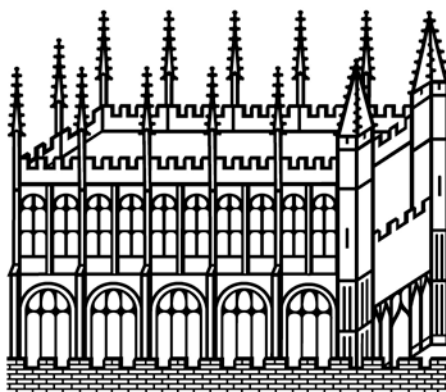




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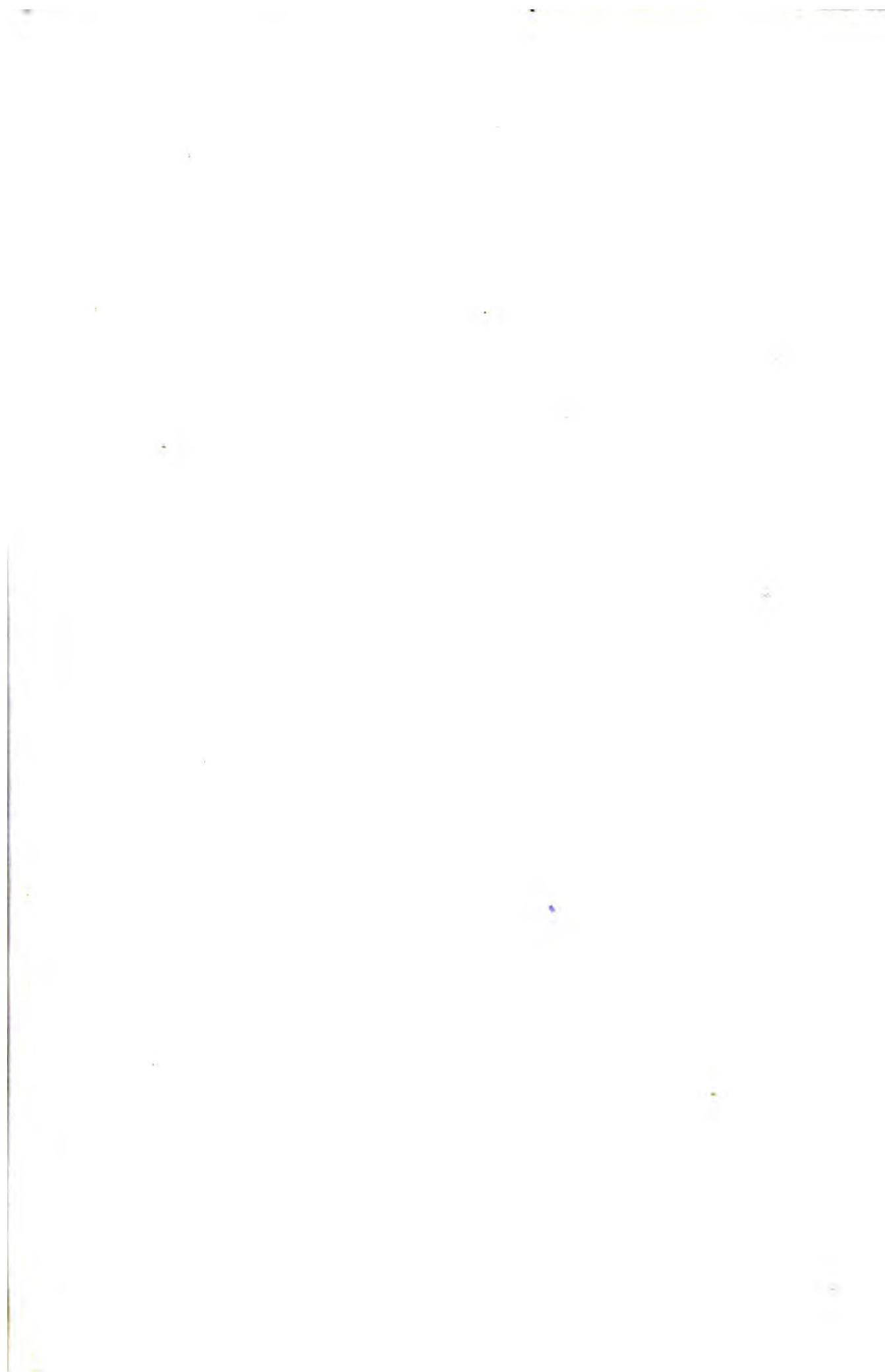
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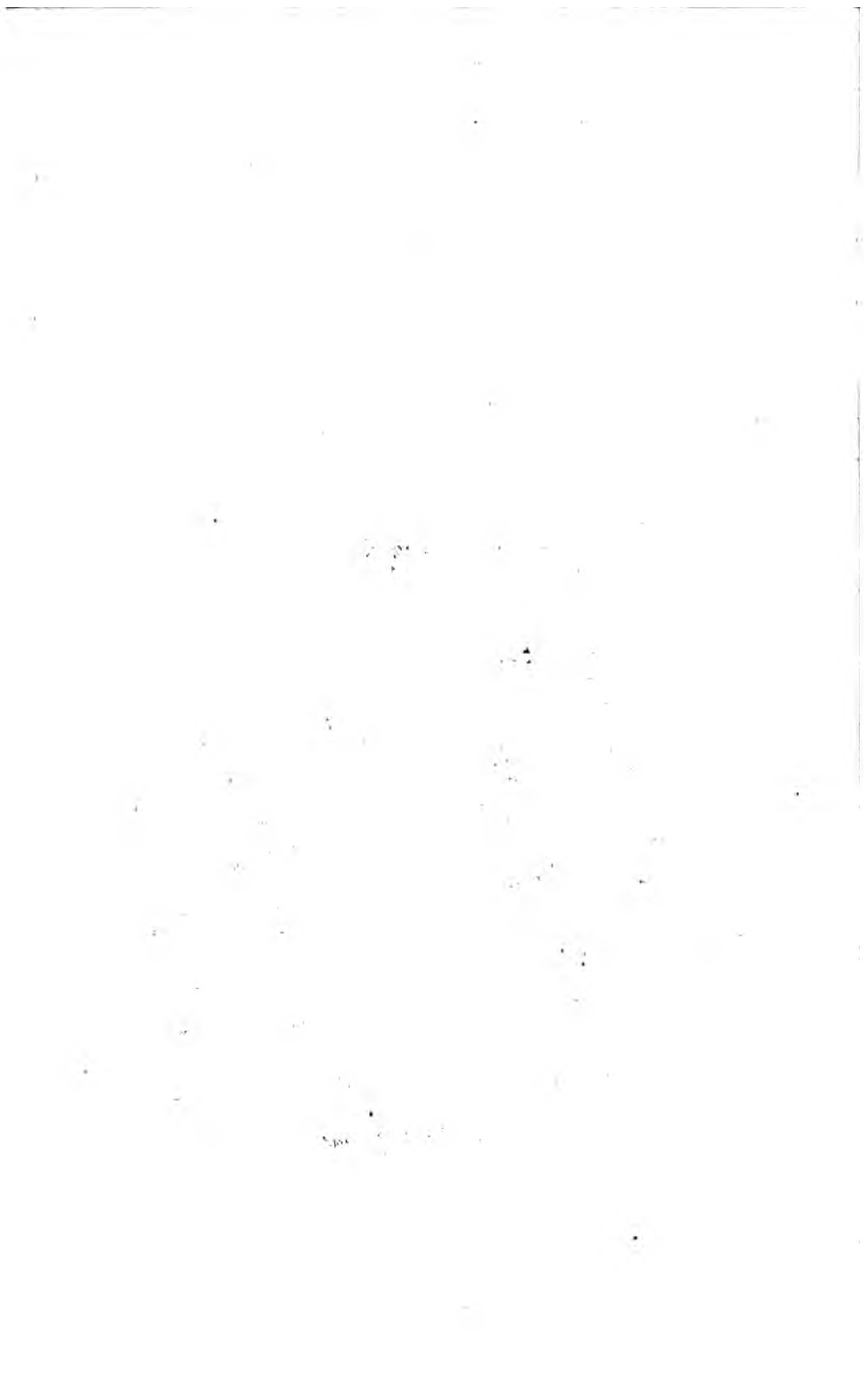


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PRINTED BY W. E. LUTHER, 10, N. 10, N. 10

Little Annie;

OR,

IS CHURCH TIME A HAPPY TIME?

LONDON :
WERTHEIM AND MACINTOSH,
24, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1852.



PREFACE.

THE difficulty of securing attentive and reverent behaviour from little children during the hours of Divine Worship, has often been a subject of anxiety with their parents and teachers. This difficulty cannot be a matter of surprise, when we find, in examining them upon the services, how small a portion has conveyed any idea to their minds. Thus they are unable to enter into the deep and varied interests of Christian Worship, and the most irksome duty of sitting still and doing nothing, becomes the only one which they can associate with the house of God. To teach little children

something of the real and touching meaning of our beautiful Liturgy, and to remind them, that the great God will not hear us if we speak with our lips, while our heart is far from Him, is the object of the following chapters. To those who are familiar with his name, it may not be uninteresting to add, that they passed while in MS. under the revision of the late Rev. EDWARD BICKERSTETH, of Watton. Should they be the means of helping one of these little ones to join in Sabbath prayers and praises, with true sorrow for sin, and warm love to the Saviour who died for them, they will not have been written in vain.

LITTLE ANNIE;

OR,

IS CHURCH TIME A HAPPY TIME?

CHAPTER I.

It is not long since, that a gentleman of my acquaintance, took the little girl of one of his friends with whom he had been staying, back with him to his home, that she might pay a visit to his own little children. He was very kind to her on the journey, and when she was tired of looking out of the window of the railway carriage, he took her on his knee and gave her some fruit and biscuits; and as he saw that she was still a little frightened at going with a stranger so far away from her home, he began to tell her about his own little girls and boys, what merry games they had on their half holidays, and how happy they were at lessons with their kind governess.

“ But Sunday is their happiest day,” he said ;
“ even little Arthur, who is not four years old,
claps his hands on Saturdays, and says, ‘ Sunday-
a-morrow, papa.’ Do you like Sunday best,
Annie ? ” he asked of his little companion.

“ Yes, I think I do,” she answered, but in a
tone as if she was not quite sure.

“ And do you like going to God’s house, my
child ? ” said the gentleman.

Annie hung down her head, and did not an-
swer at first ; but when the question was repeated,
she said, “ No, Sir.”

“ How is that, Annie ? ”

“ It is such a long time, Sir, I think it will
never be over.”

“ It is because you do not love what you are
doing, that it seems long to you, my little girl.
How many hours do you have for play on Satur-
day afternoon ? ”

“ From three o’clock to half-past five.”

“ And does not this seem a very long time ? ”

“ Oh ! no, I am always so busy with my garden
and my doll, it seems to fly away, and I wish it
were twice as long.”

“ Time always flies when we are doing what
we like, Annie ; and did you ever think that it is
because you do not *care* to hear God’s Word and

to pray to Him—because you do not love to think about these things, that it seems to you so dull?”

“ I don’t know what you mean, Sir.”

“ Why when you have been naughty and grieved your dear papa or mamma, does it not make you happy to beg them to forgive you and kiss you ; and then do you not love to be with them, and see them smile upon you again ? ”

“ Oh ! yes, that I do.”

“ And if you did but think, Annie, how much you have grieved your Father in heaven, it would not seem dull work, but a great comfort to you to say, ‘ I have done that which I ought not to have done ; O Lord forgive me ! ’ The chief thing that you want, my child, is the Spirit of God to teach you that Jesus loved you, even so much as to die for you ; then you would grieve over the many things which you do to make him sorry, and you would love to come and beg him to forgive you, and help you not to do so again, and to thank him for all his kindness.”

