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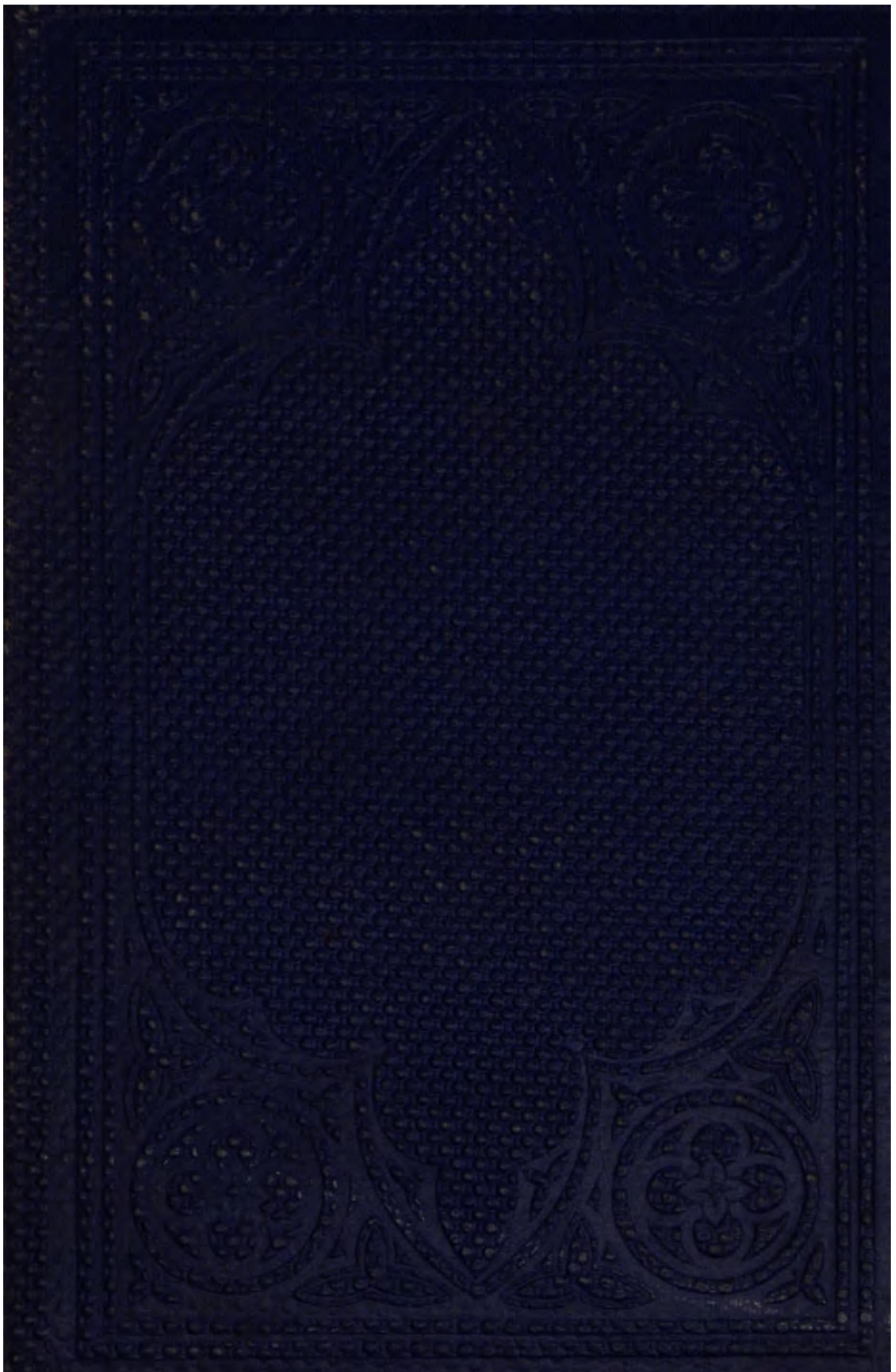
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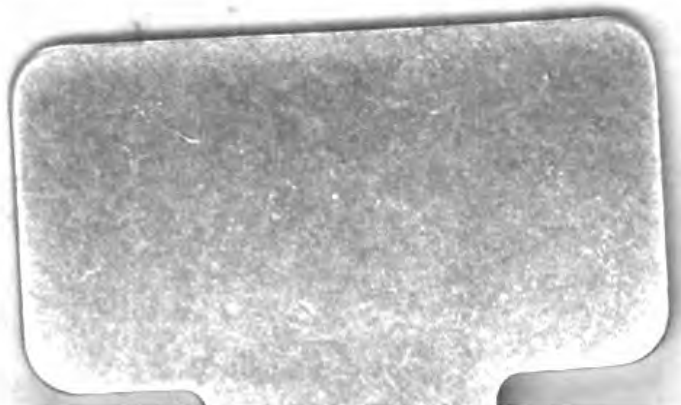


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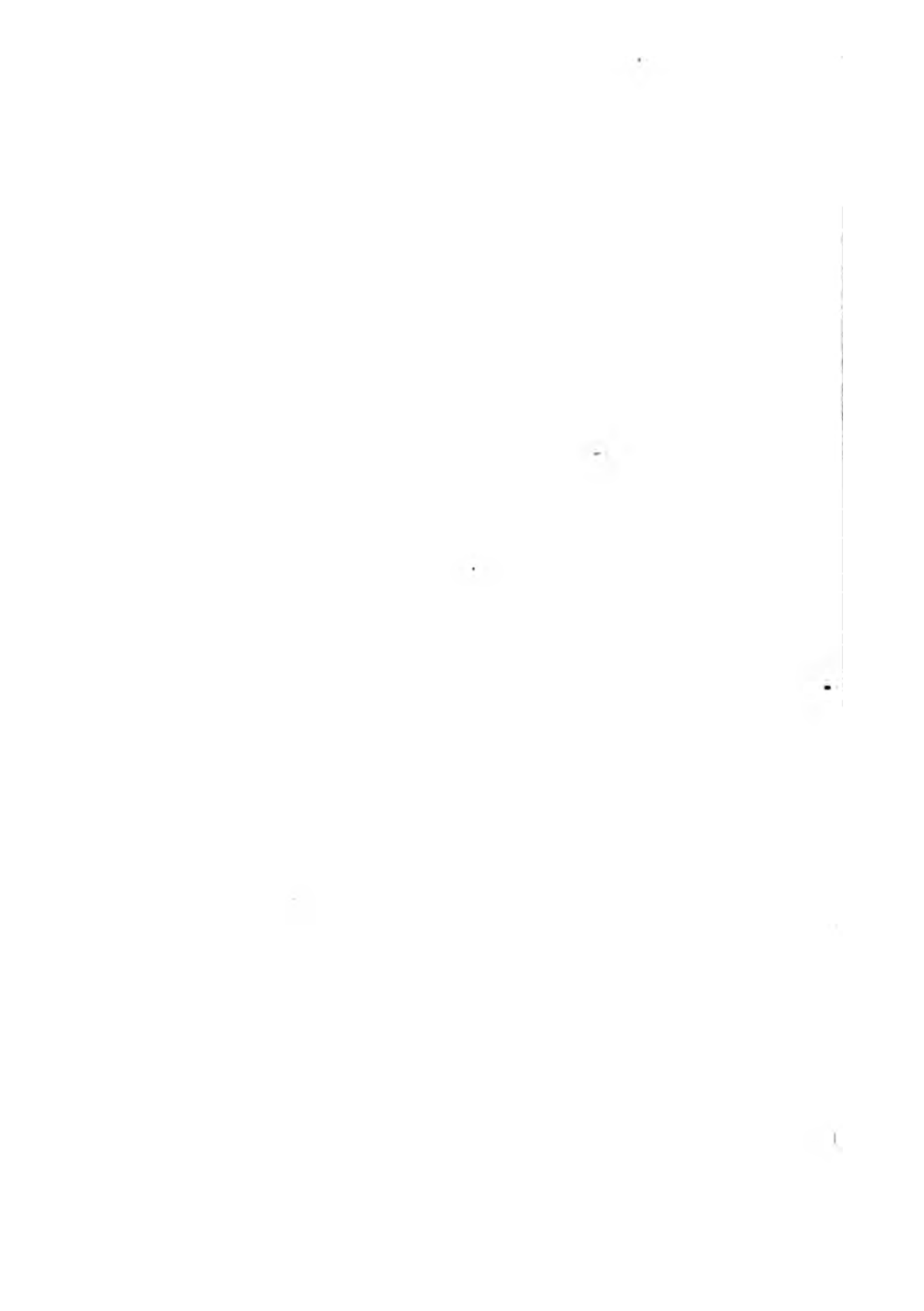




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A HANDBOOK

TO

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR,

For Young People.

BY MRS. STONE,

AUTHOR OF "GOD'S ACRE," "ELLEN MERTON," ETC.

"Images of holy men,
All doing well their earthly part,
Still yielding freely of their store,
To nerve the limb and cheer the heart :
"Whose peaceful minds are sometimes vexed,
By care, or strife, or sorrow riven,
But as they settle into calm,
Are full of thoughts and hopes of heaven."

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Inscribed

TO

MY SISTERS.

E. S.



PREFACE.

I HAVE ventured, in a very humble way, to write a little book in the hope to interest, as well as instruct the young; and with this view I have made it as *undidactic* as possible, consistently with due reverence to the subject.

LABORARE EST ORARE—*work is worship*.
Dare I hope that this little book may be thus estimated?

ELIZABETH STONE.

BROADSTAIRS,
July, 1860.



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A HANDBOOK
TO
THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

INTRODUCTION.

I CALL this book a Handbook to the Christian Year. A Handbook is a sort of guide, a help—something to teach you. So a Handbook to the Christian Year means a book that will point out to you the various duties, in their regular order, which appertain to the Christian Year, as they are taught in the Prayer Book.

But I must first explain to you the meaning of Christian Year.

You all know the meaning—that is, if you think a minute you will find that you do—of the Natural Year. You know that on the first day of the year—New Year's Day—it is very cold and bleak, with rain, or perhaps colder snow and ice, and the days are very dark and dreary. In two or three months

the snow disappears, the ice melts away, the weather becomes warmer, the birds build their nests, and cruel boys often rob them of the eggs, not minding the cry and plaining of the poor mother bird: little lambs are born, the grass springs green in the meadows, the trees put out their leaves, primroses and violets grow on the hedge banks, and the fields are covered with daisies. This is **SPRING**.

Yet two or three months and the weather is warmer still. All the country is full of sunlight, and the days are long and the nights short and cheerful. The trees are so thick in leaf that the birds are quite hidden. The sheep want shearing, their coats are so thick and warm. They and the cattle are not brought home at night, but are left in the open fields; and wanderers and poor unhappy persons who have no home, do not much care for sleeping out at nights, because it is quite warm. Children play in the hay-fields, and gather dog-roses and honeysuckle in the hedges. Cherries and strawberries, and gooseberries and currants are ripe; beans and peas, and cabbages and other good things, have all grown ready for our use. The corn, which in Spring looked only like thin blades of grass, is now tall and strong, and full in the ear—that is, the ears, though green and unripe, are swelling out, and seem as if they would, by-and-by, be full of the flour of

which is made the bread on which we live. This is SUMMER.

Again a little time and this green corn has become brown and ripe, and people are cutting it down with thankful hearts, and laying it up in barns, where it may be kept quite dry for our bread in winter. And the poor people, children, poor women, and very old men, go into the fields to pick up, or glean, the ears of corn which the labourers have dropped, and so, poor creatures, often get a little bread more than usual, that they may rejoice in harvest also. And so it has always been. Moses, the great prophet and lawgiver appointed by God, when teaching the chosen people of the LORD to be kind and charitable to others, said, that if they dropped some corn by chance, they must not stop to pick it up, but leave it for the poor starving people.¹

Winter apples, and carrots, and turnips, and potatoes, all ripe, are gathered, and stored up. Happy children go nutting, or gathering blackberries, and the hedges are full of ripe black sloes and elderberries. The moon is usually so gloriously bright at this time, that it is called the harvest moon, because people can work by its beams almost as well as at noonday, and so can make very long days, in order to gather up, while the

¹ Deut. xxiv. 19.

weather is fine, all the bounties the good God has provided for us. This is **AUTUMN**.

Autumn, that binds the golden sheaf,
And brings the harvest song ;
That tips with red each trembling leaf,
Stealing the woods along.

But as Autumn passes on, these rich and warm and beautiful things pass away also. The flowers die away and disappear: the leaves on the trees wither and go brown, and drop off, so that the branches are all bare; the beautiful butterflies are long since gone; the little birds sing no more, except the robin, which does sing most beautifully in winter, and is called, you know, the friend of man, because, instead of hiding away as other birds do, it hops about us, and, with a very little coaxing, will take crumbs from our hand. It has been said, that a robin red-breast nestled on the cross, when our Blessed SAVIOUR hung thereon, and that a drop of the sacred blood touched its breast.

And now the sky, which had been so bright and blue in the summer, is pale and grey, and often black, with heavy clouds and storms. The fields, which had been so green, are brown and ugly-looking, and the farmers plough up the stubble-fields, and sow the corn for next year's harvest; and **GOD ALMIGHTY**, in His goodness, often covers the earth with a thick coating of snow, and this

snow prevents the heat in the ground, which the sun's rays in the hot weather had thrown into it, from escaping into the air, and so keeps the seed warm enough to grow. But this is winter again, where we began, and many young and tender creatures who cannot have care enough taken of them die with the cold; and many old people suffer very much with it; and you see little children with red noses and blue fingers, and chilblains on their feet. People who are rich are very glad to wrap themselves up in warm thick clothes and furs, and people who are good show their thanks to their heavenly FATHER by giving warm flannel and soup to the poor; but with all that is done, many suffer sadly from cold and hunger, and some are starved to death. And this is indeed WINTER, where we began.

So these four seasons—Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter—which have followed each other without any change from the beginning of the world, and will do so to the end—these four seasons make the Natural Year.

I am now to tell you in what way this guides us to the Christian Year.

In the first place, we see that GOD ALMIGHTY does all things in order. He made the sun to rule the day, the moon to give light in the night; and they have always done so—always—from the time when God

created the garden, Paradise, and placed Adam and Eve therein. The sun and the moon have shined by day and by night at their appointed hours, from that day to this.

He made the stars also : and every night of your life you may see them, unless there are clouds—which are merely vapours hanging a little above the earth, and do not interfere with the skies at all—they only prevent our seeing them : the stars are always shining there.

Then He made the seasons, as I have been showing you—Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter—to come one after the other, without any change whatever, for thousands and thousands of years.

Thus it seems plainly the will of the ALMIGHTY that there should be a regular season for, and order in, all things.

So when His Holy SON came on earth, and lived and died for our sins, and suffered death upon the Cross that we might be happy hereafter, He was born at the very season that had been appointed thousands of years before ; at the very season, in the very place, at the very time, in the reign of the very king, all of which had been foretold by GOD through His holy prophets long and long before. But of course people did not understand these sayings until our SAVIOUR was born, and then they saw that everything

had come to pass exactly at the season, and in the order, that had been foretold.

When GOD ALMIGHTY first made the world, He made it in six days, and rested the seventh day. So always afterwards the seventh day was kept holy—that is, men and women rested from the toils of all the week, and spent that day in praise and prayer and in peace, and gratitude. They let their cattle rest also. And so requisite was this duty of love and rest and obedience, that GOD ALMIGHTY did not leave it to the will of the people alone, but made it a law, and commanded His servant Moses to write it on the Tables of the Ten Commandments, as you learn in your catechism—“Remember the Sabbath Day (that is, the day of rest) to keep it holy.”

This Sabbath Day was the day which we call Saturday.

But the day on which our Blessed LORD rose from the dead was Sunday—the first day of the week—the day which from that time has been called the LORD’S Day. And from that time this day has been observed as the day of prayer and rest by all Christians everywhere, instead of the Sabbath, or Saturday which the Jews observed. Because it was on this day—the first day of the week, Sunday—that our LORD rose from the dead; and so His companions and followers, the apostles, at once adopted it as

the day of the Christians' weekly rest. For as the Jews observed their Sabbath in memory of their deliverance out of Egypt, so do we observe Sunday in memory of the deliverance which our SAVIOUR wrought for us by rising from the dead.

Our LORD'S Day, or Sunday, is often indeed called the "Christian Sabbath," and properly so, meaning as it does the day of rest of Christians; but if you call it the Sabbath only, you are not *strictly* correct.

This, our LORD'S Day, comes, as you know, week by week, the year through, in order that, week by week, we may *all* join together to thank GOD for making us, and keeping us, and giving us hopes of happiness for ever hereafter, through His Blessed SON, our REDEEMER.

But besides this seventh day of rest and prayer, the observance of which helps us to keep humble and thankful tempers through the week, there are other times, each in its due season, each in its proper order, when our thoughts should change, and be sometimes more given to one event or subject, sometimes to another.

The Church has appointed these times and seasons in due order, with reference to the times and seasons of our Blessed SAVIOUR'S sojourn on earth.

But I must tell you what is meant by *the*

Church. It does not mean "S. Anne's," or "S. Mary's," or "All Saints'," or "Holy Trinity," or any building you may happen to go to. The word Church means *belonging to the Lord.* So what we now understand by THE CHURCH is that Society or Company which was begun by our Holy SAVIOUR Himself, when He called His disciples to Him, and they were baptized in His Name. At the beginning, after our LORD's Resurrection, the whole Church was contained in that single upper room, where the disciples assembled privately for fear of the Jews. And all people, ever since, who have been baptized in the name of CHRIST, have become members of this Church; and every Christian who receives the Holy Sacrament of the "Body and Blood of CHRIST" is a member of this Church: the Church is therefore the whole body of faithful Christians. The heads and rulers of this Church are our bishops and priests, as they have been appointed in regular order by other bishops, from the time of the Apostles, who were the first heads of the Church, and who ordained bishops in every place where people were baptized.

And it was the duty of these Apostles and bishops and priests to teach all Christian people their duty, "the reason of the faith that was in them," the way, the truth, and the life of our SAVIOUR, as it could not, of

course, be *seen* by everybody, but as *it had been seen day by day for three years* by the Apostles. They taught what they had thus seen to the first bishops and clergymen, who in their turn taught it to those who succeeded them; and so in turn it has been taught to *our* bishops and clergymen.

And some of the wise and holy men who from time to time, for a space of eighteen hundred years, have been baptized into this Church, have lived according to its ordinances, in repentance, faith, and obedience, and have died full of hope in its promises,—these good men began, and by degrees have completed, a course of rules, and ordinances, and prayers, for our assistance in a Christian life. These humble and holy men in old time found themselves strengthened and helped by these prayers and rules, and we now possess them for guides and helps to us on our way.

Our Blessed SAVIOUR, you know, was born at Christmas; but as it is very likely that after our harvesting and nutting was over, we should just huddle ourselves up from the damp and cold, and not think much about serious things, the CHURCH—you know now what that means—has appointed four weeks before Christmas for us to think beforehand of our SAVIOUR'S birth, in order that when the day does come we may be prepared to

celebrate it with proper devotion and humility. And these four weeks are called **ADVENT**, or *coming*; that is, the coming or approach of **CHRIST**. And this begins the Christian Year—as you will remember we began the Natural Year—in winter.

Then in **LENT** comes the time of His temptation, and suffering, and passion, and death, as we remember with prayer in the Collects, and read in the New Testament.

And when the glorious summer months are opening on us, when the days are getting longer, the skies brighter, the corn bursting out from the ground, the flowers glowing in the fields and gardens, and the ugly grubs and caterpillars changing, as you know they do, into beautiful butterflies,—this, **EASTER**, is the time when our **SAVIOUR** rose from the grave; and as all people rejoice in the natural summer, so do all Christians rejoice in the ‘Sun of Righteousness,’ then shining for their hope, and joy, and comfort.

Then, as the summer goes on, so have the weeks passed which our **SAVIOUR** spent on earth after His resurrection, teaching and comforting His disciples, until His Ascension into Heaven, and the sending of the **HOLY SPIRIT** to them. These memories come every year at their appointed proper time—**WHITSUNTIDE**, when the Comforter, the **HOLY SPIRIT** came, as our **LORD** had promised.

Then comes the celebration of the **HOLY**

TRINITY, of whom you read in the Collects and Lessons appointed for that day. And for twenty-five weeks after, the Sundays are called 'Sundays after Trinity,' until we come to Advent again. So in this season of autumn, when, in the natural year, we watch everything ripen upon earth, and gather the fruits that have been preparing and growing through the past winter and spring—so does the Church give this part of the year to thinking over the life of our SAVIOUR, as we have watched it during the past months, step by step, through His birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection. To all these things the Collects, and Prayers, and Lessons for the 'Sundays after Trinity' draw our attention, for our own help and good, until we reach winter and Advent again.

And besides these greatest seasons, there are in the course of the Christian Year other memorable times, some in the remembrance of the apostles and martyrs, some of saints and angels, all of which are observed in the Church with appointed prayers and services, so as to keep alive in our own hearts the memory of holy people and holy things.

And thus I have given you, in a very few lines, a sort of picture, taken entirely from the Prayer Book, of what is called the Christian Year.

ADVENT.

“ He comes, the broken heart to bind,
 The bleeding soul to cure ;
 And with the riches of His grace,
 To bless the humble poor.”

THE Christian Year begins with Advent, because the Church, as I have told you, arranges the seasons of her year, not by the sun and stars, but by the various events which marked the course of our SAVIOUR'S life.

Advent means *coming, approaching* ; therefore by the advent of CHRIST we understand the coming of CHRIST, the approach of the birth of CHRIST, which took place at Christmas, when the ‘ Sun of Righteousness,’ as our SAVIOUR is called, rises on the Christian world, about the time that the Sun in the sky begins to rise earlier, and to shine more brightly on the natural world.

And that we may regard this wonderful event with the awe and reverence with which we ought to think of it, the Church has ap-

pointed four weeks beforehand in which we should consider this matter especially. Such, you will find, as we go on, is the case with other great days.

Some learned men have supposed that S. Peter himself, the disciple of our Blessed LORD, first appointed these advent weeks to be spent in thinking of our SAVIOUR'S birth; but whether he did or not, it is certain that they have been so observed by holy men and women in the Church for many, many generations. They used to think more particularly of their own sins, so as to try to repent and forsake them; they used to pray oftener than at other times; to deny themselves many things which they would have liked and could easily have obtained; and to try to increase their charities to the poor, and their good-will to others.

And the Church helped them to do this by arranging certain prayers and reading, of a kind particularly suited to the time—telling us of the wonderful event that was going to occur, and the manner of it; and this it has done not only for Advent, but on other Sundays throughout the year, with reference to the season—the Christian season—or time in which they occur. And also, with reference to the apostles, and saints, and angels, as we shall see as we go along. This is done chiefly in the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels for each day.

This Advent or COMING of our SAVIOUR was no sudden, unexpected event. From the very beginning of the world—that is, from the very time when Adam and Eve brought sin into the world by disobeying the commands of GOD—the birth of our Blessed SAVIOUR was promised to us, to redeem us from the consequences of Adam's sin, to reconcile us to GOD and to fit us for Heaven.

“And the LORD said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”¹

This is the first prophecy of our SAVIOUR'S coming, and very likely you will not understand it. But you know that the serpent means the devil, who put himself into the form of a serpent, because that was the most ‘subtle’—that is, crafty, treacherous,—beast. In after-times, all his seed (that means all unrepentant sinners) were to be bruised in the head—that is, killed—by the “seed of the woman,”—JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

By inspiration of GOD, probably, Adam and Eve felt the comfort and happiness of this promise; but it could not, even now, be fully understood by us but for the later events which have explained it.

By the inspiration of GOD, good and holy

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

men knew long and long ages before CHRIST'S birth, that our SAVIOUR would be born.

As holy Job said, "I *know* that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."

This was 1520 years before the birth of CHRIST. But so it was with good and religious men from time to time, even to the Nativity, when, as you will have read, Simeon, a just and devout man of Jerusalem, who was "waiting for the consolation of Israel,"—that is, expecting the birth of his SAVIOUR,—by the goodness of GOD was allowed to be in the Temple at the very time our SAVIOUR, a Babe, was brought there, and had the honour to take Him in his arms and to bless Him. And you know the words of this blessing hymn quite well: you hear them constantly in Church, beginning "LORD, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." *Depart*—that is, die. This good man had nothing, could have nothing, left to wish for in this world, for he had *seen* his SAVIOUR in the flesh—that is, alive in the world. Try to remember that these *very words* were said by an aged, holy man, over the head of our SAVIOUR as He lay a little Babe in his arms.

But bad men were sometimes permitted by GOD'S providence to foresee the birth of our SAVIOUR. So when Balaam, the wicked prophet, was engaged by Balak, the king of Moab, to curse the Israelites, GOD'S chosen

people, with whom he was then at war, Balaam was right willing to do it, but the "Spirit of GOD came upon him," and by that Spirit he saw the advent of CHRIST far, far off, and felt and knew in all his wickedness that in after-time *he* should be judged by HIM.

"I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel."¹

This "star," this "sceptre," meant our SAVIOUR, as you will see by-and-by. This was 1450 years before His birth.

From time to time, from the first prophecy in the Garden of Eden, intimations were given of the coming of CHRIST, not clear ones, but enough to keep alive the expectation of Him in the world. In the same kind of way, as amongst people in our times, if any very great person, say the Queen, is going to visit another great person, or another kingdom, messengers are sent before to tell of her coming, and then, at the last, one at great speed to say she is at hand.

So the prophecies about our SAVIOUR were dark and obscure at first, but gradually became clearer as the time of His advent approached, until all the world was expecting it, and S. John the Baptist, cousin of our

¹ Numb. xxiv. 17.

LORD, and born only a few months before Him, went through the wilderness of Judæa, telling to all people that the LORD, the SAVIOUR, was now *just at hand*.¹

Even to Abraham, the "friend of GOD," it was only told that in his seed, that means from one to arise out of his family, should "all the nations of the earth be blessed."² But you see this is speaking more clearly than to Adam and Eve, who were told the Redeemer should be born among men; but to Abraham it is told He should be amongst his descendants. Then later it is said that CHRIST should be not merely of the seed of Abraham, but of the family of King David, "a rod out of the stem of Jesse."³ Jesse, you know, was the father of David.

Then, as time passed on, things were more clearly told, and different particular circumstances described.

He was to be born of a Virgin. "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel,"⁴ which means "GOD with us," or GOD is come down to us on earth. Also the exact place where He was to be born. "Thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel."⁵

¹ S. Matt. iii. 2.

³ Isa. xi. 1.

⁵ Micah v. 2.

² Gen. xxii. 18.

⁴ Isa. vii. 14.

Moreover, it was foretold that He was not to be a great and glorious prince in this world, but despised and rejected, "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,"¹ that He should "be oppressed and afflicted, yet open not His mouth," (the meaning of which is, that He should never complain nor murmur,) and that He should "suffer and die for our sins."²

All these circumstances you will find in the chapters marked for you below, and they were all declared by the prophet Isaiah more than seven hundred years before the birth of CHRIST, and we know now that they every one came true.

Then, again, King David, "the man after GOD'S own heart," had been taught of our SAVIOUR by GOD, and wrote in his Psalms that He should rise again from the dead,³ that He should ascend into heaven⁴ and reign there.⁵ The two first of these sayings have, we know, come to pass: we have read of them in the New Testament. The other we, I trust, may hereafter see and know.

There are many other similar prophecies, but these are quite enough to show you how,

¹ Isa. liii. 3.

² Isa. liii.

³ Ps. xvi. 10: "For Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell."

⁴ Ps. lxxviii. 18: "Thou hast ascended on high."

⁵ Ps. cx. 1: "The LORD said unto my LORD, sit Thou at My right-hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

from the very time that sin came into the world, that SAVIOUR was promised to us, Whose Advent, as at this time, is at hand.

Eighteen hundred and sixty years ago our SAVIOUR was born: but every year, as long as we live, it is our duty, it is our interest, and we should try to make it our happiness, to think of this *Coming*, this *Advent*, this divine birth, as new and present.

And above all, to think of it with reference to that second Coming, that second Advent, which will, indeed, to each one of us, be new, and present, and terrible—yes, TERRIBLE—even to the very best amongst men.

For then CHRIST will not come to teach, to save, to redeem us; but to judge us,—every man and every woman that has ever been born. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”¹

CHRIST will not then come to us as a helpless babe, grow up among us an obedient, gentle, loving boy, and when a man, go about doing good, teaching, comforting, helping us; and after enduring much sorrow and misery, meekly die a miserable and shameful death for our sakes. But “He will come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him.”²

¹ 2 Cor. v. 10.

² S. Matt. xxv. 31.

Thousands and tens of thousands of bright and glorious and terrible beings all around Him on every side.

“Lo! He comes, around Him pouring
 All the armies of the sky,
 Cherub, seraph hosts adoring,
 Swell His state and loudly cry
 Hallelujah!”

Then He will “descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in CHRIST shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air.”¹

Then “there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring;

“Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”²

But we are told still more about this great and terrible day:

“The sun shall become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon as blood: and the stars of heaven shall fall to the earth; and the heaven depart as a scroll when it is rolled

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

² S. Luke xxi. 25, 26.

together; and every mountain and island be moved out of their places.

“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every freeman, shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

“And say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

“For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?”¹

This fearful picture of the second Advent of CHRIST is given in the Bible by inspiration of GOD. We dare not, therefore, doubt one word of it. It is *certain* to come to pass exactly as we are here told. It is almost too dreadful to think about, and yet we must think about it, for it is certain too to come to us. And it is quite sure that our hearts will be “*failing us for fear.*”

The more we think about it at all times, the better for us; but this time, this Advent, this season of the first coming of CHRIST, the Church has thought fit to appoint this subject for our more especial prayer and reflection, and has regulated the services accordingly.

All the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels in Advent point to this one end,—to think of

¹ Rev. vi. 12—17.

CHRIST's first coming as a warning to prepare for His second.

Look at the Collects. That for the first Sunday prays for grace to cast away our sins, as at this time, when CHRIST came to visit us "in great humility"—a little babe, you know

"Rudely cradled, sadly born,"—

so that at His second coming we may be ready to meet Him.

In the Collect for the second Sunday, we bless GOD for those Scriptures, without which we should not have known of His second coming at all, and which show us the way to obtain and hold fast this better everlasting life.

In the third, we pray that as the Holy Baptist, CHRIST's messenger, prepared the way for His first coming, crying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" that is, CHRIST our SAVIOUR, Who opens the way to heaven for us, is now coming:¹ so *His* messengers, *our* clergymen, may turn our hearts to Him, may prevail with us to repent truly of our sins and lead new lives, so that we may be fitted for this second coming.

And in the Collect for the fourth Sunday, having on the previous weeks thanked GOD

¹ S. Matt. iii. 2.

for His Holy Scriptures, and for His ministers, we pray that He Himself, without Whose blessing and help neither Scriptures nor clergymen will avail us—that *He Himself* with “power will come among us, and with great might succour us:” that is to say, so help us that we may not be conquered by our sins, but that by the actual presence of His Spirit with us, now at the time of His first Advent, His actual birth on earth, we may be enabled to prepare for His great last day.

S. ANDREW.

NOVEMBER 30.

“Where'er
 S. Andrew's holy cross we see,
 In royal banner blazon'd fair,
 Or in dread cipher, Holiest Name, of THEE,
 A martyr'd form we may discern,
 There bound—there preaching.”

OF the teachers of “the word which began from Galilee,” our first notice in the Christian year refers to S. Andrew, a fisherman, the first who sought our SAVIOUR. “Behold,” said S. John the Baptist, one day as JESUS passed by, “behold the LAMB of GOD that taketh away the sin of the world.” And another day also he stood on the shore of the Sea of Galilee talking with two of his disciples, and JESUS passed by, and again John said, “Behold the LAMB of GOD.” These two disciples or pupils of S. John knew quite well to whom he had referred, for they had

listened to John's teaching and preaching for a long time, and had been baptized by him "unto repentance;" that is, under a promise so to forsake their evil ways, that their hearts might be prepared for a purer life, and far more self-denying habits, such as should be taught—and were never so fully taught before—in the Gospel of our SAVIOUR.

So that he, S. Andrew, was not startled or surprised when S. John pointed out our SAVIOUR to him, and he saw his LORD in the flesh, as a poor man, gentle-looking, toilworn, and thoughtful.

And S. Andrew and the other left John and followed Him.

JESUS heard their footsteps, and turning, looked at them, and said, "What seek ye?"

And they answered by the question, "Master, where dwellest Thou?"

And He replied, "Come and see."¹

These two disciples stayed conversing with, and learning from CHRIST, all that whole day "in the house where JESUS dwelt;" and S. Andrew was fully and entirely convinced that this was the promised Messiah, that this was indeed "the SON of GOD." He showed this belief by going at once to his brother, Simon Peter, and saying to him, "We have found the Messiah;" words which showed that they had been looking for and expecting Him.

¹ S. John i. 29—39.

And he brought this brother to JESUS. You will read of him, Simon Peter, by-and-by.

S. Andrew, though the first disciple who sought CHRIST, did not continue with Him then, but returned to his own occupation for about a year, when he and his brother were called by our SAVIOUR to follow Him. But as he was the first who found the Messiah, and the first to bring others to Him, his memorial is placed the first in the Christian year, at the beginning of Advent, to bring news, as it were, of the coming of our LORD.

It was about a year after, that our SAVIOUR, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw Andrew and Simon, brothers, and fishermen by trade, at work.

“And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.

“And they straightway left their nets, and followed Him.”¹

You will perhaps like to hear something about this Sea of Galilee, with the name of which you are all familiar; for we cannot read in the New Testament about our LORD without knowing it.

It is in the northern part of the Holy Land, and from it the river Jordan flows down through a great length of Palestine to the Dead Sea. This Sea of Galilee is the holiest

¹ S. Matt. iv. 19, 20.

lake in the whole world, for our SAVIOUR lived much on its shores, and often sailed on its waters. It was here there was the great tempest, when the ship was covered with waves, and He was asleep, and His disciples in terror awoke Him.¹ It was on this shore that the people often pressed to hear Him, and multitudes followed Him; and it was on this shore also that He showed Himself to His disciples after His resurrection. Capernaum, the place where He so often dwelt, was near the head of the lake. S. Andrew was a native of Bethsaida, but had afterwards a house at Capernaum, where our SAVIOUR usually lodged when He preached in that city.

The lake is about thirteen miles long and six broad, and is buried in hills almost all round, which have at their base clusters of evergreen shrubs and large thickets of oleander; a beautiful pink flower, very like a rose, but which will not grow in the open air here, because the climate is not warm enough. But there

“ All through the summer night,
 Their blossoms red and bright
 Spread their soft breasts, unheeding, to the breeze,
 Like hermits watching still
 Around the sacred hill,
 Where erst OUR SAVIOUR watch'd upon His knees.”

¹ S. Matt. viii. 23.

On one side of the lake, below Capernaum, there is a large plain seven miles long, where the hills retire five or six miles away from the water, which is not the case anywhere else round the sea. This is the land of Genesareth, of which we often read: it is very rich and beautiful, with magnificent corn-fields, and gardens, and countless birds of all kinds and of brilliant colours; water-fowl swimming on or skimming over the lake, partridges and pigeons hovering round its shores, and on the plain, away from the water, those "fowls of the air" to which our SAVIOUR refers, in greater variety, and far brighter colours than we know here.

Here also, in the time of our SAVIOUR, were numbers of villages, and crowds of people among whom He taught and preached, "publicans," "sinners," Pharisees, labourers, Roman soldiers, and hundreds and hundreds of fishermen. For there was not a sea known then in the whole world in which there were such quantities of fish, or such variety. So that there was an enormous trade in fish; vessels laden with it passing perpetually down the river Jordan to supply all the towns and cities on its banks, even so far as the Dead Sea. And especially indeed so far, because people could get no fish near there. If any strayed down the river into that sea, they were cast up on its banks dead. No fish could swim in the water, no birds could chirp

and carol joyously on the shores of that sea which had been accursed by God Almighty.

But in the Sea of Gennesareth it was very different; all in and about it was life and business and bustle. And there were two towns, one on each side of it, both called Bethsaida, or House of Fish, because they were entirely peopled by fishermen. Of course there was a vast deal of trade in other matters; a crowd of shipbuilders, and many pleasure boats, as well as ships for business. "The surface of the lake constantly dotted with the white sails of vessels, flying before the mountain gusts, as the beach sparkled with the houses and palaces, the synagogues and the temples of the Jewish or Roman inhabitants." Surely the land of Gennesareth, bordering on the Sea of Galilee, must have been a charming as well as a busy place.

