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CONVERSATIONS

ON THE

CATECHISM

OF THE

Protestant Episcopal Church,

ABRIDGED AND ACCOMMODATED TO THE AMERICAN CHURCH, FROM AN ENGLISH EDITION.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. WILLIAM MEADE.

PHILADELPHIA:
KING & BAIRD, PRINTERS, 9 GEORGE ST.
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PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

The following work appeared in England about ten years since, as the production of an anonymous author. The undersigned will be much disappointed if it does not meet with the same favor, which was shown by a large number of American Episcopalians, to the popular stories on the Church Catechism, by Mrs. Sherwood; which work it resembles not a little, and in some respects certainly excels. It shows great labor in the references to appropriate scriptures, as well as great felicity in the choice of illustrations suited to the youthful mind. If it be used according to its design, and as it deserves, it will be equally profitable and interesting to the parent or sponsor and the child. Although it will be very instructive and pleasing if read without referring to the scriptures appealed to, yet it would not be doing justice to the work,

if after being once read through in this manner, it is not afterwards studied with the Bible in the hand of either the child or the teacher, that the scripture authorities and history may be consulted. It is confidently believed that such a method will be found most edifying and satisfactory, by those who shall make trial of it.

The undersigned has selected this work in order to meet a want often felt both by parents and ministers, in their instruction of children in the Church Catechism, and that is, something more simple and easier to be understood by young beginners, than those expositions of the Catechism which attempt the explanation of each sentence and subject, and require that the answers be committed to memory. Together with this, the undersigned has put forth such an exposition drawn chiefly from the most approved writers on the subject, and hopes that both of them may prove acceptable and useful to the ministers and members of the Diocese under his care, and to any others who may think them worthy of their adoption.

In order to make this volume as suitable as possible to the object in view, the undersigned has not only omitted some things which referred peculiarly to England and the English Church, but also some parts of the work which touched on points in dispute among Episcopalians, and which could be neither interesting, edifying, or intelligible to the child.

A very few words of his own connecting together parts which were disjoined by the omission, are all that have been added by the undersigned.

WILLIAM MEADE,
Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia.

PART I.

THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT.

SUNDAY EVENING I.

ON THE DUTIES OF SPONSORS.

WILLIAM. My dear Godmamma, I have now learnt all my Catechism, from beginning to end: and mamma wishes me to ask you to hear me say it.

AUNT. *That* my dear boy, I will gladly do; and if you will come to my room every Sunday Evening, during my stay with your dear mamma, I will try to make you understand it, for I dare say you find it rather difficult.

WILLIAM. I shall like it so much, for I thought just now, although I can say it quite perfectly, without missing one word: yet, if my Godmamma asks me any questions about it, I do not think I can answer them.

AUNT. You know, dear Willie, that I am always pleased to talk to you, when you are attentive, but in this case, it is my *duty*, as well as my pleasure.

WILLIAM. Your *duty*, Aunt! I did not know it

was the *duty* of any one to teach me, except papa and mamma, but I am sure it is very kind of any one to take the trouble.

AUNT. You have been told, my dear, that when you were a very little baby, I, and some other friends accompanied your dear papa and mamma to church, when they took you there for the first time, to dedicate you to God in baptism.

WILLIAM. Yes, I have heard *that*, and so you are called my Godmother; but I do not know *why;* though there is something about godfathers and godmothers in the catechism.

AUNT. When we begin to talk about the catechism, I shall be able to explain it more clearly; but now I wish you to remember that godfathers and godmothers are sometimes called "Sponsors," anu sometimes, "Sureties."

WILLIAM. Yes, I know the last word, it is in the last part of the catechism; but what do they both mean?

AUNT. A Sponsor means a person who *answers* for another, promising they shall do something.

WILLIAM. What! suppose I was to promise you that my little sister Harriet should come here next time with me:—should I be her sponsor?

AUNT. Yes, just so. Until you had brought her and your promise for her was fulfilled, you would

be answerable for it.—You would feel that you had something to do for her,—would you not?

WILLIAM. Yes, dear Aunt; having promised you that I would do it, I should not be happy, until I had kept my promise; and if Harriet did not like to come, or fretted about it, I should persuade her, and coax her, and tell her how much better it would be for her to come to you; and if she still would not come, I should tell her of my promise to you, and that she was making me break my word, which would be very wrong in her. I think she would come, Godmamma, but if she would not,—oh! what should I do? I should not like to break my word. Should I take her in my arms and carry her against her will?

AUNT. No, my love, you would have done *all you could*, and therefore could not be blamed, even though your little sister would not come with you; but this will explain to you, *my duty* as *your Sponsor*. I took you to church when you were baptized, and made a solemn promise to God, that as you were then brought to Him, you should, as you grew up, love to walk in His ways, be a good boy, and afterwards become a good man. Is not this a very solemn promise, William?

WILLIAM. Yes, it is indeed; and I see you are

bound to keep it, as much as I should be, in what I supposed about my little sister. But suppose, Godmamma, I was to be naughty, and grow up to be a wicked man? (I hope I shall not) but suppose it should be so, what *would* you do? I am sure you would be very unhappy, for I should be, if I had broken my promise, even against my will, and that in a *little* thing too; but *this* would be a very great thing, Godmamma, for your promise was made to the great God, and in Church! What would you do?

AUNT. I should be *very* unhappy; but as I said, I must *do my part*. I must persuade, and beg you to hear what I would say. I must tell you often of my promise, and try to lead you to God; and what is most of all, I must pray to God, to make you come to Him, for He can change the worst heart.

WILLIAM. Yes; so my dear mamma tells me, and I believe it is true; for I know God is very powerful, and can do great things. I saw a tree once which God killed by a stroke of lightning, and papa told me about the hurricanes in the West Indies, and all the houses and churches which were blown down: and I have read too, of a child who used to be very passionate and ill-tempered, who in a fit of sickness which God sent him, prayed to God, and asked Him to take away his naughty tempers; and

God did, for he became quite a good boy; so I think the best plan will be to pray for me, Godmamma.

AUNT. And so I do, my dear, and you must pray for yourself as that little boy did. But still, God will not think I have done my duty, if I do not do all in my power to bring you to Him.

WILLIAM. And I am sure you ought. So, dear Godmamma, I hope I shall always listen to what you say, and instead of feeling angry when you tell me of my faults, I will try to remember that you are only doing your duty, and keeping your promise to the great God. But you did not explain the word "*Surety*," the other name for Sponsor. I should like to know the meaning of it.

AUNT. *A Surety* is one who undertakes and is bound to do a thing for an other. Suppose a man bought a field, and could not afford to pay the whole sum for it at once, he brings a friend with him to the person of whom he buys the field, who promises to see he shall pay the rest of the money in six months, or he will engage to pay it himself; this friend is called the bondsman or *surety*.

The Surety at baptism is bound in a very solemn manner to see that the child shall be taught "the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments," and if he is not, to teach them himself, and

to instruct him in all things which concern his salvation.

William. Oh, dear Godmamma, that is just what you are doing now; you are fulfilling your promise as a Surety about me.

Aunt. Only a part of it, William; the surety is also bound to bring the child at a fit age to be confirmed by the Bishop, when he will take upon himself, those things which the surety promises for him when he is too young to understand it himself.

William. I am sure sponsors take a great deal of trouble about children who are not their own—why do not their parents do it all themselves?

Aunt. Your own dear parents, William, can teach you as well as I can, and they are always with you, and I am very seldom; but still they are glad of my help in bringing up their child, and are glad of my prayers for him. But many children are not so happy as you are, in having pious parents who are able and willing to bring up their children as the church would wish them to do, I mean as Christian people who worship God according to our manner, would have them trained. Some children, alas! have no parents at all; in both these sad cases the sureties (if pious) may be of great use in bringing up these poor children in the fear and love of God.

WILLIAM. I am sure my mamma is much obliged to any one who will teach me any thing; and if you please, dear Godmamma, (I like that name best after all) I will go and tell her now, all you have told me, and what we are going to do next Sunday.

AUNT. Good-bye, dear Willie, God bless you, and make you a good boy.

SUNDAY EVENING II.

ON GOD'S FIRST COVENANT WITH MAN.

WILLIAM. Here I am, dear Godmamma, and I have brought with me my little Bible, which you gave me, because mamma told me, she thought you would give me some texts to find out. I like looking for texts.

AUNT. You know, William, that the Bible is God's own book, which He has given us, to teach us the truth, so that we must not depend on any thing as truth that is not to be found in the Bible. Read what St. Paul says to Timothy about his knowing the Bible in 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16.

WILLIAM. "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Sciptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in

Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

AUNT. What a great thing it is to have God's word to which we may go, when we wish to know what is right! I pray that you, my dear, like Timothy, may know the word of God from a child, and love it dearly.

WILLIAM. Will you please to tell me the meaning of "*Catechism?*" It is a very hard word, I think.

AUNT. It means a written form of teaching by question and answer. To *catechise*, is to teach by question and answer; a *catechist* is a person who asks questions; and *catechumens* are those of whom the questions are asked. That is a still harder word, is it not? but it is not often used. Now, my dear, can you tell me, why you only answer "*William*," when I ask you your name in the catechism? for when you are asked your name at any other time, you always reply William D'Alby.

WILLIAM. I think it is, because *William* was the name that was given me at church when I was christened, and so it is my *Christian* name; D'Alby is my *sir*name, which means, (papa says,) *father's name*, for *sir* or *sire* is an old word for father. I

had my sirname, you know, before I was christened, D'Alby is also called my *family* name, because my papa's family are all called by that name.

AUNT. You are right. The name of "*William*" was given you, to make you remember that you were belonging outwardly to Christ's family, and therefore should *act* as if you were. Can you tell me any text, my dear, about bringing Children to Christ.

WILLIAM. Oh, yes, I can find it out in St. Matthew xix. 14. "And Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And St. Mark says, "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." These children must have been very young, for Jesus to take them up in his arms; quite little babies I think.

AUNT. None are too young to come to Christ, and therefore when a month old, children are usually taken to church to be christened, and if ill and unable to go to church, they are allowed to be baptized at home. And now, my dear, in order to understand the Catechism, we may divide it into five parts, and talk of one part at a time. Each part will form several conversations.

1. THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT.

2. THE CREED, OR ARTICLES OF A CHRISTIAN'S FAITH.

3. THE COMMANDMENTS.

4. ON PRAYER.

5. THE SACRAMENTS.

We will speak first of "the Covenant of Baptism."

WILLIAM. But what is a *Covenant*, Godmamma?

AUNT. I will try to explain it to you. "Covenant" means an agreement between two persons, in which something is promised by each to the other; and in case the promise is broken on either side, the covenant no longer exists. You will understand what I mean by the true story I am going to tell you. You have seen a picture of Blenheim, near Oxford, the fine place which belongs to the Duke of Marlborough. That estate was given by Queen Anne, to a famous Duke of Marlborough, as a token of her favour, for the splendid victories he had gained for her. When she gave it him, this condition was made by her; that every year, on the anniversary of the battle of Blenheim, (from which the place obtained its name) a man on horseback should bring a white and blue flag from Blenheim Park to Windsor Castle; and if the Duke failed in his part of the agreement, her gift would cease, and the whole of Blenheim Estate was to be forfeited to the crown.

WILLIAM. I dare say how fast the man is obliged

to ride, for fear he should come too late. But I quite know now, what you mean by a *covenant*. It is not an *unconditional* promise to give. But in the case we are speaking about, it seems very little for the Duke to do in order to have so fine a place.

AUNT. So, dear child, are God's dealings with us, he gives us great things, and requires but little of us. Open your Bible, and read Gen. i. 16, 17. You will find the account of the covenant God made with Adam and Eve.

WILLIAM. "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

AUNT. Now, my dear, what is *the Lord's* part in this covenant?

WILLIAM. That Adam and Eve should be happy in the beautiful garden, and God would love them, and they should eat of all the delicious fruit which grew in the garden, except of one tree.

AUNT. Right. Now what was man's part?

WILLIAM. Only to obey God.

AUNT. And what was to be the consequence if man disobeyed God?

WILLIAM. He was to forfeit his happiness, God's love, and the beautiful garden; and he was to die.

AUNT. And mark, my dear; his sin would bring not only the death of his body, but the eternal death of his soul. That is to say, *when* he died, his soul would go to the wicked Devil, who had tempted him, instead of going to God.

WILLIAM. Yes: and all this came upon him, for he *did* disobey God, and ate the forbidden fruit: and so the covenant was no longer of any use to him.

AUNT. Not only useless to *him*, William, but to his children, and their children, and all who should ever be born into the world; for all have ever since been "born in sin," I mean, they are born with a heart that loves to disobey God's laws. *Sin* is the transgression or breaking of God's laws, and eternal death is the punishment of sin.

WILLIAM. How unhappy Adam must have been, to have caused such sorrow to his children! Yes, I know the youngest children are sinful; for they are often cross, and angry, and quarrelsome. Papa showed me these verses in the Bible, Godmamma. I will read them to you if you please.

AUNT. Do, my dear, and next Sunday, (if it please God,) we will talk about the *New Covenant*.

WILLIAM. (*reads*) Prov. xxii. 15. Gen. viii. 21. Psalm xiv. 2, 3. Then I am to hear about the *New* Covenant next Sunday. I wonder God would have any thing more to say to such wicked sinners.

SUNDAY EVENING III.

ON THE NEW COVENANT.

AUNT. We are to talk this evening, William, about a *new* covenant, which God made with Adam and his children, who for their sins deserved eternal death, and that the great God should care no more about them. Do you remember, my dear, any token which God showed of love for man, while He was cursing the serpent?

WILLIAM. Oh yes, he told the serpent that some day, some person, "who should be born of a woman," should "bruise its head," and Papa told me that person was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary, and died on the cross for sinners.

AUNT. True, my dear, but how did that bruise the serpent's head?

WILLIAM. Papa said, the *life* of the animal was in its head, and if its head were crushed, it would have no power to hurt me; but I cannot explain the rest, will you tell me?

AUNT. The wicked Devil is the serpent, and as all sin came by him, so he may properly be called the *head* of sin, its chief and beginning: by him

also came *death*, for death is the consequence of sin. Now Jesus Christ destroys the power of *sin*, because he is stronger than the Devil, and his blood can wash all sin away: he also destroys the power of *death*, because he makes it the gate to heaven, instead of the gate to hell, which Satan meant it to be. Satan thought if he brought sin into the world, he should be able to take all men with him to that dreadful place, because "death cometh by sin," and "he that sinneth shall surely die" eternally. But Jesus, the Son of God, seeing what Satan wanted, and knowing that after Eve's and Adam's sin, nothing else could save man from being his prey, offered to become the *mediator* between God and man.

WILLIAM. What is a "Mediator," Godmamma?

AUNT. Suppose that two persons were standing at a distance from each other, quite out of each other's reach; and then suppose a third person were to stand just in the middle between them, and were to give one hand to each, the two persons who before were separated, would be united, and brought close as it were, by the third person, would they not?

WILLIAM. Oh yes, and is the third person to represent Jesus Christ, and the two others to represent God and man, who had been separated by the wicked Devil? That seems to me very plain.

AUNT. Yes, for we are "brought nigh by the blood of Jesus." A new agreement was then made between God and sinners, who could not have dared to approach their offended God, but through Jesus Christ.

WILLIAM. It seems very likely that God would listen to his Son, whom he loved so dearly.

AUNT. Yes, and it is when Jesus is entreating his Father for us, that he is called our *intercessor*.

WILLIAM. Please to explain that word to me, dear Aunt.

AUNT. Suppose, William, you had been very naughty, and had made your parents very angry, and they had sent you out of the parlor in disgrace; and then suppose that your little sister Harriet, hearing you cry very much, were to run to your parents, and beg them to forgive you, and admit you to their presence again, *she* would be *interceding* for you.

WILLIAM. Yes, I understand now, and I remember a very pretty story in the Bible (Numbers xvi. 41—50.) where I read that when the Israelites rebelled, and God had sent a plague to destroy them; Aaron stood between the guilty people and their offended God, and prayed Him to forgive them, and the plague ceased.

AUNT. Aaron was then a mediator between God and man, but Jesus Christ was more than this: for

Aaron only begged for their bodily *life*, while Christ entreats God to save men's *souls* from eternal death. Tell me, dear, what does your favorite hymn say about Jesus, as the *Saviour* of sinners?

WILLIAM. (repeats)

> "He knew how wicked men had been
> And knew that God *must* punish sin;
> So out of pity Jesus said
> He'd bear the punishment instead."

Mamma told me that God was very *just* as well as merciful, and it would not be *justice* to let sinners go without punishment,—unless some person would offer to die instead of them, who had never committed any sin. Jesus Christ therefore offered to come down and die, that sinful men might be saved from eternal death; and his Father who is in heaven, was so very good as to let His only Son come down to die for our sakes, so that "whosoever believeth in him may have eternal life."

AUNT. Dear child! may your heavenly Father ever keep these blessed truths in your mind! This, then, is the *New Covenant* which God made with man, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Now tell me what God promises in it?

WILLIAM. That our sins shall be forgiven us, and we shall go to heaven when we die.

AUNT. Right; now open to Acts xvi. 31, and you may read what *our* part of the new covenant is, in the answer which Paul and Silas gave to the poor jailer, who in an agony of mind asked them, "What must I do to be saved?"

WILLIAM. "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That does not seem a hard task, we ought gladly to believe on Him, if we wish to go to heaven.

AUNT. True, my dear; the condition which Christ requires is easy; the covenant therefore is called, Rom. viii. 1, "the covenant of *grace*," or favour. But you will find that (being born in sin) you cannot believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, unless God teaches you to do so. We shall talk of this some future day. I must now tell you, William, it was in this belief that your parents, in obedience to Christ's commands, brought you to be baptized; it was in this belief that I, and others answered for you: and we pray, that in this belief you may ever be kept.

WILLIAM. Please to tell me, where Christ commanded us to be baptized, and I will mark it on my Bible.

AUNT. Besides Matt. xix. 14, which you know, the following refers more plainly to *Baptism*, as the proper *means* of being admitted into this *New*

Covenant with God: Matt. xxviii. 19, where we have our Lord's commands about it, to his Apostles; read also Acts ii. 38, 39. Persons therefore who neglect baptism either for themselves or their children, have not considered its importance as a scriptural command, nor all the benefits to be gained from it. But it would be making a mock of God's holy ordinance if we did not understand it, therefore next Sunday we will talk together about what was promised in the baptismal covenant, and try by God's help, to know what is needful concerning it.

SUNDAY EVENING IV.

GOD'S PROMISE IN THE COVENANT OF BAPTISM.

WILLIAM. I am glad we are going to talk about the catechism to-night: for when I said it to mamma, I was thinking of so many questions I should like to ask, and I am afraid I shall forget them.

AUNT. Well then, my dear, repeat the answer to the question—'Who gave you your name?' and then tell me the first thing you want to know.

WILLIAM. "My Godfathers and Godmothers, in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the king-

dom of heaven." Now I want first to know, *how* we are made all these things in baptism?

AUNT. Why the great God promises to do it for us; this is his part of the covenant you know. Last Sunday you told me that the pardon of our sins, and the promise of going to heaven when we die, was *God's* covenant promise with man. Here the words only are a little altered, and it is more particularly explained.

WILLIAM. There are three things named; First, *a member of Christ*, Second, *a child of God*, Third, *and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.* I cannot think what the first means.

AUNT. If you attend, I will try to make it plain to you. The word *member* means something which belongs to another thing, and is joined so closely to it, that it forms a part of it. Your body is formed of many parts, which united, make a whole, each separate part is called *a member*, the whole united *the body.* For instance, your arm and your leg are not *your body*, but they belong so closely to it, and are so needful to it, that they form a part of it, and if one member is hurt, the whole body feels the injury.

WILLIAM. Yes, indeed it does; for when I cut my finger very badly, my whole body seemed to be in pain, and my head ached to.

AUNT. So you read, 1 Cor. xiii. 26. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." Now *the body* which the Scriptures speak of, means *the church*. Christ is its *head*, and all true believers in Christ are the members of His body. Read Eph. v. 23. You must not think, my dear, that *the church* when mentioned in the Bible, means a building, such as your Papa preaches in; but it means the whole number of true Christians who have ever lived in the world, or are now living in it, or shall live in it hereafter to the end of the world. Each one of these persons is a member of, or belonging to, Christ's true church, which he calls *his body*, and therefore a member of *himself*, as the Catechism says, read Eph. i. 22. Christ, the head, is gone to heaven, and those members of his body who have died, are gone there too, and are joined to him there already. When all the rest of his body is there, (that is, when all true Christians have reached heaven,) they will form a perfect body "without spot or blemish, or any such thing."

WILLIAM. That means *without sin*, does it not? Little children ought to consider it a great honour to be called a part of Christ's body. Then, part of Christ's body is in heaven, and part on earth. I know some persons who belonged to Christ on earth, who are now in heaven. My dear Uncle, and Aunt,

and Grandmamma, and I know a great many persons who are members of Christ on earth, my Papa and Mamma, and you dear Godmamma, because I know you love God.

AUNT. Another way of explaining the being a member of Christ, our Lord gives us himself, John xv. 1—8, under the description of a vine and its branches. Christ says to his disciples, "I am the true vine, ye are the branches,"—read it.

WILLIAM. (*reads*) I am sure the branches could not live without the vine, for I saw the gardener pruning our vine one day, and as soon as the branches were cut off from the vine, the leaves faded.

AUNT. So you see except we are *joined* to Christ, we cannnot be real Christians. But you have sometimes seen a dead branch still on the vine: do you think that belongs to it?

WILLIAM. No, Aunt, for Papa says it is the sap which comes up to the trunk of the tree, that keeps the branches alive, so I suppose the tree does not feed a dead bough.

AUNT. True, it is useless to the tree, and the tree to it, and no more really belongs to it, than the branches which you saw cut off; it is only fit to be burned. But, my dear, do you know there are many children, and many grown persons who have

been baptized, and therefore *outwardly* belong to Christ, who are no more really His, than the dead branch belongs to the vine? Unless they are *living* members, they are no members at all. I mean to say, that if they do not *do* the things which Christ did, and follow his commandments, they are none of his. 1 John iii. 24. The same may be said of those branches, which, though they appear to be alive, yet do not bear any thing but *leaves*. Such are those who make a profession of belonging to Christ, and of being living branches—but it is all outward show; they do not bring forth fruit in their hearts, but deceive themselves and others.

WILLIAM. Oh dear Godmamma, I hope I shall not be so useless and ugly a thing, as a dead bough, or bear only *leaves*, for I remember our Lord cursed the fig-tree which had only leaves and no fruit, and it was dried up to the roots; and Mamma told me that Christ meant it as a lesson to those who talk a great deal and do nothing. Now I wish to know something about being made "*a child of God*," for I cannot think how that can be explained. Jesus Christ is the only Son of God you know. How can we be his children, then?

AUNT. My dear Willie, you are the child of your dear parents, their first born son, and your sisters are also their own children, but Mr. and Mrs.

Walker have a little boy and girl whose parents died in India, and whom they have kindly taken as their own, and they love them just as if they were. This is called *adopting* children, and thus the Lord has adopted us; taking us into his family and by baptism assuring us of his love, and if we are good children, Jesus Christ calls us his brethren.

William. When I say again in my prayer "our Father, which art in heaven," I hope I shall remember what you have told me, and love Jesus very much, for making me a child of God, and love my heavenly Father too, for a child ought to love his father and fear to offend him. It is so very good of God to adopt such a naughty little boy as I am, for I have often disobeyed him, and so good of Jesus Christ to own me as his brother and bring me to God.

Aunt. What is the third promise which God has made at your baptism?

William. "That I should be an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." What is an *inheritor?* I do not understand this at all.

Aunt. An inheritor, is one who gains any property by the death of another person. It is the same as an *heir*. Children are, by right, the heirs of their parents, that is to say when the father and mother are dead, their money and land and other

earthly possessions belong to their children. Some inheritors are not relations. Old Mr. Wells who died last week, left his house and money and beautiful garden, to the child of his friend, to whom they now belong. Mr. Wells, before he died, wrote down in the presence of witnesses that he wished Mr. Charles Sidney to be his heir. This is called leaving property by *will.*

WILLIAM. I understand now about inheritors, Aunt; but what has that to do with us and God, and the kingdom of Heaven!

