

Theology
in
Romance

By Madeline Leslie

and A. R. Baker

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GOD AND MANKIND.

VOLUME I.



THE FAMILY CATECHISING.

THE FAMILY CATECHISING.

THEOLOGY IN ROMANCE:

OR,

The Catechism and the Dermott
family.

BY

MRS. MADELINE LESLIE

AUTHOR OF "HOME LIFE" AND OF "MRS. LESLIE'S JUVENILE
SERIES"

AND

REV. A. R. BAKER

AUTHOR OF "THE CATECHISM TESTED BY THE BIBLE," ETC.

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DEDICATION.



THE VOLUMES OF THIS WORK
ARE MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHORS
TO THE
Y O U N G C O N V E R T S
IN THE
G R E A T R E V I V A L O F 1 8 5 8,
IN THE HUMBLE HOPE OF AIDING THEIR PROGRESS IN
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE AND GRACE.

INTRODUCTION.



TEN years have completed their course since one of the associate authors of these volumes published his first edition of "THE CATECHISM TESTED BY THE BIBLE." It was sold in a few weeks. That work, in two 18mo. volumes, was revised and stereotyped the same year; and two corresponding volumes, with the same title, but more simple and explanatory, and therefore better adapted to young children, were prepared and published with them.

Of these four books, recently revised, put into two, one for children, the other for adults, and issued in a new stereotype edition, more than two hundred thousand impressions have been printed. They have been translated into several foreign languages; as into the Arabic by Rev. H. M. Calhoun in Syria, where, by the blessing of God, they contribute to the fulfilment of prophecy, and are helping to "turn Lebanon into a fruitful field." In the Sandwich Islands, we are informed, they are used by government authority as national text books, assisting to confirm those who were so lately idolaters in "the faith which was once delivered to the saints." They are "helps" at various missionary stations, and have been widely circulated in the United States, the British Provinces, and several transatlantic countries.

From highly respectable sources, the author of that work has received applications for other volumes, in illustration of the doctrines and duties of Christianity, as set forth in the admirable compend thereof, drawn up by the Westminster Assembly, and entitled "The Shorter Catechism." The first suggestion of this kind was received years ago in an interview with Rev. T. H.

Gallaudet, of Hartford, Conn., whose numerous and popular works for the young demanded for his judgment grave consideration. It was then that his rare gifts as a writer awakened the hope of his future aid in the preparation of these volumes—a hope the realization of which his death has precluded.

But Providence has kindly enabled the author of the former treatise on the Catechism to avail himself of the efficient aid of his wife, whose "Home Life," consisting at present of "Cora and the Doctor," "The Courtesies of Wedded Life," and "The Household Angel," and whose "Juvenile Series," of which four volumes, "The Motherless Children," "Play and Study," "Howard and his Teacher," and "Trying to be Useful," have been very favorably noticed by the press and received by the public. Two other volumes of the same series, "Striving and Thriving," and "I'll Try," are in press, and will shortly be issued.

The explanations and illustrations contained in the present volumes exhibit the method, and in part the results, of her weekly catechising of her own children, and of her instruction in Sabbath schools, also of her husband's catechetical exercises with the children and youth of his pastoral charge, for a long course of years.

They comprise the sum of their united experience, reading, and observation, together with such anecdotes and fables as they have found interesting and useful in this department of Christian nurture.

Each catechetical answer has been analyzed, and the subjects it contains carefully studied by us individually. Then we have unitedly agreed

upon the method of explaining, illustrating, and enforcing its truths. For the theology and ethics of these little volumes the author is mainly responsible; but the background, drapery, and shading of the picture, on which much of the interest and utility of the work depends, is to be ascribed mainly to the authoress, whose nom de plume is associated with his name upon the title page.

After a careful revision and preparation for the press, the work is given to the public in the hope that it may aid parents, Sabbath school teachers, and pastors in the religious education of the dear children committed to their care, and may enable the rising generation better to understand these subjects of divine knowledge, and more tenaciously to "hold fast the form of sound words."

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THEOLOGY IN ROMANCE.



CHAPTER I.

MAN'S CHIEF END; OR, LITTLE LOTTY.

QUESTION I. *What is the chief end of man?*

ANSWER. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.