“ I do like to beg God to forgive me when I have done wrong, Sir, but I don’t remember hearing about that in church. But often I do not know what it means, though I can read it all very well.”

“ Well, Annie, while you are with me I will

promise to try and explain to you everything in the words of the Church service which you cannot understand."

"Thank you, Sir, I should like that very much, and will you begin now directly, if you please?"

"Well, I do not know why we should not, my child, especially as I have my little Bible and Prayer-book in my pocket. And first I must tell you what I always do before the minister begins."

"What is that, Sir?"

"I kneel down and ask God to help me to pray and to thank him for all His goodness, and listen to what I hear. I am a great deal older than you, Annie, and can do many things which you cannot, but I am sure I could not attend in church, if I did not ask God to help me."

"I will try and remember to do that too, Sir."

"Do so, my child, and I am sure that God will hear you. And now you may begin to read 'the exhortation,' as it is called. Stop when you want anything explained."

(*Annie reads.*) "Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble or cloak them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them

with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart, to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy.

“ Will you tell me what this means, Sir ? ”

“ *Sundry places* means that in many different parts of the Bible we are moved or told to confess our sins to God, and not to hide them up, to try and cloak them, or cover them over. I wonder whether you can repeat one of these passages, Annie.”

“ Papa taught me one which says, ‘ Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God.’ ”

“ That is a very nice one. And do you know another that says, ‘ If we do this we shall obtain forgiveness of the same ? ’ ”

“ Yes, Sir, ‘ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.’ ”

“ Very good, and now read on.”

(Annie reads.) “ And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God ; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at His hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear His most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul.”

“ Tell me in your own words what this means, Annie ; what does it say we ought to do when we meet together in church ? ”

“ That we must confess our sins, and thank God and praise Him, and hear the Bible, and ask him for what we want.”

“ Quite right, my child, that is a very good answer. Observe you do not come to church merely to hear the service repeated ; you come to pray, to *beg* God to give you what you wish very much to have ; you come to thank him with all your heart for his mercies and goodness to you ; and to listen to what the great God says in his book to a little child like you. You can understand this, Annie ? ”

“ Oh yes, Sir, thank you ; but I have not read to the end yet.

Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me.

“ I don't know what this means, Sir, at all, the minister says he prays us to go with him to— ”

“ To the throne of grace, which means God's throne. Can you tell me what a throne is ? ”

“ It is the Queen's seat.”

“ Did you ever see a throne ? ”

“ Yes, once I did, and the Queen upon it ; oh it was so grand and beautiful ! there were so many fine ladies and gentlemen standing about her. I should like to go there again.”

“ You did not think it dull, or the time too long ? ”

“ Oh ! no, Sir, it was so very pretty, I was not at all tired. Papa said it was a great thing for a little girl like me to go and see the Queen.”

“ Then what must it be, my child, to be allowed to go to the throne of the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Ah, that is glorious indeed, brighter than the sun to look upon, and with a rainbow round about, in sight like unto an emerald.”

“ Oh I should like to see that very much indeed.”

“ You can never see it with your bodily eyes, my dear little girl. There is, as it were, a curtain let down before it, so that we cannot look into heaven ; but when we kneel down and speak to God, we do really come to the footstool of his throne, the throne of his grace, or free favour, as it is here beautifully called.”

“ I never knew that before, Sir, or I think I should have been afraid to pray.”

“ You would have been afraid to go and ask

the Queen for anything, would you not, Annie?"

"Oh yes, that I should; I think she would have been angry."

"But, suppose some kind lady, of whom the Queen was very fond, had taken you by the hand and said, you were one of her little friends, and begged the Queen to listen to what you had to say, for her sake?"

"Oh, that would have been kind; I should not have been at all frightened then."

"Well, Annie, I can tell you of just such a Friend, who is standing now beside God's glorious throne,—He pities, He loves you, He will pray to God for you."

"And will He ask God to hear what I say, when I kneel down?"

"He will, my child, and God has promised that when you ask anything for *Jesus Christ's sake*, He will do it."

"*Good Jesus Christ*," said little Annie very earnestly.

"May God indeed help you to love that dear Saviour with all your heart, my child, now and for ever," said the gentleman, as he bent over and kissed her.

"And now begin to read the General Confession, as it is called."

(*Annie reads.*) "Almighty and most merciful Father ; We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done ; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done ; And there is no health in us."

"What does this prayer say we are like, Annie ?"

"Like lost sheep."

"Do you know any text which says so too ?"

"Yes, Sir. There is one in Isaiah, which says, 'All we, like sheep, have gone astray.'"

"Right, it was that one I meant. Did you ever see a man driving a flock of sheep along the road, Annie ? Unless he has a dog to help him, he can scarcely get them along at all, one climbs up into the hedge, another turns up a wrong path, and some will even run straight back the way they came. Now, how do you think we are like sheep, Annie ?"

"I suppose because we go out of the right way."

"Just so, my child. We are continually sinning against God ; going out of the way of his commandments. Have you found out yet, Annie, how often your little heart is wandering

out of the way ; how many times a-day you are cross to your little brothers and sisters, or disobedient, or thinking only how to please yourself, and forgetting to try and serve Jesus ? ”

Annie hung down her head, and answered, “ I don’t know, Sir.”

“ I am fifty-four years old, Annie, but I cannot say that there has been one day in all my life in which I have not offended against God’s holy commandments ;—leaving undone those things which I ought to have done, and doing those things which I ought not to have done. Our souls are very sick with sin ; there is no health in us. Like a poor man who is bowed down with disease, and unable to do what he would, we are helpless of ourselves to do what is right.”

“ But will not God forgive us, Sir ? ”

“ Yes, dear, if we ask for pardon for the sake of that Almighty Friend who is standing by His throne. What does the text say ? ”

“ ‘ The blood of Jesus Christ, His son, cleanseth us from all sin.’ ”

“ And it is that which we ask God to do in the rest of the prayer ; read to the end.”

(*Annie reads.*) “ But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare Thou them, O God, which confess their faults. Restore Thou them that

are penitent ; According to thy promises declared into mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for His sake ; That we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life, to the glory of Thy holy Name." Amen.

"After we have done wrong and asked God to forgive us, may we go and do the same things over again, Annie?"

"Oh no, Sir, for the little hymn says—

"'Tis not enough to say,
We're sorry, and repent,
And go, from day to day,
Just as we always went ;
For real repentance is to leave
Our wicked ways, as well as grieve."

"And what then do we ask God that we may do henceforth, or hereafter, in the end of this prayer?"

"Live a godly life."

"Yes, which means, to live as God our Saviour did when he was on earth. And now are you not tired, my child, or would you like to go on a little further?"

"I should like to go on, please Sir. May I read the next prayer?"

"Do so, my dear."

"'Absolution, or remission,' I don't know at all what that means."

“ It means pardon of sin ; remission is to put away. There was a poor man I knew very well, who was tried a year or two ago, with much sickness in his family, and he could not put by his money every week as he had been accustomed to do, for the rent of his house, so that when rent-day came round, he had not one farthing to pay off a debt of several pounds to his landlord. Poor fellow, he seemed almost broken-hearted when he told me that morning, that he expected his wife and his little ones would be turned out into the road before night. I advised him to go and speak to Mr. J——, which he did. The Squire had his books laid out before him when poor C—— was admitted into his room. ‘ Well C——,’ he said, ‘ your rent is always punctual ; let me see, 3*l.*, is it not ? ’ The poor man burst into tears. ‘ God help me, Sir,’ he said, ‘ I must go to prison, for I cannot pay you.’ The Squire listened attentively to the sad tale of his last year’s troubles, and then took up his pen and dashed it through the entry in his book. ‘ I believe you to be an honest man, C——,’ he said, ‘ and you shall also be a free man ; I remit you the debt.’ ”

“ Oh, I am so glad, what a good Squire ! ”

“ Now you know all our sins are written down

in God's book, as the poor man's debt was written in Mr. J—'s accounts, but when we pray to Jesus to pardon them, He blots them out with His precious blood, so that nobody can read them any longer, they are all gone. Now read the Absolution."

(*Annie reads.*) "Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live; and hath given power and commandment, to His Ministers, to declare and pronounce to His people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins: He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe His Holy Gospel. Wherefore let us beseech Him to grant us true repentance, and His Holy Spirit, that those things may please Him which we do at this present; and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy; so that at the last we may come to His eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"What may God's ministers declare to His people, Annie?"

"That their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake."

"Yes. Ah, my child, is it this you do not care to hear, this joyful news that seems to you so tedious and uninteresting? If you had seen that poor man's face when he told me the debt was pardoned, and he was free, how his eyes

beamed with joy; he seemed as if he could still scarcely believe that it was true, for very gladness, and asked me, 'Do you think it is really true, Sir? Can it be possible that Mr. J— will really forgive it all?' I am afraid you have never thought about *your* debts, Annie, never trembled to remember the eternal prison, a lake burning with fire and brimstone, into which you must be cast, if they are not paid; or you would think those words sweeter than music, which tell you 'God pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly (or really) believe that Christ died for sinners.' "

"I never thought about this before, Sir."

"Then I am very glad we ever began to talk about the Church service, my child; for it is more important that you should know and think about this, than anything else. May God grant you, my dear little girl, true repentance and His Holy Spirit, that those things may please Him which you do at this present, and that the rest of your life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last you may come to his eternal joy, through Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER II.

ANNIE and her kind friend reached the end of their journey in safety ; and although the time had not seemed long, the little girl was not sorry to arrive, as she had never travelled so many miles before, and felt very tired. She soon became happy with her new companions, Mr. R's merry little children ; especially the three eldest, Mary, Henry, and Ellen, who were so gentle and kind to her, that Annie felt as if she had known them a long while.

She told Mary, the eldest, how kind Mr. R. had been in talking to her on the journey, and how many interesting things he had told her about the Church service ; and added how much she would like to hear more ; " for," she said, " there are many things yet which I do not understand in Church."

" Oh," said Mary, " I will ask papa if he will be so good as to explain it to us, a little every day, if he is not too busy."

" That would be nice," said Annie, " if you think he would have no objection."

Mr. R. smiled kindly when Mary made her request, and told them they might come into his study every morning for half an hour, and ask him as many questions as they chose about their Prayer-books.

The next day he heard many little footsteps at his door, very punctually at the time, and the four little ones grouped themselves around him, near the pleasant open window.

“Papa,” said Henry, “Annie has told us all that you said to her about the first part of the Church service, so will you please go on from the end of the absolution prayer? we know what that means now.”

Mr. R. I will, my boy; and as I think the Lord’s Prayer has been explained to you all many times, you may begin with reading the ninety-fifth Psalm, which always follows:—

(*Henry reads.*) “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.

“Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving: and show ourselves glad in him with Psalms.

“For the Lord is a great God: and a great King above all gods.

“In his hand are all the corners of the earth: and the strength of the hills is his also.

“The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands prepared the dry land.

"O come, let us worship, and fall down : and kneel before the Lord our Maker.

"For He is the Lord our God : and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

"To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts : as in the provocation, and as the day of temptation in the wilderness ;

"When your fathers tempted me : proved me, and saw my works.

"Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said : it is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known my ways.

"Unto whom I swear in my wrath : that they should not enter into my rest."

Mr. R. Why do you think we have this psalm so often in Church, Mary ?

M. I think, to remind us that it is happy work to praise God, papa.

Mr. R. Yes. It is beginning now what we hope to do for ever in heaven. And I fear if you find it dull in Church, that heaven would be duller still.

