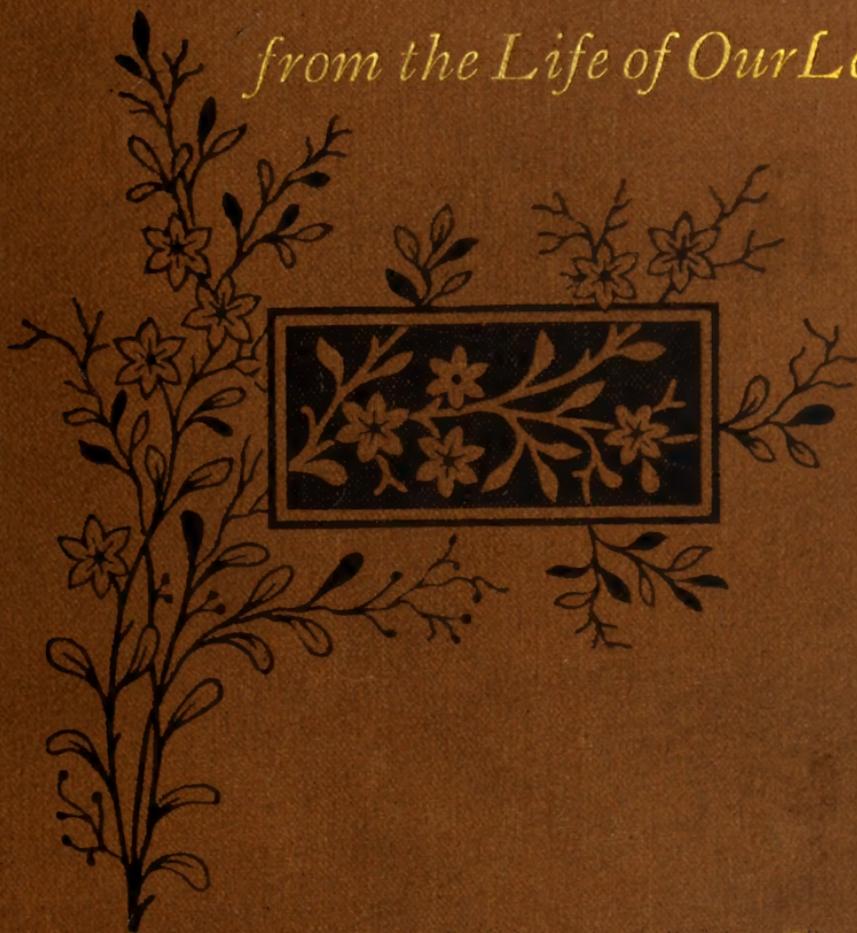


THE PATTERN LIFE

Lessons for Children

from the Life of Our Lord



W. CHATTERTON DIX

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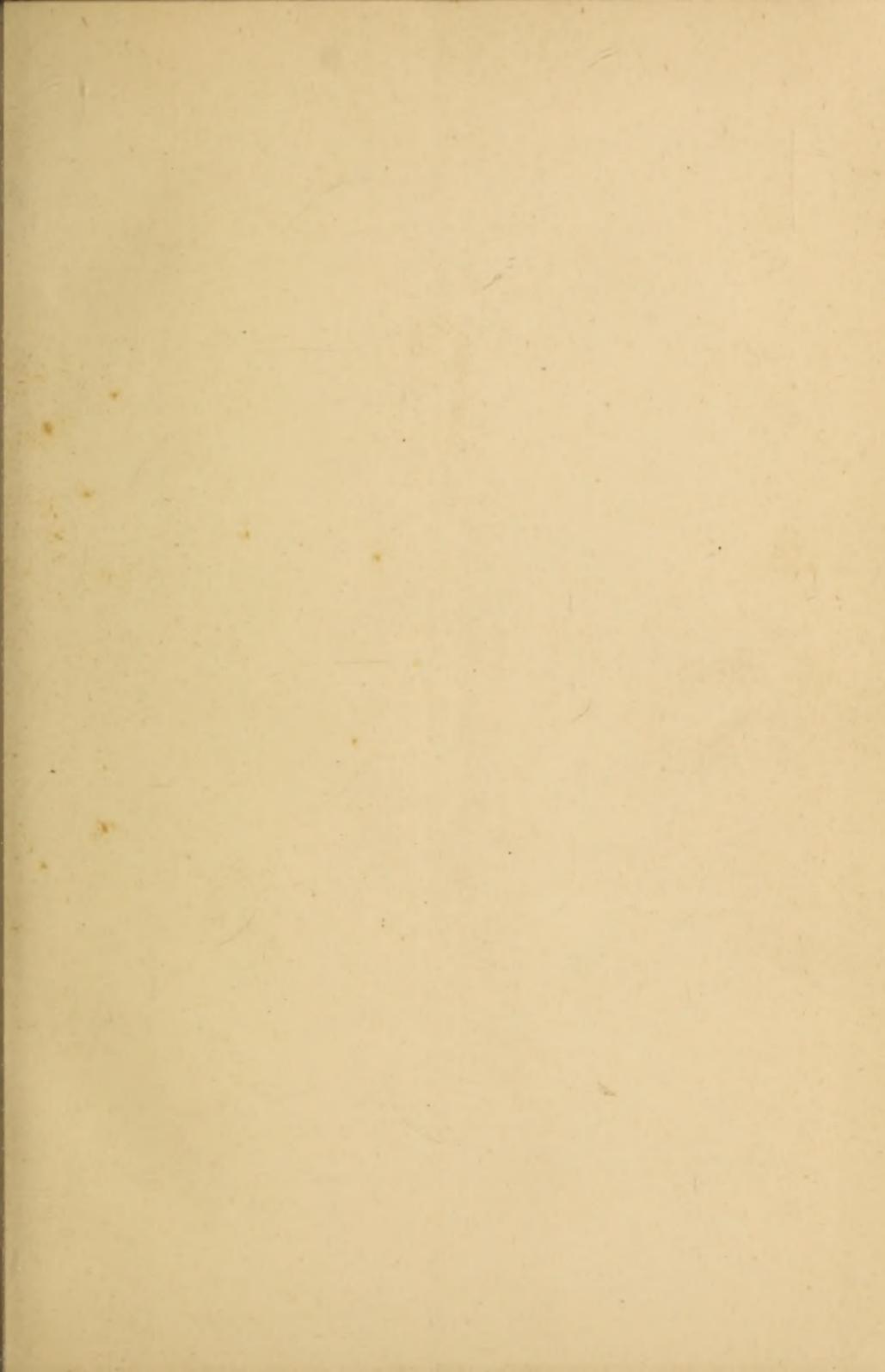
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“The Wise Men”

THE PATTERN LIFE;

OR,

LESSONS FOR CHILDREN FROM THE
LIFE OF OUR LORD.

BY

W. CHATTERTON DIX,

AUTHOR OF 'LIGHT,' 'THE RISEN LIFE,' 'A VISION OF ALL SAINTS,'
ETC. ETC.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS BY P. PRIOLO.



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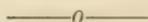
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P R E F A C E.



THIS book is intended to instruct and interest the children of the Church of England in the Truths of our Holy Religion.

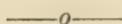
The teacher will be able very greatly to amplify the questions at the end of each chapter, which are, indeed, meant to be mainly suggestive.

The Hymns, now first printed, may be committed to memory, and may, themselves, form instructions upon the practical truths sought to be enforced by them.

W. C. D.

1885.

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CHAPTER I.

Advent.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

The Two Comings of our Lord —The Second Coming—
The Fall of the Angels —The Fall of Man—The
Sentence of Death.

ADVENT is the time in which we are taught to think about the two Comings of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Advent Sunday is that Sunday which is always nearest to the Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle, in any given year.

Saint Andrew's Day is November the thirtieth.

The First Advent, or Coming, of Christ was at the First Christmas, when

Jesus came, a little Child, into the world, to save it.

The weeks of Advent, then, must be used in trying to keep Christmas well.

I shall have very much to tell you about Christmas, and all that it means, by and by.

Now, I shall only speak of the Second Advent; that is, the coming back into the world of the same Lord Jesus Christ, to judge it.

Good people, at this holy time, have always meditated upon, that is, thought over with prayer, what are called the Four Last Things.

These are,—(i.) Death; (ii.) Judgment; (iii.) Heaven; (iv.) Hell.

Now, of these Four Last Things, Death and Judgment must happen to every one of us, and all of us must have

either Heaven or Hell for a dwelling-place hereafter.

First, let us try to think about Death. Death is a very awful thing.

To leave all that we have and all that we love in this world is sad enough, but Death is much more than this. It is the beginning of a new sort of being; it brings us, more nearly than ever, face to face with God; it, as it were, opens a new page in the book of our life, in which there is much that no one living has ever yet read.

Death is often full of weakness, pain, and suffering. There are many kinds of death. Sometimes it is slow and wasting; sometimes it is sudden and startling. Sometimes it comes by an accident, sometimes by the hand of another.

Every one must die, except those who shall be alive when Christ comes, although Death comes to all in a thousand different ways. 'We shall all be changed.'

Death, so far as we can understand, seems to be a punishment sent by Almighty God for the sins of His creatures.

God once made a mighty host of beautiful angels to serve Him in the heavenly country. He gave them, what He has also given us, the power of free-will, that is, power to choose between what is good and what is bad.

Some of these angels sinned against God by pride.

They could not, of course, sin with the body as we can, for they had no bodies such as we have. But they forgot the wonderful and good God Who had called

them into life; they thought only of themselves. They sinned in the intellect, or mind, and God punished them for their forgetfulness of Him.

Then there was a great war in Heaven, where God meant all to be perfect peace. You can read about it in the Book of the Revelation, chapter xii. verse 7. Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon, the Devil, or chief leader of the rebel hosts; and the Dragon fought, and his angels. Michael gained the victory. Michael, whose name means, 'who like to God?' was a true and brave knight who fought for the honour of his King and Master. The end of this war was, that the Devil was cast out, and his angels were cast out with him. 'God spared not the angels that sinned.'

And what have I to tell you of man—man who was made ‘in the image of God?’

The history of the Fall of man is a story of Death.

When Adam was created—that is, formed or made by Almighty God—he was put in a beautiful home, prepared for him, called the Garden, or Paradise, of Eden, which means Delight (Gen. ii. 7, 8).

We can hardly think how very lovely it was. It was far fairer and prettier than any park or garden which you have ever seen.

A beautiful fourfold river went out of Eden to water it and keep it fresh, and all kinds of wonderful things, gold and precious stones, lay hidden underneath its grassy soil (Gen. ii. 10–12).

Bright and richly scented flowers grew

all around, and the most beautiful trees of every sort, rich in leaves and fruit, spread their graceful branches, in which the birds sang from early morning until the rosy sunset lighted up the landscape with a flood of purple and gold, which sank down, to give place to the rays of the newly made moon. Then all was touched with silver beauty, or lay in the solemn twilight of the blue and yellow stars.

Two trees above all others we read of.

One was called 'The Tree of Life;' the other 'The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.' Of the fruit of this last Adam was told he must not eat, for, said God, 'in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die' (Gen. ii. 17).

Was this tree bad? Was it poisonous, as we should say?

No. Everything that God had made was 'very good.'

But man, like the angels of whom I have told you, had the power of free-will. He could do what God told him; or he could do what God told him he was not to do. He could do as he liked.

Then God created Eve. While Adam lay in a deep sleep, He took one of his ribs, and of this rib He made a woman, and brought her to Adam to be a help to him. Her name means life (Gen. ii. 21-24).

The Devil or Evil One, who led the rebel angels to their fall, told Eve that she and her husband might eat of the forbidden Tree, and that, if they did so, they should not die, as God had said, but that they should be as gods, that is, very wise, knowing good and evil.

Was this true? No; it was a lie, told by him who is called 'the Father of lies,' 'a liar from the beginning.'

And it was the worst kind of lie, partly true. They did get knowledge of evil by it, as the Devil said, and they did not then and there fall down dead; but they got a knowledge which did not make them 'as God,' but as the Devil himself, and they did die spiritually.

Adam and Eve, then, broke the commandment which God had given them, and God punished their sin with sorrow, suffering, and death.

'Dust thou art; and unto dust shalt thou return.' This was God's Sentence of Death, and it was a death of both body and soul (Gen. iii. 1-19).

Is this all I have to tell you about Death? No, indeed, it is not. Jesus

Christ died to take away the sting from Death. He rose again, to make us victors or conquerors over him who had the power of Death, that is, the Devil, that same Satan whom our Lord saw fall from Heaven as lightning; that same Devil who tempted our first parents to sin, and thus brought upon them the curse of Death (Luke x. 18).

Jesus Christ has made it possible for us to meet Death, the King of Terrors, and to pass through his unknown country, full of hope, knowing that 'the grave, and gate of death' lead to 'our joyful resurrection.' 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Cor. xv. 22).

Death has not broken the relation between the members of a family. Those who lie in the silent churchyard

are still one in the family circle. The dead are not gone into some strange unknown land ; we know where they are : the faithful dead are with Jesus Christ. They are still round about us ; as it were, in another room of our Father's house, into which we cannot yet go. But presently, please God, we shall be made all one again, through the risen life of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the communion of saints, which we now enjoy in part.

Our risen King has lain in the grave, only to make it fragrant and sweet, and to brighten it with calm and heavenly light for all those who love and trust in Him.

THE FALL AND DEATH.

Everything God made was good,
Everything was fair ;
And Eden was most beautiful ;
God placed our parents there.

When Satan tempted them to sin,
The dreadful ruin came ;
And thus it was that Sin and Death
Filled all the world with shame.

Jesus the Saviour came to win
Pardon and peace and life
For all who turn in faith to Him,
And conquer in the strife.

Death can no longer hurt, for Christ
Has died to set us free,
To raise us up, and make us reign
With Him, eternally.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER I.

1. What do we think of in Advent ?
2. When is Advent Sunday ?
3. When was the First Advent of Jesus Christ ?
4. When will the Second Advent be ?
5. What are ' the Four Last Things ' ?
6. Between whom was the war in Heaven ?
7. Could the angels sin in the same way that we do ?
8. Who led the good angels ?
9. Who led the proud angels ?
10. What does the name Michael mean ?
11. Where were Adam and Eve placed by God ?
12. What were the names of two trees in the Garden ?

13. Who tempted Eve to break God's command?

14. What was the punishment of our first parents' sin?

15. What was the Sentence of Death?

16. Who died to save us from everlasting Death?

17. Does Death really separate the living and the departed?

18. Who has made the grave the gate of life?

CHAPTER II.

Advent.

THE FOUR LAST THINGS.

The Last Judgment—Heaven—Hell—Heaven our true Home.

Now it is time for me to speak of the second of the Four Last Things. It is Judgment.

The Bible tells us that 'it is appointed unto all men once to die, but after this, the judgment' (Heb. ix. 27).

One sort of judgment happens to each soul at the moment of death.

This is called the Particular Judgment. But it is not of this that I am going to tell you now.

I want to speak to you of that General Judgment, which the Creed refers to, when it says of Jesus Christ, 'And He shall come to judge both the quick (that is, the living) and the dead.' Or, in the words of the Athanasian Creed, which I will make simple for you, 'At Whose coming to judgment, all men shall rise again with their bodies, to tell all that they have done, to give account of, or reckon up, their works.'

Have you ever seen one of the Queen's Judges come into a town, when he is going to open an Assize? I mean, when he comes to judge people, who either have done wrong and await punishment, or who have disputes to be settled and affairs to be put right?

What grand state and show there are! First come the sheriff's officers, or the

javelin-men, with ancient halberds. In Scotland, soldiers form a guard. Then follow the attendants and officers of the Judge, bearing wands, and dressed in court costume; and, last of all, the Judge himself, in scarlet robes trimmed with costly fur or gold lace.

As he enters the court, the trumpeters sound a ringing blast, and, when he takes his seat on a kind of throne, all in court rise and make a lowly bow, to own him as the representative of the Queen of England, whose laws he is to carry out, and whose sentences he, as her minister or deputy, is to pronounce.

At the end of the world there will be such a great Assize or Trial as has never before been seen.

Who will be the Judge?

Jesus Christ, King of kings and Lord

of lords. And He will come in pomp, and in the glory of His Father; and His attendants will be the holy angels, and His coming will be heralded, or made known, by the terrible blast of the Archangel's trumpet, at whose awful sounding the living and the dead will rise to stand before the Bar of God (Matt. xvi. 27).

And, unlike any earthly judge, He will know the secrets of all hearts; everything will be open to Him, every thought, word, and deed of our past lives. And His sentence can never be altered, neither can it be anything but quite right.

Oh, how terrible, how dreadful, this Judgment-seat of Christ, before which we must all stand!

If we have been good and kind and

generous and forgiving, Jesus will place us on His right hand.

If we have been wicked and cruel and selfish and unjust, He will place us on His left hand.

The one place will mean Heaven, the other Hell.

But this strict and righteous Judge is so kind and good to us, that He gives us time in which we may prepare for His coming. He gives us the chance—oh! so many chances—to get ourselves cleansed and pardoned, that so, at the last, He may not have to punish us, but to reward us.

Now, how can we prepare, that is, get ready for the coming of the Son of man to Judgment? that coming which will, at last, be quick and swift as the flash of lightning in the heavens, that, almost

before it has run across from east to west in the sky, vanishes out of sight (Matt. xxiv. 27).

First: we must be very careful about our prayers.

Prayer will keep us near to God; it will take us up out of ourselves; it will remind us of the things which are out of sight and eternal.

Secondly: we must be always watching. Like the armed sentinel, we must ever be on the look-out, lest the enemy of our souls surprise us.

‘Be sober and keep vigil,
The Judge is at the gate.’

To keep vigil is to watch, lest One come in an hour when we are not looking for Him. Jesus Himself says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door.’

Thirdly : we must judge ourselves now.

That means that we must examine or look into ourselves, and, if we find anything wrong within us, we must have it out. We must drag it to the light of day by confessing it, and by bearing pain and shame on account of it.

Whoever confesses his sin, and leaves it off or forsakes it, shall find mercy with God (Prov. xxviii. 13).

And fourthly : we must believe and love God our Father, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Oh, then, do not let us go on adding sin to sin, that so we may have an army of them to start up and accuse us at the Judgment Day. No; let us tell them all to God now, in the way in which He has most mercifully and lovingly asked us, that the Blood of Jesus Christ may

cleanse us from all sin, and that the Judgment Day be less terrible for us to bear.

The third of the Four Last Things is Heaven.

Dear children, I have shown you that Death and Judgment must happen to us all. But will all go to Heaven? Oh no. Only those who are faithful, true, and loving right to the end, will go into those beautiful gates, which stand open, because Jesus has won the victory for all who are His followers, and those who are true penitents, even at the eleventh hour.

What is Heaven?

The most simple answer I can give is this, It is the place where God is.

Yes, Heaven without God would not really be Heaven at all. It is true that Heaven is bright and beautiful because

it is the place where the angels and saints dwell.

But what gives them their beauty and joy? Is it not the presence of God? And so, the golden streets, and the pearly gates, and the crystal sea, would all lose their glory, if it were not that God in His Majesty fills Heaven with Himself. The Christian soul can truly say:—

‘E’en Heaven itself were loss,
Were Heaven without her Lord’

—(Rev. xxi. 18–23).

Thus, if we wish to spend our ‘for ever’ in Heaven, we must begin by living in Heaven even here, in this world, which, in almost all respects, is so very unlike what Heaven is.

I think I hear you ask, ‘How can we do this?’ I will give you the answer

to your question. You can live in God's presence here, every day. You can, while you are mixing with and talking to the people about you, have your conversation in Heaven all the while. You can, if you will, make a little Heaven upon earth by your good example, by your kind words, and by your gentle actions (Phil. i. 27).

While you are in a state of grace—while you are guilty of no grievous or mortal sin, that is—God dwells with you.

And is it not one of the marks of Heaven, that nothing evil is found there? As the Bible says, 'There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth ;' that is, anything which is bad or unclean, such as a lie, or wicked thought or deed (Rev. xxi. 27).

Of course, even in this state of happiness with God—this better life in the midst of a sinful world—there must be some things which are sad. There will be sickness and pain, and, worst of all, perhaps, nay, most likely, there will be falls, or going back into old sins and old bad habits, and departings from God.

But in Heaven everything will be perfect; everything will be quite pure, quite holy, quite happy, and quite safe, for ever.

‘Oh, what must it be to be there!’

More beautiful than the Garden of Eden, of which I have told you, more lasting than the loveliest scene on earth—a land of no sunsets, of fadeless flowers, and of pleasures without end—a land where Jesus is the Light, where there is

no more sorrow nor crying, where God wipes away all tears, and where there is no night (Rev. xxi. 4, 25).

There, God will be everything, the Joy of every joy, the Life of every life, the Source of every pleasure, God the First, God the Last; God, as the Bible tells us, will be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28).

Are you sure *you* would like Heaven? You would not like it, you would be uncomfortable in it, if in this world your pleasure had been in wicked and sinful things.

And now, dear children, I wish that I could finish.

But I must say something about the fourth of the Four Last Things.

I have told you of Death, of Judgment, and of Heaven; now I must tell you something about Hell, that awful place

of which we are told that the wicked shall have their part 'in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone' (Rev. xxi. 8).

What is it that makes this dreadful Hell, 'prepared,' not for us, not for man, but for 'the Devil and his angels,' so horrible, beyond all words to tell? (Matt. xxv. 41).

It is this—God is not there. Those who dwell there will wish to sin as they did when they lived on earth, and will not be able. They will thirst for drink, if but only a drop of water to cool their parched, dry tongues, and nothing will give them relief; but the cruel flames will be licking up around them, and be giving them pain, too terrible to think of.

They will know, too, that their misery is their own fault, that they might have

been in Heaven, if they had used the graces God had given them, and that, having chosen to refuse those graces, they are utterly without hope.

But the most awful punishment of the lost will be separation from the good God Who made them for Himself, Who died for them on the Cross, and Who wanted to save them, and take them to dwell with Him in Heaven, for ever and ever.

Though they despised God when they were on earth, they will think of Him then.

To live without God, this is Hell.

Dear children, every time you say the Lord's Prayer, as you repeat the words, 'Deliver us from evil,' pray to God to keep you in the narrow way that leadeth unto life, lest you also 'come into this place of torment' (Luke xvi. 28).

Heaven is our home, not Hell. God does not want you to be lost. Die you must. Ask God to give you grace that you may offer Him a good death—a death, that is, full of faith and hope and penitence and love.

Ask Him to help you so to live that you may have a merciful judgment, for remember that your Judge will be your Saviour as well.

Ask Him to reward you with eternal life in heaven with Him, that you may join those glorious bands of wonderful creatures and blessed spirits, and holy angels and saints, who rest not day nor night, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who wast and art and art to come.'

JUDGMENT, HEAVEN, AND HELL.

Christ once again will come to judge
The living and the dead ;
His great white throne set up in Heaven,
The books before Him spread.

One portion will be ours that day,
Eternal loss or gain ;
Undying joy with God in Heaven,
Or punishment and pain.

Oh, do not let us throw away,
For earthly dreams and toys,
The Crown of life which Jesus won,
And Heaven's eternal joys.

So let us live, and watch, and pray,
That, Death and Judgment past,
Our home, through Jesus Christ our Lord,
May be in Heaven at last.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER II.

1. What is the second of the Four Last Things?
2. Are there two Judgments?
3. Name them.
4. What Creeds speak of the General Judgment?
5. Who will be our Judge?
6. Who will be placed on His right hand?
7. Who on His left hand?
8. How can we best prepare for the Judgment?
9. What duties are specially needful?
10. Does God want us to be pardoned now?
11. What is the third of the Four Last Things?
12. What makes the joy of Heaven?

13. What is it to be in 'a state of grace'?

14. What is the fourth of the Four Last Things?

15. What makes the greatest pain of Hell?

16. What is man's true home?

17. What do you mean when you pray, 'Deliver us from evil'?

18. What is the endless song of the angels and saints?

CHAPTER III.

The Nativity of our Lord, commonly called
Christmas Day.

THE BEST BIRTHDAY.

The Annunciation—Mary's Visit to Elizabeth—The
Incarnation.

'I WISH you many happy returns of the
day!'

What a pleasant greeting, or wish,
this is that we give our friends, as their
different birthdays come round.

Oh, a birthday is a happy time in a
house! There are presents given; and
smiles and laughter, and fun and good
wishes and kind thoughts, are the order
of the day. All try to be sweet and

good-tempered on a birthday, of all days in the year.

But this day is the best birthday that the world has ever known; it is the Birthday of Jesus Christ.

Now, let us think a little about what happened.

One day while the Blessed Virgin Mary was praying to God, or meditating, or, perhaps, reading, a beautiful angel called Gabriel came into the room where she was (Luke i. 26).

Gabriel is called the Angel of the Annunciation, that is, the angel who announces, or brings a message.

What was that announcement? What was the message that Gabriel brought to Mary, the poor Jewish maiden?

You can easily think how surprised Mary was at first.

What should we do, if, as we were saying our prayers, a bright light filled the room, and an angel all shining and beautiful stood by our side?

But soon the angel said to Mary, 'Hail, highly favoured, or full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.'

These words make up what is called the Angelic Salutation or greeting.

Mary was very full of trouble at what the angel said to her, and thought much, or cast about in her mind what this salutation or saying of Gabriel meant.

The glorious angel knew that Blessed Mary was sorrowful, and that she wondered very much at what he had said to her, so he spoke again to her. 'Fear not, Mary,' he said, 'for thou hast found

favour with God, and behold thou shalt have a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus, and He shall reign for ever and ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end' (Luke i. 30).

Mary now knew that she was to be the mother of the long promised Saviour of the world.

Full of fear and holy joy, and knowing that through her the greatest wonder that the world had ever known was to be brought to pass, she, the pure and spotless Virgin, asked the angel, 'How shall this be?'

The angel told her how it should be by God the Father's will, through the power of God the Holy Ghost (Luke i. 34, 35).

Yes, God is almighty; He can do anything. This of which I am telling

you is the Mystery of the Incarnation, or the taking of the manhood into God. As Saint John says, 'The Word was made flesh.' God became man.

It is this truth, which, like the foundation-stone of a great building, lies under and keeps up the whole fabric of the Christian religion.

It is this truth which we say we believe every time we repeat the Apostles' Creed, as we declare of Jesus Christ that He was 'conceived by the Holy Ghost,' and 'born of the Virgin Mary.'

What I may call the feast-day of the doctrine of the Incarnation, is the 25th of March, and is called Lady Day, because then the angel came from God and told Blessed Mary that she should

have a dear Baby, who should be the Son of God.

Can we understand this wonderful mystery? No, indeed; the wisest man who ever lived can only fall down and say, 'Lord, I believe, for with Thee all things are possible. O Lord God Almighty, Thou canst do whatsoever Thou willest, both in heaven and on earth.'

The Blessed Virgin did not ask any more questions; she was not troubled very much, but she bowed her beautiful head before the angel of God, and said these simple words, full of faith and humility: 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word.'

Then the angel Gabriel went away; his work on earth for a while was

done. All the angel hosts sang for joy when they knew that their King was 'made man.'

Very soon after this, Mary made haste and started off to visit her cousin Elizabeth, who lived a hundred miles away, in a city of Judæa called Hebron, which nestled among the hills.

Of course, Elizabeth had not heard the glad tidings of the wonderful thing which had happened to her cousin; and when Mary came into the house where Zacharias and Elizabeth lived, as soon as the Blessed Virgin had saluted her, the Holy Ghost came to Elizabeth and filled her with holy joy, making her very happy.

Then she said in a loud voice to Mary, 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is this Child Who is

coming. And why is this, that the mother of my Lord should come to see me?’

Then the Blessed Virgin sang a beautiful song, which we call the *Magnificat*, and which the Church has gone on singing almost ever since.

It begins, ‘My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.’

Mary stayed with her cousin for three months, and then went back to her own house (Luke i. 38–56).

Some people think, or talk as if they thought, that the earthly life of Jesus Christ began when He was born on Christmas Day.

No; it began at the moment of the

Incarnation, when God the Son took our nature upon Him, and became 'Man of the substance of the Virgin Mary, His mother,' when God's angel came straight from heaven and said what was to be.

This may seem very hard for you to understand, dear children.

When you grow up you will be able to think more easily about it; but you will never be able really to understand this wonder or mystery.

Bad people will try to make you think that this truth of God is a story, a fable.

Do not listen to them.

What would you think of the man who would tell you to build a great castle on a shifting sand-bank or a moss-bog, which some day would

swallow up you and your fine castle together?

Turn away from all who ask you to lay any other foundation for your belief than that which is already laid for you.

If you do not 'believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ,' your whole religion will be wrecked, as surely as the ship that rests on the quicksands; or ruined as truly as the house built on the boggy ground, that shifts and trembles, and at length opens its mouth and swallows up all that stands upon it.

THE INCARNATION.

‘And was made man!’ oh, wondrous
words!

Which tell how God the Son
Took flesh from Mary, Mother-maid,
To save a world undone.

In flesh He came to live as man,
To teach us how to live ;
In flesh, to die upon the Cross,
And life eternal give.

In flesh He rose, in flesh went up
To Heaven to intercede
For evermore at God’s right hand
For every human need.

In flesh He comes, to give His own
His Body and His Blood ;

In flesh to cleanse what flesh has stained
In life's renewing flood.

'And was made man!' oh, blessed truth!
God give me grace and power
To keep it whole and undefiled
Until my latest hour.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER III.

1. When do we keep the Best Birthday?
2. What is the angel Gabriel called?
3. What are his words to the Blessed Virgin called?
4. When do we keep the Feast of the Annunciation?

5. What does the Apostles' Creed say about the Incarnation?
6. What does the Incarnation mean?
7. Where did Saint Elizabeth live?
8. What happened when the Blessed Virgin told her cousin the news?
9. What is the name of the hymn Mary sang?
10. How long did Mary stay with her cousin?
11. Where did she return afterwards?
12. What is the doctrine of the Incarnation like?
13. Can any one understand it?
14. If you do not believe it, is your religion a true one?

CHAPTER IV.

The Nativity of our Lord (Dec. 25).

THE BEST BIRTHDAY.

Darkness before Dawn—The Angel's Visit to Saint Joseph—The Journey to Bethlehem—Christ is born—The Shepherds go to Bethlehem.

OH, how long and dreary the time seemed before Jesus Christ came in the flesh!

For 400 years no prophet's voice had spoken of the coming Saviour.

Some of the people got very sad; out of spirits, as we should say.

'Our fathers,' they said, 'wrote down what the prophets foretold, long before their time, and, since they fell asleep, all things go on just as before; there is no

sign of the coming of the Desire of all nations.'

'The Desire of all nations' was one of the titles by which the prophets spoke of Jesus (Hag. ii. 7).

A little boy was helping his father at his work in a field on the Mendip Hills in Somersetshire. The father sent the little fellow home to get his tea. When he got out of the fields on the bleak hills, there was a grey evening mist coming on. Soon the rain began to fall, the poor child lost his way, and night set in, cold, wet, and miserable.

Oh, how long and dark was that night for the little fellow, who wandered about, cold and hungry, hour after hour, until, at last, in the dim morning light, nearly perishing with fright and cold, he found his way to a cottage door.

Some shipwrecked people in a small boat were tossing about on the sea for days together. Every now and then they saw a light, but the great waves hid it from their sight, and the vessel which they thought was coming to their help sailed away. Oh, the weary nights of gnawing hunger and raging thirst! How they longed and prayed for morning to come, that perhaps they might be picked up by a passing ship, or get to some friendly shore, before either their little boat was lost, or they died miserably of hunger and thirst! Every minute seemed to them an hour; every hour a year.

My dear children, these are but very faint and poor pictures of the long black night of suffering and waiting that went before the morn when Jesus came to earth.

But all the time the Giant was waiting to run His course, and the Sun, hidden by the thick dark clouds, was at last to break forth in full glory, and to light up the world with beauty and joy.

‘Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise.’

His mother was going to be married to a just and good man named Joseph; but before they married Joseph found out what a wondrous thing God was going to give Mary; and therefore he did not like to be married to her. But the same angel who had visited Mary was sent to him also to tell him that it was God’s will that they should be married. So Mary became Saint Joseph’s wife.

The Roman Emperor, Augustus Cæsar, had ordered that all his people should be taxed, or counted (Luke ii. 1).

It was, as we should say, a taking of the census, or numbering the people, just as this is done sometimes in our own country. For this purpose every one went into his own city.

Now, the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph were of the family of David, so, though they lived at Nazareth, they had to go to Bethlehem, the city of David, thus making the words of the prophet Micah come true: 'But thou, Bethlehem, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth that is to be the ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting' (Mic. v. 2).

The journey took three or four days, and the road lay across the mountains of Galilee.

Oh, how very hungry and thirsty, how

tired and cold the poor travellers must have been, as they went along their weary walk; and, remember, it was in the middle of winter.

At last they saw the lights in the little town of Bethlehem, shining afar.

Now surely Mary, who sadly needed rest, would find with Saint Joseph shelter and refuge.

Alas! the inn was quite full; there was no room for them there; so, by God's providence, it was arranged that instead of going into the guest chamber of the inn, full of noise and rude people, the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph should seek rest in the stable, which was far quieter for them and more comfortable (Luke ii. 7).

Here the Saviour of the world was born.

The people were going and coming, and passing thoughtlessly by the poor shed wherein lay the Lord of Life and Glory, wrapped in baby's clothes.

None knew that the little Baby lying in Mary's arms was God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, by whom all things were made; and yet, perhaps, the creatures in the stable knew it, for Isaiah says, 'The ox knew his master, and the ass the manger of the Lord.'

Far away, in the same country, some shepherds were abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night (Luke ii. 8).

They were the very same fields in which David had fed his father's flocks (1 Sam. xvii. 15).

The shepherds' watch-fire sent up its



“ A bright light shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.”

red glow to the deep blue heavens above, spangled with silver stars.

The herdsmen were talking, perhaps about their sheep, or their friends, or their wages; perhaps they were playing their pipes and singing to pass the long hours of night away.

And lo! the angel of the Lord came to them, and a bright light shone round them, and they were sore afraid.

But the angel said, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy for all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.'

Then the angel told them how they should see all that he said was indeed true: 'Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'

Then suddenly, in a moment, quicker

than the lightning's flash, there came to the angel a great many more, 'a multitude of the heavenly host,' beautiful angels who filled the midnight sky with a blaze of light, and sang in such sweet strains as earth had never heard before, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men.'

Directly the angels had gone away, the shepherds said to each other, 'Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has told us about.'

They made haste across the fields, along the hard roads, over hill and dale, never stopping until they came to Bethlehem, and found Mary and Saint Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Then they joyfully told every one the

good news the angel had brought them: 'This day is born in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord (Luke ii. 10-17).

The Best Birthday teaches us many lessons, dear children. I have told you, as I have gone along, about (1) the doctrine of the Incarnation; (2) the Mystery of the Visitation; (3) the Holy Nativity.

Each of these subjects has its own lessons, but what we may learn most easily from all is, that we must be submissive, patient, and humble.

1. We must try to imitate or copy the Blessed Virgin's submission of will. We must always be saying to God, 'Be it unto me according to Thy word.'

To submit means to bend, or bow, to give up to the wishes of another.

When anything hard or unpleasant comes in our path, we must say, 'Not my will, but Thine, be done.' We must take our crosses in the spirit of love. God knows what is best for us; let us trust Him. We must bend ourselves to His will concerning us. God's promises always come true. The night may be long and dreary, but morning with bright sunshine is sure to come at last.

Do we want our own way? Let us think, when we are put out at not getting it, that even Jesus Christ pleased not Himself. He came to do His Father's will. He said that His meat was to do the will of Him that sent Him. And in the Garden of Gethsemane, as He knelt in the dark shades of the olive trees, He cried out to His Father, 'If it be possible, let this cup of suffering pass away from

Me, nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done' (Mark xiv. 36).

2. Think of the sweet patience of the Blessed Mother in her long and bitter trials; and, above all, think of the patience of Jesus.

'God is a righteous Judge, strong and patient, and God is provoked every day' by our sins (Ps. vii. 12).

But does He ever grow tired of bearing with us? Is He ever weary of forgiving us? No, never. We must be patient when others are cross and troublesome and hard and unkind.

From the moment of the Incarnation, until the hour when He died upon the Cross in sharpest pain, Jesus lived a life of divine patience.

3. We must be very humble.

Oh, how humble Mary was! The

mother of the Lord, she thought not of herself but only of her Saviour; she was humble, as she nursed the Lord of Glory in the poor stable, amongst the cattle who warmed Him with their breath; humble, as helpless, she watched Him die upon the cruel Cross of shame.

No harsh word of pride ever came from her lips, no high thoughts of pride ever dwelt in her heart.

And what of Jesus? He left His Father's throne, to take upon Him our flesh; to be born a poor Child, to live a sad and weary life, to die upon the Cross.

Think of His humility as He toiled in Saint Joseph's workshop, supporting His dear mother by His hard work; think of the thirty years of His hidden life, before

He began to do wonders, and heal the sick, and preach His gospel.

Think how, without a murmur, He took the coarse insults of the soldiers as they jeered at Him, and even spat upon Him.

And yet, all the time He was God.

Oh, let us clothe ourselves with humility! it will be a more beautiful dress than any which earth can give, for it is that which Jesus wore from His cradle to His grave.

Well may Christmastide be a happy time! We trim up our churches and homes, we sing carols, and glad hymns, and anthems. Friends meet, and there is feasting for young and old, for rich and poor.

And more, far more than all, every altar is a Bethlehem, for Bethlehem

means 'The House of Bread,' and He Who was made flesh there gives us His flesh to eat, for He said, 'I am the Bread of Life;' and 'the Bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven and giveth life unto the world' (John vi. 33).

Jesus still humbles Himself to come to us in the Holy Communion.

Oh, where shall we find such happiness on earth as at the altar of God? for there the Babe of Bethlehem waits to give us Himself, as more than eighteen hundred years ago He came to the manger-throne, true God and true Man, to give His Incarnate Life to all who would welcome and love Him as little children.

HISTORICAL NOTE.

In the Commonwealth the Puritans

tried to put Christmas Day out of the Calendar.

In 1652, Evelyn says, 'Christmas Day, no sermon anywhere, no church being permitted to be open, so observed it at home.' And no wonder, for many of the Puritans did not believe the doctrine of the Incarnation, so, of course, they could not keep Christmas Day. Of course, too, they did not reverence the Holy Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.

THE BEST BIRTHDAY.

O fairest day that ever dawned
Upon this weary earth,
When Jesus Christ, true God, true Man,
Our Saviour, came to birth!

And yet, within the humble inn
No room for Him was found ;
While all unseen the angel hosts
Kept watch and ward around.

And this is God Who made the world
Which will not own His sway ;
And this the King who came to turn
Our darkness into day.

Sweet Babe, upon my waiting heart
Shed forth Thy light divine,
And let me take Thee to myself,
And ever call Thee mine.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IV.

1. How long was it since the prophets had spoken of Christ's coming ?

2. Tell me one of the names by which Jesus was called.

3. Who was the foster-father of Jesus?

4. What did the angel say to Saint Joseph?

5. What was the Roman emperor's name when Christ was born?

6. Where did Mary and Saint Joseph go, where from, and why?

7. How long did the journey to Bethlehem take?

8. Where was Christ born?

9. What song did the angels who appeared to the shepherds sing?

10. Where did the shepherds go when the angels went away?

11. What lessons does the Best Birthday teach us?

12. What does submission mean?

13. Why should we be patient?

14. Why should we be humble?
15. What does Bethlehem mean?
16. What does Jesus Christ give us in Holy Communion?
17. Why is Jesus called 'The Bread of Life'?
18. Who tried to stop keeping Christmas in England, and when?

CHAPTER V.

The Epiphany (January 6).

LIGHT SHINING FORTH.

Three Manifestations of Jesus Christ—Herod tries to kill Jesus—The Wise Men.

THIS, dear children, is the Twelfth Day after Christmas.

It is called the Feast of the Epiphany.

This hard word means, Appearance, or Showing Forth, for to-day, Jesus Christ our Lord was made known, as a little Babe, to the Wise Men who came to Jerusalem from the East.

They were called Magi, and were led by the light of a bright star to Bethlehem,

where Jesus and His Blessed Mother and Saint Joseph were.

They were great astronomers, or students of the stars, and Magi, like them, had been watching the sky carefully year after year since the prophecy of Balaam.

This festival tells us of three Manifestations or Appearances of Jesus Christ.

I. At Christmas-tide. (a) On Christmas Day itself, which is His Birthday, and when He came in the flesh; that is, when Mary 'brought forth her first-born Son, wrapped Him in swaddling-clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.'

(b) On this day, which in some parts of the Church is called the Feast of Light, when He showed Himself to the

Wise Men as the 'Light to lighten the Gentiles.'

II. When Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan, something like a beautiful Dove came from the opened sky; its pure white wings seemed to float on the air, and rays of light fell upon Jesus, and made the blue waters, that rippled along through bulrushes and drooping leaves, sparkle as if they were of gold.

It was God the Holy Ghost Who came in the shape of a Dove.

And a Voice, the Voice of God, Jesus Christ's Father and ours, said, 'This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased' (Matt. iii. 16, 17).

III. The third Manifestation was in a town called Cana of Galilee, at a wedding-party there.

When it was almost time for the guests

to go home, some of them wanted to have some more wine, but it was all gone. Then Jesus, Who is always good and kind to us when we wish for anything to make us really happy and which He knows is good for us, told the servants to fill six water-pots of stone with water.

They filled them up to the brim.

This water Jesus turned into wine like that which the people had drunk before, but better.

This was the first miracle, or wonder, which Jesus worked (John ii. 1-11).

He manifested, or showed forth His power as God, and His disciples believed in Him on that account.

But the Appearance I want to speak about to you to-day, is that when our Lord manifested Himself to the Gentiles.

First, let me tell you how, very long

ago, good people kept this day in church.

They had a little drama or play, acted in this way.

Three priests, in very grand dresses, which made them look like kings, came, each by a different path, to the altar.

After them came servants, carrying presents for their masters to give away.

There was a large Star hung high up in the church, and the priest who came from the east pointed to it with his staff.

Then they talked to each other and began to sing, 'Let us go and ask.' The chief singer in the choir sang forth with a loud voice, 'Let the Magi come!' and a procession began to move along the church.

All at once, the Star was lighted up, and some of the people who were walk-

ing in the procession said to the Magi, 'See, the Star in the East!'

Two priests, standing at each side of the altar, answered very gently, 'We are those whom you seek,' and, drawing down a curtain, showed them a figure of the Child for Whom they were supposed to be looking.

The servants brought the Magi their gifts. The Wise Men opened them, and then all worshipped the new-born King.

Now they were so very tired by their journey that they fell asleep while they were saying their prayers.

Suddenly a boy, dressed in an alb, which is a sort of long surplice, and of very beautiful countenance, for he was meant to look like an angel, touched the sleepers, and when they awoke, he said to them, 'All things which the

prophets said would come to pass, have happened.'

Then they chanted some psalms, and said some prayers, and all went home.

Here you have, as in a little picture, the story of to-day.

Now let us see what the Bible tells us, and what holy men have always taught, about this Mystery of the Epiphany.

King Herod wanted to kill Jesus, so when he found that the Wise Men from the East were in Jerusalem, he sent for them, and asked them where Christ should be born.

They told him in Bethlehem, for the prophets had said so, and they knew that what the prophets had said would surely come true.

Herod, when he heard this, said to the Wise Men, 'Go, and search everywhere

for the young Child, and when you have found Him, come and tell me, that I may worship Him as well as you.'

Herod did not really want to worship our Lord, like the Magi. No, he wanted to kill Him.

So the Wise Men set out on their journey. On and on they went, farther and still farther. They did not mind being out in the cold, dark nights, for they always saw the Star going before them, and the sight of it cheered them, for they knew that it was sure to lead them to Jesus at last.

A great many servants probably went with the Magi, bearing their presents for the Babe of Bethlehem.

On the long procession of travellers went. Their road lay along the highways, by river-sides, and over mountain crests.

At last they reached a hill, on the top of which stood the little city of Bethlehem.

The air was full of music, made by the ringing of the bells of the camels which were in the train of the Wise Men.

They climbed the slope, and, just as they wound round the top of the hill, the Star stopped in its fiery march, and stood still; not over a palace, where ivory and gold and precious stones made everything beautiful; but over a poor cottage, for there the young Child was.

Oh, how glad the travellers were when the Star sent its beautiful soft rays right down on the house where Jesus lay, watched over by His Mother and His foster-father, Saint Joseph!

Now, what did the Wise Men do?

They fell down on the floor and bowed

their heads low before Him Who was the Governor Who should rule His people.

Then, after a little while, we may suppose they beckoned to the servants who stood in the doorway, and who, perhaps, were wondering, and half-afraid to come inside, to bring in the presents they had brought for the Infant Jesus (Matt. ii. 1-11).

Tradition says that one offered Him Gold, pure, bright, and shining; for Jesus was the promised King, and this gift of gold showed forth His Royal Birth.

It may have been that Mary took the offering and placed it in her Son's tiny hands, and smiled sweetly as she saw, by faith, a golden sceptre in them.

Jesus is a King.

Another brought Frankincense, the same kind of perfume that was used in

God's Temple, and was burnt in what is called a censer, sending up clouds of sweet-smelling smoke which represented the prayers of the people. When now laid on the rose-red fire in the censer, perhaps a blue wreath of sweet-smelling smoke hid for a while the Priestly form of the Babe of Bethlehem from their sight.

Jesus is God.

Another offered Myrrh. Myrrh is bitter, a sign of suffering and death. May be the Blessed Mother put a little garland of the plant upon the forehead of her Child, and the tears started into her wondering eyes; for she saw a crown of sharp, cruel thorns there, making the crimson blood to fall down over His tender cheeks.

The Passion cast its gloomy shadows even upon the joys of the manger of

Bethlehem, but even then there was the promise of life, for myrrh is the sign of preservation, and it was used to embalm the bodies of the dead, to keep them from decay. So Mary saw also the signs of her Son's risen and glorified life.

Jesus is the Man of Sorrows, and yet the Lord of Life.

EPIPHANY CAROL.

Three Wise Men went their journey afar,
Led by the light of the glittering Star,
Travelling by day and by night till it
 stayed
Right over the place where Jesus was laid.
Round the dark mountain they wearily
 sped,
Then the great Star its bright radiance
 shed,

Over the house, in that Bethlehem town,
Where they went in and then humbly
fell down.

There, laid to sleep on the Virgin's pure
breast,

Jesus, their Lord, they saw taking His
rest ;

Then, when He woke, they presented
their store,

Fell on their knees and did humbly adore.

We, too, with them, will give all that we
can,

Worshipping Jesus, true God and true
Man ;

Led by the light of pure faith to the place
Where God will show us His beautiful
Face.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER V.

1. What does Epiphany mean?
2. Tell me the three Manifestations of Jesus.
3. Why did King Herod ask the Wise Men to tell him where Jesus was?
4. What did the Star do when it came to Bethlehem?
5. Whom did the Magi see when they came to the place where the Star stood still?
6. Was the place a beautiful one where Jesus was?
7. What did the Wise Men do when they saw Jesus?
8. What did they give Him?
9. What did Gold foreshow?
10. And Frankincense?

11. And Myrrh?

12. Is Jesus God as well as Man?

13. Do you think the Blessed Virgin knew a little of what would happen to Jesus in after years?

CHAPTER VI.

The Epiphany (January 6).

LIGHT SHINING FORTH.

The Angel warns the Wise Men—Herod orders the little Children to be killed—Lessons the Wise Men teach us.

WHEN the Sages had gone away from the presence of the great King of all, sleep soon fell on their wearied bodies.

They lay down to rest, thinking, very likely, how they should tell Herod of what they had seen.

An angel came to them in their dreams, and warned them not to go back to the wicked king at all; so they went

back to their own country by another way (Matt. ii. 12).

Herod was very angry at this ; he said, 'These Wise Men have mocked me ;' and he gave orders to his soldiers to go forth and kill all the babies and the little children who were two years old and under, as many as they could find in Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof (Matt. ii. 16).