IT was truly a pleasant scene; the cheerful fire burned brightly in the grate, as the little group gathered around their mother, their eyes sparkling with the eager anticipation of pleasure. The hour so much longed for had arrived; and Mrs. Dermott, taking in her hand a nicely-bound volume of the Catechism, proceeded, in fulfilment of her promise, to explain and illustrate it to her youthful audience.

Addressing her eldest son, a bright, active boy of twelve summers, she asked, "Walter, what is the chief end of man?"

In a low but distinct voice, he replied, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."

"What is the meaning of chief end?"

"Principal object or business."

"Yes; Isabelle is just beginning to attend school. Can you tell me, Helen, what her chief end is while there?"

"To learn to read and spell."

"I learn geography, too," lisped the little one, "and can tell which is my right hand, and which is my left hand."

Mrs. Dermott and the children smiled, while she continued: "If Isabelle should go to school some day, and spend all her time in whispering or drawing pictures on her slate, what would be her chief end?"

"To play."

"Yes. She would be like a great many men, women, and children, whom God has sent into the world to glorify him, but who pass their whole lives in seeking their own pleasure. Would that be right?"

"No, mamma. It would be very wicked."

"The great object, business, or end, then, for which mankind were sent into the world, is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. How can little children glorify God?"

"If they love him and keep his commands," replied Anna, seriously.

"How can little children show that they love God, and that their chief end is to glorify him?"

Anna blushed, and glanced at Walter, who replied for her. "If they are serious and devout in church and Sabbath school. If they listen attentively to what their teachers say about God, and are not thinking about their plays, toys, or fine clothes, but are trying to learn how to please him, I think that would be glorifying God."

"Yes, my dear boy," replied Mrs. Dermott, gazing with moistened eyes upon the flushed, eager countenance of her first-born. "God would see in that child's heart a desire to attain the chief aim of his existence, and He would send his Holy Spirit to aid, comfort, and guide him, and at last would take him to the full enjoyment of himself in heaven."

"Between two and three thousand years ago," added Mrs. Dermott, "there lived in Greece a

great many wise men, called philosophers. These were divided into numerous sects, as Christian people now are into different denominations. The search of all these was for the highest good, or 'the chief end' of man. One sect claimed it was to be found in ease; another in pleasure; and still another in fame and renown. Some claimed the greatest good consisted in luxurious meats and drinks; some placed it in one thing, some in another. Their wisdom was but folly. None of them attained the true idea which God in the Bible has revealed to little children, and which this answer of the Catechism so beautifully and summarily expresses. But an incident will explain my meaning.

"There once lived a sweet little girl who was noticed by her mother to go to her chamber many times in a day; and, curious to know what led her there, the lady softly followed. As she approached the door, she heard the voice of her child talking, as she supposed, with some one within; but listening more attentively, she perceived that Lotty was asking her heavenly Father to bless her.

"With a grateful, rejoicing heart, the mother returned to the parlor, where Lotty soon followed, and, taking up her doll, resumed her play. She dressed and undressed the baby, tried on a little bonnet and sack given her by her aunt, all the while closely watched by her mother, who soon saw her place Dolly safely in the tiny bed, and, having tucked her in, retire to her chamber again. Surprised and delighted, Mrs. Kidder only waited for her child to return to her play, before she questioned her as to the cause of her frequent absence.

"Come here, Lotty,' she said, affectionately, as the little girl made her appearance.

"May Dolly come too, mamma?"

"Yes, dear.'

"Why do you leave your play so often?"

"O mamma, I love God so!' was the touching reply, as, with her sweet face flushed with holy joy, she turned to gaze into her mother's countenance. 'Every time I go into my room, it seems just as if God was glad; and he makes my heart so warm. I think he loves to have me pray to him.'

"For two years more Lotty was spared to her father and mother, and all the time the love of God was growing in her heart. It was the whole business of her life to love, honor, and glorify him. By and by her heavenly Father called her to his mansion above the skies, where she will enjoy his love and presence forever and ever.

