

ANOTHER LILY GATHERED.

by

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“My beloved is gone down into His garden to gather lilies.”—SONG vi. 2.

GOD loves His mighty works to be remembered. We easily forget the most amazing displays of His love and power, and therefore it is right often to set up a stone of remembrance. When Israel passed over Jordan on dry land, God commanded Joshua to take twelve stones out of the dry bed of the river, and to set them up at Gilgal, for a memorial, “that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty” (Josh. iv. 24). Whenever the children of Israel looked upon these massy stones, they would remember how God brought their fathers through the swellings of Jordan.

God has done great things for us in this corner of His vineyard, whereof we are glad. The Word has often grown mightily and prevailed. Many old sinners and many young ones have given clear evidence of a saving change. And though we cannot say that “the Lord added to the church *daily* such as should be saved,” yet we can say that from the first day until now, He has never left Himself without a witness.

We have done little in the way of making known the doings of the Lord. The record of many a saved soul is on high, and many in their heavenly walk amid a polluted world are living monuments of what a God of grace can do. In this little narrative we would raise up an humble stone to the memory of a dear boy who now sleeps in Jesus, and to the praise of that God and Saviour who planted, watered, and gathered His own lily.

JAMES LAING was born on 28th July 1828, and lost his mother before he was eight years old. Of the living members of the family I do not mean to speak; they have not yet finished their course, but are still in the valley of tears, and trials, and temptations. This only must be noticed, that not long after God took away the mother, He dealt so graciously with the elder sister, that she was henceforth fitted to watch over the other children with a mother's tenderness.

James was seized with the same fever as that of which his mother died, and he never enjoyed good health afterwards. He was naturally a very quiet and reserved boy, not so rough in his language as many of the boys around. One day, when he was lying on his dying bed, I was asking his sister what kind of boy he had been. She said that he was as wicked as other boys, only he did not swear. After I was gone, he told his sister that she was wrong. He never used to swear at home, because he was afraid he would be punished for it; but when among his companions he often used to swear. “Ah!” added he, “it is a wonder God did not send me to hell when I was a swearer.” Another day, hearing some boys swearing near his window, he said, “It is a wonder God did not leave me to swear among these boys yet.” Such was the early life of this boy. He did not know the God who guided him, and in whose hand his breath was;

and such is the life of most of our children—they “cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God.”

The Holy Spirit strives even with children. And when they grieve Him, and resist His awakening hand, He suffers long with them. The first time that James showed any concern for his soul was in the autumn of 1839. It was a solemn time in this place; St. Peter’s was like Bethel. The divine ladder was set down in the midst of the people, and its top reached up to heaven, and even strangers were forced to say, “Surely God is in this place.” Oh that these sweet days would come back again! His elder brother, Alexander, a sailor boy, was at that time awakened, and the same glorious Spirit seemed to visit James for a time. One evening their sister Margaret, returning home from a meeting, found her two brothers on their knees earnestly crying for mercy. She did not interrupt them; but Alexander afterwards said to her, “Jamie feels that he needs Christ too. We will easily know if he be in earnest, for then he will not need to be bidden to pray.” The test was a trying one; James soon gave up secret prayer, and proved that his goodness was like a morning cloud and the early dew which goeth away. This is the mark of the hypocrite laid down by Job, “Will he always call upon God?” (Job xxvii. 10).

Another night Margaret observed James coming from the prayer-meeting in the school in great distress. He kept close by the wall of the church, that he might escape observation. He was much concerned that night, and, after retiring to rest, said to his sister, in his own Scottish dialect, “There’s me come awa’ *without Christ* to-night again.”

One Thursday evening he attended the weekly meeting held in the church. The passage explained was Rom. iv. 4–6, and sinners were urged to receive the “righteousness without works.” Many were deeply affected, and would not go away even after the blessing. James was one of those who remained, and when I came to him he was weeping bitterly. I asked him if he cared for his soul: he said, “Whiles.” I asked if he prayed: he said, “Yes.” He was much concerned on his return home that night, both for others and for his own soul. But these dewdrops were soon dried up again.

He attended the Sabbath school in the lane where their cottage stands. Often, when the teacher was reading the Bible or some awakening anecdote, the tears flowed down his cheeks but he tried to conceal his emotion from the other boys, lest they should laugh at him. He afterwards said in his last illness, “Oh that I had just another night of the Sabbath school! I would not care though they should laugh at me now.” Sometimes, during the reading and prayer in the family, the word of God was like a fire to him, so that he could not bear it; and after it was over, he would run to his wild companions in order to drown the cries of his awakened conscience.

