

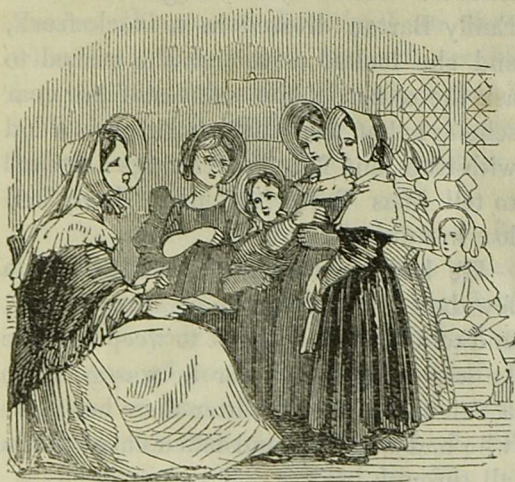
CONVERSATION
ABOUT
H E A V E N.

LONDON:
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;
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CONVERSATION ABOUT HEAVEN.



MISS TAYLOR had been from home for some weeks, and had not seen her Sunday scholars for four sabbaths. She was very

glad to take her seat amongst them again, and the children were no less pleased to see her. Only one face was too sad to smile a welcome even to her beloved teacher. Miss Taylor was grieved to see Emily Barton dressed in a black frock, and she looked as though she wished to ask the reason of the sadness of her dear scholar; but the little girl's eyes filled with tears, and Martha Jennings hastened to tell Miss Taylor that poor Emily had lost her dear father.

He had been taken ill, and died in a few days. They said he was very happy, and told his little girl not to weep because he was going away; for he was going to a Friend he loved better than her; one who had watched, and taken care of him all through his life.

“And he was buried last Wednesday,” the children said, “and Emily was here, and she cried very much, and she seems still very unhappy.”

The kind teacher looked at the little girl, and tried to comfort her. She said to her, "If I could tell you that I had a letter from the Friend your father is gone to see, would you like to hear about him? You would ask me directly, I am sure, what he is doing now, and who are his companions, what kind of a place that is to which he is gone, how long it was before he reached that strange land, and how long he will stay there.

"Well, dear, you can dry your tears, for I really have such a message of peace. And I will tell you first that that kind Friend of your father's has promised to take care of you. He calls himself 'a Father of the fatherless,' and says, 'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive,' " Jer. xlix. 11.

Sarah.—Oh teacher, that is a text in the Bible; shall we find all you spoke of there?

Teacher.—Yes. First we shall see that Emily's father is in the presence of God.

Do you remember the second and third verses of the fourteenth chapter of John.

Sarah.—"In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Teacher.—You see then, that the disciples of Jesus go to live with him and his Father. Jesus prayed for this when he was on earth; a little time before he died, he said, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory," John xvii. 24.

How pleased every one of them must be to see him who has suffered so much for them on earth, now so glorious and happy in that world of joy. And there are also holy angels that never sinned there; and Peter, and John, and all who on earth

have “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” I hope your mother is there, Emily. Oh will not your father be pleased to see her again! and will you not join them there, my child, that you may form one happy family in heaven? and then you will not be separated any more.

Martha.—Ah, that is the reason you called it a happy world. It must be better than this; for here we cannot tell how long our friends will live. Perhaps another of us may soon have, like Emily, to lose a father or some one else we love.

Teacher.—But that is not the only thing that makes heaven happy. Any place where the great and good God reigns, must be delightful, and then there is no sin there. You must all have noticed how unhappy it makes you to do wrong. Even though I fear you love sin, I know you cannot be happy when you are naughty. And I dare say each of you can remember

how unhappy it makes you, if you have any one near you when in a bad temper, even though it may be only your youngest brother or sister.

Now there is nothing of this kind in heaven. Each one there is holy; so that while they have not to grieve over sin in themselves, they also have everything to give them pleasure in their friends. Emily, you have often made your father anxious and unhappy here, and you are sorry to think of it. If you meet him there, you will never have to give him that pain, or to bear it yourself. All there are quite holy, every one like Jesus; for "we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2.

And there is no pain nor weakness there. This is not of so much consequence as what I mentioned last. For though pain is difficult to bear, it does not always make the sufferer unhappy.

Emily.—No; my father had a great deal of pain, but I was quite surprised to see him so cheerful. He said sin was much worse than pain; but it is indeed a comfort to think that he has no illness now.

Sarah.—Do you think, teacher, that they remember in heaven what happened to them here.