AUNT. Is not heaven, William, the best and happiest of all possessions, and one which we should all be anxious to obtain? All earthly property is worthless in comparison, for it must soon go from us, or we from it; but heaven, if we get it, will be ours for ever. Now the only way we can obtain it, is by Jesus Christ's *death.* He left it us as a *legacy.* (Heb. ix. 15—17.)

SUNDAY EVENING V.

MAN'S PROMISE AT BAPTISM.

AUNT. We are to talk this evening, my love, about the solemn promise which a person makes to God when he is baptized, or which when baptized as an infant, his sponsors make for him. It is called a *vow*, because it is solemnly made to God. Repeat to me that which your godfathers and godmothers then promised for you.

WILLIAM. "They did promise and vow three things in my name; *first*, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. What does *renounce* mean, godmamma?

AUNT. So entirely to give up these things, as to have no more to do with them. Suppose you had made a friend of a little boy whom your papa thought was not a fit companion for you, one who would teach you to disobey your parents, and set you a bad example, and tempt you to do wrong, your father would require you to give him up, so as not to talk to him, or listen to his advice, or follow his example, would he not? Well, just in the same way, God requires you to give up the ways, and the works, and

the advice of the devil. Can you tell me what the devil's works are?

WILLIAM. Sin of all kinds, which the Devil brought into the world, I think.

AUNT. True; and 1 John iii. 8. will prove it. But the sins which we find from the Bible the Devil chiefly practises himself, are pride, malice, envy, revenge, and lying.

WILLIAM. Those are very shocking sins, godmamma, do you think I ever commit them?

AUNT. Examine yourself, William, think a little, and tell me if you recollect doing so!

WILLIAM. Oh, I am afraid I am guilty of the first, mamma told me the other day it was pride which made me not like to be told of my faults; for I almost always feel very much vexed when I am told not to fidget at my lessons, or to take care of my books, and it is not because I am sorry for doing wrong. And then I was *envious*, because my cousin had a larger garden than I have. Dear godmamma, I have indeed broken the promise you have made for me, and have committed the Devil's work.

AUNT. Yes; and I fear we shall find you have broken it in other ways. Let us see; you promise to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," that is, caring more about those things which belong to the body than to the soul, (Col. iii. 1, 2.)

loving very much riches, splendour, fine clothes, houses, furniture, carriages, &c.

WILLIAM. I do not think I care very much about such things, godmamma, though I know that I think more about the happiness of my body than I do about that of my soul.

AUNT. You will find stronger temptations to these sins as you grow older, for under the name of "pomps and vanities" are included all sorts of sinful or trifling amusements, both public and private, that lead to the love of the world, or encourage pride, vanity, envy, deceit, or any of the Devil's works. Now you are a little boy, your parents can keep you from these things, but when you become a man, you will be greatly tempted.

WILLIAM. I hope it will please God to keep my parents alive after I am a man, for then I can ask them what is right.

AUNT. Remember, my dear, you have a teacher and Father in heaven, and his blessed book to study, which is far better than earthly teachers.

WILLIAM. What are the sinful lusts of the flesh, Aunt?

AUNT. All sinful desires or wishes, and the satisfying of them when they arise within us; the Apostle tells us they "war against the soul." 1 Peter, ii. 11. There is one sinful lust which children are very apt

to indulge in, and which is often the beginning of many others which do not show themselves until many years after. This is *greediness;* the liking to eat nice things, and thinking about them; choosing the largest and most tempting cake or apple which may be in the dish. This sin leads to *stealing*, for a child who is *greedy*, will I fear take those things he wishes for without leave; it also tempts him to tell a *lie* to hide his fault; it makes him *selfish*, and not disposed to be kind to others. So you see my dear to what one sin leads, and how much you should strive against the least greediness, or you may become a *thief*, a *liar*, and *selfish*, and as you grow up, these sins would strengthen and increase, so that we know not where they might stop, and certainly all right to being a child of God would be forfeited.

William. I never should have thought that caring about an apple, could have led to so much wickedness. But, oh! godmamma, I remember that it was the very thing that made Eve sin. She thought the forbidden fruit looked so nice, and then ate it; so that it was by her greediness that every sort of sin came into the world.

Aunt. All sins are so connected together, that one leads to another. Eve little thought, when enjoying her apple, that in the course of years the whole world would be destroyed by a flood, because

"God saw that the wickedness of man was *great* upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5. Greediness is one of the works of the Devil, and therefore we should not be surprised if it does so much mischief.

WILLIAM. The second thing promised is, that we will believe all the articles of the Christian faith.

AUNT. What is it to *believe*, my dear?

WILLIAM. To feel quite certain that any thing is true, is it not?

AUNT. Yes, Willie; then we promise to feel quite certain that the Articles of the Christian faith are true.

WILLIAM. But tell me what you mean by *articles?*

AUNT. The word *articles* means all the various *particulars* required for us to believe collected together. Have you never seen in John Taylor's cottage a printed paper, which is framed, and hung against the wall? At the top, in large letters, is put "Articles of the Friendly Society," and then follow the different rules which the members of that Society are obliged to keep. If they want a friend to become a member, they may show him all the rules together; and if they want to know any rule in particular, they can find it directly.

WILLIAM. So then the Articles of our faith are put together that we may tell them to others.

AUNT. Partly so. There are people I am sorry to say who are not Christians; and when any good person wishes to convince them of the error of their way, it is very convenient to have these rules of faith extracted from the Bible, and placed in order; but it is chiefly for our *own* good, that we may examine ourselves by them, learn them by heart, and always keep in mind in whom we are to believe, as well as "render to every man a reason for the hope that is in us." 1 Pet. iii. 15. The Scripture tells us that "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Rom. x. 10. Wherefore in public worship we are directed to stand up and repeat aloud before all the congregation, "the *Creed*," which is another word for belief.

WILLIAM. And that shows we are not ashamed of our belief. I know a text, which says, "He that is ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Papa preached on that last Sunday.

The third thing we promise to do, is to "keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life. The commandments, as well as the articles of our faith, are all put together

further on in the catechism,—but does God's *holy will* mean the same as "commandments," Aunt?

AUNT. My dear, the holy will of God means all he teaches us in the holy Scriptures; though, when we come to examine the commandments, I think we shall find them only an abridgment as it were of all the Bible requires of us. You know what an abridgment is, William?

WILLIAM. It means putting any account in fewer words, does it not?

AUNT. Yes, my dear.

WILLIAM. Why are we made to say, we will *walk* in the commandments?

AUNT. In the Scripture, the keeping of God's commandments is spoken of as a *path* or *way* wherein we are to walk; meaning that we are to act, as you would do, William, if you were walking on a very narrow path, with water on one side and a deep pit on the other. What should you do?

WILLIAM. I should be afraid of making a false step, and therefore should look to my feet to see that I did not stumble; and straight before me, that I might see where I was going, (as I do when crossing the plank over the brook,) but not on either side of me, lest I should fall into the water or into the pit.

AUNT. Read these texts of Scripture, and then you will clearly see the truth and beauty of the ex-

pression, "*walk* in God's holy will and commandments." Josh. xxiii. 6. 2 Kings xxii. 2. Jer. xxxi. 9. You see by the catechism, you are required to walk in God's commandments all the days of your life, never to wander into other paths, but to go straight forwards "looking unto Jesus," (Heb. xii. 2.) who says, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." John xiv. 6.

WILLIAM. If every body looked at Christ I suppose they could not stumble, because he says, "I am the light of the world," John viii. 12. and "He that walketh in the day, stumbleth not." John xi. 9.

AUNT. Christ is the only person that can keep us from falling. (Jude 24.) But we will now proceed. "Do you think you are bound to believe and to do as they have promised for you?" That is to say, "Do you consider yourself obliged to do those things which your sponsors promised for you?"

WILLIAM. "Yes verily, and by God's help so I will. I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end." Why is "verily," put after "yes"?

AUNT. To make your determination stronger. It means "in truth"—"indeed"—"there is no doubt of it." But you see, my dear, by what follows, that

however you may be convinced it is your duty to do these things, you will be unable to do it, unless by God's help. We cannot forsake the world and its vain pleasures, or believe with a *lively* faith, or keep any of the Lord's commandments by ourselves. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

WILLIAM. Oh no, Godmamma, because our nature is wicked you know; but when God has changed our naughty hearts we can.

AUNT. Yes, my dear, because God then "worketh in us and with us by His Holy Spirit," (Phil. ii. 13.) who dwells in our new hearts, and teaches them what is right.

WILLIAM. What does the Catechism mean by "a state of salvation"?

AUNT. Having been put in the way of being saved,—being made in Baptism a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; being enabled by God's Spirit to renounce the world and sin, to believe in Christ, and to show our faith by keeping his commandments. Those persons who are baptized have a free offer of these blessings. It is as if I were to open the gate of a beautiful flower garden and say, "Run into it, William, and take possession; all these things are yours if you think them worth having: I have bought them for you." Jesus Christ has bought for you, those

baptismal blessings, and they will never be taken from you, unless you despise and neglect them. But as it is only by God's grace or favor, that you can have them, (for you do not deserve them) so, it is only by God's grace or favour, that you can continue to value them, or remain in the same state of salvation.

WILLIAM. Yes; I think I know what you mean. If you were to give me the beautiful flower-garden, *I might* refuse to have it, or I might get tired of it, and leave off taking care of it, and then you would take it from me.

AUNT. Just so it is with your spiritual blessings. Many who have had them offered to them, as you have, William, when old enough to value them, turn away from them, love the world better than heaven; love their sins better than their Saviour, and cannot bear to be "holy as he is holy."

PART II.

ON THE CREED.

THE APOSTLE'S CREED.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; 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 arose 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. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. AMEN.

SUNDAY EVENING VI.

DIVISION I.

WILLIAM. What is the Apostles Creed?

AUNT. A statement of what they believed, and which has always been used in the Christian Church from an early period.

WILLIAM. How must I believe it?

AUNT. There are two different ways of believing, William—believing with the head or understanding merely, and believing with the heart.

WILLIAM. Do try to explain to me the difference.

AUNT. I will if you will attend. Suppose that on looking into the newspaper I see the accounts of the deaths of *two* persons, printed one beneath the other. As I glance at the *first*, I see it is a name I do not know, of a person I have never even heard of; and though I feel quite sure he is dead from the particulars mentioned, I do not feel any *sorrow* on his account. Perhaps the thought might pass my mind, "I dare say many grieve for his loss, though I cannot, and without laying down the paper, my eye rests on the second name. I see with surprise and anxiety, that it is that of a very dear friend—his christian name; his sirname; his abode; the same age as his; I can have no doubt upon the subject. I do not *believe* so quickly as in the former case—I do not take it at first for granted; but I weigh every particular, and when at last I am fully convinced, I burst into tears, and give way to the most heartfelt sorrow. I arouse myself from this to see if I can be of any use to the family of my deceased friend; I write a letter to offer my services, and am ready to go any distance to serve them, without considering the inconvenience to myself. If I find any directions have been left me, in my friend's Will, I am ready to obey them at all risks, to prove my love to him. Now William, you see these two beliefs would cause

me to act very differently; the first I believed with cold indifference, but the last came so fully home to my own heart, that it made a lasting impression on it. Thus, a person may believe there is a God, because he sees no reason to doubt it; but it is a question which does not interest him, and therefore has no effect on his feelings or conduct. He may believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners, but either he will not think himself a sinner, or he does not know Jesus as *his* Saviour, as *his* friend, and therefore, both his life and death are indifferent to him. Read Lam. i. 12, there the Lord Jesus by his prophet reproaches men for their indifference to him.

WILLIAM. Thank you, dear Aunt, you have made it very plain; the true believer is the same as the living branch of the vine, or the member of Christ's body—he would be interested in all the Bible says of Jesus, because he loves him, (as you would love your friend,) and he would take pleasure in doing his will in all things.

AUNT. We will now proceed to consider the Apostle's Creed, which may be divided into four great parts or divisions. 1st. relates to God the Father—2nd. to God the Son—3rd. to God the Holy Ghost; and the 4th relates to the Church and its privileges. These four parts are again subdivided into twelve Articles, all taken from the Scriptures,

and these you know are so placed in the Broken Catechism; but it would not be convenient in our conversations, to confine ourselves to only one article each time, as we shall have more to say about some, than about others. We will proceed now to consider the first part of the Apostle's Creed.

God the Father, "Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth."

My dear child, can you tell me who God is?

William. I learnt in Dr. Watts' Catechism, "God is a Spirit, and though we cannot see Him, yet He sees and knows all things, and He can do all things."

Aunt. The attributes or qualities of God cannot be expressed in easier words. A spirit cannot be seen, because it has no body, and therefore is invisible; yet He sees all things, sees every thing we are doing at all times, in the dark, as well as in the light; and what seems still more wonderful, He can see every thing in heaven, and on earth, at the same moment, in the sun and moon and stars, and all the planets at once.

William. It is indeed very wonderful. Why I cannot see my Bible and your face at the same time, though it is on the table, and you are sitting close by; and if it was dark, I am sure you could not see what I was about—it is only God who can be *all*-seeing.

AUNT. Besides this, God is *omnipresent;* that is, present in every place at the same time. If He were not, it would be in vain for His creatures to ask Him to take care of them.

WILLIAM. Yes, I understand why; for while attending to *our* wants, He would not be able to attend to the wants of others who needed His care at the same time.

AUNT. It is indeed a comforting thought, but a very awful one too; for, as we see that God could not take care of us, and see our wants, and hear our prayers, if he was not all-seeing and omnipresent; so we must also remember, that he sees all we do, and nothing is hid from Him. You would try to be good if I were present, but how much rather when the great God is always near you? You said besides, that "God knows all things." That is called his *omniscience*, from two Latin words which mean "knowledge of every thing."

WILLIAM. How wonderful God's knowledge must be!

AUNT. We think a person very clever, who understands one or two things tolerably well. The Duke of Wellington is very clever as a great General, and a Statesman; and Sir Isaac Newton had much knowledge of the heavenly bodies; and the persons who planned and built Salisbury Cathedral

were very clever as architects and builders; but what are these, when compared with the knowledge of Him, who made the earth, and every thing belonging *to it*, who hung the earth, and all the planets in space, and who preserves them in their various courses? Besides, God knows the inmost secrets and thoughts of our hearts, and our reasons and motives for acting as we do. Should we not therefore say with David, "Cleanse thou me, O Lord, from my secret faults?" salm xix. 20.

WILLIAM. How ignorant the cleverest man must seem in the sight of God! He can also "*do all things*," that is what the word *Almighty* means, is it not?

AUNT. Yes, my dear, and it is also expressed by the word *omnipotent*, or all-powerful. There is nothing too great for God to do. What do you think, William, the *greatest* thing which you know, of God's doing?

WILLIAM. The great hurricanes in the West Indies, and earthquakes like that at Lisbon, and the volcanoes, Godmamma; but these are only what I have read of. I think the most wonderful thing I ever saw, was the sea with its great waves coming roaring up the shore, and then they never go higher than a certain mark, and return back again.

AUNT. Only Almighty power could keep the

waves in obedience; and it is indeed beautiful, and wonderful, to watch them under the control of Omnipotence; but God has done greater things than these, although it is one of the most astonishing proofs of his creating power. I will read to you Job xxxviii. 8—11.

William. Thank you, dear Aunt. Let me now guess again; perhaps you mean some of the miracles which He performed by His prophets? or those which the Lord Jesus performed while on earth? increasing the oil in the widow's cruse?—or raising her son to life?—or bringing Lazarus to life, after he had been buried four days?

Aunt. None but God could do such wonderful things, my dear, either by the hands of His prophets, or immediately by Himself; but is there nothing which God alone does, without giving the same power to any human being?

William. Do you mean, Aunt, changing our naughty hearts? or saving us from our sins?

Aunt. Both the one and the other, my dear boy. If the Lord takes away our heart of stone, and gives us a new heart—a "heart of flesh," (Ezek. ii. 19) it is a greater miracle than raising even a dead body to life; and "that God indeed should dwell on the earth;" (2 Chron. vi. 18) take upon Him our nature, and become obedient unto death, even the death of

the cross, (Phil. ii. 8) is what angels desire to look into," (1 Pet. i. 12,) and will form the subject of perpetual wonder and praise throughout eternity. Rev. v. 9—14.

WILLIAM. I know now, why *Almighty* is so often put to the name of God at the beginning of the Collects and prayers, to remind us of all the great things He has done, and is ready to do for us.

AUNT. We should have reason to dread the power of the Great God, my dear boy, were it not for the kind word which comes before "Almighty" in the Creed, and which removes a part of our fears.

WILLIAM. You mean "*Father*." Yes, that is a dear word, Godmamma; and I know who has told us to call God "Father:" it was His own dear Son, who taught us when we pray, to say "Our Father who art in heaven." And you told me one day, that by saying "*our* Father," Jesus Christ owned us as his brethren, and that we had no right to call God "our Father," except by means of His Son.

AUNT. Look now at the first verse in the Bible, William, and you will see, that God created the heaven and the earth.

WILLIAM. I will ask mamma to let me read the whole chapter to her by and bye. Please to tell me the difference between *making* any thing and *creating* it.

AUNT. *Creation* is generally used to express that which is made by God, as it signifies making things out of nothing. When a man makes any thing, he must have materials—a table or house could not be made without wood and stone, and tools; while those trees from which the wood is cut, and the rocks from which the stone was dug, were created by the *word* of God. "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." Psalm xxxiii. 9. You remember the way in which God began the work of Creation.

WILLIAM. "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light." Gen. i. 3.

AUNT. Nothing can explain the power of God in creation, more than those few words. We will wait until next Sunday to talk about the second division of the Creed.

SUNDAY EVENING VII.

DIVISION II.

GOD THE SON.

"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."

AUNT. My dear Willie has not now to be taught who the Lord Jesus Christ is, for, thanks to God, who has given him such parents, he has learnt much about his soul, and the Holy Scriptures, of which many children know nothing.

WILLIAM. Yes, dear Aunt, I have often been told about Jesus. Before I knew anything else, papa and mamma, used to tell me such beautiful stories about his being born in Bethlehem, and about the Shepherds who were watching their flocks by night, and who saw a bright light shining around them, and a multitude of beautiful angels who sang so sweetly, and who were sent by God on purpose to tell the poor shepherds that His Son the great Messiah, who was promised in the Old Testament, was born at the nearest town; and they were told, that they should not find him in a grand house, or lying in a beautiful

cradle, or dressed in fine clothes, as the child of a great queen; but sleeping in the manger of a stable, and wrapped in swaddling clothes, that is, bound round and round with bands, mamma says, which is the way the poor babies in the East are dressed. His mother was a poor young woman of Nazareth, a small town of Galilee, and her name was Mary.

AUNT. Yes, my dear, and the Bible tells us the angel of God named Gabriel, came to her house and told her, that she should have a son, who was to be the Messiah, and that his name should be called Jesus, and "he should be called the Son of the Highest." Luke i. 31, 32; and when Mary could scarcely believe for joy, that such an honour was intended her, the angel said to her, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Luke i. 35.

WILLIAM. And Mary then believed; for she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." I dare say she was very happy to be the mother of Jesus.

AUNT. Doubtless she was; but she still remained humble and lowly, as she was before, owning Jesus as her *Lord*, more than as her *Son;* for she attended to what he said at all times. Some persons called

Papists, or Roman Catholics, are taught to worship and pray to the Virgin Mary, but any one who reads his bible must see, that our Lord never considered her as raised above other women.

WILLIAM. Yes; I remember how he spoke to her at the marriage of Cana, in Galilee. Mamma told me, that "*woman*," means "lady" in the East; so our Saviour did not speak rudely to his mother, but only told her, that *he* being God, knew better than she could know, what to do. If he had not said this, perhaps the Jews would have thought that she helped to perform the miracle, which you know she could not do, unless God had given her the power.

AUNT. Jesus Christ is as you have been taught then, the only Son of God, although by consenting to have an earthly mother, he was born as man of the Virgin Mary. I will tell you a few texts in the Old Testament which foretold this. Isa. vii. 14.—Isa. ix. 6.—Micah v. 2. Did any besides the shepherds believe in the infant Jesus?

WILLIAM. Yes; good old Simeon when he saw him in the temple, took him up in his arms, and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for my eyes have seen thy salvation:" for the spirit of God had told him, that he should not die "till he had seen the Lord Christ." And besides him, there was "Anna," a good old

woman, who lived in the temple, "and served God with fastings and prayers night and day."

AUNT. And you see she was not satisfied with acknowledging Jesus as her Saviour by herself; for she told the glad tidings "to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem."

WILLIAM. How very kind it was of God the Father, to let his only Son come down from heaven for our sakes! I sometimes think, Godmamma, that as I am an only son, my papa and mamma would be very sorry to part with me, though I am sometimes a naughty child, and disobedient to them; but Jesus was obedient to his Father in all things, and to his earthly mother, and adopted father too,—for the Bible says, he went with his parents to Nazareth, and became subject to them. Luke ii. 31.

AUNT. Do you know why Jesus is called *our Lord*, Willie?

WILLIAM. Is it not because we are to obey him? for, being God, we must pay him the same obedience which we owe the Father Almighty.

AUNT. Yes my dear. If he is our Lord, we are his servants, and we are bound to serve him. In the Rev. xix. 16, Christ is called "King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." He is our monarch, our sovereign, and we should be his loyal and faithful subjects. Of Christ's kingdom, "there shall be no

end," Luke i. 33. for he will always reign over his faithful followers. Jesus himself claimed this title; for he said (John xiii. 13.) to his disciples, "Ye call me master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am."

William. Now Godmamma, let us find out about Pontius Pilate. In the first verse of the third chapter of St. Luke, we read, that he was governor of Judea at the time our Saviour lived on earth. But why had not the Jews a king, Godmamma, like David and Hezekiah?

Aunt. They had offended God by their idolatry and disobedience, so He took away all their honours from them, and sent the Romans, who were such mighty conquerors, to take possession of their land. The emperor of Rome, Tiberius Cesar, had appointed Pontius Pilate to manage the affairs of Judea for him, as he was too far off to superintend them himself. In like manner, our Queen appoints governors over the distant countries, which belong to England. What sort of a governor do you think Pilate was?

William. I should think a very unjust one; for he delivered Jesus up to his enemies, though he said, "he found no cause of death in him." He was also very cruel, for (Luke xiii. 1,) we read of Pilate putting to death some Galileans at the time when they were sacrificing.

AUNT. Your character is quite a true one, he showed unnecessary cruelty to the Jews from the beginning of his government, the Roman history states, for he provoked the Jews, by bringing the bucklers or shields, stamped with the image of the Roman Emperor into Jerusalem, which was a great insult to them; and nothing but the command of Tiberius, could prevail on him to remove them. His injustice was also shown by his seizing on their "corban," or sacred treasure, to build an aqueduct with. Having thus maltreated the Jews, Pilate "willing to content the people," and render himself more popular, became still more cruel and unjust, by condemning the innocent Jesus.

WILLIAM. But why is Pontius Pilate's being governor, made an article of our belief?

AUNT. Because it fixes the *time* of our Lord's death. The Roman historians all agree as to the period, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, so that no one can doubt the time when Christ suffered. Do you know *what* Jesus suffered, Willie?

WILLIAM. He was crucified. Papa told me it was a Roman punishment, which was only used for the lowest criminals or slaves. Oh! dear Aunt, what a shocking death it must be! to be nailed on a cross of wood, by the hands and feet! and before

his crucifixion, he was scourged and buffeted. What is that Aunt?

AUNT. They signify two modes of beating. The scourge was a terrible whip, made of a number of cords tied together; and *buffeting* means, smiting with the hand. But our Lord endured greater sufferings than these: I mean the sufferings of his mind, because he bore the weight of the sins of the whole world. When you have been naughty, William, and your father is angry with you, how do you feel?

WILLIAM. Very unhappy. I do not enjoy any thing, from the thought of what I have done; papa's anger makes me forget every thing else.

AUNT. Then in some measure you can understand how very much your Saviour must have suffered, when he felt that he was bearing the punishment due to the sins of every one who ever lived, or who ever shall live, and the entire wrath of his heavenly Father against this load of sin. And all this, while he was perfectly innocent of the least sin, "holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners." This pressed so terribly upon him, that we read when in the garden of Gethsemane, he was in such an agony, that the blood was forced through his skin, and fell in large drops on the ground. (Luke xxii. 44.)

WILLIAM. Oh! how we ought to hate sin, if it brought such sufferings on the Son of God!