S. Andrew left at once without a moment's delay, closely followed our LORD during His ministry, and after His Crucifixion and Ascension went, as did the other Apostles, to preach the Gospel to the heathen. It is believed that the Apostles, after very solemn prayer to God for help and guidance, drew lots as to which part of the world each should go to, and in this arrangement a country called Scythia fell to the share of S. Andrew. This was a very barbarous country, and was the most northern part of the world as then

known. Afterwards he came into Greece, and visited many places, teaching the word of GOD, and the blessed Gospel and life of our SAVIOUR. At last at Ægea, the governor, a cruel and wicked heathen, caused this holy man to be murdered.

You have been taught what a cruel and terrible death was that of crucifixion, which the Jews inflicted on our blessed LORD, Who was nailed through His Hands and Feet to the Cross, and there hung till He died. But these wicked people in Ægea made S. Andrew's punishment even more dreadful, for they did not nail him; those wounds, cruel as they were, would have hastened his death and so shortened his sufferings. They only *tied* S. Andrew to the Cross, with cords round his wrists and ancles. There he hung two terrible days before he died.

But the Master was with His faithful servant then. S. Andrew was quite composed and cheerful when he was led to the cross. He said, "The cross had been consecrated by bearing the Body of CHRIST:" he said it would be "the means to carry him safe to his Master."

All the time he hung on this cross, until his strength failed, he prayed aloud, and taught, still taught the sorrowing people about him, who begged and prayed of the governor to spare his life.

So this is the first martyr for righteous-

ness' sake" of whom we read in the Christian year.

The cross on which S. Andrew was killed was not of the form commonly used, nor such as that on which our SAVIOUR had hung. It was shaped something like the capital letter X, and it must have been even greater torture than the other. To this day a cross of this shape, made for any purpose, is called S. Andrew's cross.

The proper term for it is a cross decussate; and as S. Andrew was called the patron saint for Scotland, it often occurs in flags and Scottish documents and memorials.

His body was embalmed and honourably buried by the care of a distinguished Christian lady, and was afterwards removed by the Emperor Constantine, to a church in Constantinople.

S. THOMAS THE APOSTLE.

DECEMBER 21.

“ When holy books, when loving friends,
 When parents grave and kind,
 Tell of the peace the ALMIGHTY sends
 On the pure heart and mind,—
 Alas! too often, worldly-wise,
 We scorn what they reveal;
 We will not see with others' eyes,
 Ourselves would touch and feel.”

PROBABLY you all remember that incident regarding S. Thomas which is named by S. John, in the 20th Chapter of his Gospel—that he, when told by the disciples that our LORD was risen, and that they had seen Him, replied, “ Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe ;” for he had not

been with the disciples when JESUS had shown Himself to them.

But eight days after this conversation, when the disciples were at prayer, and Thomas with them this time—and you must also observe, with the doors closely shut, as, for fear of the Jews, they always were—suddenly, without any door having been opened, they found CHRIST standing in the midst of them. He said to S. Thomas, “Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless but believing.”

And so this doubt of S. Thomas was permitted by the ALMIGHTY, as we are taught in the Collect for this day, “for the more confirmation of the faith” in our SAVIOUR’S Resurrection, as it gave the most convincing proof of His being truly risen from the dead; and as it assures us, beyond all doubt or scruple, that the very same body in which He suffered, was raised with our LORD.

And those disciples who, as you have read, were again assembled, and saw our LORD amongst them; though they had believed in His Resurrection, might yet by this event more clearly understand that it was not our LORD merely as GOD, but as Man also, in our flesh, who had risen.

“A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have,” said CHRIST, on another occasion: showing them the certainty that our

LORD, as Man, rose from the dead; as Man, ascended to Heaven; and there, at the Throne of GOD, having borne the weakness of man, ever pleads and intercedes for us in our infirmities and troubles.

This would be the impression on the other disciples: on S. Thomas the lesson taught had a different effect.

He saw in a moment that our LORD's fleshly Body had risen, but he felt also that it was only GOD Himself who *could* thus raise Himself.

And he said unto Him, "My LORD and my GOD." This does not just mean that He was indeed his "LORD and Master," as they all often called Him: but that He was not only the SAVIOUR, but GOD Almighty, GOD Omnipotent.

It will ill become us to look with any less reverence on S. Thomas because of his doubt. He was perhaps of a somewhat weak understanding (so it has been said); and naturally of a doubting disposition: for when our LORD made that beautiful discourse to His Disciples, after the institution of His Blessed Sacrament,¹ S. Thomas alone interrupted, and said, "LORD, we know not whither Thou goest, and how *can* we know the way?" Our SAVIOUR answered him kindly and explicitly, with the mildness and gentleness due to his

¹ S. John xiv.

anxious inquiry. For well our SAVIOUR knew that, though his understanding might be heavy, his mind and temper were patient and gentle, and full, not only of love, but of zeal in His service.

What a proof have we of the latter in this incident :

When our SAVIOUR was returning into Judæa, in order to raise Lazarus from the grave, His disciples tried to dissuade Him from the journey, because, when He was last there, the Jews had attempted to stone Him, and no doubt would do so again. But JESUS determined to go to save the life of Lazarus, and it was S. Thomas, the true, warm-hearted, though doubting, S. Thomas, who said to the other hesitating disciples, "Let us also go, that *we may die with Him.*"¹

There is less of the early history of S. Thomas in the New Testament than of many other of the Apostles. He is called Didymus, as well as Thomas, each name meaning, in different languages, a twin : so doubtless he had a twin-brother, though we hear nothing of him. It is supposed that S. Thomas was not only a Galilean, but, like so many others, a fisherman ; and connected in this trade with Simon Peter.

There is another circumstance related of S. Thomas, which, if true, will please you ;

¹ S. John xi. 16.

and there is no reason to suppose it not true. You have not read yet, but you will very soon, of the visit of the wise men from the East to our SAVIOUR when He was an Infant; when they brought choice gifts or offerings, and laid them at His feet, and worshipped Him: and then being warned of God in a dream, that is, by an angel whispering to them, not to return to cruel King Herod, they travelled back to their own far country by another path, which did not go near the city where Herod lived. This far country was indeed a long way off; it was far, far to the east of Palestine; through Persia and India.

Now, when some years after our SAVIOUR'S Ascension, the Apostles parted to "preach the Gospel" to "all nations," and drew lots to decide where each should go, it proved to be the lot of S. Thomas that he should go to these eastern nations.

So he went, always travelling eastward, through Assyria, Media, Parthia, Persia, until he reached the river Ganges, which perhaps many of you know is the great and, by the natives considered, the holy river of India—holy to them as the Jordan is to us:—and still eastward on, as many think, to China,—a country so remote, and so secluded, and so difficult to enter, that it is only within my own lifetime that people generally have known anything about it.

But it seems that the energy and zeal of the doubting Apostle, S. Thomas, (an energy beyond human power, and given to him, as to the rest of the Apostles, on Pentecost Day) enabled him to persevere even through the fearful dangers of this tremendous progress—dangers which, at this time of easy travel, we can scarcely picture to ourselves, and which most surely I could not clearly describe to you.

But what I wanted particularly to tell you is this. S. Thomas, when thus journeying, is said to have met with three very good and very aged men (for this was long after our SAVIOUR'S Ascension); and to have found that these were the very same "wise men from the East" who, forty years before, had knelt down at the manger-cradle of our Infant SAVIOUR at Bethlehem, to lay gold, and frankincense, and myrrh at His feet.

To these aged men, so well prepared to reverence all the wonderful and holy tidings S. Thomas brought—to these reverend, aged, and good men—not Christians, for they had not yet been baptized and taught the life and doctrines of JESUS—to these good and earnest old men, S. Thomas had the happy office of explaining our SAVIOUR'S Life, Acts, Miracles, Resurrection, and Ascension; and had finally the comfort of baptizing them as Christians in the SAVIOUR'S Name.

After this S. Thomas so taught and lived

and preached in India, that the Christians there between the Indus, another great river, and the Ganges, the holy river, are to this day called the Christians of S. Thomas, in memory of this Apostle's first teaching.

But this happy progress was soon put an end to. Travelling still, he converted an Indian prince, and the heathen priests there, called Brahmins, resolved to put a stop to teaching which would so soon destroy their own rites and practices.

For this purpose they conspired to effect his death; and so one day, when he had retired to a quiet, lonely place, outside the city, for private devotion and prayer, (in imitation, no doubt, of his Divine Master,) some of the soldiers were engaged to fling darts and stones at him, until at last he was mercifully killed by a sharp lance.

His body was reverently interred, however, in the same city. It is said that his remains were afterwards removed to a more Christian country, but this we do not *know* for certain. The Christians in the East yet believe that his mortal remains are still in the spot where they were once "in hope" interred: and the followers of CHRIST in the neighbourhood are, as I said, still called "Christians of S. Thomas."

Some persons, however, suppose that these "remains" have been removed to Syria; but an excellent Bishop of our Church, a mis-

sionary, as we may consider all Bishops or Curates who go into those wild countries must be, (and many of them indeed martyrs,) speaks of the "little mount of S. Thomas," which *he saw*, a place at Millapoor, or Meilapoor, where this Apostle was sacrificed. He says even the heathens still venerate the spot.

CHRISTMAS.

“ See within that humble dwelling,
 Where a new-born babe is laid !
 Shepherd swains their joy are telling,
 O'er Him leans a gentle maid.
 Leans she o'er that infant sleeping,
 With a mother's bliss and pride ;
 Cherub forms, their vigil keeping,
 Wait meseems with awe beside.”

[*MASS is a word formerly used to express the celebration of the Holy Communion. So by Martinmas, Michaelmas, were meant the holy services on the days of S. Martin and S. Michael, and by Christmas that on the day of the birth of Christ.*]

It was a winter's night, but not very cold, for the country was a warm one, when some shepherds were tending their flocks on a green hill-side, near Bethlehem. These hills are, many of them, high and rugged and barren mountains ; but they are mingled here and there with beautiful green slopes, covered

with grass and verdure (most welcome and requisite to those who have sheep, and goats, and cattle to feed) and many vineyards. It was amongst these green slopes that king David, then a rosy, happy boy, was keeping the sheep of Jesse, his father, when he was called away by the prophet of the LORD to be anointed king;¹ and it was from some of the wild rough mountains around, that the lion and the bear came down to the pasture to worry his flock, and did take a little lamb, which he got safely out of the mouth of the cruel animal. And he killed both the lion and the bear.

But the night of which I am speaking to you was more than a thousand years after the time when David was a shepherd boy, and kept his father's flocks. It was, however, amongst these hills, near Bethlehem, and perhaps on the very same hill-side where he had been, that some shepherds were "keeping watch over their flocks by night." It was quite necessary indeed that in so wild a country as Judæa, the poor silly sheep and weak lambs should never be left. Even in our own country, where there are no bears, nor lions, nor savage wolves now (there were once, and there are still foxes, which will steal poultry and young lambs), I have seen tiny huts rudely built of the loose stones

¹ 1 Sam. xvi.-

which lie on the mountains around, where a shepherd might be sheltered from stormy weather, and yet watch his flock by night as well as by day : that is, with the help of his dog ; for what is called a real shepherd's dog, soon learns to know every sheep and lamb quite as well as his master.

But in these wild rough mountains of Judæa there were, as I have told you, many savage beasts, who used to come down in the night, or in the hard weather, or when they were hungry, to the green parts where the flocks were kept, and prowl about, and worry them if the shepherds were not watchful : also there were a great many robbers and thieves, who lived in the grottoes and caves, of which there are many in these mountains, who stole the lambs and the kids for their own food : and besides all this, I suppose you know that sheep are the silliest animals in the world, and *will* stray away continually, and quite lose themselves if they are not well watched. It was this well known nature of all sheep to wander away perpetually from the right path, which made the pious prophet Isaiah say, "All we like sheep have gone astray ;" a confession which we are taught to repeat every day in both Morning and Evening Prayer ; "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep."

You will not wonder, then, that if it is necessary everywhere for shepherds to watch

their flocks, it was especially so in that wild and rude country, Judæa; and so during certain months of the year when it was the custom for the flocks never to be taken to shelter, but to remain in the field day and night, shepherds were always appointed to watch them. This they called "keeping the watches of the night;" and they used to watch by turns, for three hours, keeping awake, some of them, while the rest slept; and at the end of three hours, waking others, and going to sleep themselves. They would always have their sheep-dogs about them, which are the most wakeful and faithful animals in the world.

"So
These shepherds on the lawn,
Or e'er the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row."

They were lying in the calm, soft moonlight air, on the still mountain side, some of them asleep, others wakeful and watching; their dogs scattered at their feet, couched down with their noses on their forepaws, and their eyes seemingly shut, but in fact always seeing, and their ears pricked up listening;—these shepherds, I say, were thus talking "e'er the point of dawn," that is, just at midnight, when the new morning broke, when those awake were startled, and those asleep

wakened, by such a sudden, glorious light, as not only amazed, but terrified them. It was such a light as they had never seen in their lives, and "they were *sore* afraid."

As soon as they dared look at this "glory of the LORD which shone round about them," they saw a bright angel in the air hovering at a little distance above them, and from him came these rays of light. His first words were "*Fear not.*"

So to the aged priest, the father of John the Baptist:

"When Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

"But the angel said, *Fear not, Zacharias.*"

So to the Holy Virgin:

"When she saw him, she was troubled at his saying.

"And the angel said unto her, *Fear not, Mary.*"

So now said this glorious, good, and most beautiful angel:

"FEAR NOT: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David (*that is, Bethlehem*) a SAVIOUR, Who is CHRIST the LORD."

Well might these poor shepherds kneel, and hold up their hands, and pray, and wonder; and how could they in their astonishment and fright have known what to do, if

this good and beautiful angel had not spoken further. But he did: "This shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

And then, directly the angel had said these words, the whole sky above them seemed to open, and to be filled with angels and arch-angels and all "the host of heaven,"

"The helmed cherubim,
And sworded seraphim,"

all seen in glittering ranks, row above row, singing such music as had never been heard in the world before, except when God Almighty finished the creation of it, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

The "sons of God" mean the angels, the "morning stars" here mean the angels; and though they sang for joy when God created the world pure and innocent, they did not sing again, to be heard on earth, till that still greater work, the birth of our Redeemer.

The song they sang was this:

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
peace, good will toward men."*

This has ever since been called the Angels' Song, and is always repeated by us in the Church, when we partake of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our LORD.

And as soon as they had concluded their grand hymn, this bright company of angels

rose up higher, higher, and higher away, until at last they could not be seen at all: the strange and beautiful light and glory had disappeared, and nothing was visible but the deep blue sky, and the stars twinkling in the soft night air.

So soon as the awe of the shepherds was a little abated, they rose from their knees, and looking at each other, said, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the LORD hath made known unto us."

A learned and excellent Bishop of our Church, many years ago gone to his rest, has remarked, that independently of the purpose of GOD that this long-foretold and promised King should not be born in pomp and luxury, it was most beautifully appropriate that shepherds, keeping their flocks, should be the first to be told of the yearning or birth of this strange lamb—our SAVIOUR you know is called "the LAMB of GOD"—and of that great Shepherd Who was to give (and did give) "His life for the sheep."

All His great types¹ in the Old Testament were shepherds. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, were

¹ A type is a shadow of something thereafter to come; not an exact resemblance, but distinct enough to give some general idea of what is to be. A prophecy tells us of a thing beforehand by

all shepherds. Joseph said to his brethren, "Fear not, I will nourish you and your little ones," which is the express office of a shepherd. *Our* Great Shepherd, CHRIST, said to S. Peter, "Feed My sheep." Moses, a particular type of CHRIST, was a shepherd; and David, also a chief type, tended his father's flocks on these very plains.

And so this prince and prophet speaks of the spiritual care of his Divine Shepherd in the beautiful 23rd Psalm:

"He shall feed me in a green pasture:

"He shall lead me forth beside *the waters of comfort.*"

And the shepherds "came with haste" to BETHLEHEM, a small village placed on the narrow ridge of a long grey hill. On the slope of this hill were vineyards, and below, in the hollow, the corn-fields where Ruth went amongst the gleaners in harvest time, as you have read in her touching history. From this circumstance the village derives its name, Bethlehem, or "House of Bread," for it was called Ephrath when Jacob buried his dear wife, Rachel, there.

Ruth was the great-grandmother of king David, the shepherd-boy in these fields.

And here was a well, where he often drew

words: a type or symbol is something presented to the sight.

water for his flocks, and drank of it himself, when he was hot and thirsty. This water was remarkably pure and clear, and many a year after, when David had become a king, and was faint and overcome with fighting the Philistines, he thought of this same old well—(we, in this temperate climate, *cannot* understand how precious fresh water is in a hot, dry eastern country)—and he said, “Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate.”

And three of his faithful captains heard him, and were determined he should have it. This was a very dangerous thing for them to attempt, because the Philistines had then the possession of Bethlehem. However, these brave men fought their way through, and brought water to David. But the king would not drink of it, for he was shocked at the danger they had undergone, and he thought it wicked to enjoy a luxury which had been gained at such risk to his faithful brave soldiers, and he said: “My God forbid that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? For with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it.”¹

These are a few of the things told us of Bethlehem, where the shepherds came with

¹ 1•Chron. xi.

haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and **THE BABE** *lying in a manger.*

Just as the Angel had told them.¹

“And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them (*by the Angel*) concerning this Child.

“And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

“But Mary kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart.

“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.”

You all know why this Holy Babe was found “lying in a manger.” It was “because there was no room for them in the inn.”

I must describe to you this manger so far as it is understood now.

The “inns” in those hot countries were not comfortable, furnished houses, like those we call inns in England. They were buildings reaching round three sides of a courtyard (in which was always a well of water), and divided into a great many cells or rooms, all separated from each other, but each one opening into the courtyard. They had no

¹ S. Luke ii. 12.

furniture whatever, not even a mat to lie on. Travellers in that country carried their own food and everything else that they might want, and took possession of one of those empty cells. They were all full when Joseph and Mary arrived at Bethlehem. "There was no room for them in the inn." So they were obliged to go to the stable.

All round the outside of such an inn as this, and so of course behind the rooms of which I have been speaking, were sheds over which the roof of the building extended, and so they were covered overhead. They had broad ledges or benches towards which the heads of the cattle were turned, and where their fodder was placed; and in these sheds and on these benches servants who had to attend to the beasts, and travellers who could not find room in the inn, were most glad to have shelter from the weather. *Perhaps* this was the sort of stable in which, amidst lowing oxen and bleating sheep, the blessed Virgin "brought forth her first-born SON, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

The birth of CHRIST was earnestly and wonderingly looked for at this time, though people supposed He would be born like a great prince in a palace, not as the babe of a poor woman in a stable. Jews and Gentiles were all expecting Him, the period, or near

to it, having been computed by learned men from the various prophecies. For as I have told you, the birth of our SAVIOUR had been mercifully foretold even to Adam and Eve after their fall ; and again, time after time, and many a time by GOD's holy prophets. But now there had been no prophecy for four hundred years ; and those who could read and think of these wonderful writings were in a state of earnest expectation,

“ For they said that a mortal Birth
Even now would a name unfold,
That should rule the wide, wide earth,
And quench the thrones of old !

“ But no sound, nor voice, nor word,
The tale of travail brings :
Not an infant cry is heard
In the palaces of kings !

“ But there, where the oxen rest,
When the weary day is done,
How that Maiden-Mother's breast,
Thrills with her awful SON.”

A very learned and excellent clergyman calls all that long period, in which the prophets prepared the way for CHRIST, a sort of Advent, a time of watching for our LORD. It is called in Scripture “ a dark place ;” and the prophets, who, from time to time, by command and inspiration of GOD, gave hope to His people, are called lights in a dark

place. His immediate forerunner, S. John the Baptist, is called "a burning and a shining light." Then lastly came that glorious vision of Angels to announce the arrival of the "Sun of Righteousness," telling the shepherds of "a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger;" the King of Kings, and LORD of Lords Himself.

What a happy, joyous, and holy season is that of Christmas, when most people look for merriment, some who think little, far too little about the reason. Let *us*, however, strive to bear in mind what Christmas really is, and we shall find it none the less happy for being a holy season.

S. STEPHEN.

DECEMBER 26.

“ On the King of Martyrs wait
 Three chosen bands in royal state,
 And all earth owns, of good and great,
 Is gathered in that choir.

“ Foremost and nearest to His throne,
 By perfect robes of triumph known,
 And likest Him in look and tone,
 The holy Stephen kneels.”

CLOSELY following the great Festival of our SAVIOUR'S birth, the Church has appointed three days to be kept holy in memory of the martyrs S. Stephen, S. John, and the Holy Innocents. Not that they suffered just at this time, but because these Innocents *first* laid down their lives for Him, it is fitting that we should think of them about the time we commemorate His birth Who gave to them eternal life.

Also to show the three very different kinds

of martyrdom which have been, and may be borne for CHRIST's sake.

First: S. Stephen—a martyr both in will and deed; for he was willing to die for his SAVIOUR, and did so die.

Second: S. John the Evangelist, who was willing to be killed for CHRIST's sake, but was not required by Him to do so; but who did willingly, rather than deny CHRIST, go through a torture which must have killed him in a most cruel manner, only that he was saved, as the *Three Children* were saved, out of the burning fiery furnace.

And, thirdly, the deed without the will. For the poor children, whom the wicked Herod caused to be killed were not old enough to wish or to understand anything; but still they were killed for CHRIST's sake, when Herod, "exceeding wroth, sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under,"¹ because he hoped, amongst them, to kill our SAVIOUR, then a child not two years old.

The history of S. Stephen is very interesting. He was a Jew, and was probably one of the seventy disciples sent out two and two by CHRIST; and he was wonderfully well instructed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the coming of our SAVIOUR as foretold in them. Indeed, perhaps if he had

¹ S. Matt. ii. 16.

not shown this so clearly that the High Priest and others "were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake," he might not have been martyred.

He was the first appointed to the office of Deacon in the early Church. "Deacon" means one who ministers to or serves others. You know that at first the Christians had "all things in common;" everything they had they threw into one purse for the use of all. But there will always be complaints everywhere; and so, here were those who complained that "some of the widows were neglected in the daily ministration;" and then the Apostles, who had not time to attend themselves to all this, appointed seven persons, called Deacons (of whom Stephen, "a man full of faith and the HOLY GHOST," was first called) to attend to the wants of the poor, and also to make daily provision for other matters required in the Church.

One of these duties was the preparation for the Holy Sacrament, which was then administered every day; and afterwards rich and poor sat down at one table together to a meal; and the deacons had to see to the provision of this out of the general purse.

Moreover, deacons, though they acted under our LORD'S chosen Apostles, were allowed to preach and baptize; and it was just after S. Stephen's grand sermon that he was stoned to death.

A little before this, when "full of faith and power, S. Stephen did great wonders and miracles among the people," some of the chief Jews of the synagogue stirred up the elders and others to seize him and to bring him before the Council; and moreover they bribed some wicked people to come and lay false accusations against him. These false witnesses he answered by speaking what you will read in the 7th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; and what he said was so true, that it provoked and enraged those who were listening, but who *would* not believe, until "they gnashed on him with their teeth," and made ready at once to kill him.

But our SAVIOUR showed Himself to this His first martyr to strengthen him; for S. Stephen saw the heavens opened, and CHRIST standing at the right hand of GOD.

S. Stephen was cast out of the city, and had stones thrown at him till he died. He kneeled down, praying, "LORD JESUS, receive my spirit;" and then his last words were for his murderers: "LORD, lay not this sin to their charge."

So like our SAVIOUR's words at His crucifixion! "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

No wonder that S. Stephen has been called "the head of the martyrs," "the crown of the Church." His name, Stephen, signifies a crown.

To stone a person to death was one of the four punishments appointed by the Jews for the greatest crimes; and the witnesses, who were first to lay hands upon him, used to put off and lay aside their loose upper garment. So now they took off these outer robes, and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul, to take charge of whilst they committed this murder. This Saul, through S. Stephen's prayers, became a Christian himself, and you know him well by name, for he was no other than the great Apostle S. Paul, of whom you read so much in the New Testament. When, some time afterwards, he was telling the people of the great light from heaven which struck him blind, and of our SAVIOUR Himself speaking to him, he relates also, with bitter repentance, that he was standing by at S. Stephen's murder, and "consenting to his death."

The devout and sorrowing brethren carried the body of S. Stephen away to be buried, and "made great lamentation," as well they might, at the cruel death of this good man; but his death was, no doubt, the means of bringing many over to the holy faith for which he died.

S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

DECEMBER 27.

“ On the King of Martyrs wait
 Three chosen bands in royal state,
 And all earth owns, of good and great,
 Is gathered in that choir.

“ One presses on and welcomes death,
 One calmly yields his willing breath,
 Not slow, nor hurrying, but in faith,
 Content to die or live.”

S. STEPHEN glorified CHRIST by his early death : S. John lived a very long life to His honour and glory ; and as he is the disciple whom JESUS most loved, and who was admitted by Him to the most private passages of His life, the celebration of his memory is fitly placed at the time of the birth of our Blessed LORD.

Among the fishermen of importance on the sea of Gennesareth was Zebedee, a Jew, who employed many servants ; and his sons, James

and John, were engaged with him in the same trade. Our LORD called several of these fishermen to follow Him, and it seems perhaps to have been on the same day that He had called two others (Peter and Andrew); that "going from thence," that is, still on, along the shore of the sea of Galilee, where He had been walking, He passed the place where Zebedee's ship lay, and He called James, and John his brother, from out of it. "And they immediately left the ship, and their father, and followed Him."

S. John was much younger than his brother, and by far the youngest of all the Apostles: he was then about twenty-five years of age. But he appears from this time to have been always with his Divine Master. It is thought by many that he had before this heard, and loved to hear, the holy Baptist preach and teach; and, if so, he would be very ready and prepared to attend to the summons of our LORD.

On several occasions, he, with S. Peter and S. James, was chosen by JESUS to remain with Him when He did not wish His other disciples to be present. A great token of love and confidence.

S. John was indeed the disciple whom our LORD loved most dearly of them all, and who leaned his head on our SAVIOUR'S breast at the Last Supper. Perhaps you will wonder how this was if you do not know the way in

which they reclined at meals in those days. They did not sit upright as we do, but half lay down, on small sofas or couches, which were spread round a table, not of the shape which we usually see now, but having two sides and one end across, and a passage up the centre for servants to go up and down to serve the guests.

The persons who lay on these couches had their faces turned towards the table, and their left elbow reclining on it: their feet of course being outward. Now if you try to think this over in your minds, you will easily see that it explains many things that seem strange to us.

First, as people lay in a slanting position, one a little below the other, it was quite easy for a person to lay his head on the breast of the one above him, as S. John's lay on the bosom of our LORD.

Secondly, as their feet lay outside the table, Mary might very easily anoint the feet of our SAVIOUR "as He sate at meat," without disturbing Him or any of the party.

And thirdly, as the right hand of the diner was always left free for use, he could easily dip his sop in the dish, and give it to one near him—as our SAVIOUR did to Judas.

In Eastern countries, at this day, they roll their bread, which is like a thin cake, into large mouthfuls, and sop it in the general dish, in the middle of the table; and it is

considered quite a compliment to sop a bit of your own bread, and give it to a visitor. Indeed the Arabs will now, fish with their fingers through the soup to find a particularly nice morsel of meat, and offer it to a visitor, if they like him. Many English travellers have told us this.

S. John, and his elder brother S. James, were called by our SAVIOUR Boanerges; as you will read in the account of S. James. At present we will go on with the history of S. John, of whom we hear more and more as the time of our LORD's sufferings and death drew nigh.

For he accompanied Him on His last journey from Jericho to Bethany, on the Saturday before Good Friday; he was at the Supper where Mary anointed CHRIST's feet with oil, and wiped them with her hair; he was one of the two disciples so honoured as to be sent on Palm Sunday for the ass on which our SAVIOUR rode into Jerusalem: at the Last Supper he lay on the couch next to JESUS; and standing by the Cross at the Crucifixion, to him, in one of His seven sayings, our SAVIOUR commended the care of His Mother. He was one of the first to visit the Sepulchre; he was present on CHRIST's first appearance after His Resurrection; and he was an eye and ear-witness of most of the things related by him in his Gospel.

It is true, and it is a terrible warning and caution to us, that on the sudden surprisal of our SAVIOUR'S betrayal and apprehension, even this beloved and honoured follower, with the rest of the disciples, "forsook Him and fled;" but only for a short space. S. John quickly recovered himself, entered the High Priest's hall, followed our SAVIOUR closely through the short remainder of His life; and, after the Crucifixion, took the Holy Virgin to his own home, and cherished her as a good son might do, till she died, which was about fifteen years after the Ascension of our LORD.

He and the Apostle S. Peter were much attached to each other, were much together, and worked very zealously in the Church after our LORD'S Ascension. They were together when the cripple was healed at the "Beautiful" Gate of the Temple. Together they preached of eternal life and salvation by CHRIST with such power, that they gained "a multitude" to believe; and though they were thrown into prison, an angel came by night, and set them free.¹ They were also sent down together by the rest of the Apostles to Samaria, to attend to some business of the Church there.

After the death of the Virgin Mary, (until which event he appears to have worked principally in Judæa,) S. John was appointed

¹ Acts v. 19.

to go and preach the Gospel in a heathen country, now called Asia Minor.

This is a large space of country, and often called Anatolia. It lies between the Black Sea (of which most of you heard a great deal a few years ago) and the Mediterranean Sea, which, in the Bible, is called "The Great Sea." Along the coast of this country every ship sailed that went to the Crimean war. It was the only way by sea to Constantinople and Scutari, between which places, through a narrow strait, vessels had to pass, in order to get into the Black Sea to Sebastopol and Balaclava. You will many of you remember the names of these places; and some of you will, I doubt not, recollect that all vessels had to sail along the coast of Asia Minor, where S. John had once in early time preached, to get to them.

Here S. John told the heathen of CHRIST'S blessed Life and Miracles, and Death and Resurrection, with such earnestness and truth, that he got together several companies of Christians, and had Churches built for them in six different cities, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. These are six of those "Seven Churches which are in Asia," of which you read in the three first chapters of the Book of Revelation. The other of the seven was Ephesus, which had been founded many years earlier by S. Paul; and at Ephesus S. John chiefly resided.

All this was the work of years of patient toil, and weariness, and self-denial in every way : working hard and taking little rest and no enjoyment.

But S. John was to do more for his SAVIOUR than all this : he was to have been, and would have been martyred in a most cruel manner if the malice of his enemies had been allowed to prevail. He was falsely and wickedly accused to the Roman Emperor, Domitian ; and by him ordered to be thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, or oil set on fire. Of course this would usually be unspeakable torture and certain death. But you remember how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were delivered by the "SON of GOD" out of the burning fiery furnace into which they had been cast by order of King Nebuchadnezzar ; so, by the same GOD and SAVIOUR, was this faithful servant preserved in the boiling oil ; and he left it quite unhurt. But the Emperor Domitian was not warned as King Nebuchadnezzar had been. As he could not kill S. John, he banished him for life, to a lonely little island named Patmos, one of the very, very smallest of a cluster called Sporades ; not indeed a very great distance from the coast of Asia Minor, but far enough in those days to be cut off from every place where he had been accustomed to live, and far away from everybody whom he had known, or seen, or loved.

But here S. John continued to teach people patiently and earnestly about our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and here he wrote that book, the last in the Bible, called the "Revelation of S. John the Divine."

The title, "the Divine," is given to him in honour, because to him, more than to any one, were the counsels of the ALMIGHTY made known. And the book is called "Revelation" because GOD revealed to him many most important things which should occur in the world.

From his terrible sufferings he is what the Church calls "a Confessor"—that is, one who suffers for CHRIST's sake, and confesses Him, but does not die for Him, though he is willing to do so.

After he had remained in this lonely island for several years, Domitian died; and the succeeding Emperor, Nerva, released S. John from banishment. He returned to Ephesus, and there found that the good Bishop Timothy had been murdered. In compliance with the earnest and pressing entreaties of the whole flock of Christians there, he continued to take care of the Church in that city in place of its martyred pastor, until his own death.

He was a hundred years old when he died, and it is said that he is the only one of our LORD's Apostles who died a natural death. He lived to know of that actual destruction of Jerusalem which CHRIST had foretold.

He wrote three Epistles which you find in the New Testament ; and also, as I have told you, he wrote whilst an exile at Patmos, the Book of Revelation. But the work most dear and most valuable to us is the Gospel which bears his name. This was written after his final return to Ephesus, at the earnest request of the Bishops of Asia, and of many other clergy from the various Churches. So great and important a task was this, that he appointed a General Fast, and begged the prayers of the Church, that by humble supplication he might obtain the Divine blessing on this book.

His Gospel speaks more of CHRIST as GOD, and less of His Manhood, than the others do. They dwell *chiefly* on CHRIST'S outward acts, and wonderful works and miracles ; but this contains a great many more of our SAVIOUR'S solemn, earnest, affectionate, private conversations with His Disciples than do those of SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

This Gospel is more read by persons who are in sorrow, affliction, or distress of mind. It has been called the "Gospel of Comfort ;" as its writer, S. John, was most truly named "The Apostle of Love."

For it is said that when he was so enfeebled by age that he could not move about, or speak much, he used to raise up his hands, as if in blessing on those around him, and say, "Little children, LOVE EACH OTHER." And

when wearied with the same thing they asked him why he repeated this so often, he said, "Because it is the precept of the LORD, and if you comply with it, you do enough."

So purely religious and forgiving was he, that he went out into the wilderness after a young man, once his pupil, who had taken to evil courses and become a robber. Aged as he was, he obtained a horse and guide, and made his way to the mountain where the robber and his gang lived. He was taken prisoner, but did not offer to escape. He said, "It is for this that I am come: lead me to your Captain." When the Captain, who stood armed to receive him, saw who it was, he rushed away in haste and shame, but the Saint hurried after him, and, stretching his arms towards him, said,

"Child, why do you thus fly from me your father, unarmed, and an old man? My son, have compassion on me. There is time for repentance. Stay, believe me, I am sent by CHRIST."

The young man burst into tears.

S. John kissed him, prayed with him, and brought him back to Ephesus.

Well might he be the "beloved disciple." Well may a good man of our own day, writing of him, say,

"This is he whom GOD approves,
This is he whom JESUS loves."

At Ephesus, at a great age, not less, as it is said, than one hundred years, this beloved disciple died ; or as we may truly say of him, as the inspired writer did of the Martyr S. Stephen, he “ fell asleep.”

“ For angels watch beside the bed
Where aged Christians rest their head ;
And as their watchful vigils cease,
Parting, they whisper—whisper—PEACE.”

S. John the Evangelist was buried on a mountain-side, without the walls of the city ; and for a long time the dust from his tomb was treasured up and carried away by devout persons.

THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

DECEMBER 28.

“On the King of Martyrs wait
 Three chosen bands in royal state,
 And all earth owns, of good and great,
 Is gathered in that Choir,

“And some, the darlings of their LORD,
 Play smiling with the flame and sword,
 And, ere they speak, to His sure word
 Unconscious witness give.”

THIS has been called “The Children’s Saints’ Day,” and it is one in which all young people can hardly fail to take interest, and to think about it. In many country places children are called childer: so this used to be called “Childermas Day,” or the day on which there was Divine Service in memory of the Holy Innocents.

It is very interesting to read of holy children in the Bible: many of the greatest and most holy men that ever lived have been marked out as GOD’S especial favourites when they were young. You remember the beau-

tiful history of Samuel, who was dedicated to GOD even before he was born: that is, his mother made a solemn vow that if she were so happy as to have a little son, she would at once place him in the Temple, to serve the LORD as a priest all his life. And she did so as soon as ever he could be left; and how young he was you may guess, because we read that she made him "a little coat" every year, and took it to him.

So good and holy was this little child, that the LORD Almighty spoke to him, and told him His will.

Joseph you know was very good and gentle, when he was quite a young boy, and his wicked elder brothers cast him into the well, and then sold him for a slave; and GOD Almighty saved him from these and other terrible dangers, and raised him to be a helper and refuge to all his own family, as well as to the whole land of Egypt. In his early years he was very modest, truthful, and good.

Moses was only a babe, three months old, when he was laid in a little cradle of rushes on the banks of the river, where it was most likely he would be drowned or die of hunger: but GOD Almighty saw and loved this babe, and sent the princess of Egypt that way. And Moses became a very learned man, and he was the deliverer of his people out of Egypt, and was their ruler and guide for

forty years. He was then the greatest man upon earth; but, remember, he was also the meekest.