In July 1841 he went up to Glamis for his health. I was preaching in the neighbourhood, and he wished much to go and hear, but was not able to walk the distance. One night he heard Mr. Cormick of Kirriemuir preach in a cottage on John vii. 37. He felt it deeply, and wept bitterly; but he remarked that none of the people wept. He knew well when people showed any concern for their soul; and he often remarked that to be anxious is not to be *in Christ*. When he came home, he spoke much of the carelessness of the people where he had been. “Ah, Margaret, there was no Bible read yonder. The people a’ went to their bed just as if there had not been a God.” What a faithful picture is this of the state of many of our country parishes!

One night after his return, a neighbour was sitting by the fire reading the work of an old divine. It stated that even carnal men sometimes receive a conviction they never can forget. She turned to James, and asked him if he had never received a conviction that he could not forget. "Yes," he said, "I can never forget it; but we cannot seek Christ twice." Thus did the long-suffering of God wait upon this little boy, the good Spirit strove with him, and Jesus stood at the door and knocked; but he would not hear.

The day of Immanuel's power, and the time of love, was, however, near at hand. As the cold winds of October set in, his sickly frame was much affected: he became weak and breathless. One Tuesday, in the end of October, he turned decidedly worse, and became intensely anxious about the salvation of his soul. His lamentable cry was, "Oh, Jesus, save me—save me!" Margaret asked if his concern was real, for he had often deceived her hopes before. He wept, and said, "Yes." His body was greatly pained; but he forgot all in the intense anxiety for his precious, never-dying soul. On the Saturday I paid a visit to their humble cottage, and found the little sufferer sitting by the fire. He began to weep bitterly while I spoke to him of Jesus having come into the world *to save sinners*. I was enabled in a simple manner to answer the objections that sinners make to an immediate closing with Christ. Margaret wondered; for the minister could not have spoken more to the case of her brother if he had known it; and she inwardly thanked God, for she saw that He was directing it. James spent the rest of the day on his knees in evident distress of soul. Oh, how little the most of those called Christians know what it is to pass through such deep waters! Margaret asked him if he was seeking Jesus: he said, "Yes." She asked, "If he would like anything—a bit of bread?" he said, "No; but I would take a bit of the bread of life if you would give it me." She replied, "I cannot give you that; but if you seek it, you will get it." He remained alone till evening, and was never off his knees. Towards night he came to the other end of the cottage, and put this question: "Have I only to believe that Jesus died for sinners? Is that all?" He was told, "Yes." "Well, I believe that Jesus died for me, for I am a poor, hell-deserving sinner. I have been praying all this afternoon, that when Jesus shed His blood for sinners, He would sprinkle some of it upon me, and *He did it*." He then turned up Rom. v. 8, and read these words, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." His sister wept for joy, and James added, "I am not afraid to die now, for Jesus has died for me." Often after this he bade his sister read to him Rom. v., Ps. ciii., and Ps. cxvi. These were favourite portions with him.

From that day it was a pleasant duty indeed to visit the cottage of this youthful inquirer. Many a happy hour have I spent beneath that humble roof. Instead of dropping passing remarks, I used generally to open up a passage of the word, that he might grow in knowledge. I fear that, in general, we are not sufficiently careful in *regularly instructing* the sick and dying. A pious expression and a fervent prayer are not enough to feed the soul that is passing through the dark valley. Surely if sound and spiritual nourishment is needed by the soul at any time, it is in such an hour, when Satan uses all his arts to disturb and destroy.

One Thursday afternoon I spoke to him on Matt. xxiii. 37: "How often would I have gathered your children." He was in great darkness that day, and, weeping bitterly, said, "I fear I have never been gathered to Christ; but if I have never been gathered, oh that I were gathered to Christ *now!*" After I was

gone he said, "It would give me no peace though the minister and everybody said I was a Christian, if I had not *the sense* of it between God and myself."

He was very fond of the Song of Solomon, and many parts of it were opened up to him. One day I spoke on Song v. 13: "His lips are like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh." I told him that these were some of the drops that fell from the lips of Jesus: "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." "I came to seek and to save that which was lost." "Wilt thou be made whole?" "I gave unto them eternal life." He said solemnly, "That's fine."