AUNT. And these are not half his sufferings, for who can tell them all? But I wish you, my dear, to read over the chapters that principally relate to these sufferings. (Matt. xxvi. 27—Mark xiv. 15—Luke xxii. 23—John xviii. 19.) before next Sunday, and write on your slate the remainder of them, which you find there.

WILLIAM. Oh yes, dear Aunt; and you know next Friday is Good Friday, the day on which Christ suffered. It will be a nice employment for that day,—will it not? and perhaps my sisters will help me to find out the texts.

SUNDAY EVENING VIII.

"Dead and Buried."

WILLIAM. As you were pleased with the texts I wrote out about the sufferings of Jesus, I thought that I would ask mamma to let me copy out a few more about his death and burial.

AUNT. Well my love, and what have you to tell me about the death and burial of the Lord Jesus?

WILLIAM. The last words that Jesus spake before

he died, were, "It is finished"—and "Father, into Thy hand I commend my spirit." (John xix. 30, Luke xxiii. 46.) Why did Jesus say, "It is finished," Godmamma? and what is meant by "giving up the Ghost?"

AUNT. When Jesus said, "It is finished," he meant, that all the prophecies relating to him were accomplished, that he had "finished the work his Father had given him to do," (John xvii. 4.) and that every thing necessary for the salvation of man, had been performed. After this, to show that his life was not "taken from him," (as he says, John x. 18,) "but that he laid it down of himself"—he cried with a loud voice, and permitted his ghost or soul to depart from its earthly habitation. His crying out so loud, proved that he did not die from any want of power to live, but that as the time was come, when all was fulfilled, he would dismiss his spirit.

WILLIAM. When *people* die, Godmamma, it is when God pleases their souls should go, and not when they choose themselves. That is the difference, is it not? between the dying of men, women and children, and the dying of the Son of God?

AUNT. Just so my dear. The other words Jesus used, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," are such as every dying follower of Christ, should be ready to utter. Then did the Roman centurion, a

heathen, exclaim, "Truly this was a righteous man;" and the people who had before cried out, "Crucify him," "smote their breasts and returned." As a proof that he was dead, "a soldier pierced his side with a spear," and thus was the prophecy fulfilled about him. Zech. xii. 10.

WILLIAM. Oh! dear Aunt, I do so pity those poor women, who had stayed all the time "looking on afar off," (Luke xxiii. 49.) hoping I dare say, that he would save himself after all; and some of them, his own mother, and his aunt, and Mary Magdalene, who loved him so much, stood close by the cross, till the last. What must the Virgin Mary have felt, when she heard her dear son say to her, "Woman, behold thy son!" meaning his favourite disciple John, and then to *him:* "Behold thy mother." Oh! I can scarcely help crying, whenever I read those words. I dare say, John took great care of her as long as she lived.

AUNT. It must have been a bitter parting for her, but we cannot but think the Virgin Mary must have looked on her son in a different way from others. From his earliest years, she pondered all his sayings in her heart, and knew him to be the Son of God. So we may hope by God's power, she had learned to feel, that her own soul's salvation, as well as that of the whole world, depended on his death. Now

what can you tell me of the burial of our Lord, which is made an article of our faith, since had he not been *buried*, we should not have had such sure proof of his death and resurrection?

WILLIAM. I suppose not; for a person could not be alive, who was laid in a grave with a large stone upon it.

AUNT. I should like you first, to tell me what was done to the body to prepare it for the grave; then, what kind of sepulchre it was; and thirdly, how the prophecies relating to his burial were fulfilled.

WILLIAM. I read first, that the body was prepared with spices, and wrapped in linen clothes. This was the manner of burying among the Jews; for Joseph you know, was embalmed, and he caused his father Jacob's body, to be embalmed by his servants and physicians. (Genesis l.) Lazarus was wrapped in linen clothes; for the Bible says, "he came out, bound hand and foot, with grave clothes." Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, (the same timid disciple, who came to Jesus by night,) made a present of the spices, (John xix. 39, 40.) and mamma tells me, they cost a great deal, and you know, most of Christ's disciples were very poor. Then as to the sepulchre, I do not quite understand what sort of grave it was:—how could Peter and John, go into it?

AUNT. My dear boy, you must not think of the grave of our Lord, as like the graves used in this country. In Judea, and indeed in a great part of the East, they were caves either cut in the sides of the rocks, or perhaps natural caverns, formed by art into a convenient place for containing dead bodies: when any body was laid in the tomb, people rolled a large stone to the entrance of the cave, and thus the burial was completed.

WILLIAM. I understand it now. The cave where Jesus was laid, was in a garden near the place where Jesus was crucified, and it belonged to Joseph, a rich man, who lived at Arimathea, and who was a counsellor. What was that office, Aunt?

AUNT. A Jewish counsellor, was a member of the Sanhedrim, or great Council of the Jews, which regulated all the affairs of the nation; and it was by this council, that our Lord was condemned; but St. Luke tells us, (xxiii. 51,) that Joseph had not consented to their deed.

WILLIAM. No, I am sure he would not, for "he was a good man and a just," (Luke xxiii. 51,) and loved the Lord Jesus. St. Mark says, (xv. 43,) "he was waiting for the kingdom of God." St. Matthew says, he was "Jesus' disciple;" but St. John tells of a little fault in his character, Godmam-

ma, "that he was only his disciple *in secret*, for fear of *the Jews*." So I am afraid, he feared man more than God.

AUNT. His timidity was his besetting sin, William, but notice how the Lord can remove the greatest hindrances from his true children. What does St. Mark say of him after Christ's death? was he timid then?

WILLIAM. Oh no, Aunt; "he went boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus." Now it *must* have been God who *made* him so bold; for he would naturally have been more afraid after his master was dead.

AUNT. St. Paul says, "I can do *all* things through Christ which strengtheneth me." But what did Joseph do with the body?

WILLIAM. He bought some very fine linen, and wrapped it in the spices which Nicodemus had given, and then laid it in his own new sepulchre, rolled the great stone to the mouth, and departed.

AUNT. Very well, my dear. How is it you remember so much about this?

WILLIAM. Because mamma told me to read the account in each Gospel about Joseph, and tell her what was said in one, that was not said in the others, and I liked finding out the difference so much.

AUNT. It is indeed a very interesting way of studying the history of the Bible. But now my dear, tell me what prophecies were fulfilled?

WILLIAM. I do not know, Aunt: please to tell me.

AUNT. Open at Isaiah liii. 9, and read.

WILLIAM (reads.) Oh! I know who the rich were,—Nicodemus and Joseph; but why are they called wicked?

AUNT. Bishop Lowth, a very learned man, who understood Hebrew very well, (in which language the Old Testament was written) says, that it is a mistake in the translation, and ought to be, "he made his grave with the rich, and with the wicked was his death."

WILLIAM. Yes; that would be much better I think; for you know what wicked thieves he died with. Was there any other prophecy about Christ's burial, Aunt?

AUNT. Our Lord himself foretold it. When Mary brought the ointment to anoint his feet, Jesus said, when others rebuked her, "she hath done it for my burial." Now my dear, we have talked longer than usual to night, so we will not find any more texts at present. Good night.

SUNDAY EVENING IX.

"He descended into hell; the third day he arose again from the dead."

WILLIAM. I am so longing to get on with the Creed, Godmamma; as I seem to understand that part we have talked about, so much better than the rest. It is very pleasant to spend my Sunday evenings in this way; I almost count the days, till Sunday comes again. All this week I have been wanting to ask you about Jesus going to *hell*, I do not like to say the name of such a shocking place; why did He who was so *good* go there?

AUNT. The word hell in the Creed, according to the general opinion of divines in our church, does not mean the everlasting dwelling of the wicked, my dear; they think it would be more proper if the word *Hades* were used, which means "the place of departed spirits," the place where the soul goes, when it leaves the body, till the great judgment day.

WILLIAM. Can you tell me any thing about that place, Godmamma.

AUNT. No, my dear, it has not pleased God to reveal any particulars about it; and, once for all, I

wish to impress upon your mind, that those things which God has not seen fit, in His wisdom, to tell us about, we ought never to pry into. Had it been for our good, we should have known it. We are assured of this, that the souls of God's children are very happy directly after death, as we may learn from the parable of "the rich man and Lazarus," where we are told, that Lazarus, as soon as he was dead, was carried by angels into "*Abraham's bosom*," (the name which the Jews gave to Hades) and our Lord told the penitent thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in *Paradise*," which was another name for Hades.

WILLIAM. What passage in Scripture is this article taken from, Godmamma ?

AUNT. Open at Acts ii.; it is St. Peter's first Sermon after the day of Pentecost; he is speaking of the certainty of the Resurrection, and quoting several verses from xvith Ps. 8—11, he applies it to our Lord, especially the tenth verse; for he says, "He (David) seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption." But as our duty here, is only to believe the fact, without having our curiosity at all gratified, I think we had best proceed to the next article, the resurrection of our Lord.

WILLIAM. And although it is so wonderful, it has

pleased God to tell us a great deal about *that*. I think I like to read those *last* chapters in the Gospels, better than any in the New Testament, except the account of our Lord's birth.

AUNT. The creed says, "the third day he arose again from the dead." We will try, William, to find out the proofs of this article.

WILLIAM. Do tell me why it says, the *third* day? for Jesus was crucified on Good Friday, and rose from the dead early on Sunday morning, Easter day; so there was only one whole day for him to be in the grave, and parts of two others.

AUNT. The Greeks and the Hebrews, in reckoning *time*, always included the day on which any event began; and also the day on which it ceased. So that the day on which he died, was considered *one day;* the Saturday on which he lay in the grave, was reckoned as *two;* and the day on which he arose, was the third day. Our Lord had himself foretold the time, when he said to the Jews, speaking of his body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Now William, what proofs do you find in the Bible, that Jesus rose from the dead?

WILLIAM. I think there are a great many. He appeared so often to his disciples, who were mourning for him—to the two disciples, who were walking to Emmaus—to Mary Magdalene—(John xx.) and

twice to the disciples (Luke xxiv.) when shut up in a room at Jerusalem, where they had assembled; (John xx.) and besides that, to Peter, and James, and John, and Thomas, and Nathaniel; and two others at the Lake of Tiberias, (John xxi.) They could could not have been all mistaken, Godmamma.

AUNT. No, my love, and it is very clear testimony; but wicked unbelieving men might say, that these witnesses were all Christ's *friends*, and therefore they might be *interested* in declaring these particulars. Can you tell me if any of Christ's *enemies* bore witness to his resurrection?

WILLIAM. Let me think. The soldiers that Pilate sent to watch the grave, saw him rise; *they* were his enemies, were they not?

AUNT. Yes, my dear; and thus we see, how God ordered everything, that there should be no possibility of doubt, by making the servants of his enemies bear witness to the truth. Read the account of it in Matt. xxvii. and xxviii.

WILLIAM. (reads) . . . And so the wicked priests and Pharisees, who wanted the guard, in order to prevent our Lord's prophecy from coming to pass, found that the soldiers were to bear witness to its truth. Though they were paid to be silent, they could not be so, if God meant them to tell it, and I dare say they told it to many.

AUNT. At all events the chief priests were told of it. But these were not the only witnesses to our Lord's resurrection—these were earthly witnesses—there were heavenly ones besides.

WILLIAM. Oh! you mean those beautiful angels clothed in white, who appeared to the keepers; and to Mary, and Peter and John, (John xx. 12,) and then the earthquake! Godmamma: that seemed like the voice of God saying, that something very wonderful was happening.

AUNT. Now having found that our Lord *arose*, let us find some texts to prove that he "rose from the *dead*," in order to show that with the same body that had died, and been buried, he rose again.

WILLIAM. Do you not remember about Thomas, when he said, he would not believe that Jesus was risen, unless he was allowed to put his fingers in the print of the nails, and his hands into his side? and then our Lord appeared again, and made him do so. (John xx. 24, 25.) I am sure that proves it to have been the same body that was so cruelly treated on the cross.

AUNT. And the first time he appeared to the eleven, (when they were afraid, and thought it must be his spirit, without his body, as they had seen his body buried,) Jesus said, "Behold that it is I myself; handle me, and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and

bones, as ye see me have," and then he ate food before them, to show, that it was a *real* body.

WILLIAM. Nothing could be plainer, but I should like you very much to tell me the chief uses of Christ's resurrection to us.

AUNT. My dear, it makes us feel a certainty about the resurrection of our own bodies, as we see, Romans viii. 11, Christ being our *head;* we, who are his members, must rise with him.

WILLIAM. Oh! I remember very well, all you told me about "the members of Christ," and the union of all true believers to him. Dear Godmamma I am very glad that Jesus rose from the dead, so as to make it sure, that we should do so too; for it would be very sad, when any person was buried that we loved, if we had no hopes of seeing them again, as we had been used to see them. But still it does seem very difficult to understand *how* the same body which is turned to dust, should ever again have life in it.

AUNT. The God who made us first out of the dust of the earth, could surely again unite the same dust, and give a new life to it. But in God's works we are shown many changes of a like nature, which are sufficient to strengthen our faith in the doctrine of the resurrection.

WILLIAM. Do tell me some of them, Aunt.

AUNT. Look first in your Bible, William, and see what God Himself says about it. 1 Cor. xv. 35—38.

WILLIAM. (*reads.*) Then the corn which is sown in the field, represents the body when laid in the grave. I am sure a grain of wheat, or one of my sweet pea seeds, both look as if they had no life in them, when I put them into the ground; but it is when they perish in the earth, that the pretty green shoots spring out of them.

AUNT. And observe the trees, which in the winter are quite stripped of leaves, and seem like dead sticks.

WILLIAM. Oh! yes Aunt. My little horse-chesnut that I planted myself, and had such fine branches of spreading leaves, first turned yellow, then brown, in the autumn, and the leaves fell off one by one, till it was quite bare; and I was so sorry about it, for I thought it was quite dead. But the gardener told me, not to mind, for it would have more and finer leaves in the spring—and so it had; for the great buds came first, and then such large leaves; and it had two blossoms—such beautiful blossoms!—and last autumn, Godmamma, when its leaves fell, I was not at all afraid about it.

AUNT. Your tree is a good representation of the resurrection, for although we shall have the same bodies again, yet the bodies of Christ's members, will

be glorified. (1 Cor. xv. 42, 43.) Our bodies now often tempt us to sin, but *then*, they will be all holy, and pure, and without anything that is evil. But I must not forget to tell you of another very exact type of the Resurrection.

WILLIAM. What is a *type*, Godmamma?

AUNT. The representation of one thing by another, that is more easily understood, or perceived. Thus God commanded the offering up of a Lamb as a sacrifice, to be a type or representation of Jesus, who was to be offered up for the sins of men.

WILLIAM. What was the type of the resurrection you were speaking of?

AUNT. I was alluding to the changes which take place in the butterfly.

WILLIAM. I know. Papa brought me one day, some little eggs on a leaf; they were about the size of a pin's head, and after some time they became little worms, and then turned into great senseless dead looking things, which I was going to throw away; but papa told me to keep one, (he called it a chrysalis) and in a few days, there crept out of it such a lovely butterfly, with red, and purple, and black wings!

AUNT. Does not the chrysalis, without beauty, or apparent life, represent a dead body? And does not the butterfly in all its life and splendour, represent a *glorious* body rising from the tomb?

WILLIAM. Oh! yes, dear Aunt; I am sure that is a beautiful type. I shall ask papa, if he will find me some more little eggs, that I may watch the change again, and think of the resurrection.

AUNT. There is another great use in the belief of Christ's resurrection; to remind us that we must act as living members. The Bible says, (Rom. vi. 4.) "As Christ was raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father; even so, should we walk in newness of life." For us "to live as it were in the graves of sin, while Christ is risen from the dead," would be very unlike his followers; our *souls* should be raised from earthly things—"our affections should be set on things above." St. Paul says to the sinner, "Awake thou, that sleepest, and *arise from the dead*, and Christ shall give thee light." This resurrection from sin, is called, Rev. xx. 6, "the *first* resurrection."

WILLIAM. I shall try to remember that text, "Awake, thou that sleepest," &c.: for perhaps it would stop me, when I am inclined to be naughty, disobedient, idle, or selfish.

AUNT. God grant it may, my dear boy—Good night—It is past your usual hour.

SUNDAY EVENING X.

"He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father, Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

WILLIAM. I know the meaning of "to ascend," dear Aunt,—"to go up." So we shall only have to find some proofs, that Jesus did go up into heaven.

AUNT. Let us find out, if any were present at the time, that Christ arose, and if it happened in a retired place?

WILLIAM. St. Matthew does not mention it; St. Mark says, "after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven." St. Luke's account is, "and he led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands and blessed them: and it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Was not Bethany the place near to Jerusalem, where Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary lived, and where Jesus so often went with his disciples?

AUNT. Yes, it was the same place, and therefore the ascension must have been generally known: and

most likely generally seen by the people of the place.

WILLIAM. At all events, the Apostles were with him; but St. John does not say any thing about it. Is there no other account of this wonderful event, Aunt?

AUNT. Yes; in the Acts of the Apostles, written by St. Luke, and dedicated to the same Theophilus, to whom he addressed his gospel. He continues his account from the day previous to the ascension.

WILLIAM reads Acts i. 9—11. See—Jesus did not ascend, while his disciples were looking another way, (as if they only missed him from their side) but as he was talking to them, he began to ascend, for "*while they beheld*, the cloud received him out of their sight:" and they continued looking up after him for a long time.

AUNT. In the clear atmosphere of an Eastern sky, most likely they were enabled to see their ascending Lord for some time, as he rose farther and farther from the earth; until at last, a cloud received him, or hindered all further view of him. Who do you think the two men were, William?

WILLIAM. "Two men in white apparel!" Where have I read of such before? O it was in St. Luke's Gospel: he speaks of "two men in shining gar-

ments," who were at the tomb of our Lord. I suppose they were angels like the others! But if he means angels, why does he call them men?

AUNT. Either they were persons of the same nature as ourselves, who were sent from the regions above, to tell those members of Christ's body, who were still on earth, that their Head had just entered the courts of heaven; or the Evangelist may mean, that they took the form of men, in order that they might be visible to the eyes of the Apostles.

WILLIAM. What is an Evangelist?

AUNT. The word means, "a bearer of glad tidings;"—and St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John, are so called, because having written (by the teaching of the Spirit) the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, they seem in a peculiar manner, to deserve that title, though all preachers of the Gospel, may properly be called Evangelists.

WILLIAM. Was there any prophecy relating to Christ's ascension, Godmamma?

AUNT. David in the lxviiith Psalm, speaking of the greatness and majesty of Jehovah, says, verse 18, "Thou hast ascended up on high," &c.; and St. Paul, Ephesians iv. tells us, that this referred to Christ's ascension, as it could only be said of a person who *had* been on earth, that he *ascended.* Now God the Father did not take our nature upon him,

but God the Son did; so that this prophecy must relate to him.

WILLIAM. It must have been a great comfort to his disciples, to see him enter again his Father's kingdom; when only a few days before, they saw him laid in the grave.

AUNT. Yes, doubtless it was; and we see from that time, the ideas of the disciples became more spiritual, for they began to see, that their master's kingdom was not of this world, and to enter into the meaning of his promises. Two of our Lord's servants were permitted some communication with him, after his ascension: one was St. Stephen, the first of the martyrs.

WILLIAM. What is a martyr, Aunt?

AUNT. A martyr, is one who suffers death for the sake of his faith. There were many who endured martyrdom from the Roman Emperors, being torn by wild beasts, or tortured in various ways, because they would not deny Jesus, and sacrifice to their false gods; and in the English history, we read of men, women, and children, who in the reign of the wicked Queen Mary, were burnt in the flames, because they would not worship images, own the Pope as head of the church, and subscribe to the many errors and follies of the Roman Church, though it professed to be called Christian.

WILLIAM. How could people be so wicked and cruel, as to act in that manner! and what faith the martyrs must have had! Do tell me what death St. Stephen suffered?

AUNT. Read Acts vii.; especially from verse 54 to the end.

WILLIAM (reads). Oh! how shocking to stone so good a man; yet he seems to have been very happy in his death. I suppose Jesus appeared to him, to give him *strength*. But who was the other person that saw our Lord, when ascended?

AUNT. I alluded to St. Paul; but he did not *see* him, I think, as St. Stephen did; but saw a great light, and heard his voice speaking to him. You will find the whole account, Acts ix. It is right to notice, my dear, that the Creed says of our Lord, "He ascended *into heaven:*" that is to say, into the same place from whence he came; according as he told his disciples: "What, and if ye should see the Son of man, ascend up where he was before." It was the inner and highest heaven of heavens—"for the entrance of the High Priest, once a year, into the holy of holies," clothed in a pure white robe, was a type of Jesus our great High Priest, who clothed in our *flesh*, yet without spot, entered the highest heavens.

WILLIAM. What then, he did not give up his earthly body, when he went back to heaven?

AUNT. No, my dear; do you not remember that the Apostles saw his body go up? therefore, a body of the same nature as ours, and in which God has deigned to dwell, is now exalted at the right hand of God the Father?

WILLIAM. Why on the right hand?

AUNT. Because it is a mark of the greatest honour and distinction, signifying that he was raised above all angels, principalities and powers; and that our Lord did sit, and still does sit at the right hand of God, the Scriptures plainly show. Christ speaking to the Pharisees of himself, (Matthew xxii. 42,) quoted David's words: "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my *right* hand," &c., and Heb. i. 13: "For to which of his angels said he, at any time, sit thou on my right hand," &c.; and read Rom. viii. 34.—1 Pet. iii. 22.

WILLIAM. Then all it means is, that Christ, after he ascended, was exalted to the place of the greatest honour in heaven—Jesus, who had suffered so much on earth, was now received by his Almighty Father, with every mark of love and honour. How very happy he must have felt, to think of all the good he had done for man!

AUNT. And still is doing, for "he ever liveth to make intercession for us." You know what that is, William.

WILLIAM. Begging his Father to forgive us, is it not?

AUNT. Yes, love. Now read over the Collect for Ascension Day, that you may see what effect the ascension of our Lord should produce on us.

WILLIAM (reads). Dear Aunt, pray do not stop here; let us go on to the next, for it is rather earlier this evening, and I want so much to know, why Jesus should ever come from heaven again, for the Creed says, "from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead." When will Christ come again, dear Aunt? and how will he come? and what will he come for?

AUNT. I will answer your *last* question *first*. Our Lord himself has told us about it. Matt. xvi. 27. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall reward every man according to his works." You see it is the same Son of man who ascended into heaven, who (as the angels said,) "shall so come in like manner," to judge all men: "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." John, v. 27.

WILLIAM. I suppose because Jesus Christ, from

having been man, knew so well what should be expected of us.

AUNT. As perfect God and perfect man, he is indeed fully qualified for the task. He who knows every thought of man's heart, and who hates the least sin, cannot but be a *strict* judge; and none could know as He does, who amongst us really believe in his power to save, and who only pretend to do so. "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

WILLIAM. It seems very awful to think, that he knows every thing, and that nothing can be hid from him. If I knew that you, dear Godmamma, could tell all my thoughts, I should be very unhappy and much ashamed, for they are often very naughty. Will every one be brought to him to be judged one at a time?

AUNT. Every body who ever lived, will stand at the *same* time before him. St. John, who was permitted to see this great day before-hand, says, "I saw the dead, small, and great, stand before God." Read, my dear, the account of the day of judgment as he describes it, Rev. xx. 11—15.

WILLIAM (reads). Oh! how terrible it is, and yet how grand! but we cannot imagine the greatness of the number that will then be present. One day we

went through Bath, when the election of the member was taking place, and I never saw so many persons assembled as then; but that could be nothing to the day of judgment, "the small and great:" that means, all who have ever died, old and young, from the beginning of the world—all little children who have died, will be there, as well as grown up people, and they will be judged by the things that are written against them in God's book, the same as others. But what should I say to Jesus about my sins, and wicked thoughts, if he asks me about them then, Godmamma?

AUNT. As a christian child, you might remember with comfort, that your judge had once been a little child himself, and that he used to love little children and took them in his arms, and blessed them.

WILLIAM. Oh yes! and I would say, "though I have been naughty, I do really love you, and I am sure you can take away my sin;" and you know the Lord says, "I love those who love me, and those who seek me early shall find me." (Prov. viii. 17.) Does "hell" mean *hades* in this chapter, or the wicked place, Godmamma?

