

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN, AND YOUNG PERSONS.

BOOKS I – XIII.

BY
FR. JOHN FURNISS C.SS.R.

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PERMISSU SUPERIORUM.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN was published circa 1860.

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— REPRODUCTION —

APPROBATION.

"I have carefully read over this Little Volume for Children and have found nothing whatever in it contrary to the doctrines of Holy Faith; but, on the contrary, a great deal to charm, instruct and edify our youthful classes, for whose benefit it has been written."

WILLIAM MEAGHER,
Vicar General.
DUBLIN, 14 December 1855

NOTICE.

THESE Books include the following subjects:—

Almighty God and His Perfections.

God Loves Little Children.

The Great Question; or, Why did God create You?

The Great Evil; or, Mortal Sin.

Stumbling Blocks.—The Heavy Chain.—The Slippery Way.—

The Last Mortal Sin.

The Book of Young Persons.

The House of Death.

The Book of the Dying.

The Terrible Judgment, and the Bad Child.

The Sight of Hell.

Confession.

Holy Communion.

Schools in which Children Lose their Holy Faith.

Though in language and style, in accordance with the language and ideas of the young, they will be read with interest by the old. They contain a great number of stories and examples from Holy Scripture, Lives of the Saints, etc.; with explanations, by means of those objects only with which children are familiar.

Their aim is—First: *Spiritual Reading for Young Persons*—many spiritual works, being, in style and language, above their capacity.

Secondly: As a *Retreat Book for Young Persons* to assist them in making a retreat; or at a mission. Hence the subjects are arranged according to the usual order of retreats. Much of the work consists of instructions which, during a series of years, have been given in retreats and on missions.

Thirdly: As a *Preparation for First Communion*.

Fourthly: Although not following the order of the Catechism, which would be incompatible with their second object, will nevertheless have relation to the principal questions of the *Catechism*.

GOD AND HIS PERFECTIONS.

LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF LIFE.

1. ONE day St. Antony was preaching in a town called Rimini. The people would not listen to him; so he came down from the pulpit, went out of the church, and walked till he came to the sea. He stood on the sand of the sea-shore, and cried out to the fishes these words: "Fishes of the sea and of the rivers, listen to me. I wanted to preach to the people, but they would not listen to me; so I am going to preach to you." When he had said these words, an immense number of fishes, of all sizes, came round him, covering all the sea. The little fishes came first, behind them the middle-sized fishes, and then the great fishes. They were all in good order and very quiet, with their heads out of the water, turned towards the preacher. Then St. Antony spoke to them these words: "Fishes, my little brethren, you ought to thank your Creator for all the good things he has given you. First, there is the beautiful water in which you live, the sea water as well as the fresh water, whichever you like best. Then there are the holes and caves in the rocks, where you can go when a storm troubles the water. God has made you able to swim, and given you all that you eat to preserve your lives. In the great deluge, when it rained on the earth for forty days and forty nights, all the other animals were drowned, and you only were kept alive. When the prophet Jonas was thrown into the sea, God gave him to you to keep him alive for three days. When the people came to Jesus, and asked him to pay the tribute, you helped him to pay it. You were the food of Jesus Christ the Son of God, before and after his resurrection. Now, when you remember all these great favours you have received from God, you ought to bless him and thank him even more than other creatures." When the fishes heard these words, they opened their mouths, and bowed their heads, and showed how great was their desire to thank God. Then St. Antony, full of joy, cried out: "Blessed be the great God, because the fishes praise him when men refuse to praise him." And now when the people heard what a wonderful thing had happened to the fishes, they all went out to see it, and, kneeling down before St. Antony, they

asked him to pardon them, which he did. Then the Saint turned round, gave his blessing to the fishes and sent them all away. So Almighty God worked a miracle, to let us see how much he desires that we should listen to his holy word which is full of power—*Ecc. viii.* Little children, be at least as good as the fishes, and listen to the words of life which Almighty God speaks to you.

2. Sometimes children will attend to any little trifle, instead of listening to an instruction. There was a great town called Athens. The soldiers were on their way to this town. They were coming to destroy it. The people of the town were in great fear; and they met together to consult what should be done to save the town. Amongst them was one very wise man, called Demosthenes, who stood up and began to speak to them. The people would not listen to him. They talked, and made a great noise, so that he could not be heard. Demosthenes therefore gave over speaking, and was silent for a few minutes; then he cried out to the people that he had a story to tell them. When they heard that he was going to tell them a story, they became very quiet, silent, and attentive. He began his story. "There were two men," he said, "travelling with one another. One of them had hired an ass from the other. In the middle of the day they stopped. He who had hired the ass, got off it; and as the sun was very hot, he sat down in the shadow of the ass. 'No,' said the other; 'you hired my ass, but you did not hire its shadow.'" When Demosthenes had said this, he gave over speaking. The people called out to him to go on. Then he said to them: "My good people, when I speak to you about the shadow of an ass, you listen to me; but when I speak to you about the safety of this town, you will not listen." So a little child will let itself be distracted by the shadow of a fly or any little trifle, instead of listening to the Word of God.

FIRST COMMUNIONS, MISSIONS, RETREATS.

If you are getting ready for the day of your first communion, the greatest day of your life, or if you are making a retreat, or at a mission, I will tell you what to do: 1. Be sure that God sends down most wonderful graces and blessings on missions and retreats. God will give to you in particular such graces as you never received before, and your heart will be entirely changed. You may not feel this during the first day or two, but have patience and it will come. 2. Go to the mission, or retreat, or instruction for first communion, ask others to go. *James v.*, "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death; and shall cover a multitude of sins." 3. Come to every instruction. If you lose one

instruction, it is like losing a link in the middle of a chain, and perhaps you lose the most important instruction, and the very one which would do you most good. 4. From the beginning of the mission or retreat, do not commit any more the sins you were accustomed to commit, cut yourself off from them as you cut a stick in two with a knife. 5. From the beginning of the mission say your morning and night prayers, and practise the other devotions recommended, daily Mass, grace before and after meals, spiritual reading, rosary, evening examination of conscience; also accustom yourself to make each day a meditation which you may continue during the rest of your life. 6. Avoid not only bad, but all company as much as possible. Jesus Christ went into the desert for forty days to avoid the company of others. *Osee ii.*, "I will lead her into the wilderness and speak to her heart." 7. Keep silence, and talk as little as possible. *Eccles. v.*, "Let thy words be few." The more silent your tongue is, the more the voice of God will speak to your heart. 8. The greatest thing you have to do at a mission or retreat is to make a good confession: it is well to make a general confession, or, at least, a confession of the sins since your last general confession. If any one has concealed a mortal sin in confession, he will confess it during the retreat or mission, at least let him say at confession, "Please, Father, there is something I am afraid to tell." If you doubt about any thing, say, "Father, I have a doubt." 9. Write, if you can, on paper, your good resolutions and a Rule of Life for yourself, that is, what prayers you will say, what good things you will do every day. Keep this paper in your room, and read it very often. A little girl at school, during a retreat, wrote her good resolutions and rule of life on a paper. When she left school she forgot her duty to God for several years. One day she happened to go into a room. She opened a drawer, and saw in it a paper. She opened the paper, and behold, it was the very paper on which she had written her good resolutions and rule of life during the retreat at school! Her hand trembled while she was reading that rule of life, which she had forgotten long since. When she remembered how happy she had been in that retreat, she burst into tears. The reading of that paper changed her heart. On that spot, and with that paper in her hand, and with her eyes lifted up to God, she determined to be good again, and keep her rule of life, and be happy again as she was before. 10. Pray very much during the retreat or mission. If you pray much, and well, and from your heart, you are sure to make a good retreat. If you do not pray fervently, you are sure not to make a good retreat. 11. A mission or retreat is a good time to find out the will of God about your vocation. 12. In a mission or retreat, you can, if you like, read *these books* to help you to meditate on the instructions you hear.

SERMONS, INSTRUCTIONS, CATECHISMS, SPIRITUAL READING.

I will tell you what you should do when you hear the Word of God in a sermon, or instruction, or a catechism, or when you read it in a good book. 1. Your dinner does you very little good, unless you have an appetite for it; so hearing God's Word will do you very little good, unless you have an appetite for it, and a desire to hear it. If you do not feel this desire, at least wish for it, and pray for it, and it will be given to you; for it is one of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, called the gift of "understanding." 2. Do not go to an instruction through mere curiosity, for example, to hear how somebody preaches, nor only because you are obliged to go, and you would be scolded if you were absent. Go to hear God's word, because it is able to save your soul—*James* i. 21. 3. What you hear in an instruction is not the word of a man, but it is the Word of God. "You receive my word," says St. Paul, "not as the word of man, but, as it is indeed, the word of God." 1. *Thess.* So say in your heart: "My God, I believe that you yourself will speak to me in this instruction." 4. Listen with attention. The sin of Adam has made our minds very weak, and we cannot always keep our attention fixed; but do not be wilfully inattentive. 5. In almost every instruction you hear something recommended which you feel in your heart just suits you. This is a particular light which God sends from Heaven into your heart. Say then to yourself, now I will begin this very day to do that thing. "Be ye doers of the word of God, and not hearers only." *James* i. 6. When a little bird comes to the river to drink, it does not keep its beak in the water all the time; but it lifts it up sometimes, to let the water go down its throat. So when you are reading a good book, stop sometimes to let what you read, and especially what you feel most, go into your heart. 7. When you have eaten your dinner, you keep the food in your stomach, to feed your body. So when you have heard an instruction, keep some of it in your mind, to think about afterwards, and feed your soul with it. In the stable of Bethlehem there were the infant Jesus, Mary his mother, and Joseph, and the shepherds. When the shepherds were gone away, Mary, who was full of Divine Wisdom, kept the words of these poor ignorant shepherds in her heart, and thought of them, and meditated on them. *Luke* ii.

If you will not listen to the words of life see what may happen to you. St. Francis once gave a great mission in the town of Naples. Several nights before the mission began, he went round through the streets to every house, he knocked at each door as he went along, and when it was opened, he said: "Please, for the love of God, to come to the mission." In a certain house in

one of the streets there was living a very wicked woman; her name was Catherine. St. Francis came to the door of Catherine's house, and when it was opened, he said: "Please, for the love of God, to come to the mission." Catherine answered and said "No, I will not come to the mission." St. Francis left the house, and went on his way. The next evening St. Francis came again to Catherine's house, and knocked at the door. The door was opened. "How is Catherine?" said St. Francis, "Catherine!" a voice answered—"Catherine is dead!" "Then," said St. Francis, "let us go up stairs and see the dead body." They all walked up stairs, and went into a room where a dead body was laid on a bed. It was the dead body of the wicked Catherine, who only the night before had said: "I will not go to the mission." They stood round the dead body. St. Francis stood in front of it, and looked at the pale body, which had no life in it; then he said with a loud voice: "Oh! Catherine, Catherine, tell me, in the name of God I command you to tell me, where are you—where is your soul?" A moment passed, and that cold, dead body opened its mouth, and the dead tongue moved in the inside of the mouth, and that dead tongue answered the question of St. Francis, and said, in a frightful voice: "I am in Hell." Poor Catherine! you lived many years and committed many dreadful mortal sins; still the good God did not send you to Hell. Then St. Francis came to you from God, and he asked you to listen to him, and be converted: and you answered: "No, I will not listen." Then the just God sent you to Hell. In like manner, if there be any child who will not listen to the instructions which are given to it, let that child tremble, because perhaps it is as near to Hell as Catherine was. Listen, then, to the first instruction, and you will hear of "God and his perfections."

THE GREATNESS OF ALMIGHTY GOD.

"Who shall understand the ways of God?"—*Ecc.* xvi. 21. One day St. Augustine, the great bishop, was walking on the sea-shore. He was thinking about the greatness of Almighty God. As he went along he saw a little child sitting close to the sea. This child had a small spoon in its hand, and was dipping the spoon into the sea. St. Augustine went to the child and said: "My little child, why are you dipping that spoon into the water?" The child answered: "I want to empty all the water out of the sea." "But," said St. Augustine, "it is of no use for you to try to empty the great sea with that little spoon; if you were to work forever you could not do it." The child then said: "I am an angel from Heaven; and God has sent me to tell you that it would be easier for me to empty the sea with this little spoon, than for you to

understand all about the greatness of God." Who hath known the mind of the Lord (*Rom. ii. 30*)—the greatness of God? Still, you may know something of God.

GOD IS ETERNAL.

1. God always was. Before the sun shone on the earth, before a grain of sand was made, God was. Before the millions of millions of years which are passed away, God was; for he never had a beginning. This book which you are reading was made—somebody made the paper for it, and somebody printed it; but God was not made by anybody—he always was of himself.

2. God will never have an end: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."—*Heb. i. 8*. All creatures perish and die, but God will never die; "They shall perish, but thou shalt continue."—*Heb. i. 11*. The hard stones are worn away by the winds and the rains; the grass dies; the flowers fade away; the leaves drop off the trees. The birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, breathe out their last breath; the beasts perish in the fields; empires, and kingdoms, and nations, pass away; our bodies go into dust, because God has said: "Thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return." The stars will fall from Heaven: the Heavens and the Earth will pass away; and last of all, death, which destroys all other things, will itself be destroyed: and when the Heavens and the Earth shall have passed away, God will make a new and more beautiful Heavens and Earth (*Apoc. 21*); and from the dust of the body in the grave he will make a more beautiful body, shining like the sun in its brightness. So all things perish and die; only God lives for ever and ever.

3. All eternity is present before God. Look at the clock—it is just one minute past twelve o'clock. That one minute is present to us; but the minute before it and the minute after it, are not present to us. It is not so with God. *Job x. 7*. "Are thy days, O God, as the days of man?" All the years that are past, and all the years that are to come, are present before God just as much as this present minute. You cannot understand this. Take then a very long stick, and put it close before your eyes. You see the middle of it quite well, but you cannot see the ends of it so well; because your eye is too weak. But the all-seeing eye of God can see not only the middle, but also the beginning and end of all things. *Jer. xxii 23*. "Am I, think ye, a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off." So all things, past and to come, are always present before God. Where, then, is this great God? what place is he in?

GOD IS EVERYWHERE.

1. "Of his greatness there is no end."—*Ps.* cxliv. 3 He is in Heaven, in the blue skies, in the air which you breathe, in the rain, and in the sunshine. God is on the earth, and on all the length and breadth of it; he is in the deep waters of the sea. God is in the green fields where you walk, in the streets through which you pass; he is in the house in which you live—in the room where you sit down. God is in the school where you learn your lessons—in the chapel where you say your prayers. He is in the shop where you work—he is in the town full of people, in the sandy desert where no foot of man ever trod. God fills you more than water fills a sponge. God is in your heart, and he sees all your thoughts; he is with you, and he hears all your words. "No thought escapeth him, no word can hide itself from him."—*Ecclus.* 42. You are in God as a bird is in the air, or a fish in the water. If you stir your hand or your foot, God is there to help you. God is in the light and in the dark; the light and the dark are the same to him; he sees in the light as he sees in the dark—the dark is not dark to God.—*Ps.* cxxxviii.

2. *How is God present everywhere?* How are you present yourself anywhere? Your hand is present in one place, your foot in another place, so that your hand is not where your foot is. But it is not so with God. God is a pure spirit, without a body. It is not as if part of God was in one place and part of him in another place. God is *all* everywhere. For example, God is in your heart with his whole self. The three persons of the Blessed Trinity are whole and entire in your heart, with all their wisdom, and power, and greatness. So God is in your heart just the same as he is on his throne in heaven, where all the angels fall down before him and adore him saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come." *Apoc.* iv. In the same manner, God is present everywhere, his whole self, in every atom of the air, in every speck of the universe. And there is but one God, who is *all and entire* everywhere, and *all and entire* in every part of everywhere. Will you then let a frightful mortal sin go into your heart, where all God's sanctity is, where all his almighty power is, which can cast both your body and soul into hell?

3. A little boy wanted to do a very wicked thing. He said to himself, now I should be ashamed for anybody to see me doing this wicked thing, so I know what I will do; at night, when it is dark, I will go and shut myself up in a room, and lock the door, and then when I am alone by myself in the dark room, and nobody sees me, then I will do the wicked thing. That foolish boy knew not that the great Almighty God was in the dark room, and that he sees

in the dark as he sees in the light—that "in him we live, move, and have our being."—*Acts xvii. 28.*

4. In a town, the name of which is not known, there lived a woman called Thais. She led a very wicked life; for her mother, instead of teaching her what was good, had taught her all that was bad. The scandal which Thais gave was known through the whole country, and all good people lamented her bad example, and the injury which it did to souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Still, in the midst of her wicked deeds there was one good thing; she had never forgot a lesson which she had learned in her childhood, that "there is a God who will reward the just, and punish the wicked." Perhaps it was because she thought sometimes about this great truth, which she had learned in the catechism, that God was so good to her. God wished to save her from Hell, so he put it into the heart of a holy monk, called Paphnucius, to go and speak to her, and try to convert her. Paphnucius knew that if he went dressed like a monk, she would not speak to him, so he put on another dress, took some money, and set off on horseback. His journey was a long one. When he came near the house of Thais, she was standing at the window, and when she saw that he wanted to speak to her, she made a sign to him to come in. Paphnucius therefore got off his horse, and went into the room where Thais was alone by herself. "What is that you want?" said Thais. "What have you come to speak to me about?" Paphnucius said: "It is a very important thing that I have to say to you, but I do not want anybody to hear it except you." "But," said Thais, "we are alone now; there is nobody in the room except you and me." "Yes," said Paphnucius, "there is some one else here." "Who is it?" said Thais, "for I see no one." Then Paphnucius answered: "There is the great God present here—that God who sees all your grievous sins, the scandals you have committed, the souls you have ruined—that God who can cast both your body and soul into Hell, is present here, he sees you, he is looking at you now at this moment." These words, "God is present," struck the ears of Thais, and the grace of God went into her heart. She turned pale, and trembled, and fell on her knees, and the tears ran down from her eyes. "O father!" she said, "pray for me, that God may have mercy on my poor soul. Lay upon me any penance you please, and I will do it. I ask only for three hours, and then I will do any thing you bid me." She spent the three hours well. About one hour after she had been talking with Paphnucius, there was a large fire burning in the market-place, and crowds of people were standing round in wonder. Thais had taken all the beautiful things in her house, and all her fine dresses, which had so often been the occasion of sin; she had them all put in a heap in the middle of the market-place; then she took a light, and set fire to them. While they were burning, she cried out

to the people who stood round: "Let those who have followed me in my sins, follow me in my repentance." Nothing remained but a heap of black ashes. The crowds went away. Then Thais went back to Paphnucius, ready to do whatever he should bid her for the salvation of her soul. He led her therefore, to a convent, put her into a small room, and put a seal on the door, that nobody might go in to disturb her. There was a small window in the room, through which he desired the sisters to give her every day a little bread and water. When Paphnucius was going away, she said to him: "Father, tell me how I must pray to God." "You are not worthy," he said, "to have God's holy name on your lips, or to lift up to him your hands, with which you have committed so many sins. You shall say only one prayer, and this shall be your prayer: 'O thou who didst create me, have mercy on me.'" Three years passed, and the sisters heard her always, night and day, weeping, and crying out: "O thou who didst create me, have mercy on me." At the end of three years, St. Paul, a holy monk, prayed to God to know if her sins were pardoned. Almighty God showed to him a seat in Heaven of wonderful beauty, and told him that this seat was prepared for Thais. Then Paphnucius came back to the convent, took the seal off the door, and told her that she might come out and be with the sisters. Two weeks after this Thais was no more. She died the death of a saint, and her soul was with the angels in Heaven, and her name on earth was the name of a saint. How great then are these words: *God is present; he sees me; he hears me.* In a minute they changed one of the greatest sinners into a saint. In this manner, then, my child, shall you sometimes speak to Almighty God. (Ps. cxxxviii.) "Whither, O God, shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I fly from thy face? If I ascend into Heaven, thou art there. If I descend into Hell, thou art there. If I take wings early in the morning, and fly to the furthest parts of the sea, even there also will thy hand lead me. And I said, perhaps darkness shall cover me, and the night shall hide me. But darkness shall not be dark to thee, and night shall be light as the day. The darkness thereof, and the light thereof, are alike to thee."

5. It is a blessed thing to remember that God is present as often as you can. There is a certain religious order of nuns. These good nuns have a beautiful way of remembering the presence of God, even when they are talking with one another, which is commonly the time when people think least of the presence of God. In the midst of their conversation, there is a moment of silence, and one of the nuns speaks these words: "My dear sisters, I remind you that God is present." Blessed is the man who in his mind shall think of the all-seeing eye of God. *Ecclus.* 14.

6. I will tell you then what to do about the presence of God. 1. *Always remember* that *God*, your good Father is *present* everywhere, in the room where you are, in the road where you walk, in the place where you work, in your heart. He is always looking at you, in your work, in your sleep, in your pains, temptations, troubles, when things do not go well with you. When you walk in the sunshine, you remember that the sun is shining; so, since you walk in God, remember God. You do not see God but if you are with a person in the dark, you know that he is there, although you do not see him. Sometimes you can simply remember that God is present; sometimes you can make an act of faith, and say, "My God, I believe that you are present." Every thing you see ought to make you think of God. The light of the sun tells you of the grace of God, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.—*John* i. The beautiful flowers tell you of God's beauty; the green grass and autumn fruits of the earth speak of God's providence; the hard rocks which seem never to wear out, tell you of God's eternity. In the people whom you meet there is the image and likeness of God. Fire, and storms, and war, and fever, and famine, and death, speak of God's justice. When the things we see thus remind us of God, it is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, called the gift of "knowledge." St. Paul speaks of this when he says that "the unseen things of God from the creatures of the world are clearly seen." *Rom.* i. 2. Remembering that God is present, say often some nice little short prayer to him, such as, "My God, I believe that thou art present—I adore thee—I hope in thee—I love thee with all my heart; or, "Thy will be done." Fix on some short little prayer that you love, and say it very often. These short prayers are called *aspirations* or breathings and *ejaculations* or darts. As they are very short, the devil has not time to come and distract you. They do not take you off from your employments, for you have not to go and fetch a prayer-book or kneel down. 3. Remembering that God is present, and looking at you, offer to him each of your thoughts, words, and actions, with those of Jesus Christ, saying: "My Jesus, I do this for the love of you." But do your actions well and without sin. The saints became saints, because they did all their actions in the presence of God. When Saint Rose, of Lima, was twelve years old, she never forgot the presence of God for one single moment all the day long. When she was praying, or working, or eating, or walking, or speaking, she always remembered the presence of God. This is what the saints do in Heaven; they always see God. "Walk *before me*, and be perfect." *Gen.* xvii. "I have kept thy commandments, because *all my ways are in thy sight*." *Ps.* cxviii.

7. One word more on the presence of God. The room where you sleep—what is it? It is a little *Chapel*. There is the pretty little white *Altar*, with its

white altar-cloth and candlesticks, which you made for the glory of God, and the protection of the house. On the altar, betwixt the candlesticks, there is the *Cross*, the image of Jesus Christ crucified. There is also the *Picture or the image of Mary* your sweet mother, like a star shining upon you. Before the blessed Mary you perhaps put a light on Saturdays or on her festivals; and when the flowers are in the fields, you bring a fresh flower and place it at her feet; perhaps, as in Catholic countries, you keep a lamp burning day and night before Mary. Near the altar there is the *Holy Water* to send away the evil spirits from the house. There is your *Rule of Life* hung up, so that you always know how to lead the life of a Christian. Before the altar there is a *Lamp* which burns, and *Incense* which rises up. The lamp is your heart burning with the love of God. The incense is your prayer, which rises up like incense in the sight of God. When you are alone in this little chapel, there are always five persons with you, whom you do not see. There is God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; there is your angel guardian to watch over you; and the Devil is there to tempt you. What, then, are the things which you do in this little chapel? You go in there, and having shut the door, you pray in secret to God, who is your Father. There you say your morning and night prayers, you make your meditation, you read good books, you strike your breast, you kiss the ground, you look up at the cross and think of the sufferings of Jesus, you place yourself near your dear mother Mary, and say your beads to her, there you get ready for confession and the holy communion. In temptation you fly to your little chapel, and there you call on "Jesus and Mary to help you." If you have a difficult work to do, you go to your little chapel and ask Almighty God how it is to be done. If you ever feel sad and sorrowful, you go to your chapel and tell God that you are sorrowful; then a ray of light comes down from Heaven and makes you happy again. Every day when you cannot go to the great chapel, where the blessed Sacrament is kept, you go into your own little chapel, and kneeling down, and turning towards the great chapel, you say a prayer to the blessed Sacrament. Each day also you offer a *sacrifice* on your little altar. The sacrifice is the thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings of the day, and you offer them to Jesus, saying: "My Jesus, I do all for the love of you." There also you make a retreat every year. Such is your room, a Heaven on Earth, a Paradise in the world, where you live with Almighty God and the angels. Such ought to be the room of every Christian. If you have not a chapel or an altar in your house, make one; and so your house will become the house of God. "The Lord stirred up the spirit of the people to build his house." *Ag. i.* St. Theresa, when a child, made her chapel in the garden. When you are in your little chapel, see how God knows your heart.

GOD KNOWS ALL THINGS.

If God is present everywhere, he sees all things, and knows all things. He knows every grain of sand on the earth. He sees the tops of the mountains, and the depths of the sea. He knows every flower in the fields, every tree in the forests, every creeping thing, and every beast on the face of the earth. He knows every fish that swims in the water, and every bird that flies in the air—he knows every star in the skies. God knows every angel in Heaven, every man, woman, and child, on Earth. He knows every hair on your head, every motion of your body, every thought of your heart; he sees the deep things of the heart, and the sins in the conscience; neither is there any creature which he cannot see but all things are "naked and open to his eyes." *Heb.* iv. God knows all things that are past, present, and to come. God sees things not as they look to us, but as they are in themselves. *Rom.* xi. 33. "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God." "All wisdom is from God." *Ecc.* i. 1. If you ask God, he will give you wisdom and knowledge. He will not give you the knowledge of the stars or of the trees, he will not teach you how to get money, or to be great in this world. God will give you the wisdom of Heaven, teaching you to know your own heart, and the sins by which you have offended him. He will teach you that what you have been created for is to fear him, and to keep his commandments, and save your soul. God is able to give what he pleases.

GOD IS ALMIGHTY.

1. There was a time when there was nothing except God himself; no sun, no stars, no Earth, nothing but God. All was darkness; but God spoke the word, and then the sun shone in the heavens, and the stars sparkled in the blue skies, the mountains rose up out of the Earth, the rivers flowed into the great sea, the green grass grew over the Earth, the beautiful flowers covered the fields, the trees spread out their branches. At his voice the fishes were swimming in the waters, the birds flying in the air, and the beasts were on the face of the Earth. Then God took some of the dust of the Earth, and made out of it a body, and he breathed into it the breath of life, a living soul, and there was Adam, our first father. So God made all things, and the works of God are perfect. *Deut.* xxxii. A little girl once made a pocket-handkerchief, but she had something beforehand to make it of—she had plenty of linen and

thread, besides pins and needles and scissors. When God made all things, he made them out of nothing. If God had made the world out of one little grain of sand, this would have been a wonderful thing, but he made it of nothing—nothing! A carpenter had to make a chair, but it cost him a great deal of labour and trouble and time to make it. He had to get wood, and saw it and cut it, and hammer and nail it. To make all things was not the least trouble or labour to Almighty God. It is as easy for God to make the whole world, as to make one little grain of sand. "He spoke, and at his word all things were made."

2. The great God, who made all things, rules over all things. All creatures, in Heaven, on Earth, and everywhere, obey him. "For who resisteth his will?" *Rom. ix. 19.* Every grain of sand, every leaf, every flower, every insect, every beast on the Earth, every fish in the water, every bird in the air, all obey God and do his will. Why does the sun rise and set, and the stars go forward in their path? Because God tells them. Why do the winds blow and the trees blossom and give their fruits? Why do the rivers go on without stopping, and the swelling waves of the sea—why do they not break in upon the Earth and drown it? why does the thunder shake the Earth, and the lightning strike the high trees? Because God commands them. In the things which are done in this world, men think they are doing only their own wills, and yet all the while they are doing the will of the great God. Kingdoms and empires rise and fall. The great towns and cities, capitals of empires, become a ruin and crumble into dust, and they are swept away by the winds. The very place where they stood is not known, and their name is to be found only in histories. All these things are done because it is God's will. "Shall there be evil in the city which the Lord hath not done?" *Amos iii.* The great and the wise men of the Earth take counsel; and the nations of the world make wars, one against the other, and they do it to please themselves, and they know not that they are instruments in the hand of God, to do his will, like tools in the hand of a workman. "So God does according to his will with all, and there is none that can resist him and say to him, why hast thou done it?" *Dan. v. 32.* Therefore let us adore the great Almighty God, the Creator and Ruler of all things, saying: "Great and wonderful are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O King of Ages: who shall not fear thee and magnify thy holy name?" *Apoc. xv.* "Be ye humbled under the mighty hand of God." *1 Pet.*

It is wonderful to see the power of God when he rewards the good and punishes the wicked.

GOD IS JUST.

1. "God will render to every man according to his works." *Matt.* xvi. He rewards the just even for the least little good work they do for his sake. In the Temple of Jerusalem there was a box. When the people went into the temple, many of them put money into this box for the use of the temple. Some put a pound into the box, some a shilling, some six pence or less. One day there came into the temple an old woman, who was a widow and very poor. She was so poor that in all the world she had but one farthing. When she passed the box, she took out of her pocket her one only farthing, and for the love of God she put it in the box. Now what do you think was the value of this poor little farthing work in the sight of God? Its value was so great that you could not reckon it, even if you covered all the Earth over with figures. If you go to Heaven, you will see there that farthing work shining like the sun, and the reward which that widow will get for it will last for ever. Then, my child, first, have no mortal sin in your conscience. Secondly, do your works to please God, saying always, "My Jesus, I do this for the love of you." Then every little thing you do will shine like the sun before God, *Eccus.* xvii.; and for every work you will have a reward, such as the "eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man understood." *Cor.* ii.

2. God punishes the wicked. He cannot bear to see a sin; it looks frightful to his eyes. (II *Peter* ii.) "The sinner brings upon himself swift destruction." For one wilful mortal sin, which lasts but for the twinkling of an eye, he is burnt for ever and ever in the fire of Hell. It is just that it should be so, because the wicked sinner dares, in the presence of God and before his eyes, to break his commandments. When the sinner commits a mortal sin, he, as it were, thrusts a black, frightful sin, as frightful as the Devil, and as terrible as Hell, into the very midst of the Sanctity of God, which dwells in his heart. It is doing the same as that wicked man did, who dared to lift up his hand, and to give Jesus Christ, the Son of God, a blow on the face. Besides, the sinner knows very well, God has told him beforehand, that if he commits that mortal sin, he must go to Hell. So the sinner "makes a covenant with Hell,"—*Is.* xxviii.,—and puts himself into Hell by his own free will. For the least little sin, an idle word, *Matt.* xii, you must burn for a long time in Purgatory. We cannot now understand the judgments of God. Sometimes "a wicked man liveth a long time in his wickedness,"—*Ecc.* vii.,—committing thousands and thousands of mortal sins; sometimes a sinner is cut off "in the midst of his days," and sent to Hell directly after his first mortal sin. There was a little child, says St. Gregory. The father of this child was taking a walk

with it in his arms. Suddenly this child began to blaspheme God. As soon as the blasphemy had come out of its mouth, the Devil came and snatched the child out of the father's arms and carried it down to Hell, to burn there for ever and ever for this one blasphemy. But God is always good to his creatures. Perhaps he saw that if this child had lived longer, it would have committed many more sins, and he would have had to punish it more in Hell, "Yea, O Lord, just and true are thy judgments." *Apoc.* xvi. 7. Sometimes when a man has spent all his life in good works and serving God, when he grows old, he commits a mortal sin, and he dies in it, and is lost forever in Hell. There was a certain man in Egypt who had led the life of a saint for many years. His days were spent in prayer and fasting and all kinds of good works. In his old age he fell into a mortal sin, instead of repenting, he went directly and threw himself down a precipice and was killed. "How unsearchable are God's judgments." *Rom.* ii. 33. Sometimes, but very, very seldom, it happens that a man who has passed all his life in committing sins, at the end of his life is converted and is saved. The poor thief who was crucified along with Jesus, had been a great sinner; but a few minutes before he died, he repented and became a friend of Jesus, and the same day his soul was in Paradise. We cannot understand these things now; but we shall understand them all at the day of judgment, and then we shall say: "Thou art just, O Lord, and all thy judgments are just." All we can do is to live all our days in the fear of God—to fear him who can cast both body and soul into Hell, and to try to work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Say also sometimes, "My God, may I never, never commit a mortal sin; may I die rather than commit a mortal sin." Pray often for those who are in mortal sin. It grieves God to have to punish his creatures; but there is one thing which he loves to do.

GOD IS MERCIFUL.

1. Almighty God loves to have pity on his poor creatures and his tender mercies are over all his works. *Ps.* cxliv. 9. So the Son of God took a body and soul and a heart like ours. Then he let all the pains and sorrows of every one of his poor creatures come into his own heart, that he might know them, and feel how hard it is to bear them. Never was there any heart so full of sorrows and miseries as the heart of Jesus Christ. He took into his heart all the pains, and labours, and fatigues, and wearinesses, and disgusts, and anxieties, and heart-breakings, of every afflicted creature that shall have lived from the days of Adam till the end of the world, and he made them all

his own. Every sigh of distress, every groan of misery that has been, or shall be, went into the heart of Jesus Christ. "So he bore our infirmities, and carried our sorrows."—*Isaias* liii. When Jesus was on the Cross, he looked and saw all the pains and sorrows of his creatures, and he felt them all, and they pressed on the sacred heart of Jesus like a great heavy weight, and the strong heart of Jesus Christ could not bear the sight of them any longer, and he died of grief. So now if you have a pain or a suffering, you can go to Jesus and say: "My dear Jesus, I have a heavy pain to bear, and you know how hard it is to bear it, because you felt this very pain yourself: so, my sweet Jesus, give me patience." When you are on the bed of sickness, or when you are hungry or cold, and you cry for it, Jesus looks on you so kindly and sorrowfully, and he cries along with you. When the pain goes away, and you are glad, Jesus is glad with you.

2. But, above all, God has great pity on poor sinners, "neither will he have a soul to perish,"—II *Kings* xiv. 14: and he tries so much to convert them. He knocks at the door of a sinner's heart, and says: "Poor sinner, why will you go to Hell? Be converted to me, and be my friend. I am your Creator. I cannot tell how much I love you. Do you not remember that I died on the cross to save you? So change your life, and be good. You will find it so easy to be good; and you will be so happy; and after you have been good for a little time, I will come and take you to Heaven. For as I live, says Almighty God, I desire not the death of a sinner, but that he should be converted and live." Then the wicked sinner says: "No, Almighty God, I do not want to be converted; go away from me." Then God does not get angry with the sinner, and send him to Hell as he deserves; but he is very sorry for the poor sinner, and says: "I must have patience with this poor creature, for he is very blind, and does not know what is for his good, so I will go away now, and after some time I will come back again." Then Almighty God goes away, and after a time he comes back again, and he whispers into the sinner's heart, and says: "My dear sinner, have pity on your poor soul. The time of your death is drawing very near. You are standing on the brink of Hell. I cannot bear to think of your losing your soul forever. I should be so sorry. It breaks my heart to think that, after a little time, all must be over for you, and I shall never be able to love you any more." So God comes to the sinner again, and again, and again. Then God says "This poor creature will not listen to me, although he knows that I love him so much: so I will try some other way. I will send him some pain, and perhaps then he will be converted; or I will send his angel guardian to put good thoughts into his heart; or, I will send the priest to talk to him. I will bid every creature to speak to his heart to convert him. The thunder, and lightning, and wars, and famines, and

earthquakes, and diseases, and death, and pains, and sorrows, shall tell him of the torments of Hell. The trees of the Earth, and the beasts of the fields, and the birds of the air, which do my will, shall give him an example that he may do my will. His hands and feet, which serve him, shall teach him to serve me. Sometimes when he is talking with others, he shall hear words that are not meant for him; but I mean them for him, to strike into his heart and to awaken him out of the sleep of death." When God sees that the sinner is always obstinate, and that he is obliged to call him out of this world without repenting, it is more bitter to him than if he had to die on the cross again. So God has mercy and pity on his poor creatures. II *Esdras* x. 17. "Thou art a forgiving God, gracious, and merciful, long-suffering and full of compassion."

It is wonderful to see what care God takes of his creatures. Will a mother forget her own dear little child? If she does, God will not forget you.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

1. Nobody knows how God loves his creatures. "God has loved you with an everlasting love." *Jer.* xxxi. 3. He loved you before the world was made. He loved you before you were born, and when you were born. He loved you all your life. You love your parents but you are not loving them every moment; for example, when you are asleep you are not thinking of them, so you are not loving them. Through all the great eternity, which never had a beginning, God never stopped loving and thinking about you for one single moment, just the same as if he had nobody else to think about and love except you; so God's love for you is "above all understanding." *Eph.* iii. 19. If God loves you, be sure that he will take care of you.

2. A little boy had a garden, with rose-trees in it. You would have been surprised to see how diligent this boy was in taking care of the garden. He dug up the earth all around the rose-trees. When the weather was dry he fetched water from the well, a long way off, and poured it over the rose-trees. If a sharp frosty wind was blowing, he set up boards to make a shelter. If he saw a caterpillar eating the leaves, he killed it. He was always watching till the roses came into flower; and when the rosebuds began to open, he went every morning to see how much they had opened during the night. But how great was his joy when the roses were become large, beautiful flowers, with colours as bright as the rainbow! Why, then, did this boy take so much care of his roses, for many other people passed the garden, and they cared nothing at all about the roses, and did not even look at them? Because they

were his own roses, he loved them, and took care of them. This little boy had sense enough to take care of his own; and the all-wise God has he not wisdom enough to take care of his own creatures, the work of his hands? This little boy had something in his heart which made him love his own roses; and do you think that God, who loved you from all eternity, now, when the time for you to live is come, loves you no longer?

3. Oh! if you only knew how God loves and takes care of all, even of his least little creatures, and he "rejoices to do good to them all." *Jer.* xxxii. God does not forget the very stones of the earth; but he watches over them, and gives to them their strength and hardness. The little flower in the woods, which perhaps nobody ever saw, God loves it, and gives to it colours so beautiful, that no king in all his glory was ever so beautiful. The birds which fly in the air do not work or labour, and yet they eat every day as much as they like; and who is it that takes care to feed them? It is Almighty God, who scatters grains about the Earth for them to eat. The little gnat, which flies in the air, and is so small that you can scarcely see it, is not forgotten by God; but he takes care of it, and gives it wings to fly with; and he loves to see it happy and flying in the sunshine. The poor worm which creeps in the earth, God takes care of it, and feeds it. Does God then take so much care of the stones, and the flies, and the grass,—and you, my child, God's greatest work, his very image and likeness, will he take no care of you?

4. Little child, I will show you what care the good God takes of you. "All things are yours."—*I Cor.* iii. 22. He has made the Earth for you to walk on; he has made the winds and the air that you might have breath to breathe. He made the sun, and the moon, and the stars, to shine upon you,—and he makes their light come to your eyes, that you may see; he makes the sound come to your ears, that you may hear. He made the stones and clay of the Earth, that you might have a house to live in; and the beasts, that you might have clothes to wear and keep you warm. He made the plants, and the things which grow on the Earth, that you might have food to eat. So "all things work together for your good." *Rom.* viii. Every time you move your hand or your foot, God is there to help you, putting strength into your feet at every step that you take, and force into your arm every time you lift it. If God forgot for only one moment to help you, in that moment you would become nothing. The Lord must direct your steps. *Prov.* xvi. It is God who puts thoughts into your mind; and if he did not, you would become a fool and an idiot. "So God is kind to all, even to the unthankful." *Luke* vi. 35.

5. Near the river Jordan, and about a mile or so from Jericho, there was a monastery in which St. Gerasimus lived. One day this saint, being out of the monastery, saw a great large lion on the road. He was surprised to see that it

walked only with three of its legs—the other leg did not touch the ground: it seemed to be lame. When the lion saw St. Gerasimus, it came quickly up to him, and lifted up one of its legs, and roared aloud, as if it wanted to let him know that it was in great pain. St. Gerasimus took hold of the lion's foot, and, looking at it saw that a large thorn had gone into it, and that it was bleeding. He was very sorry to see the poor lion's foot bleeding; so he took hold of the thorn, and drew it out of the flesh; then he wiped away all the blood and matter, and washed it with water, and, taking a nice piece of clean linen, he tied it round the lion's foot. When he had done the lion this service, he went on his way, thinking no more about it; but, happening to turn round, he saw that the lion was following him. When he came home he shut the door. The lion did not go away, but stopped at the door; and from that moment it never went away, and it became as tame as a cat or dog. It never made anybody afraid, but learnt to do a great many things for the service of the house, like other tame beasts. Whenever the saint went out, it always followed him, and never left him for a moment. After five years St. Gerasimus died; then the lion looked very sorrowful, and went and lay down on his grave; and there it stopped for three days and three nights, during which it would neither eat nor drink. After the three days the poor lion died. So grateful was the lion to the saint, because he had taken the thorn out of its foot.

6. Learn from this lion to be grateful to him who takes away sickness from you. Remember that it is God who sends you sickness, and it is his hand alone which takes it away again. Do not say then: "Oh, it was the medicine which cured me, or the doctor who cured me;" for it is God who makes the doctor and the medicine cure you. Say rather: "My God, I thank you, because I was sick, and you have healed me. 'Thou who redeemest my life from destruction, and healest all my diseases.'—Ps. cii. Blessed be your name, O great God."

7. See now what God has done for your soul. Let us go into the chapel, where you hear mass on Sundays. Look, there is the font where you were christened. The priest at this moment is baptizing a baby. He pours a little water on its head. Into those few drops of water God puts his almighty power, to wash from the soul of the baby the dark stain of original sin, and to make its soul bright and as beautiful as the spirit of an angel. "God hath loved us, and washed us from our sins." *Apoc. i.*

8. Look at those rails where you knelt when the bishop gave you the sacrament of Confirmation. The bishop anointed your forehead with a drop of oil, and into that little drop of oil God put the power and virtue of the Holy Ghost, to make your soul strong with the strength of the Holy Ghost.

So that, after your confirmation, if anybody had come to you and said: "Little child, if you do not deny the faith of Jesus, you shall be killed," the Holy Ghost would have put into your heart this answer: "I will not deny the faith of Jesus. I am ready to die for the faith of Jesus." Then indeed "you were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." *Heb. vi.*

9. There is the confessional. The priest sits there holding in his hands the almighty power of Jesus Christ—and for what? You may have committed a mortal sin—then your soul is in chains, and these infernal chains were made by the devils in Hell, and they go round and round your poor soul as the ivy goes round a tree. You go to that confessional with sorrow in your heart, and the absolving words of the priest, as if they were the very breath of Jesus Christ, which "he breathed on the apostles" (*John xx.*), strike those chains, and they are broken in pieces; your soul is set free, free as an angel of God.

10. See that sparkling light which always hangs before the altar, in front of the tabernacle; it tells you that the flesh and blood of Jesus is always in the tabernacle, to feed your poor hungry soul: "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." *John vi.* God has scattered the stars in the skies, and the flowers in the fields, so in countless places, in every country, and in every kingdom, God has left the body and blood of his Son Jesus to feed those dear souls which he loves so much.

11. In every part of the world God has also placed bishops and priests, and blessed and consecrated them, that they might help you to save your soul. In Heaven he has created countless millions of bright angels to watch over your soul, and keep you in all your ways, lest any evil should come near you. *Psalms xc.*

12. He spoke to the blessed Virgin Mary, his mother, about you, and said to her: "Mary, my dear mother, look at that little child; I love it very much; I want you to be its mother: be very kind to it, and take care of it, as you took care of me when I was a little child."

13. Many other things God has made for your soul—crosses, that you might remember that Jesus was crucified for you; beads, that you might speak to your dear mother Mary; holy water, to send away the Devil from your soul; medals, that you might be blessed in the hour of your death; and scapulars, that, by the prayers of Mary your soul might come soon out of Purgatory. You have seen a great shower of rain falling from the clouds. The large drops came down quickly one after another, and covered the earth with water. So quickly, and without stopping for a moment, the blessings of the providence of God are always, night and day, coming down on our body and your soul. So "all things are yours." *1 Cor. iii.*

14. But if God loves his creatures, and takes so much care of them, why do we see so many poor people without bread to eat, without clothes to put on, without a house to shelter them? Others are blind, or deaf, or lame; others without their senses—they are idiots and lunatics. Remember "nothing on Earth is done without a cause, and sorrow doth not spring out of the ground." *Job* v. My dear child, be sure that whatever God does is always for the best. We do not always know why he does these things; but we shall know at the end of the world, when he will tell us why he did every thing. *John* xiii. 7.; but even now we can often see that these misfortunes are really the greatest blessings.

15. The Patriarch Jacob had twelve sons; one of them, called Joseph, who was a good boy, told his father of some very wicked thing which his brothers had done. They were very angry because Joseph had done his duty in telling of them, and determined to take revenge. One day when they were minding the sheep in the country, Joseph came to see them. When they saw Joseph coming, they said to one another, "Let us kill him." While they were thinking of killing him, some merchants happened to pass by: so they thought they would sell their brother Joseph to the merchants. When Joseph found that his brothers were going to sell him, he cried and sobbed and asked them to have pity on him and not to sell him; but they had no pity for their poor brother. So they sold him to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver. The merchants then went on their journey, and carried poor Joseph far away into the land of Egypt. What a misfortune, a little child would say, for Joseph to be sold, to leave his father and brothers, and never to hope to see them again, to be carried away into a strange country where he knew nobody. But it is the providence of God that the greatest blessings come in the shape of the greatest misfortunes. Some years had passed, and a frightful famine was come on the land where Joseph's father and brothers were living. They heard that corn was sold in Egypt, so they took sacks and went there to buy it. When they came into Egypt, they went to the house of the ruler, because all the corn belonged to him, and, behold, they found that the ruler was their own brother Joseph, whom they had sold! Joseph wept through joy to see his brothers again, he gave them plenty of corn and told them not to be afraid for having sold him, for it had been God's will that he should be sold to go into Egypt to provide corn for them in the famine. So Joseph's misfortune saved himself and his father and brothers from dying of hunger in the famine. Thus it is the providence of God that the greatest blessings should come in the shape of the greatest misfortunes.

16. One day there was great crying in the town of Bethlehem. Many hundred of poor babies had been killed. A cruel king, called Herod, wanted

to kill the Infant Jesus, but he did not know which of the babies was the Infant Jesus. So he commanded the soldiers to kill all the babies. Then there was great weeping and lamentation in Bethlehem. The mothers would not be consoled, because their babies had been killed. But in the misfortunes which Providence sends there is a blessing. Those mothers were very sorrowful when they saw their babies dead, for they knew not that death was a blessing for these babies. Because they died for the sake of the Infant Jesus, they are happy forever with Jesus in Heaven.

17. St. Francis of Sales was in a town called Ancona. He wanted to sail across the sea to Venice. Seeing a boat, he went to the captain and paid the price of a place in the boat. Then he went on board and sat down, waiting for the boat to set off. While he was sitting there, a person came and told him that he could not have a place, because all the boat had been hired by some one else. Francis begged that he might be allowed to stay, because he would take up very little room, and he was in a great hurry to go. However, he was not listened to, so he was obliged to take his things and go out of the boat. He thought it a great misfortune that he had lost such a good opportunity of going on his journey. He stood for a while on the land, watching the boat as it set off. A favourable wind filled the sails, and carried the boat quickly over the water. The sun was bright, and the weather calm; but when the boat was far out at sea the weather began to change. Dark clouds covered the sky, the thunders roared, and the lightnings flashed around the boat, which was tossed about by the fierce winds. For a while the sailors struggled against the storm, but the waves of the sea dashed over them, and, at last, St. Francis saw the boat sink down into the sea, and everybody in the boat was drowned. St. Francis then saw that the loss of his place was a great blessing, and he learnt ever afterwards to believe that the losses and sufferings which Providence sent him were for his greater good.

18. Learn then this great lesson: as in the bitter medicine which the doctor sends, there is health, so in the misfortunes which Providence sends you, there are blessings. The greatest blessings come in the shape of the greatest misfortunes. Therefore, in losses, in sickness, in pain, in hunger, when somebody is cruel to you, when your parents or your friends die, in the hour of your own death, do not say "what a pity this is, what a misfortune," but say. "I believe that God has sent this loss or suffering to me, and I am sure that in some way or other it will be for my greater good. I do not see now how it will be for my greater good, but that, in the end, it will turn out for my greater advantage, I am quite certain." All things work together unto good for the just. *Rom.* viii.

19. *You must always wish for God's will to be done.* First.—God is almighty, and he rules the world and every thing that is in it. So that from the days of the creation, till the last day of the world, every thing, even the least little thing, will have been only because it was the will of God that it should be. "Good things and evil, life and death, riches and poverty, come from God." *Eccus. xi.* What we call accidents, are accidents only to us, but not to God. A man once sent two servants by different roads, wishing them to meet one another. When they met they thought it was accidental, but it was not an accident to the man who sent them. So all the accidents which happen to you come because God sends them. One thing, however, God does not wish, and that is, sin which is in the heart of the sinner. "God hates sin." *Ps. liv.* But if you suffer any thing from the sin of another, God wishes you to have that suffering; for example, if you lose something because it is stolen, God wishes you to have that loss. "Shall there be evil in the city which the Lord hath not done?" *Amos iii.*

Secondly.—Every thing which happens to you is sent by God, because he sees that it is just the very best thing for you at that moment. "All things work together unto good for the just." *Rom. viii.* "No evil shall come to them." *Ps. xc.*

20. Now, the greatest of all virtues is to be content with whatever happens to you, *because* it is the will of God, and to have in your heart the spirit of that prayer, "Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven." *Matt. vi.* A man threw a stone at a dog. The dog did not look at the man, but ran at the stone, and barked at it, and bit it. Do not then be like the dog, and get vexed at the pain you suffer, instead of remembering that God sent it. If you take a stick into your hand, the stick never says, "I will not be in your hand." If you lay the stick on the ground, it never says, "I will not be laid on the ground." Little child, learn to be like the stick, and to be where Almighty God puts you. So if you have to live with people who are cross to you, be content, *because* it is the will of God. A bricklayer was making some bricks. He took some soft clay, and turned it about in his hand up and down, first on one side and then on the other. The clay was very quiet, and let the man do as he liked with it. In like manner, my child, let God do as he pleases with you. "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God." *Ps. cxlii.* There was a learned man who wished to save his soul. For eight long years he prayed to God that he might find somebody who could teach him the best way of saving his soul. It happened one morning that he was praying more fervently than usual, and he heard a voice, which said "Go to the door of the church, and you will find some one standing there who will teach you which is the best way to serve me." He knew that this voice came from God, so he set off to the church to

find the person who was to teach him how to serve God. When he came to the door of the church, he found no one there except a poor old beggar, who was very dirty and covered with sores. All the clothes the beggar had on were not worth three farthings. He spoke kindly to the beggar, wishing him good morning. The beggar answered: "I do not remember that I ever had a bad morning." "God prosper you," said the learned man. The beggar answered: "God always prospers me." "But," said the learned man, "I cannot understand you: what do you mean?" "I will tell you what I mean," said the beggar. "You wished me good morning; and I answered, that I never had a bad morning, as you will see. If I am hungry, and can get nothing to eat, I say: 'My God, may your holy will be done.' If I am cold, and there is no fire, I say: 'My God, may your will be done.' If it rains or snows, I say: 'My God, may your will be done.' If I am sick, or suffer a pain, I say: 'My God, may your will be done.' If somebody injures me, I say: 'My God, may your will be done.' So I am always content, and never have a bad day. I said that God always prospered me, because, whatever God sends me, whether it be joyful or painful, sweet or bitter, I know it is for the best. So I am always prosperous and happy." Little child, go and do in like manner. Therefore, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, in life and in death, let your prayer be: "My God, may your will be done." There is another beautiful prayer: "May the most just, the most high, and the most amiable will of God be done, praised and eternally exalted, in all things." If you say this prayer once every day, you can gain each day an indulgence of one hundred days, and also a plenary indulgence once a month, and a plenary indulgence when you die.

21. *Put your Trust in the Providence of God.*—"Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat; nor for your body, what you shall put on. Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them; and are not you of much more value than they? Seek, therefore, the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added to you."—*Matthew vi.*

22. There was a very rich person who had a little child which he loved very much. He took the greatest care of this child, and never let it want for any thing. He gave it plenty to eat, and always what was best for it: its breakfast, and dinner, and supper, were always ready at the proper time. He had very good clothes made for it, of the best cloth—clothes for summer, and warm clothes for winter. He had a fine, large house; and this child slept in one of the best rooms in the house. He sent the child to the best school he could find. If the child was sick, he sent for the most skilful doctors to cure it. The father was always thinking, day and night, how he could do good to

his dear child. But the child was very foolish. It was always saying to itself; "Oh! perhaps my father will forget to give me my dinner; or perhaps he will leave me without clothes; or perhaps, if I am sick, he will not send for the doctor." So the foolish child was always fretting itself, and behaving very ill to its good father, making long faces, and looking cross, and giving back answers. Although it remembered that all its life its father had never once forgotten it, still it was always afraid, and it was very unhappy. This good father is Almighty God; and you are the fretful child. God made you; and he loves you so much, that nobody can tell how much he loves you. He is very wise, and knows what is best for you. He is very rich, for of his riches there is no end; and if he gives away any thing, he is not any poorer; so he is able to give to you what is best for you. He has made you a great promise, that he will every moment of your life give you what is best for you. Very often something happened to you which you thought was not for the best; and yet you found out afterwards that it was really the best for you, or at least you will find it out when you are dead. Yet still you are unhappy, often thinking in yourself and saying: "Oh! I am afraid! What am I to do? Perhaps such a thing will happen!—perhaps it will not be the best for me!" My little child, learn a lesson at least from the birds which fly in the air: they do not trouble themselves about what may come; they expect to have food to eat—and God always feeds them. So my dear child, "cast your care on God, for he hath care of you," II *Peter* v.; and let your daily prayer to Almighty God be: "Give us this day our daily bread." Expect and feel sure, that God will, in every thing, do what is best for you. *Psalm* ciii. 28. "All expect of thee, O God, food in season: thou openest thy hand, and fillest every living creature with blessings."

ALMIGHTY GOD LOVES LITTLE CHILDREN.

1. God loves little children so much that he wanted to be like them, so he became a little child in the arms of Mary his mother. Jesus used to lay his hands on children and bless them. "They brought infants to Jesus that he might touch them." *Luke* xviii. He was very angry with those who would not suffer little children to come to him, and with those who scandalize them. Jesus says "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea." *Matt.* xviii.

2. When the blessed Lucy of Narni was a very little child, her mother gave her a Rosary beads, with an image of the infant Jesus. Lucy was very fond of

the beads, and especially of the infant Jesus. She made an altar in her room, and put the infant on it. She loved to be in her room along with the image of the little infant. When she got into any trouble, she would go to her altar, and cry there, and sometimes the image of the infant Jesus, by a miracle, would lift up its little hand, and wipe away her tears. One day her mother took her to the chapel, and she saw there a fine large image of a lady, with an infant in her arms, made of stone. When her mother saw her looking at this image, she said: "Lucy, that beautiful lady is the blessed Virgin Mary, and the infant is the little Jesus, her son. If you like, you may come here sometimes and say your Rosary before the blessed Virgin Mary." Lucy was delighted, and whenever she could get away from home, she came with her beads, and said the Rosary. One day she thought that she would like very much to hold the infant in her arms, like she held her baby brother sometimes, so she spoke to the image and said: "Mary, my dear mother, I want very much to hold the infant Jesus in my arms." When she had said this prayer, the image of Mary stooped down, and put the infant really into her arms; but she found that instead of a baby made of stone, it was a living baby—the real child Jesus. Full of joy, she got up off her knees, and went home as fast as she could with the infant Jesus in her arms. She went into the room where her altar was, and for three days and nights she held the infant in her arms, without eating or sleeping. At the end of the three days she fell asleep and when she awoke, the infant Jesus was gone away. She cried bitterly when she found that the infant was gone, so her mother took her to the church, where they found the little child of stone in the arms of Mary again, although for three days it had not been seen there.

3. Do not wonder that Jesus gave himself to the little Lucy, for he loves to hear children speak to him in prayer, because out of the mouths of infants comes forth perfect praise of God. *Psalm viii*. The prayer of a little child goes up to Heaven quicker than the prayer of anybody else. There was a town called Bethulia. One time a great many thousand soldiers came round this town. They wanted to get into the inside of it to kill the people and destroy the town. But there was something stronger than the soldiers, and see what it was! The little children were made to come into the chapel, and kneel down before the altar, and bow their heads down to the ground, and to pray to Almighty God to save the town. The prayers of the little children went up to Heaven, those cruel soldiers were obliged to go away, and many of them were killed. *Judith iv. 8*.

4. Heaven is for children only, if they are good, or those who become like little children, simple, meek, and humble. One day Jesus took a little child by the hand, and showed it to all the people, and told them that they could not

go into Heaven unless they became like that little child, that is, simple, meek, and humble. Children were the first martyrs of Jesus Christ. Before anybody else had died for Jesus—even before St. Stephen, who is called the first martyr, had been stoned—a great many babies were killed in Bethlehem for the faith of Jesus Christ, and they are called the Holy Innocents, and the blood of those dear babies told the world that the infant Jesus was the Son of God. A little while before Jesus died, the children were crying out his praises in the Temple of Jerusalem.

5. God loves to speak to children, he has often spoken words to children which he would not speak to anybody else.

There was a very old priest, and a good child, who lived with the priest. Almighty God wanted to say something to the priest, but he liked better to say it to the child, and let the child tell the priest. So one night when the child was asleep, God called the child by his name, Samuel. The child awoke, and heard somebody calling his name, but he did not know that it was God who called him. He thought in himself, perhaps it is the priest who calls me. He got up directly and went to the priest, and said: "Please your reverence. I heard somebody calling my name, and I thought perhaps it was your reverence who called me." Then the priest said: "No, my child, I did not call you; go back again and sleep." So the obedient child went back to sleep. But after a little while the child heard the same voice calling him again and again. Each time he went to the priest, and at last the priest said "Perhaps, my child, it is the voice of God which calls you, so, if you hear it again, say: 'Speak, O Lord, for thy servant heareth.'" After a little while, when the child heard the voice again, he said as the priest had told him: "Speak, O Lord, for thy servant heareth." Then God spoke to the child, and commanded him to tell the priest what he had heard. So God loves to speak to good children; and as God spoke to the child Samuel, he will speak to you also, my child, if you will only let him. You will not hear his voice with your ears, as the child Samuel did, but you will hear it in your heart.

6. There was a great town called Milan; the bishop of this town became sick and died. As soon as the bishop was buried, all the people met together, and began to quarrel and dispute among themselves who should be the next bishop. Among the crowd were some little children, and all at once one of those children cried out: "Ambrose, bishop." As soon as the people heard the little child say those words, they felt in their hearts that these words of the child came from God, and so they all began to cry out along with the little child: "Ambrose, bishop." Ambrose was made bishop, and he became one of the greatest bishops of the Church. Thus you see that when God wishes to do some great and wonderful thing, he sometimes makes use of a poor, weak

little child to do it, because everybody sees that a weak little child could not do any great thing of itself, but that it is the almighty power of God in the child which does it. Besides, when the great, wise people see that God chooses a weak little child rather than themselves, they learn to be humble, "The foolish things of this world hath God chosen to confound the wise." I *Cor.* i.

7. About one hundred years since there was living in Rome a poor beggar. His clothes were rags, his dinner an old dry crust. He had made himself poor for the love of Jesus. He was a very holy man, and when he died, his death was precious in the sight of God. He died the death of a saint. Scarcely anybody knew that he was a saint, for when he was alive he had concealed all his good works as much as he could. But when people try to make themselves little in the eyes of others, God tries to make them great, for "he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." *Matt.* xxiii. So God wished that the hidden sanctity of this good man should be known by all the world. If it had pleased God, he might have employed the bishops of his Church to make known his sanctity; but it pleased him rather that the tongues of little children should make it known to the world. The morning after he died some children happened to come into the street where he had lived, and all at once they began to cry out: "The saint is dead, the saint is dead." These children scarcely knew why they were crying out these words, but it was God who put this cry into their hearts. The cry of these little children went from street to street, and from town to town; and so by the tongues of little children the world knew that there was another saint in Heaven. The name of this blessed man was Benedict Joseph Labre.

8. A few years since a wonderful thing happened in France. Many people in that country used to blaspheme the holy name of God; and they did not keep the Sunday holy. One day the dear blessed Virgin Mary, our Lady, the Mother of Jesus Christ, was seen on the hills of that country. The light of Heaven shone around her. She came, with tears in her eyes, to tell the people that if they did not repent of their sins, the hand of her son Jesus would strike them; and to whom, do you think, the blessed Virgin Mary spoke? "Perhaps to some great, some wise, some learned man." No. God wished rather that she should speak to children. So she spoke the message of the Almighty to two little children of the country, and she bade them take this message to the people. How true, then, are the words of the Holy Scripture: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones." *Matt.* xi. The place where the blessed Virgin spoke to these children is called La Salette.

9. God often makes children little apostles for the conversion of others. A person in Paris gave the following account of his conversion: "I had been brought up," he said, "in ignorance of the truth, with no respect for religion, and hating the Catholic Church. I had a little child which was wild, passionate, and stupid. I was cross and severe to this child. Sometimes my wife used to say to me: 'Wait a little, the child will be better when it makes its first communion.' I did not believe it. However, the child began to go to Catechism, and from that time it became obedient, respectful, and affectionate. I thought I would go myself to hear the instructions on the Catechism, which had made such a wonderful change in the child. I went, and I heard truths which I had never heard before. My feelings towards the child were changed. It was not so much love as respect I began to feel for the child. I was inferior to it, it was better and wiser than I was. The week for the first communion was come: there were but five or six days remaining. One morning the child returned from Mass, and came into the room where I was alone. 'Father,' said the child, 'the day of my first communion is coming, and I cannot go to the altar without asking your blessing, and forgiveness for all the faults I have committed and the pain I have often given you. Think well of my faults, and scold me for them all, that I may commit them no more.' 'My child,' I answered, 'a father forgives every thing.' The child looked at me with tears in its eyes, and threw its arms round my neck. 'Father,' said the child again, 'I have something else to ask you.' I knew well, my conscience told me, what the child was going to ask. I was afraid, and said, 'go away now, you can ask me to-morrow.' The poor child did not know what to say, so it left me, and went sorrowfully into its own little room, where it had an altar with an image of the Blessed Virgin upon it. I felt sorry for what I had said; so I got up, and walked softly on the tips of my feet to the room door of my child. The door was a little open; I looked at the child, it was on its knees before the Blessed Virgin, praying with all its heart for its father. Truly, at that moment, I knew what one must feel at the sight of an angel. I went back to my room, and leaned my head on my hands, I was ready to cry. I heard a slight sound, and raised my eyes—my child was standing before me, on its face there was fear, with firmness and love. 'Father,' said the child, 'I cannot put off till to-morrow what I have to ask you—I ask you, on the day of my first Communion, to come to the holy Communion along with mamma and me.' I burst into tears, and threw my arms round the child's neck, and said, 'Yes, my child, yes, this very day you shall take me by the hand and lead me to your confessor, and say, 'Here is Father.'" So this child converted its father. Little child, if you have parents who do not lead a good life, God looks to you for their conversion. But what can you do? The good example

of a child speaks to the heart of a parent. Then there is prayer—will God turn a deaf ear to the prayer of a child, praying for the conversion of its father or mother? No; the Hail Mary, which you say every day for their conversion, the prayer you say for them each time you hear Mass, the holy Communion you offer for them, the sighs of your heart, all rise up before God, and are not forgotten by him; and the day will come when God will send down from Heaven the grace of conversion into the heart of your parents.

10. Then, my child, give your first years, your early years, to Almighty God. All first things and early things, are beautiful before God and men. The first rays of the sun, when it rises over the mountain tops—the first white lily which is seen in the early spring, when the snows are melting away—the beautiful colours of the rose bud when it first opens—but, above all, the early years of childhood—please God. The infancy of Jesus is the glory and delight of the Christian Church. Mary, the mother of Jesus, consecrated her first years to God. Many hundreds and thousands of children there have been in this world who gave the years of childhood to Almighty God. Many children there have been, who, pleasing God in their childhood, were taken away out of the world into Heaven, because God foresaw that if they had lived to be older, perhaps malice would creep into their hearts, and they would not love him any more. Then, my child, "remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." *Eccles. xii.* Give the years of your childhood to God, who loves the years of childhood more than he loves any other years and who gives joy to those who love him when they are little. *Ps. xlii. 4.* Be not wicked in your childhood: if you are wicked when you are young, you will be wicked when you grow old; for it is a proverb: "A young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it"—*Prov. xxii.:* and then "his bones will be filled with the vices of his youth, and they will sleep with him in the dust." *Job xx.* These years are passing away; hasten, then, and offer them to God—say: "My God, I give you the years of my childhood. May they be as the years of the childhood of Jesus."

Then, my dear child, Almighty God is your Creator, and why did he create you? A bird is made to fly, a fish to swim, what are you made for yourself?—This question will be answered in the third book.

KEEP THE RULE OF LIFE.

I. *In the morning before you get up*, make the sign of the cross and say: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul*. For this you get 100 days' indulgence. Get up at a fixed time, remembering that God sees you.

II. *Morning Prayers*. When you are dressed, kneel down and say:

1. *The prayers*, Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Apostles' Creed, or, I believe.

A Meditation.

2. *The Morning Offering*. (Say to yourself, "What shall I have to do from now till the evening?" Think for a moment what, and you will do each action well—prayers, meals, school-duties, work, conversations, etc.), then say, "*O my God, I believe that you are present, and I offer to you the thoughts, words, actions, and sufferings of this day, with those of Jesus Christ.*"

3. *Examination about the sins of the day*. (Say to yourself, "What is the greatest sin I commit, or what sin do I commit oftenest?" Think for a moment what sin is it, and how you will avoid it), then say, "*O my God, keep me to-day from that sin. Amen.*"

III. *Meal Prayers*. Before and after meals, make the sign of the cross, and say grace.

IV. *Night Prayers*. 1. Say Our Father, Hail Mary, I believe. 2. Examine your conscience for a moment. (Say "Did I miss my prayers or commit any sin to-day?" Think for a moment what sin), then say, "*O God, be merciful to me a sinner.*"

V. *When in bed*, put your arms in the form of a cross and say, *Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul*.

VI. *Daily Virtues.* 1. *Give every thing you do to Jesus.* If you pray, eat, sleep, dress yourself, talk, sing, walk, sit down, take a message, light a candle, go to school, read, write, sew, work, in every action, little or great, say, at the beginning, or middle, or end of it, *My Jesus, I do this for the love of you*, or, *All for you my Jesus*. 2. If any thing happens to you which you do not like, say, *My God, may your holy will be done*. 3. Be kind to everybody. 4. Forgive those who offend you, and speak kindly to them. 5. Love, respect and obey your parents and masters.

VII. *Good practices.* Every day hear mass, visit the blessed sacrament and some image or picture of the blessed Virgin, say the Rosary, at least one decade, read some good book, say the Angelus, morning, noon, and night, be in some pious confraternity, make a retreat every year, read this rule of life every Sunday.

VIII. *Temptation.* 1. If a temptation comes, turn away from it and say, *Jesus and Mary, help me*, or say the *Hail Mary* till it goes away. 2. Put a bad thought out of your heart quickly as you would shake a burning spark off your hand. 3. Keep your eyes, ears, tongue, and hands from what is bad. 4. Keep away from bad company, public houses, and whiskey-shops, bad dancing and singing houses, gambling-houses, theatres, bad wakes, bad books, novels and romances.

IX. *Sins to avoid.* Missing your prayers, going to fortune-tellers, cursing, bad oaths, losing Mass on Sunday by your own neglect, bad conduct to parents, etc., hatred, drunkenness, immodest thoughts, words, actions, stealing, speaking ill of others, breaking the abstinence or fast, neglecting your Easter duties.

X. *Sins committed.* "He that loveth sin, hateth his own soul." *Ps. x.* 1. If you commit a mortal sin, make an *act of contrition* directly (see No. XIII.), and go to *confession* as soon as you can. 2. For a venial sin, *strike your breast and be sorry*.

XI. *The Sacraments.* Go to confession and holy communion at Easter, and at least *once every month*. Do not wilfully conceal a sin in confession.

XII. *Prayer* before and after holy communion, also for a spiritual communion at holy Mass, and for a visit to the blessed sacrament. *O Jesus, God the Son made man, I believe that thou art present in the blessed*

sacrament. I adore thee, I love thee. Sweet Jesus, come into my poor soul, and give me thy flesh to eat, and thy blood to drink. Amen. Blessed be Jesus in the most holy sacrament of the altar.

XIII. *Death.* Live every day as if you were to die that day. When you are dying, be sure to make an act of contrition, say, *O my God, I am very sorry for having sinned against thee, because thou art so good, and I will not sin again.* An act of contrition will save your soul if there is no priest to hear your confession when dying.

PRAISED BE JESUS AND MARY.

GOD LOVES LITTLE CHILDREN

I. How Jesus Loves Little Children.—The Stable.

IN a little town in a far country there was a stable. If you had gone into this stable you would have seen two persons, one of them was called Mary and the other Joseph. There was also a manger, an ox, and an ass standing at the manger and eating hay out of it. In the manger there was a very little infant laid on the hay. This infant was—God! He was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Go, little child, up to the manger and kneel down, and speak thus to Jesus: "O infant Jesus, I believe that you are God the Son, but tell me why did you become a little infant lying in the manger?" Jesus will answer you; he says: "My dear child, it is true I am God, but I loved the little children so much, that I wanted to be a little child like them myself. So you see me a little child in the manger."

II. How Jesus loved to be with the Little Children.

THE little children loved Jesus very much, for they knew that Jesus loved them. One day a great many little children were brought to Jesus that he might lay his hands on them and bless them. Some people who were there, were so foolish as to think that Jesus did not want the children to come to him. So they scolded those who brought the children, and they began to send the children away from Jesus. When Jesus saw that they were sending the children away from him, he was very angry! Then he said these words—"Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Then he laid his hands on the children and blessed them. *Mark x.* One day Jesus took a little child by the hand, and showed it to the people, and he said that they could not go into heaven unless they became simple, and meek, and humble, like the little child. You will be glad to hear that a little while before Jesus died, when everybody was crying out against Jesus, the children were heard crying out his praises in the Temple of Jerusalem. *Luke.* It is the delight of Jesus to be with children.

III. The Child and the Loaf.

WHEN the venerable B. Gerard was a child, he went into a church where there was an image of the Blessed Virgin. The infant Jesus left the arms of the Blessed Virgin, and came to Gerard, and gave him a beautiful loaf of white bread. Gerard carried the loaf home. His mother asked him where he got it. He answered that a child had given it to him. He went to this church many times, and each time the infant Jesus came and played with him, and gave another loaf. When he was seven years old he saw other people going up to the altar to receive Holy Communion. When he came to the altar the priest told him to go back. This made him very sorrowful. The next night the great Archangel St. Michael came to him, and gave him Holy Communion. If God has a great love for children, he will take great care of them.

IV. HOW GOD TAKES CARE OF CHILDREN.

The Boy not Crushed.

SAINT PHILIP one day, when a child, was standing in a yard near the house. He saw an ass standing there, and jumped on to its back. The ass, along with Philip, fell down some steps into a cellar. He fell under the ass. Everybody thought that he was crushed to death. They took him away from under the ass, and found that by the Providence of God he was not at all hurt.

One day Philip was walking along the street. As he went on his way he dropped something made of gold. He stood still and said a prayer. He then went to look for it and found it directly. Another time he had let some things drop a long way off; but he prayed, and went back and found them again.

V. The Boy and the Wolf.

WHEN Blessed Sebastian was a little boy, there was a very dangerous sickness going about the country. Sebastian caught the sickness. There was fear lest others should catch the sickness from him. So he was not allowed to remain in the house. He was carried out into a part of the country where nobody was living, and he was left by himself in a poor little hut. Every day some bread was taken and left near the door of the hut, that he might come out and eat it. One day he felt as if he was dying. The sickness had made a swelling come on his head. This swelling gave him frightful pain. He was lying on the ground dying. The door of the hut was open. At this moment a

great frightful wolf, which had come down from the mountains, walked in through the door. The wolf came up to little Sebastian, who thought he was going to be eaten up by the beast. But the wolf, instead of eating him up, lifted up its paw and scratched the swelling on his head, and then went away. As soon as the swelling had been scratched by the wolf it began to bleed. The moment the swelling began to bleed, he felt better, and in a short time he was quite well. How good God is to the poor little children. Other people leave them, but God never leaves them. There was nobody to cure that little boy, so God sent the wolf to cure him.

VI. HOW GOD TAKES CARE OF THE LITTLE CHILD'S SOUL.

The Child While a Baby.

THEY were going to build a new school near London. The son of the Queen of England, the Prince of Wales, came there to lay the first stone of the school. There were great crowds there that day. Many thousands of people came there to look at the son of the Queen of England.

But see, there is a baby. It has just been baptized. Now it is a son of God! It is a child of God who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Surely all the eight hundred millions of people who are on the earth ought to come round that infant; they ought to lift up their hands in wonder, and say, is it true? can it be that this infant is—a son of God?

The poor baby is weak and helpless; it needs somebody to be kind to it and help it. God knows this, and he has sent his angels from heaven to be with it in all its ways. To one of the angels he said: "My dear angel, you shall be the angel guardian of that little child. Be with it always, never leave it; and pray for it day and night." Then the angel guardian came to the baby. He was so glad to see it, and he blessed it. He always stops with it, and takes such care of it.

Besides this, God spoke to his own Mother. He said: "Mary, my dear Mother, see that little baby. I want you to be a very kind mother to it, and love it, and take care of it, as you took care of me when I was a baby." And now Mary is taking care of this infant, just as she took care of the infant Jesus.

VII. The Child wants strength.

THE baby is older. It can understand things. But it wants strength against temptation. God has sent some one from heaven to strengthen it. Whom has

God sent? is it an angel? No, God has sent some one greater than an angel. He has sent the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, to strengthen the child and make it a strong and perfect Christian in the sacrament of confirmation.

The Child wants food.

THE poor child wants food for its soul. God has looked through all the earth, but he cannot find any food which he thinks good enough for the child. Then he looks through heaven, and there he can only find one thing good enough for the child. But it is the most precious of all things, it is the most precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ himself. O, the wonder! while God and his angel were looking at it, the child received at the altar the true Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, in the holy Eucharist.

The Child wants a Cure.

OH! what a misfortune has happened! The devil or some bad company came to the child and tempted it. The child did not *go away* from the temptation, nor say *Jesus and Mary help me*. It committed a sin. Its soul is hurt very much, perhaps it is even dead. God is sorry to see it. He loses no time. He has sent some one to cure it. The priest is ready. The child is sorry for offending God. It has confessed the sin. The priest has forgiven the sin. The child feels quite joyful again.

The Child Dies.

SICKNESS has come on the child. It is dying! It feels so sad and sorrowful. Every thing round it looks like darkness. But God has sent the priest to it. The priest has anointed it with the holy oil of Extreme Unction. The child feels quite changed. The sorrow is gone out of its heart. The darkness is changed into light. The child feels quite happy, and ready to die. It says, *O my God, thy will be done*. While the priest was anointing it, God told the angels that if it had been better for the child to live, the holy oil of Extreme Unction should have cured it. But perhaps God saw that if the child lived longer it would commit sin. So the child is dead.

VIII.—The Child's Soul goes into Heaven.

THE child has been judged! and Jesus has said that it should go to heaven. Now the little child is standing at the gates of heaven. The gates are opened, and the little child has gone into that paradise of joys that never end. Happy child! The angels wonder when they see the child, it looks so very, very beautiful. They clothe it with a dress whiter than snow, and more shining and bright than the sun. Now the angel guardian has taken the little child by the hand, and led it through the choirs of bright angels, up to the throne of God. God looks so kindly on the little child, and he says, "My dear little child, I am so glad to see you, come and sit down on the beautiful throne where I sit myself."—*Apoc. iii*. When the little child was seated on the throne of God, He spoke to it again and said, "My dear child, look at all that I have in heaven and on earth. I will give it all to you: all is yours." Then when God had given to the child all that he has, his greatness, and wisdom, and power, and every thing, the child seemed more than ever to be the very image and likeness of God. Now the angels began to sing hymns of thanksgiving, because God had been so good to the little child. When the child heard the music of the angels, and saw all that God had given to it, and how good God is, and how beautiful, its heart was almost bursting with joy. Then its angel guardian came over to it, and whispered in its ear, and told it that it would have all this joy in heaven every day, for ever and ever!

The Child that was seen in Heaven.

MARINA DE ESCOBAR saw in a vision among the saints in heaven, Marina Hernandez, her niece, who had died in her fifth year. When Marina was dying, she had said with her last breath, "I am going to heaven to bless and praise God in the choir of angels." When her aunt saw her in heaven she said, "Ah, my little darling, how well I know you." The little saint answered, "Dear aunt, I am doing in heaven what I said I should do when I died."

S. Aloysius died when he was young. After his death, S. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi saw him in heaven. She says that the glory and beauty of his soul in heaven were so great that she could not have thought that there was such great glory in heaven!

IX. HOW GOD TELLS THINGS TO LITTLE CHILDREN.

How the Blessed Virgin speaks to Children.

IN the year 1846, two little children called Maximin and Melany, were minding some cows on the mountains of La Salette in France. About the middle of the day they saw near them a bright dazzling light. This light was far brighter than the sun, and of a different colour. In the midst of the light they saw a lady. She had on a white dress, covered with pearls and roses. There was a small chain round her neck, on which hung a cross, and a crown of white roses on her head. Her shoes were white, with roses round them of all colours. Her face was so dazzling that they could not look at it long. She was crying: the tears ran down from her eyes, and went out like sparks in the air. This lady was the Blessed Virgin Mary. She rose up with her arms crossed, and spoke these words to the children: "Come near to me, my children, be not afraid; I am come here to tell you great news, and you will make it known to all my people. If they will not be good, I shall be forced to let go the hand of my Son Jesus, to punish them. His hand is so strong and so heavy that I cannot keep it back any longer. I am obliged to pray to him without stopping, that his punishments may not come upon the people. They do not keep the Sunday holy. They are always swearing by the name of my Son. These two things make the hand of my Son so heavy." She then said to the children, "You must be sure to say your morning and evening prayers well. When you cannot do better say at least one *Our Father* and *Hail Mary*. But when you have time say more."

O, the wonderful love of Mary for the children! She had a message to send to the people. She did not choose Prophets, or Apostles, or Bishops to take this message, but she chose two poor little simple *children*, because she remembered that Jesus was once a child, and she knows how much he loves the children.

X. The Children find out the Saint.

ABOUT one hundred years since, there was living in Rome a poor beggar. His clothes were rags, his dinner an old dry crust. He had made himself poor for the love of Jesus. He was a very holy man, and when he died, his death was precious in the sight of God. He died the death of a saint. Scarcely anybody knew that he was a saint, for when he was alive he had concealed all his good works as much as he could. But when people try to make themselves little in the eyes of others, God tries to make them great, for "he

that shall humble himself shall be exalted."—*Matt.* xxiii. So God wished that the hidden sanctity of this good man should be known to all the world. If it had pleased God, he might have employed the bishops of his Church to make known his sanctity, but it pleased him rather that the tongues of little children should make it known to the world. The morning after he died some children happened to come into the street where he had lived, and all at once they began to cry out: "The saint is dead, the saint is dead." These children scarcely knew why they were crying out these words, but it was God who put this cry into their hearts. The cry of these little children went from street to street, and from town to town; and so by the tongues of little children the world knew that there was another saint in heaven. The name of this blessed man was Benedict Joseph Labre.

XI. The Three Stone Figures.

IN the town of Barcelona, in one of the streets, there is a nurse and a child, and a man looking at the child. The nurse and the child and the man are all made of stone. Those who go through that street sometimes stop and look at them, and they wonder what is the meaning of it. In the year 1239, there was a man in this town who was doing great penances for his sins. He seldom went out of his house except to the church. He fasted every day and said a great many prayers. When people try to be good and holy, they are almost sure to be teased. So it happened to this good man. They treated him as if he was a wild beast, and locked him up in a stable along with the horses. One day a little child opened the stable door and went in. He looked at the man, and knew that he was doing penance for his sins. The child, like an angel, had looked into his soul. So the people put up in the street the likeness in stone of the man and the child and its nurse. This likeness in stone has been standing there for more than six hundred years.

The Children Martyrs.—The Babies of Bethlehem.

ONE day there was a great crying in the town of Bethlehem. Many hundreds of poor babies had been killed. A cruel king, called Herod, wanted to kill the infant Jesus, but he did not know which of the babies was the infant Jesus. So he commanded the soldiers to kill all the babies. Then there was great weeping and lamentation in Bethlehem. The mothers would not be consoled, because their babies had been killed. But in the misfortunes which Providence sends, there is a blessing. Those mothers were very sorrowful when they saw their babies dead, for they knew not that death was a blessing

for those babies. Because they died for the sake of the infant Jesus, they are happy for ever with Jesus in Heaven.

XII. The Children and the Holy Cross.

THE real cross on which Jesus died was buried in the earth at Jerusalem by some bad people. Then nobody knew where the holy cross was. After one hundred and eighty years St. Helen went to Jerusalem and found out the place where the holy cross was buried. They took spades and dug very deep into the earth. After digging for a long time, at last they found three crosses. They found also the words *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*, on a board lying a little way off the crosses. When they found the three crosses they knew that one of them must be the cross of Jesus, another of the good thief, and another of the bad thief. But they could not tell which of the three was the cross of Jesus. At that time there was a woman in Jerusalem lying very sick. Macarius, the bishop, prayed to Almighty God to find out which was the true cross. Then he took the crosses to the house of the sick woman. He put one cross into her hand, but nothing happened. Then he put another cross into her hand, still nothing happened. But the moment he put the third cross into her hand, she was cured of her sickness. Then they knew that this was the real cross on which Jesus died. St. Helen had a very grand church built. She put the holy cross in a silver case, and left it in this church.

A great many years after this, some people, called the Saracens came to Jerusalem, and took away the holy cross from the Christians. When the people all over the world heard that the holy cross had been taken away, there was great sorrow and mourning. They said to one another, "Let us try to get back the Holy Cross." Many thousands of people went to Jerusalem to try and get back the holy cross. The children also loved the holy cross, and you will now hear how they also went to try to get back the holy cross.

The Children set off to seek the Holy Cross.

THERE was a little shepherd boy living in the village of Cloies, in France. He said that he had seen Jesus Christ, who told him to let the people know that they must try to get back the Holy Cross. He went through all the towns and villages singing these words: *Lord Jesus, help us to get back the Holy cross*. These words pierced the hearts of those who heard him, as if they had been the words of God himself. Great numbers of children joined him. In Paris alone, fifteen thousand children not twelve years old, went along with him. As they went along on the journey, the people everywhere were very

good and kind to these poor children. Pope Innocent heard about it, and he said: "These children make us ashamed of ourselves. While we sleep they set off with joy to get back the Holy Cross." After they had travelled a long way they came at last to a town on the sea-side. This town was called Marseilles. When they had come to this town, they went into ships, and went over the sea for more than two thousand miles, till they came to Jerusalem. As soon as they came there the bad people who had taken away the Holy Cross, got hold of a great many of the children. They told the children that if they did not deny their religion they should be killed. But the good children would not deny their religion, so they were killed and they died a very happy death, because they died for the love of Jesus.

XIII. Other Children set off to get back the Holy Cross.

IN Germany twenty thousand children got ready to set off. Each of them had a cross on his shoulder, and carried in his hand a stick to walk with, and a bag to hold some bread in. A little boy called Nicolas, not yet ten years old, went at the head of them. On the road many died of hunger and cold. Some of them suffered many pains, and were obliged to turn back home. They were very sorry, not for the pains they had to suffer, but because they could not keep up with the others and go to Jerusalem and get back the Holy Cross. The others went on their journey, and when they came to the sea, they got into ships and set off to Jerusalem. Two ships full of these poor children sunk down in the water of the sea, and they were all drowned. Pope Gregory IX. heard of it, and he ordered the bodies of the drowned children to be taken out of the water. He had a church built called the *Church of the New Holy Innocents*. He ordered that the bodies of the children should be kept in this church like the relics of the martyrs, because they had given their lives for the faith of Jesus.

A Lesson for the Children.

THESE children took a long journey of three or four thousand miles to go to Jerusalem and get back the holy cross. Every child, as soon as it is born, must set off on a long journey, and his journey is not to Jerusalem, but to—Heaven! And the road to heaven is, to be good and keep out of bad company, and say your prayers.

The cross was very holy because Jesus had died on it. But still it was only wood, like any other wood. But you my little child are going to get, not the

wood of the cross, but in the Holy Communion you will get the true and real body of Jesus that was nailed to the cross.

XIV. ENGLISH CHILDREN MARTYRS.

St. William.

SIX hundred years ago there was a boy living in the town of Norwich, in England. His name was William. He was eleven years old, and was living with a man who made leather, and was learning that trade. During Lent, a little before Easter, some bad people in that town enticed him into one of their houses. When they had got him into the house they took hold of him, tied him, and put something into his mouth, so that he might not be able to cry out for anybody to come and help him. They got a cross ready and nailed him to it. Then took a knife and cut his side open. So they did to this boy just what the Jews had done to Jesus Christ. The boy was very patient, and he died on the cross for the love of Jesus. As soon as he was dead they took his body down from the cross. On Easter Sunday they put the dead body of William into a sack, and carried it out of the town. They brought the body to a place near the town called Thorp Wood. There they dug a deep hole to bury the holy body. But while they were digging they saw some people coming, so they ran away and left the body of the little boy hanging on a tree. The body of William was taken down from the tree, and carried to the church of the Holy Trinity. Almighty God made known what a holy death the little boy had died, for miracles were worked at his tomb. Afterwards a chapel was built in Thorp Wood, where the body of the martyred child had been found hanging on the tree. This chapel was called "The Chapel of St. William in the Wood."

St. Hugh.

ST. HUGH was a little boy who lived in Lincoln. He was eleven years old. Some bad people took him, and spit upon him, and whipped him. Then they cut his upper lip off and broke out some of his teeth; then they nailed him to a cross and cut open his side. The little boy was very patient, and he died a martyr of Jesus. Let children at least be patient when they have any pains to suffer. It is not likely that you, my little child, will have to die a martyr for the love of Jesus. But still you will very likely, before you die, have many pains to suffer. If you are patient in these pains for the love of Jesus, then

Jesus will be very glad, and give you a great reward in heaven. "Yet so if we suffer with him that we may reign with him." *Rom.*

XV. St. Teresa.

WHEN St. Teresa was six or seven years old, she had a little brother about the same age as herself. They used to read together the lives of the saints. "We read also," she says, "about the martyrs who had died for Jesus. When I read how some of them had been martyred, I thought they had bought very cheaply the happiness of going to heaven. I felt a great desire to die a martyr like them. But I desired to be a martyr, not because I loved God very much, but because I wanted to have very soon the great happiness of being in heaven. My little brother also thought he would like very much to be a martyr. So we began to think how we might become martyrs. We thought we would pray to God about it, and then we would go into the country of the Moors, where people became martyrs by dying for the faith of Jesus Christ. Although we were only infants, by the help of God, we did not feel frightened to die for him. We were only afraid that our father and mother would not let us go to be martyrs. When we read in good books how the good are happy forever in heaven, and the wicked punished forever in hell! we wondered very much. Often we said, 'Will it then be forever! forever! forever!' When I said these words to myself, God made me desire to become good. When my brother and I saw that we could not go away and become martyrs, we began to make little chapels in the garden, that we might live in them, and always be saying our prayers. But when we put the stones on one another to build a chapel, the stones tumbled down again, because there was no mortar to make them fast. I used to give to the poor all I could, but it was very little. I often went by myself to say my prayers, and I prayed very often. I said my rosary, which my mother loved very much, for she had taught us how to say the rosary"

The children must take notice that St. Teresa *prayed* to God to be a martyr. No child will ever be good unless it says its prayers well. If a child prays well, it lives well, and if it lives well it dies well!