Another day, Song i. 5, "I am black, but comely," was explained. He said, "I am black as hell in myself, but I'm all fair in Jesus." This was ever after a common expression of his. Another day I spoke on Song v. 15: "His legs are like pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold;" and showed the almighty strength of the Lord Jesus. The next day when I came in, I asked him how he was; but, without answering my question, he said, "I am glad you told me that about Jesus' legs being like pillars of marble, for now I see that He is able to carry me and all my sins."

On one occasion he said, "I am glad this psalm is in the Bible." "What psalm?" He answered, "'Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale.' He has promised to be with me, and God is as good as His word."

At another time I read to him Isa. xliii. 2: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;" and explained that when he came to the deep, deep waters, the Lord Jesus would put His foot down beside his, and wade with him. This often comforted him, for he believed it as firmly as if he had seen the pierced foot of Jesus placed beside his own; and he said to Margaret, "If Christ put down His foot beside mine, then I have nothing to fear."

One Sabbath I had been preaching on Caleb following the Lord fully (Num. xiv. 24), and had stated that every sin committed after conversion would take away something from the believer's weight of eternal glory. Alexander, his brother, was present, it being his only Sabbath on shore. He was much troubled, and said, "Ah! I fear mine will be all lost." He told the statement to James, who was also troubled. Alexander said, "You don't need to be troubled, Jamie; you are holy." James wept, and said, "I wonder to hear you speak." Alexander said, "Ah! but you are holier than me."

In the same sermon I had said that if believers did nothing for Christ, they would get in at the door of heaven, but nothing more. The sailor-boy told this to his brother, who wept again, saying, "I have done nothing for Christ." Alexander said he had done less. James added, "I would like to be *near* Jesus. I could not be happy unless I was near Him." Speaking of those who had gone to glory long ago, James said that "those who died in Christ now, and did most for Him, Jesus would take them *in by* (that is, near to Himself), though they were late of coming."

How lovely this simple, domestic scene! Happy families; but, ah! how few where the children fear the Lord, and speak often one to another. Surely the Lord stands behind the wall hearkening, and He will write their words in His book of remembrance. "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels."

Some of my dear brethren in the ministry visited this little boy, to see God's wonderful works in him, and to be helpers of his joy. It is often of great importance, in visiting the dying, to call in the aid of a fellow-labourer. Different lines of testimony to the same Saviour are thus brought to meet in the chamber

of sorrow. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. Mr. Cumming of Dumbarney, visiting him one day, asked him if he suffered much pain. *James*—"Sometimes." *Mr. C.*—"When you are in much pain, can you think on the sufferings of the Lord Jesus?" *James*—"When I see what Jesus suffered for me, it takes away my pain. Mine is nothing to what He suffered." He often repeated these words: "My light affliction, which is but for a moment."

At another time, Mr. Miller of Wallacetown called with me, and our little sufferer spoke very sweetly on eternal things. *Mr. M.*—"Would you like to get better?" *James*—"I would like the will of God." *Mr. M.*—"But if you were getting better, would you just live as you did before?" *James*—"If God did not give me grace, I would." During the same visit I was asking Margaret when he was first awakened. She told me of his first concern, and then of the first day I had called. James broke in, and said, "Ah! but we must not lean upon that." His meaning was, that past experiences are not the foundation of a sinner's peace. I never met with any boy who had so clear a discovery of the way of pardon and acceptance through the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus, laid to our account. One time I visited him, I said, "I have been thinking of this verse to-day: 'The Lord is well pleased for His righteousness' sake'" (Isa. xlii. 21). He said, "Explain that to me, for I don't understand it." I opened it up to him, but I feared he did not take up the meaning. Some days after he said to his sister, "Margaret, I have been thinking of a sweet verse to-day." She asked what it was; but it had slipped from his memory. *M.*—"Was it about Christ?" *James*—"Ay." She quoted one. *James*—"No, that's not it." At length she quoted, "The Lord is well pleased," etc. "Ah! that's it," he said; "I was thinking it's no' for my righteousness' sake, but for *His* righteousness' sake." This showed how fully he embraced what so few comprehend—the way of salvation by "the obedience of one" for many. Surely God was his teacher, for God alone can reveal the sweetness and glory of this truth to the soul of man!