Through town and village, on the hill-side, those cruel soldiers went, killing all the poor, helpless, innocent little ones, making mothers and fathers sad and sorrowful. Everywhere the mothers were weeping and lamenting.

But one Child was quite safe ; the Babe of Bethlehem—the Child of Mary—the Man Christ Jesus.

Saint Joseph had taken the Blessed

Virgin and our Lord into Egypt, lest Herod should find them out. Soon the wicked Herod died, and his son was king instead. While they were in Egypt, an angel told Saint Joseph to go back to the land of Israel, because Herod was dead. So they came back. But Joseph was afraid that Archelaus (that was the name of the new king) would try to kill Jesus.

Warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into Galilee, and came back to the city of Nazareth, where he used to live, that what the prophets had said might come true: 'He shall be called a Nazarene' (Matt. ii. 19-22).

The Wise Men teach us many lessons. Let us think about three of them.

1. They were persevering.

When a boy has a hard sum he has

made up his mind to do, he keeps working away at it, until he has done it, and proved it to be right.

Perseverance is trying again and again, as we should say.

We must not get tired with our journey. We must not be afraid of what is hard and disagreeable. We must not think to win the fight in a day. We must not fancy that the road to Heaven is quite easy.

Remember the saying, dear children, 'No cross, no crown.' Heaven, your home, must be won by a hard, a long, yes, a life-long fight. Soldiers do not go into battle with kid gloves on, nor do they much expect to come out of it without some scratches, if not some very bad wounds.

You are soldiers; you have sworn to

fight the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; you wear your Captain's uniform; you carry your King's banner; you bear your Master's sign.

Like the Magi, push on with all your heart and soul and strength.

Never mind difficulties, crosses, and troubles.

The true Light will lead you, if only you will follow It, to the beautiful House, not built up with men's hands, but eternal, everlasting, and where Jesus lives in glory and beauty, to make those who persevere in grace, happy for ever and ever.

2. The Wise Men were obedient.

They did what they were told. When the angel, in a dream, or vision, told them not to go back to Herod, they went home by another way. They did not say,

‘Oh, we do not know how we shall get back; and we are afraid Herod will be angry with us for not keeping our promise to him.’

No, they did what they were told; they did not go back to Herod, they went home by another road.

We each have a good angel whispering in our ears the whole day long; telling us where to go, where not to go, what we may do, what we may not do. Never let us despise our Guardian Angel.

Then there is the message sent to us from God. Something inside us talks to us, warns, cautions us. Sometimes it makes us very miserable; sometimes it makes us bright and very happy. That something is the Voice of Conscience.

Oh, let us always obey this voice when it says, ‘Don’t go back by that

way, because something bad is there that will hurt you and grieve God; go by some other way.' When it says, 'Follow the Star until it brings you home,' don't say, 'I will choose my own light, which is prettier and brighter.' Follow the True Light, in which God tells you to walk.

When God speaks to you in His Holy Church, in the Holy Bible, in the example of His Blessed Saints, in the wonders of His Divine Providence, listen to His Voice which speaks, and obey it.

Do what God tells you. Be obedient to your Heavenly Father, and although the path of holy obedience may be very hard, and very sharp, and very unlike what you would choose, by and by He will give you, in the true Bethlehem, which I have told you means House of Bread, everything that heart can wish,

for there, at 'God's right hand, are pleasures for evermore' (Ps. xvi. 11).

3. The Magi were unselfish.

They did not go to Bethlehem empty-handed. They took, as we have seen, presents for Him Who was born King of the Jews, and Whose Star they had seen in the East.

Their offering was twofold. They fell down in worship, and they gave presents. Theirs was a generous, an overflowing love.

They did not stand up, or lounge about, or loll with their heads in their hands, when they said their prayers. No, they fell down; they forgot themselves; they made great prostration and bowing to the earth, things that some people now call superstitions. It was their way of showing reverence, and a very good way too.

God loves that sort of praying and giving. He loves the hearty, generous gift of our bodies, souls, and money.

When Jesus lay a Babe in Bethlehem of Judea, He gave us everything He had. He gave us His life. Have we nothing to offer back for such love as His?

Oh yes, indeed, we have; we must give our hearts to Him Who gave His Life for us. One of the things He says to us is, 'My son, give me thine heart' (Prov. xxiii. 26).

We must offer Jesus the gold of our love. We must love Him with all our heart and soul and strength.

And love will show itself in labour and self-sacrifice; that is, in work, and in doing what we do not like, and bearing what we would rather put away from us, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

A man jumped into a swollen mountain-torrent to save a little boy from being drowned. The poor man lost his own life in the rushing torrent. That was the self-sacrifice of love.

We must give Jesus the myrrh of purity. Our bodies must be offered to Him as a chaste gift.

As our Lord said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' so, remember also, that our bodies are temples, in which God the Holy Ghost dwells.

Soul and body must be kept clean in His sight.

We must bring the incense of prayer and vow, worship and adoration. Always speaking to God in prayer, we shall be sending up what the incense-cloud was intended to represent, namely, intercession, or asking, both for our-

selves and for others, which, as it reaches His throne, will be acceptable to Him, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

These three things the Wise Men say to us, as, with them, we kneel round the little crib of Bethlehem: persevere, obey, give.

OUR GIFTS TO GOD.

Clear shone the fair white Star which led
The Wise Men on their way
From far-off lands to that mean shed
Where Christ, a poor Child, lay.

They brought their gifts, and all fell down
To own Him God and King:
He grants us grace and wills a crown;
Have we no gifts to bring?

Yes, we must give our lives to Thee,
The Light who comes to cheer
The world's sad gloom, to set us free
From sin and death and fear.

Pure be our acts; our prayers and alms
In love be said and done,
Till in the land of crowns and palms,
Through Light, our joy be won.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VI.

1. What did the angel warn the Wise Men to do?
2. Was Herod angry with the Wise Men?
3. What order did Herod give his soldiers?
4. Where did Saint Joseph take the Blessed Virgin and our Lord?

5. While they were there what did the angel tell Saint Joseph ?
6. Who was king after Herod died ?
7. Where did the Holy Family go after this ?
8. Why did they go to Nazareth ?
9. What do the Wise Men teach us ?
10. What is perseverance ?
11. Is perseverance an easy thing ?
12. What is obedience ?
13. Who is the perfect Example of obedience ?
14. What is unselfishness ?
15. Why ought we to offer gifts to God as well as prayers ?
16. What three things do the Wise Men say to us ?

CHAPTER VII.

The Holy Childhood.

THE CIRCUMCISION.

The Circumcision (Jan. 1) — The Presentation in the Temple (Feb. 2).

EIGHT days after our Lord was born, the time came when He was to be circumcised.

Then, too, He received His Name, Jesus; for so, you will remember, the angel said He was to be called, when he came to Mary to tell her that the Lord should be born: 'Thou shalt call His name Jesus' (Luke ii. 21).

Circumcision was the sign of the covenant or agreement which God made with Abraham, his children, and those

who should come after them (Gen. xvii. 10).

It marked them off from all other people, as holy, and as God's own children.

It meant the cutting off of sin, and the need of faith, or belief in God's promises.

So Jesus, who came to do everything that God had ordered to be done, submitted to the rite of circumcision, although, being without sin, He had no need of it.

Thus He fulfilled the law, and obeyed the Father's command.

How kind and gentle it was of Jesus to begin thus early in His sacred life to suffer and be obedient for us!

For to-day He began His life of suffering,

‘To let a world of sinners see
That blood for sin must flow.’

Hereafter the Precious Blood should flow in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the pillar, when He should be beaten with cruel whips, and on the Cross of Calvary.

With the old ceremonial or ritual law circumcision passed away; but still we have to cut off all our sinful desires and acts, and to be always looking up to God as One Who is able and willing to save us.

Just as Jesus was taken to be circumcised as an infant, so are we, when little children, taken to Christ, that we may receive the blessing of God in Holy Baptism.

This Holy Sacrament does much more for us than circumcision could. It is not only a sign, it is a real thing.

Holy Baptism cleanses us from our birth-sin, the evil stain we get from

Adam's Fall; it also gives us a new and divine life: we are made 'members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven,' as the Catechism says.

And we, too, had a name given us, when the priest took us in his arms to place us within the Ark, or Ship of Christ's Church; a name that is entered in the Book of Life.

Think how sacred a thing is your Christian name.

'He that overcometh, or wins the fight, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before His angels' (Rev. iii. 5).

In the Calendar, or list of holy days to be observed, which we find in our Prayer-

Book, one day, the seventh of August, is marked to be kept in honour of the Holy Name of Jesus, that name which our Blessed Lord had given Him, because 'He should save His people from their sins.'

He is Jesus—God the Saviour, perfect God, able to save all; Jesus—God with us, perfect Man, able to suffer for us and to offer Himself a sacrifice or ransom for our sins.

Bow your heads, dear children, whenever you hear or say the Holy Name of Jesus; tremble, shudder, when you hear others use it without thought; never take it on your lips without care and reverence, and pray to God that He who now 'calleth His own sheep by name' (John x. 3) will never, by reason of your sin, 'blot out your name from the Book of Life.'

Very soon after Jesus had been circumcised, certainly within about five weeks, the Blessed Mother, with Saint Joseph, brought the Infant Jesus to Jerusalem (Luke ii. 22).

This was done for two reasons. First, that Mary might offer the sacrifice required of her by the law of Moses; secondly, that, also according to the law, every first-born son should be counted holy to the Lord, and should be presented, or offered to Him, in memory of the saving of the first-born children among the Israelites, when the destroying angel slew the first-born of the Egyptians.

We commemorate these two things on the second of February, which the Prayer-Book calls 'The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly called The Purification of The Virgin Mary.'

There were two kinds of sacrifice allowed; a lamb, and, for the very poor, a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons (Lev. xii. 2, 6-8).

Blessed Mary was very poor, so she made the poor woman's offering; and, remember, it is not the gift, but the spirit or way in which it is given, which God looks at.

The widow's mite was dearer to God than all the gold which the rich men cast into the treasury, for she gave everything that she had, 'all her living.'

Mary was so humble and obedient that she kept the law just as any other Jewish mother would, but though her offering was that of the poor, yet what a sacrifice she brought, for she bore in her arms the Lamb of God, 'Who taketh away the sins of the world'!

Now let us pass on to the scene in the Temple at Jerusalem (Luke ii. 27).

Perhaps there was no very great crowd of worshippers there.

Most likely the Holy Family stood in one of the courts of the Temple, which were like the chapels in our large churches and cathedrals.

There was the Blessed Mother, holding her Divine Son in her arms ; standing by her was Saint Joseph with the two birds for the offering.

There was nothing going on which was unlike what happened almost every day in the Temple, so far as human eye could see.

But then, as we know, wonderful things, told long before by the prophets, were being brought to pass.

This was what Haggai had said :

‘The Desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts’ (Hag. ii. 7, 9).

Who was ‘The Desire of all nations’?

The little Babe in Mary’s arms; and the glory of the Temple in which He was presented was, indeed, greater than the glory of the Temple which stood there in old days, for He Who fills Heaven and earth with His glory and majesty had, as Malachi had long ago told, ‘suddenly come to His Temple’ (Mal. iii. 1).

‘And in this place,’ Haggai had prophesied, ‘I will give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts’ (Hag. ii. 9).

And Jesus, Who is the Prince of Peace, now came ‘to be a light to lighten the

Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel,' and to bring all who will have it, that true peace which no one should be able to take away.

THE HOLY CHILD.

Holy Child, make me like Thee,
Full of sweet humility ;
Gentle, true, forgiving, kind,
Pure in body, pure in mind.

Make me love my parents dear,
Serving them with gentle fear ;
Make me brave to wage the fight,
Make me strong to choose the right.

Pattern of my childhood, guide
All my ways, nor from Thy side
Straying, let me lose my way
To the Home of endless day!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VII.

1. What happened on the eighth day after our Lord's Birth?
2. What was our Lord then named?
3. What was circumcision the sign of?
4. Had Jesus need to be circumcised because of sin?
5. Why did He submit to the rite?
6. What Christian Sacrament takes the place of circumcision?

7. What does Holy Baptism do for us?
8. When is the Feast of the Holy Name?
9. What next happened?
10. Where did these two things take place?
11. When does the Church commemorate them?
12. How many kinds of sacrifice were allowed?
13. What was the Blessed Virgin's offering?
14. Why was the widow's mite acceptable to God?
15. Why was the glory of the latter house greater than that of the earlier building?
16. Who is the true Prince of Peace?

CHAPTER VIII.

The Holy Childhood.

THE PRESENTATION.

Simeon and Anna—The Flight into Egypt—Three Festivals after Christmas Day.

THERE was a very good man living at Jerusalem at the time of which I am telling you, named Simeon.

We do not certainly know that he was a priest, but it is probable that he was.

Of this, however, we are quite sure. The Holy Ghost had told him that he should not die until he had seen God come in the flesh.

Simeon was very much in the Temple. The Bible says he was 'devout,' that is,

he was very often employed in saying his prayers, and in thinking about good things, and, no doubt, too, in doing good works (Luke ii. 25).

Devotion means more than mere words, or acts of the mind and heart, however good these last are.

‘When the parents brought in the Child Jesus to do for Him after the custom of the law,’ Simeon took the Child up in his weak and trembling arms, for he was very old, and blessed God because He had let him see his Saviour with his bodily eyes before he died.

Just as Mary had sung *Magnificat*, so now the aged Simeon sang *Nunc Dimittis*: ‘Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to

lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.'

Saint Joseph and the Blessed Mother wondered very much at what Simeon said about Jesus in this holy song.

Then Simeon gave the Virgin Mother and Saint Joseph his blessing, and said to Mary, 'Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against: yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also' (Luke ii. 34).

There was much, very much to trouble Mary in these words, and, most likely, she knew more of what they really meant than we think.

They were full of meaning for the future, as we now very well know.

They foretold that some people would hear of Jesus, and receive Him gladly;

and that some would refuse and reject Him; that He should be hated and crucified; that His Holy Church should be persecuted and despised; and that the sufferings of Jesus would be a sore burden for His dear Mother's heart, which should, indeed, be pierced through as with a sword when she should stand at the foot of His Cross, in woe and desolation of soul.

Do you remember those words of Saint John, so tender and touching that we almost seem to see the pallid face of Mary stand out white against the darkened sky, as we repeat them: 'Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother'? (John xix. 25).

There lived, too, in Jerusalem, a very old widow named Anna.

She, coming into the Temple at the

very time that Simeon was blessing God, broke out into thanksgiving that Jesus, 'The Desire of all nations,' had come.

She scarcely ever left the Temple, she was so good, and she served God with fastings and prayers both night and day. Though, perhaps, she was nearly one hundred years old, she was neither too weak nor too aged to serve God faithfully and truly, and with a great deal of trouble and self-denial (Luke ii. 36-38).

Dear children, these are the people to whom God makes Himself known; those who, like holy Simeon and Anna, 'serve Him day and night in His Temple,' or elsewhere truly and sincerely.

How long Simeon had waited patiently for the coming of the promised Messiah!

He did not get tired of his prayers; he never said to himself, 'Oh, it is no good going on, hoping against hope.'

And Anna did not think her fasts hard, or her being so very much in the Temple anything but a duty and a holy pleasure.

Their hearts were set upon serving God, and upon waiting patiently for Him. They ever had the spirit of those sweet words, which the great Mendelssohn has set to such lovely music, ringing in their ears: 'O rest in the Lord; wait patiently for Him, and He shall give thee thy heart's desire.'

If we want to know anything about God the Father, and Jesus, and the Holy Ghost, and the world out of sight—that 'universe unseen' which is

beyond the shadows of time—we must pray very much and very earnestly, we must deny ourselves, and hope, and wait, and then God, when He thinks fit, will show more of Himself to us in His holy Church, that blessed place in which He dwells, and in which He is ever ready to help those who wait upon Him in prayer, and fast, and holy worship.

I have told you a little of the flight into Egypt, in the chapter about ‘Light shining forth.’ Now I will tell you more.

Cruel Herod, as you know, gave orders to his soldiers to go out and kill all the little children whom they could find in Bethlehem (Matt. ii. 16).

This he did in the hope that he might kill Jesus.

But an angel came to Saint Joseph in a dream, and told him to take the young Child and His Mother into the land of Egypt, so as to be out of the way of the cruel men of war.

So it was true of the Child Jesus, 'He shall give His angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee in all Thy ways' (Ps. xci. 11).

Directly after Christmas Day we observe three festivals, or holy days.

1. Saint Stephen. He was the proto-martyr; that is, the first to lay down his life for Jesus. The word Stephen means a crown; and Jesus gave His first martyr a beautiful crown, when, the shower of heavy stones falling upon him, he was stoned to death, out of love for that Lord to Whom he stood true amidst all the cruel treat-

ment of his enemies. He prayed for them, as his Master afterwards did for His murderers, and in very much the same words (Acts vii. 54–60).

He was a martyr in will and deed. He wished to lay down his life for Jesus Christ, and he did.

2. Saint John the Evangelist. He was the close, or, as we should say, the bosom friend of Jesus. He it was who leaned on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper. He it was who stood at the foot of the Cross, with the Blessed Virgin, when Jesus died. His death was to have been a cruel one, but by the power of Almighty God, according to what we are told, though not in the Bible, he was saved from a vessel of burning oil, into which he was flung headlong.

Saint John was a martyr in will, but

not in deed. He wished to die for Christ, but God did not permit that to happen.

3. The Holy Innocents. These are the poor, helpless children whom Herod killed. The prophet Jeremiah described Rachel, who was buried between Ramah and Bethlehem, as weeping for her children. 'She would not be comforted,' he said, 'because they are not' (Matt. ii. 18). Oh, how great the grief and sorrow of many a mother's heart when these words came to pass, as the little ones were, without pity, cut to pieces by the soldiers' glittering swords. The land of Bethlehem was red with the blood of the Holy Innocents.

They were martyrs in deed, but not in will. They won the crown of martyrdom, but their little hands had no part in putting it on.

These three festivals, which are kept on December the twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-eighth, are red-letter days of Martyrdom, Love, and Innocence, in all of which Christ Jesus our Lord is honoured and glorified.

Saint Joseph at once did what the angel told him. He was obedient to the heavenly calling.

When we are told to do something which we do not like, or to go somewhere we do not wish; when the voice of God speaks to us by His servants or by His providence, or by the whispers of conscience, we must think how Saint Joseph did what he was told, directly; how he braved all difficulties and dangers, and went forth in simple faith on that journey which the angel had shown him in his dream.

Saint Joseph rose up in the night, told Blessed Mary what had happened, and what they must do.

Then the Holy Family started on their hard journey. They fled by night, they hasted away in the darkness, lest any should see whither they went (Matt. ii. 14-16).

How soon does Jesus begin to bear His Cross for us! He is truly a Stranger in a strange land.

And are we to have no sorrows, no troubles, no crosses? Are we to think of ourselves as at home here, and not rather as pilgrims and exiles?

Remember, once more, the old saying, 'No cross, no crown,' and those words, which should always make us very glad, even when things are darkest, 'Heaven is our home.'

Egypt, into which the Holy Family came, after a weary journey, was a land of idolaters; people, that is, who do not worship the true God, but idols of wood and stone; some ugly and terrible looking, some beautiful, but all the work of their own hands.

The prophet Isaiah once spake these wonderful words: 'Behold, the Lord shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence' (Isa. xix. 1).

There is a tradition, or story, handed down to us, that when Jesus, the Holy Child, came into Egypt, borne thither in the arms of His loving Mother, all the idols fell down. The great gods which the Egyptians had raised on high, and carved so beautifully, crumbled to dust before His presence, Who, although only

a little Child, came to 'shake terribly the earth.'

Holy tradition teaches us many very useful truths and lessons, and so it is to be greatly valued and respected.

Saint Paul says, 'Brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle' (2 Thess. ii. 15). All the ancient Fathers of the Church put a high value upon the truth and authority of the apostolic traditions.

Holy Scripture reveals to us what we are bound to believe, what we must believe for our soul's health.

Tradition is to be received in the same spirit of willingness to be taught by it, which we give to Holy Scripture, although we are not bound in all cases

to believe it in the same way in which we must believe Holy Scripture.

We may well receive the story of the idols falling down before Jesus Christ, for is it not written of Him, 'And the idols He shall utterly abolish'? (Isa. ii. 18).

Dear children, all the idols in the world are not yet thrown down and dashed to pieces, or burnt. In many dark lands the 'good news' of Jesus is an untold tale. Little ones like you bend their knees to false gods, and often they are treated very cruelly by their fathers and mothers, for the heathen homes are full of darkness and cruelty.

Do what you can for them.

'Can we help these poor heathen?'
I hear you say. Yes, indeed, you can.
Think of them every time you say

‘Thy kingdom come’ in the Lord’s Prayer, and sometimes give up buying something you would like, something nice to eat, or pretty to wear, and send your savings to those who are trying to take all the blessings of Christ’s Holy Catholic Church into the lands that still lie ‘in darkness and the shadow of death.’

Yet once more an angel came to Saint Joseph, bidding him to return with the Holy Child and His Mother to Judea (Matt. ii. 19).

They had been in Egypt, some think, for about two years.

Herod was dead—Herod, who had put the little ones to death, and who wanted to kill our Lord.

He died a horrible and dreadful death, and, cruel to the end, just before he breathed his last, in pain and misery,

he had his son and successor to the throne, Antipater, murdered.

Another son of Herod, Archelaus, had got from the Romans the power to rule that part of the land in which Bethlehem was.

He, too, was cruel and wicked. So Saint Joseph, lest the dear Holy Child should be killed by him, went to Galilee, which lay in the north, and lived at Nazareth, where, Saint Luke tells us, he used to dwell in the days gone by.

THE CHILD-SORROWS OF JESUS.

How soon Thy earthly sorrows came,
Sweet Child of Bethlehem,
That we, in all our homeward path,
Should bear our lot through them.

Thy precious Blood was early shed,
To teach us that alone
Can purchase pardon, and a place
Somewhere before Thy throne.

Oh, as we daily force our way
Through blood, and tears, and pain,
What matter loss and trouble sore,
If only Thee we gain?

For childlike hearts Thou hast a joy
Which only love can win;
Open Thy heart, dear Child, to us,
And save from guilt and sin.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER VIII.

1. Who lived at Jerusalem at the time of the Presentation?
2. What song did Simeon sing?
3. What did Simeon say to the Blessed Virgin?
4. Did these words foretell her sufferings at the Cross?
5. What was Anna?
6. Was she very devout?
7. What sort of people does God show or reveal Himself to?
8. Why did Saint Joseph take our Lord and Mary into Egypt?
9. What kind of martyr was Saint Stephen?
10. What does proto-martyr mean?
11. What does Stephen mean?

12. What kind of martyr was Saint John the Evangelist?

13. What kind of martyrs were the Holy Innocents?

14. Who were the Holy Innocents?

15. What was Egypt a land of?

16. What is the meaning of Tradition?

17. Must we not always try to do what we can for the heathen?

18. How long did the Holy Family stay in Egypt?

19. Who was king after Herod died, and over what part did he reign?

20. Where did Saint Joseph take our Lord and the Blessed Virgin when they left Egypt?

CHAPTER IX.

The Holy Childhood.

THE LIFE AT THE NAZARETH HOME.

Jesus in the Workshop—The Lessons of the Home Life at Nazareth.

YOU will have noticed how often I have told that certain things came to pass in order that what this or that prophet had foretold might be fulfilled, or brought about.

Now, Saint Joseph came back to Nazareth, for this, among other reasons, 'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene' (Matt. ii. 23).

These words, unlike all the others of

the prophets of which I have told you, are not to be found in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Writers in the New Testament often quote sayings or proverbs of authors, although those persons were not inspired, in the sense they were who wrote down the sacred Scriptures.

Saint Paul, writing to Titus, does this. And, again, the same apostle, in his sermon at the Areopagus, before the learned people of the city of Athens, told those who listened to him, and who had built an altar, on which they had written, 'To the unknown God,' that in the true God we live, and move, and have our being. Then he went on, 'As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring' (Acts xvii. 22-28).

It was as if a Frenchman or a German wished to prove something, or make it quite plain to us, and to do so, quoted from the writings of some of our great English authors.

He would, perhaps, send us some wise saying from a play, and say, 'Even as your own great play-writer or dramatist, Shakespeare, taught you.' Or he might have sent us a beautiful poem, and said, 'This is the truth, even as one of your own poets, Milton, has written.'

But although the exact words, 'He shall be called a Nazarene,' are not in the Old Testament, it is quite easy to see what is meant by them, and how true they are, as applied to our Lord.

The prophet Jeremiah says, 'Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I

will raise unto David a righteous Branch' (Jer. xxiii. 5).

The word in the original Hebrew, translated Branch, has much the same meaning as Nazarene.

Christ, springing from the 'root of Jesse,' the city of Bethlehem, spends His early years in Netzar, and thus is the Branch (Netzar), the Nazarene.

But there is another thought about Nazareth, which will, I daresay, be much plainer to you.

Nazareth was a city despised and spoken of scornfully.

When Jesus was going to begin His public ministry, of which I shall have much to tell you by and by, He chose Philip, who lived in Bethsaida, to be His companion and attendant.

This Philip seems to have had a

friend called Nathanael, and Philip said to him one day, 'We have found Him of Whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph' (John i. 45).

Then Nathanael said to Philip, in tones of surprise and doubt, 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' (John i. 46).

At another time, when Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, and who was a ruler of the Jews, was talking with the Pharisees, some of them asked him, 'Shall Christ come out of Galilee?' (John vii. 41).

Nicodemus spoke up on behalf of Jesus, Whom the Pharisees wished to have brought before them. 'Doth our law,' he said, 'judge any man before he is heard, or before it is known what he does?'

Nicodemus wanted fair play.

The Pharisees answered him with a taunting sneer. 'Art thou,' they said, 'also of Galilee? Search and look, for out of Galilee there ariseth, or cometh forth, no prophet' (John vii. 51, 52).

So, you see, the despised town of Galilee, Nazareth, was indeed very little thought of by these proud Pharisees.

Is this why, for thirty years, it was the home of Jesus Christ? Just because Nazareth was despised, so was it the fitting and proper home for One Who was 'despised and rejected of men.'

Oh, how we should like to know more of the days and years of that Hidden Life!

There, in that poor Nazareth, amid much that was bad and unholy, dwelt perfect Holiness. There, where was much pride and selfishness, lived perfect

Humility and perfect Unselfishness, for all through those long, quiet years, 'Christ pleased not Himself.' There, amid impatience and restlessness, was abiding the perfect Example of Meekness and Gentleness. All the time, though men heard not the voice, Christ was saying, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.' There, amid darkness, the true Light was shining, and the darkness did not understand it; that blessed Light 'that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.' There, in the midst of sickness and pain and death, stood the Healer, the good Physician, 'the Life of them that believe, and the Resurrection of the dead.'

But a veil that no hands, however eagerly stretched out, can tear away, hangs over the details of the Hidden Life;

and the best we can do is to try to place before our minds what might have been its many graces and beauties.

We are something like children who are taken into a room where there is a very lovely picture, just as the winter's sun has set, and the thick, black night is settling quickly down, wrapping all in gloom and darkness.

Oh, how they would strain their eyes to try to see something of the hidden beauties which they felt sure were there, and which in the broad light of day glowed and almost flashed out from the canvas!

What could the picture be?

Are there eyes in it, which, with either terrible or tender gaze, would follow us about the room, and refuse to leave us? Are there faces, so full of love and beauty

that the tears would fall down our cheeks if we could look at them? Or are there trees that shiver in the rustling wind; or crystal streams that bubble along between banks of verdure; or rosy sunset lights, that would almost gleam forth upon us, as we should watch them dance and tremble in the landscape?

But the sun is down, and the night has come, and we cannot tell.

So we know little of the Hidden Life, and can only picture to ourselves a little of what might have been.

All the eye saw was One Who lived in the house of a poor Jewish carpenter, going to school with boys of His own age and rank.

But He was never angry or passionate or rude or unkind, for He was the good God.

There was nothing very different about

Him in His boyish looks, though He must have always been beautiful, until the sorrows of the Passion came to alter His face, and to mark Him as the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.

I think we may be quite sure that Jesus went to Divine service a great deal, and that He read the Holy Scriptures—the stories of Samuel, David, and Joseph; that He learned the commandments, and studied that very law which He Himself, the great Lawgiver, gave to Moses.

And Jesus, in that humble cottage home, for ever hallowed, that is, made holy all hard work and labour.

He took His place beside His foster-father at the carpenter's bench, learning how to handle chisel and plane.

And, perhaps, as His fond Mother came

in to watch her Boy help Saint Joseph, she might have seen Him, more than once, fashion two pieces of wood crosswise. And then she would turn away, with her beautiful eyes brimful of tears, for she must have had a vision, or foresight, of Calvary and the Cross of wood set up there, whereon that sweet, gentle Boy should be crucified.

So the years went on, until the kind, loving old man, the husband of Mary, and the Boy's foster-father, died, after much had happened of which I will tell you in another chapter.

What a legacy that poor carpenter left this weary world!—

‘A Son that never did amiss,
That never shamed His Mother's kiss,
Nor crossed her fondest prayer.’

And the Mother of Jesus, to be cared for by the hard work and toil of Him Who made the worlds!

We can easily fancy how kind and tender Jesus would have been to His dear Mother in her sorrow.

We can watch Him working hard, day by day, for the daily bread of the little household; we can see Him go to the well to draw water, lest His Mother should be tired; and, perhaps, He Who was the Light of the world would trim the lamps at eventide, when the dark purple shadows crept lazily over the Galilean hills and lake, and night shrouded the streets and houses of Nazareth in gloom.

Then, perchance, He would read to Mary, or talk to her of mysteries, half-revealed, until the time came for Him,

Who never slumbers nor sleeps, to lay Him down and take His rest.

What is the lesson of the beautiful home-life at Nazareth?

The Hidden Life of Jesus surely tells us the value of holy obedience.

Duty does not always, or very greatly, consist in doing great things, but in doing very small things well. Nothing pleases our Heavenly Father more than the sacrifice or offering of a cheerful and ready obedience. The story of the Hidden Life is all summed up in this, that for its whole time Jesus was subject to His parents.

Oh, will you not learn from this, cheerfully to obey those set over you in the Lord, parents, and all who, in any way, have rule over you?

Learn, too, to do common, everyday

work as in God's sight, and aim to do it to increase His glory. He, be quite sure, will not forget your intention, your wish or endeavour.

Be gentle, be considerate for others, be loving and helpful to all.

And in doing this, just as Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man, so will you. In one sense, Jesus could not grow wiser, for from everlasting He was the 'Wisdom of God' (Luke xi. 49).

But, with His increasing years, the outward manifestation, or showing forth, of His wisdom was revealed and made plain to those who lived about Him, and especially, we may suppose, to His Blessed Mother.

Nor could the holiness of Jesus Christ become greater. That was perfect and

complete; for His human soul, His sacred humanity, was joined to the Godhead. But as perfect Man He increased in favour with God, His Heavenly Father, because He was obedient to that Heavenly Father's will.

And as men saw fresh and ever-growing signs of His holiness and beauty of character, He increased in favour with them, for He more and more reflected the perfections of the Divine Nature, and in Himself showed them forth.

And will you not try to be like the Holy Child, at least in this, that so men may take account of you, that you have been with Jesus, and, seeing your increase in any goodness which, through God's grace, may be in you, they may glorify and give thanks to your Father, which is in Heaven?

HOME.

What a home, full of grace, must that
one have been

Where Jesus and Mary abode,
Where virtue and goodness, and gifts of
our God,
For ever sprung up and o'erflowed.

No anger was there, with its dark, sullen
frown,

No pride, with its cold, hateful sneer ;
No passion of evil that clouded the soul,
No spirit of cowardly fear.

Sweet holy obedience reigned in that
house,

Pure peace and a life-giving joy ;
And love, unlike any before it or since,
Was shared by that Mother and Boy.

Oh, surely like Heaven, must that sancti-
fied home

Have seemed in the desert around,
For He Who dwelt there, by His presence
and power,
Must daily have hallowed the ground.

The Nazareth-home is no more, but the
heart

Which has God for its Portion and
Guide
Is a shrine, which the Son of the Virgin
will choose,
And in which He will love to abide.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER IX.

1. Why did Saint Joseph go back to
Nazareth?

2. Are these words found in the Old Testament?

3. Where is the Areopagus?

4. What did the Athenians worship there?

5. What does the original Hebrew word mean, which is translated Branch?

6. Was Nazareth a despised city?

7. Whom did our Lord choose as a companion?

8. Who was Philip's friend?

9. What did Nathanael say?

10. How long did Jesus live in Nazareth?

11. Did Jesus take great care of His mother after Saint Joseph's death?

12. What is the lesson of the home-life at Nazareth?

13. What is meant by Jesus increasing in wisdom?

14. Could Jesus ever grow better or holier ?

15. Was Jesus perfect God and perfect Man ?

16. How can we try to copy Jesus as He increased in favour with God and man ?

CHAPTER X.

Early Years.

THE LIFE AT THE NAZARETH HOME.

Jesus goes to the Passover—He is lost by His Parents—
He is found in the Temple.

WHEN the Boy Jesus was twelve years old, His parents took Him with them to Jerusalem (Luke ii. 42).

Mary and Joseph went there every year to keep the Feast of the Passover.

Jesus was now to see the great and beautiful Temple on Mount Moriah for the first time.

Until the age of twelve, every Jewish boy was treated as a child, and all his religious acts and duties were done for him by others.

But now He was to go up to the Temple and see the grand services and holy rites of His religion, and to take His part in the sacrifice, all which He could not do when He went to the synagogue, or church, at home.

It was very much like His being taken to Confirmation, was it not ?

We, dear children, have all we want in our Christian churches, and need not go to any one in particular to get God's full blessing and to have our share in His service.

In every church, not in the Temple only, as in old time, the Holy Sacrifice is offered, and in the humblest and poorest village church we can plead it, and offer ourselves, our souls, our bodies, to God in worship, praise, and prayer.

And our Sacrifice is that to which all

the old sacrifices pointed, and in which the Priest and Victim are one and the same, even 'the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world.'

' He within the veil has entered,
Robed in flesh, our great High Priest ;
He, on earth, both Priest and Victim
In the Eucharistic feast.'

It was the sweet spring-time, when all is fresh and bright and full of promise, that the journey to Jerusalem was begun.

The road-sides were lined with flowers, and the travellers wound their way, each day, over the well-beaten track, until the halt was sounded, and the caravan camped out for the night in the silver light of the paschal moon.

The caravan was a collection, or



"A glad shout of 'Jerusalem.' went up to the blue sky."

number, of travellers who joined together to protect and help each other.

It was three days' journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem, and, as each day's march ended, prayers and psalms were said, and then, after a night's rest, at sunrise the march was begun again; and so it went on, until at last some in the caravan spied out the shining walls of the Holy City gleaming in the distance, and a glad shout of 'Jerusalem!' went up to the blue sky from the host of people who were going to keep the Feast to the Lord.

There were three great Feasts in the Jewish Church: the Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

These were something like our feasts of Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas.

The Passover brought to mind the

coming forth of the people of God out of Egypt, because in the night before they came away, the destroying angel, who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, passed over all the houses of the Hebrew people and did not go into them, for they were marked with the blood of the lamb on the upper door-post.

And when the Angel of Death comes to slay us, and sees the blood of Christ's Passion upon us, he too passes over us, and cannot harm us, for Jesus has won the victory, and taken away Death's sting and power.

Jesus says, as He sees the sin-stricken soul turn to His Cross, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you' (Exod. xii. 13).

Easter is indeed a happy Pascha ; it is the Christian Passover.

Pentecost was called by the Hebrews the Feast of Weeks, it being kept seven weeks after the Passover.

The people offered to God the first-fruits of all their harvests.

Fifty days after Easter we keep the Whitsuntide festival, when we think of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

On that day of Pentecost, three thousand souls were added to the Church, the first-fruits of a mighty harvest God will gather at last into His heavenly garner.

The Feast of Tabernacles, the Hebrews called the Feast of Tents, as it was kept under green bowers or arbours, in memory of the Israelites staying under tents as they passed through the wilderness.

They had processions, and carried beautiful branches of trees which they

lifted on high ; and on the first day of the Feast they went to the synagogue.

Holding in their right hand a branch of a palm-tree, three branches of myrtle, and two of willow, tied in one bunch, and in their left a citron, with its fruit ; they brought all together, waving them to the four quarters of the world—North, South, East, and West—singing ‘ Hosanna.’

Do we not call to mind how Jesus, when He came into the wilderness of this world, had to rest in a cave, and how to the four quarters of the world rang out the good tidings of His birth : ‘ Hosanna in excelsis ! ’ ‘ Glory to God in the highest ! ’

Every rite and sacrifice must have had a deep and real meaning for our Lord, as for the first time He kept the Passover !

The Law was only a shadow of good things to come. But He Who stood in the midst of the Feast could say, 'Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God.' For 'we are sanctified,' made holy, 'by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.'

In the lamb slain, offered in sacrifice, and then solemnly eaten, the bitter herbs, the unleavened bread, the pouring out of the wine, He, the Almighty God, must have foreseen His bitter Passion, His death, His awful Sacrifice, and that representation of all these, which His Church continually celebrates, and shall ever show forth until He come, in the Holy Sacrament of His most blessed Body and Blood.

Then the solemn chant of the Hallel went up.

The Hallel is a service, or song, of praise, consisting of Psalms cxiii.—cxviii.

The Jews sang these on the Paschal night, after the lamb had been eaten.

Part of these psalms most likely took in the hymn which our Lord and His disciples sang after the Passover (Matt. xxvi. 30).

Some think that Psalm cxiv., beginning 'When Israel went out of Egypt,' was sung then to that chant which so many of us sing now to the very same words, called the *Tonus Peregrinus*.

And would not Jesus have thought of that night, when, after singing this hymn, He should go out into the Mount of Olives?

Oh yes, we may be quite sure that even to the Boy of twelve, keeping His first Passover, the Cross was set before Him, and that it was His joy.

The Passover lasted for seven days.

The great week of solemn observances over, the travellers returned to their homes.

On the evening of the first day, Jesus was lost sight of by His Mother. Where could He be? She thought He might be among His 'kinsfolk and acquaintance.' But she found Him not.

Long the Blessed Virgin and Saint Joseph looked for Jesus, but they searched in vain. They asked many a traveller if they had seen the Boy, and, no doubt, Mary described Him very particularly, telling people of His height, the colour of His hair, the sort of clothes He wore, and so on. But no one had seen Him, and so at the end of another day they went back to Jerusalem.

Did Mary think of the separation of Calvary then?

After a while, they went into the Temple, to lay their trouble before God, and to ask Him to show them where the lost Boy was, just as we go to church now when we are in trouble, and pray to God to take it away, or to make us able to bear it patiently.

There, in the Temple, they found Him, sitting among the doctors of the law and the scribes, or learned men (Luke ii. 46).

Oh, how very glad they were, when they found their lost treasure !

I once heard of a little fellow who did not come home when his father and mother expected him. They got very sorrowful. They did not know where to seek for him, and kept walking up and down and going to the door, hoping every moment that he would come.

It was getting very late at night, and still he did not return.

‘Oh, what can have become of him?’ they cried. They were angry, and said he should be punished when he came back.

At last, just as they were going out to look for him in the town, the garden-gate rattled, and the boy stood at the door.

He had been to a missionary meeting with a school-fellow, and was full of life and spirits, and began to tell the tales that the missionary had been amusing them with.

The parents’ anger melted away in their joy at seeing their little boy come back safe and sound, just as the long, hard icicle thaws in the bright, warm winter’s sun, that shines out at mid-day.

When Mary and Joseph found Jesus,

Who, as you know, could not do anything that was wrong, they were very much astonished; and His Mother said to Him, 'Son, why hast Thou served us thus? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.'

There was something just a little like a complaint or rebuke in the Blessed Mother's words.

Then Jesus said to them, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' or, as the words may also be read, 'Did you not know that I must be in My Father's House?' (*Revised Version*).

Yes, the Temple was His Father's House, and He came to do His Father's will.

They did not understand what He said to them.

But in His answer, Jesus told them that His Heavenly Father was He to Whom He looked, He Whom He obeyed.

Doing His Heavenly Father's will was to Jesus what food is to us, for He said, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work' (John iv. 34).

Even our Lord's Mother could not quite understand the Mystery of the Incarnation.

'Who,' among the sons of men, 'have known the mind of the Lord?' (Rom. xi. 34).

Jesus, in His Father's House, had heard what the doctors and wise men had to say, and had asked them questions.

How much of Himself He revealed to them we cannot tell. But He in Whom

dwelt all wisdom spake even then as never man spake, and all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

Jesus did not dispute with the doctors ; He did not argue with them ; He heard them ; for He was a meek and gentle Child, and the Pattern for children in all ages to come.

After this the Holy Family returned to Nazareth, and Jesus was subject unto His parents. And His Mother kept all His sayings in her heart and thought over them, and we may well suppose that God gave her grace to know something of the wonderful future life of her Son and of His Divine work in the world.

Dear children, always keep Sunday and holy days well.

Go to church very often ; Jesus did so,

and He has left us an example that we should walk in His steps.

LOVE FOR CHURCH.

As Jesus loved His Father's House,
So we must love it too ;
And hasten there to say our prayers,
And give to God His due.

No cry sent up to Heaven's high place
From churches here below
Falls short of God, or does not bring
More blessings than we know.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray,
His Sacrifice we plead ;
And when Faith lifts her hands on high,
Help comes for every need.

Oh, hallowed is each Christian church,
For Jesus Christ is there
To bless, with His prevailing Hands,
Each sacrifice and prayer.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER X.

1. How old was Jesus when He went to His first Passover?
2. Where did the Temple stand?
3. What was a caravan?
4. What are the three great Feasts in the Jewish Church?
5. What does the Passover remind us of?
6. Why was Pentecost called the Feast of Weeks?
7. What did the people offer at this Feast?

8. What was the Feast of Tabernacles called ?

9. Why ?

10. What Christian Festivals do these three Feasts remind us of ?

11. What is meant by the Hallel ?

12. What Psalm was the 'hymn' sung by our Lord and His disciples after the Passover ?

13. How long did the Passover Feast last ?

14. When was Jesus lost by His parents ?

15. When and where did they find Him ?

16. What was Jesus doing in the Temple ?

17. What did He say the Temple was ?

18. Did Jesus set us the example of going to church and loving God's House ?

CHAPTER XI.

Saint John Baptist and His Work.

HIS BIRTH.

The Birth of John the Baptist—His Circumcision and Name-giving.

WE must now turn back a few pages in the sacred story.

I must tell you of a great saint who went before our Lord to prepare for His coming.

He is called, for this reason, the Fore-runner. His name is John the Baptist.

By the mouth of the prophet Malachi God had said, 'Behold, I will send My Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me' (Mal. iii. 1).

Malachi was the last of the long line of the old prophets, and the last words of this last prophet are: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord' (Mal. iv. 5).

Our Saviour tells us that these words were brought to pass when Saint John Baptist foretold His first Advent or Coming. 'All the prophets,' He said, 'prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias which was to come' (Matt. xi. 14).

Moses and the prophets foretold Christ's coming in the distance, or long before He came. Saint John Baptist said, He is at hand (Matt. iii. 2).

All the time that our Blessed Lord was living that Hidden Life in Nazareth of which I have tried to tell you some-

thing, Saint John the Baptist was being trained, that is, got ready, by the Holy Ghost for his wonderful work.

Herod, of whom I have spoken before, was king of Judea, having been placed on the throne by the Romans, who had conquered it; this made true the words: 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh'—that is, until Messiah—'come' (Gen. xlix. 10).

In his days there was a certain priest named Zacharias. His wife's name was Elizabeth. They were very good people, keeping all the commandments and laws of the Lord.

They were blameless, the Bible says (Luke i. 6).

They, however, had one great trial—they had no child. And this meant much more than you might at first suppose.

To be childless before Jesus was born was to be disgraced and reproached.

Zacharias often prayed that God would grant Elizabeth her desire, but, as yet, his prayer was not answered.

The college or body of priests was divided, in David's time, into twenty-four courses, or parts.

Each of these served in the Temple for eight days, that is, from one Sunday to the close of another, an octave, as we should now say.

Zacharias belonged to the eighthcourse, that of Abijah.

'It came to pass that while he served the priest's office before God in the order of his course, after the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the Temple of the Lord' (Luke i. 8, 9).

Nothing was done by chance. Incense was burnt every morning and every evening, and the offering or burning it was considered the most honourable or the grandest of all the priest's duties. For this and for all other offices the priests drew lots, but no priest could draw the lot to burn incense twice in one week.

One day at the Feast of Tabernacles, when a great many people were assembled, while all the people were praying, and when incense was being offered, an angel came to Zacharias the priest.

Zacharias saw the angel standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

This altar was a small table of acacia wood, covered over with plates of gold ; at the four corners were four horns, and round it was a border, or a crown over it.

When Zacharias saw the angel he was troubled and very much afraid. But the angel said, 'Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John (Luke i. 13).

The name John means this — 'The Lord is gracious.' Zacharias did not quite believe what the angel told him.

Then the angel said, 'I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these things. And behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day the thing I have told thee of come to pass, because thou didst not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled, or come true in due time.'

It was Gabriel, he who is 'the strength of God,' who came; the same glorious

angel who touched Daniel in his deep sleep and made him understand the vision he saw. It was the same Gabriel who came to Blessed Mary to tell her that she should be the Mother of the Lord.

Gabriel stood on 'the right side of the altar of incense;' he was offering with the priest the prayers of the people.

So the Church has always believed that angels are close to the altar whenever the Holy Eucharist is offered. It is then that 'with angels and archangels, and with all the company of Heaven,' we laud and magnify God, crying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.'

This hymn is called the *Ter Sanctus*. *Sanctus* means holy. In the Greek Church it is called the *Trisagion*, which means the thrice holy.

The people waited longer than usual for Zacharias to come out ; this was a very solemn part of the service, and they wondered that he stayed so long. But when, at last, he did come out, he could not speak to them, for he beckoned unto them and remained speechless.

Then the people knew that he had seen a vision in the Temple.

Zacharias returned to his home in the city of Hebron.

Elizabeth, when she had heard the good news the angel had brought, went away for five months, spending all the time in meditation and prayer. Her heart was full of joy, because God had taken away her reproach, and had answered her prayers.

Remember, dear children, God's holy angels are always round about you.

Behave as in their sight. And never give up prayer ; 'ask and ye shall have' is the promise of Jesus Himself. If you go on praying, time after time, be sure God will answer your prayers, if not in your own way, most certainly in His.

Elizabeth in due time had her baby sent to her. You will remember that Elizabeth was a relation, it is said a cousin, of the Blessed Virgin.

All Elizabeth's neighbours and friends rejoiced at the mercy which God had showed her in giving her a child in her old age, and they went to congratulate her, that is, to tell her they were glad.

The birthday of Saint John is indeed a great day in the history of the world, for he was chosen to be the Forerunner of the long-expected Saviour.

The Church keeps Saint John Baptist's

birthday, or nativity, on the twenty-fourth of June.

At his circumcision, which was performed at the house of his parents, he had his name given him, just as you, when you were received into the Church at Holy Baptism, had your Christian name given to you. But of this I have told you before, and you do not, I hope, forget what I said.

As may be supposed, they were going to call Saint John after his father Zacharias. But his mother said, 'Not so; he shall be called John.'

Some of those who stood by said, 'None of thy family is called by this name.' Then they made signs to the father, Zacharias, and asked him how he would have his son called. Zacharias asked them to give him something to

write upon. When they had done so, he wrote, 'His name is John.' And they were all full of wonder (Luke i. 60-63).

Zacharias was deaf as well as dumb, for, you see, they had to make signs to him before he could understand them.

Notice how very plain the words of Zacharias were; when the bystanders asked him how he would have his son called, he did not answer the question as we should. He said at once, not, 'Let him be called John,' but 'His name is John.' That had been settled, for Gabriel had said, 'Thou shalt call his name John.'

