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The
**Children's
Hour**



By
FRANCESCA

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The Holy Family

The Children's Hour

I.

My dear Children,—

Your friend, Carita, is not able to write to you any more, so I have been asked to do so in her place. I am going to call myself Francesca, because I live at a college that is dedicated to S. Francis, and I want you to think of me as someone who wants very much to help you to understand a little more about the wonderful things our Church teaches us, to help us to be good Christian men and women, and boys and girls.

This year we are going to think together of all the different seasons in our Church year, and try to learn from them something that will help us in our ordinary everyday lives, at school or at home.

I am writing this letter on Advent Sunday, and when you read it we shall still be in the season of Advent, and Christmas will be close at hand.

First of all, to-day I want you to think of all the different moods and feelings you experience in your lives. You don't always feel the same, do you? Sometimes you are very happy and light-hearted, and you want to run about and sing and make a jolly noise; sometimes you feel sad, and serious, and you see that all the world is not happy or good and you long to make it better. Then sometimes you are disappointed with yourself, and you feel sorry for your sins and all the good things you have not done, and the bad things you have done, and you want to do better and put bad things away. Then do you not sometimes have that perfectly lovely feeling when you want to make a fresh start and do everything your very best? you feel full of vigour and determination, and as if you could do almost anything you tried. You make great plans for getting up early, and working hard to be top of your form or getting into the school team, and all sorts of other nice things. We'll do you know that the Church remem-

bered that people have these feelings and impulses? If you look into your Church Kalendar you will see that the men who drew it up have given us special days and seasons that fit in with all those moods and feelings we have spoken about.

There are Holy Days or festivals when the Church tells us to be "merry and joyful." We think of the great events of our Lord's life, of His Birth and Resurrection, or we think with gladness of the great saints, and thank God for their lives and examples.

Then there are the Fasts and Vigils to fit in with our sorrowful moods. On those days we think of our sins and how we can make ourselves better; and then there is Rogationtide, when we think of the needs of the world and those around us.

There is also the Season of Advent, when we try to make a fresh start, and it is about Advent that I want to tell you to-day. The first Sunday in Advent, commonly called Advent Sunday is the first Sunday in the Church year, and in the Collect we are told to "cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light." Is not that a splendid start for a new year, and does it not just express our feelings when we have the "start again" mood? "Casting away" makes us think of something we do with great vigour and determination. We have got to cast away all the bad, weak things in our lives and have no more to do with them. But we must have help with this, so we are told to "put on the armour of light." That will be our defence against temptation, and will help us to carry out the good resolutions we make. At the beginning of the new term, or at the new year, or on our birthdays we often make a lot of new plans, don't we? So in this Advent season, which is the beginning of our Church year, we ought to make all sorts of nice plans connected with

To My Mother

our spiritual life. We should think of our prayers, and fix a time for them. and it is a good plan to make a list of all the people for whom we want to pray, and all the things for which we want to thank God.

Then we might make one or two resolutions (not too many), and try with all our might to keep them until Advent comes round again. Of course, we cannot do any of these things by ourselves, but only with our Lord's help, and He will help us if we tell Him in our prayers that we want His help very badly. He knows all about the "start again" feeling, and wants us to make the very most of it.

Besides all this, there is a very serious and a very beautiful thought for Advent. As I expect you know, the word Advent means "Coming." We have to think about our Lord's coming to earth, and of His coming to us when we die, and of His coming again "to judge both the quick and the dead."

In the first place, we think about Christmas and getting ready for it. Just as we are making or buying presents

for those we love, so we must have a present for our Lord on Christmas Day. The best one will be a happy loving heart full of joy and the Christmas spirit. And we must be ready, too, to thank God for His present to us, the present of the little Christ Child to be our Saviour and Friend.

If you read the whole of the Collect you will see that it does not only tell us to think of Christmas, but also of our Lord's Second Coming, and we can especially think of that, as his coming to us when we die. That is a very wonderful day to look forward to, and when He comes we want to be wide awake and ready and able to tell Him that we have tried with all our might to be His faithful soldiers and servants.

So you see what a lot Advent has to teach us. First to make a splendid new start, secondly to get ready for Christmas, and thirdly to be prepared for the day when we see our Lord face to face.

My next letter will not be out until after Christmas, so now I must wish you all a very happy Christmas Day.

II.

You will remember that in my last letter we talked about all our different moods and feelings and how the Church takes account of them in her Kalendar.

Now I feel sure that we are all in our very happiest and most joyful mood for when you read this it will still be Christmastide; we shall be thinking of the Birthday of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The song on our lips will be "Glory to God in the highest, Alleluia, Alleluia." I wonder if you understand why it is that Christmas is such a wonderful time? I am sure you all know the beautiful Christmas story of the birth of the little Christ-child; how the angels told the shepherds where to find Him. How they found Him lying in the manger of a humble stable with His beautiful maiden mother to look after Him.

But to-day I want you to try and think with me of the inner meaning of the story and to try to understand why it was that Jesus Christ was born a little child upon earth.

When God made the world He made it perfectly good. "God saw that it was good." We are told in the book of Genesis, God made man good too but He did not want man to be like a machine and have to be good whether he wanted to or not. God wanted man to choose goodness because he loved him in all things. But man chose the evil and not the good so God's plans for him were spoilt. But God still loved man in spite of his sin and was very sad to think that he would be separated from Him. God knew that man's eyes would be blinded by sin and his heart hardened and that soon he would not know that God was his Father and loved him and wanted him to be good and happy.

So God said that He would send His own dear Son to earth and He would be able to tell mankind that God loved them still and wanted them to be His children. God knew that if His Son went to earth and lived a perfect human life and went about helping people and

teaching them, and was willing to suffer and die for their sakes, then men would know what kind of a Father God was and know how dearly He loved them, and God, knew that if His Son went to earth as a little child and grew up to be a man living a perfectly holy life, children and men and women would always have His life for a pattern and would want to be holy and pure like Him. God knew too, that His Son would so love mankind, that is, all the men women and children whom He went on earth to save from their sins that He would live with them for ever to help and inspire them. Even after His life on earth was done He would be present with them and live in the hearts of all who love Him, making their lives pure, beautiful, and leading them at length to Heaven.

So that is why Christmas is such a wonderful time for us all. The shepherds saw a little human baby lying there but the angels knew that this little child was God's own Son, and that He had come to earth to teach men that God was their Father and that He loved them. They knew that the little

babe lying there was the Saviour of the world and that through Him man would be able to live near to God and one day be with Him in Heaven. So you see what a wonderful present God gave to us that first Christmas morning, the present of His own Son to be our Saviour and Friend. Now we do not want God to think that we do not want His present, do we? Suppose you gave a present to someone you love and they threw it away and did not like it. How hurt you would be.

We can show God we love His beautiful present by keeping a big place in our lives for the little Christ-child. We must make our hearts beautiful with loving and unselfish thoughts so that He loves to rest there. We can think of Him often so that He knows He is welcome, and we can cast aside all unkind and angry thoughts that would fill up our hearts and leave no room for Him. A little prayer that comes in one of our hymns is a good one for Christmas: "O come to my heart Lord Jesus; there is room in my heart for Thee."

III.

I am writing this on the Feast of the Epiphany. What a lot of festivals we are having, are we not? There have been five since Christmas Day—St. Stephen's Day, St. John the Evangelist's Day, and the Holy Innocents' Day. Those were the three days after Christmas. Then the Feast of the Circumcision on New Year's Day; now the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6.

I expect you all know about St. Stephen, who was stoned because he would preach about Our Lord; about the Holy Innocents, whom Herod had put to death. We must thank God for all these, because they were so brave so holy and so pure and innocent. Then on January 1, the Feast of the Circumcision, we think of our Lord as a little baby of eight days old being dedicated to God. That was the day on which He was given His Name, the Holy Name JESUS, just as we are given our names at our baptism.

Now it is Epiphany that I am going to write about to-day. It will still be

Epiphanytide when you read this, so you must not think the letter is too late.

We think to-day of how the three Wise Men followed the Star until it brought them to where Jesus was. When they found Him they offered Him gifts of gold, incense and myrrh. It is such a beautiful story. I want you all to make a picture of it in your minds. Try and see the three Wise Kings as they knelt before the little infant Christ and offered Him the best gifts they could think of. I can only tell you one lesson we learn from the Epiphany, but if you think about the story and the gifts I am sure you will think of others for yourself.

Our Lord, you know, was a Jew and the Jews thought that God was only the God of the Jews. They thought that He had nothing to do with other nations, but was just their God. All who were not Jews they called Gentiles and despised and hated them very much. But God wanted the Jews

to know that He was not only their God, but that he was the God of all the world, and loved the Gentiles as much as He did the Jews, and wanted them to know Him as their Father. So when Our Lord was born, God made the Star in the East shine with extra brightness, and He put it into the hearts of the Wise Men, who were Gentiles and lived a long way from Jerusalem, to follow the leading of the Star until it led them to where Jesus was. So the three Wise Men were the first people who were not Jews to see Our Lord, and by bringing them to see Him God taught that Jesus had come to be the Saviour of the whole world—of Jews and Gentiles alike.

If you find the Feast of the Epiphany in your Prayer Books, the Collect you will see begins thus: "Oh, God, Who

by the leading of a Star didst manifest thine only begotten Son to the Gentiles." Epiphany is another word for manifestation, and they both mean showing forth. Our Lord was shown first to the Gentiles when the Wise Men came to worship Him, and found Him lying a little helpless baby in His mother's arms.

Because we learn from the Epiphany lesson that God is the Father of all the world, we think especially of missions at this time, and we must pray that the heathen may be taught to know and love Our Lord, and that many people may be led by God to go out to foreign lands and spread the good news of the Gospel among those who have never heard, and whom God loves just as He loves you and me.

IV.

Do you know a hymn that begins like this:

Advent tells us Christ is near,
Christmas tells us Christ is here.
In Epiphany we trace
All the glory of His grace.

Those three Sundays before Lent
Will prepare us to repent,
That in Lent we may begin
Earnestly to mourn for sin.

That is where we have come this year in the Church Kalendar, and some time during these three weeks before Lent we must plan out what we will do to keep Lent well.

Between the time of your reading the last letter and this one, there will have been two special days to think about. The first is the conversion of S. Paul on January 25; the other the Feast of the Presentation in the Temple on February 2. There is one lesson I want you to learn from these two days.

S. Paul's life was most exciting and wonderful. We read of it in the Acts of the Apostles, and also in the letters which he wrote to his friends. He had most wonderful adventures and escapes; he went through them all with a joyful and willing heart for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Before his conversion, which means a big change that came into his life, S. Paul was a great enemy to all the Christians. He hated them because he was a very zealous Jew, and thought that the Christians would do harm to the Jewish Church. He went about arresting them and having them put to death. He thought all the time that he was doing right, until he saw S. Stephen being stoned to death. And when he saw how brave S. Stephen was, and how happy he looked, it is thought that he began to wonder whether, after all, he was doing right, and began to feel sorrowful and uncertain.

Now this, of course, happened after our Lord's Ascension. He loved S. Paul and wanted very much that S. Paul should learn to love Him and be His servant. Our Lord knew what a great man S. Paul was, and how he was full of enthusiasm and zeal, and He wanted him to be the great Preacher to the Gentiles.

So one day, as S. Paul was journeying to Damascus, our Lord made a great light shine round him, and as he fell in amazement to the ground, our Lord spoke to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and S. Paul, who was then called Saul, answered and said: "Who art Thou, Lord?" and the Lord answered "I am Jesus. Whom

thou persecutest." And then S. Paul knew that all that the Christians taught was true, that the Lord Whom they loved and served was a living Friend and Master. He knew why S. Stephen looked so radiant with joy when he was being put to death, he knew he was truly in the presence of the Lord. And then he gave a very wonderful answer to our Lord, for he said: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And ever after that he tried in everything to find out God's will and do it.

