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FESTIVALS AND FASTS



OF THE CHURCH.

THE
FESTIVALS AND FASTS
OF
THE CHURCH.

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A SERIES OF FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS

Between a Godmother and Child.

FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS.

From the London Edition.

BY TWO VOLUMES

VCL. I

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NEW-YORK:

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It may be naturally thought that the following attempt is needless, as well as presumptuous, since we have Nelson's standard Work, and the Sermons from which so much has been borrowed in this little book. But Nelson's style is too obscure for children, while his practical remarks are much above their capacity; and the Sermons do not generally give a sketch of the lives of the Saints they commemorate, nor are they, of course, likely to be put into the hands of the young and ignorant, for whom these dialogues are intended.

The kind assistance of a clergyman in the compilation of this little Work is gratefully acknowledged.

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THE
FASTS AND FESTIVALS
OF
THE CHURCH.

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DIALOGUE I.

**Introduction.**

GODMOTHER—PHÆBE.

*Phæbe.*—Father told me that you wished to speak to me this morning, Godmother.

*Godmother.*—Yes, Phæbe, I have just been asking your father whether he will let you go to church with me to-morrow; he says he shall be very glad that you should go.

*Phæbe.*—You don't mean to-morrow, dear Godmother, to-morrow is Saturday.

*Godmother.*—Yes, I know that, but still I do mean to-morrow. What day will it be?

*Phæbe.*—Oh, the 30th of November.

*Godmother.*—Take this prayer-book, and look in the calendar if it is nothing else.

*Phæbe.*—The feast of St. Andrew, Apostle.

*Godmother.*—Look now at the end of the calendar, and you will see a table of all the feasts that are to be observed throughout the year, and then a table of vigils and fasts. To *observe* a day is to keep it in some particular manner, so as to mark it as different from other days; and the Feasts or Festivals are days set apart by the Church, either for the remembrance of some special mercies of God, such as the birth and resurrection of Christ, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, or in memory of the blessed Apostles, and other Saints, who were the means of bringing to us the knowledge of Christ Jesus, by preaching His gospel throughout the world, and who, most of them, laid down their lives for their Lord's sake.

*Phæbe.*—I see in this table that all the Sundays in the year are feasts. Ought all feast-days to be kept like Sundays?

*Godmother.*—In former times, I believe, they were, and it was a great blessing and privilege. It may not always be in our power now to spend all festivals as we spend Sundays, but we ought to observe them as well as we can. For instance, we should make a point of going to church, if there is service within reach of us, and if we have no duties to keep us at home, or work to oblige us to go from home, but not to church. If the Feast is in honour of a Saint, like to-morrow's,

we should consider for what virtues he was most remarkable, by what steps he arrived at so great perfection; and earnestly beg God's grace to enable us to imitate him in our lives for the time to come, following the good examples that are set before us. Or if the Feast is appointed to remind us of any of the great truths of the gospel, or any remarkable events in our blessed Saviour's life, we should think about these things, praise God for His great goodness, and see what we can do to show our gratitude for the blessings which the Church thus bids us remember. You have read in the Bible that the Jews were ordered to observe several Feasts, in memory of past benefits, as the Feast of the passover, of weeks, and of tabernacles; and since we Christians have received yet greater blessings from God than even His chosen people of old, it must be good, as well as pleasant, to observe days for the particular remembrance of such blessings, and for giving thanks for them. And so the Church did from the earliest christian times; Christians celebrated especially the anniversaries of the deaths of martyrs.

*Phæbe.*—Godmother, will you tell me what anniversaries are?

*Godmother.*—An anniversary is the return of some particular day in every year. On what day do we keep Christmas?

*Phæbe.*—On December 25th.

*Godmother.*—Well, then, December 25th is the anniversary of our Lord's Birth, and we

remember, and, as it is called, commemorate His Birth, every year when that day comes round.

*Phæbe.*—Thank you, I understand now.

*Godmother.*—On the anniversary of a martyr's death the early Christians used to meet at their graves; there they thought over their sufferings, and their virtues; they blessed God for their pious examples, for their holy lives, and their happy deaths; they celebrated these days by showing great charity to the poor, and by rejoicing together.

*Phæbe.*—Is it not on the birthdays of Saints that their Feasts are now kept?

*Godmother.*—Not on what *you* mean by their birthdays,—not the day on which they were born into this world, to suffer trials and troubles, but the day on which they were placed out of the reach of sin and temptation, and born again unto the joys and happiness of an endless life, an inheritance incorruptible, that fadeth not away.

*Phæbe.*—You do not mean their christening day?

*Godmother.*—No, on that day they were not placed out of the reach of sin and temptation, though they *were* born again and made inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.

*Phæbe.*—Then you mean the day of their death.

*Godmother.*—Yes, I do. We keep the Saints' days on the day of their death; except that we keep the conversion of St. Paul, and the nativity or birth of St. John the Baptist.

By degrees the number of Saints' days increased greatly, till at length they became too frequent, and were made an excuse for idleness. And even worse than that, they were turned to a bad purpose, such as we could hardly have fancied if we did not know it to be true,—instead of glorifying God in His Saints, Christians paid them such honour as was due to God alone, and by so doing, went near to fall into the sin of idolatry, and to break the second commandment. It was thought right, therefore, to take away Saints' days, and to keep holy only those days which are now marked as Feasts in the prayer-book, and we remember and return thanks for the Saints in general on November 1st, which is called All Saints' Day. But now these holydays, few though they be, are not duly observed.

*Phæbe.*—It seems a great pity that they should not be kept. Do you know why people left off observing them?

*Godmother.*—I am afraid the neglect began by men letting their thoughts run so much on worldly business, that at last they came to think themselves too busy to attend to their duties towards God.

*Phæbe.*—And then, dear Godmother, you know that there is not always service. Should not clergymen always have service on Saints' days?

*Godmother.*—I cannot answer that question, Phæbe, nor would I, if I could. Remember, we should be very slow to judge of what clergy-

men should or should not do; what would you say to a child who blamed its parents, or told them how they ought to act? Well, it is an unfitting for people in general to interfere with or judge the ministers of God. Only let us be very thankful for whatever means of grace are given to us; we may be sure that, however few we have, they are more than we deserve, and *enough* for us, if we make good use of them. Remember, too, my child, that while you are careful never to miss an opportunity of going to church any time or any day, when you can go, you must always be careful not to blame or think ill of your neighbours who do not go so often. Many people have not their time at their own disposal; they are in service or in business, and it is their duty to attend to the orders of their masters or employers, which keep them from church. Or they have particular duties to keep them at home, though they are their own masters. They have a loss, no doubt, but God can make up this loss to them. Anyhow, whether or not you can see the reason which keeps your neighbours from church on week days, you must not judge them.

You saw in the prayer-book, after the table of Feasts that are to be kept throughout the year, another table of the vigils, fasts, and days of abstinence to be observed. Do you know what vigil means?

*Phoebe.*—No, Godmother, I was going to ask you.

*Godmother.*—Do you remember any text in which a word something like *vigil* is used?

*Phoebe.*—One of the texts you gave me to learn by heart is, "Be sober, be *vigilant*, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. v. 8. Is that what you mean?

*Godmother.*—Yes, I will first explain the word *vigilant*. There is an animal from whom we may learn what vigilance is—the watch-dog. You can tell me what he does.

*Phoebe.*—Why, the squire's *Cæsar* is still enough by day, I only see his nose just out of his kennel, but I know that every night he goes watching and prowling all round the house while every one is in bed.

*Godmother.*—Then he is wide awake all night?

*Phoebe.*—Oh yes, *Godmother*, of course, and ready to catch any thief. I know he caught the man that came last year to steal the apples and pears from the garden.

*Godmother.*—Well, *Cæsar* is *vigilant* or watchful; he is awake and mindful of his duties, watching while others sleep. Now the wicked world, which you know we renounce at our baptism, is often called *night* in Scripture, while heaven is bright day; wicked things are called *dark things*—the devil is the prince of the powers of *darkness*; evil works are works of *darkness*, and Hell is called the blackness of *darkness*. What were the texts I once made you learn about *light* and day?

*Phæbe.*—“Now are ye *light* in the Lord, walk as children of *light*.” “Ye are all the children of the *light* and the children of day.” Our Lord dwells “in *light* no man can approach.” “God is *light*, and in Him is no darkness.” “The nations that are saved shall walk in *light*.”

*Godmother.*—There are many other like texts. Now when have we most need to be careful and watchful against dangers, by day or by night?

*Phæbe.*—By night.

*Godmother.*—Of course; and also in the early morning, when it is only twilight, and evil people may be still wandering about. In this world it is no longer *all* evil, or dark night, since our Lord came to give us light, but neither is it full day like heaven. There are many dangers against which at all times we must watch. Our adversary the devil still goes about seeking whom he may devour.

*Phæbe.*—Oh! I hope I may be vigilant and watch well against him, till I am safe from him in heaven. I suppose that wicked people are like dogs who go to sleep, and do not know when thieves are about.

*Godmother.*—Yes, not only wicked but careless people are like those who are asleep, and it is because such sleep is so very dangerous that we are told, “It is time to awake out of sleep,” and, “Awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light.”

*Phæbe.*—I suppose then, that vigils mean times when we are to watch.

*Godmother.*—We are to watch at all times. The faithful dog is always watching, for the thieves may come at any time.

*Phæbe.*—Then why are there so few vigils?

*Godmother.*—These vigils are the days before most of the holydays; they are to put us in mind of being *always* vigilant, as Festivals put us in mind of being *always* thankful.

*Phæbe.*—Why are vigils kept on the days before Festivals?

*Godmother.*—The vigil is a preparation for the Festival; we must repent before we can be forgiven, we must mourn before we can rejoice. You remember what I told you about Friday coming before Sunday, and Lent before Easter, so fasts and vigils come before Feast days.

*Phæbe.*—I suppose that if we prayed very earnestly on vigils, we should have strength granted us to be more vigilant every day of the year.

*Godmother.*—I do not doubt it. The blessing of days set apart for God's more special service does not pass away when they are over; Christians look back to those holy seasons, and forward to them, as to "days of refreshing from the presence of the Lord." In former and holier times, Christians really sat up watching and praying all night.

*Phæbe.*—And they thought a great deal, I dare say, about sin being called darkness.

*Godmother.*—Yes, and when they saw the day dawn and the sun appear, they remembered who said, "I am the true Light," &c,

*Phæbe.*—I know that our Saviour is called the Sun of Righteousness; but it is the moon and stars that give light during the night.

*Godmother.*—I will tell you what I once heard our clergyman say. The moon and the stars get their light from the sun when he is out of our sight. In the Bible the saints of God are often called stars; can you tell me why?

*Phæbe.*—Because they get all their goodness from our Lord, as the stars get their light from the sun, I suppose. And what is the moon like?

*Godmother.*—She is like the holy Church which lights the world while the Sun of Righteousness is hid from our eyes, being now at the Right Hand of God.

*Phæbe.*—Do you know what prayers good men used to say at these vigils?

*Godmother.*—We know that they were prayers of penitence. They thought over their sins, they fasted, and kept away from their friends, that they might have time to ask forgiveness for all they had done amiss. They could keep the Festival that followed with more rejoicing in holy things when they had thought so much of the evil of sin, and of God's mercy, which had first washed away their sins in baptism, and then when they had fallen away from their first purity, had accepted their repentance and faith instead of sinless obedience.

*Phæbe.*—No doubt they made many good resolutions against their sins.

*Godmother.*—Not only that, they learnt to

abhor them as the enemies which had crucified our Lord and Saviour.

*Phæbe.*—We say in the Litany, “remember not our sins, nor the sins of our forefathers;” do the sins of our forefathers hurt us?

*Godmother.*—Certainly, though we cannot know *how* sin does harm from generation to generation. But we know we are suffering from Adam’s sin to this day; and that God has said that he visits the sins of the fathers upon their children unto the third and fourth generation.

Between the feast of Christmas and the Epiphany, and between Easter and Whitsuntide, there are no vigils.

*Phæbe.*—Why not?

*Godmother.*—Because these are times of great rejoicing, when the Church celebrates the Birth and Resurrection of Christ; and bids us lose the thought of ourselves and our sin and shame in the glory of Him who came “to cleanse us from all iniquity.”

*Phæbe.*—If we were like the holy Angels who are always loving Him, and doing His will, we should be able to rejoice without having first to repent.

*Godmother.*—We should, dear; and considering their happy state of holiness, no vigil is appointed before the feast of St. Michael and All Angels.

*Phæbe.*—You have still to tell me about the days of fasting and abstinence. The forty days of Lent are fasting days, I see. I know that

Lent is the time before Easter. The Ember days come four times a year; what are they?

*Godmother.*—They are times set apart in the beginning of each of the four seasons of the year—Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter—to pray for a blessing on each of them: and also to pray particularly for those persons who are to be ordained ministers at such times.

*Phæbe.*—I remember now the prayer which is appointed to be read during the Ember weeks.

*Godmother.*—Yes; and you know that we read in the Acts, how the Church fasted and prayed before the Apostles laid their hands on those who were set apart to teach and to preach. Our blessed Lord Himself passed a night in prayer, before He appointed the twelve Apostles. When we think of the blessing of having a good clergyman, we cannot help wishing that all parishes should have one; and therefore it is very comfortable to be told to pray for those who are ordained, that they may, by their life and doctrine, set forth God's glory, and set forward the salvation of all men.

*Phæbe.*—Yes, to be sure, we ought to pray for that.

*Godmother.*—We pray, therefore, for the ministers of God at all four Ember weeks;—but there are different things to be thought of at each of the different seasons. Next month, as you see, there will be Ember days; in them we must especially think of our Lord's Advent; that, with holy Simeon and Anna, and those

other Israelites who waited for our Lord's coming, we may be filled with joy and consolation at His Birth.

*Phæbe.*—Yes, when Christmas comes.

*Godmother.*—The next Ember days are in Lent; when we are in a time of sorrow and penitence, but looking forward to the joyful time of Easter. We must pray, therefore, that we may so weep and lament for our sins, that on the day of our Lord's glorious Resurrection, we may rejoice with a joy no man can take from us.

*Phæbe.*—The third Ember week comes after Pentecost.

*Godmother.*—And before Trinity Sunday; on which day there are always Ordinations. During this Ember week, we should think of the blessings brought to the Church by the coming of the Holy Ghost, and pray that, as the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles after they had continued together with one accord in prayer and supplication, so we who belong to the holy Catholic Church, founded by the Apostles, may be fulfilled with the heavenly grace of the Holy Ghost for our Blessed Lord's sake.

*Phæbe.*—The Ember days in September belong to no particular festival.

*Godmother.*—No; but they come at a time when we have especial cause to bless God for all His temporal blessings, when we gather into our barns the fruits of the earth which He has given us so richly to enjoy.

*Phæbe.*—And this year the harvest has been very good indeed; and the weather so beautiful, that it was all well got in. I remember, the day before the first corn was cut, I went out in the evening with father; and when we got to the top of the hill, by Farmer Jones's, father made me notice how rich the fields were; and then he said, "Now, Phæbe, we must pray to the Almighty for fine weather, or else all this great promise will come to nothing, and all our labour and pains be wasted." I thought then how grateful we must be if there was fine weather;—and I am sure father has been grateful. He was so glad when Mr. Seymour said he meant to read the thanksgiving for fine weather. Will you tell me now about the Rogation days; what does Rogation mean?

*Godmother.*—Praying. Rogation days are days of praying. You see they are the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension day. They are appointed to be kept with fasting and prayer, to prepare us for the festival that follows, and to turn away God's wrath, which we have deserved by our sins, so that it may please Him to bless the produce of the earth, which is now beginning to grow and ripen, and to keep from us those sicknesses which are very frequent at the beginning of hot weather.

*Phæbe.*—I was once staying with my grandmother just before Ascension day,—it must have been on the Rogation days, only I did not know it,—and there was a procession through the

village. The clergyman went first, and a great many people followed, and there was music, and they carried flags; and after the procession had passed through the village, all the people went into Church to Morning Service.

*Godmother.*—That is a custom kept still in many villages, and a very pleasant one it is. Now, my dear child, you must run home. I think you will not ask again why we are to go to church on saints' days. To-morrow, as we walk to church, I will tell you something about St. Andrew.

*Phæbe.*—Thank you, godmother.





## DIALOGUE II.

### Saint Andrew's Day.

NOVEMBER 30.



*Phæbe.*—WELL, godmother, I hope I am in good time. I have put on my Sunday bonnet, as I thought you would like it.

*Godmother.*—Yes, you see I have got mine too.

*P.*—How pleasant the sun is, this cold day! and the robins are singing quite nicely, pretty little things. And now, I declare, I hear the Church bells ringing! But, godmother, what are you going to tell me about St. Andrew?

*G.*—Those things that I have read of him in the Bible, and remarks and explanations which I have found in a book called “Companion to the Fasts and Festivals,” written by a very good man, called Mr. Nelson: the book itself would be rather too hard for you just at present, but I hope you will read it some day. I have also read some beautiful sermons on the Festivals, of which I can tell you such

parts as I remember, and I think you can understand.

*P.*—And will you tell me about the other Saints as their days come?

*G.*—Yes, dear, with all my heart. The feast of St. Andrew is the first in what is called the Christian year. St. Andrew is fitly placed first among the Apostles, because (as far as Scripture informs us) he was the first among them who found the Messiah, and sought to be His disciple, (St. John i. 40, etc.) He was born at Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, and was son of Jonas, a fisherman of that town, and brother to St. Peter. He became a disciple of St. John Baptist, and being with him one day as our Lord passed by, and hearing him say that He was “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world,” St. Andrew, and another disciple who was with him, straightway left John the Baptist, and followed Christ. He turned round and asked them, “What seek ye?” They told Him, that they wished to wait upon His teaching, and He allowed them to go with Him, and pass that day with Him. What He said to them is not told us; but St. Andrew became so convinced of the truth of the Baptist’s words, when he testified of Jesus, that he went to his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, “We have found the Messiah, and he brought him to Jesus.” It was not, however, till a year afterwards, that our Lord called St. Andrew and St. Peter to leave their father’s business, and come and follow Him,

(St. Matt. iv. 19.) Little is said afterwards about St. Andrew, but that little shows that he was very high in the favour and confidence of our Lord: in the twelfth chapter of St. John we hear of his bringing to Christ certain Greeks, who came up to Jerusalem to worship, and who desired to see Him. In the sixth chapter, again, we find him in the office of bringing strangers to Christ—"There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes." He was one of the four to whom our Saviour revealed the signs of His coming, and of the end of the world, (St. Mark xiii. 3.) We do not read in the Acts of the Apostles what St. Andrew did after our Lord's Ascension, only that he assembled with the other Apostles, (Acts i. 13,) when they were waiting for the descent of the Holy Ghost: except in this place, his name is not mentioned in the book of Acts. But we are told, from some old histories, that he went to preach the gospel in a country called Scythia, and converted many people to the faith. At last he received the crown of martyrdom, by being fastened to a cross of this form,  $\times$ , which from him is commonly called a Saint Andrew's cross. We are told that he went to the cross full of joy and gratitude, and that he hung upon it two days before he died, teaching the people about him all the time, and praising God, Who had vouchsafed him the honour of dying for his blessed Master.

*P.*—Godmother, I was thinking of some lines

that you read to me once, and explained to me, out of the Christian Year. They were about brothers, and sisters, and friends, helping each other to be good; and I think they were for St. Andrew's day, because we are told that he brought his brother, Simon Peter, to Jesus.

*G.*—They were, my dear, you are quite right, and I am glad you have remembered this: can you repeat the lines?

*P.*—No, I do not think I can; they were rather difficult, but I remember what you said about it,—how brothers and sisters should each set a good pattern to the other. I think of it sometimes, when I see how good Ben is, and how he keeps to what he thinks right, without making a fuss about it, or praising himself; and then I wish I was like him. He always seems to try to find out what is right, and do it, not caring whether other boys do so or not; and yet he is good-tempered and friendly to all his companions.

*G.*—That is the way to lead them to follow his good example. And certainly his sister should be the first to try to follow it.

*P.*—I cannot help wishing to be like him, because I love him so much,—he is so kind to me.

*G.*—You must remember that you have not only to copy your elder brother, but that you ought to set a good example to those who are younger than you; for instance, to your little cousins, who sometimes are left under your

care. I heard little Sam say the other day, that he knew he might get through that gap in the hedge, because he had seen cousin Phœbe get through. I do not think Farmer Mills would much have liked it: but that was a small instance of setting a pattern to a younger child. Take care, dear Phœbe, that you never set the example of getting out of the straight path of duty, and wandering into forbidden ways.

*P.*—That would be very shocking indeed! I will always pray to God, to keep me from setting them a bad example, and to enable me to set them a good one. And I will pray to Him to help me to follow the good examples that I see. I sometimes think I was not so giddy, before Anne went to service; she often used to remind me of my lessons and my work, and so does Ben remind me of things now, when he is at home. It was only last Saturday evening that I was going out before I had learnt my collect, and he asked me if I had not better learn it first. I answered him in a pet, that there would be plenty of time, and I went for my bonnet; but when I came back, and looked at his kind face again, I was ashamed to go against what he told me, so I took off my bonnet, and sat down to learn; and if I had not learnt the collect then, I should not have done it at all, for aunt came in afterwards. But, godmother, Anne is gone; and if Ben was to go away from home, who should I have to remind me? I hope I should always have you near; but it is very nice to

have a brother or a sister at home, to keep one company; and, as you say sometimes, to walk before one in the right way, and help one to walk in it.

*G.*—So it is, my dear, and you are quite right in making much of this blessing whilst you have it. But look, if I told you now to go over that stile and across those fields, while I keep on in this lane, would you grieve about it?

*P.*—No, because we should meet again at the church-door; the path across the fields comes into the lane there.

*G.*—Yes, so we should, my child. And you may be even more sure, that if you and your brother and sister are all good, although your paths through life may be very different, you will all be going to the same blessed home, where you will meet at last in perfect happiness, and never part again; and where you will rejoice with never-failing joy, at having given and followed good examples. Only think how happy it would make your brother, if he should see you at the last day among those whom Christ owns for his own, and should it be that *he* had helped to make you a faithful Christian, think how he might then look back on the days of your childhood, and be allowed to remember all the little things in which he had set you a good pattern, or helped you to be good by his kind advice. Do not you think it would make even heaven happier to him?

*P.*—But if I do wrong, that will be like

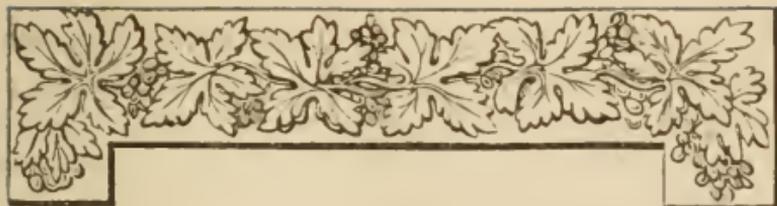
losing my way, as if I did not keep the right path across these fields, and so did not come to the church at all.

*G.*—You could not lose your way across these fields, unless you were very careless, and were thinking of something else. But suppose that you did, and got out of sight of the church, can you think of nothing which would tell you which way to go to it, so as to get right at last?

*P.*—Yes; if the bells were still ringing, I could listen to them, and I could hear which way the sound came: or I could ask any person I met to show me the right road.

*G.*—Well, we who are Christians *may* sometimes go wrong, though we never *need* do so; but if we listen to what we hear in church, and to what our clergyman tells us, we can find out our mistake, and learn how to go into the right way again. Still, it will be harder, and rougher, and slower work to get back than it would have been to keep straight on; and it will waste a great deal of time which might have been spent in getting on in the journey. May God grant, dear, that we may all keep right on, and meet in our happy home at last!

Here we are at the church-yard gate.



### DIALOGUE III.

## Saint Thomas's Day.

DECEMBER 21.



*Phæbe.*—DEAR godmother, I know what to-morrow is, it is the feast of St. Thomas.

*Godmother.*—Well, my child, it is something to know even that. But can you tell me anything about St. Thomas the Apostle?

*P.*—I have tried to find out the places where he is mentioned in the Gospels. He is named with the other Apostles in St. Matt. x. 3; St. Mark viii. 18; St. Luke vi. 15; and Acts i. 13. But it is St. John who says the most about him.

*G.*—Yes; he is the only one of the Evangelists who does more than name him. Now, I will give you the history of St. Thomas, as we gather it from the Gospels, and from the writings of the earliest Christians. Thomas was also called Didymus, which names both mean a *Twin*. He is supposed to have been a Galilean, and by trade a fisherman, as he was one of those who went a fishing with St. Peter after our

Lord's Resurrection, (St. John xxi. 2.) You have noticed, I dare say, the proof that St. Thomas gave of his love for his blessed Master, when he proposed to the rest of the Apostles to go with Him into Judea, and to die with Him, at the time of Lazarus's death, (St. John xi. 16.) The next mention of this Apostle is, when our Saviour, a little while before His Crucifixion, spoke to His disciples of the joys of heaven, and of His going to prepare a place for them; to which Thomas replied, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way?" (St. John xiv. 5.) Our Lord answered him in those words, so full of deep and blessed meaning, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Men could not find, or make a way to heaven; but in their Saviour Christ, a way is made for them: He is their way, to take them to their heavenly Father; He is their life, the life of their souls; and He is also the truth, to teach them what is needful for them to know. Our safety is to trust in our Saviour, to believe only, and so we shall be saved. But St. Thomas had not yet learnt that lesson of faith, for, as you well know, he would not believe the good tidings of our Lord's Resurrection. You must remember his unbelief then; find out the passage, and read it to me, in the twentieth chapter of St. John, ver. 24; and then go on to read our Lord's gracious indulgence to his unbelief, when he offered to give the proof which St. Thomas had required.

*P.*—But Thomas did not wait then to touch the wounds of our Lord, or to seek any farther; he cried out at once, “My Lord, and my God!”

*G.*—He was satisfied then; but our Lord, having satisfied him, added a reproof for his want of faith: “Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.”

*P.*—I suppose St. Thomas ought to have believed what the other Apostles and the women told him.

*G.*—Yes; and besides their telling him that they had seen the Lord, he had our Lord's own assurance that He would rise again. When He told his disciples that He should suffer, He told them also that He should rise again on the third day, (St. Matt. xvi. 21.) They lost their trust in these words of Christ, and in His other promises, when He was crucified and laid in the grave; and He reproved them all for this unbelief and hardness of heart. (St. Matt. xvi. 14; St. John xxiv. 13—28.) He reminded them of the prophecies which foretold His glory as well as His humiliation, and showed them that they ought still to have trusted that this was He Who should redeem Israel.

*P.*—But St. Thomas doubted longer than the rest.

*G.*—Yes, he did. And as God turns even the weakness and mistakes of men to some good purpose, this unbelief of St. Thomas drew from his Master the words which we were

speaking of just now, the words which promise a blessing to those who believe without seeing.

*P.*—Is not that promise something like a passage in one of St. Paul's epistles, which you said so much to me about once, "We walk by faith, not by sight?" 2 Cor. v. 7.

*G.*—Yes, faith is the distinction of Christians. It was for want of faith that the apostles despaired when their Lord was taken from them, and given into the hands of wicked men, and it was through the abundance of their faith, after the Holy Ghost had been given to them, that they were ready to suffer, even unto death, for the hope that was set before them. Do not you remember how St. Paul begins the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews? "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And he goes on to show what men have done by the strength of faith. It seems to be the particular trial which God gives to his servants in this world, whether they will look to the things which they see, or to the things which they do not see. St. Paul sets before us the example of Moses among others. He was called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; he lived, as we learn, in the king's palace, where he must have had all the pleasures that he could wish for, I mean all such pleasures as people are apt to set store by, all that riches and power can get for them. He *saw* king Pharaoh in all his greatness, but he knew of a greater than Pharaoh; he *believed* in the God who is invisible, and

believing in God, he chose rather to suffer reproach with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and to live among the riches of Egypt. He liked better to go back to his own people, who were despised and ill used, who were then making bricks in the scorching sun, and when more was asked of them than they could do, were beaten for not making them. He liked better to live with them and serve God, than to live with the wicked heathen king. And by the strength of faith, Moses was made able to bring the people of Israel out of bondage. Now it seems that when St. Thomas lost sight of his Lord, when Christ was laid in the sepulchre, and every thing looked dark and discouraging, he had not faith to look forward, and hope for his rising again from the grave. But, as we have read, that gracious Master pitied him, and though he rebuked his unbelief, yet he gave him a share in the commission to the Apostles, "Go ye and teach all nations," &c.; and gave him also a share in the wisdom and power which the Holy Spirit poured forth upon them. After our Lord's Ascension, St. Thomas preached the glad tidings of salvation to different nations in the east; he even went into India, where there are at this day some who are called Christians of St. Thomas. He at last suffered martyrdom by the hands of the heathen priests of India, who saw how many people he had converted to Christianity, and were afraid there would soon be no more worshippers of

their idols. He died joyfully, not as he once expressed his readiness to do, *with* his Lord, but *for* his Lord; and ever since, his name has been remembered and honoured by the Church.

*P.*—But, godmother, every body believes now, I mean in England, do not they? Nobody doubts now whether our Lord has risen, or whether every thing in the Bible is true.

*G.*—I am afraid, my dear, there are still some people who are so wretched as to doubt these things, but I hope they are not very often to be met with. At least, I should hope you need not meet with them; they are to be found, if any where, among hardened, reckless sinners, who can have no hope for their sins but in thinking that the Bible does not speak true. But though you may not meet with such unbelievers, you may perhaps meet with people who would try to shake your faith. You may hear people say of holy Baptism, “How can a little water make such a great change in an infant?” or who will say of the other Holy Sacrament, that no such great benefits as we are told of, can come from merely partaking of bread and wine. Or they will say, “How can it signify so much whether we say our prayers at church, or at home, or at a meeting-house?” These people show a want of faith. Of course water could do nothing alone, it is the will of God which gives it power. You remember what Naaman said when the prophet told him to wash himself in the river Jordan, (2 Kings v.)

*P.*—He thought any other river would do as well.

*G.*—But when he obeyed the prophet and washed in the river Jordan, what good did he get by it?

*P.*—He was made clean of his leprosy.

*G.*—And so, by God's command, baptism may make us clean from the sin in which we are born. But not to speak now of people who *talk* in an unbelieving way, what do you think of people's *actions*? what sort of belief can those persons have, who sin against God, who commit the very sins which he has threatened to punish? Alas, what sort of faith have we, we who perhaps condemn our neighbours? If we believe, why are we not much holier Christians? We have all great cause to say, as the disciples did, "Lord, increase our faith!" St. Luke xvii.

*P.*—But, godmother, I suppose you do believe, because you always do what is right. I mean that you always go to church, in all weathers, twice on Sundays, and in the week if there is service, and I know you say your prayers at home night and morning, if not oftener, and you read the daily lessons and the psalms, and good books besides, when you have time. And you are honest in all your dealings, and kind to every body; and you spare something for people poorer than yourself, though you are not very rich. And I suppose you do all that because you believe all that the Bible says.

*G.*—My dear Phœbe, you have made out a list of my good doings something like that

which the Pharisee made ; but we do not find that he was approved of, for all that he thought so well of himself. My dear child, if you knew the wandering thoughts in prayer, the wasted moments, the selfish wishes, the angry feelings, the distrust and fear, and want of courage to bear trials :—if God was not merciful beyond all that we can ask or think, it would make one despair. Let us come back to that prayer, “Lord, I believe ; help thou my unbelief.” We wonder at St. Thomas, but we have more cause to wonder at ourselves. If all the Bible says is true, how little cause we have to care so much as we do care, about the things of this life. If from our hearts we could say to our ascended Saviour, “My Lord, and my God !” that should be enough, we should trust him to order all our ways. But it is time to get ready for church, and we must not be too late.

*P.*—As we go, may I tell you the story that father told us the other day, about the poor man who found a pocket-book with so much money in it. Have you heard of it ?

*G.*—No, I have heard nothing about it.

*P.*—Then let me tell you, because I think that man must have had faith. He was a very poor man indeed, and his wife had been ill for a long time, and could not get well because he could not get enough strengthening food to give her, and his children were nearly starving too. Well, as he was coming back from the town last market day, (he went there to get work, but he could get none,) he found this pocket-book ;

he thought it must belong to one of the farmers who had been to market, and he walked back six miles to the town, and then round to the farmers in the neighbourhood, but he could not find its owner; he went home quite tired with walking, and there was only a little bit of bread for his supper. Next morning he was off again early to make more inquiries, though his neighbours advised him not to make any more fuss about it, but to use it as a godsend to save his wife and children from quite starving. He would not listen to them, and hardly dared to look at his poor wife, but went away as fast as he could. After a great deal of trouble, he found the farmer who had lost the money, and gave it back to him. Now, godmother, had not this man faith?

G.—He had indeed, my child; he had too much faith in God's commands to break them, by taking what was not his own; and too much faith in God's promises to fear that his family would not be taken care of.

P.—The farmer, who is a very good man, said that he would like to have such an honest labourer in his service; so he gave him constant work, and a cottage to live in near his farm, and when he found that his wife was so sickly, he was very kind to her, and sent her a great many things. So this poor man's faith was rewarded.

G.—Yes, it was rewarded at once, and we are allowed to *see* its reward; but we know that if such faith had no reward at all in this world, it could not fail of a reward in the next world.



DIALOGUE IV.

**Christmas Day.**

DECEMBER 25.



*Godmother.*—WELL, Phæbe, here you are at last, I expected you sooner.

*Phæbe.*—Oh, godmother, I am so tired! I have been hard at work all day. Do you know that I have gathered holly and misletoe till my arms ached? and then I had to help to put them up,—they look so pretty,—and now it is all ready against to-morrow. I could not come to you till it was done.

*G.*—No; but we may have now a quiet talk, and you shall go home early, for I dare say you will be sleepy.

*P.*—I think I am never sleepy when I am with you; but I must go to bed betimes, though, for I am to get up very early to go before daylight with the other school children to sing the Christmas hymn under the parsonage windows, and at the manor house. I do hope it will be a fine day.

*G.*—So do I. But now, my dear, sit down, and let us talk quietly about the great Festival of to-morrow; for whilst we rejoice and are merry, we must not forget what a solemn day it is, nor what great things were done for us on that day. Our Lord Jesus Christ, “for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.” (2 Cor. viii. 2.)

*P.*—Do tell me about that, about Christmas being a time to be merry, and yet to be thoughtful. Tell me how I ought to try to manage that.

*G.*—Why, I would have you try to quiet your mind this evening, and think seriously of all that we are to talk about. When you go to bed say your prayers very attentively, and you may make them rather longer than usual, and ask God to help you to keep His joyful and holy Feast in a true Christian spirit. When you wake think of the Angels’ Song, that they sung to the shepherds, “Glory to God in the highest,” &c. You may think of that as you go out to sing with your schoolfellows, and when you are singing, you may think of the words that you sing, and what they mean. Do not let any thing keep you from saying your morning prayers at home steadily. After this you will be employed at school and at church, and the sight of the church dressed with holly may bring you pleasant thoughts suited to the day. You will eat your Christmas dinner cheerfully, and when you look round at your father and brother, and at your other friends, and meet some of them on the way to church, you

may thank God for giving you friends, and you may think how much you ought to love them; and then think what you can do to serve and please them, and how good-tempered and obliging you ought to be; and how great a blessing it will prove to you, if you can show any kindness to any of your fellow-creatures, and then think how you are all members of one family, and are all reconciled to your heavenly Father through Christ. As there is no sermon in the evening, you will be out of church in time to take a walk before you go in to drink tea, and I hope you will pass a happy evening, not forgetting the holy thoughts of the morning.

*P.*—You have made out a very nice day for me.

*G.*—And now, I am going to ask you some questions, to see whether you correctly remember the great events that we are to celebrate. Where was our Saviour born?

*P.*—In Bethlehem of Judea. uuu

*G.*—Was Bethlehem the place where the Virgin Mary commonly lived?

*P.*—No, she lived at Nazareth; but she came to Bethlehem to be taxed, with her husband Joseph. What does that mean, “to be taxed?”

*G.*—It is to be commanded by the king or governor of one’s country, to pay a certain sum of money to the government, for the common use. But when we are told that Mary and Joseph went up to be taxed, I believe it only means that they went to be *enrolled*, that is, to

have their names set down, because the Roman emperor, Augustus Cesar, wished to have an account of the number of his subjects. You know that the prophet Micah had foretold, that the Christ should be born in the little town of Bethlehem. (Micah v. 2.) You can tell me what happened on the night when Christ was born?

*P.*—Do you mean about the shepherds who were watching their flocks when the angel came to them? I remember your telling me that, one Christmas when I was very little: I could not read the Bible then, but I never forgot about the shepherds, and how, when they saw the great light, they were frightened at first, till the angel said to them, “Fear not,” and told them that he brought good tidings. You made me learn the Angels’ Song, by repeating it to me. I suppose those shepherds must have been very good men.

*G.*—I should think so; for the good tidings of salvation seem to have been first made known to those who were keeping God’s commandments and ordinances faithfully; as the blessed Virgin, who was so highly favoured above women, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna. We may see, that a lowly station of life is no hindrance to one enjoying God’s greatest favours. These shepherds were poor and unlearned men; they were doing their duty in the state of life to which God had called them, and watching their sheep by night, when they

were blessed by first hearing that good news, which many righteous persons and kings had desired to know, and had not known.

*P.*—I thought you would like me to learn what I could about Christmas Day before it came; so, on Sunday evening, I looked out and read through the proper Psalms and Lessons, and the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel.

*G.*—That was right; but did you find out, as you read them, why they were appointed by the Church for this festival?

*P.*—Some of them I could understand, but not all.

*G.*—Well then, let us go through them regularly, beginning with the nineteenth Psalm. David prophesies of the coming of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness; as the sun shines forth in his glory, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof, so should Christ bring light to the world. His law converts the soul, and gives wisdom unto the simple; His commandment is true, and enlightens the eyes. The psalm ends with a confession of sin, and a prayer to be delivered from it, which Christians will make from their hearts, knowing how much they have received, and how much they ought to return.

The forty-fifth Psalm describes the greatness, and goodness, and power of Christ; how He would come with the word of truth, of meekness, and of righteousness; and how He would subdue the people unto Him, even in the midst

among the King's enemies. (Compare Rev. xix. 11—17.)

*P.*—But who is meant by the Queen, and the King's daughter?

*G.*—The Church of Christ is meant, which you know is often spoken of as His Spouse or Wife. (See Eph. v. 25—27; Rev. xxi. 2.)

“She is all glorious within;” by which is meant the inward purity and holiness of Christians; “and her clothing is of wrought gold:” all the Church's ordinances and services are beautiful and precious.

The 85th Psalm is one of thanksgiving for the great blessings which Christ, at His coming, brought to His people. He forgave the offence of His people, and covered all their sins. By His great sacrifice of Himself, the righteousness and holiness of God were satisfied, and there came on earth peace, good-will towards men. Truth flourished upon earth, when Christ came to “bear witness unto the truth.” And all lands where the Gospel has been preached, bring forth an increase of righteousness, and all the fruits of the Spirit. The way in which He went Himself, and in which He directs the going of His servants, is the way of holiness.

*P.*—That is a psalm that I have learnt by heart.

*G.*—We now come to the first proper lesson, Isaiah ix. to ver. 8. I think you must be able to follow the meaning of this prophecy. You know how the first two verses are spoken

of, in St. Matt. iv. 14. as being fulfilled when our Lord came and dwelt in Capernaum.

*P.*—Yes; and in many other places He is spoken of as a light. Simeon calls Him a “light to lighten the Gentiles;” and He Himself says, that He is the “light of the world;” and the Gospel for the day says it again and again.

*G.*—Look, too, at John iii. 19; xii. 46. Rom. ii. 19. 2 Tim. i. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 9. 2 Pet. i. 19. 1 John i. 5. The second lesson you have often read, and have had explained, so we need say nothing about it now. Can you repeat the Collect?

*Phæbe repeats it.*

*G.*—I need not tell you that you must not so presume upon your being regenerated in Baptism as to suppose that nothing more is necessary, for you know that after this unspeakable blessing has been once given, we still want something more, to keep us from losing the benefits of it.

*P.*—Yes, we want to be daily renewed by the Holy Spirit.

*G.*—That He may daily renew the purity and whiteness of our baptismal robe, which would otherwise soon be so soiled and defiled, that no one would perceive that it had ever been white.

The Epistle is taken from the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In it, Christ is spoken of as appointed Ruler of all things, as the Maker of the worlds, the Brightness of God’s glory, the express Image of His Person, up-

holding all things by the word of His power. He came down from heaven to speak to us in the name of God the Father; and then, having by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. St. Paul ends, by repeating portions of the Psalms which prophesy more particularly of the Messiah. I think that, if you try, you will remember or find out the passages of the Psalms which are here.

The Gospel you have often read; its words are plain even to a child; though not the wisest of men, not even Angels, can take in the full meaning of them.

*P.*—Thank you, dear godmother, for what you have told me; but I want still to have the Psalms and Lessons for the evening explained to me.

*G.*—It is too late for that now. Come to me before evening church to-morrow, and we will talk of them as we go along.

*P.*—That will be nice; and do not forget that you are to come home with us to tea, and you must stay as late as ever we please.

*G.*—Till you all fall asleep, I suppose.



DIALOGUE V.

Christmas Day,

CONTINUED.

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Phæbe.—DEAR godmother, I tried, when I got up this morning, to think over all the things you told me yesterday, about what a great day it is, and how we ought to be thankful upon it, and not to rejoice without knowing why we rejoice. And do you know, I have been happier on this Christmas Day, than I remember ever being before; and I have thought a great deal, too.

Godmother.—I do not wonder that you have felt happy, my child; for this day, and its holy services, would naturally make you feel cheerful, though serious; as sober as Christians should be, though your heart is full of joy.

P.—And then, it was a great pleasure to understand the psalms and lessons as they were read; which I could to-day, thank you for it.

G.—But there is *one*, the greatest, blessing

of Feast days, in which you cannot yet share. Do you know which I mean ?

P.—Yes, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I hope, some day, I shall be old enough to receive it.

G.—It is not *only* being old enough that will fit you to receive this Sacrament, you know ; you may, even now, be in a way preparing yourself to receive it, if you are striving every day to become better, and to keep God's commandments more diligently. And you might also, (God forbid that you should !) even now be unfitting yourself for it, by carelessness and thoughtlessness, and by letting your faults go uncorrected.