David was but a rosy-cheeked boy, tending sheep, but very obedient to Jesse his father, and very loving and helpful to his brothers; quite ready to carry them parched corn and loaves for food to the camp (1 Sam. xvii. 17) as his father desired, when God Almighty had him anointed as future King of Israel, and sent him to slay Goliath the giant. You know what a great and good man he became —“ a man after God’s own heart.” And you know who wrote all those beautiful Psalms which now we could not do without. There have been none such ever produced since, nor ever will; for God Almighty, Who had loved the good and rosy shepherd-boy, was with “ His servant David,” when in after-years they were written; and the Church has made them a chief part of her service and worship.

S. John the Baptist was taken into the wilderness by his mother, (who feared his life was in danger from Herod,) when but a little child; but God Almighty saw him there, loved him there, and took care of him. You will read soon what *he* became when he was a man.

You all remember how fond our LORD was of little children;—how He “took them in His arms, and blessed them;”—how He said,

“Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God;”—how, when His disciples were disputing which should be greatest, He called “a little child, and set it in the midst, saying, “Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;”—how He told them that the angels of “little children” always behold the face of the “FATHER in Heaven.”

How often and often must our Blessed SAVIOUR have thought of those little children, those “Holy Innocents,” none more than two years old, who were cruelly slaughtered for Him when He was a little child—killed for His sake, because it was to make sure of Him that Herod committed this atrocious wickedness. They glorified God, poor little innocents, by their deaths, and the ALMIGHTY’S power was shown in rescuing His SON, by a miracle, from a massacre in which it is said fourteen thousand helpless babes were killed. For Herod, who was as crafty as he was wicked, using every means he could think of to secure JESUS, caused numbers of children to be gathered together in various places, and their loving and deceived mothers, supposing he only wanted their names and ages for what is called a census, willingly took them as required. So that though many children were traced to their own homes and killed, num-

bers and numbers were slaughtered at once, in various places.

And so then indeed did come to pass what Jeremiah the prophet had foretold five hundred years before: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not." (Jer. xxxi. 15.)

Ramah is a town in Benjamin, not far from Bethlehem in Judah, and is used here to express the country generally where this cruel event took place. And Rachel means, and is often used to signify, the Hebrew women in general, because she was the mother of the two great patriarchs Joseph and Benjamin. She died early, in giving birth to Benjamin, in this very neighbourhood, when travelling with her husband and his family on his return from Haran to his own country: and he "buried her by the way." An English gentleman who has travelled there in late years says, that even now "a pillar marks the spot where the beautiful mother of Israel sleeps."

Are you surprised that "in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof," there should be "bitter weeping" when all these innocent children were murdered?

And you see all this dreadful wickedness did not answer its intended purpose. Our Infant SAVIOUR escaped, and you know how.

The ALMIGHTY, before Herod had given his cruel orders, sent one of His bright and beautiful angels to Joseph, to say to him, "Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word;" (S. Matt. ii. 13,) and, as you will read a few verses further on, another angel told Joseph when he might safely return with the Holy Child to Israel, for that Herod was dead.

So were these infants martyrs, not in will—for they were too young to know anything—but in DEED, for our LORD JESUS CHRIST; and therefore from the very first days of Christianity, by the holy fathers, according to the will of GOD, "the martyrdom of the Holy Innocents was commanded to be ever celebrated in the Church:" and very fittingly, and for more solemnity, close to the day of the birth of CHRIST; that birth having been the occasion of their deaths.

So these children "were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto GOD, and to the LAMB. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of GOD."

"These, like ourselves, were born to sin and die,
But e'er the poison root was grown,
GOD set His seal, and marked them for His own,
Baptized in blood for JESUS' sake,
Now underneath the Cross their bed they make."

THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

JANUARY 1.

“Behold, the Virgin blest
Calls on her Babe to wake
From His sweet slumber on her breast :
How should her heart not ache ?
From her pure bosom, where all night
He softly slept, that maiden bright
Resigns her well-beloved at morn
To shed His blood ; for therefore was He born.”

THE octave of a great festival, that is the eighth day following it, used at one time to be observed with almost as much solemnity as the day itself. In the Old Testament you will see that a solemn festival lasted eight days. So the first of January being the eighth day from the birth of CHRIST, was always very reverently kept on that account ; but as being the day also of His Circumcision, it is observed with still more solemnity.

When GOD made a covenant with Abraham He required him to be circumcised, and enjoined that this rite should be observed by him, and by every male child born to him and his family through many succeeding ages, as a distinction between his descendants and the rest of mankind. Circumcision was a mark made on the person, not without pain, as a token that he entered into this covenant or agreement. So all Abraham's descendants were circumcised, to show that *they* were also bound by the agreement or covenant which their great forefather had made with GOD Almighty, Who ordained that this rite should always be fulfilled when the child was eight days old, and his name given to him at that time.

So Circumcision was to the Jews very like what Baptism is to us. They by it, on their part, entered into an agreement with the LORD GOD that "they would walk in His laws which He set before them," and GOD, on His part, promised to bring them safely into the land of Canaan, then inhabited and filled with strong, fierce, cruel heathens, and to give this *then* most beautiful country to them and their descendants. Circumcision was with them the token, the "outward visible sign," that they had entered into this covenant with GOD.

So, in Baptism, *we* enter into covenant with GOD, the new covenant, the covenant of grace ;

Abraham's, or the old covenant, was the covenant of works. We are baptized in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST, and we promise by our godfathers and godmothers "to forsake all the sinful lusts of the flesh:" that is, to cast off from our hearts (circumcise means to cut away) all our evil thoughts and wishes, to use all diligence to be rightly instructed in God's Holy Word, and in the knowledge of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and so to live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world.

But Baptism is far more, as in it grace is given, and we are made parts or members of CHRIST, and so are enabled to do this; and God on His part of this new covenant, promises us life and happiness for ever hereafter, through the Atonement, Death, and Resurrection of our SAVIOUR.

Now you may naturally suppose that a Person so Pure, so Sinless, and Divine as our SAVIOUR, needed not to enter into a covenant that He would lead a good life. But though He was God, when He was made flesh, it became Him to "fulfil all righteousness." So He Himself told us many years afterwards, when S. John, knowing His divinity, hesitated to baptize Him. He bound Himself on earth to submit to all God's ordinances, and God had commanded every descendant of Abraham to be circumcised. Had He not been so, He could not have

proved Himself a true Son of Abraham after the flesh. Probably He was thus qualified to labour among His countrymen, the Jews, the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as He calls them, and to fulfil the *whole law*, which, as you become better acquainted with His holy life, you will find that He did in every possible particular.

“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His Name was called JESUS, which was so named of the Angel before He was conceived in the womb.”

The word JESUS means SAVIOUR, and was before His birth applied to Him, because “He should save His people from their sins.”

There have been many of the name, earthly Saviours or Deliverers ; it had been borne by that especial type of CHRIST, Joshua. Joshua, or Jesus, a Saviour.

Joshua, the captain of the LORD's host, was the earthly Saviour of the Israelites, leading them by his wisdom, his foresight, his power, and his valour, and by the aid of GOD (often and openly displayed), through terrible dangers, fearful battles, and hosts of warlike heathen tribes, to the possession and occupation of that beautiful country, which we read of in our SAVIOUR's life as Palestine, formerly called Canaan, “the promised land” of that early part of the Bible which treats of the first covenant.

Jesus Christ, CHRIST the LORD. It is thus

we must distinguish our SAVIOUR. The Angel said to the shepherds, "There is born to you a SAVIOUR, which is CHRIST *the* LORD." There have, as I have just said, been many of the name of Jesus, many named Christ; for Christ means "*anointed*:" and prophets, priests, and kings were all anointed earthly kings; but our hope this day is in JESUS CHRIST, THE LORD.

The Captain of our Salvation, this JESUS, Whose name was given us on this day, leads us, as His type the Hebrew Joshua did, through hosts of enemies, to *our* promised inheritance, promised in the second covenant.

Our enemies are not mere mortal people: we could most of us do battle in that way, perhaps: but they are the evil of our own hearts and inclinations, and bad desires. And to these we are prompted and tempted perpetually by hosts of evil spirits.

With these our circumcised and crucified SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST the LORD, teaches, helps, encourages us to do battle in His Name; and if we *do* "faithfully fight under His banner," He, the Captain of our Salvation, will bring us to our heavenly inheritance, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, as truly and as surely as Joshua in old time, under God's guidance, brought the Israelites to the then most fertile and most beautiful shores of the Jordan.

THE EPIPHANY.

JANUARY 6.

“Look now on this which GOD hath given :
 No cradle in a kingly hall,
 A star without, within a stall ;
 And where three strangers prostrate fall,
 The little hands as if to bless
 Uplifted in meek loveliness.”

THE meaning of the word Epiphany is “manifestation,” “appearing,” being made known, or being seen ; and we read of four epiphanies regarding our SAVIOUR.

When He was born, “made manifest” on earth, was first shown to the Jews a human being, an infant, that was an epiphany, and was called “The Appearing,” or “The Appearing of GOD.”

This first great one, when CHRIST was born into the world, and shown to the chosen people, we celebrate on the great and happy day called Christmas Day.

But twelve days after Christmas Day was the second manifestation, of which I have to tell you now, and which most especially concerns us. It is called "The Epiphany, or the Manifestation of CHRIST to the Gentiles," that is, to us.

When CHRIST was baptized in the river Jordan, and the HOLY GHOST descended upon Him, and GOD the FATHER spoke to Him from heaven,—this was a manifestation of the HOLY TRINITY, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST,—and this was an Epiphany.

When He turned the water into wine, this (His first miracle) was a manifestation of His Divine power, therefore an Epiphany.

The accounts of both these latter Epiphanies are read in the Church to-day, because they are both supposed to have happened on the same day of the year, though in different years, and thirty years after that Epiphany which we celebrate now.

I must tell you why to-day's Epiphany so especially concerns *us*.

All people on earth who were not Jews, were Gentiles or heathen ; that is to say, they had lost all memory and knowledge of the One true GOD ; the GOD of Adam, who was created so pure ; the GOD of Job, the man who lived so holily ; the GOD of Abraham and the Patriarchs ; the GOD of Moses and the Prophets. Now this knowledge and memory the Jews always held. But the Gentiles or

heathen, having totally forgotten Him, worshipped idols of all sorts, "graven images" carved out of wood or stone, which they called Gods, and knelt to and prayed to. In some places they worshipped animals, birds, and even loathsome reptiles. And in others they sacrificed human beings to these idols, and even little children, making them pass through the fire to Moloch, one of their most horrible idols.

So the Gentiles became generally corrupt; in some places most atrociously so. There were many good and well-disposed people among them; but without the knowledge of God and the practice of true religion, even these well-intentioned persons fell of course into error, though they were not so cruel or so terribly wicked as others.

And it pleased God, as on this day, to make His SON known to the Gentiles, or heathen people of that time, *whose descendants WE ARE.*

Stars shone and Angels sang to celebrate His birth. Such testimonies were never heard or thought of in the world before or since. Angels hovering round the shepherds of Bethlehem sang such hymns as are heard in heaven only: and a star, a new star, such a star as had never been seen in the skies before, shone far away from His cradle, far away into the East: where there were wise,

and learned, and good men, Chaldeans; a very learned race, who were accustomed to stay out in the open air at night to study and watch the stars, so wonderful in their motions, and who tried to learn about everything else from them; for they supposed that there were signs in the stars for everything that happened on earth.

The Magi were a very learned and wise people, and many of them very good people, who in their deep studies had learned all that people on earth could teach, but had not learned anything of the one true, real God; and so they knelt down to the sun or to fire, as their God. All these, and numbers more, were heathen.

There were three of these persons, good and just men, of very high rank, it is said, for they are called kings; of the deepest learning and high renown, for they are called prophets,—“*Prophet-Kings.*” To them was known, it is believed, that prophecy of Balaam, uttered fifteen hundred years before this time, which you have read at page 17; and much did they question and inquire among themselves what this “star” and this “sceptre” should mean, as year by year they watched the stars from the mountain tops.

However, there was then a general hush and expectation through the world; a prevailing idea, founded on the old prophecies, that about this time some wonderfully great

person should appear. And perhaps this expectation may have made these wise men more earnest and watchful. In those countries, it was usually supposed that if a new star was seen in the sky, it was an omen that any child born then should arrive at great power.

Suddenly, one midnight, at Christmas, these earnest watchers were startled by a new wonder. There came out along the East, the gleam of a new star,—a star quite different from any they had ever seen in all their lives before. It was totally unlike other stars in every way. It was a thousand times brighter, and some persons have said it was in the shape of a Cross. And it began to glide and move as if it were borne by invisible hands (angels', perhaps) through heaven.

This was, it may be, the most wonderful thing about it: for, you know, we cannot see the stars move. We are sure that they and the earth do so, because if we look at a star early in the evening, and look again some hours later, we shall see that it has changed its position; but with the naked eye we can never see them glide and move as this one did.

At once these wise men set out, and for twelve days and nights followed this star as it moved on before them; for it shone as wonderfully in the day as in the night. We can-

not see the stars by daylight ; and when God Almighty placed that wonderful pillar of fire to guide the Israelites through the wilderness, you will remember that though it was a bright flame by night, it looked only like a pillar of smoke by day. But this star shone in brightness by day as well as by night.

The pillar of fire and of smoke guided the Israelites towards their promised land, the earthly possession of the beautiful country of Canaan ; THE STAR guided *our* forerunners, those three good but heathen men, towards *our* promised inheritance, eternal in heaven, through JESUS CHRIST, whom they sought out to worship.

When they came near to Jerusalem the star disappeared, so of course they thought their journey was ended. And entering the city they went at once to king Herod, saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews ? for we have seen His Star in the East, and are come to worship Him."

Then king Herod was in much trouble, for he greatly feared that he should have a rival on the throne : supposing, as people then did, that the promised SAVIOUR was to be a great king on earth, to deliver the Jews from the Romans and other enemies, and make Jerusalem great and glorious again, as it had been in the days of David and Solomon.

We know otherwise, because we have seen those events come to pass which the prophets

had foretold ; but the Jews could not understand them then, and they, as well as the king, were very disturbed and anxious. The whole city was moved.

So king Herod consulted in private those learned men of the Jews who were most skilled in the Hebrew prophecies, and they told him that the child was to be born in Bethlehem Ephrata.

Hearing this the wise men quitted Jerusalem to go thither, when, lo ! there was the glorious star shining again before them, and "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." They followed it of course, gladly, and in a while they saw it sinking lower and lower in the air, until most slowly sinking, it stood quite still near the earth, exactly over the spot where the young Child was.

King Herod had desired them to return to him under the pretence that he might worship CHRIST also, but, in reality, that he might kill Him. But being warned by GOD not to return thither, these good men went back to their own country without passing through Jerusalem. *That is, after they had worshipped Christ.* For they knelt down before Him and worshipped Him.

They knew by inspiration of GOD not only that this slumbering, innocent, helpless babe, was the promised "star" that was to rise out of Jacob, the "sceptre" that was to govern in Israel, the long foretold MESSIAH, but that

He was—and this was what concerned them, *and us*—“a light to lighten the Gentiles.” For the knowledge of the one true GOD had been confined to GOD’S chosen people, the Jews; but the knowledge, and the grace, and the love, and the blessing of CHRIST’S Gospel, were to be extended to every human being, Jew and Gentile alike, all over the world; “A light to lighten the Gentiles,” as Simeon by the teaching of the HOLY SPIRIT prophesied in the temple.

But the prophet Isaiah, so many years before, said the same thing, and in plain words foretold the especial event of this day.

“Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And *the Gentiles* shall come to Thy light, and *kings to the brightness of Thy rising.*”

This Festival used to be called “The Day of Holy Lights,” and for the greater solemnity, and to awaken more fully the minds of the people to the importance of this, the churches used always to be lighted with a great multitude of lights and tapers during the celebration of public worship. A symbol or type, you know, of the spiritual light, the “Sun of Righteousness,” as at that season first rising on the world.

I little understood this symbol at the time, but I well remember, when a child, looking

forward so eagerly, as the season approached, when my father was accustomed to take us through cold, snow, or fog, to a very venerable and beautiful parish church in our neighbourhood, where there were large brass chandeliers suspended from the ceiling along the chancel, each holding a multitude of candles, row above row—such magnificent clusters they looked—beside smaller ones in the dim side-aisles and chapels, and large wax lights on the altar. The brilliant gas in common use now was not known of then; nor, though so bright, can I compare it to those clusters of candles which then seemed to me so solemn and so grand. It was one of our yearly treats to be taken to Afternoon Prayer in this church during the Christmas time; for the lights were kindled on Christmas Eve, and continued until the close of Twelfth Day, the “Epiphany, or Manifestation of God to the Gentiles;” and it seemed the more solemn, because it was often so foggy and dark when we left the illumined church, that we had to clasp each other’s hands very fast indeed to feel safe.

But I have not yet told you the solemn conclusion of the visit of the three learned wanderers to our SAVIOUR.

It was once always usual, and in many countries it is so still, for a person going to visit another to carry a present in his hand.

Amongst great folks, noblemen, ambassadors, princes, and kings, this was more especially the case. So these Eastern visitors failed not of course in the usual custom of bringing gifts, but inspired by wisdom from above, they brought presents most appropriate to that strange and wonderful Child, Who in the stable so little then resembled a king, or the son of a king. They knelt down before Him, opened their treasures, and laid on His humble cradle "gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

"Judea's new-born King they find,
Nor of His lowly semblance reck,
No golden band His brows to bind,
No golden chain to wreath His neck.

"An humble mother, poor and mean,
An humble Babe beside her laid,
Alone composed that royal scene,
Alone the pilgrim's toil repaid.

"But see, where prostrate on the floor
Their heads they bow, their gifts unfold,
And heaven's veiled majesty adore,
With myrrh, and frankincense, and gold."

Gold, as being the richest thing in their land, was a fit offering to a king; so, by this gift, they greeted Him *as a King*.

Now in the Jewish worship it was usual, indeed it was ordered by God, that some sweet-smelling stuff, called incense, should be

burnt in small golden vessels (called censers), the smoke or vapour of which should ascend above and over the altar, and diffuse itself around. So king David says, "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense."

The priest Zacharias, you know, was offering up incense in the temple when the Angel appeared to him. And we read in the Book of Revelation of a bright Angel before the throne, having much incense given him to offer with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar: "And the smoke of the incense ascended up before God."

Therefore we know that *to God alone* was this incense offered with prayers in His holy temple. So we are sure that when the wise men laid *frankincense*, one of the most rare and costly of all these essences,¹ at the feet of the infant JESUS, they offered it to Him *as God*.

Lastly, myrrh was a sort of balsam always used at that time at the burial of the dead: so they offered Him this, even *Him*, King and God though they had acknowledged Him to be, to show (divinely inspired, as it were,

¹ The wise men brought a precious gum called frankincense, which drops from a tree in India, and was brought from India to Palestine by the people in the intervening country, Arabia. We read in Exodus (xxx. 34) of "*pure frankincense*," for it was often adulterated; and in the Canticles (iii. 6) of perfume with myrrh and frankincense.

for thirty years later the Jews guessed it not) to show that He, even *He* must die, and that He must be yielded up (as this myrrh, a symbol of death, denoted) to the grave for our salvation. To rise again, as we know, as "our High Priest, ever to make intercession for us."

So we learn from these offerings of the wise men, that as GOD, KING, and PRIEST to *us*, who are come from the Gentiles, CHRIST was shown in the world on this EPIPHANY DAY.

THE CONVERSION OF S. PAUL.

JANUARY 25.

“The leader of that martial crew
 Seems bent some mighty deed to do,
 So steadily he speeds,
 With lips firm closed and fixed eye,
 Like warrior when the fight is nigh.”

MOST of our Church Services are celebrated on the death-day of the Apostle or Saint whose example and memory we honour; but that of S. Paul is appointed to be holden on the anniversary of the day on which he became a believer in, and a follower of CHRIST—therefore called the Conversion of S. Paul.

For this change in the usual order there are three reasons:—first, the hope and example that *no* sinner, *repenting*, need despair of pardon: for Saul had been a grievous persecutor of Christians, and as he himself says, “For *this cause* I obtained mercy, that in me

JESUS CHRIST might show forth *all long-suffering*, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe."

Secondly, for the great joy that all the Church felt that a man of so much power and talent should be won in her early days to preach the Gospel.

And thirdly, in respect of the wonderful manner of his conversion. Also because of its high advantage to the infant Church of CHRIST: for whilst the other good, earnest, zealous Apostles preached and taught, each one in his own particular province, S. Paul had "the care of all the Churches," and travelled, and taught, and laboured for thirty-five years, all through the known world.

As we say in the Collect, "O God, Who, through the preaching of the blessed Apostle S. Paul, hast caused the light of the Gospel to shine *throughout the world*."

When the Jews so cruelly stoned S. Stephen, those who had borne false witness against him, and threw the first stones at him, took off their upper garment, a loose kind of scarf or cloak, commonly worn, and laid them, to be taken care of, at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul. This young man was a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, and he was also a free citizen of Rome. He was born at Tarsus, the chief city of Cilicia in Asia Minor, famous for riches and

learning. There Saul received an excellent education, and he was afterwards sent to Jerusalem, to one of the most learned doctors there, Gamaliel, to be instructed in the Jewish laws and religion. So he became the most learned of all the Apostles. He was a Pharisee, and being a very sincere and earnest and zealous man, he observed their laws and customs very strictly, and thought he was only doing his duty when he persecuted the Christians.

This he did so zealously, and indeed so cruelly, that he won for himself high favour amongst the Jewish rulers, and easily obtained from them permission to go to Damascus, in order to imprison and persecute the Christians there.

Damascus, in Syria, a country north-east of Palestine, was the most beautiful city in the world, and very ancient. When Lot was taken captive and Abram went to rescue him, he pursued the robbers as far as Damascus: and Abraham's steward, Eliezer, who travelled to find a wife for Isaac, and brought home Rebecca, was a native of Damascus.

The city is situated in the midst of a large plain, twenty-five miles in circumference, and this valley looks like one immense garden, surrounded on all sides by dreary grey mountains. One bright river winds round the city, and another passes through

it; and rivulets are trickling on all sides, so that it is always a rich and beautiful green, filled with noble trees, mixed with orchards and gardens. In the midst of these is the city; but, as you go along the plain, you cannot see the houses, they are so hidden by the lofty palms and other trees; but from the hills around you see the minarets of the churches, and the domes of five hundred palaces, gleaming white among the green trees.

One very renowned art in Damascus was the manufacture of swords. In former warlike ages "a Damascene blade" was thought a gift fit for a king. They were so finely tempered that a thin gauze veil might be cut clean through, (that is, without fret or jag) as it floated in the air. So beautifully wrought were they, steel inlaid with gold, that you could hardly tell which was the steel and which the gold. The people of Damascus still excel in the art of inlaying metals with gold.

This was, no doubt, considered a very important city in the time of the Apostles, or Saul would not have been so solicitous to go there.

So, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the LORD," he led his band of soldiers, and was within half a mile of the city, when "suddenly there shined about him a light from heaven:"—

“ One moment—and to earth he falls :
What voice his inmost heart appals ?—
 Voice heard by him alone ;
For to the rest both words and form
Seem lost in lightning and in storm,
 While Saul, in wakeful trance,
Sees deep within that dazzling field
His persecuted LORD revealed
 With keen yet pitying glance.”

When he rose from the earth he was blind, and the soldiers whom this strong warlike person had been heading for so cruel a purpose, had to lead him by the hand, as if he were a child, into the city. This personal blindness was a fit emblem of the spiritual blindness in which he had lived.

In the deepest humility, for he felt that it was indeed JESUS, the Crucified, Who had spoken to him, Saul fasted, and prayed, and humbled himself for three days ; when a devout Christian, named Ananias, by GOD'S command, restored his eyesight—for he had remained blind—and conferred on him Holy Baptism, in the name of our risen LORD. Of this SAVIOUR, in Whom he now, to the very core of his heart, believed, Saul continued the earnest, zealous, and powerful advocate to the last hour of his life.

It is said that Saul (henceforward called Paul) studied and prayed in Arabia, in deep solitude, for three years, before he entered on the work of his life, the conversion of the

heathen. S. Peter is called the Apostle of the Jews, because when the Apostles dispersed themselves to preach the Gospel over the world, he was sent to the Jews who were scattered in various countries around Palestine; but S. Paul is called the Apostle of the Gentiles, or heathen; the worshippers, that is to say, not of **JEHOVAH**, as good Jews were, but of idols and images and false gods.

You will find in your testaments, in and from the ninth chapter of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, much about the perilous life of this most wonderful man.

When he first began to preach at Damascus that Gospel he had so miraculously learnt there, the Jews were so enraged that they sought to kill him, and other Christians contrived his escape by letting him down in a basket, over the wall. All cities had high walls built round them then, and indeed for hundreds of years after; and gates in these walls which were locked at night, so that nobody could come in or go out of the city without the permission of the governor, and the knowledge of the keeper of the gate. So you see all the gates of Damascus (and there were many) being thoroughly well guarded by the unfriendly Jews, the disciples chose a dark part of the wall between two of the gates, and lowered S. Paul over in a basket.

This mode is still practised in Eastern countries, where persons are in danger, and afraid

to go out by the usual gate. I have read of one monastery on Mount Sinai, (and there may be many others) where the inmates are even now in such fear from the wild Arabs, that they have no entrance at all but through a hole, high up in the wall, where anybody, going in or out, can only go by means of a rope and a basket.

S. Paul was one of the most active, earnest, industrious, energetic men in the world. He never thought about toil or trouble, and in his SAVIOUR'S service he feared no danger. On one occasion he thought it desirable to refer to his sufferings.

“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

“Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep ;

“In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ;

“In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,

“Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.”

With all his energy and determination and skill and power and learning, S. Paul was most humble.

“I,” he says, “am the least of the Apostles, and am not worthy to be called an Apostle.”

Yet you know he was most especially appointed an Apostle; not called by our LORD in His lifetime, but most particularly and wonderfully after His death.

Again, after all his earnest, untiring labours through so many trials and troubles for so many years, he would not relax his exertions in the least—“lest,” he says, “after having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

When he came to Jerusalem, after his conversion, the Apostles and Christians looked shyly on him, for they could hardly believe that *he*, of all people, had become a Christian. But the kind and gentle S. Barnabas, his dear friend, and often his companion and fellow labourer, told them his wonderful history, and then they welcomed him most gladly. After awhile they sent him forth to preach at Tarsus, his native place, where he spent some years, and left it to go to Antioch in Syria, a large and beautiful city, to assist S. Barnabas in his labours.

And here, when the other prophets and teachers were assembled and engaged in fasting and prayer, a heavenly revelation was

made to them that Paul and Barnabas were to be set apart for a special mission. They were therefore consecrated by fasting and prayer, and laying on of hands. This was an ancient ceremony transferred from the Jews, to whom it was ordained of God, into the Christian Church in consecrating ministers of religion ; and which has been so used ever since, and is so now.

He travelled with S. Barnabas for three years, preaching the Gospel in various countries, and returned for a time to Antioch and Jerusalem. Afterwards taking Silas, a Jewish Christian, for his companion, S. Paul revisited the places where he had taught before, and at Iconium converted and ordained to the office of the ministry a young Greek, named Timothy, whose mother and grandmother, both Jewesses, had from a child taught him the Holy Scriptures.

This young man, for whom S. Paul seems to have felt much affection, became a Bishop in the Church. S. Paul wrote to him two Epistles or letters which you will find in your New Testament ; and perhaps it may interest you to know that the Apostle wrote the second just before his martyrdom, which he was daily expecting.

S. Paul travelled in Greece, and went to Rome. At Corinth he spent eighteen months working at his trade as a tent-maker ; for it was the custom of the Jews, let them be ever

so rich, to teach their sons a trade. They have a proverb that "he who teacheth not his son a trade, teacheth him to be a thief."

I remember reading, long ago—I do not suppose I should now find the old-fashioned book anywhere—of a similar custom existing in some part of Germany; and this book told of a nobleman there who had lost all his property, and all his means of subsistence, by a war in which his party was defeated. He maintained himself and all his family by making baskets—a trade which he had been taught when a boy.

Whilst S. Paul was at Corinth he wrote his two Epistles to the Thessalonians. He was never idle anywhere. When he was not teaching, or preaching, or working, he was writing. Of the twenty-one Epistles in the New Testament, S. Paul wrote fourteen, and those the longest and most important.

It is strange to think that probably S. Paul himself brought the Faith of JESUS CHRIST to our own country, and preached here—perhaps in London, then a straggling village in a wild waste—perhaps landing at Dover, then a lonely shore—who can tell? Possibly, if we may guess, it would be in Cornwall; for Phœnician ships used to come long, long before that time, for tin, and there was much trade with Tarshish, as Portugal was then called. The people of Cornwall were more civilized, owing to this intercourse

with foreign countries than the other natives ; and wore brown cloaks, and did not stain their skins with blue woad, and go nearly naked, as most of the inhabitants of our country did then.

For an account of the miracles wrought by this great man, and of other wonderful and interesting things about him, you must read, as I have told you, the Acts of the Holy Apostles.

But the time drew on when S. Paul, like his brethren, was to seal his testimony with his blood. All his brilliancy, power, and goodness would not prevent this.

Landing in a Phœnician ship at Tyre, with the intention of again going to Jerusalem, some Christian brethren there, warned by the HOLY SPIRIT, begged of him not to go. But he proceeded, and at Cæsarea a prophet named Agabus again warned him (by binding his own hands and feet with Paul's girdle) of the imprisonment which awaited him should he reach Jerusalem. He was everywhere very much beloved. When he left Ephesus, "they all wept sore, and fell on his neck, and kissed him ;" and now at Cæsarea they "*besought* him not to go up to Jerusalem ;" but when he determined to do so, they could only say, like Christians, "The will of the LORD be done."

For he had replied to them, "What mean

ye to weep and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the LORD JESUS."

But it was not at Jerusalem that he died. He suffered much there, but was removed to Rome, where after some time he was thrown into prison, during the reign of the Emperor Nero. S. Peter was imprisoned at the same time, and both suffered martyrdom.

This Emperor, Nero, was one of the most wicked men that ever lived. It is almost impossible to imagine such wickedness as he delighted in. He caused Rome to be set on fire, only that he might amuse himself by watching the flames; and whilst the city was burning, he sang verses to his harp—for, strange to say, he was fond of music and poetry.

However he might enjoy the burning, Nero did not like the odium of this detestable action, and he accused the Christians of the crime. There was a fearful persecution raised against them on this false charge. Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and under that appearance devoured by savage dogs. Some were crucified, others burnt alive. Some were smeared all over with grease, and so set in flames, burning slowly, to light the ruffians at their horrible task. Nero amused himself by watching these tortures from his gardens.

At this time S. Peter and S. Paul both died. They had been imprisoned before for interfering, as their duty required them to do, with the wicked pleasures of the emperor. S. Peter was crucified, but this degrading punishment could not, by law, be inflicted on a Roman citizen, so S. Paul was beheaded with a sword. And this is a reason why in a great many windows and pictures we see of him, he is represented with a sword in his hand.

S. Paul was in his sixty-eighth year when he died. The chains with which he had been bound in prison were long preserved at Rome.

THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN
THE TEMPLE,

COMMONLY CALLED THE PURIFICATION OF
SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN.

FEBRUARY 2.

“ Give ear, ye kings, bow down,
Ye rulers of the earth ;
This, this is He, your Priest by grace,
Your GOD and King by birth.

“ No pomp of earthly guards
Attends with sword and spear,
And all-defying, dauntless look,
Their Monarch’s way to clear.

“ Yet are there more with Him
Than all that are with you—
The armies of the highest heaven,
All righteous, good, and true.

“ But who is he, by years
Bow’d, but erect in heart,
Whose prayers are struggling with his tears ?
‘ LORD, let me now depart.’ ”

THIS day is chiefly observed in memory of our LORD being presented in the temple: and on it the Virgin Mary completed the days of her Purification. This was in obedience to a law of the Jews, by which any woman who had a child, separated herself from the congregation for a certain number of days.

The meaning of it is, that by Adam's fall we had all received the stain of sin at our birth, and to show how spreading that sin was, the children were circumcised, and the mothers were separated from the congregation.

If the Virgin Mary had not gone through these days of purification according to the law, she could not again have appeared at public worship, and she would have been considered as forsaking the faith of her fathers; and if our SAVIOUR had not been circumcised, and publicly presented in the temple, He could not by the laws have been permitted to enter either synagogue or temple, and no Jew would have held intercourse with Him. He and His Mother would not have been considered as in covenant with the LORD.

We may well think that this custom might have been omitted by so holy a person as the Virgin Mary; but no: both by His Mother and in His own Person, our LORD fulfilled to the letter every command given in the law of Moses. And in this law it was a precept that

every first son in every family "should be holy unto the LORD."

The first-born of cattle were reserved for sacrifice in the temple, according to the law of Moses, ordained by GOD. You know that all this sacrifice and blood-shedding, which seems so strange to us now, was to the Jews a type, a symbol, of the shedding of His Blood Who was hereafter to lay down His life for them and for us.

The first-born sons among men were, as I say, to be devoted to the LORD, to serve in His holy temple. This was in memory of that awful night when all the first-born of Egypt, both man and beast, were slain : but of the children of Israel none.

After a time it pleased GOD to confine the execution of the holy services of His temple to the family of Levi ; but still all Hebrew mothers were obliged to present their first-born sons in the temple, and to pay a ransom to the priest.

In obedience to this law, at the end of forty days, the Virgin Mary walked several miles, with her Babe in her arms, to the temple, where she made her offerings of thanksgiving and Expiation, and presented her Divine Son before GOD, by the hands of the priest.

The Virgin Mary offered two young pigeons. Had she been rich, she ought to have offered a lamb : but for one too poor to

purchase a lamb (as the Mother of our LORD was), two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, which might be bought for very little, were accepted by the ALMIGHTY.

On the Mount of Olives, probably on the road to the temple, there were two enormous cedar trees, and under these were four stalls or shops, where pigeons were sold, for the convenience of those mothers, poor women, who went to return thanks for safety, the same thanksgiving which we call "The Churching of Women."

In some outer part of the temple courts too, doves and animals for sacrifice were sold, a great relief to those who came from afar. But this privilege became in time greatly abused: the traffickers intruded into some of the inner courts, where they had no business to be, and extended their trade to things not required for temple service, so that at last there was a regular market held there. You will remember that our SAVIOUR, in much indignation, turned all these dealers out, saying that His FATHER'S house was a house of prayer, but they had made it a den of thieves.

But it was thirty years before this occurrence, when He was a young babe, that the Holy Virgin carried Him to the Temple to offer her thanksgivings to GOD, and to make the usual offering at His altar. And in doing this she actually fulfilled the words of the

prophet Malachi, spoken four hundred years before. "The LORD, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; even the Messenger of the covenant, Whom ye delight in."

(This chapter from the prophet Malachi, is read in church to-day, for the Epistle.)

Numbers of persons had no doubt read and thought about this prophecy, and had supposed that the LORD, although He might come suddenly, would come in grandeur and glory. But no: He came so quietly that people in general knew nothing about it.

So we are told about other great things of God. They are done in such secrecy and silence, that even those who have been looking for them, do not note their approach.

So, silently and awfully, came the Flood, of which people had long been warned, and for which they had seen Noah preparing.

So, in the evening calm, came the destroying angels to Sodom and Gomorrah.

So, that wonderful Resurrection was in a dark silent hour, in a garden, unseen of any man.

And so will be the general Resurrection, the last Judgment; there will be terror, and alarm, and the blast of a trumpet; but it will come in an instant, "in the twinkling of an eye," to those not watching for it.

These thoughts are very solemn; but there is also great encouragement to us to watch and hope.

Noah was found watching, and he was saved and blessed when all the world was drowned.

Lot was found praying, and he also was saved, when the city in which he dwelt, and four other cities around, were shattered by earthquakes and fires from heaven.

So, in the last, awful day, will those few who "are found watching" be saved.

And this, the second day of February, is one of the most peaceful, most beautiful of the whole Christian year, when Mary carried JESUS to the temple, thinking herself of nothing but of offering her thanks to God; and she, nothing thought of by the crowds around. Why should they think of her, a humbly-clad, quiet woman, with her Baby in her arms, going to be churched? a thing that was and is happening every day everywhere.

But there, yes *there*, in the temple, were two watchers, two people who had passed long lives in hoping, and *watching*, and prayer. To them it was revealed by the HOLY SPIRIT, in reward to their pure and humble lives, that they should be in the Temple at that time.

So there they were, when Mary, carrying her Babe, and Joseph bearing the two young pigeons, one for a sin offering, the other for a burnt offering, humbly and quietly threaded their way through the crowded courts, and among the careless worshippers.