"Indeed, Sir," said little Annie, anxiously, "we do like to sing to God, and thank him for all that he gives us."

Mr. R. I am glad to hear it, Annie. Then I hope you enjoy the psalms in Church, for they are full of praise and thanksgiving. Notice those expressions, the "Strength of our salvation ;" a "Great God ;" a "Great King ;" "the Lord

our Maker ;” “ In his hand are all the corners (or *deep places*) of the earth ”—as it is in the Bible translation—the places of which we know but little ; and so are the lofty mountains. The sea, too, is His, and all that is therein.

“ How great God must be, papa,” said little Ellen.

Mr. R. He is, indeed, my child ; but he is as good as he is great, and watches over us with such love, that you see he calls those who serve him the sheep of his hand.

M. We have many other psalms in Church besides the ninety-fifth, papa.

Mr. R. Yes, dear, they vary with the day of the month, so that we cannot go through them now ; but I will tell you a nice rule about hearing them, which I was told by a good man, and which I hope you will all try to remember. It is to turn each little verse into a prayer as you read it. For instance, when you hear, “ The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil ; he shall preserve thy soul,” say in your heart, “ O Lord, preserve *me* from all evil ; preserve *my* soul.”

H. I shall like to do that, papa ; I think we shall all remember it next Sunday. And after the psalm a part comes which I like so much, a chapter out of the Old Testament.

A. Why do you like it, Henry?

H. Because I so often hear my favourite stories about Joseph, and David, and Samson, and Daniel.

A. What, do they come in Church? I don't think I ever heard them.

Mr. R. It is because you have not listened, Annie. But, my children, do not let it be the stories only to which you pay attention. If you were to hear suddenly the voice of God speaking to you from heaven, while we are all seated in this room, how eagerly you would listen to every word—how anxiously would you strive to understand all that he said, and to do what he told you. But when the Bible is read in Church, it is really the same thing. It is the voice of God speaking to all that are assembled in his house. Try and remember this, that you may listen carefully to every word, and recollect at least some one thing out of each chapter you hear.

M. We will, dear papa, and repeat it to you at dinner time, when we come home from Church.

Mr. R. I shall be very glad if you can do so, Mary; and now you may begin to read the Te Deum, as it is called.

(*Mary reads.*) "We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.

"All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting.

“To thee all angels cry aloud : the heavens and all the powers therein.

“To thee cherubin and seraphin : continually do cry,

“Holy, holy, holy : Lord God of Sabaoth ;

“Heaven and earth are full of the majesty : of thy glory.

“The glorious company of the apostles : praise thee.

“The goodly fellowship of the prophets : praise thee.

“The noble army of martyrs : praise thee.

“The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee ;

“The Father : of an infinite Majesty ;

“Thine honourable, true : and only Son ;

“Also the Holy Ghost : the Comforter.”

H. Papa, what does it mean by the powers of heaven, and by cherubin and seraphin ?

Mr. R. Bright and beautiful creatures, like the angels in heaven, my boy, who are serving and praising God all day long. If you want a fuller account of them, you may look afterwards at Isa. vi. 2. Oh, my children, how wonderful it is that a little child should be permitted to learn the songs of the heavens, and to say with those glorious and happy creatures, “We praise thee, O God!” and again, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God!”

A. I never thought of that, Sir, when I repeated those words.

Mr. R. Remember, then, Annie, that you are joining the angels in their beautiful hymns, if

you say the Te Deum from your heart. You like to do the same as grown-up people, do you not? Did I not hear my little Ellen say the other day, "I wish I was a woman, that I might do as mamma does." Will you not, then, love to do what the angels do? and will it not make you happy on a Sunday, to be allowed to join in their holy, heavenly hymns, while you are still little children?

M. Yes, dear papa; and it is not the angels only, but the apostles, the prophets, and the martyrs, who sing praise to God.

Mr. R. More even than that, my child; the holy Church universal, which means everybody through the world who loves and serves God. Will Annie read the next portion?

(Annie reads.) "Thou art the King of glory: O Christ.

"Thou art the everlasting Son: of the Father.

"When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man: thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.

"When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death: thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

"Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the glory of the Father.

"We believe that thou shalt come: to be our Judge.

"We therefore pray thee, help thy servants: whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood.

"Make them to be numbered with thy saints: in glory everlasting."

Mr. R. Think for an instant about those wonderful words, my children ; who was it that became a little baby, and for our sakes even passed through the sharpness of death ?

H. It was the “ King of Glory,” papa, Jesus Christ.

A. And he is called, too, the everlasting Son of the Father.

Mr. R. Quite right ; it was those words I wished you to observe. If the Queen of England were to become a little grovelling worm that you spurn with your foot, out of love to some of her rebellious subjects, it could give you but a very faint idea of all that our Saviour did in dying for us. Henry, can you find out from the end of the verse why he did so ?

M. Was it not that he might open the kingdom of heaven to all believers, papa ?

Mr. R. It was, dear. When Adam sinned, the gates of heaven were shut ; nobody could enter in, or open the door, until Jesus died and rose again ; then he threw them wide open, and said to all the world, “ Whosoever believeth on me shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life.”

M. I am glad, then, that the next verses are prayers, papa ; “ Help thy servants, make them

thy saints." To hear that the gates of heaven are open, makes me long to be one of those who shall enter in.

Mr. R. God grant that you may be, my child ; it is a glory everlasting, which shall never fade away.

(*Little Ellen reads.*) "O Lord save thy people : and bless thine heritage.

"Govern them : and lift them up for ever.

"Day by day : we magnify thee ;

"And we worship thy name : ever world without end.

"Vouchsafe, O Lord : to keep us this day without sin.

"O Lord, have mercy upon us : have mercy upon us.

"O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us : as our trust is in thee.

"O Lord, in thee have I trusted : let me never be confounded."

H. Papa, I don't know what *heritage* means ; will you explain it, please ?

Mr. R. It means portion or possession, my boy ; something which is your *very own*. Now if you look at Deut. xxxii. 9, you will find that "The Lord's portion is his people," and this is a sweet thought. How you prize and treasure something which belongs to you, which is all your own ; you do not care for it half so much if it belongs to others ; just so, the Lord loves his people ; they are his own, his heritage.

A. I never understood that before, but now I think I do quite : and will you tell us, Sir, what *vouchsafe* means ?

Mr. R. “ Be graciously pleased to keep us without sin ; grant this out of thy mercy.” Well, dear children, I hope you will in future enjoy this beautiful hymn more than you have ever done before ; we will not linger over it longer now, though I might talk to you about it for many days before we should exhaust all the rich lessons which it teaches. It is always, as you know, followed by a lesson out of the Gospels.

E. Oh, papa, I always watch for that chapter, I do like it so much. It is nearly always about Jesus Christ, and tells us how kind and good he was, healing the sick and the lame, and making the blind to see.

Mr. R. I am glad my little Ellen loves to hear about Jesus ; if so, do you not think the hundredth Psalm comes nicely after all that we have heard of his goodness ; we may well say :—

“ O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands : serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

“ Be ye sure that the Lord he is God : it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves : we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

“ O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and

into his courts with praise : be thankful unto him, and speak good of his name."

We ought to be glad to serve him, that is, to do as he tells us ; and to go to Church with thanksgiving, since he has been so good.

M. Yes, dear papa, and he is good to us still ; for the last verse says, "For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is *everlasting* : and his truth endureth from generation to generation."

Mr. R. True, my child ; may the goodness of God indeed draw your young hearts to himself, that of all my little ones it may be said, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast ordained praise." Now you may run away for this morning, and come again at the same time to-morrow.

CHAPTER III.

"WE are to have the 'I Believe' this morning, are we not, Mr. R.?" said little Annie, as she came jumping into his study the following morning, followed by Mary, Henry and Ellen.

"We are, dear child," said Mr. R. : "that is

if you can manage to be quiet and attentive," added he, as he looked at the merry faces and sparkling eyes of his little group.

"Oh, yes dear papa," said little Ellen, "indeed we will, for we like you to teach us so much. Do you know, Henry said he wished that to-morrow was Sunday, that he might begin at once to think about all these new things in Church."

"Sunday will come in time, my boy," said Mr. R., smiling, "and I should be glad, indeed, if my little ones are in future able to join more heartily in the beautiful prayers and praises which we hear at Church. But you must not forget, that though you understand every word, you will not of yourselves be able to attend and enjoy the service. You must ask for the Holy Spirit of God to keep away foolish thoughts, and help you, to worship God in spirit and in truth. Mary, do you begin."

M. Yes, papa, I can say the Creed off by heart ;

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

Mr. R. Stop, my child ; there is much to think about in these few words. Do you mean what you say when you repeat, "I believe in God the

Father?" If Annie tells me, "I believe in my father," I know she speaks truly, for I see by her actions that she is trying to please her dear father while he is far away, by being a good, obedient little girl, (*Annie's eyes glistened with pleasure at this kind commendation.*) Now, dear children, you cannot see God, your Father, but he knows all that you do, just as Mr. H. hears all about his child; and if you believe in him you will love to do what he bids you, that he may smile upon you and be pleased with his little ones. But if you never think about God, or even try to be good, you must not say, "I believe in God," for it cannot be true. Which of you meant what you said in repeating these words last Sunday?

The children did not answer at first, until Mary said, in a faltering voice, "Indeed, papa, I begin to fear that I seldom think about what I say in Church."

Mr R. It is well to have found that out, my child: now let it be your earnest prayer and endeavour that it shall not be so any more. You see it is not only sufficient to know the Creed off by heart. Let Henry take the next portion:—

"And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and

buried ; He descended into hell ; the third day He rose again from the dead ; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty ; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

Mr. R. Do you remember the story you read a little while ago, in the "Churchman's Penny Magazine," about the little boy who neglected to get the medicine for his poor dying father, and how he could scarcely bear afterwards to hear of his father's suffering and death without shedding bitter tears ? Now this may help you to find out whether you mean what you say in repeating the second part of the Creed. If you really believe that the Lord Jesus was scourged by Pontius Pilate, and crucified on the cross because of *your* sins, it will grieve you at your heart when you hear of it, and make you fear to do wrong again.

M. Papa, I do wish to love Jesus Christ, I do wish to do as he bids me ; but it is so difficult, sometimes I think it is of no use to try, for indeed I cannot.

Mr. R. I know well, my dear child, that you cannot *possibly* of yourself serve God ; even the Apostle Paul said, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." But let Annie read the following sentence, and you will see how you can do right.

“I believe in the Holy Ghost.”

Mr. R. Here is a sweet thought, my children. You not only believe that Jesus died for your sins, but you believe in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who helps us not to sin, and teaches us to do right.

Ellen. Papa, how can the Holy Spirit teach us and help us?

Mr. R. If you were to tell little baby to run across the room, Ellen, could she do it?

E. Oh no, papa, you know she is such a very little girl; but if mamma were to take hold of her hand, and hold her up, I think she could.

Mr. R. Just so, Ellen, if you ask God the Holy Spirit, He will take hold of your hand and keep you from falling into sin, when you are just going to do wrong. He will remind you how such naughtiness would grieve your dear Saviour, and help you not to listen to Satan's temptations.

Henry. How good God the Spirit must be, papa, to help little children. I shall like to repeat that part of the Creed now. It is Elly's turn to read next.

(*Ellen reads.*) “And in the holy Catholic Church.”

What does that mean, papa?

Mr. R. Not the building on the hill, where we

go on Sunday, Ellen, that is God's house ; but this Church means God's household, God's servants and children ; and as it is called Catholic, or universal, it means his people all over the world. Read the 6th verse of Heb. iii., Henry.