AUNT. It probably means *hades*, my dear, from whence the departed spirits will come, to be united to their bodies, in order to receive their final doom;

either in heaven or hell. It may mean only the *grave*, as the Greek word signifies that as well.

William. I am glad that the Bible mentions, that "the sea shall give up her dead," as it must be a great happiness to those persons, whose dear friends have been drowned or buried at sea, to think they shall meet them again, as well as those which have been laid in the earth.

Aunt. Now read Daniel's description of our Lord's coming, in reply to your second question, (Daniel vii. 13, 14,) how will Christ come?

William (reads). How glorious the sight will be! please to give me some more texts which describe it.

Aunt. St. Jude tells us, that Enoch prophecied, that our Lord should come with ten thousand of his saints; and St. Paul says, (1 Thess. iv. 16.) "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

William. Thank you, I will mark them. Now do tell me what is meant by "the quick." I wanted to ask before, but did not like to interrupt what we were talking about.

Aunt. The word means, *the living;* it is an old word seldom used now; but you have heard the gardener talk of a *quick* hedge, meaning, a hedge formed

of living plants, instead of such as are made of thorns and dry wood: and in the Bible, the word *quicken* is often used to denote the change produced by the Spirit of God, in the soul of the sinner. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. (Ephes. ii. 1.) But in the Creed it means, those who shall be *alive* when Christ comes. Suppose the Lord Jesus were to appear *to-night*, all now living upon earth, would be judged, the same as those who had died before.

WILLIAM. What text tells us, that those who shall *be alive*, will be judged, as well as those who are dead?

AUNT. Read the whole of that same passage before named, 1 Thess. iv. 15–17, where the apostle gives a minute account of the manner in which the judgment shall take place.

WILLIAM (reads). Now do tell me when this shall be.

AUNT. This, my dear, is one of the subjects about which we have no right to inquire, since the Lord has concealed it from us. He says, (Mark xiii. 31,) "Of that day, and of that hour knoweth no man," but ends with this advice: "What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch." St. Paul, fearful lest his converts should be neglectful of their duty, while spending their time in vain inquiries, reminds them, that

the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, 1 Thess. v.; and that they are not to be deceived into believing, that the day is at hand, by persons who may undertake to fix the time, as some people do in the present day. It is enough, that we know not when it may be, and are always ready for it. The day of our death must happen to each of us, and will be the same to us, as the day of judgment.

WILLIAM. Because in whatever state our souls are, when we die, so will they be when they are judged?

AUNT. Certainly. Now read St. Matthew's account, twenty-fifth chapter, of the judgment day.

WILLIAM (reads). There is nothing said here about our believing in Christ, Aunt, to procure our entrance into heaven.

AUNT. No, my dear; our Lord knew, that all that we could do that is right, must be in consequence of our belief in him; therefore he often speaks of our being judged, or rewarded *according* to our works, because our works are required to show, if we have really believed in him or not.

WILLIAM. Yes, I understand; he said, many would call him, "Lord, Lord," and not do the things he said; but you know, if we really love a person, we try to please him.

AUNT. The Bible says, "Without holiness, no

man shall see the Lord;" and "without faith, it is impossible to please him." When the Bible says things which seem to differ, it is only because it explains different things at different times; and if any thing seems contradictory, it is only, either because we are ignorant, and cannot see our ignorance; or because we look only to one side of the question. Some people are too apt to attend entirely to one doctrine, and neglect others; thus trying to form a religion, according to their own opinions.

WILLIAM. Is not that very unfair, Aunt?

AUNT. Not only *that*, but it leads to numberless disputes and errors; I will tell you a story which will explain it. 'In the days of knight errantry, when single adventurers rode about the world, seeking employment in their profession, which was that of the sword, two warlike knights met at a place, where a statue was erected. On the arm of the statue was a shield, one side of which was iron, and the other brass; and as the two warriors stopped, one on each side of it, the brass side was opposite the one, and the iron side opposite the other. On talking of the statue, one said the shield was *iron*, the other maintained it to be *brass;* and at last from loud words, they came to blows, drawing their swords, they fought most furiously, till both were stretched, exhausted, on the ground. A passenger came by, and hearing the

cause of their quarrel, he told them, that all this might have been spared, had they looked at both sides of the shield, before they began to quarrel.'

WILLIAM. What a pretty story! I hope I shall think of it, when I am obstinate about my own opinion.

AUNT. Now, my dear, your time is long past; good night—God bless you.

SUNDAY EVENING XI.

DIVISION III.

GOD THE HOLY GHOST.

"I believe in God the Holy Ghost."

WILLIAM. Dear Godmamma, did not you say that the word *Ghost* meant *Spirit?*

AUNT. Yes, my dear, it is taken from the Saxon word *Gast* or ghost. You see that the division of the Creed begins again with "I believe," to remind us that each point of faith requires our distinct belief. Do you know any thing about the Holy Ghost, William?

WILLIAM. Very little indeed, I should like to know more, for he is called *God*, as well as God the Father and God the Son.

AUNT. We will first try to find out that the Holy Ghost is a separate person, and not merely an attribute or quality of God. Secondly, that he is a Divine Person, or God himself. Thirdly, what is his office? It is very wicked to take away any glory, or honour, or power from God, therefore we ought to be quite sure as to what we believe on the subject.

WILLIAM. How can we find out that the Holy Ghost is a *Person*, Godmamma?

AUNT. All our belief, to be true, must be found in the Bible. Let us see if there are any personal actions, any thing which a *person* would do, to be found there, concerning the Holy Spirit. Look in John xiv., where there is much about Him.

WILLIAM. Here is a verse, the 26th,—it says, the Father *sent* the Comforter. Is not that a sign of his being a *person?* for I should think he must be a *person*, if he be *sent* by another.

AUNT. Why, my dear?

WILLIAM. Because if I wanted to send for my hat, or my ball, I must send a *person* to get it,—and look, Godmamma, further on in the same verse it says, "he shall *teach* you all things." Now there must be a person to *teach* any thing.

AUNT. And yet if the Holy Spirit teaches, we do not see him.

WILLIAM. No, Aunt. But we do not see God

the Father who takes care of us, nor Jesus Christ who is now at God's right hand, and yet we know that God does take care of us, and that his Son is there. That is *faith* you know, to believe things we do not see.

Aunt. True, my love. Now see for some more proofs that the Holy Ghost is a person. In the xvith chapter, the Spirit of Truth is said to *guide* us. Now that is the work of a person, is it not?

William. Yes, if I had lost my way, I should not be able to find it, unless some person showed it to me; and in the next verse, (14th,) it says He *receives* things, and *shows* them to others. These are more marks of his being a *person*, are they not?

Aunt. Yes; and now turn to Rom. viii. 26, and you will see that the Spirit intercedes for us with "groanings that cannot be uttered," and verse 27 says, "He that searcheth the heart, (that is God the Father,) knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints."

William. An intercessor is a person who begs for another; then the Holy Ghost is plainly a *person*. Will you now show that He is a *Divine* person?

Aunt. Open to Acts v. 3, 4, and read it.

William. Oh! it is the sad history of Ananias and Sapphira. *(Reads.)* Yes, Aunt, the Holy Ghost

must be God, for after saying Ananias had lied to the Holy Ghost, Peter said, "Thou hast not lied unto men but unto *God*."

AUNT. In Matt. xxviii. 19, He is made equal to the Father and the Son, and therefore all Christians use these words in Baptism, to show their belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in obedience to our Lord's express commands. In 1 Cor. iii. 16, the bodies of Christians are called the temple of *God*, because the Spirit of God dwelleth in them.

WILLIAM. Nothing can be plainer; the Holy Ghost is certainly a *Divine* person, but perhaps this may be only another title for God the Father or God the Son?

AUNT. No, my dear, it is important that we should believe the Holy Ghost to be quite a distinct person from either. In the verse before named, Matt. xxviii. 19, you see they are all three spoken of by our Lord distinctly; and if you turn to the account of our Lord's baptism, (Matt. iii. 16, 17,) you will see that all the three Divine persons were present.

WILLIAM. Oh! yes; Jesus was standing in the water, the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and God the Father was heard to say from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in

whom I am well pleased." Now, dear Aunt, we must find out what is the office of God the Holy Ghost. In the next answer of the Catechism it says, "the Holy Ghost *sanctifies* us." What does that mean?

AUNT. That He makes us holy. He puts holy thoughts into our hearts, holy words into our mouths, and makes us perform holy actions. All the spiritual gifts and blessings we enjoy are from the Holy Ghost. Turn to John xvi. 8–14; and see what he is said to do for us.

WILLIAM. "He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;" and He will guide us into all truth.

AUNT. He will convince men of sin, and so lead them to holiness. You know my dear, the natural heart of a man *loves* sin too well to see any harm in it, or to wish to get rid of it, but the children of God hate sin, and long for the time when they shall be wholly free from it. They strive, they pray, they watch, lest it should obtain dominion over them. This is the entire work of the Holy Spirit, who has wrought this change in their hearts. You remember I have told you something about this before when speaking of the New Birth.

WILLIAM. About what our Lord said to Nico-

demus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Does this change take place very suddenly?

AUNT. God works usually in the most natural manner. An infant does not grow into a man at once, the change in growth is gradual. It is (as the Scripture says,) Mark iv. 28, "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." But instances have occurred where the Holy Ghost has thought fit to show forth His power in the sudden conversion of a sinner.

WILLIAM. Like the conversion of St. Paul? You know he was on his way to destroy the Lord's people, when God stopped him, and changed his heart and made him one of them.

AUNT. He was a striking example of the Lord's power and mercy. But always remember, that though a person be but a "babe in Christ," and though only a green blade is to be found in him, yet the characters of the full grown Christian, and the full ear of corn, must still be found, for he must hate sin, and strive and watch and pray against it, even then, from the very first. He must no longer prefer the foolish, trifling, or sinful amusements of the world, or care about its riches or honours, for his treasure must be above, or at all events he must earnestly desire that it should be.

WILLIAM. I do hope the Holy Spirit is in me, though I fear it is only a very small green blade, so small that it can scarcely be seen. But it would be so shocking to be *quite* without the Spirit of God, Aunt!

AUNT. My dear child, I do trust that the Holy Ghost has entered your heart, and if so, I trust He will by his grace or favour, (which in the Bible is compared to *dew* and refreshing streams,) water your small blade, and cause it to spring up into a fruitful ear. But I must warn you to watch and pray lest the good seed which the Holy Ghost may have sown, should be choked, and He be driven from your heart.

WILLIAM. Could any thing make the Holy Spirit leave my heart if he has once entered it?

AUNT. In 1 Thess. v. 19, we are told not to "*quench* the Spirit;" that is, not to put out the holy flame He has kindled within us; and in Ephes. iv. 30, we are told not to *grieve* the Holy Spirit, or provoke him to leave us. You remember the parable of "the devil sowing tares in the field,"—all the seeds which the devil sows are weeds, and the heart of man is their natural soil, so they are sure to spring up wherever we leave room for them. If we allow them to spring up, the Holy Spirit seeing we love the Devil's work better than His, may perhaps

give us up to be overrun by the weeds of sin, and take the green blade away from us.

WILLIAM. But I should be afraid as the green blade is so small, and grows so slowly in our hearts, that the devil's weeds would always choke it.

AUNT. Remember, if we love to have God in our hearts, and carefully destroy the weeds as soon as they spring up, that is, resist every sin, "the devil will flee from us," for "stronger is he that is for us, than he that is against us;" and He will make our blade grow into a flourishing and fruitful ear, in his good time. The devil can never *overcome* God, for he trembles before Him.

SUNDAY EVENING XII.

DIVISION IV.

THE CHURCH AND ITS PRIVILEGES.

"The Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints."

WILLIAM. We are now come, Aunt, to the fourth and last division of the Creed, 'the Church and its Privileges.' I know what a *privilege* means, Aunt—'an *advantage gained*" is it not? But I do not seem

to understand this article: you told me one day, that *the Church* in the Bible did not mean a building in which people worship God.

AUNT. No, my dear, it does not generally signify that; but did I not tell you what it meant?

WILLIAM. Let me think. What were we talking of? Oh! it was about being "a member of Christ." Yes—I recollect you said, that the church meant the whole number of true Christians, who have ever lived in the world, or ever shall live in it. Is not that right?

AUNT. Yes, my dear; and if you bear in mind, what we then talked about, this article will soon be made plain to you. The first Christian Church, you know, was that established immediately after our Lord's death, by his apostles: we should therefore be guided in our description of a *true* church, by their rules: we find then, that the "visible church of Christ, is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly, (or properly) administered, according to Christ's ordinance:"* for in the Apostles' church, *all* were baptized by the same baptism; *all* partook together of the Lord's Supper; and the same pure faith was preached to all.

* Nineteenth Article of the Church of England.

WILLIAM. If that is the form of a true church, I suppose all persons who are not baptized, who do not hear and believe the word of God, and who do not partake of the Lord's Supper, are not members of the church of Christ.

AUNT. Certainly they cannot be members of the visible church of Christ, if they fail in either of these points; but we cannot pretend to look into the hearts of others, and therefore must only speak of persons in general, and not of individuals—of course children may be members of the church of Christ, without receiving the Lord's Supper, because they are not to do so, till they can understand it.

WILLIAM. You mean by the Lord's Supper, the service which you and mamma, and papa, and a great many people attend, once a month, when I and my sister go home with Sarah after the morning service. But I do not know what it is.

AUNT. When you are a little older, you will understand it better, and I shall try to explain it to you, when you come to the last part of the Catechism. Now have you any more questions to ask about the Church, my dear?

WILLIAM. Yes, I wanted to know the meaning of the word *Catholic*.

AUNT. It signifies "*universal*," or "*all over the world!*" meaning that the Church of Christ is not

limited to any place, but may spread, and does spread into every part of the world; and also that it has been in existence from the beginning of the world, and will last after the world has come to an end, even throughout eternity!

WILLIAM. You mean, that Noah and Abraham, and all the prophets belonged to the Church of Christ, although living in different times; and that as the members of Christ die on earth, they will be received into heaven, and form part of Christ's Church there. You told me this before.

AUNT. You may see in Heb. xi. that the saints of the Old Testament, form a part of that *Holy* Band, for *holiness* is a necessary part of the Catholic Church. However truly the Gospel may be preached, or the sacraments administered, unless the members are *holy*, they can form no part of the true church of Christ, which is a *Holy* Catholic Church.

WILLIAM. Now, dear Aunt, I want to know if there is more than *one true* Church? because I have heard of several churches, such as the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Church of Rome.

AUNT. There can be but *one* true Church, or body of faithful believers; but there may be many branches of that true Church: only, (as I said before) they must all agree in the particulars just men-

tioned. All the *branches* of the vine may not be equally healthy, or equally good, or equally fruitful; but as long as they are in Christ, acknowledging Him as their God, their Saviour, and their Lord, we are bound to own them as his. Most of the churches which were holy and pure, in the times of the Apostles, are now quite lost, from their having fallen from faith or holiness, and those which still remain, are so defaced by error, that we can scarcely own them. This is the awful case of those churches which were warned by the Apostle John. Rev. ii. 3; and which I will tell you more about some day, and read you an account of their present state.

WILLIAM. Thank you, dear Aunt; how sad it seems, that the very places where the apostles preached, should have fallen away; but do tell me if there are many churches now, which have error in their faith or their practice?

AUNT. You know, my love, all earthly things tend to decay; and if by prayer and watchfulness, the Holy Spirit is not kept alive within them, they must become corrupt. You named the Church of Rome, which formerly was a pure part of Christ's Church, and more flourishing than any other; but it is now filled with the most dangerous errors.

WILLIAM. It is what is called the Roman Catholic Church, is it not? Do tell me some of its errors?

AUNT. They call themselves *Catholic*, because they say, they are the only true church; and no person can be saved out of it: they break the first and second commandments, by teaching people to pray to saints and angels, and the Virgin Mary; they think, that fastings and prayers, and money, can get them to heaven; and they say, that the Pope, (that is, the Bishop of Rome) is to be honoured as God, and can take away sins.

WILLIAM. What are we to understand by the communion of saints?

AUNT. It is one of the great privileges of the church, signifying first, the close and intimate union which exists between the different members of the church—and God the Father—God the Son—and God the Holy Ghost.

WILLIAM. No union can be closer, than that of a child with a parent, and we know, that all the members of the true church enjoy that favour; being a part of Christ's body, we must have communion with him, and the dwelling of the Holy Ghost in us, proves, that we have communion with him also. Please to find me some texts about this, God-mamma.

AUNT. Communion with the Father, 1 John i. 3.—1 John iii. 1; with the Son—John xv. 1—4.—

1 Cor. i. 9.—2 John 9.—of communion with the Holy Ghost, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

WILLIAM. You said, communion with God, was the first thing meant in the communion of saints; what else is intended?

AUNT. Secondly, the saint's communion with his fellow saints on earth. In former days, when the necessities of the church required it, this feeling of *oneness* among them, led them to have "all things in common;" and now, as then, in a spiritual sense, it leads them "to rejoice with those who do rejoice, and to weep with those who weep:" the prosperity of one, is a cause of joy to the whole; and the heaviness of one, causes sorrow to all. You remember a text about this.

WILLIAM. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." 1 Cor. xii. 26. But do the saints on earth, enjoy communion with the saints above?

AUNT. Yes, both with them, and the holy angels. As to their fellow saints in glory, read Heb. xii. 22, 23; and as to the communion with the holy angels, you remember our Lord said, that "the angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner that repenteth;" we know besides, that they take care of the righteous, (Psalm xxxiv. 7,) and minister to the saints;

(Heb. i. 14,) and the Bible is full of instances of angels coming on earth to do good offices to the saints.

WILLIAM. These are indeed great privileges; I ought to thank God, for permitting me to be made a member of his church, and of so pure a part, as you say ours is. Indeed, what you have taught me about the Catechism shows, that the Church of England goes to the *Bible* for every thing, and therefore she cannot be wrong. I do hope that she will be watchful and faithful, and not become corrupt, or deserve to be destroyed, as those churches you named.

AUNT. I trust so too, my dear; and we ought often to pray for our church, that the hand of the ungodly may never prevail against her. I will give you some pretty verses about the Church of England, which you may learn, if you please: here they are.

THE ENGLISH CHURCH.

I love the altar of my sires,
Old as my country's rocks of steel;
And as I feed its sacred fires,
The present Deity I feel.

I love to know that, not alone,
I meet the battles' angry tide;
That sainted myriads from their throne,
Descend to combat at my side.

Mine is no solitary choice,
See *here* the seal of saints impress'd:
The prayer of millions swells my voice,
The mind of ages fills my breast.

I love the ivy mantled tower,
Rock'd by the storms of thousand years;
The *grave*, whose melancholy flower,
Was watered by a martyr's tears.

The sacred yew so feared in war,
Which like the sword to David given,
Inflicted not a human scar,
But lent to man the arms of heaven.

I love the organ's joyous swell,
Sweet echo of the heavenly ode;
I love the cheerful village bell,
Faint emblem of the call of God.

Waked by the sound, I bend my feet,
I bid my swelling sorrows cease;
I do but touch the mercy-seat,
And hear the still small voice of peace.

Long be our Father's temple ours,
Woe to the hand by which it falls;
A thousand spirits watch its towers,
A cloud of angels guard its walls.

And be their shield by us possessed!
Lord, rear around thy blest abode
The buttress of a *holy* breast,
The rampart of a *present God!*

By the Rev. J. W. Cunningham,
Vicar of Harrow.

SUNDAY EVENING XIII.

"The forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting, Amen."

WILLIAM. You taught me to understand about the forgiveness of sins, dear Aunt, when you were explaining the New Covenant to me. I know how sin first came into the world; by Adam's disobedience —and from that moment, every person was born into the world with a sinful heart. You told me also, that God hated even the least sin, (because he is so very good) and therefore, all sinners were to receive the punishment due to their sins, and that is death; for the Lord had said, that if he eat of the fruit he should die. The death which they had most cause to fear, was the death of the soul, or its endless torment. But God, besides being just, was very merciful, and promised to send His own dear Son, (who was without sin) to bear the punishment instead, and die upon the cross, that sinners might be saved from eternal death. Have I remembered it rightly, God-mamma?

AUNT. Very well indeed, my dear. It is owing then to Christ's death alone, that our sins can be

forgiven. Are the sins of every person forgiven by Christ's death, William?

WILLIAM. Oh no! but it is their own faults; they *will* not believe in Him. Persons who do not *think themselves* sick, will not take medicine, you know, though they may be very ill all the time; and numbers of persons will not come unto Jesus, because they cannot feel their need of Him.

"*The Resurrection of the Body.*"

AUNT. We will now go on to the next article, William; of this I told you a great deal, when we spoke of our Saviour's resurrection.

WILLIAM. Oh yes! I remember about the butterfly, and the grain of corn; and you said that the very same bodies, which turn to dust when we die, will be all raised again, as they were before, only more beautiful and lasting. The day after we had been talking about this, my dear mamma was so kind as to help me look in the Bible, for the accounts of all the persons who had been raised from the dead. (1.) Elijah raised the child of the widow of Sarepta. (2.) Elisha, raised the son of the Shunamite woman, and (3.) many years after Elisha's death, when a dead body was cast into his tomb, as soon as the dead man touched Elisha's bones, imme-

diately he revived and stood up. There were three raised by our Lord himself; (4.) The daughter of Jairus; (5.) the son of the widow of Nain; and (6.) Lazarus.

AUNT. And my dear you must not forget, that our Lord raised himself from the dead. (7.)

WILLIAM. Yes, that was the greatest of all; then there was Dorcas, (8,) who was raised by Peter; and Eutychus, (9,) who fell down asleep during Paul's Sermon, and was taken up dead; but St. Paul came down and raised him to life.

AUNT. Do you remember if any ever ascended to heaven with their bodies, and without dying?

WILLIAM. Yes, Enoch and Elijah; neither of them died, but are in heaven now with the same bodies they had on earth. Will both the wicked and righteous be raised from the dead?

AUNT. Yes; every person who ever lived, both the "just and the unjust." Acts xxiv. 15. Our Lord's words are very particular on this subject. (John v. 28, 29.) The clearest verse relating to the resurrection in the Old Testament is, (Job xix. 25, 26.) "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. &c.; but although the Old Testament saints were not enlightened on this point, the saints under the Gospel have had it most clearly revealed to them; so that, we may indeed say, that the belief in the Resurrec-

tion of the body, is a privilege, which as members of Christ's church, we have cause to be thankful for.

WILLIAM. When will the dead be raised?

AUNT. Not before the Last Day. See John vi. 39.—Matthew xiii. 39.—1 Cor. xv. 52.—1 Thess. iv. 15–17; and this brings us to the last article of the Creed,

"*The Life Everlasting, Amen.*"

This is also the last privilege which the church has to offer, for it brings her faithful members to the enjoyment of that happiness, which is to last forever, and which has long been the sole object of their desires. The everlasting life of the faithful, has in fact begun on this side of the grave, for their affections being fixed above, they look *through* the valley of death, to those regions, where their Lord is, and whither they would be also.

WILLIAM. It is a joyful thought, that there will be no end to their happiness; all earthly happiness so soon comes to an end, that I cannot understand any thing lasting forever; but will you let me find some texts to prove, that the happiness of believers shall be everlasting.

AUNT. Psalm xvi. 11.—John iii. 36.—Gal. vi. 8.—2 Peter i. 11.—Rev. vii. 15—17.—xxi. 4.

WILLIAM (reads). O what beautiful texts! they

make me long to go there. I have one dear uncle, and aunt, and two grandmammas, who have begun their everlasting life; and some dear little baby cousins too, who never knew sin. I mean their *souls* have begun it, for their bodies are not yet raised, you know. Will you show me a few more texts, descri ing the happiness they enjoy.

AUNT. Dan. xii. 2, 3.—Matt. xiii. 43.—Rom. viii. 17, 18.—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

WILLIAM (reads). Thank you, thank you. I will mark them all, they make me so happy! But now, dear Aunt, I must ask about something that will make me sad. Will the wicked be miserable forever? I know they deserve it, but it seems so shocking, to be suffering punishment forever and ever!

AUNT. God's justice must be exercised as well as his mercy; and if any reject God's mercy, and make light of the death of his Son, they must reap that which they have sown. See Matthew, xxv. 46.

PART III.