And here Anna, a widow eighty-four years old, who for many a year had spent her whole life, day and night, in serving God by fasting and prayers, came at that instant. At once she knew our SAVIOUR, and "gave thanks unto the LORD." And also that man "so just and devout," that he had been told by the HOLY SPIRIT that he should SEE CHRIST before he died: here he was, and at once he took this Holy Babe from His Mother, and holding Him in his arms, blessed Him, and prayed a most beautiful hymn over Him, of which I have told you before. And so these two faithful, humble, pious watchers "departed," that is to say, died "in peace."

S. MATTHIAS THE APOSTLE.

FEBRUARY 24.

“Who is GOD’S chosen priest?
 He, who on CHRIST stands waiting day and night,
 Who trac’d His holy steps, nor ever ceas’d,
 From Jordan’s banks to Bethphage height.

“Who hath learn’d lowliness
 From his LORD’S cradle, patience from His Cross;
 Whom poor men’s eyes and hearts consent to bless;
 To whom, for CHRIST, the world is loss.”

THERE is no mention of S. Matthias in the New Testament, except that which occurs in a portion of the first chapter of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, appointed for the Epistle of this day, which is, that after the death of Judas Iscariot, the remaining eleven Apostles consulted together about the choice of another in his room, and that choice fell *by lot* on Matthias.

An Apostle once meant merely a messenger, any person sent upon a special errand; but

our SAVIOUR applied the term to those twelve persons whom He made choice of, to be sent up and down the world in His Name, to teach His Gospel, to plant His Church. The highest order in the ministry were at first called Apostles; but now we understand by that name only those who received their commission from our LORD Himself, and who were distinguished from succeeding Bishops, by their having acted under our LORD and the *immediate* influence of the HOLY SPIRIT, and also by having possessed the power of working miracles.

S. Matthias was indeed called at a later period to fill up the place lost by Judas; and S. Paul and S. Barnabas are likewise called Apostles.

We may imagine how bitterly S. Peter, who loved our LORD so very dearly, would feel this treachery of Judas, yet it may well be an example to us; and it is a touching instance how he had governed and curbed his own naturally hasty and vehement temper, to read, that when recording the event to the disciples generally, (one hundred and twenty being assembled to appoint a successor,) he uses not one hard word, not one condemning, nay, not even reproving expression, "concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took JESUS." *He* left that; *he* had learned it was not for them, one mortal to judge an-

other. But he proceeded to tell how this perfidy, and this terrible, cruel crime had been foretold by king David, the holy, royal prophet, a thousand years before: "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."

A pathetic lament, touching the hearts of those who heard it, because it appealed so practically to their every-day experience. To this day, in what are called wild countries, amongst the Arabs of the East, or the Indians of the far, far Western American wilds, it is thought *impossible* for a man who has eaten of your loaf in kindness, to do you an unkindness. Yet you see Judas had not only shared our SAVIOUR'S food, which was often scanty (and sometimes none), for you know HE felt both hunger and thirst, but he had shared the sacred Feast at the "last supper:" moreover he had taken "a sop," what we now call a sippet, that is, a piece of bread soaked in the gravy of the chief dish, from our SAVIOUR'S own hand. Yet he gave Him up to His murderers.

S. Peter, you see, leaves us to *think* about this, he *says* not one harsh word. There are other prophecies in this chapter to which S. Peter refers. "Let his habitation be desolate," as David wrote in the 29th Psalm, and "his bishopric let another take;" or, as it is written in Psalm 109, ver. 8, meaning pre-

cisely the same thing, "Let another take his office," and therefore to this office they now appointed Matthias.

It is impossible to tell why our SAVIOUR chose precisely twelve persons to be Apostles ; but some have thought it was in allusion to the twelve patriarchs, as the founders of their several tribes, or to the twelve chief heads and rulers of the Jewish nation. This idea is perhaps derived from our SAVIOUR'S remark, that when He should sit on the throne of His glory, the Apostles should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. However this may be, the eleven holy Apostles directly after the death of Judas, felt it to be their duty to complete the exact number which our SAVIOUR had appointed.

Therefore S. Peter, at that time the foremost in act of the Apostles, assembled the Christians then in Jerusalem, and by their aid selected two persons, one called Barsabas or Justus, the other Matthias ; no doubt two of the best and most religious men among them ; and then all joined in solemn prayer to GOD to direct their choice. The lot fell on Matthias.

To choose by lot was a mode appointed by GOD. So between the two goats on the solemn day of atonement, it was decided by lot which should be for sacrifice, and which

for escape to the wilderness. When the land of Canaan was divided between the tribes, "every man's inheritance was to be in the place where his lot falleth." And from these lands the portion assigned to the Levites was taken by lot.

And so also the solemn services of the priests in the sanctuary were distributed, and at other times ; and as we read on one very marked occasion, when an Angel appeared in the temple to foretel the birth of S. John the Baptist, Zacharias was executing "the priest's office *in the order of his course*," that course having been marked out *by lot* a thousand years before, and more fully arranged by Solomon according to the command of David, and again at a later period revised by Hezekiah.

As I said, nothing is told us of S. Matthias in the New Testament, except his appointment to be an Apostle ; but learned men have gleaned a little from other histories of that time. From these they learn that S. Matthias was one who had followed our SAVIOUR from the time of His Baptism by John, even to the end of His course. That he was one of the seventy, sent by our SAVIOUR two and two into the world : that he was a witness of the Resurrection of CHRIST. That, added to all this, he was a most good man, there can be no doubt, or he would not have

been selected from seventy others, as a candidate (so to speak) for the holy office of an Apostle.

It is supposed that he taught in Judæa during the first part of his ministry, and that afterwards he travelled to a barbarous land (probably Ethiopia), from whence he never returned, being murdered there by the natives. Some persons say he was crucified: but the manner of his death is not certainly known.

THE FORTY DAYS OF LENT.

“ Call me not to strict account
 How I have lived here :
 For then I know right well, O LORD,
 Most vile I shall appear.

“ Mercy, good LORD, mercy I ask,
 This is the total sum ;
 For mercy, LORD, is all my suit ;
 Oh ! let Thy mercy come.”

BESIDES the days appointed by the Church for especial thanksgiving for the examples given us in the Lives of the Holy Apostles, there are in the Christian year days marked out to be particularly employed in humiliation, fasting, and prayer ; to the end that by humbling ourselves before God, we may learn true repentance, and gradually attain to a more holy life.

We read of many such days in the Old Testament, for fasting has, in all ages, and among all nations, been practised in times of mourning and sorrow.

There was one Fast appointed to the Jews by GOD Himself, before the solemn day of Expiation, which was regularly observed at the same period year after year.

There were public and solemn fasts appointed by the Jewish rulers, in time of any general calamity, or before commencing any important work.

Joshua, and the elders of Israel, lay prostrate before the ark from morning until evening, without eating, after they had been defeated by the men of Ai.

When the Ammonites and Moabites came to make war on Judah, the King, Jehoshaphat, "feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah."

When the Temple at Jerusalem was rebuilt after the release of the captive Jews from Babylon, Ezra, a very learned and good Jewish Priest, read and explained the Law of Moses, and appointed a great fast and confession of sin, before the solemn renewal of the Covenant with GOD.

We have a very remarkable instance in the Bible of a solemn fast by heathen people, caused by the preaching of a prophet of GOD. The King of Nineveh, terrified by Jonah's prophecy of the downfall of his city, not only "arose from his throne, and laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes," but he commanded that

neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, should taste anything. "Let them not feed, nor drink water; but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto GOD. Who can tell if GOD will turn and repent, and turn away from His fierce anger, that we perish not?"¹ So the whole city, from the king to the beggar, fasted, and wept, and prayed; and GOD had mercy on them, and spared them because of it. There were a hundred and twenty thousand young children then in this marvellous city.

And so in our own country at many times; but I refer only to late years.

At the time of the famine—in Ireland more especially—about fourteen years ago, a solemn day of fasting and humiliation and public worship was appointed to be held throughout the country, in hope that humble intercession might prevail with the ALMIGHTY to remove His chastening hand, to restore our harvests, and to take away the blight which had fallen on the fruits of the earth.

When the cholera raged through the land, and friends were dying so suddenly and in such awful agonies all round us, and we were in terrible fear for ourselves, then did our Bishops appoint a solemn day of general fast-

¹ Jonah iii.

ing and public prayer. And also, still later, in that fearful Indian rebellion, when those near and dear to us were suffering so terribly.

And after it had pleased God Almighty to remove these cruel trials, then, most rightly, and indeed the least we could do, was to have a day appointed when every Church in the country should be opened for public and special thanksgiving and almsgiving. And in all countries, and at all times, religious men have had many a private day of fasting of which the world at large knew nothing.

King David chastened himself with fasting. And the holy Prophet Daniel says, "I set my face unto the LORD GOD, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." The aged and good widow Anna, who saw our SAVIOUR, a young Babe, in the Temple, had "served GOD with fastings and prayers day and night," for many a long year. Our SAVIOUR fasted often; and when, in the parable, He rebuked the Pharisee who told Him that he fasted twice a week, the rebuke was not for fasting, but for boasting of it. Cornelius was fasting as well as praying when that vision came to him of which you read in the tenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The Christians at Antioch fasted and prayed when Paul and Barnabas were appointed to be Apostles; and twice S. Paul speaks of his own fasting, as if it were a requisite duty of a holy life.

Now fasting is not pleasant: no sort of self-denial is pleasant in itself. Therefore the Christian Church, knowing the weakness of human nature, and that, without denying a duty, we are so prone to defer it from time to time, has appointed regular stated Fast Days; in order that those who are willing to fulfil this duty may have the countenance and support of the Church at large, and that those who are indifferent, careless, or forgetful, may be reminded of it.

Every Friday throughout the year was appointed a Fast Day, because on it our LORD was crucified. So, on the same principle, every Sunday throughout the year is a Festival and Thanksgiving Day, because it was on that, the first day of the week, that HE rose from the dead.

From the very first ages of CHRIST, His followers were accustomed to set apart some time for additional prayer and self-denial in order that they might more truly and faithfully rejoice in the grand Festival of Easter; and our Church has appointed this solemn season every year, in which more particularly to examine our own conduct in life, and to strive to walk "humbly with GOD."¹

And this period is called LENT.

¹ "The Scriptures bid us fast, the Church says now."

George Herbert.

LENT, in the language once spoken here, means *Spring*. We often read in old books of *Lenten* herbs and fruits ; that is, the herbs and fruits of the Spring season. So this great appointed Fast, which comes every year in the spring time, and always concludes at Easter, to remind us of our SAVIOUR'S sufferings which ended at His Resurrection, is now called and known as Lent.

This Fast lasts for forty days.

The length of the Fast is similar to the Jewish custom. For the Jews began their solemn humiliation forty days before the great day of the Expiation, and so it seemed to our early Christians a fitting preparation for the remembrance of that Divine Expiation of the sins of the whole world,—the death of CHRIST: in order that, as an early Christian father writes, we might, as far as we are able, conform to CHRIST'S practice, and suffer with Him here, that we may reign with Him hereafter.

There is much in the Old Testament history to have guided our Church in the appointment of forty days as the duration of this fast.

In forty days GOD Almighty drowned the earth: for forty years the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: by the Jewish law forty stripes were to be given to malefactors: and forty days were allowed to the

people of Nineveh to repent. On two several occasions Moses fasted forty days : Elijah, in the wilderness, fasted for the same length of time : as did, to crown the whole, our blessed SAVIOUR Himself.

So after many variations in early time, the season of Lent was appointed to consist of forty days. The first of these is called Ash-Wednesday : and if you subtract or take away the six Sundays in Lent (for I have told you that Sunday is *always* a festival day) you will find that there are precisely forty days from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday. On this day, Easter Sunday, the Church appoints that all Christians, who have been confirmed, receive the Holy Communion.

During the whole of this season the ancient Christians attended additional* services in Church, and gave outward testimonies of sorrow and humiliation for their sins, which I do not doubt they felt. For they *knew*, what we only read of, the shocking state of wickedness from which they had been called. During this season of Lent no marriages ever took place, nor any feast or gay party of any sort. I can quite well remember when I was a child, some of my elderly relatives who always wore mourning during the whole time of Lent, and who, though they usually led very quiet lives, thought it their duty to live in still more quiet and seclusion during these six weeks.

In the early Christian times it was usual to receive the Holy Sacrament every day ; and this was never denied to any of the Faithful as all members of the Church were called. But as the consecration of this bread and wine was a joyful celebration, it was not permitted to be done except on Sunday, the Christian Festival. So, during Lent, bread and wine for this Holy Sacrament was consecrated each Sunday in sufficient quantity to last the whole week.

The primitive Christians, too, while lamenting their sins, lay in sackcloth and ashes : a custom which we can hardly understand now, but which I will try to describe to you on Ash-Wednesday.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

“SAVIOUR! when in dust to Thee
 Low we bend th’ adoring knee,
 When, repentant, to the skies
 Scarce we lift our weeping eyes, -
 Oh! by all Thy pain and woe
 Suffer’d once for man below,
 Bending from Thy throne on high,
 Hear our solemn Litany!”

I HAVE told you that the season of Lent was a period appointed for a more earnest attention to religious duties than we usually practise. It is intended that we should humble ourselves before God, confess our sins, deprecate His anger, beg for His mercy: that we should assemble together more frequently for public worship; practise self-denial, and give alms to the poor.

And if we do *really* suffer ourselves to hunger a little, we shall be much more charitably disposed, for we shall have some faint idea—though I fear but a very faint one—

of what our poor brethren have so often to endure.

This first day of Lent, **ASH WEDNESDAY**, had two names in Latin, one meaning "the head of the Fast," or the beginning of Lent; the other meaning Ash Wednesday. This is the name by which the day is now known, and I must tell you why.

It was always, in old time, a token of grief and humiliation to scatter ashes over the head. "In Thy sight, O LORD, we are but dust and ashes."

So said the "friend of God," Abraham, when he interceded for the inhabitants of Sodom; and the good and pious Job said, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

When Mordecai heard the king's command that the Jews should be slaughtered, "he put on sackcloth with ashes," and among the Jews "there was great mourning, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes."

The king of Nineveh "covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes;" and our SAVIOUR, speaking woe to Chorazin and Bethsaida, said "had such works been done" in Tyre and Sidon, "they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."

I need hardly tell you after these examples, even if you have forgotten that out of the dust of the ground we were created, that

ashes are a token of the frailty and vileness of man when compared with his Creator; and that by scattering them over the person, people acknowledged this vileness.

And sackcloth being the very roughest and coarsest stuff possible, was irritating and painful to the skin; in some degree personally afflicting; and it was also adopted as a token of humility, being usually worn only by those so poor and low in the world, that they could not obtain anything better.

In our time the Church does not openly rebuke, but advises us, counsels us, persuades us by telling us of CHRIST'S sacrifice; warns us by speaking of the judgments denounced, after this life, on unrepentant sinners. But in former time, notorious sinners were openly and publicly punished in church before the whole congregation. And this was done yearly on **ASH WEDNESDAY**.

These "penitents," as sinners who wished to be re-admitted to church were called, were not permitted to do so until they had made public confession of their sin.

On Ash Wednesday, clothed in sackcloth, and with naked feet, they knelt down in the church, and the bishop and the clergyman, themselves sorrowing for them, read those seven psalms called "penitential," because they were all prayers made by King David when he was in the deepest sorrow, contrition, and trouble. They are always read in church

on this day. Then ashes were scattered over their heads (now you know why this is called *Ash* Wednesday) and they were turned out of the church, and forbidden to enter it for a time, in order that they might feel the disorder their bad conduct occasioned.

But as soon as their repentance was found to be true and real, the Bishop himself, if there, laid his hands on their heads and blessed them, repeating the Absolution and afterwards administered to them the Holy Sacrament.

And thus they were earnestly welcomed back among the congregation.

So I think you may form some idea of what a solemn day Ash Wednesday has been considered.

Throughout all the examples I have given you in the last chapter, fasting has been spoken of as united with other religious exercises. It has always been practised in all times, before CHRIST and since.

Ezra, the priest, "did eat no bread nor drink water; for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away."

And Nehemiah writes, "It came to pass when I heard these words (*of the misery of Jerusalem*) that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven."

Our SAVIOUR gave His disciples instructions respecting fasting, and it is frequently mentioned in the Acts of the Holy Apostles.

Fasting, in the primary sense, means abstinence from food. In former times Christians performed this duty so strictly, that they took on fast days only enough to support life. Many of the earnest early Christians fed on dry bread, and herbs and roots, drinking only water: in warm countries where nuts of various kinds grew wild and common, they would eat only these, and usually not take any food whatever of any sort, until the evening.

But fasting is nothing if you do not exercise prayer and charity at the same time. It signifies little *in itself* whether we eat a hearty dinner of hot meat and dainty pudding, or whether we eat very sparingly of dry bread only. But when our bodies are full fed, our souls are apt to be equally idle; and it is certain that fasting does incline and help us to more earnest thought and prayer.

It is, however, the *habit* of denying ourselves that does us good, and our fasting is of no avail in the sight of God unless we join with it holy thoughts and intentions, and acts of charity. What we deny ourselves we ought to give in some shape to those poorer than we are; and the more secretly this is done the better. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? Is it not to deal thy bread to

the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house; and when thou seest the naked that thou cover him?"

Punishing the flesh alone will not atone for sin, but "self-denial and separation from the world is an appointed way of drawing near to God."

Fasting and self-denial may be shown in many ways—taking less of our usual food is one way only. It is by denying ourselves often in little things, by making a habit of it, that we shall in time get the rule over ourselves. It is only step by step that we can become good. But we may take these "steps" if we really and truly desire and strive to do so, in many matters, in the usual course of our lives, without any one but ourselves knowing anything about it. If we in our *very hearts* wish to gain a habit of self-denial, we shall soon find the way.

"The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves: a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God."

No one can keep a holy Lent, merely because the season is called Lent, who has not striven often and often beforehand, to deny himself.

"The good Christian is not one who has no inclination to sin, (for we have all the remains of sin in us) but who, being sensible of such

inclinations, denieth them continually, and suffers them not to grow into evil actions."

One most especial duty of this season is to forgive injuries. "Love your enemies: bless them that curse you: do good to them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

This direction our SAVIOUR gave to His disciples, and to all His followers for ever. But it must have been a hard duty then, when Christians lived in heathen countries, and there was not a scorn, a slander, an injury, a cruelty, or a torture, which was not inflicted by the heathen on Christian people.

It is not so with us in this Christian country, and I hope there are very few indeed who have absolute enemies. But because "we have the seed of sin in us," we have most of us at times little spites, and vexations, and mortifications.

Now these we must strive entirely to conquer and forgive; we must "bear no malice nor hatred in our hearts." All fasting, all prayer, all almsgiving, even to all our substance, all the strictest Lent discipline even for the whole forty days, will avail nothing, unless, in our very hearts, we forgive each one his brother their trespasses.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

MARCH 25.

“Ave Maria! blessed maid!
Lily of Eden’s fragrant shade,
Who can express the love
That nurtur’d thee so pure and sweet,
Making thy heart a shelter meet
For JESUS’ holy Dove?”

“Ave Maria! mother blest,
To whom caressing and caress’d,
Clings the Eternal Child;
Favour’d beyond archangel’s dream,
When first on thee with tenderest gleam
Thy new-born SAVIOUR smil’d.”

THERE was one cottage in the town of Nazareth, in Galilee, in which lived a very poor, very humble, and retiring young woman. She was kneeling in prayer one evening in the spring-time, soon after sunset, when suddenly a strange light gleamed through the room,

and she saw a bright and beautiful angel standing before her. Probably she was frightened, for indeed such a wondrous and awful sight was enough to alarm her ; and she was also troubled at his words, for she did not understand them. But the good angel soon drove away her alarm, saying the words which sounded like sweet music, "Fear not, Mary."

The Virgin Mary was, I suppose, the most meek and lowly-minded woman that ever lived ; she was too, as I told you, in an humble station of life, a poor labouring woman. Her family had indeed, in earlier times, been kings and princes ; for she was of the line of the great kings David and Solomon : however this family had sunk down by degrees until they were now amongst the poorest people. With such habits, and in such circumstances, it is no wonder that she could not understand the Angel when he said : "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the LORD is with thee : blessed art thou among women." She, so humble, so poor, so insignificant, to be thus spoken to ! Well might surprise and awe cause her to be "troubled." But the Angel went on to tell her that she had found favour with Almighty GOD, and that He had chosen her to become the mother of our blessed LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

Now, you know that a Redeemer had been promised to us even from the time of Adam's transgression, and that afterwards it was told

that He should be born amongst God's chosen people, the Jews. Therefore all the Hebrew women were most anxious to have sons ; each one hoping that perhaps *she* might become the mother of MESSIAH. Many and many of the great ones, I say, had hoped this. But it does not appear that such a thought had ever entered the mind of the Virgin Mary. Her opinion of herself was far too modest for that : moreover she was so poor, so unnoticed, so unknown. But the eye of the ALMIGHTY was on her : her worldly obscurity was nothing in His sight : HE knew that she was the most meek, the most pious, the most gentle, and the most excellent woman in the whole world ; and therefore, for these virtues was she raised to such honour as no woman in the world ever attained to, or ever can again.

“ Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the LORD is with thee. Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call His Name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the SON of the Highest. And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever : and of His kingdom there shall be no end.”

And how did Mary take this ? Was there no uplifting, no pride, no exultation ? None : only the usual meek obedience : “ Behold the handmaid of the LORD ; be it unto me according to thy word.”

This is what is called the “ Annuncia-

tion of our Lady," or the "Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary," because as on this day the Angel Gabriel told, announced, to Mary those happy tidings, tidings which carry a blessing with them to the very end of the world: and for which indeed it is most fitting that we should yearly, on this day, thank God in His Holy Church.

Besides the purity, and gentleness, and humility of the Blessed Virgin, she had other most excellent gifts and graces; for she was the most perfect woman that ever was born into the world, and was intended to be a pattern to us for everything. She had much decision and energy of character: for directly the Angel left her, she went to see and to consult with her aged and more experienced cousin Elizabeth. "Mary arose and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah."

Now it was a journey of more than eighty miles from Nazareth in Galilee to Hebron, a city of the priests, on the western side of the tribe of Judah. A hard journey too, for the country was mountainous and very fatiguing to travel: very likely she walked a good part of the way. Remember there were no railroads, no coaches: her only relief would be at times an ass, which might climb these steep paths with her in safety.

The Bible tells us how delighted her cousin

Elizabeth was to see her ; for she knew by inspiration of GOD, that Mary was to be the Mother of our LORD. But when Elizabeth expressed her delight and honour, Mary took no part of it to herself, but said, " My soul doth magnify the LORD : For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden."

You know this hymn very well. The Christians who lived close to the time of our SAVIOUR, and who are therefore the most likely to have fully understood it, thought so highly of it, that they at once made use of it in their devotions. So do we in the daily Evening Prayer of the Church. Besides the humility and beauty of it, scholars and learned men say that it is a perfect model of thanksgiving and praise, and shows her to have been rarely gifted in mind, and deeply read in the Holy Scriptures.

Some persons suppose that the Virgin Mary remained with her cousin Elizabeth until the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of our LORD, and then returned to Nazareth. The next we read of her is her going with Joseph to Bethlehem, where her promised Son, our SAVIOUR, was born, of which event you have the account in the chapter on Christmas.

There are very few notices of the Virgin in Scripture, perhaps to teach us that no woman, how good and great soever, should

put herself forward to be talked about: perhaps from the fear that if much were said about such a wonderful woman, we might be led to pay her divine honours: as indeed some people have wrongly done. But the little that is said of her shows her to have been in every respect an example for us. All her actions bring before us the character of "Blessed among women."

Though she well knew that her Son was Divine, was to be the CHRIST, the SAVIOUR, she never seems to have talked about Him. But she was always silently watching Him, and tending Him, and thinking of Him. "She kept all His sayings and pondered them in her heart." She followed Him constantly, to hear His divine sermons: she followed Him humbly, at a distance, with other holy women, in all His ministerings, in all His wanderings: she stood by the Cross when He was crucified; and lastly, after His death and Ascension, she failed not to join constantly in prayer with the Apostles.

Our SAVIOUR's last thought on earth seems to have been in behalf of this excellent and blessed Mother: for when He saw her, and the disciple whom He most loved, S. John, standing together, whilst He was hanging on the Cross, He said, "Woman, behold thy Son."

Now this sounds harsh to us, His calling His mother "Woman;" but it is not so in

reality. The words, in the language our SAVIOUR spoke them, were of very much gentler sound and meaning than they appear to us in our rough English. In Hebrew it means just such a word as we should use in kindness and respect. And He was in fact commending the mother whom He loved and had always honoured, to the care of the man whom He most loved of those on all the earth.

This favoured disciple took the Virgin to his own home, and she lived with him all the rest of her life. For she lived several years. Perhaps a less patient and holy woman would have died of grief; most likely: for though many mothers have lost sons by cruel deaths, none from the creation of the world ever had a Son like hers, or could therefore have sorrow to equal hers. But she lived on for our example, a pattern of patience, and fortitude, and resignation under the bitterest sorrow. That must have been a holy home, where she and the well-beloved disciple lived together.

I dare say you would be very pleased to know how the Virgin Mary looked: we are most of us anxious about the appearance of those in whom we feel interested. Now it is not possible to tell you this for *certainty*: but I have read a description of her which was written down in the fourth century (fourteen hundred years ago) by a Bishop of Sa-

lamis, called Epiphanius. Probably this description, which he seems to have been the first to write down, came to him by tradition; that is, one person had told it to another, down from the time of the Virgin Mary to that of this Bishop.

“She was of middle stature; her face oval; her eyes brilliant, and of an olive tint; her eyebrows arched and black; her hair was of a pale brown; her complexion fair as wheat. She spoke little, but she spoke freely and affably; she was not troubled in her speech, but grave, courteous, tranquil. Her dress was without ornament, and in her deportment was nothing lax or feeble.”

I am sure you will all of you have seen engravings taken from paintings of the Virgin Mary, and some of you will have seen the paintings themselves. Every good artist has delighted to paint pictures of her, none of them of course for a moment supposing that they could make her likeness. But they have loved to paint the most beautiful and modest face they could imagine, and call it the Virgin Mary.

They were always in the habit of putting something else in the picture, which might be a type or emblem of her good qualities. Sometimes they place doves near her when she is reading or working in the temple; and these are expressive of her gentleness and tenderness. Sometimes they place an

olive-branch near her, for that is a symbol of peace on earth. The cedar-tree, the cedar of Lebanon, so often referred to in Scripture—this, being painted in the same picture, is because of its height, its incorruptible substance, its perfume, and its healing virtues, supposed to typify her honour, her beauty, and her goodness.

She is also represented in many grander ways in paintings, but I think the most beautiful emblems to be placed near so pure and lowly a person, are flowers; they are so pure, so beautiful, so sinless themselves. The Virgin has often been painted with roses about her; for the sweet-smelling rose has always been considered an emblem of love and goodness; and the lily, yes, especially the white lily, for its purity and beauty, is often painted lying on her table, or in a vase of water near her.

In former times, when flowers were much used in teaching children, the snowdrop was shown to them as a token of hope, and of courage, and of consolation; because you see, obedient to its Almighty Maker, it grows in the deepest winter weather: and perhaps many of you have seen it (as I have a hundred times) trying to lift its little head, and drooping down again, the narrow edge of green on its white petals just tracing it from the snow beneath. Surely such a beautiful, fragile, little flower, thus silently working its

way to the light, was a type of comfort, and hope, and consolation to the mourner in the world's troubles, who was striving to the brighter light beyond. Therefore it was rightly considered to be an emblem of the Virgin Mary, who struggled patiently and bravely with so many troubles in this world.

It was very properly applied; there is hardly a beautiful name which has not at one time or other been given to her, so lovely has her example appeared to thoughtful and good people, ever since she lived.

Surely we shall do well to think often about the life of this most holy person: to strive to imitate her humility, and to copy, how far off soever, her excellent graces and Christian virtues.

I could very easily tell you as much again about the Holy Virgin, but I must not forget that this day has a more especial dedication. It has a particular respect to the Incarnation of our Blessed SAVIOUR, Who was at this time made flesh. Certainly this is one of the most important festivals relating to our LORD.

INCARNATION means making into flesh, "taking our flesh upon Him." Spirits, Angels, have no flesh, for our SAVIOUR said, "a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have;" and if spirits have no flesh, we know that GOD Almighty, the Creator of all, is

Spirit. Fleshly bodies are given to us for a covering, "a tabernacle" in this world. S. Paul speaks of "our earthly house of this tabernacle being dissolved," that is, the body dying; and S. Peter speaks of what is proper "so long as he is in this tabernacle," knowing that shortly he must put it off, that is, die, yield his body to the grave. And though our bodies *will* rise, these self-same bodies, yet they will be changed.

So the Incarnation of our SAVIOUR means that He suffered His Almighty Spirit to be clothed (veiled) in flesh like ours, for our sakes, in order that being Man He might know what is in man, what a human being suffers, what he feels; so that from personal experience He should be "tempted like as we are," and pity, and help, and suffer for us accordingly. He felt hunger and thirst, weariness and pain, just as we do.

"Hungry, thirsty, homeless, cold :
Hungry, by Whom saints are fed
With the Eternal Living Bread ;
Thirsty, from Whose pierced side
Healing waters spring and glide ;
Cold and bare He comes, Who never
May put off His robe of light ;
Homeless, Who must dwell for ever
In the FATHER'S bosom bright."

And the moment that the Angel Gabriel told Mary—that is, gave her the "Annuncia-

tion"—of the birth of our SAVIOUR, that moment did He begin to take upon Him our flesh. And this is what is meant by the Incarnation of our LORD.

I must try to show you how truly this Incarnation, this taking our flesh upon Him, did make our SAVIOUR, GOD though He were, one with us. For it would have been so very easy for Him to have come into the world, and to have lived here, without any suffering or trouble whatever. But He did not do so.

In the Scripture appointed for to-day's Epistle you read, foretelling of our SAVIOUR: "Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good;" which means, until He *knows how* to refuse the evil and choose the good. That He should be really and entirely such a child as ourselves have been, having all the little troubles of a helpless baby, and the human griefs, hopes and fears, and disappointments as He grew older, in order that He might know and feel and suffer exactly what we know and feel and suffer; so that He might be really "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," so that He might be "tempted like as we are," but without sin.

And it is this knowledge of our SAVIOUR *really* having entirely our human nature,—it is this INCARNATION of CHRIST which makes us feel that we may yearn to Him, love Him, pray to Him, and hope in Him, in a way that

we dare not presume to do had He been God only, and not Man.

Perhaps you would like to hear something about Nazareth, the abode of Joseph and Mary, the place where our LORD lived during His childhood and youth.

It is a very beautiful place indeed; the streets and houses are built on the slope of a hill, and fifteen other hills, not steep and frightful, but gentle and pleasing, rise about it like the edge of a shell, and shelter it all round; so that the country lying within these green hills is like a rich pasture, full of gay flowers, and gardens, and fig-trees. Almost all the hedges are of the prickly pear, the fruit of which has such a prickly skin, that if people are not careful in preparing it, they hurt themselves severely. It tastes something like a fig, and is, in its season, very important as food to the natives. A person climbing to the top of one of these hills on the western side of Nazareth, has a very remarkable view. He sees at once Mount Tabor, Mount Carmel, and Mount Hermon, all places much noted in Scripture.

Mount Tabor is a round hill, covered with trees and flowers up to the very top. There is a place shown near its base, which is supposed to be the spot where Deborah, the prophetess and judge of Israel stood, when, by the command of the LORD, she called Barak

and the Israelites to fight against the Canaanites, who were conquered, and whose captain, Sisera, was killed by having a nail driven into his temples as he slept. You will read about this in the fourth chapter of the Book of Judges.

Mount Carmel is also a very beautiful mountain. Travellers give very different accounts of it, according to the season of the year in which they see it; but at the happy season hyacinths, jonquils, anemones, and many other beautiful flowers grow wild there, pines and oak-trees up to the very top, and olive and laurel-trees lower down.

The name Carmel signifies *fruitful*: a country of vineyards and gardens. The food afforded by the fertility of the soil, makes the woods the resort of numerous wild animals, and birds of all sorts abound there. The Prophet Isaiah speaks of "the excellency of Carmel." If you do not recollect it, you will read the account in 1 Kings xviii., of the great miracle wrought by Elijah on this mountain. The Great Sea on which this prophet sent his servant to look, is now called the Mediterranean Sea. In the time of our SAVIOUR it was the only way by which the Apostles could move to bring tidings of His birth and death to countries in Europe and to our own.

And the third mountain which you see from Nazareth, far away in the north, is

Mount Hermon. It is very many times higher than Mounts Tabor and Carmel,¹ and is quite as beautiful, but in a different sort of way. These, as I have told you, are green and beautiful, abounding with flowers and trees to the very top; but the top of Hermon has been covered from the time of the creation with snow and ice, and is called "the majestic Hermon with its icy crown." It was called also "the mountain of snow." In the beautiful bright sunlight of that country, brighter far than we have any idea of in this, for the skies blaze like gold, this snow and ice glitter in the sun's rays like diamonds of all colours.

But now we will go down from this hill, where so much may be seen, into Nazareth again. It is a solemn thing to think that our SAVIOUR stood on this very hill, and looked on all these scenes, knowing all that had happened and all that would happen there! It is a strange and a solemn thought, that we may now go and walk—such of us as have the power to travel—in the very paths where He was when a child, in the self-same places, beautiful and solemn places, where, as He grew older, He would walk and meditate on what He had come into the world to do for us. Perhaps His Mother, the Blessed

¹ Mount Carmel is 1700 feet above the level of the sea, Mount Hermon is 10,000 feet in height.

Virgin Mary, often walking with Him, and even then, before the world knew Him, "pondering His sayings in her heart." There is a fountain there, near which most travellers raise their tent and rest; and they think, and they cannot but think, that often our SAVIOUR might have drunk water from this same spring which is such a refreshment to them.

There is a great deal more of pleasant information which I could tell you about Nazareth; but there is something more that I must tell, not so agreeable.

You have read how our SAVIOUR chose to be born of very humble parents, in the very humblest place, and in the vicinity of one of the smallest and lowest places of Judah. And you know He spent His youth in Nazareth, and "was subject to His parents" there.

Now Nazareth was not only an humble, but a low, bad place, and had a vile character. Perhaps some of you may remember that that most good and charitable man, Nathanael, said, "*Can* any good thing come out of Nazareth?" This was because Nazareth had such an evil character; for indeed it was a bad place. A good deal cut off from others, and from the busy world, it was what is called a frontier town, facing in three different directions: one towards Samaria, to the south, a region notorious for iniquity and frequent revolts; on the south-west toward the land

of the Philistines ; and on the west, towards the maritime city Acre.

The inhabitants of the sea coast of Samaria were notoriously wicked ; the Philistines we know were heathens ; and Nazareth was so situated, that it offered the nearest and safest refuge when quarrels and war were raging, to either party, and was resorted to by both. It became a den of profligates. Yet in Nazareth the SAVIOUR crucified on earth, the King and GOD of Heaven, vouchsafed to dwell, at once, as it were, living among sinners, those He came to call to repentance.

PALM SUNDAY.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
 Hark! all the tribes Hosanna cry.
 Thine humble beast pursues his road
 With palms and scattered garments strowed.

“Ride on! ride on in majesty!
 In lowly pomp ride on to die!
 O CHRIST, Thy triumphs now begin
 O'er captive death and conquered sin!”

THOUGH I have told you that every Sunday throughout the year is a festival day, our Church has endeavoured that even on this day, during Lent, we should bear in mind the duties and purposes of the holy season. In this we can hardly fail, if we read carefully the services appointed for these days. The Epistles chiefly treat of the duties of self-denial and humility: and because even these virtues will not avail us without active charity and kindness, the Gospels are so chosen as to show us how our SAVIOUR suf-

ferred temptation, fasted, prayed, and then went about seeking opportunities of doing good to others ; healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and blessing His enemies.

The fourth Sunday in Lent is called Mid-lent Sunday, and formerly, *Dominica Refectionis*, the Sunday of Refreshment ; perhaps because the Gospel for the day relates the miracle of feeding the five thousand persons with the five barley loaves and two fishes. So this name, "day of refreshment," gradually led to a custom which once extended all over England, of making a particularly good cake to be eaten on that day. In the northern countries these were, and are, large and round and flat—some as large as my small round table ; and are stuffed full of plums and spices and good things, and are called Symnel cakes, as the Sunday is called Symnel Sunday.