XVI. Prayers.—The Children's Answer.

WHEN Marina de Escobar was walking along the streets she used sometimes to ask the little children whom she met to stop. Then she said to them: "Little ones, do you know the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*?" When they answered that they knew these prayers quite well, she would say,

"Then, my little ones, pray every day to Almighty God, and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, that you may love God very much." Then the little ones used to look at her and say—"So we will, lady"

XVII. The Boy who forgot his Dinner.

WHEN St. Peter of Alcantara was a child, he loved very much to say his prayers. One day, it was dinner time and the dinner was quite ready. The father and mother of Peter were at the dinner-table, and his brothers and sisters were there, only the little Peter himself was not there. The father said, "Where is Peter?" nobody could tell where he was; they searched all through the house, but they could not find the child anywhere; they thought that perhaps he might be playing outside of the house, so they went and looked for him, but they could not see him anywhere. At last, they thought perhaps he might be in the chapel, so they went to the chapel. There they found the good child on his knees, with his hands joined, looking up to heaven, and saying his prayers! He had forgotten his dinner, he was thinking only about his prayers, so he became a very great saint. Did you ever forget your dinner or your breakfast for your prayers? Perhaps you even thought so much about your breakfast that you eat it before you had said any prayers at all!

XVIII. In the Chapel.

WHEN F. Sarnelli was a boy, he loved very much to be at his prayers in the church, so if anybody came to the house to ask for him, the servant always answered, "you will find him *in the chapel*."

When F. Blasucci was a little baby, not a day old, he was seen to lift up his little arms and fold them on his breast like a cross.

How many Prayers some Children said.

BLESSED Bonaventura, from the time that she was *seven years old*, said *every day* a hundred Our Fathers and a hundred Hail Marys, in honour of the Blessed Trinity, a hundred Our Fathers and Hail Marys in honour of the Angels, a hundred in honour of the Patriarchs, a hundred in honour of the Martyrs, a hundred in honour of the Confessors, a hundred in honour of the holy Virgins. Every day also she said a thousand Hail Marys in honour of the Blessed Virgin. She fasted three days in every week; when she was twelve years old, she put on sackcloth and wore it for six years and a half.

XIX. The Infant's first Words.

THE very first words that St. Rose of Viterbo learnt to say were the holy names *Jesus*, *Mary*, and the same of St. John the Baptist, whose picture was in the house. When she was only two years old, she used to go to the church of St. Francis, she would kneel down before Jesus in the blessed sacrament, and adore him. She listened to sermons and instructions, and said them by heart afterwards. When she was seven years old, she used to stop day and night praying in her little room, which was so small that it could hold only a bed and a little altar. She did not go out except to hear holy mass, at the next church, called St. Mary on the Hill.

XX. Meditation for Children.

WHEN Marina de Escobar was only *three years old*, people often heard her saying, "I love God more than my father and mother, and more than all things else." She used to hide herself in the house and in the fields. When they asked her why did she hide herself, she said, "I want to find God, who is my life." When she was a little girl, she said she did not know what was meant by *meditation*; but that she loved to think about what Jesus did for us. This was really meditation, so she used to make a meditation without knowing it. The children will find in this book a meditation which it will be very good for them to read every day.

XXI. Four years old.

WHEN St. Catherine Ricci was *only four years old*, she used often to go to some part of the house where she could be silent and quiet, and say her prayers. There she used to say the Our Father and Hail Mary, and think about the sufferings of Jesus Christ. When she was thinking on the death of Jesus on the cross, she would stretch out her arms in the form of a cross. Many times she saw her Angel Guardian. He taught her how to pray, and especially how to say the Rosary. When she grew older she was sent to a convent. She never wished to give over praying; very often her aunt, who lived there, had to go and let her know it was bed-time or dinner-time

The Child's Question.

VEN. MARGARET, when a little child, always felt great joy when she heard the word *prayer*. But it seemed to her that she did not know what prayer was.

Sometimes she asked people to tell her what prayer was; they only laughed at her. Then she asked God to teach her how to pray. God made known to her that she must kneel before him with great respect, and be very sorry for her sins, and tell him all that she wanted, and think about Jesus dying on the cross. She made her first communion with great devotion when she was nine years old.

XXII. What are the Prayers of Children worth?

THE following words were preached by Monsn. Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, in Paris, April 4, 1860: "What has saved the Church on earth? What has given the Church confidence in the midst of persecutions? It is this: The Church has the *little children* on her side. She has with her millions of little children, stammering out their innocent prayers. Poor Church of Christ! thou hast for thy defenders, not a million of soldiers, but millions of little children, who lift up their innocent hands for thee!" If you want to be quite certain of the power there is in the prayer of a child, open the Holy Scriptures, and read Psalm viii.—*Out of the mouths of infants thou hast perfected praise.*

The Boy Dying of Thirst.

GEN. XXI.—Agar was wandering in the sandy deserts of Arabia with her little boy Ismael. She had with her a bottle of water for him to drink, for there was no other water in the deserts. When the water in the bottle was finished, she put the little boy under one of the trees and went a great way off from him, for she said, I will not see the boy die of thirst. Then she sat down and lifted up her voice, and began to cry for the poor, dying boy. Then an angel of God called to Agar from heaven and said: "What art thou doing, Agar? fear not, *for God hath heard the voice of the boy.* Arise, take up the boy." And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and went and filled the bottle, and gave the boy to drink. So God heard the voice, not of the mother, but of the child, and he gave them water to drink. So God hears the prayers of children.

XXIII. The Children Pray for the People.

THERE was a town called Bethulia. One day the chapel there was full of children. What was the matter? The soldiers were on their road to this town. They were coming to kill the people. The people knew that God hears the

prayers of children, for they had read in the Holy Scriptures, "*That out of the mouths of infants comes forth perfect praise of God.*" So they made all the children come into the chapel, and bow their heads down to the ground, and pray for the people. God heard the prayers of the children, and he made the cruel soldiers go away, and the people were saved by the prayers of the children.

NOTE.—In Constantinople, the Turks have a remarkable custom when the plague rages, and a thousand dead bodies are carried out each day to the burial grounds beyond the walls. In these times of terror and grief, the Sheik Ul Islam gathers together all the little children on a beautiful green hill called the Oc Maidan, or the Place of Arrows. There the children bow down on the ground, and raise their innocent voices in prayer to God, and implore his pity on the afflicted city.—*Curzon's Travels*

The Children Pray for the Dying.

WHEN the great Gerson had become an old man, he could not bear to be with anybody except with children. He lived with them and taught them, or rather he sought to get instructions from them. He thought a great deal of their prayers. The evening before he died, he got all the children together and asked them to say this prayer for him: "Lord, have pity upon your poor servant, John Gerson." Children must not only say their prayers, but they must also be *obedient*.

XXIV. The Obedient Child.

THERE was a very old priest, called Eli, and a good child, called Samuel, who lived with the priest. Almighty God wanted to say something to the priest, but he liked better to say it to the child, and let the child tell the priest. So one night, when the child was asleep, God called the child by his name, Samuel. The child awoke, and heard somebody calling his name, but he did not know that it was God who called him. He thought in himself, perhaps it is the priest who calls me. He got up directly, and went to the priest, and said: "Please, your reverence, I heard somebody calling my name, and I thought perhaps it was your reverence who called me." Then the priest said: No my child, I did not call you; go back again and sleep." So the obedient child went back to sleep. But after a little while the child heard the same voice calling him again and again. Each time he went to the priest, and at last the priest said: "Perhaps, my child, it is the voice of God which calls you, so, if you hear it again, say: "*Speak, O Lord, for thy servant heareth.*" After a

little while, when the child heard the voice again, he said as the priest had told him: "Speak, O Lord, for thy servant heareth." Then God spoke to the child and commanded him to tell the priest what he had heard. So God loves to speak to good children who are obedient; and as God spoke to the child Samuel, he will speak to you also, my child, if you are obedient. You will not hear his voice with your ears, as the child Samuel did, but you will hear it in your heart.

XXV. The Child that Converted its Father.

ABOUT four years since, there was a little boy six years old, living in a large town. He was very sickly. His father was a drunkard. One evening he was going home from the children's mission. When he came home he opened the door, and he saw his father sitting in a chair drunk! The little boy went over to his father and climbed up on his knees. He joined his hands together and said: "Father, I want to say something to you." The father said: "Well, what is it?" The child said: "Father, I feel very poorly, and I think I shall die soon. God is good. I think when I am dead he will take my soul into heaven." "Well," said the father, "what then?" "When I come into heaven," said the child, "I shall be very sorry to do it, but I must go to Almighty God, and tell him that you go to the public-house and ruin us all." God must have put these words on the tongue of the child! As soon as the child had spoken, the father did not answer one word, but he quietly took the child off his knees and set him down on the ground. The father walked out of the house—he went in haste till he came to the chapel. Next morning he went down on his knees and made his confession. From that day he never got drunk any more, nor did he ever put his foot in a public-house again. Besides being obedient to your parents or masters, you should try not to get angry with your companions if they do something which vexes you.

XXVI. The Boy who was Angry.

WHEN S. Philip Neri was a little boy he was reading to one of his sisters. While he was doing this, his eldest sister, Catharine, came up to him and tried to stop his reading, and tease him. Almost without thinking, he pushed her away. Afterwards, when he thought of it, he was very sorry, and cried for his fault. One of the worst faults children can commit is going into bad company.

Temptation.—The Child and the Devil.

WHEN S. Joseph Calasanctius was a little boy five years old, he heard some one speaking about the devil, the enemy of God. He did not know who the devil was, but he thought the devil would look like a man. So he ran through all the rooms of the house to find him and drive him away. Another day he got together a good many children. They all got sticks in their hands, and went about looking for the devil to drive him out of the world. These sticks were only made of wood. The stick which really sends the devil away is the beautiful prayer, *Jesus and Mary help me*.

XXVII. The Children and the Bad Sailor.

WHEN Blessed Leonard was nine years old, one day he was walking in the country with some other boys. As they went along a sailor came up to them. The sailor began by giving them some sugarsticks and some pennies. Then he asked them to do something very wicked. The very moment the sailor began to speak about such wicked things, Leonard and the others were shocked and ran away. The bad sailor ran after them to beat them. But they ran quicker than he did. They got back into the town. The first thing they did when they got into the town was to go to the church and thank Almighty God for taking care of them.

S. Jane Frances, when a little child, had a very bad nurse who tried to teach her wicked things, but she would not listen to her.

When S. Mary of Egypt was twelve years old, she ran away from her parents, and led a most wicked life for seventeen years.

When S. Aloysius went through the streets he always kept his eyes looking down on the ground for fear he should see any thing bad.

When B. Margaret Alacoque was three years old, she was frightened if she heard anybody talk about sin.

The Two Good Boys.

WHEN S. Gregory and S. Basil were boys, they were great friends. They kept carefully out of bad company. They knew only two streets, the street which led to the church, and the street which led to the school.

Many little girls like to have a fine dress, and get proud and vain.

The Pin.

WHEN S. Rose of Lima was a little child, her mother used to dress her up very finely. But Rose did not like this, because she thought that it was not pleasing to Jesus Christ. One day they had put a wreath of white roses round her head. Rose was afraid that she would get proud. So she took a pin and stuck it in the skin of her head, that the pain of it might keep her from being proud. Somebody said to her one day, "What beautiful hands you have." She ran away directly and thrust her hands into some hot lime and said, "Never let my hands be a temptation to anybody." She fasted three days every week, and used to eat on purpose things that were very bitter.

When S. Catharine of Sienna, was five years old, her mother wanted to put on her a very rich dress. Catharine said these words to her mother: "The infant Jesus was very poor in the crib, he was dressed in very poor clothes."

Blessed Benvenuta was a very good child. Sometimes her sister would come and curl her hair, and put flowers on her head and ask her to go to dances. But instead of going to dances, she took the flowers off her head and went into a wood where there was a chapel of the Blessed Virgin and prayed there.

XXVIII. Stealing, or the children that died on the sand.

IN the early times there was a holy monk living in Egypt. He was called the Abbot John. There was another monk, an old man, who was very sick, who lived a long way off. One day somebody gave the Abbot John some figs. John thought he would send the figs to the poor old man who was sick. He called to him two very little children, and put the figs into their hands, and told them to carry the figs to the sick old man. He bade them not to eat the figs. The children took the figs and set off. They had a long journey to make. The journey was across a sandy country where there were no roads or houses or trees. The children set off. Soon after they had begun their journey a very thick mist like a dark cloud came down on the country. The children could not see their way. So they wandered about day and night without knowing where they were going. The little children got very hungry and faint, and they had nothing with them to eat except the figs. But they remembered that the Abbot John had told them not to eat the figs. So they would not eat them. Every hour they became more and more hungry and more and more faint. At last the poor little children could not go any further. All their strength was gone, they could scarcely breathe. Still they would not eat the figs. So at last, they knelt down on the sand and said their prayers

and—died! Some people went to seek the children. They knew which road they had gone by seeing their little footsteps on the sand. At last they came to the very place where they had died. They found the dead bodies of the two little children lying on the sand. The figs were lying close beside them, and on the sand where they had said their prayers, there were the marks of their knees. How good these two little children were. These children would not eat the figs for any thing, not even to save their lives. It is true they made a mistake. It would not have been a sin to eat the figs when they were dying of hunger. They should have eaten them to save their lives, and Abbot John would have been very glad of it.

But the fear these children had to break the seventh commandment, which says, *Thou shalt not steal*, at least teaches a lesson to other children, who steal the sugar, and the butter, and the half-pennies. Neither should children tell lies. S. Francis of Sales in his childhood, would rather let himself be whipped than tell a lie. It is better to be punished for a fault and be *patient* rather than tell a lie.

What a Child did for the Love of Jesus, or Patience.

WHEN Blessed Paul of the cross was a little child, his mother used to comb his hair sometimes. The comb often scratched his head and gave him pain, and he would begin to cry. Then his mother would tell him to be patient and quiet for the love of Jesus. Then the little child became very quiet and cried no more. But it is not enough to be patient. *You must do good to others.*

XXIX. The Children who were good to others.

The Child that gave away its dinner.

WHEN St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi was yet not seven years old, she was sent to school twice a day; they put her dinner in a little basket, and she carried it to school. On her road there was the prison. When she went past the prison, she would take out her little dinner and give it to the poor prisoners. When her mother said to her, "Do this or do that," she always did it directly; when her mother went to Holy Communion they took notice that the little child used to get hold of her mother's clothes; they asked her why she did it? she answered, that she could feel when she touched her mother's clothes, something beautiful about them because she had received the holy communion. Before she made her first communion, she loved at least to see

the priest give holy communion to others, and she would stop in the chapel for three or four hours. One day she heard somebody say a *bad word*, she cried all the night after; they asked her why she cried, she said, *because God had been offended*. She used to get the poor little children of the country together, and teach them their prayers and give them clothes. They asked her why she did it, she answered "Because the little children remind me of the infant Jesus."

XXX. The Child that took care of the Sick.

WHEN the Venerable Louis da Ponte was only a child, he knew what Jesus had said about visiting the sick: "*I was sick, and you visited me.*" So he used to go to the hospitals where the sick people were lying. He made their beds, swept the floor, and gave them water to drink, and was very kind to them. He read good books to them, and said prayers with them.

The Child that always gave something to the poor.

ST. FRANCIS of Assisi, when a child, had great pity for the poor. He determined to give something to every poor person who asked it for the love of God. One day he was going along in a great hurry. On his road a poor man met him, and asked for something. Francis thought that he had no time to stop, so he went on without giving the poor man any thing. After he had gone on some distance he began to feel sorry for what he had done; so he turned back and ran after the poor man; he found him and gave him a great deal of money. Then he made a promise to God that he would never refuse to give something to any poor person who should ask it for the love of God.

XXXI. The Child that spoke for the poor.

WHEN St. Thomas of Villanova was eight years old, one day he was coming home from school. On his road he met a poor man who looked very sorrowful. He asked him what was the matter? The poor man said, I am going to see your father, he lent me some corn, and I have lost it all, and I shall never be able to pay it back. Little Thomas felt very sorry for the poor man's misfortune, he said to him, "Come along with me to my father's house." As soon as they reached his father's house, little Thomas went and knelt down before his father. He told his father about the poor man's loss, and asked him to forgive the debt. Thomas' father was very glad to find that

his son was so good to the poor. He went straight to the door where the poor man was still waiting, and forgave him the debt and gave him more corn.

XXXII. The Salt.

FATHER JOHN BAPTIST when a little boy was very good to the poor. When he was six years old, he was sent by his mother one day to buy some salt in a shop. On his road he met a poor beggar, and gave him the money that was to pay for the salt. His mother did not get angry with him, because she knew he was good. Whenever a beggar came to the door, he always ran to his mother to get something to give away to the poor beggar, and when he gave it away he felt so glad. He used to get together little children like himself, and talk with them about holy things.

The Good Infant.

THE holy child Mary Teresa of Jesus, died in 1627, aged five years. She was a wonderfully holy child. She was in the Third Order of Our Lady of Mercy. The charity of this infant for the poor was so great, that she used to give them part of her own dinner. Her reverence in the church, her sweetness at home, her knowledge of holy things, were most wonderful. All good children love the blessed Virgin Mary very much.

XXXIII. The Children who Loved the Blessed Virgin.

ST. TERESA was twelve years old when her mother died. As soon as her mother was dead, she went and knelt down before an image of the Blessed Virgin. She prayed to the Blessed Virgin with tears in her eyes, and asked her to be a mother to her. She says that this did her great good, and said, after this, whenever she prayed to the Blessed Virgin, she was always helped by her.

St. Andrew Corsini was at first a bad boy, till his parents told him that they had consecrated him to the Blessed Virgin, when he became good.

When St. Clare was about seven years old, she loved to say the Rosary. But she had no Rosary beads to count the Hail Marys, so she used to get a good many little stones, and count the Hail Marys with the stones. There never was a good child who did not love the Blessed Virgin Mary very much.

XXXIV. The Children who Learnt their Catechism.

WHEN the venerable Margaret was only four years old she began to learn the Catechism, and she loved to think about the things she had learnt in the Catechism.

Blessed Hippolitus was very careful always to learn his Catechism. Besides this he used to go about the town seeking the children, and bringing them up to Catechism. After some time the Jesuit Fathers made him a teacher in the Sunday-school. When he was nine years old he made his First Communion.

The Child in School.

WHEN the venerable Benedict Joseph Labre was a little boy at school, sometimes the other boys beat him. He was always silent, and never said any thing about it. If the master found it out, and was going to punish any of the boys who beat him, he always asked pardon for them. When school was over he always waited till the last, and let all the others go out before him. The master asked him why he did this. He said the other boys like to go out first, and besides, I shall get home as soon as they do. And so he did, for he did not stop about the streets to play, but went straight home. He was at that time only six years old! He always did what his school-fellows wanted him, if it was not wrong. So if they said: "Benedict, do this," he did it directly. When he was *five years old* he often went to confession. He was always the first at catechism and prayers. When he served at mass, he joined his little hands before his breast, kept his eyes looking on the ground, and he never turned his head to look at any thing

XXXV. The Child taught by God.

WHEN St. Rose was a little child her mother wanted her to learn reading and writing. Rose did not like the trouble of learning. Her mother asked the Priest to scold her—so Rose got a scolding. Next morning while Rose was saying her prayers, she asked God to teach her how to read and write. When she had finished her prayers she got up and went to her mother. A most wonderful thing had happened. The mother found that Rose was able now to read and write. God himself had taught her while she was praying! So when children are learning to read or write, or any thing, every day they should pray, and ask Almighty God to help them to learn.

XXXVI. The little Boy that was Stupid.

THERE was a little boy called Albert who was very stupid, and could learn nothing. He was so stupid in learning that his companions used to call him "the ass." The little boy was not idle, for he did his best to learn. Still he could not learn. He had been at school two years and learnt nothing. He was very vexed with himself because he found it so difficult to learn any thing. He thought it was no use trying any more to learn. He was going to run away. However, he had always loved the Blessed Virgin Mary very much, and he often prayed to her. At last the night came when he had fixed to run away. He was just setting off—when he saw before him the Blessed Virgin. He knelt down before her and prayed that he might be able to learn. She said to him: "My child, you ask me for what often does people great harm. When people can read, they often read bad books. When they know a great deal they often become proud of their knowledge. However, I promise you, that after this, you shall be very quick in learning. But if your knowledge makes you proud, I will take it away from you." Next day the little boy Albert went to school. But he was wonderfully changed. He found that he could learn quicker than any other boy in the school. All the scholars wondered at this change, but they did not know how it came.

Albert learnt a great deal, and at last he knew so much, that everywhere people came in crowds to listen to him. People from all parts of the world sent to ask him difficult questions, and he was always able to answer them. He never felt proud of his knowledge. So he lived till he was eighty years old. Then one day he was preaching in a very large church at Cologne. The church was filled quite full with thousands of people. He preached so well that there was not the least noise in that great crowd. Everybody had their eyes fixed on him. Then, for the first time, he felt a temptation to be proud when he saw the people so still and glad to listen to him. Just at that moment he stopped, he gave over preaching—he had forgotten all that he knew. The Blessed Virgin had told him that he should lose all his knowledge when he should begin to get proud. So at that moment he lost all the knowledge that he had, and he knew no more than an infant.

XXXVII. How the Child Jesus listened.

IN Jerusalem there was a very large chapel; it was called the Temple. One day some priests were there; they were teaching the people what they ought to know about Almighty God. Amongst the people who were listening to the priest there was a child. This child was the child Jesus, the son of God, the

second Person of the Blessed Trinity! He wanted to be an example to the children, that they might know how to do when they are at catechism, or at any instruction. What then did the child Jesus do? He was very quiet. He listened, and he listened attentively to what was said. He did not attend to other things, but only to what was said at the instruction. When the priest asked him a question, he gave the answer, to teach children to learn the answers of the catechism. He knew all things, and still he sometimes asked questions. He did this to show the children that if they do not understand something, they should ask the meaning of it. He spoke so that everybody wondered to hear his wisdom and his answers. How good it was of the child Jesus to show the children how to behave at catechism, and when they are instructed. Soon after Jesus was born, he was carried to the temple and offered to God. Since that time all good Christian parents offer their children to Almighty God.

XXXVIII. Children offered to God.

The Boy and the Goat.

AN old man one day came to the great church of Montserrat, in Spain. He brought with him his little boy and a kid. He wanted to offer them to God. An ignorant man who was standing at the door said: "We will take the kid, but we do not want the little boy." The Abbot heard of this; he was very angry with the man who had sent away the little boy. So he sent somebody after the old man to tell him that the little boy might come back. The little boy came back. The Abbot was very kind to him, and put him to school. When the little boy was nine years old, he began to wear the same dress as the monks. He was very good, and afterwards he became Abbot and built a church. All this account about him may be read on his gravestone.

When St. Alphonsus was a baby, he was carried to St. Francis Jerome. St. Francis made the sign of the cross over him, and said he would live to be ninety years old, and be a bishop, and do great things for Almighty God. All this happened afterwards. The days of childhood are the days of God. The bees get the honey in the summer, that they may eat it in the winter. So you must learn to be holy when you are a little child, that you may be holy when you grow old.

In all ages, says Digby, men observing and thoughtful, have been struck with the mysteries of childhood. How solemn a thing it is, says Faber, to be in company with little children, so lately come as it were from God's

neighbourhood. They are in that state in which we ourselves once were. But, alas, we did not understand until it had slipped away from us.

XXXIX. How St. Peter of Alcantara, when a Boy, Spent the Day.

EVERY morning the little Peter got up very early. He prayed for several hours. Then he went to the church and heard mass. He often received Holy Communion. He got his lessons ready before he went to school. At school he was very attentive, and did his best to learn his lessons. He was very obedient to his masters. He said some little prayer very often, both in the school and as he walked along the streets. At his meals he took only water to drink, and left some of his dinner on his plate for the love of God. In the afternoon, when school was over, he went to see sick people, and was very kind to them. Then he went and made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. In the evening he said his night prayers, and made a good examination of conscience. While he was getting ready to go to bed, he said the *De Profundis* for his soul, as if he was already dead. Every day he read holy books. On Sunday he was in the church all the morning, and served at many masses. Whenever a poor man came to the door to beg, he always gave him something. He was so devout to the Blessed Virgin that one day he saw her with a great many angels round her. Every child should have a Rule of Life.

RULE OF LIFE FOR CHILDREN.

I. IN THE MORNING, WHEN YOU WAKEN, make the Sign of the Cross, and say—"*Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.*"

II. MORNING PRAYERS. When you are dressed, kneel down, and say the Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Apostles' Creed. Say at least Our Father, and Hail Mary, on your road or at your work. Then make a Meditation.

A Meditation.

1. *The Morning offering.*—Think what you will have to do all the day, and how you will do each action well. Prayers, meals, school duties, employment, places you will go to, persons you will speak to, duties to parents or children—Then say—"*O my God, to thee I offer all that I do this day, with what Jesus did to please thee.*"

2. *Preparation against Temptation.*—Forewarned, Forearmed! Think what temptation you are likely to meet with to-day, and how you will avoid it. Then say—"*O my God, keep me this day from all sin.*"

III. BEFORE AND AFTER MEALS. Make the Sign of the Cross and say Grace. *Before meals say*—Bless us, O Lord, and these thy gifts which we are going to receive from thy bounty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. *After meals say*—We give thee thanks, Almighty God, for all thy benefits, who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen. May the souls of the faithful, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

IV. NIGHT PRAYERS. 1. Say—Our Father, Hail Mary and Apostles' Creed. 2. Examine your conscience. Say—"Did I miss my prayers, or commit any sin to-day?" Think for a moment, what sin,—then say—"O God, be merciful to me, a sinner." When in bed, put your arms in the form of a cross, and say—"Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul." If you waken in the night, pray.

V. DAILY VIRTUES. 1. *Good Intention.* If you pray, eat, sleep, dress yourself, talk, sing, walk, sit down, take a message, light a candle, go to school, read, write, sew, work, in every action, little or great, say,—at the beginning, or middle, or end of it—"My Jesus, I do all for you." 2. If any thing happens to you which you do not like, say—"O my God, thy will be done." 3. Be kind to everybody. 4. Forgive those who offend you, and

speak kindly to them. 5. Parents, watch over and give good example to your children. 6. Children, love, respect, and obey your parents and masters, in all that is not sin.

VI. GOOD PRACTICES. Every day hear Mass—visit the Blessed Sacrament and some image or picture of the Blessed Virgin—say the Rosary, or at least one decade—read some good book—say the Angelus, morning, noon, and night—be in some pious confraternity—make a retreat every year—read this Rule of Life every Sunday. Pray daily for Perseverance. Often say to yourself, "*God sees me.*"

VII. TEMPTATION. 1. If a temptation comes, turn away from it and say, "*Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, help me,*" or say the *Hail Mary* till it goes away. 2. Put a bad thought out of your heart quickly, as you would shake a burning spark off your hand. 3. Keep your eyes, ears, tongue, and hands from what is bad. 4. Keep away from bad company, public-houses, whiskey shops, bad dancing and singing-houses, gambling-houses, theatres, bad wakes, do not read bad journals, bad books.

VIII. SINS COMMITTED.—*He that loveth sin, hateth his own soul.* (Ps. x.) 1. If you commit a mortal sin make an *Act of Contrition* directly, and go to *confession* as soon as you can. 2. For a venial sin, *be sorry and strike your breast.*

IX. THE SACRAMENTS. Go to the confession and Holy Communion at Easter and at least *once every month*. Do not wilfully conceal a sin in confession. If you are afraid to tell a sin at confession, say to the priest, "*Please, Father, help me to tell a sin.*" If you doubt whether something you do is right or wrong, say, "*Please, Father, I have a doubt.*"

X. DEATH. 1. Settle your worldly affairs. 2. Get ready for confession, Holy Viaticum, Extreme Unction. 3. When you are dying be sure to make an Act of Contrition: say "*O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against thee, because thou art so good, and I will not sin again.*" A good Act of Contrition will save your soul, if there is no priest to hear your confession when dying. 4. Be willing to die because it is God's will. Say, "*O my God, thy will be done.*"

Live every day as if you were to die that day.

Apoc. ii. "*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of Life.*"

Then, my child, give your first years, your early years, to Almighty God. All first things, and early things, are beautiful before God and man. The first rays of the sun, when it rises over the mountain tops, the first white lily which is seen in the early spring, when the snows are melting away, the beautiful colours of the rose-bud when it first opens—but above all, the early years of childhood—please God. The infancy of Jesus is the glory and delight of the Christian Church. Mary, the mother of Jesus, consecrated her first years to God. Many hundreds and thousands of children there were who gave the years of their childhood to Almighty God. Many children there have been, who, pleasing God in their childhood, were taken away out of this world into Heaven, because God foresaw that if they had lived to be older, perhaps malice would creep into their hearts, and they would not love him any more. Then, my child, "remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Eccles. xii. Give the years of your childhood to God, who loves the years of childhood more than he loves any other years, and who gives joy to those who love him when they are little. Ps. xlii. 4. Be not wicked in your childhood; if you are wicked when you are young, you will be wicked when you grow old; for it is a proverb: "A young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it." Prov. xxii.: and then "his bones will be filled with the vices of his youth, and they will sleep with him in the dust." Job xx. These years are passing away; hasten, then, and offer them to God, say: "My God, I give you the years of my childhood. May they be as the childhood of Jesus!"

A bird is made to fly, a fish to swim. In Book III., the little child will find what it is made for.

A WORD TO PARENTS.

1. Parents will remember that the prayers of their children are of immense importance. The Holy Scripture says that prayers of little children are *perfect* before God. Ps. viii. A great authority says, that it is *the prayers of little children which save the Church of God in the midst of persecutions*. Therefore the prayers of children are most precious. Parents then should be most particular in making and seeing their children say their prayers on their knees and well, night and morning. Parents should send their children to Mass on Sundays, to pray for them. One child only in a family not saying its prayers well, may be to that family the occasion of the loss of many blessings from God.

2. There are innumerable examples of children converting others, even their own parents. We read in the life of St. Francis Xavier, "*that by means*

of the children, a great change of morals was worked throughout the great city of Goa. The modesty and devotion of the children became a tacit censure to the dissoluteness of persons of more advanced age. The children admonished their parents with a liberty surpassing their age."

3. In the order of Providence, children are designed to be the models of virtue to the world. Matt. xviii. *Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven.*

4. Let parents remember, that, when after death they stand before the judgment-seat, the Great Question put to them will be—Did you bring up your children in the fear and love of God?

Parents! let your children say *their prayers well, and keep out of bad company, during their earliest infancy*, or it will be *too late*. Lock the stable-door *before* the horse is stolen.

THE END.

THE GREAT QUESTION

CHAPTER I.

GOD HAS GIVEN YOU A BODY.

"The Lord God formed man out of the slime of the Earth." GEN ii. 7.

WHAT is your body made of? The body is made of the slime and the dust of the earth, and yet the body is one of the greatest works of God. St. Augustine says that people wonder at the rivers, and the woods, and the mountains, but they ought rather to wonder at themselves. It is good, then, for a child to know what a wonderful thing the body is, that it may learn to thank God for giving it a body. (*See the note below.**) "Your bodies are members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost." 1 Cor. vi.

*1. THE BONES.—In the body are hard bones on which the body rests like a house rests on pillars and props, and would fall down if they were taken away. There are in the body many bones of different sizes and shapes. If the hand, for example, was only one bone, you could not bend your fingers, or take hold of any thing; so in each hand there are 27 bones, beautifully joined together by gristle.

2. BREATHING.—The air which you breathe goes through the mouth and the nose into the throat; then it goes down the windpipe till it comes to the lungs, which are like bellows for breathing with. But what is the air for? Why do we breathe? The air we breathe mixes with the food which comes from the stomach into the heart, and turns it into blood. The air which your body breathes should remind you how God breathes into the soul the breath of life: *Gen. ii.*

3. THE VOICE.—What is the voice? How do we speak and sing? The air we breathe back again out of the lungs, goes up the windpipe in the throat. When the breath comes near the top of the windpipe, it strikes against two little strings of flesh less than an inch long. The striking of the breath against these two strings makes sound, and that sound is the voice. The vowels, *a e i o u*, are made simply by the breath striking against these strings. The consonants *b c d t*, &c., are not made till the breath gets into the mouth, and then they are made with the help of the tongue, teeth, and roof of the mouth, and the nose. For example, the letter *t* is made by

breathing and putting the tongue against the roof of the mouth. Singing also is nothing but the sound which comes from the breath striking against the two little strings at the top of the windpipe. In singing, there may be 240 changes of the voice or tones, and in changing from one tone to another the breath passes over only 1-1200th part of an inch. So wonderful, and yet simple is the voice by which we can make known to others our secret thoughts. The thoughts of our heart are so secret that no creature on earth, no spirit in hell or heaven, except God himself, can know them. *Ps. cxxxviii.* "Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off." So wonderful then is the voice of the body. But there is another voice much more wonderful—it is the voice of the soul. With the voice of the body we speak to men, but with the voice of the soul we speak to God. The voice of the soul is prayer. We say, "Our Father, who art in Heaven," and God listens to us.

4. FOOD.—Why do we eat? The food becomes blood. Let us see how this is done. First—Your hand puts the food on your tongue, which is flat like a plate, to hold it. The tongue can also tell the different tastes of food, that we may not eat what is bad for us. When you have put a slice of bread on your tongue, you want to divide what is inside of the mouth from what is outside; so in front of the mouth are twelve sharp teeth, which like a knife, cut a piece off the slice, and so you get a mouthful. But you could not swallow the mouthful, for it would be too large to go down the throat. Therefore, on each side of the mouth are then teeth with flat tops. These flat teeth crush the food and grind it into powder, like millstones crush wheat and grind it into flour. But a dry powder would not go down the throat, so there are three wells of spittle or saliva in the mouth, two under the tongue and one on the side of the right ear. While the teeth are grinding the food into powder, the spittle comes out of the three wells, mixes with the powder, and turns it into paste; so if a hungry man comes near a good dinner, they say that his mouth waters. At a single meal six ounces of saliva are thus swallowed. When the food has been made into paste, the tongue pushes it backwards, and sends it into the throat. At the top of the throat is an opening, which is the windpipe, through which we breathe. Now the food must pass over the windpipe, and yet if any of the food falls down into the windpipe we are choked. How then is the food to get over the windpipe? The providence of God has beautifully arranged it. Over the top of the windpipe is a lid or little door, and while the food passes, the lid shuts down, and so the food passes over it. The food then gets into the stomach, and in the stomach it is changed by digestion. Then the food goes to the heart, and mixing with the breath from the lungs, is changed into blood, and the blood feeds the body, which is always wearing out, and so we live. "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all for the glory of God." 1 *Cor. x.* You say in the Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." When, therefore, you eat the bread which is for the life of the body, think also of that bread which is the life of the soul. What is the bread for the life of the soul? Jesus Christ tells us, *John vi.*, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world."

If the body is wonderful now, it will be far more wonderful at the general resurrection, at the end of the world. Then, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet, by an archangel—1 *Thes.* i. 4—the dead shall rise again out of their graves. See what will happen then to the bodies of those who have served God in this life! First, death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, for the former things are passed away—*Apoc.* xxi. 4. Secondly, the body which is buried in corruption and

5. THE EYES.—The eyes are in the head, the highest part of the body, that we may see things far off. The eye is a round white ball. In the middle of this ball is an opening, called the pupil of the eye, for light to pass through. Round this opening is a beautiful net or curtain, called the iris. When the light is too strong, this net becomes larger to let in less light. When there is little light, the curtain becomes smaller to let in more light. This net is black, or brown, or blue, or grey. So we say that a person has black, or brown eyes, &c. How, then, does the eye see things? You must, first of all, know that light travels 200,000 miles every second. The earth is 24,000 miles round, so that the light would go round the earth eight times in a second. The light then comes from a tree, or a house, or any thing you are looking at, and brings on it a picture of the thing you are looking at. It passes through the opening or pupil of the eye, and leaves the picture on the back of the eye. The picture goes from the back of the eye along the nerves to the brain, and from the brain it goes to the soul. In one moment you can see millions of things all at once, trees, leaves, men, houses, towns, &c. And the pictures of these millions of things are all at the same time on the space of half an inch at the back of the eye; and yet they do not get in one another's way. If a man had to paint a million pictures on half an inch of paper it would be all confusion; but the eye is the work of God; *Ps.* cxxii. "To thee have I lifted up my eyes, who dwellest in Heaven. Behold, as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters, so are our eyes unto the Lord our God until he have mercy on us."

6. THE SOUL AND THE BODY.—If a word comes to your ear, the soul knows it directly; if you see any thing, if you take hold of any thing, if something strikes your foot, or you have a pain, your soul knows all these things instantly. How is this? From the eyes. and the ears, and the hands, and the feet, and from every part of the body, fleshy strings, called nerves, go up to the brain; and whatever comes to the eyes, ears, or body, passes along the nerves up to the brain, and there by some means, which we cannot understand, it is made known to the soul. You move your hand; or you move your foot and walk—how is this done? The soul wills or determines to walk. This will of the soul is made known to the brain. From the brain, this will or determination of the soul passes quicker than lightning to the foot. The foot obeys and walks. Thus God has given your soul a wonderful power over your body. Your soul commands your foot to walk, and the foot obeys. There is no power on the face of the earth, except your soul, which could make your foot move of itself.

frightful to look at, shall rise in glory, and shine like the sun in the kingdom of God—1 *Cor.* xv.; *Matt.* xiii. Thirdly, the body, like a spirit, will be able to pass through solid things, through the earth, stones, and doors—*Cor.* xv.—as Christ came into the room where the Apostles were, the doors being shut; *John* xx. Fourthly, the body will be able to pass from one place to another, however distant—from the highest Heaven to the Earth in a moment, for it will become a spiritual body. *Cor.* xx. So "God will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory, according to the operation whereby also he is able to subdue all things unto himself." *Phil.* iii. Such is the wonderful body which God created for you out of the slime and the dust of the earth.

CHAPTER II.

BE THANKFUL TO GOD FOR GIVING YOU A BODY

1. THERE are few people who ever thank God for their body, for the eyes they see with, for the feet they walk with; *Acts* iii. It was the year in which Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven. One day there was a poor man sitting at one of the gates of the temple of Jerusalem. He was lame; he had never been able to walk since the day of his birth. Each morning his people carried him in their arms, and set him down at this gate. There he sat all the day long, from morning till night. When the people went through that gate into the temple, he asked them to give him something. The people, seeing that he was lame, and not able to walk, had pity on him, and gave him sometimes a half-penny, sometimes a penny—so the poor cripple was able to buy bread and live. One afternoon, about three o'clock, while he was sitting at this gate, there came two of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, St. Peter and St. John. They were going into the temple to say their prayers. As they passed, the lame man saw them, and asked them to give him something. St. Peter looked at him, and said: "My good man, I have neither gold nor silver, but what I have, I give you. Therefore, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk." The people who stood near heard the words of St. Peter, and they looked at the lame man to see if he would be cured. The name of Jesus is a name of power and of strength. Scarcely had that great name gone out of the mouth of St. Peter, when, quick as a flash of lightning, life came into the dead feet of that poor man. He rose up, and with that new life with which the name of Jesus enlivened his feet, he walked, following the Apostles into the

temple of God. His heart was filled with joy and thankfulness because he had got the use of his feet. With a loud voice he cried out, and thanked God, and all the people in the temple heard him praising and blessing God. Such was the thankfulness of this man, when he had only yet had the use of his feet for a few moments. You, my child, have had the use of your feet for years—did you ever yet once thank God for it? Then, for the many blessings you received when God gave you a body, say sometimes: "My God, I thank you, because you gave me a tongue to speak with, and praise your holy name. I thank you, because you gave me ears to hear with, and listen to your blessed word. I thank you, because you gave me hands to work with, and do good works." God has given you a wonderful body, but he has also given you something else, a great deal more wonderful than the body.

CHAPTER III.

GOD HAS GIVEN TO YOU A SOUL, AND YOUR SOUL IS A SPIRIT.

"The Lord God breathed into the face of man the breath of life and man became a living soul." GEN. ii. 7.

1. A SOUL! How wonderful the soul is! There is something in the soul which strikes fear and dread into the beasts of the earth and the fowls of the air; *Gen.* ix. 2. The soul is the very image and likeness of God himself. The soul is a spirit like God. The soul, like God, is one; yet there are three great powers in the soul—will, memory, and understanding—as there are three persons in God—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Your soul does not wear away like the rocks, which are the foundations of the earth. Your soul does not fade away like a flower, or as the leaves drop off the trees in the autumn, or as the colours of the rainbow melt away from our sight. Your soul will not be nailed down in a coffin, or buried in the grave; when the body dies, the soul will not die, but it will go out of this world to the God who gave it; *Ecc.* xii. There was a girl about twelve years of age, who died; she was the daughter of Jairus. St. Luke tells us that Jesus Christ raised her dead body to life again, but he does not say that Jesus raised her soul to life again; but he says that her soul returned, that is, came back from the other world. *Luke* viii. Your soul, like God himself, will live forever and ever, through the endless eternity of the everlasting years. Your soul then is immortal.

Your soul has a memory, which can remember things which are gone away, so that the things which are dead live, as it were, in the memory of the soul. The soul has a will, and, like God, it can say, "I will, or I will not." If a child plays truant, and stops away from school, the child gets a beating, because the child was not obliged to stop away—it could stop away or not, as it liked; it has free-will. But if a stone drops out of your hand, you do not beat the stone, because the stone could not help it; it has not a will. Your soul thinks—the thoughts of the soul can pass in a moment up to Heaven and down to Hell, through the length and breadth of the earth, and down to the lowest parts of it. Your thoughts can call back the years that are gone away, and can reach to things to come in the far future, when the last day of this world shall be over, and Eternity shall have begun.

2. The soul is not like those things which can be seen by the eye. You say sometimes, I saw a stone, or I saw a cow, or I saw my foot; but nobody ever said, I saw my soul; because the soul is a spirit, and cannot be seen by the eyes of the body. If you said that your soul was blue, or red, or grey, or that you had round thoughts, or square thoughts; or if you said that your memory weighed a pound, or that you would divide your soul into four quarters, people would laugh at you. We differ from the beasts, because the beasts have no soul or reason. Nobody ever heard of a cow building a house, neither did you ever hear anybody reading a book to a horse or to a cat, because these creatures have no soul or understanding. If a horse breaks through a fence, nobody says, that horse has committed a sin, because a horse has no reason. Your soul is not like your body. Your soul thinks; but nobody ever says, "My hand thinks, or my foot remembers." You never heard any one say that his soul had a cough or the measles, or that his soul was getting wrinkles, like an old man.

You have, then, a soul, which is the image and likeness of God; a soul, which can call before it in its thoughts the past, the present, and the future; a soul, which can think and reason; a soul, which can and will choose whether it will do good or evil; a soul, which will live forever in joy or in pain, according as it has will to do good or to do evil. "Before man is life and death, good and evil: that which he shall choose shall be given him." *Eccus.* xv.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOUL IS BEAUTIFUL ABOVE ALL THE BEAUTIFUL THINGS OF THIS WORLD.

1. ST. CATHERINE lived in the town of Sienna, in Italy. There was living at the same time, and in the same town, a certain woman called Bridget. Bridget was wicked: her life was so scandalous, that the people would not let her live in the town; so she lived in a little cottage out of the town. St. Catherine loved to do works of mercy; and one of the greatest works of mercy is to pray for the conversion of sinners. Thus Moses prayed: "Forgive, O God, the sins of this people, according to the greatness of thy mercy. God answered: I have forgiven, according to thy word." *Numb.* xiv. One day, St. Catherine was in the chapel, on her knees before the B. Sacrament, praying. Her prayer was for the conversion of a poor sinner. You will be glad to hear what sort of prayer a saint prayed for the conversion of a sinner; and, when you know it, you will yourself pray sometimes for the poor sinners. This was the prayer: "My sweet Jesus," she said, "remember the poor Bridget, and have pity on her. You laboured and you toiled for thirty-three years to save that soul; you bled on the cross, and died a bitter death, to save that soul; and now, when you are able to save it, will you not save it? Why should that poor soul not be saved? Are its sins so great that your Divine blood is not able to wash them away? O Jesus, be kind to that poor creature—have pity on her—speak to her heart, and she will be saved." The prayer of St. Catherine was finished, when, behold, she heard a voice come out of the Tabernacle, where Jesus was in the B. Sacrament. That voice was the voice of Jesus Christ, and thus Jesus spoke to St. Catherine: "My dear Catherine," Jesus said, "I have heard your prayer. I am glad. I thank you for praying for the poor Bridget, because it is my providence, that when anybody prays for sinners, then I have pity on them and convert them. It is well that you have prayed for Bridget, for she will soon die; and, if you had not prayed for her, she would have died in her sins, and gone to Hell. But now, since you have prayed for her, I will have mercy on her, and convert her." God said he would destroy the people of Israel, if Moses had not stood before him to turn away his wrath. *Ps.* cv. The following day Bridget was walking along one of the streets. Her mind, as usual, was on vain and evil things. "The way of a man is not his own," *Jer.* x.; for, behold, suddenly, a thought, a light from Heaven, came into her soul. "Thou, O Lord, enlightenest wonderfully." *Ps.* lxxv. She remembered her past sins, and the light of God showed her the frightful, the terrible state of her soul. "All its beauty is departed. It is

become vile. It is covered with darkness." *Lam.* ii. 3. She remembered how great and how good God is, and she saw what a dreadful thing it is for a creature to dare, in the presence of its Creator, to break his commandments, to blaspheme him with that breath which he puts into the mouth, to use against him the power and force which he puts into the hands and feet. "Hear, O ye Heavens, and give ear, O Earth, for my people have despised me." *Is.* vii. When Bridget thought of these things, her heart was filled with bitter sorrow; she burst into tears. "My God," she said, "what a wicked creature I have been! How would I offend you? What harm did you ever do to me? How kind and good you have always been to me, even when I was offending you. You were my Creator; you died for the love of me. O my God, I am very, very sorry for sinning against you, because you are so good. Never, O my God, will I sin against you any more—no, never again." Soon after, Bridget was in the chapel, getting ready for Confession. She carefully examined her conscience about all her mortal sins; how many times she had committed them each day, or week, or month, or year. She then made the most fervent acts of contrition and good resolutions to keep away from the persons and places where she had sinned before. She went to Confession, and accused herself sorrowfully of her sins. She felt ashamed to tell some of them, but she did not mind the shame—she told them all. Then she humbly asked the priest to give her absolution and pardon through the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who had died for her. Then came the priest's absolution: "By the authority of Jesus Christ, I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In that moment the virtue and the power of the blood of Jesus came into her soul, and her sins went away as darkness goes away when the light comes. "Whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them." *John* xx. She carefully remembered the penance given to her by the priest, and performed it. Soon afterwards Bridget died. St. Catherine was again in the chapel, and again she heard the voice of Jesus Christ from the Tabernacle. "My dear Catherine," Jesus said, "the poor Bridget for whom you prayed is dead; she made a good confession; her sins were forgiven, and now her soul is in Purgatory. You shall go down with your angel-guardian to Purgatory, and see her soul."

THE SOUL IN PURGATORY.

2. ABOUT Purgatory we read many things in the Holy Scriptures, and other things in books written by holy men. Purgatory is a prison of fire;

Matt. v.; *1 Cor.* iii. Nothing defiled with sin can enter into Heaven; *Apoc.* xiv. Those who die with any, even the least venial sin in their soul, must have it forgiven in the world to come; *Matt.* xii. 32. Therefore—First, those who die with venial sins in their souls, burn in Purgatory until they are cleansed, and so they are loosed from their sin: *2 Mach.* xii. Secondly, those who have their mortal sins forgiven, but have not satisfied the justice of God, and done enough penance for their sins, remain in Purgatory till they have paid the last farthing of the debt they owe to God's justice, *Matt.* v.; and thus they are saved, yet so as by fire, *1 Cor.* iii.

When the doors of Purgatory were opened to St. Catherine and the angel, the first thing she saw was fire. Never before had she seen such a dreadful, raging, piercing, tormenting fire—a fire which penetrated and burnt the inmost soul. It seemed as if the flames of Hell could not burn more fiercely than the flames of Purgatory. "The arrows of the Lord are in me, and the rage of them drinketh up my spirit." *Job* vi. She saw many, countless multitudes, thick as the leaves of the forest, burning in the flames of Purgatory. She saw there even some who had led most holy lives in the world. There are few, very few, who go to Heaven without first going to Purgatory. "For if the stars are not pure in His sight, how much less the soul of mortal man." *Job* xxv. All these souls looked very patient in their sufferings, and resigned to the will of God. Their prayer was ever: "O God, may thy will be done." *Matt.* vi. They seemed even to rejoice in their sufferings, which bring them each moment nearer to Heaven. "God is compassionate, and will forgive sins in the day of tribulation." *Eccus.* ii. So, like St. Paul, they say: "I abound with joy in tribulation," *2 Cor.* vii.; and often they would say: "Thy rod, O God, has comforted me." *Ps.* xxii. She saw that in the midst of their sufferings they had many other consolations. They knew that God loved them, and was with them. "I will fear no evils, for thou art with me." *Ps.* xxii. They knew that their sufferings would sometime come to an end. Many times they were gladdened by the visits of the dear angels of Heaven, who refreshed them as the dews of the night refresh the thirsty plant, or as, when Jesus was in an agony of suffering in the Garden of Gethsemani, and his sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground, then there appeared to him an angel from Heaven, giving him strength, *Luke* xxii.; or as, when Jesus himself, after his death on the cross, went and spoke kind words to his dear souls in Purgatory, *1 Pet.* iii. It seems that many souls went to Heaven before the time fixed for their punishment was ended. "God delivered them out of their distresses." *Ps.* cv. Of these she found that some had themselves, when alive, prayed much for the souls in Purgatory. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." *Matt.* v.

She saw that the time of punishment for these souls was very much shortened by the prayers offered for them on earth. She perceived that they rejoiced, especially when the Holy Mass was said for them and the precious blood of Jesus Christ offered for them on the altar. When they saw day by day souls taken from the midst of them, out of this terrible prison, and going to Heaven on account of that Holy Sacrifice, they knew well the force of those words of the Prophet: "*Thou also, O Christ, by the Blood of thy Testament, hast sent forth the prisoners out of the pit in which there was no water.*" *Zach.* ix. She saw also that great numbers of souls were delivered from Purgatory because somebody on earth had gone round the Stations, or the Way of the Cross for them, and had prayed that the precious blood of Jesus Christ spilt on that sorrowful way might be instead of the sufferings of the poor souls in Purgatory. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." *1 John* i. She saw that the prayers for which the Church has given Indulgences for the souls in Purgatory, did wonderful things. "Whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed in heaven." *Matt.* xviii. For example, the prayer, "*Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul,*" for which there are one hundred days of Indulgence for the souls in Purgatory. Sometimes a little child on the earth offered some good work for the souls in Purgatory. One child would say, "My Jesus, for the love of you I am going to learn my school lessons, and I offer this for the souls in Purgatory." Another child would say, "My Jesus, for the love of you I am going to sew, or to take a walk, and I offer this for the souls in Purgatory." Another child would do an act of self-mortification. It would say, "My Jesus, for the love of you I will not eat this sweet thing, and I offer this for the souls in Purgatory." As St. Paul said, "I rejoice in my sufferings for the Church." *1 Col.* xxiv. If the children only knew how, when they do so, they take away the pains and sufferings of the poor souls in Purgatory, they would always be offering all their good works for the souls in Purgatory. Sometimes a prayer which had been said, or a good work which had been done for some one particular soul, was not given to that soul. Perhaps that soul was already gone out of Purgatory, or for some other reason known to God. But still that prayer was not lost, for it was given to some other soul according as it pleased God. When anybody on the earth was praying for the souls in Purgatory, Almighty God seemed very much pleased and grateful to that person for praying for his dear souls in Purgatory. But nothing could equal the thankfulness of these poor souls themselves when they felt that somebody was praying for them in the world. The spirits which are in the other world know things which are done on this earth. "The angels of God know and rejoice when a sinner on earth does penance." *Luke* xv. Long and

fervently did the souls in Purgatory pray for those who on earth prayed for them. How God listens to the prayers of his dear souls in Purgatory, St. Catherine of Bologna tells us. She says that she obtained, by the prayers of the souls in Purgatory, many things for which she had prayed to the saints in Heaven, and had not received them.

Sometimes in Purgatory there was heard a lamentation—a sorrowful cry. It was not like a cry of impatience, but a gentle complaint. What could be the reason? Why did these souls complain? Was it because they could no longer bear the fierce burning of that terrible fire? No, that was not the reason; for still these souls looked patient and even glad that the fire burnt fiercely and purified them from their sins. What then could it be? St. Catherine listened to their complaints, and she heard them complaining that people in the world had forgotten to pray for them. Some had given orders for masses to be said for them, and those masses had not been said. There were also parents in Purgatory, for whom their children living on the earth had forgotten to pray. There were children forgotten by parents. Brothers and sisters who had forgotten to pray for each other. Many also had been very kind and good to people on earth when alive on the earth, and they had hoped that these people would pray for them after death; but they had been forgotten. Then these souls in Purgatory would say, sorrowfully, "I am forgotten as one dead from the heart." *Ps.* xxx. "Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me." *Job* xix. It was most beautiful to see how these souls left Purgatory and went to Heaven. Suddenly an angel from Heaven, enlightened with the glory of God, would come into Purgatory, and he would say that there was a soul whose sufferings were ended, and God wished it to come to Heaven. Then each soul would hope that, perhaps, itself might be that happy soul. Now the angel makes known which is the soul to be delivered out of Purgatory. "Blessed soul," he says, "many years more of torments waited for you but some one on earth prayed for you; and now, by the command of our merciful God, you are free." "Arise, my beloved one, make haste; the winter is past." *Cant.* ii. 2. "God has turned thy mourning into joy, and compassed thee with gladness." *Ps.* cxxix. "Rejoice, for we are going into the House of the Lord." *Ps.* cxxi. "Come in before his presence with exceeding great joy." *Ps.* cxix. Instantly the chains which held that soul bound in the flames drop off it. It is out of the fire: no more fire, no more pain, no more tears. Now the angel leads the blessed soul on its way to Heaven. It is going out from the midst of the suffering souls. They look at it with delight, they salute it as it passes. Farewell! they say; farewell, happy soul! when you shall come before the throne of God do not forget us. Speak dear words from us to our Blessed

Lady, the Mother of God, to St. Joseph, to our Angel Guardians and Patron Saints, and to all the Angels and Saints. Ask them to pray for us. Farewell, happy soul! we shall see you in Heaven. Now that soul is out of Purgatory—it is surrounded with choirs of angels. But that soul cannot go into the presence of the Majesty of God, "who dwelleth in light inaccessible," *John* i., until it is clothed with the light of glory. See, the angel clothes the happy soul with the white robes of the Saints, the stole of glory, the crown of precious stones. "His glory is great in thy salvation: glory and great beauty shalt thou lay upon him." *Ps.* xx. Oh, beautiful soul! its brightness eclipses the sun, and puts out the light of the stars. It is at the door of Heaven. All Heaven rejoices to see it. "Who is it," they say in Heaven, "that cometh up to us as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun?" *Cant.* viii. Then there is one word in the mouth of all the Blessed in Heaven: "Who," they say, "took that soul out of Purgatory by his prayers and sent it to Heaven? May all the blessings of God come upon him who by his prayers has sent this sister spirit to give us joy." Now the soul is before the throne of the Blessed Trinity. "It sees the face of God." *Matt.* xviii. "It sees God in his glory." *Ps.* ci. "The light of his face shines upon it." *Ps.* iv. It offers up its first prayer in Heaven to God: Heaven is silent! Whom does it pray for? Listen!—"My God," it says, "have mercy on him who, by his prayers, took my soul out of the flames of Purgatory. O God! do not let his soul go into the flames of Hell." All Heaven listens, and God does not turn a deaf ear to the first prayer of the blessed spirit when it has just entered into the kingdom of Heaven—that soul which by your prayers or good works, you have sent from the flames of Purgatory to Heaven, will never forget you day or night. When you are in trouble, in distress, in temptation, in the agony of death, it will pray for you.

3. And now St. Catherine saw another wonderful sight in Purgatory. Suddenly the Angel lifted up his hand and pointed to one of the souls in the flames. Look, he said, Catherine, look! there is the soul of Bridget, who led a wicked life, but made a good confession, and died. St. Catherine had been so taken up with the wonderful things in Purgatory, that she had scarcely looked at any of the souls attentively. Now, she looks attentively at the soul of Bridget. Till then she knew not how wonderful a soul is. She was astonished at the beauty of that soul. It is true, there were some dark spots and stains in it which the fire was burning away, as people can sometimes see dark spots on the bright sun. But still that soul was beautiful beyond all the beautiful things that were ever seen in the world. What could she compare it to? She thought of the sweet light of the morning and of the beautiful colours of the rainbow: but that soul was far more beautiful. She

remembered the dazzling beams of the noonday sun; but the light which beamed from that soul was far brighter. It seemed as if the sunlight, in comparison to the light of that soul, was but as a dark shadow. She thought of the glittering stars in the blue skies; but that soul was far more glittering. She remembered the pure whiteness of the Spring lily, and of the fresh snow; but that is only an earthly whiteness. In Bridget's soul it was the whiteness of Heaven, "such as there is not on earth." Mark ix. Catherine had often trembled with fear when she heard the thunders rolling in the dark clouds, and saw the flashes of forked lightning; but there was something more awful in the beauty of that soul—a majesty before which she stood with fear and delight. So, Moses and Elias were seen in majesty with Jesus Christ on Mount Thabor, *Luke ix.*; she would have been glad to stop there for ever, wondering and loving the beauty of that soul. That soul, she thought, must have been made a partaker of the Divine nature; *2 Pet. i.* She asked the Angel what made that soul so beautiful? and he answered, that it was the image and likeness of God in that soul, and the Divine grace, which made it so beautiful.

So, my child, you have in your soul the image and likeness of God: and if his grace be in your soul, and you love and serve him, then your soul is also beautiful above all the beautiful things of this world. But still you cannot know what a great thing it is to have received a soul from God, unless you know the price paid for your soul.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRICE OF THE SOUL.

1. WHAT is meant by the price or the cost of any thing? A little girl wanted to buy some thread. She went to a shop where thread was sold, and said, "Please, I want to buy some thread." The people of the shop showed her some thread. She took as much as she wanted. Then she said, "What is the price of this thread—what does it cost?" The people looked at the thread and said, "The thread costs a penny." So a penny was the price of the thread.

My dear child, your soul was bought by Almighty God as much as the thread was bought by this girl. "You are bought with a great price." *1 Cor. vi.* So now we must try to find out what was the price which God paid for your soul, for every soul, for the soul of a little baby, for the soul of an idiot who has not his senses. Did God, then, buy your soul with gold and silver, as

you buy a house or a field? No. All the gold and silver in the mines of Australia and California—all the gold and silver on the earth, and under the earth—all the rich and beautiful things in all the shops in the world; the rich silks, and velvets, and diamonds, and pearls, and precious stones—all the riches of the world put together in one vast heap, could not buy the soul of one baby which has no sense. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold and silver." 1 *Pet.* i. Did God buy your soul with the bright sun and sparkling stars? No. Neither the sun, nor the stars, nor the world, nor ten millions of suns, and stars, and worlds, could buy one soul. There is nothing in this world equal to the soul. Let us then lift up our thoughts to Heaven. There are in Heaven riches very different from the riches of the Earth. Such riches as are in Heaven "the eye hath not seen, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to know them." 1 *Cor.* ii. Did God, then, buy your soul with the riches of Heaven? No. All the riches of Heaven, even the Throne of Glory itself, the seat of the Most Blessed Trinity,—"that Throne which is for ever and ever," *Heb.* i.,—could not buy the soul of one poor idiot who has no sense. What then was the price which God paid for a soul? Oh! the price of a soul! "Man knoweth not the price thereof." *Job.* What tongue can tell it? What then was the price which God paid for your soul? Listen!—Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity. His going out is from the ways of Eternity, and He lives for ever and ever. By Him the world was made, and at his word Heaven and Earth will pass. Now lift up your eyes and look—at the Cross! On that cross hangs Jesus the Son of God! He has taken a body and soul like ours, and He is nailed to the cross! From His hands and His feet four streams of blood go down upon the earth, and all the earth round the cross on Calvary is red with the Divine blood. There—the Son of God hangs between Heaven and Earth, on four great hooks, bleeding! Look again at Jesus, his head is bowed down, it has sunk on his breast—his soul is gone away! Jesus Christ the Son of God hangs dead on the cross! The people who lived in those days saw the God who created them nailed to the wooden cross on Calvary—they saw him bleeding in cruel pain—they heard his sorrowful sighs—they saw him breathe out his last breath and die. Then the sun became dark, and the earth was torn with earthquakes, and the graves opened and the dead arose! Now let a little child come and kneel before the cross and pray, because Jesus is glad when the little children speak to him. "My sweet Jesus," the little child says, "I see you bleeding and dying on the cross. Oh, the wonderful sight. Tell me, my Jesus, how can it be? why is it that you—God, the Creator—should hang dead on a cross? Why did you let your creatures, to whom you gave life, take away your own life?" The child has spoken. It is silent. Jesus

answers: "My dear child, your soul is very beautiful and precious. I wanted to have it—to buy it. I looked through all my works in Heaven and on Earth to see if there was any thing I could buy it with, and there was nothing. Then I knew that I could not buy your soul except with my own blood and my own life! I thought what a terrible thing it would be for me, the Creator, to die; but I remembered that if I died I should have your soul, and then I was content to bleed and to die."

Now, my child, I can tell you the price of a soul. The price of a soul is—the Blood and the Life of Jesus Christ the Son of God! I get a pair of scales. I put as it were into one scale the precious Blood and the Life of the Son of God. I put into the other scale a soul. Oh, wonderful! the balance stands equal—the soul is equal to the Blood and the Life of the Son of God! Surely when you meet any creature which has a soul, you will look with wonder and bow down with reverence before a soul bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

See that poor orphan child in rags, without shoes, without bread to eat, homeless and friendless. Poor child, as you wander through the streets, you say to yourself, "Nobody cares for me, nobody takes any notice of me." You know not, O orphan child, that the light of Heaven is shining on your soul; you know not that God and his angels have their eyes fixed on you—that God is speaking to the angels about you, and is saying, "Oh, the blessed soul of that little child! I would give Heaven and Earth, I would give the Divine Blood of my Son Jesus to have the soul of that poor little child."

Now turn away your eyes from the cross and look over the four quarters of the earth—Europe, Asia, Africa, America. What do you see? You see countless millions of souls for which Christ died. They lie scattered about the earth, and neglected like stones and sticks, and the bones of dead beasts; or as old rags or bits of rusty iron; or as an old shoe thrown away, which nobody will pick up. Yet each one of these souls is precious before God, and dear to him as the blood of his only Son Jesus Christ. And Jesus Christ, seated in Heaven, with a sorrowful heart, looks down on the earth because there are few who help him to save these dear souls which He bought with His own blood.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VOICE OF CREATURES TO THE SOUL.

LOOK at the bright sun in the heavens, the sparkling stars, the green grass, the flowers, the fruits on the trees, the seas, the rivers, the beasts in the fields, the fishes in the sea, the birds in the air, the day and the night, the storm and the sunshine, the drops of rain, the dew on the grass. These creatures have a tongue, a voice which speaks to your soul. "There are no speeches nor languages where their voices are not heard. Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." *Ps.* xviii. Oh, creatures of God, what have you to say to us? Speak, for the Creator has bid you to speak to us. What then is that voice? what those words which the Creator has commanded you to say to us? Hearken, my child, those creatures speak. They say to us: "O immortal souls, created to the image and likeness of God, we are not as you; we have not a soul to understand, neither did our Creator die for us; and yet, we ever do the will of our Creator, and serve Him." Oh, immortal souls, do the will of Him who created you; oh, this very day begin to do His will, for you know not if you will live till to-morrow. The day of your life is passing and the night of death is coming; *Job* ix. "Ask the beasts and they shall teach thee, and the birds of the air and they shall tell thee; speak to the earth and it shall answer thee."

CHAPTER VII.

THE GREAT QUESTION.

THERE is a great thought—a great question. It is the greatest of all questions—the question of questions. Listen to the great question. This, then, is the Great Question: "Almighty God has created you. He has given you a body and an immortal soul, redeemed with the blood of Jesus Christ. You live in this world for a few short years, then you pass away, and nobody sees you any more. Why, then, did God create you? Why did he put you in this world? What are you for? What is the great thing you have to do here? What is your great affair? your great business in this world?" Behold, then, the Great Question: "*Why did God create you?*" Very few people ever think about the great question. But those who are wise often ask themselves the great question. Hear what the monks do. At midday they go into the chapel,

and, kneeling down, they ask themselves the great question. "Why," they say, "did God create me? have I this morning been doing what God created me for?" The night comes, and again, on their knees in the chapel, they ask themselves the great question: "Why did God create me? did I this afternoon do what God created me for?" Once every month there is one whole day, and all that day they do nothing but ask themselves the great question: "Why did God create me? have I this month been doing what God created me for?" Once every year there are ten whole days. During those ten days they are silent, they preach not, they hear no confessions, they speak not to any human creature. They spend the whole ten days in asking themselves the great question: "Why did God create me? have I this year been doing what God created me for?" This question, "Why did God create me?" is a question which all wise men put often to themselves. So, if they read, if they eat, if they walk, during the works of the day, during the silence of the night, the great thought comes before them—"Why did God create me?" Let us, then, my child, try to find the answer to this question—"Why did God create you?"

CHAPTER VIII.

DID GOD CREATE YOU TO BE RICH, TO GET MONEY?

I GO into a great town, Dublin or London. I see many people walking about everywhere. There is something in their faces which shows that they are not idle, that they have some great business, some great affair on their hands. There seems to be something which takes up their thoughts, and fills their whole soul. I stop one of these people and speak to him. "My good man," I say to him, "tell me what is it? what is the great business, the great affair which fills all your thoughts and takes up all your time?" My great affair, he answers, the great thing I have to do, is—to *get money, to be rich*. I go on further. I see a little boy running along the street. I say to him, stop a moment, my boy, what is the matter? what are you running for? I am running on an errand, the boy answers. And why do you run on an errand? The boy answers: *I want to get money*. I pass on, and walk into a shop. I see there a man, very busy from morning till night; his whole time is filled up; he has scarcely a moment to get any thing to eat. I say to him: Why do you work so hard all the days of your life? what is it for? what is to be the end of it? what do you want? He answers; *I want to get money, and to be rich*. So

the will, and the memory, and the understanding, and the thoughts, and the desires of men, are always turning on money, ~~as the earth is always turning on its axis~~. So it is with all, young and old, rich and poor, everywhere, in every place, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. I stop, then, for a moment, and again I ask myself the great question: "Why did God create us? what is the great thing we have to do on this earth?" And when I see all men spending all their time, and breath, and strength, and health, and life, in trying to get money, I say to myself: Perhaps this is what God created us for—the great thing we have to do—to get money, to be rich. Is it so? Let us see.

In the city of Jerusalem, where Jesus died on the cross, there once lived a very rich man. He had such an abundance of riches, that he scarcely knew himself all he possessed. He had gold and silver, lands and possessions, without end. He lived in a splendid house. Those who travel now to Jerusalem see the place where his house once stood. The remembrance of that fine house has come down from father to son, and so the people living there still show the traveller where it once was. They say—here stood the house of the rich man. The grand house stood close to the Sorrowful Way, near the fourth station, where Jesus met his blessed Mother as he went on his sorrowful journey, carrying the cross, from the house of Pilate to Calvary. The rooms of this splendid house were most beautiful. They were filled with the most costly furniture. There were chairs and tables made of the richest woods, of the cedar of Lebanon, and of the palm tree of Gades. There you would see the brightest marbles of every colour; carpets from Persia, and curtains of rich velvet; precious stones, and sparkling gems; the whitest ivory, glasses, and pictures so costly that nobody could tell the price of them. When the rich man went abroad, there was a long train of beautiful carriages, drawn by the finest horses in the world. If the rich man walked in the streets of Jerusalem, every eye was fixed upon him, for he was clothed in purple and fine linen, white as the snow. There was great feasting in that grand house. Every day that rich man feasted sumptuously. The most expensive wines, the most delicate and rich meats which money could buy, were on his table. The people called the rich man happy. Often, when they passed his grand home, they looked up at it, and said: How happy that man must be, because he is so rich; I wish I was as rich as he is. "They have called the people happy that hath these things." *Ps. cxliii*. One day the rich man was very ill, for sickness comes to the rich man as well as the poor man. The doctor was sent for in haste to cure him. The doctor comes without loss of time; he enters the room where the rich man was lying sick, and walks up to the bed-side. The doctor looks at him, feels his pulse, examines his tongue.

He is silent for a few moments, then he says: "I think, sir, you are very ill, but I will send you a bottle of medicine, and I hope that in a few days you will be well." Then the rich man was happy again, for he thought that he would soon be cured. The bottle of medicine was brought to the house of the rich man. He drank the medicine, and, a few days after, this rich man—died! Then his body lay on a fine bed, pale, breathless, lifeless, cold even as the dead body of a poor man lies dead in a lowly cabin. But his soul! What became of his soul? The very instant in which the rich man breathed out his last breath, his soul was buried forever in Hell, buried in the fire of Hell. Even as you bury a body in earth, so the rich man's soul was buried in fire. Then there was mourning in that grand house, because the rich man was dead; the great man was gone—he was no more! If, on that day, you had walked into the rich man's house, you would have seen a large, beautiful room. It was a wonderful thing to see that room. There was something strange in it. It was midday, and the sun was shining brightly and beautifully, as it shines in those countries; but into that large room no sun-light came. The white blinds were down, and the shutters of the window were fast shut. Yet that room was not dark, it was lighted with many hundreds of lights; but the darkness of the walls, covered with black cloth, seemed to draw away the very brightness of the light, leaving only a deathlike mournful light. The persons who were in that room moved about slowly and sadly. If they spoke, it was only a low whisper, which could scarcely be heard, so that you would have thought perhaps the dead man was only asleep, and they were afraid to awaken him. Yes, he had slept his last sleep, from which he will never awaken again. But turn your eyes to the upper end of that large room, where there are many lights. Every eye seems to be looking there. What is it? There is a rich and splendid coffin. That coffin is made of cedar, the richest of all woods. It is covered with folds of black silk velvet. Amidst the rich velvet you can see gold and silver sparkling, and almost blazing in the lights which hang above it and round it. The inside of that coffin is lined with satin, and silk, and with fringe of gold. But what is that coffin for? In that grand coffin is lying—the dead body of the rich man! But down in Hell the soul of the rich man is lying in a coffin of fire! Around the coffin in that room stood the people of the world, the friends of the rich man. They talked together; they spoke of the coffin—How beautiful it was, they said, what a fine coffin! But in Hell, the devils were standing round the coffin of fire, and they talked also, and said—What a hot coffin, what a burning coffin this is! How terrible to be shut up in this coffin of fire for ever and ever, and never to come out of it again! Such was the end of the rich man. He lived in riches, and he died, and he was buried in the fire of Hell. But why did that rich man go to Hell?

what was the reason? The reason was, because the rich man did not know the great thing he had to do while he lived. He made a great mistake. He thought the great thing of all was—to be rich; and he was rich, and he went to Hell.

Perhaps some little boy who reads this book, when he grows up to be a man, may work hard and become rich. Now I ask that boy a question. My dear boy, when you shall come to lie on your death-bed, will you say to yourself, "I have laboured hard in my lifetime, and worked much, and now I am rich? I am going to die, and because I am rich I die contented and happy?" My boy, I will answer the question for you—"The rich man died, and was buried in Hell."

What is a needle? A little child answers: "A needle is a thing to sew with, having a little hole at one end called the eye of the needle; and this little hole is so small that you can only just get one single thread through it." Very well, my little child, now tell me what a camel is? "A camel is a great large beast, much larger than a horse; it can bear thirst for a long time, so when travellers go through sandy deserts where there is no water, they go on camels." Very well. I am now going to talk to you about a needle and a camel. Let us go to the camel. Pluck one single hair, only one hair, from the camel's back, and try to put it through the eye of the needle. There, the hair goes through the eye of the needle quite easily. Now, another thing. Take up into your hands the great, large, broad foot of the camel, and try to put it through the little eye of the needle. You cannot. Now, something else. Put a rope round the great camel's neck, and lead it up to the needle, and try to make it pass, with all its great body, through the little eye of the needle. It is impossible. Jesus Christ says that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to go into Heaven, *Luke* xviii. Therefore, to get money, and to be rich, is not the great thing you have to do in this world. It was not for this that God created you. Did God create man for that which ruins him? Without doubt it is possible for a rich man to be saved. For even among the saints are to be found those who are rich. But they made a good use of their riches; they used it in the service of God; they were kind to the poor, they led good lives. But why is it so difficult for a rich man to go to Heaven? Is there something bad in gold and silver? Were not gold and silver created by God like the stones and the trees? Gold and silver are not bad in themselves, but people generally make a bad use of them, and commit sins because they have riches, or want too much to get them. Therefore, Jesus Christ says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven;" *Matt.* v. But it is not only those who have money whom God accounts as rich. At the day of judgment many of the poor will be condemned as rich. But how can a poor man be called rich? He has no

money in his pocket, his chest is empty. It is true that he has no money; but it is true also that he has in his heart a great strong desire of money. This great desire of money leads people into many sins. For example, there are many poor men whose thoughts are all about money. Then they forget God, and think no more about going to Mass and the Sacraments. A man is out at work, he loses his wages, he becomes impatient, and blasphemes God. Another man takes a false oath in order to get what does not belong to him. Here is a man who loves to drink in the public-house, so he steals, and robs, and cheats, that he may have money to spend in the public-house. There are people who were friends; they had a quarrel about money, and now they have a deadly hatred against one another. So it is money, money, money! and then—blasphemies, false oaths, stealing, cheating, drunkenness, neglect of God and the soul, and then—Hell! Therefore, St. Paul says, 1 *Tim.* vi.: "They that will become rich fall into temptation and the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition. For the desire of money is the root of all evil."

God, then, did not create us to get money, to be rich. Therefore, those people are mistaken who live in this world as if the one great thing they have to do is to get money and be rich. Death will come, and then their money will pass away from them like a dream. In one moment they will go down into Hell, and, when they are buried in Hell, they will find out their mistake when it is too late. "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?" *Matt.* xvi.

CHAPTER IX.

DID GOD CREATE US TO EAT AND DRINK AND ENJOY OURSELVES?

MANY people think that the great thing in this life is to eat and drink and enjoy themselves. "Their God is their belly; their end is destruction." *Phil.* iii. There was once a man who spoke thus to himself, *Luke* xii.: "My soul," he said, "we have much goods laid up for many years, let us eat and drink and enjoy ourselves." When it was night, Almighty God came to that man and said to him: You fool, you fool, because you thought that you were made to eat and drink and enjoy yourself—you fool, because you did not know what you were created for—you fool, this night you will die! and those goods which you have laid up for many years, whose shall they be? *Luke* xii. The number of fools is infinite; *Eccus.* i. Then God did not create

you to get money. He did not create you to eat and drink and enjoy yourself. Then why did God create you? Why did he give you a body and soul? Why did he put you in this world? What was it for? What are you for? You know very well what other things are for. Your hat you know is for your head; your shoes for your feet; a spade to dig with; a spoon to drink with. No child is so ignorant as to drink with a spade and dig with a spoon. You know what other things are for. Then what are you for yourself? Why did God create you? This great question shall now be answered.

CHAPTER X.

THE ANSWER TO THE GREAT QUESTION.

THERE is a little book. You have seen that book some time in your life. Perhaps it is long since you saw it, and you no longer remember it. That book is called, *the Catechism*. One of the first questions in the Catechism is this: Who made you? The answer to this question is: *God made me*. Then comes the next question: Why did God make you? The answer: *God made me to know him, and love him, and serve him in this life, and to be happy with him forever in the next life*. Behold, then, the answer to the great question: God made you to serve him. This is the one great thing you have to do while you live, "the one thing necessary," *Luke x., to serve God!* To serve God with your body—to serve God with your eyes, with your tongue, with your hands, with your feet—to serve God with your soul—to serve God with your will, and memory, and understanding—to serve God by day and by night, in the light and in the dark—to serve God with every breath that you breathe—to serve God in holiness and justice before Him all your days, *Luc. i., till you breathe out your last breath!* A fish is made to swim, a bird to fly; but you are made to serve God. *The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve,*

Matt. v. To serve God, St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi says is to be a king. If you serve God, you will be happy for ever in Heaven; if you will not serve God, you will burn for ever in Hell.

CHAPTER XI.

TO SERVE GOD—WHAT IS IT?

A CHILD says: I would be very glad to serve God, but I do not know how to serve God. What does that mean—To serve God? Listen, my child, and I will tell you what it is to serve God. To commit no sin against the commandments of God—that is to serve God; for *thou, O God, hast commanded thy commandments to be kept most diligently; Ps. cxviii.* Not to consult fortune-tellers, for *the Lord abhorreth these things; Deut. xviii.* Not to tempt the Lord thy God by despair or presumption; *Matt. iv.* Not to behave ill to what is holy; for *every man that approacheth sinfully to what is holy shall perish before the Lord; Levit. xxii.* Not to blaspheme the name of God, for *his name is holy and terrible; Ps. cx.* Not to curse your neighbour: *Bless, and curse not; Rom. xiv.* Not to swear either by the name of God or by any of his creatures, but *let your speech be yea, yea, and no, no; Matt. v.* Not to refuse to your parents love, honour, and obedience: *He that honoureth his father shall enjoy a long life, and he that obeyeth his father shall be a comfort to his mother; Eccus. iii.* And you, parents, bring up your children in the discipline and correction of the Lord; *Ephes. vi.* Not to keep spite in your heart, nor to render to any man evil for evil, nor to revenge yourself; but, *if thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he be thirsty, give him to drink; Rom. xii.* Not to scandalize or ruin any soul for which Christ died—*For woe to that man by whom scandal cometh; Matt. xviii.* Nor yet to follow bad example; but be even as Tobias, who, when all went to adore the golden calves, he alone fled the company of all; *Tob. i.* Not to get drunk—*For drunkards shall not obtain the kingdom of heaven; Gal. v.* To do no immodest thing—"Put away evil from thy flesh;" *Eccus. xi.* "With all watchfulness keep thy heart;" *Prov. iv.* "Turn away thy eyes that they behold not vanity;" *Ps. cxviii.* "Make a covenant with thy eyes not to think of what is evil;" *Job xxxi.* "Hedge in thy ears with thorns that they hear not a wicked tongue, and make doors and bars to thy own mouth;" *Eccus. xxviii.* Not to go into bad company—"Go not into the way of ruin;" *Eccus. xxii.* "Flee from it, and save your life;" *Jer. xlvi.* Not to steal—"Thou shalt not steal;" *Exod. xx.* "Goods unjustly gotten shall not profit thee;" *Eccus. v.* Not to detract, or calumniate, or slander, or backbite your neighbour—"Speak evil of no man;" *Tit. iii.* "The tongue is an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison;" *James iii.* Not to tell lies—"Speak ye the truth every man with his neighbour;" *Ephes. iv.* Not to commit any of these sins IS—to serve God. To keep the commandments of the Church, and not to break the abstinence or the fast—

that is to serve God. "For he who will not hear the Church is as a heathen and publican;" *Matt. xviii.* To say your morning and night prayers—to go to Mass on Sundays—to go every month to the Sacrament—to do all, whatsoever you do, in word or in work, for the glory of God; *Col. iii.* Bring to the Lord glory and honour, *Ps. xxviii.*; and be not as the heathens, who, when they knew God, have not glorified him as God, and, professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; wherefore God gave them up to a reprobate sense; *Rom. i.* You know now what it is to serve God. "Do this, and thou shalt live," *Luke x.* Do you want to know what it is to serve God? See that servant—she is in place, in a situation, in the service of her mistress. She takes care, first of all, never to do any thing which she knows will displease her mistress. From morning till night she does the will of her mistress. Whatever her mistress bids her to do she does it. Does her mistress bid her to go to the market—she goes to the market. Does her mistress bid her to stop at home—she stops at home. Does her mistress bid her to get the food ready for the household—she gets it ready. Does her mistress bid her to wash or sew—she washes or sews. Even as the centurion said to Jesus Christ: "I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it;" *Matt. viii.* That servant, moreover, watches carefully to see that nobody does any harm to the goods of her mistress. Why does that servant work so hard in the service of her mistress? In order to get a small monthly wage. Do you work as hard in the service of God as that servant in the service of her mistress, and you will get not a small monthly wage, but an everlasting reward in the Kingdom of Heaven—life everlasting; *Matt. xix.*

CHAPTER XII.

DO PEOPLE SERVE GOD.

1. GOD has created men to serve him. Do they serve him? Look at the world. See the little children. How many are there of them, seven or eight years of age, never going to Mass on Sundays? How many, ten or twelve years of age, who never went to Confession? See that child, it never says its morning prayers, and seldom its night prayers. On Monday morning it is sent to school with its school wages. It stops away from school, and steals the school wages. Watch it when it is at home; you will see it putting its hand into its mother's pocket, and stealing the pennies. It is sent to the shop, and

gets too much money in change, and this it steals. What does the child do with the money it steals? does it give it to the poor? No such thing; it spends the money in buying taffy and sweet things. The child is sent on an errand; it begins to cry, or it says, "I shan't go, I won't go." Would you believe that this child has a great habit of telling lies? The child is corrected by its mother; it gets sulky, or it gives back answers, or it looks cross. The child has run out of the house. Where is it? They seek it, and find it playing about the streets with naughty companions. Is this serving God? Now, let us go to persons from the age of ten or twelve to the age of twenty. A great many of them are working in the factories and mills. Do they serve God? See that factory boy. I will tell you his history. He left school when he was about nine years of age; he was then a half-timer. Now he is older, about eighteen, in full work. What is his life? It is a week-day morning. He sleeps till it is time to go to the factory; he sets off to the factory in a hurry, without one word of prayer to God, who has preserved him during the night. Now, he is come into the factory. Does he offer his work to God? or does he pray to God to take care of him, or say a Hail Mary lest he should be *caught* by some rope or strap, and lose one of his limbs, or, perhaps, even his life? No he never thinks of it. At the first trifle which vexes him, he says some scandalous curse. Does he watch over his eyes or his thoughts for fear of temptation? No; but you will hear from his mouth continually bad, shameful words, such as St. Paul forbids to be even named amongst Christians. But there is something worse than this. He does in the factory wicked actions, and he has been known, when he left the factory, to lie in wait in the streets—what for? To ruin souls for which Christ died. He comes home to his meals; perhaps they are not ready; again you will hear him cursing in his impatience. In the evening you will not find him at home. Where is he? In the dancing-house, or he is keeping company out of the sight of his parents. It is Saturday evening. He has received his wages. He keeps back part of them. What does he do with the money? Look at him; he is walking through the street which leads to the public house, or the whiskey-shop. Sunday morning has come. The last Mass is over at the chapel. The factory boy is still in bed. At last he is risen, and had his breakfast, and sets off. Where does he go to? is it to the chapel to pray? No, he sets off to join some idle company, and he spends in gambling, in pitch-and-toss, what he stole of his wages, while his little brothers and sisters have no shoes on their feet, and are crying for bread. Is he found at the Sunday School? Go there, and you will see that his place is empty. It is Sunday evening. Where is the factory girl? Is she at chapel? No; she is walking the dark streets, or on a lonesome road, keeping company, without the knowledge of her parents, or against their will, or against her

own conscience. There is another factory boy. He lives no longer with his father and mother; he left them. He got 10s. a week. One night he came home late, for which his father scolded him. The boy said to himself: I will not be scolded by my father any more. So he went away from his father, and took lodgings for himself. So it is with many factory boys and girls; and so it is with many boys and girls who work in shops, or at the docks, or in the fields, or who polish shoes, or carry baskets. There are other children to whom God gives the blessings of a good education in a house where they hear Mass every day, and can go often to the Sacraments, where they do not meet with the temptations which come upon the children of the poor; where they are trained to good habits by the discipline of wise rules for their conduct. God has given these advantages for this, and this only—that they may learn to serve Him. To whom much is given, of him much will be required; *Luke* xii. Yet, what is the fruit of these advantages in some of those who possess them? That boy who, in his youth, is indifferent about Mass, and careless about the Sacraments, is it wonderful if, in his manhood, he gives scandal by an irreligious life? If, in a house where it was almost impossible to meet with bad company, he sought the company of those who gave the least edification, are you surprised if, when he is gone into the world, he is to be found in the company of those whose ways are evil, and who ruin him?

2. It is bad company which most frequently draws people from the service of God. "Evil communications corrupt good manners;" *1 Cor.* xv. Bad company is an evil thing in childhood, although it is commonly a worse thing in youth. You shall hear the history of a little girl who went into bad company, mentioned by St. Alphonsus. This little girl lived in a certain town, and went every day to learn her lessons at the Convent school, taught by the nuns. One morning, after breakfast, she took the little bag in which she carried her books, opened the street door, and set off to the Convent school. She was going along the street which leads to the Convent, when it happened that a wicked boy met her. He stopped her and said: Little girl, where are you going? The girl answered: I am going to the Convent school. But, said the boy, look what a fine day it is, how brightly the sun shines! You had better come along with me, and we will go and play in the fields. Nobody will know any thing about it. Very well, said the foolish little girl, I will go along with you, and we will play in the fields. Now she has got into bad company! They set off, walked out of the town, and went into the fields. They stayed in the fields all the morning. In the middle of that morning they did a very wicked thing—they committed a mortal sin. It is not said what the mortal sin was. They knew that it was a mortal sin, and that they deserved to

go to Hell for it. The morning was over. They went back into the town. The boy went away. The little girl never saw him any more. She went home. The child did not tell its parents where it had been, nor what it had been doing. She sat down and eat her dinner as usual. In the evening the little girl felt very poorly, and was put to bed. Next morning she was much worse. It happened that a woman, one of the neighbours, came into the house. As soon as the woman had seen the child, she said to the mother: "For God's sake, send directly for the priest, your child is dying." One of the brothers was sent off in haste to call the priest. When the boy came to the priest's house, he found that the priest was not at home; he was gone a long way off to see somebody else who was sick, and so the priest was not able to come before the poor child died. Now you will hear how this child, who went into bad company, died. Already the paleness of death was on the child's face. Death was coming on it fast. It might be about a quarter of an hour before it died. The mother was standing at the window, looking out anxiously to see was the priest coming. Suddenly the mother heard the little child scream. She ran to the bed-side, and found the child sitting up in the bed. My poor child, said the mother, what is the matter, why did you scream? The little girl lifted up her finger and pointed to one side of the bed, and said: Look there, mother, do you not see them? No, said the mother, I do not see any thing. Then the child pointed again and said: There, mother, there they are, the black people, they are standing close to me. Again the child screamed. Then the mother said: My poor child, do not mind the black people; the priest will soon come, and he will send the black people away. Then the mother gently laid the little child's head down again on the pillow. Be quiet, my dear child, she said, all will be right when the priest comes. The mother went back to the window to watch for the priest. She had been there only a few minutes when there was another most frightful scream. The mother ran quickly to the bed-side. It was frightful to see the poor thing. She was sitting up as before, but she did not look into her mother's face any more. Her eyes, which seemed like two fireballs, were fixed fast on some thing she was looking at near the bed-side. The mother laid her hand on the forehead of the child. She could feel the blood beating against it in the inside. Still the child did not look at its mother. It neither stirred nor spoke. The mother knew not what to think, she remained silent. Suddenly the little child turned its head round, and, looking up into its mother's face, screamed out: "Oh, mother! the black people have come back again; there they are—they speak to me—they tell me that they are the devils, and that they are come to fetch my poor soul to Hell!" As soon as the little girl had said these words, she fell back on her pillow. Her

mother looked at her—she was dead, and the devils had carried her soul to Hell to burn there for ever and ever!

