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To

Alexander Cuthbert

~~the above named person~~

Wm. Cuthbert

FLOWERS OF PARADISE

OR

Little Ones Gone Home.

MEMORIALS OF JAMES AND CATHARINE CUTHBERT.

BY REV. ALEX. CUTHBERT, A.M.



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MDCCLVI.



FLOWERS OF PARADISE.

JAMES SHAW, the first of our two children who were taken away from us by death, was our eldest son. The lovely and engaging boy exhibited, at a very early period, indications that he possessed intellectual powers of a superior order. These were, perhaps, from that fondness of which few parents are altogether free, looked upon as warranting the hope, that he might attain a high eminence in some sphere of usefulness in the world, if his life should be prolonged, and these powers brought under the influence of renewing grace. He frequently made remarks and proposed questions on subjects which are generally considered to be far above the comprehension of one so young, and shewed, unmistakably, that he could perceive analogies by no means obvious to every mind, and reason upon facts with surprising readiness and effect.

He felt a peculiar pleasure in poetry; but no species of it seemed to yield him so much enjoyment as that which excited the more

tender emotions. So quick was his perception, and so high his relish for the pathetic, that I have seen him stand with fixed attention and deep feeling for hours together, listening to pieces of that nature. His feelings, indeed, were those of one who evidently possessed the poetic faculty himself in no ordinary degree. He had all the keenness of sensibility, and all the power of imagination, which form the essential elements of the poetic mind; and sometimes in his childish prattle, and apparently without the slightest effort, he expressed his thoughts in regular, rhythmical numbers.

His desire for knowledge was exceedingly strong. Although a lively, active child, and particularly fond of all the amusements in which children of his own age commonly indulge, he would at any time relinquish his play, and throw aside his toys, to listen to some piece of sacred history, or to an explanation of some precept or doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. It was observed, that he was always grateful for the instructions which were given to him upon these subjects; and instead of regarding such exercises as a task, nothing afforded him greater pleasure than to be catechised upon the different subjects

which had been previously brought under his consideration. His answers were generally ready and appropriate, and were often expressed in such a way as shewed that he had been thinking upon the subject. He was not satisfied with being able merely to repeat pieces of sacred poetry and passages of Scripture ; he exhibited, on all occasions, a desire to understand the meaning of them ; and it was gratifying to observe the interest with which he listened to any remarks which were made in reply to his inquiries.

At what time, and by what means the Holy Spirit opened his understanding, and conveyed to his mind a saving knowledge of the truth, it would be difficult to determine. His natural disposition was so sweet and amiable, the fear of doing what he knew to be displeasing to God was so great, and his desire to converse about the important concerns of eternity was so strong, that on one so young, and in whose character, consequently, the innate principle of depravity could not be fully developed, any very striking change upon his temper or conduct could not be expected. It was observed, however, by those who had an opportunity of being constantly beside him, that, during the last

few months of his life, he felt even a deeper interest than he seemed formerly to feel in the concerns of eternity. He became more serious at the family devotions; he spoke more frequently about heavenly and divine things; he exhibited a more marked aversion to every kind of wickedness, and seemed more fearful of whatever would expose him to the divine displeasure.

To shew the influence which that fear had upon his mind, it may, perhaps, not be improper to mention a circumstance which occurred shortly before his death. Happening to be from home one day myself, and his mother being unwell at the time, morning and evening worship in the family was not attended to. Not seeing the force of the reason which unavoidably led to the omission, he was deeply affected by it; for when conversing about it some time during the course of the day, he looked up with an air of seriousness, and said:—"Mamma, I am afraid God will kill us for not having worship." This simple remark shewed the workings of his mind upon a matter of vast importance, and one which is closely connected with the spiritual interest of families. Judging from certain modes of expression employed in re-

ference to other subjects, it seemed to indicate the existence of a conviction, that praise and prayer, and the reading of the Scriptures, are exercises in which parents ought to engage along with their households; and that the families in which these exercises are neglected, are under the displeasure of the Most High, and exposed to his righteous judgments. This, however, is but a specimen of the observations he was in the habit of making regarding divine things, more particularly during the period referred to.