In Gloucestershire and about that part of England, the day is called Mothering Sunday, and the cakes Mothering cakes ; but they are of a very different sort from those in the North.

In many country places the habit is still maintained of having some unusual dainty on this day.

The fifth Sunday in Lent was called Passion Sunday, because then, in the Services of the Church, our LORD'S Passion or suf-

fering begins to be dwelt upon ; as, for instance, in the Epistle for the day, the shedding of His blood is spoken of ; and in the Gospel, the Jews taking up stones to cast at Him.

The sixth Sunday in Lent, this one, is called Palm Sunday, because on this day CHRIST entered Jerusalem as a king, exactly as the prophet Zechariah had foretold, nearly five hundred years before.

“ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion ; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem : behold, thy King cometh unto thee : He is just and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass.”

At that time Jerusalem was crowded with people come up to the great Feast of the Passover.

From all parts of the known world, all Jews, to whom it was not absolutely impossible to travel, came up to this important Festival. And grand indeed this magnificent city must have looked at that time, thronged with people of all nations, in various and singular dresses ; accompanied, many of the richer of them, by black slaves, wearing golden collars and bracelets, and by uncouth barbarian servants ; and besides the well-known camels, elephants and other foreign animals seldom seen there, mingling in the throng.

Hearing that “ the Master ” was coming to

the city, these multitudes went out to meet Him, thronging round Him and following Him, crying,

“Hosanna! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD.”

“Blessed be the kingdom of our Father David, that cometh in the name of the LORD: Hosanna in the highest.”

And they cast down their garments in the road for Him to walk on, and they strawed palm branches on His path, and waved them in the air around Him.

It has always been usual to fling various flowers and evergreens in the path of a conqueror. But the branches of palm strown before our SAVIOUR on this His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the only period of His life in which He allowed Himself to be received with ensigns of earthly pomp, were most beautifully and particularly appropriate. They were indeed symbols of the highest honour they could possibly pay Him, for the palm was at one time especially the tree of Palestine, a visible token of its prosperity then, as its absence now is an emblem of the desolation of the country. The Holy Land was once covered with palm-trees and vineyards; now there are only a few straggling trees here and there, of which the fruit does not ripen. Even the beautiful Jericho, the “city of palms,” has but a few scattered

ones left. Yet at one time this city, the capital city of the Jordan, "high, and fenced up to heaven," stood in a vast grove of majestic palms, which extended eight miles one way, and three another. There is now little trace of the rich vineyards with which the country was, when God's blessing was on it, clothed, except the ruinous remains of the terraces on which they were so carefully trained.

This unfortunate people, the Jews, have no country now; they are scattered among all the nations on the face of the earth: their own beautiful realm of Palestine is lost to them: as was indeed often foretold, and by the prophet Jeremiah thus:

"I will make the cities of Judah desolate."

These homes are indeed occupied by others alien to the Jewish faith.

But I have not yet described to you their palm, the type of their land.

It is a very beautiful tree, throwing out at a great height enormous feathery branches, which hang round it like a lofty crown. It has always been used as an emblem of triumph, and the elegant waving of the branches when passed through the air, would probably lead to its being borne in processions and triumphs.

Indeed we read in the book of the Revelation that the great multitude of the redeemed, who "stand before the throne and

before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, have palms in their hands." In pictures martyrs are represented with palms in their hands.

It is a wonderfully useful tree too. Dates, its fruit, are an important part of the food of the people where it grows; and travellers in the East generally carry a bag of them as part of their provision. The stones of the fruit are ground for camel's food; and the wood of the tree is used for fuel; its branches and fibres are made into bedsteads, baskets, ropes, cages, mats, besoms, drinking bowls, and many other things.

Its presence is a sure sign of water; the traveller, tired and weary in the hot, sandy desert, if he sees a palm tree afar off, hastens towards it with thankfulness and joy, because he knows that certainly he shall find water near its roots. So we may imagine how rejoiced the Israelites would be in their terrible journey through the desert, when they came to a place (Elim) where there were seventy palm trees, and twelve wells of water.

At the Feast of the Tabernacles, which the Jews held every year, in memory of their dwelling in tents in the wilderness, they passed the seven days of the Festival in huts or booths, made of the boughs of trees, and they are especially commanded to provide *branches of palm trees*, and the willows of the brook.

Palm trees are often alluded to in the Psalms of David; they were then usually planted in the courts of great buildings. And in the magnificent temple built by Solomon many palm trees, emblems of his country, were carved in the cedar-wood of the sanctuary, and plated all over with solid gold.

So completely was this tree considered a type of Palestine, that when the Romans conquered the country, they had medals struck to commemorate the victory, (as we had for Waterloo and other victories,) on one side of the Roman medals was the likeness of the Emperor and the date of his reign: on the other—without any need of words to explain—a mourner bending under a palm tree. This told all the world then that Judah was conquered.

You will understand by this time, that the Jews were showing the greatest honour to our LORD when they strewed palm branches in His way, crying out, Hosanna!

In ancient times it was the custom in our own country for persons bearing branches of what we call palms (a very different sort of tree, indeed; but the palm only grows in very hot countries) to carry them to church and place them before the altar, where the clergyman then said a prayer, in memory of this day of CHRIST'S triumphal entry into Jerusalem; and now palms are frequently

put about the churches on this day, or carried in people's hands.

It is awful to think that this triumphal entry took place only five days before our SAVIOUR was mocked, and scourged, and crucified.

HOLY WEEK.

“ O help us, LORD ; each hour of need
 Thy heavenly succour give :
 Help us in thought, and word, and deed,
 Each hour on earth we live.

“ O help us, JESUS, from on high ;
 We know no help but Thee !
 O help us so to live and die
 As Thine in heaven to be.”

PALM SUNDAY is the first day of **HOLY WEEK**, the week to be kept holy in remembrance of the sufferings and death of our Redeemer.

In Holy Week Christians have always employed themselves more earnestly both in public worship and private prayer, have read more than usual in the Holy Scriptures and devotional books, and have striven to practise self-denial in every kind.

It is also called the **GREAT WEEK** ; not because it had more days and hours than any other week, but because in it our salvation

was secured—the greatest event from the world's beginning to its end.

It has also for some years been called **PASSION WEEK**—*Passion or Suffering Week*¹—from its entire consecration to the memory of the bitter sufferings of our SAVIOUR. The observation of this week is so ancient that it is ascribed to the Apostles themselves. We are told that persons used to fast entirely three unbroken days in this week, and even four: and I may mention here that I *know* persons who do so yearly, for the three days: as undoubtedly many do, though their acquaintance generally have no idea of it. For if self-denial be vaunted of, as the Pharisees did of theirs, it is *nothing* worth.

Many Christian Emperors, to show their veneration for this holy season, used to stop all lawsuits, and to set all prisoners free, in imitation of HIM Who, at this time delivered us from the prison and chains of sin; and it is the law of England that all large theatres be closed this week.

Our Church has selected Services for this week which, in the Lessons, Epistles and Gospels, teach us the entire history of this

¹ In the old English Service Books Passion Week was the week before Holy Week, and so it was for many centuries called; but people have called Holy Week Passion Week during our time; the other way however would be the more correct.

terrible and wonderful event day by day. For every day, of course, we are expected to assemble in GOD'S house.

The Collect for Palm Sunday tells us in very few words, the event of the week; it is repeated every day until Good Friday. And the accounts of our SAVIOUR'S Passion and Death, as given by the Evangelists, are read *all* of them in turn, in the course of the week. On this day also the Greeks wanted to see our LORD, and He went into the temple.

Monday before Easter. Second day of Holy Week.

When our LORD came up from Jericho to keep the Passover, He did not dwell in Jerusalem, but lodged with Lazarus (the man, you know, whom He had raised from the dead,) at Bethany. Bethany was a small village near the foot of the Mount of Olives, and on the way to Jericho. We often read of it in the history of our LORD. Simon the leper lived there; and even to this day, travellers are shown two spots which the inhabitants say are the ruins of his house, and of that where Lazarus dwelt; but this may not be true. It was a very pleasant, verdant place then, and had shops for the sale of olives, figs, and dates, which grew around it; but now it is very poor and humble, and the soil untilled. From hence our SAVIOUR seems

to have come to Jerusalem every day (in Holy Week) but one, until He was taken, and to have returned at night.

It was on this day, Monday, the second day of Holy Week, that He felt hungry in His walk, and seeing a fig-tree by the way-side, went to it to gather fruit, and found none. Now this fig-tree was full of leaves, and therefore ought to have had fruit, because the fruit of the fig-tree sets and grows before the leaves shoot, for the fruit takes two years in growth, the leaves only one. So He pronounced a curse upon it, saying it should never bear fruit hereafter. And next morning, when they passed the place again, the fig-tree was dried up from the roots, and S. Peter said, "Master, behold, the fig-tree which Thou cursedst is withered away."

And this beautiful-looking, but barren fig-tree, so pleasing to the eye and so useless, is supposed to have been a type of the temple, and CHRIST'S cursing the one a fitting introduction of His doom of the other.¹ The temple, so grand, so magnificent, "the joy of the whole earth" *in appearance*, but so corrupt within; the priests so unfaithful, and mercy, obedience, and humility, the true fruits of real religion, quite neglected.

¹ At Jerusalem, on this day, He drove the buyers out of the temple, and the Jews began to conspire against Him.

Tuesday before Easter. Third day of Holy Week.

It was on this day, when CHRIST returned to Jerusalem, that looking at the buildings of the temple He prophesied: "Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down;" one of the disciples had said in amazement, perhaps in unbelief, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here."

It was no wonder that they doubted, for many of the stones were each of them as large as a small house; and we have no buildings in England that can give us an idea of the size of the whole. But the prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter; for even when the Roman conqueror Titus wished to save a part of the temple, because of its wonderful beauty, he could not, for a soldier had thrown a torch through a golden window, and whilst the battle was still raging, the fire was raging too. All that his army had left was shattered and destroyed by the fire; and numbers who had taken refuge there, six thousand people it is said, led by a false prophet, who told them that *it* (the temple) should be saved, were burnt to death.

The decree of the ALMIGHTY had gone forth, and there was NOT *one stone left on another.*

This fate our LORD foretold on *Tuesday* in

Holy Week,¹ on which evening He returned to the house of Simon the leper.

Wednesday before Easter. Fourth day of Holy Week.

This day and until Thursday evening, our SAVIOUR passed in retirement with His dear friends at Bethany. He dined at the house of Simon the leper, and it was at this time that a woman came and anointed His head as He sat at meat.

To anoint the *head* with oil was always a sign of honour. It was a usual service at that time to any highly-esteemed guest. It was a ceremony always performed in conferring any high dignity. Priests were anointed: "Moses poured oil on Aaron's head, and anointed him, to sanctify him."

Kings were anointed: "Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it upon the head of Saul." David was afterwards anointed king by Samuel. A little oil is poured by the Bishop on the head of every king and queen of England, when they are crowned.

As our SAVIOUR sate at meat "there came

¹ His last teaching on this day was that of the Father and two Sons,—the Vineyard let out to Husbandmen,—the Wedding Garment,—the Widow's Mite. He foretels the Crucifixion, gives the parables of the Ten Virgins, the Talents, the Sheep and the Goats.

a woman having a small alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious;" and the whole of this beautiful ointment she poured over His head.

And some of those present were angry at this "waste," for they said the ointment might have been sold for much money and given to the poor.

"And JESUS said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her?"

"Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good; but Me ye have not always.

"She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to *anoint My body to the burying.*"

For the seeds of this plant were used in former times to embalm the dead.

Perhaps our SAVIOUR knew that those who murmured were not *altogether* sincere in their plea of charity to the poor, or He would not have rebuked them. For this oil of spikenard—the *real*, for there were many imitations—was very rich and costly indeed. It was extracted from a plant which grows in India, and shoots out ears or spikes parallel with the ground, so is called *spike-nard*. This very small quantity which the woman poured on our SAVIOUR, cost ten pounds in our money, and was of much greater price according to the value of money at that time.

But if you wonder that people grumbled

at spending such a sum to do honour to our SAVIOUR, what do you think of one of His disciples selling His life for less than half the sum, and on this very same day? For while these quiet hours had been passed by JESUS and His friends at Bethany, Judas Iscariot had been in Jerusalem, making that bargain with the chief priests, and scribes, and elders of the Jews, in which he said, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."

This was rather less than £4.

"And from that time Judas sought opportunity to betray Him."

And the very next day he did so.

Thursday before Easter. The fifth day of Holy Week.

This was the first day of the feast of the Passover, which began at six o'clock in the evening, and lasted seven days.

The disciples asked JESUS where they should prepare the Passover for Him, and He told them to go to Jerusalem, and they should see a man in the street carrying a pitcher of water; that if they would follow this man to his house, and speak to him, he would show them a large upper room furnished and prepared for guests. And so indeed it was.

This man is supposed to have been Mark,

who afterwards wrote a Gospel called by his name. The disciples prepared the Passover in his house. Of this great feast you will read on Easter Sunday.

It appears that our SAVIOUR still quietly remained at Bethany until towards eventide, when He went to Jerusalem (for the last time) to hold the feast at six o'clock with His disciples.

Then He told them that one of them should betray Him; they were unhappy, and one and another asked, "LORD, is it I?"

And He replied, "He that dippeth his hand with Me into the dish, the same shall betray Me."

Moreover He dipped a sop, and gave it to Judas Iscariot.

You have read (page 61) how sacred a bond of kindness eating together, and especially giving a sop, was, and is considered in those countries.

After Supper, this evening, the most Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of CHRIST was instituted by Him, to be constantly celebrated by us in lieu of that typical Jewish Passover, which had its practical fulfilment and completion in the sacrifice of JESUS Himself, and by means of which He vouchsafes to still dwell in us: "One with CHRIST and CHRIST with us," as our Prayer Book says.

"JESUS took bread, and blessed it, and

brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body.

“And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

“For this is My Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”¹

“Bread of our life, in mercy broken,
Wine of the soul, in mercy shed!”

When JESUS rose from Supper, He removed His loose upper garment, took a basin and towel, and prepared to wash the feet of His disciples. But Simon Peter was shocked, and said, “LORD, Thou shalt never wash my feet.”

To which the LORD replied, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in Me.”

On this Simon Peter was most eager to be washed: for this outward washing was an emblem of purity of heart, without which S. Peter could not have been a worthy Apostle of CHRIST. Moreover our SAVIOUR gave to us a lesson of humility; a lesson that we should be ready to discharge this, or any other humble office for our fellow-creatures, in kindness to them.

This office in those hot countries is especially one of kindness. You read fre-

¹ S. Matt. xxvi.

quently, in the history of the Patriarchs how, always, water was brought for the feet of visitors. We in our cool climate, with our shoes and stockings, don't understand it. But then people did not wear shoes, only a piece of leather under the feet, and strapped over it; so that all the dust in those sandy, dry, hot climates, gathered between the toes in walking, and caused the feet to feel very hot, and fevered, and uncomfortable.

But, though washing the feet was a usual courtesy and refreshment offered to a guest, still this office was of course performed by servants. Our LORD "took upon Him the form of a servant," in order to teach us this lesson of kindness and humility.

So for a long time, on this day, and in memory of this occasion, poor people and beggars were accustomed to have their feet washed, and alms given to them, by rich and great people, by Bishops and kings.

You read the account of this action of our LORD in the second lesson for this morning.¹

After they had sung a hymn² they went into the Mount of Olives, and JESUS having retired to a part alone, knelt and prayed:

¹ At this time our LORD foretels S. Peter's denial of Him, discourses of the True Vine, the Promise of the Comforter, and bids them not wonder if the world hates them.

² Supposed to be Psalms cxiii. to cxviii.

that agony of prayer so fearful, when He prayed that if it were possible, *this cup* (that is, the dreadful suffering He was about to undergo,) should pass from Him; but adding, "Nevertheless, not as *I* will, but as *THOU* wilt,"—when His sweat was as great drops of blood falling to the ground.

His suffering *we* cannot in the least imagine, for "God had laid on Him the iniquities of *us all*." Those in heaven knew more of it, for an Angel came at dawn of the morning to strengthen Him and to comfort Him: but "the cup" was *not* removed.

On leaving the mountain about midnight with His disciples, whom He had found "sleeping for sorrow," JESUS was met by a multitude of people with swords and staves, led by the traitor Judas. And His disciples "all forsook Him and fled." As king David had prophesied: "I looked for some to take pity, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort me."

It was during this terrible night, too, or rather after midnight, that S. Peter denied his LORD.

GOOD FRIDAY.

"Bound upon the accursed tree,
 Faint and bleeding, *Who is He?*
 By the eyes so pale and dim,
 Streaming blood and writhing limb;
 By the flesh with scourges torn;
 By the crown of twisted thorn;
 By the side so deeply pierced;
 By the baffled, burning thirst;
 By the drooping, death-dewed brow:
 SON OF MAN! 'tis Thou! 'tis THOU!

"Bound upon the accursed tree,
 Dread and awful—*Who is He?*
 By the Sun at noonday pale,
 Shivering rocks, and rending veil;
 By earth that trembles at His doom;
 By yonder saints, who burst their tomb
 By Eden promised ere He died
 To the felon at His side;
 LORD! our suppliant knees we bow;
 SON OF GOD! 'tis Thou! 'tis THOU!"

CHRIST died this day for ALL people whomsoever, and in humble imitation of this infinite

and everlasting mercy, our Church has given us one Collect in which to pray for the salvation of *all* those who have not learnt as yet to know and obey HIM : Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics.

CHRIST'S death being the ground, the *only* ground, of our hope of everlasting life and happiness, the day on which that death took place, may indeed be considered GOOD by us. From the blessed effect of our SAVIOUR'S sufferings which are the ground of our joy, this day has always been called Good Friday.

From the very first age of Christianity it has been observed with humility, and prayer, and fasting ; for people, if they thought at all, could not but think and feel that it was their sins, our sins, the sins of the whole world, which made this awful expiation necessary.

The Lamb, without spot and without blemish, slain yearly at the Passover, was a type of this Divine Sacrifice : the brazen serpent, which Moses erected on a pole in the wilderness, so that the people mortally stung by flying serpents might look up to it and be cured, was a type of this our Redeemer, lifted up on the Cross, to draw all men unto Him.

For as we read in the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, written so long before CHRIST lived, and speaking of this plague of fiery serpents, " He that turned himself toward

it was not saved by the thing that he saw, but by Thee, that art the SAVIOUR of all."

And most particularly was this Divine Sacrifice foreshown in the solemn "Day of Atonement" of the Jews, prepared for by a fast of many days' continuance, when the High Priest was to make atonement for all the people, and, in addition to the usual sacrifices, was to present, at the door of the tabernacle, two goats, one of which was slain as a sin-offering, which shadowed forth the sacrifice of the death of CHRIST.

On this day alone the High Priest went into the "Holy of Holies," and sprinkled the blood of the goat on the mercy-seat; and S. Paul, in the ninth chapter of His Epistle to the Hebrews, represents our SAVIOUR to have been our High Priest, to have borne our sins in His own body, and with His own blood to have appeared before the mercy-seat in the presence of GOD, for us.

The Jewish dispensation was full of these types.

At this time the great and magnificent city of Jerusalem was crowded, as I have said, with thousands and thousands of strangers, Jews, and their servants and attendants, from every part of the then known world, assembled to celebrate the Feast of the Passover.

Numbers of those who only a few days

before had listened to CHRIST's teaching, had flung branches of palm in His path, and had loudly and joyfully cried, Hosanna! now already press on Him, join in the clamour against Him, and in the general outcry, "Let Him be crucified."

When the soldiers and officers of the Jews had seized JESUS on Thursday evening, they took Him to Annas, who had been the High Priest; but this person refused to hear the charge and sent Him bound to his son-in-law, Caiaphas, the new High Priest, who had then the chief priests, elders, and scribes with him.

It was this same Caiaphas, who, some time before, had declared that one man should die for the people, and that this man should be JESUS, to whom he was a bitter enemy.

Here they got up a false accusation against JESUS, and, after mocking, and spitting upon, and striking Him, they put Him in prison for the night. But almost before the day dawned, the next morning, *THIS morning, Good Friday*, the sixth day of Holy Week, He was brought, bound, before the whole assembly of the chief priests, elders, scribes, and council (called the Jewish Sanhedrim;) and though they with one voice declared the SAVIOUR worthy of death, they had not the power to inflict that punishment, being themselves subject to the Romans. So they took Him before Pontius Pilate, the Roman go-

vernor of Judæa, whose name has ever since been handed down in the Creed.

Whilst they were preparing to do this, Judas Iscariot rushed in, in a bitter agony of repentance, and throwing down the thirty pieces of silver, exclaimed, "I have sinned, in that I betrayed the innocent."

But his employers said with a sneer, "What is that to *us*? See *thou* to that."

Unable to endure his misery, Judas went out and hanged himself; and having chosen the edge of a precipice, fell headlong and was dashed to pieces.

During this time His persecutors and a multitude of the rabble were dragging JESUS, fast bound, and faint, and exhausted from the cruel treatment He had already borne, to the tribunal of the Governor. It was now daylight. Pilate examined and cross-examined Him, but could "find no fault" in Him, and told them so.

But he was a bad man, and he was afraid of the Jews; and hearing that JESUS was a Galilean, he thought it a good opportunity not only to make friends with the Governor of Galilee, Herod Antipas, with whom he had been at bitter enmity, but also to save himself from his present difficulty. He and Caiaphas too, had hitherto been quarrelling; but they made friends now over the sufferings of JESUS.

Herod was in Jerusalem, having come up

to celebrate the Passover, so there was little time lost. Herod had long wanted to see JESUS, and he was now enraged, because the LORD would not answer questions. So he gave Him over to the soldiers, who mocked and insulted Him, and put on Him a robe of scarlet (an emblem of royalty) and sent Him back to Pilate. For even *he* could find no excuse to put Him to death.

“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together.”

Pilate, who was convinced of the innocence of CHRIST, spoke of Him as their King, but they preferred the Roman Emperor and even the murderer and robber before Him. He then washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person : see ye to it.”

But the maddened crowd replied, “His blood be on us, and upon our children.”

So Pilate yielded, and having caused JESUS to be cruelly scourged, the custom usually before malefactors were executed, gave Him up to them.

Then again they put on Him a scarlet robe, and plaited a crown of thorns which they fastened round His head, and put a reed in His hands, in mockery of a royal sceptre ; and then, when they were tired of insulting Him, they replaced His own garments, and led Him away to be crucified.

It was the barbarous custom of that age to

compel the person condemned to be crucified to bear his own cross to the place appointed ; therefore they compelled our SAVIOUR to carry His. It was still only six o'clock in the morning when JESUS began His sad walk to Calvary—called, as it really was, the “way of sorrows,”—a hill outside the city walls where criminals were executed. But, bleeding with His stripes and thorny crown, weak with fasting, and sinking with fatigue and suffering, He staggered under its weight, and some women who followed were full of pity, and wept and lamented for Him.

But He, turning towards them, said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not *for Me*, but weep for yourselves and your children.”

At last JESUS fainted and fell beneath the weight of the Cross, and then the multitude compelled a stranger, Simon, of Cyrene, to carry it for Him ; and after about three hours spent on the road, this dreadful procession reached Calvary. At nine, the hour of the Jewish Sacrifice, He was nailed to the Cross.

I need not describe this awful deed to you ; you have read the relation often, and will hear it in church to-day. Our SAVIOUR'S whole life had been one course of charity and good-will ; His last act on earth was one of mercy, to forgive the penitent thief ; His last earthly care, one of love and duty, a care for His mother ; His almost last word a prayer

for His enemies: "FATHER, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

It was usual to give to persons crucified a draught to lull their pain, and one was offered to JESUS, "wine, mingled with myrrh," but HE came to "suffer to the uttermost" for us, and He would not take it. Myrrh was not only a type of death, but a soother of pain.

And when He was in an agony of thirst they gave Him "vinegar mingled with gall," which He could not drink. Not without meaning was this circumstance, long foretold by King David; (Ps. lxxix. 21;) for the gall showed the bitterness, the vinegar the sharpness of His painful death.

It was the most painful as well as the most shameful manner of death known. The pain was terrific; for huge nails were thrust through the hands and feet, and these being thickly filled with tender nerves and sinews, the nails caused extreme torment, without the mercy of killing quickly.

We learn its shamefulness by its being inflicted on none but slaves. But when the Roman Emperors became Christians, this punishment was forbidden entirely, out of respect and pious honour to the memory of CHRIST.

Our Redeemer hung upon the Cross for six hours; and then, about three o'clock, crying out, "*It is finished,*" HE DIED.

From twelve o'clock to three, though in the middle of the day, there had been darkness, like night, spread over the earth. But at the very instant of CHRIST'S death there was a great earthquake; the veil of the Temple was torn asunder; torn violently and for ever from top to bottom; the rocks were riven, the graves then opened from which, after His resurrection, the bodies of good men, long buried, rose and walked about, and went into the city, and appeared to many persons. They could not rest, even in the grave, after this awful event. And the heathen, unbelieving Roman centurion, whose appointed office it was to superintend this execution, was awe-struck, and exclaimed, **TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD.**

The veil of the Temple separated the Holy Place, which was a type of earth, from the Holy of Holies, which was a symbol of heaven, and which was so holy that no living man was allowed to enter it but the High Priest, and he only once a year. But now this was shattered from top to bottom, and thus plainly showed, that the great sacrifice which the temple worship showed forth in the sacrifice of animals was accomplished. Henceforth the worship of the Christian Church should set forth and apply **THIS** blessed Sacrifice to the souls of all men.

It also showed that *our* High Priest, having

offered and perfected the One Great Sacrifice on earth, was now passing on His way to heaven to make intercession for us there, and offer up perpetually the merit of His work on our behalf.

When His side was pierced, blood and water flowed from it. Symbols these of the two Sacraments of the Gospel; the water of Baptism; the blood, of the Holy Communion.

Late in the evening Joseph, who lived in the little town of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, a rich man, and a good man, a disciple of JESUS, came to Pilate to beg the body of our LORD; which Pilate at once granted him. And he, assisted by another disciple, named Nicodemus, who had prepared a hundredweight of spices, myrrh and aloes, wound the body in linen clothes, enclosing these spices, and laid it in a new sepulchre, hewn out of the rock, which Joseph had prepared to be his own tomb: S. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sitting over against this sepulchre.

EASTER EVE.

"The primroses with kindly gleam
 Are looking out from bower and brake :
 As bright and quiet all things seem
 As if no heart on earth could ache.
 Yet HE, the Sun Who yester even
 Set in that wild tempestuous gloom,
 When graves flew wide, and rocks were riven,
 Still lingers in the dreary tomb."

THERE is little to tell you of this, the seventh day of Holy Week. Those who had closely followed our LORD passed it in grief for what they thought His loss ; in awe at His awful end, in wonder at what His many intimations to them could mean ; but—with no hope.

How *could* they hope ? How could *they* dream of what was to be ? "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead."

In sadness and in sorrow they passed this their Sabbath day.

Because of the "preparation" for the Sabbath, which you know began at six o'clock on Friday evening, the attendance on our SAVIOUR'S dead Body, and the rites usually performed amongst the Jews, had been executed in a very hurried and imperfect manner; but the women who had followed Him all the way out of Galilee, and had stood at the Cross, "afar off, beholding," had watched the carefulness of Joseph and Nicodemus for the SAVIOUR'S Body, and had marked the place where it was laid. But the rules of the Sabbath prevented them from visiting the tomb during the continuance of this holy day.

At six o'clock the Sabbath ended, and left them free to act; and they lost no time in going to buy the spices and sweet-scented oils, with which it was usual at that period to anoint the bodies of the dead, and by morning's dawn they assembled at the sepulchre.

"The veil for evermore withdrawn,
O never yet shone vernal skies
So pure, as did that morning dawn."

We can have but a slight idea of the amazement and delighted joy of THAT morning, that first Easter morning, to the early watchers at that Sepulchre. As little can we enter into their grief and despondency *to-day*. For though it becomes us to pass most of this day in humble reverence and prayer, never

forgetting that our SAVIOUR was now lying in the grave, still *we* know what is to happen to-morrow, and *they* did not.

It is right indeed, therefore, that, as the Church enjoins, we should assemble for His worship this day, and think of our SAVIOUR'S burial.

This, the last day of Lent, was duly observed with fasting, prayer, and watching. VIGIL means watching, and this was the vigil of Easter-day. It was the custom to pass great part of the night before certain holy days, in watching and prayer. These evenings were called vigils.

In ancient times the vigil continued at least until midnight. The congregation assembled in the Church were not dismissed until that hour. At that time it was believed that CHRIST rose from the grave a little after midnight.

Also this vigil was kept as a token of our thankful anticipation of the joy, of which those poor heart-broken mourners at the tomb *that* Easter-eve were so ignorant; and also it was celebrated with multitudes of lights, torches, and tapers, both in churches, in roads, and in private houses, almost turning night into day, and designed as a token of that great Light, even the *Sun of Righteousness*, which the next day arose upon the world.

EASTER SUNDAY.

THE FIRST LORD'S DAY.

"'Twas at the matin hour, early before the dawn,
The prison doors flew open, the bolts of death
were drawn.

'Twas at the matin hour, when prayers of saints
are strong,
Where two short days ago He bore the spitting,
wounds, and wrong :
From realms unseen, an unseen way, th' Almighty
SAVIOUR came,
And following on His silent steps an Angel arm'd
in flame."

"The stone is rolled away, the keepers fainting
fall,
Satan's and Pilate's watchmen—the Day has
scar'd them all."

"The Angel came full early, but CHRIST had gone
before."

"CHRIST, OUR PASSOVER, IS SACRIFICED FOR
US + THEREFORE LET US KEEP THE FEAST."

AMONGST the solemn festivals of the Jews ordained by the ALMIGHTY, the greatest and the most important was that of the Passover. You probably all know very well when this Feast was instituted, and why. You will find a full account of it in the twelfth chapter of the Book of Exodus.

The Jews were all to eat unleavened bread for seven days ; that is, bread without any barm or yeast, or fermented stuff to make it rise : and so, of course, the bread was heavy and unsavoury, as we all know " a bad baking " is, even when we have used yeast, if it were not good. So this heavy, unleavened, unwholesome bread, eaten for seven days, was to put the Israelites in mind of what they had endured in Egypt.

And on the night of the Passover they were to eat the flesh of a lamb " without blemish and without spot," which had recently been killed. It was to be roasted whole ; not a bone of it was to be broken ; and they were to eat bitter herbs with it. These bitter herbs would remind them of their grievous bondage in Egypt, which made their lives bitter to them ; but *for us* they were as a type of true and heartfelt repentance, which is bitter, and of what we may have to undergo in following CHRIST in His bitter sufferings.

And they were to eat of this lamb with loins girded, shoes on their feet, and a staff

in their hands, as if starting for a journey. They were to take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood of the lamb, and strike it on the door-posts of the house.

What the Festival of the Passover was to the Israelites, the Feast of Easter is to us, and far more; and that is, in all respects, a type or shadow of this.

The lamb that was slain was a type of our SAVIOUR, Whom S. John the Baptist calls the Lamb of God; and the eating the flesh of the lamb was a type of our eating, spiritually, the flesh of CHRIST in the Holy Sacrament of the LORD'S Supper: "CHRIST, our Passover," as the Easter anthem says.

The death of the lamb was a type of CHRIST'S death. Isaiah had said, "HE shall be brought as a lamb to the slaughter."

That the lamb was "without blemish and without spot" not only shows us our blessed LORD'S sinlessness, but tells us of that purity of heart which we should strive to gain, in order to receive the Holy Sacrament worthily.

Not a bone of the lamb was to be broken. In the thirty-fourth Psalm, David, inspired by the HOLY SPIRIT, writes of our SAVIOUR, "He keepeth all His bones: so that not one of them is broken." And S. John speaks of this Scripture being fulfilled when the soldiers came and broke the legs of the malefactors, in order to kill them more speedily,

but found that our SAVIOUR was dead already.

The loins girded, the shoes on the feet, and staff in hand, were a type of the Christian pilgrim, ready to do GOD's will, to forsake the world, and bear his cross after his great Pattern.

The sprinkling of blood on the door-posts, which saved the Israelites when the first-born of Egypt were killed, is a type of our salvation by CHRIST, of our delivery through His Blood from the bondage of sin.

In the same month, on the same day, at the very same hour on which the Israelites were ordered to kill this lamb, JESUS was crucified; CHRIST, our Passover, was then sacrificed for us.

And as to-day, He rose from the dead; "the first-fruits of them that slept;" the first sure token to us of our resurrection to everlasting life. The prophets Elijah and Elisha had, by prayer to GOD, raised persons from the dead; but our SAVIOUR raised Himself, and, as GOD, showed us then what He would do for us.

There will be a universal Easter one day, when EVERY grave, in the earth or beneath the sea, shall be opened by this, our Eternal King.¹

¹ The meaning of Easter is "to rise:" from an old Saxon word, Oster.

In old times, on Easter morning, people used not to salute each other as usual, saying, "Good morning," or "How do you do?" but their first words were, "CHRIST is risen!" "CHRIST is risen indeed!" So in the Church now, after Confession and Absolution,—for, until we have confessed our sins, we are not deemed fit ever to rejoice and offer praise,—then, instead of the usual hymn, we sing, "CHRIST our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast."

This day was always considered the highest of all festivals, and was celebrated with the greatest solemnity. It is called the "day of days," the "queen of feasts," the "feast of feasts," the "day which the LORD hath made" (Ps. cxviii. 24); for David referred to this day, and therefore this Psalm is always read in Church. In olden times carols were sung, as at Christmas.

On this day the Church requires ALL her children, of sufficient age, to receive the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our LORD.

It was a day in early times famous for works of mercy and charity. Emperors and kings used to release all prisoners, except those guilty of the most heinous crimes; Clergy and people of all ranks strove to give alms liberally; so that beggars, for whom CHRIST died and rose again as much as for them, might, as well as they, rejoice on the glorious Festival.

But we left the holy women occupied last evening, as soon as the Sabbath was ended, in purchasing and preparing sweet spices, in order to anoint and embalm the dead Body of their LORD ; and this morning, before the sun had risen, at the very first gleam of light, they came to the sepulchre to fulfil this pious duty.

On their way thither, they were wondering how they should gain entrance ; for an enormous stone had been rolled to the door by the Jews, and a guard of soldiers placed there, in order that the disciples might not steal away the Body by night.

“Who,” they said among themselves, “shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre ?” But when they arrived, they found the stone was rolled away, the soldiers were gone, and an angel was there whose “countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.” And he said to the women, “Fear not ; for I know that ye seek JESUS. He is not here ; for He is risen !”

It was indeed so : there had been an earthquake when this angel came down and rolled away the stone, and sate upon it. The soldiers fell down like dead men with terror, and, as soon as they were able, fled away to the city.

The angel desired the women to tell the disciples that the LORD had risen ; and on

hearing the account, Peter and John hurried with the utmost speed to the sepulchre, and entering, found that it was indeed empty, the grave-clothes folded, and lying in a place by themselves.

As they were much perplexed, "behold, two men stood by them in shining garments," and said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here; HE IS RISEN!"

So they returned to their own home, but Mary Magdalene remained by the sepulchre, weeping. And as she turned, she saw JESUS, the MASTER, her risen LORD and SAVIOUR, standing at her side.

And the same day, at evening, when the disciples were at prayer, they found JESUS standing among them. He said to them, "Peace be with you," and blessed them.

And later still, that same evening, two disciples took a melancholy walk to Emmaus, sad and out of spirits, for they "had trusted that it had been HE which should have redeemed Israel;" and now that He was dead and in the grave, they had lost all hope. To them JESUS appeared, and talked with them, and took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave it to them, and in that Feast was "made known to them."

And they hurried back to Jerusalem, to the believers there; hurried to them, assembled

there, and called out joyously, "The LORD is risen indeed!"

And so ended the first LORD's day.

NOTE.—The more strongly to impress upon us the immense importance to us of this great day, the Church has appointed two more days, Monday and Tuesday, for public worship. The Second Lessons chosen for these days give us further testimony and proof of the Resurrection; and the great Feast of the Holy Communion is evidently intended to be celebrated daily for eight days. As you will see, the proper preface is for Easter-day and seven days after; and this is the same at Christmas, Ascension, and Whitsuntide.

S. MARK.

APRIL 25.

“Nearer, my GOD, to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee!
 E'en though it be a cross
 That raiseth me,
 So by my woes to be
 Nearer, my GOD, to Thee,
 Nearer to Thee.”

TO-DAY we celebrate the festival of S. Mark, the writer of the Gospel which bears his name. Perhaps I shall do well to tell you what that term means.

