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LESSONS ON CONFIRMATION

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LESSONS ON CONFIRMATION;

OR,

HEADS OF INSTRUCTION TO CANDIDATES

FOR CONFIRMATION.

BY

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FORM OF PRAYER TO BE USED WITH THE
CANDIDATES BEFORE EACH LESSON.

Lord, have mercy upon us :

Christ, have mercy upon us :

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

O merciful and gracious God, we are not worthy to ask or to receive any blessing at Thy hands ; for we have sinned against Thee, again and again, in thought, word, and deed. But do not Thou withdraw Thy mercy from us, but according to Thy great goodness put away our sins, and listen to our prayer.

Without Thee we can do nothing ; be with us, we pray Thee, in all our undertakings, and especially in the work in which we are now engaged.

Pour Thy grace upon Thy servants now before Thee, and upon all in this parish who are in like

manner preparing to receive Thy blessing in Confirmation. Cleanse their hearts, that they may be fit temples of the Holy Ghost; fill them with holy awe and joyful hope in the prospect of so great a gift: and make them to approach it with such sincerity, humility, and faith, that they may not be sent empty away.

We thank Thee, O Lord, for Thy great goodness in making them Thy children in their baptism. In whatever way they have wandered from Thee, and shown themselves unworthy of Thy love, give them the grace of true repentance, and enable them now with greater earnestness to yield themselves up to Thee, in body, soul, and spirit, for the rest of their lives.

Make them diligent in the work of preparation, and attentive to the instruction that may be given them; and whatsoever in Thy holy Word they may profitably learn, may they in deed fulfil the same.

Hear us, O Lord, for Thy dear Son's sake. Amen.

After each Lesson will be found a short and appropriate Collect.

HEADS OF INSTRUCTION
TO
CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION.

LESSON I.

THE CONFIRMATION SERVICE.

“THE Order of Confirmation,” as administered in the Church of England, is a sacramental rite, by which those who have been already baptized are strengthened by the manifold gifts of the Holy Ghost, on occasion of their ratifying their baptismal vows; the outward form or sign of such Confirmation, or strengthening, being the laying on of the Bishop’s hands with prayer.

Though Confirmation has thus both a visible sign and an inward and spiritual grace, it is not strictly a Sacrament, because it was not ordained by Christ: rather it is an Ordinance of the Church, founded on the example of the Apostles.

The laying on of hands is a natural form of blessing, arising from the important place which the hand occupies among the members of the body. See Gen. xlvi. 14; Numb. xxvii. 18, 23; Deut. xxxiv. 9. So, when our Saviour healed the sick, He laid His hands

upon them (St. Mark vi. 5, viii. 25; St. Luke iv. 40). With the same act He blessed the little children (St. Mark x. 16), and His disciples at His Ascension (St. Luke xxiv. 50. Compare also St. Mark xvi. 18; Acts ix. 17, xxviii. 8).

For the example of the Apostles, on which the practice of Confirmation is founded, see Acts viii. 14—17, xix. 1—6. In the case of the Samaritans it is said that, though baptized, the Holy Ghost was not as yet fallen upon any of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. This cannot mean that the Samaritans had not received any gift of the Holy Ghost in their Baptism, for Baptism is the new birth of water and the Spirit; the reference must be to some further outpouring of the Holy Ghost, which it was customary for the newly-baptized to receive. And this is confirmed by St. Paul's question to the disciples whom he met at Ephesus, "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost, when ye became believers?" In both cases, by the laying on of Apostolic hands, the Holy Ghost was given: in both cases, miraculous gifts were the result. Hence some persons have supposed that the conferring of these special miraculous powers was the sole purpose of the apostolic act. But St. Luke's words, "They received the Holy Ghost," certainly of themselves imply, not only that they received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but that He came Himself to dwell in them. He had come to them before, in their Baptism: He came to them now, more fully, by the laying on of hands. (Comp. Acts ii. 4, iv. 31, where the words, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost," are twice applied to the Apostles.) The presence of the

Spirit was attested by outward gifts, as when the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and his friends (Acts x. 44—46), but the presence itself was distinct from those gifts.

In Hebrews vi. 1, 2, “laying on of hands” is classed with repentance, faith, the doctrine of baptisms (or washings), resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, as the foundation of the teaching of Christ: from which we may gather that there was a recognized Christian Ordinance of laying on of hands, just as there was a Christian Baptism, to be distinguished from Jewish washings. And there is no other such Ordinance than that administered, as we have seen, by the Apostles for the gift of the Holy Ghost on the baptized.

That this Ordinance was intended to endure, seems to follow from its being here spoken of as one of the elementary principles of Christianity. In point of fact it has endured; for we find that at the close of the second century (there appears to be no earlier reference) the imposition of hands, with the addition of anointing, was a part of the administration of Baptism. Tertullian says that “the baptized, when they come out of the bath, are anointed with the holy oil, and then the hand is laid upon them with the invocation of the Holy Ghost.” St. Cyprian speaks of imposition of hands by the Bishop, with prayer for the Holy Ghost, as the custom of the Church in his day: “The faithful in Samaria (he says) had already obtained Baptism; only that which was wanting Peter and John supplied, by prayer and imposition of hands, to the end the Holy Ghost might be poured upon them. Which also is done amongst ourselves, when they

which be already baptized are brought to the Prelates of the Church to obtain by our prayer and imposition of hands the Holy Ghost." And Hooker sums up the testimony of the primitive Church by saying: "The Fathers everywhere impute unto it [Confirmation] that gift or grace of the Holy Ghost, not which maketh us first Christian men, but when we are made such, assisteth us in all virtue, armeth us against temptation and sin" (B. v. ch. lxvi. § 4).

It cannot be doubted that this Ordinance of the Christian Church was the representative of the apostolical laying on of hands, although unattended by miraculous powers. In the very early days of the Church, the Spirit manifested Himself by outward gifts (1 Cor. xii. 10) as well as by inward graces (Gal. v. 22, 23). When the outward gifts were withdrawn, the Church retained the practice of laying on of hands on the baptized, because she believed that the inward operation of the Spirit, which those gifts attested, remained, and was, in fact, permanently attached to the rite.

In early times, then, Confirmation, or the laying on of hands, followed immediately upon Baptism, whether in the case of infants or adults, and was, in fact, the supplement of Baptism. In order that it might continue so, the Eastern Church (where anointing with an unguent or chrism had become exclusively the outward sign of the Ordinance) allowed it to be administered by a Priest, providing only that the chrism should be consecrated by a Bishop. In the West the Bishop has always been the minister of Confirmation. The ancient custom seems to have been for the Bishop to lift his hands over all the candidates at once, while

he invoked upon them the manifold gifts of the Holy Ghost. In later times, his finger being anointed with the chrism, he signed each of them with the sign of the cross on the forehead. By degrees, for convenience sake, a Bishop not being always at hand, the rite came to be administered to young children as well as to infants; and so the minds of men became accustomed to the severance of Confirmation from Baptism, until now the English Church has appointed that it should be administered, not to mere children, but to those that are come to years of discretion.

In the First Prayer Book after the Reformation (A.D. 1549) it was ordered that the Bishop should cross each child (without, however, the use of oil) on the forehead, and, laying his hand upon his head, should say, "N, I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and lay my hand upon thee, in the name of the Father," &c. In the Second Prayer Book (A.D. 1552) this was omitted, and the present form of blessing adopted, with the words, "Defend, O Lord, this Thy child," &c. For more than a hundred years after the Reformation the English Confirmation Office began, like the older ones, with the versicle, "Our help is in the Name of the Lord;" but in 1661 the Preface at the beginning of the Service, and the question put by the Bishop to the candidates, demanding personal acknowledgment of the baptismal vow, were added.

Thus the practice of the Church of England is to delay Confirmation to riper years, until persons can really in some sort think and choose for themselves, from the belief that it tends more to edification. Infants not being as yet able to fight in the army of God, it is thought well that they should be in childhood

seasoned and trained for His service, and then, when manhood begins to dawn, sent forth to the conflict with a special blessing (Hooker, B. v. ch. lxvi. § 7).

It will be seen that in Confirmation, as administered in the English Church, there are two distinct parts: one, which is the chief, and which may be called God's part, wherein He confirms or strengthens us by the laying on of the Bishop's hand; the other, which is our part, wherein we confirm our baptismal promises. The Office begins with the second.

The promise or vow holds, therefore, a most important and prominent part in Confirmation. It is made in answer to the solemn question of the Bishop, and is contained in the little words, "I do;" that is, "I *do* renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh: I *do* believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith: I *do* promise and intend, to the utmost of my power, to keep God's holy will and commandments." No promise could possibly be greater, eschewing all evil, embracing all good, and reaching to the end of life. The promise is of the whole heart, and it is promised for always. There are but two ways in which we can walk (St. Matt. vii. 13, 14), and we deliberately choose the narrow way, the way everlasting.

Some refuse Confirmation, because they will not pledge themselves to walk in God's way, and do not desire to live a religious life; but they should bear in mind that they are bound to such life, whether they promise it or not. For just as every Englishman (it has been well said) is bound by the laws of England, though he may never have promised in words to keep them, so every Christian is bound by the laws of Christ, and it will be no excuse for disobedience to

say hereafter that he never promised to obey. But every consideration of love and duty and happiness calls us to make the promise, and to make it *cheerfully*, in true thankfulness to God for all His goodness, and as counting it the highest honour to be enrolled among His soldiers: it must be made also *honestly*, remembering that God's eye is upon us, reading our hearts; we give our word to God, and our word will abide: and it must be made *humbly*, knowing our weakness; we must not take it for granted, that we shall keep it, but rather feel sure that we shall not, unless God help us.

It is the imparting of this help, which is God's part, so as to call it, in Confirmation. He offers us, through His servant the Bishop, the gift of the Holy Ghost, to enable us to keep our promise. The Bishop first prays for us, and then blesses us.

The prayer, "Almighty and everlasting God," &c., is a very ancient one, being known to have been used in the Church of England for 1200 years; and it is probably much older. The special purport of the prayer is, that God will strengthen, that is, confirm us with the Holy Ghost, and increase in us His manifold gifts of grace. See Isaiah xi. 2. (It is to be observed that the seven gifts enumerated in the prayer correspond exactly with those found in the Septuagint version of this passage; but in the Hebrew only six are mentioned, "true godliness" being omitted.) The seven gifts are *wisdom* (σοφία), whereby we choose God as our chief good, and direct all our lives to Him as our true end; *understanding* (σύνεσις), whereby we attain a more perfect comprehension of the truths which God has revealed; *counsel* (βουλή), whereby we

deliberately choose and purpose to do the right thing in all cases; *ghostly strength* (ἰσχὺς), whereby we are enabled to resist temptation; *knowledge* (γνῶσις), whereby we discern in all things the will of God; *true godliness* (εὐσέβεια), whereby we devote ourselves to a thoroughly religious life, a life of conscious faith and love; and *holy fear* (φόβος), whereby we feel a reverential awe of God, and walk humbly with Him.

Then follows the actual confirmation, God's blessing conveyed by the laying on of the Bishop's hand. The Bishop is the successor of the Apostles, to whom Christ said: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." It is therefore in truth Christ's hand that is laid on the candidates for Confirmation. The Bishop is Christ's minister and representative. The gift of the Holy Spirit, for which he prays, God will surely bestow, if His good purpose be not hindered by sin and carelessness. Let the young Christian fix his thoughts on the blessed Comforter, now about to come down upon him, as upon our Saviour at His baptism. Let him prepare to receive Him—by prayer, by self-examination and confession, by stedfastly resolving to live a holy life. A new stage of life is beginning; let him review his childhood, and heartily lament its faults and shortcomings. The more serious and thorough the preparation, the more abundant will be the blessing.

COLLECT.

O Almighty and ever-living God, who hast not only vouchsafed to us the grace of Thy Holy Spirit in our Baptism, but art now inviting us to receive a further

outpouring of the same Spirit in Confirmation ; glory be to Thee for Thy unspeakable gift ! May we earnestly desire and long for the coming of the Comforter, and may no sin or carelessness of ours mar Thy gracious purpose.

With shame and sorrow we confess to Thee our utter unworthiness. Oh remember not the sins and offences of our youth, but according to Thy mercy think Thou upon us, O Lord, for Thy goodness.

Give us grace to turn to Thee now with full purpose of heart, and work in us such humility, faith, and love, that Thy Holy Spirit may indeed come to us, and take possession of our hearts, and sanctify us wholly.

Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

Passages of Scripture to be studied by the Candidate for the next Lesson.

Genesis xxxix.

Hebrews xi. 24—27.

1 Samuel i., iii., xvii. 34—37.

1 Kings iii. 5—15.

2 Kings xxii., xxiii.

Daniel i., vi.

LESSON II.

SELF-DEDICATION. SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES.

CONFIRMATION, in one aspect, is a solemn call from God to young persons, at the opening of life, to dedicate that life to God. They are able now to choose for themselves, and they are required to make the choice. They were made Christians at their Baptism by the mercy of God, and the thoughtful care of others; now, in Confirmation, they proclaim themselves Christians by choice. God has set them in the right way; now, with thankful joy, they pledge themselves to walk in it.

It is a great crisis, a turning-point in their lives—very important, and, it may be, very blessed: it is like coming of age, entering on the full blessedness of their Christian inheritance.

Scripture supplies various examples, which in different ways may encourage the young Christian to make the deliberate choice of God's service, which he is now invited to make, and may help him to be steadfast in that choice.

JOSEPH. Genesis xxxix.

A friendless lad, among strangers and heathen, the lowest slave in a large household, he treasured in his heart the lessons of his childhood, and held him fast by God. He had been taught, and he had begun, to walk in God's way; and no difficulty, trial, or persecution would make him swerve from it. He was faithful to his master, and therefore trusted by him, and prospered by God. He was

not ashamed to confess God, for Potiphar perceived that it was the Lord, whom Joseph served, who prospered him. He remembered that God's eye was upon him everywhere, in Egypt as in Canaan, in secret as in the light, and so he resisted temptation—"How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" He was at all times with God, and so God was with him, and blessed him.

What a lesson to young persons in service!

MOSES. Hebrews xi. 24—27; Acts vii. 20—29.

Brought up in Pharaoh's court, skilled in Egyptian learning, mighty in word and deed (which probably refers to the command of armies entrusted to him by Pharaoh), and with the prospect, it is thought, of succeeding Pharaoh on the throne, he nevertheless chose the service of God rather than worldly greatness: he held the balance between affliction and reproach with the people of God on the one side, and sinful indulgence and the vast wealth of Egypt on the other, and he preferred to be a degraded Hebrew rather than Pharaoh's adopted son.

As life opens, a somewhat similar choice is presented to us. On the one hand, Christ calls us to take up our cross, to bear His reproach, to endure hardness (St. Matt. xvi. 24; Heb. xiii. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 3); on the other hand, the world attracts. To which will we yield ourselves? To which will we give our hearts? Will we use this world as not abusing it, *i.e.*, not using it to the full? Will we look to things temporal or to things eternal, to earthly or heavenly treasure? (1 Cor. vii. 29—31; 2 Cor. iv. 18; St. Matt. vi. 19—21.)

Moses endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

To the youthful Christian, at his Confirmation, Christ says: "Follow Me: look above and beyond this present world, and tread in My steps."

SAMUEL. 1 Samuel i., iii.

Dedicated to God by his mother before his birth, he did not refuse an engagement in which he had no conscious share, but accepted it with thorough and lifelong devotion. He was a Nazarite all his life, and wore to his death the same peculiar robe which, in a size proper to his age, his mother brought him at her yearly visit to Shiloh (1 Sam. ii. 19, xv. 27, xxviii. 14, the same word being used in each case). Take notice especially of his early obedience and truthfulness. His case answers closely to that of persons taken into covenant with God in their infancy; they find God's vows upon them, and their wisdom and happiness is to acknowledge the obligation, as they grow up, thankfully and cheerfully, and to say from their earliest years, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth."

DAVID. 1 Sam. xvii. 34—37, xvi. 11, 12.

What a picture of calm communion with God (see Psalms viii., xix., xxiii.), combined with courageous trust, does David's early shepherd life on the wild hills around Bethlehem present! How real, how vivid to him was the thought of God's protection! Neither the paw of the lion, nor the strength of the giant, had any terror for him. The faith and love and conscious delight in God of the man after God's own heart should make a deep impression on every young Christian. "Thou, O Lord God, art the thing that I long for: Thou art my hope, even from my youth." (Psalm lxxi. 4.)

SOLOMON. 1 Kings iii. 5—15.

Succeeding at nineteen or twenty years of age to the enlarged dominions and wealth of his father, Solomon went down to Gibeon, where the Tabernacle was, to offer sacrifice. In the vision of the night God asked him what He should give him. Not dazzled or overwhelmed by the prospect of earthly greatness, his first thought was of his own insufficiency, as compared with the vastness of the work before him. He asked, not for riches, nor for lengthened enjoyment of the good things at his disposal, nor for the victory over his enemies, but for wisdom. He was "but a little child," and desired an understanding heart, that he might judge God's people.

How few, in his place, would have thought of their littleness, rather than their greatness—of the fulfilment of duty rather than the enjoyment of their advantages! A lesson for young persons, that in the great and unknown sea on which they are entering their chief desire should be, not for enjoyment, but for guidance.

JOSIAH. 2 Kings xxii., xxiii.; or 2 Chron. xxxiv., xxxv.

At the early age of sixteen, Josiah began to serve the Lord, and to set himself, amid overwhelming difficulties, to root out all idolatry and restore the true worship of Jehovah; and when, ten years afterwards, a copy of the Law was found and read to him, he was so moved by God's denunciations against sin, that he and his people bound themselves by a solemn covenant to keep the Law, and so turn aside, if possible, the threatened judgments.

None are too young to devote themselves to God's service, and to bear, at least in silence, witness for Christ—to take God's Word for their guide, and to be afraid of swerving from it.

DANIEL. Daniel i., vi.

Daniel, like Joseph, was called to be a representative of the true God in a heathen land: he therefore stands as an example to those who find themselves alone and unprotected among ungodly people. When a mere boy, in the service of the King of Babylon, he refused the meat provided for him, because, as connected with idol sacrifices, it was forbidden by the Law: and afterwards, through a long life, spent in positions of the highest authority in heathen courts, he remained true to the worship of his God and the love of his country, until, in extreme old age, the jealousy of cruel enemies could find no ground for accusation against him except faithfulness to his God; and he continued to pray, openly, three times a day, even when the penalty was the den of lions.

The young Christian, preparing to pledge himself to God in Confirmation, may well take pattern by the conscientiousness of Joseph, the self-denial of Moses, the devotion of Samuel, the loving and courageous trust of David, the humility of Solomon, the tenderness of heart of Josiah, the strictness and loyalty of Daniel.

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, who hast given us the power of choosing good and refusing evil, in order that we

may of our own free-will choose Thee, stir up our will to offer ourselves entirely to Thee.

We are Thine, O Lord, by creation; Thine by redemption; Thine by the gift of the Holy Spirit: we would fain be Thine also by the choice of our own hearts. Thou art ever the same merciful and gracious God to us, watching over us, and drawing us with cords of love: Oh! may we never go back from Thee, nor wilfully choose anything that is contrary to Thy will!

We cannot of ourselves choose Thee, or do Thy will: do Thou help us by Thy grace, and enable us so to love Thee, cleave to Thee, delight in Thee, follow Thee, amid the temptations and dangers of the world, that in the last day Thou mayest acknowledge us as Thine, and admit us into Thy joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

St. John iii. 1—8.

St. John xv. 1—8.

1 Corinthians xii. 12—27.

Galatians iv. 4—7.

1 St. John iii. 1—3.

Romans viii. 15—17.

LESSON III.

THE BLESSINGS OF BAPTISM.

As Confirmation is the supplement, that is, the completion, of Baptism, it is necessary to explain what Baptism is, and what it does for us.

Ever since the fall of Adam, man's nature has been corrupt and sinful, and every inheritor of that nature is by birth unholy, not only liable to sin, but inclined to sin, and therefore the object of that wrath, which is God's mind against sin. See Romans v. 12—19, where St. Paul says that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." All men are regarded as having sinned in the person of Adam, and so all came under condemnation. So our Saviour says (St. John iii. 6), "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." By *flesh* is meant not the body merely, but the whole man, as born into the world in the course of nature: man inherits by birth a certain fleshy, unspiritual nature—"the old man," it is sometimes called—corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, which cannot of itself please God, nor inherit His kingdom (Ephes. ii. 3, iv. 22; Romans vii. 18, viii. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 50).

But God in His free grace and mercy has provided a remedy for the evils of our natural birth. He has granted us a second birth into a new life. That new life is union with Christ: and it may be observed that Scripture never draws attention to the evils of our

natural condition except in connection with the remedy provided for them in Christ. Being born again into Christ, we are set free from the consequences of our natural connection with Adam, and are made partakers of the pardon, grace, and life which come from Christ; we are taken away from the first Adam and grafted into the second.

Baptism is the instrument of this new birth—the appointed means of admission into communion with Christ. See St. John iii. 3—8; Titus iii. 5; where St. Paul says that God saved us by the washing (*i.e.*, the laver, or bath, the word *λουτρον* always meaning the vessel or pool in which the washing is made; here, doubtless, the baptismal font) of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. See also Gal. iii. 27; Rom. vi. 3; 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Such is plainly the doctrine of the Church, as contained in the Baptismal Office: see especially the Preface, “Forasmuch, as all men are conceived and born in sin,” &c.; and the address after the Baptism, “Seeing now that this child is regenerate,” &c.: indeed throughout the Prayer Book all baptized persons are treated as having communion with Christ, and as partakers of all the benefits of His life and death. Nowhere, however, are the characteristic blessings of Baptism more clearly set forth than in the Catechism, where every child is taught to say, that in his Baptism he was made “a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.”

MEMBER OF CHRIST.

The word *member* means a part, or limb: and the meaning plainly is, that every baptized person is

united to Christ, as the members of the body are to the head, or the branches to a tree. So Scripture teaches, where it compares Christ and His members to—

i. The Head of the body and the various limbs (Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27; Eph. i. 22, 23, iv. 15, 16). Hence the members of our bodies are said to be “the members of Christ” (1 Cor. vi. 15).

ii. The Vine and its branches (St. John xv. 1—8).

iii. The Corner-stone of a building and the other stones composing the building (Eph. ii. 20—22; 1 Peter ii. 5—8).

iv. The Husband and the bride (Eph. v. 29, 30; the meaning of which is, that as Eve derived her natural being from Adam, so our spiritual being comes wholly and actually from Christ; we are parts and members of His glorified humanity. Adam says of Eve, that she was “bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh;” St. Paul does not say that our “bone” and “flesh” come from Christ; it is our spiritual life that springs from His Incarnation: “we are members of *His* body, and of *His* flesh, and of *His* bones”).

As there may be diseased as well as sound limbs, and useless as well as fruitful branches, so may there be unworthy members of Christ. The test of a good Christian, as of a good branch, is bringing forth fruit, the fruit of the Spirit. Many of those who have been united to Christ by Baptism do not live the life of Christ nor are guided by His Spirit. In the parable of the Vine our Lord tells us how He deals respectively with His faithful and unfaithful members. As the fruitful branches are pruned, so fruit-bearing

Christians are chastened and corrected, that they may bring forth more fruit, affliction being like the pruner's knife (Heb. xii. 5—11). Unfruitful Christians, like barren branches, will in the end be cut off and cast into the fire. Christ is long-suffering, and does not wholly cut them off at once ; but unless those who have been taken into Christ *abide* in Him by a holy life, they will in time be cut off. Hence we may perceive the necessity of conversion, either in the sense of a continual turning of heart to God from the first, or of a conscious return to Him after we have wandered. Regeneration is the change from a state of nature to a state of grace ; but if one who has been brought into this state of grace and salvation falls away from God, he cannot indeed be born again, but he must be brought back to Him—his heart and will must be changed ; and this change is rightly called conversion.

CHILD OF GOD.

This second privilege flows necessarily from the first. Being in Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Christians become themselves sons of God.

Every man, indeed, is by creation a child of God ; as the Prophet says : " Have we not all one Father ? Hath not one God created us ? " (Malachi ii. 10.) See Acts xvii. 29 ; St. Luke iii. 38. But when God chose the Jews to be His people, He entered into such close relationship with them as to call them His children (Exod. iv. 22, 23 ; Deut. xiv. 1, xxxii. 5, 6 ; Isaiah i. 2, lxiii. 16 ; Jer. xxxi. 20). And sonship is still more truly the privilege of Christians (St. John i. 12, 13 ; Gal. iv. 4—7, iii. 26, 27 ; 1 John iii. 1, 2). They are God's children by adoption and grace ; they

are taken into God's family; He is their Father and has a Father's mind towards them, loving them with something of that unspeakable love with which He loves His only-begotten Son. There may be rebellious children, however, as well as faithful; it is they only who are led by the Spirit of God who are worthy of the name (Rom. viii. 14).

Our duty therefore, as children of God, is—

i. To pray to Him as our Father (St. Matt. vi. 6; St. Luke xi. 9—13).

ii. To trust in Him as our Father (St. Matt. vi. 31—33).

iii. To strive to be like Him (St. Luke vi. 35, 36).

iv. To return to Him at once, when we have strayed (St. Luke xv. 20, 21; Jer. xxxi. 18—20).

INHERITOR OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

This third privilege, again, flows from the second. If we are children, then are we heirs, inheritors of God's kingdom—"heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 15—17).