Understand how this was. God had created this child to serve him, and the child knew that it ought to serve God. Then there came a moment in the life of that child. In that moment the devil brought a temptation to lead the child away from the service of God. Then the child thought to itself: Shall I go on serving God, or shall I consent to this temptation, and serve God no longer? I know that this is a mortal sin, and that if I consent in it, I shall deserve to go to Hell for it. Then the child knowingly and willingly consented to the temptation. Therefore the devils came when the child was dying and took its soul to Hell. Poor child, you died without confession, you died without contrition; you were frightened when the devils came to you; but that was not enough, you ought to have been sorry for your sin. If with a sincere heart, you had said when you were dying "Oh, my God! I am very sorry that I have sinned against thee, because thou art so good, and I will not sin again," then God would have forgiven your sin, although the priest could not come to you. But you died without contrition, and therefore you must burn forever in Hell! Poor child, we would pray for you, if by praying we could get you out of Hell. But the time of praying for you is passed—you are fixed forever in Hell because you would not serve God.

Poor little child, we can almost hear your voice. Yes, we hear you crying out to the other little children who are still living in the world: "Ah! little children," you say, "you who are still alive in the world, take warning from me; remember my sad example. Keep out of bad company, for it is bad company which takes people away from the service of God, and makes them come to Hell."

Farewell, then, poor little child, farewell! We shall only see you once more at the day of judgment, and after that we shall never see you again. Great God, have mercy on the souls of the poor children! Remember that they often sin through ignorance, and scarce know any better. Forget not that Jesus died also for the little children. O God! you have a heart which loves little children. Then be very merciful and kind to these poor creatures; and, at least in their dying moments, put into their hearts sorrow, and an act of contrition for their sins, which may save their souls.

My dear child, serve God while yet you are a little child, and then God will not forsake you when you grow old. There was a man who was a servant of the King of England. He was a good and faithful servant of the king, his master. He served him in health and in sickness, by day and by night, for many long years. When that servant became old, and his hair was grey, the king sent him away from his service. Then the old man's heart was

broken because the king had forsaken him in his old age. He went to lie down on his bed and die. When he was dying he said: "If I had served God as I have served my king, he would not have forsaken me in my grey hairs." Be wise, then, my child, and serve that great and good God who never forsakes those who serve him.

CHAPTER XIII.

TWO THINGS TO BE REMEMBERED.

1. TELL me, does a child not listen to the word of its father? Does a servant not listen to the word of her mistress? Does a senseless beast not hear the word of its keeper? You, my child, will you not listen to the word which God your Creator speaks to you? What is that word? This is the word which God speaks: *The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*; Matt. iv. God has written this word on the pages of his holy book, and there you may read it—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*. Oftentimes God himself puts into your heart that word—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*. The angels whisper in your soul—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*. The sound of that word goes down even into the deep places of the conscience of the sinner. The curse of God is upon him who forgets the word—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*; and God's blessing is upon him who remembers it. In the early morning, then, remember—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*. When the sun has gone down, and it is night, forget not—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*. In the silence of the night let your heart dwell upon those words—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*. In all your ways, and in all your works, in school, in the factory, in the street, remember—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*. If bad companions come to tempt you to leave the service of God, and serve your passions and the devil, say in your heart—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*. In all the various things and changes of this life, its joys and its ills, its ups and its downs, fix your eyes on some bright star which may lead you safely to heaven. That star, what shall it be? It shall be that blessed word—*The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve*.

2. You know that you were made to serve God. But the other created things—the sun, moon, stars, flowers, beasts, sickness, pains, works, and actions of all kinds—what were they made for? They were not made to serve God, as you are, for they have neither sense, nor will, nor memory, nor understanding to serve God. Then, what were they made for? They were made for one thing and that was to *help* you to serve God. But the creatures and things which are around you do not always help you to serve God. When these things shall help you to serve God, then make use of them. When they shall draw you away from the service of God, then leave them; go away from them. A beautiful flower helps you to think of the power and goodness of God. It is good; make use of the flower. But you are at Mass, and a beautiful flower distracts you from your prayers. The flower draws you from the service of God—leave it. The food you take helps you to live, and do your duties to God and your neighbour. Then make use of the food. But you eat or drink too much, or what does not belong to you, then the food draws you away from the service of God—leave it. You dress according to your state of life and condition. It is good, such is the will of God. But there is a girl who dresses herself finely through vain glory, that others may look at her and admire her—she spends on dress money which should buy bread for her little brothers and sisters. This fine dressing draws that girl away from the service of God—she must give it up. You work in a shop or a factory. It is good. God has said: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken;" *Gen.* iii. But you work in a shop or a factory, where there is a person who has often led you into mortal sin. Many good resolutions you have made not to consent to the temptation any more. You have been often to the Sacraments to strengthen yourself against the temptation. You have put in practice the advice which your Confessor gave you about it. Still you find that you are so weak that, after all this, you still often consent to the temptation. Then you must leave the shop or factory where that person is who tempts you, and get work elsewhere, because that place turns you from the service of God, and ruins your soul. "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out," *Matt.* v. You take up a book to read. It is a good book, which helps you to serve God. It is well—read it. You meet with another book; it is a bad book; it will lead you from the service of God—cast it away. In fine, if you are rich or poor, or your friend dies, or you lose something, or whatsoever affliction comes upon you, be ready to make use of these things by being patient when they come, because they help you to serve God; and, therefore, remember—1st. That you were made to serve God. 2d. That all other things were made to help you to serve God. 3d. That among the things you meet with, some help you

to serve God, but some of them draw you away from God's service. 4th. Be ready always to make use of those things which help you in God's service; leave—go away from those things which draw you away from God's service. "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself;" *Matt. xvi.*

Now, you have a rule by which you may know what to do about any thing you meet with in life. You will say to yourself: "I care not about one thing more than another—I wish only—to serve God. What I am going to do, or make use of, will it help me to serve God, or will it draw me away from his service? If it helps me to serve God, I will make use of it; if it will draw me away from God's service, I will leave it." Should it happen that you cannot tell whether something is for the service of God or not, ask your Confessor.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

MY dear child, in the evening, when the sun is going down, if a traveller finds that he has gone astray out of the right road, and got into a wrong path, what does he do? He goes back again as quickly as he can into the right road. Do the same. Look into your past life, and perhaps you will see that not once only, but many times, you have gone astray from the service of God. Perhaps, even at this moment you are not serving God. What must you do? Go back to the service of God, and, with a sorrowful heart, beg his pardon, because you left his service.

PRAYER.

MY God, you are my Creator. You gave me a body and a soul. You commanded me to serve you, and you told me that if I would not serve you, I must burn forever in the fire of hell. My God, I know it, I confess it, that I have not served you. For my sins, I deserve to go to hell. From my early childhood I have broken your commandments in thought, in word, and in work. But, O merciful God, you have pity on little children who confess that they have done wrong, remembering that Jesus died also for the little children. Then, my God, not for any good thing that I have done, but for the sake of the sweet Jesus who died for the love of me, a little child, have pity on me, and forgive my sins. Too late have I known you, my blessed God; too late have I loved you. But now, my God, with your help, I will begin to serve you. I will serve you with my body, with my soul; I will serve you by day

and by night, in sickness and in health; yes, I will serve you, my God, with every breath that I breathe, till, for the love of you, my God, I breathe out my last breath. Amen.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul.

The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.

He who commits a "mortal sin" refuses to serve God as you will read in the Fourth Book.

PRAISED BE JESUS AND MARY.

HYMNS FOR CHILDREN.

NOTICE.—The following verses include—I. The Four Great Truths, which we must know, or we cannot go to heaven.—II. The Seven Sacraments. S. Alphonsus, *Homo Ap.*, Tract iv., No. 3, says: "That there are three Sacraments which all must know, and that the knowledge of the other four Sacraments is necessary only for those who receive them." The three Sacraments which all must know, have a cross before them.

Method of Singing.—Sing the first two verses each to the first part of the air of *St. Casimir's Hymn*, or *Daily, daily sing to Mary*; then sing them over again to the second part of the same air once repeated. So with all the other verses. The last of the four Truths will be joined with Baptism; a method is also given for singing the Prayers, Commandments, &c.

I.—THE FOUR GREAT TRUTHS.

There is one God in three Persons, | Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
God the Son, Jesus Christ, | was made man, and died for us.
The good go to Heaven, | and the wicked burn in Hell.

II.—THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

† Baptism is a Sacrament | which takes from us the sin of Adam.
 Confirmation is a Sacrament | which makes us strong and perfect Christians.

† The Blessed Sacrament is the Body | and the Blood of Jesus Christ.

† And Penance is a Sacrament | which takes away from us our own sins.

Extreme Unction is a Sacrament | which gives to us the grace to die well.

Holy Orders is a Sacrament | which gives the grace of holy priesthood.

Matrimony is a Sacrament | which gives Grace to those who marry.



I believe this, and all that the holy Church teaches.

And in this blessed faith, with God's help, I will live and die.

NOTICE.—The following Prayers are sung in one uniform high tone with a fall. It is a great improvement when they can be sung in parts. The dash between the words indicates a pause.

The syllable on which the fall is, is underlined.

—————

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

In the name—of the Father,—and of the Son,—and of the Holy Ghost.—
Amen

—————

THE OUR FATHER.

Our Father—who art in Heaven—hallowed—be Thy name—Thy kingdom come—Thy will be done—on earth as it is—in Heaven—Give us this day—our daily bread—and forgive us—our trespasses—as we forgive them—that trespass against us—and lead us not—into temptation—but deliver us—from evil—Amen.

THE HAIL MARY.

Hail Mary—full of grace—the Lord is with thee—blessed art thou—amongst women—and blessed is the fruit—of thy womb, Jesus—Holy Mary—Mother of God—pray for us, sinners—now—and at the hour of our death.—Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe—in God, the Father Almighty—Creator of Heaven and earth—and in Jesus Christ—his only Son—our Lord—who was conceived—by the Holy Ghost—born of the Virgin Mary—suffered under Pontius Pilate—was crucified—dead, and buried—He descended into hell—the third day—He rose again—from the dead—he ascended into Heaven—sitteth at the right hand—of God, the Father Almighty—from thence he shall come—to judge—the living and the dead—I believe—in the Holy Ghost—the holy Catholic Church—the communion of Saints—the forgiveness of sins—the resurrection of the body—and life everlasting.—Amen.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

The First Commandment—I am the Lord thy God—thou shalt have—no other God—but me.

The Second Commandment—Thou shalt not take—the name of the Lord thy God—in vain.

The Third Commandment—Remember—thou keep holy—the Sabbath day.

The Fourth Commandment—Honour thy father—and thy mother.

The Fifth Commandment—Thou shalt not kill.

The Sixth Commandment—Thou shalt not—commit adultery.

The Seventh Commandment—Thou shalt not steal.

The Eighth Commandment—Thou shalt not bear—false witness—against thy neighbour.

The Ninth Commandment—Thou shalt not covet—thy neighbour's wife.

The Tenth Commandment—Thou shalt not covet—thy neighbour's goods.



THE ACT OF CONTRITION OF BLESSED LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE.

O my God, I am very sorry | that I have sinned against thee,
Because thou art so good, | and I will not sin again.

Air of the Miserere Chant.



THE GOOD INTENTION.

*This is sung once over to the first part of the air of St. Casimir's Hymn,
and then twice to the second part of the air once repeated.*

My Jesus, I do all | for the love, the love of you.

THE GREAT EVIL.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS THE GREAT EVIL?

SOME children were learning their Catechism; the teacher asked them this question: "What is the worst thing in the world?" A little child put up its hand and said, Please, may I answer? Yes, said the teacher. Then, said the child, I think the worst thing in the world is a great pain. This child did not give the right answer. No doubt it is frightful to see any one burnt up with fever, or cramped with cholera, or to see death tearing away the soul from the body. It is a sad thing to say the last "good bye" to those whom we love. These things make tears run down from the eye and draw sighs out of the heart. But there is something which burns more than fever, and cramps more than cholera. There is a last parting more sorrowful than the last parting with father, mother, brother, or sister.

What, then, is the great bad thing? The greatest of all evils—the evil of evils—what is it? The greatest of all evils is—Mortal sin. Mortal sin is so great an evil that no man living will be able to understand how great an evil it is. Ps. xviii.—"Who shall understand sins?"

CHAPTER II.

WHY IS MORTAL SIN THE GREAT EVIL?

"To thee only have I sinned." Ps. i.

"Thou hast broken my yoke, and burst my bonds; thou hast said, I will not serve." Jer. ii. A child was bid by its father to go on an errand; the child answered, "I shan't go, I won't go." Everybody who heard this answer was

shocked. How shocking, then, must it be when any one says to Almighty God, the God who has in his hands thy breath and all thy ways, who can cast a body and soul into hell, "Oh, God! I shall not, I will not do what you bid me!" *Mal.* iii.: "Shall a man afflict God?" It is Sunday, and you know well that God commands you to hear Mass. You could go to Mass if you liked, there is nothing to hinder you. You refuse to go to Mass; you stop away by your own fault, and commit a mortal sin. It is as if you spoke thus to God: "O Almighty God! I know that you are my Creator, and I am your creature; I know that I ought to obey you and keep your commandments; I know that if I break your commandments, I deserve to go to hell for it. And now I tell you, O God, that I will not keep your commandments. You command me to go to Mass to-day, and I tell you that I will not go to Mass; I will not do your will, but my own will; I know that I deserve to go to hell for it, but I do not care for that." Wicked child! "you know not what you do," when you thus break the commandments of God; *Luc* xxiii. 34. God wonders that his own creatures, whose body and soul he can cast into hell, should dare thus to despise him. Thus he speaks, *Is.* i.: "Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for my people have despised me." He must have a hardened heart who dares thus to despise the majesty of God.

CHAPTER III.

THE HARDNESS OF MORTAL SIN.

A ROCK is hard, but a drop of water always falling upon a rock will wear it away. Iron is hard, but fire will burn it away. One only thing there is which no fire, not even the fire of hell, can burn away—and that one thing is mortal sin. See first the difference betwixt the fire of the Earth and the fire of Hell. Take a spark out of the kitchen fire, drop it in a river, and it will go out directly. But the fire of hell is "kindled in God's wrath." *Deut.* xxxii. Take, then, one very little spark out of the fire of hell, less in size than a pin's head—cast this spark of hell into the waters of the ocean. Would it go out? No, it would blaze out in the waters, and set them on fire, and in one moment the whole earth would be in a blaze and burnt to ashes. The fire of hell then is strong, but there is something stronger than the fire of hell, and that is mortal sin. Put a mortal sin into the very midst of the raging flames of hell. These flames burn above and below and on every side, and in the midst of mortal sin. Do these fierce flames burn it away? No; when the mortal sin

shall have been in the midst of the burning flames for millions and millions of years, it will be just as hard, heavy, and black as it was at the beginning. What does this mean? I will tell you. A man dies, and there is in his dying heart the malice and the wilful intention of not going to Mass on Sunday, or of doing some immodest action. He is dead, and condemned to hell. In hell this evil intention remains in his heart just as on earth, and he would not give it up even to get out of the flames of hell. There is no repentance in hell. O sinner, there is a just and a terrible God, who repays sin forthwith, with the blast of the spirit of his wrath; *Ps. xvii. 7.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE SENTENCE AGAINST MORTAL SIN.

GOD said to Adam, "In whatsoever day thou shalt eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt die the death." *Gen. ii.* To every creature the same words are said. In whatever day thou shalt break the commandments of God, thou shalt die. Therefore, if on Sunday, you stop from Mass by your own fault, or if you do some immodest thing, there is the sentence: "Thou shalt die the death." *Dan. v.:* Baltassar was king of Babylon. Babylon was a great city, 60 miles round; the streets were 15 miles long; the king's palace 7 miles round. Baltassar made a feast for a thousand of his nobles. They sang songs, and drank wine till they were drunk. Drunkenness brings with it many other sins. When the king was drunk he said, Bring in the vessels which have been used in the service of God, and we will drink out of them. It was a sacrilege to show this disrespect to vessels used in God's service. Then at the king's command the holy vessels were brought in, and the king and his nobles drank out of them. They sang hymns to their false gods made of metal and of stone. In the midst of their songs suddenly there was a dead silence—what was the matter? the king had looked up, and he had seen the fingers, as it were, of a hand at the wall over against the great candlestick. Those fingers were writing letters on the wall, but they were letters such as no eye had ever seen before. Then the face of the king was changed with fear. He turned pale, and his knees struck one against the other. He cried out for the wise men to come, that they might tell him the meaning of those words which had been written. The wise men came, but when they had seen the letters they said that they could neither read the letters nor tell the meaning of them. And now it came to the ears of the

queen, how fingers, as it were, of a hand, had been writing on the wall letters which nobody could read. The queen came in haste, and stood before the king, and spoke to him thus: "O king," she said, "do not be troubled. There is in your kingdom one whose name is Daniel, a prophet of the true God. In the days of your father, knowledge and wisdom were found in him. Let him be sent for." The prophet Daniel was sent for. "O Daniel," said the king to him, "I have heard that you have the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, that you can tell the meaning of hidden things. Now, then, if you are able to read that writing, and tell the meaning of it, you shall be clothed in purple, and have a chain of gold about your neck, and you shall be the third prince in my kingdom." Then Daniel answered the king and said: "O king, keep your rewards for others, but the writing I will read, and tell you the meaning of it. O king, the most high God gave to Nabuchodnosor, your father, a kingdom, and greatness, and honour, and glory. All people, and tribes, and languages trembled before him. His heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened with pride. Then he was put down from the throne of his kingdom, and his glory was taken away. He was driven out from the sons of men, and his heart was made like the heart of beasts, and his dwelling was with wild asses, and he did eat grass like an ox. His body was wet with the dew of heaven, till he knew that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and sets over it whomsoever it shall please him. Thou also, his son, O King Baltassar, hast not humbled thy heart. When thou knewest all these things, thou hast lifted up thyself against the God of Heaven. The holy vessels have been brought in before thee, and thou and thy nobles have drunk out of them. Thou hast praised the gods made of gold, and silver, and of stone, and wood, which neither see, nor hear, nor feel. But the God who has in his hands thy breath and all thy ways thou hast not glorified. Therefore, God has sent that hand to write what is written. This, then, is the writing: Mane, Thekel, Phares. And this is the meaning of the words: Mane—God hath numbered thy kingdom. Thekel—thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting. Phares—Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." Then, by the king's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, and a chain of gold was put about his neck, and it was proclaimed that he had power as the third man in the kingdom. The same night King Baltassar was killed, and the Medes and Persians took possession of his kingdom.

Little child, when you commit a mortal sin, you also lift yourselves up against the God of Heaven, for you refuse to obey him; you sacrilegiously profane your soul, which is the holy and precious vessel of God, and his dwelling place, and you give glory to the devil, who is the enemy of God. In that moment, when you thus commit a mortal sin, there is a hand writing

dark letters, the letters of death, on your soul; and this is the writing: *Thou shalt die the death*. That handwriting is written on your understanding, for you know that you are dead before God; it is written on your memory, and the remembrance of the death sentence will haunt your memory; it is written on your will, because of your own free will you have chosen death rather than life. Nobody on earth can see those words of death which are written on your soul, neither your father, or your mother, or brothers, or sisters. But God sees them, and the angels see them. But what is the meaning of those fearful words, *Thou shalt die the death*? The meaning of them you shall know, for God has said, "As I have spoken, so will I do to the wicked." *Numbers xiv*.

CHAPTER V.

HOW HE DIES WHO COMMITS MORTAL SIN.

1. *Thou shalt die the death*. *Gen. ii*. You have committed a mortal sin. Then, you are dead; "for the wages of sin is death." *Rom. vi*. Yes, O sinner, you are dead! But how can you be dead? Your face is not pale as the face of the dead; you are not cast down on the earth a corpse; no coffin is brought to you, no grave is dug for you. Who would say that you are dead? You breathe, you eat, you talk, you laugh, just as you did before the hour when the mortal sin was committed. Can it be true, then, that you are dead? Yes, O sinner, it is most true that you are dead. As sure as the God of Heaven has said, "Thou shalt die the death," so surely are you dead, and "you belong to him who has the empire of death, that is, the devil." *Heb. ii*.

What, then, is that death which has stricken you? "Your body is not slain by the sword, nor dead in battle." *Is. xxii*. Listen, then, O sinner, and I will tell you how death has stricken you. "The soul that sinneth," says the prophet, "the same shall die." *Ezech. xviii*. The mortal sin which you committed, quick as a flash of lightning struck your soul dead. *Is. xxix*. "It shall be in an instant, suddenly."

But how does all this happen? Listen: It is the moment of temptation; the soul is tempted to break the commandments of God, and commit a mortal sin. Oh, the terrible moment for the soul. *Ps. xvii.*: "The sorrows of death surround it." There is silence in heaven; the angels speak not; God is looking at the soul to see what will it do. Will it consent to the temptation or not? All is over; the soul has consented to the temptation, and committed the mortal

sin. Oh, the crash, the breaking, the ruin! Is it an earthquake which has torn the earth in pieces, or the sun darkened, or the moon turned red as blood, or the stars falling from heaven? No; none of these things. It is something more frightful. A thunderbolt from hell has broken in pieces God's greatest work—a soul is ruined. O God, that immortal soul, which was created to your image and likeness, and redeemed with the blood of Jesus Christ, is crushed and ruined! The wailings of the angels are not heard from heaven, neither do the blasphemies of the devils in hell come to the ear. All has been done in silence, and that soul is lying a silent ruin on the face of God's earth. O sinner, after the mortal sin you go into your house, and the stone does not cry out from the wall against your dead soul; you pass through the country, and the beasts in the field do not roar out because a dead soul is passing in the midst of them; you go along the street, and the people you meet do not run away from your dead soul. But there is One who sees your dead soul. There is a God in heaven who sees your dead soul, and hates the sight of it. *Wisd. xiv.*: "The wicked and his wickedness are alike hateful to God."

Oh, the day of mortal sin! Oh, that day, that terrible day, when a soul died which had once breathed the breath of life! Oh, the day of mortal sin; "the day of death;" that day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery; *Soph. ii.* "Let that day be turned into darkness; let not God regard it from above; let not the light shine upon it; let the darkness and shadow of death cover it." *Job ii.*

2. *They shall mourn over him. Ezech. xxvii.* A boy dies. His little sister goes to her mother, and says: Please, mother, may I put on mourning for my brother who is dead? The mother answers, Yes, my child, you shall put on mourning for your poor brother. The black clothes come; and the child is dressed in a black frock, black bonnet, black shawl, black gloves. Thus the body, which was not created to the image and likeness of God, dies, and for a dead body there is mourning. Nay, even a senseless beast sinks down in the fields and dies, and for a dead beast there is sorrow; but a soul created to the image and likeness of God dies by mortal sin, and for a dead soul no cry is heard, no tear is shed. He who once was just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, *Is. lvii.*; as if God had not said: "They shall mourn over him and be girded with sackcloth." *Ezech. xxvii.*

3. *They shall cry bitterly over thee. Ezech. xvii.* Some years have now passed since a missionary was giving a mission to the children in one of those small squares in London called courts. It was winter time. The children received an instruction in the morning, and again in the evening, and made their confessions. One evening the instruction went on as usual. Suddenly there was an interruption, the missionary stopped in the midst of his

instruction; what was the matter? A noise was heard at the door, and in a few minutes the door was burst open with violence; a woman rushed in, and, walking with haste through the midst of the children, she came up to the platform where the missionary was, and there she stood for a moment speechless and breathless. What is the matter, my good woman? said the missionary. Oh, father, she said, make haste and come quick, my husband has fallen on the floor, and he is dying! The missionary followed the woman in haste. Going up a narrow staircase, he entered the room where the dying man was. The poor man lay on the floor; large drops of sweat ran down his pale face; his eyes were rolling in their sockets, his breathing short and difficult, and the death-rattle in his throat. It was a fearful sight to see that man in the agony of death while his soul was passing out of this world to the judgment-seat of God. But there was another sight still more sorrowful. Around the dying father knelt his five little children, and well they knew what the matter was—they knew that their poor father was dying. Oh! the sorrow, the grief of those poor children! They were crying, and wailing, and sobbing over their poor father in the agony of death. Little child, it may be that death has been in your house as well as in the house of which I speak. Perhaps in your house it was a more frightful death—the death of the soul by mortal sin. How was it that death came into your house? Perhaps it was Sunday, and your brother lost Mass by his own fault; then he came home to you with a dead soul in him, killed by mortal sin. When, then, he opened the door, and brought a dead soul into the midst of you, did you all, brothers and sisters, come round and cry, and sob, and wail, and scream for his poor dead soul? Did you say: O brother, your poor soul is dead? Poor soul! we cry for you, brother, and the tears run down from our eyes because your soul is dead? *Ezech.* xxvii.: "They shall mourn over thee with a loud voice and cry bitterly; they shall weep for thee with bitterness of soul, and with most bitter weeping."

4. *They died for fear.* *Wis.* xvii. O sinner, it may be that your eye sees something that brings death to your remembrance. It is, perhaps, the waving plume of a dark hearse which is carrying a dead body to its last home, or perhaps it is the pale face of a corpse. Then fear strikes your heart; for the remembrance of thee, O death, is bitter; *Eccus.* xli. O sinner, you carry death within you—you have a dead soul within you, and you are not afraid. There was a little child which had never seen a dead body in its life. It happened that some one died in the house where the child was living. In the evening the child was taken up-stairs to the room where the dead body was laid on a bed. By the pale light of a candle this child, for the first time in its life, saw a dead body! The poor child trembled when it saw the strange paleness of the

dead face—the eyes fixed, the lips which breathed no more, the hands which moved not, and the wonderful stillness and quiet of that dead body. The people said to the child: You shall stop here all the night, in the dark, without any light, alone by yourself with the dead body. Then they all went out, leaving the child alone with the dead body. They remained standing outside, wishing to see if the child would be frightened. A few moments passed and they heard a fearful scream, and immediately afterwards the sound, as it were, of something falling heavily on the floor. They opened the door, and saw that the child was lying on the floor. They went to lift it up, and found that it was dead! The fright of being left alone in the dark with the dead body had killed the poor child. O sinner, in the darkness of the night you are alone, not with a dead body, but with a dead soul! and you are not afraid; but if God opened your eyes to see that frightful, hideous monster of a dead soul which is in you, you would never rise again from your bed. The sight of that fearful, terrible dead soul in you, would take away your breath, and your sense, and your life.

5. *There shall be a reproach among the dead forever.* Wis. iv. The fifth commandment says: "Thou shalt not kill." By the old law of England, the dead body of any man who had murdered himself was laid on a board. In the dead of the night the body was taken out of the house lying on the board. Then it was borne away out of the town, and carried along the lonesome country roads, till it was brought to a place where there were four cross-roads. The dead body was set down there. By the light of a lantern they dug a deep hole with pickaxes and spades. Then the dead body was lifted up and thrown down to the bottom of this hole. Then the hole was filled up again; and so he who murdered himself was buried as a dog is buried. Then the people said: Here are four roads crossing one another, and many people pass this way; let, then, every foot trample on the grave of the man who murdered himself. Wicked sinner, self-murderer! when you committed that mortal sin, you did not murder your mortal body, but you murdered your own immortal soul, into which God had breathed the breath of life; and you sought to have been buried with the burial of a dog. Jer. xxii. "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, rotten and cast forth." Oh, soul! murdered, slain, receiving the death wound from your own hand—how ghastly, how frightful you are!

CHAPTER VI.

THE FRIGHTFULNESS OF A SOUL IN MORTAL SIN.

1. *For what shall I strike you any more? The whole head is sick, the whole heart is sad. From the sole of the foot to the top of the head there is no soundness therein, but wounds and bruises, and swelling ulcers.* Is. i. If you look into a looking-glass you see your face in it. Poor child in mortal sin, let me put before you a looking-glass, that you may see a little the frightfulness of your soul. There is a miserable body—all its bones are broken in pieces—the skull broken, the back-bone broken, the arms broken, the legs broken, the bones in the hands and feet broken, all the flesh and the skin is torn in pieces and stripes. Every disease in the world is in that body; there is typhus-fever, yellow-fever, scarlet-fever, cholera, and plague. There is consumption in the lungs, jaundice in the liver, disease in the heart, blindness in the eyes, deafness in the ears, toothache, and every pain that comes upon men. O sinner, your soul is a million times worse. When you committed that mortal sin, "the vial of God's wrath was poured upon you, and a sore and grievous wound fell upon your soul." *Apoc.* xvi. O soul, O soul in mortal sin, stricken with that sore and grievous wound—a death's wound. *Apoc.* xiii. Whence came that wound, that incurable wound in your soul? Did it, like the sickness of the body, come by some accident; from a little damp, or from a change in the air? No; that wound in your soul came not from any change in the air, but from a change of the Almighty Spirit to you. He who once was your Father, has poured out the vial of his anger and indignation on your soul, and stricken it with a sore and grievous wound; and the stroke which made that wound in your soul, was such as the hand of Almighty God, in his anger, alone could strike.

2. *Sepulchres, full of dead men's bones and all filthiness.* *Mat.* xxiii. In the neighbourhood of a certain town there is a large burial-ground, in which there are three hundred and sixty-five large vaults or graves, each of them large enough to hold hundreds of dead bodies; these graves are not filled up with earth, but over the top is placed a large, heavy, square stone; each day of the year one of these vaults is opened, and all the dead who have to be buried on that day are buried in the one vault. It is the custom for the dead bodies to be thrown in the vault without any coffin. It happened that one day a person went and lifted the large stone which covered one of these vaults. Oh, what a sight! there you might see death. There were hundreds of dead bodies; some lay on the ground with their faces looking upwards, others with their faces turned to the earth; some of the dead bodies were leaning against

the wall, some with their white skeleton hands stretched out as if pointing; there were eyes dropping out of their sockets, ears falling off, teeth away from the jaw, hair scattered on the ground; arms and feet separated from their bodies; bones piercing through the skin. This immense mass of livid and rotting flesh was of every colour from pale to black. In some the flesh was hard; in others, dissolved like water. There were thousands and thousands of reptiles feeding on the dead flesh. The smell of the corrupting flesh of these bodies was insufferable, so that if he who lifted up the stone had not quickly put it down again, he would have fallen down dead into the midst of the dead bodies in the vault. O sinner, give ear to the words of Jesus Christ, for he calls you "a sepulchre, full of dead men's bones and all filthiness." *Mat.* xxiii. O soul in mortal sin! you are, then, like a deep grave filled with corruption; not the corruption of flesh, or of blood, but with corruption of spirit, corruption of thoughts and desires, of words and actions. Now, if the corruption of the body is bad, the corruption of the soul must be a great deal worse, because the better a thing is, the worse its corruption is. O soul in mortal sin! you are a grave filled with diabolic corruption, with infernal corruption; still you are a grave closed up, a sealed monument; no eye can look in. On the outside it may appear that you are beautiful with satins and silks, with ornaments of gold and silver. But there will come a day when the sound of the last trumpet will break the seal and burst open the grave, then every eye shall see your soul as it is—the most horrible, frightful, abominable sight that can be. *Is.* lxvi. "They shall go out and see the carcases of the men that have sinned against me, a loathsome sight to all flesh."

3. *For my iniquities are gone over my head, and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon me.* *Ps.* xxxvii. O sinner, when you carry about with you a soul dead in mortal sin, do you know what a terrible and frightful load you are carrying? There was a certain man condemned to suffer an extraordinary punishment. It happened long since; it was in the times of the Pagans, before the Christian religion was on the earth. There was a dead body, black, as if it had died of the black cholera. This black body was fastened to the body of the criminal, and it was so fastened that it was impossible for him to get free from it. The wretched man trembled and shook with terror when he saw the terrible load coming which he was to carry. When he felt the weight of it pressing upon him, the feeling of death pierced his very bones. This was only the beginning of his misery. The dreadful load was always pressing upon him; in the light of the day he saw with his eyes the frightful load of black death which he carried, in the darkness of the night the dead body was his only companion; the smell of that horrible dead body was most fearful.

From this corruption of death worms began to come, and they crept into his mouth, and eyes, and ears, and nostrils. Never was there such an awful sight. The people who saw this man at a distance shrieked with fright and ran away; the very beasts fled away when he passed. The unfortunate man himself howled with terror and pain; he bit his tongue, and dashed himself against the stones. At length he lost his senses, and fell down dead under the terrible load which he carried. Unhappy sinner! you go about, day by day, bound up with death—not the black cholera death, or the death of flesh and blood—but the real death, the death of the spirit, that death which came out of hell. Poor sinner! shall you then be left to perish under this crushing load? Must you go about howling with fright, biting your tongue in despair, and dashing yourself against the stones, losing your senses, and at last falling down into the flames of hell? Is your wound incurable? *Jer.* viii. "Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician?" Poor sinner? think not so. You shall, if you wish it, be delivered from this body of death. But who shall deliver you? The grace of God by Jesus Christ our Lord. *Rom.* viii.

But you have not heard the worst of mortal sin—the worst is yet to come. *Is.* vi. "God's anger is not yet turned away, his hand is stretched out still."

CHAPTER VII.

LOSS.

1. THE LOSS OF GOD, OR THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION.—*The Lord has departed from thee! Kings* xxviii. Poor sinner, you do not yet know what is the most terrible thing in the death of the soul! If you were ever in a death chamber just the moment after the soul has left the body, you would notice what a wonderful, frightful lonesomeness there is about the body, how desolate it looks when the soul has just left it. O sinner, if the body be lonesome when the soul has departed from it, how lonesome must the soul be, when God its Creator has left it in the moment of mortal sin? The death of the body is the soul going away from it, but the death of the soul is when God leaves and abandons the soul on account of mortal sin—for "the breath of our mouth Christ the Lord is taken away in our sin," *Lam.* iv.; and "the Holy Spirit will not abide when iniquity cometh in." *Wisd.* i. Know then, O sinner, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God. *Jer.* ii.

2. Did you ever think about that word *to leave, to go away*. From the west of Ireland the ships sail to America. One day a ship stood near the sea-coast ready to set off with emigrants for America. It was time for the ship to set sail, but still it waited. Some one who was to sail in that ship had not yet come. In a few moments some persons were seen coming out of the country on their way to the ship. They were father, mother, brothers, and sisters. One of the sisters was going to leave her family and sail to America. They had come to the seaside, and it was time for them to part and say good-bye—farewell to their sister who was going to leave them. If you had seen how they cried and sobbed, if you had heard their screams at this last parting, you would have said their hearts were breaking. And now the ship had set off; and their sister had left them, and still the screams and howlings of the desolate brothers and sisters come over the waters to the ship, piercing through the sound of the waves of the sea. Poor sinner, when God, who was more to you than father, mother, brother, or sister, was leaving you in the moment of mortal sin, did you scream, did you howl? No, sinner; look back, and you will remember that in that first moment of terrible and frightful lonesomeness *without God*, not a sigh, not a breathing of sadness, came from your heart.

3. My dear child, if you could go down into hell, and listen but for one single moment to the cry—the shriek—the howling of a damned soul—not because it burns in the unquenchable fire—but because it knows there what it is to lose God, then there would be no need for you to read in this book about losing God.

4. "When," says Jesus Christ, "you shall see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place." *Mat. xxiii*. O sinner, you have seen that abomination of desolation standing in the holy place. Think of the day, the hour, the moment of your mortal sin; for in that moment the abomination of desolation began in your soul, which had been once the holy place of God, the temple of the Holy Ghost. If the sun was plucked out of the skies, and all the world was left in darkness, the world would be desolate, but the abomination of desolation would not be there, but in your soul, for it has lost not the sun, but the Creator of the sun. A river was cut off from its fountain head. The people mourned because the bed of their river was dried up. They had no water to drink, and they were desolate and died of thirst. But it is not the loss of the water of the earth which brings the abomination of desolation, for that is to be found only in the soul which has committed a mortal sin and lost Almighty God, the fountain head of justice. Oh, the dry and withered and parched up soul! *Jer. ii*. "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water." It would be a cruel sight to see the eyes plucked out from the head,

and nothing left but two bleeding holes. The poor creature would feel desolate, in his blindness; but this would not be the abominable desolation and lonesomeness, no, that is to be found only in the soul which has committed mortal sin and lost the eye of God's providence. Oh, the abomination of desolation in the soul, great and deep as God himself, because the soul has lost God himself! A little child has lost a pin, and it cries for the loss of its pin. True, a pin is but a trifle, but still it is a loss, and that child shows that it knows what is meant by a loss. But you, O dull, stupid, ignorant sinner, surely you know not what is meant by a loss; for you have lost not a pin, but Almighty God, and you cry not. A traveller was going along the road, and he met a little child crying bitterly. What is the matter? he said to the poor little creature; why do you cry? The child's voice was choked with sobs, and it could not answer. At length the child lifted up its hand and pointed to the ground. The traveller looked, and, behold, he saw lying on the ground a little bottle, worth about a penny, broken. This child had, by accident, let the bottle fall, and it broke in pieces. O sinner, that child will be your condemnation at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. It will say, O Christ, I cried and sobbed for the loss of a miserable bottle, and that sinner committed a mortal sin, and lost you, and he never shed one tear for losing you. Weep, then, O sinner; "let your eyes run down with tears, because the Comforter, the relief of your soul, is gone." *Lam. i.*

5. THE LOSS OF GOD'S IMAGE AND LIKENESS.—*Let us make man in our image and likeness. Gen. i. 26.* There was a gentleman who had a most beautiful picture. This picture was the wonder of the world; it was above all price. People came from all parts of the world to see it. It happened one day that an evil minded man came also to see the famous picture. Being alone in the room, he took a knife out of his pocket, and maliciously cut the picture into a thousand pieces. Great was the anger of the owner of the picture. He would rather have lost his whole fortune than lose that picture. The destruction of the famous picture was soon known over the whole world, every newspaper in Europe gave an account of it. Every one said that the destruction of the picture was a most malicious, a most unpardonable action. They said that the man must be mad. That picture was but the work of the hand of man. You, O sinner, had in your soul a picture done by the hand of God; it was a picture of God himself, the image and likeness of God was in your soul. The angels wondered to see in your soul a picture of God so perfect and so beautiful. "You were the seal of resemblance, perfect in beauty." *Ezech. xxviii.* Then came the fatal day, the day of mortal sin, and you, like a madman, by your mortal sin, broke in pieces the image and likeness of God, in your soul, and it was seen there no more, but in place of

it, the horrible image and likeness of the devil. Weep, then, O sinner, weep for your loss, "let tears run down, like a torrent, night and day." *Lam.* ii. 18.

6. LOSS OF GRACE.—*You are fallen from grace.* *Gal.* v. 4. O sinner, God once breathed into your soul the breath of life. His justifying grace made it bright as the sun, beautiful as an angel of God. "The fame of thy beauty went forth through heaven and earth." *Ezech.* xvi. Then came the mortal sin, and the devils stripped you of the garments of salvation. They robbed you of the armour of God, which made you able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect; they took away from you the breastplate of justice and the helmet of salvation; *Eph.* vi. Oh, stupid sinner, you lose your old threadbare coat, made of a bit of cloth, the work of men's hands, and you are anxious and troubled and seek it everywhere. You have lost the grace of God, the garments of salvation, so precious and beautiful that even the angels could not make them, and you cared nothing about it. Poor sinner, God has done to you what he said, *Ezech.* xvi. 17: "Behold, I will stretch out my hand and take away thy justification." Weep, then, now at least, O sinner, "Let tears run down, like a torrent, night and day." *Lam.* ii.

7. LOSS OF GOD'S LIGHT.—*He shall drive him out of light into darkness.* *Job* xviii. *Ps.* vi.: "Light is risen to the just." This light of heaven shines in the heart of the children of God, that they may see the path which is to lead them to heaven through this dark and sinful world. When you became the child of God, he called you also out of darkness into his admirable light, *1 Pet.* ii., and you rejoiced in that light. But suddenly this light was put out in your soul, it was extinguished by mortal sin. Then, in your soul, you were as a man who walks on the earth at midnight, when there are neither moon, nor stars, but only thick darkness. He loses his way, and he stumbles and he falls into ditches and pits, and he bruises himself, and he has no hope until the light returns.

In the city of Rome, under the ground, there are narrow passages many miles in length. They are long and winding, and crossing one another in every direction. These passages under ground are called the catacombs. The early Christians in times of persecution concealed themselves in these places; and even now one often meets there with little chapels, where the Christians worshipped God in secret when the persecutors would not suffer them to do it openly. People, now-a-days, often go down and visit these places; but then it is necessary that they should have a guide with them who knows the way, otherwise they would be lost amidst so many passages, turning and winding and crossing one another. The guide also carries a light before them, because these places, being under ground, are dark as midnight. One day some German students went into the catacombs with a guide and

light. They went in, but they never came out again. People were sent to seek them, but they could never be found. It is thought that by some accident their light went out—that in the darkness it was impossible to find their way out again—and so they died of hunger, or perhaps they fell into some deep pit and perished. Poor sinner, the light of God is gone out in your soul! Now you are going forward in the dark. *Lam.* iii. 6: "He hath set me in dark places." Stop, then, O sinner, stop, I beseech you, for perhaps the very next step you take you will drop into the pit of hell. A man is reading by the light of a candle; suddenly that light is put out, and he is in the dark—he starts with surprise. Oh, sinner, in the moment of mortal sin, the light of God was suddenly put out in your soul, and you did not start with surprise, you took no notice of it.

Forget not, then, that you are sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death; *Luc.* i. What death is that in whose shadow you are sitting? Is it the death which at the end of life will set your soul free from your body? No, it is not that death—it is another death—it is called the second death; *Apoc.* xx. This death is in hell, and it does not itself come out of hell; but it sends its shadow up to you, and you sit in the shadow of death, as if you sat under the shade of a tree or a house. Lift up your eyes, O sinner, and look at that shadow of death which rears itself up and hangs over you. Yes, there it is; it rises up by your side. Oh, what a dark shadow it is—what a gloomy shadow it is! see how fierce it looks—how it threatens you. Hasten, then, O sinner, rush away out of that shadow of death, and fly to God who is always ready to enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death; *Luke* i.

8. LOSS OF GOOD WORKS.—*Aggeus* ii. 18: *I struck all the works of your hand with the mildew.* There have been many unfortunate people who have lost their all, lost all they had in the world by fire, or by shipwreck, or by robbery, or by failing in business, and other ways. Kings have lost their crowns and thrones, rich men have lost their estates, soldiers have lost a battle, children have lost their parents, and parents their children. There have been some who could not bear their loss. They fell into a deep melancholy, or they lost their senses and were shut up in a mad-house; nay, even some have killed themselves. O sinner, you are the great loser; to you only the great loss came. You were rich beyond measure. During all those years that you were a child of God, He kept an account of every one of your thoughts, words, and actions done for his sake; and for each of them there was a reward ready for you in heaven, such as no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard; *2 Cor.* ii. Then came the mortal sin, and God struck out of the Book of Life all the works of your hands. You had laid up for yourself treasures in heaven, crowns, and thrones, and kingdoms. But the hour of mortal sin

came, and the thieves, and the devils, broke through and stole all your treasures.

A man works for his master; he keeps a book, and he always writes in the book how many days in the week, how many hours in the day, he works for his master. A year has passed, and he goes to his master and shows him the account of all the days and hours he has worked for him, then he asks to be paid for all his work. The master answers, "For all the works you have done for me, I pay you nothing." Thus God does to the sinner. The sinner says to God: I have kept your commandments, I have fasted and prayed, and given alms, what reward shall I have? God answers: For all the prayers, and fasts, and good works you have done, I shall give you no reward at all. Why not, asks the sinner? Because, God answers, because you have committed a mortal sin, and the promise, the covenant I made to reward you, is made void. *Zach.* xi. 11.

"Thou fool;" *Luke* xii. A man breaks in pieces his chairs and tables; he sets his house on fire, and burns it down; he throws all his money into the river. The people cry out that he has lost his senses, he is mad. They come and seize hold of him, and bind him, and carry him away to the mad-house, and shut him up in the mad-house. Why do they say that he is mad? Because he wilfully destroyed his own property. You, O sinner! did you not wilfully commit that mortal sin, and did you not know that by mortal sin you cast away heaven and all its treasures? Then you are the madman and the fool, and your end will be to be shut up in hell, the great mad-house for the fools who wilfully throw away heaven and its treasures, bought for them with the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Wisd. xv. 17: "He formed a dead thing with his wicked hands." Your past good works then are lost. But, perhaps, you will make up your loss by your future good works. No, sinner, so long as you remain in mortal sin, an enemy of God, there will be no reward in heaven for any good works you may do. The covenant of God to reward you is made void; *Zach.* xi. Your hand is withered, and can no more work the works of God. Do you know what is meant by "a man being out of work?" He may work as he pleases, but he gets no pay for it. The factory has stopped, there are no more wages. Poor, sinner, you are out of the work of God, you can get no wages in heaven. But although the good works you do in a state of mortal sin will not be rewarded in heaven, still it is good to do them, because they will, perhaps, move God to give you the peace of repentance, and then you will get back again your good works now lost. *Dan.* iv.: "Redeem thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor, and perhaps God will forgive thy offences."

9. LOSS OF VIRTUES.—*Luke xv. 53: The rich he hath sent away empty.* You were rich in all virtues while you were yet a child of God. But where are these virtues now since mortal sin—where are they? A ship, filled with riches, was sailing over the ocean; the storms came, and the waves were dashed against the ship, and the winds blew it against the rocks, and it was broken in pieces. When the storm was over, the people came down to the sea-shore to see what there was of the ship. Behold they could see only a few broken planks floating on the water, the rest was sunk to the bottom of the sea. So it was with your virtues, O sinner, when your soul was shipwrecked by mortal sin. See that child which has lately committed a mortal sin; you can tell it by its very look. *Is. ii.:* "The show of their face hath answered them." It has lost all the power and strength of virtue; it hangs down its head: it is ashamed of itself, like Adam and Eve were ashamed of themselves after their sin, and went to hide themselves behind the trees in Paradise. It no longer loves to be in chapel and at its prayers, for it feels that God has no respect for its offerings; *Gen. iv. 5.* It is no longer cheerful in obeying its parents; it has become quite selfish, for "he that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?" *Eccus. xvi.*

10. THE LOSS OF ALL.—*The whole world shall fight with him against the sinner. Wisd. v.* O sinner! in those happy days before mortal sin, when God was with you, temptations and tribulations came upon you, but what harm could they do you? If God be for us, who is against us? *Rom. viii.* Yea, rather, by the most sweet providence of God all these things worked together for your good; *Rom. viii.* Poor sinner! look round the wide world, and you will see that you have not one friend. The sun sees you, and it hates to shine upon you, as it became dark, and would not shine on those who, like you, crucified Jesus Christ; *Mark xv.* I will make the lights of heaven to mourn over thee; *Ezech. xxxii.* Harken! the winds sigh over you because you have become the enemy of Him, who breathed into your soul the breath of life. See the beasts of the earth and the birds of the air fly from you, because you are God's enemy; the earth hates to bear your footsteps, even as it trembled and shook under the feet of those who nailed Jesus to the cross; *Matt. xxvii.*

11. THE SORROWFUL ENDING.—*Luke xv.:* *He went abroad into a far country; and there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.* O sinners in mortal sin, listen to a sorrowful story. There was a certain wicked child, a little girl of about eight or nine years of age. She was very wicked; cursing and stealing, and going into all kinds of bad company. Often had her father spoken to her and told her not to offend God by her sins. She listened not to her father. One day he spoke thus

to her: My little child, he said, you are leading a very wicked life, and you not only do harm to yourself, but you give very bad example to your brothers and sisters. I give you two weeks, and if at the end of the two weeks you are not better, I must send you away out of the house, lest your brothers and sisters should learn to follow your bad example. The two weeks were passed; the child was no better, but worse. One morning her father led her to the street door, and opening it, he said: My child, I told you that unless you became better I should be obliged to send you away; and now you are no better, so you may go away out of this house till you are willing to be good. The child answered not a word to its father, but proudly and sullenly it walked away. It wandered about the streets all the day, and got nothing to eat. In the evening when it began to be dark, the child was faint with hunger, and weary and tired with walking about. It knew not where to go and lay its head down and sleep. At last it found a heap of stones at the corner of some street, and it laid its sorrowful head there and slept. Next morning the child rose up from its stones and began to wander again about the streets. Great was its hunger; and it said to itself, Perhaps when the people see me look so pale and hungry, they will have pity on me, and give me something to eat. As it went along it sometimes looked up into the faces of those who passed it, thinking they would be moved with pity, but nobody took the least notice of the child. The second evening was come, and the poor child had eaten nothing all the day. It was too proud to go back home, and say, Father I am very sorry that I have been so bad; but if you will let me come and be with my brothers and sisters again, I will try to be good. Weak with hunger, the poor child was ready to fall down; and with difficulty it crept back again to its stones to sleep. During the night the wind blew hard and the rain fell in torrents, and every rag that the child had on was soaked with rain. It was midnight, and the child felt a burning fever. The dark hours passed slowly over its burning head. Next morning, when the light dawned the child was not able to stand on its feet; and before the sun rose, the poor creature had breathed out its last breath, and lay dead on the stones. Some one passing by that way saw the dead body of a child lying on the stones, and soon a crowd of people gathered round it. Having found out where the father lived, they carried the dead body of the child to his home. When the father saw the dead body of his poor little child carried into his house, oh, the grief, the sorrow of the father! his heart was broken when he saw his poor little child dead before his eyes. He never thought that such a thing would have happened; he thought when the child felt hungry it would have come back again to its home. The brothers and sisters came down stairs, and when they saw their poor little sister dead, they shriek! Then they came near, and leaned over

their dead sister—their poor lost sister—and bitter tears fell down from their eyes, on the pale face of their dead sister. Then they said: Oh, poor sister! poor little sister, you are dead and we shall never see you again. When the people of the town heard what had happened, they came and stood round the windows and doors of the house, and they cried out against the father for the death of the child.

Little child in mortal sin, you who are reading this book, know that the very same thing which happened to that child has happened also to you. When you committed that mortal sin, you left a kind good Father: your Father who is in heaven, Almighty God, the Father who created you. Oh, the grief, the sorrow of Jesus when he saw that your soul was dead; that soul which he loved so much, and for which he had died on the cross. The spirits of heaven who stood round him, saw that his sorrow in losing you was so great, that they thought his heart was breaking. What wonder that Jesus, who stood by the grave of Lazarus and cried for the death of his body, should be broken-hearted for the death of your soul? The angels in heaven cried bitter tears for a sister spirit that was dead. *Is. xxxiii. 7*: "Behold the angels of peace shall weep bitterly." But what happened in hell when your soul died by mortal sin? All hell was stirred up! shouts of blasphemy went up from hell to heaven on account of your mortal sin.

Poor soul! how art thou fallen, thou who didst arise from the waters of Baptism bright as an angel of God! Thou who wast the Throne of the Most High, now thou art trampled under foot by the devils! "God will send wrath and trouble to you by his evil angels." *Ps. lxxvii. "He will lift up a sign to them, and, behold, they will come with speed swiftly."* *Is. v.*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEVILS.

1. "THE Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit troubled him." *1 Kings xvi.* You have an old shoe, good for nothing at all; the sides of it are bursting—the sole has fallen off. You do not want it any more. You throw it away. Then if anybody passes by that way and sees the old shoe, and picks it up, and wishes to have it, he has a right to have it, for it belongs to nobody, the owner threw it away. When the soul commits a mortal sin God hates it, and casts it away. *Ps. lxxxviii. 9*: "Thou hast rejected it." *Lam. iii.*: "Thou hast made him as an outcast." Then the devil, when he sees that

God is casting away a soul, goes quickly to it and seizes it as a hungry dog would seize a bone. So, "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit troubled him." *1 Kings* xvi. So, when Judas received the body and blood of Christ unworthily, then "Satan entered into him." *John* xiii.—It is not one devil only which comes into the soul, but many: "for their name was legion." *Luke* viii. Yes, O sinner, your soul "has fallen and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every unclean spirit." *Apoc.* xiii. "Demons and monsters shall meet there, and hairy ones shall cry out to one another." *Is.* xxxiv. Did you ever see a swarm of bees cluster round the branch of a tree? so the devils cluster round your soul, O sinner! *Ps.* cxviii. 12: "They surrounded me like bees." They are in you as a brood of vipers; *Matt.* viii. When a dead body has been buried in the grave, the flesh is eaten up by worms; so a soul buried in the grave of mortal sin is devoured by the devils *Job* xxx. 17: "They that feed upon thee do not sleep." You would see all this clearly, if God showed you the sight which he showed to the prophet Ezechiel. "Son of man," said God to the prophet Ezechiel, "go in and see the wicked abominations. And I went in, and saw, and behold every form of creeping things and of living creatures, the abominations." *Ezech.* viii. Would you be content to be thrown into a den full of lions, and tigers, and serpents, and adders, and asps, and scorpions, and toads, and spiders, and all kinds of venomous, stinging reptiles? Your soul itself, O sinner, is the den and the hole of the reptiles of hell. For your throat is an open sepulchre to them; *Rom.* iii. There in your soul is that devil who goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour; *Pet.* v. It is that same lion of which David said, "Save me, O Lord, lest he seize upon my soul like a lion, while there is none to save me." *Ps.* vii. You, O sinner, did not cry out to God to save you from mortal sin. Therefore, that lion has seized upon you, and devours you; *Apoc.* xii. The great, frightful dragon is in your soul, crushing it like a millstone crushes that which it falls upon. *Lam.* iii.: "To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the land." That devil, exceeding fierce, is in your soul, who made you break in pieces the bonds and fetters of the law of God, and cast his yoke from you; *Ps.* ii. Those unclean spirits are in your soul, who, with great violence, carried two thousand swine headlong into the sea; *Mark* v. Poor soul, how swiftly they carry you. And whither do they carry you? To hell. There is in your soul that devil, who, while yet you walked in the ways of the Lord, seized you and threw you down into mortal sin; *Mark* ix. But see, what is that terrible form which winds and coils itself round and round your soul like ivy winds itself round a tree? O that terrible twisted creature! it is the form of a serpent. But what a serpent! We have heard of huge boa-constrictor serpents, which, from the trees of the forest,

throw themselves upon wild beasts, upon elephants, and twisting themselves round and round those beasts, crush them to death. We have heard of rattle-snakes stinging people to death. But that serpent twisted round you, O sinner, is no boa-constrictor, no rattle-snake, it is not a serpent of the earth, but a serpent of hell! Oh, that terrible fierce serpent twined round your soul, how dark and slimy! how its twisted and poisonous folds rise and fall like the waves of the sea! Poor sinner, that serpent has gone round and round your whole soul, and round every faculty of it—will, memory, and understanding. You exist only within the folds of that serpent. But see, the serpent has raised up its great, fierce, cruel head, and from its dark mouth it shoots out its forked and fiery tongue, hissing at you, biting at you. *Jer.* viii. 17: "Behold I will send among you serpents, basilisks, against which there is no charm, they shall bite you, saith the Lord." See how he breathes into you his poisoned, fiery breath. *Job.* xli. 12: "Flame cometh out of his mouth."

But see that sting, that sharp, subtle, penetrating, infernal, diabolic sting. That sting is called "the sting of death." *1 Cor.* xv. It is not as the sting of the wasp, or the sting of a scorpion, for these stings can sting only the flesh; but that diabolic sting stings the soul. But, thanks be to God, this infernal sting cannot pierce those who have the sign of God; *Apoc.* ix. But from you, O sinner, the sign of the living God was taken away at the moment of mortal sin, and now that stinging serpent-demon ceases not to thrust his infernal sting into your soul. This serpent is that same subtle serpent which went into Paradise to tempt Eve. But there is another devil in your soul, whose feet are swift to shed blood; *Rom.* iii. He is the murderer of your soul, hacking and cutting it in pieces. It is that devil who was a murderer from the beginning; *John* viii. See how "in his wrath he strikes your soul with an incurable wound, and persecutes it in a cruel manner." *Is.* xiv. But listen! what is that sound—that word, that diabolic word spoken in your soul, O sinner? Surely that voice has been heard on the earth before. It sounds like the voice of him who once said, "No, you shall not die the death." Yes, it is the voice of that devil who is a liar and the father of lies; *John* viii. What does he say? He deals deceitfully with his tongue; *Ps.* v. He devours your soul, he crushes it in pieces, he stings it, he poisons it. Yet he says to you, "No, this cannot be true, because you feel nothing—you feel no teeth, no stings, no poison." But one thing, O sinner, you forget. You forget that the soul which is in you is a dead soul! Now, tell me, the dead body which is lying in the grave, does it feel the worms which are eating it? The sheep, which has been slain, does it feel the sharp knife of the butcher which cuts it in pieces. The beast which lies dead on the field, does it feel the beaks of the wild birds which tear its flesh away from its bones? Yes, it is quite true that you do not feel these

things, and that word "you do not feel" should break your heart, because it reminds you that your soul lives no more, that it is a dead thing cast away.

2. Oh, sinner, there is nobody on the earth who accuses you. There is nobody who cries out that you have committed a mortal sin. It seems as if heaven and earth were silent and your sin forgotten. But there is one who accuses you night and day before God. *Apoc.* xii. Your accuser is the devil. Would you know how the devil accuses you? There was a certain person who committed a mortal sin. God let one of his saints see what the devil did at that moment. The earth opened by the side of the sinner, and a black devil rose up out of hell. He was one of those devils "who are kept under darkness in everlasting chains unto the judgment of the great day." *Jude* i. 6. This devil held in his hand, a fiery chain, which he put round and round the dead soul of the sinner, till the whole soul, and every faculty of it, was fast bound with this fiery chain. "They shall keep fast hold of their prey." *Is.* v. Therefore this devil kept hold of the fiery chain, and followed the sinner whithersoever he went, although the sinner himself saw nothing and knew it not. He was one of those demons of whom it is said, "He goeth about." 1 *Pet.* v. If the man walked along the road, this noonday devil, *Ps.* xc., followed him, holding him by the chain. In his workshop the devil held him by the chain; at his meals the devil was by his side, holding him by the chain; even in the chapel the devil, who can transform himself into an angel of light, 2 *Cor.* xi., held the man by the infernal chain. 2 *Pet.* ii., 4. In the night time the devil, "who walketh about in the dark," *Ps.* xc., stood at his bedside, holding him fettered with the bonds of darkness. *Wisd.* xvii. It seemed as if from time to time the devil lifted up his face to heaven and said some prayer to God. What could it be? how could the devil pray? *Job* i. That Satan, who on a certain day when the sons of God came to stand before the Lord, was also present among them to pray for evil on Job, prayed thus. "O God!" the devil said, "you sentence to the eternal flames of hell those who commit a mortal sin, and thou art a just God, and thy judgments are true and just. O God, that sinner whom thou hast commanded me to bind with the chains of hell has committed a mortal sin, he has not repented, and now he sleeps with that mortal sin in his soul. May this sleep be his last sleep! O God, let thy sentence against this sinner now be executed. Bid me to strike him and kill him, now while he sleeps, and carry his soul down to hell." Poor sinner, the devil is also at this moment at your side, holding you fast bound with his fiery chain, and praying to God night and day that he may carry you to hell. Thus does the devil bind in the chains of hell those who commit a mortal sin, in that bond with which all sinners are tied, *Is.* xxv.; even as that woman

whom Satan had bound for eighteen years, so that she was bent double and could not look upwards. *Luke* xiii.

Thus, poor sinner, the Lord hath done that which he proposed; he hath fulfilled the word which he commanded in the days of old. *Gen.* ii. "He hath destroyed and hath not spared, he hath caused the enemy to rejoice over thee." *Lam.* ii. 7.

CHAPTER IX.

MORTAL SIN WRITTEN IN CHARACTERS OF FIRE.

WHEN you committed that mortal sin, hell below was stirred up, and was in an uproar. *Is.* xiv. The black Book of Death, with the names of the damned written on its pages, was opened; the crash of that terrible book when it was opened was as the sound of thunder. The wicked spirits in hell knew well the meaning of that sound. They knew that some poor creature on the earth had been committing a mortal sin, and that the name of that sinner was about to be written in the Book of Death. Then might be seen millions on millions of wicked spirits with spiteful joy gathered round the terrible book to see whose name it was. Then came the writing in letters of fire; your name, the sin you had committed, the day, the hour, the moment of it, the place, the manner. After this came the terrible sentence, that you were from that moment a "child of hell." There was the sentence; and now, O sinner, you only wait the execution of that sentence.

Poor sinner, there is still One who has pity on you, and is sorrowful for you, and he wishes to speak to you. Listen to him.

CHAPTER X.

THE VOICE OF GOD TO THE SINNER.

Poor sinner! God says to you: I loved you with an everlasting love. *Jer.* xxxi. I created you, and breathed into your soul the breath of life, and made you to be my child, beautiful as an angel of heaven. Then I could not bear to be absent from you, so I came myself to dwell in your soul, that I might always be with you, and love you, and take care of you. But, behold, there

came to me a sorrowful moment; you cast me away from you, you would not have me for your Father any more. Poor sinner! why did you leave me? what was it for? what harm did I ever do to you? I created in your soul a light which should never fail, but you loved to have darkness rather than the light. *John* iii. I gave you life everlasting that you might live forever, *John* vi., but you chose to have death rather than life. I gave you peace and joy of heart, *Gal.* v., and you have chosen rather to have the thorn of anguish fastened in your heart. *Ps.* xxxi. I gave you the bread of life, and you have brought to me the poison of death—mortal sin. I so loved you that I gave you my beloved Son, Jesus, and with him I gave you all things, and behold you have treated my sweet Son, Jesus, disgracefully, crucifying him again, trampling under foot his most precious blood, and choosing rather to have the devil for your master. *Heb.* vi.

O soul! created to my image and likeness, and redeemed by the blood of my Son, Jesus, and sanctified by my Holy Spirit, in what did I offend you that you should do thus to me? Poor soul, remembering the days of old when you were my child, and grieving to see that you are on the road to hell, I come to you now to ask you to return to me; it is not too late—still there is time, but if you delay longer, perhaps it will be too late. Come back, then, to me, and be my child as you were before, for, as I live, I will not the death of a sinner, but that he be converted and live. *Ezech.* xxxiii.

CHAPTER XI

MORTAL SIN WRITTEN IN CHARACTERS OF BLOOD.

"BALAAM of Bosor had a check of his madness, the dumb beast used to the yoke." *2 Pet.* ii. St. Ambrose tells a story about a little dog. This dog was a beautiful creature. It loved its master; it would lick his hand and eat out of it, and follow him wherever he went. It was a faithful dog. In the night time if robbers came to the door, the dog would bark at them; when the robbers heard the dog barking they would say, We had better go away, for the dog is barking, and we shall be found out. One day the master of the dog went out of the house. When he came back his face was covered—he had a mask on. He opened the door and walked in. The dog did not know him again because his face was covered. So it barked at him, jumped on him, and bit slightly the end of his finger, which began to bleed. Then the master uncovered his face, and the dog, looking up, saw that it had been biting its own master.

Great was the sorrow of the little dog when it found that it had been biting its own master. It lay down on the floor with its head on the ground, and began to moan most sorrowfully. Then the master came to it, and, patting it on the head, said, Never mind, my poor little dog, you did not mean to bite me, look up at me. But the poor dog did not look up, and it never looked up in its master's face again. The master did every thing he could to take away the distress of the poor dog; he brought it bones to eat and water to drink; but no—the poor dog would no more eat or drink. After a while the dog rose up and went down the steps which led to the cellar. When it came into the cellar it threw itself down into a deep hole. For three days and three nights the dog stopped in this hole, neither eating nor drinking, but moaning most pitifully. Towards the end of the three days its moans became fainter and fainter, and at last its sorrowful moans were heard no more; the poor creature was dead. And this dog died of a broken heart—broken with sorrow, because it had accidentally, without meaning it, done a little injury to its master.

O sinner, learn a lesson from that dumb creature. Look up at the cross. On the cross there hangs Jesus Christ your Master. Come near then, O sinner, come near to the cross, and look up at the face of Jesus Christ your Master. Can you look up at his face and say that you never did him any injury? What! you never did any injury to Jesus Christ! See those sharp thorns which pierce his dying head! See those sharp nails which fasten his wounded hands and feet to the cross! See that blood which runs down, not drop by drop, but in streams from the cross! See, Jesus bows down his head, and he breathes out his last breath—he is dead! Who was it that did all these injuries to Jesus Christ? O sinner, it is you who did all these cruel injuries to Jesus. Your mortal sin bruised his poor body and made him bleed. Your mortal sin was the hammer which nailed him to the cross. "Crucifying again to yourself the Son of God." *Heb. vi.* Your mortal sin was the great heavy weight which weighed on the dying heart of Jesus, and broke it, and made him die of sorrow. Yes, he was wounded for your iniquities, and bruised for your sins; *Is. liii.* O sinner, look up again at the face of the dying Jesus! Perhaps you are afraid to look at him. You think that Jesus is angry at you for the injuries you have done to him. O sinner, you know not the sweet Jesus. No; he cannot look angry. See, poor sinner, he wants you to look at him, he wants you to see that his last look before he dies is a look of mercy, of compassion, of love for your poor soul. Harken, poor sinner, Jesus speaks to you.

CHAPTER XII.

THE VOICE OF JESUS ON THE CROSS TO THE SINNER.

"POOR sinner," Jesus says, "you went away from me by mortal sin, and now I want you to come back to me and be again my child. When on the cross I cried out that word, 'I thirst,' John xix., I was thirsting for the moment to come, when you would return to me. O sinner, why will you not come to me again? why may I not love you again? See, my arms are stretched out to receive you—my head is bowed down to give you the kiss of peace and forgiveness. The blood runs down from my body to wash away your sins. My heart is breaking with sorrow because you have left me. Come then to me, my dear sinner, I will make your repentance very easy—I will suffer for you the punishment due to your sins. Come, then, poor sinner, come and dwell under the shadow of my cross, and be again as you were before, my child and my brother. I will love you again, and you will give glory to my Father in heaven, and joy to his holy angels."

O Jesus, you have spoken sweet and gracious words of love and forgiveness; listen then to the poor sinner, for he is kneeling at the foot of the cross, and he wants to speak to you.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VOICE OF THE SINNER TO JESUS.

O JESUS, my God, my Creator, what you say is most true. I remember how you were nailed to the hard cross—how your poor head was torn with the sharp thorns—how the holy blood came from your blessed body. Sweet Jesus, your blessed heart has spoken to me, and told me that you died a bitter death on the cross, for the love of me, your poor child, to wash away my sins with your precious blood, and to save me from hell. Yes, it was my sins which nailed you to the cross and made you die. Oh, wicked sins, I hate and detest you. My good Jesus, I love you, and I am very sorry for offending you, and I promise you that I will never offend you any more—no, never again. May I live for you and for you only, my sweet Saviour Jesus, and if you foresee that on any day of my future life I shall again offend you by mortal sin, may I not live to see that sorrowful day; in your sweet mercy take me out of this world before that day comes. Jesus, have pity on my poor

soul! You did not turn away your face from those who struck it and spit upon it, will you turn away your face from a soul which wants to love you? O Jesus, think how much it cost you to save my soul. You bought it with your own blood—you died for it; and now, my Jesus, I do not ask you to die again for me; I only ask you to say to me the one word—pardon, forgiveness. Do not refuse to save a soul which you died to save.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE FUTURE.

I. How to keep out of mortal sin.

1. *Keep away from what is likely to lead you into mortal sin.* Keep away from bad company; keep away from those companions who have already led you into sin; keep away from those places where you know there is danger of mortal sin; keep away from those bad books which have done you so much harm. If you ask me why must you keep away from these dangers, my answer is the word of God: "He that loveth the danger, shall perish in it." *Eccus. iii.*

2. *In time of temptation pray.* Jesus Christ says: "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." *Matt. xxvi. 41.* The reason why people commonly fall into mortal sin is, because when temptation comes, they neglect to pray, and then God does not help them, and so they fall. Therefore, when temptation shall come, whether it be some wicked thought in your heart from the devil, or evil words, or bad example, always be ready to say the beautiful prayer of St. Alphonsus: "Jesus and Mary, help me." Every day pray that God would never let you commit a mortal sin, saying that petition of the Our Father: "Lead us not into temptation." You may also pray thus: "My God, with your help I resolve never to commit a mortal sin; may I die rather than commit a mortal sin."

3. If you wish to keep out of mortal sin, go often to the Sacraments, at least once a month. St. Alphonsus says, that the best way to keep out of mortal sin is to go to confession and the Holy Communion once every week. *John vi.:* "He that eateth this bread shall live forever."

4. Carefully avoid wilful venial sins, and then be sure that you will avoid mortal sins. *Eccus. xix.:* "He that despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little."

5. Therefore, remember three things. 1. Keep away from the temptation. 2. In time of temptation say: "Jesus and Mary, help me." 3. Go often to the Sacraments.

II. *What you must do if you have the misfortune to fall into mortal sin.*

Jer. viii.: "Shall not he that falleth rise again?" If you catch a fever, you get rid of it as soon as you can. If you break your arm, you get it mended as soon as you are able. Do at least as much for your soul as for your body. If you commit a mortal sin, and you die with that mortal sin in your soul, you go to hell for all eternity! Therefore, do not keep that horrible monster, mortal sin, in your soul for one moment. But you say, "What must I do? which is the way? how am I to get this sin forgiven?" Listen, and you shall hear what you must do: *Make an act of contrition directly, and go to confession as soon as you can.* Remember these two things.

1. *After mortal sin make an act of contrition directly.* Do not delay for a day, an hour, a minute, a moment. Say any act of contrition; for example, the act of contrition of blessed Leonard: "O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against thee, because thou art so good, and I will not sin again." But you say, What is the use of making an act of contrition directly after a mortal sin? I know I can get my sin forgiven by going to confession, but what is the use of making an act of contrition until the time comes when I can go to confession. I will tell you the use of it. It may be some days, it may be a week, before you can get to confession. Do you think God wishes you to remain in mortal sin for a week, or until the time comes when you can go to confession? Certainly he does not. But can you get your sins forgiven before you go to confession? Certainly, you can. But how? Through the great mercy of God, at any moment of the day or night, whenever you will, if you make a sincere act of true contrition, with the intention of confessing it, at that moment God forgives the sin, and you become the child of God again. How good God is, that a sinner should not be obliged to remain in mortal sin, and a state of damnation, one moment longer than he wishes it himself! St. Thomas says: "However little the sorrow may be, if it is only true contrition, it takes away the sin." Q. 1, 3, 4. But you ask, what does St. Thomas mean when he says, "that this sorrow must be true contrition?" He means just this, that you must be sorry for offending God *because he is so good*, and resolve not to offend him again. St. Alphonsus says just the same; *De Pœnit.* iv.

In the Lives of the Fathers of the Desert, we read of a holy man called St. Paul the Simple. He stood one Sunday at the church door while the people were going in to hear Mass. God let him see the state of their souls. On the

faces of many he saw a beautiful light, by which he knew that the grace of God was in their souls. Their angel guardians went along with them, showing great joy and contentment. But amongst them he saw one over whose head there was a dark cloud. His soul was black. The devil held him by a chain. His angel guardian followed at a distance, looking very sorrowful, with his eye cast down on the ground. This man was in mortal sin. When the people came out again, St. Paul watched for the unfortunate man who was in mortal sin. At length he saw him; and, behold, the dark cloud which was over him had passed away—the chain no longer bound him, and his soul was shining with brightness. The devil stood at a great distance from him; his angel guardian was at his side rejoicing. St. Paul then went up to the man and asked him what had happened to him while he was at Mass. The man answered: When I went into the church, I was in mortal sin. While I was in the church I happened to hear some words of the prophet Isaías, in which God promises to pardon those who repent sincerely. Then I began to pray. I said: O my God, you came into the world to save sinners; save me, for I am a great sinner, and most unworthy of your pardon. I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, because you are so good. I promise you, with a sincere heart, that, from this moment, I will not sin any more. I will serve you for the time to come with a sincere conscience. Pardon a sinner who begs of you to forgive his sins. When St. Paul heard this, he cried out: Oh, the unspeakable goodness of God; how great is his compassion and love for poor sinners? Learn, then, O sinner, that the good and merciful God is ever ready to forgive your sin, at any moment and in any place, if you only make a good and sincere act of contrition. Learn, also the blessing of going to Mass on Sundays. How can a sinner pray with a sincere heart before the Divine blood on the altar, which washes away the sins of the world, and not have his sins forgiven?

2. Besides making an act of contrition directly after mortal sin, you should also go to confession, and *confess the sin as soon as you can*. First, because you are obliged to confess every mortal sin. Jesus Christ has instituted the sacrament of Penance, to forgive all mortal sins to those who are contrite of heart, and confess them sincerely. *John xx.*: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them." Secondly, although you may hope that the mortal sin has been forgiven, if you made a sincere act of contrition, still you feel more secure about the forgiveness of it, after you have received absolution in the sacrament of Penance.

There is one great evil, and only one.
The one great evil is—mortal sin.
From mortal sin, sweet Jesus, deliver us.

HYMNS FOR CHILDREN.

NOTICE.—The following verses include—I. The Four Great Truths, which we must know, or we cannot go to heaven.—II. The Seven Sacraments. S. Alphonsus, *Homo Ap.*, Tract iv., No. 3, says: "That there are three Sacraments which all must know, and that the knowledge of the other four Sacraments is necessary only for those who receive them." The three Sacraments which all must know, have a cross before them.

Method of Singing.—Sing the first two verses each to the first part of the air of *St. Casimir's Hymn*, or *Daily, daily sing to Mary*; then sing them over again to the second part of the same air once repeated. So with all the other verses. The last of the four Truths will be joined with Baptism; a method is also given for singing the Prayers, Commandments, &c.

I.—THE FOUR GREAT TRUTHS.

There is one God in three Persons, | Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
God the Son, Jesus Christ, | was made man, and died for us.
The good go to Heaven, | and the wicked burn in Hell.

II.—THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

† Baptism is a Sacrament | which takes from us the sin of Adam.
 Confirmation is a Sacrament | which makes us strong and perfect Christians.

† The Blessed Sacrament is the Body | and the Blood of Jesus Christ.

† And Penance is a Sacrament | which takes away from us our own sins.

Extreme Unction is a Sacrament | which gives to us the grace to die well.

Holy Orders is a Sacrament | which gives the grace of holy priesthood.

Matrimony is a Sacrament | which gives Grace to those who marry.



I believe this, and all that the holy Church teaches.

And in this blessed faith, with God's help, I will live and die.

NOTICE.—The following Prayers are sung in one uniform high tone with a fall. It is a great improvement when they can be sung in parts. The dash between the words indicates a pause.

The syllable on which the fall is, is underlined.

—————

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

In the name—of the Father,—and of the Son,—and of the Holy Ghost.—
Amen.

—————

THE OUR FATHER.

Our Father—who art in Heaven—hallowed—be Thy name—Thy kingdom come—Thy will be done—on earth as it is—in Heaven—Give us this day—our daily bread—and forgive us—our trespasses—as we forgive them—that trespass against us—and lead us not—into temptation—but deliver us—from evil—Amen.

THE HAIL MARY.

Hail Mary—full of grace—the Lord is with thee—blessed art thou—amongst women—and blessed is the fruit—of thy womb, Jesus—Holy Mary—Mother of God—pray for us sinners—now—and at the hour of our death.—Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe—in God, the Father Almighty—Creator of Heaven and earth—and in Jesus Christ—his only Son—our Lord—who was conceived—by the Holy Ghost—born of the Virgin Mary—suffered under Pontius Pilate—was crucified—dead, and buried—He descended into hell—the third day—He rose again—from the dead—he ascended into Heaven—sitteth at the right hand—of God, the Father Almighty—from thence he shall come—to judge—the living and the dead—I believe—in the Holy Ghost—the holy Catholic Church—the communion of Saints—the forgiveness of sins—the resurrection of the body—and life everlasting.—Amen.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

The First Commandment—I am the Lord thy God—thou shalt have—no other God—but me.

The Second Commandment—Thou shalt not take—the name of the Lord thy God—in vain.

The Third Commandment—Remember—thou keep holy—the Sabbath day.

The Fourth Commandment—Honour thy father—and thy mother.

The Fifth Commandment—Thou shalt not kill.

The Sixth Commandment—Thou shalt not—commit adultery.

The Seventh Commandment—Thou shalt not steal.

The Eighth Commandment—Thou shalt not bear—false witness—against thy neighbour.

The Ninth Commandment—Thou shalt not covet—thy neighbour's wife.

The Tenth Commandment—Thou shalt not covet—thy neighbour's goods.

—————

THE ACT OF CONTRITION OF BLESSED LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE.

O my God, I am very sorry | that I have sinned against thee,
Because thou art so good, | and I will not sin again.

Air of the Miserere Chant.

—————

THE GOOD INTENTION.

*This is sung once over to the first part of the air of St. Casimir's Hymn,
and then twice to the second part of the air once repeated.*

My Jesus, I do all | for the love, the love of you.

I. STUMBLING-BLOCKS;

OR,

THE OCCASIONS OF SIN.

I. THE CHILD THAT FELL DOWN.

A CHILD walking along the road happened to stumble and fall down. Somebody afterwards said to the child, "What was the *occasion* of your falling down?" "I think," answered the child, "that a stone which tripped me up was the occasion of my falling." Therefore when we talk about the occasion of sin, we mean—that which makes us fall into the sin, like the stone made the child fall down on the ground.

There is some bad book which makes you to commit sin; that book is the *occasion of sin* to you. A man goes into a public-house or whiskey-shop, and gets drunk there: this public-house is the occasion of sin to that man. You go into a certain person's company, and on this account you fall into sin: then the company of that person is the occasion of sin to you. Do you know, my dear child, how dangerous it is to put yourself willfully into the occasion of sin, that is, to go near it?

II. Eve near the Tree.

GOD gave Adam and Eve leave to eat the fruit of all the trees in Paradise, except the fruit of one tree. That tree was the Tree of Knowledge. He told them that they should die if they ate of it. Eve happened to be standing *near* that tree. She lifted up her eyes and *looked at it*, and then she put out her hand and took the fruit, and ate it, and disobeyed God. Very likely if Eve had not been near that tree and had not seen it, she would not have eaten it. When the devil tempted Jesus Christ, he did not show him the kingdoms of the world in a picture or on a map, or read their names from a geography: he took Him to the top of a high mountain, and let Him *see* these kingdoms

with his eyes. So when the devil tempts a little child to steal the sugar, he tries to bring the child in sight of the cupboard or press where the sugar is kept. When we are near what is bad, and in sight of it, we always feel more tempted than when we are away from it.

Remember, then, that if *you wilfully and without necessity go where there is great danger of your falling into mortal sin, then—you are sure to fall into sin*. God himself says so. *Eccus. iii.* "He that loveth the danger shall perish in it." St. Bernard says, "To expose yourself to the danger of sinning, and not to sin, is a greater miracle than raising the dead to life." Besides, the experience of every day shows that boys and girls who do go into the danger of sin—do commit sin. *Prov. vi.* "Can a man walk on hot coals and his feet not be burnt?" Therefore, go not in the way of ruin.—*Eccus. xxxii.*

THE THREE EXCUSES OF THOSE WHO GO INTO THE OCCASION OF SIN.

III. The First Excuse.

A BOY or girl says, Oh, do not fear. If I go again into the company of the person who led me into sin before, I will not commit the sin again. He is not so bad now, he will not tempt me any more. The temptation is no more, it is dead. You say the temptation is dead! What sort of a death did the temptation die? Let us see.

How the Bears Die.

IT is said that in Africa the bears hunt the monkeys, and when they catch them they kill them and eat them. So when the monkey sees the bear coming he runs away from him. The monkey has more sense than many Christians, who, instead of running away from danger of sin, run into it. Where then do you think the monkey runs to, because the bear can run as quick as he can? He runs to a tree, and climbs up to the top of it, because he knows that the great bear cannot follow him up to the top of the tree. When the bear comes to the foot of the tree, he looks up, and sees that the monkey is out of his reach. What then does he do? He lies down close to the tree, and pretends to be dead. Then the monkey looks down from the tree, and is glad to see his enemy the bear lying on the ground and looking quite dead. The monkey knows that a dead bear cannot bite, so down he comes from the tree. When he has come down from the tree, he goes up to the dead bear and he looks at him. At that moment up jumps the dead bear, quite alive, catches the monkey in his paws, and kills him. No doubt your temptation is as dead as

the dead bear; that is, it is dead till you go back to it, till you come again into that bad company, and then be sure the temptation will jump up again as much alive as ever. Your eyes and your ears and senses will be so taken with the temptation, that your good resolutions will go away, and you will throw yourself blindly into sin.

IV. The Second Excuse.

YOU say that, although the temptation may be strong, you have force, you have strength against it, you are not weak as you were before; you are now good. You have been to Confession, you have received the Holy Communion, you have made a firm resolution not to consent to the sin again. So now you can trust yourself with that person who made you commit sin before. No doubt you are leading a very holy life, but did you never hear about David? He also led a most holy life, but he was cast into mortal sin by one look of his eye. Perhaps you are not more holy than St. Jerome. Now, let us see what he did. St. Jerome was a most holy man, a Doctor of the Church. He left the world, and went into the deserts of Palestine, where there was no human creature living, but only the wild beasts. He spent his days in fasting, prayer, and penance. Vigilantius, his friend, wrote a letter to him, to ask him why he had left the world, why he did not live in a town like other persons. St. Jerome answered this letter and said, "I will tell you the reason why I have left the world. It is because I fear, I am afraid, I am frightened. I fear the dangerous occasions of sin; I fear the temptations; I dare not trust myself; I fear lest my eye should be caught by some evil look—by the eye of a woman." Did you never hear of a certain holy man who had his tongue plucked out during the time of persecution? By a miracle God gave back to him his speech. But this man having incautiously admitted into his house a young person who sought advice, fell into sin, and lost his speech again. Say not, then, that you have received the graces of the Sacraments, and that, therefore, you may now go into the occasion of sin without harm. Take notice, *the grace of the Sacraments is given to keep you away from the occasions of sin, and not to save you, if you wilfully go into these occasions.*

V. The Third Excuse.

YOU say that if you go into the dangerous occasions of sin, God will help you, and keep you from sin. God says just the contrary. He says, *Eccus. iii.* "He that loveth the danger shall perish in it." Will God help you to do what he does not want you to do?

St. Paul Shipwrecked.

ST. PAUL was shipwrecked in the sea, but God saved him from being drowned. But how did God save him? Did he send him wings and make him fly out of the water? No. Why not? Because St. Paul did not need wings; he was able to walk out of the water on his feet: so God did not send wings to St. Paul to save him.

Now if you wilfully go into bad company, will God send you help to save you from sin? No. Why not? Because you are able to save yourself by keeping away from the bad company. So if you wilfully go into bad company, you are sure to fall into sin; for God does not help those who wilfully go into bad company. God says, "He that loveth the danger shall perish in it."—*Eccus*. iii. Therefore it is nonsense to say—"I will go into bad company, but will not commit sin." Tell me, if you want a dog not to bite you, what do you do? Do you keep away from him, or do you go up to his mouth? Then—*keep away from temptation*. It is bad to commit sin yourself, but it is worse to lead others into sin.

VI. Leading Others into Sin.

IT may happen that these lines may meet the eye of some boy, some young man, who has ruined the soul of another. Young man, I speak to you only. How could you dare to ruin a soul for which Christ died? What is your name?—your name is *Thief*. You robber—you thief. You robbed Jesus Christ of a soul which he had bought with his own precious blood. Go back, young man in your thoughts to the days when Jesus Christ was alive on this earth. Look at Him walking along the roads of Palestine. He is covered with dust, as one who is making a long and wearisome journey. His face is pale, and bathed with sweat. He is hungry and thirsty. Whither is he going? What is he seeking? He seeks a soul which he had created. He has found that soul, and made it his own child. He has watched over it day and night, as a mother watches over her baby in the cradle. But you, young man, have robbed Christ of that soul, and ruined it. He hangs on the Cross on Calvary. Listen to his sorrowful sighs. The last drop of His blood has run down on the rocks; his last sigh in this world is breathed. Young man, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is dead on the Cross. He has died to save that soul which you have lived to ruin. Wo to you, young man. Look up at the cross—look up at the face of Jesus. He sees you, and—He is silent; He speaks not. But He will not be silent forever. There will come a day—the day of your death; and on that

day He will speak to you in His anger; He will let you know what sort of a thing it is to ruin a soul for which He died. Poor young man, who shall speak for you at the tribunal of Jesus Christ on the terrible day of your judgment. Shall it be the Angel Guardian of the soul which you have ruined? Shall it be the saints, whose companion you have given to the devil? Shall it be the blood of Jesus Christ, which you have wronged and trampled upon? No, young man, in the hour of your judgment there will be no voice to cry out to Jesus to have mercy on your soul.

VII. A Ruined Soul before the Judgment Seat.

YOUNG man, perhaps that person whom you ruined is dead!—dead in that sin which you brought into her soul. The moment after her death, her soul went up before Jesus Christ to receive the everlasting sentence. When Jesus Christ saw that the soul came before His tribunal, dark, hideous, and blackened with that sin which you had made it commit, He spoke thus—"Depart from me," He said: "Go down, O soul in mortal sin, and burn for ever in the unquenchable flames of hell." Then that girl fell down on her knees, and spoke thus to Jesus—"O Jesus, my Creator, what you say is very true and very just. I know it; I deserve to go to hell; it was my own fault; I did it with my own free will. But, O Christ, before I go down into hell, let me speak one word. Hear me, O Christ. O Jesus, I was a poor innocent girl, and there came to me a wicked boy, and he deceived me. O Christ, look at my poor soul redeemed by your precious blood; look at my poor murdered soul, murdered by that wicked boy. O Jesus, by your holy death on the cross for me, avenge me; let the blood of my murdered soul be on the head of that wicked boy." Then that girl went down into hell. Her place is beside the door of hell. She never leaves it for a moment day or night. Her eyes are always fixed on that door, without ever leaving it for the twinkling of an eye. Each time that terrible door is opened, in order that more souls may come into the flames of hell, she watches them, she fixes her eyes sharply on the face of each as he passes. But what is she looking for? She is looking for the cruel murderer of her soul; she is looking for you, O wicked boy, and the very first moment that you set your foot in hell, she will fly at you and tear you in pieces, and let you know what it is to have ruined her soul.

VIII. The Cries of Ruined Souls.

GEN. iv. "Cain said to his brother Abel, let us go forth abroad. When they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. Then

God came to Cain and said to him, where is thy brother? And Cain answered, I know not, am I my brother's keeper? Then God said to Cain, what hast thou done? thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth. Now, therefore, cursed shalt thou be on the earth." If such be the cry of a murdered body, what shall be the cry of a murdered soul?

Apoc. vi. "I saw under the altar the souls of them who had been slain for the word of God, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord, dost thou not revenge our blood?"

Oh, the cries of ruined souls that will be heard on the last day of this world, rising up before Jesus Christ. How many souls will cry on that day, Revenge me, O Lord! "Revenge me, O Lord," will cry a youth; I was innocent, and there came to me one, and he taught me evil that I knew not. Revenge me, will cry another; I had listened to the words of the priest, who told me to repent, because you were a good and a merciful God. I was going to confess my sins, when there came to me a wicked companion, and he laughed at the words of the priest, and the confession I was going to make, and he led me back into the sin, and I never rose out of it again. Revenge me, will cry a poor hired servant, led into sin by a heartless master. I was helpless, I knew not whither to go. It was not my desire to break your commandments, but I was weak and without help, and he drew me into his snares. Revenge me, will cry that son, that daughter; revenge me on my father, my mother; it was from them I learnt those curses, those immodest words; it was from their example I learnt to become a drunkard. Revenge me, O Christ, will cry another; I was a poor forsaken orphan girl, and there came to me one and he promised me bread, and he promised me clothes, and he promised that he would never forsake me; and at last, by his deceits, I fell into sin. Revenge me, O Christ, revenge me.