The word Gospel used to be written GOD'S Spell—GOD'S Word; and it means GOD'S or good (for the meaning of the word GOD is goodness)—GOD'S or good tidings. The word Evangel, in the Greek language, has the same meaning.

So the history of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of CHRIST (such

good tidings of great joy to us) is called The Gospel, or Evangel; and the person who told and wrote about these good tidings is called an Evangelist. S. Matthew, S. Mark, S. Luke, and S. John are called the Evangelists, because they each of them wrote a history of our SAVIOUR's life.

S. Mark was a Jew, descended from the tribe of Levi, and his name is thought to have been Mordecai. But it was very much the custom of the Jews, who were despised and sneered at by other nations, to avoid some of this inconvenience by taking other names when they travelled abroad. Saul was called Paulus, a Roman name; and this Mordecai called himself Marcus, a Roman name also. The Romans were then the most powerful people in the world.

These names, in English, are Paul and Mark; and because they were such holy, good men, Apostle and Evangelist, we call them, in reverence, Saint Paul and Saint Mark. In the early times of the Christian Church, all Christians were called saints; but now we only apply that term to *very* holy men. Such were the Apostles and Evangelists; such, we ought to be thankful to know, have been a great many who have never been heard of in the world.

It is supposed that S. Mark (or as he was then, Mordecai the Jew) was first told of our SAVIOUR by S. Peter. There is another

Mark named in Scripture, and some persons suppose these to have been one and the same ; but it is the more general opinion that they were two distinct persons.

S. Mark, the Evangelist, of whom we now speak, was not, like S. Matthew, an Apostle ; though he is not mentioned in the Gospels by name, he is supposed to have been the man who was carrying the pitcher of water, and in whose room the Apostles prepared the Last Supper.

S. Mark's Gospel was written at the request of many new Christians, who had heard S. Peter preach, and wanted to have put down in writing the "good tidings" which he told them. Therefore S. Mark wrote the history of our SAVIOUR, his Gospel or Evangel, and S. Peter himself read it, and said that it was all true and correct. From this it happened that this Gospel of S. Mark was often called S. Peter's Gospel. It is not so in fact. S. Mark wrote it, and S. Peter read and approved of it.

It is said that this Gospel shows in itself that it was written by one who affectionately loved, and closely watched our SAVIOUR. He (S. Mark) mentions our LORD's "sighing" when He spoke : no other Gospel does that. In other instances also he puts forward the truth, so blessed to us, that CHRIST was *human* as well as Divine, very man as well as very GOD.

S. Mark is supposed to have written his Gospel more especially for the Gentile converts at Rome ; for he takes pains to explain many small matters and words which were too common to the inhabitants of Judæa to need explanation. As that corban means a gift ; defiled hands, unwashen hands ; and mammon, riches.

S. Mark was sent by S. Peter to preach the Gospel, that is, to tell the history of our SAVIOUR, and set up His Church, in Egypt. Many early Fathers of the Church, and preachers of the Gospel, went to reside in this country, which indeed became a place much noted in the early days of Christianity. It was the country which received our LORD on His flight from Herod. He not only preached the Gospel and founded a Christian Church in Alexandria, a magnificent city famed for arts and for learning, but he won great multitudes of people to this holy faith, and induced them to lead pure and good lives.

But S. Mark did not rest content with merely regulating the present affairs of this new Christian Church of which he was the first Bishop. He appointed a regular course of Bishops and pastors for some time to come, and the Liturgy or Prayer Book used in Alexandria is to this day called the "Liturgy of S. Mark : " he is said to have first arranged it. Then he went more westward (that is,

still further from civilised parts,) into Libya, and other even wilder places, of which the inhabitants were cruel and barbarous, and worshipped idols. By his preaching, his teaching, his goodness, and his own excellent life, he won many of these people to better thoughts and habits.

He then returned to his own bishopric, Alexandria, where after a while he was most cruelly and frightfully sacrificed to the fury of those heathens who would not yet listen to the *Godspell*, or good word.

He was quietly and earnestly preaching to his converts at Easter, that most holy of days, when the heathen people around, who were at that very time celebrating rites in honour of their idol called Serapis, or Osiris, rushed to the church, where S. Mark was at that moment speaking to the new Christians of "peace on earth, good will to all men." They seized him, bound him with cords, hurried him to the sea shore, and dragged him up and down the jagged and craggy rocks there the whole day, and then flung him into prison.

But during all this bitter agony he had not ceased to pray aloud. The next morning they resumed this horrid work, and the rocks were stained and smeared with his blood. But happily he soon died, and thus sealed his testimony with his blood.

The Christians around collected his re-

mains, and reverently interred them near the place where he was accustomed to preach. Afterwards these remains were removed, or as it is usual to say, translated, to Venice, a very beautiful city of Italy; at least it is so said, and a magnificent church is there dedicated to his memory, and is supposed to have been erected over his grave.

S. PHILIP AND S. JAMES THE LESS.

MAY 1.

“Stern self-mastery, tearful prayer,
Must the way of bliss prepare.”

THERE are two festivals in the Christian year which are each held in memory of two disciples, this of S. Philip and S. James the Less, and another in October of S. Simon and S. Jude.

This is done partly in memory of our **LORD'S** sending out the seventy disciples two and two to preach the Gospel. And as a lesson too by which we may learn the value of unity and kindness, and how two willing hearts uniting in and aiding each other in a labour of love, may do far more good than if they had worked however earnestly, separately.

So indeed among the Apostles we read of S. Peter and S. John working together. S. Peter at another time took Mark. S. Paul had Barnabas as a companion; and he speaks of Timothy as his “fellow-labourer in the Gospel of **CHRIST** ;” he also calls Philemon

in the Epistle to him, "fellow-labourer." In the Gospel we read of Philip and Bartholomew as if they were together.

S. PHILIP, whose name occurs first in the Service for this day, was born at Bethsaida, the house of fish, on the Sea of Galilee. This place was very much despised on account of its low and rough population. He was probably, as most of the inhabitants of these towns were, a fisherman. S. Philip seems to have been the very first closely to follow our LORD, for though S. Andrew and his brother Peter had earlier conversed with JESUS, they returned to their trade. Though often listening to His sermons, they did not actually join Him in His daily life, until the death of S. John the Baptist, their first teacher, nearly twelve months afterwards.

There was at this time a general expectation of the appearing of CHRIST, in which Philip, well acquainted with the Scriptures, no doubt shared; for his first act after seeing our LORD was to tell Nathanael that they "had found Him of whom Moses in the law and the Prophets did write," and at once to bring him to JESUS. Nathanael was, you will remember, that "Israelite in whom there was no guile," who became one of our LORD'S Apostles, and was called S. Bartholomew.

We are told little in the Bible about S. Philip. When the multitude were fed with

five barley loaves and two fishes, JESUS spake to Philip about doing this, "to prove him," as we are told; for of course our SAVIOUR knew quite well what HE was going to do. Another time when JESUS was holding very solemn discourse with His disciples about Our FATHER in Heaven, Philip said, "LORD, show us the FATHER," and our LORD rebuked him very kindly and gently for having learnt so little from His teaching, as not to clearly see that He and His FATHER were one. "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?"

When the Apostles separated to preach the Gospel throughout the world, S. Philip went into Upper Asia, and towards the close of his life came to a rich and populous city called Hierapolis. Here the heathen people used to worship an enormous serpent or dragon. Philip, by his prayers, obtained the death of this monster, and convinced many of the people how very wrong and wicked they were to pay to this creature the divine honours due to God alone. But the magistrates or rulers of this city, provoked at his success in teaching the people about CHRIST, put this good man into prison. There he was flogged and scourged, and afterwards crucified. And it is said that after he was nailed to the cross, the people killed him by throwing stones at him.

He probably lived to a great age, for he is

said to have conversed with Polycarp, a very holy Christian Bishop and martyr, forty or fifty years after the death of our LORD.

S. JAMES THE LESS is the other Apostle whom we commemorate to-day: named *the less*, in order to distinguish him from the other Apostle S. James. But he gained for himself by his piety and virtue a most beautiful title: for the name he was called in his lifetime, and is still best known by, was S. James the Just. He was a near relative of our LORD: he is called "His brother." This means cousin: for cousins are called brothers and sisters in the Bible. For he was son of Cleophas or Alphæus, who had married the sister of the Blessed Virgin.

He was the first Bishop of Jerusalem, and some persons say that he was named for this most important office by our SAVIOUR Himself, before His Crucifixion. We can none of us tell whether this be true; but we may think that it was very likely, because he was of such a very meek and humble temper. Though most intimate with our SAVIOUR, and His near earthly relative, he only calls himself the "servant of the LORD JESUS."

He was most abstemious in his private life; he never ate flesh meat, he never drank anything stronger than milk and water; and of this plain and simple food he took so little that he was "covered with paleness." He

ate to live, as was his duty : it is said, I fear too truly, that many of us "live to eat."

He was "instant in prayer." Many an hour daily he knelt to pray so long, that his knees became quite hard and horny. All should kneel in set prayer, of course, but the thoughts of the heart may be prayers, and possibly the life of S. James the Just was *one prayer*.

There was an extraordinary opinion of his sanctity throughout all the city of Jerusalem, where he lived ; and he was honoured even by the unbelieving Jews for his excellent virtues. It is well believed by all the Church that in a time of famine, when the fruits of the earth were destroyed by drought, he by his earnest prayers gained from the all-hearing God, a beautiful and bountiful rain. You will remember how the Prophet Elijah obtained rain, after a drought of three years, and therefore there is no sort of reason to doubt that this brother of our LORD, and most excellent Apostle, did the same.

But this S. James the Just was not only good, pure, and holy, he was gifted also with deep wisdom. He governed this Church at Jerusalem (then the most important Christian Church in the world) with great care and judgment, and the liturgy (that is, Prayer Book) of S. James, is said to be the very earliest. He was looked to earnestly by the other Apostles as their leader and guide. His

constant residence in this city exposed him to great danger and difficulty, but he held the post of Bishop for about thirty years.

When some discussion arose about Jewish rites and ceremonies, though those eminent Apostles SS. Peter and Paul were both engaged in this matter, they with all the others yielded to the opinion of S. James.¹

But neither the wisdom nor the goodness of this holy man was to save him from the bitter cross borne by the early disciples of our LORD. He was summoned to appear before Ananias, the High Priest, the son of that Annas, the deposed High Priest who refused to judge our LORD, but sent Him bound to Caiaphas. Ananias was a Sadducee, and unmerciful in temper, and S. James was forced up to a high outer gallery of the temple, in order that he might speak to the crowd gathered below: for the people had heard that their great Bishop was seized, and they assembled round the temple to hear all the news.

The Scribes and Pharisees hoped by threats to force him to deny his faith in CHRIST. And they said, "Tell us, O just man, what we are to believe concerning JESUS CHRIST, Who was crucified."

He answered with a loud voice, "Why do you inquire of JESUS the Son of Man? HE

¹ Acts xv. 13.

sits in heaven, on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and will come again in the clouds of heaven."

Then the people shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

At this the enemies of the Bishop, the unbelieving Jews around him on the gallery, were so provoked, that they threw him down headlong from the high place where he stood. He was fearfully hurt, but not quite killed, for indeed he partly raised himself to his knees, and prayed for his murderers. While he was thus praying they threw stones at him, and a man, a fuller by trade, having in his hand the staff with which he used to beat the dust out of the cloth he had to clean, struck S. James with it heavily on the head: mercifully, though the wicked fuller did not mean it so, for this blow killed the sufferer outright.

It is said in a very old Hebrew writing, that after S. James had partaken of the Sacrament at the "LAST SUPPER," he made a solemn vow that he would eat bread no more until he saw the LORD risen from the dead. This same writing says that our LORD afterwards appeared to him and said, "Bring
* hither bread and a table," and He took the bread and blessed and brake it, and gave it to James, and said to him, "My brother, eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among them that sleep."

S. James the Just was ninety-six years old when he died. He wrote a letter which we have in the New Testament, a general epistle to the Jewish converts scattered abroad over the world. This letter was written not long before his own death, and the destruction of Jerusalem.

THE ASCENSION.

Chorus of Disciples.

MASTER! and must we part?
 Hast Thou arisen,
 Cheering each wounded heart,
 Bursting death's prison,
 Far from our side to go,
 Whilst, in our nameless woe,
 Sad tears in torrents flow?
 Yet, yet delay!

Chorus of Angels (invisible.)

LORD! yonder golden skies
 Beam for Thy glory;
 Heaven's matchless melodies
 Swell to adore Thee;
 Rise to Thy destined throne,
 Make all Thy splendours known,
 Claim all the worlds Thine own,
 Mount, mount away!

As on this day our LORD, after His birth,
 life, teaching, passion, crucifixion, and resur-

rection—of all which you have read in their order in this book—having now finished all His work on earth, took away from us His visible bodily presence, and rose up to heaven in the sight of all His disciples. And this great event we celebrate on what is called Holy Thursday, Ascension Day. This was forty days after His Resurrection.

Before His betrayal our SAVIOUR had explained to His disciples the necessity for His leaving them: He pointed it out as a requisite prelude to other promised blessings.

“Let not your heart be troubled: I go to prepare a place for you.”

“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.”

This wonderful event is recorded by two of the Evangelists, S. Mark and S. Luke; not by S. Matthew or S. John.

In S. Mark we read, “So then after the LORD had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of GOD.”

And in S. Luke, “And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them He was parted from them and carried up into Heaven.”

In the book called “The Acts of the Apostles,” that is, the history of what these holy men did after their LORD was taken away

from them, and which it is supposed was written down by S. Luke, we have the following account:—

“And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

“And while they looked steadfastly toward Heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

“Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven? This same JESUS which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven.”

And the martyr S. Stephen was so honoured by CHRIST as to be allowed to *see Him there*, even before he himself was stoned. When He spoke to the High Priest and others, of the life and history of our SAVIOUR, his face looked as if it had been the face of an angel, so full of love and zeal was he; and for this love and faith and zeal, just when he was about to die, when the people were gathering stones to fling at him, then the ALMIGHTY allowed him to see into heaven. “And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of GOD.”

During these forty days which passed between our LORD'S Resurrection and Ascension, probably He was giving to the Apostles

many of the rules and principles on which His Church was then to be founded.

Our LORD's Resurrection took place in secret. Nobody saw that event, there was no reason why people should. Anybody who knew that He had been crucified and buried, and *saw* Him again, must have been sure that He had risen from the grave; but with His Ascension it was different. Our LORD led His disciples away with Him for the very purpose of *seeing* Him rise into heaven, that they might tell from their own knowledge that which they had seen with their own eyes. For most probably no one would have believed a word they said, unless they could also affirm that they *had seen* this event.

The blessed result to us of our SAVIOUR's Ascension into heaven is the assurance that our bodies shall rise there likewise. And that we might be assured that this was the SAVIOUR in the flesh—in our flesh—He ate with His disciples on the sea-shore. He took bread and gave them, and fish likewise; He had already laid a fire of coals, and fish on it, before they came to shore.

And another time He appeared before His disciples and asked them for meat: "And they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and an honeycomb. And He took it and did eat before them."

And at that time He said unto them, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."

And this does indeed and entirely complete the gracious purpose of our LORD'S Incarnation, that we should have Him as a man in Heaven to plead for us; He having known on earth all the trials and sufferings and sorrows and pains which we have. For we see HIM "Who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

"We have then a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, JESUS, the SON of GOD."

"For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

So it is only our LORD'S earthly work that was completed. He *is* still our High Priest; is still Head of His Church; and we are still His members—all one, though He is in heaven. He ever liveth to make intercession for us, to plead His death and merits on our behalf.

On this account ought we to think so highly of Church Worship, Sacraments, and Ordinances; for they are the means which He, our ascended Mediator, has ordained as

acts and offerings to be done by us, and He as our High Priest then offers these gifts and sacrifices for us in heaven. This is the meaning of all worship by us on earth to God in Heaven.

In this, too, lies our great hope and comfort, that our SAVIOUR has felt and suffered exactly what we feel and suffer in our earthly bodies. He was cold; He was hungry; He lay out in the fields at night because "He had not where to lay His head;" (His disciples were so wanting food that they plucked the ears of corn as they passed through the fields.) When He was fainting with hunger He was tempted as we often are and *yield*, but HE did not. Herein is He our Conqueror, our Captain, our SAVIOUR. He *never* did yield to temptation of any sort—*we do*.

He was mocked and humiliated, scourged and beaten, and at last suffered the most horrible and torturing death.

Then as Man He ascended as on this day up into heaven, and, as Man, ever there maketh intercession for us.

It is curious to observe how the divinity of our SAVIOUR was displayed to the world by the pomp and triumph which always so closely followed His humiliation.

He was born in a stable—but bright angels came down from heaven to tell the shepherds of His birth: He fasted long and was cruelly tempted in the wilderness; but

“angels came and ministered unto Him.” He was baptized, like any other homely man, in the river Jordan; but a glorious voice was heard from heaven itself speaking to Him, while also a silvery Dove from on high rested on Him. He sought fruit on a fig-tree which had none; but He showed His power by directly causing the tree to wither away. He was taken prisoner by His enemies when He might have had armies of angels to succour Him: He did not choose this, but with one word He restored the ear of Malchus, which Peter in his zeal had cut off.

He died, like a common thief, on the cross: but the sun was darkened, and the earth shook, and the veil of the Temple—the very holiest part, was rent asunder; and many saints and holy people who had lain in the grave for centuries, rose up and walked about, to the horror and amazement of everybody.

When He was dead, He was buried—buried as any of us might be till the day of judgment; but no, no tomb could hold Him. Our SAVIOUR raised Himself from the dead, and forty days afterwards rose up into heaven.

When our LORD parted from His disciples and ascended up into heaven, they were all together on Mount Olivet: that famous Mount of Olives of which you read so much in the New Testament.

It was, and is, a long mountain with three or four summits, to the east of Jerusalem, and between it and the city is the valley of Jehoshaphat, a very deep ravine where the ancient kings of Judah were buried, where thousands and hundreds of thousands of pious Jews have since been buried; where to this day Jews in their old age leave other countries and come to their long rest here; and where they believe the last judgment will take place. It is a very deep, steep, and extensive valley, but it is literally paved from one end to the other with gravestones.

You had to go down this deep valley from Jerusalem to reach the Mount of Olives on the other side—the mountain where our LORD preached His beautiful sermon, and which He had to cross when He went to Bethany where Lazarus lived, and where it seems our LORD usually lodged on His visits to Jerusalem.

On the lower part of this mountain was the garden of Gethsemane, in which He went to pray, and had that fearful agony and bloody sweat.

This garden seems to have been well cultivated, full of pomegranate and orange trees; and it has to this day some wonderfully old olive-trees in it. In our SAVIOUR'S time the whole mountain was covered with these trees, mingled with palm, and myrtle, and pine, and groves of oak and terebinth. It must

have been most beautiful. From the profusion of olive-trees on it, it was called the Mount of Olives eleven hundred years before our SAVIOUR'S birth.

David, in his sorrow, went up this hill "weeping and barefoot;" our SAVIOUR went up it often, not merely on His road to Bethphage and Bethany, but to think, to teach, to pray. From one part of this mountain there is a splendid view of the city of Jerusalem—magnificent it was then. Our SAVIOUR looked on the ill-fated city from this point, and knowing well what was to come on it, wept over it.

Here He had come to pray when He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot; and here, finally, having conquered death and hell, and opened for us a way to everlasting life, here came He to ascend to heaven.

This day was always considered one of the holiest of the year, and so observed by the Church; Psalms and Lessons proper for the day having been appointed for it. It is a sad pity that it is not now more duly observed.

The first lesson for the morning tells us of Moses going up into the Mount to receive that law from GOD which He was to teach the Jews: a type this of our SAVIOUR'S Ascension into heaven, to send down to us a new Law, the Law of faith and love.

And the first lesson for the afternoon tells

us of Elijah being taken up into heaven, and conferring then a double portion of his spirit on Elisha; which prefigured our SAVIOUR'S Ascension into Heaven, and afterwards the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT to His Apostles; of which you read on Whitsunday.

The Psalms for this day are explicitly prophetical and descriptive of the Ascension of our LORD; but I have only room here to speak of the 24th.

You probably most of you know that in our cathedrals, and also in many parish churches, the Psalms are chanted in parts: that is to say, the choristers on one side of the chancel sing the first verse of the Psalm, those on the other side the second; and so verse for verse alternately. And this is called singing antiphonally, or in parts.

It appears that this used to be the manner of the Levites in the Holy Tabernacle or Temple of the Israelites. Many of David's Psalms are called "A Song in parts." In the same way Miriam and her attendant maidens chanted verses alternately after the overthrow of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea. So also Deborah and Barak after their victory.

In the 15th chapter of the 1st of Chronicles you will read the account of King David bringing up the Ark of God in great state to the place prepared for it in Jerusalem. You

will read that none were allowed to touch it but the Levites, that tribe consecrated and set apart to God's service. You will find with what very great pomp this removal was made. "David *gathered all Israel together* to Jerusalem, to bring up the Ark of the LORD unto his place." And the priests and the Levites prayed solemnly, and "sanctified themselves," before they touched it.

So a very great multitude of people accompanied the Ark in solemn procession up the steep mountain which led to Jerusalem.

And there were a great number of singers and magnificent music: many instruments which we know now, as horns and trumpets, cymbals, and harps, and cornets; and many others, psalteries, tabrets, dulcimers, and sistrums, which we have not now.

And while the children of the Levites "bore the ark of God upon their shoulders" in a grand and solemn procession up to the House prepared for it on Mount Sion, the 24th Psalm was gloriously sung in parts, by hundreds of singers who attended.

Though thus sung on the actual removal of the Ark, this Psalm was prophetic, and was intended by David, inspired by God, to foreshow the Ascension of our LORD, this day, into the eternal Zion, the heaven of heavens.

And a wise and good bishop of our own Church, who spent many years of his life in studying the Book of Psalms alone, wrote an

explanation of this Psalm, as referring to the Ascension of our LORD. Part of this I now copy for you.

On the 7th verse, "Lift up your heads," &c., he says:—

"We must now form to ourselves an idea of the LORD of Glory, after His resurrection from the dead, making *His entry* into the eternal temple of heaven.

"We are to conceive Him gradually rising from Mount Olivet into the air, taking the clouds for His chariot, and ascending up on high; while some of the angels, like the Levites in procession, attendant on the triumphant Messiah in the day of His power, demand that those everlasting gates and doors, hitherto shut and barred against the race of Adam, should be thrown open for his admission into the realms of bliss.

"'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.'

"On hearing this voice of jubilee and exultation from the earth, the abode of misery and sorrow, the rest of the angels, astonished at the thought of a man claiming a right of entrance into their happy regions, ask from within, like the Levites from the Temple, 'Who is this King of Glory?' To which question the attendant angels reply, in a strain of joy and triumph—and let the Church of the redeemed answer with them—

‘The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle:’ the LORD JESUS victorious over sin, death, and hell.

“Therefore we say, and with holy transport we repeat it, ‘Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.’ And if any ask, ‘Who is this King of Glory?’ to heaven and earth we proclaim aloud, ‘The LORD of Hosts,’ all-conquering Messiah, Head over every creature, the Leader of the armies of JEHOVAH, ‘He is the King of Glory.’ Even so, glory be to Thee, O LORD most high! Amen. Hallelujah!”

S. BARNABAS THE APOSTLE.

JUNE 11.

"Never incense cloud so sweet
 As before the Apostles' feet
 Rose, majestic seer, from thee,
 Type of royal hearts and free,
 Son of holiest consolation,
 When thou turn'dst thy land to gold,
 And thy gold to strong salvation,
 Leaving all, by CHRIST to hold:
 Type of priest and monarch, casting
 All their crowns before the throne,
 And the treasure everlasting,
 Heaping in the world unknown."

ON this day we keep the festival of S. Barnabas the Apostle. The Gospel begins thus—our SAVIOUR speaking—"This is My Commandment, That ye love one another." And this portion of Scripture has most likely been selected by the Church for this day, because it is so peculiarly applicable to S. Barnabas,

he was so kind, so gentle, and so helpful to others. His name itself explains his character, for it means "the son of consolation;" and he was also called the "Comforter." He was a Jew, of the tribe of Levi, and his name, given him at his circumcision, was Joses, or Joseph; but when he was baptized in the name of CHRIST, he was called Barnabas, and was always afterwards known by that title.

You will perhaps remember that the Levites were not allowed to have private property; but probably this Jewish law was not carried out in other countries, for S. Barnabas had an estate (some say a very large one) in the island of Cyprus, where his parents, rich and pious people, lived, and where he was born. He was very carefully educated, probably at Jerusalem, under the care of a learned doctor of law, Gamaliel, the same to whose care S. Paul was entrusted.

As soon as he became a Christian, S. Barnabas sold his estate in Cyprus, and brought the whole of the money and laid it at the Apostles' feet, to be distributed amongst the poor; thus willingly and readily making himself one of the poorest. But at this time of blessing and happiness to the early Church, when the Apostles and loved companions of CHRIST were alive in the world, "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any

of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

“For as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold;

“And distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.”

S. Barnabas is supposed to have been one of those seventy disciples whom our LORD sent before Him, to go into every town and village to carry tidings of peace, to heal the sick, and to do good. He was afterwards sent by the Church at Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria, a city where several persons had become Christians, and wanted further help and teaching. It was in this city, Antioch, that the followers of our SAVIOUR were first called Christians. Before this time they had been called disciples, or believers, or brethren, by their well-wishers; but by the enemies of the Gospel they were in scorn called Nazarenes, “men of the sect,” and so on.

This name, Christian, though now common all over the world, is yet the most honourable in the world, and was first bestowed with great solemnity, and only on persons seriously and earnestly following and believing in our SAVIOUR, CHRIST the LORD. On such persons it was first bestowed at Antioch (as I have said,) by the Bishop of that place, about ten years after the Ascension of our

LORD. The Bishop at that time was called Euodius, and he was successor there to the Apostle S. Peter. And this name was given, not secretly, or privately, but in an open assembly, numbers of persons being present to witness the holy rite.

There were great numbers of Jews in Antioch, attracted there not only by its extensive commerce and its proximity to their own country, but by privileges granted to them by successive Greek and Roman kings.

After the great increase of Christianity there, it was called Theopolis, or the divine city. It was the capital of Syria, and a magnificent place: all the cities in Palestine must have seemed mere villages or garrison towns in comparison with this, owing to its size and strength. It was also beautifully situated in a fertile plain on the bank of the river Orontes, and being a very gay city, abounding in luxuries, and pleasures, and festivals, was a favourite abode of many Roman Emperors and other great people.

It is said that in the first ages of the Church Christianity throve in cities rather than in the country, which is probably the reason why Saul, the persecutor, hurried to Damascus, and why Paul, the Christian, and Barnabas came to Antioch.

At Antioch S. Barnabas laboured hard, for

“ he was a good man, full of the HOLY GHOST and of faith.” And his zeal and pains were rewarded well, for he prevailed on great numbers to become Christians. So many indeed, that they were more than he had strength to attend to alone, and he went for S. Paul to assist him. And S. Paul and he taught together at Antioch for a whole year.

About this time there was a famine in Judæa ; a famine, or dearth, or scarcity. I cannot tell whether you know exactly what it means. You have read in the history of Jacob and Joseph of a famine which lasted for seven years, and was indeed as the Bible says “ sore in the land.” It is when by God’s holy will the seasons are bad, and the crops fail, and people cannot get food and die of hunger, that it is a famine : or being hardly so bad as that, or things being very difficult to obtain, and dreadfully dear, we call it a scarcity. This is bad enough.

But there was an absolute famine in Ireland some years ago, at the time of the “ potatoe disease,” which perhaps some of you may have heard of. The poor people in Ireland live for the most part on potatoes, and as long as they can get them, care little for other food. They could not obtain them : for potatoes were all bad and poisonous, and they had no food, and they died, were starved to death by thousands. They were

lying along the roads starving and starved to death, dying and dead of hunger. An English gentleman who was travelling there on business, having indeed *heard* of the famine, told me he could not have imagined so dreadful a sight. The merely *seeing* it was most appalling.

People in England did, at that time, what they could : they subscribed money, and sent large subscriptions, but not early enough, nor enough in quantity, to save them. And the poor in England were very ill off also ; for the potatoes were bad here, and of course the scarcity in that one thing made everything else cost more. I remember that where I was then living, one common onion cost threepence, and a carrot fourpence, and an egg sixpence. It was a very fashionable place, full of rich people. And they almost all came to an agreement that they would not buy a potatoe. *They* could afford to buy other things, but the poor people could not, and moreover were more used to potatoes. If the rich people refused to buy them, the poor people would have them at a lower price.

And all that whole autumn, and winter, and spring, *I never saw a cooked potatoe* anywhere. This was a great dearth or scarcity here ; but if you remember what I told you about Ireland, *that* was a famine.

But about the famine in Judæa of which I was telling you.

Some prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch, where S. Paul and S. Barnabas were, and one of them, called Agabus, knew by the HOLY SPIRIT within him, "that there should be a great dearth throughout all the world." That meant then throughout the Roman empire, and in Judæa. And it was so, and it was especially bad in Judæa.

Then all the Christians in Antioch, "every man according to his ability," determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa. They readily and thankfully gave as much as ever they could, and sent this money by the hands of their dearly-beloved Apostles and teachers, S. Barnabas and S. Paul.

But S. Barnabas was destined for a different ministry; for in Antioch, at an assembly of Christian prophets and teachers, met together for fasting and prayer, GOD Almighty made it known, by His HOLY SPIRIT, to them, that He wished S. Barnabas and S. Paul to minister elsewhere: "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." This meant that they should be consecrated or set apart as leaders and ministers in the care of souls by the Apostles and prophets at Antioch, as our clergymen now are by the Bishops, the successors

of the Apostles, by prayer and laying on of hands.

S. Barnabas first went to his native country, Cyprus, and thence for three years from place to place in Lesser Asia, preaching the Gospel. He was a very grave and venerable-looking man, so much so, that the heathen used to call him Jupiter, the name of the greatest of their false Gods.

S. Paul and he were greatly attached to each other, and when the former came to Jerusalem, wishing to join himself to the disciples, and they, knowing that he had been their persecutor, were afraid to receive him, S. Barnabas came to the Apostles and told them the wonderful history of that conversion, and how, far from being now an unbeliever, S. Paul had been most earnestly teaching the true faith: then they were most glad to welcome him.

After his separation from S. Paul, S. Barnabas returned to his native country, Cyprus: in a city of which island he is supposed to have suffered martyrdom. Some Jews seized him as he was preaching, put him to cruel tortures, and then killed him, as S. Stephen was killed, by stoning.

He was buried in a cave not far from the place; and it is said that the remains of his body were found above four hundred years afterwards, and that the Gospel written in his own hand—a copy of that of S. Matthew

—was found lying on his breast. I have told you that before the Apostles separated to spread the Holy Gospel, S. Matthew at their request had written his account of it in Hebrew, and that every one of the Apostles had carried a copy away for his own help and guidance in teaching.

WHITSUNTIDE.

" 'Twas on the feast of Whitsuntide,
 The fields were green in summer's pride,
 And glittering o'er the mountain's side
 A thousand flowers appeared.
 Low from the thicket coo'd the dove,
 And trilling loud their notes of love,
 In every bush, and brake, and grove,
 The feather'd quire were heard.
 From every bank and every vale,
 The violet blue and primrose pale,
 Perfumed the balmy air.
 And all below, and all on high,
 The earth, the streamlets, and the sky,
 Were bright, and gay, and fair."

I HAVE copied out these lines for you because I think they are such a pretty, and so *entirely true* a picture of a fine day in the early part of summer, when this festival occurs.

The day which we name Whitsunday was called the day of Pentecost by the Jews, and it was their second great festival, the Pass-

over being the first, the Feast of Tabernacles the third. Pentecost means fiftieth, and this feast was observed fifty days after the Passover; partly in memory of the delivery of the Law from Mount Sinai, which occurred fifty days after that first Passover, and partly a testimony of thanksgiving for the first fruits of the harvest.

So it was also called the Feast of Weeks; being seven weeks, a week of weeks, after the Passover, and the Feast of Harvest, and the Day of First Fruits. At this time the barley harvest ended, and the wheat harvest began.

The ALMIGHTY appointed this service that the Jews might thank Him for His goodness in giving them the fruits of the earth, and implore His further blessing by offering to Him the first fruits of their harvest. And thus they are taught:

“Thou shalt keep the Feast of Weeks unto the LORD thy GOD with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give *unto the Lord thy God*, according as the LORD thy GOD hath blessed thee:

“And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy GOD.

“Thou shalt not appear before the LORD empty:

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy GOD which He hath given thee.”

The first fruits of harvest offered to God by the Jews, are a type of those first-fruits of the HOLY SPIRIT in CHRIST'S Church, when three thousand unbelievers learned to know and to believe in JESUS on this day. And on this one day, Whitsunday, these three thousand persons were baptized in His Name.

On this day, this very same day, the fiftieth after CHRIST'S resurrection at Easter, the tenth after His Ascension, "the day of Pentecost being fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." This, the first day of the week, our LORD'S day, at nine o'clock (in the New Testament called the third hour of the day), the Apostles and the Christian converts, of whom there were then about one hundred and twenty (think of that small item among the "thousands of Judah,") were gathered together for morning prayer, most probably in the temple. And as the Christians were at prayer, suddenly there was "a rushing mighty wind," which, in one instant sounded through and filled all the place. And then there was a flame of fire, which divided into tongues, and one rested on the head of each Apostle. A flame so wondrous bright as to astound the brethren, gathered there, but not to affright them. They saw at once, that unearthly as it was, it was harmless. And after a time it passed away from the Apostles without having singed a hair of

the head of any one of them. This was the coming of the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter, whom our LORD had promised His Apostles should be with them after He was taken away.

This "rushing, mighty wind" was a fit emblem of the HOLY SPIRIT, by Whose divine aid the Gospel was to be spread to all corners of the earth; and the cloven tongues of fire show the quick and piercing effect of the powers of speech and language, thus by a miracle given to the Apostles. Still further are they emblems. As a great and mighty wind, the Gospel came to dry and cleanse a sin-stained and polluted world; as a fire to purge and carry off that dross which had spread itself through the inmost regions of our nature.

Of course this wonderful occurrence made a great noise, and enormous crowds were soon gathered around; for, as it had been at Easter, Jerusalem now was very much crowded with strangers, who had travelled thither to keep the Feast of Pentecost. They were amazed, as well they might be; for come who would, from any part of the world, he found an Apostle speaking to him in his own language, of which this Apostle had not known a word in the morning. And they said, "Are not all these which speak *Galileans*?"

The people of Judah thought with great contempt of the people of Galilee; and some

of the disciples in particular were known to be unlearned and unpolished, bred up to trades, and without either talent or time to improve themselves. Yet now they were speaking readily and beautifully in every language. A power which they could not have acquired by a whole life of hard study was now theirs, in a moment.

They obtained too, by this gift of the HOLY GHOST, the power of working miracles, many of which you will read of in the history of their Acts ; and every miracle must have shown to the people around that their power was from GOD.

And another not less wonderful circumstance was the strange, undaunted courage which was now given them. They were not naturally resolute persons ; on several occasions they seemed men of a timid spirit. They "cried out for fear" when they saw JESUS walking on the sea ; and when He was seized by His enemies, they "all forsook Him and fled ;" and S. Peter, the boldest of them all, denied that he knew Him.

But now, by this gift of the HOLY GHOST they fear no one, they fear nothing : they brave all dangers, they run all risks, and bear firmly the greatest hardships, sufferings, and death itself : no terror affrighted them, nor would any torment silence them. When they were threatened, and commanded not to teach in the name of JESUS, they say, "We

CANNOT but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

On this day of Pentecost S. Peter did so wonderfully preach of our Redeemer crucified and glorified, as the holy Prophets had predicted, and he so desired to impart the Holy Gift to all who would seek it, that, before night, three thousand persons were baptized in His name.

Thus the HOLY GHOST, the Third Person in the Blessed Trinity, came down to give life to the Church, giving as it were power and authority to the ministry our LORD had appointed. And thus began the work of building up that Church which has continued ever since; and so in the Church gifts of Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination, and Holy Communion, we pray GOD the HOLY GHOST to bless, sanctify, and consecrate.

We call this day Whitsunday, or White Sunday, because, so it is supposed, of the white garments worn when people were baptized; and this day and Easter were the appointed and most important times of Baptism in the early Church.