Although the spirit which he breathed, and the traits of character which he exhibited, might, perhaps, have been regarded as indications of an early ripeness for a higher state, and have given rise to forebodings that he might be soon removed, the vigour of his frame, and the flush of health which constantly played upon his cheek, had a delusive influence upon our minds, and tended, in some measure, to make us indulge the pleasing anticipation that his life would be long spared. Had the solemn announcement been made to us but a few days before he was called away, that the angel of death was about to enter our dwelling, we would not have supposed he would be the victim. But how

short-sighted creatures are we! and how liable to err in our judgment respecting the arrangements of the sovereign Disposer of all things! Whilst we were looking for a large amount of pleasure from the engaging object of our solicitude and affection, that Great Being saw meet to blight the hopes we so fondly cherished, and to dry up one of the springs of our purest earthly comfort. The flower which had just begun to open its petals to receive the genial influence of the skies, and exhibit its loveliness, and diffuse its fragrance, was cut down and removed to an element more congenial to its nature.

For about ten days before his death he was slightly affected by cold, but not to an extent fitted to awaken the smallest degree of apprehension. On a Wednesday night, however, symptoms of *croup* of the very worst form began to appear. Medical assistance was immediately procured, and the disease seemed in a great measure to yield to the remedies which were applied; and the indications of improvement were so decided, that he was considered on the following day, by the medical attendants, to be out of danger. Although he then suffered much from the effects of the previous applications, as well as

from the disease which, as the event shewed, still lurked in his frame, not a murmuring expression fell from his lips, nor did he shew the slightest degree of apprehension regarding the issue of the trouble. Being passionately fond of music, he requested us frequently, as we sat by his bedside, to sing some of his favourite hymns; and though unable to join, as usual, in the exercise, his mind was greatly soothed, especially by the one by Watts, beginning with the lines:—

“ There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign.”

Seeing us still somewhat anxious about him, he attempted at different times, in a playful way, to raise his voice, to convince us, if possible, that he was getting better. And while his mother was sitting beside him, he said to her, with a look of the sweetest affection, “ Mamma, I am not going to leave you yet. Depend upon it, these are not the fits in which I am going to die.” If he had a desire to live, it does not seem to have been so much upon his own account as on account of others whom he tenderly loved, and whose happiness his society contributed so much to promote. But, alas! the pleasure arising from that source was soon to come to an end,

at least in this world; for just as the sun sank beneath the horizon, the symptoms again assumed a more decided form, and the hopes of a recovery which, for a short while, were fondly cherished, were dissipated forever. His sufferings became much more severe, and it was not without great difficulty and pain that he could speak, even in the faintest whisper. Soon after midnight, when it became evident that the crisis was approaching, we expressed to him our fears, for the purpose of ascertaining the state of his feelings in reference to the change which he was about to undergo. But he exhibited not the slightest indication of fear. And though he was gasping for breath, and was tossed about by the violence of the disease, he made an effort to compose himself while prayer was offered up on his behalf. Being aware of the importance and the solemn nature of the exercise, his mind was quite absorbed, and he seemed to feel that he was in the immediate presence of the Great Supreme. When the exercise was concluded, he reclined upon the pillow; and, turning round, he said to me, as I sat upon the bedside—"Now, papa, I wish you to talk to me about Jesus." He had often before listened with the greatest atten-

tion to the Scripture account of the Saviour's mysterious incarnation, the design of his mission to our world, the circumstances of his death, his ascension to heaven, and the work in which he is engaged there; but these important themes being connected with the well-being of the soul through eternity, were contemplated by him with a holy seriousness; and, knowing that he was about to leave the world, he took part in the conversation with all the interest of one who felt their preciousness.

· He had great enjoyment in hearing the description contained in the latter part of the book of the Revelation, of the glory of the heavenly state; and the artless exclamations which he uttered as the different parts of the glorious scene passed before his view, clearly shewed, that mingled emotions of wonder and delight were excited in his mind. Being asked shortly afterwards, if he was willing to leave us and go to Jesus, he unhesitatingly answered, "Yes." He felt keenly, however, at seeing our distress, and was more concerned about us than he was about himself. Though struggling in the agonies of death, he seemed to forget his own sufferings, and, with all the affection for which he was distin-

guished, he raised himself up, threw an arm around each of our necks, kissed us, and wiped away the tears from our moistened eyes. His emotion at the time was too deep to find expression in any other way; and if he could have given utterance to it, he doubtless would have said, in the language of the Saviour to the sorrowing individuals who followed him to Calvary, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves." There was, indeed, no cause of sorrow on his account, for his sufferings were about to terminate for ever. In a short while afterwards, when respiration became still more laborious and painful, he exclaimed, after a moment of agony, "Oh! when will this stifling be done!" When he was told that it would soon be at an end, and that all would then be well, he said to me, as I was supporting his head, "But, papa, shall I get into heaven to-day?" "Yes, my dear boy," was the reply; "there need be no doubt about your getting there to-day."