When Almighty God has decreed, or settled, anything, man has not to choose or wish, but simply to do as God has said.

When Zacharias wrote down the words,

‘His name is John,’ he made what we call an act of faith. He believed and altogether accepted the message of God which the angel had brought, and his punishment passed away. ‘His mouth was opened at once, his tongue was loosed, and he spake and praised God.’

When the people saw this, great fear came upon them, and all that was done was soon noised abroad, or told to all the people living in the hill-country of Judea.

Those who had heard about these wonderful things said, ‘What sort of child shall this be, about whose birth so many strange things have come to pass?’

And of the child himself we are told that ‘the hand of the Lord was with him.’ He was sanctified, that is, made very, very good, even from his birth.

Saint John was born about six months before Jesus Christ.

Zacharias now sang a hymn, which we call the *Benedictus*, beginning, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people' (Luke i. 68).

You will remember how the Blessed Virgin sang *Magnificat*, and holy Simeon *Nunc Dimittis*: Mary, in the house of Zacharias and Elizabeth, at the Visitation; Simeon, when Jesus was brought into the Temple by His parents.

These three holy songs are called the Evangelical Canticles, because they are all hymns or psalms of the good news of the Gospel.

The *Benedictus* is made up of two parts; one part tells of the blessings which we receive from the Incarnation

and the Atonement; the other shows forth the work and office of Saint John Baptist.

It is of this work that I am now going to tell you a little.

POINTING TO CHRIST.

Can I prepare the way for Christ,
A little child so weak?

Can I, for God, the dread, the great,
Dare one poor word to speak?

Saint John could preach about His Name,
And point to Him, the Lamb;
But how can I make smooth His path,
So worthless as I am?

Yet He will hear my feeble voice,
If I, myself, am true;
For while the greatest saint He owns,
He gives the least his due.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XI.

1. What is Saint John the Baptist called?
2. Who foretold the Forerunner?
3. Who was Malachi?
4. Who was king of Judea in Saint John's time?
5. Who placed him on the throne?
6. Who was Zacharias?
7. What was his wife's name?
8. How many courses was the college of priests divided into?
9. How long did each course serve?
10. What was Zacharias' course called?
11. Could any priest burn incense more than once in one week?
12. Who came to Zacharias?
13. Where did the angel stand?

14. What did Gabriel say to Zacharias?

15. What does the name Gabriel mean?

16. Why did Zacharias say his son's name was John?

17. When do we keep the birthday of Saint John?

18. What song did Zacharias sing?

19. What are the three Evangelical Canticles?

20. Why are they so called?

CHAPTER XII.

Saint John Baptist and His Work.

HIS EARLY YEARS.

Saint John's Ministry—He baptizes our Lord—Saint John's Preaching.

NOT much is said in the Bible of the early years of Saint John the Baptist; 'he was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel,' that is, until his public ministry began (Luke i. 80).

Like Moses and Elijah, the new Elias lived far away from the homes of men, waiting for the voice of God to call him to his work.

For how long do you think this was?
For thirty years.

What a long time to be alone! He was what we should call an anchorite or hermit, and people have never very well understood the lives of such men.

Saint Chrysostom and Saint Jerome believe that from his very infancy Saint John was in the wilderness; and Jesus Himself tells us 'he came neither eating nor drinking;' eating and drinking, that is, just so little of such very plain food as would keep him alive.

Locusts, often eaten in the East to this day, and wild honey, were what he ate most of.

He was clad in a rough, coarse sort of cloth, made of camels' hair, such as is worn now by some people in the East.

Elijah wore such, and, indeed, it seems to have been the usual dress of a prophet.

What a strange, wild-looking man must

the Baptist have been, clothed in such a rough garment, and with a leathern girdle about his loins, and with his long hair and beard streaming in the wind!

When he was thirty years of age, in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and the twenty-eighth year of our Lord, he began to preach.

What was his message? 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

He himself was, as Isaiah had said, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight' (Matt. iii. 2, 3).

He was not the One to come, but only the voice, crying in His Name.

Sometimes he spoke strongly and with plain words to the multitudes who flocked to hear him preach.

All sorts of people came, high and low,

rich and poor, to hear this rough-looking man, who was so humble that, although it was declared of him by our Lord Himself that of all that were ever born none was greater than he, he yet said, 'I am but the voice crying in the wilderness.' The proud Pharisees came, the Sadducees, who were always doubting everything; soldiers, publicans, fishermen, women and children.

'O generation of vipers,' he once cried out to them, 'who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?' (Matt. iii. 7).

'Repent! repent! turn away from your sins. Do not boast of your strictness and piety, do not go on in your unbelief and hardness of heart. Do works of penance; for now, at this very hour, the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree that does not bring forth good

fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire.'

This was Saint John Baptist's message. Many not only listened to it, but they also confessed their sins, and these Saint John baptized in the river Jordan; for the Jews used a sort of baptism, when Gentiles or heathens were received into God's family, to show that they must be made quite clean before they were allowed to enter into covenant with God.

One day Jesus our Lord came from Galilee to the river Jordan, and asked John to baptize Him. But John said, 'I have need to be baptized of Thee, and dost Thou come to me to baptize Thee?' Then Jesus said, 'Let it be so now.' Then Saint John baptized Him. This was in the year of our Lord 26 (Matt. iii. 13-15).

On the very next day Saint John saw Jesus walking along the road near him.

This was He Who was to come; He Whose shoe's latchet, or fastening, Saint John did not think himself worthy to stoop down and unloose; this was the Christ, the Anointed One.

Then John cried out aloud, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!' (John i. 29).

Is Saint John's work over now? Oh no; the ministers of Christ's Holy Church still carry it on; they are voices, calling men everywhere to repentance; they are ever pointing the world to the Lamb of God Who takes away its sin.

Every 'priest of the Most High God' is bound to rebuke, to reprove, to exhort, and to build up, those to whom he preaches and ministers.

Listen, then, to the words of God's ambassadors, or messengers, whom He sends in His Name, as you would listen to the words of God Himself. It is not they who speak, but Christ. They beg us, in Christ's place, to be reconciled unto, that is, made right with, God.

Now, dear children, what is this repentance which Saint John preached?

Repentance means turning away from sin. If we are to behold the Lamb of God with the eyes of our soul, we must repent us of our sins. God wants us all to be saved, but He will not save us *in* our sins. He will save us *from* them, if we will let Him. How good God is to us!

Repentance is made up of three parts: (1) Contrition; (2) Confession; (3) Amendment of Life.

Contrition is sorrow for sin. Without contrition there is no repentance, without repentance there can be no remission, or forgiveness, of sins. However great our sin is, God will not refuse our sincere and real repentance of it. 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.'

But repentance means something more than this.

Saint John, when he preached repentance, did not tell people that they were to say they were sorry for their sins, but he told them that they were 'to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.' They were, that is, to do something to show that they were sorry.

Many persons came to John confessing their sins (Matt. iii. 6). Sin was a burden to them, which they wanted to get rid

of, to cast away. And in order to get pardon from God we must confess our sins. 'I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin' (Ps. xxxii. 5).

Yes, we must confess our sins to God, if we are really in earnest about repentance.

And the Church of God makes plain to us a way by which we may get the grace which comes from 'the ministry of reconciliation.'

It is right that we should have shame and pain in the confession of our sins, and telling our fault to the minister of God gives us this pain and shame. The object is that we may get counsel, advice, and comfort.

Opening our grief to a fellow-sinner is often like tearing open a wound; but

then God pours oil and wine into our wound by the ministry of His Holy Word, by the benefit of absolution, and by the loving counsel of His grace: 'Go and sin no more.'

And if we have done wrong to any, we must try to undo it, so far as we can. If we have stolen, we must give back; if we have quarrelled with any, we must make it up.

But it is not enough to be sorry for our sins, and to confess our sins; we must forsake them. This is amendment of life; that is, trying to do better; trying, every day, to live nearer to God; to walk in the way of His holy commandments, and to love and serve Him more truly.

This, then, is the repentance which Saint John preached; this is the repent-

ance which the Church of Christ teaches—sorrow for sin, confession of sin, leaving off sin.

Without repentance there can be no pardon, so far as we know.

Do you ever think how good God is, to call us so often to repentance? He gives us so many chances. He is always crying to us from His Cross, ‘Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?’

Dear children, there are only two sorts of people who are right in God’s sight:—

1. Innocents, like those little ones I have told you of, who died before they could sin; people, I mean, who have kept their baptismal robe pure and without stain; and,

2. Penitents; those who, having sinned, show their contrition or sorrow in acts of penitence—fasting, weeping, alms,

and works of satisfaction, all of which are acceptable to the God of pardon and mercy, through the atonement and satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ, as being signs of sincerity and earnestness ; not, of course, for any merit in themselves, apart from, or out of, Christ.

Remember, in the next world, repentance and remorse and bitter sorrow for sin will be of no use. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. If you have done anything naughty to-day, either in thought, word, or deed, repent of it to-day, confess it to-day, forsake it to-day, by a good resolution. To-morrow, for you, may never come.

Saint John's preaching of repentance and the need of a holy life was crowned with martyrdom.

Herod Antipas married his brother Philip's wife. Saint John boldly told him he had done wrong. Herod put him in prison in the castle of Machærus; there he stayed for a long time in suffering and loneliness. Herod was afraid to kill Saint John, because he knew the people loved him. Tyrants are oftencowards too.

But at last, on Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before the king, and pleased him so well that he said he would give her whatsoever she asked.

Her mother, who was very angry with John for his plain speaking to her about her wickedness, said, 'Ask the king to give you the head of John the Baptist in a charger.' A charger is a large dish or basin. She did so, and the wicked king sent and had the holy saint beheaded in his prison.

Then some of the followers, or disciples, of John reverently 'took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus' (Matt. xiv. 6-12).

We must be always bold, like Saint John Baptist, in lifting up our voice against vice and wickedness, cost what it may. We must 'speak up for Jesus,' when we can, and when it is right and fitting for us to do so, always, at such times, thinking very little of ourselves.

And those who take God's side, God, we may say, specially remembers.

What a glorious crown was that of Saint John Baptist!

And you may win one something like his, if only you are true to God, and serve Him faithfully, humbly, boldly, and in the way He marks out for you.

‘He that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.’

‘Be thou faithful unto death,’ God says, ‘and I will give thee a crown of life.’

REPENTANCE.

If ever I, unhappily,
 Fall into ways of sin,
To mend what I have done amiss
 I must at once begin.

I must repent, confess, and bear
 Whatever shame and pain
God sends me in His love, and hope
 His favour to regain.

And if my bitter tears run down,
 ’Tis well it should be so ;
Joy to the angels they will give,
 And wash away my woe.

A broken and a contrite heart
My God will not despise ;
And Jesu's Blood will cleanse the
soul
That for His pardon cries.

No prodigal is spurned, who says,
'Forgive, just as I am ;'
For scarlet sins turn white as snow
When sinners seek the Lamb.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XII.

1. Where did Saint John Baptist live in his early days ?
2. For how long did he live in the desert ?
3. What did he eat ?

4. How was he clothed ?
5. By whom was this raiment of camels' hair worn ?
6. When did Saint John begin to preach ?
7. In whose reign was that ?
8. In what year of our Lord ?
9. What did Isaiah the prophet say Saint John was ?
10. Was Saint John ever angry with the Pharisees and Sadducees ?
11. What was his message, or preaching ?
12. What did the people do ?
13. Had the Jews any kind of baptism ?
14. Did our Lord ask Saint John to baptize Him ?
15. What did Saint John say ?
16. What happened on the next day after our Lord's baptism ?

17. What is the work of Christ's priests?

18. What does repentance mean?

19. How many parts has repentance, and what are they?

20. Why did Herod put Saint John to death?

21. When did this happen?

22. What shall we have if we are 'faithful unto death'?

CHAPTER XIII.

Our Lord's Life.

BAPTISM, FASTING, AND TEMPTATION.

The Baptism of Jesus by Saint John—The Revelation of the Blessed Trinity—Christian Baptism—Little Children brought to Christ.

IN the chapters about Saint John the Baptist and his work I told you something, but not much, about the baptism of our Blessed Lord.

Now you must hear more.

Jesus, as I told you, came to the river Jordan, where Saint John was, and asked him to baptize Him.

Saint John, who was very humble, forbade Him, or, rather, as we should say,

hesitated about doing what Jesus asked him.

Saint John knew our Lord's Divine Nature, His power, and His glory, and how could he baptize One so great, so much higher than himself?

John said, 'I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?'

But Jesus answered, 'Suffer it, or let it be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' Then Saint John did as Jesus asked him, that is, he baptized Him.

Did Jesus need to be baptized? Did He want to be cleansed from sin? Oh no; we know He was quite pure and free from spot or stain of sin.

But Jesus is so good to us, that He makes Himself one with us in His Sacra-

ments, and so, although He needed no baptism, He was yet baptized.

And more than this, as He so plainly said when Saint John hung back from daring to baptize Him, 'Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.'

Now, what do these words mean?

Did not our Saviour use them to show that in all ways He would be like unto His brethren, that is, to us? Was not He, the sinless One, thus 'numbered with the transgressors'?

Yes, Jesus is indeed one with us; our Divine Example Himself walks in the way in which He would have His children go.

For nearly thirty years our Lord had lived that silent, unseen, Hidden Life of which I have tried to show you something, but now He was to make Him-

self known to the world. He was to manifest, or show forth, something of His glory. His public ministry was to begin.

In the Book of Numbers we are told that the age of thirty is that when men were allowed to 'do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation' (Num. iv. 3).

Our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, at this age began His priestly office and work.

Before Aaron and his sons were consecrated, or set apart, to be priests—before the robe of the ephod, the ephod itself, the breast-plate, the mitre and the holy crown, were put upon Aaron, and the coats and girdles upon his sons—they were taken to the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation and washed with

water to sanctify them for their office of the priesthood.

And before our great High Priest began His public ministry, He went through the washing with water which He Himself ordained.

Crowds had come to Saint John confessing their sins and desiring baptism; now He comes, the Maker, Master, and Judge of all mankind, standing before Saint John as the Penitent, confessing, not His own sins, for He had none to confess, but the sins of the whole world, as though He were the transgressor, and as though the sins were His own.

When Jesus came up out of the river Jordan, in which He had stood to be baptized, the heavens were opened to Saint John. The Holy Spirit of God came

down like a beautiful Dove and rested upon Jesus, and a great and mighty Voice came from Heaven, and what the Voice said was: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

Now, dear children, this short story of the baptism of Jesus is full of wonders. Let me try to point out some of them to you.

The three Persons of the Eternal Trinity were manifested, or revealed.

God the Father's Voice spake from Heaven. Three times was this awful Voice heard.

(1) Once, at this baptism of Jesus, as He was praying. Then it said, 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased' (Matt. iii. 17).

(2) Once on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Jesus was with Saint

Peter and Saint John and Saint James. Then, as Jesus was praying, His face changed, and His raiment became white and shining. Suddenly a cloud came over them, and the three saints feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a Voice out of the cloud which said, 'This is My beloved Son; hear ye Him' (Matt. xvii. 5).

(3) Once when Jesus was sorrowful and very heavy; 'Now is my soul troubled,' He cried, 'and what shall I say? Father, glorify Thy Name.' Then there came a Voice from Heaven, saying, 'I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.' Some of the people that stood by said that it thundered, others, that an angel had spoken to Jesus. But it was the Voice of God the Father which they heard (John xii. 28).

Every time that Voice spoke, it was in answer to a prayer of Jesus. And all that we know of God, or Heaven, or holiness, every good gift, comes from above, through the interceding, or asking, of Jesus Christ our Lord, Who is true God and true Man.

Thus the First Person of the Holy Trinity was made known at the baptism of the Second Person of the same Blessed Trinity, by the sounding forth of His Voice.

And the Third Person of the Sacred Trinity came down in the form of a Dove, the emblem of purity, gentleness, and love. In Jesus Christ, all that was loving and gentle and kind and good was found. He came to buy back those who had wandered from Him, and to make peace between God and man.

This descent, or coming down, of God the Holy Ghost was the anointing of the Messiah for His three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Sanctified, made holy, from the very moment of His Incarnation, by the Holy Ghost, as I have already shown you in the chapter about the Best Birthday, our Lord is now shown, by this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which was visible to men, to be the Son of God.

Our Lord's baptism revealed, that is, made known, so far as we can understand it, the mystery, or great wonder, of the Holy Trinity, of which I shall have more to say in another chapter.

Our Lord humbled Himself to receive baptism at the hands of His creature and servant, Saint John; and it was at that

very moment that the glorious majesty of the Holy Trinity in Unity was unveiled.

And when Jesus came up out of the river Jordan, and prayed to His Heavenly Father, the Holy Ghost came down, to prefigure, or show forth beforehand, the coming down of the same Blessed Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Church of God, when so many souls should be born into that kingdom of grace which sprang forth from the bitter pain and humiliation of the Passion and Cross of Jesus.

Here it will be well for me to say something about Holy Baptism, one of the Sacraments of Christ's Church; and one of the two which are 'generally,' that is, universally, everywhere in all places and in all times, 'necessary to salvation.'

Just as circumcision was the rite in the Old Law which brought men into covenant with God, so Holy Baptism is the means in the New Law by which we are brought into our spiritual relationship with God.

Now, a Sacrament has two parts: (1) 'the outward and visible sign;' that is, 'the matter' of the Sacrament, which all can see and take note of. (2) 'The inward and spiritual grace'—'the virtue' of the Sacrament; that is, that which works, unseen by human eye, in the heart and soul.

In Holy Baptism 'the outward and visible sign' is water, used 'in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;' 'the inward and spiritual grace' is regeneration, or the new Birth.

It does not matter whether Baptism is

performed by *affusion*, that is, by pouring water, or by *immersion*, that is, by dipping into water, the effect is one and the same.

Of Holy Baptism every Christian man, woman, or child can say, ‘wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven.’

You, dear children, were brought to Christ when you were quite young, that you might be taken into the shelter of His fold, the Church.

1. You are a member of Christ. You belong to Jesus. You are a part of Him in His mystical Body, the Church. Can you dare to lie, to act impurely, to be unkind, if you remember that you have put on Christ—that you are a partaker of the Divine Nature?

2. God is your Father. You can say 'Our Father' very truly. You are His child. See that you love, obey, and serve Him. Never disobey, never dishonour, never distrust Him.

3. You are an heir of Heaven. Heaven is your home. Here you are only a stranger and a pilgrim; in this world you are but a traveller. Heaven is your possession, you have a right to it. Will you let any one take away your inheritance, your property? Will you let anybody rob you of Heaven? Will you cheat yourself of it?

Be true, then, to the grace given you in Holy Baptism. Remember, it is the beautiful robe of our Lord's perfect righteousness that was flung over you at the font. Never stain it, never defile it, never cast it from you. It is His

precious gift; guard it, revere it, keep it for Christ's sake.

You were signed with the Cross to show that you had given you the mark of the Crucified, the power of the Crucified, the life of the Crucified.

Fight, then, manfully under Christ's banner, against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and try, very hard, to be His faithful soldier and servant unto your life's end.

And then, you know what He will give you at last. The crown of victory.

One story in the Bible, children will love to hear as long as the world lasts.

Our Lord had come from Galilee into the coasts of Judea, on the further side of Jordan.

Many people had followed Him, and He had done many works in healing the

sick. And Jesus had taught the people who had come to Him, telling them things which He had often spoken to them of before, and holding much serious talk with them.

Then some of the people, many mothers, no doubt, brought their babies and young children to Jesus, that He should touch them.

When the disciples saw this, they perhaps, thought Jesus would not like to be troubled with them then.

I daresay the very little ones made a great noise, but the elder ones looked up into the beautiful face of Jesus with a quiet gaze of wonder. They were, perhaps, a little, only a very little, afraid.

Our Lord had been speaking to the Pharisees about some difficult questions which they had put to Him; and I think

the disciples, in all kindness and love for their Master, rebuked, that is, spoke harshly to the parents and others for bringing their children to Christ just then.

But Jesus, Who so dearly loves little children, when He saw what was going on, was much displeased with the disciples, and said to them, 'Let the little children come unto Me; do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God.' 'Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, in meekness, gentleness, and obedience, shall not enter into it.'

Then Jesus took some of the little ones up in His arms, put His hands upon others, and blessed them all (Mark x. 13-16).

Nicephorus, a Church historian, tells

us that Ignatius, afterwards Bishop of Antioch, the city where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians, was one of these infants.

We can hardly think how great a blessing it was for children to be taken in the arms of Jesus, and touched by Him Who was the Eternal and Almighty God.

But He has done more than this for you in Holy Baptism.

He has regenerated you, given you the New Birth of His Holy Spirit; He has taken you for His own child, adopting, or making you one of His family. He has incorporated you into, that is, He has made you part of, His Holy Church, which is His Body; He has washed and sanctified you, made you holy and good; He has set you free from wrath; He has

taken you from the dark and swelling waves of this troublesome world into the shelter and safety of the Ark of His Church.

And all this, that you may come at last, through His mercy and grace, to that Eternal Kingdom promised you by Christ our Lord, and won for you by the power of His Death and Resurrection.

‘Thus outwardly and visibly

He sealed you for His own ;

Oh, may the brow that wears His Cross
Hereafter share His Crown !’

CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.

Oh, what a glorious thing it is
To fight for Christ's dear sake!
The world, the flesh, the Devil war,
And we a side must take.

Sworn at the font, Christ's soldiers true,
Marked with His holy sign,
We dare each cruel enemy—
Yes, all along the line.

Our weapons are the Spirit's own,
Forged for the sons of light,
Who came through the baptismal flood,
Equipped with arms of light.

Under Christ's banner, then, we fight,
Forth in Christ's name we march;
Only to lay our armour down
At Heaven's triumphal arch.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIII.

1. Where was our Lord baptized?
2. By whom?
3. Did Saint John wish to baptize Jesus?
4. Why did Jesus want Saint John to baptize Him?
5. What is meant by Christ 'fulfilling all righteousness'?
6. How long did Jesus live the Hidden Life?
7. What was the age when men were allowed to do work in the Tabernacle?
8. What age was Jesus when He began His ministry?
9. What happened to Aaron and his sons before they were made priests?
10. What happened after Jesus came up out of the water?

11. How often was God the Father's voice heard?

12. When?

13. How were the three Persons of the Holy Trinity manifested at our Lord's baptism?

14. What old rite does Holy Baptism take the place of?

15. How many parts are there in a Sacrament?

16. What are these in Holy Baptism?

17. What does Holy Baptism make us?

18. What did Jesus say to the disciples when the little children were brought to Him?

CHAPTER XIV.

Our Lord's Life.

BAPTISM, FASTING, AND TEMPTATION.

The Temptation—The three special Temptations by Satan—Our Temptations.

VERY soon after His baptism, our Lord was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil (Matt. iv. 1–11).

What! could Jesus be tempted? Could the Devil dare to try and make the eternal Son of God fall?

Yes, Satan, the Devil, did tempt Jesus, but in Him was no sin, no sinfulness, and no capacity for sinning, which means He was not able to sin.

Jesus was led up of the Spirit. The Holy Ghost Who dwelt in Him, by reason of His Godhead, carried Him, as it were, into the wilderness.

The same good Spirit leads and guides us. His voice is heard within our souls. See, dear children, that you listen when the Holy Spirit speaks to you, with reverent and attentive ears. Say, like Samuel, 'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.'

Some people have thought that Jesus was led into the wilderness of Sinai, where Moses and Elijah had fasted forty days and forty nights.

But the most widely received tradition places the scene of the fasting and temptation in the desert between Jerusalem and Jericho, where the poor man, in the story Jesus told, fell among robbers, who stripped him of his clothes,

wounded him, and left him for dead (Luke x. 30).

The traveller was going from Jerusalem to Jericho, and it was not far from the last-named place, in the northern part of the desert, that, most likely, the events which I am to tell you of took place.

Modern travellers have told us something about this desert.

One who visited a religious house for men, called the monastery of St. Saba, in this wilderness, says, 'The valley of St. Saba is an immense chasm in a rifted, or parted, mountain of marble. There are no trees, no vegetation; its only inhabitants are eagles, tigers, and wild Arabs.'

Chateaubriand writes: 'The appearance of the mountains is white, dusty, without shade, without tree, without herbage or grass, without moss.'

It was in this dreadful, lonely place that Light and Darkness met in battle.

‘Forty days and forty nights
He was fasting in the wild ;
Forty days and forty nights,
Tempted, and yet undefiled.

Sunbeams scorching all the day,
Chilly dewdrops nightly shed ;
Prowling beasts about His way,
Stones His pillow, earth His bed.’

The Devil tempted, or tried, our Lord in three ways.

1. The dark Spirit said to Jesus, knowing that He was very hungry, and looking round on the hard, broken rocks, ‘If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.’

Jesus hungered as we do ; this tempta-

tion was aimed against the created human nature of Jesus.

But although Jesus 'suffered being tempted,' although the pangs of hunger and the dryness of a dreadful thirst were His, He did not listen to the Tempter's voice, but strove against him, to show us that we must strive too.

Jesus answered Satan out of the Bible. He said, 'It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that cometh out of the mouth of God.' Turn to your Bibles and you will find the words our Lord used in the Book of Deuteronomy, the eighteenth chapter, at the third verse.

Jesus smote the Devil with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

2. Then the Devil altered his plan.

He took Jesus, by some power allowed him by God Himself, to the holy city Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the Temple; perhaps on the top of the high porch or spire at the east end of it some think over the Holy of Holies.

The Devil said, 'If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written, He shall give His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.'

Satan quoted Psalm xci. verses eleven and twelve.

Now you see it was the Devil's turn to quote Holy Scripture. Satan often does this for his own bad ends, to make us think he is an angel of light.

Jesus answered him with Holy Scripture again. 'It is written,' He said,

‘Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God’
(Deut. vi. 16).

3. The Devil next tried what the power of the imagination would do.

Imagination is that part of our mind which lets us fancy things. It helps the poet to write his verses, the story-teller to weave his tales, the artist to paint his pictures.

It is a splendid gift of God when rightly used; a terrible one when it runs loose in the service of the Devil. For then we let it draw pictures for us in our mind’s eye, with a pencil that is dipped in hell fire, and whose touch is poison.

It is thought that when Satan took our Blessed Lord to the top of a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glories and splendours, Jesus did really see

them by some wonderful illusion or deception of the imagination, over which Satan has such power.

‘All these things will I give Thee,’ said the Devil, ‘if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.’

Whatever power Satan had over the kingdoms of the world was for ever crushed and broken down by our Lord's Death and Resurrection.

But now Jesus answered him, ‘Get thee hence, Satan, go away: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’

The third blow of the sword of the Spirit went straight home, for then the Devil left Him, and beautiful, bright angels came and ministered unto Him.

They came as if to rejoice with their

King in His victory, to do Him honour, and to comfort Him by their ministries or services.

Jesus at this time spake many things, as he bore many things, in His character as Man, though we know that He was God all the while.

The Devil tempts us in just the same way as he tempted Jesus.

He wants us to do as we like, to gratify the flesh, to please ourselves. He tries to make us proud, wilful, and conceited. He wishes to make us ambitious or greedy.

Self-indulgence, pride, covetousness—these are the snares the Devil lays for us.

Oh, let us meet his crafty wiles with the same sword that Jesus used; let us be valiant, brave, and true soldiers, and

fight manfully against the world, the flesh, and the Devil, unto our life's end.

The weapons in our hands must be the strength of God the Holy Ghost, prayer, self-denial.

Why? Because through these our Blessed Lord conquered, and we must, by His grace, conquer too.

Now, dear children, I must try to make you understand something about our temptations.

Temptation we must all have. We are taught to pray, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'

A very wise man once wrote: 'It is as if we said, "Lead us through temptation, into it, and out of it."'

Temptation is not sin. Giving way to it is. Shakespeare, in his play, '*Measure for Measure*,' which one day you will be

allowed to read, makes one of his characters say—

‘ ’Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
Another thing to fall.’

We are all, old and young, like children going through a country to a certain city at its farther end.

We are told not to stop about, not to loiter and pluck the flowers that spring in beauty upon the banks on each side of us, or to gather the fruit that hangs overhead.

The Devil says, ‘Don’t hurry; there is plenty of time; there is no harm in picking a few pretty flowers, and in gathering some very nice fruit.’

And, if we listen, we lose the daylight, and the dark night comes on before we reach our home; and the thorns hidden behind the leaves tear our flesh; and the

poison that lies hidden in what seemed delicious fruit hurts us.

We wanted ease and pleasure and enjoyment, you see, when we were told to keep straight on and make for the distant city, before we thought of self, or enjoyment, or rest.

You have often seen the hollows in the fields or on the downs, where you run and hide, partly filled with water after a long time of rain and damp.

Your temptations are like these, and there are four little steps cut on the sloping sides of them. The first step is the Thought of Sin; this you cannot always help. The second step is Inward Pleasure; this you can always stifle, and try to beat down. The third step is the Struggle; you have to fight as to whether you will give in or not. No doubt you

have often gone down these three steps. But there is a fourth: it is Inward Consent. Oh, if you place your feet on that, for the time you are lost. It is all over with you, as we say; you are down in the water—the temptation has overcome you.

And yet God is really very kind to us when He gives us temptations, for, after all, He always does make a way, yes, many ways, by which we may escape them.

All Satan's worst acts of trying to drag us down may, through God's grace, be turned into ladders on which we may climb up to Heaven.

And God has placed this dignity, or greatness, about our temptations. They give us the chance of being His soldiers, of doing battle for Him, and of coming off conquerors.

The dangers of temptation are many.

They come from the Devil, who has a great mind; he is very clever; he has a strong will; he has mighty powers or resources; he has bitter malice and hate.

They come from ourselves, from our intellect, our will, our affections, all which are wounded through the Fall I have told you of.

Now, we can only overcome temptation by—(1) humility; (2) by avoiding all occasions of sin, getting out of its way, that is; and (3) by prudence and common sense.

Be humble. A man who thinks little of himself is not half so likely to fall as one who thinks a great deal of himself. He who always holds his head high does not see the pits at his feet.

Do not go into the way of temptation.

Do not put your head in the lion's mouth. Do not go to places in which you may have fallen; do not know people, more than you can possibly help, with whom you have sinned. 'A burnt child dreads the fire.'

Use your common sense. God has given you five senses; they are the gateways of knowledge. Use these powers. If you bury your head in the sand, like the ostrich, you will most likely be stifled. Do not misuse your powers; if you do misuse the gifts of sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell, the Devil will have you in his power—you will fall under temptation.

But for our comfort, Satan's power is held back, it is kept in check; he cannot do whatever he likes. There are ways of escape for us.

 Temptations show the strength of

God's victory won for us; and they reveal ourselves to us. They show us what we are; they tear off the masks we put on; they let us see our selfishness and our pride, that we may get rid of them.

They win for us the crown, and that is only to be had by hard fighting.

To him that overcometh will Jesus give to eat of the hidden manna; the white stone, in which is the new name; He will give him strength and a name to be for ever with Him for His merit's sake. Above all, dear children, Jesus will give the companionship of Himself, Who was made perfect through suffering, and Who overcame, and is set down on His Father's throne (Rev. ii. 17).

The Church keeps the forty days of Lent (a word which means spring) in memory of our dear Lord's fasting and

temptation ; and in order that we may try very hard to be something, if only a very little, like Him, in His hunger and self-denial, in His resisting temptation, and in His conquest of the Devil, that great enemy of our souls.

TEMPTATION.

Temptation is a school in which
I learn to conquer sin ;
A battlefield, whereon my soul
Her victories may win.

I meet the Devil face to face,
I bid him turn away,
I brave the world, I dare myself,
And conquer as I pray.

Jesus has borne all this for me,
That I may win my crown :
His strength defies the World, the Flesh,
And casts the Devil down.

O beauteous crown that only comes
Through struggle and distress !
O Love of God, that smites to save,
And makes temptation bless !

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIV.

1. By whom was Jesus led up into the wilderness ?
2. Where was the wilderness or desert ?
3. In how many ways did the Devil tempt Christ ?
4. How did Jesus answer Satan ?

5. Does the Devil ever quote Holy Scripture?

6. Who came to Jesus when the Devil left Him?

7. What did they come to do?

8. What are the three special ways in which Satan tempts us?

9. What must our weapons be?

10. Is there sin in being tempted?

11. Where does the sin lie?

12. What are the four steps in temptation?

13. What does temptation give us the chance to do?

14. Is the Devil who tempts us clever?

15. What are the temptations that come from within?

16. How are we to meet temptation?

17. What will God give to those who overcome?

CHAPTER XV.

The Public Ministry of Our Lord.

THE DISCIPLES.

The First Disciples—The Sermon on the Mount—Other Sermons of Christ—Ordination of the Twelve Apostles.

YOU will recollect that I told you Saint John the Baptist pointed to Jesus, the day after he had baptized Him, and said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’

The crowd of people who stood round about, both heard and saw Saint John do this.

The next day Saint John looked upon Jesus as He walked near him, and said

to two of his followers, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'

Saint John pointed out Jesus as the Lamb. Why? Because He was the Victim, the Sacrifice; the Atonement, which the passover lamb and the daily sacrifice showed forth in type and figure. Yes, Jesus was indeed One Who should be led 'as a lamb to the slaughter' (Isa. liii. 7).

Saint John thought little of himself, but much of Jesus, Who would so shortly begin to preach, and teach, and do many wonders in His own Name.

'He must increase, but I must decrease.' This is what Saint John said. And so he wished his two disciples to leave him and follow Jesus.

When our Lord saw these disciples of John following Him, He said to them,

‘What seek ye?’ They said unto Him, ‘Master, where dwellest Thou?’ Jesus said, ‘Come and see.’

How kind it was of Jesus, thus to bid them to come to Him!

They went where Jesus was, and stayed with Him that day.

What they talked about we are not told.

One of them, Saint Andrew, went and told his brother, Simon Peter, ‘We have found the Messiah, the Christ’ (John i. 35–41).

It is thought that the other disciple was Saint John the Evangelist, who never talks about himself. Most likely he now saw Jesus for the first time.

Then it was that his heart was set on fire with love for Jesus; his love was strong and true, and so he came to be

called 'the Beloved Disciple;' for those who love God really, God loves dearly.

Saint John the Evangelist speaks of our Lord as the Lamb thirty times in his Book of the Revelation. The Baptist's words had burnt into his very soul: 'Behold the Lamb of God!'

When Andrew brought Peter to Jesus, our Lord said, 'Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a stone' (John i. 42).

Jesus saw in a moment what Saint Peter was, and He foresaw his future greatness.

Cephas is the Hebrew word for stone or rock; Peter is the Greek and Latin word for stone or rock.

Saint Peter was to be one of the great foundation-stones of the Church, and he

was bold, setting his face like a flint; he was hard, fit to endure trouble, and very courageous.

All this Christ saw and knew. Afterwards He said to him, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church' (Matt. xvi. 18).

Saint Peter is held to have been the Prince or Primate, that is, first or chief of the apostolic band, just as the Archbishop of Canterbury is Primate, or first in rank of all the bishops in England.

The next day Jesus went back again into Galilee, and found another disciple, Philip of Bethsaida, the city where Andrew and Peter lived, and He said unto him, 'Follow me.'

Philip did so, and went and sought out Nathanael, or Bartholomew, him of whom Jesus said, 'Behold an Israelite indeed,

in whom is no guile, that is, deceit' (John i. 43, 47).

These were the first disciples—Andrew, John the Evangelist, Peter, Philip, and Bartholomew.

Very soon after the fasting and temptation in the desert, of which I have told you, our Blessed Lord heard that Saint John had been cast into prison by Herod.

Thus the Baptist's words already came true: 'He must increase, but I must decrease' (John iii. 30).

Saint John, whom our Lord called 'a burning and a shining light,' was shut up in the dungeon-cell. He who had so boldly preached the truth to men about repentance was now silenced: his light was burning down, soon to go out in death, so far as this world is concerned,

and that by King Herod's cruel orders. But the True Light, Whom Saint John foretold, was now to shine out more and more unto the perfect day. He was to increase.

Let us see how this was to be.

I think it will be very useful to tell you how our Blessed Lord carried out His public ministry, or teaching.

I will not tell you just now when He spake His parables, or did His wonderful works, which we call miracles, for this I hope to do at some future time.

As I have told you, Jesus heard that Saint John was shut up in the castle at Machærus, and that he was kept a prisoner there.

Our Lord now went to Galilee, and preached there on the Sabbath days. This He did, too, at Nazareth, which you

will remember was 'His own country.' Leaving Nazareth, He came to Capernaum on the lake-side.

These are the times at which Jesus first publicly preached.

Then came the first general circuit, or journey, in the first year of the public ministry.

Jesus, we are told, went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, or churches, preaching the gospel, and healing all kinds of sickness and disease among the people, and bidding people to repent, as His forerunner, Saint John, had done.

The fame of Christ's teaching and wonderful works went all through Syria; and crowds of people from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the country beyond the Jordan, followed Him (Matt. iv. 17-25).

Then Jesus preached His first great sermon ; it is called the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. vi. vii.). This mount was a hill above the lake of Gennesaret.

The sermon began with what are called the Beatitudes, because Jesus then said that certain kinds of people are Blessed. These are—the poor in spirit ; they who mourn ; the meek ; they who hunger and thirst after the good things of God ; the merciful ; the pure in heart ; the peace-makers ; they who are persecuted for Christ's sake ; they who are evil spoken of and hated because of Him.

There are, you will see, nine Beatitudes, and to each of the classes of people I have named a special sentence of blessing, or beatitude, was given.

Then Jesus went on to preach about

good works; purity; forgiveness; right sort of speech; patience under provocation; perfection; almsgiving; prayer; fasting; purity of heart and will, and intention or meaning; trust in God's providence; right and kind judgments of others; perseverance in the narrow way; and of bringing forth good fruit—that is, doing the things which God tells us.

And in this discourse He, moreover, taught us, when we pray, to say, 'Our Father which art in Heaven'—the Lord's Prayer, as it is called, which was one of the very first things which we were taught to use as a prayer, at our mother's knee.

What a wonderful sermon that must have been, all unlike any the people had ever listened to before.

It was indeed 'good news;' it put things in quite a new light; and when it was over, and Jesus rose from His seat, for, like the Jewish preachers, He sat as He preached to His hearers, 'the people were astonished at His doctrine, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes,' who were very learned men like the lawyers of our days.

The words of Him Who spake as never man spake had gone straight home, as we should say. They had opened quite a new world of thought to those who heard them.

Jesus preached again: this time from a boat (Luke v. 1). The people pressed around Him so much, as He stood by the blue waters of the Lake of Gennesaret, that He went into Simon Peter's fishing-

boat, and asked Peter to thrust the boat out a little from the land, that He might the better speak to the crowds of people on the shore. And again He sat down, and taught them out of the ship.

The call of Matthew, Levi, the son of Alphæus, seems to close, so far as we can tell, the first year of the public ministry of Jesus. Saint Matthew was sitting, taking money from the tax-payers, and, as Jesus passed by, He simply said these two words, 'Follow me.' And Matthew arose, left his account-books and money, and followed Jesus (Matt. ix. 9).

Saint Matthew, as you know, was one of the Four Evangelists. He wrote his Gospel in Hebrew and Greek, very soon after the Ascension, and before any of the other Gospels.

The second year's ministry begins by

Jesus going up to the Feast of the Passover, at Jerusalem, for the second time (John v. 1).

Then we read of His going out into a mountain to pray, and staying there all the night long, praying to God through its silent watches (Luke vi. 12).

Our Blessed Lord was going to do a very wonderful thing, and this mountain vigil, or watch, was a preparation for it.

The next day He called to Him twelve men, whom He chose to be His Holy Apostles. They were—Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew (whom you will remember I told you was also called Nathanael), Thomas, Matthew (whose call I just now described), James, Jude, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who was the traitor.

These twelve Jesus ordained. And then He gave them a solemn charge, or sermon, telling them what they were to do, what they were to expect, and ending with the words, 'He that receiveth you, receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me' (Matt. x. 2, 4, 40).

Before the ordination of priests and deacons now, the faithful are asked to fast and pray at the Ember seasons, and to the newly ordained, the bishop, or chief pastor, gives a charge, setting forth their duties and the important nature of their high and holy office.

Thus, you see, the Church still does as Jesus did, when He ordained and sent forth His first twelve Apostles.

Our Saviour again preached in the Plain of Gennesaret. This sermon is

much like the Sermon on the Mount, but it differs from it in some ways. It is likely that Jesus, the second time, went over much the same ground, teaching the holy lessons of His great Sermon to some who did not hear that (Luke vi. 17-29).

We do not need to hear something new every time we go to church.

The 'old, old story' is best for us, and we need never get tired of it, for it is Christ's message of 'good news' to the world.

Saint John sent to our Lord at Capernaum from his prison (Matthew xi. 2). He had heard, in his dreary cell, of the works of Christ, and he sent two of his followers, who, when they came to Jesus, asked Him, 'Art Thou He that is coming, or do we look for another?'

Jesus and His disciples lived in a very simple way. They were so kind and friendly to all, and our Lord was so unlike the King the Jews had looked for, that some of Saint John's followers thought Jesus could not be the long looked-for Messiah.

Saint John wished his disciples to be made quite sure about this.

Our Lord pointed these messengers of John to His wonderful deeds, as a proof of His divine work and character.

He said to them, 'Go and tell John these things ye both hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them' (Matt. xi. 4, 5).

Saint John had wrought no miracle; he

had not done any of those wonderful things which Jesus Christ had. So we may suppose that these mighty works made John's disciples certain that Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah.

Not very long after this, Saint John died in prison, where he had been kept for about a year.

I have told you the manner of his death; how he was beheaded by order of Herod, at the bidding of a wicked woman, the bad mother of a gay and thoughtless daughter.

There is a story that this daughter of Herodias, who was named Salome, had her head cut off, in Spain, by the breaking of the ice, over which she was crossing. The ice closed round her neck as she fell through it. Thus she perished by decapitation, as she caused Saint John

to die. Decapitation means cutting off the head.

Herod, at war on behalf of Herodias, was banished from his own country, and both he and Herodias died in exile in a distant land, hating one another to the last.

CHRIST'S WORDS.

What wonderful words did our dear
Saviour speak,
When He dwelt upon earth among
men,
As He sat on the Mount, or preached
from the boat:
Oh, we wish He were speaking as then!

We should like to have gazed on His
beautiful face ;
To have heard His voice, wondrously
sweet ;
To have caught every word as it fell from
His lips ;
To have knelt to be blessed at His
feet.

But Jesus still preaches, His voice is still
heard,
If our ears are but open to hear,
As to-day in His Church, by the mouth
of His priests,
His message rings out sharp and clear.

And still, in the wonderful Book we
can read
Of the blessings He brought to man-
kind ;

And Christ, in His Church, is still teach-
ing the world,
And seeking His lost ones to find.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XV.

1. Why did Saint John point to our Lord as the Lamb of God?
2. Did Saint John think much of himself?
3. What did he say of Jesus and himself?
4. What did Saint Andrew say to Saint Peter?
5. Why does Saint John the Evangelist never mention himself?
6. What was he called?

7. How often does Saint John speak of our Lord as the Lamb?

8. In what book of the Bible?

9. What are the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin names for rock or stone?

10. Why did our Lord call Saint Peter by these names?

11. Who were the first disciples of our Lord?

12. Where did our Lord first preach?

13. What age was our Lord when He first began to preach?

14. What is the first great sermon called?

15. What are the Beatitudes, and how many are there?

16. Tell me what you know about Saint Matthew's call.

17. What did Saint Matthew become?

18. How did our Lord begin the second year of His ministry?

19. How many Apostles did our Lord ordain?

20. Why did Saint John send messengers to Christ?

CHAPTER XVI.

The Public Ministry of our Lord.

THE DISCIPLES.

Jesus condemns the Traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees—Saint Peter's Confession of Christ—Binding and Loosing.

WE now come to the third year of our Saviour's public ministry.

His first sermon was upon the things which pollute or defile a man, and was preached against some of the traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt. xv. 1-20).

These people were very angry with Jesus, because He had done so many

miracles or wonderful works; and they came to Him at Capernaum from Jerusalem, to try to catch Him in some fault.

They could find none, for both Jesus and His disciples kept the Law.

Then they objected to Him, because He transgressed or broke 'the traditions of the elders.'

One of these 'traditions' was: 'Whoever despises, or thinks little of, the washing of hands, must be excommunicated, that is, punished by being put outside the congregation.' Another: 'He that eats bread with unwashed hands, does as bad as if he sinned impurely.'

As the story goes, one of their great men, Aquiba, being in prison, had not enough water both to drink and to wash his hands with. He did the latter, say-

ing, 'It is better to die of thirst, than to break the traditions of the elders.'

Now, Jesus showed these people that they must be clean inwardly.

He said, 'Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man' (Matt. xv. 11).

The Pharisees were very much offended at this saying; they were very proud, and did not like to be taught, or to have the traditions broken.

The disciples told Jesus how much the Pharisees were offended.

Jesus answered: 'Every plant, which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.'

Saint Peter asked our Lord to explain what He meant.

Jesus said : 'Are ye also yet without understanding? Do ye not know what I mean? Do ye not understand that those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile a man? For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man' (Matt. xv. 12-21).

God taught men to keep their hearts with all diligence; the Scribes and Pharisees, in their traditions, bade them be very particular not to eat with unwashen hands.

Jesus, in this sermon, showed the people that the Word of God was made

useless by their traditions, and for that reason He condemned them.

Jesus, when He was in the borders of Cæsarea-Philippi, one day asked His disciples, 'Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?'

Cæsarea-Philippi is thought to be the place formerly called Laish or Dan.

It lay on the north of the land within the tetrarchy, or province, of Philip, Herod's brother.

The city had been rebuilt by Philip, and he called it Cæsarea in honour of Tiberius Cæsar, the Roman Emperor. He added his own name to it, to mark it off from another and much greater city called Cæsarea, in the southern part of the country, and which was rebuilt by King Herod, and named Cæsarea in honour of Augustus Cæsar.



"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

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In answer to the question of Jesus, the disciples said, 'Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, some say Elijah, others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.'

Then our Lord put the question straight to them: 'But whom say ye that I am?'

Then it was that Simon Peter stood out from the rest with holy courage and boldness, and he said, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

This is called the confession of Christ's divinity.

Peter said, 'Jesus, Thou art God.'

Our Lord then said to Peter: 'Blessed, happy, art thou, Simon Barjona (that is, son of Jona), for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven.'

Jesus meant that it was no human wisdom or learning, but a direct revelation, a message from God the Father, which made Saint Peter able to speak forth this confession of his belief.

Then Jesus went on thus: 'And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven' (Matt. xvi. 13-19).

These are very wonderful words. Let me try if I can help you to understand them a little.

‘Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.’

This confession by the Holy Apostle, Saint Peter, of Christ’s Divinity, was the rock on which the Church was to be built.

Saint Peter said, ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.’

The Divinity of Christ is the eternal truth on which the Church is built.

Saint Peter, himself called by our Lord, rock, or stone, as I have told you, was thus marked out as one of those twelve foundation-stones upon which the New Jerusalem is raised.

Against the Church no harm should come, no foe prevail. Even the gates of Hell, *i.e.* Death, the powers of darkness, and Satan, should fall back helpless and undone before that mighty army, the Church of God

‘Against this holy home
Rude tempests harmless beat ;
And Satan’s angels fiercely come
But to endure defeat.’

The Church and the world are always at war, but Christ has said that His Church shall triumph; and we know that Heaven and earth shall pass away, but that His words shall never pass away. The Church is Christ.

And then Jesus went on to say to Saint Peter, ‘And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven.’

Keys are the emblems, or signs, of authority. The keys of a city are often presented with great ceremony to a monarch, or some very great person.

Ancient keys were quite different from ours. In old times, doors and boxes

were closed with bands, and the key was used to fasten or loosen these bands.

Chardin describes the locks in the East as little harrows, going half-way into a wooden staple or socket. The key was a wooden handle having points at its end, which were pushed into the staple and so raised the little harrow.

In the Book of Isaiah's prophecies we read: 'And the key of the House of David will I lay upon His shoulder: so He shall open, and none shall shut; and He shall shut, and none shall open' (Isa. xxii. 22).