There is however a very old letter in the Latin language, preserved in one of the libraries at Oxford, in which it is written,—That it was the custom of our ancestors upon this day, to give all the milk of their ewes

and kine to the poor, for the love of GOD, in order to qualify themselves to receive the gift of the HOLY GHOST. Which milk being then, as it still is in some places, called *White Meat*, therefore this day from that custom, took the name of Whitsunday.

For the greater solemnity, Monday and Tuesday, and six days after this, as after Easter day, have especial Church Services appointed.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

“ Creator, SAVIOUR, strengthening Guide,
Now on Thy mercy’s ocean wide
Far out of sight we seem to glide.

“ Eternal One, Almighty Trine !
(Since Thou art ours, and we are Thine)
By all Thy love did once resign,

“ By all the grace Thy heavens still hide,
We pray Thee, keep us at Thy side,
Creator, SAVIOUR, strengthening Guide.”

“ ALMIGHTY Trine,” that is, Almighty *Three* :
Trinity means, and in some old books is
written, *Threeness*.

This day is especially appointed for the
celebration of the most deep and mysterious
doctrine of the Church—the TRINITY in
Unity. That is, three Persons in one God.

Nobody understands it; the wisest men
that have ever lived never attempted to
explain it: they knew that it was one of the

“deep things,” one of the “unsearchable things of GOD.” They were quite content, without understanding, to believe and to worship.

What is there in this world that we *do* understand, or *can* understand? Not the very commonest things about us.

We can't tell why the leaves on trees should always grow green, and the stems and branches be always brown; why one flower should grow red, another yellow, another blue, another white, all in the same small flower-plot. We don't know how the ugly caterpillar that crawls beneath our feet changes into a beautiful butterfly, soaring in the air far above our heads. Nay, we can't tell why little kittens are always born blind, and crawl about helplessly for many days, whilst a chicken, hardly out of the shell, will peck bravely at food, and turn a clear bright saucy little eye upon you. These everyday very common things, and hundreds of others quite as common, we know nothing about; but because we are always seeing them, of course we believe in them. We must remember what our SAVIOUR said to S. Thomas, “Because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

It is now our duty to do this, as it has pleased GOD to try our faith by a mystery which we cannot see, and yet which He

requires us, by faith, to believe and acknowledge.

This mystery is, that though there is only one GOD, yet in this GOD there are three Persons, separate and distinct Persons, yet *one God*.

So that our faith is shown in this: "That we worship One GOD in TRINITY, and TRINITY in Unity."

And this we do in the Te Deum every time we go to church.

"We praise Thee, O GOD: we acknowledge Thee to be the LORD.

"All the world doth worship Thee, the FATHER everlasting.

"The FATHER, of an infinite Majesty;

"Thine honourable, true, and only SON;

"Also the HOLY GHOST, the Comforter."

Again:

"Holy, holy, holy: LORD GOD of Sabaoth."

This beautiful hymn was written fourteen hundred years ago, by an excellent Christian Bishop, and is said to have been first sung by him when he was engaged in the baptism of one who afterwards himself became a Priest and a Bishop.

In the wonderful vision of Isaiah (which you read of in the sixth chapter of his prophecies) when he saw the Seraphim,

"One cried unto another, Holy, holy, holy is the LORD GOD of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory."

And in the fourth chapter of the Revelation we read that the Cherubim “rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD Almighty; which was, and is, and is come.”

This expression, the repetition three times of the word Holy, was always considered to relate to the HOLY TRINITY; and so therefore did the writer of the Te Deum mean it; and so does the Church teach us to mean it.

It is supposed that the beautiful blessing which by GOD’S command Aaron bestowed on the people, and which was used by all the High Priests afterwards, had reference to the HOLY TRINITY.

“The LORD bless thee, and keep thee :

“The LORD make His face shine on thee, and be gracious unto thee :

“The LORD lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

After our blessed SAVIOUR took on Him our flesh, it pleased GOD Almighty to vouchsafe a more distinct revelation of this wonderful TRINITY: for when HE, *the Son*, was baptized, the heavens opened, the *Holy Spirit*, in shape of a dove, descended visibly from the skies, and alighted upon Him; and *God the Father* spoke from Heaven, “This is My beloved SON.”

FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST; one GOD — TRINITY in Unity.

Therefore after His resurrection JESUS said to His disciples,

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations ; baptizing them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.”

So to this day are we baptized.

So, to this day, in the very words of S. Paul, we receive our dismissal blessing from our priest in church.

“The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of GOD, and the communion of the HOLY GHOST, be with you all. Amen.”

Or more fully, partly also as written by S. Paul to the Colossians, and partly from the blessing of Moses which I have told you.

And this is indeed the final and closing benediction and absolution, an assurance of blessing and of peace.

“The peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of GOD, and of His SON, JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

“And the blessing of GOD Almighty, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, be amongst you, and remain with you, always.”

S. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

JUNE 24.

“ Stern is this babe, and lone :
 Vow'd from his birth, unborn he seals the vow,
 And ere he win his glory-throne,
 Vigil and fast his frame must bow,
 And hours of prayer, apart
 From home's too soothing praise ;—
 His SAVIOUR'S image in his heart.”

THE birth of this holy preacher and teacher had been long foretold. He is spoken of by the prophet Malachi under the name of Elijah : “ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.”

This is because he was to be, and was, so very like Elijah. They were both eminent prophets ; both led most pure and self-denying lives ; both spent much time in solitude in desert places ; both rebuked vice boldly, and exposed themselves to danger without

care for themselves, if so they might do good. And it seems, they both wore a dress very much homelier and coarser than those commonly used by very poor people.

Any Saint's day we have hitherto observed has been kept on the day of his death, excepting that of S. Paul; now we offer our thanksgivings for the *birth of S. John the Baptist*, the only BIRTHDAY, except that of our blessed SAVIOUR, which we commemorate in the Christian year.

But in truth there may well be some extra and especial notice of this Saint; for in many points he differed from, and was far before, all others. So much had been prophesied and spoken of him in connection with our SAVIOUR, that his birth was the sure pledge of CHRIST'S immediate coming. He was ordained by GOD Himself to prepare the way of our LORD. Nearly four hundred years before his birth the prophet Malachi wrote: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me."

His birth was wonderful. His parents were very aged people. His father, Zacharias, was a priest, and when he was engaged in solemn service in the Temple, Gabriel, an angel, one of the highest,—one of those who stand before the throne of GOD—appeared before him, and told him that he should have a son, at whose birth there should be great joy, that is, great joy among all those who

wished, and hoped, and prayed for the coming of the MESSIAH ; because this son was, as I have told you, the immediate forerunner of CHRIST, of whom the prophets so long before had told.

Moreover, the angel said to Zacharias that this son must be called John. This name is most peculiarly applicable to the forerunner and messenger of the SAVIOUR ; for it means “the grace or mercy of GOD ;” and it was John’s business to proclaim to the world the arrival and presence of this mercy, in the person of our Redeemer.

As a further sign, the angel added to Zacharias that he himself should be dumb until the promise was fulfilled.

It is no wonder that, after such a scene as this, Zacharias felt too much awe and wonder, and perhaps alarm, to leave the Temple at the usual time, and the people began to be astonished that he stayed so long ; for the time of burning the incense, in which duty Zacharias was engaged, was probably half-an-hour ; and during this time there was kept a profound silence, as the people stood without, praying.

This incense was something with a beautiful smell, which was set alight in a golden censer, and swung about by the priest ; the fragrant smoke rose up, and ascended to the roof of the building. This was burnt in the Temple every day twice, morning and even-

ing, and was meant to be a token, a symbol, "an outward sign," that as the smoke ascended, so did the prayers and praises which the people outside this portion of the Temple were then offering up.

"And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of the incense."

When at length Zacharias did come out to them, they saw that something very extraordinary had occurred, and they found, moreover, that he was not able to speak one word. Nor did he for many months. But when his son was born, and they brought him, when eight days old, to be circumcised, and give him his name, (as they do ours at Baptism,) his relatives wanted to call him Zacharias, like his father; for this was the custom among the Jews. They were not at all satisfied when his mother, Elizabeth, said that the name must be John, and appealed to his father. As he could not speak, they gave him a writing-table, a convenient kind of tablet in common use then, as slates are now. Zacharias wrote instantly, "*His name is John,*" and then at once he recovered his speech. The very first words which he spoke were a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God Almighty: that hymn which is in the Morning Service, beginning, "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people."

These wonderful events had caused the fame and expectation of this child to spread abroad in the country, and King Herod tried to seize him, as you are well aware he strove to kill our SAVIOUR. He did not succeed in taking John; but it is said that Zacharias, the father, was killed in trying to protect him, and that his mother, Elizabeth, made her escape with him, and fled into the wilderness, where in forty days she died: that then the ALMIGHTY sent an angel daily to feed the child, until he was old enough to procure food for himself.

However wonderful this may seem, it is not a bit more so than the ALMIGHTY sending manna every day to the Israelites in the wilderness, or than His commanding the ravens to carry to the prophet Elijah bread and flesh twice a day, which they did; or than, when this same holy man fled away in fear of his life from Jezebel, and lay despairing and starving in a lonely, barren place, an angel touched him, and he saw by his side a fire burning and a cake baking on it, and a vessel of water to drink, where a moment before there had been nothing.

It must needs be that the appointed forerunner of our LORD, the chosen one to teach and to preach, and to prepare the hearts of the people to listen to our holy SAVIOUR, and who should, as the angel told Zacharias, “turn the hearts of the fathers to the chil-

dren, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just," should be more pure and holy than men in general. The angel, indeed, had said so. He "should be filled with the HOLY GHOST from his birth."

He lived alone in the wilderness near thirty years, in prayer to GOD, in thought, in careful schooling of himself both in mind and body, that by care and patience, with the help of the HOLY SPIRIT, he should render himself fit to "prepare the way of the LORD."

He drank no wine, he ate no nice food like other men; he drank only water from the brooks, and for his food he had but honey, which he gathered from the trees where the wild bees had stored it,—or which might be the manna, which dropped from the tamarisk trees,—and locusts; whether the insect so called, or the fruit of a tree, we cannot now tell. Both are still used for food in eastern countries.

Moreover, at that time people used to wear flowing robes, and mantles, and turbans, of very rich colour and soft material; but John was covered only with a plain dress of camel's hair, very coarse and homely to look at, and very rough to the skin, fastened round him with a belt of leather.

It was of him the prophet Isaiah spoke, seven hundred and sixty years before his birth, when he said, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the

LORD." This he did by preaching and teaching, by rebuking sinful people, and pointing to them the way to lead a better life ; but more especially he prepared the way of the LORD by baptizing the people to repentance, and that is why he is called S. John the Baptist, or baptizer. In this point he was most significantly the forerunner of our LORD. " I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I. He shall baptize you with the HOLY GHOST and with fire."

Then numbers and numbers of people from Jerusalem and all Judea, and round the river Jordan, went to him. " And were baptized by him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

That is, when, by urging the people to holiness and duty towards GOD, he had made them understand how very far they had strayed from GOD ; and great numbers were convinced by him, by his teaching and his holy life, and they *repented*,—that is, felt such a sincere sorrow for their past sins, that they confessed them, and "steadfastly purposed to lead a new life;" then he baptized them with water unto repentance ; signifying to them, as he plunged them beneath the rapid torrent, the forgiveness and forsaking of their former sins.

It was not that the water alone removed sin : it was "an outward sign" of an inward grace of repentance ; as the rainbow in the

sky, which they could plainly see, was an outward sign, a surety, to Noah and his sons of the promise which God made to them.

We all know practically the use of water: we wash, and however soiled we may be, it cleanses us outwardly; therefore it has always been used as an emblem of inward purity, of how the heart should be cleansed from sin and vice. It was so used in the Jewish Church. So important a part of the Jewish religion were these ablutions, that every synagogue, if possible, was by the side of a stream or spring.

The prophet Ezekiel, alluding to the frequent purifications ordered in the Law of Moses, says: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you." And S. Paul urges his listeners to "draw near to God, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water."

In our baptism we are sprinkled with water as "an outward sign" of the cleansing of our hearts by the influence of the HOLY GHOST; and we are signed with the sign of the Cross with water, as an outward token and a sign that our life must then be such as becometh those for whom CHRIST died on the Cross.

It is said that the disciples of the Baptist thus taught and prepared, flocked with joy

and reverence to our SAVIOUR; and it is supposed that the Apostles and the seventy disciples, whom our LORD sent by two and two to preach the Gospel to all nations, were of those whom John had previously taught.

The life of this good man was very short. Herod, the governor, had committed a great crime; and John, who feared nothing when he was in the way of duty, reprovèd him boldly for it. Herod was so angry, that he had him thrown into prison, in a very strong and lonely castle, called Machænus, or Macherus, a little beyond the river Jordan, and near the Dead Sea. Here he remained some time; and it was whilst he lay a prisoner here that he sent two of his disciples to JESUS, to ask whether He were the CHRIST or not. Not that he himself had any doubt, but that he wished his disciples to be as thoroughly convinced as he was. You remember the answer of our LORD: "Tell John the things that ye do hear and see."

I shall not narrate here the particulars of the cruel death of this holy man: you have read them often in the fourteenth chapter of S. Matthew's Gospel.

He was beheaded in prison, and his disciples are said to have buried his body between the graves of the prophets Elisha and Obadiah.

S. PETER.

JUNE 29.

“ With what full eyes of wonder wast thou bent
Upon each passing look, each act intent,
Fix'd on the Son of Man with earnest gaze,
While on thy heart the FATHER shed His rays,
'Till gradual He disclos'd the mighty whole,
And the dread Godhead open'd on thy soul !”

By that beautiful Sea of Galilee, of which we read so much in the New Testament, our SAVIOUR stood one day, and the people pressed so upon Him in their anxiety to hear Him, that He could not conveniently teach them ; so seeing two empty ships on the strand, the owners being near them washing their nets, He entered one, which was Simon's, and begged him to push out a little from the land. Then He sat down and talked to the people who crowded the beach.

When He had finished teaching them He asked Simon to sail further into the sea, and

cast his net into it; to which Simon replied that they had been toiling very hard indeed the whole night, and had caught no fish: still he would do as the "Master" desired him. He let down the net and directly it was so crammed with fish that the net brake. So they made signs to their partners, to whom the other empty ship belonged, to come and help them, which they did. And very soon *both* the ships were so heavily laden with fish that they began to sink. All were astonished at this miracle, as well they might be, but Simon knelt down at the feet of JESUS, acknowledging Him to be the LORD, and confessing his own sinfulness. JESUS said to him, "Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men," meaning that by his preaching, and teaching, and example, he should win over the hearts of men to the belief in and love of our SAVIOUR.

So then we are told, Simon and his brother Andrew, and their partners (James and John the sons of Zebedee) brought these ships and their full cargoes to the shore, and there and then forsook them, their trade, and every thing else to follow JESUS.

Simon had also the name of Cephas or Peter given to him by our SAVIOUR when he was first taken to Him by Andrew. We often read of Simon in the Gospels as Simon Peter, and later on in "the Acts," as Peter. Cephas, or Peter, means a stone, or a rock.

I shall have a few words to say about it by and by.

S. Peter, as we will now call him, was born at Bethsaida, the "house of fish," in Galilee, and was, as you know, a fisherman, and brother of S. Andrew the Apostle, who followed the same trade. It is thought also that he, like S. Andrew, had been a disciple of John the Baptist, and was therefore fully prepared to expect the Messiah. He, with the two sons of Zebedee, S. James and S. John, seem to have been far the most intimate companions of our SAVIOUR, and were with Him on several particular occasions when the other disciples were not.

S. Peter had serious faults, as many people have. It is faith and love in CHRIST, and the grace of the HOLY SPIRIT only that can enable us to conquer them. His zeal for CHRIST was in itself a great virtue; but it became a fault when he let it betray him into the passionate act of cutting off the ear of Malchus. You will remember that in one instant our SAVIOUR healed this wound.

Then you all know what is meant by "his fall," his denying CHRIST three times; the last time saying with an oath, "I know not the man." Our SAVIOUR had told him this would be the case, and he had declared, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee;" and yet he did, three times. This assertion proceeded indeed from his ar-

dent zeal and affection for our LORD, and he failed from trusting entirely to his own feelings, instead of to that grace from above which alone can keep us right.

On this sad occasion we hear of no anger, no rebuke, no word of chiding spoken by our blessed LORD; He "turned and looked on Peter;" a kind, reminding, pitying and forgiving look, which struck the disciple to the very heart. He went away and WEPT BITTERLY. That one compassionate, loving look almost broke his heart, but it gave him repentance, and bound him fast to his SAVIOUR for ever and ever.

It is said that his face became deeply furrowed with the streams of tears which he often shed up to the very close of his life, when remembering this sad act.

But to him this merciful Redeemer appeared very soon after He rose from the grave; and even the Angel who was in the sepulchre when the holy women sought our LORD, said to them, "Tell His disciples *and Peter* that He goeth before you into Galilee." Which appears as if intended to encourage S. Peter in his repentance; as indeed might the later appeal to his love made by this Divine Shepherd, "Feed My lambs."

He has in all ages been considered one of the most eminent of the Apostles, as certainly he was one of the most zealous and devoted; and so ready to profess his belief in our SA-

VIOUR that he has been styled the "mouth of the Apostles."

When so many of the followers of our LORD left Him because He had said things which did not please them, and JESUS asked that pathetic question of the twelve, "Will *ye* also go away?" it was Simon Peter who at once answered, "LORD, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

You must remember that our LORD did not reveal Himself fully to His disciples all at once; He trained their minds gradually to open to things so very, very far beyond what men naturally could understand. He gave them as a Master and Teacher in Israel rules for life and conduct which all men felt were more pure and excellent than any ever heard before, and therefore they listened to Him with deep respect, as a teacher.

Then He performed miracles, which astonished them at His power, and at last they began to think that a person who could do such things must be GOD. Moses, and Elijah, and Elisha, had done wonderful things at times by prayer to GOD, but our SAVIOUR was doing these marvellous works day by day, and hour by hour. Nay, any person touching even the hem of His garment was cured instantly of the most inveterate disease.

These hourly miracles excited the wonder, and awe, and reverence of the Apostles, and so prepared their minds for the information

which their Master gradually imparted to them, that He was the Messiah, the CHRIST, the SON of GOD, GOD Himself.

So—and this brings us to S. Peter again—when CHRIST reached the turning point of His history, when many of His disciples went back to follow Him no more, and “He could no more walk in Judæa because the Jews sought to kill Him,” then He went to the utmost north boundary of Palestine, “the parts about Cæsarea Philippi,” and began to question His disciples as to what men said of Him, in order (for *He* knew all) that each might display his own opinion.

“And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.”

Then He asked His disciples, “Whom say *ye* that I am?”

And it was Simon Peter who promptly answered, “Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD.”

Much as the others loved and revered our LORD, they had not understood this wonderful truth so early and so clearly as by the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT Peter did, no, not even the beloved disciple. And our SAVIOUR called him “blessed,” and said, “Thou art Peter (a rock), and upon this rock will I build My Church;” which seems to mean that as Peter was foremost fully and entirely to acknowledge JESUS to be GOD and LORD, so he

should be the beginner, the first stone of His newly founded Church. As he was.

For it was he who was the first to preach publicly after CHRIST'S Ascension, and with such wonderful power, that three thousand Jews were baptized that day ; and afterwards we read that he was the very first of all the Apostles to go away from Palestine into Gentile countries, to preach the Gospel to the heathen.

This is probably what our SAVIOUR meant by building His Church on this rock, that this zealous and fervent Apostle was to begin it, to lay, as it were, the first stone. Not meaning that S. Peter was supreme head or lord over the other Apostles. For the great words of their appointment, "As My FATHER hath sent Me, so send I you," were never spoken to him alone, but to all the Apostles.

S. Peter's humility was not less striking than his zeal. When our SAVIOUR (in that beautiful history about which you read on Holy Thursday) had washed the feet of some of the disciples, and came to Simon Peter, he felt humbled and ashamed, and said, "LORD, *Thou* shalt never wash my feet ;" but when CHRIST explained the mystery of the action and the advantage of it, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," Peter said, "LORD, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

This virtue of humility was also shown in his honourable notice of S. Paul as his "beloved brother," though S. Paul had on one occasion reproved him openly before others. And another touching instance is his full and entire approval of S. Mark's Gospel, in which this "son," as he calls him, gives a full account of his fall. He was indeed entitled by his own conduct to write, as he did, "Be clothed with humility."

We have a fuller account of the life of S. Peter in the New Testament, than of any Apostle except S. Paul. In the first ten chapters of the Acts, you will read of many miracles which he wrought, of much good which he did, of his healing the sick in "multitudes"—they were carried in their beds into the streets, that even his shadow might pass over them—and of his astonishing both the people and the rulers by his wonderful preaching. This, the poor uneducated fisherman of Galilee!

Such a zealous man could not escape persecution. It was not likely. Herod, the king (a descendant of that cruel Herod who slaughtered the innocent babes at the time of our SAVIOUR's birth) in order to gain favour with the unbelieving Jews, had killed S. James the Great, and now caused S. Peter to be seized and imprisoned.

"Prayer was made *without ceasing*" to

God for him by the Christians. In order to exercise and prove the faith of His people, God did not seem at first to hear their prayer ; but in full time He did so.

S. Peter was guarded by sixteen soldiers, four of whom kept sentry in their turns ; two in the same dungeon with him, and two at the gate. He was fastened to the ground by two chains, and slept between the two soldiers who were fully armed.

He was to be given up to the rabble after Easter, of all times ! It was the night before the Easter dawn. He was fast asleep. He knew he might die on the morrow ; but so tranquil, so peaceful, so happy was he in the knowledge of his SAVIOUR'S love and forgiveness, that he slept quite calmly. A clergyman poet supposes that S. Peter was dreaming, and seeing again in his dream that forgiving, comforting, and loving look of our LORD'S, and that this made him appear so happy, that the angel would not waken him until the last moment.

“ Even through the veil of sleep it shines,
The memory of that kindly glance ;—
The Angel watching by divines,
And spares awhile his blissful trance.”¹

At last the angel did awaken S. Peter ;

¹ The “ Christian Year :” S. Peter's Day.

his chains immediately fell off from him, and having put on his sandals, and cast round him his cloak—both which in those hot countries were usually laid aside within doors—he went out of the prison following this glorious being, though he thought all the time that he was only dreaming. The soldiers still thought they were keeping watch as these two passed through the different wards and courts of the prison, and through the iron gates leading to the city, which opened of their own accord, unknown to the sentinels. When they had fairly got through into the open streets, the angel disappeared.

Then S. Peter knew that he was not dreaming, but wide awake; and that the LORD had sent His angel, and had delivered him out of the hand of Herod.

There was “no small stir” in the morning when it was found that S. Peter was gone away, and Herod caused the keepers who had been appointed to guard him to be put to death.

It was said that a little portion of the chain with which he had been bound was sent as a gift to the Emperor Justinian; and that little filings of these chains used to be enclosed in a small gold cross or key, and worn round the neck by persons to whom they had been sent.

S. Peter's first mission was to the newly converted Christians in Samaria, whither he

was sent with S. John to confirm those whom S. Philip had gained to the Faith. When the Apostles finally separated to preach and carry on the Gospel all over the world, S. Peter travelled first in Phœnicia, a heathen country bordering on Palestine, where he founded several churches; thence he went forward to many places northward and westward, and became himself the first Bishop of Antioch.

Afterwards, in advanced years, he went to Rome, then the greatest place in the known world; and both he and S. Paul preached and taught here for some time. And here, at the same period, both met their death.

That cruel and bad man, Nero, was Emperor of Rome at this time, which was about sixty-nine years from the birth of our SAVIOUR. There was in Rome a magician called Simon Magus, a very clever man, who did many curious things, which made the people follow him, and attend to and believe what he said. This was a pity, for he was a most wicked and profane man; he not only spoke what was untrue, but impious—calling himself God.

He said also that he had power to raise the dead, and trying to do so, of course he failed; and S. Peter directly restored this dead person to life. Also Simon Magus made himself wings, pretending to fly; but you may be sure these failed him; and he fell, and died of his bruises.

This man was a great favourite with the emperor, who was very fond of magicians, and it is said that S. Peter was thrown into prison because Nero was so angry about this.

In about eight months he was brought out to be crucified, but was first scourged, as was usual. When brought to the Cross he desired the executioners to fasten him with his head downwards, because he did not think himself worthy to suffer in the same posture that our SAVIOUR had done.

It is said that a Christian, named Marcellinus, embalmed the body in the way, as you will have read of our SAVIOUR, it was the custom of the Jews to embalm dead people; and that this great Apostle was buried in what was called the Vatican, where there was a magnificent church erected to his memory. I suppose it is the grandest in the world.

S. Peter wrote two Letters or Epistles, which you will find in the New Testament. It is said that the last was written (as was the second from S. Paul to Timothy) when the writer knew that he was about to suffer martyrdom. I well believe it; I have read of many Christians, since that time, who, even at the point of death—a quiet death, or a fearful, cruel death, as it might be—have thought only of others, not of themselves.

But S. Peter had undergone greater trials

than his own death, for he had seen his wife, the loved wife and companion of many a long year, led away to execution, because she was a Christian.

But he forgot his own grief and loss to succour her. He comforted and supported her. He told her it was an honour to die for CHRIST; reminding her earnestly and soothingly of Him and His meritorious death and Passion.

S. JAMES THE GREAT.

JULY 25.

“One of that chosen three, who found such grace,
 To be admitted to the secret place
 Of His life-giving Presence, from the sight
 Of the rude world there lost in radiant light.
 Nor know we aught of thee, the great and good,—
 The son of thunder, and baptized in blood,—
 Nor thought, nor word, nor deed.”

AMONG the holy Apostles were two named James. Of S. James the Less, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, you have already read. The Apostle whose life and memory are celebrated to-day was called S. James the Great: why so is not known. Some think perhaps because he was a much older man than the other, for he was called also S. James the Elder; perhaps for some peculiar honours and favours conferred upon him by our SAVIOUR which were not shared by all the disciples. He was with our LORD (as were two

other Apostles only, SS. Peter and John) at his Transfiguration; when He raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead; and most particularly our LORD honoured these disciples by taking them with Him to the garden at the time of His fearful agony.

You will now understand the reference in the motto of this chapter, which I have copied from a beautiful book called "The Cathedral."

S. James the Great, like so many of the Apostles, was a fisherman, and, with his brother John, was mending nets in the ship of Zebedee, their father, on the sea of Galilee; when our SAVIOUR, walking along on the strand or shore of the sea, where the ships were lying at anchor until the nets were ready for use, saw these young men, and called them. "And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him."

They followed Him from that time day by day, in sorrow and disappointment, and hunger and danger. They seem to have been most zealous disciples, for our LORD surnamed them Boanerges, a word which means "sons of thunder." Perhaps this name referred to their vehement zeal in preaching, by which they compelled even the most careless to listen to them. Thunder was then, and is now, called "the voice of God." The Gospel which S. James preached so earnestly is that voice, in a gentler tone. Or

perhaps it might be from their asking their LORD if they should "call down fire from heaven" to destroy the Samaritans who refused to receive Him. You know well our gracious SAVIOUR did not allow this, but rebuked them, and said, He was "not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

These brothers were most earnest believers, most true and zealous followers of our LORD; but they had not then learnt (as they did in time) to subdue their fiery tempers, and become forgiving, gentle, humble, as our SAVIOUR taught and teaches all His followers to be.

Their mother, Salome, (the wife of Zebedee,) was a very near relation of the Virgin Mary; so James and John were cousins to our SAVIOUR. Cousins in the Holy Writings are often called brothers and sisters. She came to our SAVIOUR one day to intreat something from Him; and when He asked her what, she said, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left, in Thy kingdom."

JESUS evidently knew that it was the ambition of her sons, not her own, which had urged her to this most rash and presumptuous request; for it is to them He answers, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am bap-

tized with? They say unto Him, We are able.”

“ ‘Seek ye to sit enthron’d by Me?
 Alas! ye know not what ye ask :
 The first in shame and agony,
 The lowest in the meanest task—
 This can ye be? And can ye drink
 The cup that I in tears must steep,
 Nor from the whelming waters shrink
 That o’er Me roll so dark and deep?’ ”

“ ‘We can : Thine are we, dearest LORD,
 In glory and in agony,
 To do and suffer all Thy Word :
 Only be Thou for ever nigh.’ ”

Perhaps at the time these disciples did not fully understand that “drinking of His cup” meant bearing sorrow and trial all through life, as our SAVIOUR did, and that with patience and gladness, for His sake; and that being baptized with His baptism meant suffering, even to blood and death, as He did. But this prediction was literally fulfilled in S. James.

There is little said of him, but sufficient to show that his life was one of trial. He left his home, his business, perhaps a very good one, for his father kept many servants, and was a man of note. All this he gave up at once to follow CHRIST. He shared His sorrows; with Him he had not where to lay

his head; with Him he was insulted and despised: and at last was baptized with His baptism by suffering a bloody death.

He preached and taught the Gospel in Judea for eight years after the death of CHRIST, and was the first Apostle who suffered martyrdom in His cause. Herod Agrippa had been newly appointed King of Judea, and was very anxious to be in favour with the Jewish priests and people. You know very well that these Jewish priests had brought our Blessed SAVIOUR to the Cross, and hated Him and His followers. So Herod thought he could not hit on a better way to please them than by persecuting the Christians. S. James was one of the most energetic and powerful of them; so S. James was seized at Jerusalem, and was beheaded there.

But a very interesting circumstance occurred on this occasion. The very person who appeared as the accuser of this good man was so wonderfully struck by the patience, and constancy, and courage which he showed on the trial they pretended to give him, that he felt his preaching must be true. He knelt down at the feet of the Apostle, and humbly begged pardon for all he had said against him.

S. James was surprised at first, but after a little consideration, he saw that the man was quite sincere and in earnest, and he

raised him up with the utmost kindness, and said to him, "Peace be to thee."

The very blessing given by our LORD to His awe-stricken disciples after His Resurrection; the very blessing which has been craved by all holy men in all time. That "peace which passeth understanding,"—not of this world: that peace which our SAVIOUR bequeathed to His Apostles, "*My* peace I leave with you." This peace it was which, in the truth and faith of CHRIST, he bestowed on his unjust accuser: "Peace be to thee."

S. James well knew there was none now on earth for this man, for he had bowed down to a Christian. He had in the sight of others acknowledged that despised Nazarene as his Master and Teacher. The man's fate on earth was sealed, and S. James knew it.

They were both beheaded at the same time.

S. BARTHOLOMEW.

AUGUST 24.

"Come forth, Nathanael, from the fig-tree's shade,
 And see, where, down yon mountain's solemn
 glade,
 The lowly Nazareth, in the summer even,
 Shines in the sun-beams like a gate of heaven!
 'Mid those poor walls, Heaven opens to thy
 prayer,
 And angels pass upon the crystal stair.
 And who within that tabernacle's light
 Shall dwell, but thou, the guileless Israelite?"

THERE are some of our **LORD'S** Apostles of whom we read frequently in the New Testament; of S. Peter and S. Paul a very great deal; on the other hand there are others of whom we scarcely hear anything except that they followed **CHRIST**, loved Him, served Him, and died for His sake, like S. James the Great. Perhaps there is no one of whom so very little is said as of S. Bartholomew, or

Nathanael, for he had both these names. But this little gives him the highest praise for a gentle, pure, and upright heart. Our SAVIOUR said as He saw him coming, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

It was S. Philip who told Nathanael that they had "found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, JESUS of Nazareth." They came together to JESUS; and Nathanael, astonished that our SAVIOUR knew him, said, "Whence knowest Thou me?"

And JESUS replied, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee."

And then indeed Nathanael felt that He Who had seen him, when he was to human vision far away from sight,

"In his own pleasant fig-tree's shade,
Which by his household fountain grew,
Where at noon-day his prayer he made,
To know GOD better than he knew;"

then did he feel that this *must* be GOD, and he said, instantly, "Master, Thou *art* the SON of GOD, Thou art the King of Israel."

And he then followed CHRIST, and we hear no more of him, except that his name is mentioned once amongst those of the Apostles; and again, when the risen SAVIOUR showed Himself to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, S. Bartholomew is named; he is there

called Nathanael, of Cana in Galilee. And this is all that we are told of him in the New Testament; but in other histories there is some little account of his after life.

After his SAVIOUR'S death he travelled to preach the Gospel to the heathens in Asia, and went as far as India, then a region practically little known, though many Indian luxuries arrived in Judæa, through the Arabians. It was, however, a country most difficult for him to reach, and the knowledge that he really was there is preserved to us in a very interesting way.

A very learned man and excellent Christian, named Pantænus, was master of the Christian University of Alexandria about the year of our LORD 180. He became afterwards a missionary, and preached the Gospel in India. There, to his surprise and delight, he found a small band of Christians, and they had amongst them a copy of S. Matthew's Gospel, written in Hebrew, copied out by S. Bartholomew, and left by him there. On his safe return to Alexandria, Pantænus, with great joy, related this circumstance.

I have told you that many, if not all the Apostles made copies of this Gospel to carry with them when they parted, severally to teach and preach throughout the world.

S. Bartholomew left India and went to other countries in the more northern and western parts of Asia. At last he came into

Armenia, and was put to death by the governor of that place. Some say he was crucified with his head downwards, others that he was flayed alive; but all writers agree in the belief that he taught and preached and comforted those around him even whilst he was dying, and that he is now with the other holy martyrs of CHRIST.

S. MATTHEW.

SEPTEMBER 21.

“ Good Levi!

Beneath thy lowly roof I see Him come,
 An honour'd guest; the Pharisee's stern gloom
 Sitting aloof,—in calm and humble gaze
 The Galilean twelve,—th' half pleas'd amaze
 Of Publicans,—and mourning Eremit
 Shrinking apart.”

S. MATTHEW, or Levi, was the latest called of the Apostles; that is to say, he was the last of those twelve whom our LORD favoured by saying, “ Follow Me.” S. Matthew was not a poor man, and there were some circumstances regarding him so different from the rest, that it will interest you to read about him.

S. Matthew was a publican, a set of people hated and despised by the Jews, and classed by them with “ sinners,” and persons of the worst possible character and conduct. At the time of our SAVIOUR's birth the Romans

had conquered all Judæa, had placed a governor of their own over the country, and oppressed the people very much by the dues, and tribute, and taxes they exacted from them. These were so enormous, and brought so much wealth, that the highest Roman knights sought to be appointed to the post of receiver of taxes. But, though these high and mighty people were thus pleased to gain wealth, they did not choose to have the disagreeable and troublesome office of collecting it; so they appointed some of the Jews themselves to gather the taxes from them, and these taxgatherers were called "publicans." Doubtless there were many good men among them, as indeed we may learn from the examples of S. Matthew and Zacchæus, but their general character was very bad indeed. Their Roman masters compelled them to get a great deal of money for them, and then these men, in order to be rich themselves, went still further, took more from the Jews than was required, were grasping and avaricious, and oppressed their countrymen even more than the Romans would have done.

In fact, this class of people generally had such a shocking name, that when a Jew became a publican he was excluded from religious worship; and we read, if a sinner "refuse to hear the Church, let him be as an heathen man and a *publican*." Their fellow Jews thought it unlawful even to do them a

kindness: money received from them might not be put to a man's estate; their word was not taken in any disputed matter; and it was thought unlawful and infamous to marry into their families.

Matthew, the publican, or Levi—he was called by both, or either name, before his summons by our LORD, but only Matthew afterwards—was sitting at the “receipt of custom,” or as we should now say, the custom-house, or tax-office, on the sea shore on the borders of the Sea of Galilee: that sea through which the river Jordan passes from its sources, and flows down through Samaria and Judæa until it is quite lost in the dreary Dead Sea. It is called Jordan, or the Descender, because its descent from the mountains of Lebanon to the Dead Sea is immense, the Dead Sea being the lowest sheet of water in the world: so we always read in the Bible of “going up” or “going down” Jordan.

It was a river of old renown in the history of the Israelites. On its banks, surrounded by a magnificent forest of palm-trees, was the great city Jericho, the walls of which fell down at the sound of the trumpets of the Levites, when the Israelites approached it under the command of Joshua.

It was this river which the Prophet Elijah smote with his mantle, and the waters retired, leaving a dry path for him and Elisha: and on its further bank alighted the chariot of fire which bore Elijah up to heaven.

This river has been considered a holy river ever since our SAVIOUR was baptized in its waters : but at the time in which S. Matthew lived, nobody thought of it in any way except as being the great thoroughfare of traffic throughout Palestine from north to south ; the river by which all goods and merchandize were conveyed from the towns and cities on either side of it, to be forwarded to those marts whence they would be sent to any part of the world.

