

THE  
MUSEUM  
OF  
RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE:

DESIGNED TO  
ILLUSTRATE RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

EDITED BY  
MARCUS E. CROSS. K

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Religion's all. Descending from the skies  
To wretched man, the goddess in her left  
Holds out *this* world, and in her right the next.  
Religion! Providence! an after state!  
Here is firm footing; here is solid rock!  
This can support us; all is sea besides.  
His eye the good man fastens on the skies  
And bids earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl.

Young.

"Est brevitate opus ut currat sententia."  
Let brevity despatch the rapid thought.

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## No. VII.

### EARLY PIETY.

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#### PART FIRST.

##### EARLY PIETY POSSIBLE.—REMARKS TO PARENTS.

BY WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D. D.

*Begin early.*—This is the true doctrine, let our views of early piety be what they may. None who will be benefited by these pages will question the susceptibility of the youthful mind to receive impressions which may at some time be matured into a saving change. There are habits of great importance to children, which cannot be acquired too soon. Such are habits of obedience in many things. What parent does not think his child as capable of understanding his meaning in many things, when but a few weeks old, as is the dog that lies on the hearth? You may therefore teach it some things which it is important for it to know, even when very young. This is the training which it receives as an animal. Intellectual and moral training will not so soon be possible. Yet defer not needlessly. First impressions are lasting. See to it that they be desirable. Impressions respecting good and evil your child will have. Let them be according to truth.

It not unfrequently occurs, that on the introduction of a subject we discover in ourselves strong prejudices against it. Sometimes we cannot trace them to their origin and sometimes we can. It is not impossible to find out sufficient causes for all the apparent aversion of many minds towards the subject now presented. It may be asserted as a first principle, that the truly pious do heartily rejoice in the progress of true religion in all cases, if they do but

discover that it is true religion, and not something else in the disguise of piety. And yet it cannot be denied that there are views and feelings among many good people, respecting this matter, whenever introduced, that are exceedingly painful to think upon.

Now, it is not impossible to trace these prejudices to causes which have been in operation for many years.

One of them has been the manner in which the conversions of very young persons have been spoken of from the pulpit and through the press. How often has it of late years been announced, that some great and important discoveries have been made on the subject, and that hitherto the church has been in great ignorance and error. The very pompousness of the announcements which have been made in many places, was sufficient to disgust the less spiritual with the whole subject, and to create strong fears in the minds of the pious. The following are but samples of what has been published in the newspapers respecting the doings of some in transient labours among children. "On examination, mothers obtained comfortable evidence for more than sixty of their children, that they are born of the Spirit of God" — "Upwards of fifty children were converted during our meeting" — "The result of our meeting was the hopeful conversion of more than one hundred children." To "those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern good and evil," such statements are exceedingly painful. How different this course is from that taken by a patriarch in Israel, very many of whose grandchildren, and other young friends, were professing to have rested their hope in Christ, and to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Instead of any confident assertions respecting them, he seemed to be unusually solemn, and uncommonly engaged in prayer. When some one said to him that these things must make him very happy, he replied—"Wait! Let us see what sort of fruit they will bear. If that be good, we can then all rejoice together."

Another ground of prejudice is the very injudicious treatment which in most cases those receive who at a very early period profess religion. They are spoiled with attentions. Paul charges Timothy not to bring forward any young convert, however many his years in life, to the conspicuous work of a religious teacher, and assigns this remarkable reason; "lest being lifted up with pride, he fall

into the condemnation of the devil." Well would it have been for the honour of religion if the principle here inculcated had been duly regarded in every department of the church. Who has not been pained at seeing children and young persons who had professed religion, paraded in public as somewhat remarkable, their sayings repeated, and their services called for in conducting prayer, and sometimes even exhortation, among their superiors in age, and wisdom, and piety? Even admitting one to have some true piety, such treatment must induce something unlovely in the whole appearance, unless the grace afforded be without a parallel. How lovely and instructive to mothers the example of the most highly favoured among women, who did not repeat the sayings of her Son, but hid them in her heart. (Luke ii. 51.) Go and do likewise.