ON THE COMMANDMENTS.

SUNDAY EVENING XIV.

First Commandment.

WILLIAM. Dear Aunt, what a beautiful evening it is! Do you not think it would be very much pleasanter to sit out of doors in your pretty garden while we talk?

AUNT. Indeed I do, Willie, for it is very warm in the house, and the sight of the trees and flowers and the wonders of God's creation, ought to make us more thoughtful instead of less so.

WILLIAM. There is only one thing I am afraid will make me inattentive, if I sit with my face toward the pond, and a fish jumps, I do not think I could help calling out: "Look, look."

AUNT. Then while we are talking, I think you had best sit the other side of the seat, where you cannot see the pond.

WILLIAM. So I will; I am going for my Bible, shall I bring yours too, Godmamma?

AUNT. Yes, my dear, and then you will follow me.

WILLIAM. There, now I am settled. We were to begin to talk about the commandments. "To keep God's holy will and commandments," is the third thing which our godfathers and godmothers promised we should do. There are ten of them, Aunt, and they are found in the Bible in the 20th chapter of Exodus:—here it is.

AUNT. They are also written in the 5th of Deuteronomy, but they are quoted in the catechism from Exodus; because in Deuteronomy, Moses is only repeating to the people what had taken place before. You must observe that God reminded the people of all they owed him, and of their obligation therefore to keep these commandments by saying, "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;" and I am sure if the children of Israel were bound to obey the God who had brought them from earthly bondage, Christians have much greater cause to do so. You know what the Egyptian bondage was, Willie?

WILLIAM. Oh yes, the word *bondage* means *slavery*, and the Israelites were used very ill by the Egyptians, being forced by their hard taskmasters to

make bricks without having the proper materials given them; they were obliged to wander about collecting stubble from the fields, instead of straw which should have been given them, and they were to make the bricks as quickly as if the straw had been provided. But what bondage are Christians brought out of? for the catechism is written for *us*, you know.

AUNT. The bondage of sin and Satan. The journeyings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, are a just type of the Christian's spiritual life. Moses the deliverer, represents the Lord Jesus Christ, who brings Christians from the bondage of Satan and sin, leads them through all the difficulties and dangers of this world, (which is represented by the wilderness) bears with their murmurings and ingratitude by the way, and leads them to the promised land, their heavenly home.

WILLIAM. I did not know that was a type before, but it is a very clear representation. Christians are still bound to keep the ten commandments, for I remember our Lord said, "I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil." Matt. v. 17.

AUNT. Our Saviour was trying to do away the false teaching of the Pharisees, who instructed the people that they were to attend more to *tradition* than to the written word of God.

WILLIAM. What is *tradition*, Aunt?

AUNT. That which we have learnt by the ear, which has been handed down to us by word of mouth. Suppose your papa had been told something by his father, which he had heard from his father before him, who had been told it by his parent, and so on for many generations back,—this fact, whatever it might be, and which your papa knows, would have come to him by *tradition*.

WILLIAM. Yes, I quite know what you mean, but surely the Pharisees were very foolish, and I think very wicked to prefer *that*, to the written word of God, for you know people so often make mistakes in telling any thing, that we could never be sure that it was told in the right way,—while the Word of God must be true.

AUNT. Therefore our Lord said to them, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men." Mark vii. 7, 8. Now, read, my dear, the account of the delivery of the Law on Mount Sinai, Exodus xx.

WILLIAM (reads). Oh! how very terrible it must have been, and how the people must have feared lest they should break the commandments! Is it difficult to keep them, Aunt? for I thought that

only very wicked people broke the Sabbath, or swore, or committed murder, and none but the heathen would worship false gods.

AUNT. You will think differently about them before we have done speaking of them; you must remember that as Christians, we must take our Lord's rule for explaining them, and not judge ourselves by the exact words laid down in the commandments. If I were to tell you not to go out of the house, I should not think it necessary to say 'do not go out of the front door, or out of the back door, or out of the window,' one general command would be sufficient. David says to God, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad;" and our Lord intends us to take the commandments in all their breadth and extent. How were they placed on the two tables of stone, William?

WILLIAM. The first four were written on one table, and the last six on the other table I suppose, at least that is how they are placed in church, though I do not know the reason.

AUNT. Because the first four relate to God, and the last six contain our duties to our fellow creatures; or, as our catechism says, "our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbour."

WILLIAM. Our Saviour taught us in the parable of the good Samaritan, that the word *neighbour*

in the sight of God, meant 'every body.' The "duty to God and to our neighbour" in the catechism, contains an explanation of the commandments; but I never could make out the divisions for each commandment.

AUNT. I will try to mark them for you as we consider each. Now William, repeat the first commandment.

WILLIAM. "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." I should not suppose that men born in a christian land, would think of there being more than one God.

AUNT. My dear, this commandment extends in its meaning to all who form any notion of the one great God, which is contrary to what we learn of Him in the Bible. It is as much broken by those who take from his greatness, majesty and power, by denying that He can change the heart of man,—or who deny his love in coming down on earth to save sinners, as it is broken by the heathen who in their ignorance multiply false gods. Those who will not own the Son and Holy Ghost to be distinct persons in one Godhead surely break the *spirit* of the first commandment.

WILLIAM. Are there any persons who deny that there is any God at all?

AUNT. I hope there are very few; the Psalmist

speaks of such, Psa. xiv. 1, and calls them "fools." They indeed endeavour to deceive themselves, but I cannot believe that any person can *die* in the belief that there is no God. Persons who deny any God are called atheists, from a Greek word, *a*, not, *Theos*, God.

WILLIAM. How very shocking it is to think that the Jews, who were God's own people, were so inclined to idolatry, that on every occasion they worshipped the gods of the heathen.

AUNT. Their example should teach us not to depend upon ourselves, lest we also should forget the Lord "who has done such great things for us." Our country was an idolatrous country once, and our ancestors worshipped idols of wood and stone.

WILLIAM. Yes; I remember papa took me one day to Stonehenge, on Salisbury plain, which he told me was supposed to be the remains of an idol's temple. It was such a wonderful place, and every one looked so little by the side of the great upright stones!

AUNT. All false or idol gods are distinguished from the one true God, by their being impure and unholy, and teaching *sin* instead of holiness, and as the *invention* of man we cannot be surprised at this, for you know that the thoughts of man's natural heart are only evil continually. Now we will see what the catechism says by way of explaining this

commandment. 1st, It tells us, we are to *believe* in God. 2ndly, We are to *fear* Him. 3rdly, We are to *love* Him with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength.

WILLIAM. Does all *that* belong to the first Commandment?

AUNT. Yes; but in a measure to the second also, as to all the others which relate to God. Our duty in *believing* in God, we have considered in the creed; the next part of our duty is to *fear* Him.

WILLIAM. But why should *Christians* fear God? If they are forgiven through Jesus Christ, they have no cause for fear, have they?

AUNT. Are you not afraid to offend your own dear parents and me, though you love us so dearly?

WILLIAM. Yes, indeed I am. I suppose then we should always be afraid of displeasing those whom we love?

AUNT. Certainly; and it is this child-like fear which springs from our love of God, that makes us keep his commandments. The wicked *fear God*, because they cannot help thinking sometimes of future punishments, but *their* fear has no love with it, and therefore does not keep them from displeasing Him. The devils too fear God, for we read, the devils believe and tremble (James ii. 19); but they have no

love but hatred to Him, and belief and fear are of no good without love.

WILLIAM. Tell me, if you please, a few texts about fearing God as Christians.

AUNT. Isai. viii. 13. Mat. x. 28. Luke xii. 5. Now as to the duty of *loving* God, I think you understand it a little, but perhaps you never thought how much love God expects from His people.

WILLIAM. "With all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength." Then I must love God more and better than any other person or thing.

AUNT. With all the powers and affections of your body, understanding, and soul. 1 John iv. 19, we are told why we are so to love Him.

WILLIAM (reads). "We love Him because He first loved us:" and in the 10th verse, he says, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, (that means I suppose, that we did not love Him by nature,) but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" and in John iii. 16,—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." When one thinks of *this*, it is no wonder we are required to love God so very much. But I am afraid I do not love Him

as He means me to love Him; because I know that very often I would rather please myself than please God. Sometimes I am sorry not to stay up longer when I am sent to bed, and then I do not pray to Him in a proper manner, or think of what I am saying. Now, if I loved God with all my heart, I should have more pleasure in praying to Him, than in any amusement.

AUNT. Thus you see, my love, you have broken the very commandment which you thought could be meant only for the heathen.

WILLIAM. Yes, indeed I have; and I am almost afraid to go on, for now you will find I have been guilty of many more.

AUNT. My dear little boy, suppose you had a very sore arm or leg, and because it would give you pain, you would not let the doctor touch it or even see it,—would it be wise to act thus? If you covered it up, so that no one could see it, the sore place might spread and get worse, and perhaps you might die.

WILLIAM. Yes, I understand you, dear God-mamma, I would rather you should help me to find out my faults; and I remember now, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and the Holy Ghost can purify our hearts, and guide us in the right way. So if you please, we will talk next time of the second commandment.

AUNT. Read these texts, and then we will take a turn in the garden before tea. Deut. vi. 5; x. 12. Josh. xxii. 5. Psa. xxxi. 23. 1 John v. 3. Jude 21.

SUNDAY EVENING XV.

Second Commandment.

WILLIAM. Is not this commandment very like the first, Godmamma ?

AUNT. This is the difference between them; the first commandment teaches us *who* we are to worship, the second instructs us in *what manner* we are to worship God; namely, in the way the Bible directs us. We are not to use images or pictures or any other representation of God for such a purpose. Exod. xxxiv. 17. Lev. xxvi. 1. Psa. xcvii. 7.

WILLIAM. In the plain meaning of this commandment, I cannot think that any but ignorant heathen people could think of kneeling down to images of God.

AUNT. Alas! my dear child, the corruption of man's heart is so great, that the moment he leaves the Bible as his guide, he is in *error*. Even men who are otherwise learned and wise have broken this commandment in its plainest sense. The Roman

Catholics so entirely sin against it, that being sensible how wholly it condemns them, some of them leave it out of the ten Commandments, saying it is only a repetition of the first; and in order to make the number complete, they divide the last in two.

WILLIAM. That is a very wrong thing to do, but if they deceive men, they cannot deceive God. Do tell me what they do?

AUNT. Instead of always knee'ing down to the invisible God, who is in every place at all times, and approaching Him by Jesus Christ, who is at His right hand, they hang up pictures, and various images of our Saviour, and the other persons of the Godhead, to which they say their prayers. But this is not all; they worship the *Virgin Mary*, and entreat her to ask favours of her Son for them, and address their prayers to dead persons belonging to their church, to whom they have given the title of *saints*. Of these persons, they fix images or pictures in their houses and churches, and all who pass by are expected to do them reverence. The images in the Roman Catholic chapels are often like your sister's dolls, dressed in silk, and ornamented with beads, lace, &c. Now we know that to worship saints either in heaven or on earth is a sin, from Col. ii. 18, 23. Rev. xix. 10.

WILLIAM. Oh dear Aunt, how very bad our hearts

must be, to fall into such errors: and what a good prayer it is which our Lord taught us, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!"

AUNT. Satan tempted our Lord to break this Commandment when he said to him. "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." From our Saviour's answer we may learn to resist similar temptations: "It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matt. iv. 10.

WILLIAM. How does the Catechism explain this Commandment?

AUNT. We are to "*worship God*, to give Him thanks, to put our whole trust in Him, and to call upon Him." Now we are to worship Him in spirit and in truth; i. e. not only with the lips, but with the heart, John ix. 31. Can you tell me any persons in the Bible who worshipped God in a proper manner?

WILLIAM. I think *Hannah* did, when she prayed to God with such earnestness, 1 Sam. i. 9, 19; and Zachariah in the temple, Luke i.; did they not?

AUNT. Yes; and Cornelius, to whom Peter was sent, (in answer to his prayers,) to instruct him further, and baptize him. Acts x. The people of England who used to worship idols, were quite as ignorant as the savages of Africa now are, they even offered up human sacrifices.

WILLIAM. Did they indeed? What a blessing that God sent missionaries to them! for I suppose that was the way in which our forefathers were taught.

AUNT. Yes; missionaries were sent by the same Roman Catholic Church, which has now become so corrupt. In the course of time the Roman Catholic Church established in this country became corrupt also; but it pleased God to show many their errors, and the Church of England renounced these corruptions of the Church of Rome, protesting against them, —and therefore the Church of England is called a *Protestant* Church. The Scottish Church did the same.

WILLIAM. Was not that change of religion called the Reformation? I think I have read about it in my English history during the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Queen Elizabeth.

AUNT. You are right. Now my dear, the Catechism tells us we are not only to pray to God, but to praise Him. Find me some texts which bid us to give thanks to God.

WILLIAM. The Psalms are full of praises. Psalm ix. 1. Psalm c. 4.

AUNT. Look at the New Testament also, Phil. iv. 6. Col. iii. 15, and notice what St. Paul says of unthankful persons to Timothy, 2 Tim. iii. 2; numbering them amongst the greatest sinners.

William. In heaven the angels and saints are always praising God. Rev. iv. 8–11 ; v. 12–14.

Aunt. The putting our *whole trust* in God, means that we are not to rely upon ourselves or any created being in any way; we are not to depend on ourselves, for "we cannot do any thing of ourselves to help ourselves," as one of our Collects says. We are very apt to put man in the place of God :—1st, as respects our *salvation*, we do not wholly rest on the merits of Christ's death to save us, but we are willing to think that something we have done that is right, will *help* to save us, and *that something* we put in God's stead. 2d, We often in sickness rely wholly upon the skill of the doctor for our recovery, whereas it is God alone who can make the means succeed, and we by thus acting, place the physician in the place of God. 3rdly, If we are in trouble we *depend* for comfort and advice upon our minister or our dearest friend, and thus place them in God's stead. In short we make idols of our friends, of our children, and even of our money and goods if we set an improper value upon them ; so prone are we to forget the word of God which says, "I am the Lord, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another," &c. Isai. xlii. 8; and "I the Lord thy God, am a jealous God," Exod. xx. 5, meaning, 'I

will not suffer my creatures to usurp the love and reverence which belong to me alone.'

WILLIAM. How often we all must break this commandment! When I went yesterday with my uncle to that cottage where the poor woman lost her daughter, she said, "I never can be happy again, my poor child made all my happiness." Now, I fear, Aunt, she made an idol of her child, for God ought to have made her chief happiness; and then, dear Aunt, there is such an awful punishment for those who sin in this way, not only to *them*, but to their children's children. Is that quite consistent with God's justice, Aunt?

AUNT. Quite so, my dear! for the Lord does not in that place allude to spiritual punishments, for he expressly says, Ezek. xviii. 20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father;" but God means that the children of ungodly parents shall share the temporal misery which their sins have brought upon them, so that parents may be led to "consider their ways," if not for their own sakes, for their children's sake. Seeing the inclination of even Christians to break this commandment, St. John concludes his first Epistle with these words,—"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

WILLIAM. We are also to "*call* upon" God. I

should think that those who *trust* in Him, would be sure to call upon Him.

Aunt. Many profess to trust in God who do not pray in a proper manner, and many call on Him who do not really believe. Just mark the difference between the calling of the *believer* on the true God, and the calling of the idolator upon his idol in 1 Kings xviii. We have this sure word of promise given us, "Call unto me and I will answer thee." Jer. xxxiii. 3.

William. This is indeed very encouraging to all; I hope I shall not forget what you have told me, but be more watchful for the future.

SUNDAY EVENING XVI.

Third Commandment.

William. Oh dear Aunt, I thought of the third Commandment just now, for I heard some wicked children down the lane, taking God's name in vain in a shocking manner, and I called out to them and told them God would surely punish them, and they laughed and ran away; they first called out "Lord, Lord," and then another said some dreadful words which I do not like to repeat. I once heard some great boys say it when I was walking with papa,

and he told me it was cursing and swearing, and that God was very angry with all who did so.

AUNT. My dear, we ought not to be surprised that those poor children should behave thus, for I grieve to say they are brought up in sin, hearing their parents swear and take God's name in vain almost every time they speak.

WILLIAM. Then I suppose we ought to feel pity for such children more than anger, for if God had not given me good parents and friends, and taught me by His Spirit, I might have been just as bad as they are. But when I hear children saying such wicked things, I cannot help disliking them.

AUNT. I would not wish you to desire to be in their company, for we are commanded to keep from the society of the wicked. David says, Psalm ci. 4, "I will not know a wicked person;" meaning, he would not make a *friend* of him. But how does God act towards sinners, my dear? Read John iii. 16.

WILLIAM (reads). It was a wicked world, full of wicked sinners, Aunt, yet God loved them so well that He sent His dear Son to them. I suppose then, we should love the sinners, and hate their sins.

AUNT. Yes; we cannot hate *sin* too much, and the more we hate it, the more we shall wish that all sinners should be saved from it. Now repeat the

third Commandment as it stands in the twentieth chapter of Exodus.

WILLIAM. "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." How does the Catechism explain this, Aunt?

AUNT. We are to "honour His holy name and His word."

WILLIAM. This commandment I suppose means, dear Godmamma, that we are never to mention the name of God, or any thing that belongs to Him, in speaking, or reading, or saying our prayers, without being grave and serious.

AUNT. You are quite right. Another way of breaking the Commandment is by using foolish exclamations, names and expressions in our conversation,—such as calling out "gracious," which can mean nothing but "Gracious God," although the name of God is dropped. All these expressions are vulgar, and well brought up children, would not use them on that account; but Christian children would not use them because they are offensive in the sight of God. And the saying "upon my word," "upon my honour," when you wish to prove that any thing is true, is very different to our Lord's command about our conversation. Matt. v. 34–37.

WILLIAM (reads). I never thought of this before;

no wonder the Psalmist prays that God will "keep the door of his lips, that he offend not with his tongue." But are there any more places in the Bible which speak of the sin of swearing?

AUNT. Very many. In the present day we may say as Jeremiah did, xxiii. 10,—"Because of swearing, the land mourneth;" and St. James, who must have been present when our Lord gave the directions about swearing, repeats them again in nearly the same words, James v. 12. But this commandment is awfully broken by those who *curse*, that is, those who call down evil upon themselves and others by shocking wishes. Nothing seems so like the language of evil spirits as such expressions, indeed none but the Devil's own children would be guilty of this sin. St. Paul, speaking of the unconverted, says, "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." Rom. iii. 14.

WILLIAM. Our Lord says to *his* children, "Bless them that curse you." I did not feel inclined to bless those naughty boys who burst out laughing at me.

AUNT. You must pray to Jesus Christ, my boy, to help you to overcome all unchristian feelings.

WILLIAM. I want to ask one more question. Is it *always* wicked to swear? for I heard Papa say that Mr. Clifford, who I thought was a good man, was obliged to swear before a magistrate.

AUNT. To take a solemn oath, when desired by any person in authority, is allowable, and according to Scripture; for it is done to make the truth certain; and the Apostle to the Hebrews, vi. 16, says, "An oath for confirmation is the end of all strife."

WILLIAM. I do not quite understand the difference, dear Aunt, of the two kinds of swearing.

AUNT. Suppose a barn were to be burnt down by some wicked person, and your uncle, the day before it happened, had heard a man talking to another behind a hedge, about setting fire to it; your uncle would of course have the man taken up, and brought before a magistrate. When brought to his *trial*, if he were found innocent he would be set free, and if guilty he would be hung; it would therefore be necessary to be very particular about the truth of each particular before the sentence was given, for which reason all the witnesses and your uncle amongst them, would be required to take the Bible in their hands, (thus declaring their belief in its truths,) and then to swear in a solemn manner in the presence of Almighty God, that they would say nothing more nor less than the truth. This is called in the courts of law, "witnesses being sworn."

WILLIAM. I understand it now, but I would rather not take any oath, although I see there would

be no harm in it, if done in a solemn manner. Are there any instances of such oaths in the Bible?

AUNT. Yes, many. Our Lord himself was adjured or "sworn" by the High Priest, Matt. xxvi. 63, 64,—and St. Paul repeatedly in a solemn manner calls God to witness to the truth of what he affirms. 2 Cor. i. 23; xi. 31. Phil. i. 8. Next Sunday we shall talk of the observance of the Sabbath.

SUNDAY EVENING XVII.

Fourth Commandment.

AUNT. Repeat the fourth commandment, my dear.

WILLIAM. "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."

AUNT. Very well repeated, William. I hope you understand the meaning of what you have said.

WILLIAM. What is the meaning of the word *Sabbath*, Aunt?

AUNT. It means "*rest.*" It was first appointed you know when God had finished His work of *creation.* (Gen. ii. 3.) It was because God *rested* on the seventh day, that He blessed and hallowed it; which means that He set it apart as a sacred and holy day for ever. The word to *hallow*, signifies "to make holy."

WILLIAM. But we do not keep the *seventh* day holy, Godmamma, Sunday is the *first* day of the week.

AUNT. After our Lord's resurrection, he appeared twice to the assembled Apostles, on the first day of the week, (John xx. 19; xx. 26,) and since that period, the Christian Church has kept its Sabbath on the first instead of the seventh day; and as one day in seven is what God required, the change of day cannot signify.

WILLIAM. I suppose this commandment begins with the word "*Remember*," because the children of Israel were apt to forget it.

AUNT. After the first institution of the Sabbath

at the creation, many changes took place in the world, much wickedness crept in, and between two and three thousand years passed away, before the commandments of God were delivered by Moses, so that by many persons doubtless the institution was entirely *forgotten*, by others, only partly observed or wholly *neglected*, while a few, we may hope, such as Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, still "remembered the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

WILLIAM. Will you let me find out some texts which tell us we are to keep holy the Sabbath day?

AUNT. Exodus xxxi. 14. Lev. xix. 3. Deut. v. 12. Isaiah lvi. 2. Jer. xvii. 22–27. In Numbers xv. 32–35, you will find an awful instance of the punishment which the man received by the command of God, who gathered sticks on the Sabbath, during the time that the Israelites were in the wilderness.

WILLIAM. That was indeed a terrible punishment,—though he might have done his work the day before; but when our Lord blamed the Jews who found fault with his disciples for gathering the ears of corn on the Sabbath to satisfy their hunger, did he mean to say that the Christian Sabbath was not to be kept so strictly as the Jewish?

AUNT. By no means; they were to keep the Sabbath as a day of holiness and devotion, in short,

as the *Lord's* Day and not their own; he only wished to teach them that they were not to bind themselves with so hard and hurtful a bondage, as to refrain from works of necessity, charity or piety on that day. Hunger must be satisfied, though in a moderate manner, and so as to give the least possible trouble. An ox or ass which had fallen into a pit, must be pulled out, and not left to perish, a sick person was to be healed, one in temporal or spiritual trouble to be comforted.

WILLIAM. I understand then, we may do works of piety, necessity, or charity on the Sabbath. Washing and dressing as well as eating, would be works of *necessity*. As to *dinner*, my mamma always has cold meat on Sundays to save trouble to the servants. I suppose works of *piety* are reading, praying, and talking of religion. But can we talk of religion all day, Aunt?

AUNT. My dear, you are not required to talk of religion all day, though I am quite sure of this, that the most advanced Christian is never so happy as when talking of his Saviour and the things he has done for his soul. But we must always remember that the day is not *our own*, therefore we have no right to talk of the things of this world more than necessity requires, and we must not do our *own* pleasure, nor say our *own* words, or think our *own*

vain thoughts. Recollect what God said to those who bought and sold in the temple, (Matt. xxi. 12, 13,) he would say the same to all who thought or talked of their worldly concerns on the Lord's day, whether in church or out of it. We ought not to consider the Sabbath as a toil, but as "a delight," a sweet day of holy rest, more like heaven upon earth than any thing else. How many pleasing duties there are to employ us on that day!

WILLIAM. To employ clergymen, Aunt, but I do not see many employments for others, except reading.

AUNT. The master and mistress of a Christian family have many sacred duties to perform;—to instruct their servants, and see that they keep the Sabbath holy, and have as many opportunities of hearing the word as possible; to talk to their children (if they have any) of Jesus and their Bibles, and to make the day a holy and happy day to them; to encourage their elder children to teach in the Sunday Schools and to visit and read to the sick and infirm;—these are works of *charity*. In the summer they may take their children into the garden or fields, and talk to them of God's love in giving them so much to enjoy, or in the winter they may all be seated with their Bibles round the table, and find out texts on given subjects, and ask questions of their parents or each other. Surely this is variety enough, and

such variety as should be delightful to a Christian, young or old.