Now every ship that went up or down this river Jordan, from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, paid a fine to the Romans for the privilege of sailing on the river, and Levi (S. Matthew) was one of the persons appointed to collect these fines. So you see why it was that he sat at Capernaum, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, to watch these vessels, and receive the dues "at the receipt of custom."

Probably this office was a great table or bench under cover, but open to the seaside ; so that Levi sitting there might have a clear view of all the ships and lading, and persons passing that way might plainly see him.

So we read "As JESUS passed forth from thence (that is, Capernaum), He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom : and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him."

"At once he rose, and left his gold."

This was the call of S. Matthew: he seems not to have hesitated a moment. Our SAVIOUR had indeed done many of His "mighty works" in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, and S. Matthew would no doubt have heard of and felt awe at these, and would reverence our LORD accordingly. Still it cannot but excite our deep wonder, that he, a rich, wealthy, and happy man, should at once, without a second thought, give up all, everything, ease, pleasure, luxury, riches, to undertake a life of poverty, trial, pain, suffering, and perhaps cruel death: for such was the event with all our LORD'S Apostles, save one.

He left his rich trade at once to follow CHRIST, but of course, as an honest man, he would have all his bills to pay, and accounts to settle, with those masters, who had heretofore employed and trusted him. And before leaving his old companions for ever, he invited them to "a great feast in his own house."¹ "There was a great company of publicans and sinners," and our SAVIOUR and His disciples were there.

It is very likely that S. Matthew made this feast not merely as a farewell to his companions, but in the hope that they, when they saw and heard our SAVIOUR, might, like himself, be touched by His holy words and teaching, and also learn to "follow" Him.

¹ S. Luke v. 29.

But you will very readily believe that the sight of our SAVIOUR, the Holy Prophet, the Teacher and Preacher of righteousness, sitting down at table with publicans and disreputable people, as they were considered, was a great scandal to the Jews, and especially to that stiff, proud portion of them called Pharisees.

“Why,” said they, “why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?”

Our gracious SAVIOUR answered, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Showing us that it is our duty to grieve and pray for even the greatest sinners, rather than condemn them: showing us also that the call and blessings of the Gospel are open not to good people only, but to all, however low, mean, and vile, who earnestly and sincerely repent of sin, and try to do better.

“Nor can ye not delight to think
 Where He vouchsafed to eat,
 How the most Holy did not shrink
 From touch of sinner’s meat;
 What worldly hearts and hearts impure,
 Went with Him through the rich man’s door.
 That we might learn of Him lost souls to love,
 And view His least and worst with hope to meet
 above.”

From this time, far from looking back to the comforts and luxuries which as a rich

man he had heretofore enjoyed, S. Matthew appears to have been most carefully self-denying during the rest of his life; he refused himself even the usual conveniences and pleasures of it, and lived almost entirely on roots and herbs.

For about eight years after our LORD's crucifixion he preached and taught in Palestine, to his own countrymen: then he went among the heathen, to a very wild, savage, and barbarous country in Africa, called Ethiopia. But before he left Palestine, those Jews to whom he had taught the Christian Faith, intreated him to write down all that history which he had been teaching, and the other Apostles desired it also. So S. Matthew wrote his Gospel, and all the Apostles who were then separating, and going through the world to preach, took a copy of it with them; which proves that it was then received and approved by those who were to set in order the Church.

It is the first Gospel, the first record of our LORD that was ever written. Being in the first place intended for the Jews, it was written in the Hebrew language, which they spoke; but it was very soon translated into Greek, probably by S. James, the brother of JESUS. It may show how very careful S. Matthew was in collecting circumstances in our LORD's life, for he has recorded several interesting incidents which are not even

named by the other three Evangelists. Such are the Visit of the Wise Men to the Infant SAVIOUR, the Flight into Egypt, and the Slaughter of the Innocents, all which you will find in the second chapter of his Gospel ; that interesting narration of the dream of Pilate's wife (chap. xxvii.), and that fearful one of the resurrection of many saints from their tombs, and of their walking about the city amongst the living people, which is in the same chapter. And several other circumstances.

Of course every one had not copies of the Gospels and Epistles, and all the Bible as we have, but they learnt it by word of mouth and stored it up in their hearts, and handed the chief truths on to others. These Scriptures were known to be true by their agreeing with what had been taught by all the Apostles from the very first.

When S. Matthew was in Ethiopia, he worked many miracles, which you know our SAVIOUR had given His disciples the power of doing ; and by these wonderful tokens, and by his own zeal and good example he converted many people from the worship of idols : but he ceased to be heard of ; he never returned from that country ; and it is supposed that he was put to death by the idolaters there.

S. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS.

SEPTEMBER 29.

“ Ah! could one glance our earthly home reveal,
We stand alone unmov'd where countless Angels
kneel.”

THIS festival is held to express our thankfulness to Almighty GOD, for His goodness in appointing the holy angels to minister and guard us; for they are always about us, though we do not see nor think of them.

The meaning of angel is “messenger,” or bringer of tidings; and the word is applied usually to those heavenly beings through whom GOD governed the world, and by whom He used to send those messages to His people, of which we read so many instances in both the Old and the New Testament.

The first Bishops of the Church were also called Angels, because they were CHRIST'S messengers to His people.

But now when we speak of angels we mean

only those spirits who were created higher than man.

One of the greatest, if not the very greatest of these glorious beings, is the archangel Michael, who was the leader of GOD Almighty's host when Satan and his wicked angels were driven out of heaven: to be seen there no more. He is styled "one of the chief princes," and he watched over the Jewish nation as other archangels did over other nations. And I dare say you will remember that when Moses died, no *man* buried him, and "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." The archangel S. Michael, by order of GOD, hid the body, for fear, it has been said, because he had been so very great and holy a man—that the people should afterwards come and worship his remains; for they had been accustomed to see many superstitious rites paid to the dead in Egypt.

So, though we have to remember *all* angels, and there are thousands and millions of this "host of heaven," with love, and gratitude, and reverence, still, S. Michael being recorded of such great power and dignity, and being the one particularly chosen to preside over the Church of GOD, *his* name—for indeed it tells his excellence; Michael means *who is like to God? who is as God?*—his name is mentioned on this Festival of "S. Michael and all Angels:" of *all* angels

of whatsoever power and degree; for there are various orders and degrees of them. Archangels, Angels, Seraphim, Cherubim, all the host of heaven

“In glittering ranks with wings display’d.”

For they are full of wings; the prophet Isaiah, in a vision from GOD, saw the Seraphim, and each had six wings; showing, no doubt, their wonderful activity and swiftness; for “He maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire.”

They can pass through the air with the speed of light, and be, like the air, invisible to us; though there are many instances named in the Bible where they were seen in shapes, always beautiful, grand, and glorious.

They are very strong and powerful too. King David says, “Bless the LORD, ye His angels, that *excel in strength*.” In one night an angel killed one hundred and eighty-five thousand men, the army of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, who came to fight against Hezekiah, King of Judah.

They are very wise: the woman of Tekoah said to David, “As an angel of GOD, so is my LORD the King to discern good and bad.” And again: “My LORD is wise according to the wisdom of an angel of GOD.”

For their holiness we have our SAVIOUR’S testimony, when He speaks of the Son of

Man coming in His Glory, and "all the *holy* angels of GOD with Him."

For when not engaged in active good works for us, they seem to be always in prayer or adoration. Those seraphim whom Isaiah saw, cried, one to another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory"—words you know which we sing as the highest of all praise in the Holy Communion Service when we join with angels and archangels in the most exalted praise; and in the grand Te Deum hymn also, which was used in the daily services of the Church from very early times.

In Isaiah it is written, "LORD GOD of Hosts;" in the Te Deum, "LORD GOD of Sabaoth;" and perhaps some of you may be quick enough to notice the difference; so I must tell you that both the words have the same meaning, but that one is from the Greek language and the other from the Hebrew. The meaning is that the LORD GOD is the Sovereign LORD of the innumerable company of angels; of that host of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, which the heathen wrongly worshipped; and of all the hosts and armies of all nations upon earth.

GOD Almighty created all things in heaven and earth. It is impossible for us to know why GOD loves so much the work of creation, but that He does so we are well assured. He

made everything in heaven and earth and under the earth for His honour and glory, to love, to praise, to worship Him. The lowest insect that crawls on the soil tends to His honour as well as the brightest angel that stands near His throne.

In that beautiful hymn in the Morning Service, called "The Song of the Three Children," because Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are reported to have sung it in the burning fiery furnace, they call on every created thing to praise the LORD, calling first on angels of the LORD and all powers: sun, moon, stars, waters, winds, winter and summer, light and darkness: all that float in the waters, all fowls that pass through the air, the beasts and the cattle, to "bless the LORD, praise Him, and magnify Him for ever."

King David concludes his beautiful Psalms by saying, "Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD."

S. John says in the Revelation, "Thou art worthy, O LORD, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for Thou hast created *all* things, and for Thy *pleasure* they are and were created."

Again: "Every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sit-

teth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

He made the heaven and all their host, and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is; the sun, the moon, the stars; everything that lived on the earth, or swam in the waters, or flew aloft in the air; and, last of all, man and woman, perfect and beautiful and good.

We are the highest created beings upon earth: we were created “a little lower than the angels.”¹

All through the air, through the skies, up to the very throne of God, the space is filled with millions of His creatures, far higher than we are. “Thousand thousands minister unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before Him.”

So pure are they that they can see the ALMIGHTY; so holy, that many of them, as I said, stand before His awful throne.

But they are, owing to their purity and goodness, blessed enough to serve God perfectly.

They, probably, attend to all creation.

¹ But He hath given us a pre-eminence above the angels themselves, by granting to us what He hath not granted to them: He did not take the nature of angels *at all*, “but the seed of Abraham.”—Bp. Andrewes.

“He in no wise took the angels, but the seed of Abraham He took.”—Heb. ii. 16.

Not merely the stars, the waters, the hills, and mountains, and forests, and valleys; the birds and flowers, and, indeed, all the outward world; but especially, most especially, they guard and encamp around us. For this is our thankfulness to God Almighty for them. For this is our humble thanksgiving and prayer in church this day.

For throughout the Bible we read of them constantly, in care of those good persons who prayed to God and obeyed His holy will.

So an angel came to the suffering and patient Hagar in the desert, to help her.

So when Abraham, by command of God, went to offer up his son on Mount Moriah—(the great type, you will remember, of the sacrifice of CHRIST)—an angel stopped him.

And when Daniel had been thrown into the lions' den, and the king came in fear and haste to inquire for him, Daniel said, "O king! live for ever. My God hath sent *His angel*, and hath shut the lions' mouths."

Even on what we may call domestic concerns good people felt and acknowledged their aid.

When Abraham sent his steward, Eliezer, to seek for a wife for Isaac, the steward said to Laban, when telling him why he had come: "He (that is, Abraham) said unto me, The LORD, before Whom I walk, will *send His angel with thee*, and prosper thy way:" so entirely did the "friend of God" know and

believe in the constant presence and help of angels.

The "man after God's own heart," holy King David, says, "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." "They shall bear thee up in their hands."

And again: "The poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."

For "the *angel of the Lord* encampeth about them that fear Him, and *delivereth* them."

S. Paul, the inspired Apostle, says they are "all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation."

They are always about and around us everywhere, though we do not see them. Do you remember that incident told in the sixth chapter of the Second Book of Kings, when the King of Syria sent an army to compass the city of Dothan, in order to seize the prophet Elisha, and his servant was very much frightened and said, "Alas, my master, how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not, they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

And then he prayed to God to enable his servant to see what *he* saw. And in answer to his prayer, "the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and behold,

the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

The ministry of the good angels as regards mankind consists in showing to them the will of Almighty God ; as we read in the history of Abraham, of Lot, of Manoah, and others ; and the Divine Word as conveyed to the prophets in the Old Testament ; and in the New are some instances, as telling Zacharias of the birth of the Baptist ; the Virgin of CHRIST'S advent ; telling the shepherds where to find the SAVIOUR, &c.

In comforting and helping those who are in trouble : as giving water to fainting Ishmael ; food and water to Elijah when he was starving and despairing in the wilderness ; loosing the chains of the Apostle S. Peter when he was in prison, and bringing him safely from among the sleeping soldiers.

And I need not remind you to Whom an angel ministered in the garden of Gethsemane.

Though not visible to us, angels as certainly now guard and defend us from outward dangers. What we call luck or good fortune is probably the work of our good angel. Sometimes we have some strong presentiment or foreboding, some strange feeling which tells us of approaching danger, which, therefore, we strive to avoid. This may also be the ministry of our good angel.

They are always near to help us in any struggle after good. They fill us with good thoughts, they help us against temptation, and carry our secret prayers up to heaven. They are especially present in Church and during all the holy services; prompting and inspiring good and holy thoughts, to all who *strive earnestly* to worship and pray with faith and humility: for even the good angels cannot help us unless we first strive to help ourselves.

Our SAVIOUR Himself leads us to know that they will watch us when dying; for He tells us that when Lazarus, a beggar, but a faithful, humble man, died, he was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; that is, into God's Rest.

This is the ministry of angels to us; beginning when we are infants—for our SAVIOUR said that the angels of little children always behold the face of our FATHER in Heaven—and lasting until death.

Nor is their ministry finished even then; for at the day of judgment, that last solemn and terrible day, they are to be mighty agents in the Resurrection.

Then the "Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all His holy angels with Him;" then "the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from the just."

Then shall those happy ones who, having sincerely and faithfully striven to "do justly,

to love mercy, and to walk humbly before GOD," being redeemed, justified by the sacrifice of CHRIST, then shall they be led by these good angels into Heaven, there to be their friends and companions "before the throne of GOD and the Lamb FOR EVER."

If we do think seriously at all of these things, shall we not indeed pray with the Church to-day to that Almighty GOD Who has "ordained and constituted the services of angels and men" in such a wonderful order, mercifully to grant, that "as His holy angels always do Him service in Heaven," so still by His appointment they may continue to succour and defend us so long as we live upon earth.

S. LUKE.

OCTOBER 18.

“Be the tenderest breath to-day
 Breathed on all we sing or say,
 For to-day that saint we own,
 Who to JESUS' cradle-throne
 Led us first ; with shepherds mild,
 With that Mother undefiled,
 There to adore the wondrous Child.”

THE character of S. Luke the Evangelist is one of the most beautiful read in this book. We are told that he was “a pattern of constancy and perseverance in the faith ; of true and sincere friendship ; of unwearied diligence and fidelity in his calling.” His dutiful care, and tenderness, and affection, and close clinging to S. Paul during the time of the earthly troubles of that holy man, may be a pattern to all the world.

Two of the most noted of S. Paul's converts were Luke and Demas ; and both these

newly made Christians were attending their teacher when he was imprisoned the first time at Rome: for he says, when writing to the people of Colosse, (a city of Phrygia, in Asia Minor,) who had sent to inquire about him, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you."

At a later time, when S. Paul was again in prison, he still tells us of Luke, "the beloved," being with him, but Demas had fallen away. He had unhappily forsaken his guide and friend in his adversity and imprisonment, because the gay things of this world pleased him more than the humbleness, and patience, and suffering which he must have endured, if he remained with S. Paul in prison. "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica."

Not a cross nor an unkind word. S. Paul, in prison and suffering,—and prisons, now unhappy places, were then often most wretched and loathsome dungeons,—S. Paul only intreats Timothy to hasten to him, because he is nearly alone. "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me, for Demas hath forsaken me." This holy Apostle utters no scolding, not even a rebuke, at the ingratitude and falling away of the man whom he had so earnestly cared for and taught.

And even this request to S. Timothy most probably was made, not at all for his own comfort, but for that of the converts; for he

wanted these disciples to perform those duties in the Church which his imprisonment made it impossible for him to do.

But, "faithful and true," Luke remained, to help, and tend, and comfort S. Paul in prison.

S. Luke was not an Apostle, nor, perhaps, a disciple of our LORD. He speaks in the beginning of his Gospel of his having learnt it from those who were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the Word. He joined S. Paul, who is called his master and teacher, in the year of CHRIST, 57, and never left him until his death. He wrote his Gospel about the year 58, and the History of the Acts of the Holy Apostles about three years later.

S. Luke's history of our SAVIOUR—that is, His Gospel—is considered a very beautiful one, and full of comfort. It shows so much of our LORD's mercy and pardon. It shows Him in His most blessed office of Intercessor; as in the beautiful history of the Prodigal Son, pardoned and restored to his father's home; as in the shepherd going after the lost sheep—going after *until he finds it*, and brings it back to the fold.

"His joy is to the wandering sheep
To tell of the Great Shepherd's love."

These parables are indeed types of CHRIST's Gospel, by which, through His ministers, He

strives to bring us back from evil ways, from wandering astray like lost sheep.

S. Luke also gives us that most interesting account of the walk of two disciples from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus, on the evening of the Resurrection day. They talked of this wonderful event, quite unable to comprehend it, and, possibly, not quite believing it; for they were "sad," that is, very sorrowful and down-hearted; when our LORD Himself joined them (though they did not know Him) "and beginning at Moses and all the Prophets," so explained these Scriptures, that the disciples felt their "hearts burn within them."

The beautiful Christian hymns of the Virgin, of Zacharias, and of Simeon, (all of which you have read of in this book,) are found in the first and second chapters of this Gospel, and in this only; as in this only you will find the full account of CHRIST'S birth, and the angel's greeting to the shepherds; and it is to His cradle in the manger that the pretty lines at the beginning of this chapter refer.

S. Luke's Gospel was written some years later than those of S. Matthew and S. Mark, and, it is supposed, partly in order to supply the information which they had omitted.

Besides this Gospel which bears his name, S. Luke wrote the history of the Acts of the Apostles; which history tells us where these holy men travelled, and what they did, after

their LORD and Master, our SAVIOUR, had ascended into heaven. He was well fitted to do this, not only on account of his great talent,—for, among other gifts, he had that of being a most able writer,—but because he accompanied S. Paul in his journeyings, being, as I have told you, most faithful to him throughout. And this history is supposed to have been written at Rome, after S. Paul had been two years in prison.

S. Luke was called, from a physician of the body, to be a physician of the soul: therefore the Church prays in the Collect “that, by the wholesome medicine of the doctrines delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed.”

But S. Paul calls him “the *beloved* physician.” Do you fully understand the meaning of these words? Have none of you had a brother, or a sister, or say, a mother ill? and so had to call in a doctor, who has, under GOD’S blessing, made *her* well, and *you* so happy to have your own mother again. Very well: but this doctor might have been a cross, ill-tempered, rude man, and yet have cured your mother, and you would still have been thankful and happy; but would you have loved him so well as if he had been kind and gentle?

Now, plainly, S. Luke was good, kind, and cheerful, or he would not have been known

as the "beloved" physician. He not only did the good that was wanted, but he did it kindly, tenderly, cheerily.

S. Luke was also a great painter. I have myself seen a picture so black with age that I could hardly make out the face on it, so dim it was ; and the picture itself was rotting and dropping away. I was told that this picture had been copied hundreds of years ago, from one painted by S. Luke : and perhaps it was true.

And if true, it is likely enough, as has been believed, that

"Where that holy painter wrought,
He with pen and pencil true
CHRIST'S own awful Mother drew."

So it is said ; and that he also painted portraits of the Apostles S. Peter and S. Paul.

S. Luke was born at Antioch (the metropolis of Syria), a very beautiful place, and one of great renown for learning and arts. But it is a place especially to be remembered by us, because here the followers and disciples of our blessed LORD were first called Christians.

He was about eighty years of age when he died ; and it is supposed that, whilst he was preaching the Gospel, and gaining many to believe in it, he was seized by a party of the heathen, who—there not being dry wood

enough about the place to make a cross of the usual sort—hanged him on, or nailed him to an olive-tree which was at hand.

Some say this event occurred in Egypt, others in Greece; but it is not known. Certainly he was a martyr “for Righteousness’ sake.”

His body, it is said, was removed to Constantinople, and there buried in a great church built in memory of the Apostles.

S. SIMON AND S. JUDE.

OCTOBER 28.

How humble ought it to make us feel to remember that persons so holy, so good, and so honoured as to be Apostles and disciples of our LORD, are so little known, have had so little said about them, as S. Simon and S. Jude. And, indeed, this is the case with some other Apostles also. S. Paul, S. Luke, S. John, S. Peter, S. James, we are told a good deal about in the history of their acts, written by S. Luke; but of S. Simon and S. Jude we know very little, except that they loved our SAVIOUR, venerated Him, toiled in His Church in His Name, took long perilous journeys through hostile and perhaps savage countries to spread the knowledge of Him, and finally suffered most cruel deaths for His sake.

S. Simon is called Simon the Canaanite and Simon Zelotes. Both these names, 'Canaanite' and 'Zelotes' have perhaps the same

meaning, and indicate that Simon showed great zeal for the Christian faith, and was most earnest and ardent in the service of his SAVIOUR.

After the death of JESUS, he remained in Jerusalem until after the Feast of Pentecost, when, with the other Apostles of our LORD, he received that most wonderful gift of the HOLY GHOST, about which you have read in another part of this book ; a gift of strength and power which neither he nor any of the rest had before, to go and preach and teach about our SAVIOUR to all nations and in all countries, speaking to each their own language, of which before he did not know a word.

He went into various countries ; into Egypt, of which you have read in the history of Jacob and Joseph, and among other nations, of whom perhaps you hardly know anything ; but it is said by some of those who have written about him that he came at last into our own country. Britain, as England was then called, was a very wild, terrible, barbarous, heathen place. Where we now see sunny corn-fields, and meadows, and gardens, venerable churches, and cheerful busy towns and villages, was then all thick dark woods, overrun with wild beasts, savage bears and wolves ; and the people who lived in it were almost as savage as the beasts.

The people all of them went naked, or

nearly so, and painted their bodies over with blue paint. They used spears, and bows and arrows, both in fighting their enemies (and they were very quarrelsome) and in killing animals and birds for food: and their drinking cups were large shells. And how very rude, and savage, and ignorant they were, you will guess, when I tell you that when a baby was born—a poor little, weak, helpless baby—it was always brought to its father, and the very first taste of food it ever had in this world was put into its little mouth on the point of its father's sword. And this they did from the very foolish notion that it would make the little baby into a brave man.

This was not only very foolish, but the people in our country at that time were sad heathens; for they worshipped idols, images of wood and stone, and killed men and women and children at the feet of these idols; and sometimes they put numbers of them, men, women, and children, into large cages made of wicker work, like basket work, and burnt them alive. And this they called religion.

So S. Simon was one of those holy men who, it is said, came here to teach us the one true religion, as he had learnt it from our blessed SAVIOUR. And after him came others and others, many of them; and by degrees these fearful practices ceased, and we became more like Christians; very far indeed from what

we ought to be, but, as you must know, very different from what I have been telling you.

But, you see, it was a very brave thing for one man to venture himself among hundreds of such terrible and wicked people. We cannot wonder that Simon was called *Zelotes*, the brave, earnest man, full of zeal, and determined to preach what he knew was true and holy. Perhaps he knew that this earnestness and zeal were to cost him his life, but if he did, it did not make him draw back. He, like that other zealous Apostle, S. Paul, "counted the sufferings of the present time not worthy to be compared with the glory which should be revealed hereafter." For it *did* cost him his life.

But he did not live and work in vain. He brought many persons from their evil course. He taught and persuaded several of these wicked heathens to quit their evil, terrible lives, and instead of quarrelling and fighting all around, and doing all sorts of wickedness, to "do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God," their SAVIOUR, of Whose gentle, holy life he told them. But, you see, these persons who did attend to him were but a trifling few, in comparison with the hundreds and thousands of people in all the country around; and these powerful wicked ones, in their wrath and violence, laid violent hands on this zealous preacher of our LORD'S Gospel.

S. Simon became one of the holy army of martyrs; for the Britons seized him, and they crucified him.

S. Jude, the other Apostle, whose name we remember this day, had the honour to be a near relation of our LORD Himself; most likely, a cousin. Like S. Simon, whose name is joined with his, he was remarkable for his earnest zeal in praising God, and therefore was often called Thaddæus, a name which means earnest praise of God. He was also called Lebbæus, a name which signifies prudence and understanding. So, you see, though we have so few words about S. Jude, those words are in his high praise.

He was brother to S. James the Less, whose history you have read; and it seems likely that these names, Thaddæus and Lebbæus, though fully deserved by him from his admirable character and conduct, were, perhaps, more often given to him in order to distinguish him from the other disciple of the same name, Judas (Iscariot), the betrayer of the LORD. A sad thing it must have been for a good and holy man like S. Jude, as we now call him—Judas then—to have ever been mistaken for that bad and wicked man, Judas Iscariot.

At the last most awful and most holy supper, which our blessed SAVIOUR ate with His disciples on earth, and after which He esta-

blished the Holy Communion, S. Jude made some inquiries of our LORD, and the Evangelist S. John, when putting them down in his history, or gospel, writes, "Judas saith unto Him, *not Iscariot.*" Oh! it seems sad for a good man to have even the same name with such a miserable person.

S. Jude wrote one of the Epistles, or letters of advice, which you have in the New Testament, called a *Catholic* epistle, because, as I have told you before, Catholic means general, universal, spreading everywhere—and this Epistle is not like S. Paul's to *the* Church at Corinth, or *the* Church at Ephesus, &c., but is meant for *all* the Churches everywhere, which had been founded by those appointed by our SAVIOUR.

It is said that S. Jude, after our SAVIOUR'S death, preached the Gospel in Judæa, and Galilee, and Samaria, countries the names of which you have learnt in your New Testament, and afterwards in countries farther off, Idumæa, Syria, Mesopotamia. But he went still further off, into a country called Persia, where the people worshipped the sun—God Almighty's sun and creature—as if it were God Himself. The priests of this form of heathen worship were called MAGI, and they cruelly put S. Jude to death: another of that "noble army of martyrs" of whom we read in the Church Service.

But perhaps it may interest you to hear

this. You have all read in your New Testament how Herod, the king of Judæa, commanded that all the children in the country, from "two years old and under," should be killed—when he heard of our SAVIOUR's birth—in order that our SAVIOUR might be killed amongst them, because he thought (as others did) that our SAVIOUR would come as a prince of *this* world, and dispute his crown with him. You have also read in your New Testament that Joseph was "warned in a dream," that is, an Angel whispered to him, to "arise, and take the Young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt," and so they did. So the soldiers of Herod did *not* find the "Young Child," our SAVIOUR, and so, of course, did not kill Him, as Herod wished.

But S. Jude left two grandchildren, who were called before the emperor of Rome (Domitian) long after Herod's death; and they were brought before him for much the same reason which had before actuated Herod the king. The emperor feared a *worldly* rival, as Herod before had done; and these two young persons, grandsons of S. Jude (who, as I told you, was probably a cousin of our SAVIOUR), might, supposing the SAVIOUR *was* a king of this world, have claims which perhaps should disturb the emperor of Rome himself.

These two young men answered the emperor beautifully. They said that they *were*

of the lineage of David; that they *were* nearly related to our SAVIOUR; but that they were merely husbandmen, as their brown, hard, toilworn hands showed; and that though they did truly believe that Messiah was their King, yet they believed His to be a heavenly, not an earthly kingdom.

The emperor believed in their truth, and respected them for it; and they went away free.

And this is all I have been able to find to tell you about S. Simon and S. Jude.

ALL SAINTS.

NOVEMBER 1.

“The saints above are stars in heaven—
 What are the saints on earth?
 Like trees they stand whom GOD has given,
 Our Eden’s happy birth.

“Faith is their fix’d unswerving root,
 Hope their unfading flower,
 Fair deeds of charity their fruit,
 The glory of their bower.”

WE say every time we repeat the Creed, and every time we go to Church,—and in former times that would be every day, for people went to Church every day,—we say, “I believe in the Communion of Saints.” I wonder whether we think at the time what this means, or whether we do really all of us understand what it does mean?

First, we will speak of saints. A saint means a holy person, a person holier than

those around him ; so in the first times of Christianity, all the followers of CHRIST were called saints, because they professed and tried to follow a course of life far more pure and holy than ever had been taught generally in the world before.

You will often see "the saints" mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the epistles more frequently : "Concerning the collection for the saints ;" "All the saints salute you ;" "To all the saints in CHRIST JESUS which are at Philippi." In all which instances, and in many more, saint means Christian.

Many such holy men there had been in the world before this time ; for king David says, "Sing praises unto the LORD, ye saints of His : " and "God is to be feared in the assembly of His saints." And even long before this, when Moses was giving his dying blessing to the children of Israel, he said, "The LORD came from Sinai ; He came with ten thousands of His saints ; yea, He loved the people ; all His saints are in thy hand." And the Prophet Hosea says, "Judah is faithful with all the saints."

Some such we see so plainly in the Old Testament. In Abel, in Enoch, in Noah ; in Abraham the friend of God, in Isaac the son of the promise, in Israel, the appointed forefather of the CHRIST ; in Moses, the meekest of men ; in Aaron, his brother, of

whom the Psalmist says, "They envied Aaron, the saint of the LORD;" in this holy singer himself, a man, it is said, "after GOD's own heart;" in Samuel, and the holy prophets of the LORD; and in many others, of whom S. Paul says, "the world was not worthy."

These were "the just," who before the appearance on earth of our LORD, lived "by faith" in GOD, and in His holy promises, and were therefore called saints. It is of some of these no doubt the Evangelist speaks when he says that in the awful hour of CHRIST'S Crucifixion "Many bodies of saints that slept arose."

But when the Christian faith and doctrine came to be spread abroad in the world, this term, saint, at first given to *all* Christians, was restricted to those only who were peculiarly pure in faith and life, and holy in conduct; for in time there were numbers and numbers of careless Christians, called to be so (that is, baptized in CHRIST), but not living like saints.

And the Christian Church from the earliest times, had holy services yearly on the anniversary day of the death of the most humble and pious of her children, prompted thereto doubtless by the desire to incite us to imitate such holy conduct. And encouraged, probably by such sentences in Holy Writ as the following: "The righteous shall be had in

everlasting remembrance:"¹ "Right dear in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints:" "Remember them which have the rule over you, *who have spoken unto you the word of God.*"²

We have accounts of many beautiful services of this sort in early time; the earliest, those of S. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, and S. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who both suffered martyrdom for the sake of CHRIST, and whose memory was thus kept up with reverence in their own Churches. These holy men had both been personally acquainted with the beloved disciple S. John (who, as you have read, lived to a great old age). S. Ignatius was carried prisoner to Rome, and while travelling, fastened by an iron chain to his guards, and knowing quite well that he was going to suffer a cruel death, he wrote some letters of advice, and counsel, and comfort to Christians, which we have for use even now. He was thrown among some lions to be devoured by them.

The Romans, who were then masters of the world, delighted in these cruel, fearful sights, which took place at stated times, in what they called an amphitheatre, a place with benches raised one above another round

¹ Ps. cxii. 6.

² Heb. xiii. 7.

a large circle, well guarded, and much lower than the lowest bench. Here men called gladiators used to fight each other to death, or fight—for their trade was fighting—with wild beasts. And many and many a good Christian man and woman, far too good and pure to have committed any crime against their fellow-creatures, but because of their firm and undaunted faith in CHRIST, were, by heathen kings and persecutors, thrown into these places to be devoured by ferocious wild beasts, purposely kept very hungry in order to make them more savage. And such sights pleased these cruel people, more cruel, I think, than the wild beasts themselves. And in this way the good old man, the Christian saint, Ignatius, was killed.

He is supposed to have been the “little child” whom our SAVIOUR placed in the midst of His disciples, to teach them humility.¹ Perhaps he was a gracious little child naturally, or perhaps our LORD’S touch made him so, for he lived a very pure and holy life, and was a close follower of the beloved disciple S. John. So he was indeed very rightly called a saint; and though we do not now celebrate his anniversary, we truly reverence him as a father of our Church.

And an especial friend and favourite of his was S. Polycarp (also when very young per-

¹ S. Mark ix. 36; S. Luke ix. 47.

sonally known to the disciple S. John), and who had been Bishop of Smyrna for seventy years, when he was seized by the heathen Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius to be martyred for his faith in CHRIST. So aged was he, and so venerable did he look, for he was above ninety years old, that the governor who was commissioned to capture him, intreated him to have pity on his own white hairs, and escape this fearful death by denying CHRIST. But no, he would not listen. Even the rude soldiers who took him were touched with pity, and said to each other, "What need of all this care to take such an old man?"

He was sentenced to be burnt alive, and he prayed aloud as he stood in the midst of the pile of wood which was set alight. But wonderful to say, when the fire was kindled, it did not touch him, but ascended, and formed an arch like "a glory" over his head. The governor was enraged at this, and ordered soldiers to kill him with the sword. And God Almighty permitted this to be done, and so took this faithful servant to His everlasting rest. This was in the year of CHRIST 167.

So it was such true, and holy, and faithful servants of our LORD as these who were still called saints, after the custom ceased of calling all Christians saints: and you will not wonder that all good people love to remember

them in communion and prayer in Church, on their anniversary days.

But at length, as hundreds of years had passed, the numbers of these Christian saints' days had so increased, that it was thought desirable to make an alteration. And our Church decreed that only those saints should be commemorated with special service, Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, whose names are recorded in the New Testament, of all of whom you have read in this book.

But in reverence to and in honour and love of those good and holy people who have shown us by practice and example our right path through the world, even from its beginning; one day is appointed for special prayer and thanksgiving for *all* Saints. To honour God for all those who from the beginning till now, by His grace have become saints; to encourage us to patience and perseverance by their example.

For what terrible woes they have gone through! As S. Paul says in his Epistle to the Hebrews, and from many other books do we learn of similar cruelties:—"Trials of cruel mockings and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder,¹ were tempted, were slain with the sword; they

¹ The prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder with a wooden sword.

wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy); they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

And, as you have read in this book, they were devoured by wild beasts, worried to death by savage dogs, and burnt alive, many and many of them.

And yet they were mortal, fallible, helpless as ourselves; liable to sin; tempted by fleshly passions. All these human weaknesses they combated and overcame by the grace of God.

And so, by the same grace of God, still poured out on our earnest prayer and striving, may we. We have the same precepts to guide us, the same Divine Pattern to imitate, the same HOLY SPIRIT to nourish us; and, as we are placed in a Christian, not a heathen country, we have not the same fearful trials to undergo. "For the LORD forsaketh not His saints." "He preserveth the souls of His saints." "He preserveth the way of His saints." And more than all, "Precious to the LORD *is the death* of His saints."

So, having from time to time, during the Christian year, kept a holy festival in memory of those whom we know, on *Divine* authority, to have been saints; we now, at

its close, give general thanks to GOD for all saints, who for six thousand years have glorified Him by their holy lives. Or, as in the prayer for the Church militant, "We bless His holy Name for all His servants departed this life in His faith and fear."

To return to that article of the Creed, "I believe in the communion of saints."

We hold communion with the saints now on earth, though we may not know them, when we join in the same holy rites; when we try to do works of mercy and charity; forgive offences, forget wrongs, love one another, give food to the hungry, and comfort to the poor and unhappy. For "if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another."

Every saint departed from this earth is alive somewhere, and we hold communion with them in praying the same prayer; they from their place of waiting, we from our abode of trial,—**THY KINGDOM COME. THY WILL BE DONE.**" And thus we "are come . . . to the spirits of just men made perfect."

But this communion extends to angels—nay, even to the throne of GOD. S. Paul, by inspiration of the **HOLY GHOST**, says, that angels are all ministering spirits, sent forth from heaven through all the world to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation. And our **SAVIOUR** says, "There is joy in the pre-

sence of the angels of GOD over one sinner that repenteth." And S. John says, "Truly our fellowship is with the FATHER, and with His SON JESUS CHRIST."

"In prayer the saints appear as one,
In word, in deed, and mind,
When with the FATHER and the SON,
Their fellowship they find."

This, then, is the solemn service, the great duty we have to perform on this the last festival of the Christian year; for Advent is at hand; the Church's year is drawing to its end.

During its progress we have commemorated, with solemn services in the Church, all the chief events in our SAVIOUR'S history:—the Annunciation, Nativity, Circumcision, Presentation in the Temple, Epiphany: His fasting and temptation, in Lent; His Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension; and finally, the descent, according to His promise, of the HOLY GHOST upon His disciples.

According to the due order of time, intermingled with these great services, we have had holydays, called saints' days, for recording the piety and studying the example of each of His holy Apostles; and finally, on this day, of *all* His saints.

So, by earnest and humble attention, year

by year, as long as we live, to these feasts and holy seasons, we may gain help and courage in that Christian course by which only we can prepare ourselves

“To soar those older saints to meet,
Gather'd long since at JESUS' feet;
No world of passions to destroy,
Our prayers and struggles o'er, our task all praise
and joy.”

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