"When the physician, who had been hastily summoned, told her weeping mother that a few hours would terminate her life, Lotty, though suffering acutely, pressed her little hands together, exclaiming, 'O, I long to be there. I shall see my dear Saviour, and live with him forever. Don't cry, mamma,' she pleaded, as her mother's tears flowed afresh. 'Jesus has forgiven all my sins, and he will take care of me. I will ask him to send for you and papa; and then we'll sing praises to him forever and ever.'"

This little girl glorified and enjoyed God.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIBLE; OR, THE SAILOR BOY.

QUESTION II. *What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

ANSWER. The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

ANNA SHERWIN was an orphan child of Mrs. Dermott's deceased brother. For a year she had been residing in the family of her aunt, who treated her with all the tenderness which she manifested for her own children. With the buoyancy natural to youth, Anna had ceased to mourn her parents' loss, though she loved to call to mind their instructions, and to govern her conduct as she thought would please them.

With the enthusiasm of a child, she looked forward to "the catechising," as her cousins had styled the teaching of their mother, and was the first to take her seat and to be in readiness for the second question. When the others were in their places, Mrs. Dermott requested Anna to repeat the answer given at the head of this

chapter, and then asked, "What volume contains the word of God?"

"The Bible, or 'The Book.'"

"How do we know it is the word of God?"

"Because—because—" The little ones looked at each other, but could not answer the question.

"I will ask another question. How do we know, Walter, that the Shorter Catechism was written by the Westminster Assembly?"

"Because we have always heard so," replied the boy. "I suppose people who lived then told their children, and they told theirs, until it has come down to us."

"I once saw an old gentleman," remarked the mother, "who told me some interesting circumstances respecting that most remarkable body of men. His father had told him that his great-great-grandfather was a member of the Assembly; that he knew and had conversed with those who wrote the Catechism, and that he had related many interesting facts, which, with letters and other papers, were now preserved in an antiquarian library.

"In the same manner we know that the books of the Bible were written by the men whose names they bear, and can distinctly retrace them to their authors, both by history and tradition. Besides, God enabled them to perform many miracles, such as healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, raising the dead to life, to prove that they had received authority from him. He also enabled them to foretell many events which

have since taken place, and thereby has set his seal to their commission.

"A poor negro was once asked, 'What reasons have you for believing the Bible to be the word of God?'

"'Me have no reasons, massa,' was the good man's artless reply. 'Me want no reasons. Me read the precious book, and me feel it in here,' putting his hand upon his heart. 'Me know God wrote it for poor creatures just like me.'

"The Bible carries its own arguments with it. Its writers often refer to this internal evidence of its truth. 'He that believeth shall know of the doctrine.' 'Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect will of God.'

"Multitudes have in this way learned the divine truth and power of the Holy Scriptures.

"Many years ago I read of a pious widow who lived in the northern part of England. She had one son. This boy, whose name was Charles, from being her pet and darling, became her scourge and her cross. He loved bad company, and at length declared his intention of going to sea. His mother, with many tears and sad forebodings, bade him farewell; but as she did so, she put into his hand a New Testament inscribed with her name and his own, solemnly and tenderly entreating that he would keep it and read it for her sake. Year after year elapsed, bearing to heaven the record of her prayers and tears, and still no tidings of her boy!

"At length her maternal anxiety could brook no longer delay. She set out alone for London, where she went about making inquiries concerning the vessel in which Charles had sailed. She one day met a sea captain, who told her the ship had been wrecked long before, adding, 'They were a wicked crew, especially a cabin boy by the name of Charles—. He was so depraved and profligate, that it were a good thing if he and all like him were at the bottom of the sea.'

"Pierced to her inmost soul, this unhappy mother withdrew from the house, and hastened to her retired home. The language of her heart was, 'I shall go down to the grave mourning for my son.'

"Some years elapsed, when one night, a half-naked sailor knocked at her door to ask relief. He had seen great perils in the deep, had been several times wrecked, but, said he, 'I have never been so dreadfully destitute as I was some years back, when I and a fine young gentleman were the only ones saved of a whole ship's crew. We were cast upon a desert island, where, after seven days, I closed his eyes. Poor fellow! I never shall forget him;' And here the tears stole down his weather-beaten cheeks.

"'He read day and night,' continued the sailor, 'in a little book which he said his mother gave him, and which was the only thing he saved from the wreck. It was his companion every moment. He wept for his sins; he prayed; he kissed the volume; he talked of nothing but this book and his mother; and when he died, he gave it to me, with many thanks for my poor services.'