But we will not talk of that just now. I promised to explain to you the Evening Psalms and Lessons. The eighty-ninth Psalm begins with David's profession of faith in God's mercies, and in the covenant which the Lord had made with him. This covenant you will find in the seventh chapter of 2 Samuel. The prophet Nathan announced it to David. It was first partly fulfilled in the person of Solomon, who was established on the throne of his father ; but the exact fulfilment was in Christ, who alone reigns for ever. (Heb. i. 5.) Solomon, indeed, is a type or figure of Christ, in his peaceful and glorious reign, and in his building a temple to the Lord. The heavens, and all the powers therein, did praise the wonders of the Lord, when Angels came down to sing their hymn at

the Nativity; and the saints on earth, the holy Catholic Church, with them do acknowledge His faithfulness. I need not remind you how our Lord stilled the waves when they arose on the sea of Gennesareth. The tenth verse speaks of the destruction of Pharaoh and his host. But our blessed Lord defeats greater enemies than these. He has defeated those dreadful enemies of ours, sin and death; and He has given power over them to even the humblest Christian. Sin has no more dominion over the Children of God, and therefore they need not fear death. So it is most true, that the people who have the Lord to their God are blessed, while they attend to the joyful sound of the gospel, and walk in the light of His countenance. To such persons, every Festival of the Church is a day of great happiness, for it brings before them the recollection of some one of the unspeakable blessings that Christ, by His coming, has brought to them; or of that grace and strength which He is ready to bestow on all who ask for it; and whereby weak and sinful men become the saints and servants of the Lord, laying down their lives for His sake, and receiving in return a crown that fadeth not away.

The 110th Psalm begins with that verse which our Lord repeated to the Pharisees, and asked of them its meaning.

P.—Yes, I remember, and the Pharisees could not answer.

G.—And yet, if they had really wished

and tried to understand this beautiful psalm, it would hardly have seemed so difficult. Our blessed Lord, as the Son of God, was David's *Lord*; as born of the Virgin Mary, He was David's *Son*. It seems as if, in His mercy, He would have given an opportunity to the Pharisees to learn the truth, that their promised Messiah was God and man; that all power should be given to Him; that He should rule over His enemies; that the Gentiles should turn to Him with free-will offerings, and worship Him in spirit and in truth; and that these His spiritual children should be as numerous, and pure, and bright as the dew-drops of the morning. That the Priesthood of this great King should be, not like Aaron's, which was held by mortal and sinful men, but a Priesthood like that of Melchizedek's, who was king of righteousness and prince of peace,—a Priesthood to be held by Him who is High-Priest for ever and ever, (Gen. xiv. 18, 20. Heb. vii.) who sits at the right hand of God for ever and ever. 'The kings of the earth, and the mighty, fought against the Christians, but they could not prevail; they fell before the Lord in the day of His power. We believe that he will come to be our Judge, to bless His servants, and to destroy His enemies. All this speaks of our Saviour as David's Lord, the great God of heaven and earth; but look at the last verse. The Son of Man drank of the waters of affliction; He bowed down, to drink of the brook, or torrent, in the way; and there-

fore His head was lifted up, and from the valley of the shadow of death He ascended into heaven. As St. Paul says, "He humbled himself, and became obedient to the death, even to the death of the cross: wherefore God hath also exalted him on high," Phil. ii. 8, 9.

P.—That does not now seem hard to understand. Do not you think, dear godmother, that if the Pharisees had very humbly asked our Lord to explain this to them, He would have done it?

G.—Yes, surely, my child; as He afterwards opened the understanding of the Apostles, that they should understand the Scriptures, and expounded to the disciples going to Emmaus the things concerning Himself.

It is supposed that the 132d Psalm was used by Solomon, when he consecrated the temple, and asked God to bless both himself and his people. You remember how David wished to build the temple, and was forbidden by the prophet, and told that his son should do it; and how David got ready all the materials for it, so that it might be begun immediately after his death, and took no rest till all was prepared. But this psalm speaks, in its second or hidden meaning, of our blessed Lord, who entered not into His rest till He had prepared the Church on earth, as the place where God would manifest or show Himself. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them:" this was His promise, and that

it might be fulfilled, He sanctified the Church, washing her in His most precious blood, till she was without spot or blemish. Can you tell me, Phœbe, who are called temples of God and of the Holy Spirit, in the New Testament?

P.—I believe all Christians are called so.

G.—Look out and read 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17; vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

P.—Will you tell me where Ephrata is?

G.—Ephrata and Bethlehem are the same place. Notice, my dear child, how good Jews loved their temple, how much delight they took in worshipping there; how they came up, even from a distance, with trouble and difficulty, to pray to Him who dwelt there in the Holy of Holies. What was the Holy of Holies a type or figure of?

P.—Of Heaven.

G.—Yes, and I need not ask *Who*, by His blood, has opened heaven itself to us. It ought to shame us, then, to think of the Jews flocking joyfully and eagerly to their earthly temple, while we Christians are so apt to be cold and careless about our blessings, as members of the Christian Church, of the Jerusalem above, who is the Mother of us all. We take no pains to get on, and fancy that any little difficulties or troubles that we meet with in the way, are excuse enough. The expressions used in this psalm about Zion, or Jerusalem, are prophecies of the Christian Church; and it is thus that the true members of the Church feel for her. The

meaning of the 18th verse is, that in Jerusalem the Branch of Jehovah shall bud into beauty and glory upon earth, and the Lamp of Israel shall become a Sun of Righteousness, burning and shining to all eternity, with a light that can never be put out.

The Lessons for the evening service are very short. The first, from Isaiah, prophesies, that our Lord should be born of a virgin, and that His name should be "Emmanuel, or God with us." The second Lesson, from St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, reminds us of what indeed we must pray never to forget, the return that we are to make for God's unspeakable mercies to us, in sending our Lord Jesus Christ to save us, by "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," and making us heirs of eternal life. The return we are to make is, that we should be careful to maintain good works. The words of the Apostle are plain and easy enough to understand; but it is not so easy to bear them always in mind, and practise them: this, you know, can only be done by God's help, "which you must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer." *Diligent* prayer, not merely saying over your prayers in a hurried, careless way, but praying with your heart as well as your lips, thinking of the meaning of what you are saying; and watching that, when you go about your daily business, you do nothing contrary to what you have asked of God in your prayers.

P.—Dear godmother, I feel so happy now, and so wishing to be always good, that I cannot help hoping I shall.

G.—When you feel this, dear, we may hope that God gives you this feeling for an encouragement, especially on his Holy Feast-day. Only do not let this pleasant feeling turn to your harm, by reckoning too much upon it. Be humble, and look to God for help; trust in *His* strength, not in your own; and when the feeling is past, and perhaps you find it hard to do right, keep on patiently trying to do your duty in little things as well as great: when you keep God's commandments more and more carefully, you may hope that you are really learning to love Him.





DIALOGUE VI.

Saint Stephen's Day.

DECEMBER 26.



Phæbe.—MORE holidays, dear godmother, more going to Church. To-day, and to-morrow, and next day; and besides going to Church, I shall get a nice lesson from you.

Godmother.—Yes, Phæbe, I am pleased when I can tell you what you want to know about the saints, because I hope these lessons may help you in trying to be like them; for, remember, that Christians are as much bound *now*, to aim at becoming saints or holy persons, as they were bound to try in the days of the Apostles and Martyrs. St. Stephen, whose feast is kept to-day, was, as you know, something besides a saint, he was a martyr.

P.—Yes, the first martyr; the first who suffered death for our Lord's sake, as you told me once.

G.—Very little is known of St. Stephen's history. He was a Jew by birth, and he is

supposed to have been one of the seventy disciples whom our Lord sent forth. But we know that he was one of the seven men "full of wisdom and of the Holy Ghost," whom the Apostles chose to be deacons. I think you can tell me what was the business of deacons?

P.—They had the charge of the money or treasure of the Church, that they might distribute it to the poor people who were in want. That is what we read, in Acts vi., of the seven men whom the Apostles chose; but I think you have told me that besides that, they were employed to preach and to baptize; and that afterwards they assisted the priests at the administration of the holy Communion.

G.—You are right; you may observe in Acts viii., that Philip, one of the deacons, baptized his converts, and afterwards they sent for some of the Apostles to come and lay their hands upon them, and confirm them in their Christian profession: as Bishops now confirm those whom priests or deacons have baptized. The two second Lessons for the day, and the portion appointed for the Epistle, contain all that we know of St. Stephen.

P.—I have read them all through, and I have learnt the Collect.

G.—Let me hear you say it.

Phæbe repeats the Collect. But, godmother, though I can say the Collect, I cannot say it for myself, as a prayer to God, so well as I can most of the Collects; because I have not any

sufferings here upon earth for the testimony of God's truth; and I have not any persecutors to love and to bless.

G.—That is true, my dear, and the Collect for this day should remind us of those times when, in order to confess the Christian faith, people were obliged to hold themselves ready to give up their lives, and at the same time to forgive their cruel persecutors. We may well feel thankful that those times are past, and at the same time fearful of our own weakness, which might have made us so unfit to be brave and holy martyrs. But for ourselves, we should remember, that it is possible that we may have trials even for the sake of our Christian faith; and that, at all events, whatever trials or sufferings we have to bear, we should stedfastly behold the glory which shall be revealed; we should think of the exceeding weight of glory which is promised to those who suffer patiently and cheerfully. And if ever we are unkindly used, we must ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to enable us to love and bless, and, if we have opportunity, to do good, to all who have used us ill, or spoken ill of us. St. Stephen showed that our blessed Lord's teaching was not thrown away upon him, when he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; and, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

P.—Yes, that was like our Lord's saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My

spirit ;"—“ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

G.—And as our Saviour's prayer for His enemies was answered, when three thousand were converted at once on the day of Pentecost ; so St. Stephen's prayer for his enemies was granted, can you tell me when ?

P.—I suppose when St. Paul became a Christian ; at least, he was one of St. Stephen's enemies, and looked on while he was stoned. But will you tell me why St. Stephen gave that history of the people of Israel, when the high-priest asked if it was true that he had spoken blasphemous words against the Temple and the Law ?

G.—I will try to make you understand it. The Jews boasted much of being the chosen people of God, and prided themselves on being favoured above other nations. They were not simply *grateful* for this, as they ought to have been, but they were *proud* of it ; and pride, as you need not be told, is something very different from thankfulness. We, Christians, are God's chosen people now, and how ought we to feel about it ?

P.—You have often told me that we ought to feel very thankful, but to rejoice with trembling.

G.—To return to the Jews : You know that they had rites and ceremonies, which were appointed to them by their law, and which no other people but themselves observed : the Jews wished to keep up this difference ; they were not ready to give up their ceremonies as

soon as God should tell them that it was time : they did not like that other nations should have a share in the blessings which God had given to them ; and when they heard of the gentiles being converted to God, and taken into His favour, they were angry at it, and hardened themselves in self-righteousness and obstinacy.

P.—How strange that seems ! they should have been glad to see their neighbours turned to God.

G.—They were like the elder son in the parable. But, Phœbe, are you so very much surprised that they should not like their neighbours to be made equal with them ? Do you remember when little Fanny Price was taken into the school ? The young ladies took pains to get her there, because they knew that she had been taught nothing at home ; and in a few months' time she got a reward for good behaviour and learning. Were you glad when she got it ?

P.—Oh, godmother ! you know I was ashamed when you questioned me about that, and made me own that I was not glad. I remember it well enough ; but pray, do not talk of it any more.

G.—My dear child, it may be well for you sometimes to be reminded of your past faults, as a warning, and particularly when you are wondering at other people. Do you suppose that we should read so much in the Bible about the sins of the Jews, if we were in no danger of falling into the like sins ? But I will go on now

with St. Stephen's instructions to his countrymen. He tried to prove to them that their ceremonies were not necessary for all people, and that the Gentiles might obtain God's favour, without observing these ceremonies of the Jewish law. He first reminded them of the call of Abraham: God chose him to be the father of the faithful, from the midst of a nation of idolaters; and he served God faithfully, although no ceremony was appointed to him to observe, except that of circumcision. The other patriarchs worshipped God, for several ages, in the same manner that Abraham did; till the time of Moses, who was sent to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. And Moses foretold, that God would raise up to them a Prophet like unto him, unto whom they should hearken. Moses, by God's command, gave them the law, and taught them to observe many ceremonies; but only till the Great Prophet should come and teach them. The tabernacle was set up by Moses, as their place of worship; but in spite of this the children of Israel fell into idolatry, and worshipped all the idols of the nations round about them, till God well nigh gave them up to their reprobate minds. At length, a thousand years before the coming of our Lord, Solomon built the temple, of which the Jews were so proud. St. Stephen warned them against this pride, and reminded them that the Most High, to Whom heaven is as a throne, and the earth as a footstool, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as if He *needed* them.

St. Stephen then reproached the Jews for their wickedness in persecuting the prophets, and at last in slaying that Just One, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did speak. They had slain the Son, and cast Him out of the vineyard, and therefore the vineyard was to be taken from them, and given to the Gentiles. The Jews could not bear St. Stephen's reproaches, for their consciences told them that he spoke true, so they ran upon him, and stoned him.

The Gospel for this day contains a prophecy of our Lord about the ill treatment which His disciples would meet with from the Jews, and His most beautiful lamentation over Jerusalem.

P.—Those words of our Lord are very like the last four verses of the 81st Psalm.

G.—Yes, and very sad it is to think, that people can thus harden their hearts, till they, as it were, force the Almighty to leave them in their wickedness. The Jews went on in their pride and cruelty, from one sin to another, till their long-suffering and most merciful Lord drove them forth from their own land, to be wanderers and outcasts on the face of the world, as they are to this day.

P.—I am glad to know that St. Paul became good, before it was too late.

G.—On the day of St. Paul's conversion, I will show you how he differed from the other murderers of St. Stephen, and why it was that he obtained mercy.



DIALOGUE VII.

Saint John the Evangelist.

DECEMBER 27.



Phæbe.—It is such a snowy morning, I could hardly make my way here. I do not like the snow.

Godmother.—Well, I could not say that, when I see it looking so white and pretty. See how it hangs on those trees, like tufts of down on their branches: and do you see, too, the bright green patches of moss peeping out from under the bank? I doubt if those little patches are as comfortable as the grass which has its warm clothing on. Snow keeps everything under it quite safe from frost; and you would not see so many of the flowers that you gather in summer, if it did not take care of them in the winter.

P.—Well then, I will not say anything against it; only let me get your broom and clear it quite off my shoes, or it will melt on your

floor. And now, please, dear godmother, to tell me about St. John.

G.—You can tell me why he is called the Evangelist?

P.—Because he wrote one of the four Gospels.

G.—And what was he besides?

P.—He was one of the Apostles; and he was called “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”

G.—Yes; and I will tell you what I know of his history. He was a Galilean, the son of Zebedee and Salome, and the younger brother of St. James. We are told that he was under thirty years of age when he was called from his father’s trade of fishing, to become the disciple and Apostle of our Lord. I think that you yourself, Phœbe, can give me instances of the particular regard and affection which our blessed Lord showed to him.

P.—He is named always as one of the three disciples whom our Lord took with him when he left the others: on the Mount, when He was transfigured; at the raising of Jairus’s daughter; and in the garden of Gethsemane. Then he was nearest to our Lord at the last Supper, and lay with his head resting on his Master’s bosom: and St. Peter seems to have thought, that he might ask our Lord who should betray Him, when none of the other disciples dared. Besides, our Lord showed how He trusted him, when He gave the blessed Virgin to his care, that he might be a son to her.

G.—I am glad you have noticed these things. St. John, on his part, proved that he loved his Master very truly and dearly; for although he fled with the other disciples at the first surprise, when our Lord was taken by His enemies, yet he quickly returned, and followed Him into the high-priest's hall; then he watched by Him at the foot of the cross, helped to lay His precious Body in the sepulchre, and was the first to believe in His Resurrection. Again, after our Lord's Resurrection, St. John was one of the first to visit the sepulchre, (John xx. 2, &c.,) and afterwards he was among those who went fishing at the sea of Tiberias; and was the first to say, "It is the Lord," (John xxi. 7.) On this occasion, St. Peter asked concerning John, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" (John xxi. 20, &c.)

P.—Oh, godmother, I have learnt some lines about that out of the Christian Year, and they are very pretty; may I say them?

G.—Yes, you may; they are for St. John's Day.

P.—Repeats,

"Lord, and what shall this man do?"

Ask'st thou, Christian, for thy friend?

If his love for Christ be true,

Christ hath told thee of his end:

This is he whom God approves,

This is he whom Jesus loves.

Ask not of him more than this,
Leave it to his Saviour's breast,

Whether, early call'd to bliss,
 He in youth shall find his rest,
 Or armed at his station wait,
 Till the Lord be at the gate.

Whether in his lonely course,
 (Lonely, not forlorn,) he stay,
 Or with love's supporting force,
 Cheat the toil and cheer the way;
 Leave it all in His high hand,
 Who doth hearts as streams command.

P.—Godmother, is that as if I should ask, or wish to ask what will happen to my brother Ben, whether he will live long and be happy?

G.—Yes, dear; and it gives you an answer.

“Leave it all in His high hand,
 Who doth hearts as streams command.”

It is not for you to decide whether your brother shall be “early called to bliss,” by dying in youth; or, “armed in his station wait, till his Lord be at the gate.” It will be enough if he is never “ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified,” and is “His faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end.” Whether his life comes to an end early or late,—and so of health and all other blessings,—God knows better than you do what is good for him.

P.—But yet I cannot help wishing him to be happy.

G.—I know that you cannot help *wishing* it, my dear child; it is only required of you that

you should submit your *wishes* to God's *will*. It seems that St. Peter asked, "What shall this man do?" out of affection for St. John. Now, we know that he could not have loved him *more* than his Blessed Master did, for St. John is called "the disciple whom Jesus loved." We know too, that our Lord *could* have made St. John happy on earth in any way that He pleased; for He Himself said, after His resurrection, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." But you may remember what followed that saying, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Our Lord sent forth His Apostles, and St. John among them, to that glorious commission of converting the nations; but they were to fulfil it through hardships and persecutions. St. John's life on earth was hardly such as a friend, like St. Peter, would have chosen for him. "He had to bear bereavement, first of his brother, then of the other Apostles," who, one after another, suffered martyrdom, and so were taken from him. "He had to bear a length of years in loneliness, banishment, and weakness. He had to experience the dreariness of being solitary, when those whom he loved had been summoned away. He had to live in his own thoughts, without familiar friend, with those only about him who belonged to a younger generation. Of him were demanded

by his gracious Lord, as pledges of his faith, all his eye loved, and his heart held converse with. He was as a man moving his goods into a far country, who at intervals and by portions sends them before him, till his present abode is well-nigh unfurnished. He sent forward his friends on their journey, and stayed himself behind, that there might be those in Heaven to have thoughts of him, to look out for him, and receive him, when his Lord should call."

P.—Was St. John, then, alive after all the other Apostles were dead?

G.—Yes; and I believe he was the only one who did not suffer a death of martyrdom. He was banished by one of the Roman emperors to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelations, (Rev. i. 9;) and it is said that he was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, and preserved alive by a miracle, so that it seems to have been our Lord's will to preserve His beloved disciple longer on earth than the others, to be a testimony to Him and His Gospel.

P.—And so he staid till he got quite lonely in the world, certainly that must have seemed very sad.

G. Yes, but though he had these causes for being sorrowful, we may be sure that he was "always rejoicing," and that the more dark and lonely was his road, the more he looked forward to the end of his pilgrimage, and saw, as it were, a bright streak of light before him.

“Well might so great a saint say, at the end of his life, ‘Come, Lord Jesus!’ as those who are weary of the night, and wait for the morning. All his thoughts, all his contemplations, desires, and hopes, were stored in the invisible world; and death, when it came, brought back to him the sight of what he had worshipped, what he had loved, what he had held intercourse with, in years long past away. Then, when again brought into the presence of what he had lost, how would remembrance revive, and familiar thoughts long buried come to life! Who shall dare to describe the blessedness of those who find all their pledges safe returned to them, all their ventures abundantly and beyond measure satisfied!”

P.—You mean that St. John had ventured *all* upon our Lord’s word; that he had given up every thing, in hopes of a reward in heaven.

G.—Surely he had, but how he was repaid, we cannot yet tell, for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God has prepared for them that love him.

But it is time for us to be going to Church, and if we have anything more to say about St. John, we must say it afterwards.

P.—I thought it seemed too snowy to get to Church.

G.—I think we shall manage it; it is not a trifle that will keep us from church, if

we really care to go there. Thank God, you are healthy, and we are both of us better off than many people are, for we have got warm cloaks; you shall come with me under my umbrella, and I dare say we shall not get much wet.



DIALOGUE VIII.

St. John the Evangelist,

CONTINUED.



Phæbe.—GODMOTHER, who was that nice looking old lady who stopped to speak to you in the Church porch? I felt ashamed of having made a difficulty about going, when I saw her there.

Godmother.—She never misses Church, if she has an opportunity of going; it must be real illness or very unusual weather that keeps her away. She is now spending her Christmas with some relations, but her home is a good way off.

P.—Have you known her long?

G.—Yes, she was a friend of my dear Mistress. When first I knew her she had a husband living, and a fine family of children, but she has outlived them all; and the sight of her cheerful, tranquil countenance reminded me of what we had just been talking of. I went once with my Mistress to stay at her house; her

husband was a Clergyman, and they were both of them beloved by all their Parish: their house was the picture of cheerfulness, and their sons and daughters were growing up around them like fair young flowers; but one after another they all sickened, and she watched over the death-bed of each child, but each time with the hope of a joyful resurrection. Last of all she lost her husband, and now she lives alone, doing all the good she can to the poor around her, and waiting patiently for the time when she may be called to join those who are gone before her.

P.—I should not have thought she was unhappy, to look at her.

G.—And you may feel that we ought hardly to say that we *pity* such a person, who is sanctified by trials and sufferings, for God has appointed those trials and sufferings in love. I remember my Mistress saying to me once that she could hardly wish her friend to have been less tried, though she truly loved her, and felt for her sorrows.

P.—And yet we do wish our friends to be happy.

G.—Yes, dear, I have agreed to that before, but after all, we must leave it to God to make them happy in His own best way. He teaches us to love them, and we must ask Him to help us to love them wisely. This day must remind us of loving our friends in the right way, for St. John speaks continually of loving one another. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved,

he rested on His bosom, he received the charge to take care of His mother, and when he went forth to preach the Gospel afterwards, he was filled with love towards all his christian brethren; he pours it forth in his Epistles, and we are told that towards the end of his life, when he was too old and weak to preach to the people, he used to say continually, "Little children, love one another." This Christian love you must learn first to practise in your own home; it is there that love must be nursed, and must grow up till it spreads forth towards all our fellow Christians.

P.—It is easy to love my father and brother, because they are kind to me.

G.—Yes, you are happy in their being so, and I know that you do love them. But yet if you ask yourself, I think you will find that you have need to practise loving them rightly, and that you may improve in it. Are you never impatient or discontented if your father does not give you leave to go out when you wish it? Do you always consider his comfort before your own? Do you recollect every thing he tells you to do, and take pains always to keep his house quite tidy, and to mend his clothes? If you ever neglect any of these things, or ever murmur at your father's restraint, you have yet to improve in showing your love for him.

P.—I hope, dear godmother, I shall improve.

G.—And then for your brother, do you try

also to do what you can for him, and give up to him willingly?

P.—Ben never asks me to give up to him: he is always letting me have what I wish for.

G.—That is the more reason why you should take care not to be spoiled by his kindness. You should try to find out what he likes, and to give up your own wishes to his, quietly, and to attend cheerfully to his good advice. And when Anne comes home, are you always ready to let her set things to rights? Do you agree to her knowing better than you; and are you patient and good-humoured if she tells you that the house is not in nice order?

P.—No, godmother, I do not like it at all, if she comes home and finds fault with what I have done.

G.—Then you see that in these few minutes we have found out several ways in which you may practise loving your own best and dearest friends. And if we go on from them to your aunt and cousins, and then to your school-fellows, I think you will find plenty of other ways for practising christian love. Do not forget this, my dear child; and if you do not forget it, you may have a root of christian love or charity firmly planted in you, ready to spread itself out in kindness and forbearance towards any persons whom you have to live with; it will bear good fruit in its season. And remember also from whence all christian love must spring,

even from Him who said, "by this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." It was granted to St. John to know Him, as the Word of God, and the Son of man, and from that knowledge of the Saviour of the world, St. John's love flowed forth towards all his brethren.

P.—I will try to remember all this: can you tell me anything more that St. John did?

G.—I only know that he continued preaching the Gospel, and taking charge of the Churches of the East, and it is supposed that in the latter part of his life, he took charge of the Church of Ephesus, and was settled there as its Bishop, after Timothy whom St. Paul left there. Before he died, he saw heresies beginning in the Church, and he set himself firmly against them, keeping the pure doctrine which he had learnt, and earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to him. He was never married. And now let us end by calling to mind the Collect, and praying that the Church, being enlightened by the doctrine of this holy Apostle and Evangelist, may walk in the light of God's truth, and attain to eternal life.

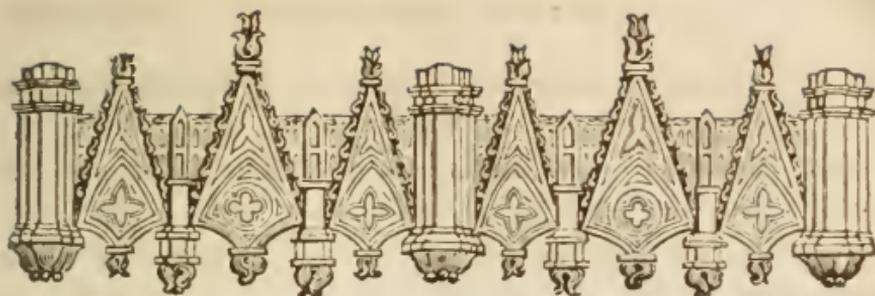
P.—I suppose it is time for me to go home.

G.—Yes, dear, and if it does not snow *very* hard to-morrow, I will call for you to go to church; but at all events I hope to keep

my promise of drinking tea with you, as we are such near neighbours.

P.—I hope it will be fine to-morrow, I think it will; do not you see that streak of bright light quite low down under those brown clouds?





DIALOGUE IX.

Feast of the Holy Innocents.

JANUARY 28.



Godmother.—WELL, Phæbe, you are not quite weatherwise yet, the snow has only just ceased, and it is near four. I suppose you did not expect me to call for you to go to Church to-day; but I have managed to come these few steps this evening.

Phæbe.—I asked father after breakfast what chance he saw of our getting to Church, and he said he thought it would be impossible; and just then Tom Jackson came in and said that he had hardly been able to get along what we call Sandy Lane, the snow had drifted so high in parts that it was all he could do to lift one foot after the other. But I hoped you would get here this evening, for they have cleared the road from the gate to get the cart out. See I have made up a famous bright fire, and put the kettle on, and got all ready for tea; but father says if you do not mind wait-

ing till five he will be much obliged to you, for he has gone out to get the snow cleared away from the farm-yard, and he will not be in just yet.

G.—That will do very well, for we can have our talk first. On this day the Church bids us think of those innocent children who were put to death by the cruel King Herod; they were in a manner martyrs, for they died for Christ. We are taught that there are three kinds of martyrdom; the first and highest, both in will and deed, like St. Stephen, who was willing to die for the faith, and did die. The second, in will but not in deed, like St. John, who was as ready as St. Stephen to die, but was not called on to do so; and the third in deed but not in will, like the Holy Innocents, who were killed for Christ's sake, but did not know it. Have you read the lessons for the day?

P.—Yes I have, and have learnt the Collect, and read the Epistle, and the Gospel.

G.—Then you have seen all that is told us about the Innocents. But there are several things that we may learn from the services of this festival. How very beautiful the Collect is! it reminds us of our Lord's saying, about the mind of little children, of children, for example, who have been newly baptized, when the sin of their birth has been washed away, and they have been fitted to receive daily the grace of the Holy Spirit, which can alone keep them in innocency, and give them constancy of faith.

P.—But had the Innocents been baptized?

G.—Not in water, but the Church has always taught that they were baptized in blood, when they were allowed to suffer for their Lord. Our blessed Saviour always showed love towards children; perhaps when He looked upon those who were brought to Him, He thought of the children of Rama, and blessed them the more tenderly. The Innocents died for Him indeed, but it was only that He might live beyond childhood, to die a sadder death for them; and His most precious death ensured eternal happiness, not to them only. but to all baptized infants, who die before they have committed wilful sin. The knowledge of this gives comfort to the poor mothers whose little children are taken early away from them; they cannot help grieving, to be sure, but in the midst of their grief they may think with joy that their babies are safe with the Lord who bought them.

P.—I remember when Mrs. White lost her three little children nearly at the same time with the scarlet fever, she did cry very bitterly; but still she said she knew they could not be taken away at a better time for them, and that she only hoped she might go to them when it pleased God. It must be a very good thing, god-mother, to die when one is a baby.

G.—Yes, but when it is God's good pleasure to keep us alive, we must try to remain good and innocent; and those who through God's grace go on through life perfecting holiness in

His fear, have a higher place in the Kingdom of Heaven than little infants. What we are to try to keep, is the *mind* of little children, for our Lord has told us that unless we receive the kingdom of Heaven like a little child, we shall not enter therein. We are to trust His word, as little children trust their parents. We are to be mild and humble, without guile and without malice. It is very pleasant to see little children who obey their parents without asking for a reason, and obey, even when they are told to do what they do not like. Such a child may be looked upon as a type or figure of what he is meant afterwards to be in his christian character, believing and trusting God, and obeying His will without a murmur. Good children are something like those bright blossoms you see on fruit-trees ; after a time the pretty flowers drop off, but instead of them there comes a good fruit. However much we may like to see the blossom, we like still better to see the fruit which follows, and if the blossom had borne no such fruit, it would have been worth nothing. You must have noticed what is said in the passage chosen for the Epistle, of those who are "without fault before the throne of God." "Who follow the Lamb wheresoever He goeth." Child-like souls seem here to be spoken of, not such as have died in childhood, but such as have received the kingdom of heaven like little children, who have not defiled their garments, and who therefore walk in white with their Lord. (Rev. iii. 4.)

Beyond all earthly blessings is that of keeping the garments of baptism pure from wilful stain.

P.—Yes, dear godmother, you have often told me that.

G.—It is my duty, as your godmother, to remind you often of it; I held you in my arms at the font, and I promised for you that you should renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil. I saw the Sign of the Cross marked upon your forehead; think how I must wish that at the great day of judgment, the holy Sign may not appear to your condemnation, but to your acceptance!

Our talk just now has reminded me of the Lady whom we saw yesterday. I told you that she had lost all her children: the two eldest were sons, and when I went to her house the first time with my mistress, they were just going to be confirmed by the Bishop; their father had prepared them for it, and all the family went with them to the Church where the Confirmation took place. I went there with the nurse who had brought up these two boys, and loved them like her own children: she was a good woman, and I believe she prayed earnestly that they might daily increase in God's Spirit, and come at last to His everlasting kingdom. I well remember the countenance of the eldest of the two boys, when it was his turn to go up and kneel upon the steps of the altar. I had seen him running and bounding in his play, and I had heard

his merry laugh as he talked with his brothers and sisters ; but now he was quite still and grave, his eyes fixed upon the ground, and his very breath drawn in as if he dared not move, but listened for the words which were to be spoken to him ; as he bent down his head, and the Bishop's hand was laid upon his bright fair hair, I could not but pray and hope in my heart that he might be kept pure and safe and holy. The younger brother (there was but a year between them) did not seem so deeply impressed by the solemn occasion ; his eyes wandered, and his thoughts did not seem to be intently fixed on what was passing.

P.—And both these boys died young ?

G.—They lived to be men, but they both died before their youth was past. Their nurse afterwards told me the history of both of them. The eldest became a soldier, and his parents trembled lest he should stray from the ways in which they had brought him up so carefully : they parted from him with many earnest cautions, which he promised never to forget. And in him those words of the 119th Psalm proved true : “ Where-withal shall a young man cleanse his way ? even by ruling himself after Thy Word. With my *whole* heart have I sought Thee ; oh let me not wander from Thy commandments.” So was it with this young man ; he sought God with all his heart, and he was not suffered to stray from the commandments in which he had been brought up. He never failed to read his Bible daily, and to say his prayers as he had done at home :

he was constant and attentive to the Church service, and if he wanted advice or direction, he asked it from the Clergyman who accompanied his regiment. He never failed to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when he had the opportunity, and he lived so watchfully that he was prepared to receive it whenever the opportunity came. So was he nourished and strengthened, and went on in the fear of the Lord. No bad advice or ridicule of his companions ever turned him from the right way; he was never "ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified," and "manfully to fight under His banner;" he went on humbly and quietly, making no unfit show of his religion, but steadily persevering in the holy paths which the Church teaches us to walk in. It was not long that he thus walked in the narrow way; his health failed in the foreign climates to which he was sent, and he came home to die. His poor nurse talked to me, with tears in her eyes, of his pale peaceful countenance after death, and of their laying him to his rest in the Church-yard close to his father's house, under the shade of that Church where he had been baptized, where he had so often joined in prayer, and where he had first received the Holy Communion. You may believe that though it was a sad time, yet it was a blessed one, for he had kept his Baptismal garment white, and he had been a holy temple to the Lord, sanctified for the abode of the Spirit of God; and therefore he could lie down in peace and take his rest, till

the day when his Lord shall call and raise his body to glory with his soul.

P.—And what became of the younger brother?

G.—Ah, that was a sadder story. He too left his home, and went out into the world, but he did not so firmly resist the world's temptations; he was led astray from his early paths of peace and innocence, and his poor mother shed bitter tears before he returned from his wanderings. He did live to repent; truly and deeply he repented, and the prayers of his parents were not in vain. They had hope in his death, and though he suffered keenly, he did not despair. But it was not like the peaceful death-bed of the elder brother; there were pangs of fear and remorse and anguish; and even now, those who remember the two boys as they were in childhood cannot look on the green mound that covers the grave of the youngest, as they look on that of the eldest.

P.—Godmother, I was thinking how that snow reminds us to keep our baptismal garment white. But there comes father, and I am going to put his chair round, ready for him to sit down to tea.



DIALOGUE X.

Feast of the Circumcision.

JANUARY 1.



Phæbe.—I wish you a happy new year, dear godmother. Do you know I was very near not coming in time for Church? I was only thinking of its being new year's day, till I looked out the lessons in the prayer-book, and then I found there were no lessons for January the first, but a blank space, and I found out that it was the feast of the Circumcision. I am very glad that it is a feast day, for it seems pleasant to begin the year with going to Church.

Godmother.—It is indeed, my dear Phæbe; perhaps there is no day in the year on which we are more reminded how entirely our lives and all that belongs to us are at God's disposal. We are reminded of this, even by the common remarks that people make.

P.—But you have taught me that there are two beginnings of the year, as there are two

different reckonings of the year; one is the Church year, or the Christian year, and that begins with Advent; the other is the common year, I suppose; it begins to-day.

G.—You are right, and different thoughts belong to the beginning of these two reckonings of the year. Tell me what the first reminds us of.

P.—Of the seasons of the Church, the round of sacred services, the course of holy days.

G.—Yes, and of what besides? of what past events?

P.—Of our Saviour's life upon earth; of His Apostles, and other holy servants of His.

G.—What serious thoughts does it bring us of what is yet to come?

P.—Of Christ's coming again to judgment, and of His everlasting kingdom.

G.—Yes; and by all this it calls us to consider our blessings and our duties as Christians. It calls us to look forward to the seasons and the services which are before us through the next year, as if they were so many streams, each one of which will bring us a separate blessing from God, if we use them rightly; as so many doors, each opening into the unseen world. It also calls us to look back to the year just ended; and to repent, if we have neglected or abused our blessings during the past year. This Church year cannot change, can it?

P.—No; it has gone on since our Lord was on earth, eighteen hundred years ago, and it will go on till He comes again.

G.—There can be no difference in the Church's year, but there may be a great difference in our way of spending it; and this will be the difference of keeping in the way of salvation, or getting out of it. You know, then, for certain, when Advent begins, what will follow.

P.—Yes; I know, since you have taught me to look in the calendar. Christmas first, and then Lent, and Easter, and Whitsuntide, and Trinity Sunday.

G.—But when this common year begins, this which is commonly called the New Year, this reminds us of the uncertainty of our own lives, and of all that happens to us. We do not know whether we shall see the end of the year, or if we live to see it, whether it will find us sick or well, sad or joyful. Such thoughts as these ought to make us serious; they would make us gloomy, but that we are told that we may cast all our care upon God, for He careth for us. As we have been told that we may do this, and as our Saviour Himself has told us not to take care for the morrow, our whole concern is to make God our friend, and then we know that He will make all things work together for our good.

The beginning of a new year brings us nearer to the day of our death; let us watch and pray, that it may bring us also so much the nearer to the beginning of everlasting life. We need not be sad on New Year's Day, but we should be thoughtful.

One of the duties of this day is to look back on the past year, and to think what use we have made of the trials and the blessings that God has sent us; whether we have cured any of our bad habits, or learnt any good ones. Whatever we find amiss we must repent of, and set about trying to amend it, by God's help, that the end of next year may find us better than we are now. It would be sad if year passed after year, and we were not getting on in our Christian course.

P.—But, godmother, I am afraid I have forgotten a great deal of what I did wrong last year.

G.—I dare say you have; and that shows that it would never do to put off questioning and examining yourself to the end of every year. You know that I have told you that when you go to bed at night, you should think of the faults of the day, in order to repent of them.

P.—You have told me, too, that every Friday, which reminds us of our Saviour's sufferings for our sins, should remind us to repent of our own particular sins, and to seek forgiveness through Him.

G.—Certainly; and Saturday night, when the week is closing, must remind us of the end of life, when we shall have to give up our account. If you thus examine yourself, from day to day, and from week to week, you will be able, at the end of the year, to consider whether on the whole you have got on, or gone back. You will be like a traveller resting by a milestone, and

measuring how much of his journey is done, and how much still remains before him: or like one who is not sure of travelling the right road, and stops to look about, and make himself sure. Think of some of the things that I spoke to you about, and advised you about, last New Year's Day.

P.—You told me, that I must learn to be more willing to let Anne direct me; that when she came home for a visit, I should ask her how I ought to take care of the house.

G.—And do you think you have minded this advice?

P.—I hope I have, a little. You told me, besides, to be careful about my temper with my school-mistress and my school-fellows; to be meek and humble, when I was found fault with by my elders and betters, particularly by my father.

G.—And have you?

P.—I am afraid to say.

G.—It is well to be cautious: but I will say, Phœbe, to encourage you, that I think you are improving, though there is still a great deal more to be done. In one *very* important matter I hope you have improved, in your behaviour at Church. As to your *thoughts*, how you attend at Church, whilst you seem quiet,—how you pray, night and morning, by yourself,—none can tell but God and your own conscience how it is with you.

P.—Godmother, you make me feel frightened

when you say that—it would be better if you knew what was wrong and told me of it, than if it went on, and I did not find it out, or remember it, and God was angry.

G.—Yes, surely, there can be no shame like that of having our sins brought to light at the great judgment day. But none can tell *all* the sins of a fellow-creature, their secret hidden sins, and therefore you must watch yourself diligently, and seek for God's pardon and help earnestly.

P.—Indeed I will try.

G.—Now, I must get ready for Church; if you have any questions to ask me about the feast of to-day, you can ask them as we go there.



DIALOGUE XI.

Feast of the Circumcision,

CONTINUED.



Phæbe.—CAN you tell me why our Lord was circumcised? I thought only Jews were circumcised.

Godmother.—You forget, Phæbe, that our Blessed Lord was born of a Jewish woman, and in His human nature He was Himself a Jew. Do not you remember what He said, when He came to John to be baptized?

P.—Yes; “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” But I do not think I know exactly what that means.

G.—I have seen it explained as if our Lord had said, “It is becoming in me, the expected Christ, to submit to all those rites and ceremonies which the Jews consider sacred and necessary.” Circumcision was the oldest and most important of the Jewish ceremonies; He therefore, of course, submitted to be circumcised; showing thereby, that He did not renounce the

religion of Abraham, to whom God gave circumcision as an ordinance to be kept; nor of Moses, who in the law directed the Jews to observe it.

We have other instances in our Lord's history, besides those of His circumcision and baptism, to show the reverence in which He held the religion which He came to fulfil. St. Paul speaks of Him as "born of a woman, born under the law;" and it was His custom to observe the law like any other Jew. For instance, He went up to the feasts at Jerusalem; He sent the persons He cured to the priests, to offer the sin-offering commanded by Moses; He paid the temple-tax; and again, He attended as "a custom" the worship of the synagogue, though this had been introduced in an age long after Moses; and He told the multitudes to obey the Scribes and Pharisees in all lawful things, as those who sat in Moses' place.

We learn from this example of our Saviour, how carefully we ought to follow all the customs of the Church to which we belong. You may possibly, some time or other, hear people asking why particular ceremonies or practices should be observed, which are not mentioned in the Bible; why we are to kneel at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; why we are to bow at the name of Jesus; why the sign of the cross is used in baptism, and so on. The easy answer to such questions is, that we must do it because we are told to do so by the Church. Our Lord did not

refuse to be baptized, because nothing was said of it in the law of Moses; neither did He refuse to go up to the Feast of Tabernacles, because it was not appointed by Moses. He submitted to the authority of the Jewish Church, though it was so soon to be overthrown; much more, then, must we, who are Catholic Christians, submit to the authority of the Catholic Church, which is founded on a rock, and will last as long as this world lasts.

P.—Yes; and you have often explained to me, how all those wise and holy men, who make up the Church, must know what is good for us better than we can for ourselves.

G.—Surely. But observe, that our Blessed Lord, who is all-wise and all-holy, submitted Himself to the authority of weak and sinful men, because that authority was given them of God; so that we must remember that it does not matter who has the authority, when once we know from whom it comes. Sometimes people will say, “I really cannot go any longer to the parish church; the clergyman who does duty there is not a good man, and does not practise what he preaches: I shall go to the meeting; the Dissenting minister who preaches there, is such a pious man.” But, Phœbe, never be led away by such people. God has given authority to teach to the ministers of the Church, who are ordained by the successors of the Apostles, and of course we are bound to continue in *their* doctrines and fellowship.

P.—I should like to tell all that you are saying to our neighbour, Mrs. Brown. I do not think she knows it.

G.—I advise you not to be too forward in teaching those who are older than yourself; it is seldom any good comes of that. I hope she may see that you do your best not to be a disgrace to our holy Church; but whilst you are young, and of course have much to learn yourself, you should be very careful how you attempt to give instructions.