That is the big lesson to learn from S. Paul's conversion, his immediate readiness to answer to God's call and give himself up for the Master's service.

There come times in all our lives when God gives us a special call. He calls us to choose what we will do with our lives, whether we will be teachers, or nurses, or doctors, or farmers; whether we will be married; all sorts of things. Some of you may have a very special call from God to be a priest in His Church or a sister in one of our communities, or may be to go far away to foreign lands as a missionary. When that great call comes, we want to be ready to answer God at once, and tell Him we are ready to do anything for Him that He wills. The best way to be sure of being ready when a big call comes is to try every day to hear God's voice in the little things of life at home or at school. To know that if we choose the good we are answering His call and preparing for the day when there is a big decision to make. That then is the first part of the lesson,—that we must

be ready always to give ourselves up to do God's will.

The other Festival is the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple. Our Lord was not presented in the Temple until he was nearly six weeks old. Then the Blessed Virgin took him with her when she went up to the Temple to give thanks for the birth of her little son, and she gave Him into the arms of the old priest named Simeon, and he blessed Him and offered Him to God. The Blessed Virgin loved her wonderful little Son more than words can say, but she wanted his life to be dedicated to God, and her Son to carry out God's plan, whatever suffering or sorrow might come. That is the second part of the lesson. We must not only be ready to give up ourselves to God's Will, but must be ready for God's Will to be done by all those we love. We must give them up to Him, too.

Sometimes this means parting with the people, we love, or seeing them occupied with things in which we may not share. Sometimes it is God's Will that our dear ones die and we are left alone, but whatever happens we must be glad and willing that they should be carrying out God's plan.

S. Paul gave himself for God's service, and the Blessed Virgin consecrated the life of her beloved little Son to God. We must be ready to give ourselves and all we love best for God, and strive all the time to find out what it is He wants us to do. The next lesson is about Lent, and we will think then of some of the things we can do to carry out God's plan for us.

V.

For some weeks we have been thinking together of days when we are told by the Church to rejoice and lift up our souls in thanksgiving to God for the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the example of the saints. Now we have come to the season of Lent, a time which the Church appoints to fit in with our serious moods, when we feel dissatisfied with ourselves, and want to be better. Lent is not a sad time. In the Old Country Lent comes at the most beautiful time in the whole year, when the springtime world is filled with new

life and new beginnings, and the earth awakes after the long winter of sleep. Well, we want Lent to be a time of new beginnings for the garden of our souls; we want to see little flowers of goodness spring up there; we want to cherish and care for our souls, so that when Lent is over we shall have a beautiful Easter offering to give to our Lord.

I want you to think of Lent as God's time; a time specially set apart for Him, when we think how we can love Him better and consecrate ourselves to Him. We often, I am afraid, think of

Lent as rather a tiresome time, when we have to give up things we like, and do things we don't like. It is true we ought to "give up" things in Lent, but giving up will not do us a bit of good if we do it just for the sake of "giving up." It is not an end in itself. God Himself gave us all the beautiful, nice, pleasant things in the world, to enjoy and make us happy, and to use for His honour and glory, and He does not want us to give them up as if they were bad things.

There are two reasons for giving things up. The first is that we are often foolish and selfish; we do not use God's good gifts wisely. Perhaps we are greedy and eat too much; then it is a good thing to give up some of the good things at any rate for a time, so that we learn self-control. Or, perhaps, we love reading nice books and we read when we ought to be helping someone; then we should give up reading for a time, or fix on special times to read. Then we are giving up things, not because they are bad, but because we are not good and wise.

The other reason for giving up is that we may gain something better, something that we know will be more worth while in the long run. Let us take quite a simple example. Suppose you often go to the Pictures, as I expect some of you do. If they are nice, good pictures, it is a pleasant way of spending your time. Suppose you say to yourself, "Lent is God's time, I won't go to the Pictures in Lent. I want

to think a lot about God in Lent, and fix my mind on heavenly things. Pictures will fill my mind with all sorts of other things." Then you might think, "I love the Pictures, I go too often when I should be working at my lessons or helping at home, so I will give up going in Lent." Then a splendid idea might come into your head: "What a lot of money I spend on the Pictures, suppose I put it into the missionary box instead."

You see you will then be giving up one thing, and see what you gain. You gain the greatest joy in life, that is giving up for love of others. First of all, you give up something for the love of Jesus Christ, because Lent is His time; secondly, you have given up something for the sake of your own character, and have learnt more self-control, and, thirdly, you have given up something you like for the sake of others, if you give the money to your missionary box. "It is more blessed to give than to receive," our Lord said, and how true that is, we know quite well. So, dear children, if you give up things in Lent, as I hope you will, do it with joy and gladness. Don't grouse and grumble, because tea is so nasty without sugar, or because you want to go with your friend to pictures, but think how lucky you are to be able to give up anything for the sake of the Lord Jesus, Who gave up all for you.

Because Lent is God's time, we must think of our prayers in Lent, and that is what the next letter will be about.

VI.

Last week we said that Lent was God's time and so we must think a lot about our prayers in Lent. I wonder if you sometimes say to yourself, "I have not much time for prayers. I am so busy that God cannot expect me to spend much time over them." Ever so many people say that and it means just this, that they don't much enjoy saying their prayers and don't care whether they say them or not. Have you ever noticed that you always find time for things you really love? Think of some of them and see if this is not true. So if we get to love our prayers we shall find we have plenty of time

and until we love them we must do the best we can and we shall get to love them all the quicker.

Prayer ought to be a very big part of the life of every Christian boy and girl because being a Christian means being a friend of Jesus Christ, and it is through our prayers that we get to know and love Him. It is no good having a friend if we don't talk to Him is it? If we think about prayer like that, we shall not just say our prayers in the morning and at night and think that enough, but we shall be saying little prayers to the Lord Jesus all day long. In our work or whatever we are

doing we will collect our thoughts for a minute and say a few words to Him. This will make us feel that He is indeed our friend and is near us all the time.

Now it is no good my pretending to you that it is easy to pray and easy to remember that our Lord is always near us, because it is not. It is hard indeed and I will tell you why. It is because we are so taken up with things we see and hear and feel, the hundred and one things we do every day, that we forget all about the things we cannot see. We take great care to look after our bodies, but we forget all about our souls. We forget that our souls are more important because they are ours for ever and what we make them now they will be always. The soul has to be trained just as the body, and by praying we teach our souls to lift themselves above all earthly things until they are right in God's Presence. "I will lift up my soul unto Thee O God." Think what a lot of difference it would make to our lives if we always prayed like that. If we remember we are in God's Presence we could not say and do unkind things, we could not lose our tempers or tell lies. It is by living a life of prayer that we shall learn to be good and loving and like Jesus Christ because our souls will be continually lifted to Him and His influence will be upon us.

There are many different kinds of prayers and the kind we have been thinking of is called "Ejaculatory" prayer and that means prayers that are spoken on the spur of the moment, something that comes from our very heart. Sometimes it is a prayer for help in temptation, or for guidance in difficulty. Sometimes it is just a little shout of joy and praise, and these prayers can be said many times in the day. The more often we say them the more we shall come to depend on Jesus Christ in all the affairs of our life both small and great.

There is another kind of prayer called Intercessory Prayer, that is when we ask God's blessing on our friends, or the work of His Church or anything else in which we are interested. In this sort of prayer we lift up our friends or whatever it is we are praying for and ask God to pour His blessings on them. It is as if you had a friend who was a great king and could bestow many favours on his subjects, and you had another friend whom you wanted to present to him. You would bring your friend to the king, tell him all about him and ask him to use his influence to help him.

Rather a nice way of praying for people is like this; kneel down and realise that you are in the Presence of the Lord Jesus. Then think of all the people you want to pray for and imagine that they are kneeling by your side. Make a picture in your mind of our Lord standing there and yourself and your friends all kneeling round him. Then you can talk to our Lord—tell Him about your friends and ask Him to bless them.

If you try to pray like that you will get it out of your head that prayer is just asking for things we want. People often say "What is the good of praying? God never gives me the things I ask for." Well the answer to that is that prayer is not just asking but prayer means our whole intercourse with God. If you have a great friend, how often do you ask him for anything? Hardly ever do you? But you talk to him and find out what he thinks about things and tell him about all the things that interest you. If you admire him very much you try to be like him.

So dear children try this Lent to make prayer a real part of your life, something that you love—on which you depend to keep you good and happy and continually in God's Presence.

There are many other things to say about prayer and we will deal with the subject again when we come to Rogationtide.

VII.

When you read this we shall have come to the last fortnight of Lent. This fortnight is called Passiontide, which means the time when we think of our Lord's suffering. The week before Easter is called Holy, and there is a special Epistle and Gospel for every day. In the Gospels we read about our Lord's last days before His Crucifixion. The Friday in Holy Week is called Good Friday, and I want you, if you can, to read this letter on Good Friday, as perhaps it may help you to understand a little more why it was that Jesus Christ died on the Cross for us; why His death that happened so many years ago should be of such importance to us to-day.

It was because of sin that the Lord Jesus died on the Cross. One of the things that people sometimes say is this "Why should sin matter so much? Why should we not do as we like?" Well, the Cross answers that question. Surely sin must matter more than anything else in the world if it was because of sin that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, suffered and died on the Cross. Our Lord did not have to die, but He laid down His life of His own free will, because He knew that by His death He would save the world from the power of sin and redeem mankind.

You will remember that I told you in the Christmas letter that God gave man the power to choose between good and evil; that is, the power to do God's will or disobey and go his own way. That is what sin means, disobedience to God's will. We know that man chose to go his own way, and so, through his sin, he began to drift further and further away from God. He became blind to God's love, and set up so great a barrier between himself and God, that he no longer knew that God loved and cared for him.

So it was that the Son of God became man, in order to bring man back to God, and to break down the barrier, and make it possible for man to live in touch with God. We know that our Lord came to earth and lived a life of perfect obedience to God's will. He spent His life teaching, healing and doing good, and by His life and perfect

goodness and loving service He revealed to men the love of God towards them. He taught them that God was their Father and loved them so much that He had sent them His beloved Son, "to the end that all who believed in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

But our Lord was not only God. He was man as well, and as man He was tempted and suffered, and had the same experiences as we have. Yet there was one big difference. Our Lord never sinned, so He could not experience on account of His own sin, the sorrow of penitence and the feeling of separation from God that sin brings. Our Lord lived a perfectly sinless life, but because He wanted to have perfect fellowship and sympathy with man, He offered Himself to be put to death on the Cross—to take upon Himself the sin of the whole world. He willingly endured the greatest sorrow, that which would hurt Him more than we can ever understand, the separation of the soul from God.

We cannot understand all that this means, but we know this: by His death on the Cross, and by taking upon Himself the sin of the world, our Lord brought man back to God. Because He Who was God Himself became man and experienced everything that man experiences, there could be fellowship between God and Man.

We often hear it said that Jesus Christ saves us from sin and perhaps we just wonder what it means. It means that our Lord made it possible for us, in spite of our sins, to live in touch with Him and to grow in goodness, becoming by His help more and more like to Him our Saviour and Friend. It means that through Him we can get God's forgiveness and God's grace to help us to resist temptation. We may sin again and again, but if we are sorry and really mean to try and do better we know for certain that God will forgive us, not because we deserve forgiveness, but for the sake of Jesus Christ, His Son, Who died for us.

So, dear children, let us think of our lives, this Good Friday, and remember

that it was because of our sins that Jesus died. Let us remember that by His sorrow and pain and death He made it possible that we should live a life of fellowship with Him and grow in holiness, until we have perfect union with Him in Heaven. But there is one

condition for all this: we must be sorry for our sin, try to live a good life, and be a faithful witness to Him. Let us think of Him dying on the Cross for love of us, and do all we can to show our love for Him.