Mr. Bonar of Collace often visited him, and these were sweet visits to little James. One day, when Mr. Bonar had been opening up some Scripture to him, he said, "Do you *know* what I am saying, Jamie?" *James*—"Yes, but I cannot get at it (I cannot feel its power); I see it all." *Mr. B.*—"I think there would be a pleasure in seeing the people drink when Moses struck the rock, even though one did not get a drink themselves." *James*—"Ah! but I would like a drink."

One of the loveliest features in the character of this little boy was his intense love to the souls of men. He often spoke with me on the folly of men living without Christ in the world. I shall never forget the compassionate glance of his clear blue eye as he said, "What a pity it is that they do not a' come to Christ!—they would be sic happy." He often reminded me of the verse: "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God" (1 John iv. 7).

One Sabbath evening I spoke to the scholars in the Sabbath school about him. When the school was over, they all came into his cottage to see him. The little throng stood silent round his bed, while he spoke to them with great solemnity: "You all know what I was; I was no better than you; but the Holy Spirit opened my eyes, and I saw that I was on the very brink of hell. Then I cried to Jesus to save me, and give me a new heart; I put my finger on the promise, and would not come away without it: and He gave me a new heart; and He is as willing to give you all a new heart. I have sinned with you; now I would like you to come to Christ with me. You would be far happier in Christ

than at your play. There are sweeter pleasures in Christ. Here are two awful verses to me

‘There is a dreadful hell,
And everlasting pains;
There sinners must with devils dwell
In darkness, fire, and chains.

Can such a wretch as I
Escape this cursed end?
And may I hope, whene’er I die,
I shall to heaven ascend?’”

Then, pointing to the fire, he said, “You could not keep your finger long there; but remember hell is a *lake of fire*. I would give you all a prayer to pray to-night. Go and tell Jesus that you are poor, lost, hell-deserving sinners, and tell Him to give you a new heart. Mind, He’s willing, and oh, be earnest!—ye’ll no get it unless ye be earnest.”

These were nearly his very words. Strange scene! a dying boy speaking to his fellows. They were impressed for a time, but it soon wore away. Several Sabbath evenings the same scene was renewed. The substance of all his warnings was, “Come to Christ and get a new heart.” He often told me afterwards that he had been inviting them to Christ, “but,” he added, “*they’ll no come.*”

One evening during the week, a number of the children came in. After speaking to them in a very solemn manner, he took from under his pillow a little book called *A Letter about Jesus Christ*. He turned up the part where it tells of six boys laying their finger on the promise (Ezek. xxxvi. 26), and pleading for its fulfilment. He was not able to read it to them, but he said he would give it to them; and each boy should keep it two days, and read it, and *do the same*. The boys were much impressed, and agreed to the proposal.

One day, during his illness, his sister found him crying very bitterly. She asked him what ailed him. He said, “Do you remember when I was at the day-school at the time of the Revival? One day when we were writing our copies, one of the boys had been *some anxious* about his soul; he wrote a line to me on a slip of paper: ‘Ezek. xxxvi. 26. *To James Laing. Pray over it.*’ I took the paper, read it, and tore it, and threw it on the floor, and laughed at the boy. Oh, Margaret, if I hadna laughed at him, maybe he would have sought Christ until he had *found* Him! Maybe I have been the means of ruining his soul to all eternity!” In how touching a manner this shows the tenderness of his care for the souls of others; and also how a rash word or deed, little thought of at the time, may plant a sting in the dying pillow.

One night I went with my little cousin to see James. I said, “I have brought my Jamie to see you.” He took him kindly by the hand, and said, “We’re twa Jamies thegither. May we both meet in heaven. Be earnest to get Christ. You’ll no’ get Christ unless you are earnest.” When we were gone, he said to his sister, “Although Jamie bides with the minister, unless the Spirit open his eyes, he canna get Christ.”

His knowledge of the peculiar doctrines of the gospel was very wonderful. It was not mere *head knowledge*—it came fresh and clear from the heart, like

spring water welling up from a great depth. He felt the *sovereignty* of God very deeply. Once I quoted to him the hymn—

“Chosen not for good in me.”

He said, “I am sure it was for naething in me. I am a hell-deserving sinner.” Often, when speaking of the great things God had done for their family, he would say, “Ah! Margaret, I wonder that Christ would look in here and take us.” Once he said, “I wonder how Jesus died for such a sinner as me. Why me, Lord, why me?”