"'There, Jack,' said he, 'take this book, and keep it and read it, and may God bless you; it's all I've got.'

"And then he clasped my hand, and died in peace."

"'Is this all true?' said the trembling, astonished mother, hope whispering to her heart that the dying youth was her own Charles.

"'Yes, madam, every word of it.' And then, dragging from his ragged jacket a little book, much tattered and time-worn, he held it up, exclaiming, 'And here's the very book too.'

"She seized it, descried her own handwriting, and beheld the name of her son coupled with her own upon the fly leaf. She gazed, she read, she wept, she rejoiced. She seemed to hear a voice saying, 'Thy son liveth;' and from her heart she was ready to exclaim, 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'

"'Will you part with that book, my honest fellow?' said she, anxious to possess the precious relic.

"'No, madam,' was the answer, 'not for any money—not for all the world. He gave it to me with his dying hand. I have more than once lost my all since I got it, without losing this treasure, the truths of which have, I hope, been blessed to my soul; and I will never part with it till I part with the breath out of my body.'

"The Bible," continued Mrs. Dermott, "has this transforming power, because holy men wrote it as

they were moved by the Holy Spirit. God put into their hearts what they wrote, and he renders it effectual to our salvation. What other names do we sometimes give to the Bible?"

"The Scriptures, or Testaments," replied Walter, quickly.

"A testament is a will or writing, such as persons leave to tell what they wish to have done with their property after their death. How many Testaments are there in the Bible, Helen?"

"Two; the Old Testament and the New Testament."

"Do you see why these two portions of the Bible are called Testaments?"

"No, mamma."

"It is because in them God has revealed to us his will. In them he tells who shall be heirs to his vast possessions."

"I should think every body would want to read them, then," exclaimed Walter in an animated tone.

"Yes, my son. If a book were now to be published, telling how any one who wished might inherit a crown, and be heir to an immense estate, how eagerly would the volume be perused! And how exactly would the directions be followed. But here is a book which God has given as a rule or guide to lead us to heaven, where a crown of glory, which cannot fade, is awaiting us, and where we may be co-heirs with Christ to an eternal and immortal inheritance. Alas, that so many should neglect it!"

"A little boy was once sent by his mother to a small shop to buy a bar of soap. The shopwoman took it from the shelf, and having received the money from the child, took a thick book from the floor, and was just about to tear out some of the leaves, when the boy exclaimed, 'Is not that the Bible?'

"'Yes; but what of that?'

"'O, do not tear the Bible! It is so precious.'

"'Pshaw! It is only fit for wrapping paper.'

"'O, will you not give it to me?'

"'Yes, if you will give me its weight in waste paper.'

"Leaving his soap, the boy ran swiftly home, and rushing up to his mother, exclaimed, 'O mother, the shopwoman will give me a Bible, a whole Bible, if I can get as much waste paper as it will weigh.'

"With his mother's consent, he then searched the house; but the quantity he obtained was far too scanty for him to procure the prize. Determined, however, not to give up, he went round among the neighbors, told them his story, and soon obtained a supply. He then carried it to the shopwoman, and watched her with breathless interest as she placed the precious Bible in one scale and the old newspapers in the other, gave a bound of joy as he saw the former was more than balanced by the latter, and received the precious volume in his arms.

"It is my own Bible. O, what a treasure!' he exclaimed, pressing it repeatedly to his breast.

"We can easily imagine with what delight the dear boy sat down to peruse the sacred pages; how joyfully he adopted it as the lamp to his feet and the light to his path, as his only rule of faith and practice."

CHAPTER III.

THE DIVINE RULE; OR, AOLA.

QUESTION III. *What do the Scriptures principally teach?*

ANSWER. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

MR. DERMOTT was the wife of a merchant residing in the suburbs of a large city. Her husband was frequently called from home for several months together; and she, in accordance with his wishes, had taken up the doctrines and duties of Christian faith, with the endeavor to render them both simple and attractive to her children. Thus far her efforts had been attended

with unusual success, and the little ones looked forward with impatience for the evening when the lessons should be continued.