Eliakim was to wear his key upon his shoulder, as a mark of his office, showing that he could open and shut with power.

Callimachus says that Ceres, the goddess of Harvest, carried a key upon her shoulder; one of those large keys

which the ancients had, in the form of a sickle, which were so large and heavy, that they could not well be otherwise carried.

Jesus told the Scribes and Pharisees that they had taken away the key of knowledge from the people; they wanted to keep them in darkness and ignorance (Luke xi. 52). Jesus also tells us that He has 'the keys of Hell and Death;' that is, that He has the power to bring us to the grave, and to save us from it, to give us life, or death (Rev. i. 18).

The Rabbins, or wise doctors of the Jews, say that God keeps to Himself, to use as He pleases, four keys—(1) the key of rain; (2) the key of the grave; (3) the key of fruitfulness or increase; (4) the key of barrenness or unfruitfulness.

We may say that Saint Peter holds two keys in his Master's name—one, of gold; one, of iron. One, that is, which opens, and one which shuts; for our Lord went on to say to him, 'And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven.'

This is 'the power of the keys,' the power of God committed to the earthly minister, for punishment, for correction, for restoring or healing, for pardon.

Christ gave His Apostles this power in the Name of His Father. 'As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.'

Did this power cease, or break off, when the Apostles died? Did their ministry stop then?

No; for Jesus says again: 'And lo! I

am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.' 'You will be taken away; but those whom you appoint in your place, shall do your work and carry out your mission, and exercise your powers, unto the consummation, or ending, of all things. I am with you, and your successors, always, even unto the end of the world.'

In the Ordinal, that is, the Service for Ordination of Christ's Holy Catholic Church in England, called 'The Ordering of Priests,' the Bishop says to those upon whom he lays his hands: 'Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.'

And in 'the Office for the Visitation of the Sick,' the Priest is told to say to the penitent: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who

hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences, and by His authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'

These words are from the Book of Common Prayer, and every duly ordained Priest has the same power which our Lord gave to Saint Peter and the rest of the Apostles, when He used the words I have been trying to make plain to you.

'His twelve Apostles first He made
His ministers of grace:
And they their hands on others laid
To fill in turn their place.'

When you say, 'I believe in One, Holy,

Catholic, and Apostolic Church,' you plant your feet firmly on the rock, because Jesus said to those upon whom that Church was built, its foundations: 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'

In the next chapter, I shall have more to tell you about Jesus, His wonderful words and deeds.

You cannot think too much about them, for they are the words and deeds of Him Who is true God and true Man.

And these last words and deeds, of which I have told you, remember, dear children, were spoken and done, when the Son of Mary was about thirty-two years old—all of them in the first, second, and the early part of the third years of His Public Ministry.

JESUS IS GOD.

This truth I firmly do believe,
That Jesus is Divine—
A Teacher sent from God—and God;
No other Faith is mine.

True Mna, Who lived with men on earth,
Yet God Who could atone,
A Brother like to us, True God,
To be by brethren known.

O Mystery of God and Man!
O Miracle of Love!
If little I know here on earth,
God teach me more above.

God keep me true, in days of doubt,
All whole and undefiled
To hold the Faith the Saints have kept,
With heart of little child!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVI.

1. The First Sermon of the third year of our Lord's Public Ministry; what was it preached against?

2. Were the Scribes and Pharisees angry with Jesus?

3. Why?

4. What was made void or useless through these traditions?

5. Where is Cæsarea-Philippi?

6. Why was it so called?

7. Who confessed our Lord's Divinity?

8. What did Jesus say to Saint Peter at this time?

9. What is the rock upon which the Church is built?

10. Was Saint Peter one of the foundation-stones of the Church?

11. Can the world, or the Devil, really harm the Church of God?

12. What do we mean by 'the power of the keys'?

13. What are keys the sign of?

14. Who took away the 'key of knowledge' from the people?

15. Who were the Rabbins?

16. When did Jesus give the power to His Apostles to bind and loose?

17. Did this power, this commission, cease with the Apostles?

18. Does the Church of England Ordinal prove that this power still continues?

19. Is Christ still present with His Church?

CHAPTER XVII.

The Public Ministry of our Lord.

HIS TRANSFIGURATION.

The Transfiguration—The Appearance of Moses and Elias—Lessons.

YOU will remember that I told you of three times at which the Voice of God the Father was heard.

First, at the Baptism of Jesus; secondly, at His Transfiguration; thirdly, when His Human Soul began to be sorrowful and very heavy at the thought of His Passion and Death.

It is of the Transfiguration, when the Voice came out of the cloud, that I now wish to tell you.

Something you have already heard, but not very much.

Six days after Saint Peter confessed that Jesus was the Son of God—six days, according to Saint Matthew and Saint Mark; eight, according to Saint Luke, who took in both the day of the discourse and the day of the wonder itself—our Blessed Lord took Saint Peter, Saint James, and Saint John into a high mountain, apart from the rest of the disciples (Matt. xvii. 1-8).

The mountain is said to be Tabor, a lofty mountain to the north of Galilee. Some think, however—for it is not quite certain—that it was Mount Hermon. It matters little.

Jesus had been talking to His disciples about His Sufferings, His Death and Resurrection; and He went away, after

that, into this mountain, with the three chosen disciples whom I have named, to pray.

Jesus lived a life of prayer and communing, or conversing, with His Heavenly Father.

The mountain where this Mystery occurred, is called the Mount of Transfiguration.

What does to transfigure mean? To change. This is not quite the best word I could use, but it is the easiest for you to understand.

Did, then, our Lord change? Did He become something He was not before?

No; this could not be, for Jesus is God, Who says, by the mouth of His prophet Malachi, 'I am the Lord, I change not' (Mal. iii. 6).

It was night. The stars were out, and

shining softly down upon the green plain that spread at the mountain's foot. The day's work was over. The solemn and beautiful words of the great Preacher had ceased for a little while, and He and His three companions climbed the rugged and steep ascent till, at last, they gained the top.

Jesus knelt down to pray, and the disciples fell asleep.

Very likely they were weary with the day's work and the mountain climb.

These same disciples were afterward the companions of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, and they fell asleep then.

They had not long ago seen their Master's power, in raising from death the little daughter of the ruler, Jairus (Luke viii. 51).

When the three disciples awoke out

of sleep, what a beautiful sight met their gaze!

‘They saw His glory.’ This is what the Bible says (Luke ix. 32). They saw their Master as they never had seen Him before. The fashion of His Countenance was altered; His Face shone as the sun.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, his face shone, it was with the light of the glory of God (Ex. xxxiv. 29).

But now, it was the glory and brightness of the Only-Begotten Son Himself which shone through the veil, or covering, of His Flesh; it was no reflected light. It was His Who dwells in the light which no man can go near to; it was His Who covers Himself with light as it were with a garment.

And not only the Face of Jesus was thus bright and shining, glistening is the

Bible word, but His raiment was transfigured, or changed, too.

The dusty and travel-stained garments became raiment, or clothing, which was bright as the light, shining exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller, or cleanser, on earth can white them.

The dress of the Eastern peasant became a robe of light, fit for the King of glory!

Why was this? Because it wrapped Him about Who is the Light of light.

Then the disciples saw two men, Moses and Elias, talking with Jesus.

What were they talking about? Well, dear children, amidst all this dazzling brightness and splendour, they talked about Death; and it was the Death of Jesus.

Saint Luke is the only Evangelist who

tells us that He spake of His decease which He would bring to pass in Jerusalem (Luke ix. 31).

Moses the great Law-giver, Elijah the greatest of the prophets, were brought into strange and wonderful closeness with God.

Both had been so brought before—Moses, when he went up into the Mount, to receive the tables of the Covenant (Ex. xxiv. 2, 15); Elijah, on Horeb, the Mount of God, when the Lord passed by; when there was a great and strong wind, which rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks; when the earthquake shook the ground, and a flaming fire burst forth, and the still, small Voice spake in wondrous tones of quiet; so terrible in its softness, after the wind and earthquake and fire, that the Prophet hid

his face in his mantle (1 Kings xix. 11, 12).

Both had received great revelations or visions of God: Moses, when God said to him, 'Thou canst not see My Face, for there shall no man see Me and live;' when, too, God hid him in a cleft of the rock and covered him with His Hand while He passed by' (Ex. xxxiii. 22); Elijah, when God said to him on Mount Horeb, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' (1 Kings xix. 9).

Both had been taken away from earth in a strange and wonderful way: Moses, who was buried by the hand of God in a valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor, and the place of whose sepulchre no man knoweth unto this day, shrouded by the mountain of Nebo and the top of Pisgah (Deut. xxxiv. 6);

Elijah, who went up by a whirlwind into Heaven, borne thither by a chariot of fire, and horses of fire (2 Kings ii. 11).

These two saints showed how Jesus was foreshadowed, set forth in type and figure, in the Law, and foretold by the prophets.

Jesus talked of His decease which He was shortly to accomplish at Jerusalem.

He did not say His death, but His decease or departure ; His release from suffering and His entrance into happiness, for this is what the word means.

The Passion and Death of Jesus Christ were ordered in the ages gone past, and were known, in some wonderful way, to these saints of the Old Covenant.

Saint Peter felt so happy at what he saw, and at the same time so full of holy fear at the words which he heard,

that he cried out to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here.'

It was as though he wanted to stay there always.

While Saint Peter was speaking, and asking if they should build three tabernacles, or tents, one for Jesus, one for Moses, and one for Elijah, as if they were equal in rank or power, not knowing really what he said, he was so eager and impulsive, there came a bright cloud and overshadowed them, and they became very much afraid as they entered into the cloud (Matt. xvii. 4, 5).

The cloud was a bright one, the sign of God's Presence.

When God spake from Mount Sinai, a dark cloud covered the Mount.

The Law showed forth God's Justice, and His great and terrible Judgments.

The bright cloud set forth the Mercy and Love of God in the Incarnation.

Then came the Voice of God the Father, of which I have told you.

When the Apostles heard it, they were more fearful still. They said, perhaps, what the people said to Moses: 'Let not God speak with us, lest we die' (Ex. xx. 19).

But the words were words of love: 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him.'

Jesus saw that the disciples were very frightened: they had fallen on their faces, and He came and touched them, saying, 'Arise, and be not afraid.'

Then, at these kind words of their Master, they looked up, and saw no man, save Jesus only.

Jesus told them not to say anything

to any one of what they had seen: 'Tell,' He said, 'the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead' (Matt. xvii. 9).

There seem to have been two purposes or objects in the Transfiguration: one was to let some of the disciples see a little of the glory of Jesus before His Decease, to strengthen them to bear the trial of watching their Lord and Master put to death by crucifixion. Christ showed them a glimpse of His glorious Majesty, that they might not lose heart when they saw His Humiliation, as He hung, pale and bleeding, against the darkened sky at Calvary.

The other purpose was in some way to fulfil His words, 'Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son

of Man coming in His kingdom' (Matt. xvi. 28).

No doubt, these words pointed to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the passing away of the Mosaic dispensation or period. But they also had a sort of fulfilment when Jesus showed the disciples the eternal glory of His Divine Nature in this vision—a glory which should be the basis, or foundation, of His Kingdom.

The disciples did not understand Christ's command that they should tell no man anything they had seen.

They thought that Elijah would come again before Messiah, and they were astonished that he went away from the Mount.

Jesus told them that the prophecy, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the

Prophet, before the 'coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord,' had already been partly fulfilled by the coming of Saint John Baptist to prepare the way for His First Advent, for he came in 'the spirit and power of Elias,' that is, in the same way, and with the same message. He was sent by God to call men to God.

Then Jesus told them that Elijah would be seen on earth before His Second Coming.

Dear children, many lessons could be learned from the beautiful history of the Transfiguration of our Lord, which the Church keeps on the sixth of August.

One lesson is, that God knows all our troubles and helps us to bear them.

Even Jesus Himself had help given Him, in this wonderful vision, for the sorrows and trials of His Passion and

Death which He should so soon accomplish, or bring to pass, at Jerusalem.

And God gives us happy and bright moments, when we can think more truly and entirely about Him, and then it is that He takes us up out of ourselves and our sorrows. He transfigures, or changes, us, helping us to do His Will and to bear our Cross.

Another lesson is this: We must get ready to meet our Saviour, and prepare ourselves to see Him, as we must, when we awake from our death-sleep. 'Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him' (Rev. i. 7).

People say that those who love each other very dearly become like each other even in appearance.

If we would be like Jesus, when He

comes to Judgment, we must try to be like Him now.

And how can we be like Him, if we do not love Him ?

For 'God is love, and he that dwelleth in God dwelleth in love' (1 John iv. 16).

Prayer, and love, and self-denial, and faith and hope must transfigure or change us, if, 'when He shall appear,' we are to be 'like Him.'

CHANGE.

I am unlike what once I was,
A child of wrath and sin,
For Jesus oped the great Ark's door,
And gently took me in.

I am unlike what I shall be,
For one day I shall rise,
This body changed and beautified,
To fit it for the skies.

And what a world of change is that,
Where never more they rest,
But, gazing on the Face of God,
They go on being blessed.

O happy souls, their raiment white,
Their faces like the sun,
Transfigured, perfected, and changed,
Before the Changeless One!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVII.

1. How many times was the Voice of God heard?

2. When were these times ?
3. When did the Transfiguration take place ?
4. Where ?
5. Whom did our Lord take with Him to the Mount ?
6. What does 'to transfigure' mean ?
7. Could our Lord change ?
8. When the disciples woke out of sleep, what did they see ?
9. Whom did they see talking with Jesus ?
10. What did their presence show ?
11. Of what did our Lord speak ?
12. What did Saint Peter say ?
13. What sort of cloud overshadowed them ?
14. What did the Voice of God say ?
15. What did Jesus say to make the disciples less fearful ?

16. What were the objects of this Transfiguration?

17. What are some of its lessons?

18. When is the Feast of the Transfiguration?

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Public Ministry of our Lord.

HIS TEACHING.

Jesus goes about Galilee—The Feast of Tabernacles—
Jesus teaches in the Temple—The Mount of Olives
—Christ's Temple Sermons.

AFTER the Transfiguration, our Lord again foretold His Passion.

When in Galilee He said, 'The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men; and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again.' The disciples were full of sorrow when they heard these words (Matt. xvii. 22, 23).

Then, at Capernaum, He taught the people lessons of gentleness, forgiveness, self-denial, or doing what we do not like.

After these things, Jesus went about Galilee from one town or village to another.

He did not walk about Judea much, for the Jews tried hard to find out how to kill Him.

Jesus was descended, or sprang from, Judah, and was, therefore, a Jew, or Judean; but people in the farther parts of the land heard Him more gladly than those of His own tribe.

You see, our Lord came to His own, and 'His own received Him not.'

Then Jesus went up to the Feast of Tabernacles, not openly, but as it were in secret, quietly and alone, for the disciples He had sent on before.

The Feast of Tabernacles was held in the seventh month of the Jewish year. In Hebrew, it is called the Feast of Tents, because, as I have already told you, it was held under green booths or arbours, to keep in memory the dwelling in tents by the Israelites during their journey through the wilderness.

It began after harvest, on the fifteenth day of Tisri, the first month of the Civil year, and five days after the great Day of Atonement.

The Feast lasted for eight days.

The Hebrew year had a twofold character.

One year was called the Civil or Secular year; the other, the Sacred year.

The Civil year began in the autumn, the Sacred year, in the spring.

Tisri was the same as our September.

The Feast of Tabernacles began on the fifteenth of September, that is, in the Sacred year, and ended on the Octave, the twenty-second of September.

It was what we now call a Harvest Thanksgiving.

The court of the women was lighted up very brightly, and on the last day, 'that great day of the Feast,' water from the pool of Siloam, mixed with wine, was poured out from a vessel of gold upon the altar.

The eighth day, as I have said, was the Octave, and was kept with the greatest solemnity.

Every day the number of sacrifices, which was far greater at this Feast than at any other, became fewer, until, on the last day of all, they were reduced to one bullock and a ram.

May not this have been to show that the Levitical sacrifices were passing away, and that the One Sacrifice should take their place—that great sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the altar of the Cross?

Saint Leo of Modena tells us that at this Feast were sung the Hallel Psalms, that is, those whose titles are Hallelujah, or ‘Praise God.’

They are Psalms cxi. cxii. cxiii. cxvi. cxvii. and cxviii.

You can read about this Feast in the Book of Leviticus, chapter xxiii. verses 33 to 34, and Deuteronomy, chapter xvi. verses 13 to 17.

About the midst of the Feast, Jesus went up to the Temple and taught the people. His time was now come for thus appearing openly.

The Jews were very much puzzled,

and said, 'How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?'

But although Jesus was the son of the carpenter, He was full of wisdom and understanding.

'My doctrine,' He answered, 'is not Mine, but His that sent Me' (John vii. 16).

It was instruction from God that He brought them. His doctrine was Divine. Simple and child-like hearts should receive it.

'If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak it of Myself. 'Did not Moses give you the Law,' He asked them, 'and yet none of you keepeth the Law? Why do ye go about to kill Me?'

Then the people got very angry with

Jesus because He told them the truth. They said, 'Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill Thee?'

It was at least a year and a half, most likely more, since Jesus had healed a man at the pool of Bethesda.

'Bethesda' means 'House of Mercy.' At this pool the sheep intended for sacrifices were washed.

The building about the pool had five porches, a sort of cloister, where the poor, lame, blind, and withered people waited about, until the Angel came and stirred the waters.

The first to step in after the Angel did so, was cured.

Many waited patiently to take their turn. One man, who had been helpless and ill for thirty-eight years, could not get any one to put him in, for he could

not walk. Jesus, seeing this, by a word healed him (John v. 2-9).

Still, although this year and a half had gone by, the Jewish rulers wanted to put Jesus to death, because they said He had broken the Sabbath by curing the poor man on that day.

The Jews would not believe that Jesus was the Christ: they tried to kill Him, but no man touched Him, because His hour was not yet come.

For there was much, very much to be done, for the teaching of the world, and for the life of the Church, before the last cruel blow should be struck, which should put God out of His own world.

After the Transfiguration, our Blessed Lord went to the Mount of Olives, which lies on the east side of Jerusalem, and is separated from the city by the brook

Kedron, and the valley of Jehoshaphat. It is a Sabbath-day's journey, that is about eight stadia or furlongs, from the holy city.

Olivet has three summits, or peaks, running from north to south.

From the middle summit, our Lord ascended to Heaven; on the south peak, Solomon built temples to the gods of the Ammonites and Moabites. For this reason, it is called the Mount of Corruption, for the worship of the true God was corrupted or injured by this as by another idol-worship.

The north summit is the highest point of all, and is called *Viri Galilei*, from the words used by the Angel, 'Ye men of Galilee.'

In the time of King Uzziah, an earthquake shook the mountain; and a great mass of earth and stones on the western

side fell, and rolled towards the mountain opposite, on the east, so that the earth and stones and rubbish blocked up the highways, and covered the king's gardens.

The mountain took its name from the beautiful olive-trees which grew so freely on its slopes.

The olive-tree is one of the earliest trees named in the Holy Bible.

Its botanical name is *Olea Europæa*. It is very abundant in Palestine, and yields great quantities of fruit and oil. The oldest trees are at Gethsemane, 'the place of oil-presses,' and where our Blessed Lord suffered His agony.

The wood is of a rich amber or yellowish colour, and is beautifully grained or marked. From this wood were made the cherubim, the doors and posts of the Temple.

Many other trees of different kinds also grew upon this mountain.

Olivet was used as a signal-station. The signals were made of long pieces of wood, cedar, canes, and pine, wrapped round with coarse flax. These were set alight and shaken about until they were answered by other signals.

This will, I daresay, remind you of the modern military signalling by sun-flashes, in which mirrors are used.

There was a large collection of water, a reservoir, as we should call it, on this mountain, at Bethany. It was used as a place for purification.

From the mountain-top a most beautiful view of Jerusalem is had.

You look down upon the streets and walls of the city, shining in the clear eastern light, while, over all, rises the

large mosque, built upon the spot where Solomon's Temple stood.

Looking away towards the south, shines the lake of Asphaltites, enclosed by mountains of great size and beauty.

To the north stretch out the green pastures of the plain of Jericho, with the Jordan winding through them like a thread of silver on an emerald ground.

Jesus from this mountain - height beheld the city of Jerusalem, and wept over it.

I have told you thus much about this mountain, because it is the scene of so many events recorded in the Holy Gospels.

Jesus, after leaving the Mount of Olives, went early in the morning into the Temple (John viii. 2).

A great many people came to hear

Him speak to them, and He sat down and taught them.

He showed them that they were to be kind and compassionate to sinners, by forgiving the poor woman the Scribes and Pharisees brought to Him for a shameful sin, saying that Moses commanded such should be stoned to death.

But Jesus pardoned the poor woman, saying to her, 'Go and sin no more.'

Jesus Christ hated sin, but He loved the sinner. That is why He is so forbearing and long-suffering with us.

Then He told the people that He was the Light of the world, and that those who followed Him should not walk in darkness, but should have the light of life.

He said, too, that if any man kept His saying, he should never see death.

The Jews taunted Him. 'Abraham is

dead,' they said, 'and the prophets are dead; whom makest Thou Thyself?'

Jesus said, 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.' Abraham saw the day, or time of Jesus, by faith.

Then the Jews were very angry, and said to Jesus, 'Thou art not fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?'

Jesus answered, 'Truly I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.'

Then they took up stones to cast at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, or was hidden, and went out of the Temple (John viii. 58, 59).

This was the first warning note of the Passion, and these words form the ending of the Gospel for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, called Passion Sunday for this reason.

Jesus next preached about Himself as the Door and the Good Shepherd (John x.).

Our Lord said that 'whoever enters into the sheepfold, not by the door, but by climbing up some other way, is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. And a strange shepherd they will not follow, but will run away from him, for they know not the voice of strangers.'

Those who heard these beautiful words did not understand them.

Then Jesus said, 'Amen, or verily, I

say unto you, I am the Door of the sheep. I am the Door; by Me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes to steal and to kill, and to destroy the sheep, but I am come that they might have life, and that they might have a truer and better, a more abundant life.'

The Israelitish sheepfolds were houses, or places closed in with walls, built all round to keep the sheep from wild beasts by night, and from the scorching heat of the noonday sun.

The word sheep is often used in Holy Scripture to mean people.

So in the Psalms we read, 'We are Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture. O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock' (Ps. lxxix. 13, lxxx. 1).

And Jesus tells us that those who deceive by false teaching, and so murder or kill men's souls, are 'wolves in sheep's clothing.'

And not only is Jesus the Door of the sheepfold, by Whom we go in and out in His Church, and find there Sacramental Food and Grace for the nourishment, or feeding and strengthening, of our souls and bodies; but He is the Good Shepherd.

Jesus is the Door by which all true Pastors enter into the sacred Ministry of His Holy Church. He is the Good Shepherd of every sheep and lamb in that fold.

'I am the Good Shepherd,' Jesus said, 'and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.'

He laid down His life for His sheep

upon the Cross, and all through these weary years that go on and on, He is ever seeking out the lost sheep who stray away from Him ; He is ever gathering in these other sheep which are not of His fold, the Church ; but whom, He says, He must bring in, that they may hear His voice.

All through the time of His Public Ministry, Jesus was this Good Shepherd, looking for His lost sheep, going out among the briars and thorns of self-will, and passing over the dark mountains of sin, and through the cold valleys of forgetfulness, to gather into His safe and happy fold those who had lost their way.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

THE sheep were astray on the dark, bleak
hills,

Far, far away from the fold ;

They had wandered off from pastures
and rills,

They were hungry, tired, and cold.

And the kind Shepherd's voice was no
more heard,

And the place was drear and lone ;

Overhead was the scream of the wild
night-bird,

Around, the wolf's hungry moan.

But the Shepherd sought, and the
Shepherd found

His flock in the wilderness ;

He called by name, and they knew the
sound

Of the voice that came to bless.

Oh, to Thy flock, which has wandered
away,

Come, Shepherd of souls, in love ;

To Thy arms ingather the sheep who
stray,

And bear to Thy fold above !

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XVIII.

1. What did Jesus foretell after His
Transfiguration ?

2. What lessons did He teach at
Capernaum ?

3. Did He go through Judea much ?

4. Why did He not ?

5. From what part was our Lord descended ?

6. When was the Feast of Tabernacles held ?

7. How was the Jewish year divided ?

8. What Feast that we keep did that of Tabernacles answer to ?

9. What Psalms were sung at the Feast of Tabernacles, and what were they called ?

10. Where did Jesus next teach ?

11. What does Bethesda mean ?

12. Tell me about the Pool of Bethesda.

13. Where is the Mount of Olives ?

14. Where are the oldest trees found ?

15. What was Olivet used for ?

16. What did Jesus teach about Himself in the Temple, after He came down from Olivet ?

17. Why is Jesus the Door ?

18. Why is He the Good Shepherd ?

CHAPTER XIX.

The Public Ministry of our Lord.

THE FEAST OF DEDICATION.

The Feast of Dedication—Christ's teaching about Himself and His Father.

AFTER our Lord had finished His beautiful and touching sermon about Himself as the Good Shepherd, He went to the Feast of the Dedication (John x. 22).

We most of us, I think, know what a Feast of Dedication is, but sometimes people make a little mistake about it, which I will try to correct for you.

A Dedication Festival of a church is

not the feast of that particular Saint after whom the church is named.

If you attend a church named in honour of Saint John the Baptist, you keep a very happy time, with, perhaps, an octave, or eight days of special services, beginning on the 23rd of June, which is the eve of Saint John's Day, June the 24th. So, if your church is called All-Saints' Church, the festival is kept on November 1st, beginning, of course, on the eve, or 31st of October.

These are the Patronal Festivals, or Feasts of the Patron Saints.

They have nothing to do with the Dedication Festival, which is something still brighter, still higher, and still holier.

For a Dedication Festival marks the time when first the spot was hallowed, or blest, on which the altar should be raised.

It tells of that happy day, when a little space of this earth, cursed for man's sake, because of his sin, was fenced off, as it were, to be a dwelling-place for the Most High God—a place where prayer and praise should be offered, where His Holy Word should be read and preached, and where the Holy Sacraments of His Church should be administered.

We read of several dedication feasts in the Sacred Scriptures.

They are—(1) the Feast of the Dedication by Moses of the Tabernacle which he built in the wilderness; (2) the Dedication of Solomon's Temple on the twenty-third of Tisri, our September; (3) the Dedication Feast of which I am now going to tell you a little, which was kept on the twenty-fifth day of Kisleu, or November. You will remember the words of the

Holy Gospel run thus: 'It was at Jerusalem, the Feast of the Dedication, and it was winter;' (4) the Dedication of the Temple when the Asmoneans consecrated it afresh, after the Greek persecutions: this was on the seventh of Iyar, or April; (5) Lastly, the Dedication of the Walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah, on the seventh of Elul, or August—the day on which we now keep the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, that Jesus Who has indeed built again the walls of the earthly Jerusalem, His Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the picture and figure of the Heavenly Jerusalem which is above.

The history of the particular Dedication Festival to which our Blessed Lord went, seems to be this.

In the time of the Maccabees,

Antiochus Epiphanes, that is, Antiochus the Illustrious, king of Syria, went into Egypt with an army.

During his siege of Alexandria, the bombardment of which by the British makes yet another terrible chapter in its history, a report was spread of his death.

The news reached Jerusalem, and there were great rejoicings, because Antiochus was a cruel oppressor of the Jews, as his father had been before him.

Antiochus heard of this rejoicing at his supposed death, and, upon his return from Egypt, entered Jerusalem by force, treated the Jews as rebels or enemies, and told his soldiers to kill all they could.

Eighty thousand were killed in three days, forty thousand made captives, and as many sold into slavery.

Then this cruel monster went into the Holy of Holies in the Temple, led there by a bad high priest named Menelaus, and he took away all the precious vessels of the House of the Lord.

About two years afterward, Antiochus returned to Egypt, which he completely conquered, and the next year he sent Apollonius into Judea with an army of twenty-two thousand men, telling them they were to kill all the grown people, and to sell the women and young men.

I daresay you have heard of Judas Maccabeus.

Judas Maccabeus was the great military hero or leader of the Maccabees, and a defender of the faith. He fell nobly, in battle, while engaging the Syrian army under Bacchides.

In your Bibles,—and, remember, no

Bible is perfect which does not contain the Books of the Apocrypha — you can read the History of the Maccabees. It is full of wonderful deeds of war and courage on God's behalf (1 Macc. iii. 1).

The celebrated musician Handel wrote an oratorio, that is, many connected numbers, or pieces, of music, which recites the heroism of the Maccabees, and is named after their great captain, Judas Maccabeus.

If ever you hear it performed, think of the history I am now telling you.

Well, this Judas Maccabeus, when Apollonius did his savage work, went away with his father and his brethren into the wilderness.

There they suffered much, being houseless and without proper food to eat, but

all this was nothing to what they had to bear afterwards.

Antiochus tried to make the Jews change their religion, that they might serve him better.

He was neither the first nor the last who did this. When people hate God, they try to make others do so too.

He wished the good Jews to become Greek idolaters; he put out a decree telling them to obey, not their own laws, but those of other nations; and he forbade their sacrifices in the Temple, and told them they were not to keep their festivals and Sabbaths.

To add to this cruel wickedness, he placed upon the altar of the Temple, the statue of Jupiter Olympus, thus profaning the holy and beautiful House of God.

Bad men did something very like this,

but even worse, for they sinned against Christ and the Holy Ghost, at the time of the great French Revolution, when they placed one, whom they called the Goddess of Reason, on the high altar of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris.

Mattathias, the father of Judas Maccabeus, and his sons went to the mountains for safety, and Eleazer and seven brethren, Maccabees, suffered death with great courage and bravery at Antioch.

Then Judas Maccabeus put himself at the head of all the faithful and true Jews whom he could find, and they went out to fight the generals whom Antiochus had sent against them.

When Antiochus got to Ecbatana, he heard that the Maccabees had defeated

his generals Nicanor and Timotheus, and that Judas Maccabeus had retaken the Temple at Jerusalem, and brought back again the worship of the True God.

Antiochus was mad with rage and disappointment.

‘Drive,’ he said to the horsemen of his chariots,—‘Drive furiously; I will make Jerusalem a grave for the Jews.’

The charioteer urged the horses forward, and as they dashed wildly along the road, the wicked king fell from his chariot. Thus Antiochus died miserably, overcome with grief and dreadful pain, in the small town of Tabes, in the mountains of Paratacene.

This was in the year of the world 3840, or 164 years before Christ came.

The Feast of Dedication was most likely kept all over the land of Judea,

but numbers of people made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to keep it at the Temple, and, as we have seen, our Blessed Lord did so.

It is thought that Jesus sheltered Himself in Solomon's Porch, because it was very cold (John x. 23).

While He was there, the Jewish rulers came to Him and asked Him how long He would keep them in doubt as to whom He was.

They wanted to know plainly whether Jesus were the Messiah or not.

Then Jesus began to talk to them about His oneness with the Father.

He told them that the works He did in His Father's Name bore witness of Him, that is, they proved that He was the Christ of God.

The Jews did not believe in Jesus:

they would not be His sheep, although He came to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

Jesus said, 'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand. My Father which gave them Me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's Hand. I and My Father are one' (John x. 27-30).

Twice Jesus told them this truth, that none should be able to snatch His sheep out of His Father's Hand.

And then came those solemn words, which the hard-hearted Jews would not hear, 'I and My Father are one.'

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

Jesus said, 'Many good works have I showed you from My Father: for which of these works do ye stone Me?'

The Jews answered Him, 'For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God' (John x. 32, 33).

They called Him a blasphemer, because our Lord said, 'I am the Son of God.'

How cruel and unkind these poor Jews were to our Lord, Who was always doing good works among them to try to show them that He was truly their Shepherd and their King!

Jesus, with that sweet patience of His, which never failed, and which was never driven away by people's wickedness and ingratitude, said to them, 'If I do not the works of My Father, do not

believe Me ; but if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works, that so ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him ' (John x. 37, 38).

You see how our Lord tried by every way He could to win the people to Him.

But He could only seek to win, or gain, them through the truth, and that truth was the preaching of His Divinity, His oneness with the Father.

Then the Jews tried again to take Jesus, that they might do Him harm, but He got away, and escaped out of their hands.

Jesus left that part and went beyond Jordan, where Saint John first baptized his followers. The place was called Peræa.

Many people came to Him there, and believed on Him.

JESUS AND HIS FATHER.

‘ Father, not My Will, Thine be done ; ’
This was Christ’s constant prayer
Through all His weary life on earth,
Those days of toil and care.

His meat and drink, it was, to do
His Father’s Will, in love ;
That Will, which you and I must do
As it is done above.

Oh, wondrous Will, which condescends
To men of low estate,
And lets them choose, or cast away,
While It can watch and wait.

One with His Father, Jesus was,
And so we learn to cast
Our wills before the Eternal Life
Which crowns true wills at last.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XIX.

1. To what Feast did Jesus go after His teaching about Himself as the Good Shepherd?

2. What is the difference between a Dedication Feast, and that of a Patron Saint?

3. Do we read of many Dedication Feasts in the Bible?

4. Can you tell me any of them?

5. When is the Feast of the Holy Name?

6. Who took Jerusalem by force?

7. What Egyptian town did he besiege?

8. What did Antiochus do in the Holy of Holies and in the Temple?

9. Who was Judas Maccabeus?

10. What did Antiochus want the Jews to become ?

11. Tell me about His death.

12. When did this happen ?

13. Where did Jesus walk in the Temple ?

14. What did the Jewish rulers want Jesus to tell them ?

15. What did our Lord teach them ?

16. Were the Jews displeased at Him ?

17. What did they do and say ?

18. Where did Jesus go after He escaped out of their hands ?

CHAPTER XX.

The Public Ministry of Our Lord.

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

Bethany—The Raising of Lazarus—The Effect of Christ's Teaching.

AFTER these things, our Lord went to Bethany. Bethany is a village, which lies about two miles to the east of Jerusalem, just on the rise of the Mount of Olives, and on the way to Jericho.

Bethany means 'House of Dates,' some say 'House of the Abject or Hopeless,' being the place to which the lepers returned, just as Bethphage means 'House

of Unripe Figs;’ Bethlehem, ‘House of Bread,’ and Bethrapha, ‘House of the Giant.’

The Gospel speaks of Bethany as the town of Martha, and her sister Mary, who poured out the alabaster box of precious perfume on our Lord’s sacred Head, and who wiped His weary feet with her beautiful hair.

These sisters had a brother named Lazarus: ‘Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.’ Lazarus fell ill and died. (John xi. 5.)

Four days after he had been buried, Jesus came back to Bethany from Judea, where He had gone again.

Martha, when she had heard Jesus was coming, went out to meet Him. Mary sat still in the house.

Martha, so soon as she saw Jesus, said

to Him, 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, our brother would not have died; but I know that even now, although he is dead, if Thou wilt ask God to give our dear brother back to us, He will; for whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.'

Jesus said unto her, 'Thy brother shall rise again.'

Martha answered, that she knew that he would rise again at the resurrection at the Last Day.

Jesus then made His meaning more plain to Martha.

He said, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life: He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die.'

Then Jesus put Martha's faith to the

trial. He asked her, 'Do you believe this?'

Martha said, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world' (John xi. 27).

She believed in His oneness with God.

Then Martha called her sister Mary, and she said the same thing to Jesus that Martha had said before: 'Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died.'

She cried very bitterly, she was so sorrowful about her dear, dead brother, whom she loved so much.

The Jews, who came with her, cried too. And more wonderful than all, 'Jesus wept.'

It is thought that Jesus shed tears three times—

(1) At the grave of Lazarus (John xi. 35); (2) over Jerusalem, when He thought of all the troubles that were coming upon that beautiful city (Luke xix. 41); (3) at the time of His Passion (Heb. v. 7).

Then the Jews said, 'See how He loved Lazarus!'

Yes, indeed, Jesus loved him. He had often lodged in that happy home when visiting Bethany, and had seen and marked what He loves so well, a holy family, at peace with itself.

The Jews wondered that Jesus had let Lazarus die, for you must know that the sisters had sent a message to Jesus, saying, 'Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick.'

Jesus did not come to the sorrowing sisters at once, but stayed where He was for two days.

What a weary time that must have been for Martha and Mary!

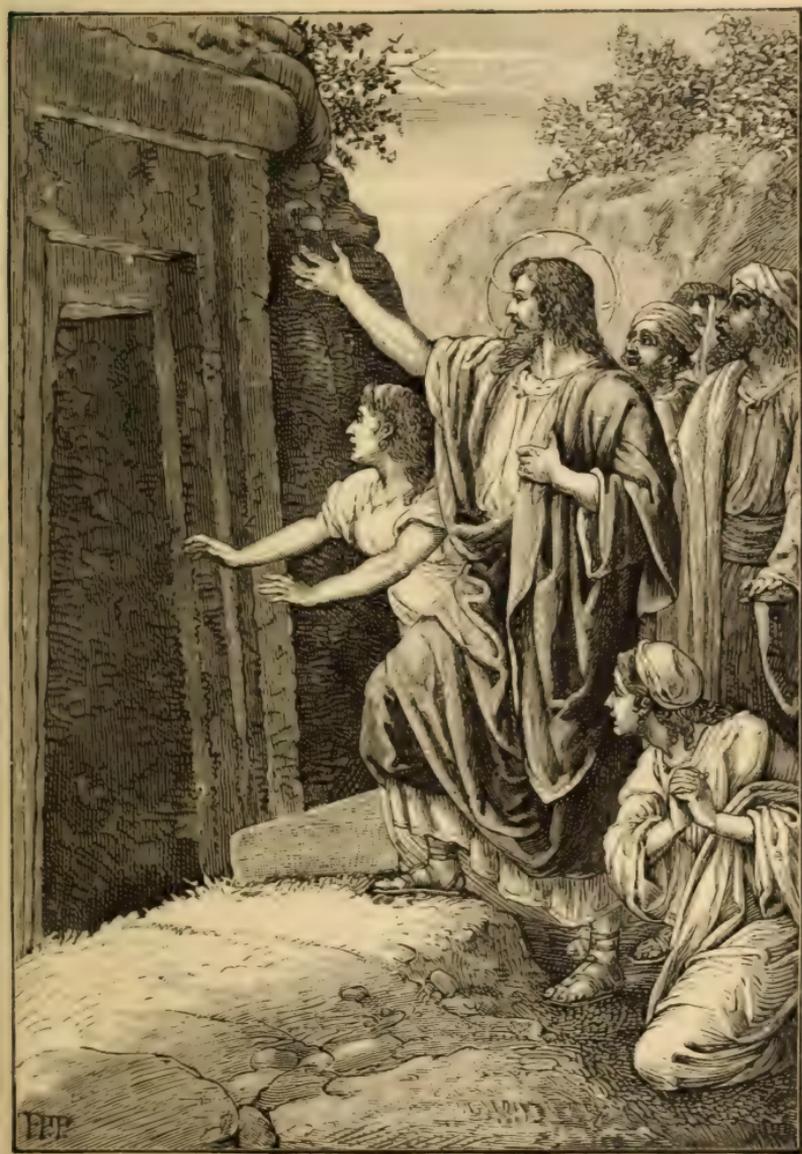
But now, as you see, Jesus had come into Judea again, although He and His disciples knew the danger of doing so, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

Jesus, at last, told them to take the stone away from the rock-hewn grave of Lazarus.

Then He prayed to His Father, and thanked Him that He had heard Him, that so the people might believe that He was Jesus, the Son of God.

When He had finished, Christ cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth!' (John xi. 43).

He cried with a loud voice—the voice of power and command, for He knew that He could bid the poor dead man stand on his feet again, and live.



“Lazarus, come forth!”

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At the words of Jesus, the soul of Lazarus was called back from the world of spirits, whither it had gone ; it entered the pale, lifeless body from which it had been separated for four days, and Lazarus, bound hand and foot in his grave-clothes, came forth and stood before them all.

The disciples unbound the grave-clothes at the bidding of Jesus, 'Loose him, and let him go !'

Face and hands and feet were set free from the burial linen which was wrapped about them, and Lazarus was brought back from the dead, raised up to complete life of body and soul, by Him Who is Himself the Resurrection and the Life.

Most of the Jews believed in the Resurrection, or rising again from the dead ; but a sect of them called the Sadducees did not.

Now, surely, you may think that all who were present at this miracle, were taught this great truth.

No, not all; for we read that many of the Jews, who had seen the miracle, did believe on Jesus, but some went their way to the Pharisees and told them what had happened (John xi. 45, 46).

Immediately, the Sanhedrin, or great Council of the Jews, was called together. At it, it was decided to put Jesus to death.

We are told that Lazarus was condemned to death as well. It is very likely, but Holy Scripture does not say what became of him.

We learn three things from this story—

(1) All that are in the graves, shall hear the voice of Jesus, and shall come forth.

(2) The power of Intercessory Prayer, that is, prayer for others. The prayers of Martha and Mary were heard, and so are ours, when we ask God to deliver from death those who are fast bound in the grave-clothes of sin and guilt.

(3) The sure and certain Hope with which we should lay in the grave those who die in grace—those, that is, who go out of this world in the faith and fear of God. The parting may be very bitter, the loss never to be made good on earth; but Jesus is the Lord of the dead as well as of the living, and ‘the souls of the righteous are in the Hand of God.’

After this mighty work, our Lord went into a city called Ephraim, on the borders of the land of that name.

It was famous for fine flour. The name means double fruit, or Twin-land.

Here Jesus stayed with His disciples.

Then our Lord set His face stedfastly to go to Jerusalem. He made up His mind, as we should say, to face all that was before Him; He shrank back from nothing.

Jesus sent messengers before Him, who went to a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him.

The Samaritans would not receive Jesus, and the disciples were very angry, and wanted our Lord to call down fire from Heaven to burn the Samaritans up.

But Jesus rebuked them, and told them that they were acting in quite a wrong way, and in a different spirit from His. 'The Son of Man,' He said to them, 'is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them' (Luke ix. 56).

Then they went to another village.

After this followed what is called the Mission of the Seventy (Luke x. 1-17).

Our Lord sent forth seventy disciples, by two and two, before Him, into every city and place where He Himself meant to go.

‘Mission’ means sending forth. ‘How shall they preach, except they be sent?’

As the Father had sent Him, even so sent He them.

The seventy disciples answered in number to the elders appointed by Moses, at the express command of Almighty God (Ex. xxiv. 1).

The charge, or sermon, given to them by Jesus Christ, before they went forth to prepare the people for the visit of Himself, was very much the same as that which He gave to the Apostles at their Ordination, of which I have told you.

The Seventy were Christ's Ambassadors, that is, they represented Him, they stood for a time in His place.

'He that heareth you,' Jesus said to them, 'heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me.'

After a while, the Seventy came back, full of gladness, saying that even the devils obeyed them through the power of Christ's Name.

The Mission had not failed, as, indeed, it could not, for He Who sent it forth was God.

The Mission of the Seventy took place in Galilee (Luke x. 17).

Soon after, our Lord went to Jerusalem, and then, six days before His last Pass-over, He again visited Bethany, to see Martha and Mary, and Lazarus whom He had brought to life.

The events which happened at the last Passover, I must tell you about at another time.

Now, let me try to put together some of the lessons which we may, I hope, learn, from all that I have told you, in these chapters about the Public Ministry of our Blessed Lord.

Christ was the Great Teacher sent from God (John iii. 2).

We may take the Sermon on the Mount as the type, or specimen, of all His Public Teaching.

That sermon breathed forth the spirit of Love. It was a revelation, or making known, of something which was quite new to the world.

It seems to lift us up on to a new platform, or standing-place, from which we can see things in a different light

from that in which we saw them before we heard its wonderful and beautiful words.

Our Lord said, 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.'

This meant, to put it in very plain words, 'paying people back in their own coin,' returning hurt for hurt and evil for evil to the same extent as it has been given.

The teaching of Christ was different from all that had been heard before on such matters.

This is what Jesus said: 'But I say unto you, if any smite you upon your right cheek, turn to him the other as well; if a man take away your coat, let him have your cloak also; and if any one make you go a mile against your wish, go with him two. Give to him

who asks of you, and turn not away from any who would borrow of you. You are told to love your neighbour and to hate your enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who are unkind to you and persecute you' (Matt. v. 38-44).

Jesus led those who heard Him, step by step, as it were, through the different stages, or points, of the Divine Teaching.

How beautiful it must have been to have listened to our Saviour, as He sat on the large level piece of ground, covered with bright flowers and green grass, on the mountain's top.

Far from the noise of the world below, far from the tumult and strife and hatred of men, Jesus taught the multitude the lessons of love and peace and blessing.

He came to this world to lift it far above earth and earthly desires and aims, to the mountain of the Heavenly Home, which is decked with the lovely flowers of the Christian graces, and is bright with the never-fading beauties of the Love of God.

This teaching of Jesus Christ has altered the condition and aspect of the world; for before it, men did not build hospitals, or infirmaries, or orphanages, or Houses of Charity, nor did they tend the sick and weary with that gentle care which is now shown them.

And this teaching has made war, which at best is always horrible and sad, not so very dreadful as it was before, because Christianity is the religion which teaches us to love our enemies.

So, the ambulance waggon is always

to be found in the thick of the fight; and brave, kind, skilful doctors are there, ready, even amidst a rain of bullets, to bind up the wounds of the injured, and to comfort, as best they can, the dying.

And this, too, not only towards our own brave soldiers, but towards those who fight against us—our, often, very cruel enemies, who show no quarter themselves.

A flag with a red cross upon it, marks the ambulance or hospital waggon. It tells the world that Jesus shed His Blood and died upon the Cross to make men merciful.

Our Lord taught us, too, that we must be kind to animals.

He said not even one of the little sparrows, five of which are sold for two farthings, is forgotten by God; teaching

us to be kind to the dumb animals whom the Heavenly Father cares for (Matt. x. 29).

No one, dear children, who really loves God and who has a good heart, could be cruel or unkind to a horse, a dog, a cat, or a bird, for God feedeth them; and God gave them to us to be our servants, and our friends and companions as well.

The worst coward is he who is guilty of cruelty to animals.

And Jesus Christ taught us to be refined in our tastes, to love the beautiful things with which He has clothed this earth to make it bright and fair.

He said, 'Consider the lilies' (Matt. vi. 28). Learn from every flower in the field how good God is to you, how He clothes you and cares for you as He does for them.

God need not have given us bright and sweet-smelling flowers.

Did you ever think that God might have made the fields drab instead of green; and the skies one unvarying cold grey, instead of blue; that He might have made the sunrise and the sunset always the same, with no differing hues of gold and purple and crimson, to light up the clouds like fairy palaces, and to be reflected on the sea, like streams of molten gold and rays of precious stones? Did you ever think that He might have made the mountains and rocks all barren, cold, and dull, instead of clothing them, as He has, with a mantle of beautiful green verdure, or painting them with the red and blue and yellow of the strata of the rocks?

‘ All things bright and beautiful,
The Lord God made them all.’

Nature animate and inanimate, all the ‘works of the Lord,’ the green things upon the earth, the ice and snow, the lightnings and clouds, the light and darkness, the angels, the spirits and souls of the just, the children of men, the priests of the Lord, the holy and humble men of heart, God made to lift, in some way or other, our thoughts up to Himself, Who is the Fountain of all Beauty.

Jesus Christ was the incarnate expression, or manifestation, of Beauty; and all His sermons and teaching lead us to this one point, that Goodness is beautiful in itself, and that sin is hateful.

Shall we refuse to learn the lessons which God teaches us?

No. Let us sit reverently at the feet of Jesus our Master, and we shall learn, if only we open our hearts to receive it, all that is worth knowing for Time and for Eternity, for this world and for ever!

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

‘Lazarus, come forth!’ The dead man
rose

From where he had lain four days;
Bound in his grave-clothes, hand and
foot,

He stood before their gaze.

‘Loose him and let him go!’ And he
lived

Free from the power of the grave;

Raised by the mighty Son of God,
Who alone is strong to save.