VIII.

A very happy Easter to you all. I hope you will have a most beautiful day, and that your hearts will be full of the true Easter gladness. At one time it used to be the custom for people when they met each other on Easter morning, instead of saying "Good morning," to say "The Lord is risen," and the other would answer, "He is risen indeed." That is the great Easter message.

What a wonderful day that first Easter morning must have been to the disciples of our Lord. When they saw him die on the Cross on Good Friday they were filled with misery and despair. All their faith and hope deserted them; they felt that their Master's wonderful life was a failure, and thought they would never see Him again. Think how terribly sad they must have been, and how it must have grieved them to know that they had deserted Him in His hour of need.

Then on that wonderful Easter morning came the news that He had risen from the dead, and that some of His friends had seen Him. S. Peter and S. John spread the news of the empty tomb; S. Mary Magdalene told how He had appeared to her and called her by name. Then He appeared to S. Peter, to the two disciples who were walking to Emmaus, and then when they were all gathered together in the upper room He came amongst them and said: "Peace be unto you," just as He used to say it before His death on the cross. How perfectly wonderful it must have been!

First the little glimmers of hope when the first rumours got about, then they would remember how our Lord had told them He would rise again, and their hope would increase, and then at last the glorious truth would burst upon them: The Lord is risen indeed, He is not dead, but He is living.

When our Lord rose from the dead He conquered sin and death. He died on the Cross because of the sin of the world. He rose again because goodness is stronger than sin. His own perfect goodness was stronger than the sin of the world. Think what a wonderful message that is for us and for the world. We thought last week what a terrible thing sin is. All round us and in ourselves we see sin, and it seems so strong, and we see what sorrow and suffering it brings. But because our Lord rose from the dead we know that the power of sin is broken, and that in the end goodness will triumph. We never need fear that sin will get the better of us, for we know that in the might of our risen Saviour we too shall be victorious. We can think of ourselves as "dead unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Our Lord by His resurrection also conquered death. Before He rose from the dead people did not know what happened to them when they died. They usually thought that they just came to an end and were no more. But because our Lord rose from the dead we know that we, too, shall rise. The Easter hymns are full of this message.

Thou has conquered in the fight
That hast brought us life and light.
Now no more can death appal,
Now no more the grave enthal.
Thou hast opened Paradise,
And in Thee Thy saints shall rise.

No, we need not fear death, for we know that death just means the passing into another life. We know that the spiritual life, the life of our soul, which we begin here will be continued after we die, and that all the people we love will still live in touch with our Lord.

and be nearer to Him than we can be now.

Jesus lives! our hearts know well,
Nought from us His love can sever;
Life nor death nor pains of Hell
Tear us from His keeping ever.
Alleluia!

We know, too, that because the Lord Jesus overcame sin and death God's great purpose for the world will be fulfilled, and that we shall one day live with Him in heaven in perfect communion and happiness.

Jesus lives! to Him the Throne
Over all the world is given;
May we go where he is gone,
Rest and reign with Him in heaven.

So, dear children, Eastertide is a time of new life, new hope, new joy. It is through our Lord Jesus Christ and all He does for us that we have all this

IX.

To-day I am going to tell you the story of an old play called Everyman. It was one of those plays that used to be acted in the churchyards in the Old Country by bands of players who would travel about from village to village, acting wherever they went. These plays are called mystery plays, and they teach some great lesson of the Christian faith.

Last week we thought of all our Lord did for us by His Resurrection, and how He offers us the gift of salvation. If you think carefully of the story I am going to tell you, you will understand that it teaches us the only way we can use and think the most of that wonderful gift for which our Lord paid so great a price.

In the first scene Everyman comes on the stage alone. He is a very pleasant-looking person, fat and easy-going, and he seems altogether taken up with worldly matters, such as money and pleasure. Presently a solemn trumpet is sounded, and then the voice of God is heard speaking to Everyman. God tells him that the time is soon coming when he must die, and He bids Everyman prepare himself for the last pil-

grimage between this world and the next. At this Everyman is very much affrighted. He feels quite unready to die, and he does not wish to leave all the worldly things that are so dear to him. But again God speaks and tells him to get ready, so Everyman decides that he will try and persuade someone to be his companion on the unknown journey. So first he calls together all his friends, those whom he loves, and implores them to come with him. But they will not come. Then he calls his neighbours and acquaintances and asks them to come. But they, too, refuse.

Then he calls Wealth to come to him, and Wealth, a great fat man, carrying money bags in his hands, comes in. But Wealth cannot go with Everyman on the last pilgrimage. Then Everyman is in despair, but once more the voice of God tells Everyman that there is one companion only who can travel with him to the next world, and that companion is Good Works.

Then Everyman is glad, and he sends a messenger to fetch Good Works, and he waits very anxiously for her arrival. But, alas! Good Works is very weak

and sick, for she has been neglected so long, and she is quite unable to walk alone. She has to be carried on to the stage, and Everyman sees at once that she is quite unfit to travel with him on his pilgrimage.

Once more the voice of God is heard bidding Everyman prepare, for soon he must set out. Everyman fears that he must go alone. He still has a little time to wait, and he determines to make the most of it. So first he sends for the priest and makes confession of his sins. The priest, after he has given him absolution, gives him Communion, the food for the soul on his last pilgrimage. Then Everyman calls together his friends and his enemies, and he asks them to forgive him anything they have

against him, and tries to make up in every way he can for the wrong he has done them. And now Everyman's time has really come. Death comes in and calls, beckoning him to follow, and God's voice is heard bidding Everyman depart. At the last Everyman sinks into his grave, and Good Works, now just strong enough to walk alone, goes with him, while his friends and his acquaintances and his wealth are all left behind.

God grant that when our time comes to make the last pilgrimage we may have a companion to take with us, a companion strong and healthy and beautiful of whom we need not be ashamed.

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Once more the voice of God is heard bidding Everyman prepare, for soon he must set out. Everyman fears that he must go alone. He still has a little time to wait, and he determines to make the most of it. So first he sends for the priest and makes confession of his sins. The priest, after he has given him absolution, gives him Communion, the food for the soul on his last pilgrimage. Then Everyman calls together his friends and his enemies, and he asks them to forgive him anything they have

X.

You will read this letter a week before Ascension Day, but it must be about the Ascension of our Lord, because the next letter will be for Whitsunday. Before Ascension Day, there are three Rogation Days; that is, days that are put aside for special prayer. We shall have to leave those days out for the present and go back to them some other time.

During the forty days after our Lord's resurrection, He often appeared to His disciples. Sometimes it was when they were all together, and sometimes to one or two alone. He would come to them wherever they were, and talk to them just as He used to talk before His crucifixion. What a wonderful time it must have been to the disciples and how they must have looked forward to His coming. But by degrees they learned that He was always near them whether they could see Him or not; they began to think of Him as the Unseen Friend, always in their midst, ever ready to help them. Our Lord taught them that His body was now a spiritual body; that it was no longer dependent on material things. It was the same body that had been nailed to the Cross on Good Friday, for in His hands and feet, He still bore the marks of the nails; but now it was a spiritual body, and no longer could feel tired and weary, or in pain. Now

He could come to them when they were shut away in the upper room with the doors shut; now He could be with them without them seeing Him. So He gradually taught them that the time would come when they would not see Him any more, but they would know that He was very near to them—was always as ready to hear them and help them as when they had been able to see Him.

He taught them that nothing but sin could separate them from Him; to them, the Apostles, He gave the power to give absolution or forgiveness of sin in His name. This means that the Apostles were given the power to declare to people who were sorry for their sins that they were truly forgiven; their sins put right away from them, and this power has been handed down from the Apostles to everyone who is ordained a priest in God's Church.

Our Lord also told the disciples what a wonderful work they had to do for Him. They were to go into all parts of the world and preach the good news of His life and death and Resurrection wherever they went. They were to heal the sick, cast out devils, proclaim the forgiveness of sin, and they were to baptize in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. He told them that some of them would die for His sake, and they would all suffer and be persecuted, but He prom-

ised them that in all their trials and dangers, He would be near them.

When our Lord had taught the disciples these things He told them that after He had left them, they could see Him no more; the Comforter would come to them and fill them with the power of God to do all the work He had left them to do. The Comforter is another name for God the Holy Spirit, and our Lord promised them that when the Holy Spirit should come they would be "endued with power from on high."

And then He went with them to the Mount of Olives, where they had so often been together before, and as He lifted up His hands to bless them, "He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Then they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, there to await the coming of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus had promised to send to them.

There are two ways in which we can think of our Lord's Ascension; one is from the point of view of our Lord Himself, and the other from our own. Our Lord's Ascension marked His day of great triumph. He had lived a perfect life on earth; He had suffered and died and risen again, victorious over sin and death. He had left on earth His band of friends and disciples who

loved Him so much, and were so inspired by His teaching that they were ready to go all over the world to preach the Gospel of God's love and man's redemption. And now his work was perfectly accomplished and He ascended to the Father to be exalted above "things in Heaven, things on earth and things under the earth; that at the Name of Jesus they all should bow." So on Ascension Day let us rejoice with our dear Lord and Master, because after His life of humiliation and suffering on earth, He, now perfect man as well as perfect God, reigns in Heaven as our King as well as our Friend and Saviour.

Let us thank Him, because He has taken back to Heaven our human nature, and the Father looking on His beloved Son sees us not as we are now weak and sinful, but as by the power of Jesus Christ we shall be when we come to be with Him in Heaven. When the disciples returned to Jerusalem we are told, they were filled with joy, because they knew our Lord was then present with them, and we too can rejoice, because that same assurance is for us just as much as for them, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

XI.

After our Lord's Ascension, the disciples returned to Jerusalem. Let us try to think for a moment of all they must have been feeling and thinking. In the first place they were full of joy and thanksgiving because of the triumph of their Lord and Master. Now they knew beyond all doubt that He was the Son of God, their King and their Lord. They thought with joy of His wonderful promise to be near them always, and they felt such union with Him that they were filled with "the peace of God that passeth all understanding." They felt perfect trust and confidence in our Lord, and did not worry and fuss about the great things He had told them to do. They did not feel anxious or frightened for the future, because our Lord had promised that they should be filled with "power from on high" to do all He had commanded

them, and they relied in perfect trust on His word. Then they had that wonderful feeling of hope and expectancy that we all have when something great is going to happen. Our Lord had told them to wait until the Comforter, that is God the Holy Ghost, should come to them. "I will not leave you comfortless," He had said, "I will come to you," and so they knew they were to wait until something wonderful should happen, and they would be so filled with the Spirit of JESUS and His influence would be so strong upon them that they would be able to begin the great work of preaching about Him as He had told them to do.

So they waited in Jerusalem and every day they went to the Temple to pray, and every day they met together in the Upper Room—there they prayed to our Lord and talked about

Him and the Comforter Who was coming to them. So they waited ten days, and when Sunday came round, which was the day of Pentecost, a feast of the Jewish Church, when they were all assembled together, our Lord's promise was fulfilled and the Holy Ghost came to them. If you read the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which is given as the Epistle for Whitsunday, you will see what happened on that day. The whole place, S. Luke says, was filled with a "rushing, mighty wind" and tongues of fire alighted on each of their heads, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost.

What a difference there was in the disciples after the Holy Spirit came upon them. Before, they had been calm and expectant, content to wait for our Lord's promise to be fulfilled; but now they were full of eagerness and zeal. They began to preach about Him as the Messiah, and condemning those who put Him to death. They were so filled with strength and courage and so radiant with joy and the knowledge of power within them that those who heard them were amazed and many believed on the Lord Jesus, who had so inspired them that they were able to speak so wonderfully and do such great things in His name.