IX. The Death Bed.

BERENGARIUS, says blessed Leonard, denied the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, and he brought many other persons into his error. When he was on his death-bed, he was seized with a great fear. The priest who assisted him in his last passage, tried to encourage him. What was his answer? I am about, he said, to go before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ; I will tell you that for my own sins I hope for pardon; but for the sins I have made others commit, I fear I shall not be pardoned. I fear I shall be damned, for I do not know how to repair the damage I have done.

Read these words.

MATT. xviii. "He that shall scandalise one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. Wo to the world because of scandals."

II. THE HEAVY CHAIN;

OR,

THE HABIT OF SIN.

Eccus. vii.—*Do not bind sin to sin.*

X. What is Meant by the Habit of Sin.

YOU say that a person has a habit of cursing; this means that he curses very often, that he curses for the least thing, that he curses almost without thinking of it. In like manner, people sometimes have a habit, or custom, or practice of drunkenness, of impurity, &c.

The Old Tree.

A HOLY monk in Egypt took his disciples into a garden and showed them a young plant, just springing out of the ground; when they had looked at it, he said, "Pull it up." One of them took hold of it and easily drew it out of the ground. He then showed them a young tree which had been growing there for some time, and desired them to pull it up. One of them set to work at the tree, and pulled very hard, but could not get it out of the ground. Then two or three of the others came and helped him. They pulled at it with all their force, and at last they drew it out of the earth. The monk then showed them an old tree, which had been growing there for many years, the roots of which had struck deep into the earth. Pull up the old tree, he said to them. They took hold of the tree, and pulled, and pulled, with all their force, but they could not get it out of the ground—it was impossible. It had been growing there so long, the roots were gone so deep, and were so firmly fixed in the earth, that they were obliged to leave it. So it is with sin. At first it is easy to

take a sin out of the soul, as it was easy to pull up the young plant out of the earth. You have the misfortune to commit a sin once—it is an easy thing to confess it, and commit it no more. But when you go on committing this sin again, and again, day after day, week after week, for months, perhaps for years, then the habit of this sin will stick in your soul, almost as firmly as the old tree stuck in the earth. Each time you commit the sin, the roots of it go deeper and deeper into your soul.

XI. The Heavy Chain.

THERE was a man who had a dog. He put a strong heavy chain of iron round the neck of the dog. The iron chain rubbed against the dog's neck and made the skin come off it, and the dog's neck was very sore. The dog never dared to run away, because if it tried to get away, the man pulled the chain that was round its neck, and the dog felt very great pain. So the dog was always obliged to follow the man wherever he went. When any one has done a great sin very often, he soon begins to find out that this sin is tied round him like the heavy iron chain was tied round the dog's neck! Ps. xxvii.—*"For my sins, as a heavy burden, are become heavy upon me."* Often he wishes to get free; but the chain is so heavy and so strong, that he does not know how to get free. So it often happens, that if a person has some bad habit of sin when he is young, this bad habit keeps hold of him when he is grown old, and even when he is dying, till he breathes out his last breath. You will see examples of this a little later. Prov. xxii.—*"It is a proverb: A young man according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it."*

XII. Stealing Bread.

THERE were some holy men living in a monastery in the desert. They lived far away from the temptations of the world, that they might be able to serve God more fervently. One day a certain young man came to the monastery. What did he want? He asked if he might live with them and become a monk. They consented, and he stayed there. Unfortunately, this young man, before he came to the monastery, had a very bad habit of stealing. However, he had made a good resolution to steal no more. After he had been living there for some time, the temptation to steal came back to him. The young man gave way to the temptation, and went and stole some bread. After he had stolen he felt sorry, and told it to one of his companions. His companion asked him why he had stolen. He answered that it was

because he was hungry, and did not get enough to eat. Then said his companion, you had better go and let the Superior know that you have been stealing, because you did not get enough to eat. The young man said he would be ashamed to go himself. "If you wish it," said his companion, "I will go and tell the Superior about it." The young man answered, "I shall be very glad if you will do so, for I should not like to do it myself." Accordingly, his companion went to the Superior and told him how the young man had been stealing because he was hungry and did not get enough to eat. The Superior answered, "Let him have as much bread as he asks for, then there will be no occasion for him to steal." After this, the young man always received as much bread as he asked for. Sometime afterwards this young man came to his companion and told him that he had been stealing bread again. "But how is that?" said his companion; "why did you steal? did you not get as much bread as you asked for?" "Yes," said the young man, "but I was ashamed to ask for as much as I wanted, so I stole." After this they took care that the young man should have as much bread as he wanted, without even asking for it. Now see how difficult it is to break off a bad habit. After some time the young man came again to say that he had been stealing! "How can this be," said his companion to him, "that you stole? did they refuse to give you bread?" "No." "Did you get always as much bread as you wanted?" "Yes." "Then why did you steal? what was the reason?" "I cannot tell you," answered the young man. "I only know one thing, and that is, that I steal—I do not want what I take, yet I steal it. I am sorry after I have stolen—yet I go on stealing. I often cry because I have stolen, and I wish that I had not stolen, and yet I always steal. I have so long had a habit of stealing, and this habit is so strong, that it seems to me as if I could not help laying my hands on the things I see, and stealing them, even when I do not want them." "Then," said his companion, "did you want the things you stole?" "No," answered the young man, "they were of no use to me." "Then what did you do with the stolen things?" "I threw some of them to the beasts," he said; "others I hid under my bed." The people of the house went and made a search, and they found, as the young man had said, some of the stolen things were thrown away, others hidden under his bed. Mich. i. *"The wound is desperate."* Be wise then; break off the habit of stealing at the beginning. If you let the habit go on and become strong, perhaps you will never break it off.

XIII. The Shop Girl.

A CERTAIN girl got employment in a shop. She had not been there long before she began to steal. At first she stole trifling things—bits of thread and

bits of cloth. However, she let this habit of stealing little things go on, and after a while she began to steal things of greater value. At last, some persons standing in the shop saw her stealing something, and charged her with it. She blushed, told a lie, and excused herself, saying, that she did not mean to keep the thing. On another occasion, a bit of stolen lace was seen hanging out of her pocket, and again she excused herself. After this, she found that she was watched. Would you believe it? still she went on stealing. She was not in want, she had good wages. Many of the things she stole were of no use to her; she knew that if she were found out she would lose her place and her character, and be punished; yet she went on stealing. She made many a resolution to steal no more; still it was always the same, she was always stealing. Mich. i.—"*The wound is desperate.*" The habit of stealing was so strong, that she often stole without thinking what she was about. At last, the people of the shop who had missed a great many things began to suspect that she was the thief. They went to a large box she had, opened it, and found it full of stolen things. The poor girl lost her situation and character, and was put into prison.

XIV. Bridget and the Silver Cream Jug.

THOSE who have a habit of stealing are sure to be found out in the end. A lady had two servants Emma, and Bridget. Emma was about twelve years of age and Bridget might be about fifty. One day the lady's silver cream-jug was stolen out of the pantry. There was reason for suspecting that it had been stolen by one of these servants. The lady, therefore, called the two servants into a room. She first asked Bridget if she knew anything about the silver cream-jug. Bridget answered, that she knew no more about it than a child unborn; then she said, that she had seen Emma go into the pantry the night before the jug was missed. Emma blushed when she heard this, but she said positively she had not stolen it. Then said her mistress, what did you go into the pantry for? Emma blushed again, and could scarcely give an answer, for, at the moment, she could not remember why she had been in the pantry. It looked as if Emma had been stealing, so her mistress gave her notice, that she must quit next morning. Emma left the room in tears, but in her heart she said, "My God, may your holy will be done;" for she was innocent. The next morning she had to make up her things in a bundle and left the house. She went home to the house of her father, who was a poor, labouring man; she told him what had happened, and gave her solemn word that she had not stolen the cream-jug. Half a year had passed, and the cream-jug and Emma were almost forgotten. One day, the lady told Bridget to go over to the

butcher's, and get some mutton chops; on her return her mistress asked her how many mutton chops she had bought? "I have bought four," said Bridget. "Then," said the lady, "get them ready for dinner." After dinner the lady went out of the house, and happening to pass the butcher's shop, she thought she might as well pay the bill for the mutton chops. She went into the shop, and said to the butcher: "I sent my servant girl here this morning for some mutton chops." "Yes," answered the butcher, "she took six chops." "Six did you say," said the lady. "Yes, ma'am, six." The lady paid for the six chops, and returned home. She met Bridget at the foot of the staircase, and said to her, "How many mutton chops did you bring from the butcher's shop this morning?" "Four ma'am," answered Bridget. "Do you say four?" "Yes, ma'am, four." At this moment there was a noise on the staircase. The dog bounced out of Bridget's room with a mutton chop in his mouth. "Oh!" said the lady, "where did the dog get this mutton chop?" She then went into Bridget's room, and the first thing she saw was a paper, half open, with another mutton chop peeping out of it. The dog had smelt the two mutton chops, and stole one of them out of the paper. The lady saw a large box belonging to Bridget; she opened it, and found nothing there but some old clothes. She was just going to shut it again when she saw a bit of paper sticking up in one corner; finding that there was something heavy in the paper, she drew it from the midst of the clothes, and behold—the stolen silver cream-jug fell out of the paper. Bridget did not remain many hours in the house; indeed, she was so ashamed, that she was glad to get away. The lady went over to the house where Emma lived, and begged her a thousand pardons for having wrongly judged her. She took her back again into her house, and gave her double the wages she had before. So the thief was found out and punished, and the innocent rewarded.

Do not, then, get into a habit of stealing; if you steal little things, perhaps you will afterwards steal great things. Many who have stolen pounds, began by stealing pennies. A bad habit is like a fire,—the more you feed it the greater it becomes.

XV. The Gambler.

A CERTAIN man became a gambler and played for money. He went on playing till he lost all his money, and ruined himself and his family. Why do you think he gambled? was it to amuse himself? At first, while it was new, it was an amusement, but the amusement of it soon wore away. He did not then gamble for pleasure, for he was always in a fever of vexation, and miserable when he gambled. Did he do it for gain? No; he lost by it. Did he

gamble because others asked him? No; for he asked others to gamble. Did he gamble because he wished to gamble? No; for he used to curse his bad habit, and a thousand times he made up his mind to gamble no more. Then why did he go on gambling till he ruined himself? It was the bad habit he had got that made him go on gambling in spite of himself; this bad habit held him fast, like a strong chain, and he never could get free from it till he lost all that he had, and was ruined, and could gamble no more.

Eccus. xxii.—"Go not in the way of ruin." Children and young people are recommended not to gamble, and not to play at pitch and toss for money, &c., especially on Sundays. 1. Because those who do so, often stay away from Mass on Sundays. 2. Because they are sure to get into idle and bad company. 3. Because they spend money in gambling which should be spent on their poor brothers and sisters. 4. Because they get into a bad habit. Those who play for half-pennies and pennies will, perhaps, afterwards play for large sums and ruin themselves.

XVI. The Death of the Swearer.

JAMES iii.—"*The tongue is an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison.*" When a person has a habit of cursing, or of committing any other sin, he often commits it without thinking. There was a man who had a great habit of swearing. It happened that for some crime which he had committed he was condemned in a court of justice to be hung. He was already on the scaffold, ready for the rope to be put round his neck. By some accident he was thrown off the scaffold and fell down. Now, see how strong his habit of swearing was; at the very moment when he began to fall, he shouted out and swore. The next moment he was on the ground, and his neck was broken, and he was dead! Those who have a habit of cursing and swearing are recommended to strike their breast, or say the Hail Mary each time they curse, that they may be cured.

XVII. The Child and the Wolf.

Ephes. iv.—"*Put away lying.*" A certain child used to amuse itself with telling lies and deceiving people. One day, this child screamed out, "A wolf, a wolf is coming!" At the cry of the child, all the neighbours came running out of their houses; they heard that a wolf was coming, and perhaps it might kill the child. When the child saw that they were deceived, it only laughed at them. This child did the same thing several times; the people seeing that the child only wanted to deceive them, came out no more. One day it happened

that a wolf really came; the child shouted as loud as it could, "a wolf, a wolf!" but it was of no use, the people thought that the child only wanted to deceive them, as it did before. So they did not come, and the poor child was eaten by the wolf. Thus you see that nobody believes those who have a habit of telling lies.

XVIII. The Hardened Drunkard.

THERE was a sober steady man. He was a good workman. He took great care of his children. He sent them to school, to holy mass and to catechism. But a great change was coming for him! One day he met with some bad company, who went often to the public house. He went with them once or twice; after some time he began to go to the public house every night and get drunk! After a while his master turned him off, and he lost his work on account of his drunkenness—still, he continued to get drunk. His house was empty, all the furniture of it sold to buy drink—*still he got drunk*. His children were crying for bread, his wife was broken-hearted—*still he got drunk*. His health began to give way on account of his drunkenness—*still he got drunk*. The doctor told him to give up the habit of drinking, or he would kill himself—*still he got drunk*. The priest came to him and told him to give up drinking, or he would lose his soul. What answer do you think the drunkard made? Did he say, I will give up drinking? No. Did he say, I will not give up drinking? No. Then what did he say? Listen, you young people who get wages, and already have begun to go to the public house, listen to the drunkard's answer. This, then, was his answer. He did not say, I will not give up drinking, but he said, *I cannot* give up drinking, I am not able, the habit is too strong; there was a time when I could have given up drinking, but it is now—*too late*.

The best way for a drunkard is: 1. Never to go into a public house or whiskey shop. 2. To abstain altogether from drinking intoxicating liquors; or, at least, to limit himself to a small fixed quantity. Eccus. xxxii.—"Go not in the way of ruin."

XIX. The Little Child.

THERE was a little girl about seven years old, who had the habit of doing a very bad thing against the sixth commandment. This bad habit injured her health very much. She lost her appetite and grew pale and sick. The mother found out what the cause of it was. Then the mother begged of the poor little child not to do that naughty thing any more, for perhaps she would die if she

went on doing it. The child was very much frightened when she heard that she would die. So, for a few days, she did not do that wicked thing any more. But see how strong a bad habit may become even in a little child. That bad habit had become so strong in this little child that, after a few days, she began to commit the sin again, and would never leave off any more. Every day the child became weaker, and paler, and thinner; at last the child could no more rise from its bed. It was on its death bed, and it was a sorrowful sight to see how that child died. Several times the mother asked it to say the Hail Mary along with her, but the child would not say one word of the Hail Mary. The priest came and spoke kindly to the poor thing, and asked it to confess its sins, but she would not speak a word to the priest. He then put a cross near the child, and asked it to kiss the feet of Jesus. No, the child would not even look at the cross, but turned its head away as if it was frightened at seeing the cross. For half an hour before it died, it neither spoke nor moved, but its face looked most frightful, its eyes rolled about as if it saw something very terrible near it, and at last the poor child died, without showing any sign that it hoped to go to Heaven! Beware then, little children, of getting into any bad habit, especially the habit of committing any sin against the sixth commandment.

XX. The Englishman, or a Fine Day.

THERE was an English nobleman, who died a few years since. He was a well-known sinner. He had spent his days in committing sins against the sixth commandment. A sinner sometimes goes on for a long time in his sins, and seeing that God does not punish him, he thinks that He has forgotten his sins. But God does not forget sins. He is patient; He wishes that a sinner should be converted, remembering that the sinner is His own creature—the work of His hands, and redeemed by the blood of His Son Jesus. So in His mercy he sometimes gives the sinner length of days in this world, that he may be converted. But if the sinner does not repent, God's day comes at last, and then, "He speaks to the sinner in his anger."—Ps. ii. The time of that nobleman's death was near at hand; he was lying on his death-bed. He was rich and wealthy. He lay on a grand bed, in a magnificent room, filled with the most beautiful furniture. The hour was come when his soul was to go out of this world, and give an account of his crimes to that terrible God who taketh away the spirit of princes. The agony of death had come upon him, the last struggle betwixt life and death. Still no thoughts of repentance came into the heart of the dying sinner. There was a low whispering of voices round the death-bed. Were they the voices of those who sought his

conversion? No. They were shameless voices, which spoke words which should not be even named amongst Christians, and words of blasphemy and of mockery. They were the voices of those who for years past had been the evil companions of that nobleman his wickedness. And now he had desired that those evil companions should come in and be round his death-bed, while his spirit was departing out of this world. Suddenly the dying man turned his head a little towards one of the windows—a curtain had been drawn before the window. "Draw aside the curtain," he said. Somebody drew the curtain aside. It was a bright, beautiful day, the sunshine streamed through the window into the room. "What a fine day it is," he said—"what a fine day to go to hell!" Having said this he turned round and died. Thus the ruling passion was strong in death. The passion of impurity had ruled over that unfortunate man in the days of his life, so on the last day of his life he died, at his own desire, in the midst of those who had been his companions in this passion.

XXI. The Ruling Passion Strong in Death.

DID you never hear of "the ruling passion strong in death?" A certain youth was in the habit of committing sins of impurity. Sickness came upon him, and he was lying on his death-bed; it was the last night of his life. The darkness of night had come on. A candle was burning on the table at his bed-side. Near to him was sitting a youth who, in his earlier and better days, had been his friend, and now had come in to see if he could be of any use to him. He whispered into the ear of the poor boy, and spoke to him of the love which Mary the Mother of God, had for sinners. The dying boy was silent. Then his friend spoke to him again of the bad company which had ruined him, and asked him to promise God that he would never go near it any more. "I cannot promise," said the unfortunate boy with a trembling voice. At this moment the door of the room opened and a person came in. It was the priest who had baptized him, and prepared him for his first communion. Walking up gently to the bed-side, he asked the boy how he felt. He then told him that he had come to help him to make his peace with God before he died, that he had just heard from the doctor that he could not live much longer. Then he said, "My dear boy, for the love of Jesus, I ask you now, in your heart, to give up that wicked company which has been your ruin." The boy looked at the priest, and with fury in his eyes, he said, "I cannot." "But," said the priest, "it is necessary." "I cannot," was the answer again. The priest took up a watch which was lying on the table, and looking at the boy, he said, "You are dying—in a few moments your soul will be before the judgment-seat of

Jesus Christ." "No matter," said the dying boy, "I cannot do it." "But if you do not," said the priest, "you will go into the flames of hell!" "I cannot," once more said the boy, "I cannot, I will not." This was the last word he spoke, for as soon as he had said this, he breathed out his soul into the hands of the devil? *So the ruling passion was strong in death.*

XXII. The Great Chain.

THIS sin is the great chain with which the devil binds people, and they find it harder to break the chain of this sin than of any other. This sin lives in the senses, and the bones and the marrow of the body. It is often as difficult to take away this sin from a sinner as to take the skin from his body. If you threaten him that he will go to hell, he is not frightened. If you cry for him, he is not softened by your tears. If he is punished for it, he becomes more hardened in his bad habit, like a lump of iron becomes harder under every stroke of the hammer. B. Leonard says, that "the habit of committing sins of impurity after some time becomes a sort of necessity, then it becomes a sort of impossibility to avoid it, then the sinner goes to despair, and from despair to hell." St. Bernard says, "At first a man commits this sin for the pleasure of it;—after a time he finds no pleasure in it, still he goes on;—at length he gets disgusted with it, still he goes on, because he thinks it a habit which he cannot break off." Mich. i.—"The wound is desperate." Impurity is a sin, which people often will not quit even when they are dying. The Scripture says, Prov. xxii.—"*A young man according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it.*"

Of the sin of impurity, above all others, it may be said, "Break off this sin in the beginning, for if you get into a habit of it, it may be too late to break it off." It may be that if you do not break it off, you may become like a certain youth. Being near death, the priest told him to break off his bad habit. The young man answered with a sigh—"Alas, I cannot; I wish I could, but it is too late, the habit has become too strong!" So do not feed the fire by committing fresh sins.

XXIII. Feeding the Fire.

ONE day fire was burning in the fire-place. What do you think the people did to it? Every minute almost they were feeding the fire putting fresh coals on it. So every minute the fire became hotter. At last the fire became such a great, hot, burning, blazing fire, that the people could not stay in the house

any longer, and they were obliged to go out! Every time you commit the same sin again, you are *feeding* a bad habit.

XXIV. Can the Habit of Sin be Cured?

CERTAINLY a habit of sin, however strong it may be, can be cured. Jesus Christ died for the habitual sinner, as well as for other sinners. St. Augustine was once an habitual sinner; for many years he was in the habit of committing sins of impurity, yet he was cured. St. Mary Magdalen was an habitual sinner, and she was cured. They broke off their bad habits. What they did you can do. Ps. xlv. "He looseth them that are fettered."

What must the Habitual Sinner do to be Cured?

A CERTAIN man, named Lazarus, died; he was buried, and he had been in the grave four days. Then Jesus Christ came to the side of the grave, and cried out, "Lazarus, come forth." The voice of Jesus, which is living and effectual, went down into the grave, and it sounded in the ears of that body, which was cold and stiff with death. Then the spirit of life came into him who was dead, and he stood on his feet alive, and came forth out of the grave. But his hands and feet were tied with winding-bands. Then Jesus Christ said to the Apostles, "Loose him and let him go." The habitual sinner is dead in sin; he wants to be raised to life, and to be loosed from his bad habit of sin. Let us see what must be done.

1. How he comes to Life again.

THE habitual sinner is dead—he must come to life again. He will come to life again, if he makes a good and sincere confession; then his sins will be forgiven by the priest, to whom Jesus Christ has said, John xx.—"*Whose sin you shall forgive, they are forgiven.*"

2. How he becomes Strong.

AFTER the sinner has been raised to life, he must be set free from the weakness which comes from his bad habits—he must be loosed from the winding bands. Jesus Christ has also given to his priests the power of loosing from the weakness of a bad habit. John xx.—"*Whatsoever you shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.*" The priest will tell the habitual sinner what he must do, in order to have his weakness quite cured, and whatsoever the

priest bids him to do, that he must do most carefully, or he will not be cured. Besides, he must go often to confession; every week or fortnight, or month, as he can. He must also go to confession at any time when he feels very much tempted to go back to his former bad habits. Especially if he ever has the misfortune to fall into the old sin again, he must go *instantly* to confession. The habitual sinner will never get cured, unless he goes very often to confession. A perfect cure of the soul may be long and tedious, and troublesome, like the perfect cure of a bodily disease; but it is better to have a little trouble in this world than to burn in the flames of hell in the next world.

XXV. How the Devil Cheats You.

BEWARE of a bad habit. The wound is not yet desperate. Your years are yet but few, the habit of sin is not yet rooted in you. Do not let it take root. Do not allow yourself to get into the habit—the custom of committing any mortal sin. The devil will try to cheat you. He will say to you, "commit this mortal sin once—only once." If you commit it once, then he will say, "might you not as well commit it twice? the priest can forgive two sins as easily as one." If you commit it twice, he will say, "You might as well go on committing this sin till your next confession." The time for your next confession is come, the devil will say, "Put off your confession for a while." In the meantime you have formed a bad habit. Remember, it is easy to keep your hand out of a lion's mouth, but if you once get your hand between the lion's teeth, it is difficult to get it back again. So it is easy to keep out of a bad habit; but most difficult to get free from it, when you are once in it.

III. THE SLIPPERY WAY;

OR,

RELAPSE INTO SIN.

Ps. lxxvii.—*They turned back and tempted God.*

XXVI. THE MAN WHO GOT THE FEVER AGAIN.

A MAN had a fever; the doctor came to see him, and gave him some medicine. The man was getting well, but the fever unfortunately came back. Again the doctor gave him medicine; again he was cured. Again the fever came back; then the doctor said, "This is a very bad case, I am afraid for this man; he is worse now than he was before; I think it is all over with him." This is called relapsing into the fever, that is, falling into it again. A sinner goes to confession, and his sin is pardoned. Soon after confession he falls easily into the same sin again. Again he goes to confession, and after confession he falls again. He is called a relapsing sinner, that is, he falls again after confession into the same sin. What the doctor said to the man who fell back into the fever after he had been cured, may be said of the sinner who falls again into the same sin after confession. His case is a very bad one. Matt. xii.—"*The last state of that man is made worse than the first.*" There is reason to be afraid for him, lest he should go on committing that sin all his life, and at last die in it. Nobody has pity on a man who gets the fever back again, because he eats something which he knows is bad for him, or which the doctor particularly told him not to eat; it is his own fault. You would pity much more a man who got ill again, without any fault of his own. It is so with people who fall again into the same mortal sin after confession; some are much more to be blamed than others. It generally happens that

people fall again into sin in one or other of the three ways which are going to be mentioned.

XXVII. THREE WAYS OF FALLING AGAIN INTO SIN.

1. He went again into bad Company.

GAL. iv.—"*How turn you again?*" A boy went to confession. He went away, and soon after he fell into the same sin again. Why did he fall? Tell me why did the sick man get the fever again? Because he eat something which he knew would bring the fever back. So this boy fell into sin again, because he did something which he knew would make him fall—he went into bad company again.

2. He did not do what the Priest told him.

ANOTHER boy in like manner, after confession, fell again soon into the same sin which he had confessed. Why did this boy fall again? Was it because he went again into some bad company? No, for the sin which he committed was when he was alone by himself. Then why did he fall? Because he neglected to do what the priest, at confession, bid him do—to pray, &c.; like the sick man who did not do as the doctor told him, and so fell sick again.

3. He was very weak.

ANOTHER person also fell back into the sin which he had confessed. Why did he fall? Was it because he went into bad company? No. Was it because he neglected to do what the priest bid him? No; he did all the priest bid him. Then, why did he fall? He fell through his *own great weakness*; he wished most sincerely not to commit the sin again. When the devil tempted him, he prayed and struggled against the temptation; but in a moment of weakness, almost without thinking, he fell again into the sin. But he repented directly, and went to confession as soon as he could. Now, what is to be said of this sinner? is his case a bad one? No. This person was not like the two others mentioned before. Let him always, when tempted, pray and struggle against the temptation. If, through human weakness, he falls, let him repent directly, and go to confession as soon as he can. Jesus Christ sees his weakness and pities him; for "the bruised reed he will not break, and the smoking flax he

will not extinguish;" sooner or later Jesus Christ will make this poor sinner victorious over his own weakness.

XXVIII. The Gaoler and his Prisoner.

Is. viii.—"They shall be ensnared and taken." The devil is like the gaoler. A gaoler had a prisoner shut up in his prison; on the door were iron bars and bolts and locks. One day, the gaoler forgot to lock the prison door, the prisoner, finding the door unlocked, opened it, walked out, and ran away. When the gaoler found that his prisoner was gone away, he went after him. After hunting for a long time he found him again, and had him brought back to prison. After this the gaoler took care never to leave the prison door unlocked again. Relapsing sinner! you have made a good confession, and you have got out of the devil's prison. Mind you do not commit that sin, and get into the devil's hands again. If you let him get hold of you again, perhaps he will keep such fast hold of you, that you will never escape from him any more.

XXIX. The Cat and the Mouse.

SOMETIMES the devil does to the relapsing sinner what the cat did to the mouse. One day the cat was going about and it saw a mouse; the cat caught hold of the mouse with its teeth, and gave it a great shaking. However, it seems the cat wanted to amuse itself, so it let the mouse go again. The poor mouse, which had been so much frightened when it was betwixt the cat's teeth, was glad to find itself free again. It lost no time when the cat had put it down on the ground, but ran away as quick as it could; but, behold, the mouse had not gone far before the cat was down on it again. Again it was betwixt the cat's teeth; again another shaking. Again the cat lets the mouse go; again it was free and ran away. After running a little, again it was betwixt the cat's teeth, and another shaking. So the cat went on for some time amusing itself with the mouse. At last, the cat seized hold of the mouse and killed it. So the devil amuses himself sometimes with a relapsing sinner. The devil sees the relapsing sinner go to confession; he only laughs at him, for after going to confession the sinner soon falls into the same sin again, and he is in the devil's hands. Again the man goes to confession, and again he relapses into the same sin, and the devil has hold of him again. So the devil plays with the sinner as the cat did with the mouse. At last the game is finished; the devil seizes hold of the sinner, and carries him to hell.

There is one difference betwixt the mouse and the sinner. The mouse could not get away from the cat; the sinner can, by God's grace, get away from the devil.

XXX. The Nail which Fastens; or, Perseverance.

THERE was a nobleman who was very much loved by the Emperor Justinian. The Emperor gave him lands and houses, and gold and silver, and all that he could wish for. One day the Emperor said to him: "I have given you a great many things; now, tell me, is there anything else you wish for? if there is, only tell me what it is, and you shall have it." "Yes," said the nobleman, directly, "there is still one thing I wish for very much; if you have it I shall be quite happy, and shall want nothing more." "What is it?" said the Emperor, "for you shall certainly have it." "I will tell you, then," said the nobleman: "the thing I desire so much is, that you should give me—a nail." "A nail!" said the Emperor; "what do you mean? what do you want a nail for?" "I will tell you," said the nobleman, "why I want a nail. You have been very kind to me; you have given me lands, and houses, and gold, and silver; now, I want this good fortune to stay always with me, so I want a nail to fasten it with, that it may never go away."

My child, you also want a nail. God has been very kind to you. When you made a good confession, God pardoned your sins and gave you all the riches of the kingdom of Heaven. But if you relapse—fall back into the sin which you confessed, God will take away all from you, all these blessings. You also, like that nobleman, want a nail by which the precious blessings you have received from God may be fastened, and remain always with you.

What is that Nail?

The nail is, not to relapse, not to fall back again into mortal sin. St. Paul speaks of this nail where he says: "With Christ I am nailed to the cross."—Gal. ii. This nail is made of three things. 1. *Prayer*. You will pray every day to Jesus that you may never be separated from him by falling into mortal sin, especially just in the moment when the devil is tempting you; you will keep your soul fastened and nailed to the grace of God by that prayer—"Jesus and Mary, help me." 2. *Keeping away from bad company*. 3. *Going often to confession*. Do these three things, and then, like St. Paul, with Christ you will be nailed to the cross, and you will not fall again into mortal sin. But even should you have the misfortune to fall into sin, do not lose heart, but repent directly, and begin again to serve God, and you will save your soul.

IV. THE LAST MORTAL SIN.

XXXI. God counts your sins.

WISD. xi.—"Thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight." A little child went amongst the flowers in the field. I think, said the child, there are so many flowers, that nobody could count them. But that child had forgotten that there is One who counts all things. God has counted the flowers. God, in His great wisdom, has fixed how many flowers, and trees, and fruits there shall be on the earth from the beginning till the end of the world. He has fixed how many insects there shall be; he has fixed every movement of the least little insect, and that insect will not move the length of a grain of sand more or less than God has fixed for it. God has fixed how many people there shall be on the earth; he has fixed how many times we shall, each of us, draw our breath, and we shall not breathe once more or less than the number of times fixed by God. There is another thing: God counts how many sins we commit. (See the note below.)

NOTE.—St. Augustine says, "We may expect pardon from God as long as we have not filled up the number of our sins; but when that is done, there will be no more pardon."—*Vita Christi* c. 9. "Sinners," says St. Alphonsus, "keep no account of their sins; but God keeps an account of them, that when the number of sins is finished, he may take vengeance on them." But you say, cannot I always get pardon for any sin by praying and making a good confession? I answer, you can. But God may take you out of this world before you get ready for confession. Besides, when a person goes on committing mortal sin after mortal sin, God gets wearied and tired with him, and gives him up to what is called a reprobate sense—Rom. i. Then the sinner prays no more, and there is no more pardon for him. So there have been sinners who, on their death bed, have said, that they did not wish to be converted; that they would rather go to hell.

XXXII. GOD HAS FIXED HOW MANY TIMES HE WILL FORGIVE YOUR SINS.

Death on the Sand.

THE Israelites, the people of God, were going through the deserts of Arabia, on their way to the promised land. Moses was their leader. Their journey was wearisome and difficult. It was across the burning sand of the desert, where there is no water to drink, and nothing scarcely grows except a wild plant here and there, which the camels eat. Often the Israelites were half dead with hunger, and thirst and fatigue. They fell into many sins during their journey. They despaired of God's providence, murmured against him, and sometimes they fell into idolatry. God kept an account of their sins, and at last he told Moses what he would do. "I will strike them," he said, "with fever, and destroy them for their sins." Moses prayed to God to forgive them. God, who is merciful, said: "I will forgive those who have been born since the time when you left Egypt; but for the others, who have sinned against me, now ten times, they shall die." So God had fixed for these men ten sins as the number he would pardon, and the tenth sin being come, they died on the sand of the desert.

XXXIII. Death in the Water.

THE Israelites had been in the land of Egypt 400 years. The Egyptians hated them, and afflicted them, and mocked them, and made their life bitter with hard words.—Exod. i. The Israelites cried to God to help them. God heard their cries; and he sent Moses to Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Moses spoke these words to Pharaoh: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel to thee, O Pharaoh. Let my people go, that they may offer sacrifice to me in the desert." Pharaoh answered: "Who is the Lord that I should hear his voice and let the Israelites go. I know not the Lord, neither will I let the Israelites go." Then God struck the Egyptians with ten plagues, and, at last Pharaoh, frightened by these plagues, said that the Israelites might go. Moses then led the Israelites out of Egypt. They went three days' journey—about 80 miles, till they came to the banks of the Red Sea. Now let us see what happened to them at the Red Sea. Let us think that we are at present there, looking at all that happened. On the east side is the Red Sea, about ten miles broad, and fourteen hundred miles long; there is a great crowd at the sea-side—six hundred thousand men, besides women and children. They are the Israelites who are resting themselves after a hard journey of three days. Now, look at

the great sandy desert on the west. Do you see that cloud of dust which rises up in the air? What is the matter? why that dust? It is a great army of soldiers coming through the desert, with the proud Pharaoh at their head. Pharaoh has repented that he let the Israelites go away, and now he comes tracking them through the sand. How angry he looks! he comes to kill the poor Israelites on the sea-shore. He says: "I will go after them, and overtake them; I will draw my sword, and my hand shall kill them."—Exod. xv. But what can the poor Israelites do to get away? if they go forward, there is the sea, they will be drowned; if they turn back, there is the cruel Pharaoh and his army, ready to cut them in pieces. God was taking care of the Israelites. He says to Moses: "Stretch forth your hand over the sea, and divide the water, that the Israelites may go through the midst of the sea on dry ground." Moses stretches forth his hand, the waters divide, and rise up on each side like great walls; now the Israelites move forward, and go along the dry passage betwixt the waters. But, see, Pharaoh rushes after them with all his soldiers, and horsemen, and chariots; he wants to overtake the Israelites and kill them: but he is fighting against God, who wants to save the Israelites. Stop! O Pharaoh! where are you going to? Do you not know that the God of the Israelites is Almighty, and he can destroy you if you touch them! Did you not feel the power of God when he scourged you so many times in Egypt? Do you not know that those hanging waters are held up aloft in the air by a miracle? Do you not know that if you enter on that dry path you will perish? Stop, then, O Pharaoh! I beseech you, stop. Are you not afraid to go on? Now hear what Pharaoh says to this. I understand, he answers, I know that the God of Israel is Almighty; I know that these waters hang in the air by a miracle; but I know also that the God of Israel is all mercy and pity. Ten times he has already scourged me in Egypt, but each time, when I repented, he drew back his hand, and pardoned me. He has pardoned me ten times, and now I am sure He will pardon me this eleventh time. Oh, Pharaoh! you know not this eleventh sin is the fatal sin which God will not pardon. Already Pharaoh, with his soldiers, are on that dry passage, where the raging waters of the Red Sea rise up on each side. He goes after the Israelites to kill them. But see what God does against Pharaoh. The air gets dark with clouds, full of the anger of God. Already God has struck the army of the Egyptians; their carriages are overthrown, wheels are broken, horses killed, men wounded, and dead bodies cover the ground. Pharaoh gets frightened; sound the trumpet, he cries, with a trembling voice—let us go back, for God fights against us. Saying this, he turns round and rushes back to the sea-coast. But see! those walls of water, which were standing up on each side, come together again. Pharaoh is stopped, he can go no farther; he is shut up in the

waters, which are dashing around him; he sinks down in the deep waters, he is suffocated, his dead body sinks to the bottom of the sea. Miserable Pharaoh! you thought not that this eleventh sin was the last fatal sin, after which God would give you no more time to repent. You knew not that God had written on the eleventh sin, "I will not forgive him." Say not, then, poor sinning child, "*I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?*"—*Eccus. v.*; for remember, the "*Most High is a patient rewarder.*" *Eccus. v.* God is patient till the number of sins He has determined to suffer from you is filled up, but when the number is once filled up, there is no more pardon—death and hell will certainly come.

XXXIV. The Can of Water.

A BOY filled a little can with water. He poured the water into the can, one drop after another. At last the can was filled with water up to the very top of it. So the can could not hold another drop of water. But the boy poured into it another drop. Then the water went over the can. So you go on filling your soul with mortal sins, till one certain mortal sin comes, then you fall into hell.

The sealed Letter, or how often will God pardon you.

A BOY took a letter into his hands, but the letter was sealed up, so he could not read it, he could not tell what was in the inside of it. It was a secret which he could not find out. There is one secret sealed up which you cannot find out, that is, *how many times will God forgive you?* Nobody knows this except God himself. Perhaps God will not forgive you any more, or perhaps he will forgive you once more, or perhaps he will forgive you ten or twenty times more. But you can never tell. God gives to some people more years of life than he gives to others. So he forgives some people more sins than he forgives to others. God forgave the people of Damascus four times. He forgave Pharaoh ten times. He did not forgive the disobedient angels even once.

XXXV. The Chair of Fire.

A CERTAIN man had a vision of hell. He saw that in hell the devils were busy building a high seat. The seat was made of red-hot fiery bricks. They finished the building of the fiery seat, except that they left out of it one brick. He asked the devils whom that seat was for, and why they did not put on it

the last brick. They answered, that there was a certain wicked man in the world, and that the fiery seat was for him. The fiery bricks were the mortal sins he had committed, and that when he would commit the next mortal sin, the last fiery brick should be put on the seat, and then he would die and come to hell, and sit on the fiery seat for ever

The Deep Pit.

A MAN was walking in the country at midnight. It was quite dark, so dark that he could see nothing at all. The man knew that somewhere about where he was walking there was a very deep pit! He knew that if he went on any further in the dark, he might come to the deep pit and fall down into it and be killed! Now what do you think he did? He stopped, he stood still and did not go on any further. You go on committing mortal sins. Now perhaps the very next mortal sin you commit will be the last mortal sin that God will let you commit—then you will die and fall into hell!

Stop!

STOP then, O sinner! stop, I beg of you—stop! Do not commit another mortal sin. If you do you have lost your senses. Perhaps the day of your next mortal sin will be also the day of your death, and of your entrance into hell; "that day that hath been appointed in the time of iniquity." Ezech. xxi. Is. xvii. 22—"In the time of the evening there shall be trouble, the morning shall come and he shall not be." Then people will see your body lying dead in the morning, and they will not know that your soul went to hell during the night. Eccles. ix.—"Man knoweth not his own end; but as fishes are taken with the hook, and as birds are caught with the snare, so men are taken in the evil time, when it shall suddenly come upon them."

Therefore, oh! sinner, before you commit a mortal sin always say to yourself these terrible words: *The sin I am going to commit, may be that sin which God will not pardon; then will come death and hell.*

REMEMBER!

Avoid the occasions of sin. Do not let the habit of sin take root in your soul. Do not relapse into sin after confession. The next mortal sin may be your last sin, after which will come death and hell!

THE END

BOOK VI.

THE BOOK OF YOUNG PERSONS.

BAD COMPANY.

I. The Monkeys and the Night-caps.

THERE was a man who got his living by selling night-caps. He put the night-caps into paper, and fastened it with a string. With this parcel on his shoulder, he went about from village to village, trying to sell his night-caps. One day he had been travelling through a lonesome country, the night was coming on, and he could see neither village nor house anywhere. He saw, however, at a little distance from the road, some trees, and he thought the best way would be to sleep that night under the trees. So he left the road and walked towards the trees. As soon as he came there, he untied the parcel of night-caps, took out one of them, put it on his head, and laid himself down to sleep. As he was tired with his journey, he soon fell fast asleep, and he slept soundly till morning. On awaking, he sat up and began to look about for his night-caps. To his surprise he found that not one of the night-caps was there; there was the string, but not a single night-cap remaining. What could have become of them? where could they be? what a strange thing! Could any robber have stolen the night-caps? No; a robber would not come into a country where he could not expect to find any one to rob. Then the man said to himself, "What shall I do? how shall I live? I have no more night-caps to sell." At this moment, it happened that the man looked up, and there amongst the branches of the trees, he saw about a hundred monkeys, each with one of the night-caps on its head! During the night the monkeys had come down from the trees, stolen the night-caps and put them on their heads, because they saw that the man had a night-cap on his head. The man seeing that the monkeys had stolen his night-caps, and knowing that he could not get them back again, began to be very angry; in his anger he seized hold of the night-

cap which was still on his head, and in a great passion threw it down on the ground. Immediately a great shower of night-caps came down upon him, for the monkeys, seeing the man pull the night-cap off his head and throw it down upon the ground, did the same themselves. You see how readily even creatures which have no sense or understanding learn to imitate what they see done before their eyes. Therefore, I say, little child, keep away from those who do evil, lest you learn to imitate it. Therefore, let little children, and not only little children, but let all keep away from the occasion of sin if they wish to keep out of hell.

II. The Boy in the Streets.

ST. CHRYSOSTOM says, "Tell me what sort of company a person goes into, and I will tell you what sort of a person he is, because he is sure to be like the company he keeps." Eccus. xiii. "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it; he that hath fellowship with the proud shall put on pride."

How did that boy become wicked?—he was once a good boy. He went into wicked company which he met with in the streets. He began to swear. He heard his bad companions swearing, and he was ashamed not to be like them. He thought that if he did not swear as they did, they would be displeased with him.

The Boy at School.

AT schools you may meet with bad company; one or two bad children may ruin a whole school. 1 Cor. v. "Know you not that a little leaven corrupteth the whole lump?" There was a boy who was for seven years at a certain school. He met there with very bad company, and teachers who seldom said anything to the boys about their religious duties. This boy was very good when he came to that school, but he soon became bad when he found himself in bad company. 1 Cor. xv. *Evil communications corrupt good manners*. During the whole seven years he never once heard Mass with the least attention; he never once opened a good book to read it. Now, after the seven years he was taken away from this school and sent to a good school. When you breathe bad air you get sick; if you breathe good air you get well again. So this boy became good again as soon as he was at a good school, and he became afterwards a holy and learned priest, and worked much for the salvation of souls. This shows that when children are in bad company, they become bad—when they are in good company, they are good. One or two bad children have sometimes ruined a whole school—a little leaven

corrupts the whole lump. 1 Cor. v. St. Teresa was a very good child. Now hear what she says about the harm which bad company did to her. "I would advise," she says, "fathers and mothers never to let their children go into company which is not good. I know it from experience. The company of a girl who was a relation of mine did me much harm; I took great pleasure in being with her, in talking with her about vain and foolish things, and in sharing her amusements. Her conversation changed me so, that all my good dispositions went away, and I found that I had in me all the bad dispositions of my bad companion. So I lost the fear of God." It happened that her father found out what was going on, and he sent her to a convent, where she soon got back those good dispositions which she had laid aside when she was with her bad companion.

III. The Girl in the Public House.

DID you ever hear of a young girl who went with a young man into a public house? She was treated, and she was made to drink till she became drunk, and lost her senses. Then ruin came upon her. When she came to her senses a little, she left that public house, but her character was gone. Then wild despair came into her heart, and she went and threw herself into the river and drowned herself. It seemed a little matter to that girl to go for a while into a public house. She was light-hearted when she went in with a companion, who in his heart was seeking only her ruin. But she knew it not. It was but a few short hours, and a great change had come over her. She had been ruined, her character was gone, her dead body was lying deep in the dark cold waters, and her soul was burning in hell. Be wise, then, young girl; have a little understanding, and learn before it is too late. Beware of the door of the public house: keep at a distance from it. Should a man or boy invite you to go into the public-house, and if you are such a fool as to consent to go in with him, at least stop for a moment before you put your foot inside the door, and think of the poor girl who was ruined in a public-house, and then threw herself into the river, and say to yourself, "Perhaps if I go in, the same thing may happen to me!" 1 Kings, xx. "There is but one step between me and death."

IV. Tea.—The Crying Baby.

THERE is a frightful practice in some places. Could any one believe it? Mothers have been seen to put *rum* into the tea which they give to their children! It is like giving them poison. See that woman who has just gone

into a gin-shop, to drink gin. She has a baby in her arms. The poor baby cries because it is cold and hungry. The woman wants to make it quiet. What does she do? She pours gin into the mouth of the poor creature! And you, young people, who work and get wages, keep away from the *public-house, the whisky-shop, the beer-shop, the jerry-shop, the dram-shop*. Do you not know that "*Death is in the pot?*" 1 Kings, iv. "*Go not in the way of ruin.*"—Eccus. xxxii.

V. The Devil's House.

ST. AUGUSTIN says, "That a certain lady having gone into the theatre was immediately possessed by the devil. The devil was commanded in the name of Jesus Christ to say why he had entered that person, since she was a Christian." He answered "That the theatre was his house, and since she came of her own accord into his house, he had a right to come into her." The devil gets cheap theatres for the accommodation of those who cannot pay much, so there are twopenny theatres, and penny theatres. Besides there are many places of amusement the same as theatres, and often much worse, under a different name. Some of these places have the most abominable things in them, and are a scandal to Christianity. In one of these dens of iniquity, in a large town in England, a kind of gas was given to young women to breathe. When they had breathed it, a sort of drunkenness came upon them, and in this state, without knowing it, they said and did the most shameful things in the presence of all the people! Nahum, iii. "*I will cast abominations upon thee, and disgrace thee.*" Then do not go near these abominable places; fly away from the doors, from the very street where they are. You will be sure to find the very scum of bad company hanging about the doors of these places. Eccus. xxxii. "*Go not in the way of ruin.*" Then keep away from *theatres, casinos, the circus, &c.* "*Fly away from them, pass not by them.*"—Prov. iv.

VI. The Dancing Girl.

KING HEROD gave a grand supper on his birth-day. After the supper was over, a dancing-girl came in and danced before the company. They were all very much pleased with the dancing. So Herod said to the dancing-girl, "Ask whatever you like and I will give it to you." Then the dancing-girl said, "I want to have the head of John the Baptist cut off and given to me on a dish." Then Herod sent a man who cut off the head of John the Baptist, and brought it on a dish to the dancing-girl. So the *dancing-girl* committed murder. Eccus. ix. "*Use not the company of her that is a dancer, nor hearken to her,*

lest thou perish." Do you know of any boy or girl that frequents the dancing-house, you may feel sure that they do not frequent the sacraments.

VII. The Broken Skull.

THERE was a mission given to the children in a large town in England. One day the missionary was in the priest's house which looked into the burial-ground. The gate of the burial-ground opened, and a crowd of people entered. Every eye seemed to be fixed on a dark-looking thing, which was borne along in the midst of that crowd. What was it? It was difficult to see at a distance, and to find out what it might be. The crowd moved slowly on, but it came nearer and nearer, till at last the dark thing could be distinctly seen. It was a coffin, covered with black cloth. But why such a large crowd? Why was every eye fixed so on that coffin? The sexton, who dug the graves, was passing. The missionary called him, and asked what funeral it was that had drawn such a crowd of people? "I will tell you," said the sexton. "We are going to bury a young man. It is but two or three days since this young man died. It happened that one evening he went to a dancing-house. While he was in the dancing-house, he got into a quarrel with another lad. At first it was angry words, then came blows. The other seized hold of a poker, and struck this youth violently on the skull. His skull was broken, he fell down senseless, and in a short time afterwards he died!" Poor young man, to die in a dancing-house—to die of a fight in a dancing-house! What a preparation for death! His soul went straight from the dancing-house to the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ. Little child, if you want to die a happy death, do not lead a dancing-house life. The funeral was over, the people went away with sorrowful faces and thoughtful hearts, and surely many a young person that day promised God, that they would never set their feet again in a dancing-house.

Children in Colleges and Convents

THERE are some young persons who have been educated at colleges, or convents, or boarding-schools. What has been said about this sort of dancing-houses does not concern them. They do not go to these dancing-houses. It is chiefly those whose lot it is to labour and toil in the sweat of their brow for their daily bread who go to these dancing-houses. Then, to those who are not the children of the poor, and who do not go to these dancing-houses, I would say a few words about dancing—as few as possible. I ask them this question—when they were taught their duties to God, did

they never hear about a virtue which is called Christian modesty? Now, I ask another question—Did they ever see any dances which were in accordance with the virtue of Christian modesty? There could be no mistake about the matter. The thing spoke for itself. The blush they felt the first time they saw these things, and the voice of their own conscience, told them that these dances were not in accordance with Christian modesty. Eccus. xxxii, "*Go not in the way of ruin.*"

VIII. The Midnight Wake.

A PRIEST in London had occasion to go out about midnight to visit some one who was dying. On his way he met a little girl about seven years of age standing in the street and crying. "What is the matter?" he said to the little thing; "why do you cry?" The little child lifted up its hand and pointed to a window where there was a blaze of light, and said, "They are keeping a wake in that room, and they have turned me out into the street!" Matt. ix. Jesus Christ went to the house of Jairus, to raise to life his daughter, a girl twelve years of age, who was just dead. He found that they were keeping a wake round the dead body. He stopped at the door, and would not enter the house till those who were keeping the wake had been put out. Eccus. xxxviii. "*Make mourning for him—according to judgment.*" Is it not a scandal, that, when the soul of a person has but just departed from the body, and gone to its last account before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, there should be amongst his friends drinking, and dancing, mock marriages, and things shameful and disgraceful, going on around the dead body.

IX. Races and Fights.

PLACES where there are races, or fights, or the like, commonly swarm with bad company, and they are not the places for those who have the fear of God, and wish to keep out of temptation. Eccus. xxxii. "*Go not in the way of ruin.*"

Sunday Amusements.

IT is not a sin to amuse yourself when the amusement is not sinful, and does not keep you away from some duty. But I ask a question of those who know anything about this matter. Is it not true that those who spend their Sundays in gambling, card-playing, pitch-and-toss, smoking, music-saloons, dancing-houses, and the like, are generally the worst characters? Do you

know among your acquaintance one single boy who goes regularly to Mass and the Sacraments, and is at the same time a Sunday gambler. Besides, those who give themselves to these amusements become so fond of them that they have no time to go to Mass, and they waste on these amusements the money which should buy bread and clothes for their little brothers and sisters. Little boys and girls must not play together at rings or forfeits, neither is it proper to see them mixed up in swinging-boats and the like. Eccus. xxxii.—"*Go not in the way of ruin.*"

X. Children in the Factory—Forty-nine Girls Converted.

EVERY one knows that the mills and factories of these countries are full of dangerous occasions of sin; nevertheless, by a sort of miracle of Divine Providence, there are many young persons employed in the factories who keep themselves from sin, and lead a good Christian life, as Lot was kept from sin in the midst of Sodom. There were about fifty girls who worked together in one room in a large factory in the north of England. One of them only was a Catholic and she led a good life, and attended to her religious duties. The rest were Protestants. These Protestant girls, during their work, were always talking most wickedly, saying words which ought not to be named amongst Christians. The girl who was a Catholic never joined them in this wicked conversation; when she had occasion to speak to the others, she spoke kindly and charitably to them, but she never spoke a bad word. The others took notice of it. They were offended at it; they thought it strange (2 Peter, iv.) that she did not speak the same bad language as themselves. They asked why she was not as the others. She answered that she was a Catholic, and that the Catholic religion forbids people to speak bad words. They began now to persecute her. "They who live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution." They teased her, and mocked her, and were always speaking in her hearing the most abominable words they could think of. What did this girl then do? She answered them by silence and patience. When she was reviled, she did not revile. 2 Peter, ii. Still she spoke kindly to them, never allowing herself to be provoked or losing her temper, and so she went steadily and quietly through her work. Many and many a time unknown to them she was saying in her heart, "Jesus and Mary, help me." A year had passed and a wonderful change had come. Every one of those Protestant girls was become a Catholic. How was it? Those girls had talked among themselves. They said to one another, what a wonderful religion the Catholic religion must be, how good it makes people! How patient this Catholic girl is when we do her an injury. If we say bad words to her, her only answer is to

cast her eyes down on the ground. Matt. vii. "*By their fruits you shall know them.*" The Catholic religion must be the true religion. So they all became Catholics! Go, my child of the factory, and do you in like manner. Some of the factories, without doubt, are much worse than others. Therefore, avoid working in those factories which have a bad name, for "*evil communications corrupt good manners.*"—1 Cor. xv. But in almost every factory there are bad words spoken, and bad actions, and bad example.

XI. Five things to be done in the Factory.

1. BE particularly on your guard, at the time when those who work meet together, just before going into the factory, for there are always amongst them some who are very wicked. 2. In like manner be on your guard when you come out, and take great care whom you walk home with. 3. You will certainly hear many bad words in the factory; you cannot shut your ears, but at least shut your heart against them, and take no notice of them, and if you do so you will be free from sin. Ps. cxl. "*O Lord, incline not my heart to evil words.*" 4. Never for a moment suffer any one to do anything to you which Christian modesty forbids. 5. Girls in factories, or employed anywhere, are admonished to be particularly on their guard about clerks, inspectors, overlookers, masters, &c., for they have been the means of bringing many girls to ruin. Dan. xiii. "*Iniquity came out from them that seemed to govern the people.*" Those who work in the factory are sometimes *caught* by the ropes, or wheels, or pulleys and so they sometimes lose their fingers or arms, or even their lives. But let them be still more afraid of being *caught* by the devil. Ps. ix. "He lieth in ambush that he may *catch*." Remember that when you commit a sin you are caught by the devil. If you commit a venial sin, it is like losing a finger; if you commit a mortal sin, it is like losing your life. Those who work in a factory are also recommended to say a *Hail Mary* every day when they go into the factory, that God may keep them from these accidents.

XII. The Temptations of Servants.

MATT. x. "*A man's enemies shall be they of his own household.*" Servants are warned that they may find themselves in the most dangerous occasions of sin. These dangers arise sometimes from masters in whose service they are. Dan. xiii. "*Iniquity came out from them that seemed to govern.*" Sometimes it comes from men, especially young men, living in the same house with them. These temptations are the more dangerous for servants,

because when they come, a servant cannot always easily go away and leave her place, either because she has been hired for a certain length of time, or because she has nowhere else to go to if she leaves her place. Listen, poor servants, and learn what you must do if you are tempted. 1. Let girls, especially young girls, not go into service in a house where there is no mistress. 2. Ask the priest, consult your confessor. Prov. ix. "Hear the instruction of thy father." 3. If it is necessary to speak to the person who has tempted you, be very short and distant with him—do not be *alone* with him. When Susanna was tempted, "nobody was there."—Dan. xiii. 4. If temptation comes from those living in the same house, let the servant make it known to the master or mistress that it may be stopped. If, however, the temptation comes from the master himself, let the servant tell her mistress of it. 5. Pray fervently. 6. If the servant still feels her weakness, and she remains in danger of falling into grievous sin, there is but one thing to be done, and that is, to leave the house altogether. Jesus Christ says (Matt. v.), "If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off."

XIII. What has the Servant got to say.

A SERVANT wishes to speak. Let us hear what she has to say. "I am in a situation," says the servant, "I am tempted in the way you speak of, and I should be glad to leave the house, but if I leave it, I shall lose three months' wages." Poor servant, which do you value more, the three months' wages, or the salvation of your immortal soul, redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ? Give up your place, and your three months' wages, and save your soul, and God will give you eternal wages in the kingdom of heaven. Another servant has something to say: "I also," says this servant, "am grievously tempted in the house where I live; but if I leave it, I have neither a home to go to nor friends to receive me. I should have to die in the street." Poor servant, your case indeed is a very hard one; let us see what can be done for you. First of all, you will do your best to find another situation *as soon as you can*. If there is no remedy, and you are in great danger of losing your soul in that house, then you must positively leave it, whatever it costs you. It is better to lose your place than to lose heaven. It is better to have no place at all than to have a place in hell. It is better for your body to die by hunger than your soul to die by mortal sin.

What about Mass on Sundays?

IF you are in a place where you can seldom or never hear Mass on Sundays, or go to the Sacraments, you must get another situation as soon as possible. Therefore, it is well, *before* you take any situation, that you should speak to the master or mistress about going to Mass every Sunday, and if they cannot allow that, ask to go every other Sunday, or at least frequently. If they say that you can never go to Mass on Sundays, *do not take the place*.

XIV. Those who Herd or Work in the Fields.

MANY children and young persons are hired in the country to herd or take care of the cattle, or to work in the fields. Great numbers of them are to be found in the north of England, and in Scotland, and in Ireland, especially in the counties of Donegal and Derry, and in the Lagan. They are often amongst very wicked people, and sometimes *alone*. They often hear very wicked words and songs. They must try to keep at a distance and pay no attention to such wicked words. If they are with people who tempt them to do what is *very wicked*, they should try either to keep out of the way of those who tempt them, or else to leave their place. Girls who work in the fields should try to keep together, and work by themselves. Before their parents allow them to be hired, they should make an agreement with the master to let them come to Mass on Sundays, and to the Sacraments at least sometimes.

XV. Mary the Dress-Maker.

THERE is scarcely any employment in which there is not some particular occasion of sin. Take for example, dress-makers or milliners, and the same may be said of clerks in an office. A certain girl called Mary went to be a dress-maker. She worked in a room along with a number of other young persons. They were obliged to sew for many hours every day, and as the work was tedious, they tried to amuse themselves. Their amusement was talking about the most shameful things, in language not fit for any Christian ear. One of them would take a book out of her pocket, and read it aloud while the others worked. What sort of a book was it? A novel or a romance of the very worst kind. The other girls laughed at what they heard, but Mary blushed and kept her eyes fixed on her work. Her conscience told her that if it went on she might perhaps become as bad as the others, so she went and told the mistress about it, and asked her to put a stop to it. The mistress, however, paid no attention to her complaint. What then was she to do? She

could not shut her ears. She took care never to join in their evil conversation, and listened to it as little as she could. She made up her mind to leave her place as soon as she could find another. It seemed that God blessed Mary for her good conduct, for within a short time she met with a much better place. What has been said about bad language amongst dress-makers, may be said also of tailors. The spriggers working in Ireland in their camps, especially the weans, should not suffer any one to be with them who speak bad words; they should occupy themselves with singing pious songs, and take care to keep boys and fiddlers out of the camp.

Those who carry baskets, oranges, apples, grit, sand, pipe-clay, &c., will remember that, in going about to sell, they are in danger of falling in with all kinds of bad company, and therefore they need a great grace from God to save their souls.

XVI. The Polishers.

The great danger for boys who polish shoes is losing Mass on Sunday mornings, and learning what is bad from sailors, &c., when they polish their shoes. The blessing of God will not be on that polisher who would rather get a penny for polishing a pair of shoes than go to Mass.

Betsy and the Ship.

A SHIP came to the quay-side of a certain town, and stayed there for some months. A washerwoman in the town engaged to wash for the sailors. Once a week she sent her daughter Betsy to fetch the things belonging to the sailors to be washed. Betsy was a very good girl till the time when she began to go to the ship. But when she went to the ship she used to talk and laugh with the sailors. Every week she became more and more acquainted with them. The end of it was, that Betsy became one of the most wicked girls in the place. Her mother found it out at last, and then she repented of having sent Betsy among the sailors. But this repentance came too late; the evil was done, and could not be undone. The same misfortune happened to another girl, who used to go and sell oranges among the sailors. Once for all girls are warned to keep away from sailors. Eccus. xxxiii. *"Go not in the way of ruin."*

Towns in which there are barracks of soldiers always feel most bitterly the consequences of it. Parents are cautioned for God's sake not to let girls go near a barrack.

XVII. Lonesome places—Markets and Fairs—Errands, &c.

PROV. vii. "Not bearing to be quiet, not able to remain still at home. Talkative and wandering, now abroad, now in the streets, now lying in wait near the corners." Girls will avoid being in lonely places far off from others, and especially being alone there by themselves, in such places as lonely roads, fields, woods, the sea-shore, and the rocks out of sight of people. Gen. xix. "*Arise, get you out of this place.*" If they go out at night, or in the dark, without the knowledge of their parents, let them be afraid of meeting that devil *who walketh about in the dark.*—Ps. xc. If they have to go to markets or fairs, or what are called in England wakes, they will remember that they are in the midst of much dissipation and temptation, bad companions, public-houses, whisky-shops, dancing-houses. They will take care, especially if they come *out of the country, not to return late*, for fear lest on their way home they should be caught in the dark, or fall into bad company. Beware of bad pictures in shop windows or elsewhere. Girls are recommended to move out of the way when they have to pass on their road those who do not seem to have the fear of God or Christian propriety about them. Eccus. xxvi. "*On a daughter keep a strict watch.*" Parents should have great prudence about sending girls alone on errands and messages, for experience has shown that they are sometimes sent to persons who are the occasion of great harm to them, and children in these cases will generally be afraid to tell their parents. Eccus. xi. "A stranger shall overthrow thee." Parents are also recommended not to send their children to mixed schools of boys and girls, in those places where the priest has provided separate schools. St. Alphonsus recommends parents not to send girls to a school taught by a master, at least when there is a school taught by a mistress. If it is necessary, then there must be a greater watchfulness over them.

It is clear that there are many occasions in which girls have to make visits, when it is highly proper that they should not go alone. So, for example, the common sense and practice of the world show, that there is a great propriety in having some one with them when they visit or are visited by doctors, surgeons, &c.

XVIII. Keeping Company.

THE SHAWL THAT WAS FOUND.

ONE day, about five o'clock in the afternoon, a policeman was walking along the bank of the river Thames, in London, near the docks. It was a part

of the river where there were very few houses. As he went along, he saw a shawl lying on the ground, close to the water. He picked the shawl up and looked at it. He saw that it was a girl's shawl. He wondered how the shawl could have come there. He thought, perhaps the girl might have dropped it as she was going along. Then he thought, that perhaps the girl it belonged to might have been drowned in the river. He went and got some persons to help him, and they searched the river. They pulled up something heavy out of the water—it was the dead body of a young girl. The hair was dark, and the head without any bonnet on it. The dead body was carried off to a public-house, called the "King's Head." There was a coroner's inquest held, to try and find out how the girl got drowned. As nobody had been there when she was drowned, they could not find out whether she had drowned herself, or whether some one else had thrown her into the water. At last they thought of searching her pockets. They found in her pocket a letter written to her aunt. A copy of the letter is given here. It will be seen from the letter that this girl was a Catholic, that she lived in Ireland, that she left Ireland, and came over to London, to her aunt and uncle, *to better herself*. And how she bettered herself will be seen in the letter! When she came to London, she got into bad company. By going into bad company, she brought some misfortune on herself. When this misfortune had happened to her, she made up her mind to drown herself. She wrote a letter to her aunt, to tell her what she was going to do. She then put the letter into her pocket, and went to the river, and threw herself into the water, and was drowned. Here is the letter:—

XIX. The Letter.

"DEAR AUNT—Remember me to father and mother in Ireland, and tell them that—I am no more! Farewell, aunt and uncle, for I am gone away, and fast asleep! It was *bad company* that made me be here. Aunt, keep this letter, and do not forget me, for I will come to you, but do not be afraid of me! Farewell to you, aunt, and to my little sister, Fanny, too, for I am no more. It is in the deep water that you will find me! No more forever—no more—no more! Aunt—aunt, my heart! Aunt, remember me, and think of me when I am fast asleep, and the fishes are watching round the dead body of Hannah Kelly, of Kilhaventown, Ireland. Aunt, remember me to all my companions, *that I may be a warning to young girls never to go into bad company.*"

Oh Hannah Kelly—the fishes watching round your body! Tell us—tell us, *what sort of fishes* are watching round your soul now? And you, young girls, let Hannah Kelly be, as she herself says, a warning to you! On the sea-shore they stick up a great pole on the top of the rocks, to warn the sailors to go

away, lest they should be shipwrecked. Let then the dead body of Hannah Kelly, taken out of the water, with her black hair hanging down, be a warning to young girls, *never to go into bad company*.

XX. What is to be done about Company-keeping.

YOUNG men, do not keep company with young women. Young women, do not keep company with young men. Prov. xxvi. "When the wood faileth, the fire will go out." For children, it is proper that boys should play with boys, and girls play with girls.

Hear what St. Alphonsus says about company-keeping: "Young men and young girls," he says, "fly from it. In the beginning the devil does not tempt you with bad thoughts, but when the affection has taken root, it will not allow you to see what you do. Almost without knowing it, you will find that you have lost your soul, your honour, and your God. How many innocent young persons does the devil get hold of in this way!"

A young person wants to ask a question.

LET us hear what the young person has to say. She says: "I am going to be married to that young man. I should like to know if what you say about company-keeping is for me?" The young woman has asked her question. St. Alphonsus will answer her question.

The answer of St. Alphonsus so this question.

"YOUNG woman," says St. Alphonsus, "if you are going to be married to that young man, I will tell you what to do. First, try as much as you can not to be *alone* with him, especially at *night*, or in the *dark*, or in *secret*, or in *lonesome places*. Try not to have *long conversations* with him, or take *long walks* with him. Secondly, if you want to see him, or speak with him, it is well that *your parents or some other well-conducted person should be along with you*."

XXI. The young person speaks again.

SHE says: "As I am thinking of being married to him, I want to know him—I want to find out what sort of a person he is?" Young woman, hear this: "You say that you want to know what sort of a person he is before you get married to him. This is right. But tell me which is the best way to find

out what sort of a person he is? Is it by talking a great deal with him? No. Do you think that if he has a bad character he will tell you of it? It is more likely that he will just then have a lie on his tongue to deceive you. He will flatter you, and make a promise to marry you—a promise which, perhaps, he never means to keep! Hundreds and thousands of young men have promised to marry young women, and when they had led them into sin and shame, they broke their promise and went away! The best way to know the character of a young man is not to ask *him* about it, but to ask those *who know him*."

XXII. The Beginning of Ruin.

LET no girl for a moment suffer anything to be done which is contrary to Christian modesty, for example, such as *catching*, or *pulling about*, &c. Some girls only laugh when this is done, but those who allow such things, may be sure that they will be caught and pulled about by the devil. Girls who allow such things, are not fit to go to the Sacraments, and they will never be good for anything. It is quite certain that this catching, pulling about, &c., is the root and the foundation of all evil, and they who do it or allow it, are at the beginning of ruin. Therefore, you boy, you young man, never dare to do such things; God will strike that hand which thus leads others to destruction. Matt. v. "*If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off.*" And you, young girl, young woman, if you meet with those who behave thus to you, do not receive it with a stupid laugh, as some do; never bear it for a moment, never allow it; show at once that you will never allow such a thing, and for God's sake keep out of the company of those who behave so. A certain girl always said she did not like such things, and yet she went freely into company where she knew there would be such behaviour. This girl was guilty of sin, because she wilfully exposed herself to the danger of such things.

Do not receive letters or presents which you know your parents would not wish you to receive. Girls who are poor will be most suspicious when things are given to them, at least by strangers whom they know nothing about, especially if he who gives it tries to lead them away somewhere.

XXIII. The Dying Company-Keeper.

LISTEN to a history told by Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice. A young girl was walking one day along the road. It happened that a young man passed her. He asked her which was the way to some village, and she pointed the road out to him. He then got into conversation with her, and talked with her

for about half-an-hour, and then left her. When the young man was gone away, the girl thought to herself how agreeable it was to talk to that young man. She determined to go to the same place the next day, thinking that perhaps the young man also might come there again. So it happened; the young man overtook her as he did the day before. Another conversation took place. After this they were frequently, constantly meeting one another. The parents found it out, and forbade her to be taking those long walks alone with that young man. She paid no attention to what her parents said to her. In like manner the parish priest spoke to her about it, but she did not mind what he said. So the matter went on. Some months afterwards the girl had a great illness. The doctor came, but all his remedies were of no use. The girl was in a dying state. It was time to think of her soul, and that she should be prepared for death. Accordingly the priest was sent for. The priest entered the room where the dying girl was, and said to her, "My poor child, you are going to die, and what will become of your soul? You were cautioned over and over again by your parents about keeping company with that person alone, and sometimes in the dark, about meeting him so often, having such long conversations with him; and I myself told you how dangerous it was." The girl burst into tears, and said, "Oh father, I now see how wrong it was; I am sorry for it and I will never do it again." The priest was most happy to find the girl in such good dispositions. He heard her confession, and gave her the last rites of the Church, which are given to dying persons, and went away. When the priest was gone, she sent word to her father to ask him to come up stairs, she wished to speak to him. The father came to the bedside, and asked her what she wanted to say to him. "I have been thinking, father," she said, "about that young man. I would like him to be sent for, and in his presence I will tell him that I give up his company for the time to come." The father did not altogether like this; but, however, as she seemed to wish it very much, and he thought it might make her conscience more easy, the young man was sent for. The young man having received the message, came to the house. He walked up stairs, and went into the room where the dying girl was, and the devil, it seems, came into the room along with him. He walked across the room till he came near the bedside. At this moment the girl raised her head a little from the pillow. She was dying. She looked for two or three moments on the face of the young man without speaking. At last she said, with a trembling voice, "My dear boy, I am dying, and I must tell you that I always loved you, and now I love you ten thousand times more. For your sake I have given up my duty to God, and I know that for the love of you, I shall have to go to hell; but I do not care for that; for the love of you I am willing to be damned forever in hell!" This was her last breath, she

fell back on her pillow, she was dead, and her soul was gone before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ. In hell, what a change—she hated that boy, and would have torn him in pieces! Poor girl, what a pity she sent for that young man. It was the very last moment of her life. She was in good dispositions to die, but the occasion of sin came back to her like a spark of fire on gunpowder. An evil thought came into her dying heart; she gave consent to it, and died instantly. Who, then, will ever dare to say, "I will go into the occasion of sin, but I will not sin?" This girl put herself into the occasion of sin for what really seemed to be a just reason; and still, although it was the last moment of her life, and she had just received the Sacraments, she fell into sin.

XXIV. The Mixed Marriage.

A YOUNG woman had a practice of going to the dancing-houses. One evening in the dancing-house she made acquaintance with a Protestant young man; they danced and talked with one another. The time passed on and it was getting late. The Protestant young man asked her if she would marry him. She was silent for a few moments. She remembered very well she had often heard the priest say, it is a very bad thing for Catholics to marry Protestants, or those of any other religion—that God does not bless these marriages. No matter; she answered "Yes"—she promised to marry him. What else could you expect in a dancing-house? The evil-spirit of the dancing-house moved her to give that answer. That Angel Guardian whom God had given her to take charge over her in all her ways (Ps. xc.) was not with her. How could he go into a bad dancing-house? So even if she had thought of saying a short prayer to her good angel, before giving that important answer on which her future happiness or misery depended, he was not there to listen to it; but she never thought of it. They do not think about these things in dancing-houses. Before the marriage the young man made many fine promises how she should go to Mass every Sunday, and he would go with her, and the children should be christened by the priest, and brought up Catholics, and very likely, he said, he would become a Catholic himself. This marriage took place—a dancing-house marriage! She was married to the Protestant young man.

XXV. After the Marriage.

It was a bright sunshiny morning, the morning of the marriage, but there were dark clouds not very far off. The Protestant young man behaved pretty

well to his wife for a few months. It is true he quarrelled with her sometimes, he forgot his promises, and beat her because she wanted to go to the Catholic chapel on Sundays. He sometimes threw her Prayer-Book into the fire, and spoke against the doctrines of the Catholic Church. She was silent and patient; she knew that it was a just punishment from God for marrying a Protestant. Wisd. xi. *"For by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is punished."* That marriage had been made, and it was too late to unmake it. At last the dark cloud came. The Protestant young man came home one day to his dinner. He sat down to the table and began to eat. The meat was not to his liking. There was sulky anger on his face. He was silent for a few moments. At length he stood up on his feet, holding the knife clenched in his hand, fury and rage flashing from his eyes. He cursed his wife, and said, "You Popish beast, I will stick you with this knife, and take every drop of Popish blood out of you." The wife turned deadly pale; she fell off the chair; her senses were gone with the fright. She got back her senses again, but it was only to live for a day or two. She died of the shock which the fright had given her! "And now your reverence," said the sexton, "she lies buried here under this wall, where the ivy grows, and it is just a year since she was buried." So ended the dancing-house marriage. So ended the marriage of a Catholic with a Protestant. Those who care about their own happiness will never marry those who are not Catholics. Jos. xxiii. *"Know ye for a certainty that if you make marriages with them, they shall be a pit and a snare in your way, and a stumbling-block at your side, and stakes in your eyes."* The church of Christ abhors these marriages. The Bishops of the Church raise their voices against these marriages. Where persons cannot agree about the most important of all things—Religion! will they agree in other things? 2 Cor. vi. *"What agreement hath the faithful with the unbeliever?"* What can be expected from such marriages except a life full of bitterness and dispute? How can the children of such persons have any true religion, when one parent is always pulling down what the other builds up? So we see by experience that mixed marriages are seldom happy marriages, and that the end of them is generally unfortunate, because they are not according to the will of God or with his blessing. As Catholics are recommended to marry none except those of their own religion, so they are recommended to marry none who are drunkards or of bad conduct; if they do, they will most likely have reason to repent it, when it is *too late*.

XXVI. Running Away.

GEN. xxxix. Joseph of old, met one day with a sudden and unexpected temptation. The person who tempted him came upon him *suddenly and unexpectedly*, when he was not thinking of it. What did he do? Did he talk to that person? No. Did he stop where he was? No. Then what did he do? He opened the door and he ran off; *he flew away* as quick as his feet could carry him, and he did not give over running till he was far away. But when he was now far off from the person who had tempted him, he remembered that he had left his coat behind him. He wanted his coat. What could he do without his coat? It was necessary for him. People would laugh at him to see him without his coat. Did he go back to fetch it? No. Why not? Because he knew that although his coat was necessary for him, still the salvation of his soul was far more necessary, and he feared that if he went back into temptation a second time, even for so good a reason as to fetch his coat, perhaps God might not give him grace to resist the temptation a second time. My child, God has given you feet, therefore if sudden temptation come upon you, make use of your feet and run away as fast as they will carry you.

Roaring out.

DAN. xiii. Some wicked people came to tempt Susanna, when she was not thinking of it at all, and she was *alone* in the orchard! What did she do? Did she run away? No. She could not run away; the door was locked. What then did she do? She began to *cry and roar* as loud as she could, and so she escaped from the wicked people. My child, if you are not able to run away from sudden temptation, has not God given you a tongue to cry out with? It is true that if you were suddenly dragged into sin, without meaning or intending, and doing all you could against it, then it would be no sin for you. The persecutors, by force, thrust flesh into the mouth of a holy man on Friday, but he did all he could against it, and it was no sin for him. The great thing is, to avoid all persons, and things, and places, which may be the occasion of grievous temptation to you. Eccus. xxxii. "*Go not in the way of ruin.*"

XXVII. The Dumb Creature—The Cripple.

PROV. vii. "*Immediately he followeth, as an ox led to be a victim.*" You boy, you girl, who let yourself be led into sin by another, you say, to excuse yourself, "*Oh, he put me up to it.*" Did God, then, create you a fool, an idiot,

without understanding to know that what he puts you up to is bad? Did he create you a dumb creature without a tongue, that you cannot answer "No" to one who asks you to do evil? Did he create you a lame cripple, that you cannot walk off about your business when you find yourself where you are tempted to evil? Eccus. xii. "Who will pity an enchanter struck by a serpent, or any that come near unto beasts? so it is with him that keepeth company with the wicked, and is partaker in their sins."

The Bears.

BUT perhaps you will say, "I will go into bad company, but I will not do as they do." Did you ever hear about the prophet Elias? He was bald, he had lost the hair of his head. One day he was travelling to a town called Bethel. When he came near the town, some little boys came out, and when they saw that he was bald, they began to mock him, and called him "Bald-head." Almighty God was angry with these little boys, because they said such bad language to the prophet. So God made two bears come out of the wood, and these bears tore forty-two of the boys in pieces. Very likely all these boys had not mocked the prophet, but only some of them, still God let the bears tear them all in pieces, because they were all in bad company. 4 Kings, ii.

XXVIII. St. Teresa.

ST. TERESA was a very good child. Now hear what she says about the harm which bad company did to her. "I would advise," she says, "fathers and mothers never to let their children go into company which is not good. I know it from experience. The company of a girl who was a relation of mine did me much harm; I took great pleasure in being with her, in talking with her about vain and foolish things, and in sharing her amusements. Her conversation changed me so, that all my good dispositions went away, and I found that I had in me all the bad dispositions of my bad companion. So I lost the fear of God." It happened that her father found out what was going on, and he sent her to a convent, where she soon got back those good dispositions which she had laid aside when she was with her bad companion.

Then, my child, *keep away from bad company*. Prov. i. "If sinners shall entice thee, walk not with them; keep thy foot from their paths." But perhaps you are obliged to work in a factory, or office, or shop, or with others where very bad things are said. Then, 1. Never join in the bad conversation. 2. Listen to it as little as you can.

BAD BOOKS.

XXIX. The Book that never stopped.

A BOY heard of a bad book. A wicked companion told him of it, and said that he would learn a great deal by reading it. This boy happened to see the book offered for sale and bought it. He read it. The reading of this book made him a thoroughly bad boy. He no more said his prayers or went to chapel. He frequented the most wicked company he could find. He went from bad to worse. He lost his faith, and said that he believed there was no God. Ps. xiii. *"The wicked hath said in his heart, There is no God."* He died in despair, cursing most frightfully the boy who had told him of the book which ruined him. The mischief of that bad book did not stop with his death. He had lent it to others to read. Many of those to whom he had lent it became bad themselves and ruined others; and where the evil of this one book stopped. or whether it ever stopped at all, God only knows!

Anna Missteens

A GIRL called Anna Missteens finished her education and left school. She heard of a certain novel. Everybody, she was told, read it and talked about it. She thought that she also must read it, that she might be able to talk about it. It would give her also, she heard, a great knowledge of the world. She met with this novel, and began to read it. She read it with great delight, and when once she had begun it she scarcely ever left off reading it, day or night. Her prayers and other duties were forgotten. When she had finished this novel, she got hold of another and read it, and then another. So she went on. She would no longer do what her parents bid her; she cared no more for her religious duties. Her whole employment was to sit with her feet on the fender, and poke the fire and read novels!

XXX. The Policeman.

THERE was a young person, the wife of a policeman, who had lived happily for several years with her husband and her young children. It happened that the works of a great Scotch novel writer came out in monthly parts. She met with them, and began to read them. She took such a delight in reading these novels, that she neglected everything else, and spent her whole time in reading them. Her husband seeing that she paid no attention either to the house or the children, began to frequent the public-house, and soon

became a drunkard. As the wife employed herself in reading novels, and the husband spent his time in the public-house, they soon got into debt and could not pay. The end of this novel-reading was, that the husband lost his situation, the family was ruined, everything they had was taken for debt, and they became beggars in the wide world.

St. Teresa.

ST. TERESA was a saint even in her childhood. See what bad books did for her. "It happened," she says, "that there were some novels and romances in our house. I began to read them, and I gave myself up entirely to this reading. Then I forgot my duties, and thought only of these novels, and I fell into many sins. I began to take a great pleasure in dress. I took great pains to appear nice and well-dressed. I loved perfumes and scents, and such like vanities. So I remained many years not knowing the harm there was in it. But now I know well that there was great harm."

XXXI. The Devil's reasons.

IF you get hold of a bad book, the devil will be sure to put some reason into your head why you should read it. A person was very sorry to see that a certain bad book was doing so much harm. He thought he would read it, that he might be better able to speak against it. So he read the bad book. The end of it was that instead of helping others, he ruined himself. The devil will whisper into your ear that a bad book will *give* you a knowledge of the *world*! It will give you a knowledge of *hell*, and lead you there. What, then, must be done about bad books? Is. lvii. "*Take away the stumbling-blocks.*" 1. All bad books, and bad newspapers, and journals about very bad things, should be burnt in the fire, lest through them you should come to burn in the fire of hell. 2. It will do you no good to read novels and romances, while it may do you much harm. 3. In reading any book, if you find something which it is not proper to read, leave it out and do not read it. Ezech. xx. "*Let every one cast away the scandal of his eyes.*"

Which are Bad Books?

THERE are six sorts of bad books. 1. Books which are plainly about very bad things. 2. Many novels and romances, which do not seem to be so bad, but often are bad. 3. Idle books, which do no good, but take people's minds

off what is good. 4. Bad newspapers, and journals, and miscellanies. 5. Superstitious books, fate books, &c. 6. Protestant books and tracts.

XXXII. The Midnight Scream!

THERE was a certain boy who went into bad company. He was taught by one of his wicked companions to commit a very wicked sin which he never knew before. A year or two passed, and still he went on committing this sin. One night he awoke out of sleep. He began to scream frightfully. His people came round him to see what was the matter. They asked him why he screamed. They could not get any answer from him. They told him to pray. At last he spoke, and what do you think he said? "Woe," he said, "woe to that bad companion who taught me that sin. It is of no use for me to pray. I see hell open ready to receive me." With these words on his lips, he died!

XXXIII. The dangers of Emigration.

THOSE who leave their country and go to America, England, Liverpool, London, Australia, California, &c., meet with two great occasions of sin. The first is, neglect of their religious duties, and the loss of their holy faith. This happens two ways. A family goes out, for example, to America. Then they go to live in some part of the country, far away from the chapel. They do not go to Mass or the Sacraments, fast days are forgotten, all is forgotten, and they become like the heathens, who had no religion at all. The children are sent to the neighbouring school, where there is no religion taught at all; but the greater part of those at the school are Protestants, and so the Catholic children soon become Protestants. In a few years all in the family are either heathens or Protestants, and thus thousands and thousands of Irish Catholics have lost their faith by emigration. Take another example. A family goes from Ireland to London or Liverpool. After they have come to England, it is perhaps half-a-year before they know whereabouts the chapel is. At last, having found the way, they begin to think of going to Mass next Sunday. While they were talking about it, in comes Biddy, their next-door neighbour, and, hearing that they have a design to go to the chapel on Sunday, she says, "And sure you will do no such thing; and sure all the English girls, if they saw you walking through the streets on Sundays without shawls and bonnets, would not they laugh at you? So then it is fixed that they shall not go to Mass till the girls have shawls and bonnets. But the shawls never come, so they never go to Mass. Christmas and Easter come, and they remember that they ought to go to Confession. In Ireland, the priest came to the stations and

heard their confessions on their townlands near their houses. But in England it is not the custom for the priests to come to stations, so they never go to confession.

XXXIV. History of Rose Anne.

THE worst about emigration has yet to come. Listen to it, young girls, who think that you will be better off by leaving Ireland, and going to another country. If you do not know it now, perhaps the knowledge may come too late. Give ear, then, to the history of a young girl, whose name was Rose Anne, who left Ireland and went to London to *better herself*. Her father and mother thought she would get on better than in Ireland, and perhaps get a good situation. She was a good child in Ireland, saying her prayers, and going to the Sacraments, and keeping out of bad company. When she set off from Ireland, she had very little money, not much more than enough to pay her passage. She had no acquaintance in London, except one Maggy M'Gouran, an acquaintance of her mother's who was thought to be living somewhere about London, whereabouts exactly, nobody knew. One cold, dreary November evening the boat in which Rose Anne was sailing came into the London docks. Rose was cold and sick, sick of the passage, and already sick of emigration, and wishing a thousand times that she had stopped in dear Ireland. But she was now in London, standing on the quay side, and holding in her hand a bundle which contained all she had in the world. It was time for Rose to find out where Maggy M'Gouran lived. Two or three times she tried to speak to some strangers, who were passing, to know where Maggy could be found. These persons paid no attention to Rose, but hurried along on their way. But all this while there was an eye fixed on Rose, it was like the eye of a demon, but she knew it not. At length a stranger came up to her. It was he who had kept his eye glaring upon her. "It is a cold night," he said to her gently, "perhaps you come from Ireland." "Yes," answered Rose, "and I begin to wish that I had never come to this country." "Where are you going to-night?" said the stranger. "I am going to Maggy M'Gouran's," said Rose; "perhaps you know the way, and could just show me which road I must take—a thousand thanks to you if you can." "It would be impossible," said the stranger, "to find out to-night where that person lives, and it is getting dark; but I should be happy to find a lodging for you, where you will be most kindly treated." "But how can I pay for my lodging?" said Rose, "I have but a few halfpence remaining." "No matter," said the stranger, "do not trouble yourself about that, all will be right, so come along with me." The man seemed to take an interest in Rose, and

spoke to her so smoothly, that she said to herself, "Sure these English are not so bad after all." She followed her guide, through a variety of streets, alleys, and courts, till they came to the house where she was to lodge. It was a large house, in a low situation, not far off the river. The stranger gave a loud knock at the door with the rapper, and it instantly opened.

XXXV. What became of Rose Anne.

ROSE entered, and found herself in a comfortable house, much more so than any she had been in when in Ireland. Still she felt something which she could not account for. It seemed as if something in her soul whispered that she ought not to be in that house; perhaps it was the voice of her angel guardian. She had tea and spirits set before her. No more was heard of Rose. Maggy M'Gouran had indeed received a letter from Ireland, mentioning the arrival of Rose in London, and Maggy had gone in search of Rose. She had even found out the vessel which brought Rose to London, and from the captain she learnt that Rose was safely landed on the quay, but beyond that she could learn nothing. One day, an acquaintance that had known Rose in Ireland happened to be passing through a street not far from the river Thames. In that street there was a house, well known to all the neighbourhood. That house had the name of being as wicked as hell itself. It happened that at the moment when Rose's acquaintance was passing, the door of that fearful house opened for some one to come out. Who was it that came out? It was Rose herself. Rose's acquaintance could hardly believe her own eyes. Could it be Rose? she thought to herself. Yes, certainly it was. She went up to Rose; and said, "How is it you are living in such a house as this?" "Oh," said Rose, "I know well enough what sort of a house I am living in, but it is now too late to know it. I was deceived!" "But," said her acquaintance, "leave this place directly. Come along with me, I will send you back to Ireland." "No," said Rose, "it is impossible—it is too late. I should be ashamed now to go back to Ireland. I could not now bear to face my own people again." Such was the situation Rose got by leaving Ireland and going to London.

Fathers and mothers, is this bettering your children? is this getting a situation for your daughters to get on in the world?

XXXVI. Stay in Ireland.

If what happened to Rose happened seldom, what has been said would be enough. But the streets of London, and Liverpool, and New York, and

California, and Australia, tell of hundreds and hundreds of poor creatures, of whom, like Rose, Ireland might once be proud, and who are now a disgrace to the earth. Fathers and mothers of Ireland, are you stark mad to send over your daughters thus to certain ruin? Better it would be by far that your children should stop in Ireland, and work in the fields, or at the sprigging, or at anything, and get their little wages, and eat their bit of meal of stirabout, and keep the holy faith and virtue of their fathers, and save their souls. If, however, you will emigrate, at least go somewhere where there is a chapel, where you can go to Mass and the Sacraments, where your children can be brought up in the faith of their fathers, the religion of Jesus Christ. Above all, do not send your daughters into another country alone by themselves. Make yourself certain before they set off, of every step they will take the moment they put their foot on shore, who will meet them at the quay side, where they are to go to, what they are to do, how they are to employ themselves. Do not expose them to those gangs of miscreants and villains, who with the eyes of devils are on the watch at the quay sides, looking out for their ruin. But ruin does not always come to the emigrants from the quay side: sometimes they find it in the ship in which they sail.

Ruin at New York.