O Christ, Resurrection and the Life,
From the sleep of death and sin
Awake me to the Life I know
Thou for Thine own dost win!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XX.

1. Where is Bethany?
2. What does the name Bethany mean?
3. Who lived in Bethany?
4. How long had Lazarus been dead before Jesus raised him up?
5. What truth did our Lord teach by this miracle?

6. How often does Holy Scripture tell us Jesus wept ?

7. Did any of the Jews believe in the Resurrection ?

8. What sect of them did not ?

9. What happened very shortly after the raising of Lazarus ?

10. What was decided at this Council ?

11. What three things do we learn from the story of Lazarus ?

12. Where did our Lord go after this ?

13. What does Ephraim mean ?

14. Where did Jesus now set His face to go ?

15. What did Jesus next do ?

16. What is the meaning of 'Mission' ?

17. Who was the great Teacher sent from God ?

18. What sermon was the type of all His preaching?

19. What are some of the chief points of Christ's teaching in His Public Ministry?

CHAPTER XXI.

Holy Week.

THE LAST PASSOVER.

The Supper in Simon's House—The Anointing by Mary
—The Entry into Jerusalem—Jesus weeps over
Jerusalem, and foretells its Destruction.

FROM all that I have told you of the Public Ministry of our Lord, in the last six chapters, you will have seen that the life of Jesus on earth was one of sorrow.

He was, indeed, 'The Man of sorrows' (Isa. liii. 3). He went about doing good, and the people would not own the good that was in Him. He spake as never man spake, and they said that He had a

devil. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. He did many good works in His Father's Name, and for this they stoned Him.

And Jesus not only was sorrowful, as He went about through the cities and villages of Judea, while men, for the most part, would not accept His teaching or own His authority; but, more than this, He had with Him, ever present in His mind, the thought of His coming Passion and Death.

To His Divine Nature, this was, indeed, joy; to His Human Nature, sorrow and dread.

He said that He had a baptism of suffering to be baptized with, and that He was straitened, or filled with trouble, until it should be brought to pass and finished (Luke xii. 50).

I have told you of one miracle that Jesus did, because it was the immediate cause of His Death ; that is, it was that act of our Divine Redeemer which led the Jews to put their wicked and long-delayed threats into action.

This was the raising of Lazarus from the dead ; and, although from all eternity it was decreed or ordained that Jesus Christ should offer Himself a Sacrifice for the sins of the whole world upon the altar of the Cross, yet this raising of Lazarus made the Jews so angry, that, at the Council of the Sanhedrin, which they called together immediately after it, as we have seen, they then decided that the Lord of life and glory, the very and eternal God, should be put to death.

It is to the last, sad closing scenes in the

earthly life of our Saviour that we must now look.

Let us do so with the deepest reverence and care.

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany—the town, you will remember, where He raised Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus went to the house of Simon the Leper (John xii. 1). There they made Him a supper, at which Martha served, and Lazarus sat at table, perhaps, to show to the people that he was really alive and well.

Simon the Leper was so called because he had been afflicted with the dreadful disease called leprosy.

This sickness affects the skin, and often taints, or makes impure, all the blood in the body of the person diseased.

Leprosy is very infectious, that is, catching. Moses took great pains to prevent lepers from giving their complaint to the healthy.

At Morocco, there is a separate quarter, outside the walls of the town, which is inhabited by lepers only.

Leprosy is a type or figure of sin. Our Lord always, when He could, went into the houses of sinners and persons who were sick and sorrowful.

Once, His enemies said, 'This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.'

Jesus truly came to seek and to save that which was lost. He came, as He Himself said, to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

And He was the Good Physician or Healer. Mary, at this supper in Simon's house, took a pound of ointment of

spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.

The whole house was filled with the beautiful odour, or perfume, of the ointment.

Spikenard belongs to the order of plants called *Gramina*, and is of several species, or kinds.

In India, it grows, as grass, in large tufts, from three to four feet long. When one treads upon it, the air is filled with its lovely scent.

It is supposed that the ointment Mary used, was prepared, not from the Syrian, but from the Indian plant, which was far more precious.

This ointment, which was in the alabaster box, was worth very nearly ten pounds, and Mary, in her love for Jesus,

poured the whole of it over our Saviour's head and feet.

Judas Iscariot, who, as we shall soon see, was going to betray Jesus, and give Him into the hands of His enemies, cried out, 'Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?' (John xii. 5).

Judas said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief. He was the treasurer of the little stock of money which was needed by our Lord and the Apostles for their daily wants; 'he had the bag, and bear what was put therein.'

Jesus said to Judas, 'Let her alone; against the day of My burying hath she kept this.'

Jesus was anointed for His burial, beforehand, by this pious and loving act of Mary.

Our Blessed Lord went on to say to Judas, in tones which must surely have cut the covetous man to the heart: 'For the poor always ye have with you, but Me ye have not always.'

The next day was Palm Sunday.

Now, we shall begin to see clearly the events of the wonderful week which we call the Holy Week.

In Germany, it is called the Still or Quiet Week.

It should, indeed, be a time for quiet thought, as much as may be; for in it the most wonderful deeds were brought to pass that have ever marked the world's history.

When the people who had come to the Passover Feast, heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, a great crowd took branches of palm-trees, and went forth

to meet Him, crying 'Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the Name of the Lord!' (John xii. 12, 13).

These are very much the same words that we use as an anthem, when our Lord comes to us, after a heavenly and spiritual manner, in the Holy Communion, but comes as really and truly as He came, 'meek and sitting upon an ass,' to the city of Jerusalem, the city of peace.

This anthem, which is often set to very beautiful music, is called the *Benedictus*.

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem took place on the first day of the week, the day on which the Paschal Lamb was brought into the city with much ceremony.

Our Lord had been staying in the wilderness quietly, and when He and His

disciples came to Bethphage, He sent forth two of them, telling them that they should find, tied up, in a village near, an ass and an unbroken colt, whereon man had never sat.

They were to loose them and bring them to Him, and if any man asked them what they were going to do with them, they were to say, 'The Lord hath need of them.' 'Our Master wants them.'

All this was done, that the words of the prophet Zechariah might be brought to pass, 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; behold thy King cometh unto thee, lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass' (Zech. ix. 9).

On His way to Jerusalem, our Lord had passed through Jericho, and there He healed Bartimeus of his blindness.

Many people who had seen the miracle, were among the crowd who followed Him.

As they went along, Jesus took His Twelve Apostles away apart from the crowd, and again told them of His coming Passion. This was the third time He had told them of it.

Some think that our Lord rode on the colt, which represented the Gentile world, and that the ass, which had borne the yoke and which represented the Jews, followed.

Jesus said, 'Loose them and bring them unto Me.'

Sinners are to be set free from the chain of their sins, by which they are 'tied and bound,' by the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and through the Ministry of His Church.

By the words, 'The Lord hath need of them,' we learn that nothing, no creature of God, is too poor, too lowly, to be made use of by Him in bringing to pass what He wills. 'The foolish things of the world,' He chooses 'to condemn the wise, the weak things to confound the mighty.'

Nothing is too small, nothing too feeble or simple, to be overlooked by Almighty God.

Then the procession started. As it came on, a very great multitude spread their clothes in the roadway, others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way.

These were branches of palm and olive trees.

Both these customs are the Eastern way of giving honour to those to whom honour is to be paid.

Palm branches are signs of victory, and were always so used, both by idolaters and by believers in God.

The palm-tree is very beautiful. It is called *tamar*, from its straight, upright growth. Sometimes it rises to the height of a hundred feet. The leaves of a full-grown fruit-bearing tree are six or eight feet long. They are used for covering the tops of houses in the Eastern land.

The palm-tree likes plenty of water. It does not flourish well in a dry soil.

When Moses and his people were on their way to the Promised Land, they found, at Elim, twelve wells of water, by the side of seventy palm-trees.

Sir Robert Wilson, in his history of the Expedition in Egypt, says that when the British army landed in Egypt in 1801, to drive out the French, Sir Sydney

Smith told the soldiers, that where date-palm-trees grew, water must certainly be near.

They dug about the roots of the trees, and found the water they so badly wanted, with which to quench their thirst.

The palm-tree has been taken as the emblem, or sign, of light, natural and divine.

In the Sanctuary, or Holy Place, of the Temple, which itself symbolized, or represented in a figure, Christ's body, palm-trees were carved on the walls and doors, between the cherubs.

Baal-Tamar (*tamar*, as I have told you, being the name of the palm-tree) was so called in honour of Baal, or the Sun, whose image was set up there, with palm-trees about it.

There were many palm-trees at Apollo's Temple, at Brutus, in Egypt; and at Sais, in the Temple of Minerva, or Athena (which means sunlight), there were columns set up in imitation of palm-trees.

The people and the children who went before, and who followed after, cried 'Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!'

Hosanna means 'Save, I beseech Thee,' and is a form of blessing, or well-wishing.

In the 118th Psalm, at verses 25 and 26, we read: 'Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.'

The 113th and 118th Psalms were

sung at the Passover, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and this response was every now and then taken up by the people, as the psalms were being chanted.

By using the words 'Son of David,' the crowd said Jesus was the long-looked-for Messiah, or anointed King and Priest.

And 'Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord' are the same words the priest used, when a lamb was offered in sacrifice; for the lamb was the type, image, or figure of the Lamb of God, Who was now so very soon to be offered up for the sins of the whole world.

As the procession wound its way along, the two crowds met; these pilgrims, that is, who were coming from Bethany, with Jesus in their midst; the other company who were pouring forth from Jerusalem.

The palm branches were waving in the bright sunlight in beautiful green flashes ; the songs of the Hosannas, borne from the lips of children, filled the air ; the wondering faces of the crowd were lighted up with enthusiasm and happiness.

The crowds crossed the shoulder, or ridge, of Mount Olivet, and the beautiful city of Jerusalem came into sight, with its palaces and towers standing out against the blue sky, and the white marble walls and gold of the Temple flashing in the sunshine.

The procession halted. Again, as at the grave of Lazarus, 'Jesus wept.'

Why did our Lord shed these bitter tears, in the midst of this triumphal march ?

Ah, He knew what was in man. He knew that in a few days' time, almost

within a few hours, the songs of Hosanna would have died away, and the savage shout, 'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!' would rise to Heaven instead.

He was indeed a King; but His throne was the Cross, and His Crown a crown of thorns!

Yes, 'when He was come near the city, He wept over it,' for He saw the sad fate that was to come upon it; not one stone should be left upon another; the very foundations of the Temple should be broken down, the ground ploughed up, and the people scattered far and wide as strangers in the ends of the earth.

The destruction of Jerusalem was a terrible one. Let us see what history tells us about it.

Vespasian besieged it under Titus. A

wall was thrown up, measuring thirty-nine furlongs, and having thirteen castles in it. This wall surrounded the city, and so cut off all hopes of escape. When this was done, the soldiers dug up the city, destroying it and laying it low, even to the ground.

The history of Jerusalem after this is one of struggle, horror, and desolation.

There were persecutions under Adrian, when the Jews of Judea and the countries round rose up in rebellion. Adrian would not let the Jews enter the city, and he built temples to heathen gods.

In A.D. 613, Jerusalem was taken by the Persians. They slew 90,000 of the inhabitants, and destroyed all they could of the things that the Christians valued and respected; for Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, who lived in the year

of our Lord 306, and Julian, who came after him, protected both Christians and Jews ; and Helena, Constantine's mother, built many churches in Judea and Jerusalem.

In 627, Heraclius defeated Cosrhoes the Persian king, and Jerusalem was retaken by the Greeks.

Nine years afterward, the Caliph Omar, after a siege of four months, took it from the Christians.

For two hundred and twenty years, the Turks and Saracens ruled Jerusalem.

Then, at the time of the Crusades in 1099, which, you will remember, was about thirty years after William the Conqueror became king of England, Godfrey Bouillon took it and was made king.

In 1188, Saladin, an Eastern Sultan, captured the city.

After still more changes of government and many dreadful wars, Jerusalem was again destroyed, by Selim the Turkish Sultan, in 1517.

His son Solyman built the present walls in 1534.

To this day, Jerusalem, the Holy City, remains under the Turkish rule.



LOVE'S OFFERING.

Love scarce can measure all her sweet
store,

All the best treasure she has to pour
Forth in her gladness, over her Lord,
Drowning her sadness in His Reward.

Much she had faltered, many her fall ;
Now Christ had altered, transfigured all :
Great though her failing, greater the
 grace,
Which, sin assailing, drove from its place.

Oh, like poor Mary, I'll do my best ;
Thou wilt not vary if I'm opprest :
All my endeavour, True God and Man,
Is to, for ever, do what I can.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXI.

1. What is our Blessed Lord sometimes called ?
2. What was the immediate cause of Christ's death ?

3. At what council was this decided?
4. How long before the Passover did Jesus go to Bethany?
5. Where did He go when there?
6. Who were at the supper in Simon's house?
7. What is leprosy the type of?
8. What did Mary do at this supper?
9. Tell me what you know about spikenard?
10. Who complained of the waste?
11. What did our Lord say to Judas?
12. Describe the triumphal city into Jerusalem?
13. What is the palm a sign of?
14. What did the people cry in the procession?
15. What does Hosanna mean?
16. What psalms were sung at the Passover?

17. Why did our Lord weep over Jerusalem?

18. For how many years did the Turks and Saracens hold Jerusalem before the Crusades?

19. When were the present walls built?

20. What rule is Jerusalem under now?

CHAPTER XXII.

Holy Week.

THE LAST PASSOVER.

Christ cleanses the Temple—The Fig-tree with no Fruit—Teachings of Jesus on Tuesday in Holy Week—The Betrayal.

WHEN Jesus was come to Jerusalem, all the city was astir, and the people asked one another, 'Who is this?'

The multitude answered, 'This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.'

As soon as they were come into the city, our Lord went into the Temple.

Here, in the Court of the Gentiles, He

drove out the buyers and sellers, threw over the tables of the money-changers and the seats of them that sold doves intended for the Temple offerings. 'And He said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves' (Matt. xxi. 12, 13).

Jesus said, 'It is written,' thus quoting the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as was His custom.

Psalm xciii. says, 'Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever;' and in the Book of the prophet Isaiah, God says, I will bring them 'to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer' (Isa. lvi. 7).

This was the second time in His Public Ministry that Jesus drove out the profaners of His Father's Temple.

The first time was, when He began His Ministry (John ii. 13, 17); now He almost ended it, by doing the same thing, teaching us how dear to Him is the reverence due to holy places, and the sorrow and holy anger which He feels, when He sees sacrilege or profanity.

All things dedicated to Almighty God in the holy worship of His Church, are to be kept free from the touch of irreverent hands.

The Court of the Gentiles was the outer one, and the largest of all the Temple courts.

Into it, persons of all nations were allowed to enter. On pillars in this court were written up warnings, in Greek and Latin, telling strangers, and such as were unclean, not to go farther, on pain of death.

After this cleansing of the Temple, many blind and lame people came to Jesus, and He healed them in His Temple, which He had made pure.

The chief priests and scribes, when they saw the wonderful things that Christ did, and when they heard the little children crying in the Temple, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' were very angry, and said to Him, 'Do you hear what these children say?'

Jesus answered by asking them a question: 'Have you never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise'? (Matt. xxi. 16).

Once before, Jesus had told them that the wonders of His kingdom were hidden from the wise people, and made known to babes (Matt. xi. 25); and the Psalm,

which our Lord knew they must have read, says, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength' (Ps. viii. 2).

Little children honoured Jesus Christ, while the rulers and priests cast Him out.

When Jesus had looked round about upon all things, sorrowfully, no doubt, as He thought of that which was coming to pass, He went, at eventide, to Bethany with the Twelve.

On the next day, Monday, they returned from Bethany.

Jesus was hungry, and, seeing a fig-tree some way off, He came to see if there were any fruit thereon, but He found nothing but leaves.

Jesus said to the fig-tree, 'Let no man eat fruit of thee hereafter, for ever' (Mark xi. 14).

The disciples heard what He said.

There is much that is hard to understand about this story, but one thing it teaches us so plainly, that we are very wrong if we do not take the lesson to our own hearts.

To have 'nothing but leaves,' is to be very good outside.

We may go to church, we may be very good and pious in our talk, we may look very solemn, and get into the way of saying proper things at the proper time, but if we do not bear fruit—if we do not practise in our lives what we profess with our lips, if we do not deny ourselves and give to the poor, if we are not humble and kind and gentle—Christ will not own us as His.

We shall be like the barren fig-tree,

which gave no fruit to satisfy Christ's hunger.

Jesus will not bless us, but curse us, by telling us sorrowfully, but truly, that we are not trees of His Heavenly Father's planting.

Fruit-trees are worthless unless they bear fruit.

‘ Ah, who shall thus the Master meet,
And bring but withered leaves ?
Ah, who shall at the Master's feet,
Before the awful judgment-seat,
Lay down, for golden sheaves,
Nothing but leaves! nothing but
leaves! ’

Once more Jesus went back to Bethany for quiet, rest, and prayer.

On the next day, Tuesday in Holy

Week, our Lord returned to Jerusalem. Again He went to the Temple.

Jesus taught His disciples, and those who listened to Him, much on this, the very last day of His Public Ministry.

He told them of the father and the two sons, and the lesson was, that the very wicked go into the kingdom of Heaven, before those who pretend to be religious, but are not.

Then He preached to them of the wicked husbandmen, who killed the son the householder sent, saying of him, 'They will attend to what my son says.'

Jesus was the Son, and the world cast Him out and killed Him.

Next, Jesus spoke of the wedding-garment, by which He teaches us that we cannot rightly come to the Feast to

which He invites us, unless we are clothed in His righteousness.

Then the Pharisees tried to catch Jesus in His talk.

They asked Him if it were lawful to pay tribute, or taxes, to Cæsar, or not.

Then they brought unto Him a penny.

The Pharisees were very cunning and sly.

If our Lord had said, 'You must not pay taxes to Cæsar,' they would have accused Him before the Roman governor, and have given Him up into Pilate's hands to be punished for rebellion.

If He had said, 'You must pay this tribute,' they would have told Him that He was an enemy to their liberties, and one who went against the Law of Moses, and taught them obedience to idolaters.

When Jesus looked at the coin which

they brought to Him, He said, 'Whose is this image and superscription?'

If you look at one of our British coins, you will see a likeness of a king or queen, with some words in Latin.

The likeness is 'the image,' the writing is 'the superscription,' or that which is written upon the piece of money.

The disciples or followers of the Pharisees, and the Herodians, a political party of the Jews, answered our Lord's question, as to whose 'image and superscription' they saw upon the coin, by saying that they were Cæsar's.

Then Jesus said, 'Give, therefore, the things that are Cæsar's unto Cæsar, but those things that are God's, give unto God.'

When they heard this, they wondered,

left Jesus, and went their way (Matt. xxi. xxii.).

By these words our Lord taught us that we are to honour those set over us, such as the king or queen, and the government of the country in which we live, but that, if these order us to do what is contrary to God's law, than we are to keep that, come what may.

God before all things, God supreme, God over all.

This is what we must always bear in mind. The Bible says, 'Fear God, honour the king.'

Upon the same day, the Sadducees came to Jesus.

The Sadducees are one of the four principal sects of the Jews. They do not believe in angels and spirits, nor in the resurrection of the body.

Caiaphas, who passed the sentence of death upon Jesus, was a Sadducee.

A small number of Sadducees still remain, but the Jews call them heretics.

These Sadducees asked our Lord to tell them whose wife a woman would be in the resurrection, who had had seven husbands.

Jesus answered them, that they did not know the Scriptures, nor the power of God, 'for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven.'

Then our Lord told them that 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.'

What He taught was, that all live in some way to God, and that there is a resurrection of the body, which the Sadducees denied (Matt. xxii. 23-33).

When the crowd of people who stood round heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine.

And when the Pharisees had heard that Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together (Matt. xxii. 34).

One of them, a lawyer, trying to catch Jesus, or to tempt Him, asked Him which was the great commandment in the Law ?

Jesus said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets' (Matt. xxii. 35-40).

The two commandments take in our

duty to God and our duty to our neighbour, both so fully and so well set forth in the Church Catechism.

We must love God above all, and love our neighbours for God's sake.

Our Lord went on to pronounce eight woes upon the Scribes and Pharisees, because they were hypocrites, blind guides, outwardly beautiful, like their own whitewashed sepulchres, but inwardly full of all uncleanness.

Then our Lord spake some of the most awful words, some of the severest words that ever passed His lips, or, indeed, that are to be found in Holy Scripture.

He said to these Scribes and Pharisees, 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?' (Matt. xxiii. 33).

Though Jesus is so loving and merciful, there is, remember, such a thing as the wrath, or anger, of the Lamb.

This anger is all the more terrible when we think of the compassionate, tender heart of Jesus, which mourns over sinners, and longs for their conversion and salvation.

Listen to His sorrowful words, spoken so very shortly after these terribly awful ones: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' (Matt. xxiii. 37).

It is our self-will which drives Jesus away; nothing but our turning from Him in pride and sin, can make Him say

to us, 'Behold your house is left unto you desolate!'

To be without God, is to be without hope in the world; to be without Jesus, is to be lost; to be without the Holy Spirit's grace, is to be dead.

Remember the very awful words, 'Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone!' (Hos. iv. 17).

If we will give our hearts to anything and everything but God, God will forsake us, He will let us alone, and we shall be lost for ever.

After these sad words of woe, Jesus went out and departed from the Temple, and His disciples came to Him to show Him the buildings of the Temple.

Jesus, looking around, said, 'Verily, or Amen, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that

shall not be thrown down' (Matt. xxiv. 1, 2).

Then He began to tell them of the destruction of Jerusalem, a short account of which I have already given you.

He also showed them what dreadful things should come to pass before the end of the world—wars and rumours of wars, pestilences, famines, earthquakes in different places; and all these things were only to be the beginning of sorrows. But he that should endure to the end should be saved.

Jesus, moreover, told them of the sun being darkened, and the moon not giving her light, and the stars falling from heaven, and of the sign of the Son of Man, His Cross, appearing in heaven.

Jesus told them, too, that of that hour no man knew, not even the Holy Angels,

so that all must watch, for in such an hour as we think not, the Son of Man will come.

Upon the Mount of Olives, our Lord described the Judgment-day, when all nations should be gathered before Him, and when He should separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats (Matt. xxv. 31-33).

The sheep, He said, would be set on His right hand, the goats on His left hand.

By the sheep are meant the good; by the goats, the wicked.

To the sheep should be said, 'Come!' to the goats, 'Depart!'

And why?

Because the sheep gave Jesus meat when He was hungry, and drink when

He was thirsty, and took Him in when they saw Him stand before them as a stranger, and did not turn Him away from the door of their hearts; when He was naked, they clothed Him; when He was sick, they visited Him; when He was in prison, they went to Him.

The goats did none of these things.

It is the way in which we treat Christ's little ones—the poor, whom we always have with us—that will help very much to seal our fate.

If we see Christ in the poor, and help them, we shall be welcomed with His word of blessing; if we do not help them, we shall be cursed by His rejection, or casting off; for, inasmuch as we did it, or did it not, to one of the least of these, we did it, or did it not, to Jesus Christ Himself.

And the bad will go away into everlasting punishment, but the good into life eternal.

These are Christ's own words.

As we hear them, let us pray, in the words of that wonderful hymn, the *Dies Iræ*, or Day of Wrath; and in those of the Litany in the Prayer-book :

‘With Thy favoured sheep, O place me,
Nor among the goats abase me,
But to Thy right hand upraise me.’

‘By Thy Cross and Passion, in the hour of death and in the day of judgment, Good Lord, deliver us.’

Now we come to the words of warning that the end is very near; for when Jesus had finished these sayings, He said unto His disciples, ‘Ye know that after two

days is the Feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified' (Matt. xxvi. 2).

Jesus told them this at Bethany.

The Council of the Sanhedrin then met at Jerusalem, in the palace of the high priest Caiaphas, and talked together as to how they might take Jesus craftily, and kill Him. But they said, 'We must not do this on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar of the people' (Matt. xxvi. 5).

It was a custom to punish rebels and criminals at one of the three feasts.

The elders of the Council seemed inclined not to carry out this custom now; but God, not man, appointed the time when Jesus should be crucified.

Then one of the Twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests and

said to them, 'How much will you give me, if I deliver Him unto you?'

They agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver.

This was on the Wednesday in Holy Week.

The thirty pieces of silver were equal to about three pounds fifteen shillings of our money, and was the sum appointed by the Law to be paid for a slave who had been killed by accident.

From that time, Judas tried to find an opportunity, or chance, to betray Jesus.

Treachery is a vile sin.

To betray a friend, is to be guilty of the most miserably cowardly conduct.

Oh, what must that sin have been which Judas committed when he sold his Master, his best and truest Friend,

the Very and Eternal God, into the hands of His cruel enemies, for thirty pieces of silver?

While we hate and detest the crime of Judas, let us be careful lest we repeat it.

Remember that it is quite easy for us by our sins to 'crucify the Son of God afresh, and to put Him to an open shame.'

'O break, O break, hard heart of mine!
Thy weak self-love and guilty pride
His Pilate and His Judas were;
Jesus, our Love, is crucified.'

Never let us, by our foolish pride, our selfishness, or our cowardice, betray the dear Lord Who bought us with His most Precious Blood.

VICTORY.

Hanging in grey cathedral aisle,
Have you seen, all rent and torn,
The colours which through thickest fight
Were by our brave men borne ?

You know they tell of victory,
And of courage in the field ;
Of fires that stir the soldier's breast,
Of wills that cannot yield.

But better trophies far than these,
Are yours who do war for Christ,
The marks of conquest over self,
And inner gifts unpriced.

And what of palms He stores on high
For those who shall overcome ?
And what of that reward, of which
God is Himself the Sum ?

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXII.

1. Where did Jesus go when He was come into Jerusalem?
2. What did He do?
3. How many times did our Lord drive out buyers and sellers from the Temple?
4. What do these two events teach us?
5. Tell me what you know about the Court of the Gentiles.
6. Where did our Lord go next, and with whom?
7. When they returned from Bethany, what happened?
8. What does the barren fig-tree teach us?
9. When did our Lord next go into the Temple?
10. Tell me what you know about the tribute money.

11. What are the lessons that we are to learn from this incident?

12. Who were the Sadducees, and what did they deny?

13. Who came to Jesus after the Sadducees had been put to silence?

14. How did they tempt Jesus?

15. Is Jesus too loving to be angry with sin?

16. What did Jesus say when the disciples showed Him the buildings of the Temple?

17. On what mountain did our Lord foretell the Last Day?

18. Who are the sheep, and who the goats?

19. Who betrayed Jesus, and for how much?

20. Can we betray our Blessed Lord?

CHAPTER XXIII.

Holy Week.

THE LAST PASSOVER.

The Last Supper—The Washing of the Disciples' Feet—
The Institution of the Holy Eucharist.

VERY soon after Judas had made his wicked bargain with the chief priests, and on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Preparation of the Passover began.

The Passover commenced on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, which answers to our March and part of April.

On this day, between the two evenings, that is, between the sun's decline and

sunset—according to our reckoning, between three o'clock in the afternoon and six in the evening—the paschal lamb was to be killed, and no one was to eat any bread but that which was unleavened, during the whole feast.

The paschal lamb was killed by the Jews, who then tore it to pieces, and afterwards ate it.

The blood of the lamb which had preserved their fathers from the destroying angel when they came out of Egypt, together with the lamb itself, and the manner of its death, were types or figures of our Saviour's Blood, Death, and Passion.

I have told you about the Jewish Passover in chapter x. and other places; now I wish to say something of the Christian Passover.

Jesus sent Saint Peter and Saint

John, saying to them, 'Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat' (Luke xxii. 8-20).

They asked our Lord where they were to do this.

Jesus answered, 'When you are come into the city, a man will meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he goes. And say to the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? Then he will show you a large upper room furnished; there make ready.'

Some think that this man with the pitcher of water was John, whose surname was Mark, and who was afterward the companion of Saint Paul and Saint Barnabas.

The two disciples did as Jesus told them, and found as He had said unto them, and they made ready the Passover.

It has been made a matter of question, whether our Saviour kept the legal and Jewish Passover the last year of His life.

Many have thought that this Last Supper which He ate with His disciples on the evening of Holy Thursday (for our narrative has brought us to this day), was an ordinary meal, without a paschal lamb.

It may be well to note here, that the account of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist, the Christian Passover, is given us by three of the Blessed Evangelists.

Saint Matthew tells us about it in his Gospel, chapter xxvi. verses 17-30. Saint Mark, in his, chapter xiv. verses 12-26; Saint Luke, in his, chapter xxii. verses 7-20.

Besides this, Saint Paul, who received the account by a special message, or revelation, from our Lord Himself, tells us about it in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter xi. verses 23-26.

Now when the hour was come, Jesus sat down and the twelve Apostles with Him.

Jesus told them how greatly He wished to eat this Passover with them before He suffered.

How sorrowful must they all have been, as they looked upon the loving Face of their dear Lord and Master, when He uttered these words.

For they meant that the Passion and Death about which He had so often talked to them, were close at hand.

The Shadow of the Cross fell over that little band, partaking of their last

meal together, in that upper room, or guest-chamber.

Part of the ritual of the Passover was this. Four cups of wine and water were drunk by the guests at different times during the Feast, and while this was being done, some Psalms, the 113th to the 118th, were sung.

After Jesus had said the sad words about His coming sufferings, 'He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves' (Luke xxii. 17).

This cup was the third, or the cup of blessing, as it was called.

Jesus was Master of the Feast; He gave thanks, and then He offered the cup to the disciples, and told them that He should not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God should

come, that is, until after His Resurrection.

Saint John, the beloved disciple, tells us something which the other Evangelists do not relate. This is the washing of the disciples' feet (John xiii. 5).

Jesus knowing that His hour was come, and that He should depart out of the world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end.

Yes; Jesus was, indeed, full of love, and the great Mystery which I am now telling you about, is itself a Miracle of Love.

The cup which our Blessed Lord consecrated to become His most Precious Blood, was the fourth cup, or cup of the Hallel (Luke xxii. 20).

Most likely it was between the third

and fourth cup that what I am going to tell you of, took place.

Jesus rose from supper, laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. After that, He poured water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel that He was girded with.

It is the custom in Eastern houses for a servant, or slave, to wash the feet of the guests before they begin their meal.

The goodman of the house and his servants seem to have been absent on this occasion.

There was a dispute amongst the disciples as to who was the greatest.

Very likely the absence of any servant gave rise to this discussion.

Jesus saw that not one of the disciples was prepared to take the slave's place.

He Who was perfect Humility, and Who 'took upon Him the form of a servant,' did so Himself.

'He that is greatest among you,' He said to them, 'let him be as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.'

When Jesus came to Simon Peter, that disciple's impulsive nature was at once stirred.

He saw that he, and not the Master, ought to have performed this office:

Simon Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?' (John xiii. 6).

Jesus said to him, 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.'

The disciples did not yet quite understand the nature of Christ's kingdom. Their minds were full of earthly ideas.

Jesus, when He came to this world, a little Child, seemed to lay aside the robes of His Godhead, though, of course, we know He did not really do so ; now, He laid aside His outer garment, which was the mark of His position in society, as we should say, and stood before them all, in the dress of the Eastern slave.

The disciples did not understand this, but Jesus told them they should understand it all presently.

Peter said to Jesus, ‘Thou shalt never wash my feet.’

Our Lord answered him, ‘If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.’

Then Saint Peter’s heart was smitten with a touch of true contrition. Just a minute ago, it was, ‘Thou shalt never wash my feet ; I cannot bear that Thou the Master shouldst become the slave ;’

now, it is, 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head' (John xiii. 9).

Saint Peter's submission to the will of God was perfect and complete.

Jesus said to him, 'He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean altogether; and ye are clean, but not all.'

'But not all!' What do these terrible words mean?

They mean this, that one of that little band should betray Him, and that Jesus knew who that one was.

This is why He said, 'Ye are not all clean.'

When our Blessed Lord had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, as their Master and Ruler, He said, 'Do you know what

I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you' (John xiii. 14).

It was the Golden Rule, 'Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.'

Many are the sweet lessons of this Mystery of the Washing of the Disciples' Feet.

It teaches us the wonders of Redemption.

It tells us how Jesus our Lord came from the blissful rest of Heaven to earth, how He laid aside the glory that He had with His Father, how He clothed Himself with our human nature, and how He

poured forth, not water, but His own most Precious Blood, 'for us men and for our salvation.'

And when He clothed Himself again with His garments and sat down with them as their Master, He showed to them the glory of His Resurrection-Body, His real and close communion with them, such as they had never yet known, and the wonderful blessings which should be outpoured upon His Holy Church, through the virtue of His Ascension and Mediation, the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost.

Yes, indeed; what He did then, they knew not, but they should know hereafter.

And what does this washing of the disciples' feet teach us about the Christian Passover?

It teaches us this: that before we come to the Holy Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, we need the cleansing of repentance, of which I have told you already; that we should be set free from the sins which, through the frailty of our nature, we have committed, and which, without this repentance and cleansing, make us unfit to receive Him in the Holy Sacrament, Who will not have a defiled temple for His dwelling-place, and Who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

We now come to consider more immediately the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

Our Blessed Lord took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto the disciples, saying, 'This is My Body which is given for you; this do

in remembrance of Me' (Luke xxii. 19).

I told you that during the whole of the eight days of the Passover, no leavened bread was to be used by the Hebrews.

This was because, when their fathers went out of Egypt, they were obliged to carry unleavened meal with them, and to make bread in haste, because the Egyptians hurried them away. They carefully cleansed their houses from all leaven before the Feast began.

Saint Paul alludes to this great care which the Israelites showed in removing all leaven from their dwellings, when he says, 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump' (1 Cor. v. 6).

The least quantity of leaven left in paste or flour, would make the whole

unclean, and it was to be burned and thrown away.

Saint Paul says that Christian people should celebrate their Passover with unleavened bread, which shows forth in figure the great virtues of sincerity and truth.

And you will remember, that our Saviour warned His Apostles to avoid the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees and Herodians; that is, they were to take no notice of their doctrines. They were not to leaven the Christian teaching with them.

It will be very plain to see that unleavened bread is the most suitable to be used in the Holy Communion.

The bread which our Lord took into His hands was one of the thin, unleavened Passover cakes.

He lifted up His eyes to Heaven, as if He would see His Heavenly Father looking down upon Him, and then He blessed it.

Breaking it, He gave a portion to each one, saying, 'Take, eat; this is My Body.'

Then He took the cup, the fourth cup, or cup of the Hallel, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink ye all of it, for this is My Blood' (Matt. xxvi. 27, 28).

Our Lord did five distinct or different actions; notice what they were:—

(1) He took bread, (2) He gave thanks, (3) He brake the bread, (4) He gave the bread to the disciples, and (5) He said of the bread, 'This is My Body.'

How the disciples must have wondered, as they heard these solemn, these

mysterious words fall from their Master's lips!

There was one sitting there whose face was darkened over by a cloud, and whose heart was stricken within him. It was the traitor.

Jesus said, 'Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table: woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed' (Luke xxii. 21).

Then the disciples began to inquire among themselves of whom it was Christ spake these awful words.

Saint John, whose head was on Jesus's breast, said, 'Lord, who is it?'

Jesus said, 'He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it' (John xiii. 25, 26).

When Jesus had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot.

Satan entered into this false Apostle's heart, and took complete possession of it.

Then Jesus said to Judas, 'That thou doest, do quickly.'

None of the disciples knew what was meant.

Some of them thought because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had told him to go out and buy the things needed for the Feast, or that he should give alms to the poor.

Judas went out directly, and it was night (John xiii. 30).

Oh, what a darkness was that into which poor, wretched Judas went! The blackness of treachery wrapped him round; the remorse of his transgression cut into his very soul, and weighed him down.

It was night; Judas had put God out

of the world so far as he could do it. No light shone on his guilty soul; it was night, and a night upon which no sun should ever rise again, for him.

‘And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives.’

The ritual of the Passover provided that the singing of Psalms cxiii. to cxviii. would follow the cup of the Hallel.

This was most likely the singing spoken of. It must have taken place just after the institution of the Holy Eucharist, or after the discourses and intercession contained in the 14th to the 17th chapters of Saint John’s Gospel, most probably the latter.

After Judas had gone out, Jesus began to say to the disciples many wonderful and beautiful things.

He said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.'

'Little children,' He went on, 'yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said to the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you' (John xiii. 31, 33).

Then Jesus gave them the new commandment of love: they were to love one another as He had loved them, and by this very sign of their love for each other, all men were to know that they were really and truly His disciples.

Saint Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, whither goest Thou?' Jesus answered him, 'Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.'

Simon Peter wanted to know why he could not follow Jesus then. He said, with all the generosity of his impulsive

nature, 'I will lay down my life for Thy sake.'

Then came solemn words of warning. Jesus said to Saint Peter, 'Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice' (John xiii. 36-38).

Read, or have read to you, the 14th and 15th and 16th chapters of Saint John's Gospel; those beautiful instructions our Lord gave His own, just before He suffered.

In the 15th chapter, Jesus speaks of Himself as the True Vine. We may well think of this in connection with the Holy Eucharist. In the Temple, over and around the gate which led from the porch to the Holy Place, and which was 70 cubits high, or about 120 feet, a richly-

carved vine was placed as a decoration.

The branches, tendrils, and leaves were of the purest gold, and the bunches of grapes were of costly jewels. The stalks of the bunches were of the length of the human form.

As Jesus, after having kept the Passover, went to the Temple with His disciples, they would see this magnificent decoration, blazing in the light of countless tapers. We may well suppose that Jesus, as they stood admiring this truly beautiful work of art, said to them in words of simple majesty, 'I am the True Vine!'

Then our Lord stood, as it were, on the steps of the Altar of the Cross, and, lifting up His eyes to Heaven, poured forth His Intercessory Prayer to His Father, which you will find in the 17th chapter of

Saint John. It was His Consecration or Dedication Prayer.

His last words were of love. 'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world' (John xvii. 24).

The Eternal Will in the Sacred Heart of Jesus is that where He is, His people may be, too.

Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the end.

His last great act was the Institution of the Sacrament of Love, the most precious gift to the world of His Holy Body and Blood.

‘THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.’

The night before He suffered, our
Saviour Jesus Christ
Ordained, in loving-kindness, the Holy
Eucharist.

He gave His Body broken, made wine
His sacred Blood,
That Bread the Food of Angels, that
Wine a cleansing flood.

O Sacrifice of Mercy, which Jesus
bade us show
In memory of His Passion, as on the
ages flow!

O Banquet of Salvation, which in His
Church we taste,
Which, evermore repeated, knows neither
end nor waste!

‘Lo! I am with you always!’ These
are the words Divine
Which tell of Jesu’s Presence in Hallowed
Bread and Wine.

‘Until He come,’ we offer this sacrifice of
Love ;
Until He come ’ to take us to reign with
Him above.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXIII.

1. When did the Passover begin ?
2. What was done on this day ?
3. Whom did the paschal lamb fore-
show ?
4. Where did the disciples prepare for
the Passover ?

5. May the Holy Eucharist be called the Christian Passover ?

6. How often is its institution recorded ?

7. How many cups of wine were used at the Feast ?

8. What was the third cup called ?

9. Which cup did our Lord consecrate to become His Blood ?

10. When did the washing of the disciples' feet occur ?

11. Why did our Lord perform this act ?

12. Tell me some of the lessons derived from this act ?

13. What did our Lord say when He took the bread ?

14. And what when He took the cup ?

15. Why were the Jews to eat only unleavened bread during the Passover ?

16. How many separate acts did our

Lord perform when He blessed the bread?

17. How did Jesus point out the traitor?

18. What was the hymn sung before they went out to the Mount of Olives?

19. What chapters of Saint John contain our Lord's last instructions to His disciples?

20. Which contains His great Intercessory Prayer?

CHAPTER XXIV.

Holy Week.

THE CHRISTIAN PASSOVER.

The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice—The Holy Communion
—Christ's Presence.

I HAVE told you the narrative, or story, of the institution of the Blessed Sacrament; now I want to teach you some lessons about it.

First, say this collect from the Prayer-book :—

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly

love Thee, and worship and magnify Thy holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

When speaking of Holy Baptism, I told you that a Sacrament consisted, or was made up of, two parts--the outward and visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.

What are these, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

(1) 'Bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received,' and (2) 'the Body and Blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful.'

These are the words of 'The Church Catechism.' I told you that unleavened bread is the fittest to be used in the Holy Communion; and wine mixed with a few drops of pure water, is very

generally employed, because it is extremely probable that a mixed cup was used in the observance of the Passover.

The name wine was applied to mingled drink, even when much diluted. Thus Plutarch says, 'We call the mixture wine, even though it may contain more water.'

The wine and water in the Passover cup, our Lord called the 'Fruit of the vine;' unmixed wine, the Jews called, 'Fruit of the tree.'

Persons who have studied the ancient Liturgies think that Jesus Christ blessed a mixed cup, at the institution of the Holy Sacrament.

In the Holy Communion, all the ritual types of the old Law are fulfilled.

It is the sacrifice of the Gospel, which means to us, Christ's perpetual Presence.

I have shown you that under the Law of Moses certain sacrifices were offered, by Divine command, to Almighty God.

Some of these were acts of worship, as the daily burnt-offering, and the heave-offering. Others were to show gratitude for benefits received from God, as the thank-offering; others again, to ask God for pardon and forgiveness, as the trespass-offering and the sin-offering.

Now, all these sacrifices were shadows of that which was to come hereafter, namely, the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the Altar of the Cross.

This indeed it was that made them good and profitable to the souls of those who offered them.

Besides this way of approaching God in sacrifice, there was another, by which God came to His people.

He chose to dwell, first, in the Tabernacle in the wilderness ; then, afterwards, in the Temple at Jerusalem ; and you know that there, in the Holy of Holies, behind the veil, He dwelt with a special Presence, different in kind from that Presence by which He is in all places.

When Jesus came into the world, the Jews saw God's presence in the Person of Christ, Who is God and Man.

When He, our great High Priest, and the true Lamb, offered Himself upon the Cross, all the types were fulfilled, brought to pass ; and the Jewish sacrifices, no longer needed, came to an end a few years after the Ascension ; for then the Temple at Jerusalem, the only place in which sacrifices could be offered, was destroyed for ever.

Have we, then, no sacrifice, no near,

real and abiding Presence of God? Are we worse off than the Jews? No, indeed, we are not.

What our Lord taught by the institution of the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, was, that this new Feast is a sacrifice to Almighty God; the old Pass-over was only the shadow. Now, the disciples had the substance.

The whole rite was a sacrifice; our Lord went on from one act to another without any break, or stop.

Bread and wine were used in nearly all the Jewish sacrifices, more especially the peace-offerings, and the Apostles were quite accustomed to their use as offerings to God.

Jesus Himself was the Sacrifice which, henceforth, they were to offer; Himself the Food they were to eat.

It was to be a Feast, for ever, upon a Sacrifice.

The Passion had not visibly begun ; but really and truly, it had begun.

Jesus said, 'This is My Body which *is being* given for you : this is My Blood which *is being* shed for you.'

The Cross was the end, the completion, of the Passion.

Jesus, though sitting with them at Table, was yet still, by reason of the union or oneness of His Godhead and Manhood, throned in Heaven ; so that the same Divine power made Him able to give His Body and Blood to them, unseen, under the veils, or forms, of bread and wine, without their being able to see any change in His Human Body, or in the Bread and Wine.

These two fresh truths Jesus taught His disciples—

(1) That He is present in His Church, with His loving and obedient children, to nourish and to feed them.

(2) That the Church is to plead the sacrifice of Christ's Death.

The words, 'This do in remembrance of Me' (Luke xxii. 19), are more correctly translated, 'Offer this for My memorial,' as distinguished from the memorial offering of the Law.

Whenever the Holy Communion is celebrated, the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ is solemnly pleaded before God the Father, and before the whole Church, and we 'show the Lord's Death' as often as we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, 'till He come' (1 Cor. xi. 26).

The word translated 'remembrance,'

is the same as that used in the Old Testament in Leviticus (chapter xxiv. verse 7), where the shew-bread and frankincense are spoken of; and in Numbers (chapter x. verse 10), which tells about the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings, both of which were types or figures of the Holy Eucharist, and were expressly and plainly said to be 'a memorial' before God.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews, we are told that our Blessed Lord is a Priest for ever. This is a quotation from Ps. cx. 4, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek;' the king who brought forth bread and wine (Gen. xiv. 18). He was not only a Priest while He hung upon the Cross; He is a Priest still; He *is*, as Saint John tells us, the propitiation for our sins *now*.

The Atonement was not finished upon

the Cross. When our Lord said, 'It is finished,' He meant that His sufferings were over, His Sacrifice perfect and complete; nothing could add to it.

But Christ's Work still goes on within the veil: 'He ever liveth to make intercession for' those who 'come unto God by Him' (Heb. vii. 25).

This great Intercession always goes on in Heaven, by the offering which our Lord makes of Himself before the Father.

It is always going on on earth, by that very same offering, made by Himself, "for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the Death of Christ" (Church Catechism).

Notice one great difference between the yearly Jewish Passover and the Christian Eucharist.

Fresh lambs, enough for all the people, had to be killed each time the Feast came round.

But Jesus died upon the Cross once for all. There is no need that He should die again.

The Holy Communion, then, is not a repetition of the Sacrifice of Calvary, but a re-presentation of it.

That which Christ continually presents in Heaven, that Sacrifice we re-present on earth.

Jesus is thus still our sacrificing, as well as our interceding, High Priest.

‘Thus saith the Lord,’ says the prophet Jeremiah, when he is foretelling Christ’s everlasting Kingdom and Priesthood,—‘David shall never want a Man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel: neither shall the priests, the

Levites, want a Man before Me, to offer burnt-offerings, and to kindle meat-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually' (Jer. xxxiii. 17).

In the Great Atonement, the chief of all the older rites, the High Priest went alone, in plain garments, behind the veil into the Holy of Holies of the Temple, taking with him a bowl full of blood from a victim which had been killed in the midst of the people.

He then sprinkled this blood, offering incense at the same time, before the Mercy-Seat, whereon was the Presence of God, in the cloud of glory.

When the High Priest had offered the blood, he came out to the people again, in very beautiful robes, to bless them, having made reconciliation for their sins.

In like manner, Jesus our Lord, our great High Priest, has passed into the Heavens, the real Holy of Holies, and is there offering continually, for our sins, His Body and Blood, in the Presence of His Father; and we, on earth, whenever we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, show forth His Death, and this by His own plain command.

It is a sacrifice in which all take part, ministers and lay-people; for He has made us all 'kings and priests to God' (Rev. i. 6).

Jesus Christ is a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

In Genesis (chapter xiv. verse 18), we read that Melchizedek's offering was bread and wine.

Christ's Sacrifice was that of bread and wine, for these He did actually bless and

offer at the Passover Sacrifice of the Last Supper.

‘ Once, only once, and once for all,
His Precious Life He gave ;
Before the Cross our spirits fall,
And own it strong to save.

“ One offering, single and complete,”
With lips and heart we say,
But what He never can repeat
He shows forth day by day.

‘ His Manhood pleads where now it lives,
On Heaven’s Eternal Throne,
And where in Mystic Rite He gives
Its Presence to His own.

‘ And so we show Thy Death, O Lord,
Till Thou again appear;

And feel, when we approach Thy Board,
We have an altar here.'

I have spoken of the Holy Eucharist in its sacrificial character.

I must now tell you about it as the Holy Communion.

What does the Holy Communion give, or communicate to us?

The Body and Blood of Christ, which, under the forms of bread and wine, is, as the Church Catechism says, 'verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.'

What you must strive to do with all your might, and with the far mightier help of God's grace, is to keep true to the Scriptural doctrine about this Holy Sacrament, which is indeed a Mystery. 'Holy Mysteries' the Church calls Holy

Communion in the Book of Common Prayer.

People do not like mysteries; they do not care to believe in things they do not understand.

In the present day, particularly, they want to use their reason more than their faith. Hence so much unbelief about Church, Ministry, Sacraments, the existence of evil, the nature of rewards and punishments.