I want you to think for a moment about our own lives in the light of the experience of these first disciples of our Lord. When we first hear about them they were just ordinary men, busy with their own affairs, not particularly good or clever. But our Lord saw in them the possibility of great things. He saw that they were capable of great love and self-sacrifice; He saw that they were humble and anxious to learn all He wanted to teach them; He saw that although some of them might then be petty and jealous and ambitious,

yet for love of Him and through His influence they would be able to cast aside all selfishness and be worthy to do the great work of spreading the Gospel throughout the whole world. And by degrees they learnt the lessons that our Lord wanted to teach them. They had often failed and disappointed Him, they even deserted and denied Him in His hour of need, but all the time He trusted and loved them, and saw all they were capable of becoming. And so after our Lord's Ascension we see them calm and joyful, full of humility and trust in God, full of faith and confidence in His word, empty of self and just waiting with love and devotion to do His will. And it was just because they were like this that the Holy Spirit was able to come to them and fill them with His power and grace, and it was because He could come to them that they became the leaders of God's Church and were able to spread the knowledge of the Gospel throughout the world.

And so it must be with us. First we must learn to know and love our Lord, and by degrees become more and more like Him as He wants us to be, and then when we are humble and submissive to His will, and ready to rely not on our own power, but on His, we shall be ready to be filled with the Holy Ghost, Who will enable us to do God's work in the world and fulfil His purpose for us.

God the Holy Spirit comes to us at our Baptism and He is always with us. At certain times in our life as at our Confirmation, He is ready to give Himself to us more fully than before, and to work very mightily within us. But before He can work through us and in us we must be ready and willing to be influenced by Him, and empty of all selfishness, so that He can fill our hearts with the love and power of Jesus Christ.

XII.

If you go to Church on the Sunday after Whit Sunday, you will probably hear sung what I think is one of the most beautiful hymns in the book: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Early in the morning our songs shall rise to Thee," I do not think you can hear this hymn sung, or even say it to yourself in your prayers, without feeling something of the true meaning of worship. This hymn seems to speak to us of the majesty and glory and awfulness of God, and makes us want to bow down in worship; and it is this thought that ought to be in our minds on Trinity Sunday, the day we keep in honour of the Blessed Trinity, and to-day I want to write to you about worship, and adoration so that we can bring home to ourselves a little bit of the greatness and majesty of God.

In the book of Revelation of S. John we learn a bit about the worship in Heaven. We read about the great company of Heaven, the angels and saints, bowing down before the throne crying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power," and then we are told of the angels falling on their knees crying: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever."

When we read the description of worship in Heaven we cannot help feeling what a tremendous difference there is between our worship and theirs, and it must be our great ideal to make our worship as much like theirs as possible. It must come from our very heart and be empty of all selfish thoughts. And in this we have one great thought to help us. All our worship is in Heaven. When we sing Holy, holy, holy, our song is lifted up and united to the song of the heavenly choir and is, as it were, an accompaniment, though rather weak and imperfect, to theirs. And be sure of this, that though the worship of God comes to Him as one vast song of praise, yet He knows the will of each singer, and if our voice

is silent, God will know and miss it, and there will be one part in the song lacking. When we go to church that is the best time to worship God, for when we join with other people it is easiest. If we sing the Psalms and the hymns as if we really mean them, if in Church we try to be very reverent, remembering God's presence all the time, then it is a very real bit of worship. In our prayers, too, we ought to try and worship as well as pray. There are many verses in the Psalms that are full of the spirit of worship, and these can be said any time during the day. Here are one or two, but when you hear the Psalms in Church you could make a note of verses which could be used as acts of worship.

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His holy Name," and "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Let the whole earth stand in awe of Him," and "praise the Lord for He is gracious," and "O sing praises unto His name for it is lovely."

I have said that when we worship, we join with the whole Church on earth, and in paradise, but not only that, we join, too, with the whole of creation. You cannot go out into the country, especially on a beautiful spring day, without knowing that the whole world is praising God. Nature sings a perpetual song of praise to God the Creator. It is through the beauties of nature that we get our first knowledge of God. They reveal His mind and His glory. "The Heavens declare the glory of God."

So dear children, let us this Trinity Sunday, think how we can best worship God. Let us give Him the worship of our souls, and join our song of praise with the songs of all Christians all over the world, and with the angels and saints in Heaven. And as we drink in the sweet fresh air, and feel the warm sun on our faces, and hear the song of the birds, and gaze on the little tender flowers, let us lift up our hearts on high and join in the chorus of the whole creation. Let us sing from our very hearts, "Oh Lord, how manifold are Thy works, the earth is full of Thy glory."

XIII.

We have now come to what is called the non-festival part of the Church's year. So far, ever since Advent, we have had one festival after another, all connected with the life of our Lord, and in between came the great fast of Lent and Passiontide. Then we came to Whitsunday, the festival of the Holy Spirit. Last Sunday we kept in honour of the Blessed Trinity. Now we have twenty-four Sundays before Advent comes round again—they are called the twenty-four Sundays after Trinity. I shall have twelve more letters to write to you, and they will be about all sorts of different things, sometimes about prayers and other Christian duties, and sometimes about the saints whose days we shall be keeping. To-day my letter is to be about the Church. There will be at least one other letter on the same subject.

I wonder what you mean exactly when you talk about the Church? If someone asks you what Church you belong to you will answer "The Church of England." By this you probably mean the particular church you happen to attend, or if you live in a big city you may have in mind all the Anglican Churches, and feel in a sort of way that you belong to them all. Or if you are a child of big ideas you may feel you belong to the English Church in Australia, or, better still, to the English Church all over the world. But even then you have only got hold of a little piece of the truth. The right answer to the question "What Church do you belong to?" is this: "I belong to the Holy Catholic Church." The word Catholic has a very big meaning. It means "for all people of all times and all places," and the Church to which we belong is not only our Church, but it is the Church of all Christian people who have ever lived since our Lord founded the Church nearly 2000 years ago. It is the Church of all the people in Paradise, and it is the Church of the saints in Heaven. Another way of saying the same thing is this: "The Church Militant (that is the Church on earth that is fighting against sin and the devil), the Church Expectant (that is the Church in Paradise), and the Church Triumphant in Heaven are all one; that

is, they make up one great Church. That is what we mean by the Holy Catholic Church, and is it not an inspiring thought to know we belong to such a wonderful society?

We sometimes think of the Church as God's great family. You know if you belong to a big family how you have a different feeling towards anyone else in the world. You may perhaps quarrel with them sometimes if you are foolish, but all the same you feel bound to them by the strongest ties of love and loyalty. You know if anything goes wrong with one of the family, if they are ill, or in trouble or disgrace, how it reflects on all the rest of the members. You are hurt because your brother is hurt, you are sad if your mother is sad, and you are slighted if your sister is slighted. If any of the family does wrong the whole family is disgraced, if any members gains distinction or reward you feel it an honour to the whole family. Well dear children, all these things apply to the other family to which we belong, the Holy Catholic Church, "For we are members one of another," and when we are baptised we are made as truly members of this great family as we are made members of our earthly family at our birth. Is it not thrilling to think what a number of brothers and sisters we have? A little black Christian child in New Guinea is just as much your brother as a little boy who attends the same church as you. And more wonderful still, we have a number of very great and holy brothers and sisters in heaven, for the saints belong to the same family, and they look with love and sympathy on their little brothers and sisters who are striving to live the Christian life and help them by their prayers, hoping one day to welcome them as members of the Church in Heaven. There is one perfectly simple reason why we are all brothers and sisters, and that is that we all have the same Father, and we all have the same Elder Brother, Jesus Christ our Lord. He is as ready to help and uphold the weakest and most unimportant members of the family here as He is to be near our greater brothers and sisters in heaven. He is as near to the little

black or yellow Christian children as He is to us; He is Brother to us all.

So you see, dear children, we have a very great responsibility to the whole family of the Church. When we are slack and lazy over our prayers or about going to church the whole family suffers; if we sin we bring disgrace not only on ourselves, but on the whole Church; when we repent "there is joy in heaven," and when we do well the whole Church gains honour through our success. There is this to help us, too, that when we are in sorrow or perplexity, and when we find the battle against sin very hard and discouraging we may know that we are not alone, but thousands of Christians all the world over are engaged in the same struggle, and thousands more of our

brothers and sisters in Paradise are praying for us and helping us in the battle which they themselves in their turn have fought. "Seeing, then, we are encompassed with so great a crowd of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us." If you think about this, dear children, I think you will feel that our membership of the Church should be a very real and very important factor in our lives, for if we belong to so great a family we must not live a selfish and self-centred life, but must give ourselves up in loving service for the sake of those who are joined to us by strong links of love and fellowship, and who every day with us lift up their hearts in prayer "to the God and Father of us all."

XIV.

In our last letter we thought of God's great family, the Church, and how we are all members of it. We thought, too, of the great number of brothers and sisters that we have, and of how some of them are in Paradise. It is of one of the very greatest of our brothers, S. Peter, that I am going to write about this week, because his day is on June 29, and I want you to think about him then. I could not tell you all about S. Peter, but I will describe a few of the incidents in his life, and I want you to try and picture the scenes for yourself. See what you can learn from them.

As our Lord was walking one day by the sea he saw S. Andrew, and said to him, "Follow Me." Now S. Andrew was S. Peter's brother, and when Jesus called him he went at once to fetch S. Peter and brought him to our Lord. That was the great turning point in S. Peter's life, and always after that he was one of our Lord's chief friends and companions.

The next picture is of S. Peter in great sorrow and anguish. He is by himself weeping bitterly, and the Lord Jesus, his Master and friend, is being led away to be crucified. S. Peter weeps, not because he is sorry for himself or because his pride is hurt, but because he has caused pain and disappointment to One whom he loves so dearly. He thinks of the look of sorrow-

ful love that our Lord turned on him when He heard his thrice-repeated denial, and his tears are tears of sorrow and penitence. He thinks of the great opportunity that was given him to go to his death with his Friend, and now he feels it is too late. And it is now when S. Peter has no more trust in himself, it is now when he is filled with humility, that he learns the great lesson of his life: "Through God we shall do great acts." "Of myself I can do nothing."

The next picture that I want you to imagine to yourselves is after the Resurrection, and our Lord is standing by the seashore surrounded by the disciples. See our Lord turn and speak to S. Peter, and see S. Peter kneel down at His feet. "Lord," he says, "Thou knowest that I love Thee," and when our Lord asks him the third time, "Lovest Thou Me?" "Lord, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee." And it is because of the love that our Lord sees in his heart that He gives him his great commission, "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep." And it came about through this that the bishops and clergy of our Church are called Pastors, which is the Latin name for shepherd, and thus sheep are the people of whose souls they are in charge.

The next picture of S. Peter is many years after. He has lived a life of

peril and hardship in the service of his Master. He has taught many people to know and love the Lord Jesus, and has baptized and confirmed many men, women and children who wanted to become Christians. Many of his friends had been put to death, and he himself had escaped from the prison, by the help of an angel sent to him from God, when he was condemned to die. After that he had spent many years in the service of the Church, sometimes at Jerusalem, sometimes travelling about and now he is an old man, and his time has come to give up his life for the Lord Jesus, and gladly and willingly he comes to die. We do not read of

his martyrdom in the Bible, but the legend goes that he and S. Paul were imprisoned together, and put to death on the same day, and it is said that S. Peter asked to be crucified with his head downwards, because he was not worthy to die in the same way as his Saviour Jesus Christ.

I am sure, dear children, you will find some lesson to learn from these pictures of S. Peter, and I hope that when June 29, comes round you will think of him, and ask God to help you to follow his example, going "from strength to strength" so that one day your whole life will be devoted to the service of Jesus Christ.

