as soon as her parents received her from the hands of her heavenly Father, they gave her back to him again by an act of solemn dedication ; and during her whole life, it is believed they never passed a day without praying for their dear little Margaret Ann. And for *what* did they pray ?—Not that she might be admired by the world, and enjoy its pleasures, its riches and its honors ; for they knew that such things could not make her happy, and

that if she set her heart upon them, she would live and die like the wicked, who "have no hope, and are without God in the world;" that she would be unfitted for pure and rational enjoyment, both here and hereafter; and as a necessary consequence, would be doomed to endless wretchedness and despair. For what then *did* they pray? They prayed that she might be washed in the fountain which the Saviour has opened for sin and uncleanness—renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and thus made a child of God, prepared to live to his glory in this world and to enjoy Him in heaven forever. But they knew it was their duty to *instruct*, as well as to *pray* for her; for the Bible says that parents must "train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" and "teach" them the great truths of religion, "diligently, and talk of these truths when they sit in the house, and when they walk by the way; when they lie down and when they rise up." This command they endeavored literally to obey. When Margaret Ann was

a little more than two years old, she was taught to look up to God as her heavenly Father; to remember that all the good things she enjoyed came from Him; that she ought to love Him more than her earthly parents, and to be thankful for every blessing his hands bestowed. She soon learned a short prayer, which she repeated every morning and evening; and much pains was taken to *impress* it upon her mind, that *merely saying the words of a prayer, was not praying*; that it was the *heart* that prayed, and that God always looked at the heart; that if the heart did not *feel* what the lips expressed, it was mocking God, instead of worshiping him. She was also taught the necessity of a Saviour: that the Son of God had come down from heaven, had suffered and died for sinners, and that it was only by a reliance upon his merits that our prayers could be heard and our souls saved. She was taught that she had by nature a heart desperately wicked, and at enmity with God; that she must therefore be born again and ,

sanctified by the Holy Spirit, or she could never enter into the kingdom of heaven. Finally, she was taught to look forward to the DAY OF JUDGMENT, to the RESURRECTION of the just and of the unjust; to the eternal happiness of the one, and the eternal destruction of the other. She not only heard these things with her ears, but they sunk down into her heart. She thought and conversed much about them, and while she was talking to others and asking them questions on these subjects, all the powers of her mind appeared to be engaged, and her feelings were often wrought up to a high degree of excitement. At such times the intelligent animation of her countenance, the tears of emotion standing in her eyes or rolling down her cheeks, her words and her actions, all contributed to make her an object which parental affection could not contemplate without inexpressible tenderness and delight.

Before she was three years old, she committed to memory a number of hymns, and a catechism. In explaining the catechism,

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her mother made some such remark as this: that her "heavenly Father was very kind to her in giving her all the good things she enjoyed; but what was infinitely more, he had given his Son to die for us." She immediately replied with her usual sprightliness, "Yes, mamma, he died to ATONE for my sins." Something was said about the atonement in her catechism, but her mother was very far from supposing that she understood the meaning of the word, or the right application of it, and was astonished to find that she did; and it must be a matter of surprise to all who may read this sketch of her life, when they are informed that she was at that time not three years old! Even at this early period it had become so habitual with her to think and talk about "the things that pertain to the kingdom of God," that when she was at work or at play, she would often repeat to herself the hymns and passages of Scripture which she had learnt. This habit was a great advantage to her. It kept her from many wicked thoughts, and from much idle, foolish talk, and gave

her mind a turn towards heavenly things, which was one means under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, of preparing her for that blessed world where she now dwells, and where all holy children shall dwell forever.

II. One day as she was playing with a little boy, whose name was George, he became very angry about some trifling thing, and raised his hand to strike her. The only notice she took of it was to say, with a sweet smile, and in perfect good humor, "You must not let such angry passions rise, little Georgy." This sentiment was doubtless suggested by the following hymn, which she had learnt, and which every little child ought to learn.

"1. Let dogs delight to bark and bite,  
For God hath made them so;  
Let bears and lions growl and fight,  
For 'tis their nature too.

"2. But little children you should never let  
Such angry passions rise,  
Your little hands were never made  
To tear each others' eyes,

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“3. Let LOVE through all your actions run,  
And all your words be mild:  
Live like the blessed virgin’s Son,  
That sweet and lovely child.

“4. His soul was gentle as a lamb,  
And as his stature grew,  
He grew in favor both with man  
And God his Father too.

“5. Now, Lord of all, he reigns above,  
And from his heavenly throne,  
He sees what children dwell in LOVE,  
And marks them for his own.”

III. When she was in her fourth year, the following interesting fact occurred. One day as she was returning home, she saw a blacksmith whom she knew, come out of his shop and knock a man down with his tongs. She saw the blood run down the poor man’s face, and was so much affected at the sight, that it made her sick. She felt and expressed the deepest abhorrence of such wickedness, and asked her mother if “God would forgive Mr. J——?” She was told that he would forgive him if Mr. J—— would repent. “Then I will pray for him,” said she. Her mother did not forget it, and

took notice of her to see whether she would perform her promise. Soon after she arrived home, she was seen to go into a private room. When she came out, her mother asked her if she had been praying for Mr. J——? She said she had. Not long afterwards, Mr. J—— came to Bethany, where Margaret Ann lived. She went to him and reminded him of what he had done, and told him she had prayed that God would forgive him. Thus early had she learnt to *hate sin*, and to feel a deep concern for the souls of her fellow creatures. She had learnt also, to connect the idea of future punishment with the commission of sin; a most important lesson both to the young and the old. Sin is “that ABOMINABLE thing which God hates;” and without repentance he will punish the sinner in hell forever.

Therefore, *we* as well as Margaret Ann, ought to pray for those whom we see to be living in a state of sin. Every instance of their wickedness ought to lead our thoughts forward to the DAY OF JUDGMENT, and to the sentence, “DEPART ACCURSED INTO EVERLAS-

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TING FIRE, PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS." Such reflections would increase our dread of sin and our concern to "flee from the WRATH TO COME."

IV. It was *common* for her to exhort children and servants, and any persons with whom she might take that liberty, to repent of their sins. One instance particularly is remembered, in which she displayed a degree of earnestness, united with simple, native eloquence, which caused a hardened sinner whom she had been exhorting to say, "That Miss Margaret Ann is a wonderful child—I never heard a child talk so in my life." She spoke to him of God, of the Saviour, of heaven and hell, as if she *saw* them with her eyes, and exhorted him to repent by the most powerful motives.

When she was about six and a half years old, the following incident occurred. She was with her parents at her grandmother's in Charlestown, where there was a prayer meeting. After the meeting closed, she retired into the next room, where she found a servant woman who had not been in the

meeting. She immediately commenced talking to her on the subject of religion, expressed her pity for the woman's condition, reminding her of the awful place to which she was going unless she repented of sin. She asked the woman if she had given her heart to the Lord? The reply was that she had not. Margaret Ann then said that she had, and she would pray that Hannah might do so now. She then kneeled down in the room, and prayed for her in such a fervent manner that her petition had a powerful effect in bringing Hannah to yield her heart to the Lord. This she soon gave evidence that she had done, and was received as a member of the church.

One day being at the house of an uncle, a gentleman came in who was a candidate for the State legislature. His mind appeared to be entirely absorbed in the business of securing his election, and out of the abundance of the heart his mouth spoke. During a little intermission of the conversation, she in the most serious and artless manner, while leaning on his knee, and

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looking him full in the face, remarked, "Haman was hanged !" She said no more, but left him to draw his own conclusion from the instructive fact.

V. When she was engaged with her little amusements, her mind did not appear to be so wholly engrossed with them as children generally are, with such things ; on the contrary, she was often thinking of her Bible, of the hymns she had learnt, and would repeat them to herself over and over again, rather than dwell upon trifles ; and those who were most with her, have remarked that comparatively little of childish phraseology was at any time heard from her. Her language was so correct, and her conversation was so far elevated above her years and displayed so much maturity and enlargement of mind, that one of her aunts said she greatly preferred Margaret Ann's society to that of many grown females. Others observed this peculiarity and often remarked upon it.

CHAPTER II.

Margaret Ann was a Praying Child.

I. A proof of this has been seen in the fact related respecting Mr. J——. Since her death, her father being in Washington City, was thus addressed by a little girl nearly of Margaret Ann's age. "When I was at your house, I saw Margaret Ann take a little black girl into a room by themselves and pray."

"How often did you see her do so, my dear?"

"Two or three times," was the answer.

Margaret Ann was then only about four years old.

II. Information has also been received from a young female who lived in the family about the same time, and who was generally with the children, that she often

saw Margaret Ann retire to a private room to pray; and that when the child was walking out, she often saw her cry without any apparent cause, and when asked why she was crying, her answer was, "O! I have such a wicked heart!"

III. She also took a deep interest in the exercises of FAMILY WORSHIP. She would stand by her father while he was reading a chapter in the Bible, and look at the hymn which was sung, and try to join in singing it. Then with the rest of the family she would kneel down, put her hands together in a devout posture, and often she has been so much affected by the prayer as to weep. When she rose from her knees, while wiping her eyes, her countenance exhibited the meekness, humility, and solemnity of one who had realized the presence of the GREAT GOD, and who had worshiped him in spirit and in truth. Thus was she preparing for that happy world, where she now unites with saints and angels, in purer, nobler worship, and where God himself wipes away all tears from the eyes of his children.

IV. Her feelings were ever alive to RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION. Her parents never found it difficult to call off her attention from other things, and to fix it upon the GREAT TRUTHS of the Bible. As soon as these truths were presented, her mind appeared to take hold of them, and to study them with all its energy ; and she was evidently more deeply interested by them, than little girls of her age generally are, in conversing about their fine dress, or their toys, or amusements.