When our Lord taught the doctrine of Holy Baptism, Nicodemus asked, 'How can a man be born when he is old?' (John iii. 4).

But Jesus spake of the New Birth of water, and of the Spirit.

When He taught them about the Mystery of His Body and Blood, they did not believe His teaching.

‘Doth this offend you?’ He said (John vi. 61).

People still ask, as did the Jews of old, ‘How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat?’ (John vi. 52).

Jesus answered them in the beautiful words recorded in the sixth chapter of Saint John’s Gospel—words which do not explain the Mystery, but state it, for us and all the faithful to receive in love and adoring faith, for ever.

‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me,

and I in him. He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. He that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever' (John vi. 53-58).

Well may we pray, 'Lord, evermore give us this Bread' (John vi. 34).

Every Liturgy, or Office of the Holy Communion, contains a Prayer of Consecration.

So Saint Paul does not say, 'The Cup which we *drink*,' or 'the Bread which we *eat*,' but 'The Cup of blessing which we *ble*ss, that is, consecrate, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? and the Bread which we *break*, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?' (1 Cor. x. 16).

God the Holy Ghost acts through the consecration of the earthly Priest. Christ's Body and Blood are those in

virtue, or by reason of, the blessing, whether we eat and drink, or do not.

There are four chief benefits about Holy Communion.

I. It is the chief form of Prayer and Thanksgiving to God; for (1) it is the only public worship Christ ordained; (2) in it Jesus offers Himself to His Father.

We offer this Sacrifice in four ways:—

(a) As an act of worship to our God and King.

(b) As a thanksgiving to Him as benefactor. 'Eucharist' means thanksgiving.

(c) As a sin-offering to Him as our Judge, asking Him to pardon us.

(d) As a prayer for mercies and good things we need, either for ourselves or for 'all the whole Church.'

II. It is the one special way in which our Lord fulfils His promise: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 20).

III. It is the means of union with Christ.

IV. It is a means of union with each other in Christ. In the Holy Communion we most truly 'love as brethren.'

We may learn these two lessons from what I have told you about this beautiful Mystery of the Holy Eucharist—the Sacrifice, the Thanksgiving, the Communion; for It is all these.

1. We must be very careful to prepare ourselves, whenever we are going to receive so great a gift.

'It is a day of fear:

Rise up betimes, go forth alone,

With tongue fast sealed and head bowed
down,
Because thy Lord is near.'

2. We must always practise the deepest reverence when we are present at this most solemn Service.

' Angels and men might strive in vain,
They could not add the smallest grain
To augment Thy Death's Atoning
Power :

Thy Sacrifice is all complete ;
Thy Death Thou never couldst repeat,
Once offered up to die no more.

Yet may we celebrate below,
And daily thus Thine Offering show :
Exposed before the Father's eyes,
In this tremendous Mystery,—

Present Thee, bleeding on the Tree,
An everlasting Sacrifice.’¹

Note.—Books, suited to different sorts of people, which may profitably be read, on this subject, among many others:—Canon Carter’s *Instructions on the Holy Eucharist*; *The Christian Passover*; Preb. Sadler’s *The One Offering*; Canon Ridley’s *The Holy Communion, Its Nature and Benefits*; *The Narrow Way*; *The Vade Mecum*. Any bookseller will get them for you.

‘THOU ART A PRIEST FOR EVER.’

Jesus Christ, a Priest for ever,
Stands between the quick and dead,
Lifting up His one Oblation,
Pleading Precious Blood He shed.

Passed within the veil, in Heaven,
Still He bears us on His Heart;
In our every joy and sorrow
Jesus lovingly takes part.

¹ John Wesley.

There He makes His Intercession,
While His earthly Priests display
All the merits of His Passion
At His Altars day by day.

Never Calvary repeated,
Daily, Jesus' Death forth shown ;
Sinners have a Priest for ever
Throned in Heaven; on earth, their own.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXIV.

1. What are the two parts of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper ?
2. What was contained in the Pass-over Cup ?
3. Are we to regard the Holy Eucharist in two ways ?
4. What are these ?

5. Who is the Victim and the Priest in the Christian Passover?

6. What does 'This do in remembrance of Me' mean?

7. Whose Death is pleaded in the Holy Communion?

8. Does our Lord's work still go on?

9. What is it?

10. How is it carried on on earth?

11. Can the Sacrifice of Calvary be repeated?

12. What offering does Jesus present in Heaven?

13. What kind of Priest is our Lord?

14. What is His Sacrifice?

15. What do we receive in Holy Communion?

16. What does every Liturgy contain?

17. Tell me the four chief benefits of the Holy Communion.

CHAPTER XXV.

Holy Week.

THE PASSION.

The Agony — The Betrayal — Peter's Denial — Christ before Pilate.

I TOLD you, in the closing words of the account of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, that after they had sung a hymn, our Lord and His disciples went to the Mount of Olives.

To do this, they would have to cross the brook Kedron, which was through the valley of Jehoshaphat east of Jerusalem, between the city and the mountain.

Often this brook has little water; sometimes it is quite dry; but, after storms and heavy rains, it swells and runs fiercely along its course to the Dead Sea.

When the little company had crossed the brook, they came to the garden of Gethsemane, which lies at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

Gethsemane, meaning an oil-press, is a little enclosure or garden to which Jesus sometimes went.

When He entered the garden, He took with Him only Saint Peter, Saint James, and Saint John.

Just before this, Jesus had said, 'All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am

risen again, I will go before you into Galilee' (Matt. xxvi. 31).

Jesus was the Good Shepherd of the flock, Who was to be smitten by His cruel persecutors.

Then Saint Peter spake out, boldly and full of zeal, little thinking of the sore temptation that was so soon to overtake him: 'Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.'

Jesus said to him, 'Verily, I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me three times.'

Peter answered again, 'Though I should have to die for Thee, I will not deny Thee.'

And all the disciples said the same (Matt. xxvi. 33-35).

As soon as Jesus was come to the garden,

He said to the disciples, 'Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.'

Then He began to be sorrowful and very heavy. We can seem to see Jesus kneeling down beneath the dark shade of the olive-trees, as He cries out, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me' (Matt. xxvi. 36, 38).

What made Jesus so full of sorrow?

Partly, His dread, as Man, of the terrible sufferings He was so soon to bear.

In suffering, as in all things, 'He was made like unto His brethren.'

Partly, and much more, His sorrow arose from His fear of the coming of the Evil One.

He said, 'The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me' (John xiv. 30).

Contact or touching between Light and Darkness is always terrible. What must it, then, have been for Jesus, Who was perfect Good, to have had the spirit of Evil face to face with Him ?

Then, there was His sorrow at having to touch and bear the burden of sin ; for He knew no sin, and yet was made sin for us.

Jesus, in that awful moment, knew that He was bearing every single sin that ever had been, or ever would be, committed ; and more than this, that His Precious Blood would be shed in vain for those who would not turn to Him to be forgiven.

Then Jesus walked a little farther on into the darkness and gloom, and fell on His face and prayed, 'O My Father, if it may be, let this cup of suffering pass

away from Me : nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

Jesus was willing, even in this awful moment, to do as God willed. It was now, as all through His holy life, 'Not My will, but Thine be done.'

Then Jesus went to the three disciples and found them asleep.

He said to Saint Peter, 'What ! could ye not watch with Me one hour ? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

How gentle and kind Jesus was ! He knew that the disciples were very tired and sleepy, and while He told them to join with Him in watch and prayer, He was not angry with them for being so drowsy.

Our Lord went away again ; and again

He prayed in nearly the same words, telling His Father of His willingness to drink this bitter cup of sorrows to the dregs, if it was His will that it should not pass away.

Once more Jesus came to the disciples, and found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy.

He did not wake them, but went away, and prayed again for the third time, saying the same words (Matt. xxvi. 36-44).

Our Blessed Lord was crushed to the very ground by the terrible weight of His bitter sorrows.

‘His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground’ (Luke xxii. 44).

You will remember that beautiful prayer in the Litany, ‘By Thine Agony

and Bloody Sweat, Good Lord, deliver us.'

My dear children, this is no fanciful picture of the imagination.

The ground of the garden of Gethsemane really drank in the Precious Blood of Christ as it fell from His sacred Person, wrung out by the intense agony of His Soul.

Then it was that God the Father sent one of His wonderful angels, the Angel of the Agony, as he is called to strengthen and comfort Jesus Christ in this terrible hour of darkness and desolation of Spirit—all which, remember, was borne for your sins and mine.

Then Jesus rose up from prayer, and came to His disciples, and found them still 'sleeping for sorrow.'

You see it was not only natural fatigue



“ Then it was that God the Father sent one of His beautiful Angels.”

that made them so sleepy; it was anguish of heart as well.

Jesus awoke them.

‘Behold,’ He said, ‘the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me’ (Matt. xxvi. 45, 46).

How these words must have roused the weary disciples!

Jesus seems to have spoken in the strength imparted to Him by the Angel’s visit.

It was as though, full of holy energy, He longed to go forth to the battle, to the struggle which He knew was to end in victory. ‘Rise, let us be going.’

The hour was come; the traitor was at hand.

While He was speaking, there suddenly

shone out flashing of torches and lanterns; the crashing of the branches of the olive-trees was heard, and the angry cries of the armed band who rushed on with swords and staves.

The red glow of the torches lit up the pale faces of the trembling disciples, and Judas Iscariot, once their comrade and friend, stood before them, in the midst of the angry mob.

Judas had told the men that whoever he kissed, was the one they were to seize and hold fast (Matt. xxvi. 47, 48).

It is not unlikely that our Lord had said something at the Last Supper, which led Judas to suppose that He would go to Gethsemane that same night.

Judas would have then hurried to the Temple, or to the house of Caiaphas on

Mount Sion, doing what he had to do quickly.

He would then have told the priests and elders how easily they could take Jesus; for they only had to go down the Temple-stairs, to cross the brook Kedron, and seize Him before the people could get together from any part of the city to make a counter-move in His favour.

The priests agreed to the plan of Judas, and they ordered out a band which, as we have seen, carried out Judas' plan.

Forthwith Judas stepped up to Jesus, and said, 'Hail, Master!' Then he kissed Him; he gave the sign agreed upon.

Jesus said to him, in tones of gentleness, 'Friend, wherefore art thou come? Dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?'

How hideous the face of the false

disciple must have looked as he came close to the pure and holy, the loving and gentle Son of God !

Think, children, if your father or mother, or sister or brother, came to you, and, kissing you, gave you up to some cruel man, who would bind you with cords and take you away from your home, how angry you would be, how ready to look with hatred upon the one who had betrayed you !

But Jesus, although He knew all things, only said, ' Friend, why art thou come ? '

If Judas had but repented, even then ; if he had cried out, ' O Master, I am sorry for what I have done ; forgive me, ' he would have been pardoned. But this bad man cast away his last chance.

Jesus stood forth boldly, and asked them whom they were looking for.

They said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'

Our Lord said, 'I am He.' He offered Himself willingly as a Victim.

When Jesus said this they seem to have been shocked, for they went backward and fell to the ground, the evil soldiers covering their faces with their shields.

Simon Peter drew a sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Jesus was gentle still.

'Put up thy sword into its place,' He said to Saint Peter; 'for they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall give Me more than twelve legions of Angels, instead of twelve Apostles? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?'

Then Jesus told them, that while He sat daily in the Temple, they did not lay their hands upon Him.

He did not fail to give them the opportunity to take Him, as He taught openly ; but now, like cowards, they were come out against Him as a thief, with swords and with staves.

‘Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled’ (Matt. xxvi. 49-56).

Does not this submission of Jesus to the Will of God concerning Him, teach us that we, if we are to be like Him, must be patient, gentle, and stedfast or true, in all times of trial, suffering, sickness, or sorrow ?

The prayer of Jesus must ever be on our lips and in our hearts : ‘Not My Will, but Thine be done.’

After this, the captain and officers of

the Jews took Jesus and bound Him, and led Him away to Annas first, the father-in-law to Caiaphas, who told the Jews that it was right that one man should die for the people.

The order of events afterward seems to be this.

They took Jesus into the precincts of the Temple, that is, to those halls or courts where the Sanhedrin generally sat.

Here Jesus was examined, guarded, mocked, insulted, and kept prisoner until, having been judged guilty of death by the highest council of His nation, He was given over to Pilate.

Peter had followed Jesus some way off to the high priest's house.

He went in and sat with the servants, to see the end.

Meanwhile, the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death.

But although many false witnesses came, they could find nothing to prove that Jesus ought to be killed.

At last, two came, saying, 'This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.' How absurd a charge! Christ did not say it; but if He had, it would not have deserved death.

The high priest rose up from his seat, and said to Jesus, 'Dost Thou answer nothing? What is it which these witness against Thee?'

Jesus made no reply.

Then the high priest said, 'I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell

us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.'

Jesus answered, 'Thou hast said. Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.'

Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, 'He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye?'

They sent up a savage cry, 'He is guilty of death!'

Then they spat on that pale and beautiful face, and struck Jesus, and smote Him with the palms of their hands.

And they cried to Him, 'Tell us, Thou Christ, who is he that smote Thee?'

All the time that their cruel insults

were being heaped upon Jesus, Peter sat in the outer part of the palace.

A young woman came to him as he warmed himself by the fire, and said, 'Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.'

Peter denied before them all, saying, 'I do not know what thou sayest.'

He went out into the porch, or corridor of the palace, and there another maid-servant saw him, and she said to those standing about, 'This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.'

Again Peter denied His Master, this time with an oath: he said, 'I do not know the Man,' for Saint Peter talked in a rough sort of way: his talk differed from that of the people of Jerusalem, just as the talk of Yorkshire people differs from that of Londoners.

About an hour after, Saint Peter, having entered into our Lord's presence, they that stood by said, 'Surely thou also art one of them; we know it by thy speech.'

At this third accusation, Peter got very angry, and began to curse and swear, saying, 'I know not the man.'

And immediately, while the words were yet in his mouth, there came the shrill crowing of the cock.

Then Jesus turned, and looked upon Peter. Oh, how that piercing look must have broken Peter's heart!

Peter remembered the word of the Lord, 'Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.'

Then Peter went out, and wept bitterly (Matt. xxvi. 50-75).

When the morning was come, Jesus was led away to Pontius Pilate the governor (Matt. xxvii. 1, 2).

Pilate lived in Fort Antonia, not far off from the palace of Caiaphas, and on the north side of the Temple.

This place had many openings or passages into the courts of the Temple—some private, for the guards and soldiers; others, more open, as the great staircase, where Saint Paul afterwards stood, and preached to the people in the Hebrew tongue.

No doubt, the Sanhedrin easily filled the courts of the fort and the pretorium, that is, the house in which the Roman governor of Jerusalem dwelt, with their own partisans or followers, so as to make the noise and clamour appear to the governor as the noise of the whole

people of Jerusalem and Judea assembled at the Feast.

Judas, now that he saw that His Master was condemned, was very sorry ; he repented of what he had done, but his repentance came too late.

Full of bitter remorse, he brought the thirty pieces of silver he had got for his crime, the wretched blood-money, and gave it back again to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned, for I have betrayed the innocent blood.'

But these hard-hearted and cruel men cared nothing for the repentance of Judas.

. 'What is that to us ?' they said ; 'see thou to that.'

Then Judas cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

The chief priests took the silver pieces, and, after they had talked the matter over, they bought, with them, the potter's field, to bury strangers in (Matt. xxvii. 3-7).

They could not put the money into the treasury, because it was the price of blood, and it was not lawful to do so.

The potter's field is south of Mount Sion, just a stone's cast from the pool of Siloam. It is surrounded by walls and is covered with a vault, with seven openings above, through which to let down the bodies of those to be buried there.

Aceldama, meaning 'the field of blood,' is now used as the burying-place of the Armenians, who have a magnificent convent upon Mount Sion.

By the buying of the potter's field,

was fulfilled the words of Jeremiah the prophet: 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me' (Matt. xxvii. 9; Zech. xi. 12, 13).

It was early in the morning that Jesus was led to Pilate's Hall of Judgment.

The people would not go into the Hall, lest they should be defiled, so Pilate went out to them.

He asked them, 'What accusation bring ye against this man?'

They answered, 'If He were not a malefactor, that is, a criminal, we would not have given Him up to thee.'

Then Pilate said, 'Take Him and judge Him according to your law.'

The Jews said, 'It is not lawful for us

to put any man to death' (John xviii. 28, 31).

Pilate went again into the Judgment Hall, and, calling Jesus to him privately, asked Him, 'Art Thou the King of the Jews?'

Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'

Pilate said to Him, 'Art Thou a King then?' Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness of the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.'

Pilate then asked a question, which people have gone on asking, in one way or another, ever since.

He said to Jesus, 'What is truth?'

Then he went out again to the Jews,

and said to them, 'I find in Him no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the Passover: will ye, therefore, that I release unto you the King of the Jews?'

Pilate was a coward.

They all cried out, 'Not this man, but Barabbas.' Now Barabbas was a robber.

He was also guilty of sedition, that is, rebellion against authority, and a murderer.

In many old manuscripts, for instance, in the Armenian, Barabbas was called Jesus, as well, so that the question would run, 'Shall I deliver to you, Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus Who is called Christ?' What an awful contrast!

When Pilate had sat down upon the judgment-seat, his wife sent him a

message, saying, 'Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream, because of him.'

All was of no avail.

The robber and murderer was chosen, rather than the meek and lowly Jesus; the prayer of the mob was granted.

Pilate sent for water, washed his hands, and said, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it,' and the awful cry went up from the angry crowd which thirsted for the Blood of Jesus, 'His Blood be on us and on our children' (Matt. xxvii. 24, 25).

Pray, dear children, that the Blood of Jesus may ever rest upon you, not to condemn you, but to save you from your sins.

PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE
CROSS.

Do you want a Crown ?

Oh ! take the one

Which Jesus wore for you ;

That Crown of thorns, which His own
Blood

With crimson did bedew.

Do you want a Throne ?

Oh ! choose the Cross

Where Jesus died in pain,

For all the world is only dross,

If you this throne may gain.

Do you want a Home ?

Fly to His Heart,

And find true shelter there,

For He alone can Rest impart,

As Calvary you share.

Do you want true Life?
First seek, in Death,
The right to win your claim;
He bought it with His latest Breath,
Then take it, in His Name!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXV.

1. To what garden did our Lord and the disciples go after the institution of the Holy Eucharist?
2. What does 'Gethsemane' mean?
3. Whom did Jesus take with Him?
4. What caused Jesus sorrow in the garden?
5. How many times did Jesus pray to His Father whilst in the garden?
6. Why did the disciples sleep?

7. What is meant by the words 'Bloody Sweat' in the Litany?

8. Whom did God the Father send to Jesus to strengthen Him?

9. What sign did Judas give?

10. Who was high priest?

11. Could Judas have repented at the moment of the betrayal?

12. Where was Jesus examined and insulted?

13. Where was Saint Peter at this time?

14. Tell me all you know about Peter's denial of Christ.

15. Was Judas sorry for what he had done at last?

16. What became of him?

17. What was bought with the blood-money?

18. Did Pilate wish at first to condemn Jesus?

19. Why did Pilate give Jesus up to His enemies?

20. Whom did the Jews prefer to Jesus?

21. Who was Barabbas?

CHAPTER XXVI.

Good Friday and Easter Even.

THE PASSION.

The Scourging — The Crucifixion — The Death and Burial.

I TOLD you it was early in the morning that our Blessed Lord was led to Pilate's Judgment Hall.

It was the morning of the saddest, blackest day that the world has ever seen, for it was the first Good Friday.

After the Jews had chosen Barabbas, our Lord was handed over to the Roman soldiers to be scourged.

Then it was the words of Isaiah the prophet came true :

‘I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair : I hid not my face from shame and spitting’ (Isa. l. 6). ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities : the chastisement of our peace was upon Him ; and with His stripes we are healed’ (Isa. liii. 5).

Then, too, the words of the Psalm were fulfilled in the person of Christ, ‘The plowers plowed upon My back, and made long furrows’ (Ps. cxxix. 3).

There is a tradition that Jesus was bound to a pillar, for His scourging, by the Roman soldiery, and that His sacred Blood poured down on the marble pavement beneath.

This is most likely, as it was the

customary way of punishing criminals; but Holy Scripture does not tell us, in exact words, that this occurred, although we are quite at liberty to think it did.

Now, He Who is the King of Glory was to wear a crown of sharp thorns, for the soldiers platted a crown of some prickly shrub, perhaps acacia, in mockery, put it upon His head, and they placed over Him a purple robe, and said in taunting and insulting tones, as they stood before the Majesty of Heaven, in Whose hand they had placed a reed for a sceptre, 'Hail! King of the Jews!'

Then they smote Him with their hands.

Jesus came forth to the crowd, wearing the crown and the purple robe.

Pilate said to them, *Ecce Homo!* 'Behold the Man' (John xix. 5).

When Pilate knew that Jesus was a Galilean, and belonged, therefore, to the jurisdiction, or government, of Herod, he sent Him to that king, who was at Jerusalem at that time.

Pilate was still hesitating, and very likely, knowing that much had been done craftily, he thought that, to gain time, he would send Jesus to Herod, whose palace was not far off.

Herod was glad when Jesus came before him, for he had a long time desired to see Him, hoping to have seen some wonderful thing done by Him.

Herod questioned our Lord about many things, but Jesus answered him not.

The chief priests and scribes came and said all they could against Him.

Herod's men of war set our Lord at

nought; they treated Him shamefully, mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a very splendid robe, and sent Him back again to Pilate (Luke xxiii. 6-11).

‘Behold your King!’ Pilate cried out to the Jews.

But they only shouted out, ‘Away with Him, crucify Him!’

‘Shall I crucify your King?’ asked Pilate.

The crowd answered, ‘We have no king but Cæsar.’

Pilate, weak and cowardly, half-wishing to release Jesus, and half-fearing to offend the mob, at last delivered Jesus to them to be crucified (John xix. 14-16).

This was done in the place that is called the Pavement, or in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

The place was called ‘Paved with stones,’ in Greek.

It was most likely a terrace, or a gallery or balcony, paved with stone or marble, and of great height, for the Hebrew name meant high, or lifted up, or perhaps enclosed.

Oh, how careful we should be to do what is right, come what may, and leave all consequences to God, Who knows what is best for us, and Who can see each hidden motive and mainspring of our wills!

After they had put the crown and robe upon Jesus in mockery, 'they led Him away to be crucified.'

The road to Calvary is called the Dolorous Way, or the Way of Sorrows; sometimes the Via Crucis, that is, the Way of the Cross.

In the parish churchyard of Frome, in Somersetshire, there is a very beautiful Via Crucis; all the events of that

part of the Passion being carved in stone, at the side of a flight of steps, which leads up to the North Porch, over which is the Calvary.

Few who have seen this, will, I think, ever forget it.

Now the dismal procession starts on its way to the hill of Calvary, or Golgotha, which means place of a skull, or more strictly, skull.

This hill, not a very high one, lies to the north-west of Jerusalem.

The name is said to be derived from the shape of the hill itself, which is like a human skull, or because criminals of the lowest class were executed there; most probably, the first is the real reason.

Formerly, this hill stood outside Jerusalem.

When Adrian took the city in a revolt,

led by Barchohebas, he entirely destroyed it, and settled a Roman colony there, naming it *Ælia Capitolina*.

This new city was not built quite on the same place as the old one, but farther north, so that Calvary was almost in the centre of it.

Adrian profaned the mount, and more particularly the spot where our Blessed Lord was crucified and His sacred Body buried.

The Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, of whom I have told you something before, built a beautiful church on the spot, which remains to this day.

The procession passes on, through the streets of the city, through the gate, up to the hill of Calvary, Jesus bearing His Cross, on which He is to be nailed.

The heavy burden is a very sore one for Him to carry; for remember how much Jesus has passed through, since that Thursday night when He sat down with the Twelve in the upper room.

At midnight came the Agony and Bloody Sweat, in the Garden of Gethsemane; then Jesus was led to Annas; then, at three o'clock in the morning of Friday, to Caiaphas; an hour later, He was taken to Pilate; at five o'clock, He was sent by Pilate to Herod, who again sent Jesus back to Pilate at six.

Then came the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the mockery and insults, and all this time Jesus had no rest; not a moment free from pain and shame and weariness!

No wonder that some of those hard hearts are a little touched with pity for

the Redeemer as He goes along the Way of Sorrows !

At last Jesus, faint from weariness and loss of blood, falls to the ground, which is less hard, rough and stony as it is, than the hard, cruel hearts of those who are leading the Lamb to the slaughter.

The Jews must have felt as though their prize were going to slip out of their hands; they feared that Jesus would die on the road, and so disappoint them of the savage pleasure they wished to have in seeing Him die.

So, as a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, was passing along, they made him bear the Cross with Jesus (Mark xv. 21).

Oh what a happy thing to have been able to ease Jesus Christ, just for a little while, of that terrible weight !

Cyrene was sometimes called Pentapolis, from its five principal cities; Saint Luke counts the Jews of this province amongst the most bitter foes of the Christian religion.

Some of the foremost who got up the persecution against Saint Stephen were men of Cyrene.

Simon was father of Alexander and Rufus; Rufus was very likely famous among the first Christians, for Saint Mark names him.

He may be the same person whom Saint Paul salutes, as 'chosen in the Lord.'

But of Simon and his sons, we know little or nothing.

One cannot but hope that he who really bare the Cross, should have found grace to bear it in his heart.

Do we think our trials and troubles, our little pains and aches, hard to bear? Let us think of Jesus bearing His Cross along the Way of Sorrows in patience, for us, and try, very quietly, to bear all for His sake.

Now we come to Golgotha.

To allay the dreadful thirst of Jesus, they gave Him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall (Matt. xxvii. 34).

The prophet Jeremiah speaks of giving water of gall to drink, as very bitter affliction (Jer. ix. 15).

The Psalmist says that the enemies of Christ gave Him gall to eat and vinegar to drink (Ps. lxix. 21).

And by the expression, 'gall of bitterness,' we are to understand a desperate wickedness and maliciousness of mind and heart.

The vinegar of the Israelites was of two kinds. One was a weak wine, used for common drink in the harvest-field, just as cider is with us. The other had a sharp, biting, acid taste, like the vinegar we know.

It was most probably this last, mixed with the bitter gall I have spoken of, that was offered to parch the thirst of the suffering Saviour.

Some, indeed, think that it was myrrh which was put into this wine, to deaden the anguish of our Lord's sufferings, as it was a Hebrew custom to give stupefying drinks to those about to suffer death.

But others think that Saint Matthew, writing in Syriac, used the word *marra*, which means either myrrh, bitterness, or gall.

The Greek translators took this word

to mean gall, Saint Mark took it to mean myrrh.

This is a slight difficulty; but what concerns us is, that when Jesus tasted it, He would not drink it.

Stripped of His clothes, wearing only His diadem, or crown of thorns, Jesus is nailed to the Cross.

Then it was that Jesus prayed for His murderers, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke xxiii. 34).

As the Cross falls down into the hole dug in the earth to receive it, the whole Body of Jesus is stricken with fresh pain, and His Wounds are opened afresh.

Then the crosses prepared for the two thieves are put up on either side.

The soldiers are gathered around the foot of the Cross, casting lots for the

garments of Jesus. This was done that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

This Scripture is Psalm xxii. 18: 'They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots.'

We read in Saint John's Gospel that the coat was 'without seam, woven from the top throughout' (John xix. 23).

It is not very clearly known how a garment was so formed in a loom. Most likely, this 'coat' was the work of some of the pious women who ministered to our Lord's needs.

It seems to have been thought both curious and of particular value.

The chief priests, too, are gathered at the foot of the Cross, mocking and deriding, or making fun of, the awful sufferings of Jesus.

Think what those sufferings were.

Hanging in exquisite torture upon the Cross, He lingered there for six long hours before He died.

But there was yet another group standing around that awful Bed of Suffering.

The Blessed Virgin, Saint John and the Holy Women, were watching Jesus die, and the sword was piercing sharply through Mary's soul as she stood there, while the sacred Blood of her dear Son trickled down from the gaping wounds in His Body to the ground.

They had set up a superscription over His Head, written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews' (Luke xxiii. 38).

Two thieves were then crucified with our Lord, again fulfilling Holy Scripture: 'And He was numbered with the trans-

gressors' (Isa. liii. 12). One was crucified upon His right hand, the other on His left.

The soldiers, and mob of people, at the foot of the Cross, made sport of Jesus, wagging their heads at Him, and crying out, 'Thou that destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross' (Matt. xxvii. 40).

And the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked Him, too, saying, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the Son of God' (Matt. xxvii. 42, 43).

The two thieves cast the same in His

teeth. Oh, what a sight must our dear Lord have looked down upon, from the throne of His Cross !

Malignity, cruelty, hate, insult, rejection, unbelief !

And love, affection, faithfulness, courage, on the part of the little group of His own, who were, however, all powerless to help Him.

One of the thieves turned, at the last moment, to Jesus Christ, and made confession of the justice of his punishment ; but he said, 'This Man,' the Man Christ Jesus, 'hath done nothing amiss.'

'Lord, remember me,' he cried in loving faith, 'when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.'

Jesus, amidst His dying agonies, heard the voice of the penitent thief above all the angry din of hatred below,

and answered him: 'Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise' (Luke xxiii. 41-43).

Now set in an awful darkness lasting from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour, that is, from twelve to three o'clock.

The earth itself went into mourning for the Sufferings and coming Death of the Son of God.

Jesus, knowing that all things were accomplished, or brought to pass, cried, 'I thirst' (John xix. 28).

This was the only word of His that seemed to imply thought of His own sufferings.

Some at the foot of the Cross filled a sponge with vinegar, put it on a reed, and placed it to His mouth.

Jesus tasted it and cried out, 'It is finished! Father, into Thy hands I

commend My Spirit,' bowed His sacred Head and died (John xix. 29, 30).

The earth trembled at the sight of its dying God: the rocks were rent in pieces, the graves were opened, and the veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom.

Then the soldiers came and brake the legs of the two thieves; but they did not break the legs of Jesus, because it was written in Holy Scripture, 'A bone of Him shall not be broken' (Ex. xii. 46; Num. ix. 12; Ps. xxxiv. 20).

But one of the soldiers came, and with his spear pierced Jesus's side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water (John xix. 34).

Forth from the side of Jesus sprang in marvellous type the power of the two great Sacraments of the Gospel, Holy Baptism and Holy Communion.

And this was done, too, that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'They shall look on Me Whom they have pierced' (Zech. xii. 10; Rev. i. 7).

Then Joseph of Arimathea came: he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews; and he begged Pilate that he might be allowed to take the Body of Jesus away.

Pilate let Joseph do so (Matt. xxviii. 57, 58).

Nicodemus also came,—he who at first found out Jesus by night,—and brought with him a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight (John xix. 39).

Tenderly, and with loving care, they loosen the nails, take our Lord down from the Cross, and, it may be, lay Him in His Mother's arms.

‘ Only came Nicodemus, he who sought
by night,
And Joseph kind, whose rocky tomb
Thy bed shall be,
Whither to sleep a Lion’s sleep in awful
Might,
My Son, how soon will they be bearing
Thee.

‘ Now Thou art borne to me from yon
sharp Cross of pain,
And heavily upon these Mother-arms art
laid ;
These arms which bare Thee long ago,
and once again
A lowly resting-place for Thee are
made.

‘ I who first swathèd Thee, Thy grave-
clothes now will bind ;

Giver of Life, Thou liest dead before me
now ;
Tears washed Thee at Thy Birth : far
hotter tears I find
To wash the Death-drops from Thy
pallid Brow.'

Perhaps, with loving care, Mary removes the crown of thorns from Christ's bleeding forehead. She and the holy women wash the Wounds and wrap the Sacred Body in pure linen, with the spices Joseph had brought ; and It is laid in the new tomb, hewn out of the rock, wherein man had never yet been laid. It was a virgin-tomb.

Arimathea, or Rama, the city Joseph the counsellor came from, is a town, standing in a fertile plain, about thirty-

five miles north-west of Jerusalem, on the high road to Jaffa.

In this rich man's garden-tomb Jesus was laid. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sat and watched by the tomb; Saint John had led the Blessed Virgin away to his own home, for Jesus had left His Blessed Mother as a precious legacy to His beloved Disciple (John xix. 27).

The next day the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate and begged him to make the sepulchre safe and fast, because, as they said, that deceiver said while He was yet alive, 'After three days, I will rise again.'

They were afraid lest the disciples should come by night and steal the Body of Jesus away, and that they should tell the people that our Lord had risen from the dead.

Pilate told them they had a watch, and that they could set officers to guard the tomb, and make it as sure as they could.

‘So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch’ (Matt. xxvii. 62–66).

The sacred Body of Jesus was dead, cold, and silent in the sealed and guarded tomb.

His Soul had gone to the place of departed spirits, to take to them the glad tidings of that great work of salvation which He had wrought for them.

It was Easter Even.

How shall we best learn some of the many lessons which this marvellous story of self-sacrifice and love teach us?

1. Let us try to love Him more perfectly Who laid down His life for us with such perfect unselfishness.

2. Never let us fail to keep Good Friday, as a day of solemn sorrow and fasting, if we are old enough to fast; never let us go out on pleasure, or to entertainments, which, while they profess to have a religious character, are not in accordance with the day.

I have purposely left out all mention, except twice when I was obliged to do so, of the words which Jesus spoke upon the Cross.

I have kept them till the last, in order that they may serve you as a model for meditation and prayer, in case, at any time, you may be unable to get to a church, where the service, called 'The Three Hours' Agony,' is held.

The First Word was spoken at the beginning of the Crucifixion, probably, as our Lord was nailed to

the Cross, before it was put into its place :

‘ Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ’ (Luke xxiii. 34).

Jesus, in His agony, prayed that His persecutors might be forgiven. How then can I be unforgiving or hard ?

‘ O Saviour of the world, Who by Thy Cross and Precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and keep us, we humbly beseech Thee, O Lord. Our Father,’ etc.

Hymns Ancient and Modern, No. 114.

The Second Word, addressed to the penitent thief, just as the mob were reviling Jesus and wagging their heads at Him :

‘ To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise ’ (Luke xxiii. 43).

Learn Christ’s compassion for true

Repentance and Penitence, whenever, and by whomsoever, shown. Note the reward: the penitent thief is to be *with Jesus*.

‘O Saviour of the world,’ etc. Hymn No. 116.

The Third Word:

‘Woman, behold thy Son! Behold thy Mother!’ (John xix. 26, 27).

This word was spoken just as the darkness came on. To His Blessed Mother He turned for the last time, asking her to look at Him once more: His love for her was true to the last. To Saint John, He gave His Blessed Mother, as His dying gift. This love of Jesus for His Mother must teach me to love her too, and to love those whom God has given me to take care of, or provide for.

‘O Saviour of the world,’ etc., Hymn No. 117.

The Fourth Word: ‘My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?’ (Matt. xxvii. 46).

This was spoken as the darkness was wrapping all the scene in dread and fearful desolation. Jesus was bearing the sins of the whole world, and the burden hid, as it were, the light of His Heavenly Father’s countenance from Him.

Oh, let me, more and more, hate sin, which separates me from God.

‘O Saviour of the world,’ etc. Hymn No. 105.

The Fifth Word:

‘I thirst’ (John xix. 28).

It was for the souls of men that Jesus longed. Never let me disappoint Him, when He comes to me, seeking me, in His

Divine love and pity, and looking to find in me His own graces.

‘O Saviour of the world,’ etc. Hymn No. 112.

The Sixth Word :

‘It is finished!’ (John xix. 30).

The work of satisfaction is complete; the sacrifice is offered; the atonement made. Shall I undo the work that Jesus did? Shall I set at naught His sacrifice? Shall I trample His Precious Blood under foot?

‘O Saviour of the world,’ etc. Hymn No. 113.

The Seventh Word :

‘Father, into Thy hands I commend my Spirit’ (Luke xxiii. 46).

The First Word of Jesus was, ‘Father, forgive them;’ His last is, ‘Father, into Thy Hands I commend my Spirit.’ Oh, the love

of Jesus for His Heavenly Father! Ever let me look up to my Father, in trouble, sorrow, desolation, and death. Let the prayer of my life be, 'Forgive me, forgive my enemies;' and let the sigh of my death be, 'Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.'

'O Saviour of the world,' etc. Hymn No. 103.

BEARING REPROACH WITH JESUS.

If I am tempted to repine,
And think my lot is poor,
My journey, in unwelcome paths,
My daily round, obscure :

If I would frame and shape my course
On other lines than those

God laid for me, and which I think
Are full of cares and woes :

Then let me think of Jesus Christ,
Who, all throughout His Life
Knew poverty, self-sacrifice,
Misunderstanding, strife ;

Let me remember, how He bare
Along the Dolorous Way
The Cross, to teach me how to live
Beneath that Cross always :

And how, in sorrow, He out-breathed,
Upon the Cross, His Soul,
To win for me and all mankind,
Through pain, the painless goal.

Oh, then content with Jesus Christ
To suffer, I will be,
If such a sweet affliction gain
So great a victory !

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXVI.

1. What happened after the choice of Barabbas ?
2. What crown was put upon Jesus ?
3. Could the false witness prove Jesus guilty of death ?
4. What does Gabbatha mean ?
5. What is the road to Calvary called ?
6. What does Golgotha mean ?
7. Who helped to bear the Cross with Jesus ?
8. Describe the three groups at the foot of the Cross.
9. Tell me about the Penitent Thief.
10. When did the darkness come on, and how long did it last ?
11. What happened when the Son of God died ?

12. Who came to bury Jesus ?

13. What did the chief priests and Pharisees do to make the tomb secure ?

14. Where did our Lord's Soul go after His Death ?

15. How should we keep Good Friday ?

16. How many times did Jesus speak as He hung upon the Cross ?

17. Try to learn them and repeat them to me.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Great Forty Days.

INCIDENTS OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

The Holy Women at the Tomb—Christ rises from the Dead—Sunday.

WHAT a wonderful Sabbath must that have been wherein the Lord of the Sabbath took His sweet rest!

Truly the Rest of Jesus was glorious!

But now the Sabbath is drawing to an end.

There is a hushed stillness, broken only by the first stirrings of the morning wind, as it lightly passes over the beautiful garden of Joseph, and gently lifts the

branches of the trees with its first chill touch.

A faint streak of silver is seen in the east.

Very soon, the streak grows larger and broader, and a twilight begins to creep over the dark sky.

Then the hues of sunrise come, like heralds of the approaching day, lighting up hill and tree-top with a flood of purple, which swiftly changes into a golden glory.

It begins 'to dawn toward the first day of the week' (Matt. xxviii. 1).

It is the first Sunday; the first Lord's Day.

Thus early, Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, and Salome, called by some, Mary, steal through the gloom to the sepulchre, bringing sweet spices with

them, that they might anoint the Sacred Body.

As during the earthly life of Jesus, these holy women had shown their love to their Lord and Master; as they had stood beside His Cross, till they had watched Him die on Calvary; so now they came yet once again to minister to Him at the grave.

Last at the Cross, they were first at the Tomb.

‘There stood three Marys by the tomb,
On Easter morning early:
When day had scarcely chased the gloom,
And dew was white and pearly.’

All through the Sabbath, they had kept in close quietude, in obedience to the Law; now, as soon as it was dawn, they sought the place where Jesus lay,

knowing, perhaps, nothing of the guard of soldiers which had been placed there at the wish of the Jews (Matt. xxvii. 66).

There had been a great earthquake, of which the holy women were ignorant, and an Angel of the Lord, sent down from Heaven, came to the tomb, rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

His face was like the lightning, his clothing was as white as snow.

The Roman soldiers, the keepers of the tomb, were dreadfully frightened when they saw the beautiful Angel of the Resurrection, as he is called; they shook with fear, and became as dead men.

The Angel said to the women, 'Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.'

Then he beckoned them to him, and said, 'Come, see the place where the Lord lay.'

They went near and looked down with feelings of holy love and fear into that sacred place.

It was not like a grave: there was nothing in it to terrify or sadden them.

There was the fair linen that had been wrapped about that 'Head so bruised and wounded;' and the napkin that was about His face, not lying with the other linen, but wrapped together, by Angel-hands, and lying in a place by itself.

The Angel told the women to make haste and tell His disciples that Jesus was risen from the dead; and they went quickly to Jerusalem, with fear and great joy, that is, with reverence and holy hope, and ran to take the disciples

word of what had happened (Matt. xxviii. 2-8).

When the holy women told the Apostles the news, they did not believe it; their words seemed to them as idle tales (Luke xxiv. 11).

Mary Magdalene said to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, that is, Saint John (who himself, with his own sweet humility, tells us the story in this way): 'They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him.'

Saint Peter and Saint John started to go to the sepulchre.

They were so anxious to know the rights of the thing, as we should say, that they both ran, and 'the other disciple,' that is, Saint John, outran Saint Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

Saint John stooped down and looked in, and saw the linen clothes lying, but he did not go inside.

Very soon after, Simon Peter came, and he at once went into the tomb, and saw what Saint John and the holy women had already seen.

‘Then went in that other disciple, who came first to the sepulchre,’ that is, Saint John, ‘and he, too, saw and believed’ (John xx. 2-9).

Up to this time, they knew not the Scripture that Jesus must rise again from the dead. They had not yet grasped the truth, which Jesus had told them of so often.

‘Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.’

Mary still stood outside the sepulchre, weeping; and, stooping down, she,

through her tears, looked into the sepulchre.

Then she saw two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had lain.

The angels said unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou? She said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him' (John xx. 11-13).

Yes, Jesus Christ had burst the bonds of death, for Death could not hold Him Who is the Resurrection and the Life, and had now risen from the dead.

Silently, with unrevealed power, without rolling away the stone, or breaking the seal which the Roman authorities had placed on it; just after midnight, in the first watches of the first day of the week,

Jesus Christ passed forth from the tomb, in the Divine Power of His Godhead, to open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

The Roman soldiers seem to have been the first to tell the news that Jesus had risen from the dead.

They went and told the chief priests what had happened.

Now, these knew that it had been by the power of God that Christ had risen ; so they bribed the soldiers not to tell the truth ; they gave a great deal of money to the guards, and told them to say, ' His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you.'

Then the soldiers took the money, and told the people what the chief priests

said to them, and the Jews commonly believe it to have been so, unto this day (Matt. xxviii. 11-15).

You see how one wicked act leads on to another. The chief priests had to buy off the soldiers to prevent their telling the truth, although, of course, if the soldiers had really fallen asleep, and let the disciples steal the Body of our Lord, they would not have dared to say so, for they would most surely have been punished.

‘I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore!’ (Rev. i. 18).

‘Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. . . . For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive’ (1 Cor. xv. 20-22).

This is what Christ said about Himself, as being, in His own Person, the Resurrection; and what Saint Paul said about the Resurrection, as a fact, and of some of its consequences.

By His triumph over death, Jesus proved that He was indeed the Son of God, and thus answered the questions which had so often been put to Him by the Jews and others who would not believe on Him.

He showed us, too, by His rising from the grave, what He had, indeed, taught before, by His raising of Lazarus from the dead, that He, the Lord of life, had the keys of death in His hand; and He gives to us, by this glorious Resurrection, a pledge that all the true and faithful members of His Body, the Church, shall, after a life of faith and obedience, rise

again to an endless Life of glory, in His blessed Presence, in Heaven.

Our bodies, sown, it is true, in corruption, will be raised in incorruption; sown in dishonour, they will be raised in glory; sown in weakness, they will be raised in power; sown natural bodies, they will be raised spiritual bodies (1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44).

‘I believe in the resurrection of the body.’

This is the glorious article of the Creed, which, through the power of Christ’s Resurrection, we are able to hold with such firm joy on Easter day.

‘O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law’ (1 Cor. xv. 55, 56).

It is sin which makes us think of death

with terror; perhaps not altogether, but still very chiefly so.

‘But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!’ (1 Cor. xv. 57).

Oh, let us ever show forth our thankfulness to God for the glorious Resurrection of our Lord from the dead, by trying, day by day, to live the Risen Life.

Risen with Christ, let us always seek those things which are above. Let our affections be set in Heaven.

Then we may humbly, yet surely, hope that at the great Morning of the Resurrection, when the trumpet of the Archangel calls us, we may pass through this grave and gate of death to our joyful Resurrection, and enter, through the merits of Jesus Christ, and the graces of

the Holy Ghost, into the Life of the world to come, the Life everlasting.

Easter day is the Queen of Festivals, the Sunday of Sundays.

We have, indeed, an Easter in every week; for the Church, from the beginning, appointed that the first day of the week, Sunday, and not the seventh, Saturday, should be kept holy in honour of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You sometimes hear people speak of the Christian Sabbath. There is, in reality, no such thing. The Sabbath is Saturday, which, as you know, the Jews still observe in their synagogues.

Sabbath means 'rest;' for God rested, that is, He ceased to create new beings, on the seventh day, and He blessed and sanctified the day in a particular manner. Hence it came to pass, that by Divine

command, the Hebrews kept it as a day of rest, prayer, and praise.

'Sabbath days' sometimes means all the Jewish festivals.

'Keep My Sabbaths,' that is, Keep My feasts, as the Passover, Pentecost, Feast of Tabernacles, and so on, all of which I have described to you.

Eusebius tells us that, from the beginning, the Christians assembled on the first day of the week, called by them 'the Lord's day.'

They met together to celebrate the Holy Communion, to read the Holy Scriptures, to preach, and to give away alms for the needs of the orphans, widows, and poor Christians.

You see how much like our Sunday is to the primitive or first one.

Sunday is truly the Lord's day, in

which we are to rejoice and be glad ; and there is one special way in which all Christians are bound to keep it.

Every Christian, unless hindered by reasonable cause, must be present, every Lord's day, at the service of the Holy Eucharist.

Matins and Evensong, Litany and catechizing, are all very good, very helpful, and very generally binding upon those who wish to keep Sunday religiously.

But they are none of them *obligatory*, that is, 'of obligation.'

Our Lord instituted none of them.

The only Divine Service is that which He *did* institute, the celebration of the Holy Communion, the commemorative Sacrifice of His Blessed Body and Blood.

If, at any time, through unhappy circumstances, we are prevented from being present at this Blessed Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving, the Holy Eucharist, let us do all we can to remedy the evil, by making what is called an Act of Spiritual Communion.

Let us join in spirit, heart, and mind in those prayers which we know are going up before so many thousand altars, and humbly beseech the Lamb of God to apply to our souls the benefits of His all-saving Passion.

We shall thus be unselfish in our prayers, which is a very great matter.

We shall be in union with, or doing the same as, angels and archangels and all the faithful people of God, in our Sunday worship, imperfect though it be; and we can ask God, in the full

assurance, or hope, that He will hear us, to accept our 'sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, most humbly beseeching Him to grant, that by the merits and death of His Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in His Blood, we and all His whole Church may obtain remission of our sins and all other benefits of His Passion' (Book of Common Prayer).

Sunday is not a day of gloom; it is a 'day of rest and gladness'—a day on which, by God's mercy, we can look up to the Rest that remains for the people of God—a day on which we can take such pure and happy recreation as may be suitable to its spirit, and will not cast any shadows upon the brightness of our Communion Feast, and the solemn yet very happy service in which we have been engaged.

Sundays and Holy days, well spent, are the foretastes of Heaven.

They lift us up from the world to the golden gates, where we can hear faint snatches of the endless Alleluia—that New Song which is ever sung before the Heavenly Altar.

They tell us of Rest after the strife is over; of victory when the battle is ended; of life which shall never end; and of pleasures eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, which are at God's right hand for evermore.

EASTER.

Very early in the morning,
Ere the sun had chased the gloom,
Fearing not the soldiers' scorning,
Came the women to the tomb.

But the Lord they sought had risen,
Mighty Victor o'er the grave,
He Whom death could not imprison,
King all glorious, strong to save!

Jesus is the Resurrection,
In His strength His saints shall rise,
Clothed upon with His perfection,
Sanctified, enriched, made wise.

Bodies which once knew decaying,
Then shall stand in beauty drest,
Caskets of pure souls, obeying
God's pure Will, and finding Rest.