THE following account came in one of the newspapers. In the summer of the year 1857, about 120 girls went from Ireland to New York in America. They all sailed together from Liverpool. When this ship came to New York, what do you think became of these girls? Twelve of them left the ship and got situations; the rest, that is 108 of them, came to a most unfortunate and miserable end. They remained on board the ship; some of them had got acquainted with the sailors and other persons during the passage; others, it is said, were kept there by force and shut up. What then became of them? In the course of a few days they were landed, a few at a time, and sent to places where, in a short time, they lost their characters and their souls. Young girls of Ireland, if this is emigration, may God keep you from emigration! Eccus. xxxii. *"Go not in the way of ruin."*

XXXVII. The Company-keeper and the red-hot Ghost.

LISTEN, my child, to the following history, and you will learn what comes from company-keeping. What I am going to tell you has been handed down from parents to their children in the place where it happened, and that is all that is known about the truth of it. There was a certain young man who kept

company with a girl. It happened one day that this young man persuaded the girl to commit a very grievous mortal sin. It is true, he made her a promise which he never meant to keep. The girl died suddenly on the evening of the same day. Death came upon her when she was not expecting it. So she died in mortal sin without repentance. She went before the terrible tribunal of Jesus Christ in this unprepared state, and she heard the terrible but just sentence against herself. It was but as it were the twinkling of an eye since she breathed out her last breath, her friends were hanging over her body to see was she dead or not, and already her soul was in the flames of hell for all eternity. It was midnight, and that boy who had been the occasion of sin to that girl was fast asleep in bed; his hardened conscience, as you may suppose, did not trouble his sleep and keep him awake. But suddenly he started from his sleep and opened his eyes. What was the matter? He looked through the gloom of the midnight across the room, and he saw the door opening, and there came in a red-hot flaming ghost! The fiery phantom walked across towards the boy, and as it came onwards that boy's heart was beating with fright: still the red-hot flaming figure came nearer and nearer to the boy. Then, with fright, the hair stood straight up on his head, the sweat poured down his face, and his tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth. And now that red-hot ghost was come close up to the boy. What did he do? With violence he drew his tongue down from the roof of his mouth, and spoke thus: "Who are you?" he said. Then the red-hot ghost answered thus: "O wicked boy—I am—I am the soul of that girl led by you this day into mortal sin. I died this night, and this night, by the just and terrible sentence of God, I have been condemned to burn in the flames of hell for all eternity. O wicked boy, when you awake to-morrow—to-morrow morning, perhaps you will rub your eyes and say that it was only a dream, but I will leave you a sign, and to-morrow when you shall see that sign, you will know that it was no dream." There was a table standing close beside. Then that ghost waved its red-hot flaming hand through the air, and that hand went down on the table, and the flaming fingers burned deep into the table, and there remained on that table finger-marks left there by a soul which by the permission of God, had come up out of hell, to teach young people the danger of keeping company. Then that unfortunate soul was turning round to go away, but it stopped a moment and spoke again. "Wicked boy," it said, "I go back to hell, never to leave it again; I go to lie down on a bed of fire, from which I shall never, never rise but once, and that once will be when you come to hell. I will watch for you, and when I see you put your foot into hell, I will tear you to pieces as a wild beast tears its prey, and I will let you know what it is to ruin forever a soul redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ." This history has

been handed down from parents to their children. Let young people learn betimes the danger of company-keeping. There were two young people keeping company as they ought not, and in one moment a flash of lightning came and struck them both dead, and they went straight before the tribunal of Jesus Christ to answer for their bad company-keeping. Eccus. xxxii. "*Go not in the way of ruin.*"

XXXVIII. The Last Word.

ONCE more then, keep away—keep away from public-houses, whisky-shops, gin-shops, dram-shops; keep away from dancing-houses, and singing-houses, and saloons; keep away from races and fights, and be on your guard at markets or fairs. Cast into the fire bad books, fortune-telling books, and fate books. Keep out of that company which is so dangerous for you; turn your back on that person, do not speak to him any more. Put an end to that letter-writing which has done you so much harm, burn those letters which you keep so carefully, destroy that portrait which brings so many bad thoughts into your mind. There was a lighted candle standing on a table. A little fly came flying near the candle and began to fly round the light. Every moment the fly went nearer to the light. At last the poor fly fell into the light and was burnt to death. You say that fly had no reason, no sense to see the danger, therefore it was burnt to death. But God has given you my child, reason, and sense to see where danger lies, therefore make use of your reason and keep away from the danger, for he that loves the danger, shall perish in it. One day a ship sailing on the sea, was dashed up against a rock and broken to pieces. The sailors saved their lives by swimming. When they reached the land, the first word they said was—"We will take care in future to keep away from that rock, and not go near it again." My poor child, that person—you know whom I mean—is a rock to you, for your soul has often suffered the shipwreck of mortal sin in his company. Therefore keep away from him. One cold frosty morning in December a little child was warming its fingers at the fire; the child was so eager to warm itself that it fell against the hot bars and was dreadfully burnt. The child said afterwards, I know what I will do in future, *I will keep away* from the fire and not get so near to it again. Therefore, as the burnt child dreads the fire and keeps off it, so do you keep away from that temptation which is a fire to you.

Keep away—keep away—keep away! Eccus. iii. *"He that loveth the danger shall perish in it!"*

THE END.

THE HOUSE OF DEATH.

I. The House of the Dying.

Mary was living at Limerick, a large town in Ireland. She had been for a month at the sea, and had just come back home. It was only a few minutes after her return when a message came to the house. The message was from her aunt, to say that her cousin Jane, who had long been poorly, had become much worse, and Mary was desired to go over to her aunt's house to see her cousin. Mary put on her bonnet, and was soon at her aunt's house. She went up stairs into the room where her poor cousin was lying on a bed, from which she was never to rise again alive. The priest had already come and given to her the last sacraments. She found several persons standing round the sick-bed. They did not speak, but they looked, sometimes at Jane and sometimes at one another, as if they were afraid to say what they thought. Suddenly the door-bell rang, and a moment afterwards footsteps were heard on the stairs. The door opened, and the doctor came in. He had been sent for in haste by the parents of Jane, as soon as they saw the change in her. Those who are sick are glad to see the doctor, because they think he can cure them. But when the doctor came to the bed-side, Jane scarce took any notice of him. Her eyes were dim, and perhaps she could not see him. The doctor looked at her for a few minutes without speaking. Then he took out his watch, and counted the beatings of her pulse. He soon saw what the matter was. Jane was dying! Ps. xvii.—"The sorrows of death have compassed her." The hand of death was upon her. There could be no mistake. Job xiv.—"Thou shalt change his face and send him away." The face of Jane was becoming every moment paler and paler—her hands and feet were quite cold, her lips blue, her eyes glassy, her pulse scarcely beating. "She is dying," said the priest; "let us kneel down and say the prayers for the agonizing."—Eccus. xxxviii.—"Comfort him in the departing of his spirit." The scapular and blessed medal which Jane wore round her neck were arranged nicely; her rosary beads were put round her arm, and a little cross, blessed for a happy death, put into her hand. II. Near the bed was a small

altar, on which were lighted candles, a large cross, and a picture of the Blessed Virgin. The altar was placed where it could easily be seen by Jane. She was sprinkled with holy water, and then the priest began to read the prayers of the agonizing over the dying child. "Go forth," said the priest; "go forth out of this world, O Christian soul, in the name of God, the Father Almighty, who created thee—in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, who suffered for thee—in the name of the Holy Ghost, who sanctified thee—in the name of the angels and archangels. O merciful God, look down on thy servant Jane, and hear her prayer, that all her sins may be forgiven. We recommend to thee, O Lord, the soul of thy servant Jane, for whom Jesus died. Remember, O Lord, that Jane is thy creature, not created by other gods, but by thee, the only true and living God. Although thy servant hath sinned, yet she hath not denied the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but she believed in thee and adored thee. May the heavens be opened to her, may the angels rejoice with her. May the angels come forth to meet her, and lead her into the heavenly paradise—may all the saints of God pray for her." The priest then quietly and gently said in her hearing the Four Great Truths.—"1. There is one God. 2. In God there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. 3. God the Son, the second Person, was made man, and died to save us. 4. God rewards the good in heaven, and punishes the wicked in hell." Then he said an act of Contrition: "O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against thee, because thou art so good, and I will not sin again." Then he said an act of Resignation: "My God, thy will be done. I am willing to die, because I deserve to die for my sins—I am willing to die, because it is thy will." It is true the dying child *seemed* not to have sense to know what the priest was saying, but the priest knew well that these are most important prayers to be said in the hearing of a dying person, and he knew that often when the bystanders would think that a dying person has no sense, such prayers go deep down into the soul. The priest had finished these prayers, and there were a few moments of silence. Suddenly Mary started; something had frightened her. Her poor cousin's breathing had changed. Her breathing now became like the sound of running water when it meets with something that stops it. People call it the death-rattle. It is the way of breathing of those who are dying. The day-light which now, for the last time, fell on the pale face of the dying girl seemed not like other daylight, it seemed sad and mournful—it was the Shadow of Death! All at once a deep, deep paleness passed, quick as a flash of lightning, over the face of the dying child. This was death! Jane was dead—her soul was gone. Is. xxix.—"It shall be in an instant suddenly." "Let us kneel down," said the priest, "and pray for her soul." Thus the priest prayed: "Come forth, O ye

saints and angels of God, receive her soul and offer it in the sight of the Most High. We recommend to thee, O Lord, the soul of thy servant Jane, that being dead to this world she may live to thee; and whatever sins she may have committed through human weakness, do thou in thy merciful goodness pardon, through Christ our Lord. Amen. Eternal rest give to her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her—may she rest in peace. Amen."

Once more Mary looked at her cousin. There was her body lying dead; but her soul, where was it? It was gone into the house of her eternity, to give an account to Almighty God of all her thoughts, words, and actions. She had left all behind her, father, mother, brother, sisters; sight, hearing, speech, money, playthings. Wisd. v.—"All these things have passed away like a shadow—as a ship which passes through the waves, of which, when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found." She had taken nothing with her except the good or evil works she had done. Mat. xvi.—"He will render to every man according to his works."

III. The Death-Chamber.

The next day Mary went again to her aunt's house. As she came near it she lifted up her eyes. There was something strange about that house, which made those who passed by the way look up at it. Few people went in or came out of it. No one was to be seen at the windows looking out. At each window a white blind hung down. One window only was a little open. No noise was heard in that house—everything about it seemed so still and silent. It was the house of death! Mary has gone into the house, let us walk with her up stairs, and go into the death-chamber, for perhaps we may there learn a lesson which it will be worth our while to remember. The room is rather dark, almost painful to the eyes of those who come out of the bright daylight; perhaps it is because they think a person would be too much shocked if he saw all at once what there is in that room. The people who are there move about gently and softly; if they speak it is only in a whisper, as if they were afraid they might waken that child which has slept its last sleep! Through the darkness you see something white. What is it! It is a bed covered with linen, white and glittering. On that bed lies the dead body of Jane. Close to the bed there is still the little altar before which she died, the lights shine down from it upon her pale face. Come near and look at the dead body. Fix your eyes upon it, it does not open its eyes to look back at you. How pale it looks, how quiet, how silent. You might almost think it was going to breathe again, but it will never breathe any more. What a change there has been in this house.

Only a few days since there was music and rejoicing, feasting and talking, and merry laughing. Perhaps there has been some great preacher here. Perhaps by his sermon he has changed that house of joy into a house of mourning. Yes, a great preacher has been in that house, and that preacher is—Death! His sermon is not yet finished. Listen, for he is still preaching. "Look," he says, "look at these sunken eyes—look at these hollow temples, at these breathless lips—look at this hair still wet with the cold sweat of death—look at this body stiff and without motion, lifeless like a piece of clay." "Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and into dust thou shalt return!"

IV. The Grave.

A few days later Mary paid another visit to her aunt's house. But she did not find just the same silence there as before. The moment she entered the house she heard a sound like that of knocking, in the room of death. The joiner had been sent for, and had measured the dead body. Then he went home and made a black box—a coffin for Jane—and when he had made it he brought the coffin to the house. The brothers and sisters of Jane were crying because they had been told to look once more, and for the last time, at their poor little dead sister, just before the coffin was shut up for ever. And now the joiner was nailing the lid down on the top of the coffin, and this was the knocking heard by Mary when she came into the house.

Any one who had passed the house that evening would have seen that it did not look as before. The white blinds were no more to be seen at the windows. Poor Jane had been carried to the church-yard, and she was deep below the earth in the grave, waiting for the worms, and waiting still after that for the archangel's trumpet, which, at the end of the world, will call her body out of the grave, to be for ever bright and beautiful if she was good, but frightful and shocking if she was bad.

V. In the midst of Life we are in Death.

What happened to Jane may happen to you next year, or even this year. Perhaps even this month, this week, this day, the shadow of death may come upon you. Death comes like a thief in the night, when we are not expecting it. Prov. xxvii.—"Boast not of to-morrow." In Liverpool there was a good boy, who came every day to a mission given to the children. He had received

his communion ticket. On the Saturday night before the general communion the instruction had begun, but that boy had not come to the chapel. This was strange, because he had always been so regular and punctual in coming to the mission. The instruction was over, and still the boy was not come; but a messenger had come to ask for prayers for the poor boy. What was the matter? He had set off for the chapel, his ticket for communion was in his pocket. While on his way there was a noise behind him, as of wheels rattling on the stones. Most likely the boy did not hear the noise. A cart was coming quickly along the street. The cart was nearly up to the boy, and still he heard it not. The cart had passed the boy, and in passing it threw him down, and went over him. He was taken up from the ground—dead! So, in the midst of life we are in death! How swiftly death passes on. Now it comes and takes away the baby, then it takes away the child, then it comes to the young, then it strikes down the strong man—then it takes away the old man whose hair is grey. Every day death takes out of the world 80,000 people, and every year 30,000,000 of people are laid in their graves. Job vii. 5.—"My days have passed more swiftly than the web is cut by the weaver."

VI. When will you die?

Heb. ix.—"It is appointed unto men once to die." God has fixed the year when you will die. What year will it be? You cannot tell exactly which the year will be. But you may know something about it. When you are dead they will write a letter to tell your friends of it. In the letter they will write the four figures of the year of your death. What will those four figures be? You know the two first, 18— but the two last you do not know. Neither can you tell whether you will die in the cold winter, when the snow whitens the ground, or in the green spring, when the leaves unfold themselves, and the flowers are so beautiful, or the warm summer, or in the autumn, when the fruits are ripe. Which day of the week will be the day of your death? You do not know whether it will be Sunday, or Monday, or Tuesday, or Wednesday, or Thursday, or Friday, or Saturday. You know not the hour when you will die. But that long finger which goes round the face of the clock, each hour of the day while it is going round points to the moment of your death. Matt. xxv.—"Watch, because you know not the day or the hour."

VII. What may come.

St. Ignatius says, that sometimes when a person is near death, and he makes strange and frightful faces, and moves his hands about, people think that he is out of his senses; but, in reality, it is the frightful temptations of the devil which frighten him. Job. vii.—"Thou shalt terrify me with visions." Blessed Leonard says, it is the common opinion, as many of the holy fathers say, and many histories tell us, that when people are dying, they see the devil with their eyes.

St Martin, in his last sickness, raised his head a little to look at the heavens. He kept his eyes fixed for a while on the blue sky. A few moments afterwards the people saw that there was fear and trouble on his face. He was no longer looking at heaven, he was looking at something else—something near him, something most frightful! What was it? It was his adversary the devil, "who goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." — 1 Pet. v. 8. Then St. Martin spoke to the devil. "Why," he said, "O cruel beast, have you come here—you will not find here anything which belongs to you." Having said these words he died; and the angels came and carried his soul to heaven.

Blessed Eleazer fell into his agony, the last struggle betwixt the body and the soul before death. He was seen to be covered with a cold sweat, and trembling from head to foot. Suddenly he started up, and looking as if he was frightened out of his senses. With a terrible voice he said three times: "Oh, if men only know how cruelly the devils fight against the soul at death!"

VIII. On the last night of the life of Venerable Berchmans, he said: "I know that during this night I shall have to fight against a great temptation." He got ready for the temptation by prayer, and especially by praying to the Blessed Virgin Mary, who, by her power, crushes the old serpent that tempts us. It is not known what his temptation was; but the greatness of it might be known by his fright and trouble. For some moments he seemed to have fallen asleep. All at once they were surprised to see his face red as fire, and his eyes looking up to heaven! He cries out in a fearful voice: "No, I will not do it; my God, I will never offend you. Mary, my holy mother, do not let me offend your Son, Jesus Christ. I would rather die a thousand deaths." He said these words over and over again, and with such a loud voice that he was heard over the whole house. They came running into the room to see what was the matter. They kneel down and begin to pray for him. Then he took his Rosary, his Rule of Life, and his relics, and said: "These are my arms—with

these I will fight against the devil." Soon after the temptation seemed to leave him; he looked happy, and died the death of the saints.

St. Alphonsus says, that when any one is at the point of death, the house is filled with devils, who come to ruin the dying person. Apoc. xii.—"The devil is come down, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time." It is said of St. Andrew Avellino, that at the time of his death, ten thousand devils came to tempt him. The struggle he had was so great, that all who saw it trembled with fear. His face swelled and became black, his head and all his limbs shook, and tears ran down from his eyes. In a little while the saint was seen to turn his face towards a picture of the Blessed Virgin. Then all his fright went away, and bowing down his head before Mary to thank her, he breathed out his soul in heavenly peace.

IX. The Ruling Passion strong in Death.

"As people live, so they die. The death of the wicked is very evil."—Psalm. It is the last night of the sinner's life Luc. xii. 20.—"This night they require thy soul of thee." The sun has gone down for the last time for him—he will never see it rise again. His life is like the sand-glass, when the sand has almost run out. To-morrow he will be in the other world. Look at him, how troubled he seems. What is the matter? He sees something which frightens him. What is it? All the sins of his past life are rising up before his eyes—there they stand round him, they show themselves to him; they look frightful—he never knew till now how frightful they are. But amongst these frightful forms, there is one which looks a thousand times more frightful than the others. It is called "The Ruling Passion strong in Death." It is that one great sin which he committed so often, week after week, year after year. It was during his life a deadly serpent living in his heart. But listen! the sinner is speaking to those frightful things which are round him. "Who are you?" he says, "where do you come from? what do you want?" They answer him and say: "We are the works of your hands, O sinner—we are the sins you committed—we have come here for you—we wait here till you breathe out your last breath, and then we will go along with you." Then that monster, "the Ruling Passion strong in death," seizes hold of the sinner. He tries to get away from it, but he does not know how, for he never tried before. He cannot bear the frightful sight of his sins any longer. He turns to the other side, that he may see them no more, but there is something else for him on the other side. There is a sound like the breathing of some tormented creature. It is the voice of the enemy of God and man—the devil. Hearken,

the devil whispers something into the ear of the dying sinner: "Oh, sinner," he says, "as people live, so they die! I am the spirit of evil, the tempter—God will not have mercy on you; you obeyed me on earth, and you shall obey me in hell. I wait here at your bedside till you die, to take you to hell! Apoc. xii.—"The devil has come down, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time."

X. What is He Doing?

Why does not the sinner do something to save his soul? Look at him. No prayer comes from his lips, he does not lift up his eyes to heaven. But why does he do nothing? Why does he not examine his conscience? why does he not make an act of contrition? why does he not ask to go to confession? Does he not know that he should be doing these things? Surely he must know it very well; but still he does not do them. Why not? I will tell you. He did not do these things when he was well, and now when he is ill and dying, and when he has half lost his senses he finds it very difficult to do them. Perhaps you do not know how difficult it is for him who is dying to do anything for himself. In the valley of Josaphat, on the east side of Jerusalem, there is a grave. It is the monument of a young man who lived about three thousand years since. He was strong and handsome, his hair was long and beautiful. His name was Absalom. He had been frightfully proud, and disobedient to his father. One day his face was very pale—he had been fighting against his own father. And now he was trying to get away; he was riding fast on a mule. There were three soldiers coming after him, with spears in their hands. They wanted to kill him. He rode fast to get away from them. On he went; his long beautiful hair was flying about in the wind. Now, he was passing under a great oak tree, and his long hair was caught by the branches, and there it fastened itself. See how people may be ruined by their vanities. While he hung betwixt the heavens and the earth, the mule passed on, and left him hanging there. He saw that a soldier was near him, with a spear pointed at his heart to kill him. But he had a sword by his own side; why did he not take it out and cut his hair, and get away from the soldiers? Why?

This question has often been asked—why did he not take hold of his sword—why did he not cut the hair which fastened him to the tree—why did he not save his life? Listen, you that lead a wicked life, and think you will repent when you die. This is the answer: "Being near death he was frightened; he forgot, he did not think about what would save him." So it is

with the sinner when he is near death; he gets frightened, he forgets, he does not think of those things which might save his soul.

XI. Perhaps You are Deceived.

There is some good person whispering an act of Contrition into the ear of the dying sinner. The sinner's lips are moving, he says the words which he hears. That is good, perhaps God will have mercy on the poor sinner when he sees him making an act of Contrition. But perhaps you are deceived. It may be that the dying sinner is saying the words with his lips only. Does the act of contrition come from his heart? Because sometimes people pray only with their lips and not with their hearts. "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." Those who think that the dying sinner is praying from his heart, may be mistaken. Blessed Leonard mentions two children who were dying, one of them had been very good and the other a very bad child. The priest offered the crucifix to each of them. The good child spit at the crucifix, and turned away from it; the bad child took hold of it and pressed it with its hand. The two children got well again. The priest asked the good child why it had behaved so ill to the crucifix? The child answered, that being almost out of its senses, and not knowing what the crucifix was, it feared it might be a temptation of the devil. The other child answered that it pressed the crucifix with its hand, because its hand was hot, and it wanted to cool it.

XII. The Pointing Finger.

In the Russian Empire there is a town called Odessa. From this town there came one who afterwards became a holy missionary, and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to the poor. In the same town there was living one whose wicked life was a scandal to the people. The missionary left the town for a while and went elsewhere. It happened that he afterwards came back again. On his return he inquired about the wicked man—was he still living? "No," the people answered, "he is dead." "How did he die?" said the missionary, for he well knew that "as people live, so they die." His death was frightful, they said. They then told him what happened at the wicked man's death. When he was dying some of his friends stood round him. He gave no sign that he hoped for the salvation of his soul. A short time before he breathed his last breath, he looked much troubled. Job. xxi.—"His eyes shall see his own

destruction." He began to point with his finger. Sometimes he would point at the foot of the bed, sometimes he would point at a chair or a table, or at the trees which could be seen through the windows. The people who stood about him looked at the things he pointed at, but they could see nothing. They wondered what was the matter. At last some one whispered into the ear of the dying man, and asked him why he pointed so with his finger at the chairs, and tables, and trees. "I see there," he said, "things most frightful." Then he put his hands over his eyes and said: "I cannot bear to look at them, it is so terrible to see them." "And what do you think," they said, "those terrible things are which you see?" "I know," he said, "well enough what it is I see. They are devils waiting till I die to take my soul." And so he died, troubled by the evil spirits, as the wicked Saul also was troubled by them. 1 Kings xvi.

XIII. The Drunkard's Death.

It was midnight. In a miserable garret on the third storey in one of the courts of London, a poor woman was kneeling and praying for her husband. He needed her prayers, for he was a drunkard. He was a good workman, and he had once been a kind father and husband. But he became acquainted with bad companions, who led him to the public-house. From that time he was a changed man. He went no more to mass or the sacraments. If you sought him at night he was always to be found in the public-house. Those who employed him often turned him off on account of his drunkenness. The furniture of his house had been sold to buy drink. His children were in rags, and they would have been hungered to death, if Willy, the eldest boy, had not managed to work for them. Many a time his wife on her knees had asked him to leave the public-house, but she got nothing but a bitter curse or a hard blow. One time when he was drunk he had stabbed his son Willy. Willy got better, but his work was very hard in an iron foundry, and within a year after his drunken father had stabbed him, he sickened and died. This man continued to be a drunkard, the ruin of himself and his family. The punishment of God on this drunkard was delayed; God often warned him by what his wife and children said to him. An evil life is punished by an evil death, and the evil death came at last.

It was the night mentioned in the beginning of this history. Midnight had passed, and he came home—drunk. His head was bleeding and his face swollen; he had been fighting with his drunken companions. When he came into the room and saw that his wife had been waiting for him, he said

roughly to her: "Why are you sitting up and wasting the candle? I daresay you want to tell the neighbours about me. If you do not go to bed directly I will murder you." "You are hurt," answered his wife, kindly. "I will get some vinegar and bathe your face with it." The man said once more, "I will murder you." The wife sank back on the chair in a fainting fit. The drunken man stood over her with a face as if it were the face of the devil. He howled like a wild beast, sprang upon her, dashed her on the floor, kicked her with his iron-shod shoes, and then stamped on her! The neighbours heard the noise, but were afraid to go in, for they knew what sort of a man he was. They heard him come down stairs, open the door, and go off. They then entered the room, where they found the poor woman lying on the floor senseless; the blood was running from her mouth and nose. The priest was sent for, and when he came, found her just dying. She had lived a good life, having gone every fortnight to the Sacraments. She had suffered patiently for the love of Jesus the ill-treatment of her husband, and now when she was dying of that ill-treatment, she made no complaint; she forgave her husband. She received the last sacraments, and died in peace.

XIV. The next night a good woman was sitting up watching the dead body, and praying for the departed soul. About eleven o'clock she heard the tramping of feet coming up stairs; she knew the sound—it was the footstep of the murderer. The footstep came on—it stopped a little way off the door. Then it came close to the door and stopped again. The handle of the door turned round, and the door opened a little—a frightful, a horrible face showed itself. It was the face of the murderer. The woman was too frightened to speak or scream. The eyes of the murderer rolled about and wandered over the room, as if looking for something. At last they fixed themselves on the woman. The man then strode into the room, his heavy footsteps sounding on the wooden floor. He then stood still and said: "Woman, where is my wife?" The woman's fright had passed away. She rose up, and pointing to the dead body of his wife lying on the bed, she said: "There, drunkard, there is your murdered wife!" The drunkard dashed himself down at the bed-side, and fixing his eyes on the dead body, he said: "She is dead! she is dead! my God, what have I done?"

Then he screamed a long terrible scream, and those who heard it will never forget it till their dying day. He threw up his hands, he dashed them down again, his eyelids went up, his lips parted so that all his teeth could be seen. A deep paleness came over his face, and he fell on the floor senseless. The woman screamed for help. The neighbours came in, they lifted up the drunkard, who now began to rave like a madman. The priest was sent for. When he came, he found the drunkard laid on the bed, from which the dead

body of his wife had been taken away and laid down in a corner of the room. Six strong men were holding him down, hanging with their whole weight on his limbs. From time to time he started up and shook these strong men off him as if they had been only infants. The great iron key which locked the door had been put betwixt his teeth, that he might not bite his tongue in pieces, but they could hear the sound of his teeth grinding it. The priest was obliged to leave; next day the priest came again to him. He was terribly changed; he had his senses, but his flesh was dried up and his skin blackened by a burning fever. His arms were fast in a strait waistcoat, as it was dangerous for him to be loose. There was a dark ring round each of his eyes. His lips were withered and covered with a brown crust, the white of his eyes had become nearly red. The sight of him made those tremble who saw it, for it was despair! The priest spoke kindly and gently to him; "My good man," he said, "you are dying; your life is coming to an end; you will soon go before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ; repent, then, of your sins while you have time. "Repent!" answered the drunkard; "is it to me you talk of repenting? No—repentance is not for me, I am damned—damned for ever. All last night I saw my murdered wife and boy, standing by this bed and threatening me; sometimes they pointed with their shadowy fingers to the corners of the room, and there I saw the spirits of hell mocking at me. Sometimes those damned spirits crowded round my bed, and bent their hateful faces over mine; but I was tied, and could not get away from them; then they would grin and laugh at me, and tell me how they would meet me to-night in hell. No, there is no mercy for me—it is too late!" The priest spoke to him again of the mercy of God, how the sweet Jesus had died to save him, how Mary is the refuge of sinners; but it was all of no use.

He made no confession. He said he could not, he would not repent. His blasphemies were too horrible to be told; it seemed as if the devil was speaking by his tongue. Sometimes he would call on those about him, to hide him from his wife and boy, whose ghosts, he said, haunted him. Then he would sing a few words of a bad song, or talk as if he was in the midst of his bad companions. Then he would roar out in fearful agony, shouting aloud, as none but a sinner dying in despair can shout, that the devils were coming round his bed to take his soul to hell, and that he saw the blue flames of hell rising up before his eyes.

It was just midnight; the window was open; the heavy bell could be heard through the still air, striking the hour; then the drunkard gave a long terrible howl, and died!

XV. The Drunkard's Coffin.

In the year 1857, the coffin of a drunkard was opened at a coroner's inquest. The coffin was made of lead, and a hole was bored through the lead. Immediately a smell most sickening and abominable came out of the coffin through the hole. This smell made those who were present sick and vomit; the smell went over the whole house. It was long before any one could bear to be in the house, although all kinds of things were burnt to take the smell away. A week afterwards the smell was so frightful, that the floors of the house had to be scraped; some parts of them had to be taken away entirely. The walls had to be scraped and fresh papered, and the wood-work painted over again. The coffin was opened, and what a sight they saw! The dead body looked most frightful; one eye was open, the other shut. The cheeks were so dreadfully swollen out, that they touched each side of the coffin. The mouth was partly open, and seemed to grin at them! The legs also were dreadfully swollen, so that the coffin could scarcely hold them. Oh, that the drunkard could see what he will come to when he is put in the coffin. Oh, that he could see his body as it will be after the resurrection, far more frightful than in the coffin. Oh, that he could see his soul, which will be ten million times more frightful than his body. Poor children, if you have drunken parents, say the Hail Mary for them every day, lest they should take you to hell along with them.

XVI. The Useless Search.

Listen again, you that neglect confession, while you are well and strong, and think that you will set all to rights by going to confession when you are dying. It is about two hundred years since there was a certain gentleman living in the north of England, in Yorkshire. He led a very bad life, and he knew that those who lead a wicked life deserve to go to hell. He wanted to be bad during his life-time, and still not to go to hell when he died. So he began to think how he might lead a wicked life, and still save himself from hell after all. He thought that he had found out a way to save his soul after leading a bad life. When I am dying, he thought, I will repent and send for the priest, and make my confession, and then all will be right. But then he remembered that if he had to send for the priest when he was dying, perhaps the priest might not be at home, or perhaps his illness might be very short, and the priest could not come soon enough to hear his confession. He was frightened when he remembered that perhaps he might die before the priest

could come. So he thought of another plan. He thought he would get a priest to come and live always in the house where he lived himself, so that at any time he could send for the priest in a moment. This thought pleased him very much, for he felt sure that if a priest was always living in his house he should be quite safe. But he forgot these words, "as people live, so they die." He forgot that he was offending God very much, and that after all, how we shall die depends entirely on God.

XVII. A year or two after this his last illness came, and it came upon him very suddenly, when he was not expecting it. He felt that he was dying, so he told his servants to go and fetch the priest to hear his confession. The priest was in the house, and the servants went directly to find him. They went first of all to the priest's own room, which was next to the room in which the gentleman was dying. For in order to be more sure that the priest would be near the gentleman when he was dying, the priest's room was next to the room of the gentleman. Well, the servants went first to the priest's own room, but they could not see him there. They went through the whole house, into every room in the house, from the highest to the lowest room, but they could not find him anywhere. They called out his name all over the house; but there was no answer to their call. So they went back to their master, and told him that the priest was nowhere to be found. Then that gentleman saw how he had been deceiving himself, despair came into his heart, and he died without hope of salvation.

A few moments after this gentleman had died, the servants happened to go again into the priest's room, and there they saw the priest! reading the prayers in his office-book. "How long," they said, "has your reverence been here?" "I have been here all the morning." "Did you not go out of the room any time?" "No," said the priest, "I have not been out for one moment." "Did you not, then, see us come into this room two or three times, or hear us calling out your name?" "No," said the priest, "I did not see any one come into this room, or hear any one call out my name."—"As people live, so they die."

XVIII. The Confession Not Made.

There was a girl in London, who had been brought up by the nuns in the convent-school. She afterwards left this school, and engaged herself in some employment. It seems likely that when she was at school, she had concealed some sin in confession, which she was frightened to tell. After leaving school she never went to confession any more. She did not live long, for she

died a few years afterwards. A priest who lived in the neighbourhood happened to hear about her, how she was dying, and would not let the priest be sent for. He thought he would try if he could not do something to save her soul. So he went to the house where she was dying. He began by asking her about her health, and asked if she felt better. She answered that she felt worse, and was sure she was going to die soon. She thought all the time that the priest was only a doctor, so she went on talking about her illness. Then the priest began to talk to her about her soul. She listened to him, and seemed very glad to hear what he said. She then began to talk about her former life, and by degrees she told all the sins of her life, even the very sin she had been frightened to tell in confession. In reality she made a confession of all her sins, and said that she was sorry for them; but all the while she thought she was talking to a doctor, and not to a priest. You may think how glad the priest was—when he found that she was so ready to confess her sins. For really there was scarcely anything more for her to do, her confession was already made. All that was wanting now was to let her know that he was a priest, and for her to make an Act of Contrition for her sins. And this would not be difficult, for she had already said that she was sorry. So the priest now spoke these words to the dying girl: "My poor child, I am glad to tell you that I am not a doctor, as you thought, but I am a priest; you have already told me your sins. All that you have to do now is to accuse yourself of them, make an Act of Contrition, and then I will give you absolution; and your sins will be forgiven, and you will go to heaven." The priest was expecting how glad the girl would be when she found that the difficulty of confession was over. Then he said to her: "Now, my child, say the words after me." Then he began—he said a few words, and waited for the girl to say them after him. The girl was silent, and did not say the words; but she looked very hard at the priest for a few moments. Then she said: "Are you a priest?" "Yes," he answered. "Then go away!" said the girl. "But," said the priest, "it is so easy for you to save your soul; only say a word to God, to tell him that you are sorry for them." Her only answer was—"Go away!" "But, my poor child," said the priest, "the time is short—you are dying." Again she said—"Go away!" The priest felt that there was a hardness of heart in this girl, such as he had never seen before; he felt that God alone could change that heart. So, instead of speaking again, he knelt down and prayed in silence. He prayed most fervently to Mary, the Mother of God, that she would speak to Jesus for that unfortunate child, that she would not forget how that soul had been created for God, and redeemed with the blood of Jesus. The priest hoped that his prayer had been heard, and he stood up again. Then he said: "My poor child, for the sake of Jesus Christ,

and of his mother Mary, I beg of you to save your soul—make an Act of Contrition." Again the girl answered only—"Go away!" "Before I go away, let me ask you one thing more. If I come back again to-morrow morning, will you make your peace with God?" "To-morrow!" said the girl, "I will see." "But," said the priest, "perhaps when I come back to-morrow you will be dead!" "Never mind," said the girl—"go away!" The priest left the house.

Next morning, when he came to the house, he said: "How is the poor girl?" They answered: "She is dead!"

XIX. The Girl asked to go to the Mission.

In a certain town in Yorkshire there was a mission given to the children. One evening during the mission a girl, who was a stranger, came into the town. She was accustomed to go about the country hawking and begging. When she came into the town she looked about for a lodging-house, and, having found one, stayed there for the night. Soon after she had come into the house, the people told her about the mission which was going on, and advised her to go to it and make her confession. Her only answer was: "Confession is not for the like of me." Shortly after she went to bed.

What a pity it is, when people do not listen to good advice. That invitation to the mission, without doubt, came from God. No doubt, God had sent her a warning many times before, and this was the last warning he sent to her. Next morning the girl did not come down stairs; they waited and waited, and still she did not come. They wondered what was the matter. At last they went up stairs, and they found her dead!

The Little Boy Drowned.

During the mission to the children in Manchester, there was a boy about nine years of age, who would not go to the mission. His parents ordered him to go, but he would not go. Some of his companions who went to the mission, asked him several times to come, but he would not. All the children came except himself. One day somebody brought word that the boy was dead. Inquiry was made, and it was found that the boy had fallen into the canal and been drowned.

XX. The Burial of the Wicked; or, the Vision of St. Teresa.

"One time," says St. Teresa, "there happened something which made me wonder very much. I was in a place where a certain person died who had lived badly for many years. For the last two years he had been sick, and seemed in some things to lead a better life. This man died without confession, but still I did not think that he would lose his soul. While, however, his friends were getting the dead body ready for burial, I saw some devils take the body and make sport with it. They were very cruel to it, tearing it with hooks, and tossing it from one to another. I considered how good God is in not letting people see what the devils were doing with it. The dead body was taken into the church. While the priest was reading the prayers, the devils went away from the body. Afterwards, when the dead body was carried out to the grave, I saw great numbers of devils down in the grave, waiting for the body. I thought how cruel the devils would be to the soul in hell, when they were so cruel to the body on earth. If those who commit mortal sin had seen what I saw, I do not think they would commit mortal sin any more. I am always frightened, even now, when I remember what I saw."

XXI. The Death of the Good.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."—Ps. "Perhaps," says blessed Leonard, "You do not know what sort of a grace it is to die a happy death. It is such a grace, that the greatest saints never thought it was their due for anything they had done for God. Even if God had denied a happy death to his own mother, he would have done her no wrong, for it is a grace so great that no one can merit it."

Good Works.

There are some things we do not know the price of till we come to die. To have fought the good fight against the devil—to have said *no* to those who tempted us to sin—to have been patient when we were poor, or sorrowful, or in pain—to have been kind and merciful to many a poor creature; we scarce know the value of these things when death is far off. But when the last hour of life is come, these things look very different, and make the heart feel very joyful.

XXII. The Gates of Heaven.

Think of a traveller who has been on a long journey, travelling many days and months, in frost, and cold, and snow, and rain, and darkness, tired and hungry. How glad he is when he comes in sight of his house, and thinks how he will rest himself. But you do not know how a good man feels when, after years of pains, and temptations, and sorrows, his feet are standing at the gates of heaven, and he is just going to enter into the joys of Paradise. The joys of Paradise are so great, that the eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, and the heart of man cannot understand them.

The Visit of Jesus and his Angels at Death.

Those who have read the lives of the saints, will often have read how, when the good were dying, the angels and saints, and the Mother of God, and Jesus himself, came to comfort them when the spirit was going out of this world, in the midst of the sorrows of death. So the angels came to Lazarus when he was dying. Listen also to what St. Gregory says: St. Peter, the husband of St. Galla, died within one year after they were married. Galla was young, and very rich, and her friends wanted her to be married again. But she wished rather to serve God only. For she remembered that the service of God begins with sorrow, but ends with joy, while marriage begins with joy, but ends with sorrow. She went therefore into a convent near St. Peter's Church in Rome. She lived there for many years, serving God with a simple heart, and with prayer, and doing a great deal of good for the poor. When the time drew near which God had fixed to reward her for good works, a painful cancer began to torment her body. During the night she had always two lamps burning in her room, for she loved not only the light which gives light to the soul, but even the light which gives light to the eyes of the body. One night while she lay awake, suffering great pain from the cancer, she saw the blessed apostle, St. Peter, standing betwixt the two lights. She was not at all afraid. She spoke to the apostle, and said: "Are my sins forgiven?" The apostle, smiling most graciously, answered: "They are forgiven—come." Now, amongst the other nuns in that convent, there was one called Benedicta, whom Galla loved very much. So she said to St. Peter: "I pray that my sister Benedicta may come along with me." "No," replied St. Peter, "not Benedicta, but another," (whose name he mentioned,) "will come along with you. Benedicta will come after thirty days." After this she no

longer saw the apostle. She then sent for the mother superioress of the convent, and told her what she had seen, and what she had heard. On the third day she and the other sister, named by the apostle, died, and on the thirtieth day Benedicta followed them. This history, says St. Gregory, is still told in the convent.

XXIII. The Poor Cripple and the Music of the Angels.

St. Gregory gives an account of another servant of God, called Servulus. He was a poor cripple, living in Rome. He gave all he could to the poor, although he was so poor himself. He could not read himself, but he often asked others to read good books to him. In all his pains he thanked God, and day and night he sung hymns. When he was dying, he said to those about him: "Be silent, do you not hear the hymns of praise and thanksgiving which the saints are singing in heaven?" Soon after this he died.

St. Gregory mentions another person called Romula, who was also a cripple, and could not move her feet. In all her pains, which lasted for many years, she was very patient and good. When she died, some persons were sitting up at her bedside. About midnight they saw a heavenly light shining in the room, and they heard a sound as of many persons coming into the room, so that there was a noise at the door, as if many persons were trying to come through it. Although they saw the light, they could not see any person. There was also a most sweet fragrance in the room, sweeter by far than the fragrance of the sweetest flowers on the earth. On the third day after these things happened, Romula desired to receive the Holy Communion. When she had received it, they heard the most beautiful music—as the music of the angels—at the door of the room, and immediately afterwards the soul of Romula left her body.

No wonder that the angels of heaven, and Jesus himself, come to console the good when they are dying. Has not Jesus himself said it? Did he not say: "I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am you also may be?" John xiv. 3.

XXIV. The Happy Child.

There was a poor, friendless, orphan child. An old Catholic woman, out of charity, had let the child live in her house. The poor child, however, had few of the blessings of this world. Its clothes were miserable rags; in its hunger,

often it had nothing to eat. Little kindness did it meet with from anybody—even the old woman was able to do very little for the orphan, for she was very poor. But there was One above who had been very kind to it. It had lost its father on earth, but it had found a Father in heaven. God had given his grace to the child; he had filled its soul with many blessed graces. He had made it a good child; and to be good is better than to be rich. Morning and night that child lifted up his hands to heaven, and said: "Our Father, who art in heaven." And He who is the God of orphans heard the orphan's prayer. The poor child got its scanty living by trying to sell a few matches. Often as it went on its weary way, it looked up at the blue sky, and thought how it had a blessed mother in heaven. Many were the Hail Marys this child said during the day; and when it said—"Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death"—a thought came into its heart, how sweet it would be to die, and go and be with Mary in heaven. God does not forget the poor creatures whom nobody cares about. It is true he waits till the next life to give them their reward. "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." But still he sometimes sends some little blessing of this world to strengthen the fainting heart. So he made the dogs come and lick the sores of the poor Lazarus. And so he sometimes put into somebody's heart the thought to have pity on this poor child in its hunger, and give it some bread to eat. The orphan never forgot that Almighty God is the giver of all good gifts, and so whenever it got anything to eat, it always made the sign of the cross before and after eating. It never lay its weary head down to sleep at night till it had said its night prayers, and examined its conscience; and the last thing it did at night was to fold its arms in a cross, and say, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul." The child went to confession once every month, and perhaps the priest who heard its confessions was the only person in the wide world who knew how much that little child pleased God. It was never absent from mass on Sundays, and even on week days it went to mass as often as it could. Whenever it was in the chapel, and could get an opportunity, it loved to go and kneel at the rails of the altar of the Blessed Sacrament. Somehow it had learned without being taught, how to say little prayers to Jesus in the blessed sacrament. It would say: "My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the blessed sacrament. I adore you, O my Jesus—I thank you, O my sweet Jesus—I love you with all my heart." How it had learnt these prayers nobody could tell, for it had never been sent to school; but it prayed with a great heart, for greatly did it love Jesus, and it said these prayers over and over again.

XXV. The poor orphan was now about nine years of age. These years had been full of sorrows and pains for the poor child. But these pains did not

come to the child by accident. God had arranged them all beforehand—before the child was born—from all eternity. These sorrows were the road, fixed by God, by which the child was to go to Heaven. God wished to see would the child be good and faithful to Him in all these pains, and if the child was faithful to Him, God intended to give to it a great, a very great reward in Heaven. The nine years fixed by God for the child to live were now finished, and this child had been good and had served its Creator. It was a cold winter evening, the snow and the rain had been falling on the poor child all the day as it went about trying to sell its matches. It came late to the cottage of the poor old woman. It did not feel hungry, although it had scarcely eaten anything during the whole day; but it felt sick and poorly. Next day it was worse, and it got worse and worse every day. At last some neighbour had the kindness to go and seek a doctor. The doctor came, and almost as soon as he had seen the child, he said that it was dying. At the moment when the doctor said that the poor child was going to die, the child's Angel Guardian left it and went away. This was wonderful; for the Angel Guardian had never before left it for a moment in all its life. He had gone with it in all its ways; he had watched over it, and taken care of it; he had consoled it when it was hungry and sorrowful. Why then did the Angel leave it just then, when it was dying? Listen and you shall hear. The Angel Guardian went to the Chapel, where Jesus was in the Blessed Sacrament, and kneeling down before Jesus, he spoke thus to him:—"My dear Jesus, the good little child which you told me to take care of is dying. Be pleased, O Jesus, to come to the poor child before it dies, and give it your blessing for a happy death."

Now, Jesus had not seen the little child in the Chapel for many days, and he knew why the child was not there; He knew very well that the little child was dying, because it was His will that it should die. When the Angel Guardian said this prayer, Jesus turned to the angels—for there are always millions of angels adoring before the Blessed Sacrament—and he said:—

"My dear angels, the good little child which you have seen so often in the Chapel is going to die, for I want to have it in Heaven; but before it dies I will go and give it my blessing for a happy death."

XXVI. Then the priest came to take the Blessed Sacrament to the dying child, as he always takes it to those who are very ill and dying. Now, just at the moment when the Blessed Sacrament was taken into the room where the child was, a most wonderful thing happened. Jesus spoke—He spoke to the heart of the child, and nobody heard him speak except the child itself. He said these words—"My dear child, I am Jesus whom you love. I want you to die and come to Heaven; and now I have come here to give you my blessing

before you die." That child knew how to answer—to speak to Jesus—for many and many a time it had knelt before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and prayed to Him. So that child said these words to Jesus—"O Jesus, God the Son made man, I believe that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament. Sweet Jesus, I love you; and now, Jesus, you know that I am dying, and I want to die for the love of you. Come, then, my dearest Jesus—give yourself to me, and give strength to my poor dying heart. Then the priest gave the Holy Communion to the little child. After that he anointed the eyes, and ears, and other senses of the child, praying to God that in His mercy He would forgive whatever sins the child might have committed by those senses. After each prayer said along with the anointing, the child answered, Amen. In the end, the priest gave the last blessing of the Church which is given to the dying, that they may not have to be punished in purgatory for their sins. It is called Plenary Indulgence.

The last moments of the little child's life were passing away—Death was not far off. What is called the last agony came on. It is the struggle between the body and the soul, when the soul begins to leave the body. It is a terrible sight to see those who are in their last agony. The child's face became as pale as ashes, big drops of sweat rolled slowly down it, the eyes moved about as if the child saw something that frightened it. These were moments of fear, both for those that stood round the dying child, as well as for the Angels above. During those moments all the Angels of Heaven were on their knees before the throne of God; they were praying for the dying child; they said, "O God, have pity on the poor dying child; do not let the devil come and tempt it; give it your blessing, O God, to die a happy death; it believed in you, and hoped in you, and loved you." All was over; the little child was dead. And what do you think happened at the last moment of its life? just when it was going to die, with the very last breath that it ever breathed in this world, it said—"*Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul*"—and the little child was in heaven at the feet of Jesus, and Jesus was putting a beautiful crown on its head, and that blessed prayer was still as it were on the lips of the dead body! And because the soul of the child was in Heaven the Angels came down and sang hymns round the lifeless body of the child, for they knew that it would rise again at the last day, bright and shining as the sun.

XXVII. Some Children who died after the Missions.

The Infant consecrated to Mary.

At the town of Derry, in Ireland, amongst the children who came to the Mission, there was one child, six years old. Every day this child came to the Mission; it did not stop away once. When the children went to confession, this little child tried to get to confession, but there were so many children older than itself, that it was never able to go to confession. On a certain day all the children were consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This was the last time that child came to the Mission. The next day the poor child was very ill, and it was not able to go any more to the Mission. It lived only two or three days, and during this time it never spoke. A few moments before it died, its mother, who was close to the bed-side, saw that its lips were moving. She could not hear what it said. She stooped down and listened more attentively. She heard the dying child say these words, "I am consecrated to Mary, I am the child of Mary—Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul." The mother heard no more, she turned her head to look at the little child, and she saw that it was dead!

The Death Song.

At Blackburn, in Lancashire, there was another little child scarce seven years old. During a Mission given to the children, it came morning and night. About half a year after the Mission it became ill. It grew worse and worse, and at last it died. The Priest had been sent for. When he came into the room where the child was, he found it singing! It was singing one of the hymns it had sung during the Mission. The Priest heard it singing these words:

Infant Jesus, meek and mild,
Look on me, a little child,
Pity mine and pity me,
And suffer me to come to thee.

The moment the child had finished the last words—"Suffer me to come to thee"—it fell back and died!

XXVIII. The Child Burnt to Death.

During a Mission given to the children at Somerstown, in London, a little girl about nine years old made its first communion. About a week after the Mission was over, this child one afternoon happened to be near the fire. By some accident the clothes of the child caught fire. All its clothes were soon in a flame, and the poor child was sadly, shockingly burnt. It was burnt so dreadfully that it lived only for two days. During these two days the poor burnt child was quiet and patient; it made no complaint; whatever pain it suffered, it never got impatient. During the two days this child did nothing but sing the prayers which the children had sung during the Mission. It died on Sunday morning. About an hour before the child died, it was just the time for the children's Mass in the chapel. The little child said to its mother, "Please, mother, might I be carried to the chapel to sing the holy prayers along with the other children." The mother told the child that she was too ill to be carried to the chapel. The poor child remained silent for a short time, then it lifted up its hands, and said: "O Heavenly Father, take me," and immediately it died.

XXIX. What the Prayers of the Children did.

There was a Mission given to the children in another place. One day the parish priest came home, and said that he had brought some sorrowful news. A young man, twenty-five years old, who had made his first communion in the chapel where the Mission was going on, and had been taught at the very school where the children who came to the Mission were going to, was very ill. He was dying of consumption, and was not expected to live more than two or three days. The priest had been to him, and told him that he was dying, and asked him to make his confession. The young man had answered the priest, and said no—that he would not make any confession—that he would die without confession. Next morning, during the holy Mass, the missionary told the children all about it—how the young man was dying—how he had been taught in their school, and made his first communion in that very chapel. "Pray to God for him," said the missionary, "that God may have mercy on his soul." The children said three Hail Marys for the poor young man. Immediately after holy Mass the priest went again to the house where the young man was. The priest found an immense change in the young man. He who the night before would not listen to the priest, and would not make a confession, was now most eager to go to confession. He was completely

changed, he was in the best disposition to die. The priest gave him all the last sacraments. The next day the young man died in the most edifying manner.

XXX. The Little Match-seller.

In one of the poorest parts of London, there was a cellar, with scarce any furniture in it. There was nothing but a broken table, a little stool, a bed with a few handfuls of straw, and a few rags upon it. A poor woman, whose husband died in Ireland, lived in this cellar, with her little daughter Mary. The woman had become very poor, and her health was so bad that she could work no more. She had nothing to live on but what the little Mary got by selling a few matches. But when she became poor, she did not neglect her duties to God. She was at mass every Sunday, and went to confession, and received holy communion every month.

Above all, she took care of her daughter Mary, that she should not go into bad company, that she should say her prayers, and go to mass and catechism, and be good. One day in the winter the poor woman had been very ill, worse than usual. She had scarcely had anything to eat all the day—there was no fire in the grate—the last farthing candle was burning away. Mary sat by her mother's bed-side crying, for it grieved her much that her poor mother should be so ill, and have nothing to eat. All at once Mary left her mother, and went over to the other side of the cellar, and began to seek for something. She had just remembered that there were a few match-boxes still remaining, and she thought if she could sell them she might buy something for her poor mother. After searching here and there, she found three or four boxes. She went back again to the bed-side of her mother with the match-boxes in her hand, and told her mother what she was going to do, and asked her blessing. "God bless you, my child," said her mother, in a weak voice; "I hope I shall see you again." But the mother never saw her child again.

XXXI. Mary had a practice of saying the Hail Mary whenever she went out of the house; and in each street she said either "My Jesus, I do all for you," or the Hail Mary, or some little prayer. She prayed fervently that night, for she knew that if she were to lose her mother, there was nobody on earth to take care of her. When she got into the street, she began to cry out: "Matches—very good matches for a penny." But the snow was falling fast, and the wind blew sharply, and the darkness was coming on quickly. There were few people about to buy her matches; and of those she met, few heard the weak voice of the child, and fewer still paid any attention to it. Mary cried out her matches, till weak, and hungry, and sorrowful, she could cry out no longer. So she sat down on a stone, and began to cry. Then Mary

thought of her mother in Heaven, and again she said the Hail Mary. She had scarcely finished it when a woman who was passing by, stopped and asked her why she sat there so late on that cold stone, and crying. "My poor mother," answered Mary—"my poor mother is very ill, and has nothing to eat." "Poor child," said the stranger; "take this sixpence, and get something for your mother." Mary was going to thank the stranger, but she was gone. Mary bought some bread in a shop, and then went home as quick as she could. She went carefully down the steps into the cellar, and there she saw her mother lying dead, and a priest kneeling beside her! The priest had given her the last sacraments before she died. But how did the priest come there? The poor woman was dying in cold, and in want, and in darkness. She was alone—there was nobody with her to go and ask the priest to bring to her the greatest of all blessings which can come to a soul which is going out of this world, before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ. But God is good, and He is very good to the poor when they have been good to Him. God remembered this poor woman; He remembered how she had always done her best to go to the sacraments, and how she had taken care to bring up her little child in the fear of God. God knew that she was dying, and God said that she should not die without the blessing of the sacraments. But how was this done, for there was no one to fetch the priest? Whatever God wishes to be done is sure to be done. At the same hour when the poor woman was dying, it happened that the priest was called to see some one else who was very ill. The priest set off. On his way he passed the cellar where the poor woman was dying. The door, which opened on the steps leading down to the cellar, happened to be open. The night was dark, and it happened that the priest, not seeing the opening, fell down the steps. He found himself in the cellar, and heard a groan in one corner of the cellar, and going over there, he found the poor woman nearly at the point of death. He had with him everything that was necessary. He heard her confession, gave her the holy viaticum, anointed her, and gave her the last blessing, and a few moments after she died! So God is good to those who are faithful to him. This poor woman had not forgotten God during her life, and God did not forget her at her death. She was dying. She wanted a priest to hear her confession. A priest came to hear her confession. But why did he come? Was it because some one fetched him? No. Was it because he came of himself? No, for he knew nothing about the poor woman. Did he come by accident? No. Then why did he come? He came because God brought him there. God said, the priest has set off to a sick person, but he shall not go to that person. He shall go to the poor woman who has served me faithfully.

CONCLUSION.

Never forget that you must die; that death will come sooner than you expect. Ecclus. vii.—"In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin." God has written the letters of death upon your hands. In the inside of your hands you will see the letters M. M. It means "Memento Mori"—remember that you must die!

PRAYER OF ST. VINCENT FERRERS FOR A HAPPY DEATH.

Lord Jesus Christ, thou dost desire that no one should perish. It is thy will that whoever prays to thee may hope for mercy, for thou hast said: "All whatsoever you shall ask in my name shall be given to you." I ask, then, through thy Holy Name, that when I am dying, I may be able to think and speak—that I may have a very great sorrow for my sins—a true faith, a sincere hope, and perfect charity. May I be able to say with a pure heart: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit—thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth, who art blessed for ever. Amen."

"What must be done in order that we may die a happy death," will be found in the next of the "BOOKS FOR CHILDREN"

THE END

THE BOOK OF THE DYING.

PART I.

I. How to Die a Happy Death.

APOC. xi.—I heard a voice from Heaven saying to me: Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: for their works follow them.

The Traveller's Book.

A PERSON had to go a long, long journey. He had to go through woods, across high mountains, over deep rivers. He had never been that way before, so he did not know the road. He went and got a book with a map in it. On the map was marked the very road he ought to take. The book also told him what he should do in each place. Before he set off, he read the book and looked at the map over and over again. Then he set off with the book in his hand. Sometimes he came to three or four roads, and he did not know which road to take. But he always looked at the book, and so he kept in the right road. When he came near his journey's end, he had to go through a very dangerous country, where there were many cruel robbers. These robbers robbed the travellers, and sometimes killed them! When he came there he read in the book what he must do to get safe past the robbers. So by always looking at the book, and doing just what the book told him, the traveller at last got safe to his journey's end.

Now, my little child, you have also a long journey to take. You have to travel to a far-off country. This country is a very beautiful country. It is called *Heaven!* You never took this journey before, so you cannot know much about the road. Many people who are on their journey lose their way, and they never get to Heaven. Indeed it is very difficult to keep on the right road which leads to Heaven. Besides, when you come near the end of your journey, you will have to pass through a very dangerous place, full of cruel

robbers. This part of the country is called *Death!* The robbers are called the *Devils!* All your life long the devils will try to lead you away out of the right road to Heaven. But especially when you come to die, they will lie in wait to rob you and catch hold of your soul, and take it to hell. Because the devils know that when you are dying only a very short time remains for them to ruin you. Apoc. xii. *The devil is come down to you having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time!* So S. Alphonsus says that when anybody is dying the whole house is filled with devils, who come to ruin the soul.

Now, you want a book to show you which is the right road to Heaven, the dangers of death, and what you must do to get safe past them when you are dying. This very book which you are reading is the book you want. It is called *the Book of the Dying*. Read it often yourself. Read it to others when they are dying! In the first part of this book you will read what you must do all your lifetime in order to die a happy death. In the second part you will find what you should do when you are dying.

LEAD A GOOD LIFE.

II The Picture.

WHEN you are dying you will see a picture. It will be a picture of your life. Your death will just be like your life. Your death will be a picture of your life. If you have led a good life, your death will be a good death. If you have led a bad life, your death will be a bad death. *As people live, so they die.* Almighty God says so. Psalm cxv. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints.* Psalm xxxiii. *The death of the wicked is very evil.* Every day then of your life, you must sow the *seed* of a happy death.

III. Sowing the Seed, or good Works.

IN the time of the Autumn, a farmer sowed seed in his field. In the Winter when there was frost and snow nobody could see the seeds, because they were under the ground covered up. Early in the Spring the sun became warmer, and the snow melted away. Then a great many beautiful little green stalks came up out of the ground. At first you could see only their little green heads. As the weather grew warmer, the green stalks grew higher. Then came the hot sunshine of the Summer. The stalks were grown very high, and the colour was changed from green to yellow, almost like gold! On the top of each stalk there were many fine little yellow grains of wheat. One day the

farmer came with a sharp sickle and out down the wheat, and filled his barn with it.

Everybody must do what the farmer did. They must sow seed. But what kind of seed must you sow? You must sow the seed of a happy death! Every time you do a good work you sow the seed of a happy death. Every time you say your prayers or hear holy mass, or say *my Jesus I do all for you*, or keep out of bad company, you are sowing the seed of a happy death. Gal. vi. *For what things a man soweth, the same also shall he reap*. St. Augustine says, "that a person cannot die a bad death who has lived a good life." But even if you do a great many good works every day, you will not die a happy death, unless you often pray for a happy death. St. Augustine says, "a happy death is given to those who pray for it."

IV. Prayer, or the Unknown Traveller.

A PRIEST was once travelling in Scotland. No one could tell that he was a priest. It happened one day, as he was on his journey, that he passed by a house which stood alone in the country. At the moment when he was passing the door, a person came out of the house, and asked him if he would come in. The priest did not wish to stop. So he asked what was the matter, why did they wish him to come in. The person at the door answered, that the old man of the house was dying. But the old man would not believe that he was dying, although the doctor and every one had told him that he was dying. The priest then went into the house, and walked up stairs into the room where the old man was. The priest looked at the old man, and saw that he was certainly dying. So he spoke to the old man. "My good man," he said, "you had better get yourself ready for death, you are certainly dying." "Oh no," answered the old man, "I am sure I shall not die *now*." "But," said the priest, "many deceive themselves about death. They die when they do not think that they are dying. Believe me, for I have seen many die." "No," answered the old man, "I am quite sure that I shall not die now." "Tell me," said the priest, "what makes you think so?" "I will tell you the truth," said the old man. "I do not know who you are, but I am a Catholic. For thirty years I have prayed every day to God, that when I died there might be a priest to hear my confession. But there is no priest in this part of the country. After praying to God for thirty years not to die without a priest, God makes me feel sure that I shall not die till a priest comes here." "What you say," said the priest, "is true. If you have prayed to God every day for thirty years not to die without a priest, it is not likely that God will let you die without a priest. I am happy to be able to tell you that a priest is here now. I am a

priest!" Great was the joy of the old man, and many tears did he shed. Well might he say with the good old man Simeon, Luke ii., *Now, O Lord, thou dost dismiss thy servant according to thy word in peace. Because my eyes have seen thy salvation.* The old man then made his confession, received the holy sacraments, and died a very happy death. Perhaps you might say, that it was only by chance that the priest passed the house just when the old man was dying. It is true the priest did not go that way to help the dying man. For he knew nothing about the dying man. But God put it into the mind of the priest to go that way, and to go past that house just at that moment. God has said, *"Ask and it shall be given to you. For every one that asketh receiveth."* Matthew vii. For thirty years the old man had *asked* of God to receive the sacraments at his death. So He, who gives to every one who asks, took care that the sacraments should be given to him when he died.

So my little child, pray every day for a happy death. "If we pray for a happy death till the end of our lives, we shall die a happy death."* "You must pray every day for a happy death, and God will grant your prayer every day."† Pray for a happy death every day when you say, "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now *and at the hour of our death.*" At holy mass, and when you receive holy communion, pray that you may always be good, and die a happy death. Besides prayers there is another thing which often brings a happy death.

V. Be Kind and Good to the Poor.

GOD has said, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."*—Matthew v. *"Judgment without mercy on him that hath not done mercy."* James ii. It is not often that a person who has been wicked all his life, is converted when he is dying. But if ever a wicked man dies a happy death, we almost always find that he has been *kind and good to the poor* during his life-time.

The Bad Soldier.

ONE day St. Francis was going along the road. He was very poor, his clothes were so poor that scarcely any one would have worn them. It happened as he went along that a soldier met him. The soldier was very wicked. However, when he saw St. Francis so poor, he felt pity for him. He

* Bellarmine.

† Suarez.

took some money, perhaps all he had, and put it in the hand of St. Francis. It was well for the wicked soldier that he did this little work of mercy, for it saved his soul. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy from God." As soon as the soldier had done this work of mercy, God sent a light down from Heaven, into the soul of St. Francis. By that light St. Francis saw that in three days the soldier would be dead! So he said to the soldier: "My good man, I would advise you to repent of your sins, and to go to confession. You have but a short time to live, and in three days you will not be alive." When the soldier heard that his death was so near, he lost no time. He did his best to get ready for death. He repented of his sins, and went to confession, and got the priest's absolution. In three days the soldier died as St. Francis had foretold. So the reward of that little work of mercy, was conversion, and a happy preparation for death.

VI. The Wicked Woman.

IN the lives of the Fathers of the desert, we find something which shows that it is well even for the greatest sinners to be good to the poor.

A priest called Timothy went to visit a holy monk called St. Pemen. Amongst other things he asked St. Pemen what he thought about a woman, living in Egypt, who was very wicked. But although she was so wicked, she was always very good to the poor. She even gave them the money she got by committing sin. St. Pemen answered "I am sure that woman will be converted before she dies, because she is so good to the poor." Sometime afterwards St. Pemen happened to hear about the wicked woman again. He was told that she committed sin as much as ever. But still she was always good to the poor. Again St. Pemen said: "I am sure that woman will be converted before she dies, because she is so good to the poor." After some time this woman sent a message to St. Pemen, to ask him to pray for her. St. Pemen prayed for her. Then he went himself to this wicked woman. He spoke to her about her bad life. When she had heard what he said, she began to cry and said: "I will change my bad life, and serve God alone." She then went into a convent, where she did great penances for her sins, and for the rest of her days she led a most holy life.

There was a great saint, called St. Vincent of Paul. He was very often with people when they were dying, and he knew very well how dying people feel. St. Vincent of Paul says, "that when those are dying who have been very good to the poor, on their death-bed God gives them a hope that they will go to Heaven." St. Jerome was one of the most learned men who ever lived. He says this: "I do not remember reading of any one dying a bad death, who had

done many works of mercy to others. For he has many to pray for him. It is impossible for the prayers of many not to be heard."

Know this, my little child, that being good to the poor *makes us find life everlasting*. Job xii. But mercy goes away from the death-bed of those who have not been merciful to others.

VIII. What the Little Child says.

THE child says: "Please I am only a little child that goes to school, I have no money to give away to the poor." My little child, do you never get a penny to buy sweet things with? Do you not know that if you give this little penny to the poor, you do a work of mercy? This little work is not forgotten by God. It is a great and blessed work before God and His angels. Have you no companions in school? At home are there not your brothers and sisters? Can you not do them any little kindness? Can you not help them in something, or forgive them when they offend you? These are most blessed works of mercy. Doing a work of mercy is sowing the seed of a happy death. Have you not read the words of Jesus Christ, that he who gives away only a cup of cold water for the sake of Jesus, shall not lose his reward? Matt. x. Have you not plenty of bread to eat, and are there not poor children who hunger, and have no bread to eat? Did you not read yet in the book called "*Almighty God loves little Children*," how many of the saints, when they were little children, often gave away part of their dinner to the poor? Did you never hear how St. Martin, when a boy, gave away part of his coat to a poor man? The next night Jesus Christ came and thanked him for it. He also said to him, you have given it to *Me*! Have you not an old coat or frock, or hat or bonnet, or shoes which you could spare for one poorer than yourself? St. Paul says: "*Do not forget to do good, and to give away, for by such sacrifices God's favour is obtained.*" But what above all things brings a happy death is loving the Blessed Virgin Mary. Great devotion to the Blessed Virgin is a sure sign of a happy death.

VIII. BE DEVOUT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

The Dying Soldier.

ST. BRIDGET had a son who was called Charles. When he was a boy he enlisted and became a soldier. He did not live long. He died while he was still a soldier. St. Bridget heard that Charles was dead, while he was still a soldier. So she was very much afraid for him. She feared that perhaps he had

lost his soul. However, as soon as the news came, she began to pray for him. While she was praying she saw Jesus Christ Himself! He spoke to her about Charles. He said, that Charles had been wicked, and that he deserved to die a bad death. But that he had not died a bad death, and that his soul was saved! St. Bridget wondered how it could be, that his soul was saved, when he had led a bad life. Jesus told her how this happened. He said, "Although Charles was wicked, still there was one very good thing he did: he loved my dear mother Mary, and he often prayed to her. So when he was dying, my mother prayed to me for him, that he might repent and not go to hell. Now, I never refuse anything that my mother asks me for. So I gave Charles the grace to repent. When he was dying, he sincerely wished to change his life, and made a good act of contrition and was saved."

St. Bridget afterwards saw the devil complaining to Jesus Christ about the Blessed Virgin. The devil said that the Blessed Virgin would not allow him to tempt Charles when he was dying, and that when Charles went to be judged Mary went along with him, to take care of him. Then St. Bridget saw that Jesus Christ sent away the devil in great shame, and took the soul of Charles with Him into heaven.

There is nothing the devil hates so much as devotion to the Blessed Virgin. He tempted the Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez with bad thoughts. He troubled him very much. One day he said to him, "If you will leave off your devotion to the Blessed Virgin, I will leave off troubling you with bad thoughts."

The least little thing you do for Mary, brings a blessing upon you.

IX. The Gentleman who gave the House.

ST. TERESA gives an account of a merchant who lived at Valladolid in Spain. He did not live as a good Christian should live. However, he had some devotion to the Blessed Virgin. A little later it will be seen that this was a very happy thing for him.

St. Teresa came to the town where the merchant was living. She wanted to find a house for her nuns. The merchant heard that St. Teresa was seeking a house. So he went to her, and offered to give her a house which belonged to him. He said he would give the house *in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. St. Teresa thanked him, and took the house. Two months after this, the gentleman suddenly became very ill. He was not able to speak, or make his confession. However, he showed by signs that he wished to beg pardon of our Lord for his sins. He died soon after. "After his death," St. Teresa says, "I saw our Lord. He told me that this gentleman had been very near losing

his soul. But He had mercy on him when he was dying, on account of the service he did to His blessed mother, by giving the house in her honour." "I was glad," says St. Teresa, "that his soul was saved. For I was very much afraid it would have been lost on account of his bad life." Our Lord told St. Teresa to get the house finished as soon as possible. Because the soul was suffering great torments in purgatory. It would not come out of purgatory till the convent was finished and the first mass said there. When the first mass was said, St. Teresa went to the rails of the altar to receive holy communion. At the moment she knelt down she saw the gentleman standing by the side of the Priest. His face was shining with light and joy. His hands were joined together. He thanked St. Teresa very much for getting his soul out of the fire of purgatory. St. Teresa then saw him go up into heaven. We see from this history, says St. Teresa, how great is the value of the smallest service done to the Blessed Virgin, and how much it pleases her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

X. What the Saints say about a happy Death.

ST. ANSELM, who lived about seven hundred years since, says—"It is impossible for any one to save his soul, who is not devout to the Blessed Virgin, and protected by her." St. Alphonsus, one of the latest saints, says—"It is impossible for any one who is faithful in honouring the Blessed Virgin, and recommending himself to her, to lose his soul—if he has a sincere desire to amend his life."

XI. Practices in honour of the Blessed Virgin for a happy Death.

1. YOU are sure to say the Hail Mary, at least every day in your morning and night prayers. When you come to those words, pray for us sinners, *now and at the hour of our death*, be sure always to pray for a happy death.

2. Every day try to say the rosary, or at least one decade of it.

3. Make a visit every day to her altar or picture. Kneel down before it, and say the Hail Mary.

4. Be very devout to her, on her festivals. The great festivals of the Blessed Virgin are: 1. Her Purification, 2d February. 2. The feast of the Seven Dolors, on the Friday of Passion Week. 3. The festival of her Annunciation, on the 25th of March, when she became the Mother of God. 4. The festival of her Scapular of Mount Carmel on 16th July. 5. The festival of her Assumption, when she went to Heaven, 15th August. 6. The festival of her Birth-day, 8th September. 7. The festival of her Presentation,

when she was offered to Almighty God, 21st November. 8. The festival of her Immaculate Conception, 8th December.

5. You can have a picture or image of the Blessed Virgin in your house.

6. Try to be in a Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin.

7. Wear the holy Scapular of Mount Carmel in her honour.

8. Bow your head when you hear her name *which all generations shall call Blessed*.—Luke ii.

9. Be devout to St. Joseph for her sake.

10. After your night prayers you can say the following prayer to the Blessed Virgin for a happy death—*O my dear Mother Mary, by the love you have for Almighty God, I beg of you to help me at all times, especially at the terrible moment of death. Never leave me till you see me safe in Heaven, blessing you and singing your mercies forever. So I hope. So may it be. Amen.*

XII. Wear the Holy Scapular of Mount Carmel, the Brown Scapular.

IN the year 1246, on the 16th of July, the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite monk, living in the county of Kent, in England. She brought with her a brown scapular, and invested him with it. She then spoke these words. "He who dies in this Scapular will not go into the flames of hell. This scapular is a sign of salvation, and of safety in dangers."

You should wear this holy scapular in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. So you honour her because she is the Mother of Jesus Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever.

The Man that was Drowned.

A LITTLE child would like to know what is meant by these words: "He who dies wearing this scapular, will not go into the flames of hell." You will understand what is meant, when you hear about the man who was drowned. This man must have either been very wicked, or lost his senses. One day he was walking along close to the river, his foot slipped, and he fell into the water. Some one who was near him stretched out his hand, and pulled him out of the water. The moment the man was out of the water, he turned round and jumped back into the water. He was drowned! Now you may understand about the Scapular. The Blessed Virgin is most kind and good to those who wear it. She gets from God many helps and graces for them, to save them from hell. If they go to hell, when they could easily keep out of it, they must

be as stupid and wicked as the man who was drowned in the water, when he might so easily have saved himself.

XIII. The Dying Man who took off his Scapular.

SOME years since, there was a very wicked man living in Belgium. Still he wore the scapular. He was taken ill. He got worse. His last agony came on him. The doctor expected him to die every moment. Still he did *not* die. He remained alive for two or three days, although it was thought that every moment would be his last. The doctor who was by his bed-side, told him that he wondered to see him remain alive so long. The man said: "I understand it. I can tell you how it is. I wear the scapular. I feel that as long as I have it on, the Blessed Virgin, by her prayers, keeps me alive, that I may repent. If I were to take it off, she would no longer pray for me, and I should die. But I do not want to repent. I will die as I have lived. What I have said is true. You will see it. The moment I take off the scapular, I shall die." He then lifted up his hand and took the scapular off his neck, and at that moment—he died!

XIV. The Child on the Sea.

DURING a mission at Wexford, the children were invested with the holy scapular. Some time afterwards, one of those children left Wexford along with its father and mother, and went to Liverpool. They had to cross the sea between Ireland and England. It was during the night time when they were on the sea. The night was dark and stormy. The wind blew hard. The waves of the sea rose up like mountains. There were many ships lost on that stormy night. It was an old ship in which the child and its parents were sailing. When the great waves of the sea were dashing against the side of it, the ship trembled as if it were just going to sink down in the water. All the people in the ship were expecting to be drowned that night. The little child was in a room below, very sick. Its father came down stairs and told it to get ready to die. For it was expected that the ship would soon sink. Now the little child remembered the words of the Blessed Virgin. "*This scapular is a sign of safety in dangers.*" So the child quietly raised its hand and took off the scapular. It said, "Please father, take this scapular and let it drop into the sea." The father took the scapular, and went to the side of the ship. Then he stretched his hand out, and let it drop into the sea. It was soon swallowed up by the waves. A few minutes after the people in the ship felt that there was a great change in the weather. The wind did not blow so hard. The waves of the sea became more quiet. In half an hour the sea was quite calm and the

ship was safe. The people in the ship wondered at such a change in the weather. They did not know what had brought the change. But the little child knew the promise of the Blessed Virgin, "that the scapular should bring safety in danger." The child believed this promise, and it was saved from death.

XV. The Boy in Danger.

A LITTLE boy in Ireland had been invested with the Holy Scapular. One day he was in a small boat on the sea, along with two other boys bigger than himself. These two boys began to shake the boat. They wanted to frighten the little boy and make him think that he would fall into the sea. The little boy did not seem frightened, for he remembered that he was wearing the scapular—"a sign of safety in danger." It happened that the little boy did fall out of the boat. He fell into the deep sea! He was soon out of sight of the other boys—he sank. The poor little boy went down—down to the very bottom of the deep sea. He was choked with the water which he swallowed. Another minute or two and he would have been drowned. At this moment he felt something pulling at his neck. It was the Scapular! He felt himself drawn upwards. He was soon out of the water on the dry land. All this became known very soon. A great many people came to examine the little boy. They took off his Scapular and looked at it. They found that the strings were wet through and through by the salt water. But not a drop of water had touched the cloth. It is the cloth which receives the Blessing. The cloth was quite dry. The Scapular is still kept by one of the missionaries.

XVI. What must be done for the Holy Scapular.

I. YOU have nothing to do except to be invested in it and to wear it devoutly, especially when you are dying.

Take notice.—One person cannot get a Scapular blessed for another.

II. By the *Sabbatine Privilege* is meant, being delivered from Purgatory the first Saturday after death. To gain the Sabbatine Privilege:—1. You must say the little Office of the Blessed Virgin. If you cannot do this, you must abstain from flesh meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays. If you can do none of these things, you must get some priest, who has the power, to give you instead some prayers to say or some good work to do. 2. You must keep chastity, according to your state and condition.

PART II.

HOW TO HELP THE DYING.

XVII. To Help the Dying is a Great Work of Charity.

A DYING person wants help more than any one else. Will the dying person go to Heaven or to Hell? This depends very much on those who help him. If you want to do a good work, *help the dying*. What you do to the sick, you do to Jesus Christ Himself. Matthew xxv. "I was sick and you did visit me."

St. Philip Neri—St. Alphonsus.

GOD let St. Philip Neri see things which go on in the room of a dying person. No one else saw them except himself. St. Philip saw that God did great things for those who help the dying. He saw angels come from heaven to those who help the dying, and put on their tongues the best words to say to the sick. St. Alphonsus says that to help the dying pleases God and saves souls more than anything else. Fathers and mothers especially, should take care of their children when dying. 1 Tim. v. "If any one hath not care of his own household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." In like manner children should carefully help their dying parents.

XVIII. How the Devil hates this good work.

TWO priests of the order of St. Camillus, went to help a man who was dying in Rome. As soon as they came into the room of the dying person they saw three devils. The devils looked most frightfully at them. Flashes of fire came out of the eyes of the devils. They wanted to frighten the two priests and make them go away. One of the priests made the sign of the cross. Then he sprinkled the holy water on the place where he saw the devils standing. As soon as the holy water had been sprinkled, the devils went away. They left behind a most frightful smell, like the smell of brimstone out of hell. Two other priests also went to help a person who was dying. They did all they could for the dying person. Then they set off on their way home again.

As they were going along the road, they saw a most frightful creature. It looked like a terrible cow. This cow seemed as if it was just going to jump on the priests and kill them. They were so frightened at what they saw that they fell down on the ground. They called on Jesus and Mary to help them. As soon as they had said this prayer they saw the terrible beast no more. It had gone back to hell.

XIX. Who should take care of the Sick.

1. BAD people should not be left to take care of the sick. Especially a bad person should not be left *alone* with the sick. If a woman is dying and some one has to sit up with her, it should be a woman. There are examples of bad persons being left alone with the sick. But, instead of saving the soul, they ruined it.

2. Those who take care of the sick should avoid as much as possible the danger of catching the same sickness, for example, if it is a fever. They should avoid breathing the breath of a sick person.

3. Those who help the sick should not forget to say their own prayers. Some people forget their prayers. So they lose the blessing of God on what they do for the sick.

4. Those who wash the sick, or make their bed, or change their linen, should do it with great modesty.

5. They should not be talkative, or talk in too loud a voice, so as to disturb the sick person. They should not talk about vain and foolish and worldly things, especially to those who are dying.

6. They must be kind and gentle in all they do for the sick.

7. They must be very patient, for sick people are often in bad humour about what is done for them.

8. When they read prayers or good books to the sick, they should read in a quiet, gentle voice, and slowly.

9. They should carefully do whatever the doctor has said about food, medicine, &c.

XX. The Room of a Dying Person.

1. TAKE out of the room whatever is likely to disturb or tempt the dying person. Take away such things as profane pictures, arms, dresses, which might be a distraction.

2. Visitors should not be allowed to come in who might disturb or distract the sick. Therefore, especially when a person is dying, keep away all bad

people, and idle, talkative, chattering people, any who have been the occasion of sin to him, any who have done him a great injury, any who might disturb him by their grief or make him grieve too much.

3. Keep the room clean and neat and tidy. Open the window sometimes, to let in fresh air, but not so as to do any harm to the sick person.

XXI. What should be in the Room of a Dying Person—a Cross or Crucifix.

ST. THOMAS one day went into the room of St. Bonaventure. He asked him what book he learned out of. St. Bonaventure lifted up his hand and pointed to the cross and said—"That cross is my book, from which I learn everything." The cross therefore is the "Book of the Dying." Did you ever read of any other of the saints who died except before the cross. The good thief died near the cross, and he died a happy death.

A Picture or Image of the Blessed Virgin.

THE Blessed Virgin Mary it is who by her prayers gets for us the blessing of a happy death. We ought therefore, when we are dying, to have a picture or image of her before our eyes. It will remind us to pray to her very often. The devil is very busy in the room of the dying. Often he makes the dying see fearful things which frighten them very much. The devil flies away from the sight of Mary. Because God gives her power to crush his head. Gen. ii. In a dark, lonesome night, the sailor stands on the ship; he scarcely knows where it is going to through the thick darkness. How glad he is when he sees the bright morning star rising through the clouds. When people are dying they have dark and lonesome hours and many fears and frights. But when they see the blessed face of Mary the Mother of Jesus, looking down upon them, their fears go away. The cross and the picture of the Blessed Virgin should be put where they can easily be seen by the sick person.

XXII. Holy Water.

ST. ALPHONSUS says, "that when any one is dying, the house is filled with devils. They come and try and ruin the soul of him who is dying, by fearful temptations. Holy water, blessed by the Church, can send away the devils. Jesus Christ gave to His Church the power to cast out devils." Mark xvi. *In my name they shall cast out devils.* The church blesses the holy water, that it may cast out the devils when they trouble us.

The Devil's Fright.

ST. TERESA says, "I was once in a little church. I saw the devil on my left hand. He looked most abominable and frightful. Especially when he spoke his mouth was most horrible to behold, a great blazing flame of fire came out of it. His words frightened me very much. He told me that I had got out of his hands, but that he would try to get hold of me again. I felt very great fear. I made the sign of the cross. The devil went away. But I soon saw him coming back again. I made the sign of the cross again, and he went away again; he came back the third time. The holy water was near me. I took some of it. I threw it where he was standing. He then went away and *did not come back any more*. I have often found that there is nothing the devils fear so much as holy water. They fly away if you make the sign of the cross. But they come back again. When I have taken holy water, I always feel great delight and comfort. In taking holy water I feel like a person, who being very hot and thirsty, drinks a glass of cold water. I rejoice that the words used by the church in blessing holy water, have such great power over the devils."

Take Notice.—1. The holy water should be near the sick person, so that he may easily reach it. 2. He should sometimes be sprinkled with it, especially during his agony, when he shows signs of fear and trouble.

XXIII. An Altar.

IT is very easy to make an altar. Put a white cloth on a table or anything else. Put on it the cross, two candlesticks, the picture or image of the Blessed Virgin, and the holy water. The altar will bring the blessing of God on the room where the person is dying. It will also be very useful when the priest gives extreme unction and holy viaticum. The altar should be where the dying person can easily see it.

ROSARY BEADS—A BLESSED MEDAL—A CROSS WITH A PLENARY
INDULGENCE—A CROSS BLESSED FOR THE STATIONS.

The Rosary Beads bring on the dying the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She alone obtains from Jesus Christ, her son, the grace of a happy death. It is very good for the sick to say the rosary or a part of it. When the Venerable Berchmans died, his rosary beads were twisted round his arm.

A Medal with the image of the Blessed Virgin, or of any other saint on it, can have a plenary indulgence for the time of death. It might be tied round the neck of the sick person. In the Crimean war a soldier was wearing a

medal of the Blessed Virgin. A gunshot came and struck him where the medal was. The shot fell down at his feet. His life was saved; he was not at all hurt. You will have a great war with the devil when you are dying. Many are the fiery darts which the devil throws at us in our last agony. Eph. vi. The medal of Mary will be for the breastplate of justice, by which you will be able to extinguish these fiery darts of the most wicked one.

A *Crucifix* may also have a plenary indulgence for death. He who gains fully a plenary indulgence, goes straight to heaven when he dies, without suffering in purgatory.

A *Crucifix blessed for the Stations*. Those who go round the stations, or way of the cross in the church, gain *many* plenary indulgences, even without confession and communion. When you are sick, you cannot go to the church. But you may have a crucifix blessed and gain the same indulgences by it. All you have to do is, to hold the cross in your hand, and say fourteen times the Our Father, and Hail Mary. Then you say five times Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father, &c. Then you say one Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father, for the Pope's Intention.

What is to be Done during the last agony, or just when a person is dying.

1. The dying person should often be sprinkled with holy water.
2. Say with him, or at least in his hearing, the Prayers for the dying, chapter XXXIV, and the recommendation of a departing soul.
3. A lighted candle may be put in his hand, as a sign that he dies believing the Catholic faith. A person who is just dying should not be moved, for this often makes a person die sooner.

XXIV. The Dying Person.

1. WHEN any one is in danger of death, it is a great cruelty and sin not to let him know it. If he knows it, he will get ready for death. If he does not know it he will not get ready, and perhaps his soul will be lost.

2. When any one is in danger of death, he should immediately settle his worldly affairs. 1. He should make his will, if he has not already made it. 2. He should arrange about his family. 3. He should arrange about the payment of any debts he owes. 4. If he has any enemies he should forgive them, if he has not done so already.

3. He should do everything which his conscience tells him ought to be done, and has not yet been done. He should prepare his soul to meet his God.

Amos iv. Especially he should get ready for confession, holy viaticum, extreme unction, and the last blessing.

XXV. The Sacraments of the Dying.

IT is an immense blessing to be able to receive the last sacraments. They help us wonderfully to die a happy death. But if it be God's will that we should die suddenly without the sacraments, we should be quite content. It is the will of God. God does what is best.

St. Gertrude.

ST. GERTRUDE was asked whether she would not be afraid to die a sudden death without the sacraments. She answered—"I desire with all my heart to receive the sacraments before I die; but I would rather do the will of God than receive the sacraments, so whether it is His will for me to receive the sacraments, or to die suddenly without them, I am equally content." Some of the saints, for example, St. Francis Xavier, died without receiving the last sacraments. People should always be prepared to die. They do not know whether they will be able to receive the last sacraments before dying.

XXVI. Confession.

Take notice. 1. It may be well for a person when dying to make a general confession of all the sins of his life, or, at least, to confess the greatest sins of his life. 2. Let him confess any thing which troubles and disturbs him. 3. Perhaps a person made bad confessions before. There was some great sin which he never confessed before, because he was afraid to tell it. Let him remember that this is the last time he will be able to confess it. If he does not confess it now, his soul will be lost. 4. There is one thing which makes a good confession very easy for the dying. Why do people sometimes go to confession and their sins are not forgiven? Because they are not willing to leave those things or those persons who lead them into sin. But when a person is dying he is obliged to leave them. So it is more easy for the dying to make a good confession.

XXVII. Holy Viaticum.

WHEN Holy Communion is given to the sick in danger of death, it is called the *Holy Viaticum*. The word Viaticum means food for a journey. A

dying person has a long, long journey to take. He has to go from this world into the other world. It is a very dangerous journey. The devils know that it is their last chance of getting his soul. So they lie in wait to ruin him in his passage out of this world. Jesus knows this, and He knows that His poor dying creature is now more helpless than ever. So Jesus comes Himself to those who are dying, to give them strength against the devils. He gives them His own flesh and blood in the Holy Viaticum. When Jesus was on the earth He said these words (John xiv.)—"I go to prepare a place for you (in heaven), but *I will come again* and take you to myself, that where I am you also may be." So when we are dying, Jesus, with many angels, comes again in the Holy Viaticum, and takes us to heaven with Him.

When Jesus was living on the earth, some people came to Him and told Him that Lazarus was sick. When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He called him His *friend*. He said to His apostles—*let us go to him*. When Jesus knows that you are sick and dying, He will call you His friend, and He will say to the angels—*let us go to him*.

When the priest is coming to give the Holy Communion to a dying person, the room should be put in proper order. Every thing should be made neat. Things should not be lying about. It is well to have an altar ready, that the priest may put the Blessed Sacrament on it. There might be a table with a white cloth on it, a cross, two candlesticks and candles, holy water, a glass of clean water, and a small white cloth for a communion cloth. When the priest comes into the room with the Blessed Sacrament, all should kneel down directly. There should be no talking. If it is necessary to speak, then speak in a low voice. After Holy Communion has been given, leave the sick person quiet to say his prayers, or read them to him if he cannot do it himself, chapter XXXIV.

XXVIII. Extreme Unction.

EXTREME UNCTION, or Anointing, is a most beautiful and precious sacrament. It is full of blessings for those who are dying.

St. James v.—"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man. And the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him."

1. A person might be in mortal sin and not know it. Then Extreme Unction would take away the mortal sin if the dying person was sorry for his sins.

2. Extreme Unction forgives venial sins.

3. It takes away that weakness which former sins had left in the soul.

4. It takes away temporal punishment, which we should have to suffer for our sins in purgatory, according to our dispositions.

5. It gives the dispositions needed for a happy death. It makes us patient in the pains of our last illness. It gives strength against the terrible temptations at the hour of death. It takes away the fear of death. It makes us willing to die for God's sake.

What must be done when Extreme Unction is given.

1. OUT of respect for this sacrament, the parts of the body which have to be anointed might be washed beforehand. These parts of the body are—the eyelids, the ears, the nose, the lips, the hands, the feet. 2. When the priest anoints the eyelids, he says—"*May the Lord forgive thee whatever sins thou hast committed by the sense of sight.*" At the end of this prayer, the sick person might answer, *Amen*. So also after the other anointings. (*Rom. Rit.*) 3. While the priest is giving the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, those who are in the room should kneel down and say the litany or other prayers. Instead of saying "pray for us," they should say pray for *him* or *her*.