The greatest want in the religion of children is generally *sense of sin*. Artless simplicity and confidence in what is told are in some respects natural to children; and this is the reason why we are so often deceived by promising appearances in childhood. The reality of grace in a child is best known by his sense of sin. Little James often wondered “how God sent His servant sic often to him, such a hell-deserving sinner.” This was a common expression of his. On one occasion he said, “I have a wicked, wicked heart, and a tempting devil. He’ll not let me alone, but this is all the hell that I’ll get. Jesus bore my hell already. Oh, Margaret, this wicked heart of mine would be hell enough for me though there was no other! But there are no wicked hearts in heaven.” Often he prayed, “Come, Holy Spirit, and make me holy—make me like Jesus.”

The way of salvation through *the righteousness of Christ* was always sweet to him. He had an uncommon grasp of it; Christ crucified was all his salvation and all his desire. One day his sister said to him, “You must meet death in Jesus, and go to the judgment-seat in Jesus, and spend eternity in Jesus. You will be as hell-deserving in yourself when you stand before the throne as now.” He smiled sweetly, and said, “Oh, Margaret, I see it must be all Jesus from beginning to end!”

Another time a little boy who was in concern for his soul came to see James, and told him how many chapters he had read, and how often he had prayed. James did not answer at the time, but a little after he said to his sister, “David was here, and told me how many chapters he had read, etc. I see he’s upon the working plan; but I must tell him that it’s no’ his reading, nor yet his praying, but Jesus alone that must save him.”

Another day he said, “The devil is letting me see that this word and another word in my prayer is sin, but I just tell him it is *all* sin. I bid him go to Jesus, there is no sin in Him; and I have taken Him to be my Saviour.”

He had a very clear discovery of the dead and helpless condition of the carnal mind, and of the *need of the Holy Spirit* to convert the soul. Telling me once of the boy under concern, and of what he had been saying to him, he added, “But it is nonsense to speak of these things without the Holy Spirit.” At another time I was speaking on John xiv. 1. He seemed to be thinking about something else, and suddenly said, “When we lose our first love, it’s no’ easy getting our second love; only the Spirit of God can give it.”

Often, when he saw the family preparing to go to church, he would pray that I might be filled with the Holy Spirit in speaking, so that some sinners might be caught. “I mind often sitting on the pulpit stairs careless; I would like if I had that place again. If I had but one sermon, I would not be so careless now.” He often wished to be carried to the church, but was never able to bear the exertion.

He was no stranger to *temptations* from the wicked one. I scarcely ever visited him but he spoke to me of these. Once he said, "The devil often tempts me to think upon good people, but I tell him it is Christ I want." Another time, "What do you think? The devil now tempts me to believe that I'll never be saved, because I have repented on my death-bed." Often, when tempted, he would cry, "If I perish, I'll perish at Christ's feet." A few days before he died, he said, "I am afraid I will not be saved yet, for the devil will catch my soul as it leaves my body. But Jesus says, 'Ye shall never perish.' If I am in the hand of Jesus, the devil cannot pluck me out there."

Once I found him kneeling on a pillow by the fire; he complained of great darkness, and doubted his interest in Christ. I told him that we must not close with Christ because we feel Him, but because God has said it, and that we must take God's word even in the dark. After that he always seemed to trust God in the dark, even at times when he had no inward evidence of being Christ's. At one of these times, a believer, who is often in great darkness, came in, and asked him, "When you are in darkness, Jamie, how do you do? Can you go to Jesus?" He answered, in his own pointed manner, "Annie, woman, *I have no ither gate to gang.*"

The last text I explained to him was 2 Tim. iv. 7: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." I was wonderfully helped in showing him that, from conversion to coronation, the life of a believer was one continued fight. He said, "Would you not think that the devil would let a poor young creature like me alone? but he's an awful tempter."

He had a mind that loved to think on the *deep things* of God. One day a believer called and prayed beside his bed, asking for him that he might be "filled with all the fulness of God." The same person came another day, and before praying inquired, "What shall I ask for you?" He said, "You mind what you sought for me the last time. You prayed that I might be filled with all the fulness of God: I canna get any more than that, but dinna seek any less to-day."