Sweetest Sabbath is each Sunday
Rest, which Jesu's trophies seal :
Earnest of the life which, one day,
Christ will to His own reveal!

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXVII.

1. Who came very early to the sepulchre on Easter day?

2. What did they bring with them?

3. What had happened before the holy women came?

4. Who sat at the sepulchre?

5. What did the Angel say to the holy women?

6. What did the holy women next do?

7. Did the Apostles believe them at first?

8. Which of the Apostles went to the sepulchre?

9. Who got there first?

10. What did Saint Mary Magdalene see when she looked into the tomb?

11. Could the grave hold Jesus Christ?

12. Were the guards and sealed stone of any use ?

13. Of what is Christ's Resurrection a pledge to us ?

14. What is Easter day called ?

15. What does Sabbath mean ?

16. How did the early Christians keep the Lord's day ?

17. What is the service which all Christians ought to attend on Sunday ?

18. How should Sunday be observed ?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Great Forty Days.

THE APPEARANCES OF CHRIST.

The Appearances of Our Lord after His Resurrection
—To Saint Mary Magdalene—To the Women—
To the Disciples going to Emmaus—To Saint
Peter—To Saint Thomas—To Ten Apostles in
the Upper Room—To the Eleven.

YOU will remember that when Saint Mary Magdalene went into the tomb, after the disciples had gone to Jerusalem, she saw two Angels.

It was a great honour that Mary should have been allowed to talk with the Angels, those beautiful bright beings whom God had sent to be watchers at

the grave of Jesus Christ. But more was in store for her.

When Mary had answered the Angel who asked her why she wept, she turned round and saw some one standing by her.

Who was it ?

It was Jesus Himself.

Mary did not know that it was Jesus. But Jesus soon spake.

He said to her, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' 'Whom seekest thou?'

Now, Mary thought He must be the gardener. She did not know Christ's form, and she did not yet remember His voice, often as she had heard it.

Mary said, 'Sir, if you have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.'

Mary, you see, did not say to Him

Whom she supposed to be the gardener, 'Sir, if you have borne *Jesus* away,' but, 'Sir, if you have borne *Him* away!'

She thought, in her overflowing love, that every one would know Whom she meant.

Then Jesus said one word to her; it was, 'Mary!'

He called her by name, as He loves to call His own sheep, for then they know His voice.

Mary at once turned to Jesus, and, knowing His voice now, she said to Him, 'Rabboni;' which is to say, 'Master' (John xx. 11-16).

And it was but one word that she, too, could speak, her joy was so deep; but that word was full of reverent love.

No doubt she then drew near to Jesus to cling to His sacred Feet, and thus

to express her love and devotion to Him.

Jesus said to her, 'Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God' (John xx. 17).

Jesus wished His disciples to hear that He was risen, and to let them know that, as He was not yet ascended to His Father, they were to expect to see Him again before He went up into Heaven to take His place at the Father's right hand.

The words, 'Touch Me not,' mean, 'Do not cling to Me,' 'Do not embrace Me.'

Mary, very likely to satisfy herself that it was no apparition she had seen, or mental deception, touched Jesus.

We may be quite sure that Jesus did not object to her doing this; but she was to hasten off on His mission to the disciples, to tell them what He had bid her.

Jesus said, 'Go to My brethren' (John xx. 17).

How kind and gracious of our Lord still to call those His brethren, who, in the dark hour of His sorest need, 'forsook Him and fled!'

And see, too, how the message of Christ would proclaim to His disciples that He is perfect God and perfect Man.

He said, 'I ascend to My Father' by nature, 'and to your Father' by adoption and grace; 'to My God and your God,' pointing to His sacred humanity.

Mary went with joy to bear Christ's message to the disciples.

Have we no message to carry to those who do not know about Jesus?

Let us never miss the opportunity of doing good to others, as occasion serves, knowing that whoever turns one soul to God, is sure of reward; and that we are mercifully permitted to advance, or increase, God's glory, by our poor and humble efforts.

As the holy women were on their way to Jerusalem, Jesus met them, and said to them, 'All hail!'

They held Him by the Feet, and worshipped Him.

Jesus told them not to be afraid, but to hasten and tell His brethren that they were to go into Galilee, for there they should see Him (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10).

On the evening of this Sunday, two of the disciples, who had waited about

Jerusalem all day, hoping to get some tidings of their Master, set out to go to their home at Emmaus.

No doubt they had heard the different tales that had reached the upper room, where the disciples were assembled, and had wondered why He Who had appeared to the women, had not come to them as well.

Emmaus, which means a place of hot springs, lies about seven miles and a half to the north-west of Jerusalem.

It is now surrounded by ruins, and is believed to have been much larger than it was at the time of Christ.

We know the name of only one of the two who went to Emmaus.

Cleopas, supposed to be Cleophas, or Alphæus, the father of James and Joses, his wife and his sons, were all disciples of

Jesus Christ ; but when Cleopas saw our Lord die upon the Cross, he lost all hope of seeing the kingdom of God set up by Him upon earth.

The story of the journey to Emmaus is one of very great beauty and interest.

As the two disciples walked along the road,—and it may have been, though of course we do not know, just as they were turning to the right from the high road to Rama,—they were joined in their walk by a stranger.

They were deep in conversation about all that had happened, and their eyes were holden by some supernatural power or miracle that they should not know Jesus.

Jesus saw that they were sad, and He asked them what they were talking

about, although of course He knew quite well.

Cleopas said to our Lord, 'Art thou so much a stranger in Jerusalem that thou dost not know what things have happened there?'

It was the same spirit of intense, deep interest in what had come to pass which Saint Mary Magdalene showed in her question to the gardener.

Their love took it for granted that every one must know, and be as deeply interested in, these matters as they themselves were.

Our Lord said to them, as if He Who knew all, knew nothing, 'What things?'

Then the disciples told Him the story of the Crucifixion, and all that had passed since, adding, 'To-day is the third day since these things were done.'

Then Jesus taught them out of the Scriptures the things concerning Himself, beginning at Moses and the prophets, —scriptures which were doubtless well known to them, but which now had a marvellous, new light cast upon them, as Jesus showed them how Prophet and Psalm spoke of Him, and how types and law and figures all foretold Him.

They drew nigh unto the village whither they went; having probably travelled a good league over rocks and flint stones, to the end of the valley of terebinthine trees.

This tree, *Pistacia terebinthus*, is really the turpentine tree. It is very common in the south and east of Palestine, in places too warm or dry for the oak.

The tree bears small clustering blossoms, and red berries.

On a terebinth, still shown, Judas the traitor is said to have hanged himself.

When they got quite close to Emmaus, Jesus walked on, as if to go farther.

Then the disciples begged Him not to do so. They said, 'Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.'

So, too, we often sing to Jesus :

'Abide with me, fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens, Lord, with me
abide.'

And Jesus went in and stayed with them.

You see Jesus was trying their faith and love.

He wished to see if they would easily let Him go. No; they constrained Him to stay, that is, they pressed Him very earnestly to abide with them, that they

might still hold sweet converse with Him about the wonderful things that had happened.

They were hungry, after their weary day of excitement and their long evening walk; and while this Stranger sat at meat with them, He took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them.

Then, in a moment, the veil was removed from their eyes: they knew Who the Stranger was Who had talked with them.

It was their Risen Master.

Then Jesus vanished out of their sight.

Many suppose that this was a celebration of the Holy Eucharist, for the words used about it are just those which are used by the Evangelists in their descriptions of the institution of the Holy Sacrament.

But whether this be so or not, we know how, through God's unspeakable gift, we are allowed to know Him in the breaking of Bread, as we can in no other manner.

How sorry the two disciples must have been when Jesus disappeared from their gaze!

But Jesus was proving to them, by this very act, the completeness, the reality, and the power of His Resurrection.

The Body in which our Lord arose from the dead, was not governed by the laws which regulate the natural body. His was a spiritual Body: He had power to appear and disappear, to pass out invisibly, to come and go as He chose.

The disciples said, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us

by the way, and while He explained to us the Scriptures?'

At once they set off to return to Jerusalem. There they found the Apostles gathered together, with some other persons, followers of Jesus, who had been admitted into their company (Luke xxiv. 13-33).

Saint Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 5), tells us that our Lord was seen of Cephas, that is, Saint Peter.

Perhaps this special appearance to Saint Peter, before our Lord revealed Himself to the rest, was meant to show the riches of the Divine Love, which forgave Peter for his denial, which I am sure you will remember I have told you about.

The two disciples, when they got back

to Jerusalem, saluted the Apostles and those assembled, with the words, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon.'

Oh, how full of joy they were!

And, ever since, the Church has been sending forth this joyous salutation, 'Christ is risen, Alleluia; the Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia.'

'A Happy Easter,' means that we wish all to be happy with the joy of the Risen Life.

While the two disciples who had returned to Jerusalem from Emmaus, were giving their brethren this joyous news, in that upper room, the doors being shut, lest the Jews should steal in, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace be unto you!'

The closed doors, you see, could not

keep Jesus out : it is only when we bolt and bar the door of our hearts, that Jesus cannot come in.

The word which Jesus first speaks to the disciples is 'Peace!'

The black storm of the Passion is over ; the wild shrieking winds of hatred and rage are hushed ; the darkness of the tomb is passed ; the forsaking of even His own disciples is looked over.

There is a great calm.

It is once more as when Jesus in other days stood by the angry waves, lashed to fury by the boisterous winds, and He says, 'Peace, be still!'

And immediately there is a great calm.

Why did He come, giving this message of Peace ?

Partly, we may be sure, because Jesus

knew their anxieties and fears; and partly because He knew, too, that they would be frightened by the manner of His appearing.

The disciples were indeed terrified, and when Jesus stood before them, they thought that He was a spirit, or an apparition like Him.

Jesus asked them why they were troubled, and to convince them that He was, indeed, their Lord and Master, He showed to them His most sacred Wounds.

‘Behold My Hands and My Feet, that it is I myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have.’

When they saw the precious marks of the Passion, they could scarcely believe, for very joy.

They were full of astonishment.

Jesus, still further to assure them that, although risen in a spiritual Body, He was the same Jesus and no spirit, or phantom, asked for something to eat.

They gave our Lord a piece of a broiled fish and some honey-comb; which some think to have been a kind of cake used in the East, made of butter and honey (Luke xxiv. 36-43).

We are taught by this that eating might consist with, though it were not required by, the supernatural Resurrection Body which Jesus had assumed or put on.

Those cruel nail-prints in our Saviour's hands and feet, must have confirmed the faith of the Apostles, as nothing else, perhaps, could.

‘ Those dear tokens of His Passion
Still His dazzling Body bears,

Cause of endless exultation

To His ransomed worshippers.'

Jesus in His Risen and Ascended Body pleads before the Throne those same Wounds.

He is the Lamb as it had been slain.

And when He shall come again to judge the world, 'every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.'

Jesus said to them the second time, 'Peace be unto you.'

And then He went on, 'As My Father hath sent Me, so send I you.'

By these words, our Blessed Lord confirmed, or made sure, to the Apostles, their commission, sending them forth as His ambassadors, or representatives, in the same way in which His Father had sent Him.

They, and their successors, that is, those whom they should appoint to follow them, were to be His ministers, and were to carry on His work in that society, His Church, which He came to found.

After this, Jesus breathed on them, and said unto them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained' (John xx. 19-23).

How can we prove that this power is a living one at the present time?

Christ gave this commission to His Apostles: none will deny this; but is it exercised *now*, in the Church, by those whom Saint Paul calls Ambassadors, Stewards of the Mysteries of Christ, and to whom has been given the Ministry of Reconciliation?

There is but one answer to this question. Jesus Christ said, 'As the Father hath sent Me, *even so* send I you. Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'

God the Father committed, or gave, all power unto God the Son: Jesus Christ, our Lord, gives His Apostles supernatural power, *as* the Father gave it Him, and He will be with the Apostles unto the end of the world; that is, inasmuch as His Apostles could not live for ever in this world, to their successors to the ending of the days.

The mission, gifts, powers, and extension of the Sacred Ministry were sealed, settled, formulated in the upper room, by the Risen Lord.

First came the Sacred Ministry; one blessed form of the extension of the

Incarnation; from this Ministry came, in due time, as we shall see, the Church.

The Ministry did not spring from, or arise out of, the Church: the Church was evolved, that is unfolded, from the Ministry.

Afterwards, Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they sat at meat, and spoke sorrowfully to them about their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after His Resurrection.

Then He told them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, telling them, too, of many signs, or marks, by which those who should believe on Him might be known (Mark xvi. 14, 18).

One of the Apostles was not in the

upper room on the evening of Easter day.

Who was he?

Saint Thomas, called Didymus, we are told, was not with them when Jesus came (John xx. 24).

Didymus means a twin.

Saint Thomas was of a very doubting mind. He had, most likely, given up all hope of seeing Jesus again.

He evidently thought that what the other Apostles had seen was not the Body of Jesus, which had been crucified and was risen again, but an apparition or spirit; for when they told him, 'We have seen the Lord,' Thomas said to them, 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe' (John xx. 25).

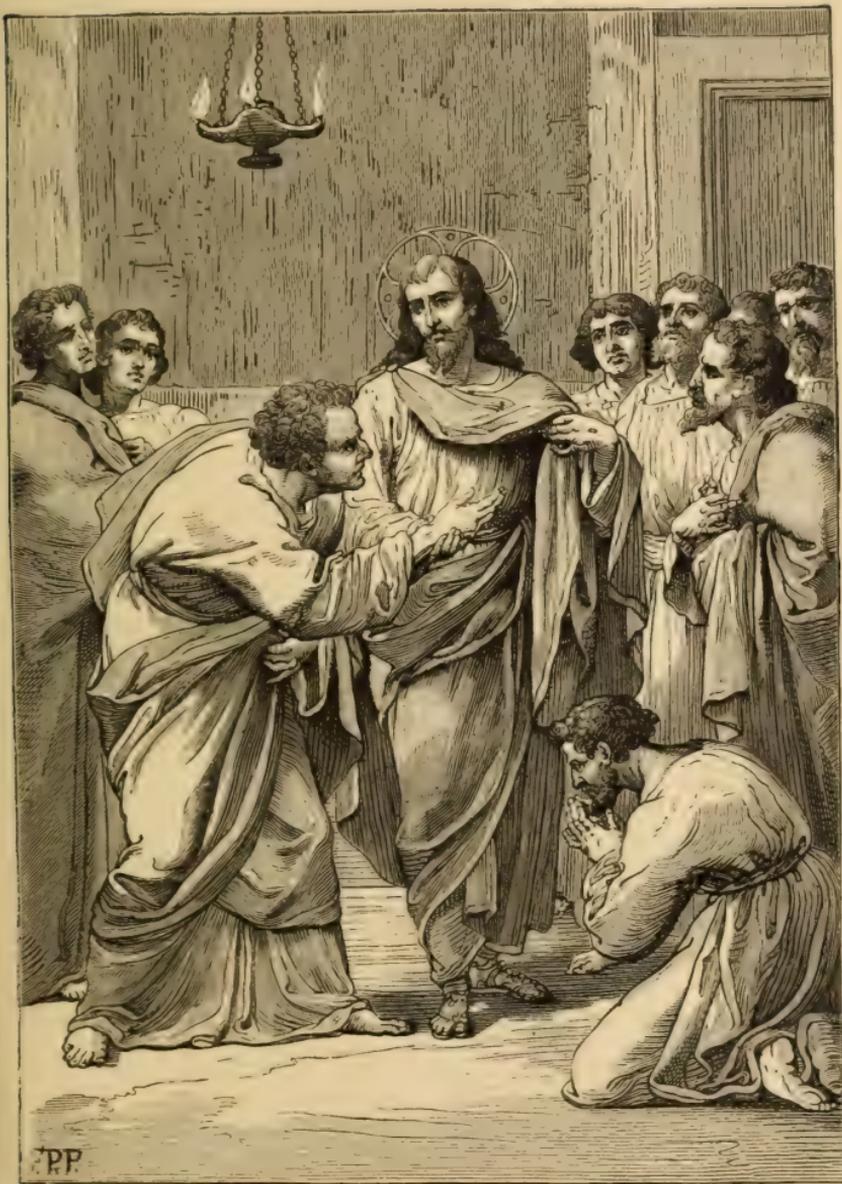
This is called the Incredulity of Saint Thomas.

On the evening of Low Sunday, so called because it is the octave or eighth day of Easter, and is only less great than that Queen of Feasts, inasmuch as it is not the very day itself, the disciples were again assembled together, and this time Saint Thomas was with them.

Then, the doors being shut as before, Jesus came, either passing through them, or opening them by His almighty power.

He used the same gracious words again, 'Peace be with you.'

Then, at once, Jesus said to Saint Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side, and be not faithless but believing.'



“ Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side ; and be not faithless,
but believing.”

Jesus knew all about Saint Thomas' doubts and want of faith, and He at once employed the very means of making His disciple sure that He was Christ, that Thomas would himself have chosen.

None of the Apostles fully believed, at this time, that Jesus was True God as well as Man.

Saint Thomas, whether he felt the nail and spear-wounds or not, immediately cried out, in loving belief and faith, 'My Lord and my God!' (John xx. 26, 28).

Saint Thomas adored Jesus Christ as Emmanuel, God in human nature, God manifest in the Flesh, and thus entitled to receive love, trust, obedience, and worship.

As Saint Thomas had doubted more than all the rest, he now seemed to be

the first and the strongest in his belief in Jesus as his Lord and his God.

Then our Saviour gave Saint Thomas a loving, gentle rebuke.

‘Thomas, because thou hast seen Me,’ He said to him, ‘thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed’ (John xx. 29).

‘Not seeing, yet believing;’ these, Jesus tells us, are truly blessed; those trusting, loving souls, who let the Hand of God guide them through darkness and fear, seeing nothing, but believing all things, because God hath spoken.

Dear children, your holy Religion makes great demands upon your faith; it asks you, that is, to believe much that you do not, and never can, understand.

Say often, ‘Lord, I believe whatever is revealed to me in Thy Holy Word,

and by the teaching of Thy Holy Church. Help me to believe more firmly, and to be true to my Faith, even unto the end.'

CHRIST NEAR US.

As we go about in our daily work,
Or enjoy ourselves in our play,
Do we think of One Who is ever near,
Who sees us and hears what we say?
Perhaps we are walking along the road,
And a poor man begs by our side;
Do we know Who it is who asks our alms,
And Who ought not to be denied?
Or, perchance, we stand by the open
grave
Where Sorrow sheds bitterest tears;

Then a Stranger comes, and stands in
our midst,

To soothe us and banish our fears.

Oh, look for our Lord in the daily round
Of duty or pleasure or care :

No work shall be hard, and all toil shall
be sweet,

Which the Lord of our life will share.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXVIII.

1. What do we call the time between
our Lord's Resurrection and the Ascen-
sion ?

2. To whom did our Lord first appear ?

3. Where was it ?

4. Whom did Mary suppose Jesus to be?

5. How did Mary know Jesus?

6. What do the words, 'Touch Me not,' mean?

7. To whom did our Lord next show Himself?

8. Tell me about the journey to Emmaus.

9. How was Jesus made known to the two disciples?

10. What sort of Body had Jesus after His Resurrection?

11. Who next saw our Lord?

12. Tell me about what happened on Easter Sunday night.

13. What did Jesus say and do?

14. Does Jesus still show the marks of His Five Sacred Wounds?

15. Tell me why Christ's Priests exercise their Ministry.

16. When did Jesus next appear?
17. Which of the Apostles was absent?
18. What occurred on Low Sunday evening?
19. Describe Saint Thomas' incredulity and confession.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Great Forty Days.

THE APPEARANCES OF CHRIST.

The Appearances of our Lord after His Resurrection—
At the Sea of Tiberias—To Saint Peter—To the
Eleven in Galilee—To the Five Hundred Brethren
—To Saint James—To Saint Paul.

WE must now pass to the shores of the
Sea of Tiberias.

This lake is sometimes called the Sea
of Galilee, the Lake of Gennesaret, and
the Sea of Cinneroth.

Cinneroth is a city of Naphtali; south
of it lay a great plain which reached to
the Dead Sea, along the river Jordan.

Some think that Cinneroth is the

same as Tiberias, for as the Lake of Gennesaret—in Hebrew, Cinneroth—is, without doubt, the Lake of Tiberias, it seems likely that Cinneroth and Tiberias should also be the same city.

This sea, or lake, is a very beautiful one.

It is almost as grand as the celebrated Lake of Geneva in Switzerland.

It is longer and finer than any of our Cumberland and Westmoreland lakes, although it is, perhaps, not quite so magnificent as Loch Lomond in Scotland.

The celebrated Lake of Lugano in Italy is most like it in picturesque scenery; but the Sea of Tiberias has not any of those beautiful islands which dot Loch Lomond and the Italian lake.

This sea, or lake, is not so large as the Lake Asphaltites, nor are the mountains

which rise from its shore so grand as those which hem in the Dead Sea, for this is its other name.

But its broad and large surface, covering the bed of a deep valley, and surrounded by lofty and very steep rocks, make it an object of exceeding beauty and interest.

The sea is about sixteen miles long and about six broad.

Hills, as I said, rise all round it, except at each end, where the Jordan enters, and flows out of it.

Thus sheltered, the lake scarcely ever knows long-continued and terrible tempests; in this respect it is like the Dead Sea.

On this very account, however, it is often visited by whirlwinds, sudden gusts, and squalls; and the most furious

gusts are followed by perfect calm, in a very short time. But the great calm was miraculous.

You will remember, I daresay, about the storm on this lake, which you can read of in the fourteenth chapter of Saint Matthew's Gospel, and how suddenly it was stilled.

The Jordan runs right through the middle of the lake, in a strong current, down to the Dead Sea, where it empties itself.

After the appearance of our Lord to Saint Thomas, and the showing of many wonders to the disciples, which, Saint John tells us, are not written in his Gospel, the Apostles went back to their homes on the shores of this lake which I have been describing to you.

There were gathered together Simon

Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others,—most likely Saint Andrew and Saint Philip, who came from Bethsaida.

Bethsaida means ‘house of fishing.’

It lay on the north-eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, where the Jordan flows out, in its long course to the Dead Sea.

Jesus very often went to this town, but the people did not receive the good tidings He preached to them. Unbelief stopped His mighty works, so that our Lord said, ‘Woe unto thee, Bethsaida, for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable (better) for

Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you' (Luke x. 13, 14).

How very careful we should be, who live in a Christian land, with the sound of the sweet church bells ringing all around us, and the message of Jesus' love brought to our very doors, not to neglect so great salvation.

Of those who have much given to them, much will be required.

Simon Peter said to the other Apostles, 'I go a-fishing.'

The rest said, 'We also will go with thee.'

Then they got into a fishing-boat, and let down their nets.

At last, night came on, perhaps lighted by the Paschal moon which cast its silver rays over the lovely lake; or, perhaps, they carried with them lanterns, as

many fishermen do on our own coasts now.

But all the night they toiled in vain, for they caught nothing.

With the morning light, tired and disappointed, they set the head of the boat to shore.

Night was the best time for fishing; and once before, when they had been toiling all night long, and had taken nothing, Jesus, when He had finished speaking to the people out of the boat on this very same lake, said to Simon, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.'

They did so, and took such a quantity of fish that their net brake.

I wonder if the Apostles thought of this, as they were going back with empty nets to land now.

As soon as it was light enough to see the shore, the disciples saw some one standing on the edge of the lake.

It was Jesus, but they did not know Him; for His Sacred Body, as we have seen, was changed after His Resurrection.

Jesus said to them, 'Children, have ye any meat?'

They answered Him, 'No.'

Jesus said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find some fish.'

No doubt they had flung the net on the right side of the ship many times that night before, and without success; but at the word of this Stranger they did so again; and 'now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.'

Then 'that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord.'

Saint John is the first to know Jesus Christ. His faith was very bright and deep ; its root was Love.

When Peter heard that it was the Risen Lord Who had come to them, he forgot all about the net and the fishes.

He thought only of His dear Master's kind forgiveness of his unworthy denial of Him.

Saint Peter and his companions had probably been stripped of the greatest part of their clothes, that they might the better follow their craft.

He now flung his fisher's coat around him, sprang over the side of the ship into the sea, for they were not much more than a hundred yards from the shore, and swam to land.

Perhaps Saint Peter, with that warmth of soul, that passionate feeling, which so

very strongly marked his character, felt quite unable to stay on board a moment longer.

He must swim ashore to greet His dear Lord and Master, Who had so suddenly come to see them, after His Rising from the dead, and to crown their labours with success.

How many times did Jesus make Himself known in works of mercy and kindness!

His was surely and continually a revelation of Divine Love.

The other disciples came to land in the little ship, dragging the net with fishes (John xxi. 1-14).

We may learn a lesson here.

Saint Peter was enthusiastic, that is, very much in earnest,—he went to Jesus at once; the rest of the Apostles, glad as they were to see Jesus, went quietly on

with their work, looking after the boat, the nets, and the fish. They were what we should call practical,—that is, they carried out what they were doing.

If they had all jumped into the sea, like Simon Peter, the nets, the fishing-tackle, and probably the boat itself, might have been lost.

Try, dear children, to combine, or join together, these two frames of mind.

It is quite right to be enthusiastic: Nothing is ever done in the world, or the Church, without enthusiasm, or earnestness of heart and purpose.

But temper your enthusiasm with devotion to duty.

To be in earnest about God and religion, does not mean that you are to give up the duties of that 'state of life to which it has pleased God to call you.'

It means that you are to do all things as in God's sight, and to His glory.

Never believe in a religion which is all shouting. You belong to an army which has to work out its own salvation with fear and trembling, in penitence, holy fear, and prayer.

You may be quite sure that, in due time, when and as God sees fit to give it you, holy joy will be yours too.

As soon as the disciples had got to land, they found a fire of coals burning on the shore, and fish laid thereon and bread.

Jesus told them to bring some of the fish which they had caught.

Then Saint Peter ran down to the water's edge, and drew the net to land.

It was full of great fishes; a hundred

and fifty-three large fish were in the net, and yet the net was not broken.

Jesus had treated the disciples with great generosity. He had given them a good haul of fish; there were no little ones; and, to show us how kind and considerate Jesus is in little matters, when He wishes to do us good, observe that the Bible tells us that, although the net was so full of big fishes, yet it was not broken.

Jesus, without doubt, kept the net whole, and made it strong to enclose, or keep in, such a weight of fish, without straining or breaking it; and this, as many persons think, because it was a borrowed one, and our Lord was thoughtful and anxious that the net should be returned to its owner, sound and in good condition.

Elisha and the sons of the prophets once went to Jordan, for the young men wished to enlarge their houses ; and when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.

Now, as one of them was felling, or cutting down, a piece of timber to make a beam with, the axe-head fell into the water.

The young prophet was very vexed, and he cried out to Elisha, ‘ Alas ! master, for it was borrowed.’

Elisha asked him where it fell, and he showed him the place.

Then Elisha cut down a stick, and threw it into the water where the axe fell in, and the axe came to the top of the water and floated on it.

This was a miracle, or wonderful work, wrought by the prophet ; for we know

that it is against the law of nature that iron should swim.

Then Elisha told the young man to take the axe out of the water, and he put out his hand and did so (2 Kings vi. 5).

Be very careful to return what you borrow. You see how troubled the young man was about the axe which his friend had lent him, and how mindful our Lord was of the net.

After Simon Peter had brought the fish to land in the net, Jesus said to them, 'Come and dine.' In our Lord's time two meals were generally partaken of. The first was called dinner, the second supper (John xxi. 12).

None of them dared to question Him now, as to Whom He was, for they all knew that it was the Lord.

Jesus took bread and gave some to them, and some fish as well.

Our Blessed Lord, although so full of sweet humility and lowliness, always took the position of the Master of the Feast. It was He Who gave them what was prepared.

Let us remember, every time we sit down to a meal, that it is God's good hand which feeds us; and so let us always ask God's blessing upon our food before we eat, and give thanks to Him when we have done.

It is terribly ungrateful of Christians not to do this.

If people always asked God's blessing upon their meat and drink, and partook of both in the spirit of thanksgiving, there would be little fear of their either eating or drinking more than is good for them.

The large catch of fish was very likely of great use to the Apostles, for they would be able to sell it well, and so get some money, which they would need on their return to Jerusalem before the day of Pentecost.

This appearance, although it is, so far as we know, the seventh since Jesus rose from the dead, is the third which was given to many of His disciples at one time.

The other occasions, as you know, were two separate ones, when He came to them,—on the evening of Easter day, and the evening of Low Sunday, or the Octave of Easter.

After they had finished their meal, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?’

What did Jesus mean by these words, 'more than these'?

Did Jesus mean to ask Peter if his gains as a fisherman, his love of his employment, which certainly, if hard at times, was yet interesting, were more to him than his love for his Master?

Notice that Jesus did not say, 'Peter, lovest thou Me more than these?' but, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?' thus calling Peter by his old name, as if he had lost his claim to the title of Rock, by his feeble, weak, and thrice-repeated denial of His Lord.

Saint Peter's answer seems to prove that what I have supposed, was not what was meant by Jesus Christ.

He said to our Lord, 'Yes, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee.'

Before his denial of Jesus, Peter had as

good as said that he loved his Lord more than any of the other disciples did, for you will remember how he boasted that though all men were offended, yet he would never be offended.

It seems, then, that Jesus was trying the faith of His Apostle.

‘Dost thou now love Me, even since thou didst once deny Me; dost thou *now* love Me more than the rest of My disciples?’

Simon Peter did not say, ‘I love Thee more than all;’ there was humility in his answer, ‘Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee.’

Then Jesus confirmed Saint Peter’s Apostolic Office and Ministry to him. He said, ‘Feed My lambs.’

Jesus asked Peter the second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?’

Not this time 'more than these?' but,
'Lovest thou Me?'

Saint Peter's answer was the same,
'Yes, Lord; Thou knowest that I love
Thee.'

Then Jesus said unto him, 'Feed My sheep.' Jesus before told him to feed His lambs; that was, Saint Peter was to be tender and gentle with all, considering his own grievous fall; just as the shepherd takes the greatest care of the sickly and weak lambs, and of those who, having strayed away amongst thorns and brambles, he brings back on his shoulders with gentle tenderness and joy.

Now it is, 'Feed,' or rather 'Tend, My sheep:' the sheep of the fold were to be tended and fed and cared for, to be strengthened and comforted.

Jesus said to Peter the third time,

‘Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?’

Yes, the third time; for three times Peter had denied his Master, and three times the Master sought His servant’s loving answer.

Peter was grieved because Jesus said to him the third time, ‘Lovest thou Me?’

In his fulness of heart, Saint Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee.’

Jesus accepted His Apostle’s words of love and faith. He said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’

This is called the charge to Saint Peter.

Then Jesus went on to tell Peter that, when he was young, he girded himself, and went where he chose; but that when he should be old, he would stretch forth his hands, and another should gird

him and carry him whither he would not wish to go.

This Jesus spake, meaning by what death Saint Peter should die.

Then our Lord said to Peter, 'Follow Me.'

Saint Peter did not hesitate now, but followed his dear Master at once.

The disciple whom Jesus loved, who leaned on His breast at supper, and who asked who was the traitor, followed them.

Saint Peter, turning round and seeing Saint John, asked Jesus, 'Lord, and what shall this man do? Is he to die a martyr's death as well?'

Jesus answered Saint Peter, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me' (John xxi. 15, 23).

The disciples thought from these words

that Saint John would not die; but Jesus did not say so.

Saint John lived long after the destruction of Jerusalem, long after all the other Apostles, and most likely died of extreme old age, wearing to the very last the beautiful crown of love which was to be exchanged only for the crown of victory.

Tradition tells us that Saint Peter suffered martyrdom at Rome in the reign of Nero. He was carried, at least so far as the flesh was concerned, whither he would not. He was crucified with his head downwards, because he did not wish to suffer in the same way as his Master, for he did not think himself worthy to do so.

The eleven disciples were on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 16-20).

Jesus appeared to them.

When the disciples saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some doubted, or hesitated.

Soon, however, the cloud of doubt passed away, for Jesus spake to them, saying, 'All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach, or make disciples of, 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: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.'

Jesus Christ asserted His Almighty power, both in Heaven and earth, and, as a consequence, gave His Apostles their commission to go forth bearing His salvation unto all nations. They were to

teach, baptize, make disciples ; and this, in the Name of the Blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and to aid and confirm them in this holy work of their Ministry, Jesus Christ promised to be with them ‘all the days,’ even unto the end of the world.

After this (most likely, but some think these two last appearances to be the same), our Lord was seen, either in Galilee or Bethany, by about five hundred brethren at once, most of whom, Saint Paul tells us, remained when he wrote, that is, in the year of our Lord fifty-seven, but some had fallen asleep (1 Cor. xv. 6).

Then He was seen by Saint James (1 Cor. xv. 7).

Lastly, our Blessed Lord appeared, probably at Damascus, to Saint Paul

(1 Cor. xv. 8), that holy saint who so gloriously teaches the Resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of our bodies in his Epistles to the Corinthians, and more particularly in the glorious fifteenth chapter of his First Epistle to them, made familiar to us by its being the lesson in the Office for the Burial of the Dead.

Dear children, although we do not see Jesus with our bodily eyes, He is ever near us.

He is near us in the means of grace; near us in His own beautiful world; near us in the mysterious workings of His Divine Providence.

When we assemble in His sacred Name, He is in our midst; when we toil all night and take nothing, He stands on the shore, at morning, ready to bless us; when we are faint-hearted and out of

spirits and weary, He comes to strengthen us with new powers and fresh graces; even when we know Him not, He comes to us and reveals Himself to us, that we may rejoice in the light of His countenance.

1. Always behave as in God's sight:
'Thou God seest me.'

2. Never give up. Although things may be very hard and very gloomy; though the night be long and dark, Jesus will appear in the morning, standing on the shore, to bless and help us, if only we are true to Him.

'LOVEST THOU ME?'

'Do you love Me more than all beside,
Ye who are called by My Name?'

Whatever come, whate'er betide,
Will your love be still the same ?

' Do you love Me, ye who have denied
In the darksome hour of fear ?
Is your love the love of penitence,
That is rich in sigh and tear ?

' Do you love Me, son, with all your
heart,
As I have loved you ;
With a love that burns away your sin,
And is pure as it is true ? '

Oh, answer, heart that is pained and
grieved
At the thought of fault and sin,
' Thou knowest all, Thou knowest *me* ;
Let my love Thy pardon win.'

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXIX.

1. Where was the next appearance of our Lord?

2. Tell me as much as you know about the Lake of Tiberias.

3. Were many Apostles gathered together on the sea-shore?

4. What does 'Bethsaida' mean?

5. What did our Lord once say about it?

6. What happened to the Apostles the night they went out fishing?

7. Who stood upon the shore in the morning?

8. What did Simon Peter do?

9. What did the rest do?

10. What lessons are we to learn from all this?

11. Tell me about the axe-head falling into the water, and the lesson of the story.

12. How many times had Jesus shown Himself to the disciples now?

13. Why did our Lord ask Saint Peter three times if he loved Him?

14. What did Jesus mean by telling Peter to feed His lambs and His sheep?

15. Tell me what you know about Saint John's death.

16. What death did Saint Peter die?

17. What was the next appearance of Christ, and where did it happen?

18. What commission, or instruction, did our Lord then give His Apostles?

19. Did our Lord appear to five hundred brethren at once, and where?

20. Was He seen by Saint James?

21. And by whom at Damascus?

CHAPTER XXX.

The Ascension.

CHRIST OUR MEDIATOR AND ADVOCATE.

Clouds—Type and Antitype—Types of the Ascension—
Christ goes up into Heaven—Priest, Mediator, and
Advocate.

I WONDER if you have ever thought
much about the clouds.

How beautiful they are!

There are the clouds that deck the
morning sky, as the sun, rising, tips them
with delicate tints of gold and crimson.

Then there are the gorgeous clouds at
sunset: great billows of colour, rosy-red,
olive-tinted, emerald-green, and golden,
as if they were of molten fire.

And have you never wondered at the storm-clouds as they come rolling up over the mountain-side or across the swelling sea?

How grand they are, how stately, how fantastic in shape, like towers or palaces, or castles in the air!

And then, again, there is the thunder-cloud; sometimes lighted with a fiery glow; sometimes black as indigo; and sometimes set off by the bow that God puts in it: the rainbow arch, which tells us of mercy in the midst of judgment.

And, not to name any others, I am sure you must have sometimes looked up to the clouds at night, as, chased by a furious wind, they drive along the heavens, now catching the moon's silver beams, now hiding the lovely orb of night and the

twinkling stars, and yet once again, as they roll away, revealing a clear sky, lighted up by the countless host of the firmament.

And have you ever noticed how much Holy Scripture tells us about clouds?

When the Israelites went out of Egypt, God gave them a pillar of cloud, to lead them on their way. At night, this cloud was a pillar of fire to give them light.

When Moses went up into Mount Sinai, a cloud covered it for six days, and on the seventh day God called to Moses out of the cloud.

‘The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journey’ (Ex. xl. 38).

And when the prophet Nahum de-

scribes the glory and power of Almighty God, he says, 'The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet' (Nah. i. 3).

Again, when the people ask rain of the Lord, Zechariah tells us that 'the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain' (Zech. x. 1).

You will, of course, remember about the bright cloud into which Jesus and the chosen three entered on the Mount of Transfiguration; and this same Jesus, the Son of Man, shall be seen at the last dread day, coming in a cloud: 'Behold He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him;' 'They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power' (Matt. xxiv. 30).

And, once again, in the wonderful

vision given to Saint John the Divine, he 'looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle' (Rev. xiv. 14).

Now I have told you all this about the clouds, because our story has reached that great day when Jesus was taken up into Heaven, and a cloud received Him out of the Apostles' sight.

This is called Ascension day.

It is the fortieth day after Easter, the last of those Great Forty Days of which I have been telling you in the previous chapters.

There are many types, or figures, of the Ascension in Holy Scripture.

Let me explain to you about type and antitype.

The type is the figure, the antitype is the person or fact pointed out in the type or figure.

Thus Isaac, the beloved son of Abraham, who was bound, ready to be sacrificed on the altar of wood, is a type of Christ, Who was the Victim sacrificed for us upon the altar of the Cross. Isaac was the type; Jesus the antitype. Again, the Paschal lamb is the type of Him Who is the Lamb of God, the antitype (Gen. xxii. 1-14).

Once more. The Jewish Passover is a type of the Holy Eucharist. The Passover is the type; the Holy Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood is the antitype.

Enoch is a type of the Ascension. 'He walked with God,' we are told, 'and he was not; for God took him' (Gen. v. 24).

Aaron is another type. He entered within the veil on the day of Atonement, which was on the 10th of Tizri, our September. It was called Kippur, which means pardon or expiation, because the faults and sins of the year were then made atonement for.

So Jesus entered for us 'within the veil,' there to carry on His work of expiation, or atonement, for the sins of the whole world.

Moses is another type.

Moses, on the hill-top, watched the battle between Israel and Amalek; and when the prophet lifted up his hand, Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

Moses got very tired, so they took a stone for him to sit upon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on

the one side, and the other on the other side ; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun (Ex. xvii. 9-12).

So Jesus, when He went up on high, lifted up His hands to bless the world, and as a sign to it, for ever, of victory and triumph, in His strength.

But our Lord never grows weary like Moses, and does not need any to uphold His sacred and wounded Hands upon the Heavenly Mount.

As long as the war between his Church and the powers of darkness lasts, so long will His hands be lifted up to give His own the victory in the day of battle.

Jesus is the Ascended Conqueror.

Elijah is yet one more type of the Ascension.

Elijah and Elisha were talking to-

gether, and it came to pass, as they still walked on and talked, that behold, a chariot of fire appeared, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder, and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

Elisha saw Elijah no more, but he took up Elijah's mantle or cloak, that had fallen from him.

Jesus is passed into the Heavens, but He has left us the rich and beautiful covering of His grace in His Holy Church. He has clothed us with His perfections.

Now, let us look at the narrative itself; and as we go along, I think you will be able to learn for yourselves some, at least, of the lessons which these types teach you.

Jesus led the Apostles as far as to Bethany (Luke xxiv. 50, 53).

What a solemn walk it must have been, that last walk on earth that Jesus and His Apostles took !

Our Lord led them out ; He was the Good Shepherd, going before them.

And His sheep followed Him out of the city, across the brook Kedron, past the garden of Gethsemane, up the Mount of Olives as far as to Bethany.

Now we seem to see our Great High Priest as He stands upon the Mount.

God told Aaron, the priest, how he was to bless the people. He was to say : 'The Lord bless thee, and keep thee : the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee : the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace' (Num. vi. 24, 25, 26).

This is very much like the Christian

Blessing or Benediction; it is like that in the Holy Communion Office, which, you know, begins, 'The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds;' and concludes with the Blessing proper, given in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

You will observe that the blessing which Aaron was to pronounce, was threefold.

It was as if it were to run thus:

The Lord God the Father bless thee and keep thee: the Lord God the Son make His face, revealed in the flesh, to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee in His gifts bestowed in His Holy Church: the Lord the Holy Ghost lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace, 'Whose blessed unction from above is comfort, light, and fire of love.'

Jesus lifted up His hands, and blessed them : what the words were which He used, we are not told ; and it came to pass that while He blessed them, He was parted from them, as Elijah and Elisha were parted asunder, and He was carried up into Heaven. ‘A cloud received Him out of their sight.’

The Apostles were not overburdened with sorrow, as when they were parted from their Lord and Master after the Crucifixion ; for, no doubt, Jesus had prepared their minds often in His converse with them during the Forty Days.

‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God,’ He had told them.

So now they worshipped Him, and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were very much in the Temple,

where He had so often taught them, praising and blessing God.

Easter day is a great day: it tells of the triumph of Life over Death; but Ascension day is the Coronation day of our King.

You have read, I daresay, of the pageant, or show, there is at a Coronation of a king or queen of England.

But nothing that I could tell you of the glories of Westminster Abbey, or the state ceremonial; the dresses, and music, and public festivities, could at all help you to understand what happened when the King of kings was crowned.

How the Archangels and Angels and all the Heavenly Host must have welcomed back their Monarch to His own home! Falling before the Man of Sorrows, Who was 'despised and rejected

of men,' they adored Him, Who was now to take His place at the right hand of the Father, in glory everlasting.

As Man, He mounted His throne: all power His, in Heaven and earth; His Name above every name; He, Lord God omnipotent.

Then the anthems of the angel-host burst forth in strains of triumphant gladness: 'Alleluia! Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!' (Rev. vii. 10).

Jesus, the God-Man, had entered, for us, within the veil.

The everlasting doors had been lifted up; the eternal gates thrown open, and the King of glory had gone in.

Who is this King of glory?

The Lord, strong and mighty; the

Lord, mighty in battle; the Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory!

Does Jesus, amid all this glory and
triumph, forget us? Did He forget His
disciples?

Oh, no! He thought of the little band
whom He had just left, for He sent two
angels to comfort them, who said, 'Ye
men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up
into Heaven? This same Jesus, which
is taken up from you into Heaven, shall
so come, in like manner, as ye have seen
Him go into Heaven.'

And He ever thinks of us: and His
Presence is ever left to us, according to
His most true promise.

'Alleluia! not as orphans

Are we left in sorrow now,

Alleluia! He is near us,
Faith believes, nor questions how:
Though the cloud from sight received
Him,
When the forty days were o'er,
Shall our hearts forget His promise,
"I am with you evermore!"?

Jesus is for evermore our Great High Priest, our Mediator and Advocate, our Intercessor.

Now, what do these names mean?

I told you so much about the Priesthood of our Lord in the chapter about the Christian Passover, that it will not be needful for me to say much now.

I will try to put into simple language for you, the words of a very wise man who wrote upon this subject.

The Holy Eucharist is the offering up

of Christ Himself. Yet He is not offered up, as though anything could be added to the Sacrifice of the Cross, or as though that Sacrifice required to be offered over again.

The blood-stained Sacrifice which the One Great High Priest for ever pleads before the Father's throne, can neither be added to nor repeated.

The Lamb of God, although He be placed at the Father's right hand, yet in the same flesh which He took of the Virgin, carries out the sacramental work of our propitiation, or reconciliation, as the Apostle says: 'Jesus Christ, Who is dead, yea, rather, Who is risen from the dead, Who is ever at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.'

He Who has been consecrated a Priest

for ever after the order of Melchizedek, chooses this way by which He may carry out His perpetual intercession.

That acceptance which He purchased by the sacrifice of the Cross, He Himself applies.

Earthly ministers are nothing except so far as they do Christ's work, for by our Lord Himself is the precious Victim presented before the Father's throne, and the action and power of their Heavenly Head alone give reality to the actions of His earthly ministers.

‘Thou within the veil hast entered,
Robed in flesh, our Great High Priest :
Thou on earth both Priest and Victim,
In the Eucharistic Feast.’

You will, I am sure, have noticed how

very often the prayers we offer to God our Father in Heaven are addressed through God our Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jesus is our Mediator, because He comes between us and the punishment due to our sins.

We, as it were, put our cause into the hands of our Lord, for He is not entered into the holy places made with hands which are the figures of the True, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

‘If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John ii. 1, 2).

Our Lord presents the prayers we

offer to his Heavenly Father; and that loving and merciful Father forgives us our sins through the merits of Him Who presents them. We are 'accepted in the Beloved.' Members of Christ, part of that mystical Body of which He is the Head, pardon, reconciliation, grace, and strength, come to us through the mediation of our Advocate, Jesus Christ our Lord.

'In every grief that rends the heart,
The Son of Mary has a part.'

Throned in Heaven, the Eternal Son is touched with a feeling for our infirmities.

Do we fall? He lifts us up. Do we faint? He refreshes us. Do we sorrow for sin? He consoles us. Do we make

good resolutions? He strengthens us.

And more than all this, He has gone to prepare a place for us.

He has told us that in His Father's house, that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, are many mansions.

Oh! how He longs that we should fill some of them. He has prepared them for us. Say, shall we refuse such generous, such unbounded love?

How can we prepare ourselves now for this blessed place where our Ascended King offers Himself, pleads, intercedes for us?

(1) First, dear children, there must be a right disposition of heart, that is, we must set our wills the right way.

Our hearts must surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found.

As I told you, when speaking about Heaven, while living on earth we must send on our hearts to Heaven before us, as it were.

In heart and mind we must go up to Heaven, and, there with Jesus, continually dwell. We must have our conversation there; we must try to get used to the society which we shall enjoy there, so that the place will not be quite strange to us, when we reach it through God's great mercy and goodness.

(2) Then we must be very much in earnest with ourselves about our sins.

Sin is so hateful to God, that we cannot hope to be in any way sharing the joy of Heaven, even while we stay

on earth, so long as we are the slaves of sin and evil passions.

Jesus is ever taking away our sin, as we take it to Him in true penitence, that is, as we confess it, forsake it, and try to do better.

(3) Our religion must be a bright and happy one,—one in which thanksgiving plays a strong part.

A poet has taught us that many are found who cry, ‘O Lord, be pitiful,’ but few who say, ‘God be praised.’

Do not let us fall into this mistake.

Especially after our Communions, we should be very careful to make a devout thanksgiving. It is not enough to make a good preparation: we must do the one, and not leave the other undone.

The Psalmist tells us that ‘the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the

tabernacles of the righteous' (Ps. cxviii. 15).

Like the disciples after the Ascension, we must be continually thanking and praising God, both in church and out of it.

Surely Ascension day teaches us to be full of the spirit of holy thanksgiving.

The children of the King must not go about the world with gloomy faces.

Rather, they must have the light of His countenance shining on theirs: continually looking up to Him, they must catch some of the glory which dwells about Him, until, at last, through the merits of His Holy Nativity and Circumcision, His Baptism, Fasting and Temptation, His Cross and Passion, His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and by the coming of that Comforter Whom

He sent, they shall be fitted to enter the blissful mansions prepared for them, where, for ever and ever, they shall join in the new song :

‘ Blessing and honour, and glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever ’ (Rev. v. 13).

THE ASCENSION.

Jesus our Lord is gone to Heaven ;

Then are we left alone ?