P.—But, godmother, may not I repeat what you tell me to little Mary White? She often asks me, and is so fond of listening.

G.—Certainly, my dear, you may repeat anything you please to your school-fellows, if they like listening to you; only be careful to repeat correctly, or else you will do them more harm than good; and not to teach in a conceited way, or they will laugh at you.

And now let us talk about the Lessons which we heard read in Church. The first Lesson tells us about the appointment of circumcision; and in the second Lesson and the Epistle, we heard how St. Paul tried to make the Jews understand that this rite was not necessary to salvation, but that the uncircumcised Gentiles might be saved, if they kept the righteousness of the law. But how can we keep the law, that is, God's commandments?

P.—I suppose, by the help of God's grace, which is promised in Baptism.

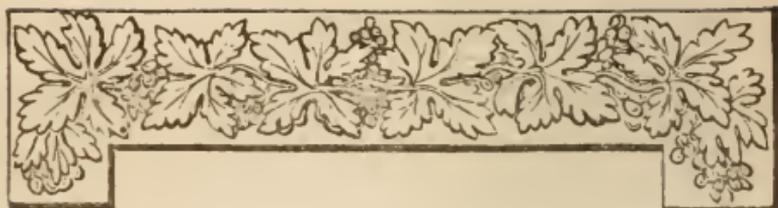
G.—Yes; and therefore in the Collect we pray for the true circumcision of the Spirit, that “our hearts and all our members being mortified from all worldly and carnal-lusts,” those lusts which we have promised in Baptism to renounce, “we may in all things obey God’s blessed will.”

P.—Was Baptism appointed instead of circumcision?

G.—Baptism had been used among the Jews, and was practised, as you know, by St. John the Baptist. But when our Saviour chose Baptism to be the means of admission into the Christian Church, He gave to it a higher honour than had ever belonged to circumcision; He made it consist of two parts: can you tell me what these are?

P.—“The outward and visible sign, and the inward and spiritual grace.”

G.—Yes, the water is an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace, and these two parts make up a Sacrament. No such grace was given with the outward sign of circumcision. Let us begin the new year, dear, by thinking that we are blessed beyond God’s chosen people of old, and by resolving, through God’s grace, to renounce all worldly and carnal lusts; to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, as becomes God’s peculiar people.



DIALOGUE XII.

Feast of the Epiphany.

JANUARY 6.



Phæbe.—WHAT is the meaning of Epiphany?

Godmother.—You may answer that question for yourself, by looking at the Collect for the day: what is marked just before it?

P.—Oh, I was very stupid not to have noticed that, when I learnt my Collect! It is the “Epiphany, or Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles.” I know that being *manifested* means being *shown forth*.

G.—And to what Gentiles was our Lord first made known?

P.—To the wise men who came from the East.

G.—Tell me what you have read about them.

P.—They saw a star in the East, which they had never seen before; and then they set out, and came to King Herod, at Jerusalem, and asked, “Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East,

and are come to worship Him:" and then Herod was troubled, and called together the chief priests and the scribes, and asked where the Christ was to be born; and they told him that He was to be born at Bethlehem, because of the words of the prophecy of Micah, (Mic. v. 2.) Then king Herod told the wise men to go to Bethlehem, and when they had found the King who was born, to come back and tell him, that he might worship Him; and they went, and the star went before them, and stood at last over the place where our Lord was lying in the manger; and they went in, and offered Him gold, and frankincense, and myrrh; but they did not go again to king Herod, because God told them in a dream that they must not, and they went back to their own country another way.

There are several things in this that I want you to tell me about. What made the wise men think that the star was meant to tell them the birth of a King of the East?

G.—Because, amongst the Gentiles, it was supposed, that when any bright light or new star appeared in the sky, it was a sign that some king or great person was born. Besides, at the time of our Lord's coming, the Gentiles were very generally expecting that some great and wonderful King was about to be born into the world.

P.—What made the Gentiles think so?

G.—Many of the Jewish prophecies had been scattered about the world, and had become known

to the learned men of the Gentiles, who in their turn reported them among the people.

P.—The Jews were expecting their Messiah at this time, were they not?

G.—Yes, they were, and we see that though the question which the wise men from the East asked Herod, vexed him very much, yet it did not surprise him; for he called together the priests, and asked them where Christ should be born.

P.—The wise men did quite right, I suppose, in following the light.

G.—Certainly they did; when any Gentiles showed such a readiness to make the best use of any helps granted them, we may be sure that God would grant them more. They rejoiced with exceeding great joy, when the star appeared to them a second time, leading them on till it brought them to the poor stable where the King, not of the East only, but of the whole world, was lying, a little infant, on the lap of His blessed mother. They do not seem to have been surprised or displeased at finding the King they came to worship in so humble a condition, but at once they offered to Him the presents which, according to the custom of their country, they had brought with them. They gave *myrrh*, which was used in anointing dead bodies, and therefore fit to be offered to Him who was to be delivered to death and the grave for our sakes; *gold*, of which kings' crowns are made, they gave to Him whose kingdom shall have no end; and *incense*, which was always

burnt on altars, they offered to him as the great God of heaven and earth.

P.—I remember that once Ben had a little piece of incense given him; it looked only like a stone, but when he threw an atom of it into the fire, the sweet smell filled the whole room.

G.—I dare say it did, its smell is so very powerful; it was on that account it used to be burnt in Churches. There is another meaning which may be found in the gifts of these wise men,—gold, by which the rich can relieve the wants of the poor, is a fit emblem for charity and works of mercy. David's asking that his prayer might be set before God as incense, (Ps. cxiv.) and the prayers of the saints being mixed with incense (Rev. viii. 4.,) show us how fitly our prayers are represented by frankincense. And the chief use of myrrh being to preserve dead bodies from corruption, is a lively image of mortification, or self-denial, by which we present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. So that the offerings of a true Christian, are charity, prayer and mortification. Our blessed Lord passed all His days in poverty, yet in His cradle He was presented with gifts befitting a King, and towards the end of His abode on earth, another precious offering was made to Him, and one which He most graciously accepted.

P.—Do you mean the box of ointment which Mary the sister of Lazarus poured upon His head?

G.—Yes I do, and you remember what our Lord said, when she was blamed for the expense.

P.—He said, “she hath done what she could;” that she had “wrought a good work on” Him; and He promised that wherever His gospel was preached through the whole world, this which she had done should be told for a memorial of her.

G.—You see then that God does not despise the gift even of earthly gold; and we may be sure that He accepts graciously those good men who, having riches, bestow them abundantly on the service of the temple, in building and repairing and beautifying Churches: those people who feel like David and Solomon, that they cannot bear to live in fine houses of their own, whilst the houses of God are without their proper ornaments, but are thankful to be allowed, by adorning Churches, to restore to God’s service some portion of what He has given them.

P.—They must have been very good men who built Westminster Abbey.

G.—At least they knew how to make a good use of their money. And now I want you to tell me if you know any reason why we, in this country, should keep very thankfully the feast of the Epiphany?

P.—Do you mean because the people of this country were once Gentiles? I remember what you told me of that time, and of Augustine’s coming over to England to convert

the people, and how King Ethelbert and his subjects were baptized.

G.—You should call this to mind to-day, that you may feel the more thankful to God for setting up His Church in our land, for making us a true branch of that holy Church, and for preserving us members of Christ through so many hundred years. The two lessons taken from Isaiah prophesy the glories of the Christian Church, after the calling of the Gentiles: these glories we do not yet see completely fulfilled with our outward eyes, yet we know by faith that God's glory is amongst us, for His house, His ordinances, His ministers, His sacraments are amongst us, and these are pledges of His Presence.

P.—I well remember your telling me that, when I asked you about the Church being consecrated.

G.—Now open your prayer-book, for I want you to take notice, that not only to-day, but on the six following Sundays, the Church bids us attend to different manifestations of our Lord. In the Collect for to-day, we pray that hereafter may be made manifest to us that glorious God-head which here we only know by faith; and in the Epistle St. Paul says, that to him, as he humbly calls himself, the least of all saints, was made known the mystery which in other ages was hid, that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs with the Jews, and partakers of all the blessings promised by Christ in His gospel; and this mystery St. Paul was to make known to all men.

P.—I wanted to ask you why the second lessons are appointed; they do not seem to have any thing to do with the day.

G.—The reason is that our Lord's Baptism and His miracle at Cana of Galilee were believed to have taken place on this same day of the year, though in different years.

P.—I suppose these also may be called manifestations of our Lord's glory; it is said in the second of St. John, that Christ manifested forth his glory, and His disciples believed on him.

G.—Very true. Next Sunday we shall ask in the Collect that those things which we ought to do may be made plain to us; the Epistle bids us offer up our bodies a living sacrifice to God; in the Gospel we have the history of our Lord's showing forth His heavenly wisdom in discoursing with the doctors in the temple, both hearing them and asking them questions.

The Gospel for the second Sunday after Epiphany, contains again the account of our Lord's first miracle.

The Gospels for the third and fourth Sundays tell us of some of His other miracles; His healing the sick, His stilling the winds and the waves, and His casting forth devils. By all these wonders He showed that He could be no other than the Son of God manifesting His great power.

The Gospel for the fifth Sunday contains the parable of the wheat and tares, and refers to our Lord's second coming to judge the world.

His awful appearance at that time is told us

in the Gospel for the last Sunday after Epiphany. Then will be His last manifestation ; and blessed will those be who are found ready for it, but most miserable will those be, at that awful hour, who now overlook Christ manifested amongst us. We do not see Him now with our bodily eyes, but by the eye of faith we behold Him every where. Let me repeat to you some sentences from a sermon on this festival: "We must seek within for the Epiphany of Christ. We will look towards His holy altar, and approach it for the fire of love and purity which there burns. We will find comfort in the light and grace which Baptism gives. We will rest and be satisfied in His ordinances and in His word. We will bless and praise His Name, whenever He vouchsafes to display His glory to us in the chance-meeting of any of His saints, and we will ever pray Him to manifest it in our own souls."

P.—What is the meaning of the chance-meeting of His saints ?

G.—The whole sentence means that if ever we are allowed to see or to know any very holy persons we must, seeing their good works, glorify our Father which is in heaven, for having given them such grace.



DIALOGUE XIII.

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.

JANUARY 25.



Godmother.—PHÆBE, to-morrow is the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, as I dare say you know, and I have called in to take you home with me, for half an hour, that we may talk over the festival, whilst you finish some needle-work with me that I have got to do.

Phæbe.—Thank you, Godmother, I will come this minute.

G.—But, Phæbe, what makes you look so sorrowful? you have been crying.

P.—I will tell you as we go along, dear godmother, I am afraid you will think I have been very naughty, and so indeed I have. You know that you have been very kind in taking the trouble to teach me to knit, and showing me how to hold my needles the best way, and I believe I am pretty handy about it now: well my little cousin Mary came to stay with me this morning,

whilst aunt went to town, and she was trying to knit some stockings; but she seemed to me very awkward, and got on slowly, and dropped her stitches continually; so I said I would show her the right way, but she said no, she knew how to knit, and did not want my teaching. I tried to prove to her how much easier my way was than hers, still she would not change, and then I got angry, and told her she was obstinate and stupid, and she might go on her own foolish way, for I would have nothing more to say to her, and I left her alone, till I heard her crying, then at last I began to feel sorry and ashamed.

G.—No wonder, I am sorry indeed to hear that you gave way to such ill-temper.

P.—But I have more to tell you, for when I went back to Mary, I kissed her and made it up with her, and she soon looked pleased again, and said that I should show her the right way; but when I came to take her stocking I found that after all she was right and I was wrong, for her stitch was one that I did not know, and her mother had taught her that particular way of knitting that she might make it strong.

G.—So you had taken it for granted that you knew what you did not know, and after this overconfidence in your own knowledge, you grew impatient and angry. Let this be a warning to you, Phœbe; I see that you are really ashamed now, do not be in a hurry to forget the shame that you feel at this moment. I am glad you have told me the truth honestly, and not tried to

excuse yourself. When you have the charge of your little cousins, you should be particularly careful of your temper.

P.—I know I should, you have told me so before, and I did not mean to forget it.

G.—I believe that you do not *mean* to forget it, but I am afraid that you do sometimes forget it, for I heard you speak very sharply to little Will the other day, when he was reading to you, and I have noticed several times that you spoke to them in a scolding tone, when there was no need at all of it. My dear child, take care, and watch seriously over your temper; you have for the last month been very frequently to Church on Holidays; you have had great pleasure in this, and you have talked about the saints whose days were kept, as if you had determined to try to imitate their good examples; but this will be of no use, if you afterwards say and do things quite unlike what they would have said and done. You cannot hope to belong to the Communion of saints, you cannot love the unseen company of believers, unless you are kindly affectioned towards those whom you do see, unless you are kind and gentle tempered towards those who live with you, the Christians whom Christ has made His own by Baptism, and who are living in your own time and place.

P.—It was thinking of something like what you say that made me cry; I feel as if I never should be good, or copy the saints, as long as I live.

G.—You must not say that, Phœbe; of course if you had not the promise of God's help, you never could become good; but with that help, it is in your power to correct yourself. St. Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me;" and every Christian may say the same. Be very sorry for your faults, and be humbled by them, but do not be discouraged so as not to try to improve; do not despair. You see children, when they are learning to walk, tumble down almost at every step, but they get up again, and by degrees learn to keep steady; if a child, instead of getting up, were to lie crying on the floor, you would tell it that in that way it would never learn to walk.

P.—Of course it would not, it must get up, even if it tumbles down again next minute. But children learn by degrees how to keep steady.

G.—Yes, *by degrees*. Now you have learnt to be on your guard against this particular fault, which is something gained; every evening examine yourself about it; when you are inclined to be impatient hold your tongue; *that* at least is always possible, and pray in your heart for that meek and quiet spirit which all true Christians strive for.

I shall watch you too, and after a little time we will talk again about it, and I hope that then you will in some degree have got the better of this fault. We see in the example of the blessed Apostle, whose Conversion we are to commemorate to-morrow, that people at one time of their

lives, may be very impatient and very severe with their fellow creatures, and yet afterwards become most kind, loving, and long-suffering. It is God's grace that works this wonder, and you know that grace is given to all baptized persons who ask for it. St. Paul thought he knew better than the Christians what was the right way of worshipping God, and instead of finding out his own mistake he persecuted them, and treated them cruelly. So far he showed presumption and harshness; but we are told that he really wished to do God service, and he says that he obtained mercy, because he persecuted God's people "ignorantly." St. Paul showed how earnestly he repented, by giving up his whole life after his conversion to preach the gospel, never caring about dangers, or difficulties, or hardships, or troubles of any kind, thinking but of one thing at all times and seasons, how he could best serve his Master. And how was it Phœbe, that he showed his love and gratitude to his Saviour?

P.—By loving and serving his fellow-creatures, I suppose.

G.—Yes; he never forgot those words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *Me*?" and having learnt from them that our Lord suffers when His servants are ill-treated, he felt that in giving up himself to do good to his fellow-men, he was doing service to his Lord. Can you remember two occasions, when our blessed Lord said, that He would take every kind act done to one of His disciples, as done unto Himself?

P.—Yes : shall I find the places in your Bible ?

G.—Do, and read them out.

Phæbe reads St. Matt. x. 42. St. Mark ix. 41, 42.

G.—Observe, Phæbe, that in the last parable we learn, that every unkind act or word to those near us, is considered by our Lord as an offence against Himself.

P.—Dear godmother, I do hope that I shall remember that better another time, than I remembered it this morning. It is so very fearful to think Whom I sin against, when I speak crossly and impatiently. Please God, I will not forget this.

G.—I trust not, my child. But to return to St. Paul. The Feast of to-morrow is not kept in memory of his whole history, nor of his martyrdom, but of his wonderful Conversion. Tell me, first, what you know about him before his conversion.

P.—St. Paul was born at Tarsus, a city of Cilicia ; but he was brought up in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel.

G.—Yes ; and Gamaliel being a Pharisee and a very strict observer of the law of Moses, it was from him that St. Paul probably learnt to hate the Christians, as supposing them to be enemies of the law of Moses. How is he first mentioned in the Acts ?

P.—As taking care of the clothes of those

who stoned St. Stephen; and you told me how we may believe that St. Stephen's prayers helped to obtain St. Paul's conversion.

G.—Yes; and very wonderful it is to think, that whilst St. Stephen was put to death for saying, that the Jews were no longer to be the only favoured people of God; from his very grave, as it were, came the man whom the Almighty chose to be the means of bringing thousands and ten thousands to the knowledge of the truth.

P.—Can you tell me, godmother, why St. Paul was called Saul at first?

G.—Saul was his Jewish name, and Paul his name as a Roman citizen.

P. I cannot make out if St. Paul remained long at Damascus after he became a Christian, nor whether he preached the Gospel immediately.

G.—It is not quite clear; but I believe that, from different parts of the Acts, and the Epistles, it has been gathered, that he went first for some time into Arabia, and that then he went back to Damascus. Three years after, he was at Jerusalem for fifteen days, but again returned to Damascus, where he continued boldly to preach in the name of Jesus, till the Jews began to persecute him, and forced him to leave Damascus; then he went to Jerusalem, and was brought to the Apostles by St. Barnabas. He afterwards spent some time at Tarsus, his birthplace, but

was fetched from hence by Barnabas, that they might go together to Antioch, where they stayed a year, and were then ordained by the Apostles to go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles throughout all the world. It is supposed by some, that St. Paul came into this country, and converted many to Christianity.

P.—And how did he die, godmother?

G.—His head was cut off by the order of the wicked Roman emperor Nero.

P.—I want to ask you one more thing. In the 2d lesson appointed for to-morrow, there is one account of St. Paul's conversion, and in the Epistle there is another; in one place it seems as if the men who were with him heard the voice and saw no one, and in the other that they did not hear the voice, but saw the vision; what makes that difference?

G.—I believe the word voice has two meanings. Read out the 7th verse of the ixth chapter, and then the 9th verse of the xxiid chapter. In the first of these verses it is said they heard a voice or *sound*; and in the second, that they did not hear the voice or *words* of Him that spake: again, in the ixth chapter, we read that they saw no *man*; but that does not say that they did not see a bright light, which is all that the xxiid chapter speaks of. So that altogether it appears, that the attendants of St. Paul heard a loud sound, perhaps as of thunder, and saw a dazzling light, which so terrified them that they fell to the

ground: while St. Paul himself saw the Form of our Blessed Lord, and heard His reproofing but merciful words.

P.—Thank you, godmother, that is quite plain.

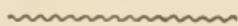




DIALOGUE XIV.

Feast of the Purification.

FEBRUARY 2.



Phæbe.—**GODMOTHER**, do you know who came to us yesterday?

Godmother.—No; but it must be somebody you love, for you look very much pleased.

P.—Yes, that I am; it is dear grandmother. She is come to stay some weeks with us. Father went over to fetch her, and I am so glad she is here; she is so very kind and good, and tells me beautiful stories. She will come to Church with us to-morrow; she was quite pleased, when I told her there was service on Festivals; for where she lives, she goes to Church, not only on great days, but every day in the week; and she says, that though she is very happy with us, she cannot help missing her Church every morning. I heard her say to one of our neighbours, who came to see her this morning, that she thought it the greatest blessing of her old age to go to Church every day.

G.—I do not wonder at that, indeed.

P.—Then our neighbour asked, if there were many people who attended the service. Grandmother said, that several old people went every day, and others now and then as they were able; besides, there are always the family of the clergyman, and the children from a school close by. Our neighbour said, “Dear! that must interrupt the children sadly!” Just then father called me, so I did not hear grandmother’s answer; but what do you think about it, dear godmother.

G.—Suppose, Phœbe, one very dry summer’s evening, I was to be very busy watering my flowers, and a hard shower came on and forced me to go in, do you think I should say, “Well, how vexatious this shower is, it has interrupted me just as I was watering my garden?”

P.—Oh no! godmother, you would be wiser than that; for the rain would do the flowers more good than all your watering.

G.—Well, my dear child, I should just as soon think of calling it an interruption to a child’s lessons, to go to Church. The Prayers and Services of the Church are to our souls like a shower from heaven, compared to the teaching which *we* can give to children, and which can be no more than careful watering. All that is taught at school is for the sake of fitting and preparing children to receive God’s blessing: but to none are his blessings so surely promised as to those who are gathered together in His

Name : we know that He will grant their requests ; therefore, to attentive children, the time passed in Church is more valuable than any other can be. You may not have so much time for going to Church as you have now in your childhood, till you are an old woman like your grandmother.

P.—Then I will tell grandmother that I may go to Church with her when I go to visit her, because I am a child, as she goes because she is an old woman.

G.—One thing more, Phœbe, you must remember, that none but those who are most attentive and well-behaved in Church on Sundays, can deserve the privilege of going to Church on week days. The Sunday services are, indeed, a greater blessing than we deserve ; so let us make good use of them, before we let ourselves think much about the greater comfort those have who can go to Church daily.

And now, let us talk about the Feast of the Purification. We shall see, in the services for the day, the blessedness of those who wait for the Lord in His holy Temple. It was commanded in the law of Moses, that forty days after the birth of a male child, its mother was to go to the Temple, and make an offering unto the Lord ; if she was rich, she was to bring a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a pigeon for a sin-offering. If she was poor, she need only bring two turtle-doves, or two pigeons ; and this was all the offering that the blessed Virgin could make, for

she was poor. At the same time, she took the Holy Child Jesus to present Him in the temple; for by the law, every first-born male child was holy to the Lord, that is, consecrated and set apart for His service; so that he was to be redeemed, or bought again by his parents, for a sum of money paid to the priest. Therefore this Festival is called the Presentation in the Temple, as well as the Purification. The Blessed Infant was carried in His mother's arms, and brought into the Temple; and those who saw them pass along little thought who it was who then suddenly appeared in His Temple, and fulfilled the words of the prophet Malachi; (those appointed to be read in the Epistle;) the people saw only a poor mother and her Child. But there were some present, whose eyes had been opened by their habit of watchfulness and prayer, and who were thus prepared for every visitation of the Lord, however sudden and mysterious.

P.—You mean Simeon and Anna.

G.—I do. You know that Simeon was waiting for that sight of the Lord's Christ which had been promised him. You can say the hymn which he composed when he did see his promised Saviour.

P.—“Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,” &c.

G.—When we say that hymn, we should remember that we have as much cause as Simeon had to thank God for His wonderful salvation, that we can never die in peace till we have

embraced our Saviour with our minds and hearts, that is, till we heartily believe what He revealed, and sincerely practise what He taught. Anna, as well as Simeon, was a faithful servant of God; and we hear how long she had waited in His Temple. She spoke of Christ to those "who looked for redemption in Jerusalem," so that there must have been some other persons present who were thought fit to have their Saviour at this time revealed to them; such as had learnt to say with their hearts, that it was well to wait for the loving-kindness of the Lord in the midst of His temple; and to be glad when it was said to them, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Can you tell me what we should learn from this Festival?

P.—I think you mean that we should learn to think much of going to Church; of returning thanks for God's mercies there, as the Blessed Virgin did; and of waiting there for his presence, and favour, and blessing; because, though we do not expect to see our Saviour when we go to Church, yet we have His promise that He will be there amongst us, and ready to bless us. I remember what you told me long ago,—that there was so little to take notice of, when our Lord was carried to the Temple, so little show or noise, and yet such great things passing?

G.—You have answered right; and now let me tell you a story which I heard when I was quite young, but I have never forgotten it; it shows, in a very striking way, how much may

depend on even going once to Church, or keeping away.

It was told me by a fellow-servant of mine, who came from the village where the events happened. Two boys from this village went to live with a farmer not many miles off, and one Sunday morning he gave them both leave to go home and visit their families. They were not brothers, and their habits were very different. James never missed going to Church, if he could help it; and Robert never went, unless he was obliged: you may guess from this that they were unlike in all respects. As they walked together to the village where they had both been born, and heard the bells from its Church, and saw the steeple, they fell into talk, and James began earnestly to advise Robert to change his way of spending his Sundays, and go regularly to Church. Robert listened to James more attentively than usual; for as he came near home, he could not help thinking of his childhood, when his mother took him to Church with her, and he determined to go that very morning. When he came to his father's house, his father, who was a blacksmith, desired him to stay and take care of the house during church-time, whilst he stood godfather for a neighbour's child. Robert then thought he would go to the afternoon's service; but just before he got into the church-yard, he was met by some idle acquaintance, who asked him to go with them to a cricket match, and to set off directly, or he would not be in time.

James was by, and tried to hinder his going; but Robert said it was only this once, he could not lose the sport, he might not have such another opportunity. James still tried to persuade him against going with them, and the other lads laughed at James, and tried to make him ashamed; but James knew too well that he must not be ashamed of his Christian profession, and of his heavenly Master's service. "It is only leaving Church once, Jem," they said, "and you go every Sunday." He told them he could not be sure, nor they either, of living till another Sunday. They laughed more than before, and ran off, taking Robert with them. He came back late in the evening, and he and James set out together to return to the farm where they lived: their walk lay along a steep cliff above the sea, a thick fog came on, and though they knew their way well enough, yet they strayed out of the path in the darkness. Next morning, they were both found dead at the foot of the cliff.

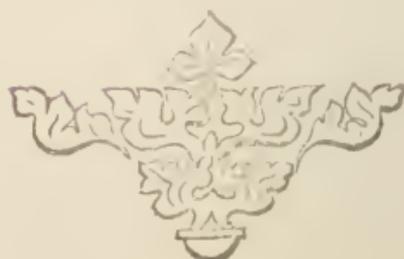
P.—How shocking! So that *once*—that once going to Church, or not going, might make more difference to those two boys than one knows how to think of. I do not wonder, indeed, at your not forgetting that story.

G.—There is still another thing to be particularly thought of this day,—the purity of heart which is required of those who come into the house of God. We should think of the duty of coming thither, and also of coming with pure

hearts and clean hands. I will read you the Verses for the Day out of the Christian Year; and you may learn at least the first and the last of these Verses by heart.

“ Bless'd are the pure in heart,
For they shall see our God;
The secret of the Lord is theirs,
Their soul is Christ's abode.”

“ Still to the lowly soul
He doth Himself impart;
And for His cradle and His throne
Chooseth the pure in heart.”





DIALOGUE XV.

Feast of St. Matthias.

FEBRUARY 24.



Phæbe.—THERE seems to be less said in the Bible about St. Matthias than about most of the other Apostles: I do not find his name in any other place, than in that chapter of the Acts which is appointed to be read for the Epistle to-day.

Godmother.—No, I believe he is not mentioned again; but we learn more than one very solemn lesson from what we do know of him. This is the only Saint's Day which is to be celebrated with mingled feelings of joy and pain, for it records the fall as well as the election of an Apostle. St. Matthias was chosen into the place of the traitor Judas, and took his bishopric, according to the words of David, Psal. cix. What overpowering thoughts must have crowded on St. Matthias, when he received the greetings of the eleven Apostles, and took his seat among them as their brother! How he must have

trembled at the thought, that as Judas had fallen and lost his crown, so he too might fall! The highest and most precious of outward privileges had not saved Judas; he had been called by Christ, had received power with the rest to preach and work miracles, was numbered with the Apostles, and obtained part of their ministry.

P.—But when Judas taught the people, if they knew what a bad man he was, do you think they would listen to him?

G.—They sinned if they did not, for the Lord had sent him, and ordained him to the ministry. If some great king sent to ask you to come to his palace, and receive his favours, and be treated as his child, should you stop to inquire whether the messenger whom he sent to invite you was a good man?

P.—I should only want to know whether the messenger whom he sent to ask me, did really come from the king, and brought me a true message.

G.—Just so it is with the ministers of God; the question for us to ask is—has my minister God's commission to speak in his name? Now all the ministers of the Church amongst us have this commission, for they have all been ordained by Bishops; and the Bishops who ordained them have received power from Christ the Head of the Church to send out ministers. The same power which Judas received from our Lord when He was on earth, has since been handed down to

the Bishops of our day, and through them, to the Priests and Deacons.

P.—The Bishops are like the links of a chain. I remember that.

G.—And Judas was a link taken out of the chain at its first beginning, in whose place Matthias was put in. But till Judas was taken out, he was a messenger in Christ's name.

P.—Have any links ever been taken out since?

G.—Yes, some Bishops have been removed by the authority of the Church. Some who fell into heresy have been removed. Do you remember what *heresy* means?

P.—*False doctrine.* Teaching against the creeds.

G.—But now see here our comfort. Even if we were to have a Clergyman who did not teach us the truth, yet tell me, where might we still find the truth?

P. I suppose in the Bible and Prayer-book.

G. Yes, every time we went to Church, we should still hear the truth, for the Clergyman must use the words of the Prayer-book; he must read the Creeds, and the Psalms, and the Lessons, and every thing else that is set down there.

believe what led me on to say all this, when you asked me that question about Judas, was that you were by the other evening when Mrs. Jones was talking about her parish, and saying that she went to the meeting, because she did not like her Clergyman. Did you listen to what she said?

P.—Yes, I did, part of the time.

G.—And therefore I wished to warn you about it because I believe that people often pick up a great deal of mischief from what they hear said by chance; when perhaps it is said at random, without any thought, or by people who know little of what they are talking about; or perhaps the listener does not understand it. Now you should bear in mind, in the first place, that we should be *very* cautious how we judge our Clergyman at all, for *he* is set over us, not *we* over him. It is not right in us, as I need hardly tell you, to speak against those who are set in authority over us. And in a more particular way it is wrong to speak against our Clergyman, because he stands between us and the great Lord of all, in a particular sense; because he has God's authority in a way that no other has. In the next place, even supposing our Clergyman to be a man of such character and habits, that we could not take him for a pattern, nor try to live like him, still he has authority to minister the word; he has authority to read the Prayers and the rest of the Service, to administer the Sacraments, and fulfil the duties of a Clergyman; and we cannot do wrong in keeping to his communion, which is that of the Church.

P.—I think I understand that quite well. So that if a Clergyman, who was as wicked as Judas even, was to read the Church Service, we ought to join in it.

G.—No doubt. At the same time, if there

was such a Clergyman, his offences would most likely be taken notice of by the Bishop, and he would be removed.

P.—I suppose that when the Apostles cast lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, God directed the falling of the lot; was it not so?

G.—Yes, it was directed by a miracle from God, as we may find the casting of lots to have been in other cases. You may remember several instances in the Bible, where lots were ordered to be cast. Lev. xvi. 8. Jos. xviii. 6. 1 Sam. x. 5.

P.—I do not exactly know how the casting of lots was done.

G.—There were different ways of doing it. The most common way, in order to choose between several persons, is to write their names on slips of paper, which are then thrown into a box, and some other person takes one of them out; the name he draws out is chosen.

P.—Christian Bishops have not commonly been chosen this way, have they?

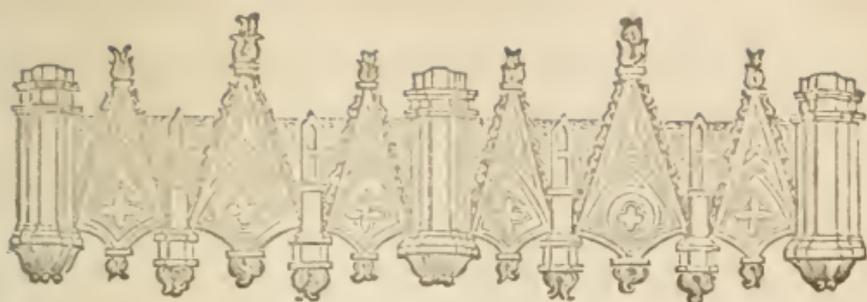
G.—No, I know of no instance since St. Matthias; he was chosen so by inspiration from God. Even in his case, he and Barsabas had in the first place been fixed upon for the other Apostles to choose between them.

P.—Now, godmother, let me try to think what are the things to be learnt from this day. First, I think you will tell me that we are to take warning from the fall of Judas, and to remember that we, who have been made to belong to Christ and called Christians, may fall as he did. Next,

we are to learn to honour our Ministers, set over us by the Lord.

G.—And the Collect reminds you of another duty, to pray that the Church “may be ordered and guided by faithful and true Pastors.” We ought to pray for the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, as we learn to do in the Prayer-book.





DIALOGUE XVI.

Ash-Wednesday.



Phæbe.—GODMOTHER, are you going to Church to-morrow?

Godmother.—Yes, surely. Did you not hear notice given on Sunday, that there would be Service on Wednesday, because it is Ash-Wednesday, the first day of Lent?

P.—Why is the first day of Lent called Ash-Wednesday?

G.—Because in former times people used to scatter ashes on their heads as a sign of their shame and sorrow. You remember that this was very commonly done among the Jews. (See Esth. iv. 1, 3. Lam. iii. 16. Dan. ix. 3. Jonah iii. 6.)

The Fast of Lent is kept by all Christians in memory of our Blessed Lord's forty days' fast in the Wilderness; and is a time for deep sorrow and shame for our sins, to make atonement for

which our Saviour died upon the Cross. The fast of Lent is a fit preparation for the joyful time of Easter; for if we do not first grieve for our sins, how can we be properly thankful to Him who has taken them away?

P.—To fast means not to eat?

G.—Yes.

P.—But we do eat during Lent.

G.—Yes, because we could not live if we did not eat. Therefore the Church does not say any thing about the manner of fasting, only that we should in some way or other, as we can, make some' distinction between fast-days and other days. All people should try to deny themselves in some little things which will not hurt their health, but which will remind them that they are to obey the Church's commands. Only we must be very careful never to make a display, or to let any one know that we are making these little self-denials; they need not always be about eating and drinking, but about any thing that offers the opportunity; going any where when we would rather not go, not doing any thing that we much wish to do, not reading any particular book that we have a fancy to read—all these sort of things will do to mark a fast-day. But as you grow older you will understand this better; at present your duty is chiefly in strict obedience to your father, because he knows better than you can, what are the things you should do to please God. But I will tell you a sort of self-denial which you

must practise by and by if you wish to do good to those yet poorer than yourself.

P.—Oh! tell me that, godmother.

G.—When you are older, and able to earn something for yourself, you will now and then be tempted to lay out too much money on your clothes; for instance, you may have to make a choice between a pretty and a useful gown, or between a light or dark ribbon for your bonnet; now if when the temptation comes, you try to remember that by buying the cheapest and most durable thing you will be able to give a loaf of bread or a warm petticoat to some poor creature, you will not long doubt which you will choose, but feel thankful for the opportunity of practising self-denial and charity together. Good by now, Phoebe: will you come to Church with me to-morrow?

P.—Oh, surely; and I shall take a greater interest in the services for Ash-Wednesday after what you have told me.





DIALOGUE XVII.

The Annunciation.

MARCH 25.



Phæbe.—GODMOTHER, is not to-day called Lady-Day, after the Virgin Mary? I see in the Prayer-book that it is “the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” I remember once seeing such a beautiful picture, which was called the Annunciation. I saw it at * * * Castle; Aunt Susan took me there when she went to see Mrs. Miles the housekeeper. In the picture there was the Virgin kneeling, as if she was at her prayers, and looking very humble and reverent, and there was an angel with a bright light about him coming down to her, with his wings stretched out; he seemed to be speaking to her; and beside her there was a tall white lily.

Godmother.—The lily was put there as an emblem, to show that the blessed Virgin was pure and spotless as that white flower.

P.—I thought a great deal about that picture

afterwards, it was so pretty. Do you think it meant that the Virgin Mary was saying her prayers there in her room, when the Angel came to her?

G.—I think very likely the picture meant that. We cannot be sure what she was doing when the Angel came to her, because we are not told it in the Bible; but we are told what message he brought her, and how she received the message. We read this in the Gospel for the day. Read it now, dear.

P. reads.

G.—We see her humility by the way in which she received the Angel's salutation. She was troubled, surprised, not understanding how she could be so highly favoured, and blessed among women. She could hardly believe that she had heard the Angel aright. But when he went on to tell her the rest of his great tidings, and how the Holy Thing that should be born of her was to be called the Son of God, then, though no doubt she felt yet more deeply her inexpressible unworthiness, her lowly lot, her ignorance, she knew it was not for her to doubt any longer, or to speak of her unfitness, which was better known to God than to herself; so she only answered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

P.—I remember your saying once how Moses was reproved by God for excusing himself from going to Pharaoh, and saying he was too slow of speech.

G.—Yes, it was his duty to obey, and trust God for the rest. As St. Paul tells us, God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. When the Angel Gabriel was sent to Zacharias to promise him a son, Zacharias would not believe the good news.

P.—I remember that.

G.—And afterwards, when Elizabeth the wife of Zacharias saluted Mary, she said, "Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

P.—So the Virgin was blessed for believing.

G.—Yes, we see throughout the Bible, what great promises are made to faith.

P.—The Angel called Mary Blessed; and her cousin Elisabeth said, "Blessed art thou among women;" and now she is always called the Blessed Virgin.

P.—All generations have called her Blessed, according to the words that were put into her mouth, when she answered Elizabeth, in what is called the Song of the Blessed Virgin. Her heart must have been full indeed when she uttered it. It seems as if she was beginning to understand the blessings which were to come, not only to her, but to the whole world, by the birth of her promised Son. In her was now to be fulfilled that promise which the world had been looking out for, during thousands of years. 'The Seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head, after a long delay, was about to appear on earth,

and was to be born of her. We repeat that hymn very often, but I fear we repeat it without thinking enough of those words which came from the most highly favoured of the children of men. We have already seen that she was blessed for her faith. Can you find in her hymn another reason for her being blessed and favoured by God?

P.—Do you mean because she was humble and lowly?

G.—Yes, she was of low estate, as she herself says, and she was ready to believe that God could exalt her; she believed that He could choose “the weak things of the world, to confound the things that are mighty.” She was meek and lowly in heart, as well as low in her condition of life, and her lowliness and her faith helped each other; she did not think that God chose her for any thing great in her, but she believed that His great power and mercy could make her an instrument to His glory. She was the handmaid of the Lord, waiting to fulfil His pleasure, and thanking Him for His mercies with a full heart. How much we might learn from this, if we could but take it into our hearts, and ponder over it, and keep it there. When one of the company who heard our Lord, blessed His Mother as being most happy and highly favoured, He answered, “Yea, rather blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.” And at another time, He said “Whosoever doth the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.” We who are Christians were

all favoured and honoured beyond mortal thought when we were made members of Christ by baptism. We must wonder at the mystery of our blessedness, with humble and believing hearts, thinking nothing too low for us, as we are in ourselves, nothing too high and great for God to do in us and through us.

There is another thought which comes to us by dwelling on the mercies of God towards the Virgin, towards her who was blessed and highly favoured above all other women. It is a solemn, awful thought, almost beyond your age, dear child, but yet it should not be put by. And that is *how* God sends his mercies to those whom He most blesses and favours. When Simeon blessed the Virgin, he said, "Behold this child," &c.; and he foretold that "a sword should pierce through her own soul." God often shows favour to his chosen ones by calling them to suffer.

P.—When was that fulfilled, that the sword should pierce through her soul?

G.—It must have been fulfilled when she stood at the foot of the cross, and watched her Son hanging there in His last agony: that sight must indeed have torn her heart, yet even then there were some drops of comfort poured into the wound, when our Lord's last dying care commended His mother to His friend.

P.—We are told that St. John took her to his own house; but I do not remember any thing being said in the Bible about her seeing our Lord after He was risen.

G.—No, her name is only mentioned again when it is said that she assembled in prayer and supplication with the Apostles and brethren of our Lord.

P.—So we do not know how the rest of her life was spent? indeed we do not seem to be told much about her in the Bible.

G.—Yet from what is said we can think of her holiness, purity, lowliness, thoughtfulness, as when she kept all the wonderful things relating to her Son, and pondered them in her heart: we see her, raised as she is above us, in her blessedness, yet set before us as a pattern for all women. I must read you a passage about this. “The holy Virgin arrived to her perfection by the means of a quiet and silent piety, the internal action of love, devotion, and contemplation; and instructs us that not only those who have opportunity and powers of a magnificent religion, or a pompous charity, or miraculous conversion of souls, or assiduous and effectual preachings . . . shall have the greatest crowns; . . . but the silent affections, the splendours of an internal devotion, the unions of love, humility, and obedience, the daily offices of prayer and praises sung to God, the acts of faith and fear, of patience and meekness, of hope and reverence, repentance and charity, and those graces which walk in a veil, and silence, make great ascents to God, and as sure progress to favour, and a crown, as the more laborious exercises of a more solemn religion.” You cannot understand every word of this,

Phœbe; but do you see what the general meaning is!

P.—I think so, godmother; does it not mean that people may be ever so poor, and ignorant, and despised, but yet they can copy the holiness of the blessed Virgin, and be humble, and pure, and meek, and obedient to God's will.

G.—Yes, and there *are* people, both men and women, who have kept the grace given them in baptism, who go on quietly and steadily learning day by day to love Him, Who has redeemed them, and overcoming by His heavenly grace the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. And such will be of the number of those whom our Lord will acknowledge to be His mother, and brothers, and sisters.

P.—Godmother, the thought of that ought to make us strive with all our might to keep God's commandments.

G.—And especially should the young endeavour to resemble Mary's innocence, blessing God for the power which He has given them to keep themselves holy and pure. But those who have let sin separate them from Him, must acknowledge and bewail their misery; they must take thankfully whatever punishment falls upon them, only hoping that it may cleanse the marks of sin and shame from their foreheads. The day will soon come when it will appear whether our lot is to be for ever with our Lord and His blessed mother, the Apostles and Prophets and all those righteous men whom we read of in the Bible, and long to

know—or with the Serpent whose head our Lord bruised, with the bad angels, with those who set at nought and mocked the Saviour of the world, and all who have since pierced Him with their unrepented wickedness.

P.—And that is the dreadful evil that we pray in the Litany to be delivered from.

G.—Yes; we must pray too that we may always remember that every day of our lives we are making ourselves more fit either for that everlasting misery, or for everlasting happiness.

P.—You mean, godmother, that when I have spent a good day, and have pleased father and aunt, and my school-mistress, and have tried to attend to my prayers, I have got as it were a step forward, and when I have done contrary to any of these things I have gone a step back.