A dear Christian lady used to bring him flowers. She spoke to him of Christ being the "lily of the valley," and on one occasion brought him one. He asked her to pick it out from the rest, and give it into his hand. Holding the gentle flower in his pale wasted fingers, he looked at it, and said, "This might convince the world that there is a God, though there was nothing else. Ay, there is a God—there is a heaven—there is a hell— and there is a judgment-seat—whether they will believe it or no." He said this in a very solemn way, pausing between every member of the sentence.

He loved *singing praise* to God, though not able to join in it himself. He frequently made us sing beside his bed, and often bade them sing the 23rd Psalm. "I have no strength to sing here," he would say; "I have a heart, but not strength: when I get to heaven, I'll be able to sing there." Sometimes he would bid them sing these words, "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord." He often repeated that hymn, and he left it in charge that it should be sung by the scholars on the night of his death. The 65th Paraphrase was also precious to him, especially that part: "Hark how the adoring hosts above." He loved these verses, and often wished that he were among that praising company.

My sister once sent him a hymn: "The fulness of Jesus." He said he liked it all, but he liked the last verse best—

"I long to be with Jesus

Amid the heavenly throng,
To sing with saints his praises,
To learn the angels' song."

He delighted in *secret prayer*. In weakness and pain, yet he spent hours upon his knees, communing with an unseen God. When unable for the outward part of the exercise, he said, "Oh, Margaret, I prayed to Jesus as long as I was able; but now I'm not able, and He does not want it from me; but I'm just always giving Him my heart." Many a night he got no sleep. I asked him if he wearied during the silent watches. He said, "No; His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." God gave this dear boy a very *calm and cheerful spirit* in the midst of all his trials. Neither bodily pain nor the assaults of the devil could sour his temper, or ruffle his placid brow. At any time when his pain increased, he would say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." One time, in deep darkness, he cried out, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Again, when his soul was more in the light, he would say, "I long to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better;" "but then I'm willing to wait the Lord's time; good is the will of the Lord." Again he would say, "I long to be with Jesus. I long to see Jesus that died for me. If I am spared to go out again, I must just go leaning upon these words, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' They will be sure to mock me, but they mocked Jesus before." Once he said to me, "I wondered when I have heard you say that Christ was sweet; but now I feel Him to be *sweet, sweet*." One time I spoke of the fulness that is in Christ; he said afterwards, "I just think that I am lying with my mouth at Christ, drawing from Him."

On the last day of 1841 he said to his sister, "I will tell you what I would like for my New Year (gift). I would like a praying heart, and a heart to love Christ more." Next day a woman came in, and said, "Poor Jamie! you'll get no fun this New Year's Day." James said, "Poor body, she thinks like as I care for the New Year. I have far better than you have, though you had the whole world. This is the happiest New Year's Day that ever I had, for I have Christ." She was very deaf, and did not hear what he said; but he often pitied that woman, and prayed for her.

At another time his father said, "Poor Jamie!" He replied, "Ah, father, don't call me poor, I am rich; they that have Christ have all things."

A little after the New Year, he said, "Margaret, I am not to die yet, for I have mair to suffer; but I am willing, though it should be for years." On one occasion, when he was suffering much pain, he said, "Five minutes in glory will make up for all this suffering."

When Margaret had to go out with her father's dinner, she used to lock the door, leaving James alone within. On returning, she asked, "Were you wearying, Jamie?" His reply was, "Oh no, Jesus takes care of me when you are out." One of his country friends came in one day to see him, and said, "I am sure you have a weary time of it, Jamie." He said, "Oh no, I *never* weary; Christ keeps me from wearying."

After a very happy communion season in April, "I went to visit him, and he spoke in a most touching manner. "I was not sorry on Sabbath that all the people were sitting at the Lord's table, and me lying here; for I thought I would soon be at the table above with Christ, and then I would be far happier."

In a season of great darkness he said, "Margaret, give me my Bible" (meaning a little book of texts, called *Dewdrops*). When he had got it, he sought out the verse, "The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him." He said, "Margaret, I'll trust in Him, though I cannot see Him. I will lie down upon that verse." When his bed was made at night, he would take another verse to *lie down upon*, as he called it; so he was fed by the dew and the word.