As "the kingdom of heaven" is continually used in Scripture to represent Christ's Church militant on earth, "an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven" may mean simply a member of that Church—a partaker of its present gifts and blessings. But it is perhaps more likely that the reference here is to eternal happiness in heaven; as when St. Paul bids us "give thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. i. 12). Christians are heirs of heaven; a place and a throne are prepared for them in heaven; they are begotten again unto a lively hope of "an inheritance incorruptible," &c. (1 Peter i. 3, 4).

They may forfeit that inheritance (Heb. iv. 1); their names once written in the book of life may be blotted out (Rev. iii. 5). Therefore it behoves them to be very watchful, and to endeavour to purify themselves after Christ's pattern (1 John iii. 3; Heb. xii. 14).

Suppose a king were to propose to his only son to adopt a number of his poor subjects, who should share his honours and advantages, and the son were to acquiesce, what an act of condescending grace would it be thought, both on the part of the king and his son! And suppose the king, having made choice of the children, were to delay the carrying out of his purpose for a certain time—so many weeks or months—in order to try whether they were willing to submit themselves to his will or no; would not the children, meanwhile, be very careful as to their conduct, and very patient in their hardships? Now, God has adopted us into His Family, made us joint-heirs with Christ, given us a place in heaven; all the glory and bliss of heaven are ours for ever, pledged and sealed to us in our Baptism. Only it depends on our faithfulness during our time of trial, which is very short in comparison with eternity. When we have been a million of years in heaven, how utterly insignificant will the seventy years of our life on earth appear!

This is God's design for us, that having loved and obeyed Him as dutiful children on earth, we should be transplanted in His own time to the many mansions of our Father's house in heaven: and all by virtue of our union with Christ, His only-begotten Son.

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, who of Thy great goodness hast chosen us, for no desire or desert of ours, to be grafted into Christ and made Thy children by adoption and inheritors of Thine everlasting kingdom, open the eyes of our understanding to perceive the riches of the glory of our inheritance in Christ.

And, inasmuch as nothing but our own sin can separate us from Thy love, or rob us of our blessedness, grant that, having this glorious hope, we may purify ourselves even as Christ is pure, so that hereafter we may be permitted to see Him as He is, and to be made like unto Him, in His eternal and glorious kingdom; where with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Job i. 6—12, ii. 1—8.

1 Peter v. 8, 9.

1 John iii. 8—10.

Ephesians vi. 10—18.

1 John ii. 15—17.

John xvii. 15, 16.

Colossians iii. 1, 2.

Galatians v. 16—21.

Ephesians iv. 22—24.

Romans vi. 12, 13.

LESSON IV.

A. THE VOW OF RENUNCIATION.

THE blessings of our Baptism are God's free gift: He bestows on us, of His grace, those things which by nature we cannot have. All that He requires of us is, that we answer to His grace, and walk worthy of our calling, or, as His requirements are summed up in the Catechism, that we renounce what He hates, believe what He teaches, and fulfil what He commands. These three things, promised in our name at our Baptism, we take upon ourselves in Confirmation.

A. THE VOW OF RENUNCIATION.

It might have been said simply that we renounce all sin, but in order to put us completely on our guard as to what sin is, and how it may assail us, the promise is more explicit, and we engage to renounce the three great enemies—the devil, the world, and the flesh, against which we were pledged to fight, when we were signed with the cross in our Baptism.

i. *The devil and all his works.*

In early times there was a special ceremony, so to call it, of renouncing the devil. The candidate for Baptism turned to the west, which, as opposed to the east, the region of light, represented symbolically the region of darkness, and solemnly renounced the devil and all his works.

What does Scripture teach us about the devil?

First of all, that he is a real person, as truly existing, though out of sight, as any of those whom we see around us in the world. This is plain from the various qualities and actions ascribed to him. Then, that he was an angel, or rather archangel in heaven, where he was, in some way, in a state of probation, for he and his associates kept not their first estate, but failing in their allegiance were banished from the face of God, and condemned to the blackness of darkness for ever (2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6). The cause of their fall is nowhere expressly stated, but it is generally supposed to have been pride: at least St. Paul (1 Tim. iii. 6) speaks of pride as the condemnation of the devil. His power and influence are more distinctly revealed. It was he who tempted Eve to her ruin (2 Cor. xi. 3); who suggested evil to Judas (St. Luke xxii. 3; St. John xiii. 2), and Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 3); who tried to draw away St. Peter (St. Luke xxii. 31). It is he who hinders the good seed of God's Word from lodging in men's hearts (St. Matt. xiii. 19); who introduced evil into God's world, like the adversary who sowed tares among the wheat (St. Matt. xiii. 39); who takes possession of the souls and bodies of men, as appears repeatedly in the Gospel history, and is able even to inflict on them bodily harm (Job ii. 7; St. Luke xiii. 16). He is called "Satan," that is, our adversary, because he is always on the look-out for ways of doing us injury (1 Peter v. 8; Job i. 7, ii. 2). He is "the devil," that is, the slanderer, insinuating into men's minds, as to Eve, hard thoughts of God (Gen. iii. 1), and on the other hand accusing men to God (Zech.

iii. 1, 2; Rev. xii. 10). He is "the tempter" (St. Matt. iv. 1; 1 Thess. iii. 5), presenting seducing objects to men's appetites and passions, in order to lead them into sin. He is "the prince of this world" (St. John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11), "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2, vi. 12), "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4). These last titles seem to show that there was at least partial truth in Satan's claim to our Lord of dominion over the world (St. Luke iv. 6). He is represented as exercising his power with great deceit and cunning (Eph. vi. 11; 2 Cor. ii. 11; 1 Tim. iii. 7; 2 Tim. ii. 26). But at the same time, only by God's permission, as is seen clearly in the case of Job. And man is able, with God's grace, to overcome him (James iv. 7; Eph. iv. 27), for Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8), and He is able and willing to bruise Satan under our feet (Rom. xvi. 20). But there is need on our part of continual watchfulness, and prayer; there must be a wrestling, a limb-to-limb conflict, and a careful use of the whole armour of God, as our only defence (Eph. vi. 10—17).

How terrible is the thought that there is such a being, a spiritual being of the highest order, with intelligence as great as his malice, and with long experience of man's weakness, ever hovering about us, and endeavouring to tempt us to our destruction. It is this being whom we promise to renounce, and whom we may renounce if we will, for he cannot force us to give place to him: he has no direct power over our wills, and, unless the will consent to the temptation, there is no sin.

We promise to renounce also “the *works* of the devil;” which, of course, include all sin, the pomps and vanity of the world, and the sinful lusts of the flesh. Here, however, as the Catechism distinguishes between them, we must understand such works of the devil as are not included under the heads of the world and the flesh; these would seem to be especially what are called spiritual sins—sins of the heart and mind rather than the body.

Pride, e.g., is the work of the devil,—all high thoughts of ourselves, self-trust, presumption, vanity (1 Tim. iii. 6). It was by this that Satan himself fell, and by it he prevailed over Eve (Gen. iii. 5).

Envy is another work of the devil—all ill-will against others, because they are better or more highly favoured, like that cruel jealousy of man’s innocence and happiness which made Satan seek his ruin (1 John iii. 12; St. John viii. 44; Wisdom ii. 24).

Falsehood. (St. John viii. 44.)—Lying especially assimilates us to the devil, and will bring us to his abode (Rev. xxi. 8, xxii. 15).

Tempting others to sin.—This is the special occupation of the devil, than which nothing is more offensive to God (St. Matt. xviii. 6).

ii. *The pomps and vanity of this wicked world*.

Or, as it is in the Baptismal Office, “The vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same.” The word *pomp*, which means literally a procession, refers to the outside show and display of the world; *vanity*, to its emptiness and transitory character.

1. The “world” sometimes means simply the

present visible system of things, the heavens and the earth and all the things that are therein—things seen as opposed to things unseen and eternal. In this sense of course it is not wicked; but our duty is to look above and beyond it (2 Cor. iv. 18); to walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. v. 7); to set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. iii. 1).

2. Sometimes the “world” means the ungodly, as opposed to the spiritual kingdom of Christ. The world is distinguished from the Church in such passages as St. John xv. 18, 19, xvii. 14; 1 John iii. 1, 13. In this sense it is spoken of as sinful, lying in wickedness, plunged and steeped in a flood of sin (1 John v. 19). Hence our duty is, not to be conformed to this world—not to take our character from the men of this world (Rom. xii. 2)—not to seek as objects of desire, and for their own sake, what the children of this world seek after (St. Luke xii. 30), *e.g.*, money (St. Mark x. 23, 24; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10; Heb. xi. 26), or gay clothing (Isaiah iii. 16—24; 1 Tim. ii. 9; 1 Peter iii. 3), or luxury (St. Luke xvi. 19; 1 Tim. v. 6; 2 Tim. iii. 4), or worldly honour (St. John v. 44, xii. 43), or earthly cares (St. Luke viii. 14, x. 41, 42; Phil. iii. 19). These things—the honours, gifts, and gains of the world—have a pomp and glitter which are very attractive; but we are bidden not to love them (1 John ii. 15), to use them without using them to the full (1 Cor. vii. 31); and that, both because they draw off the heart from God, who is our chief good, and also because they are vain and transitory (1 John ii. 17; 1 Cor. vii. 31).

When we renounce the world, therefore, we not only confess that there is a danger of our allowing earthly things to draw our hearts from God, but we promise to be on our guard against such danger, and to give up, at whatever cost, whatever has this effect. We must live in the world and work in the world, but we must not follow the world, that is, those who are not under the guidance of Christ and His laws ; nor may we hanker after the good things, or wonder at the greatness, of the world. Our calling, as Christians, is to pass through the world, as travellers to our home ; to be crucified to the world, and the world to us (Gal. vi. 14). Our Saviour's prayer for His disciples was, not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil—that they should be *in* the world, but not *of* the world, even as He was not of the world (St. John xvii. 14, 15). "Our safety is not so much *where* we are as *what* we are."

iii. *All the sinful lusts of the flesh.*

By "the flesh" in the New Testament is meant, for the most part, our old corrupt nature, as it is unaided by the Spirit. Some of the desires of the flesh, such as the desire for food or rest, are not sinful in themselves, but become so when they are allowed to gain the mastery over us. Other desires are clearly sinful, when the flesh lusteth against the Spirit (Gal. v. 17). These two principles, the old man and the new, are ever struggling within us ; and our calling is, to walk in the Spirit, so as not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh (Gal. vi. 8 ; Col. iii. 5—10 ; Eph. iv. 22—24 ; Rom. viii. 5—13).

St. Paul gives a catalogue of the *works* of the

flesh, the results of compliance with its sinful lusts (Gal. v. 19—21). All cravings of the flesh, which would lead to such sinful acts, we are bound to resist—all impurity, slothfulness, all angry passions, all strife and enmity, all intemperance and greediness (Rom. xiii. 13, 14; Eph. v. 3—14, 18).

These are our three great enemies—the devil with his secret craft and malice, the world with its various attractions, the flesh with its overpowering might. The good seed is but too likely to be trodden down and carried off by fowls of the air, or to be withered by the sun, or choked by the thorns. We are in danger on every side, from within and from without. We must first feel our danger, and then watch and pray.

There is need of faith to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one, and to overcome the world; and there is need of continual self-denial, to resist the solicitations of the flesh (Eph. vi. 16; 1 John v. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 25—27).

COLLECT.

O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of many and great dangers, but hast promised that there shall no temptation take us but such as we are able by Thy grace to bear, help us, we pray Thee, in all our conflicts with the enemies of our salvation.

Thy vows are upon us, O Lord, and we have sworn to fight manfully under our Saviour's banner. May we prove ourselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ!

Keep us on our guard against our great enemy the devil, who is ever lying in wait to deceive and ruin

us : enable us to resist him boldly, that he may flee from us.

Deliver us from the enticements of evil companions, and from the attractions of the world. May our hearts be so fixed on Thee and on the things above that we may seek for nothing and care for nothing on earth, except for Thy sake, and in accordance with Thy will.

Save us from the evil desires of our own hearts ; root out all unruly passions ; restrain our fleshly appetites ; and give us grace to keep under our bodies and bring them into subjection, that in the end we may be more than conquerors, through Him that loved us, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ! Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Hebrews xi. 1—3.

Isaiah xl. 12—26.

Genesis i., ii., iii.

LESSON V.

B. THE VOW OF FAITH.

THE CREATION AND FALL.

It is not enough to renounce evil and do good; we must know and believe the truth, we must have right thoughts of God, of what He is and what He has done for us, and our relation to Him.

Hence the second baptismal promise is to believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, as they are set forth in the Apostles' Creed. ("Article" means literally *a little joint*; in the Creed there are several small joints, so to call them, various, distinct, yet connected propositions or clauses.)

To believe is to be convinced of the truth of what we know through the testimony of others. "Faith is the substance (marg. ground or confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" it is a firm trust in, and conviction of the reality of, things not seen and hoped for; it is the eye of the soul, making it conscious of the great things around us.

To believe as a Christian is to be persuaded of the truth of the revelation made to us in and through Christ. But this persuasion is no mere assent of the mind; it must influence the heart and conduct—it must be a living faith (St. James ii. 14—26), working by love, and showing itself by its fruits (Gal. v. 6; Heb. xi.). The substance of the Christian revelation is given us in the Apostles' Creed, so called as "containing the doctrines taught by the

Apostles, and as being in substance the same as was used in the Church from the time of the Apostles themselves." There is one faith once for all delivered, which all Christians are bound to believe (St. Jude 3) and to confess (Rom. x. 9, 10). The importance of a right faith is shown, 1 Tim. vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 13, 14, ii. 2.

All candidates for Baptism in the early Church were required to make a confession of their faith; and it was for this purpose probably that a creed or form of belief was first drawn up. Many confessions of faith, differing slightly from one another, but on the whole corresponding with the Apostles' Creed, are known to have been in existence in various ancient churches. As time went on, and false doctrines grew up, explanations were introduced, and a "Form of Faith" was set forth on the authority of the whole Church. This form is called the Nicene Creed, originally drawn up by a council of Bishops at Nicæa (A.D. 325), but altered to its present shape by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). The other Creed, found in the Prayer Book, the Creed of St. Athanasius, is so called, not because it was drawn up by him, but because it asserts the great truths which he spent his life in maintaining, viz., the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and of the union of the Godhead and the Manhood in the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I BELIEVE IN GOD.

Observe, not merely "I believe," but "I believe *in*," which implies trust and confidence.

"GOD," or "GOD ALMIGHTY," is the name by which the great Creator and King of the world was first

pleased to reveal Himself to His creatures, as He Himself expressly says to Moses (Exod. vi. 3). Afterwards He spake of Himself as JEHOVAH ("I AM THAT I AM," Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν), the Eternal, Self-existent Being, who alone has life in Himself. He who was God Almighty to the Patriarchs, who was Jehovah to the Israelites under the Law, is now Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to the Christian Church.

In the Nicene Creed it is, "I believe in *One* God," which expresses what is implied in the Apostles' Creed, that there is but one living and true God, whom to know is everlasting life (St. John xvii. 3). "In the essential Unity of God (as Hooker says) a Trinity Personal nevertheless subsisteth, after a manner far exceeding man's conceit."

Of these three Persons the Creed goes on to speak.

THE FATHER.

First and specially, of His only-begotten Son (Eph. i. 3). Christ is called the Son of God, not only in respect of His human nature, but of His pre-existent state. He is, from all eternity, the Son of the Father (St. John i. 18, iii. 16, v. 19—26; 1 John iv. 9).

Secondly, of all mankind (Mal. ii. 10; Eph. iv. 6; Acts xvii. 22—31).

Thirdly, of Christians, as members of Christ, His only-begotten Son (Rom. viii. 14, 16, 19; Gal. iii. 26; 1 John iii. 1).

ALMIGHTY. The word here used in the original (Παντοκράτωρ) is different from that which is translated "Almighty" further on in the Creed (Παντοδύναμος): the first has reference to God's dominion over all creatures, the second rather to His power over all the powers of nature—His omnipotence rather

than His sovereignty. The cry of the Seraphim in Isaiah vi. 3, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Hosts," *i.e.* of the armies of heaven and earth, is the same as that of the four living creatures in Rev. iv. 8, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!" (See 1 Tim. vi. 15; Isa. xl. 12—26).

MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH; that is, of the whole universe. In the Nicene Creed it is said of God the Son that all things were made by Him (as in St. John i. 3; Col. i. 16); and elsewhere in Scripture creation is spoken of as the work of the Holy Spirit (Ps. xxxiii. 6, civ. 30; Job xxvi. 13, xxxiii. 4). Here it is attributed to the Father, because whatever is the work of the Three Persons of the Trinity may be fitly ascribed to the Father, who is the First Person (Isaiah xl. 13, 14; Acts iv. 24).

From Genesis i. we learn that God first created all the matter of the world out of nothing, and then made all things that we see in heaven and sea and earth. He made first the house, and then the inhabitants. How rich and wonderful is this world which God has made for our dwelling! It is still "very good," as when first created, if we will use it aright, and be content to enjoy the various blessings which God has provided for us, according to His purpose in bestowing them. But if we abuse His gifts, we not only put an affront on Him, but we bring misery on ourselves.

Man was created last—his body out of the dust; his soul, the principle of life, from the breath of God: it was his spirit (see 1 Thess. v. 23, where St. Paul distinguishes between body, soul, and spirit) which was created in the image of God. That part of man

which is capable of being influenced by the Spirit of God—his understanding, affections, and will—was made pure and holy; a reflection, as it were, of the wisdom and love and will of God.

As God is the Creator, so is He also the Preserver of all things. It is He who causeth the sun to rise and set; who maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains; who clothes the lilies and feeds the birds; who reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest; who takes account of every sparrow that falleth; who ruleth also in the kingdom of men, appointing to them their times and the bounds of their habitations. By His special providence, too, He watches over every one among us, numbering the very hairs of our head, and making all things work together for good to them that love Him. (See St. Matt. v. 45, vi. 26, 30, x. 29, 30; Ps. civ., cxlvii. 8; Jer. v. 24; Dan. iv. 17; Acts xvii. 26; Rom. viii. 28.)

God made man upright; but he fell (Eccles. vii. 29), and his fall made a Saviour necessary.

For the account of the Fall, see Gen. iii.

The devil (Rev. xii. 9; xx. 2) envied the innocence and happiness of our first parents, and resolved to ruin them. He attacked the woman first, as the weaker, attempting to throw doubt on the reality of the prohibition, as cruel and unlikely. When this failed, he tried to persuade her that the punishment would not follow—"so far from dying at once, they would become wiser and more knowing." The temptation addressed itself to man's moral and intellectual nature, as well as to his bodily appetite. It was when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (here was "the lust of the flesh," 1 John ii. 16), and

that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise (here was "the lust of the eyes," and "the pride of life"), that she took of the fruit, and did eat. Man wished to be independent, and to judge for himself, and rule himself, and be a god to himself. This is the very essence of all sin. Shame followed, as it does on all sin; and our first parents attempted to excuse themselves, as we do. But their excuses, though true, were not deemed sufficient. God said that they should die, and spiritual death was at once their portion. What if God had left them to themselves, and never forced Adam to come forth and stand before Him! Men would have been for ever dead in trespasses and sins. But God, of His own free mercy, sought man out, and, while He punished, held out the promise of life. Each party in the transgression had his own peculiar punishment assigned to him. First, vengeance fell on the serpent, the animal form which the tempter assumed; he was to crawl on the ground, and eat the dust. Then came the sentence on the devil: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," &c. There was to be perpetual warfare between man and his spiritual foe. Many a wound would the devil inflict upon him; but in the end victory would be with man, through Him who should be born of a woman, and bruise the serpent's head. The woman's punishment was subjection to her husband, and the pain of childbirth; and man's a life of toil, and in the end return to the dust from which he was taken. Thus sin and death came by the first Adam; but life and hope and holiness come by the Second.

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, who hast created all earthly things for man's use, and man himself for Thy love and service, we, Thy unworthy servants, yield Thee hearty thanks for the rich and abundant blessings of this life, which Thou vouchsafest to us. Grant that we may never be so ungrateful as to employ to unholy or selfish uses the good gifts which Thou hast given for Thy glory, as well as for our enjoyment.

We thank Thee also, O Lord, for Thy watchful providence over us from our birth until now; for the love which has sheltered us from evil, and directed us to good. Continue to us, Lord, we beseech Thee, this Thy fatherly care over us, that, guarded by Thy providence and governed by Thy grace, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal. Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

St. Luke i.; ii. 1—20.

St. Matthew i. 18—25.

St. John i. 1—14.

Philippians ii. 5—11.

Hebrews i.

LESSON VI.

B. THE VOW OF FAITH (*continued*).

THE INCARNATION AND BIRTH OF CHRIST.

THE immediate and fatal effect of the Fall was to separate between man and his God. No man could ever bridge over the gulf between them (Psalm xlix. 7, 8). God alone could bring about a reconciliation; and this reconciliation has been effected in and through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The first promise of a Deliverer, made immediately after the Fall, was repeated from time to time (Gen. xii. 3; Deut. xviii. 18; Psalm xxii.; Isaiah xi. 1, liii.; Dan. ix. 26, 27; Micah v. 2; Zech. ix. 9, xii. 10; Mal. iii. 1), until the voice of prophecy closed (Mal. iv. 5, 6) with the announcement that God would send Elijah the prophet before the coming of the day of the Lord, to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and of the children to their fathers. The New Testament revelation opens with the declaration of the Angel to Zacharias, that this promise was about to be fulfilled forthwith in the birth of St. John the Baptist (St. Luke i. 17). Then, in the fulness of time, when expectation was most rife, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman (Gal. iv. 4; St. John iii. 16).

He was to be especially the Seed of the woman (Gen. iii. 15), of the family of Abraham (Gen. xii. 3; xxii. 18), of the tribe of Judah (Gen. xlix. 10), and of the line of David (Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4).

The Creed speaks of Him as JESUS CHRIST, HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD.

JESUS, that is, Jehovah a Saviour, the name chosen for Him in heaven (St. Luke i. 31; St. Matt. i. 21) and bestowed on Him at His circumcision (St. Luke ii. 21), the name by which He was usually known on earth, and which was affixed to the cross (St. Matt. xxvii. 37). It was the name of His lowliness and suffering, and therefore Christians are bound to honour it especially (Philip. ii. 10. See 10th Canon, and Hooker, B. v. ch. xxx. § 3). He was so called, because He saves His people from their sins (St. Matt. i. 21). His salvation is the highest possible, going to the root of the matter, saving His people from sin, the root of all evil. He saves them *from* their sins, not *in* their sins;—from the punishment of sin, and from sin itself.

CHRIST, the Greek equivalent for the Hebrew “Messiah” (St. John i. 41, iv. 25), means “anointed.” As persons were anointed for three offices, to be prophets, priests, and kings (1 Kings xix. 16; Exod. xl. 13—15; 1 Sam. x. 1, xvi. 13), the name of CHRIST was given to the Son of God made man, to show that these three offices belong to Him. None before Him bore all three characters. Melchisedec was a priest and king, but not a prophet; David was a prophet and king, but not a priest; Jeremiah was a priest and prophet, not a king. Christ was Prophet, Priest, and King.

He is spoken of as a *Prophet* by Moses, a Prophet like, but superior, to himself (Deut. xviii. 15—18). The prophet’s office is to reveal the will of God. This Christ did abundantly, when He was on earth,

in a way in which no other ever did. He taught men authoritatively to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, in expectation of the future judgment of God. (See especially the Sermon on the Mount, St. Matt. v., vi., vii.)

The priest's office was to offer prayers and sacrifices, and to bless in God's name. So Christ, our *High Priest* (Heb. iv. 14, 15, v. 6), offered Himself upon the cross (Heb. vii. 26, 27, ix. 11—14, x. 10; Eph. v. 2), and intercedes for us in heaven (Heb. vii. 25, ix. 24; Rom. viii. 34; 1 John ii. 1), and is continually blessing His Church (Acts iii. 26; Eph. iv. 8).

Christ's office as *King* is exercised in ruling His people, and conquering His enemies. The angel Gabriel declared that He should reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there should be no end (St. Luke i. 33). That kingdom is His Church, which He formally established on the day of Pentecost, and which from His throne in heaven He rules invisibly (St. John xviii. 37; Rev. xix. 16; 1 Cor. xv. 25). See Butler's 'Analogy,' B. ii. ch. v.

To these three offices Christ was anointed by the Holy Ghost at His Baptism (St. Matt. iii. 16; Acts x. 38); and the exercise of those several functions is specially connected with the indwelling of the Holy Ghost (Isaiah lxi. 1—3; Psalm xlv. 6, 7; Heb. ix. 14).

HIS ONLY SON, that is, His only-begotten Son, His Son in that true and natural sense in which no other being can be His Son, implying participation in His essential Godhead. In that He is the Son of God, He must be whatever God is, all-holy, all-wise, all-powerful, all-good, eternal, infinite;—He must

be in truth God Himself. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and that which is begotten of God is God.

OUR LORD. This is the name always used in the New Testament to translate the Hebrew JEHOVAH, the highest and most sacred name of God; as Deut. vi. 4, "The Lord (Jehovah) our God is One Lord." It implies that He is One God, equal with the Father, and that He is our Master and has a right over us. Acts x. 36; Rom. xiv. 9; St. John xiii. 13; 1 Cor. viii. 6, xii. 3; Philip. ii. 11; St. Luke vi. 46. See Jerem. xxiii. 6 (margin).