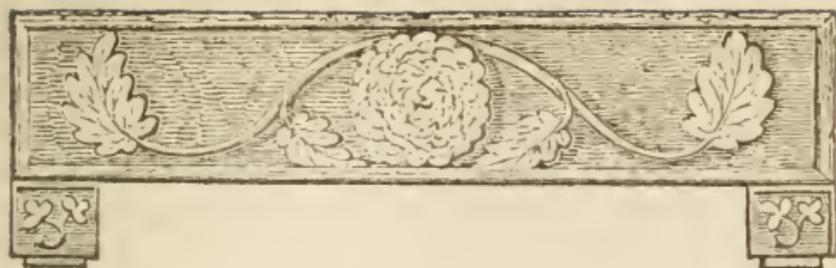
G.—Just so; we can never stand still. And now there is one sad warning from the high and holy thoughts of this joyful day. It is that men can abuse God's greatest favours, can turn food into poison, even when they have been, as we might think, cautioned against doing it. We read of our Lord as obeying His mother in His childhood: but when He entered upon His divine ministry, He would not be directed by her in the performance of his miracles. (John ii.) She was His last earthly care; but after His Resurrection we hear of her no more, except in that one passage where she is spoken of as engaged with the disciples in prayer. Yet in the course of time the honour which is her due, was turned into

idolatry. You have heard of the corruptions of the Papists: one of the most fearful of them is that they sometimes address the holy and humble Mother of our Lord in words fit only to be spoken to the Son of God Himself. I would not repeat any such words to you; but I tell you of it as a warning that we should never so honour the creature as to dishonour the Creator.

P.—Godmother, next week is Passion Week: this Feast-day is the last before Easter.

G.—Yes. The Feast of the Annunciation always falls in Lent. If you look in the Collect, you will see that on this account particular mention is made of our Lord's cross and passion, which we pray may bring us to the glory of His Resurrection. Even to His blessed mother, the sorrow came before the joy. And none of His servants will even wish to escape suffering with their Lord here, in the firm and sure hope that, through His merits, their sufferings, patiently endured, will bring to them an exceeding weight of glory hereafter, when they shall be made partakers of His Resurrection.





DIALOGUE XVIII.

The Holy Week.



Godmother.—PHÆBE, do you think you are wanted at home? If you are not, we will take a little walk before we return.

Phæbe.—I may come with you, godmother, I know, for I asked father before coming to church, if I might stay and ask you a few things I want to know about this week. There will be service every day; Mr. Seymour said so this morning, and we are to have holydays till Wednesday week.

G.—Yes, that you may be able to go to church, and attend properly to all the solemn duties of this time of sorrow and repentance.

P.—I know that you have told me that none but those who try to think seriously on all that our blessed Lord suffered for us, can rejoice when Easter comes.

G.—The Holy Week that we begin to-day is

the last and most solemn week in Lent, and is especially set apart to remind us of the sufferings of our Saviour. It used to be called the Great week or Passion week. It was called the Great week, not because it consisted of longer days or more days than other weeks, but because at this time great things were done for us by our Lord. The God of Peace made peace between things in heaven and things in earth.

P.—I think you have told me that Passion means suffering?

G.—Yes, and the sufferings of Christ for our sake are the subject of the services of this week, and we should try to keep them as much as possible in our thoughts. The first Christians, we are told, observed this week with great strictness of fasting and sorrowing for their sins, and endeavoured, with penitent hearts, to attend their Saviour through all that is told in the Gospel of His bitter Passion.

P.—Godmother, all through Lent we are to think of our sins and of our Lord's sufferings for them, and how we must repent of them.

G.—The holy Church has been preparing us ever since Ash-Wednesday for this most solemn week. She knows that we could not all at once bring our minds into a fit state for it; that we could not pass at once from a season of joy, such as Christmas, to one of deep mourning; and so, like a tender mother, who leads on her child by a few little steps at a time, the Church has led us, by the serious and sad season of Lent, to be ready

for the still sadder services which she now provides for us.

P.—I see, godmother, that there is an Epistle and Gospel for every day of this week.

G.—And there are proper Lessons for every day, except Monday and Tuesday. The Collect is the same that has been used to-day till Good Friday. You have seen how we pray in it that we may follow the example of our Lord's patience, and also be made partakers of His Resurrection.

P.—I was thinking as I learnt it that it was something like the Collect for the Annunciation.

G.—Yes, in both we own that we must suffer with our Lord before we can rejoice with Him. But let us think now a little how the four days before Good Friday were spent by our blessed Lord. What is it that we heard about in the Gospel for this morning's service?

P.—About our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem; I meant to ask you, godmother, why this Sunday is called Palm Sunday.

G.—Because in former times it was the custom for people to carry Palms or small branches in their hands when they came to Church; in memory of the branches that were cut down and strewed in our Lord's way as He came into Jerusalem.

P.—Yes, and the people cried Hosanna to the Son of David.

G.—They cried out this, which I have been told means "Lord, preserve this Son of David," in almost the same spot where, five days after,

they cried, Crucify Him, Crucify Him. After our Lord had come into the temple, He drove out the buyers and sellers.

P.—He had done that once before, had He not?

G.—Yes, at the beginning of His teaching; the Son of God began and ended His ministry by an act of zeal towards His Father's house. The chief Priests, His enemies, were sore displeased at the praises which proceeded out of the mouth of the little children in the temple. What was the prophecy that was then fulfilled?

P.—"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise."

G.—That night after our Lord left the temple, He went out of the city, and lodged at Bethany, (St. Matt. xxi.) with his disciples. The next day, Monday, and each of the following days, He returned into the city, and preached in the temple, returning to Bethany at night. He now showed himself openly to the people. See St. Luke xix. 47, 48, and St. Mark xi. 12, 19. It was as our Lord and His disciples came into Jerusalem on the Monday morning that he cursed the barren fig-tree; and on the Tuesday, they found the curse fulfilled; the fig-tree was withered away; thus, as it were by a type, showing how it would be with those who rejected His words—who were barren in all good works. By comparing the different Gospels one with another, we find that on this Tuesday our Lord spoke all things which are contained in the 21st, 22d, 23d, 24th, and 25th

chapters of St. Matthew. He delivered those awful warnings, the parables of the vineyard, and the marriage feast. He replied to the Herodians, and the Sadducees, who tried to entangle Him in His talk; and when, after these were put to silence, the Pharisees also tempted Him, He put them to silence likewise, and severely reprovèd them in the presence of all the people for their shameful pride and hypocrisy. After all this He left the Temple, and withdrew with His disciples to the mount of Olives, and there, while He sat with them and looked on the beautiful temple which was on the opposite hill, He delivered to them the prophecies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and His coming to judgment, and the end of the world. The parables of the Ten Virgins, and the Talents, and the description of the Day of Judgment, were given at the same time. Holy Scripture does not reveal to us what our Lord did from that night till the Thursday, the day before His Crucifixion. We are told that the rulers assembled together, and agreed with the traitor Judas how he should betray Christ to them.

P.—As it is said in the second Psalm, which you explained to me, “The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed.” What happened on the Thursday, godmother?

G.—On this day our blessed Lord sent two of His disciples to make ready the Passover in a large upper room furnished, and there He assembled the twelve together, and delivered to

them the last solemn discourses which we read in St. John's Gospel, from chapter xiii. to xviii. It was there they ate the last supper; and then it was that our blessed Lord instituted the most Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood. From the command then given, the most solemn He had ever given, and at the most solemn time, "Do this in remembrance of me," this day has been called *Maundy* or *Commandment* Thursday. And the service for it, especially the Epistle, (1 Cor. xi.) commemorates this action of our Lord, and leads us to meditate upon it. Of Good Friday I will say nothing now: on that awful day we will think and speak, as much as we may with reverence, of what was then done for us.

On Saturday, Easter eve, the worst was over; the Holy Body of our Lord was laid in the new sepulchre of St. Joseph of Arimathea, as we read in the Gospel for the day. His spirit had descended into Hell (the place of departed spirits,) as we read in the Epistle.

P.—But it is still a Fast, I suppose?

G.—Yes, a strict one. But the early Christians so kept it as to show that joy was very nigh at hand. I have read in Mr. Nelson's book, that it was celebrated with great pomp, with watchings by the light of numberless torches both in the Churches and in private houses. There were magnificent illuminations in some great cities; for very high tapers were lighted, which gloriously turned night into day, as emblems of that great Light, even the Sun of Righteousness, which the

next day rose upon the world. At this day, in our own country, preparations for the great Festival begin on Easter eve. In those Churches which are adorned with flowers on Easter day, they are put up on the eve. People try to get over their common business, that they may turn their thoughts to what is coming. At the evening service, the Collect for Easter is read; so that we feel that the sorrow is nearly passed, and that joy will come in the morning. Since the day when our Lord lay in the grave, death has ceased to be terrible; Christians can lay them down in peace and take their rest: they can trust their treasures to the grave, in the sure and certain hope that through the grave and gate of death is the way to a joyful resurrection. We shall go to Church together every day this week, I trust; but, dear Phœbe, do not forget to try to be attentive and thoughtful lest you should lose the blessings which are put within your reach in the holy services of the Great week.





DIALOGUE XIX.

Good Friday.



Godmother.—I AM glad to see you so early, my dear Phæbe; come and sit down quietly. I wish, before you go to church, that you should go through with me the Psalms and Lessons appointed for this solemn day, that I may give you such explanations as I can of these sorrowful services. What our blessed Redeemer did as on this day for us, miserable sinners, is so awful and mysterious, that we are in danger of soon getting bewildered and confused when we think upon it; but we can help ourselves by meditating chiefly on the very words of Scripture, for then our thoughts are less likely to get perplexed.

Phæbe.—This morning, when I got up, I did try to think in my mind about nothing but our Saviour's sufferings; but I found it hard not to go off to think of something else. May I find the Psalms?

G.—Yes, the 22d is the first appointed.

P.—I see from the first verse why this Psalm is to be read, It was part of this verse that our blessed Lord said upon the cross.

G.—Some people suppose that He repeated the psalm all through. See, Phœbe, how very exactly all the words of the prophecy of King David were fulfilled when our Saviour suffered.

P.—Yes, indeed. And the people themselves helped to fulfil it, though they did not know what they were doing; for they laughed Him to scorn, and said, “He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him;” and pierced His hands, and His feet, and looked and stared at Him: while the soldiers parted His garments, and cast lots for His vesture.

G.—Why did they not part or divide His vesture?

P.—Because it was woven without seam, and, no doubt, they thought it would be a pity to tear it.

G.—Yes, and this seamless vesture is a figure of the holy Catholic Church, which should be *one*, without rent or division; Christians being called upon, as members of Christ, to live together in unity, “having one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”

P.—I did not know that meaning of the vesture without seam, but I will remember it now. I will go on with the Psalm. It was to the poor that the Gospel was preached first; so our Lord did “not abhor the low estate of the

poor." And when He fed the multitude with the seven loaves, then they did "eat and were satisfied."

G.—But what is the bread which our Lord gives to every one who will come for it, of which those that eat can never die?

P.—You told me when I read to you the 1st chapter of St. John, "The Body and Blood of Christ, which are, verily and indeed, taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper."

G.—You are right, Phæbe. The promise in the next verse was accomplished when all the world, by degrees, became Christian, and acknowledged the one true God to be its King and Governor.

P.—What does it mean, "no man hath quickened his own soul?"

G.—What is the meaning of quicken? Λ

P.—I don't know.

G.—"He will come to judge both the *quick* and the dead."

P.—That means the *live* and the dead.

G.—Quicken them means to make alive,—and can any one give eternal life to his own soul?

P.—Oh, no, God only can do that—I understand now. The next Psalm is the 40th.

G.—It is prophetic, like the 22d; and is, as it were, said by our Lord Himself. The 8th verse speaks of the Jewish sacrifices, and meat-offerings, not being enough to take away the displeasure of God at the sins of men. What then could be done for unhappy sinners?

P.—Our Saviour said, that He would come to do God's will, and to fulfil His Law.

G.—Yes, and to declare the righteousness, the truth, and the salvation of God to the great congregation ; that is, to the whole world.

P.—I suppose it is no longer our Lord who speaks in the 15th verse, for He had no sins to lay hold upon Him.

G.—But, Phœbe, were there no sins that were laid upon Him, no iniquities that He had to bear ?

P.—Oh, yes, the sins of all mankind ; you have often told me, the sins of all who lived before He came into the world, and the sins of all those who have lived since.

G.—And He took upon Himself all the punishment that these sins deserved. What His sufferings were we cannot judge ; we only know that they were far, far greater than anything we can possibly imagine, and that it was for *us* that He bore them. If, after knowing this, we still love any one of our sins or faults, and refuse to give them up for His sake, then we may expect to be “ confounded and ashamed, to be desolate, and rewarded with shame ;” while those who seek Him, and keep his commandments, will evermore be joyful and glad in Him, for they know that He is their salvation.

P.—That means, does it not ? that He will keep them safe.

G.—Safe from whom ?

P.—From all who would wish to hurt them

but, I suppose, most of all from the evil spirit, because he would hurt people's souls.

G.—Look out now for the 54th Psalm. In this Psalm, again, our Lord is speaking. Read the 3d verse. Do you know who the *stranger* was who rose up against our Lord?

P.—Yes, I think it was Pontius Pilate; for you told me once that he was not a Jew, but a Roman, and a stranger amongst the Jews. And was not Herod, “the tyrant who had not God before his eyes?” He was a very wicked king, I am sure, and that is the same as a tyrant.

G.—I am glad you remember that. The last four verses are full of thankfulness for our Lord's deliverance from death, the grave, and sorrow; they speak too of the punishment of His enemies.

P.—I know how Herod was punished, because it is told in the Acts of the Apostles.

G.—Stop, Phœbe; you are running off too fast. That Herod, whose death is related in the Acts, was not the king who mocked our Lord, and put on him the purple robe, but his son. The old Herod, however, *was* punished; for his kingdom was taken from him, and he and his wife were banished into a distant country, where they died. I have read that Pilate also perished miserably after having been stripped of his riches, and driven from his home and country.

P.—Poor creatures, they must have been unhappy enough at any rate, because they had

been so wicked. Shall we keep the other Psalms till the afternoon?

G.—Yes. Take the Bible and find the first Lesson.

P.—It is the 22d of Genesis to verse 20. It gives the history of the sacrifice of Isaac.

G.—Now, if you think a little, you can tell me why it is appointed for this morning's service?

P.—You have told me, that all sacrifices helped to keep people in remembrance of their own sinfulness, for which *they* deserved to die, instead of the innocent sheep or ox that was sacrificed,—and also to prepare them for a greater Sacrifice, which would one day be made, to take away, really and truly, the sins of the world, which the killing of beasts could not.

G.—Very well; but what made Isaac a type or picture of our blessed Saviour?

P.—Let me think: he was the only son of Abraham; he had been promised long before his birth; and he went up the mountain to be sacrificed very meekly and without complaining.

G.—Yes, and he bore the wood for his sacrifice, as our Lord bore His cross to Mount Calvary, which is the same place as Mount Moriah.

P.—Is it really?—How very good Abraham was to obey God so readily.

G.—What did he show by his obedience?

P.—His faith, for he believed that whatever God told him to do must be for the best.

G.—Look out for what St. Paul says on the

subject, Heb. xi. 17, 18, 19.. (*Phæbe reads them.*) The 2d Lesson, the 18th chap. of St. John, does not need to be explained, but it needs to be thought over very often, if we would increase our love to our most blessed Lord, and only Saviour. The end of the sorrowful history of His sufferings is given in the Gospel for the day, which is the 19th chap. of St. John. But take your Prayer-book again, and read the Collects, or rather repeat them. (*Phæbe repeats.*)

G.—Do you notice, Phæbe, that in the 2d and 3d Collects, we are taught to offer prayers for all our fellow-men? First, we pray for all estates of men in God's Holy Church, that they may all in their vocation and ministry, (that is, in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call them,) truly and godly serve Him. We go on in the third Collect to pray for all those who are so unhappy as not yet to be safe in the fold of God's Church, Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics. We pray that our Lord, the good Shepherd, may fetch home these His wandering sheep, that they may be made one fold with us, Christians.

P.—Can you tell me, godmother, what sort of people are Turks, Infidels? Heretics, I know, are people brought up in heresy, or false doctrine.

G.—Turks are those who believe in a very wicked man, called Mahomet, who said that he was a prophet sent by God to teach men what they had never been taught before, and to give them a new law, which he wrote in a book,

called the Koran, which contains all sorts of wicked blasphemous things. Infidels are those most miserable men of whom King David speaks when he says, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God;" men who refuse to believe the blessed word of God, and who seem to take a pride and pleasure in making themselves like the beasts of the field, who have no souls, and who perish for ever when they die.

P.—Well, I am sure it is but right to pray for all these poor people: they are very much to be pitied.

G.—Yes, no doubt; and some of them are ignorant of the sin they are committing. Anyhow, on this holy-day, when we commemorate our blessed Saviour's dying for *all* men, we must pray, that all may be converted, and turn to Him, their most gracious Lord and Master, who would have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth, and to be saved.

In the Epistle, St. Paul tries to convince the Jews that Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God, slain for the sins of the whole world. He tells them that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin; and repeats parts of the Psalms—those Psalms you have just read—to show this, and to prove that there must be one great Sacrifice which would indeed take away sin, after which no more sacrifices should be required; but that God's people should be sanctified through the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ,—that the laws of God should be written in their hearts,—

and that a new and living way to the holiest, that is, heaven, should be opened to them through the Blood of Jesus Christ, who is now become our High Priest and Mediator in the house of God, where He sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father. So that those who have been washed with pure water in baptism, and have kept their hearts clean from an evil conscience, may draw near in prayer even to the highest God, with entire trust in His mercy towards them for His dear Son's sake. For fear Christians should forget what return they must make for all these blessings, St. Paul ends with exhorting them to strive which amongst them should excel in love and good works; warning them never to forsake the assembling themselves together for prayer and praise, as some already had done, but to help each other by good advice, and the more, as every moment they lived brought them nearer to "the day," that is, the great and awful day of judgment.

Now, my dear child, while I get ready, read over the Gospel for the day as attentively as you possibly can. Ask your father to let you stay with me between the services, and we will talk of the evening service before we go to it.



DIALOGUE XX.

Good Friday.

PART SECOND.



Phæbe.—GODMOTHER, I am thinking that it is very shocking that we should fret, or be cross about any trouble or pain that God sends us, when our blessed Lord suffered all that dreadful anguish for our sakes. I am very sorry that I was impatient when I had the tooth-ache last week; I could not sleep one night, and I cried and thought that I was very unhappy, but I almost think now, that if the pain came back, I would not cry or complain, but try to think how much, much greater pain our Saviour bore so patiently, and all that He might open the kingdom of heaven for us.

Godmother.—Yes, the thoughts of our Saviour's cross and passion should be enough to turn impatience at sorrow and suffering, to thankfulness and patient endurance; it seems an honour so far above anything we can deserve to be allowed to suffer with Him. At the time of His crucifixion there were many women round His cross, in heavy sorrow and distress; His blessed Mother, espe-

cially, who, we know, suffered as if a sword pierced through her heart, while she watched the dying agonies of her Son and Lord, without being able to relieve him, and while she listened to the wicked revilings of His enemies.

P.—She must have thought then of what Simeon said to her at the time of her purification.

G.—Yet who would not rather have been with these sorrowful women, than with the high priests and Pharisees in all their pride and glory? So it is still, true Christians suffer with their Lord, while the world, that is, the thoughtless and the wicked, despise Him, and reject Him, and seek for joy in earthly pleasures and riches, which He has warned us against so often, which are so hurtful to the soul, and which in a very few years we must lose by death.

P.—Surely it must have been a very good thing to have been with the women at the foot of the cross; and were they not the same women who first heard of His resurrection? That must have been enough to make them forget their former sorrow.

G.—Yes, their sorrow was turned into joy, as our Lord had foretold. But now, dear, take your Prayer-book again, and let us go through the evening Psalms. The 69th begins sadly enough, with a prayer for deliverance, and a description of our Saviour's sufferings, exact to the very letter. Even in the midst of His supplications for Himself, He thinks of others, and prays that the servants of God may not be

ashamed or confounded at the sight of his misery and death.

P.—That was what did happen to the apostles and disciples, when they forsook Him and fled, because He was taken by His enemies.

G.—Do you remember when it was said that the zeal of God's house had eaten Him up?

P.—Yes, when He drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple. Oh, how beautiful all this Psalm is! How could the Jews read it, and not see that King David's prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and that they were crucifying their Lord! Even when they gave Him vinegar and gall, they do not seem to have thought about it.

G.—No, as a punishment for their hard-heartedness and guilt, God *had* blinded their eyes. The 26th verse refers to Judas, as we read in Acts i.; his habitation became void or empty by his sudden death. The 32d verse is like the passage we read this morning, "Sacrifice and meat-offering Thou wouldest not."

P.—I suppose that the cities of Judah, where those that love God's name shall dwell, does not mean the same cities where the Jews lived, for they are destroyed, are they not?

G.—Yes, this must mean the heavenly Jerusalem, the Jerusalem that is above, the Kingdom of heaven.

P.—The last Psalm for to-day is the 88th. I have that one by heart. It is the most sorrowful of them all.

G.—It gives us some faint idea of what our Lord's anguish must have been when it could be applied to Him; the same anguish that made Him call out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The last verse describes what was, probably, one of the worst of His sufferings—the being forsaken by all His disciples.

P.—I was going to say before we came to this Psalm, godmother, that although the Psalms read to-day all begin in sadness, they all end with praise and thanksgiving; but the 88th is sad throughout.

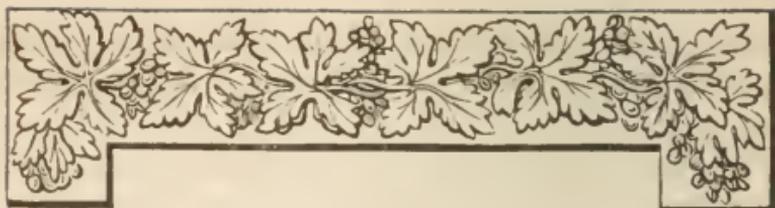
G.—Yes, that one out of five. Generally speaking, even in this world the sorrows of a Christian end in peace and joy; the sorrow endureth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning; but sometimes it happens otherwise, and the good are in sorrow as long as they live; their whole life is as the night; all God's storms pass over them, and they see no morning, not even a streak of light to cheer them. To prevent such afflicted persons supposing that it is in wrath that God thus smites them, our Lord Himself took His part with them, and knew in this life no relief to His sufferings. He passed through the gloomy grave and gate of death before He arose to joy. But the first day of the week dawned at last, and the Lord came out of His tomb. Not less surely shall those His servants who have lain down to their last sleep in sorrow and trouble, awaken to the glorious

light of the inheritance of saints ; and this hope helps them to bear whatever God puts upon them.

The first Lesson for this evening's service you have often read,—it wants no explanation, it is as clear as the Gospel.

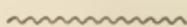
The second Lesson is from St. Peter's 1st epistle, chap. ii. It tells us plainly what all Christians should be, if they would but think often of the high and holy privileges that were purchased for them, as on this day, by the blood of the only-begotten Son of God. Read it over and over again, with earnest prayer, that you may be enabled so to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, that you may live up to its precepts, and pass through this world, bearing constantly in mind that in baptism you were made one of the chosen generation, of the royal priesthood, of the holy nation, and peculiar people. And this, not for any good found in you, for you were by nature born in sin, and the child of wrath, but for His sake who suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps ; who bare our sins in His own Body on the tree, that we being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness.

My child, may God's grace keep you ever faithful to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls ! We will not talk any more now ; go home, dear, and keep yourself as quiet as you can the rest of the day.



DIALOGUE XXI.

Easter=Day.



Phæbe.—GOOD evening, godmother; will it not be a nice preparation for the Festival to-morrow if you will talk to me a little about it? I have brought my Prayer-book, for I thought, perhaps, you would tell me the explanation of the Psalms.

Godmother.—I will tell you all I can, dear; more, I dare say, than you will recollect. I have just been thinking over what I have heard about it. Come and sit down; and what I have not time to tell you to-day, we can talk about to-morrow. I must tell you first how great a Festival it is, and how it has always been kept with great joy and solemnity. Easter Day is the highest and holiest of our Festivals—the most joyful as to what it commemorates, and the most important as to what it teaches us. It is the day on which our Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead, and opened the gate of everlasting life to

all who believe in Him, and obey Him. Therefore the Church has always kept this Holy Day with higher joy and honour than any of the rest, and looked upon it as the glory of the year, and the great Queen of days. All Festivals are days of holy joy, and every Sunday is bright and happy; but Easter Sunday shines above them all, like the sun among the lesser lights of heaven.

If you look into your Prayer-book, Phœbe, you will see one difference the Church has made between this Festival and any other—she has appointed special Anthems in honour of the Day, instead of the usual Psalm beginning “O come, let us sing unto the Lord.” They are printed before the Collect. Look for them, that you may not be put out to-morrow when we come to them.

P.—Shall I read them?

G.—Presently. But I will tell you now a little more about the Day.

P.—Has the Church always celebrated Easter Day, godmother; when did it first begin?

G.—I am sure you yourself, Phœbe, can tell when it began, and how.

P.—Oh, yes; I forgot. The day our Lord rose from the dead.

G.—You can well imagine, dear, the joy with which the first Easter Day was kept. When the disciples of our Lord saw again their beloved Master, who had been taken from them, and all their doubts and fears were done away, and their sad hearts were filled again with gladness.

P.—A happy day indeed it must have been

for them, when they found that their hope was not to be disappointed, and knew for certain that He was their God and King, and would give them the rewards He had promised in the world to come.

G.—Happy for us too, Phœbe! And we should try to feel the same as they did, and be as glad and thankful as we are sure they were.

P.—Yes, for we have the same reason to be glad at the Resurrection of our Lord as they had.

G.—In all the Services of this holy Season the Church teaches us to put ourselves into the place of the first disciples and Apostles of our Lord, and to fill our souls with the same holy, happy thoughts,—the same deep thankfulness that they felt. She reminds us of their joy at the tidings of His Resurrection given by the Angel, and bids us use the same words with which they told their joy, and the wondrous cause of it: “Christ is risen indeed.”

P.—Did the early Christians keep Easter as we keep it? I mean did they go to Church as we do?

G.—It was some years before they had such Churches as we have, for they were poor and persecuted; but from the very first they assembled where they could, and spent what time they could in thanksgiving and prayer, and in partaking together of the Holy Sacrament. Afterwards when they had Churches they did as we do now; only they spent much more time in religious services, both on Easter Day and for

seven days after. Praying and singing praises and hearing the word of God and Sermons, and receiving the Holy Sacrament; this last was the highest act of joy. They showed too their thankfulness and joy by giving alms, and freeing slaves, and by every act of charity.

P.—I suppose they had not much to do in those days if they could be so much in Church. Were there no farms then, and no shops to attend to?

G.—Oh yes, there were farms enough, and business of all kind; but yet they found more time to spare than we do now. But I don't mean that people spent all Easter time in Church, only that the season was a Festival, and kept with great solemnity. And those who could, devoted time much more to holy things than men do now; while those who had necessary business recollected, in the midst of it, that it was a time of holy joy and holy thought. We may do *this*, Phœbe, if we cannot go to Church as much as we should wish; we may employ our minds in thinking of the wonderful events commemorated at this season, and the great benefits that flow from them; and try to profit as much as we can by the good thoughts that are put into our minds.

Let us now read the Psalms together. The 2d, 57th, and 111th. Read the 2d all through. In the 1st, 2d, and 3d verses the Psalmist asks what madness, what folly it is that stirs up the Heathen to rage against the Christ, whom God had anointed to be King over all the earth, and

had sent into the world. How could they imagine so vain a thing, as that they could defeat the purposes of God, and prevent His Son from setting up His Kingdom in the world. You remember the meaning of the 2d verse, and who are the Rulers and Kings he speaks of.

P.—Yes, Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the Scribes and Pharisees, and Priests.

G.—And all the wicked rulers of the kingdoms of the world, and all the kings and great men who oppress the holy Church. They are all guilty of this madness; and their thoughts and endeavours will be as vain when they think to break the bonds of Christ, and to cast off his yoke. “He that sitteth in Heaven will laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in derision.” When they think that they have done what they desired, and shaken off His yoke, then will they feel His wrath, and be sore vexed at His displeasure, and hear the Almighty declaring as it were out of Heaven “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” Yet in spite of all your rage and madness I have set My Son to reign in glory over the whole earth. Can you tell me, Phœbe, any other places where we are told of this same law or decree of God to give his Son dominion over the whole earth?

P.—I know I have learnt some, but I am afraid I have forgotten them; let me see—

G.—Well, I will tell you one or two now, and you may look them out and read them over. Psalm lxxii. 8, Daniel vii. 14. You can recollect

these easily. Since God has decreed to give the dominion to His Anointed, and since all who resist Him shall be broken in pieces by His power—all Kings and people should be wise and prudent, and learn to serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with reverence, and so make their peace with Him, and secure His love, lest they should perish. For if His wrath be kindled against disobedient men, they must surely perish. While they who trust in Him, and obey and serve Him, are sure to have His love and blessing.

Now we will read the 57th Psalm, which comes next. It is a song of triumph for the Resurrection of our Lord, and His deliverance from the hands of His enemies. Our Lord is represented in the 1st verse as praying to the Father for protection, expressing His confidence that He would deliver Him from all the dangers that surrounded Him. He knew that He would send from Heaven, and deliver Him from the reproachful dealings of the unbelieving Jews who sought to devour His soul, and that He would show forth His mercy in preserving Him, and His truth in fulfilling His promises of doing so. Then having (in verse 5th) described the dangers that beset Him, and the rage and malice of His enemies, whose teeth are spears and arrows, &c. in verse 6th, He prays God so to confound their wickedness, and to triumph over them so mightily, that the glory of His Name might be exalted, and His praises sung more heartily by all that dwell in Heaven and in earth. And this would

certainly be done, for the net they had laid for His feet to press down His soul, would not contain Him; they themselves would fall into the pit of destruction they had digged for Him. God would deliver Him from the pains of death, and overwhelm His enemies in utter ruin. Then He goes on to the end of the Psalm to sing the praises of God, who had given Him so glorious a triumph, and shown forth the greatness of His mercy towards Him.

Psalm cxi. is for the most part very easy for you to understand, because it is a simple song of praise to God for all the wonderful things He has done for us. It is appointed to be used on Easter Day, because the Resurrection of our Lord is indeed so great and glorious an instance of His power and goodness towards His creatures. Read it, Phœbe.

You see that in the 1st verse we are taught to praise God, not only in our hearts and in our private chambers, but in the assemblies of the Church. In verse 2d we are taught that we ought to take delight in thinking of the glorious acts of love and mercy that God has shown to us, and in trying to understand them more, that we may praise Him for them more; for His works are full of majesty and glory, and His truth and goodness everlasting. So gracious has He been to us, and so compassionate to our infirmities, that we should always try to recollect His benefits. (Verse 4.) And the Church has provided us with a means of doing this, by setting

apart these holy Festivals in commemoration of them. To all who love and fear the Lord (v. 5,) He gives the Heavenly Meat of the Body and Blood of Christ, to strengthen and refresh their souls. When you are old enough, you will learn more of this, and know how this Heavenly Meat both assures us that God is mindful of His Covenant with us, and enables us to keep the holy promises and lead the holy lives He requires of us. By our Lord's rising from the dead, He has so showed His Church the power of His hand, that we can have no doubt that He will exalt her and defend her from all her enemies. He will perform His promises to us by delivering us, and punishing our enemies—because His works are equity and judgment; but then we must obey Him faithfully and truly—for all His commandments are true and just, and will stand firm and fast for ever and ever.

P.—Thank you, godmother, for all that. Now may I find the Morning Lessons? You will have time to tell me something about them. The 1st is Exodus xii.

G.—In it we have the history of the first institution of the Passover, which all the Israelites were commanded to keep for ever—to remind them of the great deliverance from Egypt, and to carry on their thoughts to the greater deliverance of which that was a type.

P.—The deliverance from sin and death everlasting by our Saviour's Sacrifice on the Cross for us, you mean.

G.—The Israelites were commanded to take a lamb without spot or blemish, and slay it without breaking any of its bones, and to sprinkle the blood upon the door-posts of their houses—that the destroying Angel might pass over them when he saw the blood upon their dwellings. Of this lamb every Israelite was commanded to eat, with his loins girded, and his shoes on, and his staff in his hand—ready to begin his journey out of Egypt. And every year for ever after they were to do the same for a perpetual remembrance of their deliverance from the Angel who destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians, and from the house of bondage. Of whom was that lamb a type, Phœbe?

P.—Of our Lord Jesus Christ.

G.—He is the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world.

P.—Will you tell me *how* the lamb was a type of our Lord?

G.—It was without blemish and without spot, as Jesus Christ was, (1 Pet. i. 17;) the blood of the lamb was sprinkled upon the door to protect and save the people from the destroying Angel, and so must the blood of Christ be sprinkled upon us, to purge our souls, and mark us for God's own. You know, Phœbe, how that circumstance in the Paschal Lamb—that not a bone of it should be broken—was fulfilled in the death of Christ, our Passover. You read in the Gospel for Good Friday, that not a bone of Christ was broken. There is another

way in which the type of the Paschal Lamb was fulfilled in Jesus Christ by the providence of God. He suffered death for us upon the same day of the same month, and at the very time the lamb was commanded to be slain; and now we commemorate His death and Resurrection every year at the time of the great yearly feast of the Jews' Passover. Where do you read that Christ is called our Passover?

P.—In the Anthem for the Day, which is taken from St. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. May I read it now?

G.—Yes; and you will see what we are taught by it.

Phæbe repeats the Anthem.

G.—Now we learn from this how we ought to keep this solemn Festival. Just as the Israelites put out all leaven from their houses, so should we put out of our hearts all evil thoughts and wicked tempers, and come before God in sincerity and truth. Christ, who died the Sacrifice for us, rose up again to assure us of the pardon of our sins, and of grace to overcome them; and we should celebrate His Resurrection by casting off the sins for which He came to die, and thinking how to live more holy lives for the time to come. It would be a mockery of Him, Phæbe, to pretend to be thankful at the Easter Festival, while we are keeping in our hearts the sins He died and rose again to free us from. So we are taught in the next anthem, that as Christ died unto sin once and rose again, and liveth

unto God, so should we reckon ourselves as dead unto sin, and alive unto God, to love and serve Him henceforth in a new life. This Anthem is taken, you see, out of the 2d Lesson for the Morning Service. Look it out in the Bible.

P.—I have found the place.

G.—You see how we are taught here to remember that we have been baptized into the death of Christ, that we, like Him, may rise to a new life. We should think of this particularly now when the great Mysteries of the Death and Resurrection of our Lord are brought before us.

Now, my child, you are going home to bed, and to-morrow will be Easter Day; try and recollect before you say your prayers to-night whether you are really striving to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness; try to think of your sins and of the solemn promises made for you at your Baptism; think if you are indulging yourself in any naughty tempers or disobedient habits, that you may pray to God to pardon them, and to help you leave them off. And then to-morrow, when you say your prayers again, you can make a good resolution to strive more to live the new life you were bound to lead when you were baptized into the Death and Resurrection of our Lord.

I shall like you to come here to-morrow morning, Phœbe, and we will walk to Church together. Good night.

P.—Good night, dear godmother.

DIALOGUE XXII.

Easter-Day.

PART SECOND.



Phæbe.—Good morning, godmother, and I wish you joy of this bright day. How beautiful it is! the little birds are singing merrily, and the sun is shining on us. The church-bells have begun to go. I do think they ring more merrily than ever they have rung before.

Godmother.—Dear child, I am glad to see you here: sit down and rest yourself for a moment, while I put on my bonnet, and then we will go together. We shall have time to stroll about and talk a little, before we go to Church. The bells, you know, are rung a little earlier to-day, in honour of this Blessed Festival of Easter.

P.—How nice it is to have a sunny Easter-day, godmother; it seems to suit it so. I never saw so beautiful a day. It was not half so nice last Easter.

G.—Do you think so? There were more leaves and flowers then, for it came later,

and if I recollect, the sun shone too. It was a nice day.

P.—Well, now I recollect, I believe it was, but I did not feel so happy then as I do now.

G.—You are a year older now. Phœbe, and a year better too, I hope, and wiser; and you know as we grow better, we shall get happier too, of course. If every year as you grow older, you can make improvement in holiness and goodness, dear Phœbe, your heart will be more light and gladsome every year; and every pleasure you enjoy will be more pleasant to you, and you will find many more pleasures than you did before. Birds, and flowers, and sunny skies, and the first budding of the leaves upon the trees and hedges, give joy and quiet delight to people of religious minds, that others never feel. So I hope that your feeling happier this Easter than you did last year may come from your being better.—And then, again; perhaps you did as I was advising you last night before you went home to bed.

P.—I tried, dear godmother, to do as you advised me, and I hope I always shall. I am always happier when I do so.

G.—It is a pity, Phœbe dear, we should ever be unhappy, for you see how easy it is to be happy.

P.—Every body must be happy such a day as this, it is so beautiful. Hear that lark singing away!

G.—Look at him rising up! Can you see him,

Phœbe, now? I can just see the quivering of his little wings. He is almost out of sight! Where is he going to, with that sweet song?

P.—Godmother, I had a fancy once, when I was little; may I tell you what it was? It is very silly—but now I hear him singing so, I like to think of it again.

G.—What was it, dear? tell me.

P.—Why, when I heard the larks up in the air, singing away so sweetly, and I could not see what made the music, I used to think perhaps it was the Angel's singing. It seemed to come down from the heavens as if they were singing psalms. I was very little when I thought that. But I do love to hear larks singing now, as well as then.

G.—And indeed, dear, we may learn to sing and praise like Angels, from those pretty birds. That one we heard just now—hark! there he is come down a little, and now he is going up again—listen—he is teaching us a song of praise for Easter-day, carrying up his praise to the gates of heaven. Our souls should do so too, and we will try to imitate him when we go to Church. His sweet note dies away among the clouds, but we will lift our thankful voices higher still; and the holy Angels you were speaking of just now will carry them on high, and present them to the glorious King of Heaven.

P.—Shall we go round to the Church by Sandy Lane, godmother? we shall have time enough, I think, and it is so pretty.

G.—So we will, Phœbe—come along.

P.—I was just thinking, godmother, how nice it is to have Easter-day come in the spring.

G.—Why so, Phœbe?

P.—Why, it does seem to fit it so. Every thing, you know, is coming into life again—rising again. I know that is not the reason why we have it at this time, because you told me yesterday. We keep it at the time of the Jewish Passover, because our Lord died and rose at that Great Festival. But it is very pleasant to have it just when every thing around us is coming up again.

G.—It is indeed a pleasant thing to see all nature bursting into life around us, and it suits well with what we have to think about to-day. Our Lord is called (1 Cor. xv.) “the first-fruits of them that sleep,” the first-fruits of the dead. He rose to open unto us the gate of life, and make it sure to us that we shall rise: and so, when we celebrate His Resurrection, we are forced to think about our own. You know, dear Phœbe, there is nothing in the world more awful than the thought of our Resurrection. We ought to recollect it always,—the day of death, and then the awful scenes that are to follow,—the Resurrection and the Judgment;—the account that we must give of all the deeds done in the body, and the awful sentence of eternal fire to be passed on all the wicked. We should always have these things in our minds.

P.—But the things we see do make us forget

them so, godmother; I wish I could always be reminded of them.

G.—That is just what I was going to tell you of, dear Phœbe. I was going to tell you how the things we see should make us think about our death and resurrection. God has spread all around us sights to remind us of our end, if we will look at them. Look at this tuft of primroses; a little while ago there were no leaves or flowers on this bank. Last year you picked some here, and they were sweet and beautiful; the winter came with its cold breath, and cut them down, and the leaves withered, but the root was buried in the earth. Now they are come out again, as green and beautiful as ever; the Great Creator has sent forth upon them the warm breath of spring, and all that died last winter has returned to life again. You see how every hedge and every bank supplies us with memorials of our end. You said just now you wished you could be always put in mind of it: there are many things that will do this for you. Every night before you go to bed, you have a picture of your death in the sun sinking down behind the hill your window looks upon; then comes the cold dark night, and you slip into bed; the night is a picture of your death, and the bed may remind you of your grave; then you wake up again, and see the sun come forth as glorious and bright as ever, to put you in remembrance of the time when you will rise again. Phœbe dear, we shall be bright and glorious then if we have kept our vows, and lived and died in

Christ. "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Look at that verse by and by, it is what the Prophet Daniel tells us in the last chapter, verse 2, 3.

P.—The bells have almost done, godmother; we must make haste.

G.—Now think, dear Phœbe, we are going to meet Him face to face, who died for us, and rose again to-day, to deliver us from sin and open for us the way to heaven. Let us humble ourselves before Him for our ingratitude and sins, and praise Him for His mercy: and pray to Him to give us grace to love and serve Him better for the time to come.

P.—I shall not be able to walk home with you, but may I come to you in the evening?

G.—Yes, dear and welcome.



Phœbe.—I should like to try and do what Mr. Seymour was telling us to-day, about the prophecies of our Lord's Resurrection and the fulfilment of them—will you help me? You know he said it would be a good thing for us to try this evening and find out a prophecy or two, or a type, and then look in the New Testament, and see how exactly they were fulfilled.

G.—You cannot do better, Phœbe, and it is our duty too, to try and do what he recommends,

I will help you ; open your Prayer-book and read through the 16th Psalm, till you come to a prophecy that was fulfilled in our Lord.

P.—I have it, verse 10, 11.

G.—In Acts ii. 31, we are taught by St. Peter that this was spoken of our Saviour : you know then how it was accomplished to-day. God did not leave His soul in hell, (hell does not here mean the place of punishment, but the place where departed spirits rest till the resurrection,) nor did He suffer His Holy One to see corruption. When the women went to anoint His body, He was gone. “He is risen, as He said.” Now, Phœbe, can you tell me if any thing happened at the time of His Resurrection, to make us more than ever certain that His Resurrection has opened to us the gates of life, and that we shall rise too ?

P.—The graves did open, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, &c. Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. I should not have thought of that, though, if Mr. Seymour had not told us of it in his sermon : but was that prophesied of too ?

G.—Yes, read Isa. xxvi. 19.

P.—“Thy dead men shall live ; together with my dead body shall they rise, and the earth shall cast forth her dead.”

G.—One more question I must ask you, Phœbe. Can you recollect any type in the Old Testament that showed the time our Lord was to remain in the grave ?

P.—Our Lord tells us that Himself. “As Jonah was three days and three nights in the

whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." So Jonah was a type of Him, and what He represented was fulfilled exactly, for on the third day our Saviour rose again.

