

**OUR LITTLE ONES IN
HEAVEN. A COLLECTION
OF THOUGHTS IN PROSE
AND VERSE**

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Our Little Ones in Heaven. A Collection of Thoughts in Prose and Verse by Henry Robbins

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With an Introduction,

BY THE LATE REV. HENRY ROBBINS, M.A.

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HAPPY are they who receive all they possess as loans from the great Giver. Happy are they who, if smitten and bereft of any earthly gifts, can say with Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Happy are they who can hear the cold chilling sound of the grave closing upon the earthly remains of a being dearly loved, and say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

If there be few, who, while the stroke is fresh and the suffering keen, can bow beneath the rod and kiss the hand that smites, the reason arises from no defect in God's comforts or the divine promises, but has its root and origin in ourselves. We receive as if we had purchased; we hold, as if a property for ever, that which at best is short lived as we. We are not prepared to part with that which seemed a portion of ourselves, and, as we think too little of our own mortality, we reckon too much on the endurance of that which is like a vapour that passeth away.

The Old Testament theory, set forth as a doctrine and exhibited in practice, is the best balm; for

therein we learn, that children are "an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord." Thus Eve received her first-born, "I have gotten a man from the Lord;" and thus she received Seth in his brother's room. So David, when the child of his sin was cut off, was willing to be comforted, for he knew that it was unsinning, and therefore, in the triumph of his sorrowing faith, could say, "I shall go to him, but he shall not come to me;" while in the case of the ripened and hardened sinner who fall in the climax of his guilt, his heart almost broke with the cry, "Oh! Absalom, my son, my son, would God that I had died for thee." There is in him no hope, no thought of regaining the one really lost. There lies before him a deep and dark abyss. In the conduct of Hagar and of the Shunammite, we have examples which seem to illustrate the difference between one who sees not God in the suffering and the other who knows that God is nigh in all. The poor wanderer cannot bear to look on her child's sufferings, and the mother's tenderness takes the strange course of withdrawing from the sight of that child's agony. She cannot bear the burden, and she does not cast it upon Him who would have sustained her; she forgets the experience of her first flight and tardy acknowledgment, "Thou, God, seest me," and enacts again forgetfulness of God, as seen in her question, "Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me?"

The Shunammite's character is particularly interesting and instructive. There is a training for trial; a preparation for suffering, and that a suffering of the sternest, severest kind. She has faith enough to give a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, and she loses not her reward. She receives that for which she asks not. In her case, that joyous event befalls, namely, a birth in a childless family. The child grows. All her love is drawn towards him. The child is well, and looks like a beautiful bud of promise; there may be no sign or symptom of weakness, but in a moment, in the joyous season of harvest, the messenger of death speeds forth, and the child can but cry, "My head, my head," and he is borne to die in his mother's arms. What a wrench! what a struggle! what a victory! The darling of her heart, the unexpected one, the child of old age is gone. What can she do? She has received him as a precious gift, a loan from the Lord. She believes, and her faith overcomes all hindrances. To her doubting husband, who can see no good in applying to the prophet but on a festival, she replies, "All shall be well." Mark her burning haste: she turns neither to the right hand nor to the left; her heart is fixed. What triumphant faith! when she can think of that little chamber and that cold form, the grave as it were of all her hopes, her mother's love, and yet reply "All is well." She sees God

in the stroke, comes to his servant, clings to him, mildly yet faithfully pleads the unasked gift as a reason for its restoration. He who gave can forgive. He who hath taken away can restore. "O woman, great is thy faith." The messenger of the covenant is present, and it is unto her even as she wills. What she saw in the greatness of the divine presence, surely the Christian parent may see in the sweetness of the divine promise, "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

The Shunammite believes in the restoration of her child. The Christian parent looks to the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. He can say, with the wise woman of Tekoa, "We are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth He devise means, that his banished be not expelled from Him." The Christian parent believes that all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live. He knows that his little one, who has not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, and has yet paid the penalty of a corrupted nature, made mortal by sin (for death came by sin)—that this little one shall rise again, and hear the welcome of Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven;" "of such," in simplicity and innocency;