Then, again, it is admitted that there are but few, very few examples of unquestionable piety among very young persons. The fact that many of those, who profess religion early, do also die early, seems to leave the matter in a light but little calculated to convince the skeptical. And because the examples of undoubted piety are *few*, some make the inference that there are *none*; and believing that there are none, they do not pray and labour hoping to witness very happy or decisive effects on their children. Indeed many seem to be fairly under the influence of the practical judgment that very early piety governing the *lives* of children is unattainable. Hence the total absence, in many cases, of all direct and earnest efforts for the salvation of the young.

The regulations of families and of schools are also not unfrequently and powerfully opposed to early conversions. A. had a little friend who, at nine years of age, confessed himself ready to serve God at any hazard. The children in his family laughed him to scorn, and knocked at his door when he retired for devotion. And at school his companions would form a circle around him, and shout—"O! here is a little Christian." This course lasted one whole summer. Is it not strange that he was yet able in meekness to bear their taunts, and not withdraw his testimony nor let go his confidence? Yet who cannot see how utterly unfriendly such a situation must be to the maintenance and growth of any thing like the spirit of devotion? Let parents, and guardians, and teachers, therefore, see to

it, that every arrangement be such as not to favour an organized system of persecution ; but on the contrary to afford every facility and encouragement to the youngest for the formation of devotional habits.

These general impressions are, in many cases, very strong and deeply rooted. So true is this, that all the strength of a scriptural argument is necessary to remove them.

Let it be stated that no one has ever yet attempted to justify these general views, from any want of adaptation in Scripture truth to affect even a very youthful mind, nor from any sober interpretation of Scripture statements declaring the thing impossible. On the contrary, the Scriptures afford many instances of plain teaching directly to the contrary. Let us look at a few of them. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained strength." Ps. viii. 2. The intelligent reader remembers that the Saviour, when on earth, quoted these words, and declared them fulfilled even in his day. Yes, the little ones can, by their hallelujahs, "still the voice of the adversary." "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xix. 14. It is promised that in the latter day glory "the child shall die an hundred years old." Isa. lxv. 20. That is, the child, in that age, shall be as far advanced in knowledge and in grace as in other ages were ordinarily attained by those who arrived at the great age of a hundred years. Indeed, the tenor of Scripture decidedly encourages us to regard children as suitable subjects of piety. Such passages as Matt. xviii. 4, and 1 Cor. xiv. 20, do not easily admit of any tolerable interpretation on any other supposition. All admit that children may be and are subjects of the renewing influences of the Holy Spirit before they arrive at years of understanding, and that thus they who die in early infancy are fitted for heaven. Why then should it be thought impossible for God to renew and save one whose mind had advanced to the first grades of intellectual and rational exercise? It is not contended that true religion will make men and women of children. It will rather maintain in them every thing that properly belongs to childhood. Let them retain all their feebleness, and diffidence, and feeling of dependence on others, and fond-

ness for retirement from public gaze. All we contend for is, that they be encouraged to carry with them, as children, the spirit of piety.

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THE WAY TO USE THE BIBLE IN INCULCATING EARLY  
PIETY.

BY REV. JACOB ABBOTT.

It is of great consequence that you pursue a proper course in endeavouring to interest your children in the study of the Scriptures. Upon a proper use of this volume every thing depends. There are some parts which children can at a very early age understand and appreciate. Others, from their style or subject, will act efficiently on mature minds alone. From the former, which ought to be early read and explained, an immediate and most important religious influence can at once be expected. Selections from the latter should be fixed in the memory, to exert an influence in future years.

For the former of these purposes, the narrative parts, if judiciously selected, are most appropriate in early years. But great care ought to be taken to select those which may be easily understood, and those in which some moral lesson is obvious and simple. Let it be constantly borne in mind, that the object in view in teaching the Bible to a child, is to affect his heart; and it would be well for every mother to pause occasionally, and ask herself, "What moral duty am I endeavouring to inculcate now?—what practical effects upon the heart and conduct of my child is this lesson intended to produce?" To ask a young child such questions as, "Who was the first man?" "Who was the oldest man?" "Who slew Goliath?" may be giving him lessons in pronunciation, but it is not giving him religious instruction. It may teach him to articulate, or it may strengthen his memory, but is doing little or nothing to promote his piety. I would not be understood to condemn such questions. I only wish that parents may understand their true nature. If the real or supposed dexterity of the child in answering them is not made the occasion of showing him

it direct and practical application to the circumstances and temptations of the child.\*