Teacher.—I should think so. It is not likely they could forget it, and it must make them love God more. They see more plainly than they could here, that their being in heaven is only owing to the mercy of God. When they recollect their sins, no doubt they thank God with greater fervour that those sins are forgiven, and they must feel the goodness of Christ more than they ever did before. Oh can you not fancy with what eagerness they would throw down the bright crowns from their heads at the foot of Jesus, and raise again yet louder and sweeter the

beautiful song : " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," Rev. v. 12.

And when they look back, and see how very hard their hearts used to be, and how little they felt his love and kindness till God softened them, they must be ready to say ; " We love him, because he first loved us."

Then they will feel how very kind it was of their dear Saviour to bleed and die for them. They cannot think of him enough, and as they sing about him to the melody of their golden harps, they must be glad that the music they can make is so beautiful, because it is the sweeter praise for Jesus ; and they must be glad that there is no night there, because they need never cease worshipping Him.

Besides this, they can see how God's dealings with them whilst on earth,

which they had sometimes thought strange, and perhaps unkind, were wise and good.

Sarah.—Can they see us, teacher, and watch us here on earth?

Teacher.—I do not know how to answer your question. Perhaps they share with the angels the delightful work of being “ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation,” and are very glad when they see another sinner at the foot of the cross. “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth,” Luke xv. 10.

Martha.—Now, teacher, you said you could tell us how soon after death they are in heaven. Is there anything about that in the Bible?

Teacher.—Yes. Jesus promised the poor thief on the cross when he prayed to him, that that very day, and it was a late hour then, he should be with him in

heaven. And we are told in the fifth chapter of 2nd Corinthians, that the apostle was willing "to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." It seems, then, that as soon as the soul leaves the body, it is in the presence of God. What a wonderful change it must be from the bed of sickness and pain, and still more from the struggle against sin, to the presence of the all-glorious God, and to the company of the holy angels. How sweet their music must sound; and how bright everything must seem. The sight of God must be unspeakably glorious. Even the angels who have lived in heaven ever since God made them, cannot bear to look at him; when they go to speak to him, they veil their faces with their wings. But we cannot fancy what heaven will be. Indeed, here we can only see as in "a glass, darkly."

Now I am going to ask you the last question. Can you remember a text

which tells us how long they will stay in heaven?

Martha.—In the sixteenth Psalm it is said; “At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore:” and I think Jesus generally called it eternal life, or everlasting glory.

Teacher.—It very much increases the joys of heaven, to think that they will last for ever, and perhaps be getting greater and greater for evermore. But I dare say you will scarcely understand how this can be, when those pleasures are at first perfect. I will try to explain it. Did you ever see a little baby free from pain, and pleased with something which has caught its attention. We say it is as happy as an infant can be; but as that baby grows, he will have more pleasures, for he will understand more, and will feel everything more deeply. Now can you see how this may be the case in heaven; how the joys of heaven may increase as

the saints learn to understand more and more about the unsearchable God?

And now, Emily, you can bear to lose your dear father for such glory and blessedness as this. Your face has brightened with the thought that he is so happy. You sorrow not as one without hope. But will you ever see him again? May we think that you will one day share his pleasures? If after so short an illness as your father's, you should be called like him to die, where would you be? None but the disciples of Jesus go to heaven. Are you such? Do you learn of him, think of him, and imitate and love him? Is he to you what he was to your father, the best Friend? Oh no. When we talk of him, perhaps you feel how kind he is; but I fear you forget it very soon. It is only the excitement for the time, and you go away to think of and to love sin. Your heart is unholy. If you could get to heaven, you would feel no sympathy with

the blessed spirits there whilst it is so. And how could you meet God! He is angry with you. You are to him like a child in disgrace, and he must meet you—ah, he is looking at you now—with a frown. “God is angry with the wicked every day,” Psa. vii. 11. How can you be happy with that thought? It must be either because you do not love God, and so do not care about his displeasure, or because you do not feel that you are wicked.

Sarah.—Oh yes, teacher, we know we are sinners. The Bible says. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” Rom. iii. 23.

Teacher.—Ah you know it is a Bible truth, but I fear it has not come home to your hearts. If you saw what that sin which you speak of really is, you would be miserable till it was all forgiven. You would feel how much reason God has to be angry with you, and you would go to the cross of Jesus; for God has promised

to grant a free pardon to all who ask it there.

See how very kind God is. He has told you of the happiness of heaven, to make you love him for his goodness, and to lead you the more earnestly to seek that holiness, without which no one can see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. Oh my children, as you dread the thought of being banished from that world of perfect happiness, do, each one of you, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near," Isa. lv. 6.