(*Henry reads.*) " Christ, as a Son, over his own house ; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

A. Will you explain this a little more, Sir ?

Mr. R. Why, you know, for instance, Annie, that the people in the Queen's palace are called her household, her servants, because they serve her ; and thus, all who serve God are called his household, his Church. As that text says, " We, if obedient to the end, are His house."

A. Oh, thank you, Sir, I understand it now, and God's household are not collected together, like the Queen's, but scattered all over the world ; some black men, and some white.

Mr. R. Yes, Annie, for the Bible says, "*Who-soever*" believes in Jesus shall be saved. Oh, it is a happy household, my children ; try to get into God's family ; there is none other like that. Mary, will you go on ?

(*Mary reads.*) " The communion of saints."

E. What is " Communion," papa ?

Mr. R. It is a word easily explained, my little Ellen. Who are the saints, or the holy ones? I taught you that only last Sunday.

E. God's children, papa.

Mr. R. Quite right, I am glad you remembered; and do you not love to be with your brothers and sisters, Ellen, to play with them and talk with them?

E. Yes, dear papa, that I do. And the child threw her arms round Mary's neck and kissed her sister fondly as she spoke.

Mr. R. The communion of saints, then, means that God's children love to be together; they feel like brothers and sisters, for they have all one Father, even God.

H. Thank you, dear papa; we can all understand that; and I think, my sentence too, it is "The forgiveness of sins."

Mr. R. You can tell me now, Annie, how it is that our sins are remitted, or pardoned?

A. By the blood of Jesus, God's dear Son, who paid our debt on the cross.—My sentence is, "The resurrection of the body."

Mr. R. Tell me, in your own words, Henry, what it means?

H. It means rising again, papa; rising from the grave. I remember that I could not under-

stand how this was, until you showed us, last spring, a little chrysalis, which seemed quite withered and dead, and told us that it would soon become a pretty painted butterfly, with bright and shining wings. We thought you must be joking, papa, it seemed so strange ; but it was all true, for in a very few days, when we looked in the box, the dark grub was gone, and a lovely spotted butterfly had come instead. And you told us that just so in the resurrection-day we should see the little baby rise again, beautiful like an angel, who was put last year in the dark grave.

M. I remember that, Henry ; and papa told us, too, that the baby would rise to everlasting life, as it is put in the Creed,—not to die, like the butterfly, when summer is over.

Mr. R. Yes, my child, we must all rise again, either for everlasting sorrow, or everlasting joy. If you believe this, Annie, what will it make you try and do ?

A. Walk in the way to heaven, I think, Sir.

Mr. R. Yes, surely. May God give you all grace to do so !

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER the Creed we find two short sentences, can little Ellen read them?

(*Ellen reads.*) "The Lord be with you"

Mr. R. Yes, it is a beautiful little prayer by the minister for the congregation. And what do they answer Mary?

(*M. reads.*) "And with thy spirit."

I have noticed that before, papa, I like to pray for Mr. B.; it goes on—

"Lord have mercy upon us;"

and then comes the Lord's Prayer.

Mr. R. Observe, that we ask for God's mercy or help, three times before engaging in prayer. This teaches us how much we need God's help in prayer; we cannot pray of ourselves. Try and repeat this little petition with all your hearts my children, and God will help you to pray the following prayers. You see the first are in short sentences, repeated in turns by minister and people, to arouse the attention of the careless:—

"O Lord, show thy mercy upon us," &c.

And the collect for the day is the next prayer used ; this varies every Sunday.

H. Oh we always know those, papa: you know we learn them to say to mamma.

Mr. R. Ah, my boy, you can *say* them, but can you *pray* them? There is a great difference between *saying* and *praying*. I heard of an old soldier the other day, who when a boy at school learned to repeat all the collects for his teacher year after year, so perfectly, that at last he scarcely needed to prepare his lesson. He could *say* the collects wonderfully well, but it did him no good. He grew up a wicked man, enlisted in the army, and served in Spain for many years, until in one severe battle, his leg was taken off by a cannon-ball, and he was left sorely wounded in the open field. Then he knew death was very near him, and his heart sunk with fear, for he felt that he was going to hell. He knew not how to pray, and the agony of his mind and body became almost unbearable, when one of the little collects he had learned at school came into his head, and he *prayed* it from the bottom of his soul. He felt a little comfort, and prayed again and again in the words of many different collects ; and God heard him. His poor body was saved, for God sent kind people to take care of him ; and

what was far better, his soul was saved too. He became a converted man, and spent the rest of his life trying to do good.

A. Oh, Sir, I think I shall never forget the difference between saying and praying again.

Mr. R. God grant it, my child, and enable you not only to remember, but to act upon it. We will pass on then to the second collect.

H. It is my turn, papa. I see it is called a "collect for peace."

"O God, who art the author of peace and the lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Mr. R. Mary, can you find out why God is called here "the author of peace?"

M. I suppose, papa, for the same reason that it says in the Bible that "the wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest," because only those who love and serve God, have quiet, happy minds.

Mr. R. Quite right, my child: that is a very good answer; and Jesus himself, you know, especially promises peace to his disciples in your

favourite chapter, the 14th of John. But what does the rest of this collect mean,—“defend us from our enemies?” Why, my little, happy children, is it possible that you have any enemies,—that any one wants to harm you?

E. Is it not the devil you mean, papa; does he not try to hurt us, and destroy us?

Mr. R. Yes, you are right, Elly. I think you all *know* what cruel, powerful, watchful enemies you have, but, my children, do you ever think about this? Are you really afraid of your enemies, so that it makes you cry out in Church with all your heart, “Defend me, O Lord?” When that great dog seized you the other day, Elly, you cried out at once, “Do help me, papa:” do you ever think of the fierce and roaring lion who is going about seeking to devour your souls? He is none the less terrible, because you cannot see him. And how can little, feeble children help themselves against him? It must only be by trusting in God’s defence, and entreating him to keep you from all sin. Then, if he takes care of you, you need not fear the power of any adversaries, for the might of Jesus is greater than the might of Satan.

H. It makes me afraid to think of him, papa. I think I shall pray this collect, not only on Sunday, but every day.

Mr. R. You cannot do better, dear boy. Will Annie read the next.

(*Annie reads.*) "O Lord, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day, defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

M. Here is another prayer about defending, papa; I am glad of that.

Mr. R. Yes, and observe, my children, what comforting words there are about God in this prayer. First, He is our Father, He loves us, He will not turn away when we call; then He is Almighty, able to do all things for us, and everlasting, He never changes. What does bringing safely to the beginning of the day mean, Annie?

A. That God takes care of us while we sleep, Sir.

Mr. R. Yes, dear. It is a nice thing to pray at the beginning of Sunday, that we may be kept from all sin and dangers. Tell me some of these Sunday dangers?

M. Not worshipping God with our hearts, papa, but mocking him with our lips.

A. Thinking about our play.

H. Wasting Sunday time.

E. Sleeping in church.

Mr. R. Yes, it is against all these dangers you pray, and if all your doings are ordered by God's governance, that is, if He guides you, and keeps you, you will be enabled in all things, to do what is right in his sight. When the Litany is not used, we next pray for the Queen. Little Ellen may read.

(*Ellen reads.*) "O Lord, our heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only ruler of princes, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth ; most heartily we beseech thee with thy favour to behold our Most Gracious Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria, and so replenish her with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that she may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy way : endue her plenteously with heavenly gifts ; grant her in health and wealth long to live ; strengthen her that she may vanquish and overcome all her enemies ; and finally, after this life, she may attain everlasting joy and felicity ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Mr. R. Notice this prayer, my children. You told me the other day that you wished you could do something for the Queen, and you were quite right, for she is our beloved, gracious Sovereign, and we cannot be thankful enough that God has

given us such a Queen. Now there is something you can do for her every time you go to Church : you can earnestly beg of God to give her all the good things mentioned in this prayer, and certainly He will hear you, if you ask for Jesus' sake. And remember, though Queen Victoria is ruler over one-fifth of the inhabitants of the globe, God is the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Ruler over princes. Henry, repeat some of the blessings which we here pray that the Queen may receive.

H. First, the Holy Spirit, papa, and that God should look upon her in favour ; then, that she may be plenteously endued with heavenly gifts, that she may have health and prosperity, conquer all her enemies, and at last go to heaven. Why, there is everything she could want, papa.

Mr. R. Yes, my boy, and not more than we should all desire for her from the very bottom of our hearts. The next prayer is for the Royal Family.

(*M. reads.*) "Almighty God, the fountain of all goodness, we humbly beseech thee to bless the Prince Albert, Albert Prince of Wales, and all the Royal family ; endue them with thy Holy Spirit ; enrich them with thy heavenly grace ; prosper them with all happiness ; and bring them to thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

E. I like that prayer, papa, because I love to pray for the little Prince of Wales, ever since we saw him that day in the Park.

Mr. R. We have need to pray for him, Ellen, and for all the Royal Family. I fear the people of France did not constantly pray for their King and his Family; and the consequence was, he was cast from the throne, and his children, and even his little grandchildren, were driven with him from their happy home and obliged to seek refuge among strangers. Let us pray earnestly for our Royal Family, that God would enrich them with heavenly grace, and prosper them with all happiness, and we shall help more than an army of soldiers to keep them from evil. Henry, do you go on? It must be the last prayer we consider to-day.

(*H. reads.*) "Almighty and everlasting God, who alone workest great marvels, send down upon our Bishops, and Curates, and all Congregations committed to their charge, the healthful Spirit of thy grace; and that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing. Grant this, O Lord, for the sake of our Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. Amen."

Mr. R. What does this collect say God can do, Mary?

M. Great marvels.

Mr. R. Yes; wonderful things; and I dare say you can find me a text in which we are told to ask great things of God.

M. Did you mean this one, papa,—

“Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it?”

Mr. R. Yes, that will do; and there are many others to the same effect. I can remember hearing a good man once say, “If you wish to enjoy the sermon, you must help the minister by praying for him.” Now you see it will be your own fault if this is not the case, as there is an especial prayer for ministers used every Sunday. Can Annie repeat the last petition of this collect once more,—it is a delightful thought?

A. “And that they may truly please thee, pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing.”

Mr. R. You remember how you were grieved for your favourite plants and flowers that very hot day last week, my children. The leaves hung down without life and vigour, the lovely flowers drooped almost to the ground, and it seemed as if they must rapidly wither and fade. Just so is it with God's people without his blessing; their life and beauty is gone, they are ready to perish and die. But in the silence of the night the soft and refreshing dew of heaven fell upon your parched

and thirsty flowers, and how you were delighted with the change next morning; each tiny leaf was sparkling with its crystal drop in the early sunshine, and the flowers were blooming once more in all their beauty. So we ask that the blessing of God may continually descend upon his people, as the dew of Hermon, the dew upon the mountains of Zion, where the Lord commanded his blessing, even life for evermore.

CHAPTER V.

“PAPA,” said Henry, as the little ones assembled the following morning in Mr. R’s room, “nurse says we pray for the *Parliament* in Church. What is a Parliament, papa?”

Mr. R. All the noblemen of our country and a certain number of gentlemen chosen by the people, who help the Queen to govern, my boy; but I will try and make it plain to you. Can you tell your brother and sisters, Mary, about the new game which I taught Mr. Middleton’s school-boys the other day?

M. Oh yes, papa, it amused them all so much.

They were quarrelling, because they could not decide at which game they should play : and papa advised them to stand in five rows, with twelve boys in each, and said each row must choose one boy, the wisest they could find, to decide for them what game it should be. It made them laugh so much. Then these five boys went and stood together under a tree, and they soon determined to have cricket, because they could all play at it.