WILLIAM. Indeed it is; and if we think thus of it, how tiresome it would be for week after week to pass away without a Sabbath. Papa says I shall have a class in the Sunday School when I am ten years old. Sometimes Harriet and I spend part of the Sunday in choosing hymns from a great many books which mamma lends us, and we read our favourites aloud, and fix on one to learn against the next Sunday.

AUNT. But my dear William, do you always feel as if the Sabbath were a happy day? Have you not sometimes felt it wearisome to you?

WILLIAM. Yes, indeed I have; for I long for the service to be over when I am hot and tired in church, and I turn over the leaves of the prayer-book to pass away the time, and do not listen to the sermon. And often when at home, I should like to read some of my story-books, and amuse myself as on a week-day; yet sometimes I feel so happy on the Sunday, and wish every day was the same.

AUNT. My dear boy, when you are tempted thus to sin against God, and to break His commandments, you should feel very humble, for it is only God's Holy Spirit being in you, that can make you love to do His will, and enable you "to serve Him

truly, all the days of your life." Read these texts, which will show how holy men amongst Jews or Christians kept the Sabbath. Exod. xvi. 26–29; xxxi. 14; xxxiv. 21. Neh. x. 31; xiii. 15. Luke iv. 16. Acts xiii. 14; xvi. 13; xviii. 4.

WILLIAM. Now, dear Aunt, I will repeat you a hymn which I have learnt on the Sabbath. Mamma told me it was written by the Rev. John Cunningham.

THE SABBATH MORNING.

Dear is the hallowed morn to me,
When village bells awake the day;
And by their sacred minstrelsy,
Call me from earthly cares away.

And dear to me the winged hour
Spent in thy hallowed courts, O Lord!
To feel devotion's soothing power
And catch the manna of thy word.

And dear to me the loud Amen,
Which echoes through the blest abode,
Which swells and sinks and swells again,
Dies on the walls, but lives to God.

And dear the rustic harmony
Sung with the pomp of village art,
That holy heavenly melody
The music of a thankful heart.

In secret I have often prayed,
And still the anxious tear would fall,
But on thy sacred altar laid
The fire descends and dries them all.

Oft when the world with iron bands
Has bound me in his six days' chain,
This bursts them like a strong man's hand,
And lets my spirit loose again.

Then dear to me the Sabbath morn,
The village bells, the shepherd's voice,
These oft have found my heart forlorn,
And always bid that heart rejoice.

SUNDAY EVENING XVIII.

Fifth Commandment.

AUNT. The fifth Commandment is the first on the second Table, and it is very rightly placed, as our first instructions are given by our parents. Will you repeat it?

WILLIAM. "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." I am sure I ought to consider it a pleasure as well as a duty to keep this commandment, because it relates to my own dear papa and mamma. I do love them so very dearly, and think I would do any thing to please them now, and yet, owing (as you told me,) to my corrupt heart, I have often been cross and fretful when they desired me to do any thing that was contrary to what I wished.

AUNT. If children could tell all that parents suffer for them, all their anxieties about their bodily health during childhood, all their far greater anxieties when they discover evil tempers, and the seeds of sin in the hearts of their little ones,—I sometimes think

they would try more to please their best earthly friends; they would I am sure ask God more earnestly to change their naughty hearts, that their evil dispositions may be brought into the obedience of Christ. But I think it is impossible for children to know all their parents have endured for them, till they become parents themselves.

William. If they should then remember that they had been disobedient children, what could they expect, but that their children should treat them in the same manner? What does the Bible tell us about this commandment?

Aunt. The word of God is very decided as to giving parents entire power over their children. Read Lev. xix. 3. Lev. xx. 9. The Bible you see gives every encouragement to parents in bringing up their children, and as this is the case, the law of Moses required that those who had not made their children obedient in early years, should themselves bear the weight of God's anger afterwards. Do you remember any example of parents being punished because they had neglected to make their children obedient?

William. Yes, dear Godmamma; God's own priest, old Eli. My Bible story says, that when his sons were very wicked, he did not insist on their giving up their evil ways, nor did he turn them out of their office, (for they too were priests of God's

temple,) but he only said mildly to them, "Why do ye such things?" (1 Sam. ii. 23, 24,) and then God told him by little Samuel that his two sons should die in one day, and all his family should be turned out of the priesthood. And it *all* came to pass, for on the day when his sons died in battle, poor old Eli fell from his seat and broke his neck.

AUNT. It is an awful story, my dear child,—you may learn by this, that God Almighty expects your parents to make you obey them.

WILLIAM. Sometimes naughty rebellious thoughts come into my heart, and I suppose Satan puts them there, for you know it was Satan who first taught man to disobey God, and commit sin,—but generally I hope I do obey my dear papa and mamma, for I am very sure they never tell me any thing but what is for my good. Do tell me some texts for children to remember the duty they owe their parents.

AUNT. Prov. i. 8, 9; vi. 20; xxiii. 22–25; xxx. 17. And to show you that the Gospel urges this duty more strongly if possible than the Old Testament, read these texts;—Eph. vi. 1, 2. Col. iii. 20. Here we see our duty as Christians, and our Lord's example is very striking; for although he was "about his Heavenly Father's business," and greatly interested in the conversations he was holding with the learned men of Jerusalem, yet we read that when his

parents came to seek for him, he went back directly to Nazareth with them, and "became subject to them."

WILLIAM. The text "Train up a child in the way he should go," &c. is often quoted, (Prov. xxii. 6,) what does it mean?

AUNT. It is taken from the comparison of a young tree or sapling, which while the wood is yet soft, and the branch tender, will take any shape which the owner pleases, but if left to itself, will lean on either side to which the wind may blow it. Thus children who are neglected when young, soon fall into evil habits and temptations.

WILLIAM. Once when I was disobedient, papa called me to him, and said in a very serious manner, 'William, I dare not disobey God, though you dare to disobey me: and he has commanded me to punish you if you do not obey me. See, God has placed the proof of my *love* to you, on my punishing you or not.' Then he showed me this verse, (Prov. xiii. 24,) and afterwards whipped me! Oh dear God-mamma, I was so sorry, not half so much for the pain of the whipping, (though that was very bad,) as because my dear papa looked so unhappy, and I felt that God could not love me. I am sure he whipped me because it was his duty, for he would gladly not have done it. Afterwards he wrote out some texts from the Bible about disobedience to parents, and told

me to learn them. The first was a very awful one, which till then I had never seen; it was about the command given to the Israelite parents, to tell of the stubborn and disobedient conduct of their child to the rulers of the city, and the wicked child was to be stoned to death before everybody, that all that was evil might be put away from them, and the people hear and fear. Here it is, Godmamma,—Deut. xxi. 18–21.

AUNT. If the Christian laws were equally severe, how many children would be put to death! and yet it seems very sad that we do not attend to the milder but still decided precepts of the Gospel, "Children, obey your parents in *all* things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Col. iii. 20. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul says, "Children obey your parents *in the Lord*, for this is right;"—meaning, that in all things we are to obey them, unless what they tell us to do is contrary to what *the Lord* commands us. We are to obey *God* rather than *man;* but otherwise if according to the will of our heavenly Father, even should we ourselves dislike doing it, or think it unreasonable, we must remember the strict command of God. I say "*we*," because the commandment is as binding upon me, as it is upon you. As long as I have parents to obey, I am bound (as the catechism says in speaking

of the duty to our neighbour,) "to love, honour, and succour my father and mother."

WILLIAM. "Succour," means to help them. I think Jesus Christ succoured, and loved and honoured his mother, when he asked John to take care of her, when he was on the cross.

AUNT. Disobedience to parents is one of the worst tokens of wickedness, for St. Paul says, "In the last days, perilous times shall come; for men shall be disobedient to parents." 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2.

WILLIAM. Does any more of our duty to our neighbour relate to this commandment?

AUNT. Yes; all that part which speaks of *obedience*. We are to "honour and obey the civil Authority, to submit ourselves to our governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters, to behave ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters."

WILLIAM. What is meant by *spiritual pastors?*

AUNT. God's ministers: the clergy who are appointed by God to lead us to Jesus Christ, and explain to us the truths of the Gospel. Read 2 Cor. v. 20.

WILLIAM (reads). I am sure we ought to love and reverence them, for they are *messengers* from God. "Ambassador" means "messenger," mamma told me when I was reading my history of England. I am afraid I shall never be good enough to be God's

messenger, though I should like it very much. It is thought a great honour for a person to be an ambassador from an earthly king, but what is that, to being "an ambassador for Christ?"

AUNT. He can make the weakest fit for His service, and the reason that he employs weak men as His messengers, is, that the glory may be His alone. 2 Cor. iv. 7. A minister's life must be one of anxiety, watching, and prayer; for his business is to seek the salvation of souls: but the thought that it was the employment of his Lord and Master, and the promises of the Bible, must encourage and cheer him. See Dan. xii. 3.—1 Cor. iv. 1.—1 Thess. v. 12, 13.—1 Tim. v. 17.—Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

WILLIAM. Who are our "betters," Aunt?

AUNT. All who are older and wiser than ourselves, and all those whom God has placed in a rank above us. The young are by this directed, to behave with respect to old persons. See Levit. xix. 32.—1 Peter v. 5. I think a child very thoughtless and unfeeling, who continues his own noisy amusements in the presence of persons much older than himself, without stopping to think if it is pleasant to them or not; or who will be lounging on a chair or sofa, when perhaps there are grown up persons standing;—or, who would ridicule the infirmities of old age.

WILLIAM. I am afraid I am sometimes so selfish, as to make a noise, when people wish me to be quiet; but I hope another time, I shall remember, that I am breaking the Fifth Commandment, and endeavour to behave kindly and respectfully to all. I am sure I love old people very much; they are generally so kind to children. It was good old Simeon who took Jesus up in his arms, and blessed him. I want to know one thing more, Godmamma. What land is meant in the promise at the end of this commandment? "Thy days shall be long in the land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee."

AUNT. It means the land of Canaan to which Moses was conducting the Israelites, and therefore can only in the first place refer to them; but as Canaan when considered spiritually, denotes *heaven*, it is also a promise to true believers in all ages, that they who keep the commandments of their God, shall have an everlasting inheritance above; but it more especially means, that those who obey their parents, shall enjoy many temporal blessings, of which the disobedient shall be deprived.

WILLIAM. I do not think a long life in Canaan could have been very happy; for there was nothing but fighting and wars, and sin and idolatry were all around; but in heaven there will be "no more sin."

AUNT. My dear child, this commandment has kept us a long time, and I fear you must be tired; but as it relates more to children, than any other, we could not make it shorter,—of the following ones, we shall have comparatively little to say, that would be suitable to children, or they will be so plain, as to need little explanation: we will then talk of several in one evening. Good night—God bless you!

EVENING XIX.

Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Commandments.

AUNT. You will not be much longer with me, my dear William, so we ought to make the most of our time.

WILLIAM. Oh! then, do let us talk a little in the week about the Catechism, as well as on Sunday.

AUNT. Well my dear, I am quite at leisure this evening, and we will begin at once. What is the Sixth Commandment?

WILLIAM. "Thou shalt do no murder." *Murder*, means killing a person, does it not? but I do not think that would always be called murder, Aunt; for when Mr. Smith shot another gentleman who

was out shooting with him, he was not hung for it; and people are always put to death who commit murder.

AUNT. Killing any person is *murder*, when it is done wilfully and unlawfully. If by any accident, the death of another person is caused, it is not murder, as in the case you were speaking of; nor is it murder, when any one is put to death by the law of their country for any crime—or if a person kills another in self-defence, or in fighting the battles of his country.

WILLIAM. Had you not shown me, that the seeds of every sin are in my heart, I should have said, that I could not break this commandment. It seems such a dreadful crime.

AUNT. See what our Lord himself, and the Catechism after Him, say about it. Matt. v. 21, 22.

WILLIAM. Jesus says there, that anger is the same as murder in the sight of God. At first, that seems impossible; but when I think about it, anger must be the beginning of all murders. The murder of Abel arose from anger, and envy, and malice. The Catechism says, this commandment requires us "to bear no malice or hatred in our hearts."

AUNT. Some time ago, the gamekeeper of a gentleman in this neighbourhood, was displaced from his office for bad conduct, and another was put in

the situation. From that hour, envy and malice seem to have taken possession of his heart, and after some months, he deliberately shot the new game-keeper in broad day light, and in the presence of others; so careless did his anger make him of the consequences. Of course he was hung. But what a dreadful effect was produced by evil passions! One soul hurried suddenly before his God; a wife made in one moment a widow, and five children fatherless; while the murderer himself publicly suffered the punishment of his crime, and left a wife and child to lament over the consequences of sin.

William. Oh, what a sad story! it is enough to make every one wish to be cured of evil tempers. The Catechism says also, that to keep this commandment, we must "do no harm to any one by word or deed," so that to speak ill of a person, is a sort of murder.

Aunt. Certainly. It is a most cruel and wicked habit, for it is killing his character, and perhaps injuring him for life: an ill word is easily said of a person; but when once said, it is not easily unsaid; the next person adds to that word, until far more is made of it, than the first speaker ever intended. St. John says, (1 John iii. 15,) "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer," and we cannot love those we speak against. Another breach of this command

ment, is by setting a bad example to others, and tempting them to do wrong; this is murdering their souls, and is of far more consequence than the body

William. I never thought of this before. How very wrong it is of me to give way to naughty tempers before my little sisters, or ever to ask them to do that which I know would displease my dear parents! Will you give me some texts about this commandment?

Aunt. You will find God's hatred of this sin in the following places: Gen. ix. 6. Exod. xxi. 14. Levit. xxiv. 17, 21. Numb. xxxv. 30–33; and that those who injure the souls of others, are murderers in God's sight. Read Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. Ezekiel iii. 18. Here are some Gospel rules which may keep us free from this sin. Matt. v. 9; v. 44. Luke iii. 14. John xiii. 34. Romans xii. 17–21. Colos. iii. 12–14.

William. These are indeed beautiful texts, I will try to keep them in mind, that I may not again be quarrelsome, or unkind to my dear little sisters or cousins, or ever speak in anger to the servants or any body else.

Aunt. There are many instances in Scripture which prove, that the breaking of one commandment, leads to the breach of another, and therefore it is almost necessary to speak of those of the second

table together. The next mentioned, is the seventh. "Thou shalt not commit adultery:" the meaning of which, as far as I can now explain it to you, is this. You know when God made Adam, He also made Eve, as a companion or "help-meet for him;" and ordained, that for the future, "a man should leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they twain should be one flesh:" (Genesis ii. 24.) that is to say, that every man should love his wife, even as he loves himself, and better than any other human being; and every wife should feel the same towards her own husband. This was a most happy law, as all the laws of God are; but the hearts of men are so rebellious, that they like not the laws of God: so that some men do not love their own wives, and some women do not love their own husbands, or love others better—*this* is the sin of *adultery*, and a very shocking thing it is. King David, who in other respects was so good a man, made God very angry with him, by this sin. He saw Bathsheba, the wife of his captain Uriah, and liked her better than his own wives,—for in those days people were permitted to have many wives; (Matt. xix. 8,) and in order that he might have her as his own wife, he gave commandment that her husband, Uriah, should be put in the front of the battle, that he might be killed by the enemy, which wicked thing was done;

and thus David was guilty of both adultery and murder.

WILLIAM. Oh! how sorry I am, that David should have been so wicked. Did God punish him?

AUNT. Yes, he sent Nathan the prophet, to tell him a parable, which you may read in the twelfth chapter of the 2 Sam.; you will also find, that David bitterly repented of his sins, as we find also in the fifty-first Psalm, so that God spared his life, but caused his little baby to die, which was a great grief to him. What is the eighth commandment, William?

WILLIAM. "Thou shalt not steal;" and the Catechism says about it, "I am to keep my hands from picking and stealing."

AUNT. That is not all it says; for all that relates to this commandment, is not put in the same place. It requires us to be "true and just in all our dealings—to learn and labour truly, to get our own living; and to do our duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call us." The Gospel tells us, (Ephes. iv. 28.—Phil. iv. 8.—1 Thess. iv. 11, 12.—2 Thess. iii. 12.—1 Tim. ii. 2,) what is expected of us as Christians; and we see by the explanation of the Catechism, that not only professed thieves are guilty of breaking this commandment, (Levit. xix. 11, 13.—Zech. v. 3, 4.—1 Cor. vi. 10.—2 Cor. iv. 2,) but all who take the least

thing, that is not their own. (Mark x. 19.—1 Thess. iv. 6.) Those who behave themselves unjustly, or try to cheat any one; (Prov. xx. 17,) or who take advantage of the ignorance of others, in buying or selling, by saying, that the thing they wish to sell, is better than it really is; or that the thing they wish to buy, is bad, in order to get it for less money. (Levit. xix. 35, 36; xxv. 14. Prov. xx. 14.) Those also who keep back from any one their right, or who borrow money, or other things, without any hopes of paying it again, fall under condemnation. Psalm xxxvii. 21.

William. I am afraid, when I have any thing given me, to divide with my sisters, I do not do it always quite fairly, but sometimes try to keep the largest bit myself; but I did not know it was so wrong. Sometimes when we have little friends to see us, and you let us have the travelling map, or spillikens or some other game to play with; all the children do not behave quite justly, but jog the table, and try other unfair ways to get the game; but we never do that, Godmamma, for it is very dishonourable, and mamma tells us, we ought always to enjoy the game, quite as much, if we gain or lose it. Now I know why it is so wrong, the next time I play with any children who do so, I will explain it to them.

AUNT. In all those childish games, if you find you cannot follow your mamma's advice, you had better not play at them at all; for you will either sin against God, by losing your temper, or you may be tempted to be unfair, in order to win the game. Some children who are *greedy*, are tempted to take fruit, or cake, or sugar, when they think no one sees them; or if a cake is left in the room, although they would not take a slice of it, yet think there is no harm in picking out plums, or bits of sweet-meat, forgetting that "picking" is forbidden in this commandment.

WILLIAM. So it is, and as you said, that one sin leads to another; so here *greediness* leads to stealing. I am sure it is very dreadful to think, how easily such little children as we are, commit sin. I wish we learnt to be good as easily as we learn to be naughty; but I know it is owing to our wicked nature. Eve was first *greedy* you know, and then stole the apple, for it was God's fruit, and he had told her it was not hers.

AUNT. If you try to be generous and kind to all, and remember our Saviour's rule, "Whatsoever ye would, that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them," Mat. vii. 12, you will find yourself prepared to resist all temptation to this and many other sins. The Apostle's advice also to Timothy, (1 Timothy vi. 18,) will also be most useful; for if we are "will-

ing" and "ready" to give to others, we shall not be sinfully careful of ourselves. Here are some more texts to show, how watchful a Christian should be, not to break this commandment. Ephes. iv. 28; Phil. iv. 8; 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 2 Thess. iii. 12; 1 Timothy ii. 2. Another little rule I would give you: if any one lends you the least thing, be careful that you return it as soon as possible, having taken more care of it, than if it were your own. Never feel comfortable, until the borrowed article, whether valuable or not, is safe in the owner's hands, always feeling while you have it, that it is *not your own*, but another person's. St. Paul advises the Roman disciples, to "owe no man any thing but *love*." Rom. xiii. 8. By this means, we should avoid the condemnation of the Psalmist, (Psalm xxxvii. 21,) "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again," (as before quoted,) which is direct thieving; and also the sin of being in debt, which many think little about, except for the trouble it brings upon them.

William. I hope I shall remember this; for I know it must be very wicked in the sight of God, to be living in a grand way, and spending money which is not our own.

Aunt. While we encourage a generous and benevolent feeling towards others, let us "*deny* ourselves;" and that which we give away, will be a far

greater pleasure to us, than if we had made no such sacrifice.

William. I should like to learn to deny myself. May I give my pudding to day to the sick little child at the gate, and go without any myself?

Aunt. Yes, my dear boy, and I hope you will find it a useful exercise, enabling you to keep your wishes in subjection.

SUNDAY EVENING XX.

Ninth and Tenth Commandments.

Aunt. Repeat the Ninth Commandment, William.

William. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." To what does this relate, Aunt?

Aunt. To the sins of the tongue, my dear. St. James says, "the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity:" read the whole description, (James iii. to 12th verse,) for the Catechism says, you are to "keep your tongue from evil speaking, lying and slandering."

William (reads). That description makes the

tongue to be a great evil, if not properly managed. Can you give me some more texts?

AUNT. Psalm xxxiv. 13. xxxix. 1. James i. 26.

WILLIAM. Thank you; those texts speak of the general sin of making an ill use of the tongue, but I should like to talk of each particular part: evil speaking is first named; does that mean saying *evil*, or *bad* words?

AUNT. No my dear; that sin belongs (as we have already seen) to the third commandment. It means, that we are not to speak evil of others.

WILLIAM. I know that by "our neighbour," we are to understand, all our fellow-creatures, but are we never to say, that others do wrong?

AUNT. Not unless the naming it could do any good. The Christian "rejoiceth not in iniquity," (1 Cor. xiii. 6,) but laments over sin wherever he finds it, and therefore unless the glory of God require it, we must, as it were, cast a veil over the faults of others; try to hide them, and make the least of them. We may in Christian love, warn persons of the faults of others, in order to keep them from the like sins; but that is a very different thing from taking pleasure, in repeating those sins and faults.

WILLIAM. I am sure it would not be doing to

others, as we should like to be done unto; for nothing is so trying to me, when I have been naughty, as to find others know it; and yet, when Harriet, or one of my sisters has been in disgrace, either in the parlour or schoolroom, I have often gone into the nursery to tell the others of it: how wrong and unkind it was of me! for I felt very angry if they ever told of me.

AUNT. This is the sin of "*tale-bearing*," which the Bible specially blames. Levit. xix. 16. Another sort of tale-bearing is, when for the purpose of getting another person punished, the "tale-bearer," or "tell-tale," as you would call him, exposes his fault, without being asked to do so, or from any sort of duty. The sin of backbiting, or speaking evil of others behind their back, is thus condemned in Scripture. Psalm xv. 1–3; Rom. i. 30; James iv. 11; Titus iii. 2; Ephes. iv. 31; 1 Peter ii. 1.

WILLIAM. The next thing mentioned, is *lying*. I hope I never shall tell lies, for papa and mamma have taught us, that *liars* are the devil's children; (John viii. 44,) and then, Ananias and Sapphira were both struck dead for telling a lie—and David said, he would not suffer a liar to dwell in his house. Psalm ci. 7.

AUNT. I am very glad to find, my love, that you have such a dread of telling a lie; for there are many

children, into whose hearts the Lord has not put the same fear, who think nothing about the sin of it, their hearts being by nature deceitful, as the Psalmist says, Psalm lviii. 3. "As soon as they are born, they go astray and speak lies." The following texts show the Lord's abhorrence of liars, and His hatred of a lie, in which all His true servants unite. Prov. xii. 19–22; Micah vi. 12, 13; Zech. viii. 16; Ephes. iv. 15, 25; Colos. iii. 9; Rev. xxi. 8, 27.

WILLIAM. What is "Slandering," Aunt?

AUNT. Slandering, is evil-speaking, and lying joined together—speaking against another, when what is said of him, is untrue. Many people, when repeating any report to a person's injury, make more of it, than had been told them, and thus make their neighbour in the eyes of others, more sinful than he really was. The account is repeated again, with fresh additions, and thus these slanderers have the power of injuring at once, their own souls, and their neighbour's character. That the Lord condemns this, is plain from Scripture. Psalm ci. 5; Prov. v. 18; 2 Pet. ii. 11.

WILLIAM (reads). I should fear that much harm was done in breaking this commandment, because it is often broken, I am sure, without thinking about it.

Aunt. You should early accustom yourself to avoid tale-bearing, or telling of others' faults, unless for some special good—be careful how you *repeat* what you have heard, and to whom you repeat it. To your parents you may tell any thing; for you ought to hide nothing from them, unless you told it from a wrong motive; but never speak of other persons' faults to your companions, brothers, or sisters, or to the servants: and often reflect, if what you are going to say, can do harm to any one; if so, be silent. Remember what is said of great talkers, Prov. x. 19, and read these passages, 1 Cor. xiii. 4–7; 1 Peter iii. 9, 10. When speaking of the third commandment, I explained to you about witnesses being sworn in a court of justice. Now, if any witness *swears falsely*, he breaks this commandment in a most shocking way, for he solemnly calls on the Holy God, to bear witness to the truth of what he says, while all the time he is wilfully swearing to a *lie*. This is called the sin of perjury.