V. The SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST seemed to affect her most deeply. When she was about five years old, on the morning of a sacramental Sabbath, her father and mother told her what they were going to do, when they arrived at the church. They explained to her the nature and design of the Lord's Supper ; described the sufferings and death of the Saviour, and reminded her, that, had not the Lord Jesus Christ thus suffered and died, all of us must have been punished for our sins in hell for ever. The LOVE OF THE FATHER in sending the SON, and the .

love of the Son in dying for sinners, were presented to her view. She was told how the Saviour on the night before he was crucified, instituted this ordinance, commanding his disciples to break bread, to set it apart by prayer from a common to a sacred use, and to eat it in remembrance of his body that was broken and crucified;—also to consecrate wine in the same manner, and to drink it in remembrance of his blood that was shed for the remission of sins; that this ordinance was called the Lord's Supper, and that it was the duty of all to be prepared to partake of it, by coming out from among those who were his enemies, and expressing their love to Him, and their determination to obey his commandments. She listened with fixed attention; her heart appeared to be melted into tenderness and love; the tears rolled down her cheeks, and she insisted in the most importunate manner to be allowed to go to the Lord's table. When told she was not prepared, she seemed to be inconsolable, still insisting as if she could take no denial—"O

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mother," said she, "why cannot I go?" and continued weeping for some time.

My dear young reader, how do you feel on this subject? Did you ever *think* seriously about it? Did you ever consider that it is *your* duty to be prepared to go to the Lord's table? When you have seen your father or mother, or your pious friends going forward to this ordinance, did you reflect that by not desiring to go with them, your conduct declared that you would not have the Lord Jesus Christ to rule over you? declared that you did not love Him, that you were not sorry for your sins which crucified him, and that you would not keep his commandments? Such was the MEANING of your conduct, and remember,—God understands that meaning, and He knows the *wickedness of your heart* which causes you to act in this manner. And O! how provoking it must be to Him, to see his Son so slighted and all his mercies thus despised and rejected! The Saviour who loved you and died for you, was looking down upon you, when you were thus re-

quiting his tender compassion with ingratitude!—Will you ever treat Him so again?—Remember, that if you are not prepared to go to the Lord's table, you are not prepared to live, nor to die; nor prepared to perform *any* duty acceptably to God. What is it that renders you unfit to partake of this holy ordinance? It is the sinfulness of your heart. This being in rebellion against God, makes all your *actions* sinful. Against such persons the WRATH OF GOD is revealed from Heaven, and it abides upon them continually;—yes—even when they fancy themselves most secure, and have the most favorable opinion of their character and condition! How awful is the thought! May it penetrate your soul and awaken you from your fatal slumbers! And while you mourn, that by your sins, you have offended the greatest and the best of Beings, and crucified the Lord of glory, adopt the language of this hymn, which was one of the first that Margaret Ann committed to memory, and which she continued to love as long as she lived.

- “ 1. Alas ! and did my Saviour bleed !  
And did my Sovereign die !  
Would He devote that sacred head,  
For such a worm as I !
- “ 2. Thy body slain, dear Jesus thine,  
And bathed in its own blood ;  
While all exposed to wrath divine  
The glorious Sufferer stood !
- “ 3. Well might the Sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in ;  
When, God, the mighty Maker, died  
For man the creature's sin !
- “ 4. Thus might I hide my blushing face  
While his dear cross appears,  
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,  
And melt mine eyes to tears.
- “ 5. But drops of grief can ne'er repay,  
The debt of LOVE I owe ;  
Here, Lord, I GIVE MYSELF away,  
'Tis all that I can do.”

And, blessed be his name, this is all He requires. Then come, come immediately, as a lost sinner, to Him who “came to seek and to save the lost ; ” and while you acknowledge and feel that God might just-

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ly condemn and cast you off forever, submit to him on the terms of the gospel, and lay hold upon the HOPE which HE has set before you. Do this, and your soul shall live. Do this, and you will experience the GREAT SALVATION which the Lord Jesus labored and died to obtain; and then its MEMORIALS will be precious in your sight, and when you see them spread before you in the ordinance of the Sacramental Supper, you will be attracted to that ordinance by a feeling which it would be painful to resist; and while you go, you will say again with all your heart:—

“ Here, Lord, I give myself away,  
’Tis all that I can do.”

## CHAPTER III.

“The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth : they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation.”

I. THE description which the Bible gives of the DAY OF JUDGMENT made a deep impression upon the mind of Margaret Ann. She *believed* it, and her “faith was the evidence of things not seen.” Her strong and lively imagination painted the whole scene before her, in the most glowing colors; and sometimes when she was with her little cousins, and other little children, she would talk to them on this subject. She would describe how, at the last day, the archangel’s trumpet will sound and wake the dead, and how the Lord Jesus will come in the clouds of heaven to judge the world; and how he will say to the wicked—“De-

part ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ;"—and to the righteous,—“Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ;” and how the latter will shine like the sun in the kingdom of heaven for ever and ever.” One of her little sermons alone, if the *manner* as well as the *matter* had been preserved, would prove that she was indeed a striking exhibition of juvenile piety and intelligence.

II. Some months before she died, her father had a long conversation with her, in which he urged upon her the duty of giving her heart to God immediately, and of serving Him all the days of her life. She listened with a feeling heart and an attentive mind while he told her how easy and how pleasant was the Saviour’s yoke, how reasonable his commands, and how unspeakably happy they will be who obey them. He also described to her the dark and slippery way in which sinners walk, their aggravated guilt in rebelling against

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God ; and finally, their dreadful end. The subject was fully presented before her mind ; life or death, heaven or hell was to be chosen, and verily she seemed to make the right choice. The language of her heart appeared to be—"Lord what wilt thou have me to do?"—She was not afraid to know the full extent of her duty, lest she might feel unwilling to comply with it ; but inquired particularly whether certain things which she had been in the habit of doing, were wrong ; and she desired to know what things would be offensive to her heavenly Father, in order that she might avoid them. This evinced the *spirit of obedience*, without which no professions of repentance are sincere.

III. MARGARET ANN was an HUMBLE CHILD. She was taught that pride was both foolish and wicked ; that every thing she had was given to her by the Lord, and that she ought to be thankful for it, instead of being proud of it. She was generally satisfied with any thing her mother gave to her ; for she had the greatest confidence in her

mother's judgment and ability to decide what was best for her.

When her mother went abroad and left the children at home, she would sometimes ask on her return—"Who of you have been good children to-day?" While one would say "I have"—and another—"I have," Margaret Ann was silent. And if the question was put to her, she would say with a sweet smile, "Ask Miss Sarah."

One day she was asked "Who is the best girl, you or sister Lucinda?" She promptly replied—"Why, sister." And who is the prettiest girl?" "Why, sister," said she, and appeared to be surprised at the question, as if she thought there could be no doubt on the subject, though at the same time others were of a very different opinion. This exhibits her humility in an amiable light, and in this as well as in other respects, her example deserves to be recorded for the imitation of other little girls; and some of more mature years might find it greatly to their advantage to imitate this part of her character. Humility is lovely in the view

both of God and man. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. And a proud person in passing through the world will often meet with opposition and contempt, where one who is "clothed with humility" would be loved and honored.

IV. To say that Margaret Ann was an AFFECTIONATE child, would not convey to those who did not know her, an adequate idea of this feature of her character. She was indeed affectionate to a degree that cannot be described. She had a tender regard for every thing that had life, and breath, and sensibility. She loved every body, but she said she did not love "the ways of the wicked." While she formed strong attachments to all the members of the family, and to others who became intimate with the family, she loved with peculiar tenderness her parents, grandmothers, and little brother and sisters. Although she was so young, yet she was a careful protectress of her next oldest sister, when they were permitted to go out to play. It was common to see her leading her dear

little sister by the hand, and it was pleasing to hear how affectionately she would talk to her, and to see how she would show her every thing which she thought would be interesting to her. And when she went from home without her little brother, she was not satisfied to return without bringing him some present. She had an infant sister whom she appeared to love with something like a parental affection; and when she thought she was dying, she sent to her brother and to sister Lucinda this message—"Tell them they must take good care of my *little* sister, and be very good to her and be very good besides—(she meant—be very good in other respects)—for God loves good children."

V. One of her grandmothers was confined to her room by a long and severe affliction. This affected her tender heart, and she often pitied her "poor grandmother" when she saw her suffering so much. She would also go to her room and converse with her about "the things which pertain to the kingdom of God." She

would often read the Bible to her, and as she was reading would stop and make remarks and ask questions which evinced how deeply she was interested in the subject. The Sabbath before her last illness, she was employed in reading the Bible to a sick servant in the family, who was expected to die, and she remarked to the sick woman—"Aunt* Milly, although you are so sick, I may die before you yet." This thing, which then appeared only a possibility, soon became matter of fact. The servant lived to weep over the corpse of her dear little comforter, while she remembered her last interesting conversation.

VI. By sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing his word, she had learnt that "it is more blessed to give than to receive;" and that Christians like their Saviour, ought to have "compassion" upon those who are as "sheep without a shepherd." She often talked with much concern about "the poor heathen children," who have no

* At the South it is common to call the colored servants "aunt" and "uncle."

Bible, no Saviour, and no well-founded hope of happiness beyond the grave. When asked by her mother whether she would rather spend her money in fine dress, or send it to the heathen, she would without hesitation decide in favor of sending it to the heathen. When she died, she had a small sum which she had kept for this purpose.

VII. In her spelling book there were some fables, of which she read one or two, and she was so much interested with them, that she had a strong desire to read the whole; but her mother thought they might not have a good effect upon her mind, and told her that she did not wish her to read them." Afterwards in saying her lesson to her teacher, he would have allowed her to read the fables, but she declined, telling him that her "mother did not wish her to read them." This was no small sacrifice of feeling; but she remembered the command, "Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."

VIII. A cousin of hers had been residing

for a few months at Bethany. Margaret Ann loved her very tenderly, and was unwilling to part from her. Her father, however, had come to take her home, and he proposed to Margaret Ann to go along with her. In order to get her consent, or perhaps to amuse himself with the child, he observed that if she would go with her cousin Elizabeth, her mother would not then have it in her power to whip her. She replied, "that would be very wrong," (meaning, if she were to go, in order to avoid correction;) "for," said she, "God has said, 'if you spare the rod you will spoil the child.'"

CHAPTER IV.

Margaret Ann Loved the Bible.

I. IN the morning, instead of spending her time in idleness or in mischief, she read her Bible. While the other children were making a noise around her, she often appeared to be so much engaged with her book as to take no notice of them. It was a custom of the family for every one to repeat a passage of scripture, in the morning before prayers. By doing this every morning for several years; by attending a Bible class, for which she prepared very carefully; and by reading the scriptures to herself, and occasionally to others, she had enriched her mind with the treasures of heavenly wisdom; treasures infinitely more valuable than all the possessions of this world. She often repeated the hymn which contains these words—

“Precious Bible! book divine!
Precious treasure, thou art mine!”