Go on in this way as your child advances through its earlier years; inculcating, thus practically, the truths and doctrines of the gospel, by making each one a comment upon some portions of its own little history. Aim especially to make the feelings of the heart keep pace with the advance of the understanding. Judicious efforts of this kind God will bless, by leading the heart of the little one who is the subject of them to daily habits of communion with him. Christian influence is increasing its power over the young. Every year is carrying the banner of piety nearer and nearer towards the earlier years of human life, and it is not impossible that it may hereafter be proved, that there is not a single hour in the whole existence of a human soul, so favourable to its conversion, as the hour when it is first able to understand that there is a God in heaven to whom it is accountable.

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## PART SECOND.

### TWO CASES OF EARLY PIETY.

BY WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D.D.

THE first is the case of Ann Maria Henry, who died at Ballston, N. Y., aged eleven years and nine months. She

\* Parents ought at such times to make ingenious efforts to learn what thoughts and feelings are passing in the minds of children; for sometimes the whole tone and manner of the instruction is to be modified by it. Draw the pupil if possible into conversation. Encourage his question, and try by every means to get a clue at the train of thoughts passing in his mind. The following anecdote illustrates the great diversity of emotion which is produced in different minds by the same narrative: Two children were looking at a picture of the murder by Cain. Abel's crook was lying upon the ground. After contemplating it a moment in silence, one says, with a thoughtful and serious expression of countenance, "I wonder if God could have made Cain as good a man as Abel, if he had wished." Another pause—and then the other said, shaking his head, and throwing into his countenance a look of stern defiance, "Ah, if I had been Abel, and could have got hold of that stick, I would have laid it upon Cain well." How entirely different now the course of remark judiciously adapted to the condition of the latter mind, from that which would be suitable to the former.

was the daughter of the late Rev. Thomas Charlton Henry, D. D., of Charleston, South Carolina.

In the character, life, and death of this young disciple of the Lord Jesus, there was much of deep and peculiar interest. The subject of many and fervent prayers, and trained in the nurture of the Lord, she with the first developments of an early mind gave evidence of being a child of grace.

She looked forward to the ensuing communion Sabbath with an earnest desire and joyful anticipation of uniting herself in a personal profession with the church. From this she was prevented only by her last illness. In relation to it she remarked, "I am providentially prevented. It is a subject on which I feel so deeply that I cannot dwell upon it; I cannot speak of it."

It is an interesting fact in her history, that from early childhood she manifested the deepest interest in the cause of Christian missions. All information in relation to their state and progress she sought with eagerness; her heart was especially drawn out in prayer to God for the conversion of the heathen world. At her own instance she adopted a system of self-denial in relation to certain articles with which she had been indulged, asking the privilege of appropriating to that cause the avails thus saved. And, though well informed in relation to the privations and hardships of the missionary life, she fondly cherished the hope of herself going as a missionary to the heathen.

In her last illness and death, though her bodily sufferings were intense, her patience in enduring them was signally exemplary, and her submission to the Divine will entire. On one occasion, lying apparently in meditation, she, with strong energy of expression and manner, said, "I do submit—I *have* wholly submitted in this sickness to the will of God." On another occasion she said to one of her physicians, "Doctor, I want you to tell me *exactly* what you think of my case; I am willing, I am ready to die at any moment."

On the physician replying that there was no probability of her recovery, that he did not expect it, a smile of unmingled satisfaction played over her features. At another time, in reply to an inquiry on the subject, she said,

"Sweet to lie passive in his hands  
And know no will but his."

And at another; "I am willing to live, and I am willing to die; and I am willing to suffer pain, or any thing that will be for the glory of God." At another time she spontaneously said to her mother, "I should be disappointed if I should not die. But I would have no will of my own. I would have it ordered for the glory of God;" and with an emphasis and energy of manner which marked all that she said on these subjects, she added, "If I live, may I live to his glory; and if I die, may I die to his glory."