G.—As we read in the book of Jonah, that on the third day God spake unto the fish, and it cast out Jonah on the dry land. All the power of Pontius Pilate and the Jews could not keep our Lord in the tomb one moment longer than God had decreed before; and all the pains they took in blocking up the tomb's mouth, and sealing it, and guarding it with soldiers (Matt. xxvii. 63—66,) only served to make His triumph over them more glorious, and the fulfilment of the promises of God more certain.

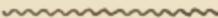
P.—It is wonderful that any body should have been so blind as not to have believed in Him.

G.—It was pride and wickedness that blinded those who would not believe. But, dear Phœbe, we believe on Him, and know that He came down to die for our sins, and rise again for our justification. We must try as much as we can to show our faith in Him, and our thankfulness for all His goodness to us. We must try every day to let our thoughts be with Him, where he now is, in heaven, and rise more and more from the grave of sin to the new life of holiness, that when we are called up out of the dust again at the last day, and He shall appear again to judge us, we may appear with Him in glory.





THE
FESTIVALS AND FASTS
OF
THE CHURCH.



A SERIES OF FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS

Between a Godmother and Child.

FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS.

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DIALOGUE XXIII.

Saint Mark's Day.

APRIL 25.



Phæbe.—GODMOTHER, I cannot find much about St. Mark in the Prayer-book; and I have not had time to look all through the New Testament. So I thought I would come to you and look at your great Bible, with the figures and the texts at the side.

Godmother.—Which are called marginal references.

P.—And by these I shall find out wherever St. Mark is named. Besides, you may be able to tell me of anything that is known about him from your old books.

G.—It seems, from what my books say, that very little is known for certain about him. It is doubted whether St. Mark ever saw our Lord while He was on earth. He was the companion of St. Peter in his travels; and it is said, that he wrote his Gospel for the use of the Christians at Rome, who wished to have those things set

down in writing which they had heard from St. Peter's mouth. St. Mark who had been so much with him knew all these things, and, it is thought, wrote as St. Peter told him; or else St. Peter afterwards saw what was written, and approved of it.

P.—And does any writer say where he lived afterwards, and what death he died?

G.—Some writers mention that he travelled about, converting people to the true faith, and that he was bishop of the great city of Alexandria in Egypt. There is a particular account of his martyrdom. It happened at Easter; at the time of which High Festival of the Church; the Heathens of the country were with great pomp worshipping an idol of theirs. They became enraged with St. Mark for keeping to the worship of his Lord, and broke in upon him, while he was engaged in the holy services of Easter. They bound his feet with cords, dragged him through the streets, and then thrust him into a prison. The next day these cruel persecutors drew him forth, and again dragged him through the streets, and over rough ground, till his flesh was torn from his bones, and he bled to death. But whether this is true we cannot be certain.

P.—Godmother, does it not make your flesh creep to hear of the shocking torments that martyrs went through? Somehow that seems an uncomfortable feeling to have on a Festival-day—a day of rejoicing I mean.

G.—It would be very painful to hear and read of such things happening to any body except martyrs,—and I do not know that I could bear to think much of it. But in reading of Christ's holy martyrs, I never feel this; I know they were supported in a very wonderful manner—as if their bodies really had no feeling of what they were suffering. It would be dreadful and painful indeed to hear of any poor creature being stoned to death in these days; but when we think of St. Stephen dying that cruel death, we can understand how the sight of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was then granted to him, would make him quite insensible to bodily suffering. Just as you, if you were looking at any pleasant sight, or hearing any story that amused you, might forget you were cold or hungry, or that you were standing, and that your legs ached.

P.—Yes, that has happened to me often enough.

G.—Now, get the large Bible, set it on the little table, and turn it over carefully. You know I do not trust every body to have it. I hope it will last long after I am gone, and if you live to be old, Phœbe, I like to think that it may be yours.

I believe the first mention of St. Mark's name is in Acts xii. 12, where it is said, that St. Peter came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, whose surname was Mark. In the 25th verse, he is named as the companion of

St. Paul and St. Barnabas. In the 13th chapter too he is named as being their minister, and in the 13th verse, as leaving them, and returning to Jerusalem. The next time he is named, is in the 15th chapter, where is the history of the contention between the two Apostles on St. Mark's account. In the Epistle to the Colossians, we find that he was the nephew of St. Barnabas. In 2 Tim. iv. 11, St. Paul desires St. Timothy to bring St. Mark to him, because he is profitable to him for the ministry. In the Epistle to Philemon he is mentioned; Marcus and Mark is the same name, the last being only the name turned into English. Now look out all the verses and read them over. (*Phæbe reads them.*)

G.—Now, take your Prayer-book. What is it that we pray for in the Collect?

P.—That Almighty God, who has instructed His holy Church, &c. What does it mean, god-mother, to be carried about with every blast of vain doctrine?

G.—To be unsettled in one's mind, sometimes following the teaching of one person, and then of another; never remaining firm in the true faith.

P.—That is the faith the Church teaches.

G.—Yes. You have seen how a leaf that has fallen from the tree is driven and tossed about by the wind, because it is not fastened to anything firm. Just so, people are restless and changing if they do not keep to the teaching of the holy Church, which, you know, is founded on a rock,

and which, having been instructed by St. Mark, and the other Evangelists, and by the Apostles in the Epistles, teaches us what we are to believe. Where are all the things that we are to believe collected together?

P.—In the Creeds.

G.—Therefore, as long as we believe all that is in the Creeds, we believe the heavenly doctrine, and are not in danger of being carried away by vain or false doctrine, especially if we never go after strange teachers, but always going to our Church, where God's appointed minister offers up prayers, that have been used by Catholic Christians from the earliest times, so that we are sure that they are acceptable to God. We should never, either, read books that are written by false teachers. But now read the Gospel.

P.—(*Reads.*) I do not see that it has anything to do with St. Mark.

G.—Perhaps you will see it presently. But it is time to set off for Church. Put my Bible away carefully with the cloth over it; and as we go along, I will tell you what I read last night out of a sermon on this Saint's-day; telling it to you will help me to remember it.

P.—I wonder whether it says anything about what puzzles me—in the 15th chapter of Acts, godmother, do you know what I mean?

G.—About the contention, and St. Mark's forsaking St. Paul and St. Barnabas? We ought to be very careful what we think and say about the faults of holy men, particularly of

those whose praise is in the Gospel. Still, as those faults are mentioned in Holy Scripture, it cannot be wrong to think of them with reverence, not making them an excuse for our own faults, but taking them as a warning. And on such matters, I would rather tell you what I have been reading out of a good book than my own thoughts about it.

P.—Yes, I understand that.

G.—The sermon began by saying all we know of St. Mark's history. That he was sister's son to Barnabas; was taken by him and St. Paul in their first journey, going first to Cyprus, the country of St. Barnabas; that when they were going to strange countries, where danger threatened, he forsook the Apostles and returned to Jerusalem; that after a time he was St. Peter's assistant at Rome, and wrote his Gospel there, under St. Peter's eye. We may, therefore, suppose that St. Peter brought him back to his duty; and that he proved himself a bold and steadfast servant of Christ afterwards, because he founded the Church of Alexandria, which was the strictest Church of that time.

P.—It is very pleasant to think that St. Mark recovered himself after a time.

G.—You remember that St. Paul afterwards desired to have him, because he was profitable for the ministry. Now it ought to be a great encouragement to have this example set before us.

If we have fallen from our duty through sloth or cowardice, what must we do?

P.—We must be ready to listen to those who reprove and warn us; I suppose to any kind teacher like St. Peter; and strive hard to make up for our past negligence.

G.—However faint-hearted we may be by nature, we know that God can and will strengthen us, as he strengthened St. Mark, and St. Peter too, after their fall. But we must not, when we are tempted to cowardice, encourage ourselves by the example of St. Mark. For if we do so, the opportunity to recover ourselves may never be given us. Demas forsook the Apostles, and we do not find that he ever returned to the right way again.

P.—All that must have been very necessary to think of in the persecuting times. How glad I am we are safe from that now. I should have been a coward then, I fear, godmother.

G.—The persecuting times are over, Phœbe, though we cannot tell when God may permit them to return. But are the times of temptation over?

P.—No, godmother, that can never be in this world, I suppose.

G.—Are there no temptations to cowardice in religion now? I think you yourself can recollect some. Have you never been laughed at by those who had been brought up less strictly than yourself?

P.—Yes, I have, godmother. When Mary Smith wanted me to go to Ellerton with her, and some other girls, on the last Saint's Day, I said I

was going to Church with you, and then she stared and laughed, and pretended to hide that she was laughing; and as they walked on I heard them laugh and say something about Methodists. Then I was vexed that I had said I was going to Church,—and angry that they called me Methodist.

G.—They meant that you pretended to be stricter than your neighbours—but that does not signify. Now perhaps if Mary and her companions had met you going with me to Church, you would have been so far a coward as heartily to wish they had not seen you.

P.—Yes, godmother, perhaps I might.

G.—And so if you were out at service, and in a good place, but one where you could not go to Church regularly, nor read your Bible—you might not have courage to give up the worldly advantages of your situation. But you can think of many things like these; when you are older you will observe how often people are tempted to religious cowardice.

P.—And after all we may have unquiet times, and be called on to suffer for our religion; you have often said that, godmother. But how are we to strengthen ourselves against bad times that may come?

G.—I suppose we ought not to indulge ourselves too much now. We ought to undergo little inconveniences for religion's sake; going to Church in bad and cold weather; giving up time to prayer and reading, even when it may seem to

put us out; giving ourselves trouble to serve other people. The seasons of fasting appointed by the Church ought to help us much in all this.

P.—Godmother, let us walk slowly across this field, I have still something to say. Will you explain to me about the Gospel,—why it is read to-day?

G.—I think, dear, you can explain that yourself, with a little thought. From whom did the holy Apostles get the grace which enabled them to become the lights of the world?

P.—From our Lord Himself.

G.—And you know that it is from our Lord that every Christian receives grace to enable him to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to remain a child of God unto his life's end. You have very often seen your father pruning the vine at the end of the house. What becomes of the branches that he cuts off, because he thinks them good for nothing?

P.—They die very soon. Father told me that they die because they no longer get nourishment from the stem, and so dry up and wither.

G.—And so the souls of Christians cannot live, unless they, day by day, receive grace from God to nourish them. This grace is given to them when they pray, when they go to God's house, and when they receive the Holy Sacraments. But those who neglect these means of grace will, at last, be cut off like useless branches to wither, and to be cast into the fire.

P.—Ah! St. Mark was not like one of those.

G.—No, surely; but we may be certain that it was for want of dependence on his Lord that he let himself give way to the temptation of cowardice. Unlike the natural branches, the spiritual branches of the Heavenly Vine may, through God's great mercy, be again united to their Stem after having been for a while separated; this we have seen was the case of St. Mark.





DIALOGUE XXIV.

St. Philip and St. James.

MAY 1.



Phæbe.—(Only half opening the door.)—
GODMOTHER, guess what I am bringing you.

Godmother.—I think I know without guessing; you cannot keep out that sweet smell, you must have got a large bunch of lilacs.

P.—(Coming in.) See if it is not large, and sweet, and beautiful. Oh, godmother, how pleasant of the lilacs to be out already! now I can trim your parlour with them against tomorrow. Last year and the year before, there was not a blossom of them out, and the first of May looked almost like winter. But now it is summer;—no, not summer either, for it is pleasanter than summer. The sun is not hot enough to burn one, and the air is so soft and sweet. No wonder that the birds should be singing from morning till night, when their homes in the hedges are so bright and green. Poor little things, they can't sing in the hot summer, when

every thing looks dried up and dusty. I wish it would always be Spring.

G.—Why, my dear child, it would be as wise if you wished always to remain a child.

P.—But, godmother, would not that too be a good thing? I could not help thinking that yesterday, for while we were all very busy and very happy putting flowers round the May-pole, —such a quantity of flowers as we had gathered! —Mary White said, Oh, look! there is Alice Gregory just getting over the stile yonder; let us run and tell her to come and help us. We were very glad to see Alice, she was always so merry and good-natured, and last year she was with us on May-day, and her garlands were the prettiest. So Mary and I ran off to fetch her, and ask her why she did not come sooner; but when we got up to her we saw she had a great heavy basket to carry, and she told us, very sadly, that there would be no more happy May-days for her,—she was gone to service now, and would probably be in service all her life. Poor Alice, she looked very grave, and no wonder; she was obliged to go back to her mistress, and Mary and I began to think that perhaps our turn for service would come soon, and then we wished we could always be children, and not be obliged to leave off play. You know, godmother, even you tell me that I shall not be able, very likely, to go to Church so often, or have so much time to read or talk to you when I am grown up, and have either to go out to service, or more work to do at home.

G.—My dear Phœbe, it is God's will that Spring should pass into Summer, and children become men and women; therefore we may be sure that it is all for the best. Indeed, with a little thought we can even see the good that there is in the hot and tiring summer, and in that busy middle time of life when we lose the joys of childhood, and may not yet have the rest of old age.

P.—Do tell me about that, dear godmother, that I may learn to love summer better, and not be afraid of becoming a woman.

G.—Yes; this will be a good day to talk about it, for the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for to-morrow's Festival will help me to make you understand what I mean. But tell me first, Phœbe, how do you manage in the summer, when you come home from school for your dinner? After you come out of Erleigh Wood, there is near half a mile of broiling dusty road before you get to the shade of the trees along the park paling. I suppose that sometimes you sit down on the stile at the end of the wood, and go no further?

P.—Oh! dear godmother, what can make you think that? Why, of course, I go home; I am always in a hurry to do that, so I don't much mind that hot road, though, to be sure, it is hot sometimes; but I never should be so foolish as to stop in the wood, pleasant as it is, that would never bring me home. And then when I come again into the shade of those beau-

tiful beeches, and can walk on the grass, I get cool and comfortable again, so that even before I come in I have had time enough to forget all the heat and dust.

G.—Then, dear, you see that it is not wise to wish to remain always a child, for that would not bring us to the end of our journey through life, to our heavenly home.

P.—That is true, I never thought of that. But that half mile is soon over, and people may have many years to live after they are grown up.

G.—Yes, but those are very short, nothing at all compared to eternity; indeed they seem very short to those who have lived through them. Remember that Jacob, though he had lived one hundred and thirty years, said the days of the life of his pilgrimage were few as well as evil. Besides, have you never, when the sun seemed hottest and most oppressive, seen a cloud come over it, and give you shade better than even trees could give?

P.—Yes, often, and very pleasant it is.

G.—So does the Almighty often give little intervals of rest and refreshment to His servants. There is one soft cloud that comes to cool us very often.

P.—Do you mean Sunday?

G.—Yes; that day of rest which comes to all, young, middle-aged, and old, rich and poor, sick and healthy. And there is another yet greater refreshment, one that we do not know while we are yet in the time of our childhood;

I mean that heavenly Food of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ; which is enough, and more than enough, to make us go on our way rejoicing. In the strength of the food that the Angel brought him, Elijah went forty days and forty nights in the Wilderness, till he reached Horeb, the Mount of God ; and in the strength of the more than Angels' food which is given us in the Holy Eucharist, we can travel safely through the wilderness of this world till we reach Heaven, the holy Hill of God.

P.—I shall understand that better by and by, godmother, but I am sure you are right in all you say. I suppose that the shade of the trees I get into as I come near home is like the quiet of old age,—such a happy old age as grandmother's, who goes to Church every day, and seems to have nothing more to wish for in this world.

G.—Just so. Altogether you see we may safely trust ourselves to Him, who is “a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, *a shadow from the heat.*” There are other thoughts which should make us ready to go through the heat. Our Blessed Lord Himself passed through it. He bore the burden and heat of the day as none of us can be called on to bear it. For our sakes He took upon Him our weaknesses and our sufferings. He was hungry after the temptation of the Devil ; He was weary and thirsty when He sat on Jacob's well, and talked

to the woman of Samaria. He bore all this, and much more, for us; and shall we who for our sins deserve every evil that can be put upon us, repine and complain at our light trials? Again, when you said just now that you wished it would be always Spring, did you think of the fruits of the earth, which would never ripen but for the scorching suns of Summer?

P.—No, I forgot them certainly; for I have often heard father say that the fruit is good for nothing which has not had plenty of hot sunshine on it.

G.—Neither can Christians, generally speaking, bring any fruits of holiness to perfection, unless they are tried and proved by the difficulties and temptations they meet with in the world. Now take my Prayer-book, and let us see what is said on the subject,—first in the Collect. Here we are taught to pray that we may know perfectly that our Lord is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, according to His own blessed words; and knowing this, that we may walk in the way which leadeth to eternal life. But the way in which our Lord bids us walk, following “the blessed steps of His most holy life,” is the way of the Cross; that is, a way where we must often meet pain, sorrow, fear, and many other things very disagreeable to our natural feelings. Lest this should frighten us, we are told in the Epistle that we are to “count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations, that the trying of our faith may work patience, for if patience has

her perfect work we shall be made perfect and entire, wanting nothing." So that we may well be called blessed, if we endure temptation and trial here for a while, looking to the recompense of reward (as we know our Lord did) till "we receive the crown of life, which He hath promised to them that love Him." The Gospel, again, gives the same lesson of patience, and the same reasons for it. "Let not your hearts be troubled." We believe in God the Father who created us, let us believe in God the Son who so loved us as to die for us, and is even now gone to prepare a place for us, in one of the many mansions of His Father. We cannot miss our way thither if we only mark His holy footsteps, and follow on them closely. He will hold us up in the path, that our footsteps slip not, as He held up St. Peter when he came to Him on the sea. We have but to ask for grace and help from Him in Whose Name none can ever ask and be sent away empty. This most gracious assurance is repeated twice, as if to make us doubly sure of it.

P.—Certainly all that ought to cure one of being fearful of any thing but of doing wrong. But, godmother, before I go home, please tell me a little about St. Philip and St. James.

G.—I will tell you what I have read of them out of that book of good Mr. Nelson's. St. Philip was born at Bethsaida, a town near the sea of Tiberias. The people of this town were generally despised as rude and ignorant; but it

was from among them that our Lord chose three of His Apostles;—which were the other two?

P.—St. Peter and St. Andrew.

G.—It appears that St. Philip was the first of the disciples who followed our Lord.

P.—I always thought that St. Andrew was the first called, and then St. Peter, and then St. James and St. John.

G.—Yes, so they were, but it seems that they returned after that call to their trade of fishermen, and did not leave all to follow our Lord till about a year after. Like St. Andrew, St. Philip, after he had learnt to know our Lord, could not rest till he had brought one whom he loved to the same blessed knowledge; he went to Nathanael, a man of fortune among the Jews, told him he had found Him of whom Moses and the Prophets did write, and led his friend to the Saviour. He is three other times mentioned by name in St. John's Gospel;—once when to try his faith our Lord asked him where they should get bread for the multitudes that followed Him. (John vi. 5.) Then, when the Gentile converts asked him to take them to see the Lord, of whom they had heard such great things. (John xii. 21.) Lastly, it was with him that our Lord held that discourse concerning Himself, wherein He gently rebukes him for having been so long time with Him, yet having not known Him. (John xiv. 8, 9.) After the Lord's Ascension, St. Philip went into Upper Asia, where he took great pains in planting the gospel,

and by his preaching and miracles converted many heathen. Towards the end of his life he came to Hierapolis, a large town of Phrygia, a city like Athens, wholly given to idolatry, especially to the worship of a serpent or dragon of a prodigious size. St. Philip made them sensible how shocking it was to worship idols; but the chief people of the town put him into prison, and caused him to be severely whipped and scourged, and then led to execution.

St. James, called *the Less*, or *the Just*, is called by St. Paul (Gal. i. 19,) the brother of our Lord.

P.—This St. James, then, is not brother of St. John?

G.—No, his Feast is kept on the 25th of July.

P.—I remember that when I read of the brethren of our Lord, who did not believe in Him, you told me that they were supposed to have been either His cousins, or the sons of Joseph by a former wife. Was St. James one of these?

P.—Yes. He, however, *did* believe in our Lord, and serve Him faithfully. St. Paul, when he relates what he had received concerning the death and resurrection of our Lord, mentions His appearing to St. James apart from the other apostles. After our Lord's Ascension, he was chosen Bishop of Jerusalem. He was of a meek and humble temper; very temperate and self-denying, making prayer his constant business and delight. He governed the Church with

wisdom, and showed great charity to his enemies, by praying for them at the hour of his death.

P.—Do you know how St. James suffered martyrdom?

G.—It was the hatred of the Jews which brought about his death. The Scribes and Pharisees began by accusing him of transgressing the law, and of blasphemy against God. When they had him in their power, they endeavoured to persuade him to deny his Lord, and to tell the people that Jesus was not the Christ. They took him up to the top of the temple, and set him on a pinnacle of it; then they asked him, “Tell us, O just man, what are we to believe concerning Jesus Christ who was crucified;” (hoping that through fear he would renounce his Master;) but he answered with a loud voice, “Why do ye inquire of Jesus, the Son of man? He sits in Heaven on the right hand of the Majesty on High, and will come again in the clouds of Heaven.” Upon which the people glorified the blessed Jesus, and proclaimed, “Hosannah to the Son of David.”

P.—And what did the wicked Scribes and Pharisees do to St. James?

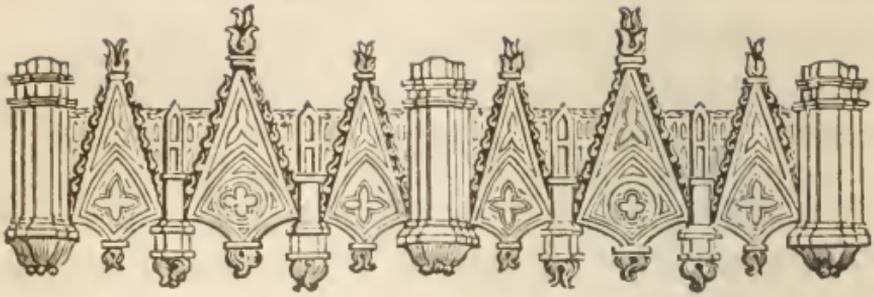
G.—They threw him down from the place where he was standing; he was not quite killed by the fall, but had strength enough to get upon his knees and pray for them that thus cruelly used him; and while he was praying for them, they threw stones at him, and at last killed him. He is said to have been ninety-six years old when he died.

P.—Well, dear godmother, both these saints had a long and painful journey through this world; they had but very few resting-places, and very little shade; but all that is over now, and I should think they have never had cause to be sorry for all their sufferings and dangers, or to wish that they had been fewer.

G.—No, certainly. When people have just got through any great danger, and have reached a place of safety, they are more inclined to rejoice in the greatness of the past danger than to wish it had been less. You do not enjoy those shady trees and soft turf after the hot high-way, half as much on a cool day, as on one when the sun has been scorching.

P.—That is very true. I begin to see how troubles and trials may be good things after all.





DIALOGUE XXV.

Ascension Day or Holy Thursday.

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*Phæbe.* — GODMOTHER, next Thursday is a Festival, is it not?

*Godmother.* — Yes, a very great Festival; and you know why it is kept, for Mr. Seymour told us in his sermon this morning.

*P.* — He said it was kept, because on a Thursday, forty days after the Resurrection, our Lord ascended into Heaven. Only, godmother, I was thinking that it must have been a very sorrowful day to the Apostles, and that made me wonder why it was kept as a joyful day to us. How very, very sad they must have felt when our Lord went up out of their sight, and they knew they should see Him no more in this world.

*G.* — I should think, my dear child, that after they had seen their blessed Lord risen from the dead, there was nothing that could make them

*very* sad again. They probably felt pain at the moment that our Lord left them; but then while they were yet gazing up into Heaven, two angels were sent to give them the promise that He would come again in like manner as He left them. And then, when they returned to their home, where they had often, during the forty days since the Resurrection, seen and listened to their Lord, how they must have thought over all His gracious words! How, especially when inclined to feel like orphans, they must have thought of His saying that it was expedient for them that He should go away; to say nothing of how they should rejoice because He had returned to the glory which He had with the Father before the world began. Their love for Him must by this time have been too deep for them to be sorry that He was again seated at the right hand of God the Father. Then, too, they had to think of the promise of the Comforter who was to be sent, and that great blessing to come upon them, for which they were to wait at Jerusalem. They did not exactly know what this was to be; but they knew that it must be great beyond any thing they could imagine, as it was to make their Saviour's going away a gain to them.

*P.*—Yes, they must have thought of all those things. I see now that the Apostles *had* more cause to be glad than sorry. I dare say they did not forget either that one of the reasons for our Lord leaving them was, that He might prepare a place for them in Heaven. I should think

they must have felt frightened lest they should do any thing wrong, and so lose this great good.

*G.*—They knew, of course, that there was need for constant prayer and watchfulness; but then they knew also, that it was the will of the Almighty that they should be saved. That as He had given His only Son to die for them, so He would give them all things that would be needful for them. But if you like now, we will read over together the Services for Holy Thursday. I expect to be busy this week, and perhaps I shall have no time for talking to you again before the Festival. You will try to remember what I explain to you?

*P.*—Yes, that I will.

*G.*—Look out the Psalms first.

*P.*—I know the 8th Psalm very well; but what has it to do with our Lord's Ascension?

*G.*—Take the Bible, and find the 2d chapter of Hebrews, and read from the 6th to the 9th verse.

*P.*—(*Reads.*) I had never thought that the Son of man in this Psalm meant our Lord. I understand now why it is read the day on which He ascended into Heaven, for He was crowned then with glory and honour. The 15th Psalm shows who are those who get to Heaven, does it not? I dare say the Apostles were very fond of saying it after our Lord had gone up from them.

*G.*—But it concerns us and every Christian as much as it concerned the Apostles. The same rules must be observed by all people in all times. The next Psalm, the 21st, begins

with rejoicing in the victory and triumph of our blessed Lord, and ends by foretelling the evil that will befall all His enemies, who are to be destroyed and consumed, and rooted out, and put to flight; while the servants of God sing and praise His power,—His power, which is shown equally in the salvation of the righteous, and in the destruction of the wicked. Now take the Bible, and look for the Lessons.

*P.*—The first for the morning service is Deut. x.

*G.*—Yes. It is appointed to be read, because, as you know, Moses was a type of our Lord, and his going up into the Mount Sinai, and interceding there for the children of Israel, a figure of our Lord's Ascension into Heaven, "where He ever liveth to make intercession for us." This second going up of Moses into the mount, was after the great sin of Aaron and all the people in making the golden calf. It was for Aaron that Moses prayed most earnestly, as his sin was the greatest, since he had been set apart as holy to God, and the high-priest of the Israelites. A great part of this chapter of Deuteronomy is full of warnings to the people of Israel, to walk according to all the laws and statutes of the Lord, and to remember what great things He had done for them. *We* must not forget that He has done still greater things for us. The second lesson at Matins is the 24th chapter of St. Luke, from the 44th verse; it gives the account of some of our Lord's instructions

to the disciples, how He opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures, and so be fit to preach His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

We will read the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, and keep the evening Psalms and Lessons for Thursday afternoon. In the Collect we pray that our hearts and minds may be fixed on Heaven and heavenly things; not setting our hearts on any thing of this world, but every day laying up treasure in Heaven, where it will be safely kept, and restored to us a hundred-fold in the great day of account.

*P.*—I think, godmother, that I do not quite understand what is meant by laying up treasure in Heaven. I suppose that when rich people give to the poor, they are laying up treasure in Heaven, because our Lord has said what is given to the poor He looks upon as given to Himself, and He is in Heaven;—but how do poor people lay up treasure?

*G.*—My dear child, our Heavenly Father receives even our good thoughts, our tears of repentance; He marks every earnest prayer, every act of self-denial, every effort to conquer what is sinful in us, every endeavour to do what is good—none of these are lost, and they make our store in Heaven. They are very poor and miserable in themselves, but they are accepted for the sake of our Saviour, who offers them, and purifies them in His most precious blood. Now look again at the Collect. We know that

we have been made inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven; and this alone should make us live as those who are only pilgrims here on their way to a better, that is, a heavenly home; whither our Lord, as on this day, returned to prepare a place for us. He is there, and there too are all who since the Ascension have departed this life in His faith and fear, that innumerable company of just men made perfect. But as we read in the Epistle, the Apostles were not long allowed to remain gazing up into Heaven.

*P.*—No, for all the looking in the world would not have helped them to follow our Lord.

*G.*—Not to follow Him up into heaven at that moment,—by looking in that manner; though it was right and needful that they should in a way gaze up into Heaven if they would follow Him hereafter. I mean that they had to fix their thoughts on Heaven, and on their Lord who was ascended thither. But the angels who were sent to comfort the Apostles in their loss, must have cheered them greatly by the promise that their Lord would come again, even in the like manner that he had left them. And when they returned to their home, they felt that their present duty was to follow their blessed Master in long-suffering, and patience, and courage; going about like Him doing good to their fellow-creatures. They knew that they were to labour diligently to prepare themselves, by God's help, for rest upon His Holy Hill by keeping their hands clean and their hearts pure. They had

to preach the Gospel to every creature; but while doing this, they had to keep under their own bodies, and to bring them into subjection, as St. Paul says (Cor. ix. 27,) lest that, by any means, after having preached to others, they themselves should be cast-aways.

*P.*—It must often have been very hard work, I should think; but, then, godmother, the Apostles had more power than Christians have now. They could work miracles, and speak with strange tongues.

*G.*—Yes, but those great powers which were given them, the signs and wonders that were to follow such as believed, were not enough to make the Apostles safe, or to excuse them from watching over themselves, and striving to become holier every day. I hope you remember our Lord's words: "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." The Holy Apostles and early Christians never forgot them, and therefore they remained faithful unto the death of martyrdom; working righteousness in themselves by the help of God's Spirit, as they worked wonders before all the people by the same Spirit; and when they felt weary and faint, they strengthened themselves by the recollection of our Lord interceding for them in Heaven.

*P.*—He interceded for them, too, when He was on earth.

*G.*—Yes, but it appears to be God's will that the most powerful intercession should be made when the Intercessor is out of sight of those for whom He is praying. Moses went up into Mount Sinai far away from the children of Israel to intercede for them.—There is another type of our Lord's Ascension and Intercession. "As every year the Jewish high priest, after the solemn sacrifice for the people on the great day of Atonement, went into the Holy of Holies with the blood of the victim, and sprinkled it upon the Mercy-seat; so Christ has entered into Heaven itself, to present, (as it were,) before the Throne that sacred Body which was the instrument of His passion, (that is, the Body by which the Son of God suffered death for us)—His pierced hands, and wounded side,—in token, or sign, of the Atonement which He has made for the sins of the world." The high priest, you see, went alone into the Holy of Holies, and offered up his prayers unseen by any of the people.

*P.*—And our Lord, since he ascended into Heaven, has remained unseen by people on earth.

*G.*—But though He is unseen, He sees each one of us, even to the lowest and meanest; and though higher than the highest archangel, with thousand thousands of angels ministering to Him, He bows down His ear to listen to every sigh of the sorrowful and penitent, and makes us all His peculiar care, watching over us, and

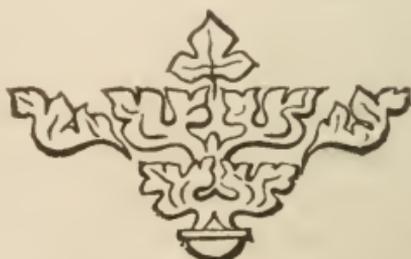
guarding us in all dangers ghostly and bodily. He knows all our wants even before we know them ourselves, and He is always more ready to hear than we to ask, giving us more than either we desire or deserve.

*P.*—I wish all these things would always stay in my head; it is such a sad pity when one forgets them.

*G.*—I hope in time you will learn how to remember them always. We are told by our Lord Himself, that it is one of the offices of the Holy Spirit to bring all things that our Lord has taught to the remembrance of His disciples. He will do this with Christians now as He did in the early times of the Church; only we must learn to call for His help by diligent prayer.

*P.*—Yes, I know what is said about that in the Catechism.

*G.*—Now, dear, I must not keep you any longer; think over what I have said to you, and come to me on Thursday.



DIALOGUE XXVI.

Ascension Day,

CONTINUED.



*Phæbe.*—GODMOTHER, I think it must be time to go to Church. It is quite hot now, and I know you will like to walk very slow.

*Godmother.*—And if we walk very slow, I suppose you think that we can talk of the evening's Psalms and Lessons. You have looked them out and read them already, have you not?

*P.*—Yes, twice over; so that I know what they are about. I knew before that the 24th Psalm was read on Ascension Day. It seems as if it must have been written on purpose, it suits the day so exactly. Part of it is very like the 15th Psalm.

*G.*—The 47th Psalm was composed by King David, to be sung on that joyful day when the Ark was brought to Zion after having been so long in the house of Obed-Edom; but it suits still better our Festival; because now has come to pass what is prophesied in the last verse, that

the Princes of the people, that is, the Gentiles, are joined unto the people of the God of Abraham, and have acknowledged Him to be the Father Everlasting, Who doth defend and protect the whole earth. The last Psalm appointed for the day is the 108th. A song of praise and thanksgiving for that mercy of God, greater than the Heavens, shown when He gave the promise of a Saviour to Adam and Eve after their sin; and for that truth which reacheth unto the clouds, shown when this promise was fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah.

*P.*—It was through God that the Apostles did all their great acts of working miracles.

*G.*—Yes; and through Him all Christians do great acts when they overcome and tread down their enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil; and continue His faithful soldiers and servants unto their life's end.

*P.*—Those are the words the clergyman says when he has made a cross on the forehead of the baby he is christening; I remember them quite well.

*G.*—No wonder, as you hear them almost every Sunday. But now tell me what the Lessons are.

*P.*—The first gives an account of the Prophet Elijah being carried up into Heaven; I suppose because it is something like our Lord's Ascension.

*G.*—It is a type or figure of the Ascension. Elijah, earlier in his life, had fasted forty days,

as our Lord did in the wilderness. Do you notice that Elijah was allowed to leave to his disciple Elisha even a greater power of working miracles than he had had himself? And our Lord said to His Apostles "He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go to My Father." Can you tell me of any other man besides Elijah who was taken up into Heaven without dying?

*P.*—Enoch: you told me so when I asked you what was the meaning of that verse, "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him."

*G.*—Yes, I told you so, and I told you where I had learnt it.

*P.*—From St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews; where it is said, "By faith Enoch was translated," which you said meant was removed from this world.

*G.*—Very well. Tell me now what is the second Lesson?

*P.*—The 4th chapter of Ephesians to verse 17.

*G.*—There is a good deal that perhaps I may be able to explain to you in it. Suppose we sit down for a few minutes on this soft moss in the shade;—we shall have plenty of time, for the Church bell is not yet going. Open your Bible, that we may go through this Lesson. It begins by St. Paul, "a prisoner of the Lord," (a prisoner for the sake of our Lord) at Rome, be-

seeing the people of Ephesus to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called.

*P.*—What is vocation?

*G.*—*Calling.* You know it is often said such a one's calling is to be a farmer, another's to be a shopkeeper, another a doctor. *Every* Christian is called to be one of "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people," as we read in the second evening Lesson for Good Friday. And we must walk worthy of our vocation; we must behave as befits such a high calling. St. Paul goes on to say *how* we are to do this; "with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

*P.*—Unity means *oneness*, you told me.

*G.*—Yes. See, Phœbe, how closely Christians are united or made one;—how they are all members of *one* Body, that is, the Church of Christ; and enlightened by *one* Spirit, and have *one* same hope of inheritance in Heaven, and *one* same faith in their one Lord, and *one* Baptism of water and of the Holy Ghost, which they have received through the unspeakable mercy of the one God and Father of all.

*P.*—If we could always remember that, we could not help loving all our fellow-Christians.

*G.*—We should love them naturally; as brothers and sisters love each other, without thinking about it;—we should think of them as parts of ourselves. You will see that more clearly in

the chapter which will be read on Whit-Monday at the evening Service.

*P.*—I will look out for it this evening.

*G.*—Lest we should fear not to be able to walk worthy of our Christian calling, St. Paul reminds us that we have grace given us by the gift of Christ, Who ascended up on high (that is, into Heaven) that He might receive gifts for men.

*P.*—What sort of gifts?

*G.*—*Every* good gift and every perfect gift cometh from Him, but He gives different gifts to different people, to each that which each needs. To the early Christians He gave gifts that enabled them to become, some Apostles, some Prophets, some Pastors and teachers, and these had to perfect saints, (that is, to teach people how to become holy,) to do the work of the Ministry, to edify (or build up) the Body of Christ, the Holy Church. So that all Christians might come to have one faith, and such a knowledge of the Son of God as would make them strive to be perfect, even as their Lord Christ is perfect. No longer like weak and foolish children, having no firmness and steadiness in themselves, but tossed about,—as you see leaves tossed by the wind in Autumn,—always ready to run after every new teacher who tries to unsettle their faith, and to lead them into error. Unlike such foolish persons, Christians are to speak the truth in love, so that they may grow up to Christ, Who is their Head, in all things. From Him the whole Body of the Church receives that grace

and strength which enables every member to do its own duty, and the Body to be increased and built firm in love,—love to its Divine Head, and through Him, and for His sake, to each of its members.

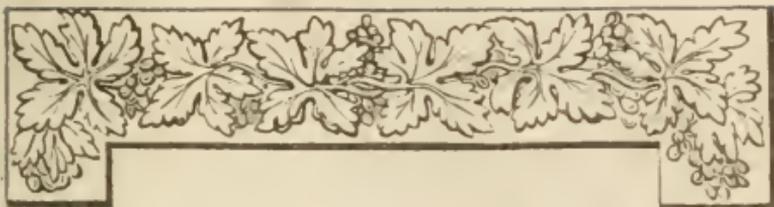
*P.*—Then, as all Christians are members of the same Body, they ought all to be ready and willing to love and help one another; otherwise they would be very bad, disagreeable members.

*G.*—Of course. But here comes good old Mrs. Bennet on her way to Church; it must be time for us to go on.

*P.*—Do you think, godmother, that it would be any use to her to lean on me? she looks tired.

*G.*—Run and ask if you may help her.





DIALOGUE XXVII.

Whit-Sunday.



*Phæbe.*—You are going to stand godmother to Mrs. Wilkins's baby, are you not, dear godmother?

*Godmother.*—Yes, dear.

*P.*—I thought so; well, I have something to tell you about its Christening, something which Mr. Seymour told us this morning in school.

*G.*—I shall like very much to hear it, my dear child.

*P.*—He came up to Sally Wilkins, who was standing by me, and he said, "Sally, your father has just been with me to ask me to christen your little brother to-morrow; and I told him I should be very glad to have a christening on such a great Festival as to-morrow will be." And then he asked us what festival it was, and made those who could not answer look for it in their Prayer-books.

*G.*—I hope there were but few who could not answer.

*P.*—Very few, only the quite little ones.—Then Mr. Seymour went on to say that in the first times of the church, when our Lord had not been long gone up again into heaven, and when Christians were much holier than they are now,—it was the custom to baptize great-numbers of people on Whit-Sunday, grown-up people who had been heathens, and that it was called Whit or White Sunday, because those who came to be baptized wore white garments, to represent the cleanness of their souls when they had been washed from their sins by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and to signify the purity and innocence they were to live in afterwards. Mr. Seymour was going on to say a great deal more, I think, about Whit-Sunday, but he was obliged to leave the School in a hurry, for poor Mary Evans came in to beg he would be so good as to go to her father, who was taken much worse, and was asking for his Clergyman. Mr. Seymour said as he went away that he would come in again on Monday, and finish what he had to say; but, godmother, it is very unlucky, I shall not be there, for father is going to take me early that morning to grandmother's, to spend the week with her.

*G.*—I am very sorry, dear, that you will lose what Mr. Seymour is going to teach; I cannot make up this loss to you; but if you like I will repeat what I have read about this high Festival,

and what I remember to have been taught by clergymen in different places where I have been living.

*P.*—I am sure, godmother, you are very kind; I don't think there are many such good godmothers as you are.

*G.*—Oh! yes, Phæbe, I hope there are many better; but we can't talk about that now. You can tell me what happened on Whit-Sunday?

*P.*—Christ sent down the Holy Spirit upon his Apostles.

*G.*—Yes; and the Church has set apart the same day in every year that we may return thanks to God for this great and precious benefit, and think how we may best use it. How was this day called in the Jewish Church?

*P.*—The day of Pentecost.

*G.*—Many of the Christian Festivals answer to the Jewish, which were types and figures of our Lord's blessings. Our Christmas, when our Lord came to *tabernacle* or *dwell* among men, answers to the Feast of Tabernacles. Our Easter—

*P.*—Oh; I know, it answers to the Jewish Passover; you told me about that at Easter.

*G.*—The ancient Pentecost was kept fifty days after the Passover, in memory of the Law of Moses given in thunder, fire, and thick darkness from Mount Sinai; and it was on this Festival that it pleased our blessed Lord to send the Holy Spirit to write the law on the hearts of his people. It is getting rather late now, so I

think we had better only just go through the proper Psalms for to-morrow, and keep the rest till we walk together to Mrs. Wilkins, for me to take the baby to Church in the afternoon.

*P.*—Yes, godmother; it will be a nice long walk.

*G.*—Look out and read the 48th Psalm.

*P.*—(*After reading.*) This Psalm seems to be all about Jerusalem and Sion.

*G.*—Jerusalem was the type or figure of the Catholic Church; and in the Holy Scriptures the Church is very often spoken of as Jerusalem, or the city of God, for “there the Lord promised His blessing, and life for evermore.” Does the 3d verse remind you of one in another Psalm that you have learnt?

*P.*—In the 2d Psalm there is “the kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed.”

*G.*—Yes; you know how St. Peter showed that the prophecy had come true. The kings, the great men, did marvel at the things done by our Lord and by His Apostles. Pilate “marvelled greatly;” the Centurion “marvelled;” the rulers, and elders, and scribes marvelled at the boldness of Peter and John. The Apostles were to wait at Jerusalem for the promise from on high, for the Lord’s “loving-kindness in the midst of His Temple;” “they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication;” “they were daily with one accord in the Temple.”

*P.*—Like Simeon and Anna, when they were waiting for the coming of our Lord.

*G.*—The 10th, 11th, and 12th verses all allude to the blessings and privileges of the Church, and tell her children to learn to know and mark them well, that they may tell them that come after. The truths that the Apostles learnt by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost were given on by them to those that came after; and so they have been passed from one appointed teacher to another, till they came to the Ministers who are now living, from whom we have received them. To all who have received these truths, they have given the blessed assurance that “this God is their God for ever and ever, and will be their Guide unto death.”

*P.*—Our guide means one who shows us the right way, and leads us on?