During a short interval of comparative ease, his mother reminded him of some verses of hymns of which she knew he was particularly fond. They afforded him much enjoyment; and though his voice was almost gone, he re-

peated the well-known one of Charles Wesley's :—

“ Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy mercy fly.”

But he did it in such a way as shewed that it was no mere formal exercise. His whole soul was in it; and I can never forget the expression, which the dying child, as he lay looking upwards, with his hands clasped, and laid across his breast, threw into these lines :—

“ Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide ;
O receive my soul at last ! ”

His eyes, sparkling with intelligence, even in death, clearly indicated that he felt the importance of the sentiments which they contain; and that he looked to the Saviour alone for all the help that was needful in the dying hour. Nor did he look in vain.

The disease, by this time, was making fearful progress, and he could not speak but with extreme difficulty. We, however, still continued to whisper the truths to him which we knew he delighted to hear; and when speaking about the exercises of the redeemed in heaven, as if inspired by the subject, and

longing to join in the worship of the upper sanctuary, he, when the power of utterance was almost gone, was heard to say several times, in broken accents, "Hallelujah, praise the Lord!" It was truly affecting at that moment, to see the interesting boy, panting for breath, and the lineaments of death beginning to appear upon his lovely countenance, endeavouring, amid the weaknesses and pains of expiring nature, to give expression to the emotions of his soul in the language of adoration. What a striking illustration does it afford of the power of the gospel to sustain the mind in the hour of dissolution! And what a pleasing and edifying exemplification of the truth of the inspired saying, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise!"

Thinking, perhaps, that he could breathe more freely if he were in a different position, he desired to be taken out of bed, and when he was lifted up, he said to me, "Papa, I wish you to pray again." "Yes, my dear boy," I replied, "but what shall I pray for?" Without hesitating a moment, he said, "Pray for me." He still felt the need of looking to Jesus for strength to support him while the conflict lasted, and he engaged in the exer-

cise with the greatest composure and seriousness; and it was the last exercise of the kind in which he formally engaged. His mind, however, was still absorbed in heavenly things, for, as soon as it was concluded, he said, "Papa, talk to me again about the Saviour." For a little, he manifested the same interest in the high and important themes connected with salvation; but the tide of life ebbed apace, and his sufferings became so agonising, that he was incapable of fixing his thoughts upon anything else, yet did he not utter a murmuring expression: he manifested throughout a measure of resignation and fortitude seldom exhibited by aged Christians in similar circumstances. After tossing and struggling for a while, he sunk into a comatose state; and about eleven o'clock on Friday morning, when he was little more than *five years old*, he entered into the joy of his Lord.

Such was the latter end of this engaging child. The glorious hope and elevated joy which he experienced, whilst they illustrate the grace and power of Jesus, exhibit the happy effects of religion even upon an infant mind, and they shew how well it is fitted to dissipate the fears of death, and tranquillise

the spirit in the immediate prospect of appearing in the presence of God.

CATHARINE.

A SHORT time after our dear boy was consigned to the grave, death again entered our dwelling, and snatched away from us CATHARINE, our only daughter. Although cut down in the early morning of life, before her intellectual capabilities were developed, enough was exhibited, during her brief sojourn upon earth, to shew that she was an extraordinary child. Indeed, the precocity of her mind, associated, as it happily was, with high spiritual feelings, was so marked as not unfrequently to give rise to painful forebodings; and to force something like an apprehension on our minds that she would be taken away before the years of childhood were filled up—though we felt ourselves warranted to cherish the hope, if such an event did take place, that she would be removed to a state of being where her powers would be unfolded, without being exposed to the refrigeratory influences of a sinful world. These apprehensions,

alas! were speedily realised. The delicate and lovely flower, whose growth we tenderly watched, suddenly withered and died. *The wind passed over it and it is gone.*