She had a very strong "desire to depart and to be with Christ." The only thing which gave her any wish to live, was concern for the bereavement of her mother. Filial affection was one of the most strongly marked traits of her character in life. On returning from the interment of her lamented father, she, then a child of only six years old, repaired to the room of her bereaved mother, and as she entered, fixing her eyes steadily on her, approached her, and with an unfaltering voice, and a dignity of manner almost inconceivable in a child so young, while her own eyes were filled with tears, said, "Mamma, do not weep, I will be a comfort to you." And well did she redeem the pledge thus nobly given. This beautiful and lovely feature of character, under the improving power of sanctifying grace, gained strength in death. At one time, being asked by a friend who watched by her bedside, if she was resigned to her sickness, she said, "If I knew I were to die this night I could not shed one tear. Were I to cast a look behind, it would be for my mother." At another time she said to her mother, "How sweet—how delightful would it be, if we could go to heaven together. But, mamma, we must wait God's time. His time is the best. We shall soon meet again;" and asked, "Mamma, do you feel willing to give me up?" On her mother's replying in the affirmative, she with transport said, "O, I am so happy, for I am so anxious to go to heaven!" Her mother withdrawing from the room in tears, a sudden change passed over her before joyful and heavenly countenance, indicating the deepest distress, and even anguish of soul. A friend observed, "Anna, something seems to oppress your mind; be frank and say what it is." She replied with a deep sigh, "If any thing distresses me," with emphasis repeating, "*if any thing* distresses me, it is for my mother. I said a moment since that I wished to die: but I would live

for my mother." At another time she remarked to her uncle, that during the first week of her illness she had felt great anxiety for her mother. On his replying, "If God sees fit to remove you, he will take care of your mother;" she said with great earnestness, "O, uncle, please tell dearest-mother *that*," repeating, "*tell her that*."

The day but one before her death, the family were assembled in her room to witness her dissolution, which was then supposed to be near. While suffering intense pain of body, and unable to converse, her countenance assumed a most heavenly expression. She continued to smile unceasingly, for an hour and a half, on her mother, her little brother, and occasionally on other friends who surrounded her bed. During this time one remark only she uttered: "*I am happy, just as happy as I can be.*"

Her dissolution was eminently peaceful and joyous. This appearing at hand, her mother said, "I commit you into the hands of Jesus." She embraced her mother in her arms, and would have so died, but for the interposition of friends, to allow the inspiration of air. In a moment she was at rest.

Mary Frances Huntington, the oldest daughter of M. P. and S. Huntington, was the first subject of infant baptism, about six years ago, in the church in Milton, North Carolina. She was truly an interesting and intelligent child. At her death, she was not quite ten years old. She had attended constantly, for several years, the Sabbath-school, of which she was very fond. But the facts to be narrated occurred principally within the last three months of her life.

During a protracted meeting in the month of October last, in the neighbourhood, she was first observed to be unusually interested and manifestly affected on the subject of religion. This personal concern for the salvation of her soul was evinced by her marked readiness and anxious fondness to attend all the meetings. Whilst other little girls of her age were grouping together for amusement, she was seeking instruction in some religious circle or exercise, with the seriousness and solemnity of mature age. On several occasions she expressed herself, after the meeting

had closed, as having felt very anxious to attend the inquiry meetings—but did not, because being so young, she did not know whether it was proper or not.

And at the close of the meeting, when Christians were requested to stand and sing the 375th of the Village Hymns—

“Awake and sing the song  
Of Moses and the Lamb,” &c.

little Fanny was observed to stand and sing with high relish and devout animation. Although her friends were quite at a loss to know exactly what to think, or what use to make of these things, yet they laid them up and pondered them in their hearts.

Some three or four weeks after this she expressed herself, in a conversation with one of her classmates, with whom she was most intimate, as entertaining the hope of having become a Christian—referring to the protracted meeting as the time and occasion when she embraced that hope—and solemnly enjoining secrecy, on the ground that she was so young that she *might* be mistaken, and that she wished to be sure before she made it known. From this time till the commencement of her sickness it was noticed, not only by her parents, but others who were frequently with her, that she was unusually serious and retiring, remarkably affectionate and dutiful, and conscientiously attentive to religious exercises. The writer of this little narrative has been struck with her devout and marked attention under preaching, where he has seen her hanging on his lips with a tearful eye and solemn countenance.