*G.*—Yes, without this Almighty Guide we should never find the narrow way which leads to Heaven, nor keep in it if we could find it.

*P.*—The next Psalm is that long one which you told me King David wrote when the ark was carried from the house of Obed-Edom to Mount Sion.

*G.*—It tells of the blessings which the presence of the Ark of God would bring to Mount Sion, and it prophesies of the greater blessings that the Presence of the Holy Spirit of God would bring to the Christian Church. You will see what some of these blessings are as you read through the Psalm.

*P.*—(*After reading the three first verses*)

The enemies of God will be scattered ; that must be one blessing.

*G.*—The power of the Devil was destroyed by our Lord, and those that are his, the ungodly could not stand before the presence of God.

*P.*—And then the righteous were very glad and rejoiced ; we hear a great deal about the Disciples rejoicing in the Acts of the Apostles. (*Phæbe reads on to verse 6th.*) I remember what you told me on Ascension Day, about men being of one mind, of living in unity. The next verse speaks of the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, I suppose.

*G.*—I will read you the end of the 19th chapter of Exodus, which gives the description of it. (*She reads.*)

*P.*—Oh ! godmother, that is very awful ; no wonder the people were so much frightened !

*G.*—You see that the coming down of the Most High in all His terrors was very different from the coming down of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles ; this was not with lightnings and thunderings, but like a soft and gentle rain that falls upon the earth in summer, trickling down with a pleasant sound, refreshing and softening the parched ground, and making it bring forth good fruit. Now you may read on to the 18th verse.

*P.*—(*Reads.*) The company of the preachers means the Apostles, who were sent to preach the word of the Lord ?

*G.*—Yes, and those whom the Apostles or-

dained, the Bishops, Priests, and Deacons of the Church. God's hill, you see, means the Holy Church, where the Lord will abide for ever, according to His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Finish reading the Psalm, Phæbe. (*Phæbe reads.*) We kept our Lord's going up on high on Ascension-Day. The gifts He received for men are what St. Paul calls the manifold gifts of the Spirit. You can tell me when the Lord brought His people from the depths of the sea?

*P.*—When they came through the Red sea.

*G.*—But what was that a type of? think a moment.

*P.*—Of the waters of Baptism. That is said in the first prayer in the Christening service.

*G.*—God sent forth strength for His people when He poured the Holy Spirit upon them, making them strong to confess and obey Him. The last four verses are of thanksgiving, praise and confidence. Strength and power are among the gifts of God; blessed be God who grants them to his weak and sinful servants!

The 104th Psalm is one of thanksgiving for all the wonders of the Creation. It sets forth the glory and wisdom, power and goodness of the Almighty.

*P.*—You gave me that Psalm to learn by heart some time ago; I hope I have not forgotten it. I think I understand it pretty well.

*G.*—You see, dear, that from the 1st to the 9th verse, King David counts up the wondrous works

of God in the creation of light, of the heavens, of clouds and winds, of His bright Angels; of the earth, and of the waters under the earth. Then from the 10th to the 18th he shows how graciously God has provided for the wants of man and beast. Rivers for the beasts of the field to drink thereof; trees for the fowls of the air to dwell in; grass for the cattle to eat; green herb, wine, oil and bread for the use of man; habitations for wild goats and conies. From the 19th to the 26th he speaks of the order of the sun and moon, how the darkness and light come each in their turn, dividing the time for the rest and labour of man.—Then again the Psalmist praises God for the riches of the earth and of the sea, both peopled with His creatures, who all depend upon Him for their being; for if He but hides His face, they are troubled—if He takes away their breath, they die. No wonder that the holy king should end by declaring that he will praise God as long as he has his being, and that his joy shall be in the Lord.

*P.*—Can you tell me, godmother, why this Psalm is read on Whit-Sunday?

*G.*—Of course there are other reasons, but I only know that every song of praise seems fitted for the Day. And I suppose that is one of the reasons why the 145th Psalm was chosen, which is so very full of joy and thankfulness.

You must wait for any thing more that I can tell you till to-morrow. Good night now, my child; run home very fast; your father will think you are lost.

DIALOGUE XXVIII.

**Whit=Sunday,**

CONTINUED.



*P.*—It is very nice that babies should now always be dressed in white for their Christening, just as the old Christians used to be.

*G.*—Yes, it is pleasant, for white is the emblem of light, of purity, and of joy.—I was reading yesterday evening after you left me the words which were spoken in early times to those who came to be baptized, when their white garments were given to them. I think I can repeat them to you.

*P.*—Oh! do, dear godmother.

*G.*—“Take these white garments for a token of the innocency which, by God’s grace, is given you in the holy mystery of baptism, and for a sign whereby ye are admonished, so long as ye live, to give yourselves to innocence of living: And may ye bring them forth without spot before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be

partakers of the rewards of holiness and purity in the life everlasting. Amen.”

*P.*—Godmother, is it not said in the Book of Revelations that the Saints in Heaven wear white robes?

*G.*—Yes, dear, (Rev. iii. 4, vi. 11, vii. 13, xix. 8.) But the robes there spoken of are not the white robes of innocency that are given in holy Baptism, but robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb. They would not be “without spot” but for the washing of His most precious Blood.

You heard, Phœbe, in the Gospel this morning how our Lord comforted His Apostles before His death with the promise that He would not leave them comfortless, but would send them another Comforter, who should never leave the Church, but abide in it for ever—even the Spirit of Truth, that is, the Holy Ghost, who was to supply His place till the end of the world. After His Resurrection, and before He ascended up to Heaven, our Lord again made the same promise to His Apostles, and commanded them to wait in Jerusalem till He should perform it.

*P.*—The Holy Ghost, I know, was to do many great things for the Apostles, but I am afraid I do not remember them all.

*G.*—He was to comfort their hearts for the absence of their Lord, (John xiv. 18.) and to bring our Saviour’s words to their remembrance, and to teach them to understand His will, (xiv. 26.) and to give them power and authority to perform

the duties of the office to which He had called them, (Luke xxiv. 49, and Acts i. 8.)

*P.*—What do you mean by the duties of the office to which our Lord had called the Apostles?

*G.*—You know that our Lord chose twelve poor fishermen to be the first Apostles and Bishops of His Church, and gave them the command to go and make disciples of all nations, and baptize them in His Holy Church; but they were ignorant and weak, and without help from above, they could not obey this command, so Christ sent down the Holy Spirit to enlighten them, and strengthen them, that they might do all things needful for the Church, which was, as it were, left to their charge.

*P.*—I understand now, godmother.

*G.*—We have heard in what was read to-day for the Epistle, how this promised blessing came. When suddenly the Holy Ghost came down with the sound as of a mighty wind, and sat upon each of the Apostles in the form of a cloven tongue of fire, they found themselves possessed of all the power they required to spread the Gospel throughout all lands. How did they show the wonderful gifts they had received?

*P.*—They were able at once to speak many languages that they had never known before, and surprised the foreigners who were assembled with them, by speaking to them in their different tongues. No wonder that so many were converted.

*G.*—How many?

*P.*—Three thousand.

*G.*—Yes; no less than three thousand people were at once converted to believe in our Lord, and to be baptized, when they heard St Peter preach to them, and explain that what had happened, had been promised by Jesus Christ, and foretold very long before, by the Prophet Joel. (Joel ii. 28, 29.)

Now I must tell you something more of the three thousand people who became Christians as on this Day. It was the custom at the Feast of Pentecost for the Jews to offer up to God the first-fruits of their harvest, and these three thousand were the first-fruits of the great spiritual harvest of souls, which the Apostles were sent forth to reap, and gather into the Church of Christ. The first Lesson for this evening's service is the 11th chap. of Isaiah, which contains a prophecy of the conversion of the Jews and Gentiles. We are told in it how the Heathen nations shall seek to the "rest" or Church, which the Root, or Son, of Jesse, (that is, Christ) shall set up. You know that God has promised (Psalm ii. 8,) to give Christ the Heathen for His inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for His possession. This promise began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

*P.*—The Apostles had a great many other gifts, had they not, besides speaking with new tongues?

*G.*—Yes, certainly. The Holy Ghost gave many other wonderful and miraculous powers, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, casting

out devils, and the like; and at the same time inspired their minds with all wisdom and knowledge to teach His Church.

*P.*—Did not the Holy Ghost come upon any body besides the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost?

*G.*—No; we are not told of any one. But the Apostles had power to convey the same gifts to others by laying on of hands, as we read in the 19th of Acts (which is the 2d Evening Lesson.)

*P.*—But are these wonderful powers ever given now by laying on of the Bishops' hands, for they are in the place of Apostles now?

*G.*—The gifts we have been speaking of were only to last a little while, to help the Apostles to plant the Church in the world; so they have ceased long ago. They are called the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit.

*P.*—But did not our Saviour promise His Holy Spirit to be with the Church always?

*G.*—I will tell you *how* He is with her always, and what He does for every one of her members; and this, my dear Phœbe, is the chief thing we should think about to-day.

*P.*—To be sure it concerns us most to know what the Holy Spirit is come to do for us, and the blessings He will give to us.

*G.*—We are certain that since our Lord promised that His Holy Spirit should be with the Church always, even to the end, He is really with her now, although we cannot see His Power in such miraculous gifts as He gave to the first Christians; and you may be sure that we all want

His gracious help, or our Lord would not have sent Him.

You know, dear child, that Almighty God promises to save us for Jesus Christ's sake, if we obey His holy laws, and serve Him by leading holy lives, leaving off and hating all sins and wickedness; but, as it is said in the Catechism, we are not able to do these things of ourselves, we cannot walk in God's commandments or serve Him, without His special grace,—the grace of the Holy Spirit, who is sent to help us all to love and serve God. He is sent to sanctify us.

*P.*—Yes, godmother, “Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.”

*G.*—Unless we are holy we cannot see God, as St. Paul teaches us; (Heb. xii. 14.) and so the Holy Ghost is given us to make us holy by cleansing our hearts from sin and wickedness, and enabling us to overcome all the bad passions and tempers of our nature. We are by nature very blind and ignorant; and so the Holy Spirit is given to teach and enlighten us, that we may know the will of God, and see how to do it. And, besides, we are in a world full of many sorrows and afflictions; so the Holy Ghost is given to comfort us, and help us to bear them, and to teach us how we may be the better for them. In a word, the Holy Ghost continues in the Church to bless all her true members, and to give them all that is necessary to enable them to live in this world so that they may be saved in the world to come.

*P.*—I think I now understand the difference

between the gifts the Holy Ghost gave to the Apostles and to some of the first Christians, and those He promises to all who are baptized. But I suppose He sanctified and strengthened the Apostles, as well as gave them those miraculous powers?

*G.*—Yes, certainly. He gave them the ordinary graces and helps to sanctify and teach them, as well as the extraordinary ones. The extraordinary died with them, were not continued; but the ordinary will be always given to all who seek them.

*P.*—And how are we to seek them, godmother?

*G.*—That is indeed a most important question, Phœbe; I can only answer by repeating what I have heard from clergymen. The Holy Ghost was sent down from Christ, the Head of the Church, upon the Church, which is His body. We must seek the Spirit, therefore, in the Church. He was sent down first upon the Apostles, to be by them conveyed to the members of the Church, of which they were appointed Overseers or Bishops; we must seek Him therefore in the Ministry of Bishops, and of those to whom they give authority. We shall find the Holy Ghost in the Prayers, and Sacraments, and Ministrations of the Church; for Jesus Christ has promised to be with His servants always by His Holy Spirit, and when we are baptized by them, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) when we are confirmed by them, (Acts xix. 6.) when we are blessed by them, (Luke x. 5, 6; 2 Chron. xxx. 27.) when we receive the Holy Sa-

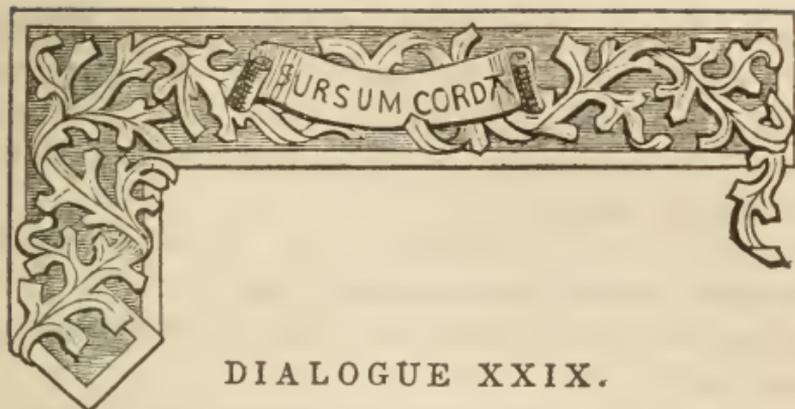
crament of the Lord's Supper at their hands, and when we pray with them in the public service of the Church,—in all these the Holy Ghost is especially present to sanctify and bless us; and if we thus seek for Him with obedient and humble minds, we shall surely receive His help. If we withdraw ourselves from the services of the Church, we go out of the way of the Spirit, as the Holy Ghost was sent to abide for ever *in the Church*. But we must also be very regular and diligent in all our duties, and in our private prayers as well as public; and be very careful not in any way to grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

*P.*—It is indeed very sad to think of grieving Him Who does so much for us.

*G.*—And we, who have been made members of Christ and children of God, are bound to lead innocent and holy lives, in great purity and obedience.

*P.*—Yes, we are bound to do this by the promises that we make when we are christened. I hope I shall never forget that, godmother; I am sure to think about it when I see the baby christened to-day.

*G.*—When you give thanks with the Priest for the child, you must give thanks also for your own regeneration, and pray for grace to keep the vows you made. You know that if we break our vows, and drive away the Holy Spirit Who has sealed us, we shall be cast off by Jesus Christ at the Last Day.



DIALOGUE XXIX.

Trinity Sunday.



*Godmother.*—I HARDLY expected to see you to-day, Phœbe; your father must have fetched you early this morning.

*Phæbe.*—It was Ben who brought me home; he had some business with a farmer who lives near grandmother's, so he went to him yesterday, and then came on to us; so we had a very happy evening, we two, and grandmother; and I had a nice early ride in the cart this morning. I should have been sorry not to come to you to be taught about to-morrow. I know that it will be the last great Festival for a long time. I think Christmas will be the next, and that is a great way off; I wish we had some more before then, it seems as if there was nothing to look forward to now.

*G.*—But we have plenty to do in the interval,

between Trinity Sunday and Christmas. Those great Festivals that we have now nearly gone through, do you think, Phœbe, that we are allowed to celebrate them, and then to think no more about them?

*P.*—Oh no, godmother, we are to try to remember them continually, and to be very thankful for all the blessings they are appointed to remind us of.

*G.*—And how are we to show our thankfulness for them?

*P.*—By keeping God's commandments more strictly.

*G.*—Well then, do you not see that this quiet time which we shall enter upon after to-morrow, is given us for the very purpose that we may show by our daily conduct that the great blessings which have been set before us by the holy Church, have not been lost upon us? We still shall have our weekly festival of Sunday, and occasional Saints' days, to keep holy, quite enough to help us along our way. And every day that we live, we shall have duties to do for God's sake; we shall receive both spiritual and temporal blessings from Him; we shall have His holy word to read, and His glorious works to look upon. No day can be dull to those who are striving to spend it as if living in God's presence, and who take every thing, be it little or great, as from God's hand.

*P.*—I know that, godmother, from the Hymn for the Morning, which you gave me to learn:

“ Oh ! could we learn that sacrifice,  
 What lights would all around us rise !  
 How would our hearts with wisdom talk  
 Along life’s dullest, dreariest walk !”

*G.*—Now think, Phœbe, how we must *do* those things that we have learnt from the Collects for the Festivals. Almighty God put into our minds good desires,\* when, on those great Days our hearts burnt within us at the glorious truths which were made known to us ; and His continual help is ready to bring the same to good effect for our Blessed Lord’s sake, if we will but ask for it by diligent prayer. We have been taught that our Lord is ascended into Heaven,† and every day we may ascend thither in heart and mind, till we dwell with Him continually,—till, as St. Paul says, our conversation is in Heaven. And since this is too wonderful and excellent for us to attain to by ourselves, we have learnt that God the Holy Ghost will give us a right judgment in all things,‡ to enable us evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort, and this not at times only, but every day and every hour.

*P.*—I remember those Collects. To be sure they do give us enough to think of and to do. I see, godmother, that it will be a pleasant work to try to make ourselves better against the Festivals come round again. We shall then take more pleasure in them.

*G.*—No doubt we shall, but much more than

\* Collect for Easter Day. † Collect for Ascension day.

‡ Collect for Whit Sunday.

that, we shall understand them better, and be more fit to receive a blessing from them. Tomorrow's Festival is kept in honour of the mystery of the glorious and ever-blessed Trinity, Three Persons, and One God. God the Father, Who created us and all the world; God the Son, Who redeemed us and all mankind; and God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth us, and all the elect people of God. Repeat the Collect, dear. (*Phæbe repeats.*) You see, that here we say that by God's grace we make confession of a true *faith*, when we acknowledge the glory of the Trinity, and worship the Unity; and then we pray to be kept stedfast in this *faith*.

*P.*—Yes, because that is what we learn in the Creed, and if we did not believe that, we should be heretics, which would be very shocking.

*G.*—Yes; but those who confess the faith of the Catholic Church, may humbly trust that God will defend them from adversities, as we pray in this Collect, and chiefly from the great adversities of heresy and false doctrine. We have no power of our own to keep us from these evils; but God, with Whom all things are possible, will give us power and keep us safe. In the Services for this Festival, the Church brings before us the high and heavenly mystery which she bids us humbly to believe and adore, and she shows us in what manner we are to fulfil this sacred duty. Tell me what are the proper first Lessons, Phæbe.

*P.*—They are both from the Book of Genesis, the 1st and the 18th chapters. There are two

proper second Lessons also : I suppose because it is such a great Festival.

*G.*—In the first Morning Lesson, we read of God the Father Almighty creating heaven and earth, and all that therein is, and of His Spirit moving upon the face of the waters ; we learn from the 1st chapter of St. John, that by the Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, all things were made ; we know therefore that the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity took part in the creation of the world. This holy truth has been more fully made known to Christians than it was to the Jews. The Bible, of course, always speaks of the Great God as the same : He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But the mystery of the Holy Trinity was not revealed to man before the coming of Christ. We acknowledge this our faith every time we say “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.” And in the Collect you have just said, we thank God for the knowledge of it, and for the grace given us to confess it. What is the 18th chapter of Genesis about ?

*P.*—It tells us of the Angels coming as strangers to Abraham’s tent, and of Isaac being promised to him.

*G.*—How did Abraham receive this promise ?

*P.*—He believed at once what the Lord said.

*G.*—Yes, as St. Paul says, he “staggered not through unbelief, but was strong in faith.” The

holy Scriptures, in many places, set before us as a pattern, Abraham, the father of the faithful,—telling us, that they which be of the faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham; and therefore the Church, who has bid us pray in the Collect to be kept stedfast in the right faith, has appointed this chapter to be read, in which we see that when the Lord appeared to Abraham, though he knew not at first that it was the Lord, yet he was ready at once to receive the word of the Lord; he did not speak, but he worshipped the Lord in silence, as was fitting for a man in the presence of his Lord and Maker.

*P.*—Sarah laughed within herself; she should have done like Abraham, and not laughed.

*G.*—In reproving Sarah, the Lord said, “Is any thing too hard for the Lord?” And this is a reproof to all those who do as Sarah did, instead of humbly receiving the mysteries which God has mercifully revealed for their good. Abraham’s faith was rewarded by a further revelation of God’s will. “And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” So our Lord has taught us, that if any man will do God’s will, he shall know of the doctrine,—he will be kept stedfast in the faith. In the 3d chapter of St. Matthew, which is taken for the second Morning Lesson, we hear of the manifestation of the Trinity at the Baptism of our Lord. God the Son was baptized, God the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a Dove upon Him, and the voice of God the Father was heard

from heaven. This Baptism of our Lord was an event full of mystery. He has commanded, as you know, that all Christians should be baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity. In the 5th chapter of the 1st of John, the Evening second Lesson, the sacred doctrine of the Trinity in Unity is further spoken of. We are told that "there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost,—and these Three are One." We are told that faithful Christians are born of God;—that their faith is "that victory which overcometh the world," which keeps them from the wicked wiles of the devil, (verse 18.) The great goodness of God in calling us to a right faith, should lead us to pray to Him with confidence, as we read in the 14th verse, "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us." Now it is according to His will that we remain "stedfast in the true faith," and therefore we know that we shall have this petition that we desire of Him in the Collect.

*P.*—Yes, godmother, I understand all that.

*G.*—The portion of the Scripture taken for the Epistle, is the 4th chapter of the book of Revelations.

*P.*—I have read it, godmother; it speaks of that song which is always being sung in heaven. It is the same that the Prophet Isaiah was once allowed to hear.

*G.*—Yes, and we find that it was granted to the beloved disciple also to hear it. We too join

in that song of praise when we say the *Te Deum*; we with earthly voices and with our weak human hearts try to adore the Most Holy;—we can only *try*. But we can understand how in heaven the spirits of the just are continually worshipping Him who liveth for ever and ever, who is worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power, for He has created all things, and for His pleasure they are and were created.

We read in the Gospel for the day, that when Nicodemus asked concerning the mystery that our Lord was revealing to him, “How can these things be?” our Lord answered, “We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness.” So it was in our Saviour’s days, and so too often it is now. God makes Himself known to us, and we are called to believe in Him, and to love Him. If we do not, we are more to blame than Nicodemus, for we have had more blessings than he had.

*P.*—I suppose he ought to have received our Lord’s words, as Abraham received the promise of Isaac’s birth.

*G.*—Yes, Abraham never asked *how* he could have a son in his old age; he believed and did not ask questions. We do not know how the Holy Spirit dwells in Christians,—giving them holy and good thoughts,—no more than we know whence the wind comes, or whither it goes.

*P.*—But we see the wind blowing the trees about.

*G.*—No, Phœbe, we see the *trees* moving, and

the wind; but when they move, we know that it is the wind that does it. And so in Christians, when we see them bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit,—when we see them loving and joyful, peaceful, long-suffering, good, faithful, meek, and temperate,—then we know of a certainty that the Spirit of God dwells in those persons. But I was going to tell you, Phœbe, that although we cannot understand mysteries, yet if we take them rightly they will have a great effect upon our daily conduct.

*P.*—Will you tell me how that is, god-mother?

*G.*—We will speak first of the great mystery that we are to commemorate to-morrow. We are to believe that the three Divine Persons are One only ever-glorious God; we are to acknowledge that God the Father is our Maker, God the Son, our Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost, our Sanctifier.

*P.*—Yes, I say that in the Catechism.

*G.*—We do not need to understand more to make us feel that we must love God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength. In the general thanksgiving, we bless God for our creation;—but since Adam's sin, creation alone would have been the greatest evil, if our blessed Lord had not redeemed us, and therefore we say, “but above all for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.” He is now and evermore our Saviour;—He has bought us

with His own blood, that we may be His, both soul and body, for ever; Christ having died for all, we must not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him.

*P.*—And how are we to live unto the Lord?

*G.*—In the same sort of way as when a dutiful child is said to live to or for his parents;—by looking to Him habitually and continually, and making it the business of our life to please Him. But how can we do this? for we have frail bodies, and we live in an evil world, and too many of us have got into bad habits very contrary to His will.

*P.*—You told me how, last Sunday, god-mother, by the help of the Holy Spirit.

*G.*—Yes, “the Holy Ghost, who is very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, proceeding from the Father and the Son,” is ever present with Christians, strengthening them in the absence of their Redeemer, to walk by faith in Him, so as to please God. He is ready with His helping hand to lift our thoughts above earthly things, and fix them on the Son of God, Who ought to be all in all to us. He is ready to bless our prayers, our good and humble thoughts and purposes, by making us gradually purer and purer, and more and more fit to be received into heaven.\*

If we would keep the true faith in the ever-blessed Trinity, we must struggle to overcome all that is evil in our nature.

\* See Plain Sermons. Sermon 48th.

*P.*—What do you mean by that, godmother?

*G.*—I think I can make you understand what I mean. An undutiful son, who disobeys or neglects his earthly father, will not bear the idea of a Heavenly Father, to whom he *must* submit, and Whose Eye is ever watching all his perverse and wicked ways. A brother who quarrels with his brothers, and envies them all the love he sees their father give them, will feel no joy in the thought of Him who is at God's right hand, yet calls all Christians His brethren; Who is the well-beloved Son of His Father, and our only hope.—And those who in their ill-temper and sullenness make all about them uncomfortable, who turn away from the kindness and affection of their friends, how can such acknowledge the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, the Spirit of meekness and gentleness, Who is grieved by every angry word or cross look?

I will give you some verses about this to learn by heart; they will help you to remember what I have been saying.

“ The heart that scorn'd a Father's care,  
How can it rise in filial prayer,  
How an all-seeing Guardian bear?

Or how shall envious brethren own  
A Brother on th' eternal throne,  
Their Father's joy, their hope alone?

How shall thy Spirit's gracious wile  
The sullen brow of gloom beguile,  
That frowns on sweet affection's smile?



DIALOGUE XXX.

**Feast of St. Barnabas.**

JUNE 11.



*Phæbe.*—ONLY look, dear godmother, at the nosegay I have brought you for the Feast-day. I do think it is very nice when Saints'-days come in summer, for then I can make your room look so very smart and pretty. You can have flowers on your chimney-piece and on each of your tables, and a nosegay to wear besides; so you will be even smarter than when I brought you lilacs on St. Philip and St. James's Day. These flowers mostly come from the hedges; they are quite full now of roses and honeysuckles, and they smell so sweet! How very much we ought to thank God for giving us flowers!

*Godmother.*—Yes, indeed, Phæbe, and for the trees which shade us, and the air which blows

so softly upon us, and for the sun which makes the flowers open, and the fruits ripen; nor, you know, must we thank Him less for the rain that falls to freshen the earth, and the storms which clear the air; they are not always pleasant while they last, but they do great good; they are something like sickness, which teaches people to be patient; or like sorrows and troubles, which make people think of God, and pray to Him, and trust in Him.

But now, Phœbe, you are wanting to hear something about St. Barnabas, before it is time for us to go to Church.

St. Barnabas, as we read in Acts iv. 36, was born at an island called Cyprus, and was of the tribe of Levi. His parents sent him to Jerusalem, to be brought up by Gamaliel, and it is probable that he then became the friend of St. Paul. His first name was Joses, or Joseph; but the Apostles surnamed him *Barnabas*, which signifies the Son of Consolation. This honourable name was given to him, it appears, when he sold his whole estate for the relief of the poor Christians, upon account of the *consolation* they received thereby; and throughout his life he proved how well he deserved to be called the Son of Consolation. Can you tell me of some of his acts of kindness, Phœbe; you have often read of them in the Acts?

*P.*—I think that it was very good of him when he took St. Paul, and brought him to the other Apostles, who were afraid to receive him,

lest he should only be pretending to be a Christian. St. Barnabas told them what St. Paul had already done at Damascus. (Acts ix. 26, 27.) Afterwards he went to Antioch, to teach the people there who had become Christians; and he was very glad when he saw how many were converted. Then he went to fetch St. Paul, that he might help him to teach at Antioch.

*G.*—Yes; and this showed he did not care who had the credit of converting the Gentiles, so that they were converted, but would as soon see St. Paul's success as his own. He did not seek his own glory, but the glory of God.

*P.*—I think the next thing that he did was to go with St. Paul to take some money and provisions to the poor people in Judea, where there was a great famine.

*G.*—Not long afterwards, St. Barnabas and St. Paul were set apart by the other Apostles to go and convert the Gentiles; this was done with fasting and prayer, and laying on of hands. They first went to preach the Gospel in Cyprus; and then sailed to Perga in Pamphylia. There it was that St. Mark left them. They themselves went on to various places, and were altogether three years going about from city to city; they then returned to Antioch, from whence they had set out, and there "they abode long time with the disciples." They left it to go to Jerusalem, when they heard that the Jewish converts in that city were disturbing the faith of the Gentile converts, by teaching them that it was

necessary to observe all the ceremonial law of Moses.

*P.*—What is meant by the ceremonial law, godmother?

*G.*—All those rites and ceremonies which Moses commanded the Jews to observe, they were types or figures of the blessings that our Lord brought to his people, and were done away with when the real blessings were given. St. Barnabas, as well as St. Paul, testified to the miracles and wonders which God had wrought amongst the Gentiles by their hand—miracles no less great than those wrought amongst the Jews; and both agreed that the Gentiles were not to be troubled, but only exhorted to observe a few plain rules which were given to them in the letter which the Apostles, elders, and brethren wrote, and sent by St. Paul and St. Barnabas to the Church which was in Antioch. But it seems, from what St. Paul says in Galat. ii. 13, that St. Barnabas fell into the error which he had condemned at Jerusalem, at least that he withdrew himself from intimacy with the Gentile converts, for fear of displeasing the Jews; so that St. Paul was forced to “withstand him,” as well as St. Peter, whose example led St. Barnabas wrong. The two Apostles again tarried some time in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord.

*P.*—I know what comes next—their sad quarrel about St. Mark. Perhaps St. Paul having been already displeased with St. Barnabas, was

the more ready to be angry with him for being too indulgent towards St. Mark.

*G.*—Very possibly. St. Barnabas and St. Mark went to Cyprus, while St. Paul went to the Churches in Syria;—so that altogether, perhaps, the Church gained by their contention, as the Gospel was preached in more places than if they had continued together; and St. Mark himself was brought by St. Paul's severity to a sense of his former fault, and to true repentance.

*P.*—What became of St. Barnabas afterwards; do you know? I think there is nothing more said of him in the Acts.

*G.*—No; Mr. Nelson says, that it is generally believed that he spent the rest of his life in his own island of Cyprus, converting his countrymen; and there in a town called Salamis, he suffered martyrdom. After suffering great tortures, he was stoned by the Jews; and was buried by St. Mark in a cave not far from the city. His body is said to have been discovered more than 400 years afterwards, with a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, written with his own hand, lying on his breast. We know nothing more of this Son of Consolation.

*P.*—What a beautiful name that is! I think, godmother, our Mr. Seymour might be called a son of consolation; he always is doing good, and when people are sick or in trouble, he goes to comfort them day after day. Do you remember all the long time that uncle Richard was so ill, Mr. Seymour went to him every day, no

matter what the weather was, to read to him and pray with him. Uncle used to be so anxious for his coming, and to bless him after he was gone away; and then, you know, when poor aunt was nearly heart-broken after uncle's death, Mr. Seymour came very often to comfort her, and nothing did comfort her but his visits.

*G.*—Yes, dear; Mr. Seymour is very good. And indeed all clergymen are, as it were, sons of consolation by their office.

*P.*—And can no other people be like St. Barnabas?

*G.*—Yes, others in their degree. Women in particular, should all aim at being daughters of consolation. It is, one may say, almost the business of our lives;—that to which we have been peculiarly fitted by the Almighty, Who has given to us lower voices, and lighter steps, and gentler manners than to men, in order to fit us for our duty of consoling, and nursing, and soothing all who are in sorrow, or sickness, or trouble. Of course, men may be very kind, and affectionate, and compassionate; but, generally speaking, their very duties prevent their giving much time to tending the sick, or consoling the sorrowful. They have to labour for their families, and must employ themselves actively; while women fulfil these gentler duties at home.

*P.*—I remember that you once explained to me how it is not necessary to have money, to be useful to our fellow-creatures. But do you

think that we can be nearly as useful as those who are rich?

*G.*—That does not concern us in the least to know. Let us do what we can; we may be very sure that we shall never be blamed for not having done more. I will tell you of a person of humble birth, and without a shilling but what she gained by her own hard labour, who was yet a blessing to all her neighbours.

*P.*—Did you know her, godmother? where did she live? near here?

*G.*—No, many miles off; at Heckley, the village where I lived when I was a girl; I knew her then well, and loved her dearly.

*P.*—And how was she so useful, and what sort of good did she do?

*G.*—In the first place, she did good by her own excellent example. She was a widow, and her children were settled at a distance from her. They often wished her to come and live with them, but she did not like the thought of leaving the village where she had been born and baptized, and where her husband was buried; so she lived alone, and supported herself by taking in needle-work. She was such a beautiful workwoman that the ladies in the neighbourhood were very glad to employ her; so that she was never in actual want, though often it went very hard with her in the winter.

*P.*—I hope her children helped her.

*G.*—Yes, as much as they could, but they had families of their own; and she never com-

plained, or looked otherwise than happy and contented, so that no one had an idea how much she was distressed at times. She managed to get through her difficulties by patience and perseverance. She worked on, day after day, summer and winter; only on Saturday afternoons she used to try to get through her work early, that she might take her book and read quietly for an hour or two, or else go and read to one of her old neighbours. so that, whenever she could, she made the latter part of Saturday a sort of preparation for Sunday, her happy day; and it did one's heart good to see her smiling, thankful countenance when she spoke of that holy day of rest,—especially of those Sundays on which she was to receive the blessed Sacrament; and many a thoughtless, careless person was brought by her example to become first a regular Church-goer, and then a devout communicant.

*P.*—And did she do any other good?

*G.*—In cases of illness she was always ready to offer her assistance, and would sit up night after night with the sick, never thinking of her own ease and convenience, or making excuses that her health would not stand it, or that she could not do without sleep. In a cottage close to Mrs. Young's, lived a woman who was any thing but respectable; she took a great dislike to Mrs. Young, and used to annoy her in every possible way, using bad language whenever she passed by her, and encouraging the children to throw

stones and dirt at her. This went on for some time, and I never saw her so sorrowful or hurt as she was by this cruel conduct. At length this woman was taken suddenly ill in the night, and her husband got frightened and went to call up Mrs. Young; she came instantly, and watched the woman through her illness, going in at every spare moment to attend to her.

*P.*—I hope the woman was grateful.

*G.*—Yes; she was, and after her recovery she was always civil and respectful to Mrs. Young. But it was not to get her gratitude that Mrs. Young nursed her; whatever she did for her fellow-creatures she did for the sake of Him Who has said that kindness shown to our neighbours He takes as done to Himself. She asked for no reward here.

*P.*—I suppose, as she was so good, she was very happy in spite of living alone, and having to work so hard.

*G.*—You could not look at her and doubt it; she had the sweetest and most peaceful smile of almost any person I ever knew. Her thoughts were generally turned to the world to come—to its rest and peace.

*P.*—I should like very much to become as good as Mrs. Young.

*G.*—Yes; but you must remember that it was only by degrees that she became the holy, charitable woman that she was. You must begin by taking every opportunity of obliging and doing service to those you live with; giving up

your own pleasure to theirs, using kind and gentle words to them, and keeping from every sharp or quick word you may be tempted to speak. This is often difficult, and requires much care and watchfulness, but it is the only way in which you can fit yourself to be useful when you are grown up.

*P.*—I remember your telling me something of the same kind on St. John's Day. I have often thought of it since; though I have not *done* it as I should. It is difficult, as you say.

*G.*—Yes; but at every effort that you make it becomes easier. And if you do not learn to bear the very little trials of your patience that you now meet with, how will you ever become like Mrs. Young? You do not yet know how difficult it is to nurse sick people properly,—to bear with their fretfulness and impatience, and to attend to all their wants. It was not *pleasant* to Mrs. Young, when she was tired, and about to go to her clean bed in her airy little room, to have to go to spend the night watching a sick person in a close hot room; but she had got the habit of not thinking of herself, so it never came into her mind to prefer her own comfort to the chance of doing good.

*P.*—She was too good, of course, to be proud of what she did; but I think I should be proud if I did as much for my neighbours.

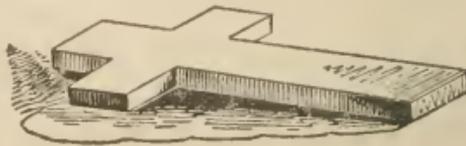
*G.*—I hope not, Phœbe, and I think not. You are much more likely to be proud now of any of your little efforts to be good; but if you

become good like Mrs. Young, you will, like her, feel nothing but gratitude to God for the opportunities of being useful; you will feel it an honour to be allowed to serve Him, in serving His sick and suffering creatures. Mrs. Young felt only surprise if any body praised her. I have heard her answer a lady who could not help expressing her admiration, "Dear, Ma'am, I am sure I am only doing my duty; the poor soul would do the same for me if we were to change places." A proud self-satisfied feeling she never had.

*P.*—How very much she must have been missed when she died!

*G.*—Yes; all who knew her missed greatly her pleasant looks and cheerful voice. But the good that she had done did not die with her; those who had been brought by her example and advice to lead a new life, still loved to think and to talk of her; then they in their turn did good to others, and there is no saying how far this good may go.

*P.*—Well, I will try to be the better for what you have told me to-day, dear godmother.





DIALOGUE XXXI.

**Feast of St. John the Baptist.**

JUNE 24.



*Godmother.*—How is little Sam to-day, Phæbe?

*Phæbe.*—A great deal better, thank you, godmother. He has been sitting up for near an hour this afternoon, and aunt feels quite easy about him.

*G.*—Well, it is a comfort to hear that; he will get on quickly now, I hope. Come to me in good time for Church to-morrow, dear.

*P.*—Stop a moment, dear godmother, I have something to say to you; I was just coming to you when you passed by. You know it is market-day at Ellerton to-morrow, and aunt wants very much to go to it; but Sam won't bear to be without his mother or me close to his bed, so when she goes out I must stay with him. Aunt is very kind, for she has not told me to stay at home to-morrow, instead of going to Church with you; still I know it is an inconve-

nience, a very great one, I heard her say, to her not to go to market. Now ought I to stay with Sam, or go to Church?

*G.*—I think, my child, you should stay with Sam. I am very sorry it should happen so, and I wish markets were not held on Feast-days, but still neither you nor I can help it.

*P.*—Well, then, godmother, I will go and tell aunt that I will take care of Sam all to-morrow morning.

*G.*—Yes, dear. And ask her if she will spare you to me now, to go home and drink tea with me, that we may talk a little about St. John Baptist.

*P.*—Oh, thank you, godmother.



*G.*—Tell me, Phœbe, what are we told about the parents of St. John Baptist?

*P.*—That they walked in all the ordinances and commandments, blameless.

*G.*—Yes; I wish you to attend to this, because it shows that, even in those evil days, when the most part of the Jews had greatly corrupted themselves, there were still sufficient means of grace in their church to enable those who sincerely wished to please God, to walk in His laws which He set before them. Can you tell me of any holy Jews living then?

*P.*—Oh yes! there was first the blessed Virgin, and then Joseph, and those two good old people, Simeon and Anna.

*G.*—And others besides, whose names we are not told. These all were waiting for the Lord in the midst of His temple.

*P.*—Why did not Zacharias believe the angel, at once, godmother?

*G.*—I suppose because his words seemed so very strange and improbable.

*P.*—Zacharias should have believed the Angel, though, who must have known better than he could what was God's will.

*G.*—I remember once hearing of a little girl who laughed very much when her godmother put some seed-corn in water, and told her it would grow there quicker than if sown in the ground. Yet the godmother was more likely to know about it than the little girl.

*P.*—Dear godmother, I was very much ashamed of myself afterwards, and it is a long time ago it happened.

*G.*—Yes, I know; I only reminded you of it to show that if you would not believe such a trifling thing as that, because you had never seen it, you need not think good Zacharias so very inexcusable for not believing at once the great wonder that the Angel told him. Of course he was to blame, or he would not have been struck dumb. I hope you remember the example given us by the blessed Virgin of the manner in which we are to receive mysteries beyond our understanding. The angel Gabriel's message to her was much more wonderful than that to Zacharias,—more wonderful than anything that could possibly be fancied;

yet Mary knew that with God all things are possible, and she made, as you know, that meek and beautiful answer, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." But Zacharias's fault was not wilful, so his punishment only lasted for a short time; and when his mouth was opened and he spake, it was to prophesy of our Lord's coming;—the first prophesy that had been made since the prophet Malachi about 400 years before.

*P.*—I have read over the two chapters of Malachi which are to be read to-morrow.

*G.*—Then I hope you saw that St. John Baptist was the Messenger sent to prepare the way before his Lord. His Father knew this by the Holy Ghost which filled him. Thirty years after, St. John said the same thing of himself: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness;" repeating the words of the prophet Isaiah that are read in Scripture for the Epistle.

*P.*—Just let me find the place in the Prayer-book.

*G.*—The people of the Lord were comforted when St. John came, though his teaching was humbling to the proud; who, perhaps, till he preached repentance to all, rich as well as poor, had never thought of flesh being as grass,—and its goodliness, its pomps and vanities and pleasures, being but as the flowers that wither in a day. But then St. John, when he foretold the coming of the Messiah, gave to those who were waiting for Him the blessed certainty, that "the

word of the Lord endureth for ever ;” and that His promises, though they tarry, will come at last. Their God was born into the world to redeem those whom He had created. “Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him ; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd : He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”—Isa. xl. 10, 11.

*P.*—How beautiful that is !

*G.*—Yes ; it could be spoken of none but the good Shepherd,—He who laid down His life for the sheep, and is now, as then, ready to protect and guide with inexpressible goodness and mercy all those who belong to His fold, the Church.

*P.*—Godmother, I suppose that Zacharias and Elizabeth, and the other holy Jews, were those who Malachi says feared the Lord, and spoke often one to another, and thought upon His Name.

*G.*—No doubt : and we see how the Lord discerned “between the righteous and the wicked,” when He gave to these His servants the knowledge and the sight of the long-looked-for Messiah. To them first of all was given knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins.

*P.*—What does Day-Spring mean ?

*G.*—The rising of the sun. The Day-Spring from on high, is the Sun of righteousness which arose with healing on his wings.

P.—I remember that our Lord was a light to lighten the Gentiles.

G.—Those poor heathens who sat in darkness and the shadow of death.

P.—Did St. John begin to teach when he was very young?

G.—No; I believe he was about thirty when, as it is expressed in the gospel, the day came of his showing unto Israel. I think I told you before, that thirty was the age appointed by the Law for Priests and Teachers to begin their duties; you know our Lord did not begin His Ministry before that age.

P.—Then how many years St. John lived in the Wilderness and did nothing!

G.—You forget, Phœbe, that he was doing what was most necessary—he was obeying God's will, and thereby preparing himself to *teach* it when the proper time came. His strict and holy life, must have prepared people to think of him as one to be respected and listened to with attention, when at last he came to call them to repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

P.—What is meant in this place by the Kingdom of Heaven?