Mr. R. Well, my children, that was a little picture of a Parliament ; if all the boys could not come to a decision what to do, much less could all the people of England ; therefore every county chooses one or more gentlemen, and many of the large towns do the same, to say what they would advise the Queen to do in governing the nation. All these gentlemen meet together in a large building, in London, called the House of Parliament, and decide what will be best for all the people in the kingdom, just as those five boys decided for the sixty.

A. I have seen the Houses of Parliament, Sir, but I never knew what it meant before. What things do they decide about ?

Mr. R. Why, for instance, Annie, the Parliament had something to do with deciding that the

beautiful prayers of our Prayer-book should be used in all the churches of England, instead of prayers to the Virgin Mary, and other men and women, which there used to be at one time. The Parliament helps the Queen to decide whether or not there must be a war with other countries, upon which the lives of thousands of poor soldiers depend, as we are commanded in the Bible, Prov. xxiv. 6: "By wise counsel thou shalt make thy war." Have we not need to pray that God would help them in these important things to decide aright?

M. Yes, papa; because we are sure they cannot do right unless God helps them. Now I shall like to see what we pray for about the Parliament.

(*M. reads.*) "Most gracious God, we humbly beseech thee, as for this kingdom in general, so especially for the High Court of Parliament, under our most religious and gracious Queen at this time assembled: that thou wouldest be pleased to direct and prosper all their consultations to the advancement of thy glory, the good of thy Church, the safety, honour and welfare of our Sovereign and her dominions;"—

Mr. R. Can you remember any instance in the Bible, Henry, in which you think a nation advanced God's glory?

H. I think Solomon and the people of Israel

did, when they built such a beautiful temple to be God's house.

Mr. R. Quite right, my boy. And if the Parliament seeks to serve and please God, it will be the best way to make all the people in England happy. See what you can find about this in 2 Chron. xxvi. 5, Mary.

M. "As long as Zechariah sought the Lord, God made him to prosper."

(*H. reads.*) "That all things may be so ordered and settled by their endeavours, upon the best and surest foundations, that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations. These and all other necessities, for them, for us, and thy whole Church, we humbly beg in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ our most blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen."

Mr. R. This shows us still more what the Parliament has to do. They have to make laws, that all bad men who are unjust, and disturb the public peace and make others miserable, should be punished ; we ask God in this prayer to help them to do so ; and well we may, for we should be in sad trouble if it were otherwise.

E. Papa, what does it mean when it says, "in the mediation of Jesus ?"

Mr. R. I think Annie can tell you that, Ellen ; try and explain it to her, Annie.

A. Why, Elly, I think it means, that even when we try most to pray to God, idle thoughts come into our heads, and we do not ask as we ought to do. This makes God angry, because he cannot bear to look at what is sinful. But when we ask for Christ's sake, He stands between God and us, and offers up our prayers; then God will hear and answer them, because he looks at Jesus instead of us, and sees no sin in him.

Mr. R. That is quite right, Annie. Oh, my children, how much you ought to love this dear Saviour, who is so full of love to you. Pray God to make your hearts full of love to Jesus, that you may try to please him in all you do. For whom is the next prayer?

H. I think it is a prayer for every body, papa.

Mr. R. It is, my boy, as we shall find on reading it. Mary, are we told in the Bible to pray for every body?

M. Yes, papa, in 1 Tim. ii. 1 : " I exhort that prayers be made for all men."

(*A. reads.*) " O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that thou wouldest be pleased to make thy ways known unto them, thy saving health unto all nations."

Mr. R. Stop a moment there, Annie, and tell me for what we here ask God.

A. That he would save every body from going to hell.

Mr. R. Yes; I am afraid you have seldom joined in this prayer, my children, though you have heard it so often. It is asking God for a great thing, and if you really felt how many all around you are going on the broad road to destruction, you would not ask so carelessly as you do. You will all remember going over the prison with me the other day?

“Oh yes, papa,” said Henry; “and little Ellen cried when she heard that one poor man was going to be punished on the treadmill, and begged so hard that he might be forgiven.”

Mr. R. If you were sorry for the poor creatures condemned to a short earthly punishment, Henry, how should you long for the pardon and safety of those who are in danger of hell-fire, and how earnestly will you pray God, with all the congregation in Church, that he would be “pleased to make *his ways*,” the only way to heaven, “known to them.”

M. Indeed, papa, I never thought of this before; I shall love to join in this prayer now, for I know that God can save their souls, and will hear us, if we ask him.

(*E. reads.*) “More especially, we pray for the good

estate of the Catholic Church ; that it may be so guided and governed by thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life."

Mr. R. We have prayed for those who know not God,—for the wicked,—tell me who we pray for here, Ellen, and what we ask God to do for them ?

E. I think we pray for Christians, papa,—good people, and that God would give them his Spirit, and help them to do right.

Mr. R. That is not quite right, my little girl, tell her what it is we pray for Mary.

M. We pray that everybody who calls himself a Christian may really love and serve God.

Mr. R. Yes, that is what is meant. The first part of the prayer refers, perhaps, more especially to those who have never heard the Bible—poor heathen nations ; the second includes all those who have been baptized, but have not got new hearts, as well as God's own dear children.

(*M. reads.*) "Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those who are in any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate ; that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities ; giving them patience under their sufferings,

and a happy issue out of all their afflictions ; and this we beg for Jesus Christ his sake. Amen."

Mr. R. Dear mamma has always arranged for you, I think, that your chief rewards and pleasures should be to do good to others, my children ; to comfort the sorrowful, or help the poor ; nothing else makes you so happy as this, does it ? Well, see, here is this great pleasure provided for you every Sunday if you will care to enjoy it. You can help *everybody* in trouble, by joining heartily in this beautiful prayer. There is no way of relieving them so sure as that of asking God to do so, because he only is able to take away all sorrows.

E. But, dear papa, I never heard of anybody being helped by this prayer.

Mr. R. Wait until you have *prayed* it yourself, my little Ellen, before you decide that it has done no good ; I do not expect you would hear of a prayer in which you have never joined. Papa, who has so often delighted to use it, could tell you of many a poor creature whose heavy heart has been cheered and comforted by hearing the congregation unite in prayer for all those who are in trouble. And I doubt not, at the last day, we shall hear many wonderful stories of the comfort and help God has sent to the afflicted in

answer to these petitions. We must ask in faith, my child, nothing doubting that God hears and will answer us when he sees best.

CHAPTER VI.

H. A THANKSGIVING prayer comes next:—

“Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and lovingkindness to us, and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life: but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.”

Mr. R. Stop there, Henry, let us look a little at this wonderful list of the tokens of God's love. If an angel in heaven was to number all his mercies, he could not reckon up half such unspeakable mercies as we are permitted to do.

H. I know what you mean, papa, because the Lord Jesus never died for the angels in heaven. But there cannot be half our mercies here, papa; why, when you set me the other day to write

down all that I could think of on my slate for an exercise, I filled both sides, and still there were a great many more.

Mr. R. That is quite true, my boy. We find in the Bible that "they are new every morning," but we shall find many more included here than you would at first imagine. Mary, mention some of the chief mercies for which we praise God when we thank him for our creation.

M. That God made us with souls, papa, and not like the animals who cannot think and can never go to heaven, or even like a poor idiot, who does not know what he says. That God made us with ears to hear, and eyes to see, and feet to walk, and hands to work, and a mouth to speak ; that he made us well and strong, too. Oh, I did not think there were so many mercies in our creation.

Mr. R. And you have not numbered the half, my child ; but let Henry mention some that are included in preservation.

H. That God preserves us from accidents, papa, and from robbers and murderers ; that he preserves us from fevers and sickness, and takes care of every body we love ; that he preserves us from all the troubles which poor little beggar-children have, or the little negroes, who are slaves.

Mr. R. And from what does he preserve our souls, Henry ?

H. Ah, I had forgotten that, papa ; from hell fire, I hope, and from Satan, and from all evil.

Mr. R. See what a list are included in these two words only. Annie, will you take the next sentence—

“ All the blessings of this life.”

A. Dear papa and mamma, I think, Sir, and little brothers and sisters, and food and clothes ; and a nice house to live in, and kind friends and teachers ; and the servants.

Mr. R. Now shut up your books, and tell me what is more than all these mercies put together.

H. THE GIFT OF GOD'S ONLY SON TO DIE FOR US, PAPA.

Mr. R. Yes, we may well add, “ *above all*, for thine *inestimable* love ; ” but I do not think Ellen quite understands. Ellen, which would you rather have, that beautiful bunch of flowers on the table, or mamma's gold watch ?

E. Mamma's watch, to be sure, dear papa ; because the flowers would be dead to-morrow, but the watch will not fade.

Mr. R. And would all these things we have mentioned do us any good when we came to die, Elly, if Jesus had not borne the punishment for us ?

E. No, papa, because then we must have gone to hell for ever and ever.

Mr. R. True, dear. God grant you all, my children, so to remember what your dear Saviour suffered to save you, that you may love him with your whole hearts, and never be weary of thanking him and trying to please him. One thing strikes me about "the hope of glory:" What was it pleased you all so much the other day?

E. Oh, you must remember, dear papa, when mamma told us we were all going to the sea-side, and perhaps Annie too.

Mr. R. If this hope gave you all so much pleasure, my children, think how bright and precious the hope must be of going to heaven itself, where Jesus, the Lamb of God, shall himself lead us to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; where there shall be no more sin and no more sorrow, but we shall live for ever with our Saviour and the holy angels in that glorious city, whose streets are paved with gold, and whose gates are gates of pearl. How earnestly and heartily should you thank God for this precious hope which he has given to poor sinners through the death of his Son.

M. And for the “means of grace,” too, papa, which so often remind us of heaven ; I do not think we should ever get there if it was not for the Bible, and Sunday, and going to Church.

Mr. R. Then try to thank God, my children, not only with your lips,—people who have no real thankfulness may do that,—but in your lives, by loving and serving him with your whole hearts while you are young ; he will enable you to do so by his Spirit if you constantly seek for his help in prayer.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. R. THE part of the Morning Service which we have to consider to-day, my children, called the Litany, was not at first intended to be used with the other prayers which we have been reading, but at a separate time, between the morning and evening services. This accounts for the repetition of some parts which we shall find.

M. I have often wondered, papa, why exactly the same prayers seemed to come over again, but

this explains the reason. It is divided into many short prayers, repeated in turns by the minister and people.

Mr. R. Yes, dear, and if you are careful to repeat the responses, you will find it a great help to be attentive. Begin, then, to read, Mary.

(*M. reads.*) “O God, the Father of heaven : have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

“O God, the Son, Redeemer of the world : have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

“O God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son : have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

“O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God : have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.

“Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers ; neither take thou vengeance of our sins : spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever. Spare us, good Lord.”

Mr. R. These opening sentences are very solemn, my children, and should remind us, when we hear them, that Church is an awful and solemn place, as well as a happy place. God is there, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and he sees all our hearts, and knows how full of sin we are. Find out from the 28th chapter of

Genesis what Jacob said about the place which he called Bethel, or the house of God.

M. "How dreadful is this place ! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Mr. R. The house of God must mean the place where God is continually ; and I do not wonder that Jacob felt it a dreadful thing to be in the presence of Almighty God. If you were to remember this, my children, I should not so often see you idle and listless in Church. But remember also, that while Jacob said it was a dreadful place, he called it "the gate of heaven ;" a place that was almost heaven itself, it was so happy and blessed. If you love God, your Father, it will make you happy and joyful to be with him in his house, though you will very much fear to do anything which would make him angry. See what the holy prophet Isaiah said, when he saw the Lord in his temple, Isa. vi.