XV.

In our last letter but one, we thought about the Church as God's family, and this is to be about the Church too. But to-day I want you to think of the Church in rather a different way as a Society or Association. The society that you will know best is the school you go to. You know that in your school there are the children, boys and girls, big and small, who are all members of the school. Then perhaps there are the prefects or monitors, boys and girls, who are appointed to do certain work and to have some authority over the others. Then there are the masters and mistresses, who are there to do the work of teaching and to enforce order and discipline, and at the very top there is the head-master or head-mistress who is in charge of the whole school, and whom all have to obey. The prefects, the assistant teachers and the head-master might all be called the officers of the school. They each have their own particular work in the management of the school and have varying degrees of authority. A prefect has his work, and can do that and no other, a master has his work, and can do that and the prefects' too, if he likes, and the head-master has his work that no one else can do, and he can do the masters' and the prefects' work as well, if he wants to.

It is something the same as this in the society of the Church. The people of the Church are called the laity and

the officers or those in authority are called the clergy. There are three orders of clergy; Bishops, Priests and Deacons, and each have their own work in the ordering of the Church. A deacon has his work and power to do certain things, a priest can do all a deacon does and other things as well, and a bishop can do all a priest and deacon does and other things that no one but he can do.

To-day I want to tell you of all the steps a man takes before he becomes a clergyman or minister of the Church. Some of the boys who read this may be little boys and some big, but none are too big or too small to think whether it is God's will that they should one day be one of the officers in His Church. No boy should make up his mind what he will be when he grows up, until he has thought about this. When he thinks about it he may see that God is wanting him to do something quite different, or he may not feel sure about it. In that case he must pray to God to show him what he ought to do. But possibly he may see quite plainly that God is calling him to prepare for this particular work for Him, and then he should be the proudest and happiest boy in the world for a man can have no greater joy or privilege than that of being a priest in the Church of God. And if he does feel he has this call or even if he feels doubtful about it, he must try to prepare him-

self in every way for his future work. He must say his prayers very earnestly and ask God to make him worthy of so great an honour. He must work very hard at school and read all the best books he can, so that one day he will be able to teach and help others. He must never forget that God has given him a special call and must try to live up to all the best he knows. Then after he has left school he may have to go out to work for a bit and this will be good, because he will learn to be independent and to understand more about life and the things people do, and think. He should do all he can to enter in to other peoples lives and to see their point of view and to understand them.

After that if he is a lucky boy, he will be able to go to the university for three years and get his degree. This is a very great advantage, and every boy who wants to become a minister in the Church should make it his aim to do this, because he will want to be as well educated as he possibly can to do such important work for God. Of course, sometimes it is not possible, and then he must do the best he can by study and reading. And then comes the time when he begins his actual training for the ministry, and he goes to what is called a Theological College.

This is a college where every one is preparing to become a minister in the Church. A man generally stays there three or four years, and all that time he is studying and learning to pray better and preparing himself in every way for the work he is going to do. At the head of the college there is a principal, and a vice-principal, who are both priests, and they give lectures on all the things that the clergy ought to know. Then there is always a chapel (or little church) belonging to the college, and there services are held every day and there every day they spend time in prayer and meditation. All the time they are at the college they are trying to learn more and more about prayer, and how to pray better, because that is what will help them most in their work later on.

In the next letter we will think about what happens when the time at the Theological College is over—the time has come to be made a deacon in the Church. This letter will be a little hard for you younger children; but, however young you are, I want you to ask God in your prayers to show you what he wants you to do when you are a man, and if it is His will that He call you to be a priest in His Church. And it would be nice too, if all the girls who read this letter would say this same prayer for their brothers or for their friends.

XVI.

In my last letter I told you about the ministry of the church; of the bishops, priests and deacons who do God's work. Have you ever noticed what they sometimes wear in church over their surplices when they are celebrating Holy Communion or baptising little children? They wear what is called a stole, and at this time of the year it is green in colour. It passes round the neck at the back and hangs down on either side in front. I will explain to you what it stands for.

You know how hard it is to carry two buckets when they are filled with water. They knock against the knees and the water spills. So sometimes on a farm you will see a man wearing on his shoulders a smooth board rounded

and shaped to fit round the neck and resting on the shoulders, and projecting about six inches on either side. This is called a yoke, and is used to help him to carry water more easily. From the ends of the yoke hang two chains, on to which the buckets are fixed. The man can then walk along easily carrying the water without spilling it.

Now the stole a priest wears round his neck over the surplice is meant to represent a yoke; and the reason he wears it is to remind him continually that he is to serve. He is God's servant. And as God's servant, he is to serve all of God's children to whom he is sent. Although we speak of the bishops, priests and deacons as the officers of the church, yet they are to fulfil their

office by serving those around them. Jesus Christ became a servant when He came into the world, to help us to be good. You remember how He washed the Disciples' feet and how patient and gentle He was to those who opposed Him and wronged Him. He knew it was no good to command and threaten, but He tried to help the people by loving them, and love has to be humble and to take many rebuffs. His ministers in the same way must be humble and gentle, even as St. Paul says, as gentle as a nurse cherishing her own children.

If a young man offers himself for the ministry of the Church he first becomes a deacon. The word deacon simply means a servant. Do you know how you can distinguish between a deacon and a priest in church? One way is this: the deacon wears the stole over one shoulder only, whereas the priest wears it over both shoulders. The deacon wears it over the left shoulder and the two ends, instead of hanging down in front, are crossed and fastened under the right arm. The reason for this is to show that the deacon is only beginning to learn to serve God in the Church. He has not yet undertaken the full responsibility of service, so he only partly wears the yoke. He is made a deacon at a special service in church. You will find it at the very end of the Prayer Book. It is called "The Ordering of Deacons." The Arch-deacon first presents all those who are to be ordered deacons to the Bishop and says that he has examined them and thinks that they are truly called by God to this work. The Bishop also examines them and explains that their work is to assist the priest in divine service, and specially at Holy Communion; to read the Holy Scriptures in church, to preach, and to teach, and

to visit the people in the parish. They promise to do all this, and so to live that their lives may be good examples in the Church. They also promise to obey the Bishop and those set over them.

Then they kneel before the Bishop, one by one, and he lays his hands on them, and says, "Take thou authority to execute the office of deacon in the Church of God committed unto thee: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Then, whilst they are still kneeling, the Bishop gives each one a copy of the New Testament, usually in Greek, and says, "Take thou authority to read the Gospel in the Church of God, and to preach the same; if thou be thereto licensed by the Bishop himself."

In this way the Sacrament of Holy Orders is received in which the Holy Spirit comes to each one to supply all that he needs for the new life and work now before him. Henceforth the minister of God is to try to live so close to God by a life of prayer and meditation and study that the grace of God will continually come to him in sufficient measure for his needs. It is always a temptation to every minister to be so absorbed in the work of teaching and preaching and visiting as to make the times for prayer and drawing near to God become shorter and shorter. This spoils the work entirely. Just as it is God whom we rely upon to help us to overcome temptation and to be good, so a minister must rely wholly upon God for help to do his work. To try and do it alone is to fail. A minister of the Church must above all things be a man of prayer. Let us all pray for the clergy we know that they may truly serve God and live very close to Him day by day.

XVII.

In our last letter we thought about the work of a Deacon, and to-day we will go on to speak about the work of a Priest of the Church.

After a man has worked for a year or more as a Deacon he is again brought to the Bishop, this time to be ordained a Priest. You will find the service for a Priest's Ordination after the

Ordering of Deacons at the end of the Prayer Book. Ordination is a Sacrament and the laying on of the Bishop's hands on the heads of those who are brought to him to be ordained, is the outward visible sign (that is a sign that can be seen and felt) of the coming of the Holy Spirit. When the Bishop's hands are laid on his head the person

who is being ordained knows that God is giving him the strength and the authority to do the work to which He has called him. He knows that now by the grace of God he is a Priest, that through that grace he will be enabled to do all the work that in this office of Priesthood he will be called upon to do.

When the Bishop lays his hands on the heads of those who are brought to him to be ordained Priest, he says the following words:—"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition (i.e., laying on) of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of His Holy Sacraments. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." And then he hands each one a bible, and says, "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God and to minister the Holy Sacraments in the Congregation, where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto." So you see a Priest has much greater responsibility than a Deacon. He has many of the same things to do, but a great many other very important ones as well. In the first place, he has to administer the Sacraments. In another letter I am going to tell you more about the Sacraments, but I will explain a little about them now.

First, the Holy Baptism, which can be administered by a Deacon or a Priest, and by any baptized man or woman, if the person to be baptized is dying, and there is no clergyman at hand. Everyone should know this, because sometimes it is impossible to get a Priest or Deacon in time, and people often don't know what to do. Then there is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. This service can only be taken by a Priest or a Bishop. These are called the two great Sacraments, because they were given us by Our Lord Himself, and because everyone who is a Christian should be baptized, and when the right time comes should be a partaker of the Holy Communion. Then there are five other Ordinances (which are really, though not always

called a Sacrament), three of which can be administered by a priest, these are the Sacraments of Absolution, Marriage and Holy Unction. To administer the Sacrament of Absolution is a very important part of a priest's work, and is given to him as a special commission when he is ordained: "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." These words were spoken by our Lord to His Disciples, and the power to declare God's forgiveness to those who are sorry for their sins has been handed down from that day to this through the priesthood of the Church. The word absolution means "letting loose." When we receive absolution it means that we are let loose from our sins. A Priest does not forgive sins, but if we are truly sorry and confess that we have done wrong and intend to do better he can tell us that God does indeed forgive us. He pronounces words of forgiveness in God's Name.

Then there is Holy Unction, which is something administered to people when they are ill, and there are two Sacraments that only a Bishop can administer—Confirmation and Ordination.

So you see administering the Sacraments is a very important part of a Priest's work, and takes up a great deal of his time. Sometimes he takes the Holy Communion service two or three times on a Sunday, and often in the week as well, and always on Saints' Days. It is one of his highest duties, and greatest privileges, that he is able by the authority given him, to carry out our Lord's command to St. Peter to feed His flock with the spiritual food of His own Body and Blood.

If a man is to be a true Priest, he must himself live very close to God, and this means that he must spend much time in prayer and meditation—in studying God's Holy Word. This will also help him in another part of his work, that of preaching. A Priest has to preach to his people in church, and he also teaches them, especially when he is holding classes for those who wish to be confirmed. He spends much of his time, too, in visiting his people, and especially he goes to see any who are sick and in sorrow or difficulty. So you see a Priest is a

real father to his people. He is there to help them in all the different departments of their life, and because he is a Priest he is able to minister to their souls by giving them the Sacraments which all who belong to the Church are entitled to receive. What a wonderful life a priest's is. He spends his whole life serving others in ways that he knows are best because they were used by the Lord Jesus Himself. If a Priest does so much for us, surely it is our part to do something for him. We have a great responsibility towards the clergy, just because they do such great things for us, and spend their lives in helping us to live good and Christian lives. In the first place we must pray

for them and their work, and in the second place we must be sure they have enough money. Sometimes you hear people say, "I don't like Mr. So and So. I shall not give anything for his stipend." This is very wrong. They may not like him, but, all the same, he is their Priest, and he spends his time seeing to their needs. You would not refuse to pay your doctor because you didn't like him, would you? So let us remember, dear children, to pray for all the clergy of our Church, especially our own rector and any others we know, and if we can, let us sacrifice ourselves a little bit for those who give up their lives to help us to live closer to God.

XVIII.

To-day we are going to think about the work of a Bishop, and in the next letter we shall go on to something quite different.