William. Dear Godmamma, that is very dreadful. I hope God will keep me from breaking this commandment for the future, either in heart or word.

Aunt. I trust He will, for "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Let us

remember also, that our church teaches us to pray in the Litany, "for all our enemies, persecutors, and *slanderers*," and that he would "turn their hearts."

WILLIAM. Now we are come to the Tenth and last commandment: "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." I often hear of people being covetous, but thought it was the same as *greediness*.

AUNT. So it is in a great measure. There are, as you see, a great many ways of being covetous. The word "*to covet*," means, to anxiously wish for, or desire, things that are not ours, and which we have no right to expect. This wishing for them is a sin of itself, and the breaking of this commandment, leads more perhaps than any other, to breaking all the rest: I mean principally those of the second table, though it is connected with the others also; especially the fourth, for how often does a wish for some wicked, and unlawful pleasure, lead people to keep away from the Church, and break the Lord's day?

WILLIAM. But how can it cause a person to break the fifth?

AUNT. Coveting or wishing for any thing, which their parents think it wrong for them to have, or

which they cannot give them, is often the cause of children's disobedience; and then I have heard of parents, who have been neglected by wicked children in their old age, because those children coveted what their parents possessed. But I hope such instances as the last, are very rare.

William. The first is very common. Mamma, I think I can explain how it causes people to break the sixth commandment. Suppose a man has a great deal of money, and a wicked neighbour covets it; after wishing for it a long while, and thinking a great deal about it, he determines on getting it, and that he may not be found out, he first murders the rich man, and then steals his money; so that he breaks both the sixth and the eighth commandments.

Aunt. In the same way, the seventh is broken, for if a person attended to the command, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," he would not think of taking her. So in the ninth, the coveting of any thing leads to telling lies, in order to obtain it; thus Gehazi, 2 Kings v. 20. There are many such instances recorded in Scripture: Achan's sin of stealing began by *coveting*. Joshua vii. 20, 21. Saul disobeyed God, owing to it. 1 Sam. xv. 9. David broke the sixth and seventh commandments, owing to it. 2 Sam. xi. 2, 3. Ahab murdered Naboth, because he coveted his field; and

Balaam was led by the love of money, to go to curse God's people. Judas betrayed his master for thirty pieces of silver. Matt. xxvi. 13.

WILLIAM. What a dreadful list of crimes, from what seems the *small* sin of *wishing!*

AUNT. As we have before observed, great things grow out of little ones. A child by looking wishfully at a cake or apple, at a cherry-tree, or box of money, may soon persuade himself, that there is no harm in taking some; that it will never be missed—that the owner has plenty—that he will not care about it: and then when discovered, it is easy to tell a lie. Oh my dear child, guard against the *first* temptations to sin. See God's anger at this sin. Psalm x. 3. Isaiah lvii. 17. Micah ii. 2. Hab. ii. 9. Matt. vi. 19—24. Luke xii. 15. 1 Cor. vi. 10. Ephes. v. 5. Heb. xiii. 5. James i. 14, 15. There is one Christian virtue which is a great safeguard against this sin; I mean *contentment.* "Be content with such things as ye have," says the Apostle to the Hebrews, xiii. 5; and if we are so, we shall not be looking and wishing for anything else. If we are discontented, it seems as if we thought we could do better for ourselves, than God has done for us, and we are unhappy, and make others so. Read 1 Timothy vi. 10. Philip. iv. 11.

WILLIAM (reads). I know contented people are

very happy, for mamma took me one day to see old Martha Deans: she is very old and infirm, and poor, and has no one to live with her; and she has only gruel for breakfast, and dry bread for dinner, and gruel for supper; and she told mamma, "she did not want any thing but a more thankful heart, to praise the Lord for all his mercies to her."

AUNT. You may be sure, that she was really happy, for nothing but the Holy Spirit in her heart, could make her feel thus. We have now talked over all the commandments, dear William, what do you think of them?

WILLIAM. Oh, I am quite sure, they are very difficult to keep; indeed no one could keep them, unless God taught them, and enabled them to do so; and I suppose that very few people keep them always. How is that?

AUNT. "Through the weakness of our mortal nature, we cannot always stand upright," as our Church says; but the Christian will bitterly lament his sinfulness, and like Peter, when he feels himself sinking, will stretch out his arm to Christ, saying, "Lord save, or I perish." Jesus is ever near, ready to help those who are fallen, and wash away their sin in his blood. But remember, the Bible is our rule of life, and, as St. Peter says, 2 Peter ii. 21, "it had been better not to have known the way of right-

eousness, than after you have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto you." You are now going home to your dear parents, my child, and I pray to God, that your visit to me may, by His blessing, not have been in vain; but that you may show by your actions, that you understand the walking in God's holy will and commandment, better than you did. Without *prayer*, you cannot succeed, but who is so fit to explain to a child, the importance of prayer, as a pious mother? Your dear mamma, therefore, will explain the Lord's Prayer to you.

WILLIAM. Thank you, thank you, dear God-mamma, for all you have taught me; I shall often look over the passages which I have marked with you in the Bible, and think of all you have said.

PART IV.

SUNDAY EVENING XXI.

PRAYER.

WILLIAM. Dear mamma! my Aunt said she knew you would explain the Lord's Prayer to me; when will you be so kind as to do it?

MAMMA. This evening we will talk about it, if you please, my dear boy. I am very glad, and so is your dear papa, to think that you are more anxious to be taught what is right than you used to be. You bear reproof with a more patient and Christian spirit, and are more gentle and kind to others.

WILLIAM. I am very glad you think so; but it seems to me, I am always breaking one or the other of the commandments, and falling into sin. My godmamma told me, that *prayer* must be my helper, so I should like to know more about prayer than I do.

MAMMA. You have been instructed in much that as a Christian child you should believe and do; and you feel that of yourself you can do none of these things, nor walk in God's commandments, nor serve

Him without His *special grace*, as the catechism says.

WILLIAM. Mamma, I do not quite understand what is meant by God's *special grace*, though I think my Aunt told me, that "*grace*" means "*favour*."

MAMMA. So it does, William. A *favour* you know is something granted to one who has no claim to it. Now you know *we* do not deserve any of God's blessings, therefore, they are all "*of grace*." God does not *owe* us any thing but *punishment*.

WILLIAM. Yes, mamma, but if we believe in Jesus Christ, and are joined to him, as a branch to the vine, we have a right to ask through Him for every favour.

MAMMA. True, and therefore we are told that as Christians, we must ask for God's *special favour* to enable us to perform His holy will and commandments. "*Special*" means "*particular*." We are to ask for that particular favour which we most need, not only the general favour which God bestowed when He sent His Son to die for the sins of the whole world, but that which He bestows when He saves each one of us; also when He gives to each person the assistance he requires, in fulfilling his peculiar duties.

WILLIAM. It is by God's Holy Spirit, is it

not, Mamma, that all Christians are assisted? I know too, that we must obtain Christ's Spirit by praying for it, for Jesus Christ says when speaking of earthly fathers giving good things to their children, upon their asking for them, "How much more shall your heavenly Father give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him!" but, dear mamma, I do not know how to ask God properly,—either I am thinking of something else while I am praying, (which you know is so wicked, and making a mock of God,) or I feel that I am saying what I do not quite understand, or I feel that my prayers are too childish to offer to the Great God.

MAMMA. My love, when you want your dear papa to give you any thing, or to do any thing for you, how do you ask *him?*

WILLIAM. When I wish very much for it, I ask him over and over again, and say, "Pray do let me have it, dear papa, I do love you so much, and I am sure you love me, don't refuse me this once."

MAMMA. And if your papa is busy writing or speaking to any one, and does not attend to you, what then?

WILLIAM. Oh I wait patiently for a better opportunity, and then ask again.

MAMMA. But suppose your papa says, "I have been thinking of it, William, but I am sure if I grant

your request, you will injure yourself or some one else; it will not be good for you, *I* foresee something that *you* do not.

WILLIAM. Why then, I *ought* to feel sure that papa knows better than I do, and that he would have given me what I asked, had it been good for me.

MAMMA. It is just in this way that God's children should act towards their heavenly Father. Ask for what you want with the greatest earnestness, feeling you really want it, and come to God and speak to Him as a dutiful and affectionate child would to an earthly parent; if he does not at once grant your request, ask again and again; use "*diligent* prayer" as the Catechism says, and if He does not grant it at all, rest satisfied that He would have done so, had He not foreseen that it would be hurtful to you.

WILLIAM. Thank you, dear mamma; I will try to remember this, when I pray to God either at Church or at home. I know why the Church prayers have nearly always the name of Jesus at the end;—because Christ said, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in my name*, He will give it you," John xvi. 23.

MAMMA. Yes, my dear, it is only through Christ you know, that we have any right to pray to God at all. Had not Jesus had compassion on sinners, none could have dared to speak to the most High

God whom they had offended. See John xiv. 6. Ephes. ii. 18. When we pray through Christ it is by the assistance of His Holy Spirit. Romans viii. 26. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Ephes. vi. 18. The Bible tells us of five things which are necessary to make our prayers acceptable. 1. *Sincerity;* we must really mean what we say. Read Jer. xxix. 13.—2. *Humility;* we must feel how unworthy we are to approach God. Psalm ix. 12.—*Faith;* we must firmly believe God's power and willingness to hear us. Matt. xxi. 22. Mark ix. 24.—4. *Fervency;* we must ask with all our hearts. Rom. xii. 11. James v. 16.—5. *Perseverance;* we must not be weary of asking. Rom. xii. 12. Eph. vi. 18.

William. Thank you, mamma; I have found them all out, and marked them in my Bible. Now will you tell me how many different kinds of prayer there are. *Public* prayer is worshipping God in Church, and *private* prayer, at *home*, is it not?

Mamma. You are right as to public prayer, which is the worship of God amidst the congregation of his people. Public forms of worship were in use among the Jews, for this purpose, as they are in the Church of England. The Israelites had a form of thanksgiving when they offered the first fruits of their ground. Deut. xxvi. 3—15. See also Solomon's prayer, 1 Kings viii. 54—56. David's prayer, when the

ark was brought back, 1 Chron. xvi. 7—36. Jehoshaphat's prayer when his country was invaded, 2 Chron. xx. 5—13. A form of prayer was used when the foundation of the second temple was laid, Ezra iii. 10, 11. The *whole multitude* were praying without at the time of incense, See Luke i. 10. Peter and John went to the temple at the hour of prayer, Acts iii. 1.

WILLIAM. There are a great many examples indeed that God appointed public prayer, and also that the Jews used to pray in public according to a written form. What is the next kind of prayer?

MAMMA. 2. *Social prayer;* which means, worshipping God in our families, or with our friends.

WILLIAM. Such as, when you have the servants and all of us into the study of a morning, and the servants again in the evening when we are gone to bed; and papa reads the Bible and then prays;—and sometimes the school teachers and the missionary collectors come here, and papa prays with *them*. Are not both these what you mean by *social* prayer?

MAMMA. Yes, my dear; and these texts will prove that such prayers are well pleasing to God. Matt. xviii. 19, 20. Acts i. 14; xii. 12. Jesus used to pray with his disciples also, Luke ix. 28. The third kind of prayer, is *private* prayer; the worship of God in secret, when we pour out our hearts to Him who is ever ready to hear us, though

our fellow beings would not be able or willing to help us. Our blessed Lord himself set us a frequent example of *private* prayer. Mark i. 35. Luke xxii. 44. The instances recorded in the Bible in which God has answered private prayer, are too numerous to tell you of at once, but you can find out a few, and it will be a nice employment for you and your sisters some wet Sunday, to find out the rest. Abraham, Gen xvii. 18, 20. Eliezer, Gen. xxiv. 12, 56. Moses, Exod. xvii. 11. Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 10, 11, 27. Daniel, vi. 10. 22. Cornelius, Acts, x. 2, 4. St. Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 8.

WILLIAM. Oh! what nice examples those are; I am sure they make me wish still more to pray so that God should listen to me.

MAMMA. You know that Jesus Christ in compassion to his disciples taught them how to pray; (See Matt. vi. 8, 9.) so that we, if his disciples, must pray in the same manner.

WILLIAM. But Jesus did not mean that we should say only the Lord's prayer, when we are praying, did he?

MAMMA. Certainly not. He says, "*After* this manner, *according* to this manner, "pray ye;" that it is to be as a pattern to us, by which we must make all our prayers. We must never ask any thing, that would be contrary to the spirit of this prayer, nor

must we omit to ask for the blessings which are contained in it. The Lord's prayer can be used in public, social, and private prayer, and none could be more suited to the wants of all persons.

WILLIAM. How many parts do you divide the Lord's prayer into?

MAMMA. I think it divides itself into *three.*

1st, The Introduction.

2nd, The six petitions.

3rd, The conclusion.

We shall not have time this evening to begin the first part, therefore you shall read the collect for the 10th Sunday after Trinity, and then these pretty verses on Prayer.

Prayer is the soul's *sincere desire,*
  Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire,
  That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
  The falling of a tear:
The upward glancing of an eye,
  When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech,
  That infant lips can try:
Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach,
  The majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watch word at the gates of death,
He enters heaven by prayer.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

SUNDAY EVENING XXII.

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name.

MAMMA. Tell me, my dear, what is the Introduction to this prayer?

WILLIAM. "Our Father which art in heaven," is it not, Mamma?

MAMMA. Yes, and you can tell me by what right you call God "Father?"

WILLIAM. Because Jesus Christ here tells us to do so, I suppose; but I know he would not have told us to do it, if he had not made the way plain for us, having procured our pardon, and by his death brought us near to God. My dear godmamma talked about this in the first part of the catechism; she also said, that by saying "*Our* Father" in this prayer, Jesus Christ owned us as his brethren.

MAMMA. I am glad to find you recollect what you have been taught. We shall find a great many scripture proofs that God is our Father. 1st, By *creation;* He made us, and therefore He is the author of our being. See Mal. ii. 10. Acts xvii. 28. 1 Cor. viii. 6. 2ndly, He is our Father by regeneration, or the new birth; when we are born again, or our hearts are changed by the power of the Holy Spirit, we become God's spiritual children. 1 John iii. 2; v. 1. 1 Peter i. 3, 4. 3rdly, He is our Father by *adoption*. You know what adoption means, William?

WILLIAM. Yes, Mamma;—when a person takes the children of another into his family, and considers them as his own.

MAMMA. Well, the great God took us from being the children of wrath, and made us His children, seeing that Christ had taken away our sin. Deut. xxxii. 6. Rom. viii. 15, 16. Gal. iii. 26. 1 John, iii. 1. Now think of the way in which your own dear papa treats you, and then we will compare it with God's dealings with us.

WILLIAM. Papa loves me, and is so kind to me, and gives me all I want.

MAMMA. God's children receive the most tender love and kindness from Him; (see Jer. xxxi. 20,)

and that he provides for all their wants, see Luke, xi. 13.

WILLIAM. My papa punishes me, when I deserve it.

MAMMA. So does the Lord punish His children. Deut. viii. 5. Heb. xii. 6.

WILLIAM. Papa is very sorry to punish us, and when we are sick or unhappy, he pities us very much.

MAMMA. Read Psalm ciii. 13. You see God feels the same towards His children. Now tell me what conduct is expected from a child?

WILLIAM. Love, honour, and obedience, as the fifth commandment tells us.

MAMMA. Then how much more should God's children show love, honour, and obedience to their Father, who is in heaven. Again, children bear a likeness to their parents, and God's children must all bear a likeness to Him, His image must be on their hearts. He says, (Lev. xi. 44,) "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy:"—and our Lord says, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 48.

WILLIAM. I was thinking just now, mamma, that the word "*our*" might perhaps have been used, to show that there should be communion and love, amongst the saints on earth.

MAMMA. You are quite right, my dear boy; a *Christian* must not be *selfish*, even in religion; when praying, we are to think not only of ourselves, but others, indeed of all the world; and we must ask God to bring *all* home to Him; but we are especially bound to pray for that part of Christ's body which is on earth.

WILLIAM. Mamma, why are we to pray to God in "heaven?" He is in every place, and can hear us at all times and places.

MAMMA. Heaven is more especially God's throne, where He is surrounded by all His glory, and Majesty, and attended by myriads of angelic beings. When an earthly sovereign receives petitions from, or grants favours to his subjects, it is when he is seated on his throne of state, and decked with all his pomp and splendour, so that all who behold him give him the respect and submission due to him. Our Lord in teaching us to address God as "our Father who art in heaven," meant us to remember the great majesty and power of Him to whom we are speaking. While we speak of His being *in heaven*, we are to humble ourselves by the thought that we are upon *earth*. Our feeling in addressing the Almighty God should be that of Abraham,—Gen. xviii. 27. Eccles. v. 1, 2.

WILLIAM. The catechism explains the Lord's Prayer as well as the Commandments, but as I do

not quite understand the different parts, I wish you would make it clearer while we are talking about it.

MAMMA. I will, my dear. The Father is there spoken of, "as the giver of all goodness." This He truly is; and because He is so, we ask Him for all the *good things* we want. The three first of the six petitions relate to God's glory, and are thus described as what we "desire of the Lord God our heavenly Father," namely, "to send his grace unto us, and to all people, that we may worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him as we ought to do." The three last petitions relate to our necessities, seeking for our *own* good, and that of all the human race.

WILLIAM. As we have time this evening, may we begin the petitions, mamma?

MAMMA. Yes, my dear. The first is,

"Hallowed be thy Name."

WILLIAM. "Hallowed" means sanctified or made holy, for that was explained to me in the fourth Commandment. But how can *we* make God's name holy? It is holy in itself, mamma.

MAMMA. You are right; and we cannot add to His holiness, or take from it. But, as we are said to *glorify* God, when we acknowledge or praise His glory, and to *bless* Him, when we own Him as the

giver of all blessings,—so when we speak of His holiness, and make mention of His name and all belonging to Him in a devout and reverential manner, we are said to hallow His name.

WILLIAM. It is very like asking, that we may keep the third Commandment.

MAMMA. But it not only means our speaking of God's name in a devout manner, but our earnest desire, that God should be reverenced in all His words and works; and viewing Him under His different titles, we pray that all the world as well as ourselves may delight to honour Him in them. Mention some of the Lord's titles, William.

WILLIAM. Jehovah,—I Am,—The Lord of Hosts,—The God of Israel,—The Almighty,—The Creator,—The Father.

MAMMA. You must remember that God must be hallowed as the blessed Trinity, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

WILLIAM. Oh yes! or we should indeed be taking from Him the honour due unto His name. He is Jesus,—the Saviour,—Christ,—the Redeemer,—the Lamb of God,—the Word,—the Holy Spirit,—the Comforter, and many others. What texts can you give me to prove that God's name is to be hallowed?

MAMMA. Psa. xcvi. 7, 8; cxlviii. 13; Isaiah

viii. 13; xxix. 23; 1 Pet. iii. 15. We must not only feel ourselves that God is a mighty, true, just, merciful, all-seeing, all-knowing God, our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Sanctifier,—but we must earnestly desire, that *all* may consider Him as such,—that those who have not yet known Him, may by His grace acquire this blessed knowledge, whether they are only the outward members, the dead branches of Christ's visible Church, or whether they are of the heathen, to whom His Holy name has never been proclaimed.

William. I was thinking, mamma, that as you said the petitions of the Lord's Prayer partly related to God and His glory, and partly to ourselves,—they really ask of God to help us keep the ten commandments, which contain our duties to God, and to our fellow-creatures.

Mamma. You are right, my dear, for as you have been told, you cannot keep any of the commandments without God's special grace, which is only to be obtained by diligent prayer, we will consider the next petition another time; but before we part, I must tell you there is one place in which God's name is always hallowed, and there are some beings who never cease to glorify Him.

William. I know what *place* you mean,—heaven, mamma; the beings you speak of are I think

the *beasts* mentioned in the Revelations, (iv. 8,) who "rest not day and night, saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

MAMMA. The word *beasts* ought there to be translated "*living creatures;*" a fit name for the holy angels who were created by God, and never having sinned, are not subject to death, and doubtless it means some particular order or degree of angels, but their rank we cannot tell. The members of Christ's redeemed Church, who are in heaven, delight to honour and glorify the name of God, and therefore the members of Christ's Church on earth must do so likewise. That you, my dear boy, may show yourself to be a true member of that Church, by ever hallowing God's holy name, is my earnest prayer.

SUNDAY EVENING XXIII.

CONVERSATION I.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

WILLIAM. I cannot tell what is here meant by God's kingdom; for I thought that His kingdom is every where, nor can I tell the meaning of our desiring it to come. I am quite ashamed of not understanding what I say so often, it is like making a mock of God I fear.

MAMMA. The kingdom of God about which we are taught to pray, is not the kingdom over which God rules as Creator and governor of the world, but it is the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; the subjects are those which he purchased with his own blood, who have been converted by his Holy Spirit, and who are the members of His body on earth, and in heaven;—they form a part of the kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter.

WILLIAM. Those who are only outward members, do not belong to Christ's kingdom, do they?

MAMMA. It is certainly true that all who remain until death only visible or outward Christians, will

not afterwards be owned by Christ as His in the kingdom of glory; but we are told in the parable of the tares, not to separate the wheat from the tares until the harvest, lest in pulling up the weeds we should also root up the wheat with them; so we must not presume to say what portion of Christ's Church, or which of its members, belong to the kingdom of grace or not. Go to the book-case, William, and bring me the 4th vol. of those books in brown covers, with "Archbishop Leighton's Works" printed on the back; I will read you what this good man says about the kingdom of God.

WILLIAM. Do mamma; I know papa is so fond of that book, for I often see him reading it.

MAMMA. After saying that 'the kingdom signifies *the Church*,' he adds, 'the Church is the *Jewel* in the ring of the world: in it He (i. e. God,) hath His peculiar residence, and chief delight, as kings choose one of their palaces .... to dwell in, more than another.'

WILLIAM. That means that God loves the Church better than all the world besides.

MAMMA. Yes; the Church taken as a *whole*, both its outward and spiritual members. Hear what Leighton says;—'The *visible Church* is but a little parcel, a kingdom chosen out of the world; but the truly godly, who are alone the subjects of the inward

kingdom of grace, are but a small part, a choice part of the *visible* church, as it is a choice part of the world.'

WILLIAM. Does he not mean, that it is better to belong to the outward Church, than to be amongst the open unbelievers or heathen, but that it is far better to be of the spiritual Church of Christ.

MAMMA. Just so; and you see it would be very wrong to speak of the *outward* members of Christ's Church as if they were no better than unbelievers or heathen in the sight of God. Leighton adds, 'the inward kingdom of grace, is the way and preparation for that of glory, and the outward kingdom of grace in the visible Church, is the means and way of introducing, and establishing, and increasing the inward; so that both of them look forward to the kingdom of glory.' Vol. iv. p. 68.

WILLIAM. I suppose that many are passing every day from the outward to the inward kingdom of grace; as the people pass by the outer court into the house.

MAMMA. Yes, my dear; and it is for an increase of their number that we offer this petition in the Lord's Prayer, "may thy kingdom *come*," or approach, or advance. We desire that those who have not professed the name of Christ, may be admitted into his Church, and own themselves the subjects of

Christ their King ; that those who have acknowledged themselves to be such, may (by the Spirit of God,) be brought to a willing subjection, and gladly submit to Him in all things ; and that while the kingdom of Christ is thus increasing upon earth, His people may greatly increase the numbers of His Church above.

WILLIAM. But is not that like praying that good people may die, mamma ?

MAMMA. The whole glory of Christ will not be perfected until the number of Christ's saints (his whole body) is completed. We do not ask for the death of good people, but only, that as all must die, those who are taken, may tend to increase His kingdom, instead of adding to the number of those who belong to the kingdom of Satan.

WILLIAM. I am sure, mamma, it is an excellent prayer, I hope I shall pray earnestly for it in future, for I have never prayed for it yet. We ought, too, to think it the best of all things, to pass from God's kingdom of grace here, to that of glory, and see Him face to face. Will you tell me some texts about those who pass from the state of sin, to that of grace ?