In the Nicene Creed this Article is expanded into: "And in one LORD JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made." This addition was made in consequence of the heresy of Arius, who denied the Godhead of our Lord. He said that if the Son were begotten, the Father must have been *before* the Son, and therefore the Son had a beginning; He was a creature, though the highest of all creatures. The true doctrine on this subject had been guarded hitherto by the two titles given to Christ in Scripture: the title of *Son*, which expressed sameness of nature and distinct personality; and the title of the *Word*, which conveyed the idea of essential unity and co-eternity. But on account of the spread of error, it was needful to be more explicit, and therefore a General Council, at which three hundred bishops were present, was held at Nicæa, A.D. 325, when a special Creed was

drawn up and subscribed. In that Creed the Son is declared to be “of one substance,” or essence, that is, of the same nature, “with the Father” (Ὁμοούσιος),—a declaration which embodies the sense of innumerable passages of the New Testament, where not only is Christ said to be God, and to contain in Himself all the fulness of the Godhead (Col. ii. 9; St. John i. 1; Rom. ix. 5; 1 John v. 20), but every attribute, every prerogative of Divinity is fully ascribed to Him. He is the Searcher of hearts (St. John i. 47—50, ii. 24, 25, iv. 17, 18, vi. 15, 70), the pardoner of sins (St. Matt. ix. 2, 6; St. Luke vii. 48, xxiv. 47), the well-spring of life (St. John v. 21, 26, 40, x. 28), the raiser of the dead (St. John vi. 39, 40, x. 18, xi. 25), omnipresent (St. John iii. 13; St. Matt. xviii. 20), omnipotent (Philip. iii. 21; Heb. i. 3), eternal (St. John viii. 58, xvii. 5; Rev. i. 8), One with the Father (St. John x. 30, xiv. 10, xvii. 11), and claiming an equal share in the honours due to the Father (St. John v. 23). At the same time the Creed asserts that the Son is “*begotten* of His Father,” “God *of* (that is, from) God” (Θεὸς ἐκ Θεοῦ), which implies that the Son is so far subordinate to the Father, as that the Father is the sole Fountain of the Godhead; but He is begotten *before all worlds*. See Col. i. 15, where He is said to be “begotten before any creature” (Πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως), not the first of created spirits, but existing before them, as One “begotten, not made.” This is called the doctrine of the Eternal Generation of the Son. The Divine Nature of the Son is derived “by an unbegun and unending generation,” from the Being of the Father.

It was this only-begotten Son of God, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. Till then He had been simply God, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person: but He chose to take into personal union with Himself the nature of man, so that He became God and Man in one Person (Philip. ii. 5, 6). The Word, which in the beginning was with God and was God, was made flesh. He became what He was not before, without ceasing to be what He had ever been. This is the great mystery of the Incarnation, God becoming man, God dwelling with us, God manifesting Himself in the flesh, God emptying Himself and taking on Him the form of a servant, and appearing upon earth in the likeness of sinful flesh.

The manner of the Incarnation was by a miraculous conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary. See St. Luke i. 26—38. No sooner did the Blessed Virgin acquiesce in God's wonderful purpose, than the great miracle which the angel foretold began to be accomplished. Heaven, as it were, opened, and the Eternal Son of God left the bosom of His Father, and came forth to be conceived, by the special operation of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of a woman. The Word was made flesh without ceasing to be God; and the blessed Mary became a mother without ceasing to be a virgin. For this great miracle the Church gives thanks every year in the Festival of the Annunciation, and every day in the Hymn of the Virgin, in which we magnify

God for the mighty salvation which He has wrought for us in and through His Son. St. Luke i. 46—55.

By this miraculous conception Christ was born without spot of sin. All the other children of Adam are conceived and born in sin; but Christ, though He took our very nature upon Him, with all the powers, capacities, and infirmities of that nature, yet took it in a way above and beyond nature, so as altogether to escape that taint of corruption, whereby it is defiled in every other partaker of it. (See Article xv.: and proper Preface for Christmas Day.)

For the account of Christ's birth, see St. Luke ii. 1—14. The place of His birth was foretold (Micah v. 2); as also the circumstance that He should be born of a Virgin (Isaiah vii. 14; Matt. i. 22—25).

The doctrine of the Incarnation is more fully set forth in the Athanasian Creed, and the second Article. Christ our Saviour is perfect God and perfect man: as regards His Godhead, of one substance with the Father; as regards His manhood, like unto us in all things except sin. He has not only a true human body, but a human soul, a human will, and a human heart; and so He loves us, not only as God loves His creatures, but as a brother loves his brethren.

This belief in our Lord's Divinity will alone enable us to appreciate duly the love of God the Father in sparing not His only-begotten Son (St. John iii. 16; Rom. viii. 32). "How intensely must He have loved us, even when we were yet sinners, to tear His only Son from His bosom, and send Him down into the pit of our ruin." So also shall we

have right thoughts of the love of Christ in willingly offering Himself for us; and of the greatness of His humiliation also, when we remember that He is not only our Saviour, but Jehovah our Saviour—not only our Priest and Teacher, but our King and Lord.

COLLECT.

Almighty and everlasting God, who of Thy tender love towards mankind hast given Thy only Son to take our nature upon Him, and share all our infirmities and sorrows, make us truly to know and realize the wonders of Thy love! Lord! what is man, that Thou hast been thus mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou hast so visited him! Thou hast passed by the angels that perished, and humbled Thyself to behold our sinful race, that Thou mightest lift us from the mire of our sins, and set us among princes, and make us inherit glory. Grant that the great work of salvation which Christ has taken in hand may be accomplished for each one of us! May He be indeed our Saviour and Deliverer,—our Prophet, Priest, and King! May we love Him as our Saviour, and trust in Him as our Advocate, and listen to Him as our Teacher, and obey Him as our King, that as He has vouchsafed to be “God with us” on earth, so we may be with Him hereafter in heaven. For His Blessed Name’s sake. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Isaiah liii.

St. Mark xiv. 32 to end; xv.

Psalm xxii.

St. Luke xxii. 39 to end; xxiii.

St. Matt. xxvi. 36 to end; xxvii. St. John xviii., xix.

LESSON VII.

B. THE VOW OF FAITH (*continued*).

THE SUFFERINGS, DEATH, AND BURIAL OF CHRIST.

THE Son of God took our nature upon Him and became man, in order that as man He might suffer and die for us. In his natural condition man is an outcast from God, a sinner under the condemnation of a broken law; and if he is to be restored to God's favour, some satisfaction must be made to that law. Christ came to offer that satisfaction, to be the sacrifice for the sins of the world. As Head of our race, He was specially qualified to represent that race, and to make atonement for it. This atonement was the purpose of His death. It is impossible that the Son of God should become man and die without some great result following His death. What that result is, we can know only by revelation; and revelation tells us plainly that it was to obtain for us the pardon of our sins and the gift of everlasting life.

See how He Himself sets forth the purpose of His death: St. Matt. xx. 28. "The Son of Man came . . . to give His life a ransom for many." xxvi. 28. "This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." St. John iii. 14, 15.

See how the Apostles echo His words: Acts xiii. 38, 39; Rom. iii. 23—26; 2 Cor. v. 14—21; 1 John iv. 10.

On this Article of the Creed, consider—

I. His life of suffering.

i. Bodily privations (Isaiah liii. 2, 3). He was born in a stable, brought up among the poor, on spare diet: He was with the wild beasts in the wilderness (St. Mark i. 13), without a home (St. Luke ix. 58).

ii. The malice and calumny to which He was subjected.

What must it have been to have had men always watching Him, and taking amiss everything He said and did, and plotting against Him (St. Mark iii. 6, 21, 22; St. Luke iv. 28, 29; St. John v. 18, viii. 59, x. 39, xi. 47—53).

II. His Death. i. Bodily pain.

1. The scourging and crown of thorns (St. John xix. 1—3). (Specially foretold: Isaiah l. 5, 6.)

2. The crucifixion (St. Luke xxiii. 33, 34); typified by the Paschal lamb pierced with transverse spits (Exod. xii.); by the brazen serpent (Numb. xxi. 8; St. John iii. 14); by Isaac bearing the wood (Gen. xxii. 6).

The most terrible form of death, "*crudelissimum teterrimumque supplicium*," scarcely, if at all, known among the Jews (for Deut. xxi. 22 probably refers to exposure after death), but frequent among the Greeks and Romans. The degradation was one main part of the punishment, but the physical suffering was intense. (Psalm xxii. 14—17). At the same time there was a burning thirst (St. John xix. 29; Psalm lxix. 21).

ii. Mental sufferings caused by—

1. Ingratitude. Betrayed (St. John xiii. 21; St. Matt. xxvi. 47—50); forsaken (St. Matt. xxvi. 31, 56); denied (St. Luke xxii. 54—62). Foretold, Ps. xli. 9; lv. 12—14.

2. Reproach (St. Matt. xxvii. 39—44). Foretold, Psalm xxii. 6—8; lxix. 20.

3. Insult (St. Matt. xxvi. 67, 68, xxvii. 27—30).

iii. Anguish of soul.

1. In the Garden; where His anguish was so piercing that His tender frame gave way beneath the trial, and He shed His blood before the time (St. Mark xiv. 33; St. Luke xxii. 44; Heb. v. 7). He prayed that if it were possible the cup of suffering might pass from Him. It was not merely the fear of death that oppressed Him, but an overwhelming sense of the evil of sin, which for our sake He was bearing. He was torn two ways—by the horror of sin, and by the determination to suffer all His Father's will. "He truly felt the full value and demerit of sin, which we think not worthy of a tear, or a hearty sigh; but He groaned and fell under the burden."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

2. On the Cross; when He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (St. Matt. xxvii. 46.) The Father, indeed, never forsook Him; nor did He for a moment lose His hold, so to speak, of His Father. See Psalm xxii., the first words of which Christ takes to Himself, and which we may therefore regard as His utterance throughout. He begins by claiming God as His God, but expostulates with Him for leaving Him in the hand of His enemies: why did He not interfere in His behalf? It was not so with others. When they cried, they were helped: nevertheless He would trust in God. Men and devils might do their worst (and the various sufferings of the Crucifixion are given in detail, almost as if it were an historical account of it); yet

He would suffer to the end, and He was sure that God would hear His prayer : by His sufferings the heathen would be converted, and all the kindreds of the Gentiles would be brought to adore the true God.

It is especially the death of Christ that is the atonement for our sins : and it is, as Hooker says, the infinite worth of the Son of God that gives efficacy to His death. Observe how the Creeds first state the truth of Christ's Divine Person, and then pass on to say how He suffered and died. In the later chapters of St. John's Gospel, which describe Christ's humiliation and sufferings, he is speaking of the very same Person whom he had in the beginning described as God the Word. And even in the history of His Passion flashes of His Godhead are seen, in the involuntary homage of the men who came to seize Him (St. John xviii. 6); in the mysterious awe of Pilate (St. John xix. 8); in His dealings with the penitent robber (St. Luke xxiii. 42, 43); in the rent veil, the darkness, the open graves, in the confession of the centurion (St. Matt. xxvii. 54). This is why Scripture speaks so emphatically of the blood of Christ as the price of our redemption ; because it is the blood of Him who is the Son of God (St. Matt. xxvi. 28 ; Rom. v. 9 ; Eph. i. 7 ; Col. i. 14 ; Heb. ix. 14 ; 1 Peter. i. 19 ; 1 John i. 7 ; Rev. i. 5).

This death of Christ was His own free act (St. John x. 11, 17, 18). When He took man's nature, He became capable of death ; but it is spoken of in Scripture as an additional humiliation that He submitted to it (Philip. ii. 8). At the same time, if the Son gave Himself, the Father no less freely gave the Son. And so the death of Christ sets forth His

own love (1 John iii. 16; 2 Cor. v. 14; Eph. iii. 18, 19; Rom. v. 6—8), and the Father's (St. John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 9, 10).

III. His Burial.

Death, to Christ, as to every other child of Adam, was the separation of soul and body; but, though separated from each other, they were the soul and body of God. Having been taken into His Godhead, they continued His: His body was laid in the grave, His soul passed into the world of spirits.

By Roman law, the bodies of the crucified were exposed, not buried; but the Jews were specially commanded to bury them (Deut. xxi. 22, 23). Our Saviour's body, therefore, was buried.

Joseph of Arimathæa, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim, but a secret disciple of Jesus, begged His body from Pilate, that he might bury it. He was assisted in this work of love by Nicodemus. Wrapping the body in fine linen, with myrrh and aloes, they laid it in Joseph's new tomb, in the presence of Mary Magdalene and other women, and rolled a stone to the entrance of the sepulchre (St. Matt. xxvii. 57—60; St. Mark xv. 42—46; St. Luke xxiii. 50—56; St. John xix. 38—42). Thus Christ was with the rich (lit. "a rich man") in His death (Isaiah liii. 9).

St. Paul speaks of the burial of Christ as a distinct subject of his preaching (1 Cor. xv. 4). Its doctrinal importance, in connection with Baptism, is referred to Col. ii. 12; Rom. vi. 4. Hence Easter Eve, the day during which Christ lay in the grave, was a common time for baptisms in the early Church. (See Collect for Easter Eve.)

IV. The descent into Hell.

The word "Hell," or *Hades*, means a hidden or covered place. In the Creed it is not Gehenna, the place of torment (as in St. Matt. v. 22, 29, 30, x. 28, xviii. 9), but the place where the souls of men are hidden after they have departed from the body (as in St. Matt. xi. 23, xvi. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 55; Rev. xx. 13, 14). Into that part of Hades, where the souls of the righteous are, our Saviour's soul entered. This state was sometimes called by the Jews "Paradise," sometimes "Abraham's bosom," sometimes "beneath the throne of glory." Each of these expressions has the sanction either of our Lord or His Apostles. (See St. Luke xxiii. 43, xvi. 22; Rev. vi. 9.) St. Paul speaks of His descending "into the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. iv. 9): this may refer to the Incarnation, and "the lower parts of the earth" may mean the place beneath, that is, the earth itself, in contradistinction to heaven; but it is more probable that the Apostle is speaking of our Lord's descent to the place of disembodied spirits, that is, Hades.

See Psalm xvi. 10, and St. Peter's explanation, Acts ii. 27—31, where it is expressly said, that, though Christ's body was laid in the grave, it did not see corruption; and though Christ's soul went to Hades, where other souls go, yet God did not leave it there: on the third day it was reunited to the body, and the body raised from the dead.

See also 1 Peter iii. 18, 19, where we read that Christ being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit (or, rather, quick, alive in His Spirit), went and proclaimed the things of salvation to the spirits in safe custody, and especially, it would

seem, to those "who had once been disobedient in the days of Noah." "If angels rejoice over one sinner that repenteth, may we not suppose Paradise filled with rapture, when the soul of Jesus came among the souls of His redeemed, Himself the herald of His own victory?"

This was one object, doubtless, of Christ's descent into hell; but it is plain that He went thither also, in order to show that He had taken on Him our whole nature, and that it happened to Him, as to us, that His body was buried, and His soul passed into the realm of spirits.

Christ's descent into hell and subsequent resurrection were prefigured by the history of Jonah. As Jonah was three days in the whale's belly, or, as he himself says, in the belly of Hades, and then delivered, so Christ was three days in the heart of the earth (which refers not so much to His burial as to His descent to the abode of departed spirits) and then rose again (St. Matt. xii. 40; Jonah i. 17, ii. 10).

COLLECT.

O gracious God, Who sparedst not Thine only Son, but didst freely give Him up to suffering and death for us, grant that His death may be our life. Vouchsafe to us the pardon of our sins and all other benefits of His Passion. Make us to see, in the light of our Saviour's sufferings, the greatness of Thy love and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and give us grace, out of love to Thee, to bring our sins and nail them to His cross.

Grant, O Lord, that as we have been baptized

into the death of Thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with Him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for His merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

St. John xx.
St. Luke xxiv.
Acts i. 1—11.

1 Corinthians xv. 1—23.
Colossians iii. 1—3.
Hebrews ix. 7—12.

LESSON VIII.

B. THE VOW OF FAITH (*continued*).

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION.

THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.

Our Saviour died about three o'clock in the afternoon: before sunset He was buried. The whole of the next day, the memory of which the Church keeps on Easter Eve, He lay in the grave. Early on the following morning the Resurrection took place. Thus, although Christ had lain in the grave not more than thirty-six hours, yet, as these formed part of three days, it is usual, according to the manner of the Jews, to speak of the time during which death had dominion over Him as three days. The exact hour of the Resurrection is not recorded; but all was dark and still in Joseph's grave, when life and motion suddenly returned to the pale form which was lying wrapped in linen on the rocky floor. By His own inherent power Christ awoke as from sleep, bursting the bands of death, and passing from the closed tomb. It was not for Him that the angel came down to roll away the stone, which covered the mouth of the sepulchre, but in order that access to the empty grave might be given to His friends.

Other persons, in various ages, had already risen from the dead; but their resurrection had been plainly the work of another, greater than them-

selves (1 Kings xvii. 21, 22; 2 Kings iv. 32—35, xiii. 21; St. Matt. ix. 25; St. Luke vii. 14, 15; St. John xi. 43, 44). Christ alone rose by His own power. He who had quickened all the rest, now quickened and raised Himself. The Prince of life submitted to death, and on the cross seemed to be withering in Satan's grasp; but in the moment of apparent defeat, He rose unvanquished and utterly destroyed the enemy who had thought to overwhelm Him (Heb. ii. 14; Col. ii. 15).

The same body that was crucified arose, but wonderfully changed; it was now a spiritual body, no longer confined by those laws under which our bodies lie. His manner of dealing with men also was different; He did not mix freely with them as before. As He rose in secret, so His whole sojourn on earth after His resurrection was, as it were, in secret. It was only as a special favour that He showed Himself, from time to time, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God (Acts x. 41).

His first appearance was to Mary Magdalene, who did not, however, recognize Him immediately on His addressing her, but when the tone of His voice afterwards recalled Him, she was about to throw herself at His feet with joy; but He would not suffer her to touch Him. Death had placed a gulf between them; the body which had conquered death had become glorified, and was on the point of ascending to the Father; therefore she might not touch Him as before. When the Ascension was complete, she and others might touch Him in a more true and perfect manner; and to that spiritual

and heavenly touch He would have her look forward (St. John xx. 11—18).

His second appearance was to certain women returning from the sepulchre, to tell His disciples that His body had been removed (St. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10).

The third was probably to St. Peter (1 Cor. xv. 5; St. Luke xxiv. 34).

The fourth to the two disciples going to Emmaus (St. Luke xxiv. 13—35).

The fifth to the ten disciples in Jerusalem (St. Luke xxiv. 36—43; St. John xx. 19—23).

All these occurred on the very day of the Resurrection. On that day week He appeared,

For the sixth time, to the assembled disciples again, Thomas being now with them (St. John xx. 24—29).

The seventh appearance was to certain of the Apostles on the Sea of Galilee (St. John xxi. 1—14).

The eighth, to the eleven (St. Matt. xxviii. 16—18), and probably to five hundred brethren assembled with them (1 Cor. xv. 6), on a mountain in Galilee.

The ninth to St. James (1 Cor. xv. 7); and

The tenth to the Apostles in Jerusalem just before the Ascension (Acts i. 4; St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51).

The Resurrection could scarcely be typified by actual resurrections, as the Nativity by births (*e. g.* Isaac, Samson, Samuel). The events therefore which were typical of the Resurrection represented it in a figure, as, *e. g.* the deliverance of Isaac, the histories of Joseph and Jonah.

The Resurrection was the great subject of the earliest preaching of the Apostles, the chief proof of

the truth of the Gospel. St. Luke says (Acts iv. 33) that with great power they gave witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and the records of their preaching confirm this (Acts iii. 15, 16, iv. 9, 10, v. 29—31, x. 40, 41, xiii. 30—37, xvii. 31, xxvi. 23).

St. Paul specifies particularly the various witnesses of the fact of the Resurrection, and speaks of it as the very corner-stone of the whole fabric of Christianity (1 Cor. xv. 4—8). But the Apostles do not dwell merely on the historical fact; they treat the Resurrection as a great moral power, the source of a twofold resurrection in Christians,—(i.) from the death of sin here, and (ii.) from the grave hereafter (Philip. iii. 10; Eph. i. 17—20; 1 Cor. xv. 20—23). Christians are said to be already risen with Christ (Col. iii. 1; Eph. ii. 6), and therefore bound and enabled to seek the things that are above.

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN.

Christ lingered on earth for forty days after His Resurrection, partly to establish the fact that He was really risen, and partly to unfold to His disciples the matters connected with His Church and Kingdom (Acts i. 3).

At the end of the forty days, that is, on Holy Thursday, or Ascension Day, it pleased Him to ascend into heaven in their sight. His Resurrection had been in secret; His Ascension was in the presence of a considerable number of His disciples. It was not merely that after a certain time He ceased to show Himself; they actually saw Him ascend. He joined their company one day, when they were assembled

in Jerusalem, and led them out to Bethany, that is, to the further or eastern side of the Mount of Olives. There, among the bare hills overhanging Bethany, after renewing the promise of the Holy Ghost, and bidding His disciples not depart from Jerusalem until that promise was fulfilled, He lifted up His hands over them and blessed them. In the very act of blessing He rose from the ground, and passed through the air over their heads, by a gentle and gradual motion, while they in wonder followed Him with their eyes, until a cloud came, and they saw Him no more (St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51; Acts i. 4—9).

When lost to human sight, angels waited on Him (Psalm lxviii. 17, xxiv. 7—10).

And whither did He go? Into heaven: so said the angels, who appeared at the time (Acts i. 11), and St. Luke (xxiv. 50): and St. Mark adds (xvi. 19), that He sat at the right hand of God, that is, He entered into the nearest presence of the majesty and bliss of God.

Christ's human body, though all-glorious, retains the true nature of a body, and is in heaven, as in a place. It is there in heaven, where heaven is most removed from earth, "far above all heavens" (Eph. iv. 10; Heb. vii. 26).

The Ascension was foretold in the Old Testament (Psalm lxviii. 18; explained Eph. iv. 8), as well as by Christ Himself (St. John vi. 62, xiv. 2, xx. 17).

It was typified by the High Priest's entering every year into the Holy of Holies (Lev. xvi.), after he had made atonement for himself and the people, clothed not in the gorgeous robes of his high priesthood, but in the common white garments, taking

with him the blood of the slain victim. So Christ, having offered His own blood upon the cross, has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, in the likeness of sinful humanity, though Himself pure from sin, and ever pleads the merits of His sacrifice (Heb. ix. 7, 11, 12, 24).

Purposes of Christ's Ascension,—

i. To enter on His glory, the reward of His sufferings (Acts ii. 33; Philip. ii. 9).

ii. To plead for His people (Rom. viii. 34; Heb. vii. 25, ix. 24; 1 John ii. 1).

iii. To obtain and impart the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 33; Eph. iv. 8; St. John xvi. 7; Psalm lxxviii. 18). This was the special reason why Christ said that it was expedient for His disciples that He should go away.

iv. To prepare a place for His people (St. John xiv. 2, 3, xvii. 24; Heb. vi. 20).

v. To draw our hearts after Him (Col. iii. 1, 2; Phil. iii. 20).

COLLECT.

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who didst raise Him from the dead and exalt Him to Thine own right hand, in order that we might one day follow Him and enter through the gates into the heavenly city, grant that we may know from our own experience the power of our risen and ascended Lord. Make us to live a new and heavenly life in the midst of the business and pleasures of the world, and to set our affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, so that

when He shall come again, it may be to take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may also be for ever. Grant this, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

St. Mark xvi. 19.

Ephesians i. 20—23.

1 Corinthians xv. 24—28.

Ecclesiastes xii. 14.

2 Corinthians v. 10.

St. Matthew xii. 36, 37.

St. Matthew xxv. 31—46.

Revelation xx. 12—14.

LESSON IX.

B. VOW OF FAITH (*continued*).CHRIST'S SESSION AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, AND
RETURN TO JUDGMENT.

HE SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE
FATHER ALMIGHTY.

St. Mark says expressly that Christ was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God (xvi. 19). Cf. Acts vii. 55; Eph. i. 20—22; Heb. i. 3, 13.

God is a Spirit, filling all space, without bodily parts; but as the right hand among men is the place of honour and power (1 Kings ii. 19; St. Matt. xxvi. 64; Psalm xvi. 11), so the right hand of God is the place of highest glory in His presence in heaven. We are not to understand Christ's sitting at the right hand of God as necessarily determining His posture. St. Paul says, that He *is* at the right hand of God (Rom. viii. 34); and St. Stephen saw Him *standing* there (Acts vii. 55). The word implies perfect rest and perfect power. To this end was He born and for this came He into the world, to be a King (St. John xviii. 37). This royal dignity was predicted by the angel at His Incarnation (St. Luke i. 32, 33); and at His Ascension He entered on it. Then He was crowned with glory and worship (Heb. ii. 9). He sat down at the right hand of God, angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto Him (1 Peter iii. 22).

He is ever exercising His kingly power, (i.) by

ordering the course of events so as to establish completely His dominion ; and (ii.) by strengthening His people against their spiritual foes.