There are very few Bishops in the Church compared to the number of Priests, and it is a very great honour to be chosen to be a Bishop. Bishops are, as it were, the generals in the great army which is fighting Christ's battles on earth, and of which Jesus Christ Himself is the Commander-in-Chief; or, to put it differently, they are the princes appointed to rule over His Church on earth.

I wonder if any of you have ever seen the consecration of a bishop? I have once, and that was when Bishop Davies was consecrated to be Bishop of Carpentaria in St. John's Cathedral, Brisbane. It was a very wonderful and impressive ceremony. I wish I could tell you all about it so that you could picture it for yourselves.

The only person who can consecrate is a bishop, and if possible it is done by the Archbishop of the Province with two or more other bishops to assist him. They are usually robed in a cope, which is a beautifully coloured vestment shaped something like a cloak opening down the front, and on their heads they wear a mitre, which only bishops can wear. (If you want to see a picture of a bishop in cope and mitre there might be one in your history book, and if you have a Coronation

Book there is sure to be one there.) The Priest who is to be consecrated is brought before the Archbishop, and before the Archbishop and Bishops lay their hands on his head he is asked several questions. These questions will tell us a good deal about the work of a Bishop. He is first asked if he feels certain that God is calling him to be a Bishop, and next whether he believes the Holy Scriptures, and will instruct those committed to his care in their teaching. Then he is asked whether he will study and meditate on God's Holy Word so that he will be able to exhort his flock and to convince those who do not believe. Next he is asked if he will try to root out all false doctrine and encourage others to do the same. The next question is about his own personal life, and he promises by the help of God to live a good, upright, unworldly life, and to be a good example to his flock. Then he promises to teach his people to love peace and goodness and to live in charity together, and says he will correct and reprove those who have done wrong. The next question concerns his special work as a Bishop, and he is asked if he will be faithful in ordaining and confirming others. Lastly, he promises to be "gentle and merciful for Christ's sake to all poor and needy persons and to all strangers destitute of help."

When these questions have been asked the Archbishop says a prayer for the

newly-elected Bishop that he may have strength to carry out all he has promised, and then a hymn to God the Holy Spirit is sung. Then the Archbishop and the other Bishops present lay their hands on the head of him who is consecrated and say these words: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given by this imposition of our hands, for God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and soberness." Then he is handed a Bible, and the Archbishop says these words, which also give us a picture of what a Bishop should be and do:

Give heed unto reading, exhortation and doctrine. Think upon the things contained in this Book. Be diligent in them that the increase coming thereby may be manifest to all men. That means that they may see the good he gets from reading and meditation.) Take heed unto thyself and to doctrine, and be diligent in doing them; for by so doing thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee. Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost. Be so merciful that you be not too remiss (i.e., lenient); so minister discipline that you forget not mercy; that when the Chief Shepherd shall appear you may receive the never-failing crown of glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

These are very beautiful words, and they sum up for us the duty and character of an ideal Bishop. We see him as one gentle and humble, yet full of strength and dignity; always ready to help and comfort, and teach and exhort his people. We see him as one who is every trying by prayer and

communion with our Lord and by meditation on His word to live closer and closer to Him, and to learn from His example to be a true shepherd to his people.

A Bishop is the father of his people, and he gives up his whole life to their needs. He travels about to different parts of his diocese to visit his clergy and see how they are getting on, and to hold Confirmations. He is always ready to help those who come to him, and to give advice to those who ask him. He preaches and teaches as he promised to do, and of course he administers those sacraments which we thought of last time as part of a Priest's work. He also spends much time in prayer and meditation and in intercession for his clergy and his people. As well as being a general in the army or a prince of the people, a Bishop is the servant of all for Christ's sake. Our Lord Himself said: "I am among you as one that serveth," and it is a Bishop's great aim to follow in his Master's steps and work for and serve his people.

There is only one more thing that I am going to tell you about Bishops, and it is both interesting and important. When a Bishop lays his hands on a Priest's head to consecrate him a Bishop he is doing just what the Apostles did long ago. They consecrated Bishops to take their own place when they were dead, and these men in their turn consecrated others, and so on, till you come to the Bishops of the present day. There has been a succession of Bishops ever since the days of the Apostles. This is a wonderful thing to think of, because it means that our Bishops (that is all the Bishops in the whole Church) have succeeded straight from the Apostles who were chosen and ordained by Jesus Christ Himself. So their power and authority comes straight from the Lord Jesus, and the command that He gave to St. Peter to feed His flock is given just as directly to every Bishop who is consecrated in Christ's Church.

XIX.

I wonder how many of you are confirmed, and how many are still looking forward to their Confirmation. Perhaps some of you are going to be confirmed very soon, and are thinking a great deal about it. Anyhow, whether you are confirmed or not, I want you to read this letter, and see if it will throw any new light on the subject.

If you are one of a large family you will know that the younger brothers and sisters have to be looked after and cared for. They do not have many responsibilities, and not very much is expected of them. Also they do not have so many privileges as their elders, and they are not considered altogether responsible for their own actions. For instance, if a little child is untidy and careless or naughty and unruly, people will not so much blame him as they will his parents. They say, "Look how badly Mrs. So-and-So brings up her little boy. Poor little thing, what a shame not to teach him better." But when the children grow older, it is quite a different matter. They are still members of the family, but are, as it were, full-grown members, and it is their part to look after the honour of the family more than to be looked after by the family. They are able to look after themselves, and are expected to do so. They have more privileges, such as being allowed to sit up for tea or go out alone, and they are expected to be a good example to their younger brothers and sisters. If they do wrong and are untidy and slovenly, people do not blame their parents, but they say, "Look what a horrid girl So-and-So is, she ought to know better at her age."

So, dear children, it is the same in the other great family to which you belong—God's family—the Church. When the time comes for you to be confirmed, it shows that you have come to the time when you must be, as it were, a grown-up member of the family. (This does not in the least depend on a child's age, but on how much they are capable of loving and understanding spiritual things. One child might be ready to be confirmed at twelve, another not till much later.)

You will have great responsibility, and much more will be expected of

you. You will no longer be as it were, the babies of the family who have to be looked after and made to do as they are told, but you will be more like grown-up members, still doing as you are told, but doing so of your own free choice, because you love obedience and know it is best. You will be a responsible member of God's family, on whom the honour of the whole family depends, and it will be your part to see that nothing you do brings disgrace on your brothers and sisters, or on your Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

But if this were all that Confirmation meant, it would be a hard thing indeed to think about. We should probably say this: "God has made me a full-grown member of His family, He has given me great responsibilities, and more is expected of me, and yet I don't feel any more able than before to be as good as I should wish. I have always had difficulties enough, and now I have more than ever. Whatever shall I do?"

No! God does not treat us like that. He knows that when boys or girls are old enough (spiritually) to be confirmed, they are also old enough to have a great many temptations and difficulties. He knows too that their new responsibilities will bring them more temptation and perplexity. If left to themselves, He knows that they will probably grow worse, instead of better, as they get older. So God ordained, through His Church, that when the time came for His children to be full-grown members of his family they should be given a great and wonderful gift to help and support them. Just as people will give you presents when you come of age, so God gives you a wonderful present when you become of age spiritually. He gives you the gift of His Holy Spirit, and the way He gives this gift to you is through the laying on of the Bishop's hands at your Confirmation. The word "to confirm" means to strengthen, and God's Holy Spirit is given you so that you may have strength and power to do the work to which God is calling you, and to fight against the temptations that will beset you.

So, dear children, when you go to a Confirmation or are yourselves con-

firmed, you will see the Bishop lay his hands on the heads of those who come and kneel before him, and you will hear him say these words, "Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace, that he (or she) may continue Thine for ever; and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more until he (or she) come to Thine everlasting Kingdom. Amen." And then you will know that the gift of God's Holy Spirit is being poured out on those children, and that if they use it and make the

most of it their lives will be full of the power and the love of God.

So I want you just to think of this. When you are confirmed, God calls you to a higher service. He calls you to serve Him by prayer, by work and most of all by a good and pure life, and by being an example of a loving, true and joyful Christian child. But, remember. He does not ask you to do this in your own strength, but He gives you the Holy Spirit to work within you and make you all He longs for you to be.

XX.

In our last letter we thought about Confirmation, and we saw that after we were confirmed we had more privileges than before. The greatest privilege of all, as you probably know, is that we are allowed to be partakers of the Holy Communion, that is when we go to the Communion Service we go up to the altar rail and receive from the hand of the priest the holy bread and wine—the outward sign of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. To-day we are going to think about just one aspect of that service of Holy Communion. It is only one very small part of all there is to think about it, and I have chosen this particular part because it applies to all the children who are present at that service, and not to those who are confirmed. Another time I want to write a letter especially for them.

When I was at school I had two very great friends. We were always together, and we loved each other very much. When the time came for us to leave school we knew we should miss each other very much indeed, and we made a plan that at a certain time every day we would think of each other very specially, so that we would all be thinking the one of the other at the same moment. This was a very good plan, and saved us from being sad or lonely. After a hard day's work, when five o'clock came round I would just stop a minute and think something like this: "Anne and Joyce are both thinking of me now. I wonder what they are doing, and if they are happy. What lovely times we have had together. God bless them both." And doing this

made my friends seem very near to me, and when the right time came round it was almost as if we were really together again. It did not mean that we forgot each other at other times, but that was our very special time for each other.

You know, too, how certain things and certain occasions make you think of certain people. For instance, your mother may be very fond of some special hymn, and you will never hear that hymn sung without thinking of her. Or one day, on your way to school, you see a boy fall off his horse, and every time you pass that way you think of the boy and the horse again. So it is with hundreds of things in life, one thing reminds us of another, and some things are very strongly connected in our minds with certain people. You think of some things for yourself and see if this isn't true.

Well, our Lord Jesus Christ when He knew that the time was coming when His disciples would not see Him any more, wanted to think of something that would always be connected in their minds with Him, and would remind them of Him very strongly. And He remembered how very often during His ministry they had all met together after the long day of preaching and teaching, and had had supper together. He could probably think of many such occasions when they had gathered round the table and after He had blessed the bread (or said grace, as we should say) they had sat down and had a cheerful, pleasant supper together while they told Him all they had done during the day, and asked His advice for the next day's work. So our Lord knew that

the preaching and blessing of the bread at supper would be something that would remind them of happy times they had had together. The night before He was to die, our Lord told His disciples to meet Him at a certain house in Jerusalem, where they would all have supper together. It was the Feast of the Passover, a Jewish festival at that time, and as it was a special occasion S. Peter and S. John went first to see that everything was ready and the supper prepared. Then our Lord and the other disciples arrived, and they all had supper together. And when the ordinary meal was over Jesus told them why He had specially asked them to meet for supper that night. He told them that it was the last time before His death that he would have supper with them, and He asked them when they met together in that way, after He had left them, to think very specially of Him, and to remember that last night when they had supper together. But our Lord said much more than this. Any man can ask his friends to do a certain thing in his memory, and our Lord, knowing that His disciples would naturally think of Him when they met to "break the bread," used this to teach them something very great and wonderful. He promised them that when they met together and one of them took the bread and the wine and blessed them and when they would be thinking of Him, that He would really and truly be present with them. He promised that although they would be thinking of Him, that He Himself would be standing amongst them just as truly as when He was with them. He took the bread and said

"This is My Body," and He took the wine, and said, "This is My Blood," and this He said to teach them that the bread and the wine would be the outward tokens of His real living presence amongst them. He did not mean that He would not be near them at other times, or that He would forget them, but he appointed this special time as a meeting-place when they would all be together with all their thoughts and hearts concentrated on Him, their unseen Friend, who would be standing in their midst.