And then she would say, with a countenance expressive of the happy feelings which the sentiment inspired, “O! is not that sweet.”

During her illness, when she had a little interval of ease, she requested that the Bible should be read to her. When asked—“What part shall we read?” she would say—“Read to me about the sufferings of Jesus.” She repeated this request very often, as if nothing but these sufferings could support her mind and give it peace in view of her sins and in the prospect of death. It seemed to be a delightful solace both to her soul and body; for although her sufferings were so great, that she often exclaimed in the most plaintive, yet submissive manner, “O, dear! O, dear!” yet when the Bible was read to her, or any of her favorite hymns were sung, or when her parents and friends talked to her about the Saviour, she was silent and attentive. Once or twice she requested to hear that passage

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read which speaks about the conduct of Mary, who "sat at the feet of Jesus and heard his word, and chose the good part which shall never be taken from her."

As her father was one day putting the Bible under her pillow to raise her head, she interposed by saying—"don't treat the word of God so." When he replied—"my dear, I want you to rest your soul upon it," she appeared satisfied. Near the close of her illness, when she could scarcely speak at all, she was heard to say—"The Bible!" "Do you love the Bible?" said her father. "Yes," said she. "Why?" "Because it is the word of God," she sweetly replied.

II. These incidents are here brought together to show how highly she prized the Bible, and *why* she prized it so much. This is regarded as one of the most prominent traits of her character, and it certainly is one of the surest evidences that she was a child of grace. Her parents labored much to cherish this disposition in her, being fully convinced that nothing else could contribute so much to her present happiness, or to her preparation for usefulness while she lived,

or to fit her for death, judgment and eternity; and since they have seen the happy effects of it exemplified both in her life and death, they are more deeply convinced of it than they were before. To her love and veneration for the word of God, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we may ascribe all the other excellences of her character, all the peace of mind she exhibited on her death-bed, and all the happiness she is now enjoying, and will forever enjoy in Heaven. If, then, children desire to be wise, good, useful, and happy, let them read and love the Bible, and obey the voice of the Lord speaking to them in the Bible. In reading that precious book, they may, like Margaret Ann, sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him, and if they receive his instructions with believing and obedient hearts, they shall find rest to their souls, and commence a career of holiness and of happiness, which shall never end. May God incline every one who may read these pages to make the experiment!

We must now go back to some events which took place before her illness.

## CHAPTER V.

*Margaret Ann Weeps, Prays, &c.*

I. ONE night, during the year preceding her death, after retiring to bed, her mind was very much oppressed by a sense of her sinfulness. She wept for some time. At length she called for her mother and asked her to pray with her. Her mother for particular reasons, did not at that time comply with her request, although she had often prayed with her at other times; but after instructing and admonishing her, left her, saying, that if she did not pray for herself, the prayers of others could not save her. She then covered her head and prayed earnestly for a considerable length of time, and her nurse, who was in the room, said she had never heard such a prayer from a child. While her mother was talking to

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her, she said in a very affecting manner, and with many tears—

“O that I could say from the bottom of my heart,

“ ‘Here Lord, I give myself away,  
'Tis all that I can do.’ ”

This is not inconsistent with the supposition that she may have experienced a saving change before that time; since it is not uncommon even for grown persons who have experienced that change, to lose the evidence of it, by negligence or unwatchfulness, and thus to get into a state of mind which makes it appear very doubtful whether they have made an entire surrender of themselves to the Lord. Those, however, who get into this state of mind, have abundant cause to weep, as Margaret Ann did, and they ought never to rest until, in the spirit of submission, repentance, faith and love, they return to God from whom they have wandered.

II. The scene begins to brighten—the work of grace is advancing, and we shall

soon find her, who had so often wept over her sins, rejoicing in the love of God.

One day when walking out with her aunt they came to a retired place where they sat down. Her aunt observed—"Now we have been talking long enough about earthly things, let us talk about heavenly things." In a moment the world and all it contains appeared to be forgotten, and little Margaret Ann was engaged with *all her heart*, and in that *peculiar* manner which can never be forgotten by those who have seen her under the influence of such an excitement, in conversing about those glorious objects which she could then only see as through a glass darkly, but of which she was soon to have a more perfect knowledge. Her hands appeared to move instinctively with the most natural, appropriate and graceful gestures; her countenance brightened, and her eyes filled with tears while she talked of God, and Christ, and angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect. At length feeling, perhaps, as Peter felt on the mount of transfiguration, she said,—

“Aunt, this would be a good place for us to have a meeting.”

“How,” said her aunt, “can we have a meeting when there is no person besides you and me?”

“Why,” said she, “you can pray, and I can pray, and we can sing.”

“But there is no place to kneel down.”

“Yes there is,” said she, “we can kneel down by the side of that tree.”

Her aunt feeling reluctant to engage in such exercises where they might possibly be overheard, and under circumstances so novel to her, still declined. But Margaret Ann insisted with tears that her aunt should pray, saying with her characteristic earnestness,—I want to bow my knees to my heavenly Father.

“But will it not do for us to sing, and converse, and raise our thoughts to heavenly things?”

“No,” said she; “my heavenly Father commands us to pray, and I want to obey his *command*,” laying a great deal of emphasis on the word “command.” So great

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was her importunity that her aunt found herself quite in a dilemma, and did not know how to get out of it. They, however, united in singing the hymn which begins with these words—

“ When I can read my title clear  
To mansions in the skies,” &c.

They then conversed awhile on the subject of the hymn, which opened a boundless field for thought and conjecture, and over which a sanctified imagination might rove with unspeakable delight. They then sang a hymn which brought to view the wonderful means by which this glorious prospect was opened up to us—

“ Alas, and did my Saviour bleed,  
And did my sovereign die,” &c.

And last of all they sung the following words, which, as they are so well known as the two preceding hymns, we shall write down at full length.

1. " Awake, my soul, in joyful lays,  
And sing the GREAT REDEEMER'S praise;  
He justly claims a song from me,  
His loving kindness, O ! how free !
2. " He saw me ruin'd by the fall,  
Yet lov'd me, notwithstanding all ;  
He sav'd me from my lost estate,  
His loving kindness, O ! how great !
3. " Though numerous hosts of mighty foes,  
Though earth and hell my way oppose,  
He safely leads my soul along,  
His loving kindness, O ! how strong !
4. " When trouble like a gloomy cloud,  
Has gathered thick and thundered loud,  
He near my soul has always stood,  
His loving kindness, O ! how good !
5. " Often I feel my sinful heart  
Prone from my Jesus to depart,  
But though I have Him oft forgot,  
His loving kindness changes not.
6. " Soon shall I pass this gloomy vale,  
Soon all my mortal powers must fail,  
O, may my last expiring breath  
His loving kindness sing in death !
7. " Then let me mount and soar away  
To the bright world of endless day,  
And sing with rapture and surprise,  
His loving kindness in the skies !"

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The conclusion of this hymn assumes the form of a *prayer*, and it was answered much sooner than she expected. In her last moments she spoke of the “loving kindness of Jesus”—and said she would “praise him for it in heaven.” When they had done singing, her aunt asked her if she loved God? “Yes,” said she, “I know I do.”

“Do you love him better than every thing else?”

“Yes,” said she earnestly,—“I know I do.”

In this conversation the remarks she made, and the questions she asked about God and the things of his kingdom, particularly of the employments of the saints in glory, displayed an enlargement of mind and reach of thought, which surprised and delighted her aunt, although she had often witnessed similar exhibitions of her mental powers before.

This appeared to be a season of refreshing to her soul, so that she loved the place where she had seen, and tasted, and felt so much of the loving kindness of the Lord ;

she often spake of it afterwards, and asked her aunt when she would visit it with her again.

III. Several months before her death, she had a dream which greatly affected her mind. She thought she saw the Saviour wrapped in his grave clothes, lying in the new sepulchre belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. The whole scene was painted before her imagination to the very life, and it appeared to leave a distinct and salutary impression upon her mind, and to excite more sensible emotions of gratitude and love to the Saviour than she had ever before felt. This effect was, doubtless, produced by leading her to reflect more than she had previously done upon the Saviour's character, particularly his love and compassion in dying for sinners. It was no *new revelation*; but the Holy Spirit may have employed this means to fix her attention upon truths and facts revealed in the Bible, of which she had often read, for the important purpose of carrying forward the work of grace in her soul.

IV. A few days before her last illness, being with her father by the bed-side of the sick servant, to whom she had been reading the Bible, while he was conversing with the servant, exhorting her to make her peace with God, and explaining to her the way of salvation through Christ, Margaret Ann wept, and appeared to be much more affected by what was said, than the woman to whom the conversation was directed. Her appearance at this time was exceedingly interesting, while she stood by the bed of the sick woman, with her Bible in her hand, and tears flowing down her cheeks. This incident exhibits a trait in her character, which ought not to be passed over without notice. She felt a tender and lively sympathy for every person whom she saw in distress, and was keenly sensible to every thing relating to eternity, particularly to the love and compassion of the Saviour, and to his sufferings and death for the redemption of guilty man. She was especially struck with an anecdote which her father related to the sick woman, of an

African negro who had long been a servant of the Lord. When he was lying on his death-bed, his friends came around him, lamenting that he was going to die, saying, "Poor Pompey, poor Pompey is dying." The old saint, animated with the prospect before him, said to them with much earnestness—"Don't call me poor Pompey—I KING Pompey," referring to the representation in the book of Revelation, where the glorified saints are spoken of as being made "kings and priests unto God." This anecdote she repeated during her illness, to which period we have now arrived in the progress of our narrative.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Her last Illness and Death.*

It has already been observed, that on the Sabbath before her last illness, she said to a sick woman, "Aunt Milly, although you are so sick, I may die before you yet." On that night she was taken very ill. On the next day her fever rose exceedingly high, and her mind became delirious. And although from the first, every effort was made to stop the progress of her disease which parental affection, or medical skill could suggest, it continued to rage until its precious victim closed her eyes in death. It was a mercy, however, both to her and to her parents that this event did not take place for many days. Thus an opportunity was given for her mind to recover from that delirium into which it had been thrown; and also, for her to feel and to express those sentiments

which rendered her last illness the most interesting part of her life, and which inspired so much hope and confidence that she is now a little seraph before the throne of God. If those who attended her could have foreseen that she would die, and that a sketch of her life would be published, they might have collected much more than they did from her conversation, that would have been exceedingly interesting. But we will relate such things as have been distinctly remembered.