It is Christ's human nature that is thus exalted (Heb. ii. 6—9). He sits at the right hand of power, not *when* He shall have put all enemies under His feet, but *till* He has done so (Ps. cx. 1 ; 1 Cor. xv. 25 ; Heb. x. 12, 13). When the last enemy, death, is overcome, then His royal power, as connected with His Mediatorship, will be resigned, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28). Then there will be no enemies to conquer, no militant Church on earth to govern. Nevertheless Christ will not cease to be a King : therefore the Nicene Creed adds, " Whose kingdom shall have no end " (St. Luke i. 33 ; Rev. xi. 15).

" He shall reign for ever and ever, not only to the modiflicated eternity of His Mediatorship, but also to the complete eternity of His humanity, which for the future is co-eternal with His Divinity."—PEARSON.

FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

Christ's Ascension and sitting at the right hand of God lead us naturally to think of His return. The very next thing He will do, now that He has taken His seat on His throne in heaven, is to rise from that throne, and take His seat on the throne of judgment. The angels who appeared at His Ascension bade the disciples begin at once to look forward to His coming again (Acts i. 11) ; and the early Christians always connected the thought of heaven and of Christ's present glory with the anticipation of His return (Philip. iii. 20 ; Col. iii. 1—4).

Christ's second coming will be very different from

the first, both in circumstances and in purpose. (See Collect for Advent Sunday.)

He will come to *judge*, that is, to call men to account for, and examine, their actions—to weigh them in the balance, and visit them accordingly.

Men's natural conscience leads them to expect a judgment. We feel that as God has given us an inward law of right to guide us, leaving it to ourselves whether we will obey it or no, so will He be sure one day to inquire into our conduct with regard to it. We feel that we are on our trial, with good and evil set before us, and a secret voice urging us to seek the good. And we feel that there must be a day of reckoning, when the secret testimony of conscience will be confirmed openly by the sentence of God Himself: "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1 John iii. 20).

God's providential government of the world also teaches us to expect a future judgment. We see plainly that God is just and holy, setting His mark of favour or of displeasure on goodness and sin: we see that there is a reward for the righteous—that there is a God that judgeth the earth (Psalm lviii. 11); but we see also that the reward of goodness and the punishment of iniquity are alike as yet imperfect; that the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper, in a way which seems inconsistent with perfect justice. Therefore we look forward to a time when these inequalities will be righted, and the righteous shall no longer be as the wicked, but every man shall receive according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

And the Bible reveals such a future judgment. See Eccles. xii. 14; Psalm l. 3, 4, lxii. 12; St. Matt. xvi. 27, xxv. 31—46; St. John v. 28, 29; Rom. ii. 6—11; 2 Cor. v. 10; Rev. xx. 12, 13. These passages show beyond dispute that men will be judged according to their works. Not that men's works can merit God's favour; only they are the real test of the heart being right with God. If a man is savingly united with Christ he will bring forth good fruit (St. John xv. 5), and by their fruits men are known (1 John iii. 7—10). "Works" include words and thoughts (St. Matt. xii. 36, 37; Jude 15; Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5; Jer. xvii. 9, 10). "Every work" of man, good or bad, secret or open, will be brought forward and weighed (Eccles. xii. 14; 2 Cor. v. 10).

The Judge of mankind must be God. None other could judge righteously, as knowing the secret hearts as well as the outward lives of each, or taking in the varying circumstances and characters of the whole race. And the Scripture speaks clearly to this effect: it is said that *God* will bring every work into judgment: that every one shall give account of himself *to God* (Rom. xiv. 12); that St. John saw the dead, small and great, stand before God (Rev. xx. 12). Hence the day of judgment is called "the great day of Almighty God" (Rev. xvi. 14), "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. ii. 5). See Jer. xxxii. 17—19.

The Judge of mankind *must* be God; but He may be, and He will be, also man; for "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (St. John v. 22): He "hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of

Man" (St. John v. 27). That is, because of His incarnation, therefore He will be our Judge (Acts x. 42, xvii. 31). Hence "the Son of Man" is the expression used in almost all the accounts of the judgment (St. Matt. xiii. 41, xvi. 27, xxv. 31; St. Mark viii. 38; St. Luke xvii. 30; St. Matt. xxvi. 64). This appointment of the Son of Man, the Man Christ Jesus, as the Judge, is partly, we may conceive, on His own account, as a return for His humiliation: "Sedebit Judex qui stabat sub judice:" hence He will come with great pomp (St. Matt. xxiv. 30, xvi. 27; 2 Thess. i. 9, 10); and partly on ours: (i.) it is an encouragement to the penitent to be assured that He who redeemed them with His precious blood will come to be their Judge: all His acts and words of mercy, when He was on earth, will be to them pledges of forgiveness and grounds of hope: if they hide them in the Rock cleft for them on Calvary they will be safe: (ii.) to the wilfully impenitent it will be a further ground for fear: their Saviour turned into their enemy, the Lamb of God provoked to wrath,—where can they look? (Rev. vi. 16, 17.)

He will judge the quick and the dead; that is, all mankind (Acts x. 42; 2 Tim. iv. 1). Great stress is laid on this: "all" (2 Cor. v. 10; Rom. xiv. 10), "every eye" (Rev. i. 7), "every one" (Rom xiv. 12, ii. 6; Rev. xx. 12). At His coming the dead in Christ will rise first; then those who are alive will go forth to meet the Lord and to be judged (1 Thess. iv. 15—17).

The judgment will be according to strict justice (Acts xvii. 31), without respect of persons (Rom. ii. 11; 1 Pet. i. 17). The books will be opened. 1. The

book of God's remembrance, the record which God keeps of the lives of each one, according to which we shall be judged. 2. The Book of Life, wherein are written the names of those who will be saved.

For a description of the judgment see Rev. xx. 12—14; St. Matt. xxv. 31—46.

The time of His coming is uncertain (St. Luke xii. 40). It is not for us to know the time that will elapse before He comes, nor the season of His coming (Acts i. 7). "Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son (in His mediatorial office), but the Father" (St. Mark xiii. 32). It will come in a moment of security, with the suddenness of a woman's birth-pang (1 Thess. v. 3), or like the Flood and the destruction of Sodom (St. Luke xvii. 26—29). Christ will come as a snare (St. Luke xxi. 35; Eccles. ix. 12); as a thief (1 Thess. v. 2; 2 Peter iii. 10; Rev. iii. 3, xvi. 15; St. Matt. xxiv. 43; St. Luke xii. 39); as a master returning (St. Mark xiii. 32—36). He will come soon (Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20, iii. 11; Heb. x. 37); but His coming will be delayed (St. Matt. xxiv. 48—50; 2 Thess. ii. 1—3; 2 Peter iii. 3, 4).

Therefore let us watch and be sober (St. Mark xiii. 37; St. Matt. xxv. 13; 1 Peter iv. 7; St. Luke xxi. 34—36).

COLLECT.

O Thou who wilt come to be our Judge, have mercy on us now and in the day of judgment. Teach us, day by day, to watch for Thy coming, and to prepare for it by prayer, and penitence, and strict-

ness of life, that when the books are opened and the records of our lives unfolded, our many sins may not be mentioned against us, but blotted out for Thy mercy's sake.

O Lord, we pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy precious blood. Make them to be numbered with Thy saints in glory everlasting.

Lord of mercy and of might,
Of mankind the life and light,
Soon to come to earth again,
Judge of angels and of men,
Hear us now, and hear us then ;
Jesu, hear and save !

Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

St. John xvi. 7—14.

Acts ii. 1—28.

Romans viii. 9—16.

1 Corinthians vi. 19, 20.

Galatians v. 22—25.

Hebrews viii. 7—13.

LESSON X.

B. THE VOW OF FAITH (*continued*).

THE HOLY GHOST.

THIS Article is expounded in the Nicene Creed : " I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the Prophets."

This addition is not found in the Creed actually set forth by the Council of Nice, for that Creed ended with the words, " And in the Holy Ghost," the remainder being added subsequently by the Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381), with the exception of the words " and the Son," in the clause, " Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son."

In the expression, " The Lord and giver of life," the word " Lord " is not connected with " of life," but with what went before : " I believe in the Holy Ghost, who is the Lord (*i.e.* Jehovah), and the giver of life " (τὸ Κύριον καὶ τὸ ζωοποιόν).

" The giver of life : " natural life (Gen. i. 2); spiritual life (St. John iii. 5, vi. 63; 2 Cor. iii. 6).

" Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son." So in the Creed of St. Athanasius, " The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son ; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding." In St. John xv. 26 our Saviour says, " When the Comforter is

come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me." And accordingly, in the Creed of Constantinople, the clause ran, "Which proceedeth from the Father," the words "and the Son" being first added by the Council of Toledo, A.D. 589, and ordered to be used in the Liturgy of the Spanish Church. It was not until some centuries later that the addition was universally admitted into the Creeds of the Western Churches. In the East it has never been received; and it is one chief cause of the difference between the two Churches. The English Church followed the other Churches of the West, because, however unwise it may have been to add anything to a Creed drawn up by a General Council, without the authority of another General Council, yet there can be little doubt of the truth of the doctrine contained in the words. For, with the exception of the one expression in St. John xv. 26, Scripture sets forth the relation of the Spirit to the Son in precisely the same language in which it speaks of the relation of the Spirit to the Father. As the Holy Ghost is called the Spirit of the Father, so also is He called the Spirit of the Son (Gal. iv. 6; Phil. i. 19; Rom. viii. 9; 1 Peter i. 11). As He is said to be sent by the Father, so also is He said to be sent by the Son (St. John xv. 26; xvi. 7).

The Holy Ghost is the third Person of the Holy Trinity, being associated by Christ Himself with the Father and the Son in the solemn form of Baptism.

That He is of one substance with the Father

and the Son appears from such passages as the following:—

2 Cor. iii. 17, where He is called “the Lord,” *i.e.* Jehovah.

Acts v. 3, 4, where St. Peter says to Ananias, that in lying to the Holy Ghost, he had lied “not unto men, but unto God.”

Job xxxiii. 4, xxvi. 13, where He is spoken of as the Creator.

1 Cor. ii. 10, where He is set forth as omniscient.

Heb. ix. 14, where He is called eternal.

None other than God can be personally present, as the Holy Spirit is, with every Christian.

On the other hand, that the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person from the Father and the Son, is plain from—

St. John xiv. 16, 17, where Christ says that He will pray the Father, and He will send another Comforter,—another, *i.e.* distinct from Himself; and being sent by the Father, therefore distinct from the Father.

St. John xv. 26, where Christ speaks of the Spirit, not as “It,” but “He.” See also Rom. viii. 16; 1 Cor. xii. 11.

The Holy Spirit has been ever in the world, dealing with men, guiding, purifying, testifying to them. Even before the Flood, God said, “My Spirit shall not always strive with men,” implying that He had so striven hitherto (Gen. vi. 3). The Holy Spirit was especially present with the Jews, as God’s peculiar people (Nehem. ix. 20; Isaiah lxiii. 10). And various gifts, of the mind and of the hand, were especially attributed to Him (Exod. xxxi. 3—

5; Numb. xi. 17, 25). He it was who spake by the holy men of old who wrote the books of the Bible, as He moved and taught them (2 Peter i. 21; Acts i. 16, xxviii. 25). And not only must we attribute all the graces of the saints of old—the faith of Abraham, the purity of Joseph, the patience of Job, the courageous devotion of Daniel—to the operation of the same Holy Spirit, but all that there is of good among the heathen, all feeling after God, if haply they may find Him, is His work. Christ in the days of His ministry declared that the Holy Spirit waited on the prayers of every one that sought Him earnestly (St. Luke xi. 13).

Still, there was a sense in which the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified (St. John vii. 39). God had long promised that a time should come when there should be a special and abundant outpouring of the Spirit (Isaiah xi. 2, xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28, 29). And as the time for the fulfilment of the promise drew nigh, Christ repeated it with emphasis (St. John xiv., xv., xvi.). He told His disciples that His own departure would be a gain, not a loss, because the Spirit would come, not as a mere influence, or operation, but by a real, personal indwelling.

This promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost, when, in visible form, as of divided tongues of fire, and with the sound of a rushing, mighty wind, the Holy Ghost came down upon the Apostles (Acts ii. 1—4). They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. This marvellous gift of tongues assured them that then and there the Holy

Ghost had descended to make His abode in their hearts. And the outward signs which accompanied the descent of the Holy Ghost, the wind and the fire (St. John iii. 8; St. Matt. iii. 11), bore witness to the special nature and effect of His operation.

Doubtless the gift bestowed on the Apostles at Pentecost was not the first, nor the only aid of the Holy Spirit which they received (St. John xx. 22); but there was now a personal indwelling (Rom. viii. 11; 2 Tim. i. 14) of the Comforter, such as there had not been before,—no passing visit, no fitful transient power, but a continuous presence: “I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (2 Cor. vi. 16; Exod. xxix. 45; Jerem. xxxi. 33). All the great things which Christ assured them should flow from His coming were now fulfilled. He was the Comforter, the Remembrancer, the Teacher, the inward Advocate, the very Representative of Christ in their souls. His coming made it even a gain that the Saviour had departed; so much better was it to have the Father and the Son dwelling in them by the Spirit, than to have even the daily comfort and happiness of the company and converse of the Incarnate Son of God below.

And the Apostles not only received the Holy Spirit for themselves, for their own individual comfort, guidance, and sanctification, but in order that from them and by them He might be diffused to the whole body of Christians to the end of time. That diffusion began at once by the baptism of the three thousand on the Day of Pentecost; and all who have from that day been grafted into Christ by

Baptism have received, through God's mercy, the same indwelling gift.

It is especially from Him that other holy ordinances draw their efficacy. His is the grace of Confirmation. It is the Holy Ghost who makes men to be overseers over the flock of God (Acts xx. 28), and by whom they are empowered to forgive and retain sins (St. John xx. 22).

The presence of the Holy Spirit is the distinctive inheritance of the Christian Church, the prolongation of the work of Christ, the complement of the Incarnation. As it was the beginning of Christ's work that the Godhead should be clothed with humanity, so it is the end of it, that humanity should be exalted by the presence of an indwelling Godhead (Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. iii. 16, vi. 19). Hence this present time is emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit, the ministration of righteousness (2 Cor. iii. 8, 9), the time of the new covenant, whereby God promises to put His laws in our minds and write them in our hearts (Jer. xxxi. 31—34; Heb. viii. 8—13).

The special office of the Holy Spirit is to sanctify men (2 Thess. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 2). He is the Author of all goodness in them, giving them a good will, and working with them when they have that will. He it is who leads them in the right way (Rom. viii. 14), who works in them holy graces, the fruits of the Spirit (Eph. v. 9; Gal. v. 22, 23), who pours the love of God into the heart (Rom. v. 5), who convinces of sin (St. John xvi. 9), who opens the mind to know the things which the natural man cannot receive (1 Cor. ii. 12—15), who

helps our infirmities, and teaches us how to pray (Rom. viii. 26).

The question is, Does He thus work in, and guide, our hearts? For men have the terrible power of resisting, grieving, and in the end quenching, the Holy Spirit (Acts vii. 51; Eph. iv. 30; 1 Thess. v. 19).

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, who hast promised to give the Holy Spirit to all that ask Thee, pour down upon us the abundance of Thy grace, that we may daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until we come unto Thine everlasting kingdom.

We thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast made us partakers of the Holy Ghost in our baptism; may we never grieve Him, nor resist His godly motions, but may He in all things direct and rule our hearts. May He defend us with His mighty power, enrich us with His manifold gifts, refresh us with His comforts, and lead us in the way everlasting, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Daniel ii. 31—45.

Acts ii. 37—47.

St. Matthew xiii. 24—30, 47, 48. Ephes. ii. 19—22, iv. 11—16.

St. Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

LESSON XI.

B. THE VOW OF FAITH (*continued*).

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

CHRIST came into the world, not only to be a sacrifice for sin, and an example of holiness, but to establish a kingdom, to found a special society or community, which should be separate from all earthly communities, and should acknowledge Him as its Head, and be His successor, as it were, on earth.

This kingdom was the subject of prophecy (Isaiah ii. 2, ix. 6, 7). Daniel, especially, foretold that when the Assyrian, Persian, and Grecian empires had passed away, and after the fourth great empire of Rome had been established, the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed (ii. 44), and that the Son of Man should have given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him (vii. 14).

When the Baptist came, he announced the immediate approach of that kingdom: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (St. Matt. iii. 2). So also Christ began His ministry (St. Matt. iv. 17). The kingdom of heaven was the great topic of His parables. He speaks of this kingdom as His "Church" (St. Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17). And after His resurrection He specially instructed His Apostles with reference to it (Acts i. 3).

The foundation of this kingdom, the Church, was

laid on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came down on the Apostles, and when three thousand were baptized (Acts ii. 4, 38, 41). Daily additions were made to it; and ever since it has been growing throughout the world by successive incorporations up to the present time.

The word "Church" means literally "the Lord's House" (Eph. ii. 19; 1 Tim. iii. 15; Heb. iii. 6, x. 21; 1 Peter ii. 5), the whole congregation of Christian people dispersed throughout the world (see Canon LV.), or, as we gather from Acts ii. 42—47, a society of believing and baptized persons, continuing steadfastly in the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles and in breaking of bread and in prayers. The Greek word *Ecclesia* signifies that the members of the Church are called out of their own individual life to form one body.

The Church, therefore, is not merely the aggregate of believers, but a visible, organized society, into which men are admitted by Baptism. It is consequently a mixed body, including unfaithful as well as faithful members (comp. the Parables of the Net, St. Matt. xiii. 47, 48; of the Tares, *ibid.* 24—30; of the Vine with the fruitful and unfruitful branches, St. John xv. 1—6; see also 2 Tim. ii. 20). But it is a body endowed with spiritual privileges; *e.g.*, it is the body of Christ (Eph. i. 23, "Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all"—the fulness, that is, which is filled up by Christ; the receptacle, as it were, of all His gifts, graces, and blessings. See Eph. iv. 12, v. 23, 30; Col. i. 24; Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 27): it is the Temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph.

ii. 21, 22 ; 1 Peter ii. 5 ; Heb. xii. 22, 23) : it is the Bride of Christ (Eph. v. 25—29 ; Rev. xxi. 2, 9).

It has certain outward marks or signs. The 19th Article specifies two :—

(i.) In it “ the pure word of God ”—that is, the true faith—“ is preached.” There is a certain body of truth which the Church maintains and teaches, “ the faith once for all delivered to the saints ” (Jude 3), probably the Apostles’ Creed. Hence the Church is called “ the pillar and ground of the truth ” (1 Tim. iii. 15). Christ bade His Apostles to go into all the world, and not only make disciples of the nations, but teach them to observe all things that He had commanded (St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20) ; and it is especially mentioned of the first Christians that they continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine (Acts ii. 42).

(ii.) In the Church “ the Sacraments are duly ministered according to Christ’s ordinance.” By Baptism we are made members of Christ, united to Christ as our Head, taken into His mystical Body : by the Lord’s Supper that union is maintained and strengthened. Christ commanded His Apostles to make disciples of all nations by *baptizing* them ; and the Apostles uniformly acted on this command and baptized all their converts (Acts ii. 38, 41, viii. 12, 13, 36—38, ix. 18, x. 47, 48, xvi. 14, 15, 33, xix. 3—5 ; Rom. vi. 3, 4 ; Gal. iii. 27). So with regard to the other Sacrament, Christ’s command, “ Do this in remembrance of Me,” has always been considered as making the celebration of the Holy Communion binding on the Church. And it is expressly said that the early Christians continued stedfastly

in the breaking of bread (Acts ii. 42; see also Acts xx. 7, 11).

But the sacraments must be "*duly* ministered according to Christ's ordinance," that is, there must be that form of administration which Christ appointed, which implies, in the case of Baptism, the use of water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and in the Lord's Supper the solemn offering of bread and wine as a memorial of Christ's sacrifice upon the cross, and the due reception of the same by the communicants, as, in some true sense, the body and blood of Christ (St. Matt. xxvi. 26—28; xxviii. 19, 20). No "ordinance of Christ" lays down in express terms who is the lawful minister of the sacraments. The command to baptize was given originally to the Apostles; but we know that they were not the only baptizers, even in their own time. Philip the Deacon baptized the Samaritans and the Eunuch (Acts viii. 12, 13, 38); the unknown Ananias baptized St. Paul (Acts ix. 18, xxii. 16). Not St. Peter, but his companions, baptized Cornelius and his friends (Acts x. 48). Comp. 1 Cor. i. 14, where St. Paul declares that only a few of the Corinthian converts had been baptized by his hand. In times subsequent to the Apostles the custom of the Church seems to have been for Baptism to be administered, except in cases of necessity, only by ordained ministers. By "ordained ministers" are meant those who have been constituted such by the laying on of hands by bishops, who had been themselves constituted in like manner, and so back to the Apostles. See the Preface to the Ordination Service: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the

Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation that no man might presume to execute any of them except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful," that is, episcopal, "authority." As regards the Holy Communion, there never was any doubt but that the consecration of the bread and wine to their mysterious purposes belonged exclusively to the clergy.

The Creed does not define the Church, but gives certain titles:—

Holy: not because all its members are holy (see Parables of the Tares and the Net), but because it is the body of Christ, and Christ dwells in it by His Spirit; and because, moreover, it is Christ's design that all the separate members should be holy (1 Peter ii. 9; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Thess. iv. 3, 7).

Catholic; i.e. universal, not confined to any particular class, nation, or age. Every member of the human family may become a member of the Church. Christ's command was, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (St. Mark xvi. 15; Rev. v. 9, vii. 9).

In the Nicene Creed this Article runs: "And in one Catholic and Apostolic Church."

One. All Christians are spoken of in the New Testament as one, that is, as united, in some sense or another. Not only did our Saviour in His solemn

intercession, before His death, declare His purpose that they should be one (St. John xvii. 20—23); but this unity is expressly asserted of them in the Epistles :

1 Cor. xii. 12: "As the [human] body is one, and hath many members; so also is Christ;" that is, the body of which Christ is the Head.

Eph. iv. 4—6: "There is one body and one Spirit," &c.

This body is spoken of as "one man," one new spiritual man (Eph. ii. 13, iv. 13); one building (Eph. ii. 20—22); one flock under one Shepherd (St. John x. 16). As by Baptism men are incorporated into Christ's body, the Church (1 Cor. xii. 13), so by the Holy Communion they are preserved in that body. Wherever there is a due celebration of the Holy Communion, there there is a branch of the one Church (1 Cor. x. 17).

There can be no doubt that our Saviour meant that there should be outward communion as well as inward unity. The early Christians continued stedfastly in the Apostles' fellowship as well as doctrine. One portion of the Church may indeed be justified in breaking off communion with other portions, as a protest against their errors in doctrine or practice; but such separation is in itself an evil, and those who cause divisions without sufficient ground are expressly censured (Rom. xvi. 17, 18; 1 Cor. i. 10; Jude 19).

Apostolic; i.e. built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets (Eph. ii. 20). The Apostles were the foundation on whom the building of the Church was reared (Rev. xxi. 14): as Christ says

specially of St. Peter, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church" (St. Matt. xvi. 18). It is doubtful whether "Prophets" mean the prophets of the Old or the New Testament. St. Paul's saying, "God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets" (1 Cor. xii. 28), would rather lead to the belief that the prophets of the New Testament are alluded to (Eph. iv. 11). The Church sprang from the Apostles, and the chief governors of the Church have derived their authority by direct succession from the Apostles: "Lo, I am with you (and therefore with your successors) always, even unto the end of the world."

When we say therefore, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," we profess our conviction that all Christians form one great society, some of whose members are still living upon earth, some have passed into the other world;—that this society, which began on the Day of Pentecost, is the mystical body of Christ, united to Him by the blessed sacraments. We believe that we ourselves belong to this body, and are so joined to the Apostles, having the same faith, the same ordained ministers, the same sacraments, and to a great extent the same prayers (Acts ii. 42); and are thus fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, who hast called us out of the world to be members of Thy Church on earth, grant

that we may walk worthy of our high calling. We have been taken into Thy kingdom; may we be careful in all things to be ruled by its laws. We have been admitted into the fellowship of the Apostles; may we thankfully cherish all the privileges of that fellowship, and keep fast hold of the doctrine delivered by them. We have been grafted into the body of Christ; may we strive to be holy even as He is holy, so that we may never be cut off from Him, but abiding in Him by a lively faith, and growing up unto Him in all things, may be found hereafter among the number of those who are chosen as well as called—that blessed company of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, who shall stand before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes, and with palms in their hands. Hear us, we pray, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Ephesians iv. 1—6.

Hebrews xii. 22—24.

Romans iii. 9—26.

Acts ii. 38, 39.

St. John xx. 22, 23.

St. Luke xv. 11—24.

1 John i. 8, 9.

LESSON XII.

B. THE VOW OF FAITH (*continued*).

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS: THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

THE four Articles which follow the Holy Catholic Church set forth the several privileges to be obtained in the Church. The first is—

I. THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

The word "Saints," that is, holy persons, is almost invariably used in the New Testament as equivalent to Christians, members of Christ's Church: it denotes men's privileges and duties, therefore, rather than their actual holiness. But here, in the Creed, it seems to mean those who are really holy, the true and living members of Christ, whether in this world, or in the world of departed spirits.