The Last Blessing.

WHEN the priest gives the last Blessing with a plenary indulgence, the sick person should make an *act of contrition* for his sins.

XXIX. Holy Patrons of a happy death—The Dying Monk.

IN the middle of the burning sands of the deserts of Egypt, there was a little cell. In this cell there was a mat made of straw. One day, about 1400 years since, some body was lying on that straw mat. His name was St. Sigsoes. He had led a most holy life for many years, and now he lay on that mat—he was dying! Many other holy monks were round him. They had heard that he was dying. They knew that it is a holy work to help the dying. So they had come to help him in his passage out of this world. All at once the face of the dying monk looked very bright, and he said—"See, there is St. Anthony coming to me." Then he said again—"See, the apostles and the prophets are coming!" Then for a few moments he seemed to be talking with them. His face became still brighter, and he said—"I see the angels coming to take my soul. I wish they would leave me here longer to do more penance." Then the other monks said—"You have done penance enough." He answered—"I do not know if I have even yet begun to do penance." The

monks knew from this how humble he was. He had done a great many penances, and he thought nothing of them. After this, says the history, his face shone as brightly as the sun; he smiled and said—"See our Lord Jesus Christ is coming to me." The moment after he had said these words he died, and the cell was filled with a most sweet and delightful fragrance, as the fragrance of heaven.

St. Teresa.

WHEN St. Teresa was dying, Sister Anne, her companion, saw Jesus Christ and a great many angels near her bedside. She saw also that the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph were there; they were waiting to take her soul to heaven. Then she saw a great number of persons shining with lights, and with dresses whiter than snow come into the room. It is thought that they were the ten thousand martyrs who had promised to come to her when she was dying.

XXX. The Wicked Spirits sent away.

ST. CAMILLUS saw by the light of God that sometimes Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin, and the angels and saints, come down from heaven to help the dying. He also saw the devils come out of hell to tempt the dying. One day St. Camillus was helping a person called *Leo* to die in Rome. He saw that the dying person was struggling with temptation. He went to the bedside and said to him—"The hour is come when you must go out of this world. Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ who bled on the cross and died to save you. See," he said, "Jesus is showing you his wounds and his head crowned with thorns. Be firm; do not consent to the temptations. Do not believe the wicked spirit which is come out of hell." Then turning to the devil and sprinkling the holy water, he said—"Go away, wicked spirit, you have nothing to do here." Then he knelt down and said the litany, begging of all who were present to join in prayer for the departing soul. He rose up again and said to the dying man—"See the Most Holy Virgin is come to help you, behold her! look at her and rejoice. See S. Francis is kneeling before her and praying for you. See the angels and archangels are praying for you." Then again the saint lifted up his eyes to heaven. After this, he fell on his knees and bowed down his face to the ground as if he was making reverence to some persons whom they did not see. At this moment the sick man died! Then St. Camillus stood up and cried out—"O! happy soul, you have died in the hands of the Blessed Virgin." When the night gets darker the stars get

brighter. When the darkness of death comes upon us, without doubt the light of God will shine upon us. Perhaps it will be a light brighter than any that ever came to us before. Your holy patrons will assist you."

XXXI. Who are the Patrons of a Happy Death.

1. *Our dear Mother the Blessed Virgin Mary.* The blessing of dying a happy death comes from Jesus through her hands. If she prays for us we shall be saved. If she does not pray for us we shall be lost.

2. *St. Joseph.* After the Blessed Virgin, St Joseph is always considered the great patron of a happy death. When he died Jesus and Mary were with him, helping him and consoling him. St. Alphonsus says—"Those who are devout servants of St. Joseph should hope with confidence that when they are dying St. Joseph with Jesus and Mary will come and help them."

3. The *Saints* whose names you have received in baptism or confirmation.

4. *Your Angel Guardian.* No one will be more busy about you than your angel guardian when you are dying. He will watch the devils when they come to tempt you, and send them away. He will pray for you.

6. *St. Michael the Archangel.* In the prayers of the Church we read that St. Michael has been appointed by God to be prince over those souls which are on their passage out of this world into the next to be judged.

6. *St. Barbara* is particularly prayed to for a happy death. The prayer of the Church is this—"O God, before we die, may we do true penance and make a sincere confession and receive the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ through the prayers of the Blessed Barbara, virgin and martyr."

7. *The Holy Innocents.* When St. Francis of Sales was dying, he particularly prayed to them.

8. *Any saints or angels* to whom you have had a particular devotion.

XXXII. SHORT READINGS FOR THE SICK ON VIRTUES AND TEMPTATIONS.

Read to the Sick slowly, distinctly, and a little at a time.

1. *Patience in pain and suffering and temptation.*—St. Angela of Foligno says—"Sufferings are most holy and precious. *They pray for us* before God." St. Francis of Asissi was ill and in great pain. Somebody advised him to pray to God that his pains might be taken away. St. Francis rose up from the bed of sickness and knelt down. Instead of praying for his pains to be taken

away, he thanked God for sending him these pains. St. Aloysius said—"The best sign of going to heaven is to continue patient and resigned in suffering." Jesus Christ said to St. Teresa—"The souls most dear to my Father are those who suffer most." St. Alphonsus says—"It would be a great advantage to suffer during all our lives all the torments of the martyrs in exchange for one moment of heaven. Sufferings in this world are a sign that God loves us and intends to save us." St. Catharine of Genoa says—"God makes a purgatory of the bodies of sick persons." Jesus said to the blessed Verani—"I do to you what my Heavenly Father did to me. I send you as many sufferings as you can bear." St. Joseph, the Franciscan, was very sick. It was necessary for the doctor to do something for him which would be very painful. So the doctor said he had better be tied. St. Joseph took a cross into his hand. Then he said—"The will of Jesus shall tie me."

II. *Temptations of the Sick.*—Take notice, a temptation is not a sin. If you consent to it, it is a sin. If you try to put it away, you give glory to God, and ensure your reward in heaven.

Temptations against Faith.—If you feel any doubt about the holy faith, put away the doubt directly, and say in your heart—*My God I believe all the Catholic Church teaches.* When blessed Columba was dying, devils came to her with temptations. These temptations were *against Faith*. The devils tempted her fearfully, as might be seen from her face. Blessed Columba struggled against the temptations. She kept saying, *I believe in God.* These temptations lasted for about half-an-hour. She then called on the holy name of Jesus, and at the sound of that name the devils went away.

Temptations to Despair.—If you feel a great fear that you will go to hell on account of your sins, put that fear away. Say—*My God, I hope in you; I am sure you will save me, because Jesus died to save me.* Say also—*Sweet Jesus, you died to save me, do not then refuse to save a soul which you died to save.* Perhaps in sickness and death we shall feel as if God had forsaken us. Remember when Jesus died on the cross, He said—*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me.*

Take notice.—It often happens that at death the devil strongly tempts people to commit some sin which they often committed before. They must quickly put away the temptation, and say—*Jesus and Mary help me.*

Sick persons sometimes say that they cannot pray.—St. Vincent of Paul when sick tried to think of the presence of God. Sometimes he tried to say some short prayer, especially, *O my God, thy will be done*, and also, *O my God, I hope in Thee.* St. Alphonsus says, "*One thanks be to God* in sickness, is worth more than a thousand in health. In sickness if we cannot think on holy things, let us look sometimes at the cross." Let us offer our sufferings

with those of Jesus on the cross. St. Angela of Foligno says, "When we are sick and patient, *our sufferings pray for us.*"

Sick persons are discouraged because they cannot do good works.—If we cannot do good works we must be content not to do them, because it is God's will. Ven. John of Avilla says: "Do not think of what you would do, if you were well. Only think that you will be glad to remain sick as long as it is the will of God." God made known to his servant Alvarez, that a certain nun had gained more merit in eight months sickness, than all the others had gained in many years. St. Alphonsus says: "Let us not desire to live longer to do penance for our sins. The best penance we can do is to receive the sickness, because it is God's will." Alvarez says, "that although we can do nothing, we please God more by being patient for a month in sickness, than we should if we worked for him for a whole year in health."

III. *The best thing we can do when we are dying is to be willing to die for God.*—We should be willing to die. 1. Because it is God's will. St. Alphonsus says: "In time of sickness we should be ready to accept death, and the kind of death it shall please God to send." He says also: "When we are told that our death is near, let us be willing to die to please Jesus. It was this willingness to die for God's sake, which made all the merit in the martyrs." Let us then say, *My God, I am ready to do all you wish, and to die when you wish.* 2. We should be willing to die for our sins. St. Alphonsus says: "The best penance we can do is to be willing to die, because it is *God's will.*" 3. We should be willing to die, that we may be like Jesus. God has predestinated all the saints to be made conformable to the image of his Son. Rom. viii. Jesus was willing to die. Therefore let us be willing to die with him. 4. We should be willing to die that we may go to heaven. St. Augustine said: "Let me die, for death alone can give me the happiness of seeing God face to face, and of loving him for ever in heaven." Ven. John of Avilla says: "When we find ourselves in good dispositions, although they are only moderately good, we ought to desire to die, to get away from the danger so frequent on the earth, of sinning and losing God's grace."

XXXIII. What is to be done when a Person becomes suddenly ill, and may die before the Priest can come.

WHEN any person is taken ill, there is often great disturbance and disorder in the house. The priest is sent for. But instead of doing anything for the soul of the dying person before the priest comes, people waste the time in talking, crying, and lamenting. Instead of crying, let them do what they will find

below. Besides, when the priest comes to give the last sacraments to the dying person, he will be much better prepared to receive them.

Notice.—First. No person can be saved who is ignorant of the Four Great Truths. Secondly, a sincere Act of Contrition will obtain the forgiveness of the sins of the dying person, even if no priest can be had. Thirdly, therefore say aloud in the hearing of the dying person the four principal mysteries and the act of contrition, two or three words at a time; let the dying person, if possible, say the words after you.

I. *The Four Great Truths.*—"1. I believe that—there is—one God. 2. I believe—that in God—there are three Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. 3. I believe that God the Son—was made man—and died to save us. 4. I believe—that God—will punish the wicked—forever in hell—and make the good happy—forever in heaven—I believe all the Catholic Church teaches."

II. *An Act of Contrition.*—"O, my God!—I am very sorry—that I have sinned—against thee—because—thou art so good—and I will not—sin again—no, never any more. My Jesus, I love thee. Sweet Jesus, have mercy on me. Mary, my dear mother, pray for me."

III. *Acts of Resignation.*—"My God—Thy will be done. My God—I am willing—to die—because—it is Thy will—and because—I deserve to die—for my sins. Jesus and Mary—help me, Jesus—Mary and Joseph—I give you—my heart and my soul. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony—Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe out my soul in peace with you.

IV. *Acts—Faith.*—"My God—I believe in Thee—and all the Catholic Church teaches—because—thou hast said it—and thy word is true."

Hope.—"My God—I hope in Thee—for grace and glory—and because of thy promises—thy mercy and thy power."

Charity.—"My God—because—thou art so good—I love thee with all my heart—and for thy sake—I love my neighbour as myself."

XXXIV. Prayers for the Sick—How to get ready for Confession.

I. *ASK GOD TO HELP YOU.*—O my God, help me to make a good Confession, to know my sins, and to be truly sorry for them, because they have offended thee. Keep me from sin for the time to come. Help me, that I may sincerely and humbly confess all my sins, and that I may keep back nothing in my heart. Hail Mary, &c. My dear angel guardian, to your care I am given, watch over me and help me.

II. EXAMINE YOUR CONSCIENCE.—Read over the following Examination of Conscience, and when you come to any sin that you have done, especially if it is a great one, try to find out *how many times* you did it, at least how many times each day, or week, or month.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.—*First Commandment.* Neglecting to say your morning or night prayers—going to sermons or prayers in Protestant churches—giving scandal by it, or joining with them in worship—reading Protestant books—wilfully doubting, denying, or disbelieving the Catholic Faith, or speaking against it—despairing of God's help, or expecting it without doing what he commands you—murmuring against God or his Providence—not helping the poor if you are able—leading others into sin—asking fortune-tellers or those who use charms, signs, toss cups, cut cards—reading books about such things—behaving ill in Church, or to any holy thing or person—neglecting your penance—receiving the Blessed Sacrament after breaking your fast—receiving any sacrament with bad dispositions. *How often each sin?*

Second Commandment. Speaking ill of God, or the Saints, or what is Sacred—cursing, specially if from your heart, or with God's name—an oath, in a lie, or to do what is sinful—a custom of swearing, breaking a lawful oath?

Third Commandment. Working on Sundays or holidays without necessity—losing Mass on Sundays or holidays by your own neglect.

Fourth Commandment. Not loving or helping your parents—striking them, or disrespect to them, especially in their presence—cursing them, or calling them bad names, especially in their hearing—disobedience to them, if in any great thing, for example, by going into dangerous company. Stopping from school, or being idle there.

Fifth Commandment. Evil wishes on yourself or another, especially if from your heart—quarrelling, hatred, keeping spite, revenge, fighting, doing harm to the life or health of yourself or another—drunkenness.

Sixth and Ninth Commandments. Immodest thoughts (if wilful), immodest desires, words, looks, actions, alone or with others, with married persons or relations, or with any thing—going into bad company, to bad dancing houses, &c.—keeping dangerous company with persons of the other sex—reading or keeping bad books.

Seventh and Tenth Commandments. Stealing, what did you steal, and how often—helping others to steal, receiving stolen things, cheating, injuring others in their goods or any way—not restoring to another what is his, or not paying your debts when able—breaking a promise, or any agreement without just reason.

For Married Persons. Invalid marriages with relations, &c.—marrying in any way against the regulations of the Church—cruelty or bad behaviour to one another—giving their affections to another—leaving one another without just cause—wasteful spending of money—wife not taking care of the household—a wrong or improper use of marriage—wife not obeying her husband in the lawful duties of marriage—anything which might scandalize children. *How often?*

For Parents. Care before and after birth—allowing children to be brought up in a false religion—cruelty to, or cursing them—putting brothers and sisters in the same bed—not sending them to a good school, but to Protestant or other schools forbidden by the Priest—neglect about their baptism, or their prayers—not sending them when seven years old to Confession, Mass, or Catechism—letting them say bad words, read bad books, go into bad company, play about the streets with any one, or keep dangerous company with persons of the other sex—not letting them follow their vocation to be nuns, &c.—without just reasons hindering their marriage, or forcing them to marry. *How often?*

For Masters and Mistresses. Ill treatment of servants—over-working them—not giving them food enough—not paying their wages—breaking the agreement—allowing them to commit sin, or go into bad company, or asking them to do what is sinful—letting them neglect their religious duties, Mass, or the Sacraments. *How often?*

Acts of Contrition.

O MY GOD, I am very sorry that I have sinned against thee, because thou art so good, and I will not sin again.—*Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice.*

O my God! I am heartily sorry for having offended thee, and I detest my sins most sincerely, because they displease thee, my God, who art so deserving of all my love, for thy infinite goodness and most amiable perfections; and I firmly purpose by thy holy grace never more to offend thee, and carefully to avoid all the occasions of sin.

Prayers before receiving the Holy Viaticum.

Faith. O Jesus, because thou hast said it, I believe that I shall receive thy flesh to eat, and thy blood to drink. *Love and desire.* Sweet Jesus, I love you with all my heart. Jesus, come into my poor soul. Dearest Jesus, come to me

and be my strength, when the sorrows of death surround me. My dearest mother, Mary, pray for me, now and at the hour of my death. Amen.

After receiving Holy Viaticum.

O Jesus, I believe that I have received thy most holy body and blood. I adore thee O Jesus, my Creator. Sweet Jesus, I love thee with all my heart. I thank thee. I give thee my body, my soul. Wash away my sins with thy precious blood. May I die a happy death. Into thy hands I commend my spirit. Lord Jesus receive my soul.

Before Extreme Unction.

MY GOD, I believe that Extreme Unction is a Sacrament which gives grace to die a happy death. May I receive all the graces of this sacrament. Give me sorrow and repentance for my sins. The hour of death is coming. Through this sacrament make me strong against the pains and temptations of death. Amen.

After Extreme Unction.

MERCIFUL JESUS, I have received the sacrament of Extreme Unction. May the grace of this sacrament take away all sin from my soul. May it save me from the punishment due to my sins. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear. The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid. One thing I have asked. This I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord.

THE END.

THE TERRIBLE JUDGMENT

Heb. 9.—IT IS APPOINTED FOR MEN ONCE TO DIE, AND AFTER THIS
JUDGMENT.

I. One who saw Judgment.

I. HEAR what happened to one who had not led a very holy life. He became sick. His sickness got worse and worse. It was thought that he was dead. It was time for the burial. The coffin was ready. They were just going to put the dead body into it. At this moment they saw the hands of the dead body move. Then those eyes which seemed to be closed in death—opened! The man arose and stood upon his feet. Fear and trembling came on those who were present, when they saw the dead man come back to life. The man did not speak. But he raised his hand and made a sign to them to leave the place.

And now the room was empty. All were gone away. The man was alone by himself. He fastened up the door so that nobody could come in. Then he went and sat down in the middle of the floor. He looked like one who was filled with wonder and fright at *what he had seen!* His eyes were always fixed on the ground. He spoke not. His lips never moved. The tears were always running down his face. The room was always as silent as the grave. Years went on. Sometimes those who knew him came past the place where he was. They saw that he was always just the same. They talked among themselves about him. They said, What can be the matter with him? Why does he do these strange things? There he sits silent and as pale as death. He never stirs. He looks down on the ground. The tears are always running down from his eyes like two streams of water. There seems to be some deep thought in his heart, and nobody knows what it is.

II. Twelve years had now passed. Still it was always the same. One day they were going past his door, and they heard a sound in the inside. They wondered at this. For during the twelve years, the room had always been as silent as if there was only a dead body in it. They listened again! They heard

a groan. It seemed a groan such as you may hear sometimes from those who are dying. They forced open the door which had been shut now for twelve years. They found that he was really dying. They spoke to him. They said, "O dear brother, for God's sake tell us what has been the matter with you during these long years. Why all this silence? Why these tears? What was it that happened to you. Tell us. Speak to us before you die." The dying man opened his eyes, which were half shut in death. He said, "Dear brethren, I am dying. Before I die I will tell you why I have done all these strange things. It is now twelve years since you thought that my soul had left the body never to return. While my body seemed to be lying lifeless here, my soul was before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ. The examination of all the thoughts, words, and actions of my life had begun. I was terribly afraid, for I knew not what the end of it might be. I shook with fear and terror as the time for the everlasting sentence came near. I can tell you but little of what I saw, because my soul was filled with horror and fright. But this I can tell you, that judgment after death is very, very different from what we think. I saw that there were quantities of sins I had forgotten. Even those sins we have repented of, it seems as if it was only a half repentance. Then the good works we do, when God comes to examine them there is so much evil found in them that they look more like sins than good works. Then God sets before us the numberless graces and helps he has given us to save our souls. The strict account we have to give of what we did with each grace, is so dreadful, that I cannot make you understand it. Then it seems as if we had made no use at all of most of God's graces. Even those graces we did make use of, we made such a poor use of them, that we seem almost to have neglected them.

"Wo to him who neglects the graces of God. At the day of judgment God looks more angry with him than he was with the people of Sodom, on whom he rained down fire and brimstone—"It shall be more tolerable in the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for him." *Matthew xi*. Oh Judgment of God! Oh judgment of God! how terrible thou art, how little do people think of thee. And now the voice of the dying man was so choked with tears and sobs that he could not speak for some minutes. At last he spoke again. He said, "Pardon me, brethren, but the judgment after death is frightful and terrible above all terrible things. Perhaps now you will understand all I have done and the reason of it. God in his mercy allowed me to come back to life to do more penance for my sins. From that moment the thought of the terrible judgment has been ever with me. This great thought has never left me for one single moment, morning, noon, or night. I could not, I was not able to think about any thing else. Every moment of these twelve years the terrible judgment has been like a great loud peal of thunder sounding in the

very middle of my soul. Night and day I sat thinking about it. Sometimes in the long lonesome nights I was weary, and sleep fell upon me. But I quickly started from my sleep! For I heard a voice crying in my ears. "It is appointed for men to die once, and after this judgment." *Heb. ix.* And now hear the last words I shall speak on earth. There is not one of you who would ever speak another word if you only knew what is really meant by "*judgment after death.*" Having said these words he breathed out his last breath.

III. *A Holy Man Judged.*

LET us go with St. John Climacus into the cell of a dying monk. His name was Stephen. There were forty years since he had left the world. He went into the desert. There he lived for God only. His life was so holy that the wild beasts, the lions and tigers had respect for him. They came and lay down at his feet. They came and ate out of his hand. He was worn out with fastings and penances. He felt sick and was dying. He knew that he would have to struggle against the temptations of the devil. He asked to die in humiliation before God. So he was lifted from his bed and laid on the ground on ashes to die there. His brethren were round him to help him in the last passage to the other world. All at once he began to show signs of great distress. First he turns to one side and then to the other side. It seemed as if he saw something very frightful, and wanted not to see it. He then raised himself up a little and looked round him. He said—"How troubled the water is, how difficult the passage!" They laid him gently on the ashes again. Then for a moment his face looked brighter. He said, "Blessed be the Lord God who has saved me from the teeth of those terrible beasts." They did not know what he meant. But they thought that perhaps he had seen the devils looking like terrible wild beasts ready to devour him. But this quiet was only for a few minutes. The dark clouds soon came back again. Again the dying man showed signs of fright. He began to speak again. He spoke as if he was already before the judgment seat of Christ. He said, "It is true I committed that sin, but I fasted so many years for it." "Yes," he said again, "I remember that sin, but I confessed it." "That sin," he said, "no, I never committed it; that other sin, yes," he said, "I know I committed it, and I can do nothing but ask God to have mercy on my poor soul." Saying these words he breathed out his soul! leaving those who were there in terrible fear of what might be the end of this judgment. Alas, they said, if this holy man dies so, what will become of us?

IV. The World and the Saints.

PEOPLE of the world, often, perhaps generally, when they are dying, have little fear about the judgment after death. But it was not so with the saints.

Blessed Eleazer, as soon as he was born, was offered to God by his mother. When a boy, it was his delight to give away part of his dinner to poor children. He lived a very holy life. When he was dying he showed signs of great fear. A cold sweat covered him. He trembled from head to foot with fright. He rose up, and his look was fearful and lamentable. He cried out three times, "Oh, if men only knew the fearful battles they have to fight against the devil in the last moment when they are going before the judgment-seat."

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi had been a saint from her childhood. When she was lying on her death-bed she called for the priest, who heard her confessions. He came. He asked her what she wanted. "Oh father," she said, "I have been thinking about the terrible judgment of God. I fear it. I am frightened at the thought of it. Do you think it possible that I can be saved?" The priest answered, "Yes, I hope and believe that you will be saved. But tell me why do you ask such a question, what makes you afraid?" She answered, "I have been thinking about the terrible judgments of God; they are so different from ours. My judgment will come soon. What a terrible thing it is to have to stand before the judgment-seat of God!"

What a Saint Was.

IT pleased God to let St. Veronica Juliana see a soul before the judgment-seat. Hear her account of what she saw. She says, "The fear and the fright I felt, when I saw what the terrible judgment is, was so great that I cannot tell it to you by any words or examples. It is easy to understand things most terrible. But that one terrible thing—*judgment after death!* nobody can understand. Each one will know it only when it comes to his turn."

V. The Moment before Death.

WHEN a person is on the point of death people come round him to comfort him in the departure of his spirit. *Eccus.* xxxviii. They watch him in his last painful struggle with death. It is a fearful thing to see a human creature going out of this world. Often people see in the dying persons signs of fright. They wonder what is the matter with him. Is it pain? No one can tell. Is it some great temptation? No one knows. Is it that he sees something most frightful,

that no one else can see? Has the devil come to him with great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time! *Apoc.* xii. Perhaps it is so. But you cannot be sure. And now the last moment is coming—that terrible moment—that moment on which depends heaven, hell, eternity! You may have seen a lighted candle when it is nearly burnt down to the end. Every moment the flame sinks lower and lower. Sometimes it rises up again. You might think the candle was going to burn again as it did before. But you are deceived. Again the flame sinks down more and more; at last in a moment when you are not thinking, the flame is seen no more—it has gone out. It is much the same with the dying person; his breathing becomes more and more difficult. Sometimes it is easier; but do not be deceived—it is only for a moment. Again the difficulty of breathing comes back. Each instant it becomes more difficult. Now, a sound is heard from the throat of the dying person; it is called the *death rattle*. It is a sign that the breathing will not go on much longer. So people keep looking at this terrible sight. The soul is leaving the body where it had been for so many years. At last the one breathing comes, which from eternity God had fixed to be the last breathing of that person. He draws that one last breath, perhaps with difficulty. Then his soul—is gone! "*It shall be in an instant, suddenly.*" *Is.* xxix. The people who are round the death-bed, lift up their hands in wonder, and they say—he is dead!—he is gone.

VI. *The First Moment after Death.*

Job. xxxviii. "*Have the gates of death been open to thee? Hast thou seen the darksome door?*" While the dying person was still alive he was very unquiet and restless. He kept moving his hands and feet about. There was a strange rolling about his eyes; but the first moment after death, there is a fearful stillness. How still, how quiet, the dead body looks directly after death! There is stillness in the sandy desert where the foot of man never trod. There is stillness in the dead of night, when no sound is heard, but it is not like the stillness of death. The first moment after death has passed; the silence of death has not been broken. The people are looking in silence at the dead body. The change from life to death has filled them with terror and silent wonder. It has been a moment of deep, deep silence. They have seen nothing, they have heard nothing. Yet during that one silent moment after death, when nothing was seen, nothing was heard, a most tremendous thing has happened. If all the thunders and lightnings of the skies had burst down into that room, it would be nothing. Something a thousand times more terrible has happened. But the terrible thing has happened without the people

seeing or knowing anything of it. In that one, first, little, quiet moment after death—the soul has stood before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ—sentence has been passed—the soul is in hell, or it will be in heaven for evermore!

VII. *How long Judgment lasts.*

A TRIAL in a court of justice on the earth, takes a long time. There are the witnesses, and the lawyers, and the jury, and the judge. They have all a great deal to say. It is true the trial is only about one single action. Yet the examination of this one action takes a long time; sometimes weeks or months, or even years. At the judgment-seat, the examination is not about one action, but about all the thoughts, words, and actions of the whole life; they are all examined most carefully. Still, this examination is over in one moment. It is at an end quicker than a flash of lightning, or the twinkling of an eye. Say that a person is *dead*, and you may say in the same breath that *he is judged*. The everlasting sentence is passed. The moment of death is the moment of judgment. Let us now leave the dead body to go back into the dust from which it was taken. Let us follow the soul and see what is done with it, when it returns to the God who gave it. Exodus xii.

VIII. *The Soul passing from the Deathbed to the Judgment-seat.*

PS. 75. *Thou enlightenest wonderfully.*

AS soon as the soul is out of the body, two wonderful things happen. First, the soul gets a most wonderful, a most extraordinary knowledge. No person on earth has or could have such knowledge. A baby only a day old dies. As soon as the baby's soul is out of its body, it knows a million times more than all the people that ever were or will be on the earth. Is. 60. *The least shall become a thousand, and a little one most strong. And the Lord will suddenly do this in its time.*

The knowledge the soul has after death is quite different from ours. If we have to think about a thousand things, we cannot think about them all at once. We must think about them one after another. But when the soul is out of the body, it can think about all these things at once. Besides, when we are thinking, we often have a great deal of trouble to find things out. But after death the soul sees things just as they are without the trouble of finding them out. A blind man has never seen any thing in his life. All at once his eyes are opened. He sees for the first time the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars. How wonderful these things must seem to him. While we are alive

the soul is like the blind man. It has never seen any thing in the other world. *They have not known or understood, they walked in darkness.* Ps. 81. Directly after death the soul sees the things of the *other world!* It sees God. It sees Heaven—it sees Hell—it sees the angels—it sees the devils—it sees millions of wonderful things we do not know of. *All we can know now is but as a spark.* Eccus. 42. So when the soul has seen the wonderful things of the other world, *Where alone Our Lord is magnificent.* Is. 33, all the things of this world seem only like a grain of sand or a bit of straw!

Secondly, if you have to walk a journey of ten or twenty miles, perhaps it will take a whole day. Directly after death, the soul has to take a long, long journey. Nobody could count the millions of millions of miles of this long journey. Yet the soul will travel this long journey, which could not be measured, in less time than one single moment.

IX. *The Judgment-seat.*

THE first thing after death is judgment. On the judgment-seat, He will be sitting who is the judge of the living and the dead, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. *Neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment to the Son.* John v. There we shall really see the terrible Judge! His look is not now kind and gentle and merciful as when he blessed the children in the days of his mortal life. It is no longer the time of mercy. It is the time of justice. It is the time to punish sin: So the judge looks severe and terrible. *Clouds and darkness are round about him, justice and judgment are the establishment of his throne.* Ps. 96.

Near him there is a Cross! It is there that the soul may know how good he has been to it, how he has done every thing he could to save it.

X. *The Soul before the Judgment-seat.*

We must all stand before the Judgment Seat that every one may receive the proper things of the body according as he has done, whether it be good or evil. 2 Cor. v. The bad child is just dead. The soul has left the body. It has gone into the house of its eternity. Already that soul has passed away with a quickness that cannot be thought of. It has come in before the presence of God. It sees the Great God! it sees Jesus Christ, the judge of the living and the dead, sitting on the judgment-seat. It never saw him before. When alive on the earth it knew that Jesus Christ was in the Blessed Sacrament under the appearances of bread and wine. But it never saw him. The child has seen pictures of Jesus on the Cross or in the Crib at Bethlehem. But now it really

sees him *as he is!* It sees his face which is the joy of the angels and the terror of hell. It sees the five wounds in his hands and feet and side. It is so near to Jesus that it could touch his real wounds.

XI. *The First Sight.*

THERE are many things in this world which are so wonderful that the first sight of them takes away our breath, such as a very deep precipice or a very high mountain. A traveller was going up a mountain near Jericho, where the devil tempted our Lord. All at once, without expecting it, he came to a very deep precipice many hundred feet deep! He got dizzy when he saw the frightful depth of the precipice below him. He threw himself down on the ground, he tried to get hold of the ground for fear of tumbling down the deep precipice. If the sight of a deep place can take away our breath, how shall we feel at the first sight of the great God! the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth. *Of his greatness there is no end.* Hear about one who saw Jesus Christ, and how he felt.

XII. *The Island of Patmos.*

EXODUS xxxiii. "No man shall see me and live." St. John the Evangelist was sent by the Emperor Domitian to the Island of Patmos. It is a little island about twenty miles round. While St. John was there he saw most wonderful things. You shall hear what he says about it himself. Apoc. i. "I was," he says, "in an island called Patmos. I was in spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a voice as of a trumpet, saying, What thou seest write in a book, and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia. And I turned to see the voice which spoke to to me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of the golden candlesticks I saw One like to the Son of Man; he was clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white as white wool and as snow. His feet were like fine brass as in a burning furnace; His voice was as the sound of many waters. He had in his right hand seven stars. From his mouth came out a two-edged sword. His face was as the sun shining in its power and when I had seen Him, *I fell at His feet as one dead!* When St. John saw Jesus Christ, he fell down as dead; how will it be with you, when after death you see Jesus Christ?

XIII. *The Witnesses.*

Ps. 49. *"He shall call Heaven from above and the Earth to judge his people."* Now Jesus Christ is sitting on his judgment-seat. The child is before him ready for judgment. See the heavens open and millions on millions of angels and archangels come forth. Apoc. xix. *The armies that are in heaven followed Him clothed in linen, clean and white.* Perhaps among the angels there is a little brother or sister of the child that is going to be judged. It died when a baby soon after its baptism. The angels come in silence and in fear. They go to the right hand of the judgment-seat; they wait there to hear the last sentence. If the sentence is for heaven, they will lead the child back there singing hymns of joy and thanksgiving.

But see! deep down below the gates of hell open! The devils in shapes the most frightful, and in numbers which cannot be counted, pour out of hell like a black torrent. As they come along, the air is darkened by their frightful forms. Flashes of fire come from their eyes; they go to the left of the judgment-seat; they wait also for the last sentence of Christ on the child. If that sentence is for hell, they will carry the child back with them into the flames of hell. Apoc. ix. *"There was given to him the key of the bottomless pit, and he opened it; and the smoke of the pit arose. The sun and the air were darkened with the smoke. From the smoke of the pit there came out locusts. It was commanded to them that they should hurt only those who have not the sign of God on their forehead."*

XIV. *The Examination.*

Apoc. xx. *"I saw the dead standing in the presence of the throne; and the books were opened. Another book was opened which is the Book of Life. The dead were judged by those things which were written in the books according to their works."*

One of the angels leaves the others, he comes and stands on the right hand of the child who is to be judged. He is the angel guardian of that child. He holds in his hand a book in which are written the child's good works. The child looks up into the face of its angel guardian to see what he thinks; but it sees on the face of the angel only fear and doubt. A devil, the accuser of our brethren, Apoc. xii. goes to the left hand of the child. He also holds a book in which are written all the sins the child committed in its life. Perhaps it is that devil who tempted the child most. Still the terrible examination does not begin yet; one thing is still wanting. When the child was alive on the earth, it could remember very little of what it had done. If on the evening of any day

you had said to it—"Little child, tell me what you have been doing and thinking about every minute to-day?"—the child would not have been able to tell you half or quarter of the things of that one day. But now all at once the child sees every thought, word, and action of its life, as plainly as you can see your five fingers, if you hold them up before your eyes. It is like being in a dark room where the windows are shut up; you cannot see any thing at all. All at once the windows are thrown open, and the sunlight bursts into the room. Then you can see quite well the chairs and tables, and every thing. You can see even specks of dust moving about in the sun-beams.

XV. *Examination about Sins.*

Wisd. iv. *"They shall come with fear at the thought of their sins; and their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them."* Now, the child's sins will be made known. Now, the hidden things of darkness will be brought to light, 2 Cor. iv. If the child, through fear, concealed a sin in confession, now that sin will be dragged out of the child, and it will not be forgiven.

There is a deep silence; not the least sound can be heard among the millions who are present. All listen attentively; every word will be heard by all.

The devil opens the Book in which the child's sins are written down. He reads up all the sins the child committed in thoughts, words, or actions, during all its life. He reads up how often, how many times it committed each sin—morning prayers and night prayers, how often not said?—Curses, little and great—Mass not heard on Sundays—behaving bad in chapel—disobedience to parents—quarrels, fighting, hatred, revenge—immodesties in thought, word, and action—reading bad books—going into bad company—stealing, if it was only a pin—the number of times of each sin will be given exactly, and the child will remember that it is the true number. Now, the devil has finished—the book of sins is shut.

But there are other accusers. The child is forced to be its own accuser. Rom. ii. *"Their conscience bearing witness to them."* So every time a sin was read up, the child was obliged to say—*"that is true, I cannot deny it."*

Job xx. *The earth shall rise up against the sinner.*—Listen! From the earth voices are rising up against that child! These voices can be heard quite well by all the angels, and by the child itself. These voices come from those places where the child committed sins. "In this street, a voice cries, the child committed such a sin—in this room, another voice cries, the child committed such a sin—in this field, in this dark entry, cries another voice, the child committed a great, a terrible sin.

But there are other voices coming up from the great dark deep under the child's feet. These voices come up out of hell; they are the voices of those companions whom the child led into sin. They cry out—Oh Christ, we are burning in hell for our sins. But remember, O Christ, it was that wicked child now before the judgment-seat, which put us up to commit sin. O Christ, take vengeance on that child, which ruined our souls bought with your precious blood." These voices die away; all is silent. Jesus Christ looks round to see if there is any other accuser; but there is none.

XVI. Examination about Good Works.

Jesus Christ now tells the angel guardian to read up all the good works the child did. All the angels look very glad and attentive. The angel guardian opening the book reads aloud—every prayer the child said in its life—how often, on awakening in the morning, it made the sign of the Cross, and said, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul—How often it said its morning prayers. How often it made the sign of the Cross before and after meals—how often it said, my Jesus I do all for you—how often it said its night prayers and examined its conscience—how often it heard holy Mass—how often it went to confession and holy Communion—how often it made a visit to the Blessed Sacrament and to the image of Mary—every good work it did to the poor—how often it was obedient to its parents—how often it was kind to its companions—how often it read good books. The angel has finished—the book is shut; but the devil has another word to say.

XVII. Good Works Lost.

The devil asks leave of the Judge of the living and the dead, to be allowed to speak. Then he says: "I know the child did those good works which the angel has just read—But there is a law which says: All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now there are many of these good works which the child did not do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It did not say, my Jesus, I do all for you. It did many of these good works only to please itself, or to please other people, or through fear of punishment, or to make others think it a good child." This accusation will be found to be true. All the good works not done for Jesus are counted for nothing.

XVIII. Examination of Graces Neglected.

A man gave sixpence to one of his children, and said: "Go and buy bread with this sixpence." Instead of buying bread, the child bought sugar-sticks and other foolish things. Jesus Christ gave many graces to the child to save its soul. He will himself examine most strictly, to see what use the child made of these graces. He will say, "Little child, give me an account of every grace I gave you to save your soul with. I made you a Catholic, did you live like a good Catholic? I gave you the grace of baptism, what did you do with your baptismal innocence? Give me an account of every one of your confessions and communions. Let me see what good each of them did you. Then all the instructions and reading of good books, what good did each of them do you. What did you do with those millions of holy thoughts, which your angel guardian put into your heart every day. I did more for you than I did for thousands of others who were not Catholics, and were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. When you were alive on the earth, I saw you neglecting my graces, I was silent then. But now I will make you give a most strict account even to the last farthing, of what you did with my graces. Luke xii. To whom much is given, of him much will be required. If I shall find that like the barren tree, you gave no fruit, "I will condemn you as a wicked and slothful servant."

Matt. xxii. "Some people were invited by a king to come to his supper. When supper was ready, he sent his servants to them that were invited, to say that all things were ready and they should come. But they would not go. They neglected. They went, one to his farm, another to his merchandize." Now the child will be examined about every one of the graces it got, one after another. Alas! how often will it be found that the child was told to pray and it neglected. It was told to read good books, it neglected. It was told to go to mass or confession, or catechism: it neglected. It is enough. The examination is now finished. Still nobody, not even amongst the angels, knows what the end of it will be. What will be the sentence on the child? will it be for heaven or hell? nobody yet can tell. They have heard the child's sins read up. But it may have repented of them. They have heard the child's good works, but it may have lost them by mortal sin.

XIX. Mortal Sin or not.

WHETHER the child will go to heaven or not, does not exactly depend on the mortal sins it may have committed, or the good works it may have done in its life. All depends on this one single thing. At the moment when the

child died, was there a mortal sin or not in its soul? This will soon be known. If there is a mortal sin found now in its soul, the child must surely go to hell; if not it will go to heaven.

Scibboleth.

JUDGES xii. The people of Galaad made war on the people of Ephraim. The people of Galaad said, Let us kill all the people of Ephraim that we can find. But some one said, how shall we be able to tell the people of Ephraim from other people? There is a Hebrew word *scibboleth*, which means an ear of corn. Now the people of Ephraim could not say this word right. They always left the letter *c* out. So instead of saying scibboleth, they said *sibboleth*. So the people of Galaad were able to find the people of Ephraim out. When they met a man they said to him, "Say the word scibboleth." If he left the letter *c* out they knew that he was one of the people of Ephraim, and they killed him directly. So this one thing, whether a person could say the letter *c* or not, settled whether he was to live or die. So this one thing, is there a mortal sin or not in the child's soul will settle whether it is to go to hell or heaven.

XX. The Terrible Sight.

No creature knows at this moment the state of the child's soul. But Jesus is going to show to all the state of the child's soul. Jesus Christ gives a command that the real state of the child's soul be made known before all, both angels and devils. Instantly this command is obeyed. The state of the child's soul is seen by every eye! The hidden things of darkness are brought to light.

Oh, the frightful, the terrible, the horrible sight! There is a mortal sin there! Moses held up a stick before Pharaoh, and in one moment that stick was changed into a serpent. So in this one moment that child seems to be changed into a devil! The angels turn away from the sight in horror and fright. Is. xxxiii. The angels of peace shall weep bitterly. The wicked child lifts up its eyes, and sees Jesus looking at it in his anger. It cannot bear the dreadful burning shame. How glad it would be if the hills would fall upon it, and the mountains hide it from the wrath of Him, who is sitting on the judgment-seat. Poor child, how will you flee from the judgment of hell. Matt. xxiv. Saint Veronica saw all this, and she says: "The soul sees itself in God. It sees itself just as it is, and why it is so. It sees itself most horribly frightful. How glad it would be to fly away and hide itself in the earth, from

the sight of the anger of God. But by the just judgment of God, it stands there immoveable and speechless."

XXI. *Queen Esther.*

ESTHER xiv. Queen Esther one day had to go into the presence of king Assuerus. She knew not what the king might say to her. So her heart was full of fear. However she put on a beautiful dress. Glittering in royal robes, she took two maids along with her. She leaned on one of them, for she was weak with fear. The other maid followed her mistress, bearing up her train which flowed on the ground. But Esther with a very rosy colour in her face, and gracious bright eyes, hid a mind full of anguish and exceeding great fear. So going in, she passed through all the doors in order. At last she stood before the king! He sat on his royal throne. He was clothed with royal robes, and glittering with gold and precious stones. He was terrible to behold. The king lifted up his face. With burning eyes he shewed the wrath of his heart. Then Esther sunk down. Her colour turned pale. She rested her weary head on her handmaid.

Poor child in mortal sin, before the judge of the living and the dead! Queen Esther sunk down before an angry man. What will you do before an angry God! Esther rested her weary head on her handmaid. But there will be no one to help you to rest your weary head.

XXII. *Excuses.*

GOD is very good even to sinners. He came into Paradise to punish our first parents for eating the forbidden fruit. But before he punished them he listened to any excuse they wished to make.

So Jesus will speak thus to the child. He will say: "O Soul, I am your creator. I loved you with an everlasting love. I made you to my own image and likeness. I loved you so much that I was glad to die in pain on the cross that you might live. Look at my hands and feet, and see even now the marks of the nails. I made you a Catholic. You were washed from sin in the waters of baptism. I fed you with my own flesh and blood that you might live for ever. Tell me, O soul, what was there that I could do to save you that I did not do. Then I made you live on the earth for a few years. I warned you that on these few years depended your all for eternity. I told you that if you were good, you should have joy with me in heaven, such as no eye hath seen, nor ear heard of. But I also told you, that if you were wicked and broke my commandments and committed mortal sin, you should burn for ever in the

unquenchable flames of hell. You knew all this very well. The years of life I had fixed for you were finished. Death came. You have stood before my judgment-seat. The examination has been made. Mortal sin has been found in your soul. It is time for me to do sorrowfully what justice obliges me to do. It is time for me to pass on you the last terrible sentence of condemnation to hell. Still, before I condemn you, speak and tell me, if there is any reason why I should not condemn you.

XXIII. *The Child speaks.*

THE child has fallen down on its knees before Jesus. How pitifully it lifts up its tearful eyes to Him! How it stretches out its hands to him for mercy! In a voice broken with sobs and tears, it says, "Jesus have pity on me. Jesus do not send me to hell. I was a poor ignorant child. I knew no better." Jesus answers the child, and says: "You say that you were ignorant, that you knew no better. Tell me, was it not your own fault that you were ignorant? Was not the priest always ready to instruct you? Why did you stop away from Catechism and Sunday school, and from mass? Do you not also remember that mission I sent for the salvation of your soul? Why did you stop away from it. Besides, did I not give you a law written on your heart? Rom. ii. Did you not know the difference betwixt good and bad? Did not your conscience accuse you when you were going to do the bad things? Ignorance is no excuse. Tell me, have you any other excuse to make?" Again the miserable child speaks. "O Jesus do not send me to hell. Remember that I was a poor weak child, and bad company came and put me up to do that wicked thing." Jesus answers: "You say that bad company came and put you up to do it. Did you not know that you ought to go away from bad company? Did I make you a lame cripple? Did I not give you feet to run away from bad company? Did I make you a dumb creature? Did I not give you a tongue to speak with? When bad company came and asked you to do what is wicked, why did you not say no, I will not do it? Why did you say, yes, I will do it? You had power over your own tongue. You were able if you liked to say *no* to him that tempted you. Besides, why did you not pray to me to help you, and I would have helped you quickly? Now tell me, have you any other thing to say? If you have, say it." With a sorrowful voice that would make the stones cry, the child speaks once more. It says: "Jesus you are so good. Jesus, you are a merciful God. Have pity on me, a poor child. Listen to the cry of my sorrowful heart. Jesus, you died to save me, will you refuse to save me? Try me once more, only once. Let me go back again. I will never do that wicked thing again. I will be so good." Again Jesus answers. "Poor child, it is too

late now to ask me for mercy. If you had asked me for mercy while yet you were alive on the earth, O how glad I would have been, how merciful I would have been to you. But I warned you beforehand that your lifetime was the time for mercy, that after death there could be no mercy, no forgiveness. You knew this quite well. So now I tell you again, and I say it most sorrowfully! it is now too late to ask for mercy. It is time for me to say the last sentence. But I ask you once more, have you anything more to say? If you have, say it. The child is silent. It says nothing. It feels it has nothing to say. It knows that Jesus did everything he could to save it, and that truly it deserves hell. Now Jesus speaks again to the child. He says: Prov. i. "Remember how many times in your life I called you, and you refused. I stretched out my hand, and you would not look at me. You despised all my counsels, and neglected my reprehensions. And now when sudden calamity is going to fall on you, when your destruction like a tempest is at hand, when tribulation and distress is coming upon you, you will call upon me—and I will not hear!"

Oh the bitter thoughts of that child's heart. It remembers the many times in its life when Jesus on the cross, in the anguish of his soul, begged of it to listen to him, and become good before it was too late. And it would not listen to Jesus. Gen. xlii. "The brethren of Joseph talked among themselves; they said, We deserve to suffer these things because we have sinned against our brother, seeing the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear. Therefore this affliction is come upon us."

The child has said all. Its heart is bursting with sorrow and anguish. It is withering away with fear and expectation of the dreadful sentence which will come upon it.

XXIV. *The Sentence.*

Deut. xxxii. *The day of their destruction is at hand, the time makes haste to come.*

Gen. xx. The Jews standing round Mount Sinai heard the voice of God speaking to them, but not in his anger. Yet they cried out, "Let not God speak to us any more lest we die of fear." In the garden of Gethsemani Jesus Christ spoke to the Jews, but not in his anger. He only said, "I am He." Yet through fear they fell backwards to the ground. How will the child feel now when God is going to speak to it in his anger. Think of any terrible sound you please, the roar of a lion in the desert, the rolling of the thunder in the dark clouds. All this is nothing. The only terrible sound is when God in his

anger speaks the last terrible sentence never to be changed of condemnation to hell.

What is a curse? A curse means calling for evil and pain to come on somebody. It is wrong for us to curse one another. Rom. xii. "Bless and curse not." But it is right and just for God to curse that creature, the work of his hands, which is obstinate in sin and will not obey him. Gen. ii. So he cursed the devil who brought sin into the world. He cursed the earth on which sin had been committed. On the last day he will curse all the wicked and say to them—Matt. xxv., "Depart from me, ye accursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. "

The last Moment before the Sentence.

Heb. x. *A certain dreadful expectation of judgment and of fire which shall consume.*

Jesus Christ now orders the cross to be taken away. Oh how the child roars and screams when it sees the cross going away. It is a sign that mercy is no more! There is a deep and a terrible silence amongst the angels and the devils, not a whisper, not a breathing is heard. The child dare not lift up its eyes. They are cast down on the black deep which is under its feet. It bends a little forward, for already it feels the breath of that terrible curse which is coming upon it. Is. xxx. His wrath burneth and is heavy to bear. His breath as a torrent overflowing. The child's heart sickens. It seems to it that the sun has become black as sackcloth of hair, and the heavens have departed as a book folded up. Apoc. vi. Now the ears of the child are open to hear the last tremendous sentence.

XXV. The Thunderbolt.

Apoc. iv. *From the throne there came voices and lightnings and thunders.* Jesus Christ says to the child, "I did not create you for pain but for joy. I loved you more than my own life. I gave my own blood for you, that you might be happy with me for ever in heaven. You might have been happy, but you would not. You have chosen the pains of hell rather than the joys of heaven. It was your own free choice. From your own mouth I have judged you. You have confessed that you were a wicked child, obstinate in sin. You could not deny it. You might have been a good child if you had liked, but you would not. Now, therefore, hear the tremendous sentence! It is the last time that I shall speak to you. You will never hear my voice any more."

"This is the sentence—Depart from me, wicked child. Go away from me. You shall never, never see my face any more. You have chosen during your life time to obey the devil rather than obey me. Therefore with the devil you shall be tormented in Hell. The smoke of your torments shall rise up before me night and day. Your painful cries shall come up to me for ever and ever. But I will never listen to them. And now you shall have not a blessing but a curse from God who created you, wicked child! The curse of God the Father Almighty who made you, is upon you—I am God the Son, my curse is upon you. The curse of the Holy Ghost who sanctified you is upon you. The curse of every creature is upon you, because you have disobeyed God your Creator. Gen. xxvii. When Esau heard his father's words, he roared out with a great cry and great indignation."

Jesus Christ now lets the devils know that the child no longer belongs to him but to them. Is. v. He will lift up a sign to them, and behold they will come with speed swiftly.

XXVI. *The Stricken Child.*

You may have heard of the lightning striking a tree in the woods. In a single moment it burns every leaf to ashes. It runs along the branches. It eats up the trunk of the tree. It strikes down into the root. That terrible curse coming from the mouth of God is more frightful than all the lightnings in the world. It has struck the wretched child and the flames of the curse have gone through and through it. Ps. cxl. Our bones are scattered by the side of Hell.

The Devils

Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Jesus Christ is no longer to be seen. The angels are gone back to Heaven. Even the child's angel guardian, after one last sorrowful look, is gone! He will never be at its side any more. He will never pray for it any more. The last ray of angelic light can no more be seen. Heaven is shut for evermore against the wicked child.

There is a fearful, a terrible darkness. The thickest, blackest darkness fills all the skies. Is. lx. Thou shalt no more have the sun for thy light by day. Neither shall the brightness of the moon enlighten thee. The child sees through this darkness that all the skies are filled with most frightful devils. They are coming! They come round the child on every side! Father John de Britto and his companions gave missions in the East Indies. One day there

was a great storm of wind and rain, which flooded the whole country with water. They were afraid of being drowned in the water. They saw near them some high ground. They thought that if they were on this high ground they would be safe from the water. So they went there. They had not been long there before they saw something which frightened them more than the deep waters. On every side of them they saw wild beasts and serpents and snakes coming towards them. The wild beasts were roaring, the serpents were hissing and darting out their tongues and their stings! However, by the Providence of God, John and his companions got away from these terrible creatures.

But the child sees devils. Thousands and millions on every side coming round it. It cannot get away from them. On they come, more swiftly than the wind, like hungry dogs would come to a bone.

Poor child—what will you do in the day of your calamity which cometh from afar? To whom will you fly for help? Is. x. It is of no use for the child to pray to its angel guardian to help it. The time of help is passed. Besides the prayer would never reach him. Neither is it of any use now to cry Jesus and Mary help me! There was a time when this prayer would have saved it from the devils. But that time will never come back again. Now the foremost ranks of the devils are near at hand, close to the child. They are hissing at it and spitting fire and venom upon it. They stretch out their great claws of red hot fire to get hold of the child. Listen! do you hear the cry of the unfortunate child. That cry went from one end of the sky to the other. What is the matter? the child has felt the fire of hell for the first time. The devils have fast hold of it with their fiery claws. Numbers xvi. "Core, Dathan, and Abiron, were very wicked men. God made the earth open and swallow them up. They went alive down into hell. All the people heard their cry as they went down into hell, and they flew away in fright." But nobody has heard the terrible cry of the child except the devils. Perhaps the brothers and sisters of the child at that moment are praying in the house round the dead body. But they do not hear the cry; their prayer does the child no good. No brother can redeem and give to God the price of the redemption of its soul Ps. xlviii.

The child's cries are drowned in the uproar and blasphemies of millions of devils. It struggles against the devils. It tries to get away from them. Poor child, it is of no use for you to try against millions of devils.

XXVII. *The Devils take the Child.*

Now the devils have fast hold of the child. They do not wait any longer. They drag it down through the skies. It is a long journey down to hell. But

the journey is soon over. Already they have brought the child before the Gates of Hell. They knock at the gates. When somebody comes to a house, a bell is rung to let people know that he is coming in. So this knocking at the gates of Hell tells that a soul is coming in. The sound of this knocking is heard through every part of Hell, like thunder rolling through the skies. All Hell is stirred up. Hell is in an uproar of rejoicing because another soul is coming amongst them to share their torments. S. Bridget heard the uproar that was made when a soul went into Hell, and she says that it was louder than if the Heavens and the Earth were broken in pieces. Now the Gates of Hell are opened. The light of the red flames burst through the gates and shines on the eyes of the child, from which two rivers of tears are running down. The child now sees for the first time through the gates the real fire of Hell! It learnt about it in the Catechism, and now it sees it. The devils are lifting the child up to throw it into Hell. Then the child's brain gets wild and mad with fright! It shrieks. It cries out. It roars, "Oh do not throw me into Hell. Let me go back, I will be so good." The devils laugh at it, and scoff as devils only can scoff. Again the child cries—"I cannot, I will not"—The Gates of Hell are shut. The child is in the inside burning!

XXVIII. *The End of the Child.*

The wicked child has been burning in Hell for years and years. Day and night it has been frightened out of its senses by the terrible cries and groans and howlings of the damned.

A certain moment has come. Something happens in hell, which never happened before. Every groan, every cry, every shriek is hushed. The black stones of Hell have been shaken to their foundations. Hell is as silent as the grave. What is the matter? A voice has been heard, as the voice of the loudest trumpet. That voice has gone over every land and into the depths of the sea. That voice has pierced the highest Heavens and gone into the deep places of Hell. That voice has cried—Arise ye dead, and come to judgment!—It is the great day of judgment! Slowly and unwillingly the damned move out of Hell, because they know that fresh torments are coming on them. The child has gone out along with them. What a sight it sees out of Hell! It looks up and it sees the sun darkened and the stars falling from Heaven. It looks on the earth and sees that the rivers have stopped running. The winds blow no more. The sea is roaring and in confusion. In the towns and villages, the houses and churches and steeples are rocking and falling down on the ground. The wild beasts frightened rush out of their dens to seek the help of man. Men rush into the dens of wild beasts to hide

themselves, or they climb up the high mountains which fall down under their feet. Every thing is at an end. The merchants sell no more. There is no one to buy. The soldiers fight no more, for war is at an end. The children no more go to school, for there is no one to teach. Lands and houses are good for nothing, for they are in ruins.

Now the child sees another wonderful sight. The stones are flying off the tombs. The graves are bursting open. The dead bodies are coming out. Bones are in motion. Each bone seeks the bone that belongs to it. Dust in the graves turns into flesh. Skulls are covered with hair. The whole earth is covered with bodies. But what a difference there is betwixt bodies. Some bodies are most beautiful, shining like the sun. Other bodies are most frightful and abominable to look at. Now the child seeks its own body. It is black, and deformed, and diseased.* The child seeing its body so abominably frightful, flies back from it and curses it—"Am I," the child says, "to come into you, O accursed body, and to be imprisoned in you for ever. How shall I look when people see me in you"—Nobody can tell the anger and rage and spite of the child when it is forced to go again into this frightful body. It is so angry with its body that it makes it bite and tear itself!

And now in the middle of that great day, another wonderful sight is seen. All nations and all peoples from Adam to the last child born on the earth are gathered together in the valley of Josaphat, on the east side of Jerusalem. What endless and innumerable crowds! They are waiting in expectation. See the Heavens open—the Sign of the Redemption. The Cross, the real Cross on which Jesus died is seen. Its light fills Heaven and Earth. Immediately after the Eternal Judge is seen coming in the clouds of Heaven, with great power and majesty. Millions and millions of angels and archangels come with him. Now he has sat down on the judgment-seat. Every eye sees Him, and those also who pierced him. On his right hand is seated his Blessed Mother, the Queen of Heaven. Around Him on thrones are seated the twelve apostles. Already the good and the bad have been separated by the angels: to the right of the Judgment-seat the good, to the left the wicked, and the child along with them. Fathers and mothers have been separated from children, husbands from wives, brothers from brothers, sisters from sisters. Oh the tears and the cries that are heard at that everlasting separation! It is the evening of that day, the last evening that ever will be. The Examination has been made. Now the last Sentence is heard, Matt. xxvi, "Come ye blessed of my Father and possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Depart from me ye accursed into everlasting fire which was

* Resurgent cum deformitatibus corporalibus.

prepared for the devil and his angels."—The earth opens wide, an immense black deep is seen. The wicked are swallowed up in it. They go down into Hell in dreadful confusion, devils, men, women and the child along with them. The Gates of Hell are shut once more and for ever; they will never be opened again! The wicked child is in Hell for ever and ever.

Time is finished!

Eternity has begun!

XXIX. *The Change in the Four Brothers.*

About three hundred years since many people in Germany lost their faith. They began to hate the Catholic Religion. They often went into the Churches and broke in pieces the holy statues and pictures.

One day four brothers came into the town of Aix-la-Chapelle. They came to get the money of their uncle who was lately dead. They lodged at one of the inns in the town. The festival of Corpus Christi was near at hand. On that day there was to be Holy Mass, with grand music, at the Church of the Convent St. Cecily. This Church was a little out of the town. The four brothers were bad young men. They thought they would go into the Church of St. Cecily, when Mass was going on, and break every thing in pieces, and destroy the church. Three hundred other young men agreed to help them.

At last the festival of Corpus Christi came. It was the day on which these wicked persons had fixed to destroy the church of St. Cecily. Very early in the morning the Nuns of St. Cecily came to know what was going to be done in their church that day. They sent into the town to ask the police to come and hinder these wicked men from destroying the Church. The police would not come. So there was no one to help them, except one very old man and a few children. So the Nuns thought that perhaps it would be better for the church to be shut up that day. But the Abbess said that the church should remain open, and the Mass should be sung.

It was now found that Sister Antonia, who played the organ, was very ill, and it was impossible for her to play the organ. It was nearly time for Mass to begin. The bells were ringing. A great many people were already in the church. Behind the pillars might be seen the wicked persons with hammers and axes in their hands, ready to destroy the church as soon as Mass should begin. Still there was nobody to play the organ, for sister Antonia, the organist, was very ill. At this moment the Nuns were greatly surprised to see Sister Antonia (as they thought) walking up the stairs that led to the organ. She looked well again, only a little pale.

All was now ready for Mass to begin. The four wicked brothers and their companions were also ready to begin to destroy the church. The Mass began. Sister Antonia laid her hands on the organ. The sound of the organ was heard through the Church. But it was such a sound as never was heard in this world before! When the Nuns joined their voices to the sound of the organ, it seemed to them as if their souls were in the skies. The longer they sang, the more their souls felt lifted up. All through the church as soon as the people heard the sound, it seemed almost as if they were struck dead. The very dust on the ground was not stirred by the wind. But what had become of the four wicked brothers, who had come to destroy the church? They had agreed with their companions that as soon as Mass began they would lift up their hammers. This was the sign to begin to destroy the Church. The four brothers had kept their hats on to show that they did not care for the holiness of the Church. As soon as the first sound of the organ was heard, the bad companions expected to see the four brothers lift up their hammers. Instead of this, they saw something very different. They saw the four brothers take off their hats with a reverence that cannot be thought of. The eldest of the brothers turned round and looked at the people. He cried out to them, in a loud and terrible voice to take off their hats, as he had done. The brothers then went down on their knees. They buried their faces in their hands. Only the eldest brother crossed his arms over his breast. Then with their heads bowed down to the earth, they said in a low voice those prayers which a few minutes before they had scoffed at.

The Mass was over. The people went away in wonder and fright. The four brothers were left behind. They lay on the stone floor, kissing the pavement of the Church. The door-keeper told them it was time to go away. They took no notice. At last the door-keeper was obliged to lift them up and carry them out. They were obliged to go away. But they went away with deep sighs as if their hearts were breaking. They turned round every moment to look at the church. When they came back to the inn they would not eat the dinner which had been got ready for them. They went into a room by themselves. They put a cross on a table, with lights on each side of it. Then they sat down round the table. Their hands were joined and they were silent. They seemed as if they were lost in deep adoration of the great God! They sat there till midnight. As soon as the clock struck twelve, they all rose up together. They began to sing the music which had been heard in the Church. But they sang in a loud and terrible voice. It was like the howlings of bears and wolves. The pillars of the house shook. The windows sounded as if handfuls of sand had been thrown against them. The people who stood round looking at them ran out of the room through fright. Those who were in the streets crowded

into the house to know what was the meaning of these terrible sounds. They cried out to the four brothers and asked them why they sang in that terrible manner. The brothers paid no attention to them, but went on with their singing. At last the clock struck one. Then the singing stopped. The brothers wiped the sweat off their foreheads, which was falling in large drops on the table. Then they took off their black cloaks, put them down on the ground, and slept for an hour. When the hour was finished they rose again, and sat round the table as before. They kept silent, they answered no questions. Only they asked that they might have a little straw to sleep on, and a little bread and water, and that no one should come into their room. The master of the house not knowing what to do, got them put into a madhouse.

Six years had passed since the four brothers had left home. When they left home they had promised their mother to come back in a few days. During the six years their mother had neither seen nor heard any thing of them. So she thought she would go to the place where they said they were going to, and ask about them. She went, and found that about six years since, four young men like her sons had been shut up in a madhouse. She found that they had been shut up in a room by themselves. The door was opened and the mother saw her four sons! They were sitting round a table in their black cloaks. On the table was a crucifix. They were praying in silence with their hands resting on the table. When their mother came in, they neither spoke to her nor looked at her. The mother asked what they did all the day long? The answer was: they never open their lips, they sleep little, and eat scarcely anything. When the church clock strikes twelve o'clock at night, they always stand up on their feet and sing the music they heard in the church, in voices loud enough to break the windows. Only two or three times they had opened their lips and spoken. Then they had said that if people knew what they knew, they would leave all things and come and kneel down before the cross, and spend all their lives in praying. So, it is true, that if any child only knew what judgment after death is, it would do nothing all its life but pray and try to get itself ready for that terrible judgment. The four brothers lived some years longer, always doing the same as before. At last one night they sang the holy prayers for the last time. When they had finished they laid themselves down on their black cloaks and died.

Warnings.

Amos iv. 12. *Be prepared to meet thy God!*

1. The time of our judgment is uncertain. Matt. xxiv. *Watch ye, because you know not at what hour your Lord will come.*

2. Examine your conscience every day. 1 Cor. xi. *If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged.*
3. Do many good works Eccus. xviii. *Before judgment prepare justice.*
4. Be kind and merciful to others. James ii. *Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.*

THE SIGHT OF HELL.

I. WHERE IS HELL?

Ps. lxii.—*"They shall go into the lower parts of the Earth."*

EVERY little child knows that God will reward the good in Heaven and punish the wicked in Hell. Where, then, is Hell? Is Hell above or below? Is it on the earth, or in the earth, or below the earth?

It seems likely that Hell is in the middle of the earth. Almighty God has said that *"He will turn the wicked into the bowels of the earth."*—Ecclus. xvii.

THE EARTH OPENING.

In the days of the Jews, there were three very wicked men. Their names were Core, Dathan, and Abiron. They were very disobedient to the priests. God had made Moses master over all the people. He told Moses that He was going to punish the wicked men. Moses went and told the people to come away from the wicked men. The people came away. Then Moses said to them: "By this you shall know that God has sent me. If these wicked men die like other men, then do not believe me; but if the earth open, and swallow them, and they go down alive into hell, then you shall know that they are wicked."

As soon as Moses had done speaking, the earth broke open under the feet of the wicked men. It drew them in with all they had, and they went down alive into Hell. Then the earth closed up over them again.—Numb. xvi. The same thing happened another time, as you will see.

II. THE BURNING MOUNTAIN.

ST. Gregory says, "There was a very wicked and cruel king. His name was Theodoric. He lived in a town called Ravenna. At the same time there was a holy Pope called John, living in Rome. One day this holy Pope went to the

town where Theodoric the cruel king was living. When Theodoric heard that the Pope was come, he had him put in prison. He gave him very little to eat, and was very cruel to him. In a few days the good Pope died in the prison. Very soon after Theodoric had killed the Pope, he killed another good man called Symmachus. Soon after this the cruel king Theodoric died himself. You will see how God punished him.

"There is a little island called Stromboli, with water all round it. On this island there is a great mountain. Fire is often seen coming out of the top of this mountain.

"At that time there was a holy hermit living on the island in a little cell or room. On the night that cruel king, Theodoric, died, it happened that the hermit was looking out of the window. He saw three persons near the top of the fiery mountain. They were persons who were dead. But he had seen them all before. So he knew who they were. There was Theodoric, the cruel king, who had died that night. The other two were Pope John and Symmachus, who had been unjustly killed by Theodoric. He saw that Theodoric was in the middle betwixt the other two. When they came to that place where the fire was coming out, he saw Theodoric leave the other two, and go down into the fiery mountain. "So," says Saint Gregory, "those who had seen the cruel king's injustice saw also his punishment."

III. HOW FAR IT IS TO HELL.

WE know how far it is to the middle of the Earth. It is just four thousand miles. So if Hell is in the middle of the Earth, it is four thousand miles to the horrible prison of Hell.

It is time now to do what St. Augustine bids us. He says—"Let us go down to Hell while we live, that we may not have to go down to Hell when we die." If we go and look at that Terrible Prison, where those who commit mortal sin are punished, we shall be afraid to commit mortal sin. If we do not commit mortal sin, we shall not go to Hell.

IV. THE GATES OF HELL.

Matt. xvi.—"*The Gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Church.*"

St. Frances of Rome lived a very holy life. Many times she saw with her eyes her Angel Guardian at her side. It pleased the Almighty God to let her see many other wonderful things.—*Brev. Rom.* One afternoon the Angel Gabriel came to take her to see Hell. She went with him and saw that terrible place. Let us follow in her footsteps, that we may see in spirit the wonderful

things which she saw. Our journey is through the deep dark places under the earth. Now we will set off. We pass through hundreds and hundreds of miles of darkness. Now we are coming near the terrible place. See, there are the gates of Hell! When St. Frances came to the gates of Hell, she read on them these words written in letters of fire—"This is Hell, where there is neither rest, nor consolation, nor hope." Look, then, at those tremendous gates in front of you. How large they are. Measure, if you can, the length and breadth, the height and depth of the terrible gates. Isa. v.—"Therefore hath Hell *opened her mouth without any bound*. Their strong ones, and their people, and their glorious ones go down into it."

See also the vast thickness, the tremendous strength of those gates. In a prison on earth, there are not, perhaps, more than two or three hundred prisoners; still the gates of a prison are made most strong with iron, and with bars, and with bolts, and with locks, for fear the prisoners should break down the gates and get away. Do not wonder, then, at the immense strength of the Gates of Hell. In Hell there are not two or three hundred prisoners only. Millions on millions are shut up there. They are tormented with the most frightful pains. These dreadful pains make them furious. Their fury gives them strength, such as we never saw. We read of a man who had the fury of Hell in him. He was so strong that he could easily break in pieces great chains of iron.—Mark v. The vast multitudes in Hell, strong in their fury and despair, rush forward like the waves of the sea. They dash themselves up against the gates of Hell to break them in pieces. This is the reason why those gates are so strong. No hand of man could make such gates. Jesus Christ said that the Gates of Hell should not prevail against His Church, because in Hell there is nothing stronger than its gates.

Do you hear that growling thunder rolling from one end of Hell to the other. The Gates of Hell are opening.

V. THE FIRST LOOK INTO HELL.

WHEN the Gates of Hell had been opened, St. Frances with her angel went forward. She stood on the edge of the abyss. She saw a sight so terrible that it cannot be told. She saw that the size of Hell was immense. Neither in height, nor in depth, nor in length nor in breadth, could she see any end of it. Isa. xxxiv.—"*None shall ever pass through it.*" She saw that Hell was divided into three immense places. These three places were at a great distance from one another. There was an upper Hell, and a middle Hell, and a lower Hell. Wisd. xvii.—"*Night came upon them from the lowest and deepest Hell.*" She saw that in the upper Hell, the torments were very

grievous. In the middle Hell they were still more terrible. In the lowest Hell the torments were above all understanding. When she had looked into this terrible place, her blood was frozen with fright!

VI. FIRE.

Now look into Hell and see what she saw. Look at the floor of Hell. It is red-hot like red-hot iron. Streams of burning pitch and sulphur run through it.—Isa. xxxiv. The floor blazes up to the roof. Look at the walls, the enormous stones are red-hot; sparks of fire are always falling down from them. Lift up your eyes to the roof of Hell; it is like a sheet of blazing fire. Sometimes when you get up on a winter's morning, you see the country filled with a great thick fog. Hell is filled with a fog of fire. In some parts of the world torrents of rain come down which sweep away trees and houses. In Hell torrents, not of rain, but of fire and brimstone, are rained down. Ps. x.—*"The Lord shall rain down on sinners fire and brimstone."* Storms of hailstones come down on the earth and break the windows in pieces. But in Hell the hailstones are thunderbolts, red-hot balls of fire. Job. xli.—*"God shall send thunderbolts against him."* See that great whirlwind of fire sweeping across Hell. *"Storms of winds shall be the portion of their cup."*—Ps. x. Look how floods of fire roll themselves through Hell like the waves of the sea. The wicked are sunk down and buried in that fiery sea of destruction and perdition.—1 Tim. vi. You may have seen a house on fire. But you never saw a house made of fire. Hell is a house made of fire. The fire of Hell burns the devils who are spirits, for it was prepared for them.—Matt. xxv. So it will burn the soul as well as the body. Take a spark out of the kitchen fire, throw it into the sea, and it will go out. Take a little spark out of Hell less than a pin-head, throw it into the ocean, it will not go out. In one moment it would dry up all the waters of the ocean, and set the whole world in a blaze. Wisd. xvi.—*"The fire, above its power, burnt in the midst of water."* Set a house or town on fire. Perhaps the fire may burn for a week, or a month, but it will go out at last. But the fire of Hell will never go out: it will burn for ever. It is *unquenchable fire*.—Matt. iv. St. Teresa says, that the fire on the earth is only a *picture* of the fire of Hell. Fire on earth gives light. But it is not so in Hell. In Hell the fire is dark.

VII.—DARKNESS.

Isa. xxi.—*"Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said: The night cometh."*

The watchman did not say the nights are coming, but only the night. He said so, because in Hell there is only one night, one eternal night, one everlasting night. The fire in Hell burns, but gives no light. Wisd. ii.—"*No power of fire could give them light.*" No stray sunbeam, no wandering ray of starlight ever creeps into the darkness of Hell. All is darkness—thick, black, heavy, pitchy, aching darkness. It is not darkness like ours, which is only *an image of the darkness to come.*—Wisd. xviii. This darkness is thicker than the darkness of the land of Egypt which could be touched with the hand. "*So the wicked in Hell will never see light.*"—Ps. xlviii. This darkness is made worse by the smoke of Hell.

VIII. SMOKE.

Apoc. xvi.—"*The smoke of their torments shall go up for ever and ever.*"

Stop up that chimney where the fire is burning. In half an hour the room will be full of smoke, so that you cannot stay there. The great fires of Hell have been smoking now for nearly six thousand years. They will go on smoking for ever. There is no chimney to take this smoke off; there is no wind to blow it away. See those great, black, heavy sulphurous clouds rising up every moment from the dark fires. They rise up till the roof of Hell stops them. The roof drives them back again. Slowly they go down into the abyss of Hell. There they are joined by more dark clouds of smoke leaving the fires. So Hell is filled with sulphur and smoke, in which no one on earth could breathe or live. How then do they live in Hell? In Hell they must live, but they are stifled and choked each moment, as if they were dying. Now listen!

IX. TERRIFIC NOISE.

Exodus xi.—"*There shall be a great cry such as hath not been heard before.*"

You have heard, perhaps, a horrible scream in the dead of night. You may have heard the last shriek of a drowning man, before he went down into his watery grave. You may have been shocked in passing a madhouse, to hear the wild shout of a madman. Your heart may have trembled when you heard the roar of a lion in the desert or the hissing of a deadly serpent in the bushes.

But listen now—listen to the tremendous, the horrible uproar of millions and millions and millions of tormented creatures mad with the fury of Hell. Oh, the screams of fear, the groanings of horror, the yells of rage, the cries of

pain, the shouts of agony, the shrieks of despair from millions on millions. There you hear them roaring like lions, hissing like serpents, howling like dogs, and wailing like dragons. There you hear the gnashing of teeth and the fearful blasphemies of the devils. Above all, you hear the roaring of the thunders of God's anger, which shakes Hell to its foundations. But there is another sound!

X. A RIVER.

Isa. xxii.—*"It is the day of slaughter and of treading down, and of weeping to the Lord the God of hosts."*

There is in Hell a sound like that of many waters. It is as if all the rivers and oceans of the world were pouring themselves with a great splash down on the floor of Hell. Is it then really the sound of waters? It is. Are the rivers and oceans of the earth pouring themselves into Hell? No. What is it then? It is the sound of oceans of tears running down from countless millions of eyes. They cry night and day. They cry for ever and ever. They cry because the sulphurous smoke torments their eyes. They cry because they are in darkness. They cry because they have lost the beautiful heaven. They cry because the sharp fire burns them.

Little child, it is better to cry one tear of repentance now than to cry millions of tears in Hell. But what is that dreadful sickening smell?

XI. THE SMELL OF DEATH.

Joel ii.—*"His stench shall ascend, and his rottenness shall go up."*

There are some diseases so bad, such as cancers and ulcers, that people cannot bear to breathe the air in the house where they are. There is something worse. It is the smell of death coming from a dead body lying in the grave. The dead body of Lazarus had been in the grave only four days. Yet Martha his sister could not bear that it should be taken out again. But what is the smell of death in Hell. St. Bonaventure says that if one single body was taken out of Hell and laid on the earth, in that same moment every living creature on the earth would sicken and die. Such is the smell of death from one body in Hell. What then will be the smell of death from countless millions and millions of bodies laid in Hell like sheep?—Ps. How will the horrible smell of all these bodies be, after it has been getting worse and worse every moment for ten thousand years? Isa. lxvi.—*"They shall go out and see the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me. They shall be a loathsome sight to all flesh."*

Now let us enter into Hell and see the tremendous torments prepared for the wicked.

XII. THE DEVIL.

Apoc. xx.—"*An angel laid hold on the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up.*"

Our journey lies across that great sea of fire. We must go on till we come to the middle of Hell. There we shall see the most horrible sight that ever was or will be—the great devil chained down in the middle of Hell. We will set off on our journey. Now we are coming near the dwelling-place of Satan. The darkness gets thicker. You see a great number of devils moving about in the thick darkness. They come to get the orders of their great chief. Already you hear the rattling of the tremendous chains of the great monster! See! there he is—the most horrible and abominable of all monsters, the devil.

His size is immense! Isa. viii.—"*He shall fill the length of the land.*" St. Frances saw him. He was sitting on a long beam which passed through the middle of Hell. His feet went down into the lowest depths of Hell. They rested on the floor of Hell. They were fastened with great, heavy iron chains. These chains were fixed to an immense ring in the floor. His hands were chained up to the roof. One of his hands was turned up against Heaven to blaspheme God and the saints who dwell there.—Apoc. xiii. His other hand was stretched out, pointing to the lowest Hell! His tremendous and horrible head was raised up on high, and touched the roof. From his head came two immense horns. Apoc. xiii.—"*I saw another beast having two horns.*" From each horn smaller horns without number branched out, which like chimneys sent out fire and smoke. His enormous mouth was wide open. Out of it there was running a river of fire, which gave no light, but a most abominable smell. Job xli.—"*Flame cometh out of his mouth.*" Round his neck was a collar of red-hot iron. A burning chain tied him round the middle. The ugliness of his face was such, that no man or devil could bear it. It was the most deformed, horrible, frightful thing that ever was or will be. His great fierce eyes were filled with pride, and anger, and rage, and spite, and blood, and fire, and savage cruelty. There was something else in those eyes for which there is no name, but it made those on whom the devil's eyes were fixed tremble and shake as if they were dying. One of the Saints who saw the devil said she would rather be burnt for a thousand years than look at the devil for one moment!

XIII. WHAT THE DEVIL DOES IN HELL.

1. TEMPTATION.

Job xli.—"*He beholdeth every high thing, he is king over all the children of pride.*"

As the devil is king of Hell, he does two things. First, he gives his orders to the other devils about tempting people in the world. Without his leave, no one in Hell can stir hand or foot. Millions and millions of devils are always round him waiting for his orders. Every day he sends wicked spirits, whose numbers cannot be counted, into Europe, Asia, Africa, America, into every country, and town, and village, and house, and to every human creature. He sends them for temptation and the ruin of souls. He tells each devil, whom he must tempt, what he must do, and when he must come back. St. Frances saw that when these devils came back, if they had not made people commit sin, they were cruelly beaten. When a child is tempted, how little it thinks that the temptation has been got ready in Hell, that there is a devil at its side who has brought the temptation, and this devil is breathing the temptation into its heart, and trying to make it do what the bad company wants it to do.

XIV. 2. JUDGMENT.

As the devil is king of Hell, he is also judge. When a soul comes into Hell, condemned by the judgment of God, he executes the judgment. He fixes whereabouts in Hell the soul is to be, how it is to be tormented, and what devils are to torment it. In a moment you will see his judgment on a soul.

XV. A SOUL COMING INTO HELL.

St. Frances saw souls coming into Hell, after they had been condemned by the judgment of God. They came with letters of fire written on their foreheads. Apoc. xii.—"*He shall make all, both little and great, have a character on their forehead.*" On their foreheads were written the names of the sins for which they had been condemned in Hell. *Blaspheming, or impurity, or stealing, or drunkenness, or not hearing Mass on Sundays, or not going to the Sacraments, etc.* As soon as any of these souls came to the gates of Hell, the devils went and seized hold of it. Job xx.—"*The terrible ones shall go and come down upon him.*" But what sort of devils took hold of these souls? The prophet Daniel saw one of them. He says, chap. vii.—"I beheld, in a vision by night, a beast, terrible, and wonderful, and exceeding

strong. It had great iron teeth, eating and breaking in pieces, and treading down the rest with its teeth." How do the devils take hold of these souls? As the lions in Babylon took hold of those who were thrown into their den.

When the people were thrown over the wall into the den, the lions opened their mouths and roared and caught the people in their mouths and crushed them, even before they had fallen to the ground. So is a soul received by the devil when it comes to Hell.

XVI. THE SOUL BEFORE SATAN.

THE devils carry away the soul which has just come into Hell. They bear it through the flames. Now they have set it down in front of the great chained monster, to be judged by him who has no mercy. Oh, that terrible face of the devil! Oh, the fright, the shivering, the freezing, the deadly horror of that soul at the first sight of the great devil. Now the devil opens his mouth. He gives out the tremendous sentence on the soul. All hear the sentence, and Hell rings with shouts of spiteful joy and mockeries at the unfortunate soul.

XVII. THE EVERLASTING DWELLING-PLACE OF THE SOUL.

AS soon as the sentence is given, the soul is snatched away and hurried to that place which is to be its home for ever and ever! Crowds of hideous devils have met together. With cries of spiteful joy they receive the soul. Isa. xxxiv.—"*Demons and monsters shall meet. The hairy ones shall cry out to one another.*" See how these devils receive the soul in this time of destruction. Eccus. xxxix.—"*In the time of destruction, they shall pour out their force. The teeth of serpents, and beasts, and scorpions, the sword taking vengeance on the ungodly unto destruction.*"

Immediately the soul is thrust by the devils into that prison which is to be its dwelling-place for evermore. The prison of each soul is different according to its sins.

"St. Teresa found herself squeezed into a hole or chest in the wall. Here the walls, which were most terrible, seemed to close upon her and strangle her. She found her soul burning in a most horrible fire. It seemed as if some one was always tearing her soul in pieces, or rather as if the soul was always tearing itself in pieces. It was impossible to sit or lie down, for there was no room." As soon as the soul is fixed in its place, it finds two devils, one on each side of it. "*There are spirits created for vengeance, and in their fury they lay on grievous torments.*"—Eccus. xxxix. St. Frances saw them. One of them is called the striking devil, the other the mocking devil.

XVIII. THE STRIKING DEVIL.

Prov. xix.—"*Striking hammers are prepared for the bodies of sinners.*"

If you want to know what sort of a stroke the devil can give, hear how he struck Job. Chap. ii.—"Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and *struck* Job with a grievous ulcer from the sole of his foot to the top of his head. Then Job took a tile and scraped off the corrupt matter, sitting on a dung-hill. Now when Job's friends heard all the evil that had come upon him, they came to him. For they had made an appointment to come together and visit and comfort him. And when they had lifted up their eyes afar off they did not know him. And crying they wept and sprinkled dust on their heads. And they sat down with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights. And no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great."

The devil gave Job one stroke, only one stroke. That one stroke was so terrible, that it covered all his body with sores and ulcers. That one stroke made Job look so frightful, that his friends did not know him again. That one stroke was so terrible, that for seven days and seven nights his friends did not speak a word, but sat crying, and wondering, and thinking what a terrible stroke the devil can give.

Little child, if you go to Hell, there will be a devil at your side to strike you. He will go on striking you every minute for ever and ever, without ever stopping. The first stroke will make your body as bad as the body of Job, covered from head to foot with sores and ulcers. The second stroke will make your body twice as bad as the body of Job. The third stroke will make your body three times as bad as the body of Job. The fourth stroke will make your body four times as bad as the body of Job. How then will your body be, after the devil has been striking it every moment for a hundred million of years without stopping?

But there was one good thing for Job. When the devil had struck Job, his friends came to visit and comfort him, and when they saw him they cried. But when the devil is striking you in Hell, there will be no one to come and visit and comfort you, and cry with you. Neither father, nor mother, nor brother, nor sister, nor friend will ever come to cry with you. Lam. i.—"Weeping she hath wept in the night, and the tears are on her cheeks, because there is none to comfort her amongst all them that were dear to her." Little child, it is a bad bargain to make with the devil, to commit a mortal sin, and then to be beaten for ever for it.

XIX. THE MOCKING DEVIL.

Hab. ii.—*"Shall they not take up a parable against him, a dark speech concerning him?"*

St. Frances saw that on the other side of the soul there was another devil to mock at and reproach it. Hear what mockeries he said to it. "Remember," he said, "remember where you are and where you will be for ever: how short the sin was, how long the punishment. It is your own fault; when you committed that mortal sin you knew how you would be punished. What a good bargain you made to take the pains of eternity in exchange for the sin of a day, an hour, a moment. You cry now for your sin, but your crying comes too late. You liked bad company, you will find bad company enough here. Your father was a drunkard and showed you the way to the public-house; he is still a drunkard, look at him over there drinking red-hot fire. You were too idle to go to Mass on Sundays, be as idle as you like now, for there is no Mass to go to. You disobeyed your father, but you dare not disobey him who is your father in Hell. Look at him, that great chained monster; disobey him if you dare."

St. Frances saw that these mockeries put the soul into such dreadful despair that it burst out into the most frightful howlings and blasphemies.

But it is time for us now to see where the sinner has been put—his everlasting dwelling-place.

XX. A BED OF FIRE.

THE sinner lies chained down on a bed of red-hot blazing fire! When a man, sick of fever, is lying on even a soft bed, it is pleasant sometimes to turn round. If the sick man lies on the same side for a long time, the skin comes off, the flesh gets raw. How will it be when the body has been lying on the same side on the scorching, broiling fire for a hundred millions of years! Now look at that body, lying on the bed of fire. All the body is salted with fire. The fire burns through every bone and every muscle. Every nerve is trembling and quivering with the sharp fire. The fire rages inside the skull, it shoots out through the eyes, it drops out through the ears, it roars in the throat as it roars up a chimney. So will mortal sin be punished. Yet there are people in their senses who commit mortal sin!

XXI. WORMS.

Isa. lxvi.—"*The worm that dieth not.*" Judith xvi.—"He will give fire and worms into their flesh, that they may burn and feel for ever." St. Basil says that "in Hell there will be worms without number eating the flesh, and their bites will be unbearable." St. Teresa says that she found the entrance into Hell filled with these venomous insects. If you cannot bear the sight of ugly vermin and creeping things on the earth, will you be content with the sight of the venomous things in Hell, which are a million times worse? The bite or the pricking of one insect on the earth sometimes keeps you awake, and torments you for hours. How will you feel in Hell, when millions of them make their dwelling-place in your mouth, and ears, and eyes, and creep all over you, and sting you with their deadly stings through all eternity? You will not then be able to help yourself or send them away because you cannot stir hand or foot. One of the most painful things in the world is to be much frightened.

XXII. FRIGHT.

Wisd. xvii.—"While they thought to lie hid in their obscure sins, they were horribly afraid and troubled. For neither did the den which held them keep them from fear. For noises coming down troubled them, and sad visions appearing to them, affrighted them."

Do you know what is meant by being frightened out of one's senses? A boy wanted to frighten two other little boys. In the daytime he took some phosphorus, and marked with it the form of a skeleton on the wall of the room where the little boys always slept. In the daytime the mark of phosphorus is not seen; in the dark it shines like fire. The two little boys went to bed, knowing nothing about it. Next morning they opened the door of the room where the two little boys had been sleeping. They found one boy sitting on his bed, staring at the wall, out of his senses. The other little boy was lying dead! This was fright.

You will be lying helpless in the lonesome darkness of Hell. The devils come in the most frightful shapes on purpose to frighten you. Serpents come and hiss at you. Wild beasts come and roar at you. Death comes and stares at you. How would you feel, if at the dark hour of midnight, one that was dead should come to your bed-side and stand over you and mock at you? You hear the most horrible shrieks and dismal sounds which you cannot understand. The sinner, frightened out of his senses at those terrible sights in the darkness of Hell, roars out for help—but there is nobody to come and

help him in his fright. Wisd. xvii.—"*Being scared with the passing of beasts and hissing of serpents, they died of fear.*"

The greatest pain of Hell has not yet been told. You shall hear it now.

XXIII. THE PAIN OF LOSS.

IT is easy to understand the other pains of Hell, because there are pains like them on earth. But it is difficult to understand the Pain of Loss, because there is nothing like it on earth. You must know that when a soul has been condemned to Hell at the judgment-seat, God lets it see for a moment something of what it has lost. It sees the immense happiness it would have had in Heaven with God and His angels and saints. And now it sees that all this blessed happiness is lost—lost by its own fault, lost for ever, lost without hope! Listen to the painful cry of a child which has lost its mother! Listen to the wailings of the people in Ireland when their sister is leaving them to go to America, and perhaps they will never see her any more. Then you may think what a wailing there will be when the soul hears these words from God: "Depart from Me for ever." Listen to the shriek of that madman shut up in the madhouse; he lost his money, his brain turned, and he became mad. Then you may think how the soul will shriek when it sees that it has lost Heaven. Listen to that splash in the river. A man threw himself off the bridge; as he was falling down into the river, he roared out: "I can bear death, but I cannot bear this loss." Listen to the tremendous roar at the judgment-seat. The soul dashes itself from the judgment-seat down into the flames of Hell, roaring out: "I can bear the fire of Hell, but I cannot bear the loss of Heaven *after I have seen what Heaven is.*" Listen again to the devils in Hell, and you will hear them crying out: "I would gladly burn here for millions of years if I could only see God for one moment." Jer. xxiii.—"*In the latter days you shall understand these things.*"

Now look to those little doors all round the walls of Hell. They are little rooms or dungeons where sinners are shut up. We will go and look at some of them.

XXIV. THE DUNGEONS OF HELL.

THE FIRST DUNGEON—A DRESS OF FIRE.