M. He said he was "unclean, a man of unclean lips."

Mr. R. Yes ; when he saw the great and holy God, it made him feel how sinful and defiled his own heart was. And if you really feel that God is there, that He can see even every naughty thought in your heart, and that He knows all

that you have ever done wrong, what do you think it should make you say, Annie?

A. "Have mercy upon us, miserable sinners; spare us, good Lord; be not angry with us for ever."

Mr. R. And the great God is not only able to pardon our sins for his dear Son's sake, but to help us by His Holy Spirit not to do what is wrong again; therefore, we next pray to be delivered from many sins, and things which would hurt our souls.

(*H. reads.*) "From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation; from all blindness of heart; from pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness; from fornication, and all other deadly sin; from all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, Good Lord, deliver us."

E. I do not understand all this, papa.

Mr. R. Why my child, you can understand that there are many things which would hurt your little body, if they were to come near you. You would not like to touch the fire or a sharp tool, because it would hurt you, and do you harm. Now there are many things also which will hurt your soul, if they come near you. They will

make you sin against God, and make God angry, and perhaps they will sink you down to hell-fire. You can see the things which hurt your body, and take care to keep away from them, but you cannot see the things which hurt your soul. Sometimes they are very near when you do not know anything about it, and only God can save you from them. It is from these things we here ask God to deliver us,—from sin and all evil, from Satan, the wicked Spirit, and every sin which he tempts us to commit; from the anger of God, and from hell-fire. Must you not cry out with all your heart, Ellen, “Good Lord, deliver us?”

E. Yes, dear papa, I see what it means now, and I am glad we say this little prayer so often.

H. Papa, I remember reading a story in which a man looked through a glass, and did really see all these things in the air; the air was quite full of wicked spirits: one was called Pride, and another Envy, and another Hatred, and they were all so busy, whispering to some boys in a playground, and trying to make them do wrong. How terrible it must have been!

Mr. R. Not less terrible than true, dear boy. I believe that now, in this very room, there are evil spirits, which we cannot see, about my children's hearts, trying to make them sin against God.

Remember this in Church, it will help you to pray, "Good Lord, deliver us."

A. And then we pray to be delivered from things which would hurt our bodies.

(E. reads.) "From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death."

Mr. R. These do not need explanation; you may read the next, Ellen.

(E. reads.) "From all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion; from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism; from hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word and Commandment, Good Lord, deliver us."

These are very hard words, papa.

Mr. R. Do you not recollect hearing last winter about Guy Fawkes, Ellen,—the bad man, with his hat drawn over his face, and a dark lantern in his hand—what did he wish to do?

H. To set light to some gunpowder, papa, which he and his friends had put under the houses of Parliament, that they might blow up the King and Queen, and all the great men in the kingdom; but God found out their wickedness, and, instead of making others suffer, they suffered themselves.

Mr. R. This cruel plan of the wicked Papists was a sedition, privy conspiracy, or secret re-

bellion, my little Ellen ; and it is from all such cruel plans of wicked men that we ask God to deliver us in this prayer. It is a bad thing when one person does what is wrong, but it is worse still when many people join together in some wicked plan, which is what these words mean. False doctrine, heresy, and schism, mean not exactly planning together to *do* what is wrong, but to *teach* what is wrong ; when grown-up men teach others to do what God has forbidden. This is very grievous, and makes God very angry. Read the next, Mary, and let me see if you can explain the difficult words as you go on.

(*M. reads.*) “By the mystery of thy holy Incarnation ;”

That means, by the love of Jesus in coming down from heaven to be a man and to die for us.

(*M. reads.*) “By thy holy Nativity and Circumcision, by thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation, by thine Agony and bloody Sweat ; by thy Cross and Passion ;”

I think you once told me that passion does not mean anger here, dear papa, but sharp sufferings.

(*M. reads.*) “By thy precious Death and Burial ; by thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension ; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord, deliver us.”

A. I do not understand, Mr. R., what this means, “*by* thy Baptism, *by* thy Fasting,” &c.

Mr. R. “By” here means “because of;” and it is the same as if we were to say, “*because* of thine agony, because of thy sufferings, Good Lord, deliver us.”

M. I remember you told me a long while ago, papa, that each thing mentioned was something which showed God’s great love to us, and, therefore, it was a reason why he should deliver us from all these evils.

Mr. R. Yes, Mary: just as I heard one of my little ones pleading with mamma for something the other day,—“I think you will, mamma, because you did do it for me before.” Only there is this great difference between coming to God for what we want, and coming to man. When other people have been very kind to us they do not like us to ask them for anything more; but the more God gives us, the more he wishes us to ask him to give us. The greatest thing he has ever done for us makes us most sure that he will help us again. Can any of you remember a text about this in the eighth chapter of Romans?

M. Is it not this you mean, papa:—“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for

us all, how shall he not, with him also, freely give us all things?"

Mr. R. Yes; there is also another reason, Annie, why these things are mentioned here. What made you feel so much for that poor little boy, whom we saw in great pain last week?

A. Because I had just had the toothache myself, Sir, and I knew how bad it was.

Mr. R. True, we can always feel most for others when we have had the same pain ourselves. And when we ask the Lord Jesus to deliver us from sorrow and temptation, we remind him of all that he suffered, that he might be able to pity and save us. Read the 18th verse of Heb. ii., Henry.

"For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

(*A. reads.*) "In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our wealth; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, Good Lord, deliver us."

A. Why do we ask to be delivered in the time of wealth, Mr. R.? I thought that meant prosperous, happy times, when we have nothing to hurt us.

Mr. R. So it does, Annie; but have you forgotten the evil spirits which Henry was talking about? Often when we are most happy we are

most in danger of sinning against God, because it puts us off our guard; and, therefore, we have especial need to pray, "In the time of wealth, Good Lord deliver us."

CHAPTER VIII.

(*H. reads.*) "We sinners do beseech thee to hear us, O Lord God; and that it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy Church universal in the right way; that it may please thee to keep and strengthen in the true worshipping of thee, in righteousness and holiness of life, thy servant, Victoria, our most gracious Queen and Governor; that it may please thee to rule her heart in thy faith, fear, and love, and that she may evermore have affiance in thee, and ever seek thy honour and glory; that it may please thee to be her defender and keeper, giving her the victory over all her enemies.

"That it may please thee to bless and preserve the Prince Albert, Albert Prince of Wales, and all the Royal Family; that it may please thee to illuminate all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of thy Word; and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth, and show it accordingly; that it may please thee to endue the Lords

of the Council, and all the Nobility, with grace, wisdom, and understanding ; that it may please thee to bless and keep the Magistrates, giving them grace to execute justice, and to maintain truth ; that it may please thee to bless and keep all thy people ; that it may please thee to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord."

Mr. R. Will you try and tell me in your own words, Annie, for what we here pray ?

A. We pray for other people, Sir ; for God's people, that they may be kept in the right way, I suppose that means in the way of his commandments : for the Queen, we ask for blessings for her soul and for her body ; for the Royal Family ; for all clergymen ; for all great and rich people ; for the magistrates ; for God's people generally, and then for all nations.

Mr. R. What a large prayer, my children ; so large, that you must each have a large heart before you can join in it.

E. What do you mean by a large heart, papa ?

Mr. R. I mean a heart so full of love that it takes in everybody, Ellen. You are little children, but that is no reason why you should have little hearts. A little heart loves itself so much, that it has only just room for papa and mamma and brothers and sisters,—it does not care about anybody else. A little heart will find this prayer

very dull, but there is nothing a large heart loves better than to help *everybody* by praying to God for them.

M. I hope I have not got a little heart, papa, but I am afraid I often find these prayers very dull, and do not care to join in them.

Mr. R. Remember, then, to ask God in your prayers, Mary, to make your heart so full of love that you shall be able to join in all the prayers for others, which you hear in Church.

H. What does it mean, papa, when we ask that bishops and deacons may set forth God's Word both by their preaching and *living*? How can they set it forth in their living?

Mr. R. I am glad you asked me that question, because though only clergymen can set forth God's Word by their preaching, everybody, even little children, may and ought to set it forth in their lives. One way of teaching others to do what is right is by preaching to them out of the Bible; and another way is, by doing ourselves what the Bible tells us, so as to set them a good example. I knew a little girl some years ago, named Mary Leslie, who was then one of the younger children at a boarding-school near our house. She truly set forth God's Word in her life. Nobody could be with her without seeing

that she was indeed one of Christ's lambs. Her humble, holy, gentle behaviour was a continual help to her school-fellows to do what was right. Almost from her infancy she had learned to love and serve Jesus, and her chief wish always seemed to be to obey and please him. Though she little knew it herself, her conduct was like a continual sermon to those around her, saying, "The way to be happy and to be a comfort to everybody is to love and serve God." I know of at least one of her companions, whom she thus taught to love Christ, not by her words, but by her actions. May God enable you, my children, so to follow her as she followed Christ, that you too may set forth his Word in your lives.

(*M. reads.*) "That it may please thee to give us an heart to love and dread thee, and diligently to live after thy commandments; that it may please thee to give to all thy people increase of grace to hear meekly thy Word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit; that it may please thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred, and are deceived; that it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand; and to comfort and help the weak-hearted; and to raise up them that fall; and finally to beat down Satan under our feet."

Mr. R. Can you find out from the first sen-

tence, Henry, what we must have before we can diligently live after God's commandments?

H. We ask first, "for a heart to love and dread God," papa.

Mr. R. Yes; this is like the root of which the other is the flower. When you kept your hyacinth bulb in a glass last spring, Ellen, what was the first thing you noticed?

E. That it put out little white roots, papa. You told me there must be little roots before the flowers could come, because the flowers spring from the roots.

Mr. R. Just so, my child, obedience and gentleness, and holiness, spring from love to God. If you love the Lord Jesus, who died for you, it will make you fear and hate to sin against him; you will be always striving to keep his commandments. Can you find out, Annie, what the word "dread" here means.

A. I suppose, Sir, it means the fear of God which Mrs. R. was explaining to us yesterday; not the fear which we have of anybody who hates us and tries to do us harm, but the fear which we have of grieving dear papa, or dear mamma, just because we love them so much.

Mr. R. Quite right. You have remembered very well.

H. What does it mean, papa, "to receive the word with affection?"

Mr. R. To listen to it as if you loved it, Henry. Which of you do not love stories? I have watched your little eager faces when mamma is repeating a story, and I think you never move your eyes from her. So we pray that we may receive or listen to the Bible as if we loved it, and then we shall bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. We shall not go away and forget all that we have heard, but it will make us loving, and joyful, and peaceful, and patient, and thus bring forth all the other beautiful fruits of the Spirit. Can you find out from the sixth chapter of Ephesians, Mary, what kind of standing is here intended?

M. I think,—to stand against the wiles of the devil,—against Satan's temptations, papa.

Mr. R. And what by those that fall?

M. Those that fall into sin. As in the "Pilgrim's Progress," when Christian fell down, it means that he did something wrong.

E. I cannot understand this, dear papa?

Mr. R. You can understand, Ellen, that when you fall down it hurts your body. How often you bruise your little hands and knees with a tumble! And so, when you do wrong it hurts

your soul : it does your soul harm when you sin against God, therefore it is called *falling*.