The saints have communion or fellowship—

i. With God. Being made by the Holy Spirit members of Christ, they are therefore the children of God: their "fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John i. 3).

ii. With one another. Being united to Christ, the head of the mystical body, they are united to each other. This is implied in the figure of the body and its members (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Rom. xii. 4, 5); of the vine and its branches (St. John xv. 5); of the building and its separate stones (1 Peter ii. 5).

iii. With the saints departed. "Ye are come (not, ye *shall* come) to the spirits of just men made

perfect" (Heb. xii. 23). The departed saints are most closely united to Christ; and when the true believer draws near to Christ in prayer, he breathes the same atmosphere of communion with Christ which they breathe who are with Him in Paradise. Indeed, at all times, so far as we are ourselves living members of Christ, we are, in some wonderful way, one with all the saints who have gone before us—not only the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and Martyrs of former times, but those also of our own friends who have died in the fear of God.

iv. With the Holy Angels. St. Paul, speaking of the privileges of Christians, says that they are come to "an innumerable company of angels" (Heb. xii. 22). The angels feel an exceeding interest in us, rejoicing over the penitent, and ministering to the heirs of salvation (Heb. i. 14; St. Luke xv. 7, 10).

This communion of saints is God's gift, the work of the Holy Ghost; but it involves duties on man's part. If there is this communion, it should show itself—

(i.) In united worship. The early Christians were careful to continue steadfastly in the Apostles' fellowship (Acts ii. 42. See 1 Cor. i. 10—12); though we may hope that the suspension of such united worship or intercommunion does not exclude real spiritual unity.

(ii.) In mutual love and kindness. The early Christians were "of one heart and of one soul" (Acts ii. 44, 45, iv. 32); and we are especially required to love one another (1 John iv. 7, 21; St. John xiii. 34, 35).

The second privilege of the Church is—

II. THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

First, as regards sins; Scripture teaches us that we are all sinners.

i. *We inherit a sinful nature.*

God made man upright, in His own image and likeness (Gen. i. 26, 27; Eccles. vii. 29.) "Certain supernatural gifts and powers were infused into him by the Spirit of God."—BP. BULL. When he fell, his union with God was broken, and those supernatural gifts were lost. Original sin is the want of original righteousness. All have sinned and come short of the glory, that is, the perfect image of God (Rom. iii. 23. Cf. 1 Cor. xi. 7). Sin is a corruption, not part of man's true nature: but since the Fall man's nature has not been as it was originally; it is corrupt. St. John iii. 6. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" that is, man inherits by birth a carnal, unholy nature.

Rom. v. 12. "By one man sin entered into the world."

Ibid. 19. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners."

Rom. vii. 18. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh (the original, as opposed to the renewed, nature), dwelleth no good thing."

Rom. viii. 3. Our nature is called "sinful flesh."

The Psalmist says of himself that he was shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin (Psalm li. 5). See also Rom. viii. 7, 8; Eph. iv. 22.

ii. *We are sinners by practice.*

Scripture teaches this as a doctrine:

Psalm cxliii. 2. "In Thy sight shall no man living be justified."

Prov. xx. 9. "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?"

Gal. iii. 22. "The Scripture hath concluded all under sin."

St. James iii. 2. "In many things we offend all."

1 John i. 8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

It is to be observed that St. Paul is more careful to enforce the positive effect of original sin on men's own habits and lives, than to dwell on the punishment to which they are liable in consequence of Adam's sin. He takes great pains to bring home to those whom he is addressing their own actual sinfulness (1 Cor. vi. 11; Eph. ii. 1—3; Col. i. 21; Titus iii. 3).

We know, moreover, from our own experience of ourselves and others, how readily men yield, in thought, word, and deed, to the corrupt inclinations of their nature.

Secondly. Sin separates from God, and must be forgiven. God is holy and hates sin (Isaiah lix. 2).

Rom. i. 18. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men."

Ezek. xviii. 4. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of sin is death."

St. James i. 15. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Men are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1, 5); alienated from the life of God (Eph. iv. 18); enemies (Rom. v. 10); guilty before God (Rom. iii. 19).

Thirdly. There is forgiveness with God (Psalm cxxx. 4). God has provided an atonement, by which the gulph between sinners and Himself may be bridged over, and we who were afar off be brought near. Adam had no sooner incurred the sentence of death, than the promise was given that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head (Gen. iii. 15). Under the Law there was a continual sacrifice offered up for the sins of both priest and people, and a continual promise of pardon to the returning and penitent sinner. Very numerous and very gracious are the assurances of forgiveness in the Prophets (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7; Psalm ciii. 8—12; Isaiah xxx. 18, 19; Jerem. xxxi. 34, xxxiii. 8; Ezek. xvi. 60—63, xxxiii. 12—19; Dan. ix. 24; Micah vii. 18).

In the fulness of time God sent His only-begotten Son, to be the Lamb of God who should take away the sin of the world (St. John i. 29); to give His life a ransom for many (St. Matt. xx. 28); to bear His own self our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter ii. 24). It is His will that repentance and remission of sins should be proclaimed in His Name among all nations (St. Luke xxiv. 47; Acts xiii. 38).

Forgiveness, then, is the free gift of God through Christ, bestowed on all who truly sought it under the Old Testament, and proclaimed as a sure privilege of Christians under the Gospel.

i. It is pledged to all baptized Christians. For the connexion between Baptism and forgiveness, see Acts ii. 38, 39, xxii. 16; Eph. v. 25, 26; Heb. x. 22. Hence in the Nicene Creed, this Article stands,

“I believe in one Baptism for the remission of sins.”

ii. It is given freely, after Baptism, to the prayer of the penitent. In the Lord’s Prayer, *e.g.*, Christians are taught to pray daily that their sins may be forgiven (St. Matt. vi. 12). The Prodigal Son (St. Luke xv.) seems to set forth the case of a Christian falling into grievous sin, and being, on repentance, received and pardoned.

1 John i. 9. “If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.”

Ibid. ii. 1. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

But besides this, inasmuch as men require, not only pardon, but the assurance of pardon, God has appointed an order of men, whose very office it is to proclaim forgiveness to all who truly repent. Hence, not Baptism only, nor the prayer of penitence, but—

iii. The Absolution of the Church is a means of pardon (St. John xx. 22, 23). Being a power always needed, in one age as much as another, we cannot suppose that it was limited to the Apostles: on the contrary, it has passed to those who inherit their ministry. See the Form of Ordination of Priests, “Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest, &c. . . . Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.” Accordingly, whenever Christians draw near to God in His house, whether in the ordinary daily service, or at the celebration of the Holy Communion, after they have joined in confessing their sins, the priest stands forth as Christ’s ambassador, to whom the ministry of recon-

ciliation is entrusted (2 Cor. v. 18), and proclaims with authority the pardon of the penitent. See also the Form of Absolution in the Visitation Service, and the latter part of the first exhortation to the Holy Communion. St. James v. 14, 15.

iv. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is also a special means of pardon (St. Matt. xxvi. 28).

The conditions on which we may hope for forgiveness are—

1. Repentance and faith (Acts iii. 19, x. 43, xxvi. 20; 1 John i. 9; Rom. iii. 26).

2. Forgiveness of injuries (St. Matt. vi. 14; St. Mark xi. 25, 26).

3. Charity to the souls and bodies of men (St. James v. 20; St. Matt. v. 7; 1 Peter iv. 8).

COLLECT.

O gracious God, whose fatherly love outlives even our repeated transgressions, we, Thy erring children, humbly confess our sin to Thee, and earnestly entreat Thy mercy.

Forgive, we pray Thee, all the folly and wilfulness of our childhood and our later transgressions, our hastiness to evil and our unwillingness to do good. We are not worthy to be called Thy sons; for not only have we sinned against Thee, but we have too often made light of our sins, and not mourned for them as we ought. Grant us the grace of godly sorrow; and impute not unto us our former sins, but strengthen us with Thy blessed Spirit, that when Thou art pleased to call us hence,

we may be taken into Thy favour, through the merits of Thy most dearly-beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Job xix. 25—27.

1 Corinthians xv.

St. John v. 28, 29, xi. 25, 26.

Rev. vii. 9—17, xxii. 1—5.

LESSON XIII.

B. VOW OF FAITH (*continued*).THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE
EVERLASTING.

IN the Nicene Creed it is, "I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."

III. THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

This is the third privilege of the Church.

One part of the sentence on Adam for his sin was, that his body should die: "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen. iii. 19). See also Job xxi. 26, xxxiv. 15; Eccles. iii. 20, xii. 7. But death is dissolution, not annihilation. The body cannot cease to exist: only, as a punishment for sin, the elements of which it is composed return for a while to their native earth.

The separate existence of the *soul* after death has been a common belief among heathen nations; but they had no suspicion, far less any knowledge, of the resurrection of the body. It was when they heard of the resurrection of the dead that the Athenians derided St. Paul (Acts xvii. 31, 32).

The Jews seem to have anticipated a resurrection. See Job xix. 25—27; where Job declares his conviction that in the latter day his Redeemer would personally manifest Himself, and that he, Job, should then see Him in his body (*lit.* from out of his flesh), with his own eyes, notwithstanding the destruction of the skin, that is, the outward man.

Isaiah xxvi. 19. "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead;" that is, the evil dead. "Isaiah foretells the resurrection of the good and bad; only that the good alone should rise to joy. As the dew quickens the vegetation which lies parched and dead, so the life-giving power of God should quicken those long dead."

Daniel xii. 2. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Ezekiel xxxvii. 1—10. "Never," says St. Jerome, "would the likeness of resurrection be used, to signify the restoration of the people of Israel, unless the resurrection itself stood firm, and was believed as to be: for no one confirms things uncertain through things which are not."

In our Lord's time the Jews, with the exception of the Sadducees, believed in the Resurrection. Martha represented the common belief, when she said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (St. John xi. 24).

Our Lord implies that the doctrine was plainly taught in the Old Testament. See St. Luke xx. 37: "That the dead are raised, Moses showed at the bush," &c. God's calling Himself the God of Abraham proved that Abraham was alive; and if Abraham were alive, then not his soul only, but his body also, was really living, and would one day awake from its sleep.

The doctrine is clearly revealed in the New

Testament (St. John v. 28, 29; 1 Cor. xv. 42—54; 1 Thess. iv. 14—16; St. John xi. 25, 26).

Yet there were some who said that there was no resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. xv. 12), and others, as Hymenæus and Philetus, who explained the resurrection as an allegory (2 Tim. ii. 18).

All men, good and bad, will rise (St. John v. 28, 29; Dan. xii. 2; Acts xxiv. 15, where St. Paul distinctly expresses his belief that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust). But in most of the passages which speak of the Resurrection, the reference is to the resurrection of believers; and it is therefore specially connected with the Resurrection of our Lord. N.B. The general resurrection is called simply the resurrection *of* the dead; the resurrection of believers is the resurrection *from* the dead (St. Luke xx. 35; Acts iv. 2; Philip. iii. 11, according to the true reading. Compare also 1 Peter i. 3).

Christ, rising from the dead, is the first-fruits of them that slept (1 Cor. xv. 20). And His Resurrection is not only the cause, but the pattern of the resurrection of His members. As His body was essentially the same, yet changed, as appears from the different manner of His manifestations; so will it be with the bodies of His people. Each man will rise with his own body, but it will be marvellously changed (1 Cor. xv. 51). It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption (1 Cor. xv. 42—44). Christ will change the fashion of the body of our humiliation, and conform it to the likeness of the body of His glory (Philip. iii. 20).

The last privilege of the Church is—

IV. THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

This Article seems so closely connected with the preceding, that it can scarcely be doubted that by "everlasting life" is here specially meant that life to which the righteous will rise at Christ's coming (St. John v. 29; St. Matt. xxv. 46). Compare the expression "enter into life" (St. Matt. xix. 17).

But, to understand fully what is meant by everlasting life, it must be remembered that it is spoken of in Scripture as a *present*, and not merely as a *future* blessing.

St. John xvii. 3. "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

St. John v. 24. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life." Ibid. vi. 40—47.

Rom. vi. 23. "The gift of God is eternal life."

The true life of the Christian consists in union with Christ. He is "the life" (St. John xiv. 6, xi. 25, 26). "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

What we call death is to the believer but a sleep. The life of the soul lasts on through death: death is but an accident which happens to him.

This life, like the natural life, begins with birth; that is, in Baptism (St. John iii. 3). We are taken into Christ and so quickened: "In Christ all are made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22). "He that hath the Son hath life" (1 John v. 12). This life is maintained by faith (Gal. ii. 20), and obedience (St. John viii. 51, "If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death"), and Holy Communion (St. John vi. 54).

This everlasting life will be perfected hereafter. Scripture teaches us that—

i. We shall be free from—

1. Pain and sorrow (Rev. vii. 17, xxi. 4).
2. Want (Rev. vii. 16).
3. Death (1 Cor. xv. 26; Rev. xx. 14, xxi. 4).
4. Sin (Eph. v. 27; Rev. vii. 14, xix. 8).

ii. We shall enjoy—

1. Rest (Heb. iv. 9; Isaiah lvii. 1, 2).
2. The presence of God (1 John iii. 2; 1 Thess. iv. 17; St. John xii. 26, xiv. 3, xvii. 24).
3. Likeness to Christ—
In body (Philip. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 49).
In spirit (1 John iii. 2; Rom. viii. 29).

Passages which speak of the happiness of heaven (Rev. vii. 9—17, xxii. 1—5).

As there is an eternal life, so also is there an eternal death, which also begins here. So far as men sin, they are spiritually dead. God hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but that he should turn, and, in turning, live. If, however, he depart in a state of death, Scripture reveals no hope of further quickening. Eternal death, eternal punishment, is set forth as his portion. It is chiefly Christ Himself who speaks of the wrath to come (St. John iii. 36; St. Matt. xxv. 46; St. Mark ix. 43, 44). “Himself reveals the sinner’s hell.”

COLLECT.

O merciful God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die; and whosoever believeth in Him, shall not die eternally:

we meekly beseech Thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in Him; and that at the general resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in Thy sight; and receive that blessing, which Thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear Thee, saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world: Grant this, we beseech Thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Deuteronomy vi. 4.	St. Matthew xxviii. 19.
Genesis i. 26.	2 Corinthians xiii. 14.
Numbers vi. 22—27.	St. John i. 1.
Isaiah vi. 1—4, vii. 14, ix. 6.	Hebrews i. 1—5.

LESSON XIV.

B. THE VOW OF FAITH (*continued*).

SUMMARY OF THE CREED.

THE fundamental truth of religion is, that there is One God. This truth was specially enforced upon the Israelites under the old dispensation, in opposition to the "gods many and lords many" of the heathen nations. "From the earliest antiquity downwards, this was the essential basis of the Old Testament religion."

Deut. vi. 4. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord." See also Deut. iv. 35, xxxii. 39; Isaiah xlii. 8, xliii. 10—13, xliv. 6, 8, xlv. 5, 6, 18, 21, 22, xlviii. 11, 12.

But there are not wanting, even in the Old Testament, indications of a plurality of Persons in the Godhead.

Gen. i. 1. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Here, in the Hebrew, the word *God* is plural, the verb *created* singular.

i. 26. "Let Us make man in Our image."

iii. 22. "The man is become as one of Us."

xi. 7. "Go to: let Us go down and there confound their language."

These passages point to a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, while the following would prepare men for the future revelation of the Christian doctrine of the *Trinity* in Unity.

Numb. vi. 22—27, where, in the solemn form of

blessing, the priest was instructed to repeat the holy Name three times.

Isaiah vi. 1—4, where Isaiah gives the hymn of the Seraphim, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth."

"It is impossible not to be struck with the recurrence of the threefold rhythm of prayer and praise, again and again, in the Psalter: Psalm xxix. 4, 5, and 7, 8, 9, xcvi. 1, 2, and 7, 8, cxv. 9, 10, 11, cxviii. 2—4, 10—12, 15, 16."

There was, moreover, much in the language of the ancient prophets respecting the Messiah, which marked Him out as God, sharing with the Father the sacred name of Jehovah, yet as clearly distinct from the Father.

Psalm xlv. 6. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

Psalm cx. 1. "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool" (St. Matt. xxii. 43—45).

Isaiah ix. 6. "The mighty God."

Jer. xxiii. 6. "The Lord our righteousness."

Whether the truth contained in these utterances was fully discerned at the time or no, there it lay in the sacred text, "like a diamond in a mine, waiting only for the ray from heaven" to shine upon it.

In the New Testament the unity of the Godhead is asserted as plainly, and upheld as strictly, as in the Old.

St. John xvii. 3. "The only true God."

1 Cor. viii. 6. "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him."

1 Tim. i. 17. "Unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God."

1 Tim. vi. 15, 16. "The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see."

At the same time it clearly appears that this One God is a God in Three Persons.

St. Matt. xxviii. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 14, where the Three Persons are joined together in the solemn forms of baptism and blessing.

And so, with regard to each of the Three Persons separately, we are distinctly taught—

i. That the Father is God. "One God and Father of all" (Eph. iv. 6). He is the Fount or Source of Godhead, from whom, by eternal generation and procession respectively, the Son and Holy Spirit derive their personal being.

ii. That the Son is God (St. John i. 1. Comp. Rev. xix. 13).

Rom. ix. 5. "Who is over all, God blessed for ever."

Col. ii. 9. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

St. John x. 30. "I and my Father are One" (xvii. 11, 22).

Philip. ii. 5—9; 1 John v. 20.

iii. That the Holy Ghost is God. Various functions and powers are ascribed to Him, which none but God can discharge.

1. He is the great worker of miracles (Rom. xv. 19; 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9; St. Matt. xii. 28).

2. He is the Inspirer of the Prophets, and can teach all things (St. Luke xii. 12; St. John xiv. 26, xvi. 13; Acts xxviii. 25; 1 Cor. ii. 13; Eph. iii. 5; 1 Peter i. 11, 12; 2 Peter i. 21).

3. He dwells in temples as God (1 Cor. iii. 16, vi. 19).

4. He is the Source of all holiness (1 Cor. vi. 11; Gal. v. 16).

5. He is omniscient (1 Cor. ii. 10), everlasting (Heb. ix. 14).

The work of *creation* is especially ascribed to the Father: "Who made me and all the world."

Rom. xi. 36. "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things." The Eternal Father is the ultimate Source of all life, both *intra Deum* and *extra Deum*.

Rev. iv. 11. "Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."

Heb. i. 2. "By whom also He made the worlds."

Eph. iii. 9. "Who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Rev. x. 6. The angel sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the sea (xiv. 7).

See also Acts xiv. 15, xvii. 24; Nehem. ix. 6.

Redemption is the special work of the Son: "Who hath redeemed me and all mankind."

Gal. iii. 13. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law" (iv. 5).

Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption through His blood" (1 Peter i. 18, 19; Heb. ix. 12, 14; Rev. v. 9).

“All mankind.” In Christ’s intention the whole world was redeemed (1 Tim. ii. 4—6, iv. 10; Titus ii. 11).

If Christ has purchased us, we are not our own, but His (1 Cor. vi. 20).

Sanctification is the special work of the Holy Ghost. Christ’s promise was, that He should convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (St. John xvi. 8—11). The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, &c. (Gal. v. 22, 23; Eph. v. 9). “Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.”

Observe the present tense, “*sanctifieth*.” The acts of creation and redemption are past, sanctification still goes on; and as each child is taught to say, “Who sanctifieth *me*,” he claims for himself this continual work of the Holy Ghost. Having been born again of water and of the Spirit, the Holy Ghost dwells in him, and, if he do not resist His working, will sanctify him wholly, and preserve him blameless in body, soul, and spirit, unto the coming of the Lord Jesus. God’s “elect or chosen people” means sometimes those who are chosen to the present privileges of the kingdom of God, which privileges may be forfeited (1 Peter i. 2, ii. 9, compared with 2 Peter i. 10), sometimes those who will be ultimately admitted into heaven (St. Matt. xx. 16; St. Mark xiii. 27).

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, who hast graciously revealed to us the full truth concerning Thyself, as One God in Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,

grant that we may not only continue steadfast in the faith which Thou hast taught, but may so love Thee as our Father, so trust in Thee as our only Saviour, so yield ourselves to Thee as our Guide and Comforter, that Thou mayest be indeed our God, the one Thing that we desire and long for, and, amid the failure of all earthly hopes, the strength of our heart and our portion for ever. Grant this, O gracious God, for Thy love and mercy's sake. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Exodus xix., xx., xxxiv. 1—4. Romans xiii. 8—10.
St. Matthew xxii. 36—40. Hebrews viii. 8—10.

LESSON XV.

C. THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE.

THE third part of our baptismal vow is, that we should keep God's holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life; that is, we promise not only to renounce what God hates, and believe what He reveals, but also to do what He commands.

Every one who is really in earnest will say, with Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6. Compare also Acts ii. 37, xvi. 30; St. Luke iii. 10.) Two answers are given in Scripture to this question—the one, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," and the other, "Keep God's Commandments" (Acts xvi. 31; St. Matt. xix. 17). These answers are substantially one, for they both imply an entire surrender of ourselves to God, arising, in the one case, from a deep conviction that by grace alone can we be saved, and, in the other, from a hearty desire to do what we can to please Him.

To suppose that we can of ourselves so obey God's Commandments as to be justified in His sight, is contrary both to Scripture and our own experience. We can have no hope of justification except in and through Christ. Without faith it is impossible to please God. On the other hand, faith without works is dead, being alone (St. James ii. 17, 26).

Therefore, together with a hearty trust in God's

mercy in Christ, there must be a fixed determination to do God's will in all things; but as we need in many particulars to be informed what God's will is, He has been pleased to set it forth for us in what are called "The Ten Commandments," which, rightly understood, contain the sum and substance of our duty.

The Commandments were first given to the Israelites under circumstances of peculiar awfulness. When Almighty God brought His people out of Egypt, He led them deep into the desert, amid the bare and silent mountains, and then bade them prepare to receive on a certain day a special communication from Himself. When the appointed morning broke, there were thunders and lightnings, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, and on the mountain itself a thick cloud and darkness (Exod. xix.).

The Israelites stood at the foot of the Mount, trembling, afraid to approach God. They did not see Him, but they were taught to believe that He was there. And presently they heard His voice speaking to them out of the midst of the fire; and what the voice said was the Ten Commandments. Moses stood between the Lord and them to show them the word of the Lord, and the people, awe-struck by the nearness of the Divine Presence, begged that God would speak to them henceforth through him, as the Divine Messenger (Deut. v. 5, 23-29). Still, it would seem that it was God Himself who spake to them, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage: thou shalt have no other gods before Me," and the rest.

Thus God made a covenant with them, promising to be their God, while they on their part were to keep His Commandments (Deut. iv. 13, v. 2). And this covenant was ratified by sacrifice; for when Moses had written the words of the covenant in a book, he took the blood of rams and goats, which he had sacrificed to God, and sprinkled it both on the book and on all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has enjoined unto you" (Exod. xxiv. 3—8; Heb. ix. 18—22).

Almighty God not only spake the Commandments, but He wrote them on two blocks of stone (Exod. xxiv. 12, xxxi. 18); not on one side only, but on both sides (Exod. xxxii. 15). When these tables were broken, God bade Moses prepare others, on which also He wrote the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments (Exod. xxxiv. 1, 4, 28). These tables were kept in the Ark, which was therefore called "the Ark of the Covenant" (Numb. x. 33; Deut. x. 5; 1 Kings viii. 9).

The usual method of dividing the Commandments assigns the first four to the First Table, and the six last to the Second Table. It is thought, however, by some that the fifth Commandment was originally included in the First Table, filial reverence having been regarded in early times as an absolute, unconditional duty, part of a man's duty to God: and it is to be observed that when St. Paul sums up the several duties comprehended in the one great law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," he enumerates the last five Commandments, but makes no mention of the fifth (Rom. xiii. 9).

It pleased God to enter into covenant with us

Christians also, when He made us His children in baptism. Strictly speaking, indeed, there cannot be a covenant between God and man. The blessing of our baptism is a free gift, an act of mere favour; but it comes to us in the way of a covenant, that is, as a promise with a condition annexed to it; and if we fail to fulfil the condition, we forfeit the promised blessing. And this our covenant, like the covenant with the Jews, has been sealed with blood, namely, the precious blood of Christ Himself (Heb. ix. 12; 1 Peter i. 18, 19).

God of His free mercy has brought us out of the Egypt of this world, out of the captivity and bondage of sin. He has broken our bonds asunder, and set our heart at liberty; and what He requires of us is, that we should run the way of His Commandments (Psalm cxix. 32).

The difference between the Old Covenant and the New is not so much in regard of what God requires, as in regard of the grace given to enable us to obey (Jer. xxxi. 31—34; Heb. viii. 8—10). “What the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. viii. 3, 4). By the grace of the Holy Spirit we may obey, if we will; not indeed perfectly, but so as to please God, and to be accepted for Christ’s sake. Hence, while the Law is called the ministration of condemnation and death, because men were punished for breaking it, though the Law itself gave them no power to keep it, the Gospel is called the

ministration of righteousness, that is, of the fulfilment of the Law, because it is the ministration of the Spirit, who enables them to fulfil it (2 Cor. iii. 7—9).

It might be thought, indeed, that the Commandments, being mostly negative, are not very difficult to keep, at least in the letter. Men are not much tempted to worship graven images, or to commit murder or adultery; but our Lord has taught us, not only that each Commandment is to be understood positively, as enjoining the grace most opposed to the sin forbidden (St. Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28); but He has summed up all the Commandments in two, the love of God and the love of our neighbour (St. Matt. xxii. 36—40).