A young woman who lived in the same lane was awakened to deep concern the same winter that James was brought to Christ. Before her concern she never came in to see James, though her mother often advised her to do so. But when she was brought to feel her sin and misery, she came in every Sabbath night, and was always tenderly kind to James. "How are you to-night, Jamie?" she would say; "you are well off when you can say, I have found Christ." Early in spring this young woman evidently found the true rest for her weary soul in Jesus. She became a candidate for the Lord's table, and was to have been admitted, but God called her away to sit at the table that can never be drawn. She died full of joy, with the praises of God upon her lips. Margaret had been present at this interesting death-bed, and when she returned home she told James. He answered with great composure, "I wish I had been away with her; but I must wait the Lord's time. Betsy is singing now, and I will soon be there too."

James used to take the bitterest medicines without any reluctance. He folded his hands, shut his eyes, and asked God to bless it to him. "Ah! Margaret, if God do not bless it to me, it will do me no good." Often she asked, "Is it not bitter?" He would say, "Yes, but Jesus had a bitterer cup to drink for me."

In the summer of 1841, another remarkable boy, named James Wallace, had died in the Lord. He was one whom God taught in a wonderful manner. He had a singular gift of prayer, and was made useful to many, both old and young. James Laing had known him well in former days. In 1839, a younger brother of James Laing, named Patrick, had died also, not without pleasing marks of having undergone a divine change. It is needful to know these things, to understand the following dream of our little pilgrim.

A short time after he believed, he said, "Margaret, I will tell you my dream." Margaret was afraid of some fancy leading him astray, and asked what it was. *James*—"I thought there was a ladder, the foot of it on earth and the top of it reached to heaven. I thought it was heaven I saw. There was a great multitude of people, but I knew none of them but Patrick and Jamsie Wallace. When I was standing on the first or second step of the ladder, Jamsie Wallace looked down and said, 'Ay, *here's another one coming stepping up.*'" He explained it by referring to Jacob's ladder, and that Jesus is the ladder. Margaret said, "Ay, and you are just on the first step."

He was very fond of the life of John Ross, and nearly had it by heart. He said he was in the same mind. Another little book he loved was, "A Dying Thief and a Dying Saviour." He left it to his father. The hymn at the end of it, "There is a fountain filled with blood," often fed his soul.

He could write a little, and, like John Ross, he used that talent in writing down precious sentences. One of his little papers is now before me: "Stand fast in the Lord. Be ye faithful unto death. Abide in Him, abide in Him. Pray without ceasing. This is the end."

In the latter part of his illness he was used as an instrument in awakening another boy, whose impressions I earnestly hope may never wear away. B. G. had been a very wild boy—so much so, that he was expelled from the Sabbath school. He found his way into James's cottage, and there saw exemplified the truths he would not listen to in school. From that day till James died, David regularly visited him, and learned from him with deepest interest the things that belonged to his peace. James often prayed with him alone. Sometimes both prayed at the same time for a new heart. Margaret was always made to withdraw at these times. He pleaded with this boy to seek Jesus when young, "for it's easier to find Jesus when we are young. Look at Annie (a grown-up person, who had been long under concern), she has been long in seeking Christ, and she is long in finding. Mind what I told you, for I will soon be in heaven." *Boy*—"Will you get to heaven?" *James*—"Oh yes all that believe in Christ get to heaven, and I believe that Jesus died for me. Now, David, if I see you on the left hand, you will mind that I often bade you come to Christ." *Boy*—"I'll have naebody to pray with me, and tell me about my soul, when you are dead." *James*—"I have bidden Margaret pray for you, and I have told the minister; and go you to our kirk, and he will tell you the way to come to Christ."

Three times a-day did this anxious inquirer seek the prayers and counsels of his youthful instructor, till James's strength gave way, and he could talk no more. The day before he died the boy came in; James could hardly speak, but he looked steadily at him, and said, "*Seek on, David.*"

The last visit I paid to this young Christian was on the Tuesday before he died, in company with Mr. Miller of Wallace-town, and Mr. Smith, one of our Jewish missionaries at Pesth, who was that same day to sail from his native land. After speaking a little we prayed, and I asked what I would pray for him. James said, "Dying grace." He shook hands with us all. When the missionary held his hand, he said, "God's people have much need to pray for you, and for them there." When we had gone out he said, "Maybe I'll never see the minister again."

On the Thursday he said, "Ah! Margaret, mind it's no easy to die. You know nothing about it. Even though you have Christ, it is dark." The same day he bade her give D. G. his Sunday trousers and new boots, that he might go to the church. He gave his father *The Dying Thief*; and said, "I am going to give Alick my Bible" (meaning *Dewdrops*). There was a piece of money under his pillow. He said it was to buy Bibles to them that never heard of Jesus.