Job xxxviii.—"*Are not thy garments hot?*" Come into this room. You see it is very small. But see in the midst of it there is a girl, perhaps about eighteen years old. What a terrible dress she has on—her dress is made of

fire. On her head she wears a bonnet of fire. It is pressed down close all over her head; it burns her head; it burns into the skin; it scorches the bone of the skull and makes it smoke." The red-hot fiery heat burns into the brain and melts it. Ezech. xxii.—"I will burn you in the fire of My wrath, you shall be *melted* in the midst thereof as silver is melted in the fire." You do not, perhaps, like a headache. Think what a headache that girl must have. But see more. She is wrapped up in flames, for her frock is fire. If she were on the earth she would be burnt to a cinder in a moment. But she is in Hell, where fire burns everything, but burns nothing away. There she stands burning and scorched; there she will stand for ever burning and scorched! She counts with her fingers the moments as they pass away slowly, for each moment seems to her like a hundred years. As she counts the moments she remembers that she will have to count them for ever and ever.

When that girl was alive she never thought about God or her soul. She cared only for one thing, and that was dress! Instead of going to Mass on Sundays, she went about the town and the parks to show off her dress. She disobeyed her father and mother by going to dancing houses and all kinds of bad places, to show off her dress. And now her dress is her punishment. "*For by what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented*"—Wisd. xi.

XXV. THE SECOND DUNGEON.

THE DEEP PIT.

Luke xvi.—"*It came to pass that the rich man also died, and he was buried in the fire of Hell.*" Think of a coffin not made of wood, but of fire, solid fire! And now come into this other room. You see a pit, a deep, almost bottomless, pit. Look down it and you will see something red-hot and burning. It is a coffin, a red-hot coffin of fire. A certain man is lying fastened in the inside of that coffin of fire. You might burst open a coffin made of iron; but that coffin made of solid fire never can be burst open. There that man lies and will lie for ever in the fiery coffin. It burns him from beneath. The sides of it scorch him. The heavy burning lid on the top presses down close upon him. The horrible heat in the inside chokes him; he pants for breath; he cannot breathe; he cannot bear it; he gets furious. He gathers up his knees and pushes out his hands against the top of the coffin to burst it open. His knees and hands are fearfully burned by the red-hot lid. No matter, to be choked is worse. He tries with all his strength to burst open the coffin. He cannot do it. He has no strength remaining. He gives it up and sinks down again. Again the horrible choking. Again he tries; again he sinks

down; so he will go on for ever and ever! This man was very rich. Instead of worshipping God, he worshipped his money. Morning, noon, and night, he thought about nothing but his money. He was clothed in purple and fine linen. He feasted sumptuously every day. He was hard-hearted to the poor. He let a poor man die at his door, and would not even give him the crumbs that fell from his table. When he came into Hell the devil mocked him saying: *"What did pride profit you, or what advantage did the boasting of riches bring you? all those things have passed away like a shadow."*—Wisd. v. Then the devil's sentence was that since he was so rich in the world, he should be very poor in Hell, and have nothing but a narrow, burning coffin.

XXVI. THE THIRD DUNGEON.

THE RED-HOT FLOOR.

LOOK into this room. What a dreadful place it is! The roof is red-hot; the walls are red-hot; the floor is like a thick sheet of red-hot iron. See, on the middle of that red-hot floor stands a girl. She looks about sixteen years old. Her feet are bare, she has neither shoes nor stockings on her feet; her bare feet stand on the red-hot burning floor. The door of this room has never been opened before since she first set her foot on the red-hot floor. Now she sees that the door is opening. She rushes forward. She has gone down on her knees on the red-hot floor. Listen! she speaks. She says: "I have been standing with my bare feet on this red-hot floor for years. Day and night my only standing-place has been this red-hot floor. Sleep never came on me for a moment, that I might forget this horrible burning floor. "Look," she says, "at my burnt and bleeding feet. Let me go off this burning floor for one moment, only for one single, short moment. Oh, that in this endless eternity of years, I might forget the pain only for one single moment." The devil answers her question: "Do you ask," he says, "for a moment, for one moment to forget your pain? No, not for one single moment during the never-ending eternity of years shall you ever leave this red-hot floor!" "Is it so?" the girl says with a sigh, that seems to break her heart; "then, at least, let somebody go to my little brothers and sisters who are alive, and tell them not to do the bad things which I did, so they will never have to come and stand on the red-hot floor." The devil answers her again: "Your little brothers and sisters have the priests to tell them these things. If they will not listen to the priests, neither would they listen, even if somebody should go to them from the dead."

Oh, that you could hear the horrible, the fearful scream of that girl when she saw the door shutting, never to be opened any more. The history of this girl is short. Her feet first led her into sin, so it is her feet which most of all are tormented. While yet a very little child, she began to go into bad company. The more she grew up, the more she went into bad company against the bidding of her parents. She used to walk about the streets at night, and do very wicked things. She died early. Her death was brought on by the bad life she led.

XXVII. THE FOURTH DUNGEON.

THE BOILING KETTLE.

Amos iv.—"*The days shall come when they shall lift you up on pikes, and what remains of you in boiling pots.*" Look into this little prison. In the middle of it there is a boy, a young man. He is silent; despair is on him. He stands straight up. His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears. His breathing is difficult. Sometimes he opens his mouth, and breath of blazing fire rolls out of it. But listen! there is a sound just like that of a kettle boiling. Is it really a kettle which is boiling? No; then what is it? Hear what it is. The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones! Ask him, put the question to him, why is he thus tormented? His answer is, that when he was alive, his blood boiled to do very wicked things, and he did them, and it was for that he went to dancing-houses, public-houses and theatres. Ask him, does he think the punishment greater than he deserves? "No," he says, "my punishment is not greater than I deserve, it is just. I knew it not so well on earth, but I know now that it is just. There is a just and a terrible God. He is terrible to sinners in Hell—but He is just!"

XXVIII. THE FIFTH DUNGEON.

THE RED-HOT OVEN.

Ps. xx.—"*Thou shalt make him as an oven of fire in the time of Thy anger.*" You are going to see again the child about which you read in the *Terrible Judgment*, that it was condemned to Hell. See! it is a pitiful sight. The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the

roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor of the oven. You can see on the face of this little child what you see on the faces of all in Hell—despair, desperate and horrible!

The same law which is for others is also for children. If children, knowingly and willingly, break God's commandments, they also must be punished like others. This child committed very bad mortal sins, knowing well the harm of what it was doing, and knowing that Hell would be the punishment. God was very good to this child. Very likely God saw that this child would get worse and worse, and would never repent, and so it would have to be punished much more in Hell. So God in His mercy called it out of the world in its early childhood.

THE SIXTH DUNGEON.

A VOICE.

LISTEN at this door. Hear that voice; how sad and sorrowful it sounds. It says: "Oh, I am lost, I am lost. I am lost when I might have been saved. I am in Hell, and I might have been in Heaven. How short my sin, how long the punishment! besides I might have repented; I might have told that sin, but I was ashamed to confess it. Oh, the day on which I was born, I wish it had never been. Accursed be that day; but I am lost—lost—lost for ever—for ever—for ever." The voice dies away, and you hear it no more!

XXIX. HUNGER.

THE prophet Isaias, chap. ix., says, that hunger will be so horrible, that every one shall eat the flesh of his own arm.

THE DRUNKARD.

Do you hear that man roaring out in the middle of Hell? How loud his voice is. It rises above all the groans, and shrieks, and cries, and screams, of millions. With a voice like thunder he roars out: "Oh, a drop of cold water, a drop of cold water to cool my tongue; my tongue is thirsty, my tongue is burning, my tongue is red-hot. Give me a drop of cold water, only one single drop of cold water to cool my burning tongue." The devil answers his roar with another roar: "You fool," he says, "you drunkard, why do you cry out for cold water to cool your burning tongue; there is no cold water in Hell." Still the drunkard goes on roaring for a drop of cold water. Now the devil

lifts up a scourge of fire to strike him and make him hold his tongue. Then the drunkard sinks down into a deep pool of fire and brimstone, where he is drowned in destruction and perdition.

You drunkards, who on Saturday evenings are in the public-house, and on Sundays away from Mass; you drunkards, whose children are hungered and in rags, and go neither to Catechism nor Mass, go down to Hell, and listen to your brother-drunkard crying out for a drop of cold water to cool his burning tongue!

XXX. NO PEACE.

Job x.—*"A land of misery and darkness, where the shadow of death and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth."*

See those children in dreadful anger beating their parents. They fly at them; they try to take life away from those who gave them life. "Cursed parents," they shout, "if you had not given us bad example, we should not now be in Hell." "Accursed father," cries a boy, "it was you that showed me the way to the public-house." "Accursed mother," cries a daughter, "it was you that taught me to love the world. You never warned me when I went into that company which was my ruin." "Cursed husband," cries that wife, "before I knew you I was good; I obeyed the laws of God. It was you that led me away from God, and made me break His laws. Like the devil you ruined my soul, and like the devil I will torment you for ever and ever." 1 Kings xxv.—*"When Nabal heard the words of his wife, his heart died within him, and he became as a stone."*

TWO VIPERS.

DID you ever see two deadly vipers fly at each other? Their eyes burning with rage. They shoot out their poisoned stings. They struggle to give each other the death-blow. They struggle till they have torn the flesh and blood from each other. You may see the like of this in Hell. See that young man and young woman—how changed they are. They loved each other so much on earth, that for this they broke the laws of God and man. But now they fight each other like two vipers, and so they will fight for all eternity.

A PICTURE OF HELL.

THERE was a glass which made things look three million times larger than they really are. A drop of dirty water was looked at through this glass.

Millions of frightful little insects were seen in the water. These insects seemed to be always fighting and beating and trying to kill each other. They gave themselves no rest. It was always fighting, beating—beating, fighting. Sometimes thousands would throw themselves on other thousands and swallow them up alive. Sometimes they tore away pieces from each other's bodies, which still remained alive, only looking more frightful than before. Such is Hell!

XXXI. ETERNITY.

Matt. xxv.—"*These shall go into everlasting punishment.*"

There is one thing which could change Hell into Heaven. An angel of God comes to the gates of Hell and says, "Listen to me, all ye people in Hell, for I bring you good news. You will still burn in Hell for almost countless millions of years. But a day will come, and on that day the pains of Hell will be no more! You will go out of Hell." If such a message came, Hell would no longer be Hell. Hell would no longer be a house of blasphemy, but a house of prayer and thanksgiving and joy. But such a message will never come to Hell, because God has said that the punishment of Hell shall be *everlasting*.

THE QUESTION.

YOU say what is meant by *everlasting*. It is both easy and difficult to answer this question. It is easy to say that the pains of Hell will last for ever, and never have an end. It is difficult to answer the question, because our understandings are too little to understand what is meant by the word *ever*. We know very well what is meant by a year, a million of years, a hundred million of years. But for ever—Eternity—What is that?

A MEASURE—A BIRD.

WE can measure almost anything. We can measure a field or a road. We can measure the earth. We can measure how far it is from the earth to the sun. Only one thing there is which never has been and never will be measured, and that is Eternity—for ever!

Think of a great solid iron ball, larger than the Heavens and the earth. A bird comes once in a hundred millions of years and just touches the great iron ball with a feather of its wing. Think that you have to burn in a fire till

the bird has worn the great iron ball away with its feather. Is this Eternity? No.

XXXII. TEARS.—SAND.—DOTS.

THINK that a man in Hell cries only one single tear in ten hundred millions of years. Tell me how many millions of years must pass before he fills a little basin with his tears? how many millions of years must pass before he cries as many tears as there were drops of water at the deluge? how many years must pass before he has drowned the heavens and earth with his tears? Is this Eternity? No.

Turn all the earth into little grains of sand, and fill all the skies and the heavens with little grains of sand. After each hundred millions of years, one grain of sand is taken away; oh what a long, long time it would be before the last grain of sand was taken away. Is this Eternity? No.

Cover all the earth and all the skies with little dots like these . . . Let every dot stand for a hundred thousand millions of years. Is this Eternity? No.

After such a long, long time will God still punish sinners? Yes. Isa. ix. "*After all this His anger is not turned away, His hand is still stretched out.*" How long, then, will the punishment of sinners go on? For ever, and ever, and ever!

XXXIII. WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

PERHAPS at this moment, seven o'clock in the evening, a child is just going into Hell. To-morrow evening at seven o'clock, go and knock at the gates of Hell, and ask what the child is doing. The devils will go and look. Then they will come back again and say, *the child is burning!* Go in a week and ask what the child is doing; you will get the same answer—*it is burning!* Go in a year and ask; the same answer comes—*it is burning!* Go in a million of years and ask the same question; the answer is just the same—*it is burning!* So if you go for ever and ever, you will always get the same answer—*it is burning in the fire!*

WHAT O'CLOCK—THE DISMAL SOUND.

LOOK at that deep pool of fire and brimstone. See, a man has just lifted his head up out of it. He wants to ask a question. He speaks to a devil who is standing near him. He says: "What a long, long time it seems since I first came into Hell; I have been sunk down in this deep pool of burning fire.

Years and years have passed away. I kept no count of time. Tell me then what o'clock is it?" "You fool," the devil answers, "why do you ask what o'clock it is? there is no clock in Hell; a clock is to tell the time with. But in Hell time is no more. It is Eternity!" Ps. lxxx.—"*Their time shall be for ever.*"

Perhaps on a dark lonesome night you may have seen something waving backwards and forwards in the air. The sound of it was sad and mournful. It frightened you although it was but the branch of a tree.

Such a sound there is in Hell. It passes on without stopping from one end of Hell to the other. As it comes sweeping past, you hear it. What then is this dismal sound? It is the sound of Eternity—ever!—never!

XXXIV. TOO LATE!

LET us ask one of those souls scorched in the flames of Hell, to come and kneel before the Cross and see if its sins can be forgiven, and if it may come out of Hell.

"Poor soul, then burning in the unquenchable fire of Hell, come and kneel before the Cross of Christ, and ask Him for pardon."

See now that soul is kneeling before the Cross.

THE PRAYER OF A LOST SOUL.

THIS lost soul says: "O Christ, I am tormented in this flame. Day and night the tears run down from my eyes, like torrents. O Christ, you were my Creator; you redeemed me; you are a merciful God. I come before you to ask if I may go out of this terrible fire where I am tormented."

THE ANSWER OF JESUS CHRIST.

"UNHAPPY soul!" Jesus says; "I have pity for you, because, indeed, I was your Creator, and I did not create you for pain but for happiness. I wished you to be in Heaven and not in Hell. How could I wish you to be in Hell, seeing what I did to save you from Hell? Remember how I came down from Heaven to the very earth to save you from Hell. Do you remember how I was mocked and spit upon, and pierced with thorns; I was nailed to the wood of the Cross, and died in shame and cruel agony. What was all this for? It was for you, to save you from Hell. And if this is not enough, I will tell you, that from all eternity I was thinking how to save you, and My heart was thirsting to save you. I cared for your happiness more than for My own, for I

left My own happiness in Heaven and went down to the earth to be tormented for your sake. When My Father, who is in Heaven, had seen what I had done for you, He said, 'Surely I will give that soul all the graces it needs, and thousand times more than it needs, to save itself.'

"Then the days of your life came. You were not made like the beasts of the field. You had sense and understanding to know that it is right to do good and wrong to do evil. Besides, I said to you: '*Do good and you shall be happy for ever in Heaven; but if you do evil you shall be punished for ever in Hell.*' I wrote this on your heart. You heard it with your ears thousands of times during your life. You knew, you felt that what I said was right and just. If on earth a man deserves punishment who breaks a law of one who is only a man, how much more does he deserve punishment who breaks the law made by Me, his Creator and his God.'

"Then you, knowing full well that Hell would be the punishment, did evil. You broke My Commandments. Then I might in justice have sent you to Hell. But I did not. I had pity on you; I warned you to repent. I told you repentance was easy. Instead of repenting you broke My laws again, and again, and again. You went on breaking My law. I went on asking, begging of you to repent. In the anguish of My heart I asked you to save your soul from everlasting punishment. But you despised all My counsels, you neglected My reprehensions, you treated Me most ungratefully as you would not have done to any man on the earth. You seemed to be weary of My kindness. But I who knew what punishment was coming upon you, was not weary with trying to save you from it.

"The days fixed for your life were coming to an end. A thousand times I brought to your remembrance that death which was coming swiftly. You did not care. The last moment of your life came and nothing had been done. You had done everything except *the one great thing—to try to save your soul.* If you had only taken a little of that trouble to save your soul which you threw away on a thousand trifling things, your soul would have been saved. Death came. You stood before My judgment-seat. You were condemned to the eternal punishments of Hell. You confessed that My sentence was just. You could not deny it. And now you come and ask Me to change the everlasting sentence, and let you go out of Hell. I promised eternal happiness to those who do good, punishment in Hell to those who do evil. I must keep My promise—I cannot break it. It was a mercy that the punishment of Hell was made everlasting. If so many broke My law, knowing that the punishment would be everlasting, how would it have been, if the punishment had not been everlasting? There are millions in Heaven who would not have been there but for the *everlasting* pains of Hell. They were wise; they thought on

the eternal years of punishment. You could have done the same, but you would not. Besides, even now sin is in your heart as it was when you died. You hate the punishment, but not the sin; your heart is ready to break My law again, and so it will be for ever.

"Unhappy soul! you ask now for mercy; but it is too late. If you had asked for mercy when you were alive, how glad I should have been to be merciful to you. But now it is *too late* to ask for mercy. You must go back into everlasting punishment."

The sinner knows and feels that a wrong thing would be done if he were set free from eternal punishment. So he goes back into the flames of Hell hopeless and desperate.

XXXV. DESPAIR.

Jer. xlv.—"There is no cure for thee."

Let us look at Hell once more before we leave it. See that man who just asked for mercy and could not get it. He cannot bear the scorching fire which burns his body through and through. But he *must* bear it. On the earth the hungry man looks for bread, and at last he gets it. A sick man looks for his pain to get less, and at last it gets less. The man in Hell looks for the burning to stop—but it does not stop. Then he begins to think how long will the horrible burning go on. His thoughts go through millions and millions of years that cannot be counted. Will the burning stop then? His understanding tells him, No—never—never—never!

See in his agony of despair he has thrown himself on his knees. He prays! he prays with his eyes and hands lifted up. O how well he prays; no distraction comes to take his thoughts off his prayer. To whom does he pray? Does he pray to God? No prayer ever goes up from Hell to God. "*For there is no tongue that shall confess to Thee, O God, in Hell.*"—Ps. vi. To whom then does he pray? He prays to Death! "O Death," he says, "come and put me out of this horrible pain. O Death, when I was alive I feared you; I kept away from you. But now, Death, I love you. O Death, be kind to me; come and kill me." Does Death come? No! Death flies away from him. "*In those days men shall seek death and shall not find it.*"—Apoc. ix.

He finds that his prayer is not heard. He stoops down; he takes up two great handfuls of fire; he throws the fire down his throat to kill himself. "*He looks for death and it cometh not.*"—Job iii. He is on his feet again; he runs like a madman towards the walls of Hell. He dashes his head up against the walls. He hopes that his brains will be beaten out, and that he will die, and that his torments will end. "*He looks for death and it cometh not.*"

THE KNIFE.

SEE that great strong man. He rushes furiously through Hell. As he goes along, he splashes the fire and sulphur about him with his feet. Those who are in his road fly away in terror. He bellows out like a mad bull; he says: "Bring me the knife—bring me the knife." He was a murderer. He killed somebody with a knife. Now he wants to get the knife, and kill himself with it. Sometimes he thrusts out his hand as if to catch at the knife; but he is deceived. The knife is not there; *he looks for death and it cometh not.*

XXXVI. THE VISION OF ST. TERESA.

ST. Teresa writes: "One day when I was praying, it seemed to me that suddenly, in one moment, I found myself in Hell. I did not know how I came there. Only I understood that our Lord wanted me to see the place which the devil had prepared for me. I was in Hell for a very short time; but if I was to live for many years I could never forget it.

"The entrance into Hell seemed to me like a long narrow passage or a low dark oven. The floor was very filthy, and the smell which came from it was abominable. Great numbers of venomous insects were creeping about it. At the end of this passage there was a wall with a kind of hole or cupboard in it. I found myself all at once squeezed into this place. What I had seen in the narrow passage was most frightful. Yet it might be called even pleasant compared with the torments of the place into which I had been squeezed. These torments were so terrible, that I cannot give any account of the least part of them. I found my soul burning in such a horrible fire, that I could not make anybody understand it. During my illnesses I have felt the most dreadful pains which the doctors tell us can be felt in this world. But all these pains are nothing—nothing like the pains I felt in Hell. Then there was the horror I felt when I thought that these pains would never come to an end, but would last for ever. I felt as if I was always at every moment strangled and choked. It seemed as if some one was always tearing my soul in pieces, or rather as if my soul was always tearing itself in pieces. I felt myself always burning, and as if I was being cut, and broken and crushed in pieces. In this most frightful place there was not the least hope of any relief. It was impossible either to sit or lie down, for there is no room to sit or lie down. The very walls are most frightful, and seem to close on you and strangle you. There was not the least light there, but only the thickest and blackest darkness. Yet somehow or other, I know not how, you see there whatever is

dreadful and terrible. God did not allow me to see more of Hell at that time. But afterwards He let me see other much more frightful torments for particular sins. I could not understand in what manner these things were seen by me. But I understood that God did me a very great favour in letting me see those terrible torments from which He had saved me. All I have read or heard about Hell is as different from the real pains of Hell as a picture is different from the thing painted. To be burnt in the fire of this world is a mere nothing, a trifle if compared with being burnt in Hell. It is now six years since I saw Hell. Yet even now I cannot write about it without feeling my blood frozen with horror. When I think about the pains of Hell, all the pains of this world seem to me not worth thinking about. It seems to me that we have no reason to complain about the pains of this life. I look upon it as one of the greatest graces of God to have seen the pains of Hell. It takes away all fear of the pains of this life. It makes us suffer them patiently, and thank God in the hope that He will deliver us from the terrible pains of Hell, which will last for ever! Since I had this vision, there are no pains which it does not seem to me easy to bear, remembering what I saw in Hell. I often wonder I could before read of the pains of Hell, and not be frightened by them, or how I could find pleasure in those things which lead to Hell. 'O my God, be Thou for ever blessed. You have shown me that You love me more than I love myself, by delivering me so often from that frightful prison, into which I was so ready to enter against Your will.' The sight of Hell has made me feel immense pain when I think of those heretics and bad Catholics who are lost. My desire to see them saved from these pains is so immense that I would willingly give a thousand lives, if I had them, to save one of these souls."

A PAIR OF SCALES.

If you want to know the weight of some sugar, you get a pair of scales. You put the sugar into one scale and a weight into the other. If you want to know the badness of mortal sin, put it into one scale, and pains of Hell into another scale. You will see that the balance stands equal. *A mortal sin of one moment deserves the everlasting pains of Hell.*

THE PAST; OR, BREAK THE EGG.

YOU only see the outside of an egg. If you knew that there was some frightful venomous creature hatching in the egg, you would break it in pieces, directly. Mortal sin is an egg which the devil puts in your soul, if you

let him. You only see the outside of the devil's egg. In the inside there is the most horrible and abominable monster that ever was. He who dies with this diabolic egg in his soul, will burn in the flames of Hell for ever and ever.

If you have committed a mortal sin, you know that the diabolic egg is in your soul. Break that frightful egg in pieces. Break it before you lay down this book. Break it before you stir hand or foot; break it *this very moment*. If you wait till the next moment you may be in Hell the next moment! How must you break this diabolic egg? Make an Act of Contrition for your sin. If God sees that your Act of Contrition is sincere, He will forgive you *directly*. But then you must go to Confession as soon as you can and confess it.

An Act of Contrition.—*O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against You, because You are so good, and I will not sin again.*

THE FUTURE; OR, THE DEVIL'S TRAP.

TEMPTATION, especially bad company, is the devil's trap by which he brings you into mortal sin. Keep away from temptation when you know of it before. Fly away if it comes when you are not expecting it, and say—*Jesus and Mary, help me.*

Remember! if you die in mortal sin you burn in the flames of Hell for all eternity. You understand this quite well. So if you have the misfortune to go to Hell, you will have no one to blame but yourself.

XXXVII. THE VISION IN VEN. BEDE.

"A certain man," says Ven. Bede, "fell sick, and died in the beginning of the night. Next morning early he suddenly came to life again, and sat up. He told the people what he had seen. 'I was led,' he said, 'into a dark place. When I came into it, the darkness grew so thick that I could see nothing but the form of him who led me. I saw a great many balls of black fire rising up out of a deep pit and falling back again. I saw that there were souls shut up in these balls of fire. The smell which came out of the pit was unbearable. He who led me into this place went away. So I stood there in great fright, not knowing what to do. All at once I heard behind me voices crying and lamenting most fearfully. I heard other voices mocking and laughing. These voices came nearer and nearer to me, and grew louder and louder. Then I saw that those who were laughing and rejoicing were devils. These devils were dragging along with them souls of men which were howling and lamenting. Amongst them I saw a man and a woman. The devils dragged these souls down into the burning pit. When they had gone deep down into

the pit, I could not hear their voices so well. After a while some of these dark spirits came up again from the flaming pit. They ran forward and came round me. I was terribly frightened by their flaming eyes, and the stinking fire which came out of their mouths and nostrils. They seemed as if they would lay hold of me with burning tongs which they held in their hands. I looked around me for help. Just then I saw something like a star shining in the darkness. The light came from him who had brought me into this place. When he came near, the devils went away.' Then he said: 'That fiery, stinking pit which you saw is the mouth of Hell, and whosoever goes into it shall never come out again. Go back to your body and live among men again. Examine your actions well, and speak and behave so that you may be with the blessed in heaven.' When he had said this, on a sudden I found myself alive again amongst men."

THE END.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN, AND YOUNG PERSONS.

BOOK XI. CONFESSION.

I. THE BOY WHO CAME BACK.

THERE was a good man who had two sons. He took great care of them and was very kind to them. One day he told them that when he was dead each of them should have half of all that he had. The younger son thought that he would not like to wait for his share till his father died. He wished to have it directly, and be his own master and spend it as he liked. So he went one day to his father, and said—"Please, father, will you give me now what you promised I should have when you are dead?" The father gave him what he asked. A few days after the boy gathered together all he had. He left his father's house, and went abroad into a country far off. There he had no good father to look after him and watch over him. So he soon fell into bad company. He went with them to theatres, and gambling-houses, and dancing-houses, and such like places. His money went very fast, and he had soon spent it all. When he had spent his money, he expected that the companions whom he had treated would help him. But, when they saw that his money was finished, they all left him! He found himself now even without bread to eat; besides, just at this time, a great famine came on the land. He saw that he must either die or work for his living. So he went and hired himself to a certain man to work for him. This man sent him into the country to feed his pigs. But he got very little for his work. He would have been glad to eat even the cabbage-leaves that were given to the pigs. But he was not allowed to eat them. When he saw how hard people were to him, he became very sad and sorrowful. Then he began to think of the happy days of old, when he lived in his father's house, and how kind his father had always been. He remembered also, that in his father's house, even the servants had plenty of bread to eat, whilst he was dying of hunger. It was now he saw how foolish he had been to leave his father. At last he said to himself, I will arise and go back to my father, and say to him,—"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before

you. I am not worthy to be called your son any more, only let me be as one of the hired servants in your house." So he rose up and set off on his way back to his father's house.

Now, his father had often grieved about him after he had gone away. His heart was fretting after him, "Oh, if he would come back again," he often said. Many a time he looked out, hoping to see something of him. So it happened that, just at the time when he was coming back, his father, who was looking out, saw him while yet he was a long way off. He was sadly grieved to see him looking so pale, and thin, and ill, scarcely covered with rags and without shoes on his feet. His father could not bear the sight any longer. He did not wait till his boy came up to him. He set off running to meet him. As soon as he came up to him, he was so glad in his heart to see him again that he could not speak a word. He threw his arms round his neck and kissed him. You may think how ashamed and sorry, the boy felt at that moment for his bad behaviour. So he said, directly, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, I am not worthy to be called your son any more." But these words never reached his father's ears. He was so glad to see him again that he neither heard nor understood what his son was saying. He called out to the servants directly and said, "Bring quickly the best dress out of the house, and shoes for his feet, and kill the fatted calf, and get a great feast ready, and let us eat and rejoice, because this my son was dead and is come to life again, he was lost and is found."

II. WHO IS THE GOOD FATHER?

THAT Good Father is Jesus himself. The boy who left his Father's house is that boy who once went regularly to church on Sundays but now he comes no more, he has left the church, which is the house of God his Father. What, then, does the boy do on Sundays? He spends his time in gambling, in playing at pitch-and-toss, and in all kinds of bad company. Go and ask him is he happy now as he was in the days when he went to church? He will tell you no, he is not happy. He has never had any real peace of heart since he left God: for how can he have any peace? "*who ever resisted God and had peace?*"—Job. Besides this, that boy knows well that there is but one step betwixt himself and Hell. A little blood-vessel breaks, or a fever comes; and where is he?—gone! Where is he gone to?—to Hell for all eternity. But there is one who has not forgotten him, and that is Jesus. When the boys are coming into church on Sundays, Jesus looks down from the altar to see if this boy is among them. When all the boys have come into church, Jesus sees that he is not among them, and his heart is sorrowful.

Poor boy, God is good! He is a very good Father. You have found that there is no one who cares for you and watches over you as God does. Say, then, now, *at this moment*, to yourself—"I will arise and go back to my Father. Next Sunday I will begin to go to church again." Next Sunday, when you set your foot in the church again, there will be such joy at the altar where the Blessed Sacrament is. If you could only see the face of Jesus, how glad he will look when he sees you coming back to him. He will say to the angels who are round him at the altar—"Be glad, and rejoice, O my angels, for this my son was lost and is found." While the Holy Mass is going on, the grace of Jesus will come from the altar into your heart, like the streams of light come down from the sun. Then you will be saying to yourself—What a blessed thing it will be for me to go to Confession. This very week I will go to Confession. When you have gone to Confession, and have confessed your sins, the solemn moment of absolution will come, the moment of the forgiveness of your sins. In that moment Jesus will throw his arms around your neck, and give you the kiss of peace, saying—"This my son was dead, and he is come to life again!"*

III. THE GREAT CURE.

JOHN xx.—"*Whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.*"

Did you ever hear of any body who in a single moment could cure all diseases, and give sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf? Did you ever know of any one who could call the dead out of their graves back to life again?

The Priests of God's Church can do all this for souls at Confession! There souls that were sick with the disease of sin are cured. The eyes that were blind as a stone to the things of God are opened and see. The ears that could not hear even the thunders of God's word get back their hearing. Tongues that have been stiff and dumb for years speak again to God in prayer. At Confession, souls which have been buried for years and years, deep down in the grave of mortal sin, come to life again.

John vi. At Jerusalem there was a pond full of water. It was called the Pool of Bethesda. Near it there were five places covered over. In these

* S. Alphonsus Opus Mori, Lib. vi. Tract. iv. No. 459—*Consuetudinarium qui prima vice suum primum habitum confitetur bene potest absolvi, etiamsi nulla emendatio præcesserit, modo eam serio proponit.*

places there were always a great many sick, and blind, and lame, and withered people. They were waiting there till the water moved. At certain times an angel of the Lord came down there, and the water was moved by him. Now, the first sick person who went into the water after it had been moved by the angel was always cured of his sickness. But only the person who went first into the water was cured. No one else was cured except him. It is not so at Confession. Any soul at any hour can be cured of any sickness at Confession.

IV. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.*

Is there a sacrament to forgive sins?

Yes.

Which sacrament is it?

The Sacrament of Penance.

When you go to Confession is it the Sacrament of Penance?

Yes.

When you go to Confession what do you tell the priest?

I tell him my sins.

When you tell your sins to the priest, what is it called?

It is called *Confession*.

Must you be sorry for your sins?

Yes.

Who is offended by sin?

God.

Why must you be sorry for your sin?

Because sin offends God.

When you are sorry for your sins, what is it called?

It is called *Contrition*.

If you are sorry for your sins, does the priest forgive them?

Yes.

When the Priest forgives your sins, what is it called?

It is called *Absolution*.

* "Omnis utriusque sexus *postquam ad annos discretionis pervenerit peccata confiteatur*—suscipiens reverentur ad minus in Pascha Eucharistiæ Sacramentum, nisi forte de consilio proprii sacerdotis ob aliquam rationabilem causam de tempus ab ejus perceptione duxerit abstinendum."—*Fourth General Council of Lateran*.

Does the Priest after Confession give you some prayers to say, or some good work to do for your sins?

Yes.

What is that called?

A Penance.

Has it any other name?

Yes.

What name?

It is called *Satisfaction*.

V. CONTRITION.

CONTRITION is the most important part of this Sacrament. Sin may be forgiven without Confession when Confession is impossible. A dumb man who cannot confess may have his sins forgiven. A dying man who cannot speak may have his sins forgiven. But without Contrition or sorrow for sin God has never forgiven, and never will forgive, any sin, great or little.

WHAT CONTRITION IS.

If you had offended somebody, would you like him to forgive you?

Yes.

If you wanted him to forgive you what would you say to him?

I should say I was sorry for offending him.

Does sin offend God?

Yes.

When you confess your sins, must you be sorry for them?

Yes.

Why must you be sorry for sin?

Because sin offends God.

If you are sorry for your sins, will they be forgiven?

Yes

If you are not sorry, will your sins be forgiven?

No.

When we are sorry for our sins, what is it called?

Contrition.

VI. THE MAN WHO WAS SAVED BY CONTRITION.

IT happened, about the year 1614, that a prince, whose name is not known died in a duel which he fought against some one who had offended him. He died directly after committing a mortal sin. He died without Confession, he had but a single moment, before dying to prepare himself for death. In that one moment, however, he prayed to God. There was a holy nun of the order of the Visitation, called Sister Mary Martignat, God let her know that the soul of this prince had been saved. In the last moment of his life he received into his heart the grace of making a true and sincere act of contrition for his sins. He had not lost the faith she says, so he was ready to receive this grace into his heart as a match receives fire. This Act of Contrition saved his soul from Hell. She said that it was a most wonderful thing that God saved him; because, commonly only those who lead a good life are saved. She saw that when he was saved a million of other souls were lost; it was not on his own account that God gave him this grace; but on account of that article of the Creed, the *Communion of the Saints*, that is, because others had prayed for him. She saw that the devil fully expected to have his soul, and he was never so disappointed since he was in Hell; she saw this soul in the deepest part of the flames of Purgatory, and would very likely remain there till the day of judgment. It was covered and surrounded by fiery thorns which hung down on all sides of it.—How good God is, how his ways are above the ways of men. A man commits a murder, they hang him; he may be very sorry for it, no matter, they will not forgive him; they hang him. A man commits the most terrible crimes against God, the man is sorry, God forgives him!

THE GREAT MISTAKE.

A CERTAIN child was told that if it made an Act of Contrition its sins would be forgiven by God. So the child made an Act of Contrition; it said the words of the Act of Contrition, but, while it was saying the words, it did not think at all about what it was saying. The child finished the Act of Contrition; but, its sins were not forgiven! Why not? Because, while it said the Act of Contrition, it was neither sorry for its sins, nor did it think about not committing them any more.

VII. CONTRITION MUST BE INTERIOR.

If you only say that you are sorry, and are not really sorry, will your sins be forgiven?

No.

THE TWO KINGS.

THERE were two kings, one was called Saul, the name of the other was David. Both of them had committed great sins. Saul had offered a sacrifice; this was a sin, because Saul was not a priest, and nobody was allowed to offer a sacrifice except a priest. Besides, Saul had taken a great many beasts and cattle which God had forbidden him to take. David, besides other sins, had unjustly taken away the life of an innocent man.

The Prophet Samuel came to Saul and told him of his sins, that he might repent. Now hear what answer Saul made; he said—*I have sinned because I have broken the commandment of the Lord*, 1 Kings xv. Now, you ask were the sins of Saul forgiven when he said these words? No, the sins of Saul were not forgiven. Why not? Because he said those words only with his lips, he did not say them from his heart, sincerely.

Now, let us see what happened to David. The Prophet Nathan came to David. He reminded David of his sins, that he might repent; what answer did David make? Just the same answer as Saul had made. He said, *I have sinned against the Lord*, 2 Kings xii. Was the sin of David forgiven when he had said these words? Yes. The Prophet said to him *the Lord hath taken away thy sin*. Why was the sin of David forgiven? Because he said the words not only with his lips, but he said them also sincerely from his heart. So you see, when you go to Confession, it makes all the difference *how* you say the Act of Contrition. If you say it from your heart and sincerely, your sins will be forgiven. If you only say it with your tongue as a parrot might say it, your sins will not be forgiven.

VIII. CONTRITION MUST BE SUPERNATURAL IN ITS ORIGIN.

If you are not sorry in your heart for your sins, can any one change your heart and make you sorry?

Yes.

Who can change the heart?

God.

But cannot a sinner change his own heart and have true sorrow of himself, without the help of God?

No.

Can a sinner get sorrow from God?

Yes.

How can he get it?

By praying for it.

CAN WE CHANGE OUR OWN HEARTS?

The heart of a sinner cannot be changed except by God. If fire gets hold of a house and begins to burn it, the fire will not stop of itself. If a river is running into the sea, the river will not stop of itself. So, a sinner who is going on the ways of sin will not stop of himself. A man who loves to get drunk will continue to love it. He will get worse. He cannot, himself, change his own heart and make it hate what he loves. Nobody can change his heart except God. God can and will change the sinner's heart, if he prays earnestly and sincerely, and does his best. God has promised this, and God cannot break his own promise, God has said—*Ask and it shall be given to you*, Matt. vii. So if we ask for contrition and change of heart, God will give it to us. So the true change of heart which is in Contrition, comes from God and from God only. He who prays for it will get it. He who does not pray for it will not get it? You will not understand why many sinners do not repent. They feel that they cannot change themselves. They cannot of themselves hate a sin which they have committed so often and loved so much. So they give up all thoughts of repentance. A sinner says, "It is of no use for me to try, I cannot change myself." This is true. The sinner cannot change himself. But the sinner forgets that if he begins to pray to God, and goes on praying, God will change his heart for him.

IX. THE BAG OF SERPENTS.

A CERTAIN man used to carry about with him a bag full of poisonous, stinging, deadly serpents. One night he laid the bag of serpents down on the floor. He forgot to fasten it up, and went to bed. During the night all the serpents crept out of the bag. They went and twisted themselves round the man while he was asleep. In the middle of the night the man awoke. He was dreadfully frightened when he found the serpents twisted round his head, and arms, and legs, and feet, and all his body: What was he to do? If he stirred the least, these serpents would bite and sting him. The bite or sting of any

one of those serpents was sure to be his death! So he lay as still as if he had been lying in the grave. He called out to somebody to get a pan of warm milk and set it down in the middle of the floor. This was done. The serpents soon smelt the warm milk. First one great serpent untwisted itself from his arm and went to the warm milk. Then another serpent followed, and then another. At last every one of the serpents untwisted itself from the man's body, and he was saved from death!

This man could not get away from the serpents of *himself*. He was obliged to ask somebody to help him. Every mortal sin is a serpent round the soul. The sinner cannot get away from these serpents of himself. But if he prays to God, God will make these serpents go away.

There is some one else to whom the sinner should pray for true Contrition. He should pray to his Blessed Mother Mary, in Heaven. She is called the *Refuge of Sinners*. If a little child wants something, to whom does it go? It goes to its mother. If you want Contrition, pray to your Mother Mary. Never forget to say some Hail Marys before you go to Confession.

X. CONTRITION MUST BE SUPERNATURAL IN ITS MOTIVE.

Why must we be sorry for our sins?

Because we offend God by sin.

Why must we be sorry for offending God?

Because he is so good.

Is it well to be sorry for offending God because we deserve to be punished in Hell and to lose Heaven? Yes.

If we are sorry *only* for the punishment, and not sorry for offending God, will our sins be forgiven? No.

THE THOUGHTLESS BOY.

A LITTLE boy called Thomas one day played truant. He stopped away from school, and played in the streets. When little boys stop away from school, it generally happens that they are found out. So it was with Thomas. His father found out that he had stopped away from school. About dinner time Thomas came home. As soon as Thomas had come into the house his father spoke to him. He said, "Thomas, you stopped away from school this morning?" Thomas could not deny it. His father went into the next room. When he came out again he had a stick in his hand, and he said, "Thomas, come here." So Thomas came. Then the father said—"Thomas I must make you remember that it is wrong to stop away from school. It is a sin of

disobedience." He told Thomas to stand straight up. Then the stick began to come down on the shoulders of Thomas. First it fell on the right shoulder, then on the left. So the stick went from one shoulder to the other a good many times. Thomas, feeling great pain in his shoulders, began to roar and promise never to do it again. The stick now stopped. The father then said to him—"Thomas, are you sorry?" "Yes, please, father," Thomas answered, quickly, "I am very sorry," "Tell me," said the father, "why are you sorry?" Before Thomas answered this question, he rubbed his shoulders about and then said, "Please, father, I am sorry for the beating I have had, because it has made my shoulders very sore." "But," said the father, "are you not sorry for *offending God*?" "Oh," answered Thomas, "I never thought about that."

So you must remember that when you make an act of Contrition, if you are not sorry for *offending God*, it is not Contrition at all. Tell me, if you go to a shop with a piece of money which is counterfeit, will the people of that shop take it? No. So Contrition, which is not for God, will not get pardon of sins.

XI. CONTRITION MUST BE SOVEREIGN.

When we go to Confession must we be sorry for offending God? Yes.

Must our sorrow for offending God be greater than our sorrow for anything else?

Yes.

THE MISTAKE.

A GIRL once was listening to a sermon. Amongst other things she heard the Priest say, "that if people want to make a good confession they must be more sorry for their sins than for anything else." When the sermon was over the people went away. The girl remained behind. She went to the Priest and said, "Please, Father, I think I made a bad confession." "Why do you think so?" answered the Priest. "I will tell you," said the girl. "You said in your sermon to-day that if we want to make a good confession our sorrow for sin must be greater than our sorrow for anything else. When I went to confession I remember that I did not cry for my sins. But when my poor mother died I remember that I cried very much. So I am afraid that my sorrow for my mother's death was greater than my sorrow for my sins." "Answer me one question," said the Priest. "Tell me, if you could bring your mother back to life again by committing a mortal sin, would you commit a mortal sin?" "Oh, no," said the girl, "I would not commit a mortal sin for

anything." "Then," said the Priest, "you love God really more than your mother." "Yes," answered the girl directly. "Then you really would be more sorry to lose God by sin than to lose your mother." "Yes," answered the girl again. "Then," said the Priest, "do not be afraid. Although you cried for your mother's death and did not cry for your sins, yet you were really in your heart more sorry for your sins than for your mother's death."

XII. CONTRITION MUST BE UNIVERSAL.

WHEN you go to confession must you be sorry for your mortal sins?

Yes.

Must you be sorry for *all* your mortal sins?

Yes.

If you are sorry for all your mortal sins except one, will the sins you are sorry for be forgiven?

No.

THE MAN IN CHAINS.

THERE was a man in prison chained fast to the wall. There were chains round his arms, and his legs, and feet. He wanted to get away, so he tried to loosen the chains. He worked very hard. At last he got the chains away from his arms. Then he slipped his feet out of the chains. He got his right leg away. But, when he came to work at the chain on his left leg, he found it impossible to get it away. Take notice, it was all the same to him whether he was held fast to the wall by one chain only or by several chains, for he could not get away. In like manner, as long as the devil holds the soul by one mortal sin, the soul cannot get away from him nor have any of its sins forgiven.

XIII. FIRM PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

JOHN v. *Sin no more lest some worse thing befall thee.*

If you have offended somebody and mean to offend him again, do you deserve forgiveness?

No!

When you go to Confession, if you mean to commit sin again, will your sins be forgiven?

No!

When you are getting ready for Confession, must you say from your heart—"My God, with your help, I will not commit sin again?"

Yes.

When you say this, what is it called?

A firm purpose of amendment.

Of all things in Contrition the firm purpose of amendment is the greatest. It is a sign, and the great sign of true Contrition. A person, after Confession, comes and says, I should like to know if, when I went to Confession, I had true Contrition, if I was really sorry for my sins? I answer that question very easily. I say to him—since you went to Confession, did you commit any more the sins you told in Confession? The person answers, no, I did not. Then, I say, you may be sure you had true Contrition. Smoke coming out of a chimney is a sure sign of a fire. Not committing again the sins we confessed is sure sign of Contrition.

WHAT WE MUST DO NOT TO COMMIT SIN AGAIN.

1. TEMPTATIONS FROM OURSELVES.

THERE are some sins which people commit when they are alone by themselves, for example, some sins of impurity. You shall hear what you must do, that you may not commit these sins again. 1. When you are at Confession, ask the Priest what you must do. Whatever he tells you to do, do it most carefully. 2. Go very often to Confession and Communion. 3. If you have sincere wish not to fall into the sin any more, and yet through weakness you fall even many times—*do not be discouraged*. Rise up out of it again directly, make an act of Contrition, and go and confess it.

A man had a great sickness. He got better. Still he was very weak. Walking along the road he fell down into the mud, through weakness. What did he do? Did he stop lying in the mud? Did he say, it is of no use trying to walk, I am so weak, I will stop where I am lying in the mud? No, he said, I will try again to walk. So he got up directly. He fell down many times more. But he always had patience, and got up again. Every day he got stronger. At last he was able to walk without falling down. Let the sinner who falls into sin through weakness do in like manner.

2. TEMPTATIONS FROM OTHERS.

MOST frequently people commit the same sins again, because they go back to the same bad company which tempted them before, or they go back to the same places where they committed sin before, such as public-houses, dancing-houses, theatres, etc.

THE GREAT SECRET.

HEAR the greatest secret you ever heard in your life. The secret is about what you must do not to fall again into the sins which you fell into before Confession. This, then, is the secret—*keep away*—keep away—keep away from the bad company; keep away from the places where you committed that sin before! If you want a dog not to bite you, what must you do? Keep away from the dog. If you want not to catch a fever, what must you do? Keep away from the place where the fever is. If you want not to commit a sin again, what must you do? Keep away from those persons and places where you were tempted before. Remember! *the burnt child keeps away from the fire*

XIV. EXCUSES.

BUT you say, "Oh, you do not understand me. I am quite different now since I went to Confession. I would not commit the sin again for anything. Trust me. If I go to the public-house, I will not get drunk again. If I go into the company of that person who tempted me before, I will not commit the same sin again. Besides, he has been to Confession himself. He is so good now."

Hear the answer to all this. You say you will go back into his company, but you will not commit sin! This is untrue, it is false. If you go back you will most certainly commit the sin again. You know that if you go back, there is at least danger of sin. You do not deny this? You only say that you will go where there is danger of sin, but you will not commit sin. Do you know what God says? He says, *He that loveth the danger shall perish in it*, Eccus. iii. Do you not know that if you put the straw to the fire, it burns. If you put your hand into the dog's mouth, the dog bites you. Do you not know, then, that if you go again into bad company you will become bad yourself. You say that the person who tempted you is becoming now like an angel, he is so good. Hear this—perhaps he is good like an angel, but if you go into his company again, he will soon become like a devil.

But you say that if you go into the danger of sin, God will help you, and keep you from sin. Where did you learn this? For God himself says he will not help you—he says that he will let you perish. Hear it again—*He that loveth the danger shall perish in it.* God will not do for you what you can do for yourself. God has given you feet to walk with. If you do not choose to use your feet to walk, but want to fly, God will not help you to fly. You can avoid sin by keeping out of bad company. If you do not choose to avoid sin by keeping out of bad company, God will not help you to avoid sin. From the beginning of the world till now God has never once helped any one who went wilfully in the danger of sin.

XV. THE BOY WHO COMMITTED SIN AGAIN.

THERE was a boy who had been very wicked. It happened that there was a Mission given in the town where he lived. One night during the mission he went into the church. He stood near the platform where the missionary was preaching. He felt a struggle in his heart during the sermon. While the words of the missionary sounded in his ears the grace of God came into his heart. The struggle was over; he was converted. The tears were running down from his eyes. He was saying to himself, "I never thought about these things before. I will change my life." He went home and asked his father for some pens, and ink, and paper. He shut himself up in a room alone. He got ready for Confession. He wrote all his sins down on paper. He made most fervent acts of Contrition. His tears of repentance fell on the paper where his sins were written, and wet it. He folded up this Paper, put it into his pocket, and set off to the church to make his Confession, but never reached the church!

As he went along the street it happened that he lifted up his eyes and saw a certain house. In that house there was living one who had often led him into sin before. Now he is in danger! The devil had been all along watching this boy. He was at his side while he was getting ready for confession, and as he went through the street. Now was the Devil's moment, when the boy had his eyes fixed on that house. The devil put a temptation into his heart. The temptation was this—that he should go into that house and commit the sin once more, only once more. The Priest would forgive this sin along with the others. What, then, did the boy do when he saw the house and felt the temptation? Did he fly away? No. Did he say *Jesus and Mary help me?* No. If he had done so God would have helped him. He stood there with his eyes fixed on the house and allowed the temptation to keep hold of his heart. At last he said, yes, I will go in. He then went into the house and committed a mortal sin. After this he said to himself, I think I will not go to Confession,

to-night. I will go back home. He went to the street door, opened it and looked out. It was dark, he could see nothing; all was quiet. Still, death was lying in wait for him at that door. Near the door on the outside a man was standing with his hand stretched out. In his hand there was something bright and glittering. It was a long sharp knife. That man had long hated the boy and had made up his mind to kill him. He knew that the boy was in the house and he was watching for him to come out. The boy saw neither the man nor the knife. Now, he thought he would set off for home. He put his foot out of the house. Before he had time to let it down on the ground, the knife had gone through his heart. He screamed out and fell down dead at the door. His soul went straight to Hell. So his soul was lying in the flames of hell, and his dead body was lying in the street, with the Confession paper in his pocket!

THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER.

1ST. This boy did not go into temptation knowingly and willingly, for he never thought about the house when he set off. Yet, he fell into sin. You say that you will go into temptation knowingly and willingly, and yet will not fall into sin—what nonsense!

2d. When his eyes first saw the house of temptation he did not fly away, he did not pray, he did not say *Jesus and Mary help me*. If he had prayed, God would have helped him. *Pray lest you enter into temptation*, Matt. xi. 26.

3rd. Good Christians should always be thinking beforehand, if they are likely to meet with any temptation that they may avoid it. *Forewarned—forearmed*. If he had thought beforehand, he would have remembered that the house of temptation was in that street, and he would have gone by another street. But the other street was a long way round. No matter, it is better to go a long way round than to go by a short way to hell. *Watch lest you enter into temptation*, Matt. xi. 26.

XVI. THE DYING ROBBER, OR CONTRITION.

IN the time of the Emperor Marian, there was a fierce and cruel robber living in Thrace. He was lying in a hospital. He was dying. What happens very seldom happened to him. A little before he died he began to repent of his sins. He made a most sincere Act of Contrition. He cried so much for his sins that his pocket-handkerchief was as wet with his tears as if it had been steeped in water.

When the robber was dead a very holy man, the doctor of the hospital, had a vision. He saw on one side of the dead robber many devils with papers in their hands, on which the sins of the robber were written. On the other side he saw two angels shining with light. A pair of scales was brought. The devils put into one scale the papers of sins, and this scale sunk down with the weight of sins laid upon it. The other scale went up. The Angels said to one another, "What can we put into the empty scale to make it weigh more than the scale in which his sins are? He has only just repented of his robberies. How can we hope to find anything good done by him. However, let us try." They searched about and found the pocket-handkerchief wet with tears of repentance. They said "Let us put this handkerchief into the empty scale, and perhaps God will add to it the weight of his mercy." They did so. Behold, the empty scale went down and the tears were found to weigh more than the sins. So it was known that God had pardoned the man's sins because he had made a sincere Act of Contrition.*

XVII. CONFESSION.

WHEN people are sick do they like to be cured? Yes.

Whom do they go to get cured?

To the doctor.

Why do they go to the doctor?

Because he can cure them.

When a sinner wants to have his sins forgiven, whom does he go to?

He goes to the Priest.

Why does he go to the Priest?

Because the Priest can forgive sins.

Who says that the Priest can forgive sins?

Jesus Christ says so.

What did Jesus Christ say to the Priests?

He said—*Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them.*—John xx.

When a sinner goes to the Priest for forgiveness, what does he tell the Priest?

He tells his sins.

* St. Alphonsus Homo, Ap. Tract Ult. No. 38. Oportet curari ut pueri eliciant actum doloris necessarium ad suscipiendam absolutionem, modo respectu ipsorum magis proprio. See *Blessed Leonard's Act of Contrition*—"O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against Thee, because Thou art so good, and I will not sin again."

When he tells the sins to the Priest what is it called?

It is called *Confession*.

Can you tell your sins at Confession, if you do not remember them?

No.

Then, what must you do before you go to Confession?

I must try to remember my sins.

When you try to remember your sins before Confession, what is it called?

Examination of Conscience.

WHAT SINS WE MUST CONFESS.

Sins before Baptism.—Are we obliged to confess the sins committed before Baptism?

No.

Why not?

Because sins committed before Baptism are not forgiven by the sacrament of Penance.

What sacrament forgives them?

The sacrament of Baptism.

Then, what sins must you confess?

The sins committed after Baptism.

Mortal Sins.—Are you obliged to confess *all* the mortal sins you remember?

Yes.

Must we confess how many times we committed each mortal sin?

Yes.

But, if we cannot remember how many times, what must we do?

We must try to remember how many times we did it each day, or week, or month, or year.

Venial Sins.—Are you obliged to confess your venial sins as you are obliged to confess mortal sins?

No.

Is it good to confess venial sins?

Yes.

Concealment of Sins.—If you remember a mortal sin must you confess it?

Yes.

If you do not confess a mortal sin because you are afraid or ashamed, will it be forgiven?

No.

Will the other sins you tell in that Confession be forgiven?

No.

Why will not the other sins be forgiven?

Because it is a bad Confession.

If a person has wilfully concealed a mortal sin in confession, can he get it forgiven?

Yes.

How can he get it forgiven?

By confessing it.

Must he confess that he concealed it?

Yes.

Must he tell all the sins of that Confession over again?

Yes.

Why?

Because they were not forgiven.

If a person is afraid to tell his sins at Confession, what should he say to the Priest?

He should say—*Please, Father, help me to tell my sins, I am afraid.*

Will the Priest be glad to help you?

Yes.

Sins forgotten.—Is concealing a sin in Confession the same as forgetting it?

No.

If you conceal a mortal sin, does it make the Confession bad?

Yes.

If you forget a mortal sin, does it make the Confession bad?

No.

Is the sin you forgot forgiven along with the others?

Yes.

Why does God forgive it?

Because he knows that I am sorry for it along with the other sins.

If you remember it afterwards, must you confess it?

Yes.

Why must we confess a mortal sin, after it is forgiven?

Because we are obliged to *confess all our mortal sins.*

When must we confess it?

At the next Confession.

Matter for the Sacrament.—Must you always be sorry for your sins before they can be forgiven?

Yes.

If you have only venial sins to confess, must you be sorry for them?

Yes.

If you are not sorry enough for your venial sins, what must you confess?

I must confess a mortal sin.

But how can you confess a mortal sin, when you have not committed one since your last Confession?

I must confess over again some mortal sin which I confessed before my last Confession.

XVIII. FAULTS IN MAKING A CONFESSION.

- 1.— Children often talk with one another while they are getting ready for Confession.
- 2.— Some children are in a hurry to get to Confession, and do not wait till their turn comes.
- 3.— Some are very slow in confessing their sins. They tell one sin, then a long stop—a second sin, then another long stop—and so on. Thus they make the Priest lose much time.
- 4.— Sometimes people confess their good works instead of confessing their sins.
- 5.— Some people confess other people's sins instead of confessing their own sins. There was a woman who told her husband's sins instead of telling her own sins. To teach her a lesson the Priest said to her, "For your own sins you will say one Hail Mary, but for the sins of your husband you will fast on bread and water for a month!"
- 6.— Some people waste a great deal of time by saying many useless words, and telling long histories. Instead of saying—I stole such a thing, they will tell the name of every street they went through on their road, and such like useless things.
- 7.— Others will say—"I stole"—but they do not tell what they stole; or, "I broke the commandments," but they do not say which commandment they broke.
- 8.— Some confess only part, sometimes the least part, of a sin. A person says—"I stole a bridle"—then he stops. I ask him did he steal anything else?—"O, yes," he says, "I stole the horse along with the bridle."
- 9.— Some do not try to tell the number of their mortal sins, not even whether they were often or seldom.
- 10.— There are others who, when the Priest is speaking to them and giving them good advice, do not attend to him, but are thinking whether they

have any more sins to confess, and they do the same when they are even making the Act of Contrition!

- 11.— Some, when they are asked, if they have any more sins to confess, answer, "no more at present." They seem to think that they are obliged to divide their Confession into two halves, one-half this week and one-half next week!
- 12.— Some, instead of accusing, *excuse* themselves. They say, "I committed such a sin, but somebody put me up to it; or I cursed, but they took the curse out of me; or I said angry words, but could not help it."
- 13.— Sometimes, when there is a real excuse, which ought to be told, people will not tell it. They say, "I lost Mass on Sunday," they leave out—"because I was sick;" or, "I ate meat on Friday"—leaving out—"because I forgot it was Friday."
- 14.— Some people, being asked if they will keep from sin for the time to come, answer, "Yes, *if I am able*." They should answer, "Yes, with God's help, I will."
- 15.— Some seem to think that they must always be running back again to the Priest for every little thing they forget in Confession.
- 16.— Children sometimes forget to do their penance. But, the worst thing of all is, the concealment of sins, through fear or shame.

XIX. SOME WHO CONCEALED SIN IN CONFESSION.

THERE was a girl, living near Brussels, who went to confession and Holy Communion every month. During her last illness, one day, she remained for some time with her eyes shut, lost, as it seemed, in deep thought. After a while she opened her eyes again, and sent for her sister. When her sister came, she said to her sister, "I am lost forever!" "How foolish," answered her sister, "it is for you to say so; you are dreaming." "No," said the dying girl, "I am not dreaming; I have just seen it." "Seen what?" said the sister. "I have just seen the very place in Hell which has been got ready for me." Her sister then ran out of the room to fetch the Priest. In a short time the Priest came. He said, "Well, my child, what is the matter?" "I am lost," she answered, "for ever. I have just seen the place in Hell which has been got ready for me. I committed some sins when I was little, and I was always frightened to tell them in Confession." Then, in the presence of the Priest and of others in the room, she mentioned what the sins were. "Now," said the Priest, "I know what the sins were. You have only to accuse yourself of them in Confession and they will be forgiven." Her only answer was—"I am lost forever." "But," said the Priest, "if you ask God to have mercy on you, he will forgive your

sins." "I know he will;" the girl said, "but I have abused his mercy so often that I will not ask it any more." The Priest staid three days and three nights, trying to persuade the girl to confess her sins. It was of no use. She died with these words on her lips—"I am lost forever. I have seen the place in Hell which has been got ready for me!"

A child once went to the altar to receive the Holy Communion. When this child was receiving the Holy Communion, nobody could see any difference betwixt it and the other children. When it had received Holy Communion it came back from the altar, and knelt down in its place. After kneeling there for a few moments, it fell down on the floor. Some people came to raise it up from the floor, but they found that its eyes were shut and it could not speak. They carried the poor child out of the church, and took it to a house that was near. The doctor was sent for, and he came and looked at the child, but he could not tell what was the matter with it. When the Holy Mass was finished, the Priest went over to the house where the child was. He looked into its pale face and spoke to it. But the child made no answer, its eyes were still shut, and it seemed to have no sense. The Priest stood there wondering what could be the matter with the child. All at once the child opened its eyes and said the words, "I made a bad Communion this morning. When I went to Confession, there was a great sin which I was frightened to tell, and I would not tell it." As soon as the child had said these words, it turned round and died. Then, for the love of Jesus, tell your sins in Confession. The Priest is not glad of sin, but he is glad to hear you tell your sins. If you will not tell your sins now, you will have to tell them before all the world at the day of judgment. If you will tell them now they will be forgiven: but if you tell them only at the day of judgment, they will not be forgiven. When the devil tempts you not to tell your sins, say, "My God, help me to tell my sins, because the devil is tempting me not to tell them." If you are frightened to tell your sins when you are making your Confession, say to the Priest, "*Father, help me to tell my sins, because I feel afraid.*" Remember—To forget a sin is no harm, only tell it afterwards when you remember it. But to remember a mortal sin at Confession and then not to tell it, that is a terrible thing.

XX. WANT OF HOPE AND CONFIDENCE, OR THE MAN WHO HANGED HIMSELF.

JUDAS was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ. He committed a very great sin. He sold Jesus Christ to the Jews for thirty pieces of silver. But repentance came into his heart. When he heard that the Jews were going to

crucify Jesus, he repented. He was very sorry for his sin. He wished with all his heart he had not done it. He would not do it again for anything. With his heart full of sorrow, he walked to the Temple and went in. The Temple was full of people and of priests. He went into the midst of them. They all looked at him, for they saw that he had something to say. He felt very much ashamed, but he did not mind the shame. He confessed his sin, aloud in the hearing of all the priests and the people. He said, *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood!* This was not all. He knew that he had done wrong to receive the thirty pieces of silver. So he gave all this money back again. What a good Confession this seemed to be. Was it, then, a good Confession? No. Judas walked out of the Temple. He went down into the valley of Josaphat. There he hanged himself on a tree, and while his dead body hung there, his bowels gushed out, and it became known to all the people. Why, then, did Judas make a bad Confession? He had everything wanted for a good Confession except one thing, which looks very little, but is very great. He had not *hope*. He had no hope, no confidence that God would pardon him, although God would have been very glad to pardon him. Then, before the children go to Confession, after the Act of Contrition, they should be sure to make an Act of Hope. They might say, *My dear Jesus, I hope in you. I believe, I am sure, you will forgive my sins, because you died for the forgiveness of them.*

XXI. THE WORDS OF JESUS TO THE SINNER.

"I AM your Creator," Jesus says to the sinner; "you are mine, shall I not take care of my own. I died once on a cross to save you. And now, when I am able to save you, do you think I will refuse to save you? I am your brother; shall I not do what is good for my own brother? If you do not know that I love you you do not understand me. Did I not let men pierce me and scourge me because I loved you? Was I ever seen to despise him who prayed to me? Was it ever known that I turned away from him who sought me? You forget that I seek even those who do not seek me. No, poor sinner, I am the best friend you have in the world. You owe a great debt to God for your sins, but I have promised to pay it. Trust me, hope in me, and your sins shall be forgiven."

XXII. ABSOLUTION.

JOHN xx. Jesus said to his disciples—*As the Father hath sent me, so I also send you.* When he had said this he breathed on them, and said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins ye shall forgive they are forgiven them.* So the

Priests of God's Church can forgive sins. These are the words of absolution which forgive sins, and are said by the Priest at Confession—"*By the authority of Jesus Christ, I absolve thee from thy sins, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.—Amen.*"

A NEW CREATION.

2 Cor. v. *If any be in Christ a new creature, the old things are passed away, behold all things are new.*

At Confession there is a new creation like the creation of the Heavens and the earth, but more wonderful.

In the beginning God created Heaven and Earth. The earth was then empty of everything. Darkness was on the face of the deep waters. It was such a darkness as we never see. Not a single ray of light was in the whole universe. It was like a solid, dead darkness. Nothing then was heard but the rushing of the waters and the howling of the winds.

The earth empty, in darkness and disorder, was a picture of a soul in a mortal sin. The soul in mortal sin is empty and lonesome, like the earth was. It is empty of God. Oh, the deep, deep emptiness of a soul where God is not! Instead of God there is darkness in the soul. It is not the darkness of a deep pit, nor the darkness which presses round a dead body in the grave. It is the darkness of Hell. But go and listen to that soul. You will hear the torrents of temptation rushing into it like great roaring rivers. You will hear in it the wild howlings of its passions, of anger and bad desires.

The Spirit of God moved over the dark waters at the Creation. The sinner has gone to Confession, and the grace of the Spirit of God is moving his soul. Faith and Hope of pardon are stirred up in him. He begins to love God, and hate his sins.

When the Spirit of God had moved over the waters of the earth, God said, *Let light be made.* Then light burst forth into the great darkness and shone on the skies and the earth. The Priest has said the words of absolution. The light of God bursts out in that soul, shining in it as it shines around the throne of God in Heaven,

When God had created light on the earth, he filled it with beautiful flowers of every form and colour, and with the richest fruits. But those flowers faded away, the fruits rotted on the trees at the end of autumn. But at Confession God creates in the soul flowers of virtues which will never fade, and fruits of good works which will never drop off, but will go with the soul into Heaven. So, at Confession the soul becomes like a paradise in which God delights to be with the children of men.

XXIII. THE OLD ROOT OF A TREE; OR, THE DEVILS.

A TRAVELLER found on his road the root of an old tree. He struck the root with his stick. As soon as the root had been struck hundreds and thousands of frightful black insects came out of the old root and went away! What was it that made these insects go away? It was the little noise of the stick striking on the wood over their heads that frightened them and made them go away.

The sinner has begun his Confession. The devils are still dwelling in his soul, like the insects in the old root. Their ugly shapes are feeding on it, as worms feed on the rotten flesh of a dead body in the church-yard. They stick to the soul like leeches, drawing its life away. But what is the matter? the devils have looked up in fear and trembling! The words of absolution are coming near them. The sound of those words come nearer now. The words of absolution have sounded in the soul. In the ears of the devils the words of absolution sound louder and more dreadful than ten thousand thunders. In haste they dash themselves out of the soul. They do not stop till they have buried in the deepest of Hell, and hid themselves from the sound of words so terrible to them.

CHAINS BROKEN.

THE sinner has not yet received Absolution. His soul is still lying in chains—the chains of mortal sin. They are great heavy clanking chains. They are strong as the gates of Hell. Those chains go into the soul. They have eaten their way into the very inward spirit. Corruption and rottenness have grown up from the soul into the links of those chains, and made them one thing with itself. Those chains go round the soul and into every part of it. The soul looks as if it was buried from the sight in those chains. Who can break those terrible chains in pieces? No man, no spirit, no devil, no angel could break them. All men and angels and devils, together, could not break the least little ring of those chains. Poor soul! there is a God above *who heareth the groans of them that are in fetters*, Ps. There is a God who is able to break those chains, who wants to break them if you only want it yourself. And, since you have come to Confession, God will break those chains. But, wait a little. The Priest is saying the words of absolution. Those words of themselves could do nothing. But there is the endless force and the Almighty power of the Blood of Jesus in these words. Another moment!—the words of absolution have struck the chains off the sinner like a flash of lightning. Those chains are snapped and broken in pieces as if they were but a bit of

thread. The sinner is free! Ps. 135 *With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm God has burst the iron bars.*

XXIV. RESURRECTION.

JOHN v. *The hour cometh and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear shall live.* Lazarus was dead, his dead body had been lying in the grave four days. Jesus came there and stood beside the grave. He cried out with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth.* The voice of Jesus sounded in the ears of that body which was cold and stiff in death. Presently he that had been dead came forth! Let us see how it is with a soul lying dead in the grave of mortal sin. The words of absolution have not yet been said over that soul; it is still lying in the grave, cold and stiff in death. But life is not far off; the Priest has begun to say the words of absolution, already the light of life comes on the dead soul. But how? As yet only like the flash of a candle on the pale face of a dead body. The Priest is breathing the words of absolution, in the name and by the power of the Son of God. Still, that soul lies cold and stiff in death. The words of absolution go on, still there is no sign of life in the soul. The angels are crowding round from above and on all sides to see the great, great wonder that is going to be, *the resurrection of a soul from death to life.* So men would crowd round a grave in a church-yard where a dead body was going to be raised to life. The words of absolution are nearly finished. The Priest has said, *By the authority of Jesus Christ—I absolve thee—*(only one more word is wanting, it comes,) *from thy sins.* It is done! in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, that soul is risen to life! the breath of life has been breathed into it, and now it is a *living soul!* Well may the angels come in crowds to see such a sight. They know that to raise a dead body to life costs God nothing. But to raise a dead soul to life, cost God thirty-three years of pain and labour.

XXV. GOOD IN THE SOUL.

WHAT are they doing in Heaven during the sinner's Confession, where there is joy over every sinner that does Penance?

God in Heaven is looking at the sinner on his knees making his Confession. And now listen, for God is speaking to the angels, "My dear angels, "God says, "I have tidings of great joy to tell you. This day another name will be written in Heaven. See the poor sinner is on his knees in the church making his Confession. The moment of his absolution is at hand. It is my intention to go down myself and dwell in his soul. I want you to make

that soul a fit dwelling-place for the Majesty of God. You will clothe that soul in garments of glittering whiteness, which is *the justification of the Saints*, Apoc. xix. Carry, therefore, from Heaven a most beautiful, precious robe for that soul." Now the angels are going down to the earth carrying that beautiful dress of *Divine Grace* for the happy soul. That dress is whiter than snow, brighter than the sun, richer than gold, or silver, or precious stones. Already the Priest has begun to breathe into that soul the words of absolution. The angels wait in silence. The words of absolution are finished. The angels are clothing the soul with the beautiful robe of Divine Grace.

How beautiful that soul is! Solomon in all his glory was not clothed as that soul is, Ps. 110. Glory and riches are in his house. But now God himself in his three Divine Persons is coming down from Heaven to that soul; we *will come to him and make our abode with him*; John xv. When God comes past the sun, it does not stop to wonder, for it knows that the Creator is going past. When God comes near the earth, the trees do not bend down to the ground for they do not know that the Majesty of God is near. And now the Glory of God is in that soul, Ps. 45. *God is in the midst thereof*. It is the same God who came down on Mount Sinai and the Jews were told not to go near the mountain lest they should die, if they went so near to God. And now, God is in that soul. He speaks his first word, he says, *this is my beloved son*, and he gives the kiss of peace to the happy soul.

But God has not come from Heaven with empty hands. He has brought with him most precious and beautiful presents for the soul, such as no eye hath seen, no ear heard of. See, the virtues of God and the seven-fold gift of the Holy Ghost, are glittering in that soul like the stars in the skies. God speaks again, "my son, he says, be of good heart, your sins are forgiven by absolution. You may thank Jesus for his blessed grace, because he bought it for you with his precious blood. There was a decree against you which condemned you to Hell. But know that in this very hour the hand-writing of that decree has been blotted out. And now, besides all the gifts you have received, I give you another excellent gift on account of absolution, that gift is *Sacramental Grace*, that is, I make you a solemn promise, and *I will be mindful forever of my covenant*; Ps. 110. I promise that, whenever you are tempted to commit sin again, if you will pray to me I will hear you, and the grace of the Sacrament of Penance shall keep you from sin, *so you are girt with strength that your ways may be blameless*, Ps. 17. And now you are again the heir of the kingdom of Heaven. Be faithful to me until death and you shall receive the crown of life."

XXVI. THE ANGELS.

Ps. 33. *The Angel of the Lord shall encamp round about them that fear him and shall deliver them.* Now God speaks to the angels who are standing round in joy and wonder, "My dear angels," God says, "I give you charge over this soul, to each of you I give a sword of flaming fire turning every way, as I gave to the angel in Paradise. Guard this soul and keep it from the evil spirits, for they will seek to take away the heavenly life it has now received."

To the Angel Guardian of the soul, God says: "Dear angel, rejoice because this soul over which you watch, was dead and is now living again. Feed it daily with holy thoughts and the lights of Heaven. Till now its works have been dead works. *But now it shall be like a tree planted near the running waters which shall bring forth its fruit in due season,* Ps. 1. For after this every work will be a living work. Therefore take into your hand the Book of Life. Go along with this my son in all his ways, whatsoever he shall do in thoughts, word, and work, write it down on the pages of the Book of Life. When the short days of his earthly life are finished, and when, after death, he shall stand before me for judgment, I will give him a reward in Heaven exceeding great for every thought, word, and action I shall find written in that book.

There is joy in Heaven above over this soul which has done penance. That joy goes far and wide through Heaven; it is endless, like Heaven itself; all the countless millions of angels are rejoicing over that soul which was dead and is come to life again. They look at the soul in wonder. *Who is it, they say, that cometh forth as the morning, rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army,* Cant. When we see a child coming out from Confession, how little we think of the wonderful things that have been done in its soul!

XXVII. PENANCE; OR SATISFACTION.*

If a child has done wrong, does it deserve to be punished? Yes.

If a child is punished for doing wrong is it likely to do wrong again? No.

After Confession does the Priest give you some prayers to say, or some good works to do for your sins? Yes.

* S. Alphonsus Homo, ap. Tract Ulo. No. 38. *Pœnitentia pueris levis sit quantum fieri potest, et curandum quod illa ab ipsis quantocius impleatur alioquin aut eam obliviscentur aut omittent.*

What is it called? A Penance.

Why does the Priest give a Penance for your sins?

To teach me not to commit sin again.

Is sin an injury to God? Yes.

Ought we to satisfy God for the injury we have done him by sin? Yes.

How can we satisfy him? By doing Penance.

What is Satisfaction?

Doing the Penance given by the Priest at Confession.

If you have injured any one in his goods or his character, are you obliged to make him amends? Yes.

THE MONASTERY OF PENANCE.

S. JOHN CLIMACUS, during his journey in Egypt, came to a certain monastery. "I saw there," he says, "such sights as the eye of the slothful man never saw, the ear of the idle never heard of, and the heart of the coward never thought of.

"In that monastery they always fasted on bread and water for their sins. Some of them stood upright all the night in the open air. When sleep tempted them they drove it away and reproached themselves for their cowardice. Some, with their eyes lifted up to heaven, and with a sorrowful voice, called upon God to have mercy on them. Others stood with their hands tied behind their backs, as if they were great criminals. They did not dare to lift up their eyes to Heaven, but remained silent. Others placed on sackcloth and ashes, hid their heads betwixt their knees or beat their forehead against the ground. You might see others striking their breasts, and thinking of the happy days before they had sinned. Others there were who watered the ground with their tears. Some cried aloud that they were unworthy of pardon, but prayed that God would punish them in this world, and save them from eternal torments in the world to come. They were so humbled and so bent down under their sins, that the very stones might have pitied them. No laughter was ever heard amongst them. There was no vain-glory or pride seen. There was no care about their body, what they should eat or drink, or what was pleasant to the taste. Even the desire of these things was no longer in their heart. They thought about nothing but their sins and death. Will God forgive us, they cried, has he heard our prayers? How will it be with us in the last moment of our lives? will the gates of Heaven be opened to us?

"It was a terrible sight when the death of any of them was at hand. When any of those blessed penitents saw that any of their companions was about to quit the world, they gathered round him. In a sorrowful and compassionate

voice they said to him, 'O dear brother and companion of our labours and penances, how do you find yourself? what are your thoughts now? have you a firm hope of your salvation? do you hear in your soul a voice which says *thy sins are forgiven thee*, or do you hear a terrible voice saying the wicked shall be punished in Hell. Tell us sincerely how you are that we may know how we shall be when death comes, for the time of your penance is now finished.' To these questions some answered by thanking God for his great mercies, others, frightened at the sight of the terrible judgment of God which was coming near, showed greater sorrow than ever for their sins.

"As for me," says St. John Climacus, "when I had seen and heard all these things, I was near falling into despair, for I remembered how little my own penance had been. I remained there for a month. Then I left the monastery, feeling that I was unworthy of the company of these holy penitents."

Children may learn from this history what a terrible thing sin is. They may learn also to be very careful about doing the little penances they get at Confession.

HOW A CHILD MAKES ITS CONFESSION.

The child goes to the Confessional where the Priest is. It kneels down. Then it makes the *Sign of the Cross*. Then it says, *Pray, Father, give me your blessing, for I have sinned*. After this it says, "I confess to Almighty God, to Blessed Mary ever Virgin, to Blessed Michael the Archangel, to Blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed—through my fault—through my fault—through my most grievous fault. Then the child says—*since my last confession, which was a week or a month since* (the child tells how long it is since), *when I received absolution* (or did not receive absolution) *I accuse myself of*—here the child tells each of its sins against the commandments of God or the Church. If the child committed a mortal sin, it must tell how many times it committed the mortal sin. When the child has confessed all its sins, it says—*For these and all my other sins, which I cannot at present call to mind, I am heartily sorry, purpose amendment, and humbly beg pardon and absolution of you, my ghostly Father*." Then the child says, "Therefore, I beseech the Blessed Mary ever Virgin, Blessed Michael the Archangel, Blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me."

After this, the child listens attentively to the advice the Priest gives to it. It takes great notice what Penance the Priest gives. Then while the Priest is giving it Absolution, it makes another Act of Contrition. The child goes away and returns thanks to God, and takes care afterwards to do its Penance as soon as it can.

BOOK XII.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Venerable Bede, in his letter to Egbert, Archbishop of York, says:—"There are innumerable boys and girls who might receive Holy Communion every Sunday. To make instruction sink deeper they should be taught, not only to say but to sing the Lord's Prayer, Apostles' Creed," &c.—See Canon Flanagan's Church History.

JOHN iii.—"God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son."

I. THE GREAT GIFT OF GOD.

SOME bread was *given* to a little child by its mother. Then the bread belonged to the child. The child could do any thing it liked with the bread. It could eat the bread, or keep it in the cupboard, or give it away—just as it liked. No one could take away the bread from the child, because the bread had been given to it, and was its own. Now, you will know what is meant by the word *giving*.

From the early times God had said that he would *give* to men something most wonderful. What was it that God said he would give to us? Was it the beautiful flowers and rich fruits of the earth? No; it was something far better than fruits and flowers. Was it heaven that God said he would give? No; it was something a million times better even than heaven itself. Hear, then, what it was. God said that he would give away to men—*Himself*. When men heard that God would give himself to them, they wondered. How, they thought, could this be? How could God, of whose greatness there is no end, be given to man, who is so little, even to a little child? Then they thought about that word—*given*. If God was given to them, then they could have from him any good thing they liked; the same as if a gold mine is given to us, we can take as much gold out of it as we like. People, then, could not

understand *how* God could be given to them, for God kept it a secret to himself. All they could do was to pray that the time might come soon when God would give himself to them. But the time did not come soon. Four thousand years had passed, and still God had not given himself to men. Millions and millions of people had died before God gave himself to them. You ask, why did God wait so long before he gave himself to men? It was that men might have plenty of time to pray and make themselves holy, and get themselves ready to receive the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

1. *God comes down from Heaven.*—When the world was four thousand years old, God the Son, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, came down from heaven. He was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary. His holy name was Jesus. He was a baby. He grew up. When he was about thirty years old, he began to do most wonderful things. He cured the sick, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and raised the dead to life. The people came round him in crowds to hear his blessed words, and to see him do works which no one but God could do.

One day Jesus had done a most wonderful work. With only five loaves and two fishes he had fed four thousand men, and they all ate as much as they liked.

2. *He promises to give Himself to men, and tells them how it will be done.*—After the people had eaten the bread which Jesus had given them so wonderfully, they followed him. Then Jesus said to them: "You follow me because you did eat of the bread I have given you and were filled. But I will give you other bread, much better than the bread you have just eaten. It is better even than the beautiful Manna which Moses gave to your fathers in the desert. Your fathers ate that bread, and yet your fathers are dead. But if any man eat of the bread that I shall give to you, he shall not die. And now I will tell you what that bread is which I am going to give you. *The bread that I will give you is my flesh for the life of the world.*" (John vii.) So now, at last, God told men the great secret which he had kept to himself for four thousand years. He told them *how* he would give himself away to them—that he would give them his own flesh to be their food. As soon as the words of Jesus reached their ears, and they knew what a wonderful thing he was going to do for them, what do you think they did? You would expect them all to kneel down before the Son of God, and say:—"O Jesus, we believe the word you have said, because you have the words of eternal life. We believe that you will give us your flesh to eat, and your blood to drink. We praise you and thank you for this blessed gift." But many of these people did not do so. Instead of thanking the good Jesus, they began to talk and dispute about it. Like some who are not Catholics do now-a-days, they said: "How is it

possible for him to give us his flesh to eat? we do not believe it." But that the people might know it quite well, Jesus said again:—*Amen, I say to you, except you eat my flesh, and drink my blood, you shall not have life in you. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.* (John vi.) After this, many of the disciples of Jesus left him, for they would not believe him. Poor creatures! But the apostles believed Jesus, and said: "O Jesus you have the words of eternal life; we believe what you say, we believe that you will give us your flesh to eat and your blood to drink."

3. *He keeps his promise, and gives himself to men at his Last Supper.*—The apostles always remembered the promise which Jesus had made—to give them his most holy flesh and blood. But still Jesus did not give it to them for a long time. In Jerusalem there is a hill called Mount Sion. On this hill, near the tomb where King David was buried, there was a house with a large dining-room in it. If you had gone into that room, the evening before Jesus died on the cross, you would have seen him sitting at a table with his twelve apostles. What a sight! to see the Creator in the midst of his creatures, whom he had made out of the dust of the earth, going to do the greatest thing that ever was or will be done. He was going to give away himself, to give his own most sacred body and blood to be the food of his creatures. It was very good of Jesus to give to us heaven and earth, and to give to us his angels to take care of us. But it seemed too good and too kind for him to give away himself to us to be our food, like the bread we eat at breakfast is our food. But nothing seemed to Jesus too good to do for us. Now, let us see how it was done.

You will remember that at the creation God said: "*Let light be made—and light was made.*" Because, when God speaks the word the thing is done, and done directly. Now, then, be very attentive. Jesus is going to speak the word that will change bread and wine into his Body and his Blood. On that table where they were sitting there was bread and there was wine. First of all, Jesus took the bread into his holy and venerable hands. He lifted up his blessed eyes to heaven. Then he said these solemn words—THIS IS MY BODY. Quicker than a flash of lightning that bread was changed into his Body! Then all the apostles ate the most sacred flesh of Jesus. In like manner he then took the wine into his hands and said—THIS IS MY BLOOD. He, whose word the winds and the sea obey, was obeyed by the wine. In that moment the wine was changed into his Blood! Then all the apostles drank of the most precious Blood of Jesus Christ. An eternity had passed, and the most holy Flesh and Blood of God had never yet been given to any creature. The apostles were the first to whom this greatest blessing of all blessings was given.

4. *His promise will never pass away.*—It was the will of Jesus that from this moment all his poor creatures everywhere should freely eat his flesh and drink his blood to make them holy before God. For the good of his creatures he wished his Body and Blood to be scattered over the earth almost like the flowers of the fields. But Jesus knew that in about forty days he would be in heaven, and he would not be on earth to give away his flesh and blood. Therefore, he wished to leave others on earth to do it for him. So he said to his apostles and priests—I give you the power to do what I have been doing, to change bread and wine into my flesh and blood, and to give it to my people. The word of Jesus will never pass away. The sun will shine on the earth till the last day of this world. So the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ will be given by the priests of Jesus Christ to the people, to be the light of their souls, till the end of the world.

Where are the Body and Blood of Jesus?—When people go to Holy Communion, you see the priest at the altar in the chapel, holding in his hand something which looks like white bread. Is it bread? No, it is not bread. It is the most holy of all holy things in heaven or on earth. In the name of the living God it is the true Body of Jesus Christ, which was nailed to the cross, and is sitting on the right hand of God in heaven. Understand also that under the appearance of bread there is—The Body and Blood, the Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

II. IN HOLY COMMUNION WE RECEIVE THE BODY OF JESUS CHRIST.

The wonders of the Body of Jesus.—The Woman cured.—Did you ever think about the wonders which were worked by the Body of Jesus whilst he was alive on the earth? It cured the sick, it gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf. The body of Jesus touched the dead, and they came to life again. *Virtue went out from it and cured all.* (Luke vi.) One day Jesus was going along the road with his disciples. Great crowds of people were about him. In the midst of the crowd there was a woman who had a terrible sore. This sore had been bleeding for twelve years without stopping. She had spent all her money on the doctors that they might cure her. The doctors had done all they could think of to cure her, and had given her a great deal of pain. After all this, she was no better, but a great deal worse. She had heard how good Jesus was to the sick, and what power he had to cure them. She said to herself—if I could only get near him and touch even the hem of his garment, I am sure that this terrible sore would be cured. Oh, that people, when they want curing, either in their body or soul, would think of going to Jesus to be cured as she did. The woman then made her way through the

crowd. She went behind Jesus. She lifted up her hand, she just touched the hem of his garment, that very moment the sore was cured and stopped bleeding. Then Jesus, turning round, said to her very kindly—"Daughter, be of good heart, thy faith hath cured thee." This woman did not touch the real body of Jesus Christ as you do in Holy Communion! She touched the dress—only the dress of Jesus, and in that instant she was cured. In Holy Communion you touch not the dress, but the very body of Jesus itself. You touch that body which fills all heaven with its brightness. Oh, the tremendous moment, when the flesh of the living God is laid on the tongue by the priest! If a flash of lightning, coming from a thunder-cloud, should touch your body, it would strike you dead in a moment. How will it be then, when in Holy Communion, not the lightning, but He who made the lightning, touches you? What for? Is it to strike you dead? No; it is to fill you with graces and blessings more than the great ocean is filled with drops of water.

The Prophet's Grave.—Just hear what happened once. (4 Kings xiii.) Some men were carrying a dead body through the desert. Robbers came in sight. The men who carried the dead body were frightened. They wanted to run away. A grave was near them; it was the grave where the Prophet Eliseus was buried. In haste they threw the dead body into the prophet's grave. The moment the dead man touched the dusty bones of the prophet, he stood on his feet alive again! From the bones of a dead creature came life. What then shall come from the living Body of the Creator when it touches you in the Holy Communion?

Oh, the poor, and the weary, and the sad, and the sorrowful, and the broken-hearted, and the orphan, and the fatherless, why will they not understand? They want a cure, they want some one to do them good. Why do they stay away? Why do they keep at a distance? Is the living body of Jesus Christ on the earth, for them to touch it, or is it not? They know it is. Does virtue come out of it to cure all who touch it, or does it not? They know it does, and still they will not come to be cured by it. The weak man will not come to Jesus to get strength. The sorrowful man will not come to it to get joy. The weary man will not come to it to get rest. The fatherless child will not come to get a protecting father. Come, then, little child, come to Jesus, for he loves your early years. Come, old man, come to Jesus, for the day of your judgment draws near. Come, O you whose hearts are sad and sorrowful, come to Jesus. Hear what Jesus says, Mat. xi.—"*Come to me all you that labour and are burthened, and I will refresh you.*" In Holy Communion we receive something besides the body of Jesus Christ.

III. IN HOLY COMMUNION WE RECEIVE THE PRECIOUS BLOOD OF JESUS CHRIST.

The Pelican.—You know that birds feed their little ones when they are hungry. They fetch grains, and worms, and other things for them to eat. There is one bird called the pelican. When the pelican sees that its little ones are hungry, it is not content to fetch grains, and worms for them. It opens its own breast with its beak, and lets the blood run out that its little ones may feed on it. How good the pelican is to its little ones. St. Gertrude saw Jesus under the appearance of a pelican, wounding its breast with its beak, and letting its blood flow out to feed its little ones. She wondered at what she saw, and said—"My God, what is the meaning of this?" Jesus answered—"I want you to understand how great is my love for my creatures. It makes me give my own blood to feed them." Then, sweet Jesus, help those souls whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious Blood.

How we receive the precious Blood.—Take one single little drop of the holy blood of Jesus. Do you know the force, the Almighty power which is in that one drop of the precious blood of Jesus made of the most pure blood of Mary? All the fires of Hell burning for eternity, will never burn away one single mortal sin. But one drop of the blood of Jesus, in the twinkling of an eye, can wash away all the mortal sins that ever were or will be. In one drop of the blood of Jesus there is more virtue, than all the virtues and graces that are in Heaven or on Earth.