II. On the Sabbath day she heard her little brother and sister making a noise, of which she complained. Her grandmother observed that the little things were playing. "But," said she, "you know they must not play." "Why?" "Because," said she, "it is the LORD'S DAY."

III. While she was quite delirious she was heard to repeat with accuracy, the details of an interesting scripture fact, which she had not long before read. It was the story of Solomon's decision in the case of the two women who came to him to determine

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who should have the living child. After she had gone through the story, she made this natural reflection—"O how badly must the real mother of the child have felt when Solomon called for a sword to cut it in two."

IV. Her father knowing that when she was in her right mind she was more powerfully influenced by the motives of the gospel, than by any thing else, endeavored to bring these motives to operate upon her, so as to induce her willingly to take medicine when he required her to do so. In order, therefore, to test her rationality, he asked her how we are to prove that we love the Saviour. She immediately replied, "By keeping his commandments." It was truly surprising and delightful to see how correct her judgment was on the most important subjects, while her mind was so much affected by her disease that at times she did not know even her father or her mother!

V. This fact reminds us of one very similar to it, which is related respecting the pious Bishop Beveridge. When he was on

his death-bed, he did not know any of his friends or connections. A minister with whom he had been well acquainted visited him. When conducted into his room he said, "Bishop Beveridge, do you know me?" "Who are you?" said the Bishop. Being told who the minister was, he said that he did not know him. Another friend came who had been equally well known, and accosted him in a similar manner—"Do you know *me*, Bishop Beveridge?" "Who are you?" said he. Being told it was one of his intimate friends, he said he did not know him. His *wife* then came to his bedside and asked him if he knew *her*. "Who are you?" said he. Being told she was his wife, he said he did not know *her*. "Well," said one, "Bishop Beveridge, do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" "JESUS CHRIST," said he, reviving, as if the name had upon him the influence of a charm, "O! yes, I have known Him these forty years. Precious SAVIOUR! HE IS MY ONLY HOPE!"

VI. After she became quite rational, her

father and others conversed with her frequently about the state of her soul. "O!" said she, in one of those conversations, "I have passed through a great deal of sin!" and was evidently much *distressed* by the reflection. Her father did not, however, wish to make her think that her sins were *less* than they appeared to be to her own mind; on the contrary, he rejoiced to see that she felt herself to be a GREAT SINNER. "But," said he, "my dear, do you feel sincerely sorry that you have sinned against your heavenly Father?" "Yes, sir," said she, "I do." "And can you trust in the Saviour for the pardon of your sins, and for the salvation of your soul?" She said that she could. These exercises of mind in regard to her sinfulness, were not now experienced for the first time. They were impressions of long standing, but now deepened by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, who was about to finish the work of grace.

From the time when she was four or five years old, she was, as has been already observed, often seen crying, when no person

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knew the cause ; and when asked what she was crying for, her reply generally was, " O ! I have such a wicked heart ! " But she had found the " Balm of Gilead," and had put herself under the care of the GREAT AND GOOD " PHYSICIAN ; " for when asked by her mother, " whether she thought God had for Christ's sake forgiven her sins," she said she thought he had, and her mind generally appeared to be at rest on that subject.

VII. One night she remarked, " Jesus died to save us from perishing ; if I repent, did he not die for me ? " " Yes, he did." " If I feel sorry *in my heart* for my sins, is not that repentance ? " " Yes." " Then," said she, " God will forgive me for Christ's sake. He died for all that repent. Did you not say so ? The Bible says so. John was the beloved disciple. Jesus will love me too, if I repent."

VIII. At another time, being asked, " whether she would rather go to heaven and be a holy child there, than to remain in this sinful world," she replied, with the

prospect of death before her, and without evincing the least fear of it, "I would rather go to heaven and be a holy child there."

Most children, with all that can be said to them about heaven, are unwilling to die, in order to go there. Many are filled with distress and alarm at the very idea of dying; and they are so much afraid to die, that they sometimes wish they had never been born. But Margaret Ann felt otherwise. Her spirit, having tasted the sweetness of a little intercourse with heaven, was aspiring after that "fullness of joy," and those "pleasures which are at God's right hand" for evermore." After reflecting for a moment on the idea of going to heaven, that she might be a holy child there, another pleasing thought occurred; it was the thought of seeing Jesus in his GLORY. The impression it made upon her mind was expressed in these words, in a very feeling manner, "O! I hope I love the Saviour." Afterwards she spoke of dying as *going home*. "Do you think I am

going?" said she. "Going where, my dear?" said a friend. "Home," said she, with sweet simplicity; as if she had been already in the *habit* of viewing heaven as her home, a maturity of Christian experience not equaled by many aged professors of religion. "A child shall die an hundred years old!" Isaiah 65: 20.

IX. She seemed to regard it as part of her affliction, that she could not attend family worship, and she sometimes requested that the family might be assembled in her room, that she might enjoy the exercises. Her extreme illness, however, rendered this improper. But as often as her condition and other circumstances would admit, her father or some pious friend prayed with her. And she enjoyed it so much, that she sometimes requested that it might be repeated twice a day, or twice during a night. She often requested that some of her favorite hymns might be sung, and if those who were singing did not remember the beginning of a stanza, she would tell them what it was. One of those,

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in which she appeared to take the deepest interest, was that which relates to the sufferings of Christ—

“ Alas! and did my Saviour bleed,” &c.

Another, was that which relates to the prodigal son, which she had often repeated and tried to sing—

“ Afflictions, though they seem severe,  
In mercy oft are sent;—

and concludes with these words—

“ 'Tis thus the Lord his grace reveals  
To call poor sinners home ;  
More than a father's love he feels,  
And welcomes all that come.”

There were two others for which she had a peculiar fondness, and which she requested to be sung for her; but when she spoke of them, she appeared to be in so critical a state, that it was not thought advisable to have any noise in her room. The sentiments, however, were so suitable to her afflicted state, and so well adapted to sup-

port her mind, under the extreme sufferings of her body, that her friends afterwards regretted that they did not sing the hymns for her. As some, who may read this little volume, may not have seen them, they are here inserted; and, it is hoped, will be committed to memory by all who read them.

1. "My Hope, my All, my Saviour thou,  
To thee, lo ! now, my soul I bow,  
I feel the bliss thy wounds impart,  
I find thee Saviour, in my heart.
2. "Be thou my strength, be thou my way,  
Protect me through my life's short day ;  
In all my acts let wisdom guide,  
And keep me, Saviour, near thy side.
3. "Correct, reprove, and comfort me ;  
As I have need my Saviour be ;  
And if I would from thee depart,  
Then clasp me, Saviour, to thy heart.
4. "In fierce temptation's darkest hour,  
Save me from sin and Satan's power :  
Tear every idol from thy throne,  
And reign, my Saviour, reign alone.
5. "My suffering time will soon be o'er,  
Then shall I sigh and weep no more ;  
My ransomed soul shall soar away  
To sing God's praise in endless day."

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*The Triumph of Faith over the Afflictions  
and Trials of Life.*

1. "Come on, my partners in distress,  
My comrades through this wilderness,  
Who still your bodies feel ;  
Awhile forget your griefs and fears,  
And look beyond this vale of tears  
To that celestial hill.
2. "Beyond the bounds of time and space,  
Look forward to that heavenly place,  
The saint's secure abode ;  
On faith's strong eagle pinions rise  
And force your passage to the skies,  
And scale the mount of God.
3. "Who suffer with our Master here  
Shall soon before his face appear,  
And by his side sit down ;  
To patient faith the prize is sure,  
And all that to the end endure  
The cross, shall wear the crown.
4. "Thrice blessed bliss, inspiring hope !  
It lifts the fainting spirit up,  
It brings to life the dead ;  
Our conflicts here will soon be past,  
And you and I ascend at last,  
Triumphant with our Head !"

Such sentiments have an admirable tendency to prepare the soul to meet death.

Happy for Margaret Ann, her mind was well stored with them; not only as they are expressed in beautiful hymns, but in the very words of Scripture. Like David, she had "hid the word of the Lord in her heart," and now she had it ready for use, in her last conflict with the powers of darkness. It was the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, with which those powers have always been vanquished, when it has been rightly used. It was what Mrs. Graham calls, "Provision for passing over Jordan."

X. It was exceedingly interesting to observe the operations of Divine grace in the mind of a child so young as Margaret Ann was. She had learnt and experienced much before her last illness; but during that period, which was about three weeks, the progress of light and sanctification in her mind was rapid. The nearer she approached eternity, the more her thoughts appeared to be fixed upon "the things which pertain to the kingdom of God." The precious Saviour of lost sinners was now her "all in all." The world could do nothing for her. The

wealth of the Indies could not have procured her restoration to health. Neither parents, nor friends, nor physicians, could stop the progress of disease and death. None but JESUS could support her. She knew this; she felt it; and now with more earnestness than ever, she looked up to Him for help. Her soul hung upon Him as her ONLY HOPE; and who can conceive the feelings of her heart while she uttered these affecting words—"O, JESUS, LOVE ME!" What a prayer was this! How full of meaning! What an appeal to the tender compassions of Him who came "to seek and to save the lost!" When he was on earth, how did he delight in exercising mercy and extending relief to all who trusted in him, and who called upon him in time of trouble, or under a sense of guilt and wretchedness! His compassion was moved towards every such object, and he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." While we think of the import of this prayer, and of the Saviour's character

in connection with it, we may almost imagine that we hear him saying to this little lamb of his flock, "Verily I say unto thee, this day, (or in a very short time), shalt thou be with me in Paradise." In the mean time, he fulfilled to her another precious promise—"My grace shall be sufficient for thee." He strengthened her faith, so that it was to her "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It supplied the place of eyes to penetrate the vail of dark mortality. One night she appeared to forget that there was any person in the room besides herself and her Saviour. She realized his presence, and began to plead with him as if she saw him seated on his throne;—"O, Jesus! Jesus! you *did* promise me, you *did* promise me, that whosoever believeth on thy name, should not perish, but have everlasting life; you *did* promise me so!" This evinced a degree of confidence in the Redeemer's truth and faithfulness, love and power, which might indeed be expected in "an old disciple,"

but which must appear remarkable in one who was literally "a babe in Christ." She did not forget this promise; for afterwards when told that if she would take her medicine, her grandmother had promised to bring her some pretty things, she replied, "Oh! I have a better promise than *that*, the *Saviour's* promise to me—to *myself*."