E. Thank you, dear papa. I see now what it means.

Mr. R. Satan is continually trying now to make you fall into sin, my children, but, thank God, he shall not always be able to do this ; when the Lord Jesus comes he will beat down Satan under our feet, so that he shall not harm us any more, as we are told in Rev. xx. 10, " And the devil that deceived was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

(*H. reads.*) " That it may please thee to succour, help, and comfort, all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation ; that it may please thee to preserve all that travel by land or by water, all women labouring of child, all sick persons, and young children ; and to show thy pity upon all prisoners and captives ; that it may please thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless children, and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed ; that it may please thee to have mercy upon all men ; that it may please thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts ; that it may please thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so as in due time we may enjoy them ; that it may please thee to give us true repentance ; to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances, and to endue us with the grace of thy

Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to thy Holy Word."

Mr. R. When you are older you will understand better the full beauty of these rich and scriptural prayers, my children. I hope you may live to hear, as I have done, from the lips of the desolate, the fatherless, and the widow, how sweet it has been to hear God's people uniting in prayer for them Sabbath after Sabbath ; and I cannot tell you how many captives in the gloomy prisons of far distant lands have been comforted to think that in thousands of churches the weekly prayer was offering for them, that God would have pity on all prisoners and captives.

M. Dear papa, this seems to make me ashamed ; somehow I am afraid I have never listened to these prayers as if I thought we were really asking God to help these people. I hope I shall hear them differently now.

Mr. R. I hope so, too, dear child ; and that you will ask God to help you to do so. It is an awful thing to repeat the prayers Sunday after Sunday with your lips, without ever thinking of their meaning, or joining with your heart. There are also especial promises to those who remember the poor : look at Psalm xli. 1 :—" Blessed is he

that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." It is the best kind of consideration to remember them in prayer before God. There is one petition here which I thought you would all have noticed, since it concerns you particularly.

H. I know what you mean, papa,—for young children. It is very nice to think that everybody prays for us in Church. And another, papa, I shall think of when we are journeying next week—for all those who travel by land or by water.

Mr. R. You often talk of the poor sailors, Henry; you should also think of them when this prayer is used. What command of Christ do we obey in the fifth sentence here, Annie?

A. Does he not tell us to pray for our enemies, Sir?

Mr. R. Yes, he does, in Matt. v. 46.

CHAPTER IX.

(*A. reads.*) "SON of God, we beseech thee to hear us ; O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ, hear us. Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.

"O Lord, deal not with us after our sins. Neither reward us after our iniquities."

Mr. R. To whom do we here pray, my little Ellen ?

E. To the Lord Jesus, dear papa.

Mr. R. Try to think of that, my child. You are really in those prayers *speaking* to the Lord Jesus, just as much as you are now speaking to me. That very Saviour about whom you love to hear, who took the little children up in His arms and blessed them, is listening to what you say, and is ready to hear and help you. It is a sweet thought. And for what do we ask him, Ellen ?

E. For mercy, papa, a great many times over.

A. Why does this prayer come so often, Mr. R.?

Mr. R. I will try and explain to you by a little story. Not long ago, a poor man had a quarrel with his neighbour. From words they rose to blows, until the one stabbed the other with his knife, and he fell dead upon the spot. The murderer was taken up and sent to prison to be tried for his crime. He made no resistance. When his passion was over, he saw how wicked he had been, and his heart seemed almost broken with sorrow and penitence. He knew that he must die. The law of the land is that murderers must die, and he felt he was not ready to appear before the great and holy God. A few weeks rapidly passed, and he was brought before his judge. The court was crowded with people, and he stood up, pale and trembling in the midst,—he knew that he was guilty, his heart told him so. Then the witnesses stood up and declared that this man had murdered his neighbour. He did not answer, for he had nothing to say. The judge listened, and inquired; the jury consulted together, and found out that it was true, quite true. Then the judge stood up with solemn looks and a sad heart to say that the man must die. The prisoner had said nothing until then,

but when the judge stood up, he knew what he must expect, and throwing himself upon his knees, he cried with a loud and bitter cry, "Mercy, have mercy, oh my Lord, mercy, mercy upon my life, it is all I ask."

H. And did they save him, papa?

Mr. R. They could not, my boy. He had broken the law, and he must suffer the punishment. All that they could do was to grant him a respite of three months before his execution ; and I think there is reason to hope that he made good use of the time, and died a humble penitent. Turn now, Annie, to 2 Cor. i., and read the 9th verse.

(*A. reads.*) "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God."

Mr. R. See now, my children, why we have need to cry for mercy. Like that poor man, we have the sentence of death in ourselves, we have broken God's laws, we must suffer the punishment. God says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But Jesus bore the punishment instead of us : the Judge Himself says, that if we cry to Him for mercy, He will save us ; and more still, grant unto us eternal life. I do not wonder that this little prayer, "Lord have

mercy," comes over so often. Remember, in repeating this prayer, that we have the sentence of death in ourselves; and that unless we cry earnestly to Jesus for mercy, even as the poor criminal cried, we must suffer the punishment of our sins. What do we call the Lord Jesus, Mary, when we here pray to Him to have mercy upon us?

M. The Lamb of God, papa, that takest away the sins of the world.

Mr. R. Yes; it is from this we hope to obtain pardon of our sins, when we cry for mercy. God told the Jews to pour out the blood of a lamb, or some other innocent creature, when they had sinned against Him, and He would pardon them; so that the lamb suffered, not the sinner. This was a sign or picture of the holy Saviour, who suffered for our sins—His blood was poured out that we might be pardoned, and, therefore, he is called the *Lamb* of God, that takest away the sins of the world.

H. Papa, it says in my chapter that Jesus was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

Mr. R. That was because he suffered so patiently, as a meek and gentle lamb. You may discover many ways in which the lamb is a type of Christ.

(*E. reads.*) "Let us pray.—O God, merciful Father, that despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful ; Mercifully assist our prayers that we make before thee in all our troubles and adversities, whensoever they oppress us ; and graciously hear us, that those evils which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us, be brought to nought ; and by the providence of thy goodness they may be dispersed ; that we thy servants, being hurt by no persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto thee in thy holy Church ; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thy Name's sake. O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them. O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for thine honour. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son : and to the Holy Ghost ; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be : world without end. Amen. From our enemies defend us, O Christ. Graciously look upon our afflictions. Pitifully behold the sorrows of our hearts. Mercifully forgive the sins of thy people. Favourably with mercy hear our prayers. O Son of David, have mercy upon us. Both now and ever vouchsafe to hear us, O Christ. Graciously hear us, O Christ ; graciously hear us, O Lord Christ. O Lord, let thy mercy be shewed upon us ; As we do put our trust in thee."

Mr. R. Can you find out from your Latin grammar what *providence* means, my boy ?

H. Pro, before : is it not to see before, papa?

Mr. R. It is, dear. We cannot tell what is before us, even in the next hour, any more than a blind child can see along the road he is walking ; but God knows all that may happen, and so we ask for his *foreseeing* goodness to give us all the help we may need in coming troubles. And do not forget, children, that you have a crafty and subtle (that means clever and deceitful) enemy always near you. He can turn everything into a danger : he makes dear brothers and sisters a danger to each other, for he tempts them to be selfish and quarrelsome : when you are happy, he makes a danger of being proud ; when you are sad, he makes a danger of being fretful—nothing but the good providence of God can take care of us in these many dangers. He knows beforehand what they are, and when they will come, so that He can enable us, by His Spirit, to pass safely through them. Can you find out for me, Mary, three reasons which we here mention why God should hear our prayers?

M. For His name's sake ; because He did help our fathers with noble works ; and for His honour's sake.

Mr. R. Quite right ; and we go on to tell Him more fully all that we want. I think you

can understand these short prayers, so you may read the concluding collect.

(*M. reads.*) “Let us pray.—We humbly beseech thee, O Father, mercifully to look upon our infirmities; and for the glory of thy name turn from us all those evils which we most righteously have deserved; and grant that in all our troubles we may put our whole trust and confidence in thy mercy, and evermore serve thee in holiness and pureness of living, to thy honour and glory; through our only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

“Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou wilt grant their requests; fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.”

Papa, does the word “infirmities” in the first of these prayers mean the same as sins?

Mr. R. No, dear, sin is a direct act of disobedience against God; but I think infirmity here means that weakness of body, which often prevents our joining heartily in the prayers, even when we wish to do so. You know that you sometimes get tired and sleepy when you are trying most to attend in Church; this is because

your body is not strong enough to do all that your mind desires. Jesus knows what it is, for we find in Matt. viii. 17, that He took our infirmities, so we need not be afraid to ask Him, at the end of the service, to look mercifully (that is, with pity) upon all the weakness of body, which has made it more difficult to us to pray to Him aright.

E. Papa, will you tell me what it means to put our whole trust in God's mercy when we are in trouble?

Mr. R. I will explain it to you by a little story, *Ellen*. During a tremendous storm at sea, a ship, containing passengers beside the crew, was in considerable danger. The mighty waves seemed to rise up to the very sky, while the poor vessel was tossed to and fro like a cork upon the water, which frequently broke over the deck, and swept away all that was loose. One of the ladies was very much frightened, she thought the ship would sink, and every body in it would be drowned; and she was surprised to see a child near her looking as peaceful and happy as if nothing were the matter. She asked him why he was not afraid? "BECAUSE," replied the boy, "MY FATHER'S AT THE HELM." He believed that his father was able to guide the

ship safely through the storm ; he knew that he would take care of his dear child, and, therefore, he was not afraid. Believe, my children, that God is your Father, able to take care of you, and help you through all troubles and dangers ; and like the Captain's child, you will be kept peaceful and happy in the midst of them.

A. Thank you, Mr. R., that is a very pretty story ; I shall think of the little boy in the storm when I hear this prayer. Why is the last called the prayer of St. Chrysostom, Sir ? Who was St. Chrysostom ?

Mr. R. A holy and celebrated man, who lived in the fourth century after Christ, my child, and suffered much on account of His religion, though he was not exactly a martyr. It is called his prayer because he wrote it. I do not wonder that it has been used for so many hundred years, because it is very beautiful ; especially when it comes, as it does in our service, at the end of many other prayers, in which always I should hope "two or three," and generally far more, of God's people have agreed together to ask of Him what they want. It should remind us with comfort before we rise from our knees, that if we have really been joining in the prayers, not one request has been in vain ; for we know that

Jesus has said, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing which they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

CHAPTER X.

Mr. R. I SHOULD like to talk with you to-day, my children, about a part of the Communion Service, or the service used at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

M. I am very glad of that, dear papa; for though we have learned in the Catechism something about the sacraments, I do not know what communion means.

Mr. R. Listen attentively, then, while I explain it to you. Communion is something which you all know in reality, if not in name. Which of my little ones likes to sit on papa's or mamma's knee, with their arms round you, while you can look up in their face, and tell them what you want, or anything that you are thinking about?

E. Oh, papa, you should not say, *which* of

us,—because I think that is what we all love best, to be quite close to you, and to hold your hand, dearest papa.

Mr. R. And papa loves to have you near him, dear child,—this is communion ; and communion is very sweet with those whom we love. Now let us find out why the Lord's table is called the Communion. Of what is it a remembrance, Henry ?

H. Of Christ's death, papa.

Mr. R. Yes, dear ; it was appointed at a time when his disciples were all very near to Him,—one was lying upon his bosom, and the others were close beside. Their hearts were full of sorrow and love, because their dear Master was going away, and He was comforting them with the kind and tender words which we find in the 14th and following chapters of St. John. This was communion. Then Jesus took bread and wine, and gave it to them to eat and to drink, and told them that, after He was gone, they were to do this in remembrance of Him. And so, for more than 1800 years, the children of God have met together in his house, from time to time, to eat bread and to drink wine in remembrance of their dear Saviour. And though they cannot see Him with their bodily eyes, they know that He is very

near, even in the midst of them, and they speak to Him in their hearts, and know that He hears them, and how much He loves them. Therefore the Lord's Supper is called the Communion.