G.—The coming of our Lord,—the coming of those new and unspeakable blessings which He brought with Him to a sinful world, and which we learn from the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament. St. John preached only repentance and the forsaking of sin, as what was

necessary to fit and prepare men to receive the blessings of Christianity.

*P.*—Godmother, you have often told me that it is only since our Lord came that we are made members of Christ, and children of God, inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven; how came it then that St. John baptized?

*G.*—Look out the 1st chapter of St. Mark, verse 8th, and you will see the great difference between St. John's baptism, and that which our Lord appointed.

*P.*—(*Reads.*) That means, I suppose, that the Holy Spirit was not given to those whom St. John baptized.

*G.*—Yes: the baptism of John was only an *outward sign* of washing; it only served to remind people that their souls were defiled by sin, and needed to be made clean; there was not the *inward grace* of the soul's being really and truly washed, and made pure in the sight of God, by water and the Holy Ghost.

*P.*—I see now how very different the two baptisms were.

*G.*—There was, however, one thing in which they were alike. What have you learnt in the Catechism is required of those who come to be baptized?

*P.*—“Repentance, whereby they forsake sin, and Faith whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.”

*G.*—Well, repentance and faith were required by St. John of those who came to him.

*P.*—I know he said a great deal about repentance and forsaking sin; but when did he say anything about faith?

*G.*—Look in the 1st chapter of St. John. What did the Baptist say to his disciples when he saw our Lord coming?

*P.*—“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” I see now that St. John the Baptist taught his disciples to believe, or have faith, in our Lord. I suppose St. John did not wish all people to do as he did—live in the wilderness, and eat locusts and wild honey?

*G.*—No; you can see in St. Luke iii. how plain and easy those things were which he taught the people. When they asked what they were to do to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance, he told them of their plainest duties—almsgiving, fair-dealing, peaceableness, and contentedness in the state of life in which God had placed them.

*P.*—That did not seem much to ask, certainly. Still I think the Jews would rather have been taught by our Lord than by St. John.

*G.*—Yes, I dare say they would; but it was necessary that they should first repent and mourn for their sins before they were fit to receive the blessings which the Lord came to give. It is the same now; you know that at Church we confess and are sorry for our sins before we dare to say the Lord’s prayer, in which we call God

our Father, and pray for spiritual blessings. To what prophet of the Old Testament is St. John Baptist compared?

*P.*—to the prophet Elijah. At least I suppose so, for Malachi says, (chap. iv. ver. 5.) “Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” Elijah and Elias are the same, you told me; and the Angel told Zacharias that his son should go before Him, the Lord God, in the spirit and power of Elias.

*G.*—Yes; and our Lord Himself says of St. John, “I tell you this was Elias;” and, “Elias is already come.”

*P.*—But why did St. John say he was not Elias, when the Pharisees sent to ask him?

*G.*—He meant that he was not actually Elijah himself come back to earth. See, now, if you can find out, and tell me how he was like Elijah.

*P.*—I am afraid, godmother, I do not remember enough about Elijah.

*G.*—Well then, I will show you a chapter in the first book of Kings that you may look over while I am gone to speak to Mrs. Jones; I see her coming up the garden, and I know she wants to ask me about that place I mentioned to her girl. (*Godmother goes out; when she returns,*) Well, Phœbe, what have you found?

*P.*—I will tell you some things in which I see that St. John Baptist was like Elijah. The prophet seems to have lived a great deal by him-

self in desert places. Then, he was sent to tell King Ahab of his wickedness, as St. John went to reprove King Herod. Elijah also called upon the people to repent of their sin in worshipping Baal. He seems to have been quite as strict as St. John.

*G.*—You have certainly found out some instances of their likeness. You will see, too, that their dress was something the same, if you look at 2 Kings i. 8; both wore a coarse leathern belt, instead of the fine embroidered ones that were generally used. I dare say there are other reasons, if we knew them, for St. John being called Elijah; but these are enough for us.

*P.*—Oh! there is another I forgot—that Herodias was like Jezebel when she contrived St. John's death; how terribly wicked both those queens were!

*G.*—I have read that the name John, or Johannan, means, "Beloved of God;" and no doubt God did love St. John, as he was so holy; yet we see that his life was a very sad one, and that he died before our Lord, so that he had not the comfort of seeing Him in His power and glory when He arose from the dead.

*P.*—The Apostles were much happier than St. John Baptist.

*G.*—Yes; you know our Lord said, that though he was the greatest of prophets, yet the least in the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than he. Yet he too was blessed with the sight of our Lord; his eyes, like Simeon's, had seen His

salvation; and he felt that was reward enough for his life of self-denial and hardship. He did not think of his own honour, but of his Lord's; he rejoiced that he was to decrease, since Christ was to increase, and he only sought to gain disciples to himself that he might lead them to the Lamb of God. In the service of God he feared dangers as little as hardships. He probably knew, when he rebuked Herod and Herodias, that it might cost him his life.

*P.*—He must have been very courageous. I suppose it is always our duty to reprove people when we see them do what is wrong?

*G.*—No; certainly not *always*.

*P.*—But, godmother, it was that which you say was so right in St. John Baptist.

*G.*—Yes; because he had authority from God to do so. But those who have not received such authority must be very careful how they set about reprovng others. There are rules to be observed. For instance, the young must not rebuke their elders, nor private Christians their clergy, nor servants their masters. But it is the duty of Clergymen to point out the sins of their parishioners, of parents to punish their children when in fault, and of masters to watch over and direct their servants. The only way in which inferiors may bear witness against sin in their superiors is by keeping themselves clean from it, and separating themselves from those who are living in wickedness.

*P.*—What ought I to do if I see my little

cousins or my school-fellows doing what I know to be wrong?

*G.*—You should gently and kindly tell them of it, taking care not to speak either roughly or proudly, as if you thought yourself wiser and better than they, but rather as knowing how very likely you are yourself to do wrong, and how thankful you would then be to any of your companions who would stop you, and make you see your fault.

*P.*—I remember, godmother, what our Lord says about wanting to take a mote out of our brother's eye, when we ourselves have a beam in our own eye.

*G.*—Yes; we must never forget when we feel a great wish to correct our neighbours, that we had better first set about correcting ourselves. There is an old saying, that if every body would undertake to mend *one* person, the whole world would soon be good. And who do you suppose that one should be?

*P.*—I don't know, godmother.

*G.*—Whom are we commanded to mend and make holy?

*P.*—Oh, I see; our own self. Yes, to be sure, that is very true. I will think more about that. But now, good bye, dear godmother; thank you for all you have told me; I am going to run home very fast, for fear of aunt wanting me before I go to bed.



DIALOGUE XXXII.

**St. Peter's Day.**

JUNE 29.



SATURDAY.

*Godmother.*—HAVE you looked in your Prayer-book, Phæbe, to see whether you have any holidays to prepare for?

*Phæbe.*—I meant to do it to-morrow; you told me I might look them out on a Sunday evening; and as we hear them given out in Church always for the following week, that reminds me of them; and then I learn the collect on the Vigil—the Eve is not it called?

*G.*—That is all right. But I wish you to find out whether to-day is a holiday.

*P.*—To-morrow is Sunday. Monday is June 29th, St. Peter's day. Oh, then, to-day is the Vigil of St. Peter; because it is said in the table of Vigils, that, if any festival fall upon a Monday, the Vigil is to be kept on the Saturday.

*G.*—Do you remember the reason of this rule?

*P.*—Because we are told that *all* Sundays in the year are festivals, and therefore we cannot keep any fast on a Sunday; and the vigils of Saints' days are fasts. So now, godmother, you mean to tell me all about St. Peter this evening, and then I shall be ready for the Service on Monday. To-morrow I shall have the Sunday Service to think of. I think you are going to tell me a great deal about St. Peter; so much is said of him in the Gospels and the Acts.

*G.*—Yes; so much that the Church has had a choice to make in the Lessons, and Epistles, and Gospels for the day, and has only taken a small part of all that we are told of St. Peter.

*P.*—Well, dear godmother, as we have plenty of time, I hope you will be so good as to tell me St. Peter's history all through.

*G.*—I shall like to do so, dear; it will help us to think about him on his festival. Draw that chair to the table and sit down, and then you will be able to look out in the Bible the places I tell you of. Simon, the son of Jonas, was born in Bethsaida, a little town of Galilee. He was a fisherman by trade.

*P.*—Oh, yes. I have read of that, he was catching fish when Christ called him. But he was first brought to our Lord by his brother St. Andrew; and as soon as our Lord saw him approaching, He saluted him by name, and declared that he should be called Cephas.

*G.*—Or Peter, which means a *rock*. Our Lord knew what was in man, and foresaw that

Simon would be the forwardest and boldest of His followers, and so He promised him this name of Peter, as descriptive of his character, and of the part he should discharge in supporting and building up the Church. Our Lord did not call on Simon at that time to leave his business and follow Him, but some time after, when He found St. Peter and St. James and St. John fishing on the lake of Gennesareth, (Luke v. 1—11.) and gave them that miraculous draught of fishes, by which St. Peter was so much struck that he fell down at Christ's feet, and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

*P.*—Why did he say that?

*G.*—Because, at that moment, when for the first time he had learnt from our Lord's miracle that He was more than man, he felt his own unworthiness so strongly that he was ashamed of being in the presence of God, to Whom the sight of a sinner, such as he knew himself to be, must be hateful. But St. Peter did not go away, did not hide himself like Adam at the voice of God; he fell down at his Master's feet, and cried out that he did not deserve that He should stay with him.

*P.*—But our Lord did not go away.

*G.*—No; for He was the Same Who afterwards said, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted,"—Who by His prophet had promised to dwell with the lowly and contrite spirit. He did not depart from St. Peter, but said to him,

“Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.”

*P.*—I have been told what that means—that St. Peter should make men become Christians.

*G.*—Soon after, Simon, and James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were with him, left their business and followed Christ. St. Peter, who was thus called to be with Christ, was afterwards the first and chiefest of the twelve Apostles whom Christ chose to be the first founders and bishops of His Church. It was when Simon was made an Apostle that our Lord gave him the name of Peter, which He had promised.

*P.*—Then was St. Peter put above the other Apostles?

*G.*—No; he had no more power and authority than the others; but he was the oldest, and the foremost in his zeal, so he was named first. He generally spoke for the whole body in their conversations with their Master, and to him, therefore, the answers were addressed which belonged equally to them all. Open that Bible again, Phœbe, and we will look at some instances of that zeal and readiness of faith, for which St. Peter was remarkable above the rest. Look at St. Matthew xiv.

*P.*—Oh, yes; it is about our Lord walking on the water, and St. Peter going to meet Him.

*G.*—You see St. Peter did not fear to go to his Master; he did not doubt of His power to hold him up—a noble example of unhesitating

trust and boldness;—but when the waves were boisterous, his courage and his faith began to fail, and he began to sink, till his Master caught him by the hand and saved him. We are to imitate his zeal and boldness, and to learn from the failure of his faith to pray that ours may stand firm.

Presently after, (in St. Matt. xvi.) we read another instance of the readiness of St. Peter's faith. It is taken for the Gospel on St. Peter's day. Our Lord inquired of His disciples, whom men thought that He was; and when they had told Him what was said of Him, He asked what they themselves thought of Him:—“But whom say ye that I, the Son of man, am?”—St. Peter, as the mouthpiece of the others, declared their faith, that “He was the Christ, the Son of the living God;” and then our Lord commended his noble faith, (which was built upon the testimony that the Father had given of His Son by miracles, not on human testimony,) and declared that he was, indeed, what his name signified—a Rock—firm, and strong, and faithful,—and that on this faith the Church should rest so firmly that nothing should be able to destroy it,—not all the violence of devils or wicked men should prevail to overthrow that Church which He would build upon the foundations of the Apostles. Now, as I have told you that St. Peter made that declaration of belief in Christ in the name of all the rest of the Apostles, so when our Lord called him a rock on which He would build His Church, He said

that of them all, though it was addressed to St. Peter, who had spoken for them; and so in Rev. xxi. 14, they are all called "foundation stones," that is, rocks on which the Church is founded; and in another place, Eph. ii. 20, they are called the same. There was nothing said of St. Peter which did not belong to all the twelve alike. It is the same with regard to the promise which Christ made to St. Peter:—"I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," &c. that was made equally to all the Apostles.

*P.*—Can you tell me the meaning of that promise, godmother?

*G.*—I will tell you what a clergyman was once good enough to explain to me about it. When our Saviour set up His Church or Family on earth, to save men's souls, He chose the Apostles to be its heads or governors in His place after He should be gone back to Heaven; He made them and the Bishops, who were to come after them in their places, the stewards and rulers of His family, (1 Cor. iv. 1.) and gave them power and authority to govern in His Name. To preserve His Family in purity and peace, He gave the Apostles power to shut out of it all wicked and rebellious people, and to receive them back again into the Church when they should repent; and He declared that whomsoever, for his wickedness and obstinacy, they should shut out of the Church on earth, should be shut out of Heaven; and whomsoever

they should absolve and take back into the Church should be pardoned and received into Heaven. "Whomsoever they should bind on earth," by inflicting the sentence of expulsion from the Church upon him, should be bound with the same sentence of condemnation in Heaven; and whomsoever they should loose, or forgive on earth, should be forgiven in Heaven.

I am afraid, my dear child, you will hardly understand all this, but I will try to make it clearer to you.

*P.*—Thank you, godmother, I do understand *partly*.

*G.*—When we are baptized into the Church, we are cleansed and pardoned, and we have the Holy Spirit given to us; and are promised the Kingdom of Heaven, if we live holy lives according to the laws of Christ. So we are, as the Catechism says, taken "into a state of salvation" at our Baptism. Well then, those who are not baptized into the Church are not brought into the state of salvation; and they who for their sins are driven out of it again are put out of the state of salvation; they are cut off from the means of grace which Christ has given, and from the Family which He has promised to save: this cutting off is called excommunication.

*P.*—What a long word, godmother! but I think now I understand what it means. How do you know that our Lord gave this power to the other Apostles, as well as to St. Peter?

*G.*—In St. Matt. xviii. 18, He said the very same words to them all, “Whatsoever ye,” &c., as He said to St. Peter, “Whatsoever thou,” &c.; and when He actually gave them this authority He had promised, He breathed on them all, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” &c., St. John xx. 21—23; sending them forth into the world, as the Father had sent Him, to be the ministers of peace and salvation to the world, to feed His Family, to reconcile the penitent and humble, and drive out the wicked and obstinate.

*P.*—Oh! godmother, it must be a dreadful thing to be cast out of the Church for one’s sins. And it is called—

*G.*—Excommunication; that is, casting out of a communion.

*P.*—That can be done now, godmother?

*G.*—The Bishops and priests now, *who stand in the Apostles’ place*, have the same power, because Christ promised to be with them always, even unto the end of the world.

*P.*—I hope I shall never be excommunicated by the Bishops.

*G.*—And I hope you will never excommunicate yourself; for you must recollect, Phæbe, that, if we forsake the services of the Church, or by our wicked lives forfeit our baptismal covenant, we are cut off from the way of salvation, as much as if the Bishop were to pass that terrible sentence upon us for our sins.

Let us finish talking about the history of St. Peter now. We find him always joined with

James and John, as one of those who were admitted to the greatest intimacy with our Lord; and chosen to be His companions several times when the other apostles were not allowed to be present. Do you remember when this happened?

*P.*—Only those three were with our Lord at His Transfiguration, and when He raised the daughter of Jairus, and during His agony in the garden of Gethsemane.

*G.*—You are right. St. Peter, on many other occasions besides those we have already spoken of, showed the greatness of his zeal, and faith, and courage in his Master's service; for instance, when he declared his readiness to die with Him, and his confidence that, though all the rest should forsake Him, yet he would never do so. In all these he is set before us as a great example; and though we read that his faith did fail upon the trial of it, and he forsook his Master and denied Him, (Matt. xxvi. 56, 72, &c.) yet he repented bitterly, (Matt. xxvi. 75.) and gained his Master's pardon, and afterwards became indeed the first to confirm the faith of all the rest. From his fall we must learn how humble we should be, and how little we may trust and depend upon ourselves; and from his repentance we must learn the way to be restored to favour, if ever we are frightened from our faith, and tempted to deny and forsake our Lord.

*P.*—After what happened to so great a saint as St. Peter, we can never dare to feel sure of ourselves.

*G.*—No; and the more afraid we are of ourselves, the safer we shall be.

After our Saviour's resurrection and ascension, St. Peter took the lead, as he had done before His death; and by his great devotion made amends for his denial of his Lord. He reminded the other Apostles about electing another Bishop in the place of Judas; and then, on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii.) he preached to all the people, explaining the miracle that they saw and heard, so that he converted and baptized 3,000 souls. You can read for yourself in Acts 3d, 4th, and 5th, the wonderful power he showed in healing the lame man, in striking dead the wicked Ananias and Sapphira, who lied unto the Holy Ghost, and tried to deceive the Apostle. When St. Peter was cast into prison by king Herod, the Church prayed for him, and the angel of the Lord was sent to set him free. (Acts xii.) He was the chosen one to whom the Lord made known His will for the call of the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, into His Church.

*P.*—Yes, I remember about the vision which appeared to St. Peter at Joppa, and his going soon afterwards to baptize the Centurion Cornelius, who was a Gentile.

*G.*—We are not told much about the labours of St. Peter after the Apostles were dispersed throughout the world to spread the Gospel. But it is said, that after labouring with great success, for about thirty years, in the service of his

Master, and showing always the same zeal, and faithfulness, and courage, he went up to Rome and suffered martyrdom there, in the way our Lord foretold him that he would. Do you remember, Phœbe, what our Lord said to him about his death?

*P.*—Yes, I read about it the other day. Our Lord said that St. Peter should stretch forth his hands, and another should lead him whither he would not; which meant, that he should be stretched on a cross and crucified.

*G.*—That was the death by which he glorified God, and was taken to receive the crown of glory for which he had laboured. It is said that his brother Apostle, St. Paul, who had also come to Rome, and together with St. Peter, founded the Church there, was put to death at the same time. St. Paul, who was a Roman citizen, was beheaded; and St. Peter, who had not that rank, was put to the more cruel death of crucifixion; and we are told of the manner of his suffering, that at his earnest request, he was crucified with his head downwards, as he thought himself unworthy to die in the same way that his Lord and Master had died. Thus, in the last act of his life, as throughout it, he set us an example of unbounded zeal and faithfulness, and love of Christ. He gave us also an example of constancy and courage, of humility and holiness of mind. These graces, dear Phœbe, we are taught to meditate upon on the festival of this great Apostle, and to try to obtain them by the help of the same grace of

God, which is as freely given to strengthen our weakness, and turn our cowardice into constancy and courage, as it was given to enable St. Peter to suffer martyrdom for that Master whom he had thrice denied,





DIALOGUE XXXIII.

**Feast of St. James.**

JULY 25.

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Phæbe.—I THINK, Godmother, you must put up your umbrella, or you will get a head-ache from the heat of the sun; it is quite broiling under the wall.

Godmother.—Well, dear, we will take the umbrella, but now sit down and rest; we need not set off for half an hour.

P.—Godmother, I must tell you that I was very near grumbling about the heat; but, as I came past Dame Jackson's cottage, I saw her hard at work ironing close by a large fire, and I thought how glad she would be if she had no worse heat than that of the sun; so then I was ashamed of myself.

G.—No wonder; and, besides, I am sure you would never even feel inclined to grumble at the

weather, if you would only recollect in time, that hot and cold, sunshine and rain, all come to us according to the will of the Almighty. Did you read the Services for the day before you came here, Phœbe?

P.—Yes, godmother: the Epistle is all about St. James's death. He was the very first of the Apostles to die—was he not?

G.—Yes.

P.—And his brother St. John was the last. I remember what you told me about that on St. John's-day. How St. John had to bear the loss of all the friends he loved, and of his brother, which must have been the worst of all. St. James was the best off by a great deal; I mean, at the time it must have seemed so; for, of course, all was really for the best for St. John too.

G.—And now they have been long united again, and together before the throne of God. But, no doubt, it must have been a sore trial to all the Apostles, when they had to separate, and each to go a different way, though they were still in the same world.

I have heard that there is, near Jerusalem, a field which is still pointed out as the place where the Apostles all met together, for the last time, when they were about to set off to their labours in different parts of the world; and there they all, one after the other, repeated the words of the Creed which we call the Apostles' Creed; thus, as it were, promising each other to teach all the same doctrine that they had learnt of the

Holy Spirit, which had just been sent down upon them. And so they went forth, each alone, but each with the same Lord, the same faith, and the same sure hope of meeting again in heaven, if not on earth.

P.—In the Gospel for the day, there is the history of the mother of St. James and St. John coming to ask the places on the right hand and on the left of our Lord in His kingdom for her sons. Was it wrong of them to let her ask this?

G.—I suppose, from our Lord's words afterwards, that they were mistaken, and, perhaps, expected their Master's kingdom to be more like an earthly kingdom than it really is. Our Lord showed them their mistake by the question He asked them; (St. Matt. xx. 22, 23.) He asked them if they could drink of His cup, and be baptized with His baptism.

P.—I do not think that I quite understand those words of our Lord.

G.—I believe, dear, that none of our Blessed Lord's words can be *quite understood* by any human being.

P.—Oh, godmother, I thought that *you* understood all the Bible.

G.—No, my dear child, very far from it. The Bible is the sacred word of the great God of wisdom;—no man can understand it all;—it has many mysteries, with deep and hidden truths, and meanings beyond what we can see. The better we become, and the more we study it, the more we know. Young as you are, and ignorant and

simple, there are many parts that you can understand ; I can understand some more ; better and wiser people understand much more. If we study it with humble minds, and try to practise it, and submit ourselves to be taught and guided in the understanding of it by the holy Church, we shall understand it more and more, and be made wise unto salvation.

P.—What do you mean, godmother, by submitting to be taught and guided in the understanding of the Bible by the Church ?

G.—I mean that we must not interpret it according to our private fancies, but that we must try to find out the sense of it according to the doctrine which the Church has always held and taught. We know that Almighty God has appointed the Church to be our teacher, and has set ministers over us to explain her teaching to us, and has promised to be with them in their teaching. We should therefore submit to them rather than follow our own opinions when the meaning of Scripture is not clear.

P.—But, godmother, are not ministers sometimes mistaken themselves ?

G.—No doubt they may be ; but they are much less likely to be so than you or I. And if what they teach is agreeable to the Prayer-book and Creeds and Catechism of the Church, we may be sure that they are right. The Prayer-book is the best help we can have to understand the Bible, because it contains the doctrine of the Church. And if we are teachable and humble-

hearted, and try to use all the helps we can get, and pray for the Holy Spirit to purify our hearts, and endeavour to practise what we are taught,—then we shall be saved from any great mistakes about the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, and be led into the way of salvation. Now, my dear, take my great Bible, and look out that verse that you said you did not understand. What other passages are we referred to in the margin?

P.—To St. Matt. xxvi. 39, 42. St. Mark xiv. 36, and St. Luke xii. 50.

G.—Look out for those verses.

P.—The two first, godmother, are about our Blessed Lord's praying that the cup might pass from Him, if it was God's will.

G.—And what was this cup?

P.—The pain and sorrow that He was just going to suffer.

G.—Yes. Read the text from St. Luke.

P.—“But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!”

G.—I heard our Clergyman once explain that to mean our Lord's baptism of blood, or His death upon the Cross, by which the sins of all mankind were to be washed away. You know that in the service of baptism children are said, when baptized, to be made partakers of our Lord's death.

P.—Then, when our Lord asked St. John and St. James if they could drink of his cup, and be baptized with his baptism, was it as if He had

asked whether they could suffer pain and trouble and death for Him?

G.—Just so.

P.—And they answered, “We are able.”

G.—Yes, for they felt that their love for their master would enable them to bear all that He should put upon them. Probably, though, they did not know all that they promised when they made this answer, but as they were sincere, our Lord did not blame them, but took them at their word, and said they should indeed suffer with Him, though whether they should sit at His side in His kingdom, depended on the way in which they should bear their trials and do His will.

P.—They did bear their trials well.

G.—Yes, by God’s grace; and that grace, remember, dear Phœbe, will now be given to all who in sincerity and love have resolved to keep God’s holy will and commandments all the days of their life.

P.—It would be very sad if we did not try to keep them, as it was promised that we would by our godfathers and godmothers.

I suppose, that when the two brothers asked if they might pray, as Elias did, for fire to come down from heaven to burn those bad people who would not receive our Lord, they were thinking of the two captains of fifty who were burnt when they came to take Elijah.

G.—Yes; but you see how our Lord reproves them. It was not surprising that they should have felt very angry at the Samaritans who re-

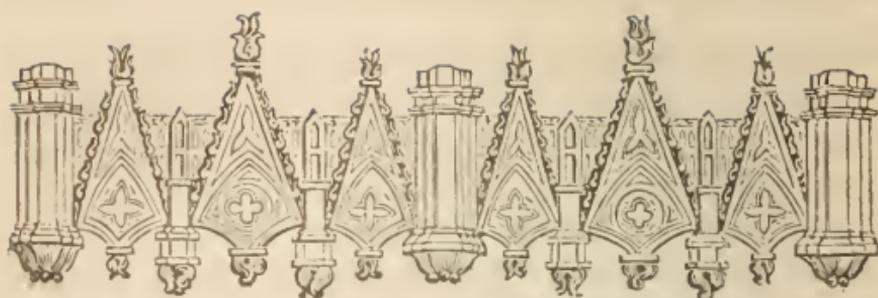
fused to receive their Blessed Master, and made Him travel on when He was weary; but we learn from our Lord's answer, that we must not be passionate or revengeful even for our friends' sakes. Neither must we be *angry* with the wicked; we must keep away from them if we possibly can; but, when we are obliged to be with them, we must be meek and gentle and patient, and never forget that they too are God's children, though, like the prodigal, they have gone away from their Father into a far country; we must hope that they will yet come to themselves and return.

P.—Do you know any thing more than what is told us in the Acts about St. James's death?

G.—Only what Mr. Nelson tells, out of some old history; that the man who had accused the Apostle, and given him up to Herod, was so struck by his courage and patience at his trial, that he repented heartily of what he had done, and knelt down at St. James's feet, asking his forgiveness; St. James quickly forgave him, saying, "Peace to thee;" and then the man declared that he would become a Christian, and die with the Saint.

P.—He was a wise man if he did. Thank you, godmother: I had better run now and get your bonnet and shawl; it is just time to go.





DIALOGUE XXXIV.

Feast of St. Bartholomew,

AUGUST 24.



Phæbe.—I AM afraid, godmother, I shall have but a poor lesson to-day, unless you know a great deal more about St Bartholomew than I can find in the Gospels: I have hunted all through them as carefully as I can, and he is not once spoken of except in the lists of the Apostles, and then only his name is given.

Godmother.—Do you remember the calling of Nathanael?

P.—Oh, yes, Godmother,—that good man whom Philip called to come and see our Lord.

G.—Well, dear, it is supposed that St. Bartholomew was that same Israelite without guile, There are several reasons, I believe, for this idea; amongst others, it is observable, that as in St. John, Philip and Nathanael are joined

together in their coming to Christ, so in the rest of the Evangelists, Philip and Bartholomew are always put together. Then, in the 21st of St. John, Nathanael is named among the other Apostles to whom our Lord appeared after His Resurrection:—"There were together Simon Peter, Thomas, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee." His call, too, is mentioned particularly just about the time of the call of the Apostles, John and James, Peter and Andrew, and Philip.

P.—I am glad that we know more of St. Bartholomew than I thought.

G.—Look out for St. John i. 47, and read what is told of Nathanael.

P.—(*Reads.*)—Why did Nathanael say, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

G.—Because the inhabitants of that town were particularly disliked by the Jews, on account of their having married strange women, foreigners, which you know was forbidden; besides, Nazareth was in Galilee, and all the Galileans were despised as ignorant men, who were only fit for lard labour and the works of the field. Nathanael, too, was well read in the Scriptures, and knew that the Christ was to be born in Bethlehem, whereas Jesus dwelt in Nazareth, which Nathanael in consequence supposed to be the place of His birth. However, you see he was very ready to learn more of this wonderful teacher of whom Philip spoke, and he went with him to our Lord.

P.—Yes; and then our Lord called him an Israelite without guile, and Nathanael was surprised, and asked whence He knew him; he must have been still more surprised when our Lord said He had seen him under the fig-tree; for I suppose the fig-tree was out of sight of the place where our Lord was.

G.—Yes; but it was something better than surprise that Nathanael felt; it was a certainty that our Lord was the Son of God, was the King of Israel. He thought no more of doubting, or waiting, or inquiring; he believed at once.

P.—Our Lord was pleased with him for believing so readily, and He promised that he should see greater things to reward him.

G.—What made Nathanael's faith the more remarkable was, that he was a learned doctor of the law, and all the other disciples of our Lord were poor and ignorant men, of whose company many doctors would have been ashamed; but that did not stop Nathanael from joining himself to them, that he might become a follower of our Lord.

P.—Do you know what happened afterwards to St. Bartholomew?

G.—Very little is told of him in the early writers. He went forth, like the other Apostles, to preach the Gospel in distant lands, and travelled to the country called India.

P.—That was where St. Thomas went. Was

St. Bartholomew martyred, like the rest of the Apostles?

G.—Yes; in a most cruel manner; and it is said he bore his tortures very cheerfully, and comforted his converts to the last moment of his life. Have you learnt the Collect?

P.—Yes, godmother; I was thinking about it; I was thinking how much easier it is for us to love God's word, and to receive it, than it was for the Apostles.

G.—You mean that we can love it and receive it without being exposed to any such perils and dangers as they had to endure. No doubt; and this thought should make us feel ashamed of ourselves; for I fear our love of God's word is so unlike that of the early Christians, that it does not even lead us to do our easy duties, or to resist our slight temptations.

The portion of Scripture for the Epistle gives the account of the wonderful works of St. Peter and all the Apostles. The Gospel contains our Lord's lessons of humility to those who were gifted with such great gifts; and his warning lest they should suppose that the Kingdom in which they were to have their portion was like the kingdoms of this world. They were here but to share our Lord's trials and temptations; it was hereafter that they were to sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now, dear, let us think a little about the character of St. Bartholomew; as our blessed Lord gave him such high praise, it concerns us to see

how we may imitate him. It was not for his learning that he was commended, but for his guilelessness and faith; and these qualities, through God's grace, we may all obtain.

P.—To be without guile is to be true and sincere, is it not? That does not seem very difficult.

G.—I think, Phæbe, that you do not quite know all that is required to be guileless. A guileless man is one who has but one wish and one intention in all he does or says—that of pleasing God; whether he eats or drinks, he does all to the glory of God, as St. Paul bids us do. He speaketh the truth from his heart, for he knows that it is to the heart that God looks. When quite alone, he acts as if he would act in the presence of those he most respects, for he feels that God's eye is on him. He never tries to make his friends think better of him than he deserves; he never says things with a view of gaining their praise; he wishes to *be* good, not only to *seem* good. Sometimes speaking the truth and doing right may bring him for a time into trouble, and make him lose great worldly good; but he takes it all patiently and cheerfully, feeling sure that God will make it up to him. Do you remember what our Lord says about serving two masters?

P.—Yes; He tells us that we cannot serve more than one,—we cannot serve God and Mammon; which you said meant, that those whose hearts are set on riches or pleasures cannot serve

God acceptably. The guileless man has but one master, I see.

G.—And having but one master, he goes on happily, without being careful or troubled with many matters: having but one business, he can do it with all his heart. I think you will understand this better, if I tell you about two little girls I knew. They were sisters, but were very different in character.

P.—I shall like to hear about them; what were they called?

G.—Bessy and Lucy. People who only saw them in a common way did not notice the difference in them and their ways of going on; but I, who could watch them, soon discovered that Bessy was what I should call guileless and single-hearted, and Lucy very much otherwise. Lucy was cleverest of the two; she got her lessons learnt soonest, and her work done quickest, and she was always ready with an answer. Many people thought she was the most attentive of the two, and I have heard it said that she was never seen looking off her book,—as was sometimes the case with Bessy. But I soon found that Lucy always took most pains when people were likely to see her; and those days when the ladies came to the school, her lessons were learnt best. She certainly would not have behaved ill at Church; but she was more attentive when the gentlefolks were in the country, and in their large pew close to the children, so that they could see her. I mean she would have feared

to behave ill in the House of God, but she wished to please man also. Now Bessy was always the same, whether the ladies saw her or not. It seemed as if she really wished to be good, for the sake of pleasing God. If people were pleased with her, she was glad; but that was not the object for which she tried to be good. Once, I remember, the children were to have had a holiday, and to drink tea on the Squire's lawn. The weather suddenly changed to bad, and the tea drinking was put off. When the girls were told of this in the morning, they were both a good deal out of sorts; they did not make the most of their holiday, and amuse themselves as they might have done at home, but they went about quite dismally, and at every fresh shower they said, "How tiresome! how provoking!" Between the showers, one of the ladies stepped in, to ask after their mother, who was not well; (I was there nursing her;) and she said to them, that she was very sorry for their disappointment; they must make the best of it; they had their pleasure still to come, and little disappointments helped us to learn to bear great ones. "So I hope, Bessy," she said, "the clouds will clear away from your face, and that you will not sit looking at the window quite all day. Lucy seems brisk enough." For, as soon as the lady came in, Lucy seemed suddenly to find out that it was wrong to be sullen, and was going about her work, or something, quite cheerfully. Now, if this had been after the lady's ad-

vice, it would have been all very well, but it was, I fear, to show off to her. Bessy curtsied and said, "Yes, Ma'am;" and sat still a minute or two after the lady went, but then she went quietly to her book or work, and by degrees she got quite merry again. The lady's words had reminded her of her duty, and she exerted herself to do what was right. But Lucy got dull and out of humour again towards evening, for her effort had been to please men, not God. When I spoke to her afterwards, she seemed to see how wrong she had been; but her want of guilelessness was not changed. She went on in this way till they both went to service, in tradesmen's families. When I asked Bessy's mistress about her, at first she said, "I doubt she is a queer temper; at least she is very downright. I asked her yesterday if she did not think my little Mary one of the best children she knew; and she said, 'She rather likes to have her own way.' And even when I am in the room, she will speak sharply to that child if she hinders her at all." A short time afterwards, I heard a different story, for this child was very ill, and Bessy's mistress told me she nursed her night and day, and the child was so fond of her; she believed it was because Bessy always behaved to little Mary, when they were alone, as she did when her mistress was present. And often afterwards, she said Bessy was plain-spoken, but she could be trusted at any time. "I really believe," she would say,

“Bessy hardly cares what other people think, if she can but do her duty.” And that was a high character indeed.

P.—And what did Lucy do?

G.—She soon got into the service of Mrs. James, a widow lady, who was taken with her pretty manners, and wanted a nice person to wait on her, for she was very sickly. At first she was delighted with her, she thought her so attentive and steady; but after a fit of illness which confined her to her room, she found many things had been neglected while she was up stairs, though she could not find that anything positively wrong had been done. At last Lucy suddenly left, and her mother begged me to inquire of Mrs. James the real reason why they parted. Mrs. James knew me before, and therefore told me at once that Lucy was not to be depended upon. She behaved one way when she was watched, and another way when nobody was by; and this, Mrs. James added, she could not bear. She told me several proofs of this. One thing I recollect was, that on a Sunday she heard a great deal of talking and laughing in the kitchen, and opened the door to see what was going on. The servants were spending their time, I suppose, rather idly; but Mrs. James was struck by seeing Lucy snatch up a book and sit down to read it, to seem as if she had been so employed before her mistress came in. This was very bad; and afterwards, when I named this to Lucy, she cried and said, “In-

deed I meant to read the good book. I should have read it in the evening." I tried to show her the danger of being double-minded; and I believe the loss of her place, and good advice, were of use to her; but I have heard little of her since.

P.—Thank you, godmother, for telling me about Bessy and Lucy. I think I remember two texts, which seem to have to do with what you have been saying—that one about the Pharisees, who loved the praise of men more than the praise of God, which was something like what Lucy did; and St. Paul's telling servants to obey in all things their masters, "not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God:" Bessy did that. Godmother, I will strive to be always guileless.





DIALOGUE XXXV.

Fest of St. Matthew.

SEPTEMBER 21.



Phæbe.—(*Returning from church.*)—GODMOTHER, I could not help missing you while I was in church to-day; it seemed so strange to be there without you.

Godmother.—And I too, dear child, have missed my church; but as Mr. White told me I must not go out, I would not think of it. You know we must always do as the doctor bids us. By next Sunday I expect to be quite stout again; and to-day I am well enough to talk to my little Phæbe. I dare say you will like to hear what I have been reading about St. Matthew?

P.—Yes, godmother; I am sure to like that, if you are confident talking will not make your bad head-ache come on again.

G.—There is no fear of that, I hope.

P.—Well, then, I may tell you how I have been puzzled. Yesterday evening I took my

Bible and Prayer-book after tea, and I first read what St Matthew himself says about our Lord calling him; and then, as you have directed me, I turned to the other places, which are marked in the margin,—first, St. Mark ii. 14, and St. Luke v. 27; but when I found them, there was nothing about St. Matthew in either, so I must have made some mistake.

G.—Did you read those verses?

P.—No, because I saw that St. Matthew's name was not there.

G.—You are too apt to be in a hurry, Phœbe: now read both the passages.

P.—(*Reads.*)—Oh! dear godmother; Levi must be another name for Matthew.

G.—'To be sure it is. It was very common for the Jews to have two names. Levi was the name by which he was known before he became an Apostle; St. Mark and St. Luke call him generally Matthew, because he was known amongst Christians by that name at the time they wrote their Gospels. But he calls himself Levi, probably because that was the name he bore when our Lord called him to leave a business which was considered infamous, and to become His disciple.

P.—Godmother, what was a Publican? and why are Publicans and sinners so often named together? Were all Publicans wicked men?

G.—No; I do not think that Levi could have been wicked. But I will try to explain what the business of Publicans was. You know that the

Jews, at the time of our Lord's coming, were under the power of the Romans.

P.—Yes, you have told me that Pontius Pilate, who was the governor of the Jews, was a Roman.

G.—The Romans had conquered the Jews some time before our Lord's birth, and forced them to pay every year to the Roman governors a large sum of money, which was called tribute or custom, what we should now call taxes. This money was to be collected from a great many people, and the men who were appointed to collect it were called Publicans.

P.—Then they were like our tax-gatherers; but there was nothing wrong in that.

G.—No, there was nothing wrong in the employment itself; but the Jews could not bear to pay this money to a foreign king, one who lived far away from them, and who did not care for them, and who had taken away their own kings. So they disliked the Publicans who collected the tribute; and besides, these Publicans, who were generally Romans, were covetous men, who tried to get money for themselves, as well as for the governor who employed them. Suppose, for instance, that a Jew had to pay ten dollars to the governor, perhaps the Publican or tax-gatherer would tell him that he was to pay twelve dollars, and keep the two additional dollars for himself.

P.—That was very dishonest.

G.—And when Jews took the office of Publicans, they were still more disliked than were

the Romans, for they were suspected of trying to cheat their own countrymen.

P.—Do you think that Levi ever acted dishonestly?

G.—We are not told in Scripture, so we cannot know; but his readiness to leave his gainful trade at the first call of our Lord is very remarkable. In St. Luke's account it is said, "he left all, and followed Christ." He himself says only, "he arose," as if he felt that all he left was nothing, when compared to what he gained from becoming a follower of Him Who had not where to lay His sacred head, and Whose disciples could expect nothing in this world but poverty, and hardship, and contempt. We can trace St. Matthew's humble spirit, in his always calling himself "the Publican;" and in his putting his name after St. Thomas in the list of the Apostles, whereas the other Evangelists put it before.

P.—What became of him after our Lord's Ascension?

G.—For the first eight years he went up and down Judæa, endeavouring to convert his brethren the Jews to the faith of Christ. Then he went into a far country, called Ethiopia, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and there he suffered martyrdom, but by what kind of death is uncertain. He wrote his Gospel about eight years after our Saviour's death, by the desire of the other Apostles; he wrote it in the Hebrew language for the use of the Jews, but it was soon

translated into Greek, that the Gentiles might understand it.

P.—How much wiser and happier St. Matthew was than the rich young man, who would not part with his riches when our Lord bade him, but went away sorrowful!

G.—Yes; that young man is a warning to the rich, and St. Matthew is an example to them. You see that in the Collect we pray to be enabled to forsake not only riches, which many do not possess, but all covetous desires, every vain and idle wish to have anything more than what it has pleased God to give us. But, for rich people, St. Matthew's history must be very comforting, as it shows, that though riches are dangerous things, and often a snare and temptation to those who possess them, yet people may have them and not set their hearts upon them or trust in them. We learn, too, from the account of St. Matthew's call, that it is no matter what people's business is, if it be an honest one or where they live, whether in the pleasant country, or in crowded cities: so that they be doing God's bidding, He will own them as His servants. I will tell you what is said about this in a sermon I have read. "When Christ came to choose a people unto Himself, to show forth His praise, He took of every kind; highways and hedges, the streets and the lanes of the city, furnished guests for His supper, as well as the wilderness of Judæa or the courts of the temple." Peter and John, for instance, were simple fishers

on the Lake of Gennesareth, Nathanael was a doctor of the law, Matthew was a busy tax-gatherer, St Luke was a physician, Joseph of Arimathea a rich man, and so all the other disciples were of very different occupations. St. Matthew had not only to overcome the temptation of riches, but also that great one of living a very busy life, with many worldly cares and occupations to take up his time and thoughts; so that he had but little leisure probably to give to his religious duties.

P.—That must have been very bad for him.

G.—Yes; but the busy should learn from his example that it is possible for them to hearken to our Lord's voice in the midst of all their business, and to obey it.

P.—People who live in towns, I have heard, are generally hurried and bustled.

G.—At all events they have not the help that we who live in the country have, from the quiet in which we live, and the beautiful sights that are all around us.

P.—Godmother, I once thought it must be a very fine thing to live in London, and see all the great houses and pretty shops, and crowds of people; but Ann cured me of that. You know the first year she went to service, she lived with our cousin Morgan, who keeps a haberdasher's shop in Cheapside. To hear her talk of the heat and dirt and noise of London! To be sure, poor Ann was poorly all the time she was there, and that made her feel it more; but she got well as soon

as she came home. I have heard her tell, that though she now and then saw trees in what she called the parks and squares, yet they were very different from country trees, for they were all blackened with smoke. A cow she never saw,—and the sheep in the parks! you would not guess they had been white. But the worst of all was not seeing the blue sky; it always looks grey in London. Ann thinks people who live always in London must be very unhappy.