CATHARINE acquired the power of utterance sooner than most children, being able to speak with considerable fluency when she was not more than twelve months old. And so rapidly did the habit improve after that period, that she had a full command of appropriate language, when those around her, of the same age, could hardly do more than lisp in broken accents. This afforded an opportunity, at a much earlier period than is usual, of beginning the important business of instilling into her mind a knowledge of the great facts connected with the creation, the fall, and the redemption of man. As might have been expected, the progress she made was equal to the desire she manifested to receive instruction ; and before she had acquired the knowledge of letters, she was familiar with many of the elementary truths of the gospel, and could repeat a great number of the psalms and hymns, as well as passages of Scripture. Indeed, the quickness of her memory was apparent when she was a mere infant ; and she frequently shewed the extent to which she

possessed that faculty, by efforts which alike pleased and surprised those about her. Among numerous instances, the following may be selected as not unworthy of being recorded:—

When only one year and nine months old, she expressed a desire to visit a Sabbath school in our immediate neighbourhood. Her desire was readily complied with; and she was permitted to go that she might have an opportunity of seeing how it was conducted. The teacher, on seeing her led into the room, spoke very affectionately to her, and asked—not supposing that she was capable of doing so—if she was going to repeat her lessons. Without hesitating for a moment, she stood up, and repeated, with the greatest accuracy and self-possession, several of Wesley's sacred odes, with other productions of a similar kind, and some passages of Scripture. The children, on seeing her rise, and imagining, perhaps, that one of such a tender age could hardly speak, seemed unable to refrain from smiling. Indeed, a half-suppressed laugh was heard through the room. But she had not finished the exercise when feelings of a very different kind were expressed by them all.

Some considerable time after this, when learning to read, her mother, on one occasion, took the book—a common school spelling-book which she was then using—out of her hand, for she was never sent to school, and asked her if she could repeat from memory any of the lessons she had been reading. Though she had neither made any effort to prepare herself for such a task, nor imagined that anything of the kind was to be required, she, with the utmost ease, and without faltering, repeated fourteen pages. And one evening, about the same period, while she was sitting beside me, and happening to have a Bible in my hand, I read aloud a whole chapter from one of the gospels; and immediately afterwards, by putting questions to her in a particular form, she repeated, in the answers she gave, the whole of the chapter which was read. All that seemed requisite to fix it in her memory was, my reading it slowly over twice, and requesting her to listen attentively, as I intended to examine her upon what she heard. The capability of recollecting so easily what she heard or read was of singular advantage to her; and such was her desire for knowledge, more especially a knowledge of sacred things, that she often

rose in the morning before the other members of the family; and not unfrequently during the day did she retire to a corner or to some apartment alone, to prepare her lesson and read the Scriptures, or any little books which, in an easy and simple way, illustrated the facts and doctrines which they contain. But it was not the doctrinal and preceptive parts of it alone which she pondered. She possessed an acquaintance with the main particulars of Jewish history which was truly surprising, and could describe with great minuteness the structure of the tabernacle and the order of the Mosaic ritual. And what, perhaps, is not less remarkable—she seemed to feel peculiar interest in the book of the Revelation, and was quite familiar with its imagery and symbolical representations.

But the other and higher faculties of her mind were developed as early as was her memory; and though the incidents by which a superior judgment was indicated, were in themselves, in many instances, comparatively trifling, they do not, on that account, afford the less satisfactory evidence, that she fully understood what she learnt. And it was pleasing to observe how aptly she could apply

any fact or sentiment which had been instilled into her mind.

When scarcely more than eighteen months old, she happened one Lord's day morning to be in a room along with her little brother, the circumstances of whose death I have already described, and imagining herself perfectly competent to the task, she got up on a chair and began to preach to him with all solemnity; and she threw such energy into the effort, that her voice was heard through all the house. Her mother, who was in another apartment, went in and reproved her, especially for mentioning the name of God in such a way, as it had occurred several times in her discourse; and, while in the act of lifting her down from the chair, she clasped her little hands, and, with an expression of countenance which it would be difficult to describe, cast her eyes upwards, and repeated the two following lines of one of Dr Watts' hymns:—

“ Lord, give me pardon for the past,
And strength for days to come.”

About the time at which this circumstance took place, she and her brother JAMES were amusing themselves with a number of toys; but a dispute having arisen about some of

them, they both spoke with somewhat more warmth than was proper on such an occasion. Their mother, on hearing them, immediately interposed, and pointed out to them how unbecoming it is in children to speak in such a manner. CATHARINE, who seemed instantly to feel the force of the rebuke, looked as if she were under deep concern, and, with inimitable simplicity, uttered the words:—

“ Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For God hath made them so.”