MAMMA. Rom. v. 21. Col. i. 13 ; and here are some relating to the coming of Christ's kingdom of glory. 1 Thess. iv. 16–18. 2 Thess. i. 10. Rev. xxii. 20. Remember, my dear, that the surest way

to fulfil this petition is, for Christ's kingdom to be established in each of our hearts ; let us often examine if we are His true subjects, living in a willing obedience to His commands, and endeavouring to spread His kingdom upon earth, by forwarding as far as we can, the designs of those who are seeking to convert the heathen, to the knowledge of the Saviour.

William. I should like, dear mamma, to save up some pence when I have any, and put them in the plate, when a missionary sermon is next preached in the church.

Mamma. Do, my love; for besides the good which you may be doing for the poor heathen, you would most likely learn to value more the blessings which belong to God's kingdom. Which is the third petition of the Lord's Prayer?

William. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." I suppose that the members of Christ's kingdom on earth, should desire to serve God in the same manner, as those who are in heaven. But mamma, how can they do God's will, as well as it is done in heaven?

Mamma. It does not say "as well," William, but, "*as* it is done in done in heaven ;" meaning, according to, in like manner," "after the same pattern." When Jesus said, "Be ye perfect, even as your

Father which is in heaven is perfect;" he did not mean that we could be as perfect as God, or as holy as He is.

WILLIAM. Oh no; it is something like copying copper-plate writing. The more we try, the more our writing resembles it; but we could never do it as well. In what manner is God's will done in Heaven?

MAMMA. It is done *universally* and *perfectly*. Psalm ciii. 20. *All* the commandments of God are kept, and none *omitted*. Now *we*, (like David, Psalm cxix. 6,) should have respect unto *all* God's commandments: we cannot, while on earth, keep any *perfectly;* but so far we may imitate the inhabitants of heaven, as not to keep one commandment and omit another, according to our own wayward fancies.

WILLIAM. I should think, that the saints in heaven were *cheerful* and *happy*, in doing the will of God?

MAMMA. That may be considered the second way in which God's will is done in heaven; for in the Revelations we are told, (Rev. iv. 10, 11,) how readily and joyfully they owned their obedience to their king, casting their crowns before Him, and singing His praises. Another way in which angels and saints perform God's will, is by doing it in *unison*, which means *all in one*—every saint and angel *unite* in doing his will. Now my dear William, God's will is not often done on earth in this manner: instead of cheerfully

submitting to God's will, how often do people murmur and complain at what they call *hardships*, and when they do comply with his commands, because they think it is their *duty*, they do it as a *task*, and not as David did, who said, (Psalm xl. 8,) "*I delight* to do thy will, O my God." Again, how different is the *harmony* of heaven, to the jarrings and disputings we hear on earth, even among God's people. Many who boast themselves of being living members of His church on earth, instead of quietly doing God's will, each in his own station, employ their time and thoughts in wondering why their brother does not understand the command in the same way that they do; and thus divisions are caused, and the kingdom of God diminished, and not increased.

WILLIAM. What a pattern of obedience and submission, Jesus Christ should be to us! for you know, when he was praying in the garden, before he was taken by the Jews, he said, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me, nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Luke xxii. 42.

MAMMA. Archbishop Leighton says, that our own will we must give up wholly into God's hands, 'to be as a piece of wax, pliable to what form He will, to do with it what He will.'

WILLIAM. Will you tell me some Scripture ex-

amples of submission to God's will, besides our Saviour?

MAMMA. When Nadab and Abihu were struck dead for offering strange fire, Aaron, their father, held his peace. Levit. x. 1–3; also, 1 Samuel, iii. 18, where Eli, when told of God's judgments on account of the wickedness of his sons, said, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." 2 Samuel, xv. 26. Job i. 21. Acts xxi. 14. James iv. 7, and do not forget the promise, Rev. xxii. 14, made to those who keep God's commandments.

WILLIAM. But we have only a *right* to the tree of life through Jesus Christ, who bought it for us.

MAMMA. It means, that unless we keep His commandments, we cannot belong to Christ, or have any right to the blessings he has prepared for us. And here we will stop for this evening.

SUNDAY EVENING XXIV.

CONVERSATION III.

" Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our tres passes, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

WILLIAM. To-night we are to begin the first petition of the Lord's prayer, that relates to our own wants, and those of all the human race: " Give us this day our daily bread." I always thought, mamma, that this meant, a prayer for as much food as would do for *one day*, and that we were not to ask for *more;* that we might not forget to pray *every day*—and we *might* forget, you know, if we put off praying any longer.

MAMMA. True, my love, that is one reason why we are to ask for our " *daily* bread," for we are much more apt to remember our temporal, than our spiritual wants. But it is also called, our *daily* bread, to show, that we depend upon God from day to day. We are not to ask for food *in advance*, or desire more of it, than is sufficient for our present wants ; for if we asked for a large supply, so as to wish to hoard it up, it would seem as if we were afraid we should get no

more. This would be like the Israelites in the wilderness, when manna was sent them from heaven. Do you remember?

WILLIAM. O yes! It fell every day early in the morning, except on Sundays, and the people were to gather enough for the day, but no more; and those who disobeyed and gathered more than they wanted in the day, found it all spoiled and useless. But on the day before the Sabbath, they were all to gather a double portion, and then it did not spoil.

MAMMA. It reminds me of a poor woman who earned her bread, by keeping donkeys, and letting them out to hire at a watering place in the neighbourhood. Her two children had the care of them. The church being at a great distance, many people hired donkeys to go to it, and many more made the Sunday a day of pleasure, and hired donkeys for their excursions. But this good woman, would never let her donkeys go to the town on that day, as her children would have been kept from the Sunday School, and she would have broken the Fourth Commandment, which forbids the cattle working; and on being asked, if she did not lose a great deal by it, she replied, "God takes care of me all the week, and I won't distrust him for Sunday."

WILLIAM. What a pretty story! and a *true* one too, Mamma! I am sure God provided for her; and

I hope her children will be as good as she is. I suppose, mamma, we are to ask for *bread*, to show that we are contented with whatever God gives us, and be thankful, as old widow Dean is, with her crust and gruel.

Mamma. Yes, my dear; and not only contented with regard to our food, but every thing else that relates to our body; for this petition includes all our temporal gifts. There are many texts which teach us to be contented. Prov. xxx. 8. Mat. vi. 31–33. 1 Tim. vi. 6, 8. There are many also to show, that God will provide for all who trust in Him. Ps. cxxxii. 15. Isa. xxxiii. 16. Prov. x. 22. Ps. xxxvii. 3. 1 Peter v. 7. But this petition must also be understood in a spiritual sense, for the Catechism explains it, by saying, "I pray unto God, that He will send us all things that be needful, both for our souls and bodies." We must daily pray, that our souls may be fed with spiritual food, even the Word of God; Jesus Christ, the true bread, which came down from heaven; and this is of more consequence than the other, as you will see by these texts. Matt. xvi. 26; iv. 4. John vi. 27.

William. Thank you, mamma; but can we ever ask for too many spiritual blessings?

Mamma. No, William; moderation is only required, with regard to our bodies; our souls can

never be satisfied on earth, with their food, and we ought never to be weary of asking for fresh and large supplies. Read 2 Cor. ix. 10, 11, which contains a description of the food which is to supply both bodies and souls.

WILLIAM. The next petition is, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." *Trespasses* mean *sins*, do they not, mamma?

MAMMA. Yes, William. St. Matthew, (vi. 12,) calls them "our debts," meaning, what we owe to God. In this petition, we ask mercy and pardon for our souls; we feel our need of forgiveness, that we are *lost* without it, and that it is only through Jesus Christ, that we can obtain it. But, through Him, the believer is sure of finding favour in the sight of his Heavenly Father, therefore he does not hesitate to ask Him (as the Catechism explains it) "to be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins."

WILLIAM. I know a verse in the Psalms (xxxii. 1) which says, that the man is "blessed whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is covered." Can you give me some more texts about forgiveness?

MAMMA. There is one in Acts iv. 12, and another, 1 Pet. ii. 24. You know that we all *daily* require forgiveness from our heavenly Father; therefore we should *daily* ask for it; for if persons are really sorry

for their faults, they will not rest until they have asked for, and obtained forgiveness.

WILLIAM. Yes, mamma, I am sure I am never happy if I have made you or dear papa angry, until you have pardoned me. But this petition says, "Forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive them that trespass against us.*" Does this mean, that if we forgive any one who has offended us, God will forgive us our sins against Him? If that is the case, I am sure my little sister Bessie might expect to have her sins forgiven, for she always forgives every body. But I do not think it means *that*, because you know it is "the blood of Jesus Christ alone which cleanseth from all sin." Will you explain it to me?

MAMMA. No my dear, there is none other name whereby we can be saved;" our own works have nothing to do with it. It means, that unless we forgive others, we cannot expect that God will forgive us: for an unforgiving spirit is contrary to Christ's example, we could not be members of His body, and possess it.

WILLIAM. Yes, I know that Jesus Christ prayed for his murderers, and said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

MAMMA. It would be very unlike a Christian then, to bear malice or hatred to our fellow-sinners, with such an example before our eyes. If we cannot

forgive our neighbour, we cannot hope for forgiveness from our God.

WILLIAM. Dear, dear mamma! I am so sorry, I have been so wicked. . . . Do tell me what to do?

MAMMA. What have you done, William?

WILLIAM. I was playing the other day, with Mr. Gray's little boy, and he was rude and unkind, and teased me so much, and at last he ran all over my flower bed, and spoilt my new seeds, which were coming up; and I told him, "I hoped he never would come here again, for I never could forgive him, and I have never liked to think about him since, I dislike him so.

MAMMA. Dear William, I am very sorry, and hope you are too; you cannot say the Lord's Prayer in a proper manner, if you feel like *this*—neither can you expect forgiveness of God, if you are not willing to forgive little James.

WILLIAM. I see that, I know it now; but how can I forgive him?

MAMMA. Read over Matt. xviii. from verse 21 to the end.

WILLIAM (reads). Oh dear mamma! I am ready to forgive him now, for how little is the offence James has committed against me, when compared with all my sins in the sight of God—and how much

Jesus Christ suffered, and yet *He* forgave! I will run down to Mr. Gray's to-morrow, if you will let me, and ask James to forgive me, for being angry with him. May I ask him to come here again some day, just to show, that I *really have* forgiven him, though I do not think him a pleasant playfellow. Perhaps it might have partly been my own fault, for I did provoke him, I own.

MAMMA. You shall do so, my dear, and if little James comes here again, I hope you will try to act as a Christian child. I do not allow him often to come, for he is not taught, I fear, to avoid the sin of selfishness, nor to act according to the rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them." But he has lost his mamma, and his papa is always so busy, that we must pity more than blame him. But do not forget, my dear boy, when you go to bed, to ask pardon for this your sin, through Jesus Christ's blood, and to say with all your heart, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

SUNDAY EVENING XXV.

CONVERSATION IV.

'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen."

WILLIAM. God does not tempt men to do what is wrong, mamma; that is the devil's work. What then does the sixth petition mean?

MAMMA. No, God does not tempt any man, (see James i. 13, 14,) but He permits us to be tempted, in order that we may be proved or tried. Do you see that pretty china vase, on the chimney piece? When that was made, it was put into an oven or furnace, which had been heated very hot, and kept in it for a certain time. Had it cracked during this trial, it would have been a proof, that it had not been perfectly made, and was not fit for use; there must have been some flaw or fault in it, which the fire discovered, and which would have shown its worthlessness. Thus, our heavenly Father, (wishing to make

us "perfect in every good word and work to do His will, working in us, that which is well pleasing in His sight," Heb. xiii. 21,) sends us trials of different kinds, or permits temptations to assail us, that our faithfulness may be clearly seen.

WILLIAM. What is the difference between a *temptation*, and *trial?*

MAMMA. Sometimes the word *temptation* in the Bible, means *trial*, Gen. xxii. 1; but, it commonly means, God's permitting us to be placed in such a situation, as would oblige us by our conduct in it to show, if we are His children or not. For instance, we were speaking last Sunday of your quarrel with little James: had God thought it best, He could have hindered your meeting with him at all, or have prevented his acting as he did; but as a trial of your temper, He left James to speak according to his own perverse nature, and left you exposed to the temptation. Had you thought that you were in danger, and lifted up your heart to God to "keep you from falling," (see Jude 24,) all the temptation would have been in vain, and by God's help you would have overcome sin and Satan.

WILLIAM. If I could but keep in mind, that Satan is always on the watch to lead us into sin, how careful I should be. It was Satan who seeing Job was

an upright man, tried to make him sin against God; and it was Satan who tempted St. Peter, to hinder our Lord from saving men, for Jesus reproved him when he tried to persuade him not to go up to Jerusalem to be put to death, and said, (Matt. xvi. 23,) "Get thee behind me *Satan:* thou art an offence to me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of man;" and afterwards Peter fell into a still greater temptation by denying his Saviour. I wonder why Jesus permitted his own disciple to be so tempted.

MAMMA. It was to show Peter the weakness and sin of his own heart, and to cure him of its natural pride and self-conceit; for when forewarned that he would deny his master, instead of asking Jesus to keep him from committing such a sin, he said in his own strength, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." Matt. xxvi. 35.

WILLIAM. I remember papa told me, that St. Peter never spoke so confidently of himself again; for after Jesus was risen, and had appeared to Peter, He asked him three times, "if he loved him? and Peter humbly said, "Thou knowest that I love thee."

MAMMA. Here then you see, my dear, why God permits us to be tempted; but we must not *ask for* temptations, as we know not if our faith may at the

time rest firmly on God, and we ought constantly to feel the truth of that text, "Let him that *thinketh* he standeth, take heed lest he fall." The Scriptures are full of awful lessons respecting those who have fallen under temptation, and many of those are God's own people. David fell into temptation, when he committed the sin of taking Uriah's wife, and murdering her husband, 2 Sam. xi.; and again, when tempted by Satan to number Israel, 1 Chron. xxi. 1. Achan saw the Babylonish spoils, and stole them. Josh. vii. 20, 21. Judas was tempted by the love of money, to betray his master. Matt. xxvi. 15. Ananias and Sapphira were tempted to lie unto the Holy Ghost. Acts v. 3. The following texts will show, that the Lord tries his people in mercy to make them what they ought to be. Deut. viii. 2–16; xiii. 3; Luke viii. 13; James i. 12; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

William. I see now why we ought to leave even our trials in God's hand, only asking Him to deliver us out of them. The Catechism explains this petition, by saying, we are to pray, "that it would please Him to save and defend us from all dangers, both of soul and body, and that He will keep us from all sin and wickedness," and thus all sorts of trials and temptations are included.

Mamma. Yes, and especially we pray to be delivered "from our spiritual enemy," who is *Satan.*

see Ephes. vi. 11. 1 Pet. v. 8. 1 John, v. 18. Although *he* is the greatest of all evils, and our strongest enemy, yet it is a comfort to think, that even *he* cannot compel us to sin, he can only persuade and tempt us; so if we put on the whole armour of God," we shall "become *more than conquerors*, through Jesus Christ who hath loved us;" and be saved from "the everlasting death," as the Catechism calls eternal punishment—that terrible hell inhabited by devils, where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." See Matt. xxv. 46. Rom. vi. 23. Rev. xx. 14.

William. Oh! dear mamma, I know and believe that it is only Jesus Christ who can deliver us from that awful place; what should we do, if He had not said "My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Mamma. The prophet Hosea says, xiii. 9, (speaking from God,) "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help;" and St. Peter, (2 Peter ii. 9,) says, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations:" and He has taught us the only way to obtain His never-failing help, by constant and earnest prayer, such prayer as a drowning man would use, who unable to swim, could not reach the shore, and had nothing to rely on but God. Yet, we must not neglect the duty of keeping away from evil, and

out of sight of temptation; for if we wilfully run into danger, we cannot expect that God will bring us out of it. Though Satan puts evil thoughts in our hearts, yet, if we yield to them, it is our own free act, and the sin lies at our own door.

WILLIAM. I will try, dear mamma, to avoid those things which I think likely to tempt me. If I feel inclined to be provoked by any thing that is said, I will, if I can, go out of hearing, till I can bear it; or, I will try to remember how Jesus Christ bore the angry words of his enemies, and answered not a word.

MAMMA. If we are likely to be tempted by those things which please our outward senses, such as eating nice dainties, which children are too often fond of, instead of looking and wishing for that which is forbidden, we ought to turn our eyes and thoughts from it, as soon as possible. Read the Collect, my dear, for the fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

WILLIAM (reads). I will learn that prayer by heart, dear mamma, and often use it; but will you tell me about the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, for we have gone through all the six petitions.

MAMMA. It is called the *Doxology*, or form of praise, and by it we ascribe *Sovereignty*, Omnipotence, Honour, and Eternity to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are all included in our prayer.

Such doxologies are often used in Scripture. 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Psalm lxxii. 18, 19. 1 Timothy i. 17. Rev. v. 13, 14; vii. 12.

WILLIAM. I think I understand it; if we are members of Christ's kingdom, and his subjects, God must be our king, and all we have, is at His disposal. He can do what he pleases to us, and for us; and besides, we know the greatness of His *power*, and that he is both willing and able to "do more for us, than we can ask or think." Ephes. iii. 20. Then as to the *glory*, we know that if we do not glorify Him on earth, He will be honoured and glorified in heaven; indeed, when the Jews desired Jesus to command the children, and his disciples to be silent, who were exclaiming, "Hosanna to the Son of David, &c." Jesus said, "Should these hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." Do you not remember that, mamma? Luke xix. 40.

MAMMA. Yes, my love, and I am very glad you thought of that text, as it proves clearly, that God must be glorified, whether we delight to do so or not; and these attributes must *ever* be ascribed to God, for He Himself says, "I am the Lord, I change not." Mal. iii. 6.

WILLIAM. How happy heaven must be! because the love, and greatness and glory of God lasts forever, while all earthly love, and glory and greatness

may be gone in a moment. Does not "Amen," at the end of this, and other prayers, mean, "So I wish it to be?"

Mamma. Yes, and it also denotes, "So I *believe* it to be;" marking our entire trust and confidence in God's power and love, in Jesus Christ. Here are some texts which show, that it is only (as the Catechism expresses it,) "of his mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ," that we can hope to obtain any of our petitions. Matt. xxi. 22. John xvi. 23. 2 Cor. i. 20. But, my dear boy, you must not think that by saying "amen" at the end of the prayers, when you are in church, or at family worship, that you need not follow the words spoken, with your heart and lips; that would be like a person putting his name to a paper, signifying that he approved of its contents, when he had never read it through, to see what it contained; and by thus acting, he would deceive both himself and others.

William. Thank you, for reminding me of that, it would indeed be very wrong; but, dear mamma, I never knew rightly what it was to pray before, and I am sure I did not understand half you have now taught me, about the Lord's Prayer. My Godmamma was quite right, when she said, you could teach me all about it, and now I know so much, how sad it will be if I do not pray with all my heart!

MAMMA. We will often talk together about the privilege of praying to our heavenly Father, and I trust that my dear boy will openly speak to me on the subject, whenever he feels inclined.

WILLIAM. Indeed I will, dear Mamma, I am never so happy as when we are talking together.

MAMMA. God grant you may always delight in conversing on such subjects! and may He, my child, give you a spirit of prayer! I have written a little hymn for you on "prayer," which I should like you to learn!

WILLIAM. O thank you, I shall like it the better, if you have written it. Let me read it.

ON PRAYER.

In every hour of grief or joy
  Almighty God! I'll fly to Thee,
With songs of praise my lips employ,
  Or seek Thy aid on bended knee.

Thou art my Father and my Friend,
  On Thee I place my surest stay;
On whom but Thee could I depend?
  Who else could wash my guilt away?

Let not Thy child rebellious prove
  When prostrate, Lord, before Thy throne;
But, asking blessings from above,
  Still may he add, "Thy will be done."

PART V.

SUNDAY EVENING XXVI.

THE SACRAMENTS.

AUNT. My dear William, I am very glad of the opportunity which this short visit gives me, of talking with you about the fifth and last part of the Church Catechism, which is called "the Sacraments."

WILLIAM. And so am I, dear Godmamma, for I began to fear I should never finish it with you, and since you were so good as to begin explaining it to me, mamma said, she would rather you finished it, as this part is connected so much with the first.

AUNT. The word "sacrament" was originally used to signify the oath which was taken by the Roman soldiers, when they bound themselves to be faithful to their general.

WILLIAM. Oh then, I know what it means in the catechism. Something which binds us to be faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ, as the Baptismal Service says,—Is it not?

AUNT. Yes, my dear; christians must "fight manfully under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil," if they would continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto the end. You have seen,

William, the difficulty of renouncing the world, the flesh, and the Devil; therefore we have the more reason to *bind* ourselves to do so, in a solemn manner, and especially in those ways which God has ordained. How many sacraments are there, by which we are bound to serve the Lord Jesus?

WILLIAM. The catechism says, "Two only, as generally necessary to salvation; that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord." Why is a sacrament said to be generally *necessary* to *salvation?*

AUNT. Because commanded by God; and if we wilfully break any of God's commands, we cannot be His children. The Bible tells us, that we are to be baptized, and that we are to partake of the Lord's Supper, and both by the special command of our Lord Himself.

WILLIAM. I understand it now. If it be *possible*, a Christian is bound to receive the Sacraments; if not, God will not be displeased.

AUNT. How does the Catechism explain the meaning of Sacrament?

WILLIAM. As "an outward and visible sign, of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof." Let me think a minute. "An outward visible sign, of

an inward and spiritual grace!" That means, something we can see, which is to remind us of something we cannot see. A sign or mark which is to remind us of the inward spiritual grace, which Christ has promised to send us. Christ has appointed this sign Himself, and He appointed it as a *means* by which the grace should come to us if we use it properly, and a *pledge* to make it sure to us; so that those who rightly use the outward sign, may claim the promise of the inward grace. But what is the meaning of a pledge?

AUNT. A *token*. You will comprehend it better if I tell you by an illustration, the common use of the word. Suppose a king were to say to a subject, 'I am indebted to you for your services to me, here is a *ring*, and if ever you are in trouble and I can do you any good, send it to me, and I will be attentive to your request!' This ring would be a pledge or token that the king would grant whatever he might reasonably ask. Years might pass, and the king may forget the man, and the service he had performed,—but if even then the ring was sent, all would be brought to his mind, and he would redeem or bring back his pledge by doing whatever was asked.

WILLIAM. I think I understand now what is meant by a sacrament.

AUNT. You have already been taught all that is

necessary about the Sacrament of Baptism, in my first conversation with you, but do you know any thing about the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, William?

WILLIAM. I do not understand much about it, I know that on one Sunday in every month, Papa and Mamma stay in church, after the sermon is over, and *we* go home; and they call those Sundays "Sacrament Sundays." Is it any thing which children ought not to know?

AUNT. No, my love; any thoughtful children should have this Sacrament explained to them as well as the other; both are very solemn ordinances, and should be treated with the greatest reverence; but as Baptism is administered to little children, and the Lord's Supper is not, it seems that the one concerns *them* more than the other, and therefore, a few words for the present will answer. You have already read the account of the first appointment of the Lord's Supper, and from it you learn that our blessed Saviour, the night before he suffered, knowing all that was to take place, and being fully aware how prone the human heart is to forget even the greatest benefits, commanded that all his disciples, that is to say all Christians, should often partake of a solemn meal, eating a little bread and drinking a little wine, in remembrance of His precious body and blood, and he

desired *all* to do it, as a token that they belonged to Christ, and believed in His atonement. I shall hereafter write to you more fully, if I have not an opportunity of seeing you; for the present, bear in mind, that it was the parting request (not to say *command*) of a *dying Friend*,—of such a friend as men never had before, nor could such another be found! and his words were, "Do this in remembrance of me." We have also completed the consideration of the Catechism, or Instruction, which our church gives to her members; and I hope you have been led to bless God for permitting you to be amongst their number. Value this privilege, as a wise child would value a pious, judicious and affectionate mother, whose instructions were not *her own*, but *God's*, taken from His word, and pointing through His kingdom of grace here, to His kingdom of glory hereafter.

William. I do indeed feel it is an honour, to belong to a Church, which takes so great an interest in little children, as well as riper Christians; and I trust, if God (the *wise* God,) will some day permit such a sinful and ignorant child as I am to preach His everlasting Gospel, I do trust, that I may never bring disgrace upon the Church by forgetting or despising her Instructions.

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