Is it, then, only one drop of the precious blood of Jesus that you receive in Holy Communion? No; you receive *every* drop of the blood of Jesus. You receive in Holy Communion every drop of blood which trickled down upon the ground, when Jesus was in his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. It comforts you, and makes you strong in your struggles against temptation, and when your soul shall be in the last agonies of death. You receive every drop of blood which flew like a shower from the body of Jesus when he was scourged at the pillar. It prepares you to bear with patience the scourging which God, in his mercy, will send you. *For whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth, and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* (Heb.) You receive every drop of blood which bathed the face of Jesus when his head was pierced with thorns. It purifies the thoughts and imaginations of your mind. You receive every drop of blood which fell down on the rocks of Calvary when the hands and feet of Jesus were bored through with nails. It sanctifies the works of your hands, and makes your feet walk swiftly in the ways of God. You receive in Holy Communion every drop of blood which ran out of the sacred heart of Jesus when it was broken on the cross. It

cleanses the heart of man, which is prone to evil from youth. (Gen. iii.) Oh, soul, washed with the precious blood of Jesus, in the Holy Communion, how bright you are. You are brighter than the stars which sparkle in the blue skies.

But know that in Holy Communion you receive something more precious even than the precious blood of Jesus.

IV. IN HOLY COMMUNION WE RECEIVE THE SOUL OF JESUS CHRIST.

Limbo.—In the soul of Jesus are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge. (Coloss. ii.) You receive the soul of Jesus in Holy Communion, and with it all the wisdom and graces of God. You receive the soul of Jesus, which was sorrowful unto death, in the Garden of Gethsemane. His sweet soul will teach you, when in pain and sorrow, to say—*My God, thy will be done.* (Luke xxii.) When Jesus died on the cross, his soul left his body on the cross, and went down through the earth into Limbo. Limbo was a prison in which were kept the souls of the good who died before the coming of Jesus. It was a darksome, a sad prison. They knew in that prison that one day Jesus would come and open the prison door, and take them all up with him to heaven. There were souls that had been there for hundreds and thousands of years. How long the time seemed to them! Oh, how they kept their eyes fixed on the door, looking for Jesus to come and open it. Never for a moment did they take their eyes off the door. One Friday afternoon exactly at three o'clock, the great bars that went across the doors of that prison were all at once smashed in pieces, and fell down with a heavy crash on the ground. The doors were burst open. A light, brighter than ten thousand suns, flashed through the door, on the walls of Limbo. Then, behold legions of angelic spirits, rejoicing, enter Limbo. In the midst of them is the Soul of the Creator, which you receive in Holy Communion. Limbo was no longer a prison—it was Paradise. Oh, if people only knew how bright is the glare of that light which flashes into their souls when the Soul of Jesus comes into them in Holy Communion. If they only knew how the bars of difficulties, and temptations, and bad habits are smashed in pieces by the presence of Jesus Christ. What crowds without number would press round the altars all over the world to receive Jesus in the Holy Communion.

But in Holy Communion we receive something even better than the Soul of Jesus.

V. IN HOLY COMMUNION WE RECEIVE THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST.

The child receiving the Divinity of Jesus Christ.—See that child which has just received Holy Communion, and is still kneeling at the altar. That child has lived but a few years, yet the Eternity of God is in that child. The everlasting years that have passed away, the everlasting years that are to come, are in the child. The child is poor, and little, and weak, but it has in it now the Almighty power of God that created the world. The child has committed faults, but there is in it the Sanctity of God, which the angels tremble to look at. What place is there in heaven or on earth more holy than the soul of that child. The soul of the child is heaven itself. But the Prophets will tell us what there is in the child's soul.

What the Prophets saw.—The Prophet Isaias saw the Lord God Almighty sitting on a high throne. The glory of God filled all the place. Near to God stood those angels who are called the Seraphim. They veiled their faces with their wings before the blaze of God's glory, as we should put up our hands to hide our eyes from the blazing sun. Seeing God, they cried out in wonder: "*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Armies, the earth is full of his glory.*" The same Lord God Almighty is in the soul of the child when it has received Holy Communion. There is no veil on the child's soul to hide it from the glory of God. Its soul shines in the glory of God more than the brightest crystal glass shines in the blazing light of the sun. The angels seeing it, cry out in wonder: "*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, whose glory fills the soul of this little child.*"

The Prophet Daniel saw a throne placed in heaven. The Ancient of days, God Himself, was sitting on that throne. From the throne came a swift stream of fire. The numbers of angels who were round God could not be counted. Thousands and thousands of angels ministered to Him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him. The throne of God is also in the soul of the child who has received Him in the Holy Communion. From that throne comes forth a torrent of fire. The fire is the immense love which God has for the child. The fire of God's love pours itself through the child's soul, and fills its will and memory and understanding with the love of God!

VI. UNDER THE APPEARANCES OF BREAD AND WINE.

A little child says: "Why does not Jesus let us see him, when we receive him in Holy Communion?" Little child, do you know what it is to see God? Did you never hear these words—*No man can see God and live?* The

Prophet Daniel saw only an angel, and he fainted away. If the sight of an angel of God made him faint, what would the sight of God Himself do? St. John saw Jesus in the island of Patmos, and he fell at his feet as if dead. Moses spoke with God for forty days on Mount Sinai. When he came back to his people, the light of God was still on his face. The people did not dare to look at him or speak to him. So Moses put a veil on his face, and hid the light. Then the people were not afraid to look at him and speak to him. If the people were afraid of the light of a man's face, how should we be afraid if we saw the light of the face of Jesus Christ? How good, then, Jesus is. He covers his brightness with the appearance of bread as with a veil, that we may not be afraid to come to him. But, you say, why does Jesus take the appearance of bread? You know that bread is our food. So Jesus takes the appearance of bread that we may remember that He is our Food.

Besides, do you not know that when God says a thing and we believe it, although we do not see it, God is very glad. So, a child says to Jesus: "My Jesus, you have said that you are present in the Blessed Sacrament, under the appearance of bread; I do not see you present with my eyes, yet I believe it because you have said it." Then Jesus is pleased. He said himself once—*Blessed are they who have not seen and have believed.* (John xx.) When you receive Holy Communion, it looks like bread and not like wine. But under the appearance of bread only there is the Body and Blood, the Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ.

We will now see what wonders Holy Communion works upon the soul.

VII. EFFECTS OF HOLY COMMUNION.

The books—The heavy load—The torrent.—Blessed Leonard said that if he wrote down in a book only the graces he remembered to have received in Holy Communion, they would fill many great books. A holy man once saw Jesus in the Holy Communion. Jesus seemed to be heavily laden with riches and precious gifts which he had brought from Heaven to give away in Holy Communion. The load was so heavy that it seemed to be very painful to Jesus to carry it. Jesus looked as if he would be very thankful to any one who would relieve him of this heavy weight, by taking away part of his riches in Holy Communion.

Think of a great torrent of water rushing down the mountains. Think that you are standing just under it, on the very spot where it falls. So, a torrent of graces and blessings from heaven rushes into the soul of him who receives Holy Communion. God alone knows the wonders that are worked in the soul by Holy Communion. The soul does not know them itself.

N. B.—*The effects of Holy Communion are in the order given by St. Alphonsus.*

1. *Holy Communion gives grace, which is the Life of the Soul—The Tree of Life.*—There was once on the earth a garden of pleasure, called Paradise. Amongst the trees of this garden there was one far better than any of the others. It was called the TREE OF LIFE. The very name of this tree tells you what it was for. The fruit of it was to keep the body alive. If we had been in that garden, and eaten of the Tree of Life, we should never have felt any weakness. We should not have known what sickness was. No pain would ever have made us sorrowful. Doctors, and hospitals, and infirmaries, would never have been heard of. There would not have been such a thing as old age. No old man would ever have been seen. There would not have been such a thing as a coffin or a grave. You would have lived a long and happy life, and even then you would not have died. God would have raised you up alive from the earth and received you into Heaven. So you would have passed sweetly from a very happy life on earth to a life, a million times more happy, in Heaven. All these blessings would have come from eating the fruit of the Tree of Life, in Paradise.

The Bread of Life.—But Paradise is no more. The Tree of Life is no longer on the earth. God took them away when Adam committed the sin of disobedience. But you need not be sorry for this. God is good. There is something on the earth now far better than the Tree of Life. It is called the BREAD OF LIFE. The Tree of Life grew out of the earth like the grass. The Bread of Life comes from Heaven, and it is the flesh of the living God himself. The Tree of Life only kept the body alive, the Bread of Life keeps the soul alive. If you often eat the Bread of Life in the Holy Communion, Death will never strike your soul. At the end of your life God will take your soul up alive into Heaven, and you will say with Saint Paul: "*O death, where is thy victory?*" (2 Cor.) There you will live with God in joy for ever and ever. (John vi.) *He that eateth this bread shall live forever.*

Understand how this is. The body wears away by labour and work. Unless we feed it, it dies. So the good disposition of the souls are worn away by the difficulties of doing our duties, by struggling against temptations, &c. Unless the soul is often fed and kept alive by the flesh of Jesus Christ, it dies. (John vi.) *Unless you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.*

2. *Holy Communion is our Food—The manna.*—The Israelites had been wandering in the desert more than a month. On every side, as far as the eye could reach, they could see nothing but dry, burning sand. They were dying of hunger and thirst. In their distress, Moses, their leader, prayed to God to

give them something to eat. God answered: *"I will rain down bread from heaven in this wilderness."* Next morning the people looked out for the bread which God had promised them. They saw it! All the ground was covered with it. When they had seen it, they said *manhu*, which means, *What is this?* So this bread was ever after called "manna" When they examined it, they found that it was small, and white, and round. So it was something like the appearance of bread in the Blessed Sacrament. There was another most wonderful thing in this bread. Whatever taste people liked, they found it in this bread. So, just as they liked, they found in it the taste of any of the beasts of the earth, or fowls of the air, or fishes of the water, or the taste of any fruit that grows on the earth. (Wisd. 16.) *"The manna had in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste. Serving every man's will, it was turned to what every man liked."* So the manna was like the Holy Communion, in which you may taste any virtue, or anything heavenly which you desire. When you have received Holy Communion, Jesus spreads out before you all the virtues of heaven. He says to you: "My dear child, see all the good and rich things I have brought for you, to be the food of your soul. You may have as much as you please. Will you have Faith like as my blessed martyrs had? Will you have Hope laid up in your heart? Will you have Charity, the best of all virtues? Will you have the chastity of the angels? Will you have poverty of spirit, which will make you like me? Will you have the love of my blessed mother, Mary? Are you sorrowful? Will you have joy of heart, and the peace of God, which is above all understanding? Are you tempted? Will you have my almighty power and strength against temptations? What will you have, speak, my dear child, and tell me. I thirst to give away all my riches to you, I want to fill your soul with all good things." So, what Holy Scripture says of the manna, may truly be said of Holy Communion, *"Serving each one's taste it is turned to what each one likes."*

3. *Holy Communion gives strength in temptation, and keeps us from mortal sin—The Tenth Plague of Egypt.*—The poor Israelites had been in Egypt 430 years. It was not their own country. They were strangers there. The Egyptians made them very sorrowful, by giving them hard work to do with clay and bricks. The work was above their strength. But there is a God above who listens to the prayers of the sorrowful. The Israelites prayed to God to take them away from this land of sorrow. God heard their prayer. God sent Moses to King Pharaoh to bid him to let the Israelites go. Pharaoh said that he would not let them go. So God scourged Pharaoh and the Egyptians ten times. He sent them ten terrible plagues, or punishments. It is only about the tenth punishment that you have to hear now. Before God sent

this punishment he said to Moses: "Let the Israelites take a lamb in every house and family. The lamb shall be one year old, without a spot upon it. In the evening the lamb shall be killed. They shall take the blood of the lamb and sprinkle it on the door of every house where the Israelites live." On this same evening God said to a destroying angel: "Go through the land of Egypt, and strike dead the first-born, both of men and of beasts, in every house of the Egyptians. But I forbid you to strike any one in the houses of the Israelites, whose doors are sprinkled with the blood of the lamb." So on that night the Angel of Death went through the whole length of Egypt for 1,200 miles. When he came to each house, there might be heard a groan of pain, then the first-born in that house lay cold and stiff in death! The Angel of Death came also to the houses of the Israelites. There he saw the red blood of the lamb sprinkled on the door. He could not enter. He could not strike anybody dead. He was forbidden to strike where the red blood of the lamb was. The red blood was a sign to him that he was not to kill any one in that house, that he must pass over it, on his journey of death. And now it was midnight. King Pharaoh was wakened out of his sleep by the groans of the dying, and the wailings of the living through all the land. He rose up and sent for Moses. He said to him: "Let the Israelites go away out of this land."

The blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God.—Now, turn away your eyes from the dead bodies which fill the land of Egypt. Look at the dead souls which cover the earth. What was done that night in Egypt is done now every day and night on the whole earth. The angels of death, the devils are loose. Day and night they carry death through the whole length and breadth of the earth. They go about everywhere, north, south, east, and west, cutting, and hacking, and killing, till the whole earth is soaked with blood. Would to God it was only the body they killed. But they have a sword which reaches even to the soul, and kills it. That sword goes deep into the soul and the spirit. Immortal souls, made to the image and likeness of God, are struck with that sword, and they lie dead on the face of God's earth. Oh, that terrible sword, which can kill the soul! Even the holy and the saints, when they see that terrible sword glittering from afar, are struck with fright, and fly away crying, *Jesus and Mary, help me.* That sword is TEMPTATION. If, on the evening of any day you could see what the devils have done on that day, you would see all the earth looking like a butcher's shambles which is filled with flesh of dead animals, cut up in pieces. Now, then, look in spirit, and see the devils feeding their swords with millions of souls. But there is one soul—look at it! It lives in the midst of the dead and the dying. How is this? The devils go about striking, killing souls, right and left. Only this one soul they never touch. When the devils go past it, their swords drop out of their hands,

and they fly away howling with fright and pain. What is the matter? That soul has on it *the sign of the living God*. It has been sprinkled with the blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Communion. O happy soul, sprinkled with the precious blood of Jesus Christ! O soul, strong with the precious blood! "Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night, nor of the arrow that flieth in the day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand on thy right hand, but death shall not come near to thee." (Ps. xc.) "The devils," says St. Chrysostom, "fly away from one who has received the Holy Communion, as if he were a lion with fire flashing out of its eyes." But you, O souls, living in the midst of the shadow of death, why do you delay? Why do you wait till Temptation has stricken you with death? Hasten, then, run quickly, and make yourselves strong against Temptation, by receiving the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

How the Holy Communion gives strength in Temptation.—Perhaps a child will say: "Oh, I will receive Holy Communion often, and then I shall have no more temptations." Little child, you are mistaken, if you think that Holy Communion will keep away temptation forever. As long as you live and breathe the air of the world, you will be tempted. The old temptations which tempted you before are not dead. You say, then, if Holy Communion will not keep away temptation, well what will Holy Communion do. *First*, it will give strength to your weak heart, and make you keep away from bad company, and all kinds of temptation. So that you will never *wilfully* go where there is temptation. 2. If temptation comes without your fault, Holy Communion will make you *fly away* quickly from the temptation, and cry out, *Jesus and Mary, help me*. 3. If you cannot fly away from temptation, if it comes from your own soul or body, Holy Communion will make you fight hard against it, and say, Hail Marys, till it goes away. 4. There are those, who, either without any fault of their own, or, perhaps, from former bad habits, have to struggle against *very great* weakness, and evil in themselves. Now, let those understand once for all, where their salvation is. If they want to save their souls, they must go often, *very often*, to confession and Holy Communion. Without this they will not be saved.

Besides mortal sin, which kills the soul, there is another kind of sin, which does not kill the soul, but does a great deal of harm to it. It is called venial sin.

4. *Holy Communion takes away Venial Sin.*—*The Leper.*—About a mile from the Sea of Galilee, there is a little round mountain, about 200 feet high. On this mountain Jesus taught the Our Father, and preached a sermon to his disciples. He then came down from the mountain. He found a man waiting for him, whose body was covered all over with a frightful sore, called the

leprosy. The poor leper came and knelt at the feet of Jesus, and said: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Jesus stretched forth his hand and touched him, saying, "I will, be thou made clean." Immediately the man was made clean. The leprosy did not kill the body. It only made it look very ugly and frightful. It was like venial sin, which does not kill the soul, but makes it look very ugly and frightful. Jesus touched the man and his body was made clean. When Jesus touches you in Holy Communion, your soul will be made clean from venial sin. The Council of Trent says: "Holy Communion is an antidote by which we are delivered from venial sins."

5. *Sweetness.—St. Peter's Mother-in-law.*—(Ps. 33.) "O taste and see that the Lord is sweet." Sometimes people find great joy and sweetness in receiving Holy Communion. Sometimes, without any fault of their own, they do not find this sweetness. Jesus Christ said to Gertrude: "Sometimes I let my servants feel less devotion at Communion, to keep them humble." But there is always one kind of sweetness to be found in Holy Communion. This is the sweetness of doing our duties and good works, and being very ready to do them.

The mother-in-law of St. Peter had a fever. Jesus came to her. He touched her hand, as he touches us in Holy Communion. The fever left her. She *rose up directly and served them* at table. This is what Holy Communion does for us. It makes us rise up directly when any duty calls us, and do it. You are called in the morning, you rise up directly. It is time to say your prayers; you rise up directly and go to say them. Your duty calls you here or there. You rise up directly and go. Father Surin says: "I received, in Holy Communion, grace to do those duties which it is naturally very painful and difficult to do." Oil makes the wheels of a carriage go along the road easily and without creaking. The grace of Holy Communion makes us go easily and sweetly along the path of our duties. (Matt. xi.) *My yoke is sweet, and my burden is light.* Such is the sweetness given by Holy Communion. Above all things, Holy Communion unites us with Jesus as when you pour wine into water the wine is united with the water.

6. *Union with Jesus—Mount Sinai.*—In the sandy deserts of Arabia you may see the great mountain of Sinai rising up into the blue skies. It was to this mountain that God came down from Heaven to give his ten commandments to the Israelites. God first said to Moses: "On the third day I will come down to give my commandments. Let the people get ready. Let them wash their garments and be holy. You will draw a line round the mountain. If any man or beast passes over that line *they shall be stoned to death, or shot through with arrows.*" The third day came, as soon as it was light the people looked towards the mountain. Great, heavy, thick clouds,

and smoke hung over the top, and round the sides of it. The lightnings struck through the dark clouds and flashed across the mountain. The loudest thunders were heard rolling about, and shaking the sandy deserts. The sound of trumpets grew by degrees louder and louder, and was drawn out to greater length. Again Moses was charged to tell the people not to come near the mountain, or cross the line drawn round it, lest a great multitude of them should perish. Then it was that the Lord God came down from Heaven to the top of Mount Sinai, and spoke the Ten Commandments. So terrible was the voice of God that even Moses said: "*I am frightened, and tremble.*" (Heb. xii.)

The Difference.—Now, see the difference betwixt God coming down on Mount Sinai, and his coming down to a little child in Holy Communion. God does not come down to the child with dark clouds round him, or in the midst of thunders and lightnings. He comes to the child as sweetly and gently as a sunbeam comes to a little flower. He comes meekly and mildly, under the appearance of a little bread, because he knows that, above all things, the appearance of bread would not make the child afraid. He does not come down to the top of a mountain and say: "Little child, if you come near me you shall be stoned to death, or shot through with arrows." He does not speak to the child from a distance, but he comes truly and really into its inmost soul. When God has come into the child's soul he speaks unto it words and commandments. The voice of God speaking to the child does not sound in its ears like terrible thunder. The voice of God goes into the child's heart like dew falling on the grass. *I will give my laws in their hearts, and on their minds I will write them.* (Heb. x.) All this while the child does not say like Moses: "I am frightened and tremble;" but it says "I love Jesus." From this moment you may say that the child lives no more, but that Jesus lives in it. Now, the child has Jesus always with it. *He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood remaineth in me and I in him.* (John vi.) It goes along with Jesus, as an infant takes hold of its mother's hand, and goes along with her. What Jesus thinks, the child thinks. What Jesus wishes, the child wishes. Whatever is the will of Jesus, is the will of the child. So the words of Jesus are true: "*He that eateth me shall also live by me.*" (John vi.)

7. *Temporal Punishment.*—Holy Communion takes away part of the punishment we have to suffer for sins forgiven at confession.

8. *Glory in Heaven.*—On account of Holy Communion, the body will, in Heaven, have glory like the glory of the Body of Jesus Christ. Some of the Apostles law his glory on Mount Tabor: "His face shone as the sun. His dress became white and glittering, so white that there is not such whiteness on the earth." The babies, in the early ages of the church, received Holy

Communion, and on this account will be more beautiful in Heaven. Jesus Christ told St. Gertrude "that when, at the time of death, we receive Holy Communion with a pure intention, it gives to all we do, such as eating, drinking, being patient, &c., a kind of infinite merit, because these actions are united with his sacred Body."

Holy Eucharist is the greatest of all the Sacraments, so we must make a great preparation for it.

VIII. PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

The Ark.—The most holy thing the Jews had was called the Ark. It was like a small chest. There was nothing in it except two stones, on which were written the Ten Commandments, some manna, and some other things. One day King David was walking in the rooms of his grand palace with his friend the prophet Nathan. They were talking about the things of God. All at once the king stopped. He turned to the prophet and said: "Look, O prophet; you see that I live in this grand palace, in which there are such a great many rooms made of cedar, the most precious of woods. But while I am living in this grand palace, the Ark of the living God is in a miserable place, covered only with the skins of beasts. This is surely a great forgetfulness in me, but I will make amends for it. I will build a very grand Temple, in which the Ark shall dwell. What do you think of this, O prophet?" The prophet answered, "I cannot but praise a work so holy." But, then, this thought came into the king's head. The work is great, exceeding great, *because a dwelling place is prepared, not for man, but for God!* David set about this work directly. He got together about a million pounds in gold and silver. This was a great sum of money, especially in those times. What, then, was there in that ark for which David was going to prepare such an expensive house? Two stones with the Ten Commandments on them, and some other things. If, then, instead of getting a place ready for two stones, he had been getting his own soul ready to receive the flesh of the living God, what would he not have done? Let us, then, blush, that we grudge sometimes to give even a quarter of an hour to prepare our souls for Holy Communion. The more we prepare ourselves, the more graces we shall receive from Holy Communion.

The two Cans.—Two children went with tin cans to a river to fetch water. One child brought back a great deal more water than the other. What was the reason? Was it because there was not water enough in the river for both? No. It was because the one child had a much larger can than the other. Two persons go to Holy Communion. One comes back with far more blessings in his soul than the other. What is the reason? Because the one made a much

better preparation than the other. What is the first thing to do to prepare yourself for Holy Communion? It is that your soul should be pleasing to God.

The beautiful Dress.—A certain king made a marriage feast for his son. He sent his servants to invite many to come to the feast. They were all expected to come in a proper dress. The dining-room was filled with persons who had been invited. When they were all come, the king went into the dining-room to see them. Amongst them he saw one who had not a proper dress on. The king said to him: "Friend, how did you come in here without having a proper dress on? You knew that you ought not to do so, you could have had a proper dress on if you liked. You only wanted to mock me when you came in such a dress as you are wearing." The person was silent; he had no excuse to make. So the king said to the waiters, "Tie his hands and feet, and cast him into the cold and darkness outside." God invites you to the great feast of the Holy Communion. But if you are in mortal sin, and your soul is not clothed with sanctifying grace when you receive Holy Communion, the sentence on you will be: "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into exterior darkness." So people go to confession before Communion. The next thing before Holy Communion is to pray.

IX. PRAYERS BEFORE HOLY COMMUNION.

1. Prayers before and after Holy Communion should be *short and simple*. 2. They should be said *slowly*, a few words at a time. 3. It is well to *stop after every few words* that they may sink into our hearts. 4. It is well to say each prayer *several times over*. Jesus Christ said one short prayer in the garden of Gethsemane several times over. That prayer was, "*Thy will be done.*"—The Our Father, Hail Mary, and Creed, said in this way are a very good preparation for Holy Communion.

1. *Faith.*—Our first prayer should be an Act of Faith. We should tell God that we *believe* that we are going to receive his Body and Blood. When Jesus Christ did any good thing, such as curing people, he almost always said—*because you have believed*—I will do it.

2. *Humility.*—*The sealed Book.*—St. John the Apostle saw in Heaven a book sealed up, in which were written the secrets of God. An angel cried out with a loud voice: "Who is worthy to open the book." No one was found worthy either in Heaven or on earth to open the book, or even to look upon it. St. John cried much when he found that no one was worthy to open the book, or look upon it. Now, if no one was worthy to look at the Book of God, who is worthy to look at God himself—who is worthy to receive the

flesh of God? No angel in Heaven is worthy—above all, we poor sinners made of the dust of the earth are not worthy. But Jesus is so good, all he wants is that we should know and confess it, that we are very unworthy to receive him, then he is very glad to give himself to us.

3. *Contrition.*—How pure and spotless a soul should be which receives all the Holiness and Sanctity of God. That soul should be pure as an angel, and bright as a sunbeam. When a baby has been baptized, the Priest clothes it with a white garment, saying: "See thou carry this white garment without spot or stain before the Judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ." When you receive Holy Communion you are as near to Jesus Christ as you will be when after death you stand before his judgment-seat. How spotless then your soul ought to be? On this account, you should make a fervent Act of Contrition for your sins, a little before you receive Holy Communion.

4. *Charity to our Neighbour.*—As Holy Communion is, above all things, a sacrament of charity, you must take care to be in charity with your neighbour when you go to Holy Communion. You must not have in your heart wilful vexation, or anger, or spite against any one.

5. *Desire and Love.*—Does the hungry man desire bread? Does the thirsty man thirst for water? Does the weak man desire strength? Does the sick man desire health? We, Christians, have the faith of God in us. Is it possible that we should not hunger for the Bread of Life, that we should not thirst to drink in the Living fountain of the precious Blood of Jesus, that we should not cry out for the cure of the sores and miseries of our souls? "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after the justice of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, for they shall be filled." (Matt. v.)

The three wise men found the child Jesus with Mary his Mother—you will not find Jesus without the help of Mary his Mother. Be sure, then, to say some fervent Hail Marys when you are preparing for Holy Communion.

X. THE FIRST COMMUNION.

See that man in the agony of death! They wipe the sweat of death from his face. They moisten his cracked and parched lips. He moans in pain. He pants for breath. In three minutes he will be before the judgment seat of God in the next world. Now, turn your eyes away from him and look at something else.

See that child. In three minutes the Lord God Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and earth, will be in that child. The great day is come, the day for the child's first Communion. It has been preparing for this day since the first light of reason came into its infant mind. From its earliest days, morning and night that child has lifted up its hands to God, saying—*Give us this day our*

daily bread.—God has never yet given the Bread of Life to that child. To-day He is going to give to it, for the *first time*, that bread, which is not bread, but it is the living flesh of Jesus. All last night Jesus in Heaven was speaking with the angels about the little child. This morning when the sun rose above the hill, the heart of Jesus was glad, because he knew that the day was come when he would give himself to the child; the very sun as it rose in the skies wondered that this day, the flesh of its Creator should be put on the tongue of a little child. And now Jesus is on the altar. His eyes are fixed on his dear child. He is counting the moments, he wants them to pass. He wants to give himself to the child. Already the child has made its Acts of Faith—humility, contrition, love and desire. The bell has rung which invites the child to come to the altar. The child has risen from its knees. The child has begun its journey to the altar. Its Angel guardian leads it, although it does not feel the pressure of his angelic hand. It is a short journey. But still, it is a great, great journey, because every step the child takes brings it nearer to God. The child has its hands joined, its eyes are cast down, its thoughts are on God. It looks as an angel would look in prayer. The child has come to the altar rails, and knelt down. It has taken the white cloth into its hands. The Priest is on the highest step before the altar. He is holding in his hand the tremendous Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. He says aloud: "Behold the Lamb of God! behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world!"—"Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed." Now, the Priest is coming down the steps carrying the Body of the Lord to the child. Millions on millions of angels, and archangels, of thrones, and dominations, and powers, are around the Majesty of God, who in another moment will be in the little child. O, the unspeakable adoration which the angels offer to God! O, their reverence beyond all thought! They see two things. They see the tremendous Majesty of the Creator, and they see the poor little child, made of the dust of the earth, which is going to receive its Creator. The Priest has come to the child. He has lifted up the most Holy Sacrament, saying these words—*May the body of Jesus Christ keep thy soul unto life everlasting.*—Another moment—It is done! Jesus has been given to the child. The child has bowed down its head to adore the great and everlasting God present in its soul. The child is walking away from the altar. The earth rejoices, but Hell trembles under the footsteps of this child, which carries the judge of the living and the dead. The people whom it passes look at it with wonder and reverence, knowing that it carries the great God who created Heaven and earth.

In this world, the sun is shining as it does any other day. The winds are blowing as usual. Men are walking through the streets, and talking as if

nothing particular had happened. But in heaven this day is not as any other day. You may have heard the sudden roaring of cannons, the ringing of bells, the sounds of trumpets and organs burst out in one moment, when some great thing had been done on the earth. But Oh! that great moment, when it is said, in Heaven, *The child has received the flesh of God!* Oh, the hymns of thanksgiving, the Te Deums, which burst out before the throne of God, from millions on millions, from countless millions of angels and archangels, Thrones, Dominations, and Powers, Cherubim, and Seraphim. Oh, the voices of the four living Creatures, and of the seven Spirits, which are before the Throne. Oh, the most sweet canticle of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her Son Jesus, because he has been so good to the little child and fed it with his flesh and blood, and because his mercy remaineth for ever!

XI. PRAYERS AFTER HOLY COMMUNION.

Judas, who betrayed our Lord, received Holy Communion. When he had received it, he said no prayers at all, but went away directly. Who will be like Judas? Who will not pray for at least a quarter of an hour after receiving Holy Communion. The devil knows how precious the time is after Holy Communion. So he always tries, above all, to disturb us at that time. When St. Peter of Alcantara had received Holy Communion the devils showed themselves to him in the most frightful forms, on purpose to disturb him. They made the most terrible noises, and even beat him. He did not care for them, but said his prayers.

Take Notice.—After Holy Communion, you may think of Jesus, who is in you either as nailed to the Cross, or as he is in heaven shining with light, or as an infant at Bethlehem. Alexander Berti, after Holy Communion, saw the infant Jesus in his soul with two Angels adoring him. Your first prayer after receiving Holy Communion will be an Act of Faith.

Faith.—*St. Thomas.*—On the day that Jesus rose from the dead, the apostles were by themselves in a room with the door fast, for fear of the Jews. Suddenly, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and said, *Peace be to you.* Then he showed them his side, and his hands, and feet, with the marks of the nails in them. It happened that Thomas, one of the Apostles, was not there. When the others told him that they had seen Jesus, he said: "Except I see the marks of the nails in his hands and feet I will not believe it, because I have not seen him." Eight days afterwards Jesus showed himself to the apostles when Thomas was with them. Jesus turned to Thomas and said: "Put in thy finger, and put in thy hand into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." Then Thomas said: "*My Lord and my God.*" Then Jesus said: "Because thou

hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed. Blessed are they who have not seen, but have believed." So, as soon as the child comes back to its place, it will make an Act of Faith, and tell Jesus that it believes that it has received his body and blood. So the child will be blessed, because, although it has not seen Jesus, it has believed.

2. *Adoration*.—The three wise men in the stable at Bethlehem bowed their heads to the ground to adore the infant Jesus. So after Holy Communion you will adore Jesus, your Creator, your first beginning, your last end. You will adore him with your body and soul, with your will, memory, and understanding.

3. *Love*.—There is one word which Jesus desires to hear you say more than any other word. It is to tell him that you *love* him.

Act of Love.—"O Jesus, I am but dust and ashes, and yet my poor heart speaketh to thee. Jesus, I love thee—I love thee with all my heart—may I die for the love of thee."

When we have received Jesus in the Holy Communion, he is very glad if we kiss his hands and feet. But how can we do this when we cannot see him. Gerson says that, after Jesus had ascended into Heaven, his blessed mother Mary, still on earth, often received him in Holy Communion. Then she remembered how, when he was a baby, she often held him and kissed his feet. So she did it again in spirit, when she received him in Holy Communion. So when we have received Holy Communion, we may kiss the feet of Jesus in spirit.

4. *Praise and Thanksgiving*.—Tobias had a visit from the Angel Raphael. When the angel left him, he fell on the ground and praised God for *three whole hours*! How, then, should we praise Jesus, the God of the angels, when he visits us in the Holy Sacrament? Do you know how many times you should praise Jesus? As many times as there are little, small grains of sand in all the length and breadth, and depth of the earth, so many times should we praise Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. As many times as there are little drops of water in all the rivers, and seas, and oceans, so many times should we praise Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. As many times as there are stars in all the immense skies, so many times should we praise Jesus in the Holy Sacrament. As many times as there will be little moments through the long, long eternity, that will never have any end, so many times should we praise Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Yes, perhaps, the day will come when with your own eyes you will see Jesus in Heaven, sitting on the right hand of God in the glory of the Father! Then you will wonder how you could receive such an unspeakable glory into your soul and think so little of it. Then you will

know that to praise Jesus every moment through endless eternities, even for one Communion would be very little.

5. *Offering.*—Jesus has given himself to you. Give yourself then to Jesus. Offer to him your body, your soul, your heart, your thoughts, words, and actions, and every breath you shall breathe till the end of your life.

6. *Petition.*—Jesus Christ has said—*Ask, and it shall be given to you.* (Matt. vii.) As sure as the sun will rise to-morrow morning, so sure it is that Jesus will give you what you ask, especially on the day when he gives himself to you in Holy Communion. Therefore, ask, 1, for the forgiveness of sins; 2, for strength against temptation; 3, for the greatest of all blessings—a happy death; 4, for what you want for your body. He clothes and feeds the birds of the air. He will do the same for you, only you must ask him; 5, for any particular want you have; 6, pray for others, for the Church, for your father and mother, brothers and sisters, for the conversion of sinners, the souls in Purgatory. Jesus said to St. Gertrude, "when any soul not in mortal sin receives Holy Communion, every one in Heaven, on earth, and in Purgatory, receives a blessing greater than you can think of from that one Communion." Lastly, always promise Jesus never to commit a mortal sin, say, "*O Jesus, I have received your precious blood on my tongue—with that tongue I promise never, never to commit a mortal sin. Sweet Jesus, may I die before I commit a mortal sin.*"

XII. GO OFTEN TO HOLY COMMUNION.

I am smitten as grass, and my heart is withered, because I forgot to eat my bread. (Ps. 101.)

Jesus Christ said to St. Gertrude: "My delight is to be with the children of men. Therefore, he who draws away from Holy Communion any soul which is not in mortal sin, interrupts and hinders what is my delight." Venerable John of Avilla said that, "He who hinders another from receiving Holy Communion does the office of the devil."

Every Christian should receive Holy Communion at least once every month. But it is much better to receive it every week.

St. Alphonsus on going often to Holy Communion.—1. "Those who communicate only once a year will scarcely remain in the grace of God."

2. "Let every Christian communicate at least once a week. Those who communicate once a week seldom or never fall into mortal sin. Many persons who communicate weekly avoid mortal sin, and they would not avoid it if they communicated once a month. Tepid persons, who habitually commit venial sins, cannot be permitted to communicate oftener than once a

week. Weekly Communion may be allowed to them that they may have strength to avoid mortal sin."

3. "Those who do not commit deliberate venial sins, and have a desire to advance in the love of God, may be permitted to communicate oftener than once a week."

XIII. A BAD COMMUNION.

By a bad Communion is meant, receiving Holy Communion when we know that we have mortal sin in our souls. A person who forgets a mortal sin does not make a bad Communion.

St. Teresa saw a person who made a bad Communion. Two most frightful devils were standing at his side. Their great horns were twisted round his neck. When these devils saw the majesty of Jesus Christ coming near them, in the Blessed Sacrament, they were dreadfully frightened, and tried to get away. But Jesus Christ did not permit them to move.

XIV. HOW TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION.

1. You must fast from the midnight before. If you swallow even the least little crumb, it would be a mortal sin, knowingly, to receive Holy Communion.

2. In going up to the altar, your hands should be joined. You should not look about you. Your eyes should be cast down, and your thoughts on Him whom you are going to receive.

3. When you come to the Communion rails, kneel on the highest step.

4. Take the Communion cloth into your hands. Hold it before you, under your chin. Do not put it up to your mouth.

5. Let your eyes be shut.

6. Do not bow your head down, but hold it straight up.

7. The mouth should be wide open. The tongue should be out of the mouth, resting on the under lip.

8. When the Priest has put the Blessed Sacrament on your tongue, shut your mouth.

9. If you cannot swallow it immediately, do not be troubled, but wait quietly till you can swallow it.

10. Try not to touch the Blessed Sacrament with your teeth.

11. If the Blessed Sacrament stops on the roof of your mouth, do not put your fingers into your mouth, but move it with your tongue.

XV. THE GRACES OF GOD TO LITTLE CHILDREN.

Blessed Imelda, Patroness of First Communicants.—A traveller who goes to Bologna may see the tombstone of a child, called Imelda. The history of the child is on the tombstone. The child died at the age of *seven*, in the year 1393. On Easter Sunday morning there were many children in the church. They were going to make their first Communion. Little Imelda had begged hard to make her first Communion. But the nuns thought that she was too young and too childish in her ways. She must wait till she was older. So the little Imelda was obliged to stay far away from the altar, at the bottom of the church. She was alone in sadness and tears, because she could not receive Jesus whom she loved. But there was One who measures not the years, but the love of little children. Jesus could not bear that the child should be lonesome and sorrowful, because it wanted to receive him, and could not receive him. The bell had sounded for the communicants to come up to the altar. The altar rails were filled with a long line of happy children. The Priest was standing on the highest step, holding the Blessed Sacrament in his hand. He was saying—*Behold the Lamb of God*. At this moment a ray of dazzling light went from the Blessed Sacrament to the little Imelda, at the bottom of the chapel. Then the Priest saw, with astonishment, that the Blessed Sacrament, which he held in his hand the moment before, was no longer there! The Priest had seen the ray of light which went to Imelda. And now he saw above her, as it were, a star of light. Imelda's eyes were also lifted up, looking at the bright star which glittered in her tearful eyes. She knew it was the light of Jesus himself who had come to his dear child. The Priest left the altar, following the bright path of light. The people made way for him, hushed in deep and solemn silence. He came to Imelda, and saw, with astonishment, that the sacred Host, which he held in his hand a few moments before at the altar, was in the air above the head of Imelda. With trembling hand, he took hold of the Blessed Sacrament, and gave it to Imelda. So, the little Imelda received her Jesus. A while after Imelda was seen to lean on one side, looking pale as if she were ill. The nuns came round her and took her in their arms, they thought she had fainted. But it was no fainting. On the child's face there was an angelic smile. Its arms were crossed over its breast, as if it wanted to hold fast to the treasure it had received. What, then, was the matter with Imelda? The joy of the little child in receiving Jesus had been too great. Its heart was too weak to bear it. Joy had snapped in two the thread of life—the soul of the little child was gone to Jesus in Heaven!

EXTRACTS FROM THE *Sunday School*.

1. Wax takes an impression more readily when soft than when it is become hard. Soil which is fresh and new is more fit for the growth of seed. It is easier to write on a sheet of paper when it has not previously been written upon. So is the soul of a child with relation to Divine grace. It receives the grace of God as soft wax receives an impression, as blank paper receives writing, as fresh soil receives seed. So our Lord says, Mark x. 15: "Amen I say to you, *unless you receive the kingdom of God as a little child, you shall not enter into it.*" (Prov. iii.) *The communication of God is with the simple.* Blessed Mary of the Incarnation says: "*It is of the greatest importance that First Communion should be made in an age of innocence. God then takes the child under his protection, and by his mercy makes it strong against temptation for the rest of its life.*" One of the principal fruits of Holy Communion is *perseverance*—perseverance in grace, in prayer, in attendance at Holy Mass and Catechism. We may now understand why our Lord has signified the great desire he has to communicate Himself to little children. (Mark x.) *Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not.*

2. The simplicity of little children wears away day by day. Wait not many years, and probably you will find that the soft wax has become like the hard rock, or the beaten highway; the soil is choked up with thorns. The spirit of the world has got hold of the child before Jesus Christ could take possession of it. The spirit of the world is not a spirit which makes children eager to go to Catechism. On the contrary, such children come to look on first Communion as a period after which they have nothing more to do with Catechism. Those who have an opportunity of seeing children in a great variety of places, cannot but be struck by the singular spirit of perseverance at Catechism, which is generally found in those children who have made their first Communion at that age when Blessed Mary of the Incarnation says it is so profitable—*the age of innocence.*

The time, then, has passed when the child might have received the kingdom of God *as a little child*—it is now *too late*. Hence the learned Jesuit Boero says: *First Communion is delayed till the devil and sin have entered into the soul of the child, and darkened and destroyed its purity and simplicity. This should not be. Let Jesus Christ take early possession, and first possession of the soul.*

3. As soon as children come to the use of reason, they are subject to temptation. It happens, and not seldom, that children, even little children, have strong intrinsic temptations, of which their teachers, instructors, nuns,

&c., of course, will not know. What is the remedy for temptation? what is to keep the soul alive in the midst of temptation? There is one great remedy for children, as well as for others. (John xi.) *Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.* If this remedy for temptation is withheld from children who need it, what is the consequence? The old proverb tells us—*The remedy comes too late when the evil is deeply rooted.* Sero medicina paratur, &c.

4. It is well "to make hay while the sun shines." It is well for children to make their first Communion while they are at day-school, ever under the eye of the Priest.

A child, says the Holy Scripture, according to its way, even when it is old, will not depart from it. Children should be *trained* to regular frequentation of the Sacraments. If first Communion is delayed till the child is on the point of leaving school there is no time for such training. Besides, it may, and in this country does not unfrequently happen, that children are suddenly and unexpectedly taken away from school, and do not make their first Communion at all. "Lock the stable door before the horse is stolen."

Question.—How soon are Christians bound to receive the Blessed Sacrament? *Answer.* As soon as they are capable of being instructed in this sacred mystery.—*Catechism approved of by H. E. Card. Wiseman, and the other Bishops for all the Dioceses.*

NOTE.—The General Law of the Church. *Fourth Council of Lateran.*—"Omnis, utriusque sexus postquam ad annos discretionis pervenerit peccata confiteatur reverenter suscipiens ad minus in Pascha, *Eucharistiæ Sacramentum* nisi forte de consilio proprii sacerdotis ob aliquam rationabilem causam ad tempus ab ejus perceptione duxerit abstinendum."—*S. Alphonsus*, Homo. Ap., Tract XIII., No. 43. "Parvuli statim ac adepti sunt usum rationis semper ac discernere valeant hunc celestem panem a terreno possunt admitti ad Communionem."—*S. Alphonsus*, Opus. Mor., Tract III. "Recte reprehendit Ronc., Parachos qui indiscriminatim non admittunt ad Communionem nisi pueros in certa ætate constitutos."—*Cat. Concilii Tridentini*, Pars de Euch., 68. "Qua vero ætate sacra mysteria (*Eucharistiæ*) pueris danda sint, nemo melius constituere poterit quam sacerdos cui illi confitentur peccate; ad illum enim pertinet explorare et a pueris percunctari an hujus admirabilis sacramenti cognitionem acceperint et gustum habeam."

Prayers before and after Holy Communion to be said by children after their Teacher, may be found in No. I. *How to Teach at Catechism.*

CAPABILITIES OF CHILDREN.

1. *The prayers of children are most powerful.* (Ps. viii.) "Out of the mouths of infants thou hast perfected praise." Monsignore Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans, in his sermon (Paris, April 4, 1860), says: "What has saved the Church on earth? What has given the Church confidence when persecuted? It is this—the Church has *the little children* on her side. She has with her millions of little children *stammering out their innocent prayers.*"

2. *When faith or morality are weakened, they may be restored through the children.*—The "Roman Catechist" remarks, that "attention to the children is the only means of the revival of religion."—*By means of the children, St. Francis Xavier worked a great change of morals throughout the great city of Goa.* A Priest in Madagascar writes to the *Annals*—"The regeneration of this people is to be effected only by exercising an influence over childhood." H. E. Cardinal Wiseman has said: "The great work which now occupies the Church, is *the care of the children.*"—"Cleanse the fountain head and the stream will be pure."

3. *In the order of Providence children are designed to be the models of virtue to the world.*—(Matt. xviii.)—"Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

So children will be, if they are *rightly* treated, that is, if they meet with kind and gentle treatment, and not with repulsive harshness—if their instructions are not hard words, long sentences, abstract reasoning, and in a voice which frightens them—if their prayers are in accordance with their weak capacity—if besides "questions and answers," they have pious exercises *fitted for them*, and not such as are fit only for adults, as if one should clothe an infant in the coat of a grown man—if simple singing and simple stories be the basis of their training—if persons of the better classes will take an interest and teach Catechism in the Sunday Schools—if the interests of children are not sacrificed to the convenience of adults.

Mark x. *Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.*

BOOK XIII.

SCHOOLS IN WHICH CHILDREN LOSE THEIR HOLY FAITH.

CHAPTER I.—HOW THE SOULS OF THE POOR CHILDREN ARE CAUGHT.

ONE day a lady saw a little child wandering about the streets begging for a bit of bread; the Souper lady came up to the child, and looking very kind and agreeable, she said. "Dear little child, how pale and hungry you look! show me where your mother lives, and I will get you some bread and some warm clothes." The lady followed the child to the cellar where its mother lived. "My good woman," said the Souper to the mother, "I met your little child in the street; I was sorry to see it looking so poor and distressed." The mother made a curtsy, and answered: "We have seen better days, ma'am; my husband had a little farm in the country; but the landlord turned all the people off his estate; so, having neither bread to eat nor a house to shelter us, we came to Dublin to look for work; but my husband has not been able to get any work." "Indeed!" said the lady, "then I will get some work for your husband; and here is sixpence, you can buy some bread for the children. What is that heap of straw in the corner?" "It is the only bed we have in the house," said the woman; "yesterday we could not bear to see the poor hungry creatures crying for bread, so we sent the last blanket to the pawn-shop, to get some bread for them." "Then," said the lady, "I will send you a couple of nice warm blankets; and let this little girl come to my house this afternoon, and she shall have a frock and a pair of shoes." "Thank you, ma'am," said the woman, "you are too good to us." "Can this child read?" said the Souper. "No," the woman answered, "we could not send it to school, for we were forced to send it to look for its bit." "Then," said the lady, "I will take care of the schooling of your child; we have a nice school in this neighbourhood, and your child shall go to it; she will have nothing to pay, and she will have her breakfast given to her every day for nothing. When she becomes a scholar we will find a good situation for her."

The children, perhaps, may not know that the school of which this lady spoke, is called a Souper's school. What the lady meant by the child becoming a *scholar*, and getting a *good situation*, will be told in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.—WHAT IS DONE IN THESE SCHOOLS.

THE door of the school opens. A grave, solemn-looking gentleman comes in. His coat is glossy and black; round his throat a neckcloth white as snow; he looks neither thin nor pale. Who is he? He is a Bible-reader. He gets on a chair. "Children," he says, "I am come to preach to you the word of God. The Catholics never hear the word of God." ["That is a lie," a little child says, under its teeth. "I heard the word of God every Sunday at St. Andrew's."] "Children," continues the Bible-reader, "the Catholics are idolaters, they worship stocks and stones." ["Another lie," says the child; "I never saw a Catholic worship a stock or stone."] "Children," the Bible-reader goes on, "the Pope is the beast of the Revelations." ["Another lie," says the child; "I saw a picture of the Pope, and it was the picture of a man and not of a beast."] Here the Bible-reader stops, and draws out of his pocket a white handkerchief. ["Is he going to cry?" the child says to itself.] No, he only blows his nose, and puts the handkerchief in his pocket again. "Children," says the Bible-reader, "I am going to speak to you about something which ought to be dear to your hearts, so be very attentive. You all love your mothers, do you not?" "Yes, Bible-reader," the children answer, "we love our mothers." "That is right," continues the Bible-reader, "for such is the commandment of God, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' Now I will speak to you, not about your own mothers, but about the mother of Jesus Christ." Then the Bible-reader enlightens the understandings of the children by speaking for a quarter of an hour against the Blessed Virgin Mary. The little child turns pale, and tries not to hear the Bible-reader, and while he is thus speaking, it says the round of the beads on its fingers. The Bible-reader goes out. Four girls, about sixteen years of age, with good frocks, bonnets, and shawls, are taken out of the school, the children looking at them in admiration. As soon as they are gone out, the schoolmistress speaks to the children: "Children," she says, "I want to speak to you about those four girls who have just gone out of school. They were once little dirty ragged Papists without bread to eat; some of our Soupers found them in the street and brought them here; as soon as they came into the school, we gave them soup

and plenty to eat. When they had eaten as much as they liked, we desired them to say that 'the Pope is Antichrist.' They hung down their heads and were silent; we pressed them to answer, and at last they answered: 'We do not like to say the Pope is Antichrist.' Then one of our Soupers said to them: 'You ungrateful little creatures, we found you starving in the streets, we brought you into this nice school, and gave you plenty to eat, and now you will not say the Pope is Antichrist.' We said no more, but when the Bible-reader came to the school they were always placed close beside him. At first they seemed very much shocked to hear the Bible-reader speak against the Virgin Mary, but after they had heard him a great many times they became accustomed to it. We never let them go near the Catholic chapel, so after a while they learnt the practice of speaking ill of the Virgin Mary along with other children. As soon as we found that they were willing to speak ill of the Virgin Mary and eat meat on Fridays, we said to them: 'Now, you are *good scholars*, and we will find a *good situation* for you.' Two of the girls are placed with a dress-maker, and the other two are gone to situations. The mistresses of these girls intend never to let them go near a Catholic chapel, or speak to a Catholic—and their parents live far away—so I am happy to tell you there is no danger of these girls becoming Papists again. But I am sorry to tell you one thing: we always find that as soon as these proselytized children become good Protestants, and are ready to eat meat on Friday, and speak against the Virgin Mary, they become a great deal more wicked than they were before. We have been thinking what could be the reason of this, and we are not able to account for it." Here a simple little child, with an open Bible in its hand, stands up and says; "Please, ma'am, I think I have found a text in the Bible about that; it is in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew, fourteenth verse, '*Wo to you, hypocrites, you go round the sea and the land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, you make him a child of hell twofold more than yourselves.*'"

CHAPTER III.—WHAT IS DONE IN THESE SCHOOLS TO THE CHILDREN WHO WILL NOT ABANDON THEIR FAITH.

A GENTLEMAN one morning went into a Souper's school—the school was large, and clean, and well-aired; the boys were learning their lessons. The gentleman had walked round the school, and was going out again, when he happened to see a boy standing on a chair, with his hands tied behind his back with a rope. The gentleman was curious to know what was the meaning

of it, and what crime the boy had committed. He therefore stepped up to the master, and asked "what was the matter with the boy—why were his hands tied behind his back?" "Oh, sir," said the master, "we bought that boy; we gave a couple of blankets for him; we made a bargain with the mother, that she should have the blankets, and we would have the boy and make a Protestant of him." "Is that the usual form," said the gentleman, "by which you make a Protestant—tying the hands behind the back, a pennyworth of rope, and the boy is a Protestant?" "Oh, no, sir," said the master, not exactly that, although it is often a convenient way; but I will tell you how this happened. This boy used to go to a Catholic school taught by some people called Christian Brethren, or Christian Brothers; however, that is no matter, the boy went to the school. In that school the boys were always taught to make the sign of the cross when the clock strikes; the boy brought this bad practice of making the sign of the cross along with him to this school. He had not been here half an hour when the clock struck, and then, to my horror, I saw him—for I was standing near him—lift up his hand and make the 'sign of the cross.' I went to the boy and said, 'you dirty little Papist, we will not have any of your idolatry here; if I see you make the sign of the cross again, I will tie your hands, and you will be able to do it no more.' When it was nearly time for the clock to strike again I watched the boy, and—would you believe it, sir?—at the first stroke of the clock his hand was up, and he made the sign of the cross again. I went and pulled him to that chair, made him stand upon it, and tied his hands behind his back with a strong rope; and now, sir, if you like a little fun, wait till the clock strikes, and you will see the boy struggle in vain to get his hands free and make the sign of the cross." The gentleman took up his hat and left the school.

CHAPTER IV.—HOW SOME CHILDREN WOULD NOT GO TO THESE SCHOOLS.

A VERY wonderful thing happened in one of the central towns of Ireland. The Soupers, one morning, made a bargain with a poor woman, that they would give her a blanket, and that she should send her little girl Bridget to the Soupers' school. Bridget was a very good child, and went to the school of the Sisters of Mercy. In the afternoon the little Bridget came home from the convent; she was singing one of the hymns of the Blessed Virgin, which she had learnt at the convent, when the door opened, and her mother came in. "Bridget," said the mother, "the Soupers came here this morning." "What did

they say, mother?" asked Bridget. "Oh, they said," answered the mother, "that if I would send you to the Soupers' school, they would give me a blanket." "I am sure you sent them away, mother?" said Bridget. "No," said the mother, "we are very poor, so I promised that I would send you." "What!" answered Bridget, "do you really mean that I must go to the Soupers' school, and become a Protestant for a blanket? The nuns told me that Jesus Christ bought my soul with his precious blood; and will you let the Soupers buy it with a blanket?" "No matter," said the mother, "you must be ready to go to the Soupers' school to-morrow at ten o'clock." The child turned pale as death, and sank on its knees; it lifted up its little hands and eyes to Heaven, and prayed thus: "Dear Blessed Virgin Mary, the nuns always told me that you are my good mother, and that you love me—then, for the sake of the Infant Jesus, do not let me go to the Souper's school and become a Protestant; let me die, rather than be a Protestant." The mother sent the child to bed. Next morning the mother called to her to get up and be ready to go to the Soupers' school; but there was no answer from the child. She called out in a louder voice, "Bridget, get up;" still no answer. The mother then went to see what was the matter; she found the little child in its bed, but—it was dead! Its arms were folded in the form of a cross, and it looked like an angel. The Blessed Virgin had heard its prayer, and its innocent soul was in Heaven.

A boy was walking along a lonesome road; a gentleman came up to him and said: "What religion are you of?" "I am a Catholic," answered the boy. The gentleman took sixpence out of his pocket, and said: "Here, my boy, you will be able to buy a great lot of sugar-sticks with this sixpence. If you will go to the Soupers' school, and become a Protestant, I will give you this sixpence." "Sir," said the boy, "do you think that it would be right to sell my religion for sixpence?" The gentleman then pulled his purse out, and took from it a sovereign, and said, "My boy, if you will be a Protestant, I will give you this sovereign, twenty shillings." "Sir," the boy replied, "I want to ask you one question, 'Did Jesus Christ offer money to people to make them change their religion?'"

CHAPTER V.—WHAT THE SOUPERS WANT.

DEAR little children of Ireland, you are very poor and hungry; the Soupers come to you and ask you to go to their school, and promise you bread; but they do not tell you that if you eat the Soupers' bread, you must leave the

faith of your fathers—the Catholic faith. Little children, they want you to come to the Soupers' school in order to make you Protestants. It cannot be because they believe the Protestant religion to be the religion of Jesus Christ, that they want to make you Protestants; for they know right well that the Protestant religion was made, not by Jesus Christ, but 1500 years afterwards, by a wicked man called Luther, who broke his vows to God, and confessed that he made the Protestant religion, to please the devil and spite the Pope. Besides, the Protestant Church is the Church of one nation, but the Church of Christ is the Church of all nations: all these things are as clear as the daylight. Now, there is another thing. The Soupers want you to believe—what they believe. This is most wonderful, because they do not know themselves what they believe, or what they do not believe. Some of them say that Christ is God; others say, no, he is not; some of them say that Baptism is necessary; others say, no, it is not necessary at all. They have something which they call Confirmation, but what it means none of them could ever find out; they have also the Lord's Supper, but whether Christ is really present in it or not, they never could agree. Their Church tells them that they should go to Confession, but not one of them ever thinks of going to Confession. They do not even know how to consecrate a church. One of their bishops said: "That when he consecrates a church, he puts on his shoes, walks into the church, writes in a book, and then walks out again;" but many others say, no, this is not the right way to do it. (*See the debate in the House of Lords.*) So you see, about what they should believe or not believe they do not agree at all, and the Protestant Church looks very like the Tower of Babel, where everybody spoke a different language. Likewise, they blow hot and cold with the same breath; for they say that everybody should follow the religion they find in the Bible, but when the Catholics find their religion in the Bible, they say that they must not follow it. So, also, they always tell the people that the Catholics believe just the things which they do not believe. If, then, little child, you should become a Protestant, I will tell you just what you will have to do. You will have what is called the "Right of private judgment;" that is, you will be allowed to make any religion you like out of the Bible—Protestant, Lutheran, Calvinist, Methodist, Wesleyan, Primitive, New Connection, Anabaptist, Quaker, Jumper, Ranter, Irvingite, Johanna Southcottian, Lady Huntingdonian, Presbyterian, Socinian, Swedenborgian, Muggletonian, &c., &c. In fact, you will be allowed to find in the Bible any kind of belief or disbelief you please, save only that you will not be permitted to find in the Bible the old faith—the one Holy, Catholic, Apostolic faith; the faith of Jesus Christ and his Apostles; the faith of the greatest part of all the Christians who are living on the earth; the faith in

which all the fathers and mothers of those who are now Protestants, for more than a thousand years, lived and died. You will understand this better when I tell you, that history records that a certain Protestant parson wrote on the door of his Protestant Church these words: "Enter here, Jew, Turk, or Atheist, any man except a Papist." You will eat meat on Fridays, and break the fast on fast-days. If you have made any vows to God you will break them; and, above all, you will speak ill of the Mother of Christ and the saints of God, and so you will be a good Protestant, according to the most approved form of Souperism.

And now, I will tell you, little child, why they want to make you a Protestant; I will tell you the truth. The Soupers have read in their Bible how the devil envied our first parents, who were happy in Paradise, serving God in true religion: then the devil tempted our first parents to leave true religion by offering them a bit of fruit. The Soupers thought they might do just the same, so they tempt the children to leave the true religion by offering them soup.

CHAPTER VI.—FAITH, ETC.

What we must believe.—Are we obliged to believe the truths taught by the Church of God?

Yes.

Who taught these truths to the Church?

The Apostles.

Who taught them to the Apostles?

God.

How do we know that God taught the Apostles?

Because the Apostles worked miracles to show it.

When we believe these truths taught by the church, what is this belief called?

Faith.

Why we must believe.—Why do we believe what the Church teaches?

Because God himself has taught it, and God is truth.

Faith Supernatural.—Can we, of ourselves, without God's help, believe?

No.

Does it sometimes happen that an ignorant child believes, and a learned man does not believe?

Yes.

Why is this?

Because the child has received the gift of faith, and God helps it to believe, but the learned man has not got faith.

Necessity of Faith.—Can we be saved by good works only without faith?

No.

How do you know that?

Jesus Christ says, *He that believeth not shall be condemned.*—Mark xiv.

St. Paul says, *Without faith it is impossible to please God.*—Heb. xi.

Can we be saved by faith alone without good works?

No, St. James says, *Faith without good works is dead.*—James ii.

Is it a great sin to deny our Faith?

Yes.

If a Christian obstinately denies what is taught by the Church, what sin is it?

Heresy.

If a person rejects the discipline and practice of the Church, what sin is it?

Schism.

If a person leaves the Church altogether, what sin is it?

Apostasy.

What sin is it to worship idols or false gods?

Idolatry or Paganism.

Is it a great sin to deny or disbelieve what the Church teaches?

Yes.

St. Louis was king of France. One day a most wonderful thing happened. A priest was saying Holy Mass. After the consecration, the people saw with their eyes our Lord Jesus Christ present on the altar. Some people went in haste to tell the king about this wonder. They asked him to come and see it himself. The king answered, "No, I will not go. Why should I go to see what I know already. The Catholic Church teaches that Jesus Christ is truly present on the altar and I believe what the Catholic Church teaches."

The Seven Brothers.—There was a wicked king called Antiochus. He lived about 160 years before Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem. He wanted to make the Jews deny their faith. There were seven brothers along with their mother brought before this king. He told them that they must deny their faith. The eldest boy answered—"We are ready to die rather than offend God." When the king heard this answer he was very angry. He ordered his men to get frying-pans and brass vessels, and make them red hot. Then he commanded that the tongue of the boy who had answered should be cut out. The skin was drawn off from his head. The ends of his feet and hands were chopped off. Still he was not yet dead. So the king ordered him to be put into

the hot frying pan, and he was fried to death. While the poor boy was dying his mother and brothers were looking at him. But they were not afraid. They encouraged one another to die, and they said—"God will be pleased with us."

When the eldest brother was dead, they took the next to him, and began to mock at him. Then they tore the hair and the skin away from his head. Before he died, they asked him if he would deny his faith. He answered—"I will not." Then he was put into the frying-pan, and died like the eldest brother. When he was breathing out his last breath, he said to the wretched king—"You take away our lives now. But we die for the law of God, and he will raise us up in the resurrection of eternal life."

It was now the turn of the third brother. He quickly stretched out his hands to be cut off, and his tongue to be cut out. At the same time he said to the wicked king—"God gave me my hands and my tongue. But I do not care for them now. I would rather lose them than offend God. He will give them back to me again." The king and they that were with him wondered at the boy's courage, for he seemed to think nothing of his torments.

The fourth brother was tormented like the others. Just when he was going to die he said to the wicked king, "It is better to die hoping to be raised by God to life again, than to be like you who have no hope of resurrection to life." The fifth brother died in the same manner, warning the king of the judgments of God. When the sixth brother was dying he said to the king: "Do not be deceived. God lets these sufferings come upon me because our people have sinned. But do not think that you will go unpunished, for you are fighting against God."

There was now only the least brother of all the seven remaining. The king wanted very much to make him turn away from the law of God. He promised him, if he would do so, that he would make him rich and happy, and give him everything he wanted. The boy did not seem to care about these things. So the king called the boy's mother, and asked her to speak to him, and make him do what he wanted, that his life might be saved. The mother promised that she would give him *good advice*. So she turned round to her son and spoke to him in her own language, which the king did not understand. "My son," she said, "have pity on me, who am your mother, and brought you up till now. Look upon heaven and earth, and remember that God made them out of nothing. So you will not fear this cruel king. Think of the example of your brothers, and be ready like them to die. So I shall meet you and them again in heaven." While she was yet speaking these words, the boy said to the king: "What are you waiting for? I will not obey your commandment, but the commandment of God. Like my brothers, I offer up my life and my body

for the law which God gave to our fathers." Then the king was very angry, and ordered the boy to be tormented even more cruelly than his brothers. So these seven brothers, along with their mother, died because they would not deny their holy faith.

The Children in Japan who professed their Faith.—Louis was a little boy, eleven years old, in Japan. The Franciscan Fathers had taught him the catechism. He was one of the servers of the altar. A great persecution arose against the Catholics. The names of those who were to die because they were Catholics, were written down on a paper. The little Louis hoped that his name would be on the list. When he found that it was not there, he cried so bitterly that at last they put his name on the list of those who were to die for their faith. So Louis was put in prison. While he was there a gentleman came to him, and said that he would get him out of prison if he would deny his faith. The child only answered him in these words—"If you want to save your soul, you must become a Christian yourself." Soon after they cut off a piece of his left ear. While the blood was running down, the boy looked quite glad, because he knew that he was suffering for the sake of Jesus.

Antony was thirteen years of age. He was born at Kangazaki. He was very kind to everybody and very quiet. He also served at the altar, and was a companion to the little Louis. His name was down on the death list, because he was a Catholic. His father and mother were very glad that their child was going to be a martyr. Still they loved him, and cried very much to lose him. They even wanted him to run away, so that he might not die, and might be able to serve at the altar again. The good child answered—"Do not trouble yourselves about me, father and mother, for I am sure that God will take care of me till the end. I hope you will not cry for me any more." Somebody told him that he should do what his parents said, and promised to give him a reward if he did so. The little Antony answered—"Keep your rewards for yourself. If I die for Jesus, he will give me greater rewards in heaven. I do not fear death. I love the cross." He then said farewell to his parents, promised to pray for them, and asked them not to cry for him.

Thomas Cozacki was another child, fourteen years of age. He was very good and cheerful. Along with these three children were several other martyrs. They were all put into a cart, to be taken to the place where they were to die. Their hands were tied behind their backs. All the people who crowded round them were looking at the martyrs and especially at the three little children. The face of the little Louis was bright with joy. With a voice like that of an angel, he was *singing the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and other devout prayers*. When the people heard him singing, they burst out into sobs and tears. Fazamburo, the man who was appointed to lead them, felt

very sorry when he saw the three little children on their way to die. He thought they seemed more fit to play than to die for their faith. So he tried to persuade the little Louis to deny his faith, that he might live. Louis answered that he would rather die and go to heaven, than live and lose his soul. While they were on their road, somebody brought the children some sweet things to eat, but they would not touch them. They were now come to the place where they were to die. The crosses on which they were to die were ready lying on the ground. As soon as the children saw the crosses they leaped for joy, and little Louis ran and kissed his. At this moment the father and mother of little Antony came to him. They were crying, and wanted to make him deny his faith to save his life. But Antony would not deny his faith. He said that he was going to be happy with Jesus in heaven. All was now ready. The children were fastened on the crosses, with iron rings on their necks, and cords round their hands and feet. The crosses were then raised upright, and fixed in the ground, with the children hanging on them. Before each child stood two soldiers, with sharp spears in their hands. All round there were great crowds of people. Not a word was spoken, all was still and quiet. They were waiting for the children's deaths. At this moment the voice of the little Antony was heard coming from the cross. With an angelic voice, he was singing the hymn, *Praise the Lord all ye children*. A cry burst from the crowd, they were praying for the children! At this moment the soldiers lifted up their spears and pierced the bodies of the children, and the blood came running out. All was over; the little children were dead, and their souls were gone to Jesus. When the little Antony was pierced, he had not yet finished singing the hymn. He went to finish it in heaven. The people tried to get a drop of the blood of the little martyrs, and cut away pieces of wood from their crosses. On the Friday after their death, a pillar of fire was seen moving round the crosses on which they died. A great many little children, even those only eight years old, were not satisfied unless their parents told them that perhaps they would one day be martyrs, like the little children who died on the crosses.

This very year 1862, our Holy Father the Pope, in St. Peter's Church at Rome, solemnly declared that the little children were martyrs and saints in heaven.

Some who denied the Faith.—There was a certain little girl, about nine years of age, living with her mother, who was a widow. As the mother was very poor, she wished the child to get into service. The little girl had heard of a house where a servant was wanted. So one morning she set off to the house to see if she could get the place. When she came to the door she rang the bell. The door was opened, and she was asked what she wanted. The little

girl answered: "that she wished to speak to the mistress." Soon after the mistress came down stairs. She said to the little girl: "What is it that you want?" The little girl made a curtsy, and said: "Please, ma'am, I heard that you wanted a servant, will you let me be your servant?" The mistress said: "I never saw you before, and I do not know whether you would be fit. Tell me, what can you do?" "O please," said the little girl, "I can do everything." "Tell me," said the mistress, "do you know how to wash linen?" "Oh yes," the child answered, quickly, "for I have washed my mother's floor!" "Are you able to cook?" said the lady. "O yes, please, ma'am," answered the child, "for I once roasted my mother's potatoes!" The lady then said to her: "you may come back here again next week, and I will give you an answer." The child was already at the door when the lady called her back again. She said: "There is one thing I quite forgot to ask you. Tell me, are you a Catholic? because I never have Catholics in my service." The child hung down its head for some moments and blushed. At last it lifted its head, and through fear of losing the place, said: "No, please, ma'am, I am not a Catholic." So this little child denied the holy Faith.

In a large town there was a servant out of place. One day she was going about in search of a place. She went to many different houses. At each house they asked her if she was a Catholic? When she said that she was a Catholic, they told her that she might go away, because they never took Catholics into their service. The girl was tired out by all these refusals. So she determined next time she was asked about her religion to deny that she was a Catholic. Soon after she knocked at the door of another house. The door was opened, and she said she had called to enquire if they wanted a servant. The first question was. "Are you a Catholic?" The girl answered immediately, "No, I am not a Catholic." "O then you may go away," they said, "we only take Catholics in service here, because we find that they keep best to their duties." The girl was ashamed to let them know that she had told a lie. So she lost her place because she had denied her religion.

The Manichee.—The Manichees were wicked people who believed that the devil made the world. One day a Manichee was disputing with a Catholic, who was very ignorant, about his religion. While they were disputing a fly came and bit the Catholic. The Manichee thought this was a good opportunity for him, so he said: "How those flies tease you!" "Yes," answered the Catholic, "they are nasty things." "Do you think," said the Manichee, "that God or the devil made such nasty things?" The Catholic felt ashamed to say that God made them. So he answered, "well I suppose the devil made them." The Manichee said, "there is not much difference betwixt a fly and a bee. Besides, the sting of a bee is worse than the bite of a fly, so if

the devil made the flies, surely he made the bees also." The Catholic had nothing to say against it. Then the Manichee went on: "If the devil could make the bees, why could he not the frogs? If he made the frogs, he could make the beasts also. If the devil made the beasts, he also made the world in which the beasts live." The Catholic, who was very ignorant, could not deny what the Manichee said, so he became a Manichee himself.

Men who are clever and great talkers, when they dispute with ignorant people, can easily make truth look like falsehood, and falsehood look like truth. So those who do not know their religion very well, should be on their guard, when people dispute against it. You are certain that grass grows out of the earth, although you cannot tell *how* it grows. So by faith you know that the Catholic religion is the true religion, although if you were asked to show how this is, perhaps you would not be able.

THE CHILDREN MARTYRS.

St. Cyril, the Infant Martyr.—The Lord assisted this little child in his sacrifice of martyrdom. When the blessed Cyril was very little, he astonished those who saw him. His constancy in the holy faith led all to glorify and thank Jesus Christ. This holy name was always on his lips, and he said that in it he found strength and life. As his zeal for the faith increased every day, he had many enemies amongst the other children of his age. Even his father sent him away from his house, and took away everything from him. Cyril said, that in exchange for these poor and perishable things, the Lord would give him treasures of infinite price and eternal in Heaven. These words of the child made the judge angry, when he heard of them. He ordered the soldiers to bring the child before him, and tried to frighten him. But he soon found that he was not to be frightened, and that he cared for nothing but his holy faith. "Child," the judge said to him. "I pardon your fault, and your father will also forgive you, if you will have sense to do what we want you to do." The blessed little Cyril answered; "I rejoice at what is happening to me, for God, in his goodness, will give me a place in his glory. For being driven away from my father's house, I shall dwell in another house far greater and better. I am very willing to be poor, in order to enjoy eternal riches. I have no fear of death, which will bring me a life of unspeakable delights." There seemed to be Divine strength in these words of the infant. The angry judge gave orders, in a loud voice, for him to be put in chains and led to death. He wanted to frighten the heart of the child. When they saw that the child was not frightened by the fire into which they threatened to throw him, and that, on the contrary, he went with great joy to death, the judge

called him back. He wished to try again to gain him by persuasion. "Child," he said, "you have seen the flames and the sword. If you will do what I bid you, your father will take you again into his house, and give you what he took away from you." The child answered: "You have given me pain by bringing me back again; for so you have deprived me of my true goods, which are in heaven, which I was just going to get by dying; and this is the greatest punishment for me. My dwelling in heaven is far greater than the house of my father on earth." When those who stood by heard the child speaking these words they shed tears. But he said: "You should rather rejoice than cry for me. Be rather sharers in my happiness, and let your hearts rejoice with me, when you go along with me to the place of punishment. You know not the blessed city above where I am going, and you do not understand the confidence with which I am filled. Let me then buy this kingdom above at the price of my life." So the little martyr spoke on his way to the place where he was to die. A Divine light seemed to shine round him. He was the admiration not only of Heaven, but of all the people of Cæsarea. So was this little martyr honoured by Him who reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. CONON AND HIS SON.

In the reign of the emperor Aurelian, an officer called Domitian was sent through all the provinces, to make people offer sacrifices to pagan idols. When this officer came to Scone, a city in the province of Isauria, they brought to him a man called Conon, who was much respected for his holy life. He was a friend of God and a co-heir of Christ, and prayed much to the angels. He was a great enemy of the pagan idolatry. He helped and consoled the holy martyrs. He had been married. His wife was dead, and he had one son. With this boy he lived in solitude. He was exact in the observance of God's commandments. Near the town there was a great river, which the people could not cross, for there was no bridge. He, by a miracle, changed the course of the river, that the people might cross it. So his name was held in great veneration by the people. The just man commands the creatures of God by his prayers.

When Domitian, the minister of the devil, saw Conon, he said to him: "Your white hairs and old age give me veneration for you; but why are you so foolish as to live in a monastery?" Conon answered: "I wish to please God by this kind of life, in which there are many sufferings, because we must enter heaven through many tribulations. Men seek after fine dresses and other goods of this world. But I place before myself the cross of Christ, in

order that he may forgive my sins, for he will judge me." Domitian said: "Do you wish your life to end?" Conon answered: "I would wish this life to be finished, that I may live with Jesus Christ in heaven." Domitian said: "I think you are impious to our gods. What is your office among the Christians? are you a priest or a deacon?" Conon replied: "I live in the presence of God, adoring Jesus Christ, and am filled with joy in the Holy Ghost. But I am not a priest or deacon, I am only an unworthy layman." Domitian said: "Are you married?" Conon answered: "I was married, but my wife is dead, and she is now with Christ in heaven." Domitian then asked him if he had any children. Conon answered: "I have one son, whom I will bring to you." Domitian said: "Is he also impious to the gods, and a Christian?" Conon replied: "He is a Christian, for such as the root is, such also are the branches." Domitian ordered him to be brought. The officer replied: "He is here." Domitian asked about him. Conon having answered his questions, said: "We should be glad if you would finish this affair, and pass sentence upon us. Let us suffer all the usual torments and pains, that we may be worthy to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Domitian said: "Will you believe in our gods, and offer sacrifice to them? say yes or no; for the emperor has ordered me to condemn those who will not sacrifice to them." Conon replied: "O foolish and impious man, have I not already said, do as you like with us. Think of all kinds of punishments and torments. But know, that neither your promises nor your threats will ever make us deny the name of the Lord our God." Domitian then said to his soldiers: "Heat the plates of iron red hot, and torment their bodies with them." Conon said: "You will see the power of Christ in our patience." Domitian said: "I will conquer you by fire." He then said to the executioners: "Make the gridiron red hot; put oil at the four corners of it, and put a light underneath it, and put Conon and his son on it." When they had been roasted on the back, Domitian commanded that they should be turned round and roasted on the other side. Conon said: "Believe me we do not care for the fire, we do not even feel it." Domitian then said to the executioners: "Make the great cauldron red hot, and put them into it—perhaps they will find themselves burnt in it." When they had been put into this cauldron, Conon said: "Your executioners mock you; we feel no fire here." Domitian said: "Take them out of the cauldron, and hang them up by the heels over a fire, so hot, that it will kill them directly." When this had been done, Conon said: "We do not feel the fire, we only feel the smoke." Domitian said: "Bring a mallet of wood, and beat and bruise their hands." After this punishment, Conon said: "Are you not ashamed that two servants of God have broken your pride, and have hindered the victory of Satan?" While he spoke thus, a voice was heard from heaven, which said: "Valiant martyrs of

Jesus Christ, your life has been pure, your combats full of vigour, your life amongst men full of charity. Now, crowned with roses, and glorious by your victory over the devil, come and dwell in heaven." The holy martyrs, hearing this voice, raised their eyes to heaven, and after praying a long time, gave up their souls to God. Domitian, being frightened, rose up and ran away. The Christians came and took away the bodies of the martyrs, more precious than gold or precious stones, and buried them, singing the praises of the Lord. Saint Conon and his son were martyred at Scone, in the province of Isauria, by Count Domitian, when our sweet Lord Jesus was reigning in heaven, to whom are honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

ST. BABYLAS AND THREE CHILDREN HIS DISCIPLES

About the year 250, Numerian, pagan governor of Antioch, after having offered sacrifice to the false gods, wished to enter into the Catholic Church. The pagans, who offered sacrifices to false gods, were never allowed to go into the Catholic churches. When the Bishop, the blessed Babylas, heard of this, he called the Catholics together, and spoke these words to them; "My children," he said, "be firm in your faith, and pray without ceasing, for the wolf threatens to come into the fold, but Jesus Christ will not let him do such a frightful thing." The bishop then went out of the church, and waited till the governor should come. The governor soon came. His hands were stained with the blood of the pagan sacrifices. He wished to enter the church by force. Babylas, the bishop, stopped him and said: "A sacrilegious and impure man cannot enter the church of God." The governor saw how firm the holy bishop was, and knew how much he was esteemed in the city. So he had him quietly taken to prison, where he was kept till the next day. On the following day the governor took his seat on the tribunal, in the court of justice, and ordered the bishop to be brought before him. He said to him: "Miserable man, what were you thinking of when you raised your hand against me, to send me away from your church? Do you not know that I am a prince? I swear by my power, which is greater than any other here, that you shall not escape from my hands. I will see if your God is able to defend you." Babylas replied: "It is true that I am a poor, wretched man, still God has made me the pastor of this people. Therefore, when I saw the wolf coming, and wishing to enter the fold of the Lord, I hastened to turn him back, lest I might be guilty before God, of the loss of even one of his sheep." The governor said: "Miserable man, you shall die, because you considered me to be a wolf, and not your master." The bishop answered: "God has made you our master on account of our sins, that the scourges of your cruelty might bring us back to

Him. Jesus Christ, whom you despise, but whom I honour, gave you that power, of which you are so proud, and he has given it to you that you might learn to know him. But still you provoke his anger, by adoring creatures, instead of adoring him who created them and gave them life." The governor said: "You are losing your reason, and loading us with injuries. Do you think, then, our great gods are only creatures?" The bishop replied: "your gods are the works of the hands of men; they are the inventions of the devil, who was banished from heaven, and has ruined men by leading them into idolatry." The governor said: "I order you to offer sacrifice to our gods; if you refuse, your obstinacy shall be punished." The bishop answered: "Your worship of false gods is abominable; God, who is in heaven, can give me help and strength to bear your torments." "Who is that God, whose help you speak of?" said the governor. "He is," answered the bishop, "the wisdom and the Word of the Father, he is God and Man." The governor said: "You have answered wisely; there is only one thing you want, and that is to know our gods." The bishop answered: "O tyrant, I seek not your foolish praise, I seek only the praise of Jesus Christ my Lord." The governor then said: "I can no longer listen to the things you say. You shall have a collar of iron on your neck, and chains on your feet, because you do not cease to insult me, who am your lord and master." Babylas answered: "I shall bear with joy any punishment you like, that I may be worthy to be called the servant of the Lord, and counted amongst those who have suffered for his name. They are happy in their pains, because their reward is great from God." Then the governor said to Victorinus, the general of his soldiers: "I give up this bishop to you that you may torment him cruelly. Put an iron collar on his neck, and bind his feet with iron chains." When the iron collar and chains had been put on the bishop, he cried out: "I thank my God who has given me the honour to confess his name. I believe in Jesus Christ, my Saviour, in whom I place all my hopes. He will give me strength and patience to bear these sufferings." The governor still pressed the bishop to offer sacrifice to the false gods, when all at once he saw three little children come up to the bishop. They were three brothers whom the bishop instructed in piety. They had heard what had been done to the bishop, and they came to console him, for they did not wish to leave him now that he was bound in chains. The governor, surprised at this touching sight, ordered the little children to be seized and brought before him. He was beginning to question them, when the bishop said: "As you blame my doctrine, you will be able to learn from these little children what sort of doctrine I teach, and what is the gift of God which I am commanded to teach." The governor then asked the children if their mother was living. They answered that she was alive. The governor

sent for their mother. When she came he asked her what her name was? She answered that it was Theodula. The governor said: "Are these your children?" She answered: "Yes; and I offered them to God, and also to our bishop, that they might be baptized. He has instructed them in the knowledge of God." The governor said: "Strike her on the face before her children, and tell her to speak to me with more respect." The children seeing their mother struck, all cried out with one voice: "Do not strike our mother this way, without any reason. She has a right to be properly treated, she only said what is the truth." The governor, angry at this answer, ordered the three children to be hung up by their arms. He ordered that the eldest child should receive twelve strokes, the second nine, and the youngest seven strokes. Then the three children, raising their voices, cried out: "Be thou ever blessed, O God, because it is given to us to suffer with Jesus Christ, our Lord, like Babylas, our good bishop." The governor then said to the mother: "How old are your children?" She answered: "The eldest is twelve, the second nine, and the youngest seven." Then she cried out: "Thou art blessed, O God, who hast permitted that my three sons should this day, receive strokes according to the number of their years." The governor then sent the mother away, and ordered the bishop to be brought to him again, and said to him: "You master of fools and teacher of infants, I have tried your doctrine by those children, and the trial of it is turned against you, for the children have promised to offer sacrifice to our gods" "You tell an untruth," answered Babylas; "you speak like the devil, who is a liar and the father of lies." The governor then said: "I despise your words and your insults, and if you do not consent to offer sacrifice to our gods, I will have you hung directly." Babylas answered: "I only laugh at your threats; I am ready not only to be hung, but to be crucified for Christ, to merit the grace of possessing him. The souls of the just and of those who confess his name are in the hands of God, and no evil can touch them. So do as you like with me." The governor then ordered that the bishop should be hung up along with the three children. The bishop then said: "O Lord, behold me and the three children whom thou hast given me." The governor then ordered him to be cruelly beaten. The head of the martyr sank under the weight of the chain which was round his neck. The people, who saw his friends lament, asked him to have pity on his old age, and offer sacrifice in order to escape from these torments. "I do not feel any pain, it is Christ who suffers in me, and gives me patience, and will give me eternal life." The governor ordered them to strike him harder. The children, who were hung up with him, cried out: "O tyrant, most impious of men! why do you, without reason, treat so cruelly our good pastor and master, who honours the Lord in all things. Know that thy punishments increase his glory

before God and men. We call Christ, who is our salvation, to witness, that thou shalt not escape the hand of God, but thou shalt be delivered to the fire of hell, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." The governor, who was very angry when the children spoke in this way, ordered them to be tormented more. Then the children said again: "Unfortunate man, do you not blush to see yourself confounded in the sight of the people by us, children. You suffer more than we do. God, who lets us suffer can, in a moment, take away your life; whilst he assists us, and we do not suffer pain when we are struck." The governor then ordered the bishop to be taken down from the gibbet on which he was hung, and sent him away, that he might question the children apart. "My little children," he said, "I will give you things much more precious than your Master can give you." But these children, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, answered: "Perfidious man! you are laying snares for us. Your presents are full of the fire of hell, and they will drag you into the same ruin. Our Master has promised in the gospel to give us the kingdom of heaven, if we give a glorious testimony to God." The governor had the bishop brought back, and said to him: "Once more, if you will offer sacrifice to our gods, you shall live, and persuade these little children to do the same, that they may save their lives." The bishop replied: "Foolish man that you are, do not think that I shall do such an impious thing." The governor then pronounced sentence, that the bishop and the children were to have their heads cut off. After the reading of this sentence, the bishop spoke thus to the people: "I ask you, by the Lord who sees all, to bury along with me the irons which are round my neck and feet, to serve one day as a testimony against the cruelty of this tyrant, for whom God has ready an eternal fire, which shall never be extinguished." Then he went out of the town, singing psalms and saying: "O God, you who have saved us from those who persecuted us; you have confounded those who hated us. My children, let us join in praising the Lord every day forever." The children answered, "Amen." Then they said: "We do not abandon thee, blessed father, by whose wisdom we have been taught to know Christ, and suffer for him." Then, raising their eyes to heaven, they said: "Lord Jesus Christ, we return thanks to you for not permitting us to be separated from our father." The executioners were now come to cut off their heads. Babylas asked the executioner to put the children to death first, and leave him till the last. Then he embraced the children, and said: "Behold me, O God, and the children whom you have given me." The children put their arms round the head of Babylas, who had been as a father to them, and kissed his hands, saying: "O father and master, we will die with you. We wish to receive the crown along with you, by confessing generously to the end, Jesus Christ, whom you have

confessed before the great ones of the world." Whilst they spoke thus, the holy martyr prayed; and admiring this faith and confidence which God alone could give, he cried out with joy: "I bless you, O God of true Christians, because by me, your unworthy servant, or rather by the virtue of your name, and for its glory, you have brought to perfection these infants, who call me father. Yes, Lord, 'Out of the mouths of infants thou hast perfected praise.'" Then he kissed each of the children on the forehead, and delivered them up to the executioner. When their heads were cut off, he delivered himself up also, and his head was, in like manner, cut off. The bodies of the bishop and of the children were buried together, and along with them the chains which the bishop had round his neck and feet. Thus was finished the martyrdom of the most holy bishop and servant of God, Babylas, with the three children in the city of Antioch, in the month of February, Numerius being governor of Antioch; but our Lord Jesus Christ being the only King, to whom glory is due, for ever and ever. Amen.

**A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION;
OR,
A VISIT TO OUR SWEET LORD
JESUS CHRIST,
IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT,
AND TO HIS IMMACULATE MOTHER, MARY.**

ONE day a holy person saw our Lord Jesus Christ on the altar. He saw that Jesus was crying. The tears were running down from his eyes, and fell on the altar-cloth. He went near to Jesus, and said: "My sweet Jesus, why are you crying, what is the matter; what is it that makes you sorrowful?" Jesus then made this answer: "Yes," he said, "I cry because my heart is sorrowful, I cry because I am lonesome. I have come down from heaven to this altar. I stay here day and night, awaiting, calling, welcoming all who come to visit me. I never go away. I came here thinking that my creatures would also come and visit me, and speak to me, and tell me all their wants. But they will not come; they stay away and they will not visit me; they leave me alone by myself. Therefore, I cry, and my heart is sad, and the tears run down from my eyes."

St. Alphonsus says: "Your love for us, O most amiable Jesus, should oblige all men ever to stay with thee in the most Blessed Sacrament, till they are obliged by force to leave thee. When they leave thee, they should leave also their hearts and affections at the foot of the altar, where thou remainest; all eyes to see and provide for their necessities, and all heart to love them, and where thou awaitest the coming day to be again visited by the souls thou lovest."

S. Teresa says: "Let us never be at a distance from or lose sight of Jesus, our beloved Shepherd. The sheep which are near their shepherd are always more taken care of and better fed, and they always get something of what the shepherd eats himself. If, by chance, the shepherd sleeps, still the lamb remains near him. It either waits till his sleep is ended, or itself awakens him. Then it gets new favours from him."

WHAT IS A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION?

St. Thomas says that a "Spiritual Communion is desiring very much to receive Jesus in the Holy Communion, and then loving and thanking him as if we had really received Him."

Blessed Jane of the Cross used to say, that a Spiritual Communion can be made very easily. You can make it without fasting, without the leave of your confessor. You can make it at any time you please and at any place you like, although it is better to make it in the chapel in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Blessed Agatha of the Cross made a Spiritual Communion two hundred times every day. From the tabernacle Jesus speaks to his poor creatures. He says to them: *"Come to me all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you."*

PRAYER.

My Jesus, I believe that thou art truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love thee above all things, and I desire to have thee within my soul. But since I am not able to receive thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. O Jesus, I embrace you, make yourself one with me. Be always with me; never let me be separated from you. May the burning and most sweet power of thy love, O Lord Jesus Christ, fill all my soul. May I die through the love of you, since you died for the love of me.

Jesus, my love, my only love,
I seek for none but thee;
Behold me all thy own, my God,
Do as thou wilt with me.

Then make a visit to an image or picture of our Blessed Lady, and say the Hail Mary at least.

THE END.

PRAISED BE JESUS AND MARY.



TO OUR MOST SWEET, AND HOLY,

AND IMMACULATE MOTHER

MARY,

AND TO HER DIVINE SON,

THE EVER BLESSED

INFANT JESUS,

THESE BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

ARE OFFERED.

MAY THEY LEAD

THE POOR LITTLE CHILDREN

TO LOVE

THE DEAR INFANT JESUS

AND HIS BLESSED MOTHER

MARY.