So, dear children, when you come to the Holy Communion service, at the Prayer of Consecration you see the priest take the bread and the wine, and hear him say the very words that our Lord said on the night before His death, you will know that our Lord Jesus Christ is truly present there with you, as He was with His disciples in the upper room. And this is the best time of all to speak to Him and tell Him of your love for Him, and of all your hopes and thoughts. He loves to see His children present at that service, when He is so near them, and can fill them with His joy and love. So never, if you can help it, be absent from this service and go with great joy and reverence, knowing that you will meet our Lord and Saviour there; and if you live far away in the bush and cannot often go, look forward to the time when you will be able to meet our Lord at His own appointed place, and make, as it were, appointments of your own with Him your Lord and Friend, and know for certain that He is very near to you and you to Him.

XXI.

You will be reading this letter some time about September 29, which is the Feast of S. Michael and all Angels. I expect most of you know something about the Angels and perhaps you often think about them, and remember how near they are to you. There is a very nice hymn which tells you a great deal about the Angels and what they do. It begins like this, "Around the Throne of God a band of glorious Angels ever stand." Will you please find it and read it before you go on with my letter?

Now, I am going to tell you an Angel Story, and I hope you will like it and that it will make you realise more the nearness of the Angels to us all.

There was once a town called Spinalunga, that was built high up in the mountains. On three sides there were deep ravines between the town and the hills, so that no enemy could approach except by the fourth side, which was on the west. On the top of the hill, which was flat, stood the Cathedral and over the western door a statue of the Holy Mother Mary bearing the Christ

Child in her arms. In front of the Cathedral was a piazza or courtyard, in which grew many orange trees and pomegranates, and here it was that the children of Spinalunga used to play. The streets of the town were very steep and narrow—there was no room for the children to play there, so for many years the piazza had been devoted to them, and they loved to play there beneath the shadow of the Cathedral and listen to the deep-toned bells.

But in a certain year there was a Governor of Spinalunga who was a very bad-tempered man, and the sound of the children at play irritated him so much that he gave orders that no children should be allowed to enter the piazza. So the children had nowhere nice to play, and a strange, sad silence hung about the Cathedral, and all the people of Spinalunga were sorry not to hear the happy sound of laughter and song. Now in the forest near the town there lived a hermit, named Brother Agnolo, whom all the people loved for his goodness and wisdom. When next he came into Spinalunga he heard what the Governor had done, and went to remonstrate with him. "You have not done well," he said, "You spoil the children's lives and do yourself no good. Their happiness should bring joy into your life, not sadness. If you will bid them come back this evening you will see something that will give you such joy that you will never want to send them away again."

So the Governor did what Brother Agnolo wanted, and he and the Brother stood on the Cathedral steps to see the children come. As the Cathedral bells began to ring all the little people of the town came trooping into the piazza. Laughing and singing they came, chasing each other in the sunshine. And as the Governor stood watching his eyes were opened and behold with every child he saw a white-winged Angel, who ran and laughed and sang just as the children were doing. As the Governor and Brother Agnolo watched and listened they could not tell which were the songs and laughter of the children and which the angels, and as they stood there they looked up at the western door, and, lo, the Holy Babe in His mother's arms, seemed to smile and clap His little hands.

Now, shortly after this Spinalunga was besieged by the enemy. A great

army encamped outside the western gate, and the captain sent a message to say they would besiege the town unless twenty of the children of Spinalunga were given up to them as hostages, as a pledge that the people of Spinalunga would not join in with their enemies against them. This demand the Governor utterly refused and so the siege went on, and the city was sore beset. One night Brother Agno'o managed to make his way through the ranks of the enemy and enter the town. The people rejoiced to see him, and he went straight to the Cathedral to pray. When he rose from his knees his face was glad, and he went to see the Governor, and they talked for a long time together. And that evening a message was sent to the enemy, saying that in the morning the gates of Spinalunga would be thrown open and that all the children would come forth so that twenty of them might be chosen to go as hostages. All that night as the children slept and the enemy made merry in the camp the people of Spinalunga prayed with pale drawn faces, and at mid-night all the strong young men assembled in the square. After they had received the blessing of Brother Agnolo, they were let down over the wall by rope ladders into the ravine on the eastern side of the town, and from there they were to steal round to the woods on either side of the besiegers and there wait till morning.

Early in the morning, as soon as the sun's first ray had lighted up the hills the gates of Spinalunga were thrown open, and as the Cathedral bells began to chime the children came trooping out. They walked in two files singing a simple hymn, and at their head went Brother Agnolo, bearing a plain wooden cross and singing joyfully. As they walked towards the enemy's camp the people of Spinalunga crowded on the walls to see, and held their breath with wonder, for, lo, beside each child was an Angel with a flaming sword.

The besiegers, too, beheld this wonderful sight. Filled with dismay, they turned to flee, only to find their way cut off by the young men of the city, who came springing out from the forest on either side. "So the little hill town of Spinalunga was saved by the children and their angels, and even to this day the piazza of the Cathedral is their very own playground, in which no one

can prevent their playing all the year round."

You will find this story, dear children in a book called "The Child's Book of

Saints," by William Canton, and there are many other beautiful stories in that book that I hope you will read one day.

XXII.

Have you ever thought what a big debt of love and gratitude we owe to the four writers of the Gospel? If they had not taken the trouble to write down all they knew about Our Lord Jesus Christ and His life on earth, what a terrible loss it would have been to us and to all Christians of all ages throughout the world. The four writers of the Gospel—S. Matthew, S. Mark, S. Luke, and S. John—are called Evangelists, and that means the bearers of good news. **They write to us about the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Saviour of the world.** That is the good news they bear.

On Thursday, October 18, we hold the Festival of S. Luke, and so this letter is to be about his Gospel. We do not know a great deal about S. Luke's life, but we can find out a lot about his character by reading his Gospel. Have you ever noticed how much you can discover about people by what they write or how they describe things? Suppose five children went to a picnic and came to tell you about it afterwards. One would tell you what they had had for tea, another what games they had played, two might describe the place where they had had the picnic, and each would tell you such different things about it that you would hardly recognise it for the same place. Another might tell you how tired she got coming home, and from what they each told you, you would understand a little bit what sort of children they were and the things that interested them most. So it is with the writers of the Gospel. They were all men of different character and outlook, so they were all interested in different things. They all loved our Lord, but some things in His life and in His teaching might make more impression on one than another. One might love Him most because He was so gentle, another because He was so brave, another because He was such a great teacher. So we should be very glad that there are four writers of the Gospel, because we learn about His life and His work from four different points of view.

Let us think what S. Luke most loved in Our Lord, and what most appealed to him in His Master's life. First S. Luke had a great love and respect for women. In those days, as in some heathen countries to-day, women and girls were greatly despised and little thought of, but Our Lord Jesus Christ loved them, and was always ready to help and encourage them. S. Luke loves to tell us the many occasions when Our Lord came in contact with women who were in trouble or sorrow and helped and saved them. He tells us of the time when Our Lord, filled with sympathy for the poor widow who had lost her only son, raised him from the dead and restored him to her. He tells us the nice homely story of Mary and Martha, and how they shared their love for our Lord, one by sitting at His feet and listening to Him speaking and the other by getting the dinner ready for Him. S. Luke, too, tells us of the poor widow putting her penny into the offerings, and of the women who followed our Lord to Calvary weeping. We have cause to believe that S. Luke was a friend of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that it was from her own lips he heard the story of the Angel Gabriel's visit to her to tell her that she would have a little son, and the wonderful Christmas story of the Birth of the Christ Child in the stable at Bethlehem, and the song of the Angelic Hosts at His Birth. Perhaps it was because S. Luke knew and loved the dear Mother of our Lord that he showed such love and sympathy for other women, and told with such understanding and tenderness the story of Our Lord's love and service to them.

S. Luke, too, loves to write about little children and the Childhood of our Lord. He tells us about the childhood of S. John the Baptist, and about Jairus' little twelve-year-old daughter. He writes about our Lord's Birth and His Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple. He alone tells us the story we all love of how Our Lord at the age of twelve waited behind in the Temple to hear the teaching of the learned Doctors,

He tells us how the Boy Jesus was obedient to His Mother, Mary, and Joseph, and advanced in wisdom and stature, and was beloved by God and man.

Another special thing to notice in S. Luke's Gospel is that he loves to think about Our Lord as the Saviour of the whole world. He thinks of all people as brothers and sisters in one great family, and of Our Lord as the Saviour of them all. The Jews of our Lord's time were divided into different classes which each hated the other, and then all Jews hated and despise the Samaritans, and all other Gentiles. S. Luke in his Gospel tries to do away with this feeling, and he shows how Our Lord loves all alike, and came as the Saviour of the whole world. He tells us all the instances when Our Lord honoured the Samaritans and treated them just the same as He treated the Jews, and tells how, on the day of the Ascension, our Lord bids His disciples to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

Lastly, S. Luke wrote his Gospel especially for the outcast and despised, the sinners and the despairing. His message to them is one of salvation; Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. He tells us of Our Lord's story about the lost piece of silver, ending with the words, "There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth." He

tells us the story of the Prodigal Son, and God's willingness to forgive; He tells us of His loving gentleness to the woman who was a sinner, and of His words from the Cross to the Penitent Thief. He tells us of Our Lord's story of the man who made a great supper and called in "the poor, the lame, the halt and the blind."

So you see, dear children, we learn from all this what sort of a man S. Luke was. He loved gentleness and sympathy, and was himself gentle and kind. He was deeply attached to little children and honoured and loved women. He had a great love for sinners, and thought especially of Our Lord as the Saviour coming to save sinners, bringing peace and forgiveness to the penitent. He had a chivalrous and manly heart, and loved to see the downtrodden uplifted, and the despised honoured and respected.

Besides writing the Gospel, S. Luke also wrote the Acts of the Apostles. From this book, too, if we had time we could find much to tell us about his life and character. We know that he was S. Paul's loyal friend and companion, and that he was a doctor. S. Paul calls him "The beloved Physician." And we can just imagine him as he went about healing and doing good ever striving to follow in the footsteps of his Master about whom he loved to think and write.

XXIII.

When I am writing to you, I often wonder what sort of children you are, and try to picture you as you read my letters. I wonder very often what sort of things interest you—how I can best put things, so that they will help you. But there is one thing that I know about you all, that makes it possible for me to write to you as if I really knew you, and that is something that you are called to be, and I am called to be, and all God's children are called to be. What is that you say? We are called to be saints "What," you say, "Saints? Saints are the great and good people we read of in the Bible and other books and we are not great and good like them." No, of course you are not, but that is what God means you to be, and that is what by His grace you will be one day. You are called to be saints in just the same way as the great men and women of our Church were called

and you have just the same chance as they had of living holy and valiant lives devoted to God's service. The word saint really means one who is set apart for God's service and when we speak of the saints we usually mean those who won the battle against sin and gave themselves up to God; the great heroes of our Church, men, women and children, who after passing through "great tribulation" have won at length eternal life with God. And that is just God's aim for us. He wants us so to live our lives on this earth, that one day we shall live with Him.

So you see we can think of the saints as those who have won the battle that we are fighting now. In the ordinary things of our life it is a great help to think of those whom we admire or who have succeeded in what we are trying to do. If you are playing in a cricket match you want to play as well as the

boy whose place you have taken in the eleven; if you are going in for an examination, you want to pass well because your sister passed so well the year before. We are constantly helped and encouraged by those to whom we look up. And so in our lives as children of God. As we saw in another letter, we are members of one great family, the Church, of which as it were the saints are the elder brothers and sisters, and we always have before us the wonderful example of their lives to help and inspire us as we fight the very same battles that they once fought.

November 1, is All Saints' Day, the day on which we give thanks to God for His Saints.

For all the Saints who from their labours rest,
Who Thee by Faith before the world confessed,
Thy Name, Oh Jesus, be for ever blest.
Alleluia!

That is the first reason why we keep All Saints' Day. It is a day of joy and thanksgiving to God for the lives of His saints. You try and think of some of the saints you like best, and thank God for the example of their lives, the good they did.