His aunt came in on the Friday morning. He said, "Oh, aunt, don't put off seeking Christ to a death-bed, for if I had Christ to seek to-day, what would have become of me? but I have given my heart to Christ." Margaret asked him, "What will I do? I will miss your company in the house." James answered, "You maun just go the mair to Jesus. Do not be ill about me now, when I am dead, Margaret. If I thought that, I would be sorry; and, more than that, God would be angry at you, for I would be far happier. It is better to depart and be with Christ. Ask grace to keep you from it."

All that day he spoke very little. In the evening he grew much worse. His sister wished to sit up with him that night, but he would not allow her. She said, "These eyes will soon see Him whom your soul loves." James said, "Ay." After midnight, Margaret, seeing him worse, arose and woke her father. She tried to conceal her tears; but James saw them, and said, with a look of

solemn earnestness, “Oh, woman, I wonder to see you do the like of that!” He spoke little after this, and about one o’clock on the Saturday morning, 11th June 1842, fell asleep in Jesus.

From this affecting history, *all children*, and especially the dear children committed to my care, should learn an impressive lesson. What is said of Abel is true of this dear boy: “He, being dead, yet speaketh.” He warned many of you when he was on his dying bed; he prayed for you, and longed for your conversion; and now that he has gone to the world of praise, and holiness, and love, the history of his dying hours is a warning and an invitation to each of you. You see here that you are not too young to have the Holy Spirit striving with you. You are not too young to resist the Holy Ghost. You are not too young to be converted and brought to Christ. If you die without Christ, you will surely perish. The most of you are wicked, idle, profane, prayerless, ungodly children. Many of you are open Sabbath-breakers, liars, and swearers. If you die thus, you will have your part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. You will see this little boy, and others whom you know, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. Oh, repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out! You may die very soon. Oh that your latter end may be like his!

Parents also may learn from this to seek the salvation of their children. Alas! most parents in our day are like the cruel ostrich in the wilderness, “which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust; and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them; she is hardened against her young ones as though they were not hers” (Job xxxix. 14–16). How many of you hold up your children before God and the congregation, and solemnly vow to bring them up for God, to pray for them and in your family with them, and then return to your house with the guilt of perjury upon your soul! Alas, are not the family altars of Scotland for the most part broken down, and lying desolate? Is not family government in most of your houses an empty name? Do not family quarrels, and unholy companies, and profane jests, and sordid worldliness, prevail in most of your tabernacles? What can you expect but that your children shall grow up in your image, formalists, sacrament-breakers, loose livers, fierce, incontinent, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God? Oh that God would touch your hearts by such a tale as this, that you may repent and turn to the Lord, and yearn over your children in the bowels of Jesus Christ! Would you not love to see them fall asleep in Jesus? Would you not love to meet them at the right hand of the Judge? Seek their conversion *now*, if you would meet them in glory *hereafter*. How will you bear to hear their young voices in the judgment, saying, “This father never prayed for me; this mother never warned me to flee from the wrath to come”?

Dear brethren in the ministry, and labourers in the Sabbath school, suffer the word of exhortation from one who is “your brother and companion in tribulation.” May we not learn from this to be more earnest, both in prayers and labours, in seeking the salvation of little children? We have here one bright example more in addition to all those who have been recorded before, that God can convert and edify a child with the same ease with which He can change the heart of a grown man. I have with religious care refrained from embellishing, or in any way exaggerating, the simple record of God’s dealings

with this boy. We must not “speak wickedly for God, nor talk deceitfully for Him.” All who knew him can bear witness that I have spoken “the words of truth and soberness.” Indeed the half has not been told.

How evident is it, then, that God is willing and able to convert the young! How plain that if God give grace, they can understand and relish divine things as fully as those of mature age! A carnal mind of the first order will evermore despise and reject the way of salvation by Christ; but the mind of a child, quickened by the Holy Spirit, will evermore realise and delight in the rich and glorious mystery of the gospel. “I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.” Let us awake from an unbelieving dream. Let us no more be content to labour without fruit. Let us seek the *present* conversion to Christ of our little children. Jesus has reason to complain of us that He can do no mighty works in our Sabbath schools because of our unbelief.

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”