XI. Being much distressed with a number of blisters, she did not like the idea of putting on another, and expressed a wish that it might not be done. When told it was necessary, she said no more, but appeared to be engaged in silent prayer. While she was held in a warm bath, and another blister applied to her head, she remembered and spoke of her Saviour, as having been crowned with thorns. She appeared to fancy some resemblance between his condition and her own at that time; and she gave several remarkable proofs that she had imbibed the spirit of Him who "opened not his mouth when he was led as a lamb to the slaughter." To

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show the heavenly turn of her mind, the fact may be recorded, that, while she was in this situation, she repeated the Saviour's words, "Father, forgive them"—and again still dwelling upon the account of the Saviour's sufferings—"Abba, Father, they know not what they do."

XII. Obtaining clearer evidence of her acceptance, and having, as we supposed, more distinct and sensible exercises of gracious affections, she affirmed nearly a week previously to her death, what she had often been afraid to affirm before, that she had "given her heart to God." When asked another time, "My dear, do you still think you have given your heart to God?" She said she had, and her manner indicated that she had no doubt on the subject. She was now nearly exhausted by the violence and long continuance of her disease. Her little body was reduced nearly to a skeleton; and it was almost covered with blisters. In this state she had often to be lifted from her bed and put into a warm bath. Once

while she was undergoing this operation, her feelings were such, that she probably thought she was dying. She remembered the dying words of the Saviour, and repeated them as her own—"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" When she was actually sinking in death, and the family were collected around her bed to see her die, she was asked the same question which had once before been put to her. "Would you rather go to heaven and be a holy child there, than to remain in this sinful world?" She replied with as much earnestness as she was capable of expressing—*O, yes, a great deal.*" Her father desired her to say something to her little brother, that might make a good impression upon his mind, and said to her, "Can you not say, 'My dear little brother, try to meet me in heaven?'" She immediately said, "My dear little brother, try to meet me in heaven;" and said it in a manner which indicated that it was the language of her heart. She was asked—"Will you sit

down in a corner in heaven with that little girl of whom you have read, and sing hallelujah with her?"—"O!" said she, "there is room enough in heaven without sitting down in a corner." Seeing her nurse much affected, she said in a very pleasant manner, almost smiling—"Talking so, makes Miss Sarah cry." And truly the scene was unspeakably affecting. Here was a little child, not sinking in a state of stupid insensibility, beneath the stroke of death, regardless both of her present and of her future condition; but with intelligent views, with a mind enlightened by the Spirit of God, and reposing upon the bosom of the Divine Redeemer, triumphing over that which is emphatically called the "king of terrors," and which has often been a terror to kings. While others were weeping around her, expecting to see her in a short time breathe her last, her countenance was peaceful, and her soul appeared to be as calm as a summer evening! "Whom," said her father, "do you expect to see when you get to heaven?"

“JESUS,” said she.

“And will you praise him?”

“Yes,” said she.

“And for what will you praise him?”

“For his loving kindness;” and she spoke so distinctly and so sweetly, as to fill the hearts of her parents and friends around her with inexpressible joy. “FOR HIS LOVING KINDNESS!”—They appeared to be the sweetest words that ever fell from the lips of a mortal. Indeed, so abundant was the evidence she gave of being a child of God, and an heir of glory, that the tears which were shed over her were tears of gratitude, of affection, of joy, and not of sorrow. Who could rebel or murmur at a dispensation in which there was so glorious a display of the grace and mercy of God to a little child? Her sufferings, which during the greater part of twenty-one days, had been unspeakably great, having accomplished the purposes for which Divine wisdom and mercy had sent them, were now apparently removed, and her heavenly Father made

her passage over Jordan very smooth and easy. It did not look like death; the monster had lost his frightful appearance. The storm was past, and there was only heard that gentle, almost imperceptible motion of the winds, with which they hush themselves to rest. She appeared to be falling into a sweet and tranquil sleep. A heavenly smile lighted up her countenance, which seemed to say, "Weep not for me; I am happy, and shall soon be employed in praising the Saviour for his 'LOVING KINDNESS.' "

She died October 8th, 1825, aged 7 years and 7 months. But her influence lives,—lives in the memory of her parents, and in the impressions that her example made upon the little circle in which she moved. And through this little volume she comes with a message to children, and bids them love her Saviour, obey her God, and then she will welcome them to her happy home. She will point out to them the temples and palaces of the New Jerusalem,—walk with

them amid the bowers of a celestial Paradise, where flowers never fade, and fruits never decay,—lead them where they may hear the sweet melody of angelic choirs, and mingle their voices with the Redeemed in singing the song of a Saviour's love.

REMARKS
ON THE
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.
ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS.

It will be a cause of joy and gratitude to those who have been bereaved of this lovely child, if, while this little volume is made a blessing to young persons, it may also be the means of impressing more deeply upon the minds of Christian parents the importance of training up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The enjoyment, afforded by reflecting upon the facts contained in the preceding pages, in connection with a strong confidence that she to whom they relate, is now

a sainted spirit before the throne of her heavenly Father, is an ample reward to her parents for all the labor and care they bestowed upon her. And they feel that it adds greatly to the obligation by which they are bound to labor and pray for the salvation of their other children. It does more. It furnishes abundant encouragement to be "instant in season and out of season," in communicating Divine truth to their understandings, and in employing all possible means to impress it upon their hearts. They now see, for they have the most palpable evidence, that God *can change the heart of a little child*; that *out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he can perfect his praise*. Let Christian parents *believe* this—for many act as if they believed it not; and when they pray for the salvation of their children, let them *expect* it, and expect it *now*, provided they are employing the means which they are required to use for this purpose. The following remarks are intended to assist those who desire to know their duty on this subject, and to ad-

monish those who know it, but who may be growing negligent in its performance.

The following things appear to be indispensable to that success, at which every pious parent should aim in the religious education of his children.

First—A right estimation of the value of religion.

Second—Correct views of Divine truth.

Third—A right apprehension of the part which parents are required to act in this matter.

Fourth—Reliance upon the blessing of God.

CHAPTER I.

A right Estimation of the Value of Religion.

I. UNLESS we have a deep, practical, operative conviction of its INFINITE IMPORTANCE; unless we regard the "favor of God as LIFE, and his loving kindness as *better* than life;" unless we esteem an interest in Christ and in his salvation as being infinitely more desirable than all that "this world calls good and great;" we shall not pay that attention to the concerns of our *own* souls which is indispensable to their salvation, and religion will be regarded by us as a secondary thing, while the world will have the supreme control of the heart. This will bring such "a mist and darkness" over the mind with regard to every object which relates to eternity, that such objects

will make but a feeble impression, and whatever we may *profess* we shall still *act* like the children of this world. In such a state of mind no systematic, no persevering, no anxious and successful efforts will be made in the great business of training up our children for the kingdom of God. The instructions given to them will be defective both in matter and in manner. They will be so superficial, so pointless, so desultory and so coldly imparted, as to produce but little effect. No vigilant care will be employed to prevent the inroads of sin in their young and tender minds, and to bring those minds under the influence of the fear and love of God. Nor will the Holy Spirit be earnestly and daily sought for their conversion.—*Other* objects will engage our attention: their comfort and respectability in life; the decoration of their bodies or the cultivation of their minds and manners; their preparation for some business, profession, or station in society, which we wish them to hold. To the accomplishment of

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*these* objects all our care, anxiety and labor will be directed ; thus, in reality, limiting our views respecting them to the PRESENT WORLD, as if we had totally given up the doctrines of immortality and accountability, and settled down upon atheistical ground ! It is an ALARMING FACT that many Christian parents—such at least in profession—are pursuing this absurd, inconsistent and most criminal course. And what is its practical effect upon the minds of their children ?—It cherishes in them the spirit of the world ; it leads them to adopt the maxims and to pursue the course of the world, and to seek its pleasures, its riches, or its honors, above every thing else. Almost the whole system of domestic instruction, and domestic training, is adapted to produce this effect. But does it not appear strange, that it should never occur to these *believers in Divine Revelation*, that they ought to feel *at least* as much concern, and to take *at least* as much pains to qualify their children for being useful in the church, as in the world,—

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to make provision for their *eternal* happiness, as to provide for their comfort during their transitory existence in the *present* state? Perhaps some will say—"we *feel* more than we express in regard to the eternal well-being of our children. It is true we do not *say* much, but"—. But what? Who is the better for *feelings* on this subject, which are never *expressed*? And how is it to be known that our feelings are different from those of the men of this world, if we do not pursue a course different from theirs? Let us make a fair calculation. How much have we done towards instructing and preparing our children for glorifying God in this world, and for eternal happiness hereafter? And how much have we done to fit them for the present world, and to promote their comfort while they remain in it? And to come at the truth, we must not inquire what we have done upon some *rare* and *particular* occasions? but what is our *daily* practice? The result ought to fill us with shame, astonishment

and grief; for it is a proof of our practical infidelity. We miscalculate—WE DO NOT SET A RIGHT VALUE UPON RELIGION, OR WE should pursue a very different course in regard to the training of our children.

I mean not to exclude or to undervalue that instruction or those accomplishments which would fit a person of either sex, for being a respectable and useful member of society. But surely no argument is necessary to prove that when different objects claim our attention, the attention we bestow upon them ought to be proportioned to their relative importance.

They who believe the soul to be infinitely more valuable than the body, and eternity infinitely more important than time, and an interest in the blessings of the gospel infinitely more desirable than all the interests of this world, ought to let the world see the practical influence of this belief in all they say, and do, particularly in the plan they pursue with regard to the religious education of their children. In many

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Christian parents, however, this *cannot* be seen: but on the contrary they exhibit abundant evidence that they are acting under the influence of *other* views and feelings. And here may be found an adequate cause for the remark often made, "The children of professors of religion are as bad as others, and often worse."