When we promise, therefore, to keep God's Commandments, we promise to love God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves. And great and far-reaching as the promise is, it is not presumptuous to make it, because God has promised to help us by His Spirit. Without Him we can do nothing, but through His in-strengthening we can do all things.

COLLECT.

O Almighty and everlasting God, whose blessed Son came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him, grant us a like spirit of devotion to Thy holy will. May it be the one desire of our hearts to do in all things what Thou wouldest have us do.

Deliver us from the bondage of the world, and of

the flesh, that we may run the way of Thy Commandments; and in keeping Thy Commandments may please Thee both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Exodus xxxiv. 10—17.

Philippians iii. 19.

Colossians iii. 5.

Exodus xxxii.

1 Kings xii. 26—33.

Acts v. 3—9.

Ecclesiastes v. 2, 4.

St. Matthew v. 33—37.

LESSON XVI.

C. THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE (*continued*).

FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD COMMANDMENTS.

FIRST COMMANDMENT.—*Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.*

At the time when the Commandments were given, the knowledge and worship of the One true God was either wholly forgotten in the world, or sadly obscured. Even His own chosen people had fallen, once and again, into idolatry. Their ancestors had “served other gods” in their home in Mesopotamia (Josh. xxiv. 2), of which, perhaps, a relic remained in Laban’s images (Gen. xxxi. 19, 30). When Jacob returned from Laban to the land of Canaan, we find his family allowing themselves to be led away immediately into the worship of the gods of the Canaanites (Gen. xxxv. 2—4), and during their long sojourn in Egypt they defiled themselves with the idols of the land (Josh. xxiv. 14; Ezek. xx. 6—8).

Therefore Almighty God set in the forefront of His instructions the command, “Thou shalt have none other gods but Me;” and in various ways the warning was repeated, especially in regard to the gods of the nations round about them (Exod. xxxiv. 10—17). He who sacrificed to any other gods save unto the Lord only was to be put to death (Exod. xxii. 20); his nearest relations were to be the first to execute the sentence (Deut. xiii. 2—10, xvii. 2—5).

Nevertheless the Israelites were continually starting aside. Besides the golden calf, which they probably regarded as a symbol of the true God, they were seduced into the worship of the gods of neighbouring countries, *e.g.* Baal, the Sun-god, and Ashtaroth or Astarte, the Moon, of the Phœnicians (Numb. xxv. 3; Judges ii. 11—13, iii. 7, x. 10; 1 Kings xvi. 31, 32, xviii. 19, 22); Chemosh, the abomination of the Moabites (Numb. xxi. 29; 1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 13; Jer. xlvi. 7, 13, 46); Molech, or Milcom, the Fire-god, the abomination of the Ammonites (1 Kings xi. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 14, 13). Their apostasy brought on them God's judgments; the kingdom of Israel, first, and afterwards the kingdom of Judah, were destroyed and carried into captivity. Their sufferings did not *wholly* cure them (Ezra ix.), but after the return from captivity they were more true in their allegiance than before.

The Jews were of course wholly inexcusable in their departure from the true God; but even the heathen nations, to whom no direct revelation has been vouchsafed, might have remained faithful to Him, if they would. St. Paul says expressly (Rom. i. 19—23) that God's works in creation are such a standing proof of His power and goodness as to leave idolaters without excuse. But men would not keep God in their minds: some, as the nations of the East, worshipped the sun, moon, and stars; others, as the Greeks, degraded the idea of God by likening him to fallen man; others again, as the Egyptians, worshipped images of birds, beasts, and reptiles (Acts xiv. 17, xvii. 29).

We are not tempted to break this Commandment

in the letter, as the Three Children, who refused to worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Daniel iii.), or as the early Christians, who chose martyrdom rather than offer incense to the false gods of the heathen. But this Commandment is to be understood not only as forbidding the worship of false gods, but as enjoining the love and worship of the true. We break it, therefore, so far as we forget God, or give our chief thoughts and affections to any thing or person in the world rather than to Him (see Philip. iii. 19; Eph. v. 5; where the guilt of idolatry is extended to self-indulgence and covetousness. Cf. 2 Tim. iii. 4; St. Matt. vi. 24).

From the explanation given in our duty towards God, we learn that this Commandment binds us—

1. To believe in God; that is, not merely that He is, but that He is what He is, a God in three Persons, of infinite power, holiness, and love.

2. As a consequence of this belief, to fear Him, to be so full of awe and reverence before Him, as almost to shrink from Him from a sense of our own unworthiness (St. Luke v. 8): and—

3. To love Him with all our heart, *i.e.* all our affections; and mind, *i.e.* all our intellectual faculties; and soul, *i.e.* with all our will; and strength, *i.e.* with the full and entire devotion of all these powers.

SECOND COMMANDMENT.—*Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, &c.*

The first two Commandments are closely connected together: indeed, the Roman Catholic Church, following St. Augustine, counts them as one Commandment, making up the number ten by dividing

the last, separating coveting the wife from coveting the goods. This distinction is so unmeaning, that it seems preferable on every account to maintain our English division.

The first Commandment prohibits *polytheism*; the second, *image-worship*, including any image of the true God. It condemns therefore, by anticipation, the worship of the golden calf. The Israelites had been accustomed to see nature worshipped under the form of a calf; and when Moses lingered so long in the Mount that they did not expect to see him again, they induced Aaron to supply his place by providing for them a visible God to go before them, and to whom they might address themselves. Aaron made, therefore, a calf of gold as a representation of the One True God. Exod. xxxii. 4: "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." In like manner the calves which Jeroboam made were meant to be symbols of the true God. He set them up at Bethel and Dan, the two extremes of his kingdom, to suit the convenience of the people, and to draw them away from Jerusalem: and he appointed for their worship as much of the Mosaic ritual as he could (1 Kings xii. 26—33).

But God forbade such worship. Every image or likeness that was made for worship was condemned, whether of anything that is in heaven above, as the sun, moon, and stars, or in the earth beneath, as of men, birds, beasts, and creeping things; or in the water under the earth, as fish or crocodiles. We need not, indeed, understand the Commandment as forbidding the mere *making* of images or pictures, for God Himself ordered various likenesses to be

made for the Tabernacle, *e.g.* the Cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat (Exod. xxv. 18—20; 1 Kings vi. 29; 1 Chron. xxviii. 18, 19). It is the making such images as were intended to represent God, and therefore meant to be worshipped, that was condemned. Great stress is laid on the circumstance that the Israelites saw no similitude of God, when He came down on Mount Horeb (Deut. iv. 15), and therefore they could not make any. Cf. Isaiah xl. 18.

The design of the first Commandment was to teach the Israelites, that as their God was one in Himself, so was He to be one alone to them, the one object of their faith, and fear, and love. The distinguishing point in the second Commandment would seem to be, that the true God is a Spirit, a God out of sight: they had seen no likeness of Him, and they were to make none: they were not to worship, or call upon, or put their trust in anything material, but in the Invisible God. When, therefore, the Israelites took the Ark into the battle-field, as trusting to the symbol of God's Presence rather than to Himself (1 Sam. iv. 3—8), and when they offered incense to the brazen serpent (2 Kings xviii. 4), they broke the second Commandment.

The first Commandment enjoins the entire devotion of the heart; the second insists on pure worship, as the due expression of that devotion. If there is a tendency in men to forget God and give the heart to earthly things, so is there also a tendency either to neglect the worship of God, or to worship Him in a wrong way, or to trust in themselves or others rather than in Him.

It is true that since God has become incarnate in the person of Christ, it is lawful to attempt to portray Him as man; still it would seem as if the use of images or pictures in our prayers, and the offering of prayers to the saints for their intercession, even if we could be sure that they heard us, are contrary to the spirit of this Commandment. At all events, there is need of great watchfulness, lest what was intended as a help to devotion should have the effect, as in the one case, of drawing to the visible object some of the reverence which belongs to God alone; and in the other, of our being led to depend on the saints rather than on God.

The reason appended to the second Commandment for its observance—"For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God," &c.—may be considered as belonging to the first as well. See Exod. xxxiv. 14. Almighty God is pleased to say that He is jealous of our affection and of our trust: it is a grief to Him if we care for anything more than for Him, or if from undue fear we shrink from putting our whole trust in Him. He threatens also to punish those who are unfaithful to Him, not only in themselves, but in their children to the third and fourth generation. This would seem to apply only to temporal punishment; and it implies further that the children imitate their parents' sins. For Almighty God says in Ezekiel (xviii. 20), "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father."

The ruin of the ten tribes is often traced back to the sin of Jeroboam (1 Kings xiii. 34, xiv. 10, 16, xv. 29, 30). Compare also the threatening against

Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 29), and against Manasseh (2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27, xxiv. 3). Though Josiah's piety won for him that he should be borne early to the grave, that he might not see the evils that were to befall Judah and Jerusalem, the Divine vengeance did not spare his children.

But mercy rejoiceth against judgment. God promises to show mercy unto thousands (of generations) in them that love Him and keep His commandments. The continued favour shown to the Israelites for Abraham's sake is a proof of this (Deut. vii. 8, 9).

THIRD COMMANDMENT.—*Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, &c.*

To "take God's name in vain" means literally to utter it for a lie, or, as we should say, to take a false oath. Lev. xix. 12: "Ye shall not swear by My name falsely."

A false oath may be taken in two ways:

i. By calling God to witness that what we say is true, when it is false—the sin of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v. 3—9).

ii. By breaking a vow (Numb. xxx. 2; Deut. xxiii. 21; Eccl. v. 4; Psalm xv. 4; where the man who sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not, is specially commended). If a man swear to do anything wrong, he sins by taking the oath, and heaps sin on sin by performing his promise (St. Mark vi. 21—28; Acts xxiii. 12).

Our Lord enlarges this prohibition. "Swear not at all" (St. Matt. v. 34; St. James v. 12). There ought to be no need for oaths among Christians: a simple assertion should be sufficient: whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil; it is the consequence

of men's natural deceit. That it is not sinful, however, to take an oath on solemn occasions and for the satisfaction of others, appears from such passages as Jer. iv. 2 (referred to in Article xxxix.); Rom. i. 9; 2 Cor. i. 23; Gal. i. 20; Phil. i. 8 (where St. Paul calls God to witness, which is essentially taking an oath). Compare also Heb. vi. 16, 17; Rev. x. 5, 6.

Our Lord's words include in their condemnation all rash and irreverent use of the Name of God, such as we commonly call cursing and swearing. See Jer. xxiii. 10; Hosea iv. 2; Lev. xxiv. 11, 16; Rev. xiii. 6: in this last passage it is mentioned as a characteristic mark of the great enemy of souls, that he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name.

The way to keep this Commandment is to honour God's holy name; that is, as Bishop Ken explains it, 1st, Never to use the holy Name except on solemn, just, and devout occasions: and, 2ndly, Never to use it without some inward act of love and reverence. And as God's Name means not only His title, but Himself and everything belonging to Him, so this Commandment forbids all dishonour or irreverence shown to God's Word, or His House, or His Sacraments (St. Matt. vi. 7, xv. 7, 8; Eccles. v. 1, 2).

To this Commandment is added the threat, that God will not hold guiltless him that breaks it: he will be accounted guilty in God's sight; his sin will be upon him, and, together with the sin, the punishment which the sin has deserved. See Zech. v. 1—4, where, under the figure of a flying roll, the Prophet saw the curse of God go forth against the

false swearer, and enter into his house, and destroy him and all his.

COLLECT.

O Lord, who hast taught us that the first and great Commandment is, that we should love Thee with all our heart and mind and soul and strength, pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, that we, loving Thee above all things, may serve Thee faithfully out of love, and may find in Thy service perfect freedom and our truest joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Genesis ii. 1—3.

Exodus xvi. 22—30.

St. Mark ii. 23—28.

Acts xx. 7.

St. Mark vii. 9—13.

St. Luke ii. 51.

Ephesians vi. 1—8.

Genesis iv. 1—12.

St. Matthew v. 21, 22, 43—48.

Romans xii. 19, 20.

1 John iii. 15.

LESSON XVII.

C. THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE (*continued*).

FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH COMMANDMENTS.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT.—*Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day, &c.*

This command is concerned with the ordering of men's time. As everything we have belongs to God, so our time is His; and He asserts His claim by enjoining six days of labour and one of rest, as the right distribution.

The Sabbath-day means the day of rest; and it is plain, both from the words of the Commandment and from other enactments of the Law, that it was *rest*, that is, cessation from servile labour and gainful business, which it was the chief object of the institution to secure (Exod. xxxi. 12—17). Certain kinds of labour were specially forbidden; *e.g.* lighting a fire in the house (Exod. xxxv. 3). A man was stoned for gathering sticks (Numb. xv. 32—36). But there were also positive duties to be observed on the Sabbath: the morning and evening sacrifices were doubled, two lambs instead of one (Numb. xxviii. 9, 10): the twelve loaves of the shew-bread were renewed (Lev. xxiv. 8). The Jews had a saying that there was no Sabbath in holy things. It seems to have been the custom to repair to the nearest prophet, presumably for instruction, on the Sabbath (2 Kings iv. 23). Certain Psalms, *e.g.* the ninety-second, were composed for use, in public and private,

on the Sabbath. And that the day was to be sanctified to religion may be gathered from the exhortations and remonstrances in Isaiah lvi. 1—8, lviii. 13, 14; Jer. xvii. 19—27; Ezek. xx. 12—20.

It admits of doubt whether Gen. ii. 1—3 proves that the seventh day was consecrated by God Himself from the beginning. If, as is likely, the record of the Creation was written after the promulgation of the fourth Commandment, we might naturally expect such a notice of the Sabbath as is given in the book of Genesis, without supposing that it was appointed from the beginning.

The first undoubted reference to the Sabbath is in Exod. xvi. When the Israelites, in compliance with Moses' injunction, gathered twice as much manna on the sixth day as they were in the habit of gathering daily, Moses said to them, "See, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, therefore He giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the Sabbath-day." It is almost impossible to say, whether this account most favours the notion of the pre-existence of the Sabbath, or that this was its distinct appointment. Shortly after came the fourth Commandment, which made the due observance of the Sabbath a matter of special obligation: partly as a commemoration of God's work in creation and subsequent rest; partly as a beneficent ordinance, claiming exemption from labour on one day in the week for all, even slaves and cattle; and partly, also, as a memorial of the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt (Deut. v. 15).

In our Lord's time we find that the Pharisees had devised many prohibitions, which were plainly beyond the intention of the original command. They forbade the impotent man to carry his bed (St. John v. 10), a notion probably derived from Jeremiah's command, not to carry any burden on the Sabbath (Jerem. xvii. 21, 22. Comp. also Neh. xiii. 19); they found fault with the disciples for plucking the ears of corn (St. Luke vi. 1, 2), and with Himself for healing (St. Matt. xii. 10; St. Luke xiii. 14, xiv. 1—3). These were not breaches of the Sabbath, but our Lord's protest against the burdensome rules which the Pharisees had laid down for its observance. Works of necessity (St. Luke xiii. 15), of charity (St. Matt. xii. 11, 12; St. Mark iii. 4), and piety (St. Matt. xii. 5), were no violation of the Sabbath. On the other hand, we find the women at our Lord's burial resting the Sabbath-day according to the Commandment (St. Luke xxiii. 56); and our Lord Himself was very careful to attend the weekly worship of the synagogue on the Sabbath (St. Luke iv. 16). While, as regards Himself, He justifies His command to the paralytic to take up his bed by the uninterrupted activity of God Himself, who opens His hand daily for the preservation of His creatures, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," claiming thereby to be equal with God (St. John v. 17, 18); with regard to man, He lays it down that the right view of the Sabbath is as a privilege and a blessing, instituted for man's benefit, and not as a burden (St. Mark ii. 27, 28). The Sabbath was made for man, for purposes of rest and devotion. Christ therefore, as the Son of Man, the true and perfect Man, the Head

and Chief of the sons of men, is Lord of the Sabbath ; that is, it is His to decide how far the means are suitable to the end : He can enforce or dispense with the strict observance of it, as may seem to Him most likely to conduce to its great ultimate purpose, which is man's good.

It is to be observed that not even with the Pharisees was the Sabbath a day of mortification, but of rejoicing. Hospitality was encouraged, and sanctioned by Christ Himself (St. Luke xiv. 1). The Sabbath lasted from sunset on the evening of the sixth day, to sunset on the evening of the seventh ; and as the principal meal of the day was in the evening after sunset, the Sabbath-day meal would have been prepared before the Sabbath began.

The only undoubted reference to the Sabbath in the Epistles is Col. ii. 16, 17, which certainly implies that the Sabbath was not meant to be of lasting obligation among Christians ; and the same may be gathered from the omission of the Sabbath from the list of necessary things to be observed by the Gentiles (Acts xv. 29).

But side by side with this apparent abolition of the Sabbath, are to be found indications of a custom among Christians of marking the first day of the week as a day of special religious observance (Acts xx. 7 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2 ; Rev. i. 10). And in the primitive Church, the dedication of the day to God, and that especially because it was the day of Christ's resurrection, is everywhere taken for granted as resting on apostolic authority ; until, in the year A.D. 321, the Emperor Constantine issued an edict to pagans and Christians alike, insisting on the inter-

mission of all worldly business on Sunday, — an exception being made, however, with regard to agricultural work.

Thus the providence of God seems to have brought it about, that though the fourth Commandment may be considered to have been repealed in the letter, it should still be binding in the spirit. All those who sincerely desire to follow the indications of God's will, however made known, will feel that a weekly day of rest is in accordance with that will; only that the day is not to be merely a day of cessation from labour, but especially of religious worship and thankfulness.

The institution of the Sabbath, though in itself a positive precept, may be said to rest on a moral basis, namely, on the truth that all our time is God's, and He has a right, therefore, to set His mark on a certain portion to be specially devoted to Himself. Thus viewed, a due observance of the fourth Commandment would seem to involve (i.), abstinence from all worldly business ourselves, and permitting the same freedom to others; and (ii.), the dedication of the day to God by religious worship (Heb. x. 25) and Holy Communion (Acts xx. 7). Compare Lev. xix. 30, where reverencing the sanctuary is joined with keeping the Sabbath. If the Jews were to keep the seventh day in memory of their deliverance from Egypt, much more reason have we to keep the first day holy, because on that day God delivered us from the bondage of sin into the glorious liberty of the children of God: it was the day also of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

The typical character of the Sabbath is not to be

lost sight of: "There remaineth therefore a rest" (*σαββατισμός*, a Sabbath-keeping) "to the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9).

FIFTH COMMANDMENT.—*Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days, &c.*

Great stress is laid in the Old Testament on the duty of children to their parents, especially in the Book of Proverbs. See Prov. i. 7—9, where Solomon, after laying down the fear of God as the basis of the whole religious life, speaks of the duty of honouring father and mother, as though obedience to earthly parents was the only way to the fear of our Father in heaven. "The instruction of the father" is said to be "an ornament of grace," not a burden; something to be worn for its own beauty, which will add grace to the character. See also Prov. vi. 20, xxiii. 22, xxx. 17; Eccles. iii. 12, 13.

The Law enacted that violence and disrespectful language towards a parent were to be punished with death (Exod. xxi. 15, 17; Lev. xx. 9, xix. 3. Cf. Deut. xxi. 18—21).

Our Lord brings it forward as one proof of the rottenness of the religion of the people in His time, that they made void the Law of honouring parents by their traditions. The Pharisees taught that if a man did but *say* of anything wherewith he might have helped his parents, that it was "corban," that is, a gift offered to God, he was set free from the obligation to afford that help, because, forsooth, it would be irreligious to take for secular purposes things consecrated to Divine uses (St. Mark vii. 9—13).

The duty is frequently enforced in the Epistles.

See Eph. vi. 1—3 ; where St. Paul says that this command to honour parents is the first commandment with a special promise attached to it ; “ that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.” This is taken from the Septuagint version of the passage in Exodus, but so as to omit the reference to Canaan. See Col. iii. 20.

Disobedience to parents is mentioned as one of the special marks of the wickedness of the heathen (Rom. i. 30) ; and as one of the signs that perilous times are coming (2 Tim. iii. 1, 2).

Examples of obedient children :

Isaac, suffering himself to be bound (Gen. xxii. 9).

Ruth, honouring and succouring her mother-in-law (Ruth i. 16—18).

The Rechabites, adhering strictly to their father Jonadab’s command (Jer. xxxv. 6—10).

Christ Himself, not only living in subjection to His mother and Joseph, but showing His care for His mother even in the anguish of death (St. Luke ii. 51 ; St. John xix. 26, 27).

Examples of disobedient children :

Hophni and Phinehas (1 Sam. ii. 24, 25, 34, iv. 11). Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 2—6, xviii. 9—17).

The Catechism explains this command as teaching us not only to love, honour, and succour father and mother, but also to honour and obey the Queen and all that are put in authority under her ; to submit ourselves to all our governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters ; and to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters—that is, our superiors in age, station, or endowments.

As regards the duty—

1. Of subjects to earthly governors, see 1 Peter ii. 13, 14, 17; Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

2. Of servants to their masters, Eph. vi. 5—7; 1 Peter ii. 18.

3. Of people to their pastors, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 17.

4. Of young persons to their elders, Lev. xix. 32; 1 Peter v. 5.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT.—*Thou shalt do no murder.*

Murder is the wilful shedding of man's blood; not, however, when the civil magistrate executes the sentence of the law (Rom. xiii. 1—4); nor when citizens take up arms at the command of those to whom they owe obedience. The calling of a soldier is not condemned, but acknowledged and approved in the New Testament (St. Luke iii. 14; St. Matt. viii. 5—13; Acts x. 1, 2). See Article xxxvii.

The chief guilt of murder, according to Gen. ix. 6, consists in its being an affront to Almighty God, a disregard of His image in man; and there are many passages in the Old Testament which in like manner imply the sacredness of human life. The blood of Abel cried unto God from the ground (Gen. iv. 10). God declared that He would require, that is, take vengeance for, the blood of every murdered man (Gen. ix. 5). Blood was said to pollute the land in which it was shed (Numb. xxxv. 33; Psalm cvi. 38).

Provision was made under the Law for the case of the man who shed blood involuntarily. Certain cities of refuge were appointed, whither the murderer might escape, and where he should be safe, until he should stand before the congregation in judg-

ment, *i.e.* until his case was tried (Numb. xxxv. 12, 22—25; Deut. xix. 1—6). If the decision were in his favour, he might remain there in safety until the death of the high priest (Josh. xx. 1—6).

The wilful murderer was to be put to death (Deut. xix. 11—13). The nearest relation of the deceased became the avenger of blood, who was bound to execute vengeance. Private vengeance was checked by the circumstance that in every case the question of murder was to be decided by two witnesses (Numb. xxxv. 30; Deut. xix. 15).

When the body of a murdered man was found anywhere, and the murderer was unknown, the elders of the nearest city were directed to lead down a heifer never used before into a rough valley, never eared nor sown, and, having cut off its head and washed their hands over it, to say, "Our hands have not shed this blood," &c. (Deut. xxi. 1—9).

Observe David's abhorrence of murder (1 Sam. xxiv. 6, xxvi. 9; 2 Sam. i. 14, iv. 9—11, iii. 28, 29; 1 Kings ii. 5, 6, 28—34); and yet he was himself guilty of it (2 Sam. xii. 9). Cf. Psalm li. 14. It is said of Manasseh that he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon (2 Kings xxi. 16, xxiv. 4).

However it may have been under the Law (though it is to be observed that the rule, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," was no sanction for private revenge; it merely laid down a principle for the guidance of the judge; see especially Lev. xix. 18), anything like vengeance is strictly forbidden under the Gospel. We are commanded to leave vengeance to God, as we would be free from His

vengeance hereafter (Rom. xii. 19, 20, that is, "Repay evil with good; melt your enemy to remorse by kindness; let this be your revenge").

Christ Himself gives us His interpretation of this Commandment (St. Matt. v. 21, 22). He mentions three gradations of the sin of anger—first, the inward feeling; then words of abuse; lastly, expressions indicating positive ill-will. And He mentions also three gradations of punishment, with reference to the three courts of judicature among the Jews. First, there was the judgment, the lesser or local court; then the council, the greater court, both of which had power to inflict death; and besides this there was the further punishment of Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom, where the bodies of malefactors were cast, to be burned with fire and consumed by worms. But though borrowed from the similitude of earthly tribunals, Christ's words are concerned with more than temporal punishments. Those who indulge causeless anger, or give way to reproachful, injurious words, are in danger, in different degrees, of the wrath of God. God looks to the heart, and sees how far it is the fear of earthly consequences which deters men from carrying into effect their evil thoughts. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John iii. 15; St. Matt. xv. 19).

The essence of the sin forbidden is malice and ill-will at heart; but abusive or provoking words are also a breach of the command (Eph. iv. 31); and so are angry looks, which are especially noticed by Almighty God (Gen. iv. 5, 6).

But this commandment not only forbids anger; it enjoins love; and as love is cherished by *deeds* of

love, therefore it sets before us the duty of active charity even to those who have injured us. We are not only to forgive (St. Matt. vi. 14; Eph. iv. 32) our enemies, but to pray for them and do them all the good we can (St. Matt. v. 43—48). We are not only to think kindly (1 Cor. xiii. 4—7; Col. iii. 12, 13) of all men, but we are to lay ourselves out to act kindly towards them (Gal. vi. 10; St. Matt. xxv. 34—40; 1 John iii. 17), after the example of Him who went about doing good (Acts x. 38).