No ; for amid the realms of light

A Man is on the Throne :

A Man, yet very God, Who still

For ever intercedes,

And by His Presence day by day

On earth for sinners pleads.

Within the veil our Brother dwells,
To offer up His Blood,
Which once from His torn Bodystreamed,
A sacrificial flood.

Our King, our Priest, is Jesus crowned,
Our Royal Advocate,
Touched with a feeling for our woes
In Heaven's most high estate.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXX.

1. Tell me something you know about clouds in Holy Scripture.
2. When is Ascension day?
3. What is a type and what an anti-type?
4. Who were types of Christ ascending to Heaven?

5. Where did our Lord lead His Apostles on the fortieth day after His Resurrection?

6. How was Aaron told to bless the people?

7. What is the Blessing in the Holy Communion Office?

8. Is the Christian Blessing anything like Aaron's?

9. What did Jesus do upon the Mount?

10. What happened directly after Christ blessed the Apostles?

11. What did the Apostles then do?

12. What do we call Ascension day, and why?

13. Does our Lord sit on His throne as Man?

14. Whom did our Lord send to the

Apostles directly after He went up into Heaven?

15. Does Jesus still think of us, and in what way?

16. How is He our High Priest?

17. How is He our Mediator, Advocate, and Intercessor?

18. How can we best prepare ourselves for going to that place whither our Saviour Christ has gone before?

CHAPTER XXXI.

Whitsuntide.

DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The Upper Room—The Descent of the Holy Ghost—
Pentecost—The Scape-goat—Whitsuntide—Saint
Peter's Sermon.

AFTER the return of the Apostles from Mount Olivet, which is a Sabbath day's journey, that is, about two English miles, from Jerusalem, they were assembled together in an upper room.

Was this upper room the very same in which our Lord instituted the Holy Eucharist, and where He appeared to His disciples, several times, during the Great Forty Days?

Some people say so, but I do not think that it is at all certain.

The Apostles were tarrying at Jerusalem, until they should have power given them from on high, in obedience to the commandment of Jesus Christ.

It is said by some, that the house in which the Apostles met, was that of Mary, the mother of Saint John, on Mount Sion.

But wherever the upper room was, one thing is certain, that 'when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place' (Acts ii. 1).

What makes it seem likely that the house was that belonging to Saint John's mother, is the fact that our Lord gave His mother into Saint John's care, and that the Blessed Virgin was with the Apostles in their gatherings.

In this house, where the upper room was, Peter and James and John, Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the brother of James, met together.

‘These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women,’ and, as we are expressly told, ‘with Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with his brethren’ (Acts i. 14).

These latter are those who did not at first believe in Jesus, but were now His brethren in His holy religion, as we are.

The Apostles, the Blessed Virgin and the holy women, were waiting for a promised gift.

What was it?

‘Suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and

it filled all the house where they were sitting' (Acts ii. 2).

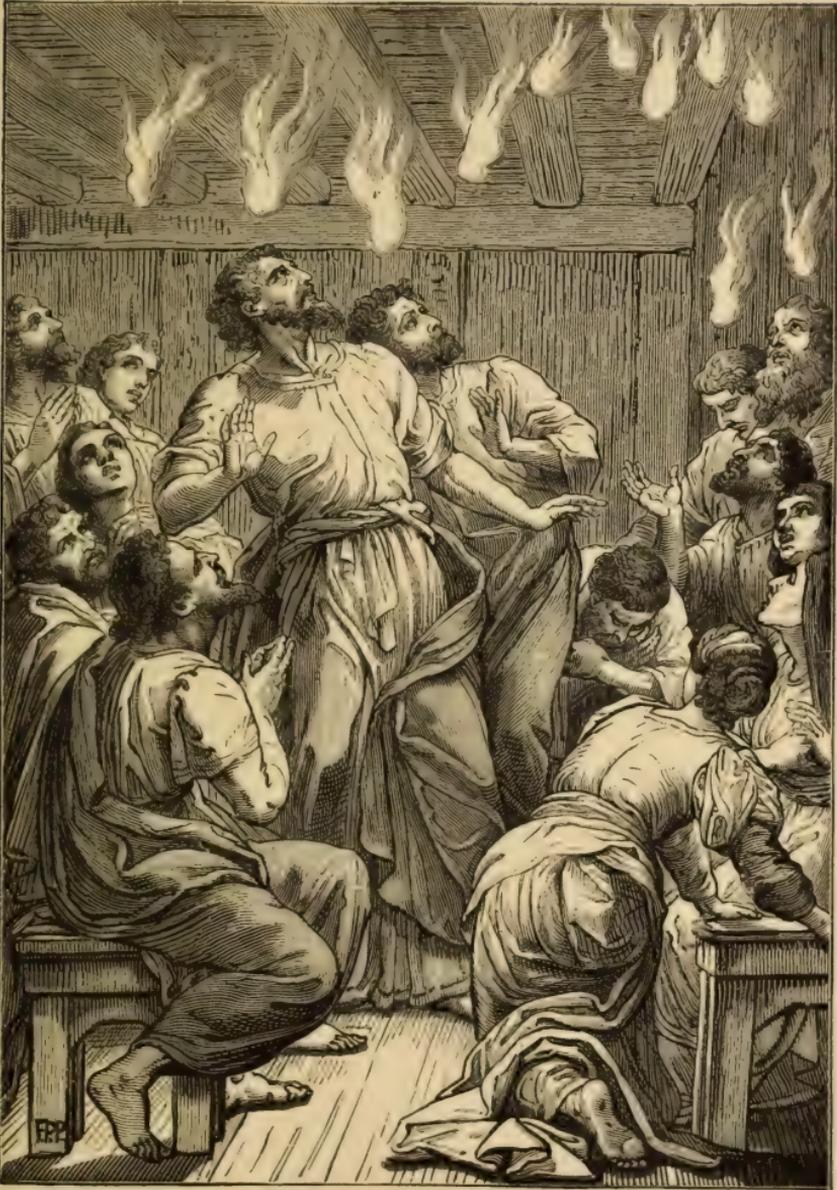
And then there appeared unto them cloven tongues, or flames of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, besides those which they already knew, as this Holy Spirit gave them new powers of utterance, or speech (Acts ii. 4).

How wonderful all this was!

Jesus had told His disciples, that when He was gone away from them, He would not leave them comfortless, but that He would send the Holy Ghost to comfort them (John xiv. 18).

This Holy Ghost, for Whom the disciples had been so patiently and eagerly looking, had come.



“There appeared unto them cloven tongues.”

It was the day of Pentecost, the birthday of the Christian Church.

Pentecost means fiftieth.

The Feast was kept on the fiftieth day after the sixteenth of Nisan, our March, which was the second day of the Passover.

The Hebrews called it the Feast of Weeks, because it was kept seven weeks after the Passover, as I have told you before.

At this Feast they offered the first-fruits of their wheat harvest.

God had said, 'Seven weeks shall you number; begin to number the seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the corn' (Deut. xvi. 9).

God told the people, as well, that they were to keep the Feast of Weeks to Him, by giving Him a tribute of a free-will

offering of their hands, which they were to give to the Lord their God, according as He had blessed them (Deut. xvi. 10).

The first-fruits were two loaves made of fine flour—bread which was unleavened. The loaves were made of three pints of meal each.

The two loaves were offered in the name of the whole Jewish nation, not, it would appear, by the head of each family, as some think.

Besides this offering of the first-fruits, the Jews presented at the Temple seven lambs of that year, one calf, and two rams for a burnt-offering, two lambs for a peace-offering, and a goat for a sin-offering.

Let me tell you a little about the scape-goat here, as I have not done so (Lev. xvi. 21, 22).

On the great day of Expiation, that is,

the day of Atonement, the elders of the people offered two goats for the sins of all Israel.

One of these was to be slain ; the other, driven away into the wilderness.

Which was to be slain, and which sent out to die miserably in the wilderness, was decided by lot.

The goat sent to the desert was the Azazel, or the scape-goat.

The two goats were led into the inner court of the Temple ; they were then presented to the high priest on the north side of the altar of burnt-offerings, one being placed on his right, the other on his left hand.

An urn, or vessel, was then brought and set down between them ; and two lots were cast into it, of wood, and silver or gold.

In the second Temple, the second lot was always of gold.

Upon one lot was engraved, 'For the Lord;' on the other, 'For Azazel.'

After the urn had been shaken about, the high priest put both his hands at once into it, and in each hand drew out a lot.

The lot in his right hand decided what was to be done with the goat on his right hand; the lot in his left, what was to become of the goat on his left hand.

After drawing these lots, the high priest fastened a long, narrow piece of scarlet to the head of Azazel, the scape-goat.

Then the goat, which the lot had fixed for the Lord, was sacrificed; but the scape-goat was brought to the high priest, who then put both his hands on its head,

and confessed his own sins and those of the people.

Then the goat was taken to the wilderness, and left on the brink of a precipice at a great distance from Jerusalem, thus taking away, in figure, the sins of the people of Israel.

Jesus, our Lord, went forth, bearing our reproach, and suffered without the camp.

This is a little digression, that is to say, we have gone rather out of our way: now let us return to the Feast of Pentecost.

We are not told that Pentecost had an Octave, although it was one of the three great festivals of the year, in which all males were to appear before the Lord.

The Feast of Pentecost, or Weeks, was instituted for two purposes.

One was, to oblige the Israelites to go

to the Temple, and there own God's providence over their country and their labours, by offering to Him the first-fruits of their harvests.

The other reason was, that they should always remember, and give thanks to God for, that Law which He gave to them from Mount Sinai, on the fiftieth day after their coming up out of Egypt.

The Church keeps the Feast of Pentecost, or Whitsunday, fifty days, or seven weeks, after the Passover or the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Whitsuntide is a term rather difficult to understand.

Some think Whitsunday is so named because of the light and knowledge then shed upon the Apostles, in order that the world might know the full blaze of Gospel light.

A learned writer says the word may come from the French word *huit*, which means eight; thus Whitsunday would be the Eighth Sunday from Easter.

Another reason given for the name Whitsunday is this.

In old times, Holy Baptism was administered principally at Easter and Whitsuntide; at Easter, in memory of Christ's Death and Resurrection, wherein we die unto sin, and rise again unto newness of life; and at Whitsuntide, some think in memory of the Apostles being then baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and of their having then baptized the first-fruits of the Church, three thousand souls.

After these seasons, the newly-baptized came each day to church in white garments, with lights borne before, or by

them, to show that they had laid aside the works of darkness, and had become the children of light.

Later on, when most of the baptized were infants, the custom was altered, and Holy Baptism was administered at all times of the year.

But however all this may be, it seems right to say Whitsun-day, not Whit Sunday. You know we say Easter day, not Easter Sunday.

In the Prayer-book you will find proper Epistles, Gospels, and Lessons appointed for the Monday and Tuesday in Whitsun week.

It is quite a vulgar error to talk of Whit week. It is Whitsun week.

We may divide the lessons we are to learn from the Feast of Pentecost, into two classes or divisions.

First, there are the outward signs attending upon this great festival; next, there are the inward gifts then bestowed.

Like the Sacraments, you see, this Mystery of Pentecost has two parts,—that which is outward and visible, that which is inward and spiritual.

For ten days, the Apostles had been waiting. Jesus had said, ‘I will pray or ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth: He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you’ (John xiv. 16).

Now this gracious promise had been fulfilled, and the days of Expectation were over.

God the Holy Ghost had come; and as the Jews kept Pentecost in honour of

God's goodness to them at harvest-tide, this coming of the Holy Ghost fore-showed that great harvest of souls which, through the blessed work of the Spirit of God, would be ingathered.

And as the Jews remembered the giving of the Law, did not the coming of the Comforter foretell how He would write the Law of God, not on tables of stone, but on the tables of their hearts?

Yes, indeed; all this would be pre-figured, or pointed out, by this day's Gift.

At this time, there were living at Jerusalem devout and good Jews from all parts of the world.

As soon as what had happened got abroad, a great multitude of these crowded about the room where the Holy Ghost had descended.

They were confounded, that is, they were astonished so much that they hardly knew what they were about, because every man heard the Apostles speak in his own language.

They asked, in astonishment, ' Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear every man speak in our own tongue, wherein we were born, the wonderful works of God? ' (Acts ii. 6-11).

They were Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene.

Besides these, there were the strangers of Rome, that is, the native Jews, who generally lived at Rome, but who then stayed for a while at Jerusalem.

And there were also proselytes, that is, people who had been induced to become Jews, and Cretes and Arabians.

From these different countries and nations, of which I have told you, being represented by their inhabitants at Jerusalem, it is reckoned that seven or eight distinct and separate languages, and many more different dialects, or forms of the same language, must have been spoken by those who had received the miraculous gift of tongues.

Some of these people were Asiatics, some Africans, some Europeans ; foreigners who had come up to Jerusalem to keep the feast ; people of all kinds, classes, and countries.

Those who perfectly understood the words of the disciples, had no doubt at all about the reality of this miraculous gift.

Not so the inhabitants of Judea, who mostly understood no language but their own, and who were more bitterly opposed to our Lord than those who came from a distance.

They were all, however, amazed, as well they might be ; and they asked one of another, what these things meant.

The sound of the rushing mighty wind had reached the outside world, it would seem ; and so this very mixed multitude came together, to see and hear all they could.

The more unbelieving of them—most likely, as I have said, the inhabitants of Judea—mocked the holy Apostles, saying, ‘These men are full of new wine’ (Acts ii. 13). They said they were tipsy.

These people did not understand the Holy Spirit’s influences, any more than

those now living who do not discern them, who do not take the trouble to search out the deep things of God, and who never pray to be enlightened by His grace.

Then Saint Peter stood up, lifted up his voice, and began to preach the first Christian sermon in the streets of Jerusalem.

Saint Peter began at once by replying to this false accusation of the Jews.

‘Ye men of Judea,’ he said, ‘and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem: these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day’ (Acts ii. 14, 15).

These Jews had thought that the disciples had taken too much of the new wine prepared for the Feast.

It was the third hour of the day, nine o'clock in the morning, one of the stated

hours of prayer. On every account the idea of intoxication was as silly as it was wicked.

‘But this,’ went on Saint Peter, ‘is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; and upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days I will pour out my Spirit’ (Joel ii. 28, 29).

Old and young, men and women, are to be baptized with this new and marvellous baptism of the Holy Ghost, this pouring out of the Spirit.

Saint Peter then told them that if they would be saved, they must repent of all the bad things which they had done, and believe in Him Whom they had crucified, and Who now, exalted to His throne in

Heaven, poured forth upon them the gift of the Holy Ghost.

‘Save yourselves from this evil generation,’ seem to have been the last words of Saint Peter’s discourse, or words to that effect or meaning (Acts ii. 40).

Many very gladly heard the message which Saint Peter brought, and were baptized; and on that day, the first great ingathering of the first-fruits of the Christian Church were waved before the Lord: three thousand souls were added to the Church. It was, indeed, a Harvest Festival.

These Christians, we are told, continued firm and true to the Apostles’ teaching, and were in strict fellowship with them—that is, they did not pick and choose their religion, but kept fast to that which they had been instructed in.

They continually received the Holy Communion, and engaged in the prayers and devotions of the infant Church (Acts ii. 46, 47).

The work went on; the fire spread.

Every day these converts were in the Temple, praising God.

And to them were added every day such as, through repentance and faith, should be saved.

Now, let us notice some of the inward graces and gifts of this Holy Spirit.

The Apostles became endowed with fresh power and strength. They were not like what they had been before.

You see how bold Saint Peter had been in his sermon to the people, he who had been frightened at the silly accusing voice of a maid-servant, he who had actually denied his Master.

In the garden of the Agony all the disciples forsook our Lord; throughout His Passion, they were faithless; only Saint John stood by the Cross.

Now all is changed; they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for their Master's Name.

God the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Strength and Might.

The Apostles had thought that Christ had come to set up an earthly kingdom.

Even at the last, they had asked, 'Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?' (Acts i. 6).

Now they see how false all their expectations had been.

Illuminated by the light of the Holy Spirit, they fully know that their Master's kingdom is not of this world.

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Understanding.

The once poor, unlearned fishermen now know 'all mysteries:' they are to become the teachers of the whole world: they are to destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of Wisdom.

Two kinds of gifts were, at the first, poured out upon the Apostles; they were ordinary—that is, general gifts—and extraordinary—that is, special ones.

The first of these are those which are given to all Christian people, as they can receive them.

The graces of faith, hope, and charity are these, given us in Holy Baptism, strengthened and increased in Confirmation.

Sometimes the gifts of grace are given suddenly, just as the voice of the rushing mighty wind came suddenly.

God works as He wills. 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, but thou canst not tell whence it comes and whither it goeth' (John iii. 8).

Sudden conversions, that is, turnings to God, are therefore not impossible, or even improbable; although the ordinary method of dealing with souls by Almighty God is by little and little, by gradual advances, often by one step at a time.

And 'the rushing mighty wind' shows us the unseen, wonderful working of the Holy Spirit of God. He is the Lord and Giver of Life.

The whole Church is filled with this Divine Breath of Life, just as the whole

house was, on the day of Pentecost, with the mighty wind.

To the world lying in darkness and death, let us pray to the Holy Ghost, 'Come from the four winds, O Breath, breathe upon these slain, that they may live' (Ezek. xxxvii. 9).

And when the life-giving Breath of God the Holy Ghost goes forth, the dead in trespasses and sins stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. God the Holy Ghost is ever enlarging His Church.

The extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost are those which are not needed by all Christian people.

The gift of languages, the power of working miracles, were the outward signs of the presence of God the Holy Ghost in His Church and in the hearts of men ;

they were granted for special purposes, and their use has passed away.

What we have now, is the abiding Presence of God the Holy Ghost to teach us and to lead us unto all truth.

THE HOLY GHOST.

O beautiful Dove, Spirit of Love,
Holiest, truest, and best ;
Thou Comforter sweet, Blest Paraclete,
Deigning with mortals to rest.

O great, rushing Wind, bountiful, kind,
Filling the world with Thy grace ;
By Life-giving Breath saving from death,
Searching each sin-defiled place.

O pure, cleansing Fire, quick with desire,
Burning up all that is ill ;
Endowing with light, arming with might,
Warming the frozen and chill.

Be Thou praised and adored, glorious
Lord,
Spirit of Wisdom and Light ;
Rest within me enthroned, honoured and
owned,
And nerving my arms for the fight.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXI.

1. Where did the disciples wait for the coming of the Holy Ghost ?
2. Who were with the Apostles ?
3. What did they do ?

4. Describe the things that happened on the day of Pentecost?

5. What does Pentecost mean?

6. Tell me what you know about the Jewish Pentecost?

7. What was the special offering?

8. Tell me about the scape-goat.

9. Why did the Jews keep Pentecost, or the Feast of Weeks?

10. When do we keep our Pentecost?

11. Do you know why we call this season Whitsuntide?

12. How long did the Apostles wait for the promised gift?

13. Did the Holy Ghost enable the Apostles to speak many languages?

14. What did the Jews say about this?

15. What did Saint Peter say in reply to this in his sermon?

16. Were the Apostles changed by the gifts of the Holy Ghost?

17. What were the two kinds of gifts He bestowed?

18. Which gifts do we now possess, and why?

CHAPTER XXXII.

Whitsuntide.

THE HOLY GHOST.

The Holy Ghost a Divine Person—The Church's Birthday—The 'Rites' of the Church—The Canon of Scripture.

WE must be very careful not to form wrong ideas about God the Holy Ghost.

Some people speak of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity as if He were impersonal; that is, as if He were only a mere good influence, or holy power, and not a Person, like the Father and the Son.

The Holy Ghost is a Divine Person:

He is the Lord and Giver of life; with the Father and the Son together, He is to be worshipped and glorified: He it is Who spake by the Prophets.

We must, therefore, pray the Father to give us this Holy Spirit: we must ask Him not to take this Holy Spirit from us.

And we must pray *to* the Holy Ghost.

We can use no better Prayer to Him, than the *Veni Creator*. You will find this Hymn in your Prayer-book in the Ordering of Priests, and in most Hymn-books.

Another very beautiful Prayer is that beginning,

‘Come, Thou Holy Paraclete.’

I will repeat two verses of it: learn the whole hymn as soon as you can.

‘O Thou Light most pure and blest,
Shine within the inmost breast
Of Thy faithful company.

‘Where Thou art not, man hath nought;
Every holy deed and thought
Come from Thy Divinity.’

‘The Holy Ghost is God.’ Never listen to those people who pick to pieces the words of the Athanasian Creed, because their wretched pride will not bend to accept its teaching about the Incarnation and the Trinity.

Receive the Creeds of the kingdom of God as little children, as you are to receive that kingdom itself.

1. Pray, then, much to the Holy Ghost. We miss much by praying so little to Him.

2. Never quench the Holy Spirit.

Think of a man almost perishing from cold on an island.

All around him, the wild wind is blowing and the rough waves beating.

In a hut, he has a blazing fire, which gives him light and warmth, and saves him from a miserable death.

Would you not say he was a madman if he put that fire out? Oh yes, indeed, you would, and you would be right.

Now, this is just what you do, when you quench the Spirit.

You leave yourself in the dark and cold, exposed to every breath of passion and wind of evil, without help when most you need it.

Think much and solemnly of these words of Holy Scripture: 'Quench not the Spirit.'

3. Your body is the temple of God the Holy Ghost.

If you stain your body by wilful sin, if you indulge yourself in forbidden and wicked pleasures, you defile this temple; and the Bible says, that whoso defileth the temple of God, him will God destroy.

Learn, then, to reverence your body because it is the temple, or shrine, of the Holy Ghost.

4. The Holy Ghost is your Guide and Comforter. He is the Spirit of Love, Who is so kind and good to you, as to make you an habitation of God; that is, He lives within you, as you live in your house, or habitation.

This is very wonderful, but quite true.

See to it, that you never stifle this

Voice, and never refuse to give heed to it.

‘ Come, Lord ; come, Wisdom, Love, and
Power,
Open our ears to hear ;
Let us not miss the accepted hour ;
Save, Lord, by love or fear.’

The day of Pentecost, of which I have been telling you, was the birthday of the Christian Church.

Our Lord came down from Heaven to lay the foundation of His Church.

Christ loved the Church : He gave Himself for it ; He bought it with His most Precious Blood. He is its Head and Ruler, and, as this kingdom is not of this world, so no world-power, no king or magistrate, can change its laws, take away its rights, or alter its truths.

Our Lord once said to Nathanael, 'Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these' (John i. 50).

Surely there could be nothing greater than the power and works of Jesus Christ, to Whom all power was given in Heaven and earth; power given to Him, that is, as Man, for as God His power is from all eternity!

What, then, were these 'greater things'?

We may well understand them as referring to the glorious kingdom of God the Holy Ghost; this last Dispensation in which we now live.

You will remember, for I have so lately told you, how the Apostles were told, by Jesus Himself, to wait in the

city of Jerusalem, until they were endued, or filled, with power from on high.

Now the Promised Comforter had come, the Church was organized, or, as it were, put into working order.

The Commission to the Ministry had been given, as you have seen; the gift of the Holy Ghost, too, had been imparted to the Apostles at their Ordination; but now, at Pentecost, the full and abiding Presence of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity was poured out in all its wonderful and mighty power, since Jesus had gone away to Heaven, and had sent His most Blessed Spirit to teach and to guide His Church into all truth.

The Ministry was formed first: out of this Sacred Ministry was evolved, or unfolded, the Church.

The Church is perfect and complete,

wanting nothing, for she is the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

She has laws for her government and guidance; rules for her successful working; orders for her regulation and control; officers for carrying all these out.

The Church is the living, speaking Voice of God the Holy Ghost in the world: she is 'the pillar and ground of the truth.'

The Church and Christ are so mysteriously, so truly, one, that we can say, The Church is Christ.

Had there been, you may ask, no Church until the first Christian day of Pentecost?

Yes, indeed, there had. Let me tell you a little about this.

Moses tells us of a Church from the beginning to his time.

From Moses until Christ, we have the sacred writings of the Hebrews.

Moses tells us of the Church of the elder dispensation from Shem to Abraham: he does not tell us, however, whether the true religion of God were preserved by the descendants of Ham and Japheth.

Shem, Ham, and Japheth were, you know, the three sons of Noah.

Abraham's forefathers worshipped idols in Chaldea, a country of India, it is generally supposed, and not the Chaldea in Asia, near the junction of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

Chasidia is its proper name.

We read in the book of Joshua, that Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor, dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, and served other gods.

But God's truth had not quite died out in Palestine and Egypt when Abraham came there, for the king of Egypt feared God and hated sin.

Abraham thought that there were at least ten or twenty good persons in the wicked city of Sodom.

Job, who was descended from Esau, it is thought, and his friends, knew God.

The Ammonites and the Moabites, descended from Lot, did not fall into idolatry for some considerable time, it is supposed.

The Ishmaelites, sons of Hagar and Abraham, took the knowledge of the true God to Arabia; Isaac did so to Palestine: but in the time of Mahomet, and long before, they had forsaken the true faith of the living God.

Our Lord, as we have seen, was a

constant and devout attendant upon the temple services of the Jewish Church.

He was present at the great Feasts, at the offering of the sacrifices ; He must have studied the Old Testament Scriptures, have heard them read and explained, have joined in chanting the Psalms, and reciting the solemn prayers of the Jewish Liturgy for the living and the dead.

How He loved, revered, and cared for His Father's House we very well know.

But all that had gone before led up to the perfect Church ; the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ ; the Church of the day of Pentecost ; the Church built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone ; the Church, the Bride of Christ.

Dear children, you are members of this spiritual Kingdom, which shall endure for ever, and which shall not be destroyed.

Baptized into it, in the Name of the Holy Trinity, you have been called out of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, His Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

Oh, how great are your responsibilities,—that is, how much you will have to answer for. How needful it is for you to watch and pray, that no evil temptations from within or without cause you to be faithless to that Church, or unfit for that holy Society into which you have been admitted.

This Church is like a city set upon a hill, it cannot be hid: men see it from afar, on all sides.

And men see what you are doing, you

who are citizens of this city: they take note of you, they look out to try and find faults in you; they would even like, perhaps, to be able to point the finger of scorn at you, and say, 'Ah! what a disciple of Christ you are, who do so and so!' or, 'What an ornament *you* are to Christ's Holy Church!'

Yes, the world is ever ready to find out all our weak places: let us be very much on our guard, and keep as true and strict in our lives as we can. Let us be pure and honest and upright, lest we bring disgrace and shame upon that which is in itself pure and lovely, and altogether, in its Divine character and nature, 'without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.'

There are four 'notes,' as they are called, or marks, about the Church, of which I wish to say a little.

The Church is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. You will find all these 'notes' applied to the Church in the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds.

The Church is One.

She is one in herself; she is the centre of unity, or oneness, to those who own her rule.

The Church is not divided; Christ's Body is not rent.

It is quite true that in Christendom, men are called by different names; but really and in God's sight, the great company of the baptized, all over the world, who hold fast to the creeds of Christendom, who possess a three-fold Ministry, and who celebrate the Sacraments according to Christ's command, are one.

Nothing can make Christ's Church anything else.

Our dear Lord prayed for this oneness for His Flock, and none shall ever tear this precious gift from us, though the world and the devil try all they can to mar and damage it.

We may pray for visible unity, and a more perfect oneness; but the unity we have with Christ's faithful people all the world over, is a mark of the Church of God.

The Church is Holy.

She is holy in her origin; holy in her Offices and Sacraments; holy in her Priesthood and Ministry; holy in her way of working in the world; holy in her everlasting life. The Church is not for time only, but for a holy eternity.

The Church is Catholic.

Catholic means universal. Go where you will, you will find Christ's Church.

She is received everywhere and by all; that is, of course, in every place which is open to her ministrations.

You find her in all climes; men of all nations and colours are her officers; her sway is universal.

Persecuted, she is not cast down; hated, she lives to bless the world; but destroyed she never can be, for 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against her.' 'God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be moved.'

The Church is Apostolic.

She is built upon the foundations of the Apostles; she has an Apostolic Ministry, which at the present moment can be traced back by a perfectly reasonable and historic chain of evidence to the days of our Lord Himself. She is Apostolic, for she continues stedfast in

the Apostles' fellowship ; in the breaking of the Bread, that is, in the dispensing the Holy Sacrament ; and in the prayers, that is, in the rites and devotions of Apostolic order and origin.

And besides this, the Church is the keeper of Holy Writ.

This is a very important matter.

To hear some people talk, dear children, we might almost think that the Bible had dropped down from Heaven, just as we have it, quite complete and nicely bound.

And many persons now-a-days talk of finding their religion in their Bibles.

Do such ever think what the very good and holy people did, who had no Bible ?

How did the very first Christians fare, who had the Old Testament Scriptures, but not the New ?

And what about the great mass of mankind who lived before the art of printing was either invented or generally used ?

You see, these people must have got their religion from somewhere else than the Bible.

Yes; they got it from the Church, which Holy Scripture itself calls ‘the pillar and ground of the truth.’

The Bible, does not give us our religion, but the Church does give us the Bible.

Let us see how this is.

The Bible, as the whole Book we now possess, has been put together for us by the Church.

The Church has propounded and settled what is to be the Bible and what is not to be the Bible; in other words, she has decided what is called the Canon of Scripture.

Canon is a Greek word, meaning straight rod, used, in figure, as a testing rule in art, logic, grammar, and other sciences.

In early days, the word was used most commonly to describe a standard of opinion and practice.

Its first use, as applied to the Holy Scriptures, occurs in the year of our Lord 836.

From Origen's time it has been used to describe those books which are regarded as genuine, that is, true and real, and of Divine authority.

Uncanonical (not canonical) books are those not named in this canon, or rule.

Apocryphal books are those which, while they are not admitted into the canon, are regarded as very useful historically.

I have told you about the Maccabees, you will recollect: all that comes from the Apocrypha.

These apocryphal books are also good as giving us lessons of manners.

Thus, you see, the Church of God has decided what books are canonical, what uncanonical, and what apocryphal.

The Jewish Church had its canon of Scripture.

I think it will interest you if I tell you a little about it.

Before the captivity of the Ten Tribes, 721 before Christ, there are very few traces of the sacred writings being kept.

Moses ordered the 'book of the Law' to be put 'in the side of the ark.'

This, of itself, is surely a beautiful figure of the Ark of Christ's Church being the keeper of Holy Writ.

To 'the book of the Law' were most likely added the book of Joshua; and, later on, the book of Proverbs and some Prophecies; for Daniel refers to the Books, and Zechariah to the 'Law and former Prophets.'

Ezra and the 'Great Synagogue' probably finally fixed the canon of the Law; and Nehemiah 'gathered together the acts of the kings and the prophets and those of David,' when founding a library for the second Temple.

Our Lord quotes from an unknown book, and so does Saint James.

These books might have been known in very early times, but there is no record of them, and they were not preserved in either the Jewish or the Christian canon.

The 'book of the Law,' the different

'Annals,' and the prophetic books from Joshua to David, Solomon placed, for safety, in the Temple, where they remained until its destruction.

After the Temple was rebuilt, Nehemiah collected the sacred books and made a library of them.

To these were added the writings of Ezra and those of his time, namely, Nehemiah and the later Prophets.

There is little to tell about the Christian canon.

The books of the Jewish canon were read from the first, in the Christian gatherings, as of Divine authority. Writers of the Church largely quote them.

Between A.D. 200 and 400, fifteen catalogues or lists of canonical books were published.

Six of these agree with our present

Canon, three of them omit only the Book of the Revelation.

A Canon, a fragment written in the middle of the second century, found at Milan, mentions as canonical, all the books of the New Testament as we have them, except the Epistles of Saint James and Saint Peter and that to the Hebrews.¹

All this will not, I hope, have seemed dry or uninteresting.

Nothing about the Holy Bible ought to be so. I have told you these things, in order to show you how carefully the Church, both under the Jewish and Christian dispensations, collected, preserved, guarded, and kept the Sacred Deposit entrusted to her; and to show, moreover, what is one, and surely not

¹ See *Helps to the Study of the Bible*.

one of the least important, offices of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, founded on the day of Pentecost.

THE HOLY CHURCH OF GOD.

A beautiful Ark on the troublesome
waves

Of the world is afloat for us all ;
God puts us within it, and wondrously
saves

From the ruin and wreck of the Fall.

'Tis Peter's fair bark which goes sailing
along

Through the tempest and darkness
and hate,—

Through tumults, disasters, affliction, and
wrong,

To the Port of the Beautiful Gate.

The Captain and Master of all, is our
Lord,

Helping on by His Presence and Love:
The crew steer straight on for the shore
of Reward,
And the bright star of Hope shines
above.

Oh, when shall we come to the Haven of
Rest,

Drop our anchor and bid the toil
cease,
As the red sun of Time sinks down in
the west,
And our feet touch the Land of true
Peace?

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXII.

1. Is the Holy Ghost a Person?
2. Where do you find the Hymn *Veni Creator*?
3. How are we to receive the Creeds of the Church?
4. When was the birthday of the Church?
5. What were the 'greater works' of which our Lord spake?
6. Was the Ministry formed before this time?
7. What is the word Church derived from?
8. Who tells us of a very early Church?
9. Where did Abraham's forefathers live?

10. Was our Lord a true member of the Jewish Church ?

11. What admits us to the Christian Church ?

12. What are the four ' notes ' of the Church ?

13. In what sense is the Church ' the keeper of Holy Writ ' ?

14. Were there any good people before the Bible was completed ?

15. Who decided what was to be received as Holy Scripture ?

16. What was this rule, or standard, called ?

17. Tell me the names of the three kinds of Books of Scripture.

18. What is one of the chief offices or functions of the Holy Catholic Church ?

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Holy Trinity and the Saints.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH.

The Athanasian Creed—The Door opened in Heaven—Worship—The Mystery of the Trinity—The Saints.

‘IN the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.’

What does he who uses this form of words mean?

He means, surely, that he believes in the Mystery of the Holy Trinity; that what he says, or what he does, he says and does in that Name and Faith.

‘Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was

in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.'

What do we mean when we say, or sing, this *Gloria Patri*,—this hymn of ascription to the Trinity in Unity?

We mean, surely, that we adore and worship one God in three Persons, and that we will honour the Holy Trinity, as He has been praised from the beginning, is praised now, and shall be praised by the faithful, for evermore.

And, therefore, we say Amen, 'So be it;' giving our full assent and consent to this glorious article of the Christian Faith; and maintaining, or holding fast, our full belief in it, as a precious part of revealed Religion, and a glorious verity, or truth, of the Holy Church of God.

This belief is formulated, or put down, in plain terms for us, in the Creed of

Saint Athanasius, which is appointed to be used in the services of the Church on certain great Festivals and Holy Days.

It is a triumphant Hymn of Faith, to be sung out with gladness, because it proclaims the unsearchable Mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, both of which Mysteries we cannot understand by our reason alone.

Heart and mind must work together in the study and acceptance of this Creed: above all, love and reverent faith must be in our souls, as we take such wonderful words—wonderful if we only look at them in the light of good English—upon our lips.

There is no such beautiful English language anywhere as that to be found in the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.

A faithful and true Christian is ever jealous for the integrity, that is, for the truth, of the Creeds of Christendom: he will not stand quietly by and see them tampered with, mutilated, that is, cut up, watered down, or altered.

The world is always trying to do these things, because the world hates dogma, or settled, defined opinion.

The world thinks it can turn out its own religion, just as a mechanic turns out his work; and that it can improve upon the old religion of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, just as a scientific man, or a clever artisan, can improve upon existing scientific results, or manufactured goods.

Progress is all very well in science and manufactures; but Religion does not want any improvements of modern days,

because it is as Almighty God has revealed it, and therefore perfect.

‘Keep that which is committed to thy trust,’ is an apostolic command.

It is nowhere written in the Sacred Scriptures, or in tradition, or in the councils of the Church, ‘Alter principles, and cut up, or abolish, Creeds.’

A Creed is called in Latin *Symbolum*. One signification of the word is derived from military matters; it is used to denote, or point out, the marks, signs, or watchwords by which the soldiers of our army know each other: in like manner, by this Creed, the true soldiers of Jesus Christ are known among all others, and distinguished from those who are false and hypocritical, people who pretend to be what they are not.

People dislike the Athanasian Creed,

because it tells them of truths which, by their reason, they cannot understand; and they think it very unmanly to have to believe anything which they do not understand, or cannot explain.

It is a great comfort and blessing to have a religion which has neither been invented, nor improved upon, by the ideas of the nineteenth century.

The Athanasian Creed condemns all ancient and modern heresies, and is a statement, or summary, of all orthodox, that is true, divinity.

This Creed plainly declares only what Holy Scripture as plainly teaches,—that, before all things, it is necessary that we hold the Catholic Faith, which is, ‘that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.’

From the twenty-seventh verse to the end, this Creed teaches the doctrine of the Incarnation ; a right belief in which it declares to be necessary to everlasting salvation.

Of the Incarnation, I have told you somewhat fully : now, let me ask you to think a little about the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

Dear children, this Mystery is one which you are not free to believe in, or not, as you like ; you are bound to believe it : it is the revealed truth of God, and if you reject it, say what men will, you do so at the peril of your soul.

Almighty God has been very good to us ; He has stooped down to our poor human nature so far as to open a door in Heaven, that we may look in, and see some of the wonders of that holy and

beautiful place where He dwells in majesty and light, throned in everlasting beauty, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.

Isaiah looked through this opened door, and 'saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple.

'Above it stood the Seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke' (Isa. vi. 1-4).

In this vision the Prophet saw Jesus

Christ upon His throne of glory, for Saint John tells us that ‘these things said Esaias, when he saw His glory and spake of Him.’

Over against this throne stood the burning spirits, glowing with the holy flame of Divine Love.

With two of his wings, each of these beautiful creatures veiled, or hid, his face, as if unworthy to look upon the glory of God.

With two of his wings he covered his feet, showing his humility, and meaning by this, that he was not fit to do the will of so great a God.

And with two of his wings he did fly; showing even amid all this unworthiness, his readiness to do this Will of God, should he be commanded to carry it out.

And all sang ‘the thrice holy song,

ever and aye;’ ‘Holy, Holy, Holy;’ setting forth the three Divine Persons in the Trinity, and the holiness of the work of Redemption.

Then, as the song echoed through the vaults of the Temple, the posts or pillars shook as if they, too, joined in adoration; and the whole place was filled with smoke, or darkness, as when the Temple was dedicated by King Solomon.

The very glory of God’s Presence, itself undying Light, made darkness round about His pavilion and thick clouds to cover Him.

And, then, what a glorious vision Saint John saw (Rev. iv.).

Read the Epistle for Trinity Sunday; it tells you of the marvellous light of Heaven; of the sea of glass like unto crystal; of the Seven Lamps; of the

Seraphim, spreading their fiery wings about the Throne; of the Four-and-Twenty Elders falling down before the Throne, and casting their crowns before Him Who sits thereon; of the Song which is caught up in our earthly worship, when with angels and arch-angels and with all the company of Heaven, we sing, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High.'

All these visions were given, that we may have a Pattern, showed to us in the Heavenly Mount, for our worship.

I have told you about people who dislike, or wish to alter, the Creeds of the Church; now I must warn you against those who have wrong ideas of Worship.

Too often the same persons object equally to Creed and Worship.

The modern idea of Worship seems to be very much confined to going to as comfortable a 'place of worship' as can be found, to listen to as long sermons as can be preached, or if not as long, as sensational and moving ones as can be produced, by what are called 'popular preachers.'

Preaching is a very good thing, a very necessary thing.

We read a great deal about it in the New Testament, as I have shown you.

From the very nature of the case, preaching was a great necessity in the early times of Christianity: people were so ignorant, and had so very much to learn.

Our Blessed Lord, Who was the Great Teacher sent from God, was, as you have

seen, constantly preaching to the people ; so were Saint John the Baptist, Saint Peter, Saint Paul, and the other Apostles of Jesus Christ.

And preaching is very much needed now ; for very many must have the Gospel, or Good News, taken to them, before we can hope to be a really Christian people, in the best and truest sense of those words.

But to listen to sermons is not the first duty of Christian people.

Worship is.

Worship is an act of adoration and homage, addressed by the creature to its Creator.

Almighty God is the Supreme Being, to Whom we must ascribe, in our worship, glory, honour, and power.

And in this way, God is pleased to

allow His glory to be increased. His intelligent creatures have it in their power to add to that glory.

Oh, what dignity, what grandeur, does this give to our worship!

God loves to receive the adoration of His children, and He loves them to press into the service of that worship, all that is beautiful in nature, and art, and science.

God does not refuse worship offered to Him in the meanest place, it is true; but this is no reason why we should keep back all God's beautiful gifts from His own service, and take them all for our own selfish ends; for people who grudge God His own good things, always take care to have their own houses as beautiful and comfortable as money can make them.

Architecture, Painting, Sculpture, Music,—all these must minister to the Source of all beauty in the service of His sanctuary.

Art is the handmaid of Religion, and she loves to wait about its altars, to consecrate her best to God

In her hands she brings her choicest stores, knowing that none of them will be too good, too costly—none of them too lowly, too little—for God to accept.

Constantly listening to preaching is very apt to make people self-satisfied, self-righteous, and selfish.

Giving up ourselves continually to Worship, will make us think very little indeed of ourselves, and very much and very reverently of Almighty God, Who could, but will not, do without our worship.

The Mystery of the Holy Trinity was shown to the Jewish Church very dimly.

When God was going to create Adam, He said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.’ You see God spake in the plural number.

I have shown you how the Mystery was afterwards unfolded, when I told you about the revelation, or showing forth, of the Holy Trinity, at the Baptism of our Lord, at the Transfiguration, and in the promise of the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

Yes, God has told us that in His one Divine Nature there are three distinct or separate Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, the glory equal, the majesty co-

eternal; which means that all three Persons are equally glorious, and that all Three existed from all eternity.

The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet they are not three Gods, but one God.

We cannot understand this; we can only bow down in loving adoration, and say, 'Into this Holy Name we were baptized; in this Holy Faith we believe; this Mystery we confess with angels and archangels; in this Truth of God we will live; in it we will, by God's grace, die.'

Learn from the contemplation of this Divine Mystery of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, these lessons:—

1. There is One God. 2. There are Three Persons in God. 3. Each Person is co-equal, co-eternal.

And let this belief of Christendom

come out in practice, in your everyday life.

The Eternal Father made me: I offer myself to Him as His child, and render to Him my praise for His creating and protecting power.

The Eternal Son redeemed me: I offer myself to Him as His blood-bought treasure, and give Him back love for love, since He loved me and gave Himself for me.

The Holy Ghost sanctified me: I yield myself up to His Divine guidance and influence, praying Him to illuminate, bless, and defend me.

Praised be the Holy and Undivided Trinity now, henceforth, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Now, just as the Sacraments of the Church are the extension of the Incarna-

tion, that is, as they convey to the soul the merits and virtue of the Incarnation; so the saints are extensions and reproductions of the Life of God the Holy Trinity.

The wonderful plan of salvation wrought by the Eternal Trinity was not to be a glorious tree bearing no fruit, but a glorious tree bearing much fruit

God in His existence, His grace, His salvation, is indeed unspeakably glorious; but He wills that you, dear children, and I, should become partners in that glory. Is not this wonderful?

We could hardly dare to say as much, if we did not find the truth stated so clearly in Holy Scripture; yet it is true to say, because God Who is the Truth tells us so, that we 'are partakers of the Divine Nature.'

This makes it possible for every one of us to be a saint. God the Father is the Creator of the saints, just as He is the Creator of the world and of all mankind, of nature animate and inanimate, that is, of things that live and things that exist.

God the Son, through the virtue of His Death and Passion, and by the power of His Resurrection, transforms His own into saints; He translates them from darkness to light.

God the Holy Ghost enlightens, cheers, sanctifies, or makes holy those whom He calls to be saints.

We read a great deal in the Bible about saints.

Our Lord is the King of Saints.

And, dear children, you need not be a very great hero, or make a very fine

figure, or do some very great thing, in order to be a saint.

God notes the little stars as well as the large ones.

If you are true and real, and earnestly trying to do good, you *are* a saint; and although you may be 'the least of all saints,' yet think what an honour it is to be in any way, however lowly, 'a fellow-citizen with the saints,' one of the very household or family of God.

You will see in your Prayer-books, and of course you very well know, that a number of days are set apart by the Church, on which are commemorated the lives and deaths of the saints of God.

These are the great saints: the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Peter, Saint John Baptist, the Holy Apostles, the Evangelists, the Martyrs.

Besides these, there are days of commemoration, marked in the Calendar, of saints whose feasts have no proper Collect, Epistle, and Gospel.

These are called Black Letter days.

Such saints are: Saint Agnes, virgin; Saint Edward the king; Saint Alphege, archbishop; Saint Alban, the first martyr of Britain; Saint Cyprian, and many others.

But on one day in the year the Church gathers up in one great commemoration the memory of All Saints.

This she does on the first day of November.

On that day we seem to see 'the great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white

robes, and with palms in their hands, and crying with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb' (Rev. vii. 9-11).

Then, amidst this splendid sight of All Saints worshipping and adoring the Lamb in the Heavenly Jerusalem, we on earth listen to the Voice of Jesus Christ, pronouncing His sentences of blessing as He did when He preached His Sermon on the Mount.

We may divide the saints of God into three classes, as, indeed, all the faithful are divided:—

1. Those who still dwell in the Church militant; that is, all those who are waging the battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil, in behalf of their Lord.

2. Those who are waiting their reward in the Church patient or expectant; that is, those who, having departed this life with the seal of faith, wait their 'perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul,' at the great day of the Lord, crying out from underneath the heavenly altar, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true?'

3. Those who are in the Church triumphant; that is, those who have been admitted into the heavenly court, and now enjoy the Presence of God, and see Him Face to face.

When we say, 'I believe in the Communion of Saints,' what do we mean?

We mean that we are unselfish in our religion, that we do not live only to ourselves.

We mean that we have an interest in

the prayers, the thoughts, the hopes, the worship, the love of the saints, living and departed—the saints on earth, in Paradise, in Heaven.

One with our Lord, we are one with them ; we have, through Him, fellowship not only with the world we see, but with that world unseen—that world beyond our sight, but not beyond our sympathies and our affections.

And what is the bond of union between all ?

It is, dear children, the Eternal Life of the Holy and Undivided Trinity ; that Life which rules and governs the world ; that Life which is the Source and Fountain of all life ; that Life which alone is deathless and Eternal ; the unspeakably Blessed Life of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Holy Trinity, to

Whom be glory, adoration, love, and
thanksgiving for ever and ever. Amen.

THE HOLY TRINITY.

Can I, by searching, find out God,
Or understand His ways?
Can I approach His awful throne,
Or rightly sing His praise?

'Tis only as Himself vouchsafes
To teach me, that I learn
Something of those great Mysteries
Which round God's Being burn.

Trembling, I cast myself before
The Trinity of Might,
And, like the seraphs, veil my face
At thought of such a sight.

What must it be to look on God,
And see Him Face to face,
With saints and all the angel-hosts
In Heaven's eternal place ?

Love lets me look behind the veil
A very little way,
To catch some glimpses of the Light
Which leads to Light for aye.

Send out Thy Light, and let it lead
To where Thou art, O Lord,
Thou Trinity in Unity,
My Pardon, Peace, Reward! Amen.

QUESTIONS ON CHAPTER XXXIII.

1. Repeat the *Gloria Patri*.
2. What do we mean when we say or sing it ?
3. What does Amen mean ?

4. In which Creed is the truth of the Trinity plainly taught?

5. Where do we find the best English?

6. Does the world approve of the Athanasian Creed?

7. Can the truths of religion progress or be improved?

8. What is a Creed called in Latin, and what does the Word teach?

9. May we believe in the doctrine of the Trinity or not, as we choose?

10. Has God revealed this truth in Holy Scripture?

11. Tell me where.

12. What is Worship?

13. Is hearing sermons part of Worship?

14. Does God let us add to His glory when we worship Him?

15. Tell me the notes or marks of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

16. Are the saints independent of God, that is, can they do without Him ?

17. Tell me the three classes of saints.

18. What does belief in the Communion of Saints mean ?

THE END.

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