But surely this ought not to be a matter of surprise, where those means have been neglected which *alone* God has promised to bless. On the contrary, it ought to be expected as a matter of course. Grace is not hereditary; and if it were, very little would be communicated by those who have not enough to prompt them to the discharge of so plain and important a duty as that of training up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

In some, however, this neglect may, in part, proceed from a *want of information* as to the means which ought to be employed; in others, from prejudice arising from erroneous views of certain points of doctrine:

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but most commonly, we fear, it proceeds from an entire absence of *Christian feeling*. In the two former cases, supposing the ignorance or prejudice which forms the obstacle, to exist in connection with true piety, nothing is required to remove the evil, but correct information. Let such persons know distinctly what the Lord would have them to do, and they will immediately attempt to perform it.

But for the latter case there is no remedy except *a change of heart*. As long therefore as there are so many professors of religion laboring under ignorance and prejudice on this subject, and so many who are destitute of the *vital principle*, the lamentable fact above stated will continue to exist, and to be employed as an argument against the religious education of children. But it appears to me that such an argument cannot have much weight with those who will attentively consider the remarks offered on this subject in the following pages. When they arrive at the end, they will, it is

hoped, unite with one voice in saying, "if this course were pursued by all professors of religion in the training of their children, few indeed would be found in the ranks of God's enemies."

CHAPTER II.

Correct views of Divine Truth indispensable to Success in this Great Undertaking.

WE cannot impart that which we do not possess. If we remain ignorant of the truths of the Bible, instead of being qualified to teach our children, we have need of being taught ourselves "the first principles of the oracles of God." Many Christians appear to think, that because they are not called to the office of public teachers, they need not labor and toil to obtain much religious knowledge. They therefore satisfy themselves with the small amount which they can gather from the sermons they hear, and from a little occasional reading, *without much mental effort.* *This* they never put forth in the earnest investigation of religious subjects, however

much they may employ it in attending to other matters. They merely look at the *surface* of things, and seldom try to bring the different parts of divine truth together, so as to see them in their beautiful connection and harmonious consistency. How much sin is involved in this negligence, and how much they themselves lose of that sanctification and comfort of which divine truth is the appointed instrument, I cannot tell. But sure I am that their children, if they have children to educate, are unspeakable losers. They lose that which is more precious than gold, more valuable than all the world, and which, under the blessing of God, might bring them to a state of mind that would prepare them for happiness in time and in eternity. And children are often suffering this loss, while their infatuated parents are making every possible effort to obtain for them wealth or honor or some temporal object, which may ruin them forever! If parents read the Bible more, and spent more of their time in meditating upon its precious contents, they would experience

so much pleasure and advantage, that it would be the subject of their daily conversation, and they would "speak out of the abundance of the heart," and there would be a "sweet savor" of divine things about them, which would add much weight to their instructions, while in a pleasing and natural manner, they would make almost every passing event, conspire to illustrate some important truth, or to bring that truth to bear upon the minds of their children so as to make a salutary impression. But how few are habitually and consistently pursuing this course! On the contrary, how much ignorance and error may be found in the very bosom of the church! It is most lamentable to think how many children of religious parentage have been hardened in sin, by the influence of those errors which must always exist where the mind is not pre-occupied by the opposite truths.

Nothing is more common than to hear the wicked assert that they cannot repent, nor obey the gospel, without a change of heart; and as they cannot change their own hearts,

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they must wait until God shall please to do the work. This stand is often more boldly and confidently taken by the children of *professors* than by any others. This might have been prevented by correct instruction. But christian parents, anxious to know their duty, and feeling deeply for the salvation of their children, will eagerly inquire, how? As the question is one of unspeakable importance, I will offer such suggestions as may assist those who have not yet obtained clear and consistent views respecting it.

First. Teach them the *nature* of their depravity; that it consists in voluntary "*enmity* against God," which disposes them to depart from him and to rebel against his authority: and show them how absurd it is to plead ENMITY AGAINST GOD as an excuse for not obeying him!!

Show them that nothing prevents them from obeying the gospel, but *the want of a willing mind*. This may be done by the following texts. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man

hath and not according to that he hath not." "Thy people shall be WILLING in the day of thy power;" which proves that they were *not* willing before the day of God's power, and that their unwillingness was the only obstacle in the way of their conversion; no other being even hinted at as requiring the application of that power for its removal. "YE WILL NOT come to me that ye might have life." These and many other passages of Scripture cannot be even *forced* into a consistency with any theory, which supposes the sinner to labor under such an inability to obey the gospel, as would form a valid excuse for his disobedience. Indeed, every command, and every denunciation of punishment, goes upon the assumption that the sinner might obey IF HE WOULD.

To present the subject in another light, show them what is necessary in order to justify the requirements of the gospel. 1st, The knowledge of duty. 2d, Such natural faculties as are commensurate with those requirements. These terms must, of course, be explained and simplified, according to

the age and capacity of the person to be instructed.

1st. The knowledge of duty. The sinner sometimes alleges that he has not this pre-requisite, and that he cannot obtain it. You assert that he can, and you may bring the controversy to a speedy issue. Does God admit such an excuse? Does he admit it even in regard to the *heathen*? He says "*they* are without excuse;" much more inexcusable therefore are those who can read or hear the gospel. What does he say respecting such? "This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men *loved darkness* rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Again: "If ye were blind ye should have no sin." Once more: "They are wise to do evil, but to *do good* they have no knowledge." And this is spoken to their reproach and condemnation. These texts alone decide the question. But the objector may be told that he is *conscious* of knowing, already, much more than he even attempts to perform, or

than he has a disposition to do. He is therefore *without excuse*.

2d. Natural faculties commensurate with God's requirements, are necessary to justify those requirements. "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." The above remarks are sufficient to show that this command is justified by the sinner's capability of acquiring the knowledge of his duty, and that every plea of ignorance will be silenced by a sentence of "condemnation." Why is not obedience to the gospel required of idiots? Because they are naturally incapable of understanding the gospel, or the obligations of creatures to their Creator. There is, therefore, a sufficient reason why they should not be condemned, on account of ignorance, or of disobedience. But those who are possessed of *rationality*, have no such plea to urge; and consequently, are without excuse, if they do not both *understand* and *obey* the gospel. And when I speak of obedience to the gospel, I mean obedience *from the heart*, for God requires and will accept of nothing

short of this. The *external* performance of what are called "religious duties," *without this*, ought not to be viewed as *acts of obedience* to God's commands; for they are *not* such. They ought not, therefore, to be called DUTIES; for by giving them this appellation, impenitent sinners are very often deluded into a belief that they are doing that which is PLEASING to God, when the *wrath of God* is burning against them, "*because they repent not*," and because "*they believe not*." Still, perhaps, they will urge—for it is exceedingly difficult to beat them off this ground—"that they cannot repent, because their hearts are not renewed, and as regeneration is the work of God, they must wait God's time to accomplish it. They are asleep, and cannot awake themselves—dead, and cannot raise themselves to life." This perversion of Scripture is resorted to for the purpose of relieving their minds from the painful conviction that they are under the strongest obligation to *immediate repentance*; such an obligation as precludes every excuse for

impenitence. But while such persons are laboriously endeavoring to find an excuse for their disobedience, they ought to consider the following questions—Does God admit your excuse? If you were to die this moment, and go to the judgment-seat, would it procure your acquittal? Does the gospel limit the obligation to repent, to those whose hearts are renewed? Does it say that the want of a new heart is a sufficient reason for not performing *any* duty? All these questions must be answered in the negative. To make the subject still plainer. “Repentance and the making oneself a new heart,” mean *identically the same thing*. Both are required in such terms as prove that an *immediate* compliance is demanded, which could not be so, if the one was prerequisite to the other. “God *now* commands *all men everywhere* to repent.” The command respecting “the new heart,” is in the following words—“Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye

die." Ezek. 18 : 31. No *argument* is necessary to prove, that when God makes use of such language as this, he requires *immediate* submission to his authority, and obedience to his commands. What else *could* he mean ? The proof may be made out complete in another form. The solemn interrogatory, "Why will ye die?" implies that if they would obey, they should not perish; and the declaration, "*except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,*" implies that those who *repent* shall not perish. The *same promise* then is connected with *both*. But if they were *two*, and so *distinct* and so dependent, the one upon the other, as the objection above stated supposes them to be, *this could not be so*. If then repentance is not the same as making oneself a new heart, a man might repent and yet perish, which the whole tenor of the Bible forbids us to believe. The truth is, that he who obeys *from the heart* any one of God's requirements, whether it be to repent, or to believe in Christ, or to be reconciled to God, does *by that act* evince himself to be a new

creature, in the scriptural sense of this phrase. The sinner, then, is as inexcusable for not making himself a new heart, as he is for not repenting or for being at enmity with God. If he is able to repent, he is able to make himself a new heart. Nothing prevents him from doing either, except the *love of sin*. This alone creates the necessity for the operation of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly we find that all which the Holy Spirit does in regard to the change of which we are now speaking, is to make the sinner a willing servant of the Lord, the enemy a friend, the rebel an obedient child. This view of the subject presents the question of *duty* in a very different light from that in which many have been accustomed to contemplate it. The duty of making oneself a new heart, is to be urged by ministers upon their people, and by parents upon their children, *without any relaxation of the requirement* on account of *any excuse of the sinner whatever*. And so far from *easing off* the obligation by prescribing "a system of *means*" to be used as *preparatory* to repent-

ance, and for the purpose of producing a *gradual* change for the better, much pains ought to be taken to convince them that THIS IS NOT GOD'S METHOD OF SAVING SINNERS; that while they pursue it, they are *rebelliug* against him, and that if they *continue* to pursue it they must be lost. This will elicit many wrong feelings, of which, perhaps, they were not before conscious. The many hard thoughts of God, the enmity and rebellion which they will often feel, rising in their hearts, will, if the Holy Spirit accompany the instruction, serve to convince them that they are desperately wicked, justly condemned, and if left to themselves, utterly lost. With such views and feelings as these, they will no longer be satisfied to wait for what they formerly called "the Lord's time;" nor to "lie at the pool" in their impenitence and unbelief, *as if nothing more were required of them.* The language of their hearts will be, "God be merciful to me a sinner." And with sinking Peter, "Lord save me." This will be accompanied by a cordial approbation of

the gospel method of salvation, an unreserved submission to God, and an humble, perhaps joyful, reliance upon Christ in all his offices.