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, who gavest Thine only-begotten Son to be unto us both a sacrifice for sin and also an ensample of godly life, grant us grace to walk in His steps, and to follow Him in lowly devotion to Thee and in love and charity towards our neighbour.

Make us to learn of Him to be obedient to the commandments and ordinances both of Thy Law and of man's appointment, that, living in the world as He lived, we may come at length to the heaven where He is, and where, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth one God, world without end. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

St. Matt. v. 27, 28, xix. 4—6.	Deuteronomy xix. 16—19.
1 Corinthians vi. 13—20.	St. James iii. 2—13.
Deuteronomy xxv. 13—16.	1 Kings xxi. 1—14.
Ephesians iv. 28.	1 Timothy vi. 9, 10.
St. John xii. 4—6.	St. Matthew vi. 19—21.

LESSON XVIII.

C. THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE (*continued*).

SEVENTH, EIGHTH, NINTH, AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.—*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

When God created mankind, He made them male and female. No sooner was the woman formed than Adam perceived that God's purpose was the union of man and woman as husband and wife, and he declared the closeness and indissolubility of the union in words which may be considered the original charter of marriage, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. ii. 24). See our Saviour's comment on this passage (St. Matt. xix. 4—6). St. Paul speaks of marriage as representing the spiritual union between Christ and His Church (Eph. v. 23—32).

Notwithstanding God's purpose in the beginning that every man should have only one wife, and every woman one husband (1 Cor. vii. 2), the practice of polygamy was permitted in the Old Testament. There was no adultery except in the case of a *married* woman and a man who was not her husband. This is the special crime forbidden by the Commandment; both of the guilty parties were to be punished with death (Lev. xviii. 20, xx. 10; Deut. xxii. 22—24). This was the sin of Potiphar's wife (Gen. xxxix. 7), and of David (2 Sam. xi. 4).

Under the Gospel there is a return to the original strictness of the marriage bond (St. Matt. xix. 4, 5); and therefore, now, adultery means any unfaithfulness to that bond on the part either of the husband or wife. Our Saviour also extends the guilt of adultery to sinful thoughts (St. Matt. v. 27, 28); and in the Epistles (Gal. v. 19; Eph. v. 3, 4; Col. iii. 5; 1 Thess. iv. 3—8) every kind of wantonness in act, or word, or thought, is earnestly forbidden, especially on the ground that Christians are members of Christ, and therefore bound to keep their bodies undefiled (1 Cor. vi. 13—20).

It is against this commandment, therefore, to mix unnecessarily with persons of loose character, to look with pleasure on indecent pictures, to take or to allow improper liberties, to speak or to listen to unclean words, to dress or to behave immodestly, to allow the imagination to dwell on impure objects, to read impure books. See Prov. vii.

The great duty enjoined is *purity*; that is, the absence of all uncleanness and defilement in thought or desire. Christ pronounced a special blessing on the pure in heart (St. Matt. v. 8); and it is to be observed, moreover, how repeatedly the judgment of God is denounced against those who are guilty of offences against purity, "God will judge them" (Heb. xiii. 4). "They have no inheritance in Christ's kingdom" (Eph. v. 5; Isaiah xxxv. 8). "The wrath of God is on them" (Col. iii. 6). "They shall have their portion in the lake of fire" (Rev. xxi. 8). "They shall be shut out of heaven" (Rev. xxi. 27, xxii. 15).

This purity is to be gained by *self-control*, by

checking the desires (St. James i. 14), guarding the eyes (Prov. iv. 25), watching the heart (Prov. iv. 23; St. Matt. xv. 19), mastering the bodily appetites (1 Cor. ix. 27; Col. iii. 5; Gal. v. 24), which cannot be without a continual struggle (St. Matt. v. 29, 30, xviii. 8, 9; St. Luke ix. 23).

The Commandment is explained as enjoining on us to keep our bodies in temperance, that is, in checking all self-indulgence in eating and drinking (Rom. xiii. 13; 1 Pet. iv. 3; Prov. xxiii. 2, 20, 21); in soberness, that is, in curbing a spirit of levity and thoughtlessness (Titus ii. 6, 12); and in chastity, that is, in restraining all sensual desires and avoiding all immodest ways.

The thought of God's all-seeing eye may be a great help in temptations to any kind of uncleanness. See Joseph's example, Gen. xxxix. 9.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.—*Thou shalt not steal.*

The special importance of this Commandment consists in this, that so much of the trial of most men lies in their dealings with regard to money, in buying and selling, earning and paying wages (Ecclus. xxvii. 2).

By this Commandment we are forbidden

—to steal, that is, to take what is our neighbour's by stealth, or secretly, whether much or little (Lev. xix. 11, 13; Eph. iv. 28). The evil of pilfering what is in itself of small value is seen in the case of Judas (St. John xii. 4—6).

—to consent to theft in others, or share their gains (Psalm l. 18).

—to take an unfair advantage in selling, by false weights or measures, or by using unsound materials

in work (Lev. xix. 35, 36 ; Deut. xxv. 13—16 ; Prov. xi. 1, xvi. 11, xx. 10, 23). The severe denunciations against this kind of dishonesty in the Prophets show how hateful it is to Almighty God (Ezek. xlv. 9—12 ; Micah vi. 10, 11 ; Amos viii. 4, 5 ; Hosea xii. 7, 8 : in this last passage he who uses false weights nevertheless protests that in all his transactions no iniquity could be found. Men who are bent on gain are seldom brought to suspect or accuse themselves).

—to depreciate what we wish to purchase, in order to get it for less than its value (Prov. xx. 14).

—to waste our employer's goods, or idle away the time for which we are paid.

—to run wilfully into debt, or to refuse payment when it is in our power to pay (Rom. xiii. 8).

—to oppress others by keeping back wages, or availing ourselves of our power to deal harshly with them (Jer. xxii. 13 ; Prov. xxiii. 10, 11 ; Deut. xxiv. 14, 15 ; Lev. xix. 13 ; Mal. iii. 5 ; St. James v. 1, 4).

—to extort by fraud or violence (1 Cor. v. 11, vi. 10).

By this Commandment we are enjoined

— to make restitution of what is unlawfully gotten.

Under the Law, the stolen goods, if found on the thief, were to be restored twofold. If the thief were unable to pay, he was to be sold for his theft (Exod. xxii. 1—4 ; Prov. vi. 30, 31). See the example of Zaccheus, St. Luke xix. 8. "What thou hast taken unlawfully, restore speedily, for the sin in taking it is repeated every minute thou keepest it ; if thou canst, restore it in kind ; if not, in value : if it may

be, restore it to the party injured; if not, to God; the poor is God's receiver." The difficulty of such restitution is taught Habak. ii. 6, where other men's goods are spoken of as "thick clay," from which it is hard for men to disengage themselves.

—to labour diligently for our own support and those belonging to us (Eph. iv. 28; 1 Tim. v. 8; 2 Thess. iii. 10). St. Paul frequently drew attention to his own industry (Acts xx. 34; 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Thess. ii. 9).

—to be liberal to others according to our means (1 Tim. vi. 18; Heb. xiii. 16; St. Luke xvi. 9—12, where almsgiving is set forth not only as wisdom for us but as faithfulness towards God). St. Paul exhorts men to honesty and diligence, not that they may live more comfortably, but that they may have more to give (Eph. iv. 28).

NINTH COMMANDMENT.—*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*

To bear witness is to give an account of what we have seen or heard, or what in any way we claim to know. This may be done either publicly—in which case it is often required to be confirmed on oath—or privately, in ordinary conversation.

This Commandment therefore forbids—

Public false witness; Deut. xix. 16—19; where the Jews were bidden to do to the false witness as he had thought to have done to his brother. So the false accuser, Haman, was hanged on the gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai (Esth. vii. 10); the men who accused Daniel perished in the den of lions (Dan. vi. 24). See St. Matt. xxvi. 59—61; Acts vi. 13, 14: in these cases there was not so

much direct falsehood as a partial statement of the truth.

Private slander (Prov. vi. 19, xix. 5, 9, xxv. 18 ; Psalm ci. 5). Christ's enemies were continually speaking evil against Him falsely (St. Mark iii. 22 ; St. Matt. ix. 34, xi. 19 ; St. John vii. 20, viii. 48, 52, x. 20). And that this slander grievously afflicted Him may be gathered from His lamentations in the Psalms (xxxv. 11, cix. 1, 2, lxiv. 3, 4). Doeg told the truth, but not the whole truth ; he did not say how Ahimelech had been imposed on by David (1 Sam. xxi. 2, xxii. 9, 10 ; Psalm lii. 2—4). One of the names of Satan is "the Devil," the accuser of the brethren (Rev. xii. 9, 10). A special blessing is pronounced on those who refuse to slander (Psalm xv. 1, 3).

Tale-bearing (Lev. xix. 16 ; Prov. xviii. 8, xxvi. 20, 22).

Evil-speaking, *καταλαλία* (1 Peter ii. 1 ; St. James iv. 11) ; *βλασφημία* (Eph. iv. 31 ; Titus iii. 2).

Lying (Lev. xix. 11 ; Prov. vi. 17, xii. 19, 22, xxiv. 28, xxvi. 28 ; Eph. iv. 25 ; Col. iii. 9 ; Rev. xxi. 8, 27, xxii. 15).

This Commandment bids us

—bear true witness (Prov. xiv. 5, 25).

—not speak without cause (Prov. xxiv. 28).

—speak the truth in love (Zech. viii. 16 ; 2 Cor. iv. 2 ; Eph. iv. 15 ; 1 Peter iii. 10 ; Psalm cxix. 29, 163).

—guard the tongue (St. James i. 19, 26 ; iii. 2—13).

TENTH COMMANDMENT.—*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, &c.*

In Deut. v. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife," comes before "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house;" and it is the same in the Septuagint version, both in Exodus and Deuteronomy. "His field" is added in Deuteronomy; the Septuagint inserts it also in Exodus.

This Commandment is a kind of fence to the others, prohibiting not only deeds and words injurious to our neighbours, but also evil thoughts. If we allow ourselves to covet what is our neighbour's, we shall be led on to injury and injustice. Hence our Saviour substitutes "Defraud not," for "Thou shalt not covet," in His version of the tenth Commandment, St. Mark x. 19. (See such passages as Micah ii. 2; Habak. ii. 9, and St. Paul's earnest disclaimer of any desires injurious to others; Acts xx. 33; 2 Cor. vii. 2, xii. 17.)

Desiring another man's wife leads to adultery, as in the case of David (2 Sam. xi. 2—4, xii. 7—10): desiring his goods leads to theft and murder, as with Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 1—14); desiring his prosperity and good name leads to envy and hatred, and so on to murder, or to detraction and slander. Darius's courtiers coveted Daniel's position, and were led on to compass his death (Dan. vi.). Compare also the envy of Cain, of Joseph's brethren, and of Saul (1 Sam. xviii. 6—11).

This Commandment, therefore, goes beyond the others, being concerned not with outward actions, but with the inner root and spring of those actions in the heart: it seems to say emphatically, "Keep thy heart with all diligence" (Prov. iv. 23), and so to anticipate our Saviour's teaching, St. Mark vii.

21, 22. It not only forbids desiring what is another's, but every kind of immoderate desire. It is not in itself, and necessarily, wrong to desire what we have not; it is sinful when we desire what is forbidden, as Achan (Joshua vii. 1—26), and Judas (St. Matt. xxvi. 14, 15), and Balaam (2 Peter ii. 15), and in all cases of what is specifically called lust (St. Matt. v. 28), or covetousness (*πλεονεξία*, Eph. v. 3, 5; 1 Cor. v. 10, 11, vi. 10; St. Mark vii. 22); or when we set our hearts on what might be to a certain extent lawful. There is a point, *e.g.* where the natural, and not necessarily unlawful, desire for wealth becomes sinful (Eccl. v. 10; 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10). Christ therefore warns us earnestly to lay up treasure in heaven, and to despise worldly wealth (St. Matt. vi. 19—21; St. Mark x. 23—27; St. Luke xii. 15—21).

The special duty enjoined is *Contentedness* (*αὐταρκεία*, 1 Tim. vi. 6, 8; Heb. xiii. 5; Phil. iv. 11). The heart of man must desire something: it is not *αὐταρκής* of itself; the true object of its longing is God. See Psalm xlii. 1, 2; lxxiii. 25, 26.

COLLECT.

O Lord, who hast taught us that love is the fulfilling of the Law, and that all the duty which we owe to our neighbour is briefly comprehended in the saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," pardon us our many sins against this law of brotherly love. Take from us all selfish disregard of our neighbour's rights, or character, or happiness,

and give us grace to endeavour in all things to do to others as we would they should do unto us. Hear us, we pray Thee, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

St. Matthew vi. 5—15. St. Mark xi. 24—26.
St. Luke xi. 1—13.

LESSON XIX.

THE MEANS OF GRACE.

PRAYER. THE LORD'S PRAYER.

WE have seen how far-reaching is the promise made by every Christian at his Confirmation—how exceedingly narrow and difficult is the path in which he engages to walk. But he need not shrink from it, either through fear or self-mistrust; for as God in His mercy first set him in the narrow way, the way everlasting, so is He always ready to help him to walk in it.

What is necessary is—

i. That he thoroughly desire and intend to walk therein. Here lies, in truth, the main distinction between one Christian and another: in some the will and desire are truly on the side of obedience; in others it is not so. Every one who comes to be confirmed must see to it, that his steadfast purpose is to keep his promise, and to walk before God with a perfect, that is, a sincere heart. (See St. James i. 8; St. Matt. xv. 7, 8; 1 Kings iii. 6, viii. 61, xv. 14; 2 Kings xx. 3).

ii. That he feel and acknowledge his inability to please God without His special grace. Through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without God. Left to ourselves, we are like St. Peter attempting to walk upon the water (St. Matt. xiv. 28—30. See St. Matt. xxvi. 41; Rom. vii. 22, 23; Gal. v. 17).

iii. That he believe God's power (Philip. iv. 13 ; Eph. iii. 20 ; 2 Cor. ix. 8) and willingness (St. Luke xi. 13) to help him.

iv. That he diligently seek His help. There are various ways of doing this, various acts of ours in answer to which God vouchsafes His grace ; in other words, various *Means of grace*, such as prayer, public worship, reading holy Scripture, self-examination, and, above all, Holy Communion.

A. PRAYER.

This is the simplest and most obvious means of grace. It is asking God to give us what we feel we need. True, our Father knows our necessities before we ask (St. Matt. vi. 32), and is willing to supply them ; but, as loving children, we should tell Him what we want, not only because our faith and trust are fostered by prayer, but because prayer is a direct means of obtaining the blessing, spiritual or temporal, which we desire. Mark His promise, Psalm xxxiv. 15 ; St. Matt. vii. 7—11 ; 1 St. John v. 14, 15.

Conditions of acceptable prayer. We must pray—

1. In the name of Christ, *i.e.* in dependence on His merits and intercession (St. John xiv. 13, xv. 16, xvi. 23, 24).

2. In expectation of an answer (St. Mark xi. 24 ; St. James i. 5, 6).

3. In submission to God's will (St. Luke xxii. 42).

4. With a sincere purpose of obedience (Psalm lxvi. 18 ; Isaiah i. 15 ; St. James iv. 3 ; 1 Tim. ii. 8).

5. With perseverance (St. Luke xviii. 1 ; xxi. 36 ; Rom. xii. 12 ; Eph. vi. 18 ; Col. iv. 2 ; 1 Thess. v. 17).

Our Lord has (i.) taught us to pray continually

by His example (St. Luke iii. 21, vi. 12; St. Matt. xiv. 23; St. Mark i. 35; St. Luke ix. 28, xxii. 41—44): and (ii.) has left us a model for our prayers (St. Matt. vi. 9—13; St. Luke xi. 2—4).

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Besides the sanction which it gives to the use of forms of prayer, the Lord's Prayer teaches us in all our prayers

1. To address God with confidence as our Father.
2. To associate others with ourselves in our petitions.
3. To seek first God's glory.
4. And then, also, the supply of our own needs.

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

There is no instance of a like address in the Old Testament. Almighty God is said to be *like* a father (Psalm ciii. 13; Prov. iii. 12), and to *be* our father (Isaiah lxiii. 16, lxiv. 8); but it is Christ who first bids us *call* Him by this name. And it is only in and through Christ that the privilege of so addressing God belongs to us (St. John i. 12; Gal. iv. 4—7; Rom. viii. 15). The Spirit which we received in becoming Christians was one, not of slaves, but of adopted sons, under whose influence the cry of our hearts is "Our Father." Even if we have been disobedient children, God still permits us to call Him "Our Father" (St. Luke xv. 21).

"*Our Father.*" Christ in His prayers said, "My Father," or simply "Father" (St. Matt. xi. 25, 26, xxvi. 39, 42; St. Luke xxiii. 34, 46; St. John xii. 27, 28, xvii. 1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25), He being the Son of

God by nature ; but we, who are His children by adoption and grace, and who share this privilege with all our brethren, are taught to address God as "*Our Father*," a fit beginning for petitions which we offer for others as well as for ourselves.

"*Which art in Heaven.*" This is added, apparently, in order to elevate and solemnize our minds, to impress upon us the thought of God's greatness, as the name of Father reminds us of His exceeding goodness ; God's love and power being, as it were, "the pillars of our faith."

The several petitions of the Lord's Prayer answer to the key-note struck by the Invocation : they ask first for those things which would lie nearest to the heart of a loving child. We lay our own necessities before our Father ; but our *first* care is for His glory. He should come in our thoughts before ourselves or our brethren.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

By "the Name of God" is meant God Himself, as He is revealed to us (St. John xii. 28, xvii. 6, 26 ; Rom. ix. 17. Cf. Psalm viii. 1, cxlviii. 13 ; Isaiah xlvi. 9, 11, l. 10 ; Jer. xlv. 26 ; Ezek. xx. 8, 9, xxxvi. 22). God's Name *is* holy : and we cannot, of course, hallow it in the sense of making it holy ; but we can think of it and reverence it as holy. When, therefore, we say, "Hallowed be Thy Name," we pray that God Himself, and everything belonging to Him, may be regarded as holy, and treated with reverence and honour ; we pray that we ourselves and all mankind may be ever acknowledging and worshipping (see explanation of Lord's Prayer in the Catechism) God as our God, ever bowing ourselves

before Him in heart, as the saints and angels in heaven do in act (Rev. iv. 10, 11, v. 8, 14, xv. 3, 4).

THY KINGDOM COME.

Scripture speaks of the state of things which will follow the present dispensation, when, all Christ's enemies being destroyed, He shall reign for ever and ever, as the coming of Christ's kingdom (Rev. xi. 15, xii. 10). When we pray, therefore, for the coming of Christ's kingdom, we pray for the close of this present dispensation and the end of all things. And as a means thereto, inasmuch as we are taught that the end will not come until the Gospel has been preached in all the world (St. Matt. xxiv. 14), we pray for the progress of Christ's dominion upon earth, that is, for the spread of His Church, which is continually called His Kingdom. If we shrink from the thought of praying that God would hasten His Kingdom, we may join with it the further petition, that the nearer Christ comes, the closer He will draw us to Himself; at the same time that we are very diligent to make our calling and election sure (2 Peter i. 10, 11, iii. 11, 12).

This petition, therefore, is in truth a prayer for the establishment of Christ's power in our own and other men's hearts, that we may acknowledge Him as our King, and serve Him faithfully as such (see explanation in Catechism). How sad if Christ were to come *πρὸ καιροῦ*, that is, before we were ready!

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

There is a sense in which God's will must be done. Whatever happens is by His permission. But He allows men to have free-will, so that they may follow or thwart what they know to be God's will. For

example, God wills our sanctification (1 Thess. iv. 3; Titus ii. 11, 12); and yet men do not strive to be holy: God wills the salvation of all men (1 Tim. ii. 4; St. Matt. xviii. 14; 2 Peter iii. 9); yet men will not be saved themselves, nor promote the salvation of others. The angels in heaven do His will completely and heartily; they have no will but His: and we pray that it may be the same with us. Doing God's will on earth is the only way to fit ourselves for His presence in heaven (St. Matt. vii. 21; St. Mark iii. 35). Our Saviour has set us an example, both of perfect obedience and of entire resignation to the will of God (St. John iv. 34, vi. 38; St. Matt. xxvi. 39).

It is possible that the words "as in heaven, so also upon earth" ought to be taken as applying to the first three petitions, and that the purport of the prayer is that God's Name may be hallowed, His Kingdom may completely come, His will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. The explanation of the Lord's Prayer in the Catechism seems to take it so.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

Of our own personal needs, the first and most necessary is the preservation of our natural and spiritual life. "Daily bread" seems primarily to mean such temporal blessings as are really needful for us. We do not pray for superfluities, or even for abundance, but for what is sufficient (Prov. xxx. 8). For *this* we do ask, and ask with confidence as from our Father. He who gave us life and made our bodies will sustain the one and clothe the other (St. Matt. vi. 25—34). Nevertheless, Christ bids us daily pray for what God has promised to give, that

we may feel and express our constant dependence on Him—"in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28). But the well-being of our souls and spirits is doubtless also included in this prayer. He who has given us souls will give them rest, and help us to save them (St. Luke ix. 56; St. Matt. xi. 29): He who has quickened our spirits will support them. He Himself tells us that He is the bread of life, that is, our spiritual food and sustenance (St. John vi. 48—58).

Though this prayer regards ourselves, it is not a selfish prayer, but a prayer of charity. We ask our common Father to supply the daily wants of all His children.

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.

The remaining petitions are for spiritual blessings; and first, for forgiveness, the forgiveness which we daily need. Sinners as we are, we cannot come before God without thinking of our sins, and without praying that they may be forgiven.

It is our special privilege as God's children to believe that He is ready to forgive, for Christ would not have taught us this prayer, if He had not meant that we should expect forgiveness. While greater transgressions call for more distinct confession and repentance, this petition may be supposed to suffice for daily sins of infirmity. The true penitent, however, will at all times remember his own heinous sins, and so the continual repetition of this prayer will be a continual confession of himself before God. Only, as he seeks forgiveness for himself, so will he be careful to extend it to others. Special

stress is laid on the necessity of such forgiveness (St. Matt. vi. 14, 15, xviii. 23—35; St. Mark xi. 25, 26; St. James ii. 13; Eph. iv. 32). He who hopes to be forgiven ten thousand talents will not take care to reckon the hundred pence. This forgiveness must be thorough (St. Matt. xviii. 35), and without limit (St. Luke xvii. 3, 4). It would be well, at least, before we say the Lord's Prayer for the last time at night, to inquire into our feelings towards others; for, if we say it with anger in our hearts, we invoke God's anger on ourselves (Eph. iv. 26).

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

The prayer for protection naturally follows the prayer for forgiveness. It cannot be but that we shall be tried and tempted in the world; indeed, temptations overcome may be not only profitable, but grounds of rejoicing (St. James i. 2, 3, 12). Nevertheless, sinful men, mistrusting themselves, may naturally and rightly shrink from trial, and pray not to be placed in circumstances where they shall be directly solicited to evil. Herein lies the distinction between the temptations which come from God and those which come from Satan or the world: God never entices men to sin (St. James i. 13; Gen. xxii. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 3). The prayer not to be led into temptation will imperceptibly glide into the further prayer not to *enter* into temptation, that is, not to yield to it (St. Matt. xxvi. 41; 1 Tim. vi. 9).

What an encouragement to this prayer is there in the assurance that God will, with the temptation, make a way to escape (1 Cor. x. 13); unless, indeed, we wilfully and needlessly put ourselves in the way of danger (Prov. iv. 14, 15).

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

This last petition is for that which must be the ruling desire of every Christian heart, to be delivered from evil, that is, from all sin. (See 2 Tim. iv. 18; which seems to show that it is evil itself, rather than the evil one, which is here meant.) In this world we are not only continually tempted to sin, but we fall into sin. We pray to God, therefore, to deliver us more and more, to rescue us from the power of evil: we offer for ourselves the same prayer which our Saviour offered for His disciples (St. John xvii. 15).

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER.

This doxology is not properly part of the Lord's Prayer, but a reverent and suitable addition made by the early Church in the public recitation of the Lord's Prayer, after the example of St. Paul, who is in the frequent habit of introducing similar ascriptions of praise (Rom. xi. 36; Gal. i. 5; 1 Tim. i. 17; Eph. iii. 20; 2 Tim. iv. 18. This last passage corresponds closely with the latter part of the Lord's Prayer).

God's majesty, power, and glory are so many assurances to us that He will hear our prayer (1 Chron. xxix. 11). Thine is *the* kingdom, *the* power, *the* glory: there is none other kingdom, power, and glory but His alone. And so this doxology at the end of the prayer is an ascription of praise, as well as a plea for hearing: we thereby join thanksgiving with our supplication (Philip. iv. 6).

AMEN: a Hebrew word, signifying *true* or *truth*. It is used in the Old Testament as a solemn asseveration of the truth of what has been said, or, in the case of

a prayer, of assent to the request contained in it (Deut. xxvii. 15; Neh. v. 13, viii. 6; 1 Chron. xvi. 36; 1 Kings i. 36; Psalm xli. 13, lxxii. 19, lxxxix. 52, cvi. 48; Jer. xi. 5). Hence the custom of concluding prayers with "Amen" passed into the Christian Church (1 Cor. xiv. 16; Rom. ix. 5, xi. 36, xv. 33, xvi. 27; 2 Cor. xiii. 14).