Tears came into Mary's eyes as she listened, and she exclaimed earnestly, "Oh, papa! how much I should like to be there! Why may not children go to the Communion?"

Mr. R. Because, my dear child, you are not able yet to do all that is required of those who attend the Lord's table. The Bible tells us, in Heb. v., that milk is for babes, but strong meat for them that are of full age. Year by year, if you grow in grace, you will be preparing more and more to share in this happy service, as your godfather and godmothers promised you should do, even when you were a little infant. But until you are old enough to take this promise upon yourself, you must be content with the many good things which the Great Shepherd provides, even for the lambs of his flock. And remember, my dear little ones, though you may not yet join fully in this blessed service, you are permitted to be present at its beginning, and you can try to remember that your dear Saviour is close to you, in the very midst of us. You can think how he bids little children to come unto Him; and while

you are praying to Him, and praising Him, you, too, will have sweet communion with Jesus. Now begin to read the service, my Mary.

(*M. reads.*) "Our Father, &c.

"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen."

A. Mr. R., will you be so kind as to tell me why the Lord's Prayer comes over so often in Church?

Mr. R. Well, think, Annie, how you ask mamma or papa for something which you wish very much to have; are you content with repeating your request once over, if they do not immediately choose to grant it?

A. Oh no, Sir; why I think I asked them twenty times before it was quite fixed that I might come here with you.

Mr. R. It is just so with the Lord's Prayer, my dear little girl. It contains petitions which all who love God very much wish to have answered; for instance, that Christ's kingdom should come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Though God has not yet answered this prayer,

we know that He will, and that the more his children really pray for it, the sooner He will grant it. The collect which follows is very useful to remind us, that we need pure and holy hearts when we come into the presence of the great God. "Inspiration" means breathing; the low whisper of good thoughts by the Holy Spirit into our hearts.

H. Papa, the Ten Commandments come next, but I do not understand why they should come in the Communion Service.

Mr. R. Turn to Rom. iii. 20, Henry.

(*H. reads.*) "By the law is the knowledge of sin."

Mr. R. You can all understand this. If it was not for the law, or the commandments, which tell us what we ought to do, we should not know how little we have done that which is right,—how much we have done that which is wrong. *The law teaches us how full we are of sin.* Now, God hates pride. We find in Proverbs, that "a proud look is abomination to the Lord." If we come into his presence with proud, vain hearts, we shall only bring down his anger upon us. Therefore, the first thing which we do when we come before Him in the Communion Service, is, to hear the law, which teaches us how full we are of sin, and should make us humble.

A. But how can the law make us humble, Mr. R., when we certainly have not broken some of the commandments?

Mr. R. My dear child, this is a subject on which we must have a little more conversation at another time. We will read them through, and then you shall tell me which of them you have certainly not broken. In the meantime let me remind you that the four first of these commandments constitute that which our Lord calls "the first and great commandment," and of which He says that it requires us "to love the Lord with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength;" and that the six last constitute the "second commandment," as to which he adds that it requires us to "love our neighbour as ourselves." Ask yourselves whether you have always done this, and may God the Holy Spirit indeed teach you, "through the law, the knowledge of sin."

CHAPTER XI.

Mr. R. WE will now go through the commandments a little more particularly, and you shall tell me which of them, as you said, you have certainly not broken.

(*H. reads.*) "God spake these words, and said ; I am the Lord thy God : Thou shalt have none other gods but me.

"Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them : for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and show mercy unto thousands in them that love me, and keep my commandments."

Mr. R. In order to see what is the real meaning of these commandments, we must turn to Luke x. 26, 27. We find that the law here means, not only that we must not *bow down* to idols,—but that we must love and serve God better than any thing else. Therefore, my children, if you think about and care for any body or

any thing more than God, you have broken the two first commandments,—you are idolaters.

A. That does seem strange. Does the Bible say so, Mr. R.?

Mr. R. Look at Col. iii. 5, Annie, and you will find, that covetousness, or loving money too much, is called idolatry. Now, some people love one thing, and some another; *what* it is does not make any real difference;—it may be your parents, or your playthings, or your lessons; if you love and care for them more than God, He calls it idolatry.

A. (*sorrowfully.*) I am sure I did not know this before; I will pray God to make me love him best of all, that I may not break these commandments again.

(*Mr. R. reads.*) “Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his Name in vain.”

M. Papa, may I tell the others about this commandment; I remember so well how you explained it to me?

Mr. R. Do so, my child.

M. It does not mean swearing and using bad language only, but, it means at any time to repeat God's name without thinking who He is, and how great He is. So that when we say our

prayers without thinking to whom we are speaking, we do really take God's name in vain.

Mr. R. Quite right, Mary. Remember that we are told in Deut. xxviii. 58, to "fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God;" and that it is a solemn thing even to repeat it with our lips,—"*The Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain.*"

(*E. reads.*) "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it."

Papa, we have never had our playthings or our work on Sunday; how have we broken this commandment?

Mr. R. Turn to Isa. lviii. 13, 14, Ellen. See if you have ever done "your own ways." If you have ever done wrong on the Sabbath, you have broken this commandment; if you have ever found your own pleasure, amused yourself

instead of doing the will of God, you have broken this commandment in his sight.

E. If this is what it means, dear papa, I am afraid I shall never keep it.

Mr. R. Indeed you never will keep this, or any of the commandments, my child, rightly, as they ought to be kept. To know this you must understand what they really are, or you will not find out how often you disobey them. If we could keep God's law perfectly, we might deserve to go to heaven, but we cannot keep it, we cannot speak one word or think one thought without sin. Every minute of your life you are breaking the commandments in some way or other. Now, what do you think we deserve for this, Ellen?

E. To be punished, papa. We deserve God's righteous anger.

Mr. R. And how is it, then, that we may hope to be saved from hell?

E. By the Lord Jesus Christ, dear papa, because He bore the punishment instead of us.

Mr. R. Yes, dear. And do you not think that when we find out by reading the law, how much we have sinned against Him, how much we deserve to be punished, it will help to make us love that dear Saviour, who pitied us not-

withstanding all our sins, and suffered on the cross that we might be saved?

H. Yes, dear papa; and I think I see better now why we read the law when we are going to remember Jesus.

(*M. reads.*) "Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

I think we know, without being told, dear papa, how sadly we have all broken this commandment.

Mr. R. Then I hope you will all join heartily in the little prayer which follows,—“Lord, have mercy upon us,”—which means, to forgive us for having so often broken it;—“and incline our hearts to keep this law,” or help us not to do so again. What do you find in Ephes. vi. 3, about this commandment, Annie?

A. That it is the first which has a promise added to it.

Mr. R. Yes; you know well, that even now you are always happy when you are obedient; and, besides this, God promises a long life to those who seek to honour their father and mother. We may see a proof of this in the great empire of China: the Chinese are a heathen people, and in some respects a very wicked people, but in this

one thing they have been careful to do right, that the children, both young and old, should honour their parents. The governors, and magistrates would punish severely an undutiful child. And God has rewarded them for it; for thousands of years the empire of China has been great and flourishing; they obeyed the command, and they have received the reward.

(*H. reads.*) "Thou shalt do no murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Mr. R. I see Annie's eyes are brightening with the thought, that here at least is a commandment which she has not broken. Is it not so, Annie? But remember, we must try to find out the full meaning of this law, as well as of the others, before we decide that we have kept it. Read 1 John iii. 15 :—

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer."

Mr. R. You must ask yourselves, then, my children, not whether you have ever killed any body, but whether you have ever hated any body.

A. Indeed, Sir, I am afraid I have, when I have been in a passion; but I don't think I do now.

Mr. R. Then you see we have need to ask after this commandment also,—“Lord, have mercy

upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." I cannot at present explain to you the seventh commandment, but we find, from other parts of the Bible, that it also forbids sinful thoughts, in which we have all sinned many times.

(*A. reads.*) "Thou shall not steal."

Surely, Sir, you do not think we have ever stolen anything, like thieves and robbers?

Mr. R. What is stealing, Annie?

A. To take away something which belongs to anybody else.

Mr. R. And do you never take for yourself, my child, something which belongs to God? Tell me to whom the time of a servant belongs; whom ought she to be serving all day long?

A. Her master and her mistress, Mr. R.

Mr. R. And if, as I hope, we are God's servants, Annie, does not our time belong to Him?—ought we not to be serving Him all the day long? Yet I think you all know for yourselves, that, instead of serving God, we often disobey Him; instead of giving our love to Him; we set it upon others. We *take away* from God the time and the strength which belongs to Him, and this is really to steal.

E. I am sure I did not know before, that I had ever stolen anything in my life. Have we broken

the ninth commandment, too, dear papa? I do not quite understand what it means—

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.”

Mr. R. To bear false witness against any one, Ellen, is to say something against any one which is not exactly true, either by adding a little to the truth, or leaving out any thing. I will explain it to you by a little story:—Two boys, named James and John, were playing together in their father’s dining-room, when some dispute arose between them, and James, who was a very passionate child, pushed his brother with such violence against the window that a large pane was broken. James was frightened when he saw what was done; but, thinking to escape the blame himself, he made his fault much worse, for he ran to his mother, and told her that John had been a very naughty boy, and had broken the window. Was this true, Ellen?

E. No, dear papa, because it was James’s fault.

Mr. R. This, then, was to bear false witness, my child; and remember, every one breaks this commandment who repeats against another something which is not quite true. Read the tenth commandment, Mary.

(*M. reads.*) "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his."

To covet, means to wish for something which is not our own, does it not?

Mr. R. Yes, dear. I heard Henry breaking this command the other day, when he wished for his sister's desk; indeed I think you can hardly, any of you, remember a day of your lives in which you have not done so, in some way or other. Now, my dear Annie, I think you will not be surprised at the text with which we began our reading to-day, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." But in case you do not yet feel quite sure how completely we have broken it, look at James ii. 10 :—

(*M. reads.*) "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

Does this really mean to say, papa, that if we have only broken the Sabbath-day, it is the same as if we had committed murder, and stolen, and broken all the other commandments?

Mr. R. It does, dear. Why, if there were ten flowers in the garden, which I told you not to pick, saying that you should be punished if you did so; and you disobediently went and picked one

or two of the flowers, would you not deserve to be punished?

M. Oh, yes, dear papa, because I should be disobedient, just the same as if I had picked them all.

Mr. R. Exactly so it is with the commandments, Mary; to have broken one, is the same as to have broken all. It is disobedience, for which we deserve to go to hell. We shall not have gone through the commandments in vain, my children, if it has taught you how grievously you have broken them in God's sight. Remember, you are guilty, you deserve to be punished: like the poor criminal we were talking about the other day, you must perish, unless you cry for mercy. But if you cry to Jesus, He will save you. Though you have broken God's law a thousand times, He has borne all the punishment instead of you; and now, this very day, He is ready to pardon you and bless you, and save you from hell. When you hear the commandments, let it then remind you of Jesus, and make you pray to Him, and love Him, more than you have ever done before. The Collect for the day, with the Epistle and Gospel, you are accustomed to read every Sunday with mamma. The rest of the Communion Service which is used every Sunday,

the prayers for the Queen, and a longer Creed, or Belief, have been already in substance explained to you, therefore it will not be necessary to go through them again. May God give you grace, my dear little ones, so to join now in the beginning of this beautiful service, that in due time you shall be permitted to share in the privileges of its close.

Not long after this conversation, little Annie was obliged to leave her kind friends and return home, but she did not forget all that she had been learning about the service in Church, and I have reason to hope she would answer differently now, to the question with which this story began.

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