G.—No, not unhappy if they are doing their duty there. I have spent some years of my life there, and I was not unhappy, though, to be sure, I often thought of the beautiful works of God to be seen in the country, and I have been much happier since I came back to it. But there are many men and women in the dirtiest, dullest towns, whose hearts are as much set on God, and whose thoughts are as much fixed on His wonderful works and ways, as if they were in the quiet happy country. And even in London, the sun can shine through the smoke. One summer that I was in town, I was not well, and could not sleep at night, so I used to get up and sit at the open window; the chimneys did not begin to smoke till long after sunrise, so I could watch the sun gradually getting higher and higher till it shone brightly; and though it only shone on red roofs and chimneys, it was very beautiful, and made me think of the glory of Him, who created the sun to give light by day, and the moon and the stars by night; and how

His light can shine even out of darkness, as it is said in the Epistle for this Day, and give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ;—such a light as enabled at once St. Matthew to see that he must leave his riches and follow his Lord. But there are some on whom the light of the Gospel cannot shine. Who are they, Phœbe?

P.—Those whom the god of this world hath blinded. The god of this world means Satan.

G.—Yes; and none are more blinded by him than those who have their hearts set on the good things and comforts of this world; those in whom the seed of the Word of God has been choked by the cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, and brings no fruit to perfection. St. Matthew overcame the temptation of riches and of living a busy life. I hope that you, my dear child, will neither have riches, nor live in a town; but you must pray to be enabled to follow our Lord whenever and wherever He calls you.

P.—But, godmother, if I have not riches, I cannot give them up for our Lord's sake.

G.—No; but you must learn to give up your own will, your comforts, and enjoyments of every kind, when God requires them of you. I think you will understand what I mean, if you remember what Ben did last Michaelmas.

P.—Do you mean his going to Farmer Young instead of Farmer Southwell?

G.—Why did he do so? Farmer Southwell

gives higher wages, and lives much nearer here.

P.—Yes, and Ben would have had pleasanter work. But I know why Ben would not go to him, for I heard him tell his friend, John Barnes, all about it. Farmer Southwell is a very merry, noisy man, who never goes to Church, and keeps his labourers too away, generally; and he encourages his men to be what he calls jolly; that is, to drink and smoke, and make a noise, and to spend their money on themselves rather than on their families. He wished Ben to work for him; and father told Ben he might go if he pleased, he could trust him; but Ben said he could not trust himself; it would be putting himself into temptation's way, he thought; so he went for lower wages and harder work to Farmer Young's. Some of our neighbours said he was very foolish for his pains.

G.—Well, Ben in this instance showed that he loved doing what he knew was God's will better than worldly advantages; and he has never repented of it.

P.—No; though poor Farmer Young had such a bad year with illness amongst his cattle, that Ben has only got half his wages. He told me, the other day, that he had been very happy with his good master, and hoped he had learned a great deal from his example of content and cheerfulness, and submission to God's will in his losses. Well, dear godmother, I hope I

shall think much more about being with good people, than getting high wages. I will try, too, not to have any covetous desires, because that is contrary to what I say in the Catechism about not coveting or desiring other men's goods.





DIALOGUE XXXVI.

Feast of St. Michael and all Angels.

SEPTEMBER 29.



Phæbe.—GODMOTHER, I have been thinking all day about the Angels, who are always good and happy, and so beautiful too. What a pity it is that Angels do not come down to the earth now. Have they left off coming down, because we are not good enough to see them ?

Godmother.—They still come down, dear ; do you forget what St. Paul says ? that they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation ; that is, to those who, having been made God's children in Baptism, and having patiently continued in well-doing, shall inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. And what does the Collect say of the Holy Angels ?

P.—That they always do God service in Heaven.

G.—And what do we pray that they may do for us ?

P.—Succour and defend us on earth, by God's appointment. Yes; I see that it is only that we do not see them, as people used to do. But it must have been very pleasant to see them.

G.—Very pleasant for the good, but very terrible for the wicked; for Angels brought the messages of God's wrath, as well as of His mercy. But Christians do not need any further knowledge of God's will, than that which God's human ministers now give them from the Holy Scriptures. They are God's visible messengers to us; indeed, in the Revelations, the Bishops are called the Angels of the Churches; for the word angel means messenger or minister.

P.—To be sure it is a better thing for us to have Mr. Seymour with us always, to tell us what we should do to please God, and to get His forgiveness of our sins, than even to see a bright Angel once in our lives.

G.—Yes; and then, though we do not see them here, we know we shall in Heaven, if we keep our Baptismal promises; and, more than see them, we shall be like them, as our blessed Lord has promised.

P.—I remember that promise of our Lord's; it is so pleasant to think of. Will you explain all about the Angels, godmother? I have seen pictures of them; they are always painted with wings, are they not?

G.—That is to signify their swiftness, because the word angel means a messenger.. But as to

explaining all about them, my dear Phœbe, I am not able to do that, nor do I believe that even learned and wise people can understand the subject.

P.—And yet, you know, godmother, there is a great deal about Angels in the Bible.

G.—Yes, and therefore we may think about them, and with profit as well as pleasure. Or else we may be sure the Church would not have set apart this day on which we are to keep them in mind.

P.—Ah, that is what you have told me. There are so many things—things about religion I mean—that we may and ought to think of, though we cannot understand them.

G.—And often must not try to explain them. But now, as we have time before Church, look out some of the texts in the Bible that mention them. Gen. xvi. 17 ; xix. 1 ; xxviii. 12 ; xxxii. 1 ; Exod. xiv. 19 ; Numb. xxii. 23 ; Judges vi. 11 ; xiii. 3 ; 1 Kings xix. 5 ; 2 Kings xix. 35 ; 1 Chronicles xxi. 15 ; Matt. i. 20 ; iv. 11 ; xxviii. 5 ; Luke i. 13, 19 ; ii. 10 ; xvi. 22 ; xxii. 43 ; John v. 4 ; xx. 12 ; Acts v. 19 ; viii. 26 ; x. 7 ; xii. 8. There are many other texts which speak of Angels ; but with these and the Collect, we may find a great deal to think of with thankfulness, and wonder at God's great mercy and power. Having read in Scripture how the Angels have succoured and defended God's servants on earth, we may pray as we do in the Collect, that He will still appoint them to do so, just as he ap-

points our parents and elders and betters to be His instruments of good to us continually.

P.—We must not pray to them, as we should ask our friends here to help us.

G.—No; for besides that we know from the second Commandment, that we are to pray to the Great God alone, you must remember (in the book of Revelations) what the Angel in the vision said to St. John, when he was going to worship him.

P.—“See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant. Worship God.”

G.—Now we need not wish that we were allowed to pray to Angels, or to any created beings, as thinking, that because they are fellow-creatures of ours, they can understand us and feel for us; for our Merciful Father has promised that He will listen to the prayers of the poorest and weakest among us; and has told us that He knows the least thought and wish of our hearts. And we are told that our Lord Jesus Christ can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, because He suffered them, (though without sin) and that having been tempted Himself, He can succour those who are tempted.

P.—How strange and fearful it would be, if our eyes could be opened like the Prophet's servant's, and we could see the holy Angels moving about on their different tasks! We should hardly be able to do anything for watching and wondering at them.

G.—Our poor weak eyes and minds, perhaps, could not bear such a glorious sight; and we should not be worthy of it. But it seems to me a comfortable and cheerful thought, that there may be such beings all round us, though we see them not. That they are among the invisible things which are quite real, though hidden from our eyes.

P.—Yes; just as when we come into the church-yard before the service begins, we do not see or hear all the people in Church, but they are there just as much as if we saw them.

G.—If the wall were removed, we should see them at once. So if the wall of our mortal flesh were removed, we might see all the Holy Angels.

P.—People would not be afraid of being alone, as they often are,—I mean, children often are,—if they thought how many good Angels there may be near to guard them.

G.—Their first thought should be of God, their Father, Who is ever present to guard them. This we know, and are sure of. But we may think, besides, of the unseen presence of Angels, who *may* be by; just as we think of our parents being near to take care of us. And that thought will help us to be thankful.

P.—But, godmother, tell me about the bad Angels. We must be afraid of *them*. Perhaps that is the reason bad people are afraid of being alone, because of the bad Angels.

G.—This is one of the things too high and

mysterious for us to understand, but we know and believe it, because it is written in the Bible, that Satan was once a great and glorious Angel, but through pride he fell from his high estate, and drew many Angels after him. And we know what their last end will be; and that now their fearful object is to lead men astray, by tempting them to evil, so that at last they may share the punishment of wicked spirits; that God in His good pleasure permits them for a time to try men in this way, though He might have destroyed these rebellious creatures with a word. And that there is no more hope for them, as, through God's exceeding mercy, there is yet for us.

P.—"The Devil goeth about as a roaring lion," I remember that. So there are bad Angels tempting us to evil, and good ones helping us to be good.

G.—The bad ones are *permitted* to tempt us for a time; the good ones *appointed* to succour us.

P.—How dreadful to think of any created being, that had once been good, being lost for ever!

G.—How dreadful, too, to think that this may be our lot hereafter, unless we believe, and strive, and pray. The Devils only believe and tremble. But we may fear, and yet rejoice—rejoice at God's unspeakable goodness in giving His Son to save us from the dreadful fate of the Devil and his Angels. Every thing we learn and meditate on this and every other Festival,

brings us to that—the thought of what our blessed Lord has done *for* us, and of what He will do *in* us, if we are not wanting to ourselves.

P.—Yes; you mean, how we must strive and pray, trusting in the merits of Christ. We have the example of all the Saints to make us do that.

G.—And as to the Angels, too, we pray, that we may do God service, as they do. Every day, indeed, we pray for that.

P.—When we say, “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.” But, godmother, nobody can serve God as the holy Angels do, for they are without sin.

G.—We cannot be like them, but we are to try as much as possible to imitate them. Indeed, we are told to be “perfect, as our Father, which is in Heaven, is perfect.” That is, we are never to stop *trying* to reach the highest point, though we know we cannot reach it in this life.

P.—We are each of us like a person who is between two great armies of friends and enemies, both striving to get hold of him. That is frightful to think of.

G.—Yes; but there are more with us than against us.

P.—Godmother, do not you suppose that the Angels are particularly present in church?

G.—Yes; there seem to be things said in the Bible that prove it. And I believe holy and

learned men have always thought so. It is most likely they should frequent the holiest places on earth, which, you know, churches are.

P.—And they may join in our praises and worship, though we do not know it. That is a reason for wishing to go to church as often as we can. I wish I knew all that the Angels do for us. Do you think, godmother, when good people die, they take their souls to Heaven?

G.—I do not know any thing more about it, than what we read about the Angels carrying Lazarus into Abraham's bosom. Were you thinking of that?

P.—No, godmother, it was not that, but I remembered what Mrs. Ford heard from her daughter, who was a nursemaid in London. She talked about a little boy, one of the children she took care of. He was quite a little thing in the nursery. I do not think he was ill long, but he knew he should die. I believe he had heard them talk about it. And just before he died, he said there were some beautiful Angels come to take him.

G.—Perhaps his eyes might be opened, then, to see what others could not.

P.—It would be pleasant to his friends to think so.

G.—Any how, they would know that in a very few moments, their dear child, having been baptized into Christ's flock, would have power to see and know more than the wisest and best of us here below.

P.—There is not much about St. Michael in the Bible—only those texts I read.

G.—We cannot know much, and I suppose, could not understand if we were told more. He is called an Archangel, that is, a chief Angel.

P.—As chief Bishops are called Archbishops.

G.—We learn that there are several orders of Angels; we read of Cherubim and Seraphim, and St. Paul speaks of principalities and powers. Many learned men have tried to find out the meaning of the different order of Angels, but they have not been able to decide it; so, of course, we, who are unlearned, must remain in ignorance on the subject. But still we may learn something from it. I will tell you what I read lately in the life of a holy man of our Church, of great learning and wisdom, who wrote a book on Church-government which will make him be remembered for ever. It was on the last day of his life, I believe, when a friend asked him what he was thinking of: he answered, that he was meditating on the number and nature of Angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in Heaven; and oh! that it might be so on earth! And, surely, if this be true, (and what such a man said at such a time is well worth attending to,) it should teach us how much Almighty God would have us think of order, and submission to those who are set over us.

P.—You have taught me about that, and

how we ought to give up to our elders and teachers, and not to be above our station in life.

G.—But to do our duty in that state of life into which it shall please God to call us—as the Catechism says. We always come back to that.

P.—I cannot think I should ever be unwilling to learn from the teachers whom God has set over me.

G.—Not now, perhaps,—not ever, I hope and trust, dear Phœbe. But do not be too sure of yourself. You have heard of people who will choose their own teachers,—who will judge for themselves where they can get most good,—who despise their own Ministers.

P.—Oh! that would be bad in me, after having once learnt how wrong it is.

G.—It is sad that people, without knowing what they are about, should disturb the order of things which God has appointed in His Church. And as you know what a serious mistake it is, you should think of it on this day, and often besides, and pray to be kept from it.

P.—I think I understand now what the Church teaches us in the Collect for to-day—that God has constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful *order*. Does it not mean that God has appointed them and us set tasks or duties to do?

G.—Yes; and as the Angels do His pleasure by their ready obedience, so we must strive in our degree to serve Him with a willing heart.

P.—Godmother, does any body know what is meant by St. Michael fighting with the dragon?

G.—I believe not exactly. But the dragon must mean the Devil, that old serpent, as he is elsewhere called. We know that there is (as I was saying just now) a constant war going on between good and evil angels.

You see, dear Phœbe, how much there is to think of on this day, though we cannot thoroughly understand it.

P.—Fearful things, and pleasant things too.

G.—The beautiful things of this world may remind us of God's messengers. The clouds that move swiftly, and their bright and heavenly colours—"He maketh . . . His ministers a flaming fire." We may think of their ministering to the heirs of salvation, though we may not know how they minister. A comfortable and cheering thought, when we are in difficulties of any kind. And when we are prosperous, and in too high spirits, we may think of the struggle that is going on around us, not in our sight, indeed, but which concerns us quite as much as if we saw it with our bodily eyes.





DIALOGUE XXXVII.

St. Luke's Day.

OCTOBER 18.



Phæbe.—GODMOTHER, I was so glad to see you coming to the door. I heard you had been sitting up all night with poor Mrs. Morris, and I thought you might be too tired and sleepy to go to Church.

Godmother.—I have been *hoping* to go, for I knew it would refresh me so much. I hope I shall not be sleepy in Church; at any rate I am sure it will do me good to go.

P.—Yes, to be sure; and then the walk this nice clear day, you will enjoy it. All the brown and yellow leaves look so bright in the sun, and there are still green ones, too.

I wanted to tell you, godmother, that I had been looking in the Prayer-book and Bible for what I could find about St. Luke, in case I should not see you. There is more on this Saint's day than on many others to talk about, I thought, if you had time for it.

G.—And things for you to think about, if I had not been able to come in time to talk. I could not but think of the Collect when I was with poor neighbour Morris.

P.—Oh, yes; because St. Luke was a physician, that is, a doctor, is it not?

G.—Yes. I was waiting late, last night, longing for Dr. White to come. I did not know what to give the poor creature, she was in such pain. She lay there groaning, and saying between whiles, “Oh! if the man would but come, I would take any thing on earth that he gave me; I would have my hand cut off to get rid of this pain.” So, when he did come, she minded every thing he said as quietly as a child. What he gave seemed to still the pain; but as she could not sleep, she liked to talk; and we tried to recollect together what Mr. Seymour, when he came to see her, had said about taking the troubles God sends us like medicine for our souls.

P.—They say that poor old Mrs. Morris is not very patient.

G.—She was not at first, but she is much more so now. I think, Phœbe, that she *has* taken that medicine for her soul, and that it is doing her good. She likes to hear and talk about such things now.

P.—She is very lucky to have you, godmother, so near her.

G.—What she has to be thankful for, is having her good clergyman to visit and instruct

her; and I, too, am very thankful that I am present sometimes to hear his instructions; and if I am not with her during Mr. Seymour's visit she repeats to me what he has said. Indeed, it is a great gain to me to see him in sick people's houses, and a great blessing that I have time to go to them.

P.—Will you tell me, godmother, what it was that Mr. Seymour said about medicines for the soul?

G.—Just the things which the Collect should remind us of. That Christ was the great Physician, as He is the Bishop of our souls; and that He has appointed others—

P.—Yes; the Apostles and their successors down to this time.

G.—For what?

P.—To cure our souls.

G.—By their medicines, preaching the Gospel and praying with and for us; what else?

P.—(*After thinking a little.*) Administering the Holy Sacraments?

G.—Yes, that is what I meant. The first time that Mr. Seymour came to poor old Mrs. Morris, who, you know, had been careless about going to Church, and many other things, he asked if she had a Bible.

P.—Had she one?

G.—Yes; she asked me to get it out of an old trunk, where it was buried among other things, and quite mildewed. She looked rather ashamed, and Mr. Seymour said, "I am afraid you are

like some people who have a bottle of medicine from the doctor, and put it on the shelf without even tasting it. It can do them no good there." So poor Mrs. Morris said, "It was too true, worse luck;" and Mr. Seymour went on, "Now, I will show you how to take your medicine." Then he found out the proper places in the Bible, and told me what to read to her, and how much at a time; and the same with some of the Psalms. But we must go on about St. Luke,—only, Phœbe, remember, you need not talk of poor Mrs. Morris having been impatient, and neglecting her Bible. You may say—which is true—that she bears her pains very patiently now, and I am sure is making much of what her minister teaches her. Now, what do you know else about St. Luke?

P.—I have been told about his being St. Paul's companion. We know that from the book of Acts. And I have learned how it is supposed that St. Paul told him what to write in his Gospel.

G.—Do you remember, too, about St. Luke's Gospel being written to tell of those things that the other Evangelists had not mentioned in theirs?

P.—Yes, I remember that. How pleasant it must have been to St. Paul to have such a companion, who could feel just as he did.

G.—I suppose the greatest Saints find comfort and support in a faithful friend, likeminded with themselves.

P.—But can you tell me anything that is

known about St. Luke after what we are told of him in the Acts?

G.—I believe nothing very certain is known. But it is said that he left St. Paul at Rome, and travelled about in different countries, converting many persons. It is said, too, that he was bishop of a large city.

P.—Was he a martyr?

G.—Mr. Nelson says that old writers do not quite agree as to whether he was or not. One gives an account, however, of his preaching the Gospel in Greece; where the heathen people attacked him, and dragged him away to put him to death, which they did by hanging him on an olive-tree. The same writer says he was eighty or eighty-four years old at the time.

P.—Godmother, who was Theophilus, for whom St. Luke wrote the book of Acts?

G.—It is not known. Theophilus means a *lover of God*; so some people have imagined it was only a name St. Luke gave to any good Christian who should read his writings. But it is thought more likely that Theophilus was a real person, being called “most excellent,” which is a title of respect such as we use in these days for persons of high rank.

P.—Like calling the Queen *her Majesty*, I suppose.

G.—And noblemen, ‘*my Lord*’;—you can think of many others. And you may see what that teaches us.

P.—That we should not be too proud, you

mean, to use these words of respect when we speak to great people.

G.—It must be God's will that we should do so. Theophilus, we know, was a Christian;—but St. Paul used the words “most noble” to Festus, the Roman governor, who was a heathen. So we are to show outward respect to all persons above us, whatever we may think of their characters; there are many other passages of Scripture which teach us this.

I wonder if you can tell me what part of our Church service is to be found in St. Luke's Gospel only?

P.—Yes, you told me once, or I might not have found it out;—what you called the Christian Hymns.

G.—Open your Prayer-book, and tell me which they are.

P.—The Hymn of Zacharias, that is called Benedictus. Then there is the Magnificat, or song of the blessed Virgin Mary; and the song of Simeon. Do you know nothing more of St. Luke?

G.—Only that he was born at the famous city of Antioch, in Syria, and that he is said to have been a skilful painter as well as physician. His having been a physician we are sure of, because it is said so in Scripture.

P.—I remember the words of St. Paul, “Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.” Demas, at that time, was perhaps as good and sincere as St. Paul.

G.—And yet we read afterwards, “Only Luke is with me. Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” It ought to startle us, and make us very careful, to think how one was taken and the other left. They must have had the same advantages, the same teaching, the same example of St. Paul to lead them on. But there was one difference—Demas “loved the present world;” he could not be content to give it up for the sake of another and a better.

P.—Perhaps St. Luke may have been tempted in the same way, but stood more steadily against the temptation.

G.—And to think of the difference between them now should make us tremble, and watch and pray; we who have so many helps and advantages: instead of boasting of them we should fear the more for them.

P.—Godmother, I thought just now that if I was ill when I got as old as Mrs. Morris, I should never neglect my Bible as she did, after all the teaching I have had; but I was wrong for thinking so.

G.—Quite wrong; and take care to avoid such thoughts again, my dear Phœbe. Remember those words, “Be not high-minded, but fear.” Mrs. Morris was well-taught in her youth. She has told me lately that till she married she went to church regularly, and read her Bible and good books at home. But it was the world that drew her away from those good habits; not worldly pleasures, but worldly cares. We must

always remember that care as well as pleasure may make us worldly. Poor creature! she told me with tears about it. How, when she had her first child, she stayed at home with it till it was weaned. Then her mother offered to take the child sometimes on a Sunday; but it was winter, and she said she would wait till the fine weather came. In the spring there was some new excuse, for she had lost the habit of going, and so did not miss her Church. And then her family came on fast, and she had always the excuse of a baby, or of having to attend to the little ones at home, or of not having proper clothes; and too often she did things on Sunday morning which might and ought to have been done on Saturday.

P.—And did she not read her Bible at home?

G.—No, poor soul; she said she could not do it, for it seemed to reproach her. And then, when her family were grown up and had left her, she grew quite indifferent about church, and never thought of going there. After she had said this, she cried out, “I know this sickness is a great mercy; it has brought me to my senses in my old age before it is too late. I hope I shall be a warning to others. I might have been carried off without having time given me to repent.” I tell *you* this is a warning, Phœbe, because you need it; and poor neighbour Morris would wish her example to be useful to you. Do you not see how, when you grow up, you may have a family to look after, and go wrong by very little steps at a time?

P.—Oh, yes ; I hope I shall always remember this.

G.—I believe you will. Do not look sorrowful now, for your fault was not great ; only stop it now. I do not like to see a sad face on a Saint's Day. But keep this in your mind, and be watchful.





DIALOGUE XXXVIII.

Feast of St. Simon and St. Jude.

OCTOBER 28.



Phæbe.—I HAVE found very little about St. Simon and St. Jude in the Bible.

Godmother.—These are two of the Apostles of whom we know very little, except that they are numbered among those on whom the Church of Christ is built up. We honour them as being Apostles, without knowing many particulars of their lives, after they had received their Lord's commission.

P.—Then, what should we think of particularly on this day?

G.—The Collect will teach us that. But I was going to tell you that I have heard people say they did not care so much to go to Church on Saint's Days when they knew very little of the history of the Saint whose day was kept. I have heard this said even by people who did not mean to neglect their religious duties; and would not have said anything they thought wrong.

P.—But it was wrong to say so, was not it?

G.—It certainly must be a mistake, I think. You can tell me, I believe, why we keep certain days.

P.—Because the Church bids us.

G.—Yes, and the Church speaks to us in God's name. She is our Mother, set over us by God. She teaches us in the Collect for to-day, how much cause we have to honour the memory of the Apostles. Repeat it.

P.—(*Repeats it.*) God has built His Church upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets.

G.—By the Prophets are meant the teachers whom He sent to His Church of old, giving them power to foretel things to come. Many of their exhortations and of their prophecies are preserved to us in the old Testament, as those of the Prophet Isaiah, and many others.

P.—And the new Testament gives us the writings of the Apostles.

G.—Yes; on them God founded the Christian Church. They are spoken of in the book of Revelations, chapter xxii. where it is said that the heavenly Jerusalem had twelve foundations, and in them were written the names of the Apostles of the Lamb.

P.—I went to see the first stone laid of Beechwood Church, when it was begun to be built, and I saw how deep the workmen had dug the foundations.

G.—Without that the building could not stand firm. There was a Church begun at Longford, but the man who undertook to build it did not

know his business, and took in the people of the place by pretending to understand what he did not: he set about the building, and it looked handsome enough; but, for want of having strong foundations, and being well put together, it fell to pieces.

P.—The Church that I saw begun is standing firm, though there has been such stormy weather since; they have got on very far with the building.

G.—Those two Churches may help us to understand the prayer that we make in this Collect: “Grant us so to be joined together,” etc.

P.—I will look out the texts in which the Church is compared to a building, and all true members of it to stones. (See 1 Pet. ii. 5. Eph. ii. 20, 22. Heb. iii. 6.)

G.—The “lively stones,” mean stones full of life. Holy people ought to have within them the spiritual life, given them by the Holy Spirit, as you have just read in Eph. ii. 22. In Heb. iii. 6, the building is called a house, and Eph. ii. 21, a temple. We often call our Temple or Church the house of God. The next time you go to Beechwood and see the Church being built there, try to think of the holy men of old by whose examples and labours it pleased God to edify the Church before Christ came; and then of the twelve Apostles, the foundation of the Christian Church.

Do you remember that ruined castle that you went to see with me last Whit Tuesday?

can you tell me how the stones of that old castle looked?

P.—They were out of place, some already gone, and one end of the building seemed ready to fall. I think I know what you mean, godmother; we who have been baptized into Christ's Church, should be like firm stones in it, not dropping out like the stones of that ruin.

G.—We should each be filling up our appointed place in life, never troubling ourselves or thinking whether it is high or low; whether like that castle's beautiful gateway, all carved and ornamented, we possess what every one who looks at, admires; or whether like the stones in the recesses of those deep solid arches whose thickness you measured, we are hidden from sight and unknown. Our only thought should be, "Am I a stone, helping, by keeping firm in my proper place, to support and keep together the whole spiritual building of the Church; or am I tottering myself, and so causing others to totter?" It is an awful truth; we cannot stand or fall alone, if we would. Every duty done, and every duty omitted; every sin shunned, every sin indulged,—has an influence for good or for evil over others, of which we shall never be aware till the great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

P.—Oh, how much that should make us watch ourselves!

G.—Our blessed Lord is compared to the chief corner-stone, that is, the stone which keeps the

whole building together. Psalm cxviii. 22. Matt. xxi. 42. 1 Pet. ii. 6. Eph. ii. 20. Zech. x. 4. He alone can join us together in unity, by enduing each Christian with His Holy Spirit, which inspires that charity "which is the bond of peace and all righteousness." (Collect for Quinquagesima Sunday.)

P.—I think the Gospel speaks of this spirit of unity,—“These things I command you, that ye love one another.”

G.—Yes, we see there how our Lord graciously unites Himself to His Church, as being persecuted by the world. “The servant is not greater than his Lord,” etc.

The Epistle is chosen, as being part of the writings of the Apostle whose festival we commemorate. He warns his converts against being led away by those who in deeds or words “deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ;” and bids them “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints;”—that faith which we all profess every time we repeat the Creed. I have told you often what those who keep this true faith are called?

P.—Catholic Christians; and the ungodly men who deny it are Heretics.

G.—As St. Jude was brother to St. James the Less, he was either nephew of Joseph or of Mary, or Joseph’s son by a former wife.

P.—You mentioned on St. James’s day, that all near relations were called brothers and sisters, among the Jews. (St. Matt. xiii. 35.)

G.—St. Jude was also called Thaddæus and Lebbæus; Thaddæus meant zealous in praising God. Lebbæus meant prudent and understanding. In the answer to St. Jude's question in St. John xiv. 22, our Lord shows the difference between His followers, who love Him, and the world, "who keep not His sayings."

P.—Is there any account in history of the death of St. Jude?

G.—After preaching to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, he laboured in neighbouring Gentile countries, and at length went into Persia, where he was put to death for exhorting the Persians not to worship the sun. It is remarkable that Domitian, a cruel Roman emperor, caused search to be made for all the descendants of king David, that he might kill them, for fear they should ever claim the crown. He only found two grand-children of St. Jude, and he had them brought before him. They said they were indeed of the royal family, but were very poor; and they showed the emperor their hands hardened by daily labours. They earned their bread by the sweat of their brow, as husbandmen. They told the emperor that one Son of David was indeed a King, but in Heaven, not on earth, and that He would not come again, to reign as King on earth, till He should come in glory at the end of the world, to judge the quick and the dead.

P.—Did the cruel emperor listen to them?

G.—Unhappily for himself, he did not: when he found they were neither inclined nor able to

take any crown of his, he let them go, not caring for what they said of a heavenly kingdom.

P.—I think you said that the Bible told us hardly any thing of St. Simon.

G.—Only that he was called the Canaanite, probably not from his being born in Canaan, but because that word means the same as Zelotes—a very zealous man.

History only relates that he preached the Gospel in Egypt and other parts of Africa, and some think that like St. Jude he suffered martyrdom in Persia. Anyhow we may be certain that in his life and death he was devoted to his Saviour's service; we do not know how many he turned from sin to righteousness by the doctrines he taught, but they will be known in that day when the Lord shall make up His jewels.





DIALOGUE XXXIX.

All Saints' Day.

NOVEMBER 1.



Phæbe.—GODMOTHER, what a storm of wind there was last night, and how the trees are stripped to-day! The leaves are dancing and whirling about, and it all looks quite sad to what it did yesterday when we went to Church. It was so still then, and there were so many fine bright-coloured leaves on the boughs.

Godmother.—Yes, I thought as we went to Church, that it looked as if every thing was *waiting*. It put me so much in mind of something that I have read about the Epistle yesterday, of the Angels who were bid to wait, and not to hurt the earth, or the sea, or the trees, till they had sealed the servants of their God in their foreheads.

P.—You did not explain the Epistle and Gospel to me yesterday, as you do generally, because you set off to attend that funeral at Beechwood, just after morning service. I thought you

would say it was a fitting day to attend a funeral.

G.—It was indeed, and a blessing to attend a funeral where one could feel a steadfast hope that the brother then laid in the grave was really resting with his Lord,—was added to the number of those blessed ones who “rest from their labours.”

P.—That poor young man was a good Christian, then?

G.—You have said one word about him which I could not have said.

P.—Which do you mean?

G.—If he was a good Christian, can we pity him for dying?

P.—No, certainly we cannot. But it sounded very shocking to hear how he died.

G.—Of course we are shocked by any such accident; we cannot help it. But when we think it over afterwards, that feeling goes off, and we feel the real blessing. I did feel it when I talked to Michael's friends about him. I had seen him when he was a boy at school: for the last few years he has been working at his trade as a carpenter, and you know that he was killed, by falling from the scaffolding inside the new Church at Beechwood, whilst he was working at the roof. His sister and her husband told me how pleased he had been with having to work at the Church, how much he thought about it, and used to talk to them about it, for though, they said, he had not been used to talk much about

his good thoughts and right doings, but went on in a steady way, and not as if there was anything particular in what he thought and did, yet the new Church seemed quite to brighten him up, and pleased him so much, that he could not help talking of it, and telling them how it was all to be done, and the reason why things are made as they are in Churches, and what we may learn from it all. He told them, one night, that it made him understand better all that he had learnt at school about the Christian Church being built up.

P.—And in the midst of this he fell down and was killed.

G.—Yes; he did not speak again after his fall.

P.—They must have longed to hear him speak again.

G.—No doubt they did; but they had comfortable and pleasant things to remember of him, so they could feel peace and hope in his death. It was hidden from them how God worked in his soul in his last moments, and fitted him to appear before Him; but they could hope,—they could think of him when the 1st Psalm was read, where the righteous is likened to a tree planted by the water, whose leaf shall not wither; for they could hope that he was planted by the river of God, that waters the Paradise where His servants rest,—where they await the Day of Judgment. I thought about all this, as I walked home alone. The evening was still, as you have been saying, the leaves were coming down quietly,

and I was recollecting what is said in the Epistle of the last dreadful day, when the earth and all in it will be burnt up; when the angels will hurt the earth, and the sea, and the trees; but how first of all the true servants of God will be sealed, and kept safe, whilst their old dwelling-place is destroyed. God waits, as it were, till His servants are ready, or if He takes any of them suddenly from this place of trial, He can make them ready; He can make them, in a short time, fulfil a long time. I kept thinking of all this as I walked on; it was getting quite dusk, and as every thing got more dim and indistinct, and I could only see the hedges on each side the lane, looking dark against the pale grey sky; I seemed more able to think of things that are out of sight, and of the Christian soul which had just passed into the unseen world of spirits. Presently I heard steps, and I saw a figure coming towards me round the corner of the lane, where it turns down by the clump of tall aspens. I soon found that it was your brother, who had come out to meet me, because he thought I should find it lonely coming home in the dusk, and he walked by my side the rest of the way, cheering me by the sound of his kind voice, and yet listening gravely and quietly when I answered his questions about Michael Lance and the funeral. It made me think of the comfort of Christian fellowship on earth, and how we are allowed to find help and pleasure in those who are still with us. I had known Michael's mother when she was

young; she died early, like your mother, dear. I had cared about Michael for her sake, as I care for Ben on account of your dear mother, and I could not help thinking how one of those boys was now safe (I trust he is safe) in the unseen world; and your good brother still on this trial, going on steadfastly, I trust, towards his end;—both having been adopted into God's family, and both by His mercy to continue in it for ever. You remember what was said in the Epistle for the 19th Sunday after Trinity, which we heard not long ago, how St. Paul reminded the Ephesians that they had been sealed unto the Day of Redemption.

P.—Mr. Seymour said in his sermon that they were sealed in baptism, and that the sign of the cross should remind us of that sealing unto the Day of Redemption.

G.—And when the Day of Redemption shall come, they will be sealed again; sealed then for ever, without fear of losing that mark. They have been Christ's faithful soldiers and servants, and having been found clothed in the wedding garment, having overcome the wicked one, they will have white robes, and palms of victory, and will fall down before the throne of God, and before the Lamb, to give glory, and honour, and power to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.

P.—Mr. Seymour said a great deal about the day in his sermon yesterday.

G.—Yes; I hope you have tried to remember

it, for I do not feel fit or able to talk to you about such things, and it is so much better to learn about them from our clergyman. Try and say over some of the things he told us.

P.—He put us in mind how we had been keeping Saints' Days all through the year, and how different Saints' Days were to remind us of different Christian graces that we have to seek after:—St. Johns' Day, of Christian love and gentleness; the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary, of her meekness and purity; St. Peter's Day, of his bold faith, and yet of its having failed him. And so on with others; and that as to those saints of whom we know less, we should think of them as faithful servants of God, to whom we owe much, for He sent them forth as Apostles or Evangelists, and called most of them to martyrdom. But Mr. Seymour said that on this day we called to mind all God's faithful servants at once; all that glorious company of all tongues and nations, who having fought the good fight on earth, and kept the faith, have been admitted into the society of angels in the kingdom above; that we, by thinking of the glory they are now enjoying, may be encouraged to imitate the holy lives by which they gained their crowns, that we may come at last ourselves to the same state of happiness and peace. He said that we should try to follow them now in our minds, and picture to ourselves the glorious company that St. John describes in the Epistle for the day (Rev. vii.),

and then think where they are, and how they came to such a state of bliss; it was by renouncing the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of the world, and denying the desires of the flesh; by faithfully labouring, in spite of difficulties and temptations, to keep the vows they made, the holy faith they professed, when they were admitted into the family of Christ; and by keeping the seal of the Spirit unbroken, and feeding their souls evermore with the heavenly food which Christ gives in the Sacraments and Ordinances of His Church, that they arrived at heavenly glory; and that we must take courage, from the thought of them, to lead such lives of obedience, and faith, and penitence, as will obtain for us admission to their glorious society.

He said that if we thought of where they were, we should not mind going through a little pain and trouble to join them there, for now they are at rest in the Paradise of God, all glorious and bright, clad in robes like the light, washed clean in the blood of the Lamb; that it is promised them to hold palms of victory in their hands, and to have crowns of glory set upon their heads; that they are joined with Jesus Christ and all His holy Angels, to sing Psalms of joy and praise;—all danger passed,—no more sorrow, no more pain—their happiness secure for ever.

G.—Happy, indeed, Phœbe; happy souls, beyond the reach of danger and temptation! how can we sorrow for the dead, if we may hope that they died in the Lord, like that young man

whose body I followed to the grave? “Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours.” Do you remember, Phœbe, when those words are used?

P.—Yes; they are said over the grave by the Clergyman, when the body of a Christian is laid in the earth.

G.—And beautiful they are, and full of comfort, when we come with heavy hearts to lay our dear ones in the grave. They tell us of their peace and happiness, and we know that we shall meet again after a little while.

P.—And never part again.

G.—In the meantime we may think of them as well as if we saw them; and that makes us feel that we have not lost them, or parted from them altogether.

P.—What you say now reminds me of something more that Mr. Seymour taught us—Why we ought to love to think of them. He said they were still our dear brethren in the Church of Christ, fellow-members of His body,—that they are alive, though their bodies are dead, and perhaps very near to us, though we cannot see them; and that they, who are now the happy members of the Church triumphant, do not forget the condition of the Church below,—of their brethren who are still militant on earth,—but that they pray for us.

G.—I suppose you remembered what the word *militant* means?

P.—Yes; you explained that to me, because we hear it used before the Prayer that is read at the end of the Service. “For the whole state of Christ’s Church Militant here on earth.” You told me that it meant fighting, because all Christians on earth are fighting against the enemies of their souls.

G.—You are right. Go on telling me what Mr. Seymour said.

P.—He said then, that they pray that Christ would soon make up the number of His elect, and hasten His coming, to save and deliver us, and exalt His Church to the highest glory, which He has prepared for it with Him in Heaven; and he told us to look at the 6th chap. of Rev. and read the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses, in which we are told of the souls of the departed saints waiting for the end, and praying that God would hasten it. And so we ought not to forget them, but to think of them as the Church directs us on this Festival, and praise God for the happiness He has given them; and strive to live in such a manner as they lived, that we may not miss of their glory.

It comes into my mind now, godmother, about the meaning of what is said in the Collect for the day—that God has “knit together His elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of His Son Christ our Lord.” I used to think it only meant that Christians are united together while they are alive; but it means that

those who are dead are joined still with us in the same body.

G.—Yes, certainly; for they have been baptized into the “one body,” and united by the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ the Head, to whom we also are joined in the same body; and though we call them dead, they are not really so, but only gone into the world where Christ is, to be nearer to Him and to see him; and so, though they are hidden from our eyes, as it were by a veil, they are not separated from communion with us. Death cannot dissolve the union which the Holy Ghost has formed; but we, though some in this world, and some advanced to glory, are still “one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” (Rom. xii. 5.) This, as you suppose, Phœbe, is what the Collect means, when it speaks of the union of “the Elect in the Mystical Body of our Lord.” I wonder if you know the Collect perfectly.

P.—(*Repeats the Collect.*)

G.—I hope we shall both remember that the way these saints arrived at the happiness they enjoy, is the only way that we can hope to gain it.

Now let me read to you the Lessons that were taken out of the Apocrypha, they are so beautiful and so instructive.

P.—I should like to hear them read again, for they are not in my Bible. The Apocrypha is not in mine—I wish it was!

G.—I am glad you wish for it, for I had been thinking of giving you one. But tell me if you know the difference between the Apocrypha and the rest of the Bible.

P.—Thank you, godmother! Yes; I think I remember the difference. The Apocrypha is not inspired by God, like the rest of the Bible. You told me once to look at the end of the Prayer-book, and find what is said of it in the 6th Article. You said this spoke of the Apocrypha—“And the other books (as Hierome saith,) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine.”

G.—Now, Phœbe, if we read over the Epistle and Gospel together, it will help us to remember what we have been talking of, and show us both the state of glory to which the true members of the Church will be advanced, and remind us of the dispositions that our Lord requires in us, that we may at length partake of their blessedness.

P.—(*Reads.*) “And I saw,” &c. v. 1, 2, 3.

G.—The Almighty represented in a vision to St. John the vengeance He will inflict upon the wicked and unbelieving world, and showed him how He will then save from the general destruction all who are sealed as His own faithful servants.

First were sealed a number out of every tribe (but one) of the Jews, who had believed in Christ, and been admitted into His Church. And

after them, a countless multitude of every nation from among the Gentiles, who had been gathered into the fold of Christ, and made up, together with the converted Jews, that one great family of Christ, the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. All these the Apostle saw standing round about the throne of God, as you have just repeated to me from Mr. Seymour's Sermon.

When we have thus seen the happiness and glory of the Saints above, such as it will be after the great Day of Redemption, we are taught by the Church to fix our minds upon the way that brought them there; in the Gospel we are shown from the Sermon of our Saviour on the Mount, that we must be pure in heart, and poor in spirit, and meek and merciful,—that we must mourn for our sins, and seek for righteousness as hungry men seek for food, and submit to persecution if He shall please to call us to it; and then we shall receive that great reward in Heaven, which they are now enjoying who have so lived and died. We must not hope to reap the joys of Heaven unless we labour for it as they laboured, but must steadfastly endeavour, by the help of God, to follow in their steps, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, have gained the glory and honour and immortality they now enjoy.

If we will think of the great sufferings of the Saints of old, whom we are taught to think about in the 2d Morning Lesson, (Heb. xi. and xii.) we shall be ashamed at the thought of flinching from any care or trouble it may cost.

us to follow them ; for, besides the common care and difficulty from their natural corruption, they had often to contend against most cruel persecutions, mockings, and scourgings, and imprisonment. So it was, for the most part, in the early times of the Church of Christ ; the devil stirred up Heathen princes, and all wicked men to afflict and persecute the faithful followers of Jesus Christ ; but they endured it manfully, and kept the faith. Their pains are over now, and they are reaping their reward ; we should prepare our hearts to follow them, because it may, perhaps, please God that we shall ourselves be tried as they were, and not go on in easy comfort through our lives in the undisturbed possession of our holy faith, and the uninterrupted use of the blessings of our Holy Church. We should endeavour to prepare our minds, by self-denial and mortification, to endure hardness like the good soldiers of the cross, and suffer any thing rather than deny or forsake our faith, and be cut off from the Communion of the Saints, who are now singing the praises of the Lamb about the throne of God.



THE END.



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FRANCIS LUCAS,

OR

"THEY VOWS ARE UPON ME."



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WITH TRUE AND FEARLESS MIND
TO SERVE THE VIRGIN-BORN."**

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OR

A HELP

TO

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That they may be fitted for the Holy Communion, and receive
it with Profit.

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