COLLECT.

O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come! Grant to us such a true and deep sense of our weakness, that we may ever look up to Thee for help; may we pray without ceasing, lifting up our thoughts and hearts to Thee continually in the midst of our worldly business, and may we also be regular, exact, and thoughtful in our stated prayers.

Keep us from the sin and folly of speaking to Thee with our lips, while our thoughts are far away. May we truly desire with our hearts what we ask for in words; and may our daily lives and conversation be in accordance with our prayers!

Hear us for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

Hebrews x. 25.

St. Matthew xviii. 19, 20.

St. Luke iv. 16—19.

2 Timothy iii. 15—17.

Psalm xix. 12, 13.

Proverbs xxviii. 13.

1 St. John i. 9.

St. Matt. vi. 1—4, 16—18.

LESSON XX.

THE MEANS OF GRACE (*continued*).

PUBLIC WORSHIP. READING THE BIBLE. SELF-
EXAMINATION.

BESIDES prayer, Almighty God has appointed other instruments or channels by which He imparts His grace to us, and helps us to walk with Him. Confirmation itself is such a help; and so, pre-eminently, is Holy Communion. There are also others deserving special notice.

B. PUBLIC WORSHIP.

By this is meant the assembling together of God's people from time to time in some place specially appointed for the purpose, in order to offer to God the sacrifice of their common devotion. It is a public acknowledgment on the part of the whole body, that God is their God, and they are His people. Consequently, *praise and thanksgiving* are not only one element of public worship, but, to speak accurately, they are the chief element. How largely the Jewish worship was a service of praise may be seen from the Psalms, many of which were specially composed for use in the public service of the Tabernacle or the Temple (2 Chron. v. 13, vii. 6, xxix. 30). And a large portion of our own Church service is made up of psalms and hymns and ascriptions of glory to God. The highest and truest type of worship is the worship of heaven (Rev. iv. 8—11); and that is the highest form of earthly worship, which most accords with

the heavenly pattern, when Christians pour themselves out before God in praise and adoration, rejoicing in Him because He is what He is, so good, so great, so holy. "This God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death" (Psalm xlviii. 14).

But earthly worship cannot consist of praise alone: we have requests to make, as well as thanksgivings to offer; and therefore when Christians come together for public worship, they come to join in *common prayer*, as well as in united praises. And there is a special promise attached to such common prayer (St. Matt. xviii. 19, 20). This promise suggests one special advantage of a regular form of prayer in public worship, as enabling all the worshippers to agree in the petitions which they present to the throne of grace. It suggests also that the value of joint worship consists, not in the number of the worshippers, but in their agreement. Public worship is not intended to be a mere saying of our private prayers in Church; it should be a conscious joining with the whole body of the Church in their supplications, adding our humble contribution to the great voice of prayer which is going up from those around us to the God that heareth prayer.

Instruction also is part of public worship; God's Word is read and preached. So it was among the Jews, as we learn from such passages as Luke iv. 16—19; Acts xiii. 15, 27, xvii. 2; and so it has always been in the Christian Church.

We go to church, therefore, to join with our brethren in praising God, and praying to Him, and hearing His Word.

But in order that we may be fit to take part in these acts of common worship, we are invited first to individual confession of sin, that so we may receive from God's minister the assurance of our forgiveness. This ordinance of *Absolution*, as it is called, is a special means of grace. If we confess our sins, not only is God faithful and just to forgive us, but He sends His servant to bring home to each of us individually the message of reconciliation ; so that the house of God in every parish is in truth the house of pardon, where from time to time we may bring our sins and lay them at our Saviour's feet, and go away with the sound, as it were, of His own gracious words ringing in our ears, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee."

But over and above the benefit of absolution, the public services of the sanctuary are a continual source of strength to the Christian soldier, as he will not fail to realize more and more, the more he strives to worship in spirit and in truth. It will be a help and refreshment to him to come into God's more immediate presence, to bow himself before the Most High, and so to prepare for His visible presence in heaven. It will elevate and purify his heart to emulate the praises of the angels, and to rehearse his own everlasting employment. It will cheer and encourage him to remember that as in his praises he is joining with the angels, so in his prayers he is united with the whole assembly of Christ's servants throughout the world ; that he is but one in a vast army who are taking high heaven by violence ; and that the great God will be sure to listen to the cry of many voices ascending up as one, inspired by One

Spirit and pleading the Name of One Mediator. It will rouse and edify him, too, to listen to the reading and preaching of God's Word. It is thus that God sows the good seed in his heart; and if he will but prepare his heart, and take heed how he hear, it will assuredly bring forth abundant fruit.

Thus public worship is not only a duty—the divinely-appointed method of testifying our devotion to our God—but it is also a joy and delight, a continual source of strength and refreshment in our pilgrimage through the world. See Psalm lxxxiv.

C. STUDY OF GOD'S WORD.

The devout use of Holy Scripture is another means of grace, which no Christian will neglect; for Scripture is the word or message of God to the soul. The diligent study of God's Word was strictly enjoined on the Israelites: Deut. vi. 6—9, xi. 18. Understanding this command literally, the Jews, in our Lord's time, wrote certain passages of Scripture on strips of parchment, and wore them on their foreheads, St. Matt. xxiii. 5, and under the left arm. See also the command given to the future king (Deut. xvii. 18, 19), and to Joshua (i. 8).

In the Book of Psalms there is constant reference to the benefit of God's Word. It converts, enlightens, rejoices the heart (Psalm xix. 7, 8); it is a lamp to the feet, and a light unto the path (Psalm cxix. 105); it is a protection against sin (Psalm cxix. 9, 11); it contains wondrous things (Psalm cxix. 18); meditation on it is recommended (Psalm i. 2, cxix. 15, 148). The Psalmist is never tired of expressing in the strongest terms his love and

delight in it (Psalm xix. 10, cxix. 72, 97, 103). Our Saviour commands the Jews to search the Scriptures (*i.e.* to search them deeply), because they testify of Him (St. John v. 39); and He Himself expounded to the two disciples, on their way to Emmaus, in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (St. Luke xxiv. 27, 44—46). St. Paul tells the Romans (xv. 4) that whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. See 1 Cor. ix. 10, x. 11. St. Stephen and St. Paul speak, the one of the Books of the Law, the other of the whole Old Testament Scriptures, as “living oracles,” the voice of God speaking to those who will hear (Acts vii. 38; Rom. iii. 2). The Bereans were commended as more noble than the Thessalonians, because they searched the Scriptures daily (Acts xvii. 11). St. Paul says, moreover, that the Holy Scriptures are able to make men “wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture,” he adds, “is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. iii. 15—17).

Such being the value of the Bible, it can scarcely be regarded as other than the plain duty of every Christian who can read, to set apart some portion of every day for the devotional reading of the Scriptures. Even the most thorough acquaintance with the contents of the Bible does not make this religious use of it unnecessary; for it is not the mere knowledge of the words of Scripture, but the devout pondering over them, with application to ourselves, that does

us good. Every day, therefore, some portion of Holy Scripture should be thoughtfully read, and listened to by the soul as the voice of God.

This reading of the Bible, in order that it may be profitable, should be—

i. *With earnest prayer* for the help of the Holy Spirit, to open our understandings to understand, and our hearts to receive, its teaching. Without the light of God's Holy Spirit, Scripture may be but a dead letter to us; we may miss its true meaning, or, even if we understand it aright, it may not really influence our hearts. Not only, therefore, should we enter on our reading with prayer, but as we read we should from time to time lift up our minds to God, seeking to have the truths which are before us deeply fixed in our hearts.

ii. *With serious thought.* Not merely with attention, but with thought, *i.e.* with patient consideration what spiritual lessons, whether of reproof, consolation, correction, or instruction, we may gather from the passage we are reading. It has been suggested (see Goulburn on the Study of Holy Scripture) that thought, so to speak, digests Scripture, converts it into spiritual nourishment, and makes it serviceable for the pilgrimage and warfare of life: attention answers simply to the receiving the food. Food cannot, of course, be digested where it has not been first received; but it may be received without being properly digested. In the same way Holy Scripture cannot be meditated on except it be first read with attention; but it may be, and often is, read with attention without being meditated on—without being allowed to stir in the heart one single question of

personal and practical interest. Whoever desires to derive spiritual benefit from the study of God's Word must give his *mind* to what he reads. He must *think* what it means and what it teaches, and he must ask himself how he may be the better for its teaching.

iii. *With humility.* If a man know anything of himself, he will, by instinct, as it were, humble himself before the great and holy Being who speaks in the Bible. Humility is not a forced or artificial attitude of the soul; it is, in truth, seeing things as they really are—a sense of what is due to the truth about a man's self when brought face to face with the holiness of God. They only who are humble are successful students of God's Word, because they only have caught the true point of view from which a creature should look at the message of his God.

The Psalmist mentions two special benefits of the careful reading of God's Word (Psalm xix. 7): first, it converts the soul; that is, it turns and changes the whole man; secondly, it gives wisdom to the simple, that is, it fills the humble Christian with a wisdom far better than the learning of the world. Any one who meditates devoutly on Holy Scripture, and takes it as the rule of his life, will find his soul gradually weaned from the world, and reaching forth to better things; and, moreover, he will grow in knowledge, and his heart will open more and more to take in the true light.

D. SELF-EXAMINATION.

This might seem to be a duty rather than a means of grace; but it is a duty which, when performed carefully and honestly, brings with it a great bless-

ing, and is a special aid to a holy life. Indeed, it is scarcely possible to maintain a life of Christian obedience without continually examining ourselves and seeing what we are doing.

It is surprising how ignorant men are of themselves. Not only do they not wish to know the truth about themselves, but they wilfully shut their eyes to their faults, and are resolved to think well of themselves. He that trusteth to his own heart, that is, to what his own heart would tell him of his spiritual condition, is a fool. The proverb, "Love is blind," is especially true of self-love. But besides this blinding power of self-love, thoughtlessness is another cause of our ignorance of ourselves. We live at random, taking no heed to our steps, and it is no wonder, therefore, if we know not what or where we are. "At first persons do not think; then they will not think; at last they cannot think." Hence arises the necessity of serious self-examination. We must desire and resolve to see ourselves as we really are, to know our sins, and to think of ourselves, as we should think of others, were they disfigured with like evil; so shall we know what particular sins we have to repent of, and so shall we be able to guard against falling in future.

At certain times, and especially, one may say, when young persons are preparing for Confirmation or first Communion, it is good to take a thorough review of our past life, and endeavour to ascertain, as far as possible, where we stand with regard to God. The best help in this inquiry will be to take some explanation of the Commandments, drawn up in the form of questions, and apply them one by one to our con-

sciences, marking strictly any departure from the rule of right, and taking special notice of those sins which seem to have the strongest hold on us. For it is to be observed that most men have some one or more specially besetting sins, which are their chief hindrance in the way of holiness. It is of the greatest consequence that we should strive to ascertain what our besetting sin is, because it is that by which we most frequently and most heinously offend God. If this be broken, other sins will be more easily overcome.

If any one desire to discover his besetting sin, let him ask himself some such questions as these:—What is that which most alarms me in the prospect of death,—against which I have most frequently resolved and broken my resolutions? What sin would it be hardest to me to give up? What should I least like my friends to know about me? What is it that most makes me wince when others accuse me? Conscience will be sure, in replying to one or other of these questions, to suggest to us what is our chief sin, whether it be a sin of the flesh or of the spirit.

Such self-examination as has been suggested should be followed by solemn and particular confession of the sins of which we find ourselves guilty; we must tell God what we have done, and we must tell it with a distinct purpose of putting the sin away from us for the time to come.

When we have thus thoroughly reviewed our whole life, and ascertained how we stand in God's sight, it will still be necessary to maintain a continual daily self-examination, in order that we may

not unwittingly fall back from God, but may by immediate confession and repentance be restored to His favour. For this purpose perhaps it may be enough to recollect ourselves at our evening prayers, and try to remember what we have done wrong during the day, especially anything wilful, adding, at the same time, a question or two with reference to our besetting sin. If this be done seriously, we may well hope that no great matter at least will pass unnoticed. No doubt even so much as this will be a work of some labour, but it is "not more than is really necessary, and not more than an ordinary person can well accomplish, if he is only well convinced that it is the most important thing in his whole life to keep a clear conscience towards God and man."

Two other Christian practices may be mentioned,—duties they may be regarded in one point of view, but they are also sources of spiritual grace and strength,—namely, Fasting and Almsgiving. Both are specially commended by Christ Himself, in connection with prayer: hence they are sometimes called "the wings of prayer." See St. Matt. vi. 2—4, 16—18.

E. FASTING.

Our Lord does not in express words command fasting, but He assumes it, saying that His disciples would fast when He had left them (St. Matt. ix. 15), and promising a reward to fasting when practised towards God and not for man's praise (St. Matt. vi. 17, 18). There are certain powers of evil which our Lord says are not likely to be overcome without it (St. Matt. xvii. 21).

Fasting is taking less food than we are inclined to

take ; and when this is done thoughtfully and unostentatiously, in order to subdue the flesh to the Spirit, and with a view to closer communion with God, Scripture certainly teaches us to believe that it will be a great help in the way of holiness. Though the Church of England lays down no rules as to the manner of fasting, it distinctly recognizes the practice as an ordinary duty of religion. Every Friday in the year except Christmas Day, and every day during Lent except the Sundays, are to be kept as fast-days.

F. ALMSGIVING.

In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord takes it for granted that His disciples will consider almsgiving, as well as fasting, a necessary part of a religious life, and He promises a special blessing to those who give alms not to be seen of men, but as an offering to God. Elsewhere He expressly enforces it as a duty (St. Luke xi. 41, xii. 33, xvi. 9); and so do the Apostles (2 Cor. ix. 6, 7 ; Heb. xiii. 16 ; Gal. vi. 10 ; 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18).

The Jews were commanded to give two-tenths at least of the produce of the soil to religious purposes—one-tenth for the maintenance of the Levites, and another tenth for festival purposes (Lev. xxvii. 30—33 ; Deut. xii. 5—18). Indeed, some persons believe that every third year a third tenth was offered. Josephus expressly says that it was so ; and Tobit speaks of giving away three-tenths of his income (ch. i. 7, 8).

It deserves to be seriously considered whether Christians should be content with less than the standard of Jewish charity.

COLLECT.

O Almighty and everlasting God, who hast called us unto holiness, and hast mercifully appointed certain ordinances and means of grace to help us to become holy, grant that we may profit by these Thy good gifts, so as to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Thee and of Thy Son Jesus Christ.

Make us diligent in the study of Thy holy Word, devout and thoughtful in public worship, strict in calling ourselves to account, and steadfast in acts of charity and self-denial.

Give us grace to walk with Thee, and to observe faithfully all rules of holy living to which it may please Thee to bring us: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Preparation for next Lesson.

St. Matthew xxvi. 26—28.	1 Corinthians x. 16.
St. John vi. 51—63.	1 Corinthians xi. 23—32.

LESSON XXI.

THE MEANS OF GRACE (*continued*).

HOLY COMMUNION.

THE Holy Communion is the chief and most sacred of those means of grace by which God vouchsafes to help us to advance in holiness and fitness for heaven. It is the highest act of Christian worship, the special and distinguishing privilege of Church membership. To this we are admitted in Confirmation; for none are to receive the Communion unless they have been confirmed, or are ready and desirous to be confirmed; but if Confirmation is the gate of admission to Holy Communion, then, obviously, Holy Communion should follow as consequent upon Confirmation. "To be confirmed, and not come to Holy Communion, is like going up to a house, and standing on the top step without going in:" it is foolish and unmeaning. An adult Christian who is not a communicant does not deserve the name, for he neglects that which, as a duty, comes to him with the highest sanction, the express command of his dying Lord, and, as a privilege and means of grace, is the necessary support of his spiritual life, the special instrument of union with Christ; for therein "we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood; we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

Following the order of the Catechism, we may consider—

i. *The object of the Institution.*

Q. Why was the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ordained?

A. For the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

The name here used, the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20), carries us back to the time of the first institution of the Sacrament, when on the night before His death our Saviour, while celebrating the Paschal Feast, took bread and wine, and solemnly blessed them, and gave them to His disciples, as memorials of His sacrifice then commencing, and as channels for communicating to them His body and blood.

There are four narratives of the institution (St. Matt. xxvi. 26—28; St. Mark xiv. 22—24; St. Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 23—25); which are all carefully brought together in the Prayer of Consecration in the Communion Service.

Our Lord, we know, had looked forward with intense longing to this Last Passover (St. Luke xxii. 15), chiefly, no doubt, because it was to be the First Communion,—because the Old Testament Feast, which was just expiring, was to give way to a new Feast in the kingdom of God. As the Passover was instituted and celebrated year by year in grateful remembrance of the deliverance of the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt, so the Holy Communion is a perpetual memorial of the greater deliverance wrought for us by the death of Christ.

“This do in remembrance of Me,” our Lord says;

and St. Paul adds, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (St. Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24—26). Hence, as the Mosaic sacrifices foreshadowed the sacrifice of Christ before it took place, so the Holy Communion is a perpetual subsequent commemoration thereof.

ii. *The outward part or sign.*

Q. What is the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper?

A. Bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received.

This command is contained in the words of Institution, which are repeated literally in the Prayer of Consecration, where the priest is directed also to copy exactly our Lord's action: so much importance is attached in this great thing to the exact performance of Christ's command.

iii. *The inward part or thing signified.*

Q. What is the inward part or thing signified?

A. The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

Our Saviour says, "This is My body," "This is My blood." These words must not be explained as if they only meant that the bread and wine are figures or representations of Christ's body and blood: in so sacred a mystery they must be understood to say exactly what they say, neither more nor less. At the same time it must be remembered, that when the words were spoken, the living body of Christ was visibly present before the disciples, distinct from the body which He gave to them, and the

words must have been understood by them at the time in a sense compatible with this fact. It would seem therefore that the outward and inward parts of the Sacrament come to us concurrently; we receive God's creatures of bread and wine, and at the same time we are partakers of His Body and Blood. Compare St. Paul's words (1 Cor. x. 16), "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion" (he does not say, Is it not a figure or representation, but the communion, that is, a communication, a means of partaking) "of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion, the participation, of the body of Christ?"

Hence the Catechism says that "the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed"—not in an empty figure, but *verily* (that is, truly), and *indeed* (that is, really), although spiritually and invisibly—"taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." The presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament does not depend upon men's faith; any more than the virtue which was in Christ depended on the faith of the woman who touched the hem of His garment; but as in her case faith was the condition of her partaking of the virtue, so without faith men cannot receive the blessing of Christ's body and blood: they are not truly partakers of Christ.

iv. *The benefits of the Sacrament.*

Q. What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby?

A. The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are

(strengthened) by the bread, and (refreshed by the) wine.

Bread is the symbol of strength, wine of refreshment (Psalm civ. 15): so in the Holy Communion our souls are strengthened by the body of Christ, and refreshed, stirred up, and comforted by His blood. Our Saviour specially sets Himself before us as the Bread of life, that which is as necessary to the support of our souls as bread is to the nourishment of our bodies. See St. John vi.; where, up to the fiftieth verse, Christ speaks of Himself as the one source of spiritual life to men, and then passes on to declare the means by which this life is imparted, namely, by eating His flesh and drinking His blood: "The bread, moreover, which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Amid the temptations and sorrows of the world our souls need to be strengthened, and they need to be comforted and refreshed: in the Holy Communion Christ comes to us, to unite us to Himself, that we may be strong in Him, and to comfort us by the assurance of pardon of our sins and all other benefits of His Passion.

v. *The conditions of acceptable Communion.*

Q. What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?

A. To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death; and be in charity with all men.

See 1 Cor. xi. 28, where St. Paul himself specially enjoins self-examination before Communion. "Who-soever (he says) shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily (that is, in an unworthy, thoughtless way), shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord;" that is, instead of being, as he might have been, a partaker of the blessing of Christ's Body and Blood, the guilt of them shall be upon him, and they shall be his punishment and condemnation. Hence St. Paul bids every man examine and prove himself, and then, after such examination, eat of that bread and drink of that cup. The special sin of the Corinthians, to whom this injunction was addressed, was that they treated the Lord's Supper as an ordinary meal, not discerning, that is, not distinguishing, the Lord's Body. The consequence was, that they ate and drank condemnation and judgment to themselves. The sicknesses and frequent deaths which occurred among the Corinthians were God's judgment on their unworthy communions. If the special sin of the Corinthians is not likely, or not possible, with us, there may still be unworthy, because careless and indevout, communion; and therefore it is necessary that we, too, should consider how St. Paul exhorteth all persons diligently to try and examine themselves before they presume to eat of that bread and drink of that cup. The word which St. Paul uses, translated *examine* (*δοκιμαζέτω*), is a strong one; it is used of testing metals, to see if they be pure: applied to persons, it means careful scrutiny, to try whether they be true. The full meaning is well expressed in the Exhortation to Holy Communion

in the Prayer Book, "so to search and examine your own consciences (and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God; but so) that ye may come holy and clean to such a heavenly feast, in the marriage-garment required by God in Holy Scripture."

The special points for self-examination are—

1. Repentance: "whether they repent them truly of their former sins, stedfastly purposing to lead a new life." Repentance of some kind is common enough; but *true* repentance is rare. There cannot be such repentance without careful examination, honest confession, hearty sorrow, and a sincere desire of amendment. This last requisite is particularly mentioned. At every Communion we should at least so far sift our consciences, as to ascertain that our mind is thoroughly changed as regards past sin, and that we are bent on a new and holier life for the time to come.

2. Faith: whether they "have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death;" "lively," that is, living, as opposed to a dead faith. When a man has sincerely endeavoured to search out and renounce his sins, then it is his duty to trust himself entirely to Christ's mercy, and to be assured that for His Saviour's sake he will be accepted. He who thus feels the efficacy of his Saviour's blood must need give thanks for it; and hence, therefore, a thankful remembrance of Christ's death is a distinct and special requisite for devout communion. See Exhortation in the Communion Service, "Above all things ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God," &c.

3. Charity: whether they "be in charity (or love) with all men." The Holy Communion is the feast of love; any feeling of anger or malice, therefore, is a manifest disqualification. Of course in this matter of charity with others, our duty extends only so far as our power: we must make restitution, when the wrong done has been such as to admit of it; and when the wrong has been on the other side, we must not bear ill-will, but be ready to accept any acknowledgment of error.

Special stress is laid on this point in the Notice of Holy Communion, "If ye shall perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbours," &c. See St. Matt. v. 23, 24.

COLLECT.

O merciful Lord, who hast given Thy blessed Son not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in Thy holy Sacrament, feed us, we pray Thee, with this heavenly food.

We have sinned against Thee, O Lord, and are not worthy to be partakers of Thy great gift; but do Thou make us worthy by Thy grace, that we may receive the holy Body and precious Blood of Thy Son, not to our condemnation, but for the remission of our sins and eternal life; for His sake, who gave Himself for us, our blessed Saviour and Intercessor. Amen.

FORMS OF PRAYER FOR PRIVATE USE.

MORNING.

O God, Thou art my God : early will I seek Thee.
Early in the morning will I cry unto Thee.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Thou, God, seest me.

Cleanse the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit.

Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart,

Be always acceptable in Thy sight ;

O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer.

Glory be to Thee, O God, for keeping me safely during the night and bringing me to another day.

Forgive me, for Jesus Christ's sake, whatsoever I have at any time done amiss. O Father of mercies, wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.

Grant, O Lord, that I may ever remember Thee, and all Thy goodness to me. Be with me through this day, and enable me to be with Thee. Pour Thy love into my heart, and give me grace to keep from sin, knowing whose I am, and whom I am bound to serve : and if I fall, may Thy Holy Spirit lead me at once to true repentance.

Bless my relations and friends : may I always love them, and strive to do my duty to them ; and may we all so live in this world, that we may live

together in everlasting happiness in the world to come.

Grant these mercies, O heavenly Father, for the sake of Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Our Father, &c.

The grace, &c.

EVENING.

Lord, have mercy upon me.

Christ, have mercy upon me.

Lord, have mercy upon me.

Our Father, &c.

Who can tell how oft he offendeth?

O cleanse Thou me from my secret faults.

Then ask yourself very seriously—

1. What wrong things have I done to-day?
2. What wrong things have I said?
3. What wrong thoughts or tempers have I indulged?
4. Have I tried to do my duty in all things, and to all persons?

Almighty and merciful Father, I have sinned against Thee in thought, word, and deed. (*Here mention particularly anything you remember.*) Have mercy upon me, I beseech Thee, and pardon me, for Thy Son Jesus Christ's sake, and keep me from falling again.

O God, make clean my heart within me:

And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

O Lord, I thank Thee for Thy many mercies to me this day and through all my life; especially I desire to praise Thee for Thy great goodness in

sending Thy blessed Son to die for me, and Thy Holy Spirit to guide and sanctify me. O defend me by Thy grace, that I may continue Thine for ever.

Have mercy upon all mankind, and especially upon all Christian people throughout the world. Comfort those who are in any kind of trouble, and relieve them according to their several necessities.

Bless all my relations and friends, and the household where I dwell. May we love Thee truly all our days.

To Thee, my God and Saviour, I commend myself this night. Keep me under the shadow of Thy wings: preserve me from every evil thought, and from all the power of the enemy, and prepare me to serve Thee faithfully another day. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

The grace, &c.

YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN,
April 1878.

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