Finding, however, that the other two lines of the verse were hardly applicable, and that something in their stead was requisite to complete the sense, she said, after a momentary pause:—“ But little boys and girls should be good and love one another.”

One other incident only I shall take the liberty of mentioning, to shew how early, in her case, the habit of reflection was formed. After being able to read tolerably well, she was one day repeating her lesson, which happened to be the account of the creation contained in the first chapter of the book of Genesis. But when she came to the words —“ And God said, Let us make man in our

image, after our likeness,"—she stopt and said:—"Mamma, did not you tell me, that when the world was made there was no person in it but God? But there must have been some one with him at that time, for he says — 'Let us make man in *our* image.' And you know it could not be to man that he was speaking, as it was before he was created; for God says—'Let us *make* man.' Now, mamma, who was he speaking to?" Her mother, in reply, directed her attention to the mysterious subject of the trinity of the Godhead, but, more especially, to the pre-existence of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the remarks seemed to interest her very much, as they explained satisfactorily, in her estimation at least, a passage, the meaning of which, she could not otherwise comprehend.

But without tracing more minutely the development of her mental powers and her progress in religious knowledge, a task which to me would be both mournful and pleasing, I must hasten to give an account of the hallowed and affecting scenes which were exhibited during the few days of excruciating suffering which immediately preceded her death.

A short time before that event took place

she and her brother ALEXANDER ANDREW, now the only surviving member of our family, went along with their mother to reside for some time with their relatives at Garliestown, a small sea-port beautifully situated on the west side of Wigton bay, in the southern part of Galloway. The salubrious air of that place had begun to have a beneficial effect upon her frame, which was rendered somewhat delicate by the severe treatment to which she had been subjected under three or four attacks of *croup*. And, as the tendencies to that distressing and dangerous complaint gradually disappeared, and the glow of health played upon her cheek, the anxiety which was previously felt with regard to her was in a great measure relieved. But how fallacious oftentimes are human hopes and calculations! The spoiler, who seemed to have laid his hand upon her on different occasions before, but was disappointed of his prey, appeared in a different and more formidable shape. And I shall never forget the strange emotions which struggled in my breast after the disease which seized the interesting child had made some progress, when its portentous name—*necrosis*—was announced to me. It seemed to sound her

death-knell in my ears. But it is not necessary that I should describe the nature of the complaint, or attempt to convey to the mind of the reader a conception of the excruciating agony which invariably accompanies it. It is enough to state, that the effects which it produced on her frame were such that her pulse was seldom below a hundred and sixty; but it was more frequently from a hundred and ninety to two hundred. And her piercing cries, both night and day, more especially during the first stages of it, entered into the very soul of those who waited around her couch.

On the day on which she became unwell, her mother had occasion to go out a short while for the purpose of making some calls; and when she returned she found CATHARINE in bed, in a strong fever, and complaining very much of a violent pain in her left knee. But her mind was quite composed; and she said to her mother, who reminded her of the necessity of calling upon God, that she had been praying since she lay down. During that night the disease made fearful progress, and symptoms of delirium occasionally appeared. The efficient medical skill which was brought to bear upon the case was com-

pletely baffled ; and serious apprehensions began to be felt that it would speedily terminate fatally. On the second day of her illness her mother intimated to her that she feared she was to be taken away, and asked her where she thought she would go. Without seeming to be conscious of a doubt or fear, she said that she would go to heaven ; that Jesus had died for her sins ; and that he would take her to himself. She then asked if she was quite willing to go. " Oh, yes," she replied ; " but if it were God's holy will, I would stay a little longer with you." Sometime afterwards, when conversing upon the same topic, and when a question of a similar nature was put to her, she said, " I am quite willing to die, and would much rather go to Jesus than stay here." Her mother, who was sitting at her bedside, weeping, asked if she still loved her. " Oh, yes," she answered ; " but I love Jesus better than you and papa." And then she exclaimed, with great earnestness, " Come, Jesus, come and take me away !" But seeming to fear that these expressions would distress her mother more, she immediately added, " Do not be sorry for me, mamma, when I am dead, and be sure not to cry."