When the work is *done*, every one who understands the gospel will say, "It is the Lord's doing," and will give to him the glory. But such is the *instrumentality* which he thinks proper to employ for its accomplishment. Let parents *labor* to form clear views on these points, and to impart them to their children; and if by the blessing of God they should succeed, they will pervert the formation of one of the greatest obstacles to conversion that ever was raised in the mind of a sinner. If some should have cause to say,—“Alas! my children have already been carried away by these errors,”—let them not despair of removing the evil by a prudent, diligent, and prayerful application of the means here suggested. My remarks have been confined to this particular point, because it appears to be less understood than almost any other. Every part of divine truth, however, ought

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to receive its appropriate share of attention, in a system of religious education. But the limits I have prescribed to myself will not admit of any thing more under this division of the subject.

## CHAPTER III.

*It is indispensable that parents should understand the part which they are required to act in this matter.*

THAT God changes the heart of every sinner who is saved, is unquestionable. But it is equally clear, that he requires parents to labor for the salvation of their children, with as much diligence and assiduity as if the work were to be accomplished by their agency alone. Deut. 6 : 6, 7. "These words which I command thee thou shalt teach diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Prov. 22 : 6. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Eph. 6 : 4.

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“Ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” These commands cannot be neglected without “despising the word of the Lord,” and forfeiting the blessing which he has promised to the seed of the righteous.

In order to assist parents in understanding their duty, the following suggestions are affectionately offered.

I. DEDICATE your children to the Lord *without reserve*, and realize your obligation to train them up *for his service and glory*. Consider that HE has committed to your charge these young IMMORTALS, and that by the connection which he has constituted between you and them, he has made their character and their destiny to depend in a great degree, upon the performance or the neglect of your duty towards them. You may see this truth confirmed both in the Bible and in actual experience. What parent can think of it without trembling under the weight of his responsibility!

II. Having given your children to the

Lord, be careful that you do not, as many have done, take them back again, and train them up for this world, instead of training them up for the kingdom of God. This would involve the guilt of SACRILEGE and of SOUL-MURDER. The terms are not too strong. No representation can equal the enormity of the crime. But who is liable to a charge like this? I answer, those parents who professedly devote their children to God in baptism; and then, instead of laboring by every possible means to bring them to an experimental acquaintance with religion, are anxious mainly about the appearance they are to make in this world; about the cultivation of their minds, or the decoration of their bodies, or their success in business.

The charge lies against those who feel more concerned to gratify their children, than to please God, by restraining them from such things as he has forbidden; it lies against those who suffer their children to associate with companions, who they have reason to believe will lead them into sin;—against those who cherish the pride

of their children, by gratifying their immoderate desires for fine dress, and other ornaments;—it lies against those who allow their children to participate in those amusements which have the most direct tendency to destroy every serious impression. Let parents remember, that when they gave their children to the Lord, Heaven witnessed the solemn transaction, earth also witnessed it, and both are now looking on to see how they perform their vows; let them also remember that the ISSUE may soon be seen in the salvation or damnation of those whom they tenderly love. O! if I had a voice like that of the archangel's trumpet which will awake the dead, I would sound an ALARM on this subject which should be heard and felt by every parent who has ears to hear and a heart to feel.

III. Be careful to establish and to maintain PARENTAL AUTHORITY over them. The neglect of this duty generally results in unspeakable vexation and unhappiness to parents, creates a thousand difficulties in the management of children, and the con-

sequences to them are always highly pernicious, and often ruinous. Such neglect arises from a most pitiable and culpable weakness on the part of the parent, for which he often meets with a painful retribution in this world, in having his authority despised by his children, and in the loss of that filial respect which might have been secured by a better discipline. The habit of *implicit obedience to parental authority*, is highly important in a *religious* point of view. It may, when accompanied by proper instructions, prepare the way for submission and obedience to our Father in heaven. On the contrary, the habit of rebellion against parental authority, is indicative of a state of mind which places its subject farther from the kingdom of God.

This duty is so important as to be made the subject of Divine command. Under the law, a stubborn and rebellious son was to be stoned to death. A curse was also pronounced upon him who should "set light by father or mother." The book of Proverbs contains many positive injunctions

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on this subject. "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for for his crying." "Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." "The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." "Correct thy son and he shall give thee rest, yea he shall give delight unto thy soul." We are urged then by God's command, by regard to our own peace and comfort, and to the present and eternal welfare of our children, to establish and to maintain parental authority over them. To accomplish this object it is best to begin very early. Dr. Wither-  
spoon says, that a beginning ought to be made when the child is not more than eight or nine months old; and with prudence and perseverance, he thinks the point may be gained by the time the child arrives at the age of twelve or fourteen months. The same firmness and consistency, however, must still continue to be employed in their

management ; and if it be united with affectionate admonitions and correct instructions, it will seldom be necessary to resort to the severity of discipline. When, however, correction becomes indispensable, we ought to be careful that it be not administered in a passion. On the contrary, we should let our children see that we do it from a sense of duty to God, because *He* commands it, and because it is for their good. This should be impressed upon their minds, as soon as they are capable of receiving the impression.

In order to avoid difficulties with them, —which would be likely to defeat the object of Christian discipline, we should carefully guard against laying upon them any unnecessary or improper commands. But when we command them to do what we know to be right, we ought *invariably* to enforce obedience, although it may be in itself a small matter.

Having, in the days of their childhood, established absolute authority over them, and having gained their entire and affec-

tionate confidence, we shall afterwards find it comparatively easy to restrain them from those associations, amusements, and pursuits, which might counteract the instruction they had received and prove the death of all our fondest hopes.

IV. BE FREE IN CONVERSING WITH THEM. Always pay a kind attention to what they say, and be careful not to keep them at a cold distance. We ought so to adapt our conversation to their capacities, and so to enter into their feelings, and evince so much tenderness and love to them as to make them delight in our society. This object is easily accomplished. Children are affectionate, and they are easily gained by affection; and we ought to prize their love not only for its own sake, but as an instrument of moral discipline—as giving us an influence which may be exerted most beneficially to them. If they love us ardently, we may carry any point with them. If they love us ardently, they will respect our authority and dread our displeasure.

Under this head, I would also recom-

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mend a vigilant care to improve every favorable opportunity of impressing divine truth upon their minds. Such opportunities will daily occur; and if our hearts are exercised as they ought to be, we may give such a turn to these events as will excite their interest, sometimes in a high degree. By this means, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, they may be led to the knowledge of God, of his works, and of his will respecting us: of Christ and the plan of salvation; of heaven and hell, the judgment to come, and the GREAT INTERESTS OF ETERNITY. By speaking of these subjects in the right time, and in the right manner, they will perhaps never fail to produce, or to confirm some good impression. In this way, much time that is often spent in useless reveries, or idle conversation, might be turned to a profitable account; for example, when we are "walking by the way, or sitting in the house; when we lie down, and when we rise up." This practice habitually pursued, would have a happy effect upon the minds of parents; while its advantages

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to their children would be unspeakable, and might be lasting as eternity.

Labor to inspire them with reverence for the Bible. Teach them always to regard it as God's holy word. When they do wrong, ask them what the Bible says about such conduct or such words. Get them into the habit of referring to it on all questions of duty, and regarding it as the STANDARD by which their destinies will be decided.

I would add a word or two in regard to other books. The example contained in the preceding memoir exhibits, in a very striking manner, the importance of storing the minds of children, at an early period, with such truths as the Holy Spirit is accustomed to employ for their conversion. These truths may be found expressed, with great simplicity and beauty, in many hymns; such as those called "Hymns for Infant Minds," and Dr. Watts' "Divine Songs for Children." The rhyme enables them to commit the lines to memory more easily than they could otherwise do, and

imparts to them a pleasure which they would not experience in reading the same sentiments expressed in prose. As they improve in reading, and as their capacities enlarge, other books ought to be procured for them, such as will be both interesting and instructive; and such as will give them correct views of divine truth. Books of an opposite character and tendency, ought to be kept out of their hands, with as much care as is exercised in preserving them from the influence of corrupting society, or the most fatal poison.

VI. Accustom them, at a very early period to make A VISIBLE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SABBATH AND THE OTHER DAYS OF THE WEEK. They should often repeat the command—"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it HOLY," &c. See, also, Isaiah 56: 4—7; 58: 13, 14. On this day especially, parents ought to have their children under their notice, and not to suffer them, on any account, to wander off with others who have no fear of God before their eyes, and who may do them more injury in a few

hours, by their conversation and example, than their parents would be able to undo in months or years. We ought to see that they are in their proper place—take them with us to the house of God, and labor to impress their minds with the importance of behaving well, while there, and of attending, with interest, to what the minister may say. It is, also, highly important to teach them, ever to regard ministers in their proper character, as the ambassadors of Christ; and to pay that respect to them, which is due to their office and their character. We ought never to let them hear us speak disrespectfully of a minister; and we should caution them against listening to any ill reports, respecting the servants of God, apprising them that this is a wicked and censorious world, which delights in hearing and giving currency to such things, and often exaggerates them, and sometimes fabricates them without the least foundation. A prejudice formed against ministers of the gospel, or the loss of that respect which ought to be felt for all who act con-

sistently with their high vocation, may lead a young person to think lightly of every thing sacred, to "despise the word of the Lord," and thus shield him against all that moral and religious influence, which might otherwise be exerted upon him, by the ministry of reconciliation, and place him beyond the reach of those means of salvation which God has appointed.

VII. Set before your children an EXAMPLE OF CONSISTENT AND DEVOTED PIETY. One of their first tendencies is to say what they hear others say, and to do what they see others do; and thus their principles and habits are, in a great degree, formed by what they see and hear in the domestic circle. These principles and habits are lasting; and, generally speaking, they form the character of the man or the woman. Dr. Scott's children have remarked, that they learned more important lessons of practical wisdom from their father's conversation with his friends, who visited him, than they received from him in any other way. And, doubtless, thousands of unfor-

fortunate children have, in a similar manner, received instructions and impressions of a very different kind,—such as have produced the most deplorable and fatal effects upon their moral character. We ought to let our children see, from our conversation and habits, and especially, by making *every thing else bend in subserviency to our religious duties*, that we are, in reality, *influenced by the fear and the love of God, and by a confident belief of the GREAT TRUTHS of the Bible*; that we feel ourselves to be strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and that we are seeking a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God;” that we consider it our great business to do good in the world, and to glorify God by extending the knowledge and influence of the gospel among men; and it is important, often to explain to them the *principles* upon which we are acting, and the *views* by which we are influenced.