The second reason is this: We want to honour the saints themselves. Just as we keep Anzac Day in honour of our soldiers and sailors, who fought at Gallipoli and think of them with loving reverence and admiration, so we keep All Saints' Day in honour of God's saints and think with love and wonder of their courage, their purity and pattern of self sacrifice.

The third reason is to remind ourselves how closely we are bound by the strongest ties to the saints in Heaven. We are all members of one family, all soldiers of the same army with our Captain, Jesus Christ at our head and as we fight our battles here, we know they are with us, and as we keep All Saints' Day we know that they too are rejoicing and giving thanks with us. Suppose one of your brothers lives right away from home and you never see him, yet you never forget him do you? And on special days as for in-

stance his birthday, you think very much of him and know for certain that his thoughts are turned to you and home. So on All Saints' Day we feel sure that our holy brothers and sisters in Paradise whose festival it is are joined to us in heart as we think of and give thanks for them.

Dear children, it is very uplifting to think of the saints, not only because of the wonderful example of their lives, but because of the consciousness of our union with them. We are as we say, in the Collect for All Saints' Day, "knit together in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of Christ Our Lord" and this is just another way of saying that we are all members of one great family. We know that they help us by their prayers and by the inspiration of their lives and we know too that because they were given strength and courage to fight their battles, and win through we too will win one day. God is just as ready to help us as He was to help them and He has just as big plans for us as He had for them. And let us think of all this, especially when we are sad and cast down. We are so stupid (at least I am, and I expect you are too sometimes); we think of these helpful and inspiring things when we are happy and things seem real to us. But directly we get discouraged, and the battle is very long and weary, we forget all the wonderful things we have to help us. When these hard times come upon us, let us try to gain new courage by thinking of these things. Let each one say: "How good it is that God calls me to give my life to Him just as He called the saints of old: how glorious to know that I am not alone, but have the prayers and sympathy of my great brothers and sisters to help me. Thank God for it all."

So, dear children, let us keep All Saints' Day in the very best way we can and be full of joy and hope as we think of that great company of holy men and women and children, who are so near to us, and who once were ordinary people like you and me and through the grace of God, fought and conquered in the battle against sin that we are fighting now.

XXIV.

Our last letter was about All Saints' Day, and this one is to be about the greatest Saint of all, the Mother of our Lord.

There are several days devoted to the honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary in our Kalendar, and as we have not had a letter about any of them I thought I would write to you about the Blessed Virgin before we come to the end of the Church's year.

I expect all of you have pictures in your homes of the Holy Mother and Child. My little son, who is just two, has one hanging by his cot, a very beautiful one that my father brought me years ago from Rome, and every night, before he goes to sleep, he asks to kiss the "Holy Mummy" and the "Holy Baba." Of course, he does not understand about them yet, but he is learning to love them now, and one day I hope he will know what I am trying to make you realise, that the Holy Mother and Child are not just pictures, but real living friends to him and all other Christian children.

There is not a very great deal about the Blessed Virgin in the Gospel. S. Luke tells us most, but even he does not say very much. This may seem strange at first, because you might think that he would write a lot about the Mother of our Lord, and tell us what she looked like and some of the things she said. But really it is not strange, for a very simple reason, and that is that when he wrote the Blessed Virgin Mary was still alive. We feel sure that she would not have liked him to say much about her; only conceited people would have liked that, and the Mother of the Lord Jesus was very humble and lowly of heart, although she had so much to be proud of. Let us think for a moment how proud she might have been. Nothing pleases us so much, does it, as to be chosen out to do special work or fill some position of trust. We love that sort of thing, because it shows that people have a good opinion of us. Now the Blessed Virgin Mary was chosen by God out of all the women in all the world of every age to be the Mother of His Son. God saw that she was so pure and holy, so humble and loving, that she would make the most perfect Mother for the Saviour of the world, and it was to her care that He entrusted the Infant Christ.

You all know the beautiful story of how the Angel Gabriel was sent to tell Mary the wonderful news that a little son should be born to her. We believe that when the Angel came she was kneeling at her prayers, and he spoke to her, saying, "Fear not, Mary, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women," and he then told her that she should have a little son, and that His name should be called JESUS. And Mary was very surprised because she knew that her little baby would have no earthly father, as other babies have, but the Angel told her that her child should be born through the power of the Holy Spirit, and that He would be Holy, the Son of God. Then Mary's heart was filled with joy and wonder, and she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy Word."

What wonderful words those are; so simple and yet so full of meaning and devotion. They mean that she had no other wish apart from God's Will, and that she was ready to do joyfully all that He asked her. The day on which we specially think of the Angel coming to the Blessed Virgin is March 25, and is called the Feast of the Annunciation. That word is really the same as the word announcement, and it is called that because on that day we think of the Announcement by the Angel to Mary of the Birth of her little Son.

Of course we think, too, of the Holy Mother at Christmas time. We think then of her joy at the birth of the Christ Child and of all the loving care she bestowed upon Him. How she must have loved her little Holy One.

Then on February 2 we think of the Blessed Virgin presenting her little Son to God in the Temple; giving thanks for His birth; and on July 2, we keep the Feast of the Visitation, when we think of Mary hastening to the hill country to tell her cousin Elizabeth the great news that the Angel had told her. It was then that Mary sang that wonderful song, the Magnificat. Will you find it in the evening service, and read it, for it will tell you a lot about the Holy Woman who sang it those hundreds of years ago?

September 8 is marked in our Kalendar as her birthday, and the month of

May is called after her, but we chiefly think of her in connection with all the events of our Lord's life. What a wonderful Mother she must have been and how they must have loved each other. She was always there when He wanted her to help Him, always ready to sympathise and listen to all He told her. They were always one in heart, thinking only of God's Will. We can imagine how terribly the Blessed Virgin must have suffered to see her Son dying on the Cross, and how great her joy must have been to see Him again after the Resurrection. We feel sure she was there to see His triumphant Ascent to Heaven, and that she was with the disciples in the upper room on Whitsunday morning to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and be filled with power from on high. And we can ima-

gine her living the rest of her life with S. John, to whom our Lord Himself entrusted her, loving to talk of those who loved the Lord Jesus, and tell them about His Holy Childhood. And we can imagine how she and S. Luke used to have long talks about the Gospel he was writing, and how she used to help him and tell him all she knew. Then, at the end, we can picture how joyfully she answered God's call to die, and what a happy reunion she had with our Lord Jesus Christ, her Son, in Heaven.

So, dear children, let us often think about Holy Mary, the Mother of our Lord. We have so much to learn from her holy life of humility and devotion to God's Will, and if we think of her we might often be kept from sin and carelessness in God's service.

XXV.

We have now almost come to the end of the Church's year and the season of Advent will soon be upon us. Let us look for a moment and think of some of the things we have thought of in these letters. First we saw how the Church takes account of all our different moods and feelings, and gives us festivals and special days on which to rejoice and give thanks, fast, or special days on which to think of serious things, and be sorry for our sins, and special days for new beginnings, when we make a fresh start with brave hearts and high hopes, and set out anew on our Christian Pilgrimage.

We have thought of the different festivals in connection with our Lord's Life—with the lives of some of the Saints. We have thought a great deal about the Church and what a very wonderful thing it is to belong to a family with such high traditions, and with such great people for our fellow members. We have thought about a few of the things that the Church teaches us and tells us we ought to do, and we have seen that all her teaching has one object that is to help us to be good, and make the very most of our lives here, so that we may be worthy to be called God's children, to be with Him one day in Heaven.

Now if the belief in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, that the Church

teaches us, means anything to us, if belonging to the Church and saying our prayers is a real part of our lives and really helps us, then we are quite certain to want to tell other people about it all, so that they may have the same joys and privileges that we ourselves have. Suppose you are sick and you find something that makes you better, and the next day you meet someone suffering from the same sickness, don't you immediately want to tell them about the medicine that made you better? Or suppose you find some lesson very hard at school, and you get hold of some book that helps you to understand, if you are at all a decent sort of a boy or girl, as I am sure you are, you will hand on the book to your friends who have the same difficulties as you. In everything in life the things that we value we want to pass on to others so that they may profit by them.

Well, dear children, our Religion, which is a very great part of our life, and will by God's grace become more so as we grow older, is something that we should long to hand on to others. If we don't I am afraid it means that we do not value it very highly. There are a great many ways in which we can do this and every single one of us is called by God to it. The best way of all is by making our lives so beautiful and true, so joyful and sportsman-like that people will see Christ's spirit in us,

and we shall show Him forth to those around. This is the vocation or calling of every one of us.

Then, as we have seen before, God has very special calls for some of us. Some are called to preach the Gospel to others at home—some to go right away to foreign lands to be His messengers, to those that "sit in darkness." Jesus Christ told His disciples to go in to all the world and preach the Gospel, and those who go to this work are called missionaries, which means those who are sent. It is not only their work, it is the work of the whole Church, that is of every single member, and the missionaries go as their representatives. We cannot all go as missionaries ourselves but we all have to see to it that missionaries are sent and that we support them in every possible way.

This is the least we can do if we are true Christians and gain strength and help from our Religion, we shall want to help in every possible way. Christ has done such wonderful things for us, and we are selfish and mean spirited if we do not do our best to bring others to Him. "Well," you say "What can I do?" I know that being a Christian means a lot to me—I don't want to be selfish, so what shall I do? Well, one thing you can do is to pray. I won't pretend that this is easy because it is not at all, and we shall have to take a lot of trouble before we can pray for missions properly. We cannot pray for things we know nothing about, and are not interested in. I always think it is very bad manners to talk to God about things we don't care about just because it is the right thing to do.

So first of all we must learn about missions. There are many interesting books about them—I expect most of you could get hold of some, and there is a nice paper specially for children called the "Herald," which is all about Missions. If you live in a parish where there is a branch of the Heralds of the King, the best thing you can do is to join up for it is specially to help children to understand about Missions, and to teach them how they can best help in missionary work. Then when you have learnt something about the wonderful work the missionaries do and understand their difficulties and troubles you won't have half so much trouble

in praying because you will know what to ask God for them.

Another thing we can do is to give money for missions. Money is always needed terribly badly and mission work is often spoilt for lack of it. It is a splendid plan to have a missionary box and to put something into it regularly whenever we can. And when you give up something you like in order to put money into your box you are sharing in the sacrifice that the missionaries make when they give up their homes and their friends and go out into far countries to fulfil their Lord's command. Dear children, above all things do not let us be grudging. Let us do what we can joyfully—be proud to help in such a glorious work.

Nov. 30 is S. Andrew's day, and we set it apart specially as a day of Prayer for Missions. This is because S. Andrew was the first missionary we read about. You will find the story in the first chapter of S. John's Gospel. S. Andrew and a friend of his were talking one day to S. John the Baptist, when the Lord Jesus passed by. When S. John saw Him, he cried "Behold the Lamb of God" and S. Andrew and his friends were so surprised at his words that they followed Our Lord. And the Lord Jesus noticed them following Him and He asked them to come home with Him, which they did and stayed the whole day with Him. S. Andrew was so filled with wonder at His holiness and His teaching that the first thing he wanted to do was to tell his brother Peter about Him. So as soon as he could, he fetched Peter and brought him to the Lord. This, dear children, is the true missionary spirit. First we must be filled with love for our Blessed Lord, and then we shall long to bring others to Him.

So on S. Andrew's day, let us remember that the missionary work of the Church is our work and let us lift up our hearts to God in prayer for those who go forth as our representatives because we are responsible for them. Let us ask God to bless them very abundantly and all those to whom they are sent and as we pray let our hearts be full of hope and longing that one day the Gospel will be preached through the whole world and "The earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the Sea."

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