About that time she requested that her brother ALEXANDER ANDREW might be brought to her, and, with an elevated composure, bearing no faint resemblance to the state of mind manifested by some of the patriarchs immediately before their death, she took him affectionately by the hand, bequeathed to him some articles which belonged to her, bade him not be sorry for her though she was to leave him, as she was going away to heaven, and then gave instructions about some things which she had received from one of her most attached companions—a daughter of the Rev. Dr Ferrier, now in Canada.

During the succeeding night, which was one of extreme suffering, she spoke more fully of her joys and hopes than she had previously done. Although racked with pain, she continued at one time for a whole hour without ceasing to speak with high animation of the sufferings of Christ, the resurrection of the body, and the glories of heaven. But she dwelt more especially upon the inspired descriptions of the upper world, which are given in the New Testament. She said she had been reading before she was taken ill, some of the last chapters of the book of Revelation; and that heaven was

called the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God. And, after speaking with elevated pleasure of its resplendent walls, its pearly gates, and its golden streets, she said, "And there will be no pain nor sickness there, mamma, and no more suffering—there will be no night—it will never be dark—the people that dwell there need no lamps, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light of it." She spoke also of the society of that place with feelings to which language cannot do justice. On being reminded that she would see Jesus, and her dear brother JAMES, who had gone there before her, she added, "Yes, mamma, and I will see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, too; and Moses, and Paul, and all the apostles and good people of whom I have been reading in the Bible." The effect of these statements, being made in such circumstances by one so young, will not easily be forgotten. I had not the satisfaction of being present on the occasion, as I happened to be in Edinburgh when CATHARINE was seized, and had not then arrived; but those who were standing at her bedside describe the scene as one of the most extraordinary kind.

About that time she expressed a desire to

sec the Rev. Mr Forrester, minister of the parish, afterwards minister of Martyr's Free Church, Paisley, and now in Canada. That gentleman had, a short while previously, preached to the children connected with his charge. CATHARINE attended the service; and the sermon, which was characterised by simplicity of language, made a deep impression upon her mind, and tended to enlarge her views of the importance of early piety. She ever afterwards was strongly attached to him, and frequently spoke of the subject of the discourse—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it"—as one in which she felt peculiar pleasure. In a few minutes after notice was sent to him that she was anxious to receive a visit—although it was several hours before daybreak on a winter morning—he was at her bedside. She seemed much gratified, and was all attention to hear what he would say. After making a few inquiries at those who were in the room, about the manner in which she was affected, he asked her if she loved Jesus? "Yes." "Are you willing now to go to heaven to him?" "Yes." He then inquired if she recollected any passages of Scripture in which Jesus ex-

pressed an interest in little children? "Yes," she immediately answered, and repeated the words of our Saviour—"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He asked if she recollected any other? "Yes," she replied, and repeated the words of Solomon, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." She then requested him to engage in prayer; but, before commencing, he asked to whom he would pray? "To God," was the answer. "For whose sake must I pray?" "For Christ's sake." "Why should I offer up prayer for Christ's sake?" "Because he died for sinners." "Are you a sinner?" "Yes." "Did he die for you?" "Yes." Being fully satisfied by the answers given to these and other questions as to the state of her mind, he, in an impressive manner, made supplication to Heaven on her behalf. Though she was at the time in extreme pain, she was so absorbed in the exercise, that she lay with the greatest composure, and seemed, for the moment, to be altogether free from suffering. A similar effect was frequently produced when any suitable portion of Scripture was whispered in her ear. What has been stated,

however, forms but a small part of the conversation which Mr Forrester had with her on that occasion, but it indicates the feelings of the child, and the general state of her mind. The interest which it excited, led that gentleman afterwards to repeat his visits two or three times every day until her death; and he sometimes remained till near midnight, praying with her, and administering consolation. In a note which he sent to me afterwards, he says:—"I often think of dear, departed Catharine; and I think I may safely say, that her deathbed has furnished me with stronger encouragement to persevere in the religious instruction of the young than anything I have yet witnessed."