VIII. PRAY with your children. Begin early and repeat it often, and as they grow older it will become habitual, pleasant, and

most profitable, both to yourselves and to them. No method will be found so successful in softening their hearts, and bringing their minds to that state in which divine truth may operate upon them most powerfully. The same method will sometimes be found to answer a better purpose, in correcting the bad tempers and habits of servants, than the most severe discipline. In speaking of prayer, I am naturally led to the last thing which I proposed to consider, as necessary to success, in the religious education of children.

## CHAPTER IV.

*Reliance upon the Blessing of God.*

WITHOUT this blessing, you will "labor in vain, and spend your strength for naught." While, therefore, you use the means already pointed out, and others, which the Bible and your own experience may suggest, look to God, daily, for the Holy Spirit to accompany your efforts. Plead his promises: plead with Him for the glory of his own GREAT NAME, and for the sake of Christ and his cause on earth, to make your children the subjects of his grace; to teach them to subdue their hearts, and to sanctify them by his Holy Spirit. Establish your minds in the firm belief, that he can produce this blessed change in little children, and that he will produce it in *yours*, if you are faithful in your duty to Him and to them. Both the Bible and the history of the church

concur in establishing this truth, that spiritual blessings are granted to children, in answer to the prayers of faithful and believing parents. "Make FULL PROOF," therefore, of the efficacy of prayer, and of faith. Never rest until you see your children saved from the power of sin and Satan, and prepared to unite with you, in serving and glorifying your God and Saviour. If your children should grow up, without exhibiting any evidence of piety, then, instead of sinking into despondency, and relaxing your efforts, and doubting the truth of God's promises; examine whether you have not been deficient in some part of your duty respecting them. Ask yourselves these questions, in relation to those fundamental points to which your attention has just been directed.

1. Have you *sincerely* and *unreservedly* devoted your children to God?

2. Have you *faithfully* performed your vows?

3. Have you established and maintained parental authority; and have you exercised

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this authority for the purposes intended by Him who made you a parent? Or have you not too much resembled Eli, whose sons “made themselves vile, and he *restrained* them not?”

4. Have you improved your opportunity of colloquial instruction, “teaching” your children “diligently the things which God has commanded you, when you sat in your house, and when you walked by the way!” endeavoring to ascertain whether they really understood these things, and supplying their lack of knowledge?

5. Have you inspired them with proper sentiments respecting the Bible, and made that use of its truths in your system of religious discipline, without which no other means can accomplish the end you profess to have in view?—Remember *this* is the INSTRUMENT by which the Spirit of God works, and this instrument must be employed by *us*.

6. Have you given them right views of the Holy Sabbath both by precept and example, endeavoring to show them the

reasonableness of the command which relates to it, and how happily it is adapted to promote our comfort and interests in this world, as well as to prepare us for the world to come? Have you used such means to keep them engaged in proper employments as would prevent them from feeling that you were exercising over them a painful and tyrannical restraint?—The best medicine when improperly used, may become poison.

7. Have you prayed with your children, especially on those occasions which were most favorable for making serious impressions upon their minds; or when they were in a temper of mind which disposed them to disregard ordinary instructions and ordinary methods of discipline?

8. Has your example been such as might be reasonably expected to make a favorable impression upon their minds? Has your conversation been adapted to convince them that RELIGION is the ONE THING NEEDFUL? that our *only* proper business in life is to serve and glorify God? that we

are creatures formed for an ETERNAL EXISTENCE, and that the great question whether we are to be eternally happy, or miserable, will soon be decided, and decided "according to the deeds done in the body?" Have they seen you carry your religion into all your transactions, influenced by its principles in *every thing*—consistent, conscientious, and ever aiming to do all the good in your power?

Finally—Have you exercised *faith* in the promises of God, and relied upon his Spirit—to accomplish the desired change in your children?

Have you felt more concern to see them "covered with the robe of righteousness" and "beautified with salvation," than to obtain for them or for yourselves any worldly object, realizing that unless they became Christians, they would be wretched whatever might be their circumstances in this world, and lost forever in the world to come?

On the other hand, contemplate the blessed consequences of success in the relig-

ious education of your children. If they should become truly pious, what a comfort will they be to your declining years! What a comfort to the whole domestic circle! How great a blessing to the church, and to the neighborhood in which they may reside! When they become heads of families, they will certainly employ the same means to train up their children in the fear of the Lord, which have proved so beneficial to themselves; and thus as your family branches out, and multiplies, even down to the end of time, the happy effects of your labors will be increasing, and increasing in a ratio that baffles all calculation. Some of your posterity may become ministers of the Gospel, may have the honor of "turning many to righteousness," and when removed from this world may occupy distinguished positions in the world of glory. If, after all, you feel yourselves growing indolent and negligent in the performance of your duty, cast your thoughts forward to THE JUDGMENT DAY; in imagination place yourselves and your children be-

fore the GREAT TRIBUNAL;—see them in their sins, among the enemies of God, hear the last sentence pronouned upon them, and their shrieks of anguish and despair, while they sink to rise no more forever.——In view of this overwhelming scene, renew your resolution; strengthen yourselves in the Lord your God, and determine to live and to die **LABORING AND PRAYING FOR THE SALVATION OF YOUR CHILDREN.**

THE PIOUS MOTHER.

EXTRACT FROM A SERMON BY REV. ALBERT BARNES.

Two thoughts, in conclusion, I will suggest, to two classes of my hearers. The first relates to those who *have had* pious mothers, who now are removed to heaven, but whose prayers and counsels they have disregarded. I refer to those who have thus far withheld their heart from that Saviour whom their mother loved, and with whom she now dwells; who may have embraced sentiments such as they know she would not approve; who have made choice of companions such as she lived to warn them against, or who indulge in revelry and sin such as if she were living, you know would break her heart. Go, young man, or woman, and walk in the stillness of the evening among the graves. Beneath your feet, in the sacred slumbers of a Christian

death, lies a much loved mother. How calm her slumbers ! How sweet the spot ! How lovely a mother's grave ! How the memory delights to go back to the nursery ; the fire-side ; the sick-bed ; the anxious care of a mother ! How it loves to recall the gentle look ; the eye of love ; her kiss at night. At that grave, thoughtless child, think of thy revels, thy neglect of God ; thy forgetfulness of the prayer she taught thee ; thy friendship now for those against whom she warned thee ! She sleeps now in death ; but from that grave is it fancy that we hear a voice—" My beloved child ! Is this the life I taught thee to pursue ! Did I bear thee, and toil for thee, and pray for thee, and wear out my life, that I might train thee for sin, and death, and hell ?"

The other thought relates to those who *now have* a Christian mother—and who disregard her living counsels and prayers.

The day is coming when that mother will die. You may see her die ; or far away you may hear of her death, and may return and visit her grave. Be thou sure

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that every unkind look, every disobedient action, every harsh word, will come back and visit thy soul. Be sure you will remember every thing that ever gave pain to her heart, and remember it with unavailing regret when too late to recall it, or to ask forgiveness. Be sure, if you are unkind and disobedient: if you are an infidel or a scoffer, if you slight her counsels, and neglect the God and Saviour to whom she would lead you, there are laid up in the chambers of your soul, sources of the most bitter repentance hereafter—and that you cannot find forgiveness of her whose heart you broke, though you seek it carefully, and with tears. And be sure that the sweetest of all consolations when *she* dies, will be found in such love of her Saviour that you will appreciate what is meant when it is said *she has gone to heaven* ; and an evidence in your own heart that you will be prepared when the summons comes, to rejoin her in the realms of bliss.

## BOYS, MIND YOUR MOTHER.

"COME, boys, here is a story for you. I want you all to come together and listen. I was a boy once, and I recollect a little how boys feel. I am a man now, but I have had as much to do with boys as I have had with men.

I suppose you all have a mother. What I want to tell you is, how you ought to treat your mother. When I was a boy, no larger than you are, my mother used to tell me that she never knew any one to prosper who did not treat his mother well. She said that when she was young she knew several children who did not honor their mothers, and that they all came to a bad end.

There were several boys among my acquaintances, whom I knew to have disobeyed and ill-treated their mothers. I thought I would remember them, and see

how they turned out in the world. I should think it was as much as fifteen years ago. I will call these boys William, George, and Herbert. I remember as distinctly as though it were but yesterday. They were my classmates at school. I remember their mother perfectly well: for many a play afternoon have I spent at their house.

William was a very pleasant boy and a fine scholar. One afternoon I was at his father's house. We were playing on the green in front of the door. William's mother stepped upon the door-stone and called him. We were busily engaged in play with some other boys, and William took no notice of his mother's call. After she had spoken several times, he stopped a moment to hear what she had to say.

'I want you to go down to the shop, and carry this box to your father,' said his mother.

'But I don't want to go, mother,'

'Well, you must go.'

'But I'm playing, and I can't go.'

‘William, I tell you, you must go, for your father must have this immediately.’

Just then one side of the party who were playing ball had beaten the other. William heard the merry hurra, and exclaimed, ‘Well, I won’t go, there.’ He picked up a stick, and throwing it at his mother, ran eagerly off to join the victors. I turned just in time to see the stick fall from his mother’s dress, and to see how sad she looked as she went into the house.

I never before saw a boy strike his mother, and it made me feel so badly that I could not play. I told the boys I believed I must go home. I walked away, thinking of what my mother had told me. I thought I would always remember William, and see if he prospered. Before he grew up he was taken very sick, and after many years of great suffering he died.

The next boy was George. His mother indulged him very much. She used to let him do pretty much as he chose, and any thing he wanted she was sure to do for him; but any thing she wanted he was

sure *not* to do for her. He never minded any thing his mother said to him. Well, George is dead, too. He became dissipated, lost his character, and died a miserable death.

Herbert was much like William and George—worse, if any thing. He not only did not care for what his mother said, but used to ridicule her before the other boys. His end was more miserable than that of William or of George. I shall not tell you exactly what became of him, for it is a more dreadful story than I love to relate. But I can never think of him without remembering the text, ‘The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.’ Prov. 30: 17.”