On Sabbath night before she was taken sick—just one week previous to her death, she was overheard talking to her two younger brothers respecting their manner of saying their prayers. Among other things, she was heard to tell them that she was afraid that they did not think of God, or of the meaning of their words when they prayed. After thus addressing them for some time, she took them into a private room, and all of them kneeling, she prayed with them aloud, and for them in particular. The next evening she was taken ill of the scarlet fever, at the house of her grandfather, in the same village in which her father lives.

From the commencement of her sickness she seemed to forebode, even to a degree distressing to her friends, that

she would never recover. When any one spoke of what would be done *when* she got well, she would *very* frequently correct the expression, and say, "*if* I get well." And she herself constantly used the term *if*, when speaking of her recovery. On several occasions during her illness, and entirely of her own accord, she spoke in terms of the strongest regret that she had wasted so much time and money in the use of dolls; saying, with solemn emphasis—"if it was to do again, I would not do so." She cautioned also several little girls with whom she was intimate, against playing so much with dolls, as sinful, and painful to the conscience.

A day or two before her disease came to a crisis, she said to her mother, "Mother, why don't you talk to me about God and about dying? Don't you know that I shall die to-night?" Her mother, very much affected, and suffused with tears, was at first unable to speak; but soon replied—"I don't know that you will die, and I hope you will not, to-night." She answered, "Yes, I shall; but don't cry, I have a hope." Soon after this, she was told that the doctor had given her up, and had said that she could not live. The information, though perfectly understood, seemed to produce no alarm whatever, nor even the slightest excitement; on the contrary, it seemed to be rather acceptable; for, after a considerative pause, she sweetly and placidly replied, "Well, I don't care—I would as soon die as live—I shall be far better off in heaven." She was asked if she wished to go home; (to her father's;) she replied, "I should like to go home; but it is no matter—I shall soon be at my heavenly Father's home." When she saw two of her young companions and classmates present, she requested to be left with them alone. When her request was complied with, she called them by name, and exhorted them, at some length, to prepare for death, to pray, to love and obey the Saviour, &c. As she approached her end, when she saw her doting parents and friends weeping around her, she frequently said to them, "Don't weep for me, but meet me in heaven."

On Sabbath, her last Sabbath on earth, she took leave of her parents, grandparents, and other friends present, calling each one by name, and requesting them to kiss her. In the afternoon her tutoress asked her if she remembered little Jane? "Yes," was her reply, "and little Susan too." "Jane, you know," said her tutoress, "when she

was afflicted, could put her trust in Christ; can you do so?" "O yes," was her reply, with animated emphasis. About dusk, the minister asked her, among other things, "Do you love the Saviour, Fanny; do you want to see Him; can you trust yourself with Him?" With unhesitating promptness, emphatic earnestness, and a brightening countenance, she replied, "*O Yes!*" "*O Yes!*" Her father, being overcome on hearing her answer, wept aloud. She turned her head, looked at him, and said, with peculiar sweetness of manner, "Don't cry, papa, don't cry." After this she became insensible, and about 12 o'clock expired, it is hoped, in the arms of Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

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## CASE OF LITTLE JAMES.

BY REV. JOHN TODD.

A FEW years since, a man and his wife arrived in the town of M—, N. Y., as permanent residents. They were young, lately married, and their prospects for the future were bright and cheering. They purchased a farm in M—, which was then a new country, and had happily spent two or three years in this situation, when, by a mysterious providence, the young man was called from this world. With his surviving widow, he left two lovely twin infants, to deplore a loss which time could not retrieve. The widow sought comfort in vain from the limited circle of her acquaintance. There was no minister of the gospel in that region to direct her to the great source of comfort, nor was there a pious friend who could direct her trembling footsteps to the cross of Jesus. But she went to her Bible, and by the assistance of the Spirit of truth, found that consolation which a selfish world can neither bestow nor taste. She mourned indeed a husband who was no more, but she was cheered by the hope that God would protect her and hers. She wept over her innocent babes, and resolved that while she lived, they should never need a mother's care. As they grew up, she endeavoured to teach them the first prin-