In a few days after Mr Forrester first visited her, the disease reached its crisis; and to all human appearance the case was then such as to leave no hope whatever of her recovery. The violence of her sufferings had seriously affected some of the vital organs. Symptoms of inflammation of the brain began to appear, and her energies were completely prostrated. Her intellect became occasionally clouded; and the restlessness and incessant tossings which accompanied the disease, altogether prevented her from engaging in any

lengthened conversation. But her mind was never diverted, for any length of time, from the all-absorbing theme which filled her soul. The feeble effort to restrain the heaving of the breast, when a suitable passage of Scripture was repeated, and the heavenward motion of the sunken, glazed eye, when I or any other individual offered up prayer for her, indicated the direction of her thoughts; and they conveyed the notion to those who were standing by, that they were the workings of a spirit eager to disentangle itself from the elements by which it was bound, that it might soar away to the higher regions of purity and love. Even in her ravings, she talked almost exclusively of divine things. At one time, those who were near heard her say, "The glory of the Lord appeared to them on the plain." At another time, when her mind was in a similar state, she exclaimed:—

"Jehovah hear thee in the day
When trouble he doth send!"

And on the night before her death, when highly excited, and apparently making an effort to lay hold of something, I happened to be standing by, and asked if she wished anything. She said, with all the earnestness

of which she was capable:—"I am seeking the body of the Lord Jesus." "Where are you seeking it, my dear?" was the next question. She replied, "It was laid in Joseph's new tomb." I then asked, "But where is it now?" These words were scarcely uttered, when reason resumed its wonted control over her powers; and, as if a faint gleam of recollection flitted across her mind, she said, after a momentary pause, "Oh! it is in heaven," and sunk down exhausted upon the pillow.

But the hour of her release drew near. As it approached, she manifested, if possible, a higher relish for spiritual conversation and devotional exercises. While her tongue performed its functions—and it did so till a very short while before she expired—Christ, and heaven, and her hopes of immortality, were the subjects on which it was employed; and when utterance failed, the expression of her countenance betokened, in some degree, the feelings of her mind. A group of weeping relatives and friends were then eagerly hanging over her, to watch the last ebbings of life; and while gazing on the lovely countenance, over which the livid hues of death were beginning to steal, the following hymn

of Mrs Barbauld's was read aloud at her bedside :—

“ How blest the righteous when he dies !
 When sinks a weary soul to rest,
 How mildly beam the closing eyes,
 How gently heaves the expiring breast !

“ So fades a summer cloud away ;
 So sinks the gale when storms are o'er ;
 So gently shuts the eye of day ;
 So dies a wave along the shore.

“ A holy quiet reigns around,
 A calm which life nor death destroys :
 Nothing disturbs that peace profound,
 Which his unfettered soul enjoys.

“ Farewell, conflicting hopes and fears,
 Where lights and shades alternate dwell !
 How bright the unchanging morn appears !
 Farewell, inconstant world, farewell !

“ Life's labour done, as sinks the clay,
 Light from its load the spirit flies ;
 While heaven and earth combine to say,
 How blest the righteous when he dies ! ”

For a few moments her breathing became somewhat more difficult ; then, raising one of her arms, she heaved a gentle sigh, which loosed the fetters of mortality, and her redeemed spirit entered into rest.

She was then only a few days more than *six years of age* ; and having been universally beloved, her death made a deep impression upon all. Her remains were conveyed by

a numerous company of deeply interested friends to the churchyard of the parish in which she died ; and a small tumulus, close beside the family tombstone, marks the spot where they now repose. The Rev. Mr Forrester, on the Sabbath after the funeral, called the attention of his people to the event, and delineated her character and experience in a sermon, founded on Matthew xxi. 16 :—
 “ Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.”

These notices, though brief, and in many respects imperfect, shew that the subjects of them were specimens of humanity of no ordinary kind, and that children are capable of forming conceptions of spiritual things, and of being savingly impressed by them at a much earlier period than many seem to imagine. At what age the moral powers begin to operate, and the difference between right and wrong is first perceived, it is altogether impossible to determine. That depends so much upon the intellectual constitution, and is modified to such an extent by external circumstances that it, in all probability, varies as much in different individuals as does the

measure of their mental endowment or the capability of acquiring knowledge which they afterwards display. But the notion prevails—and it is in some degree sanctioned by observation—that children of great and marked precocity are generally removed from this world at an early age. Parents may behold that precocity with deep interest and satisfaction, and fondly contemplate the course of usefulness and honour which the gifted subjects of it may run when their faculties are fully developed; but how often are these prospects darkened by the shadow of death, and the objects with which they are identified taken away from them! This fact loudly calls upon them to hold such precious gifts with a loose grasp, and to make them intensely solicitous to have them prepared for heaven.

THE END.