All being in their places, and the answer repeated with which this chapter commences, the lady inquired, "Did you notice, Walter, into how many parts the teachings of Scripture are divided in this answer?"

After a moment's hesitation, the boy replied, "Into two parts: what we are to believe, and what we are to do."

"Very well, my dear. In the first place, the Bible teaches us to believe; or it presupposes the existence of God, the Creator of all things. He made the world and all that is therein; the sun to rule the day, and the moon and stars to rule the night. The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, even the little insects which swarm in the air, were all fashioned by his forming hand.

"But what is of more importance to us than all else, is the fact contained in Scripture, that God sent his only Son to provide a way of salvation for poor, guilty sinners.

"This is what we are to believe concerning God. The duties required of us are comprehensively and beautifully summed up in the ten commandments. These relate both to our duties toward God and our duties toward our follow-creatures.

"The Bible teaches little children to whom they are indebted for life and all that makes life

pleasant, and it also teaches them to obey their parents, and how to treat each other."

"The Bible says, 'Little children, love one another,'" urged Helen, speaking quickly; "now, mother, will you tell us a story?"

Mrs. Dermott smilingly assented, and commenced. "Far, far away among the Rocky Mountains, many hundred miles beyond where the foot of the white man had ever trod, there once lived an Indian maiden, the daughter of a sachem. She married one of the young warriors of her tribe, and for many years followed him from one hunting field to another, her heart kept warm by her love for him and for her papooses. This is the Indian name for children, of which she had four.

"At length her husband grew sick, and, according to the custom of the poor, deluded tribe, Nola presented offerings to their idols in his behalf. But, notwithstanding her sacrifices and her prayers, the warrior grew rapidly worse, and soon died.

"Aola was now a widow, and had no one to draw the bow for her, except her eldest son. In a few months, he returned hurriedly from the chase to his mother's wigwam, and throwing himself upon his father's hunting robe, said, 'I am sick.'

"'This time,' said Aola, 'I will surely appease the wrath of our gods.'

"She deprived herself of many comforts to offer more costly sacrifices; but all in vain: her first-born soon breathed his last.

"Before twelve moons had waxed and waned, two more dear ones, precious remembrances of her past joys, had sickened, and in spite of her agonizing prayers to the idols, had passed forever from her sight.

"At length her sweet little Lola, who, in her repeated trials, had entwined herself closer and closer to her heart, grew wan and pale, like the others who had preceded it to the world of spirits. Aola, in her anguish, beat her breast. Suddenly she grew more calm, and, taking Lola in her arms, hastened to a huge pine tree near her wigwam. She seated herself on a little mound at the foot of the tree, and began to look into her own heart."



"I will pray to the God of my Lola."

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"I will pray to the God of my Lola."

"'Aola,' she asked herself, 'where is the God who gave you your papoose?'

"She gazed far into the deep, dark forest, then up toward the bright blue sky, and a voice whispered to her soul, 'I am God, who made the heavens and the earth. Plead your cause with me.'

"With streaming eyes Aola replied, 'I will no longer bow down to the gods who would not hear my prayers. I will pray to the God of my Lola.'

"She then laid her babe upon the soft grass at her feet, and prostrating herself upon her knees, with her lips touching the ground, her cries and her supplications ascended to the Most High. He heard her prayer; and when Aola returned to her wigwam, it was with a smile of hope upon her lip.

"Fourteen years later, when Mr. Kingsbury, one of the first missionaries to the Indians, reached her tribe, and began to talk about the white man's God, Aola, catching her child by the hand, led her to the good man, exclaiming, in her native language, 'White man's God my God, Lola's God too.' And then began to tell him that for fourteen years she had prayed to the good Being who had whispered to her heart, and who had saved the life of her child.

"A station was subsequently established at that place, and Aola was received into the Christian church. Lola was taught to read the Bible; and O, how eagerly did her mother drink in the precious words which revealed to her so fully

the greatness and goodness of that gracious Being, whom, not knowing, she had loved!

"But her history is very unlike that of most of the heathen. It teaches us of what the power of conscience and the light of nature are capable, and confirms the words of the apostle:

"The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.'

"The multitude of them have 'changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.' They need the Bible to teach them what they ought to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of them."

CHAPTER IV.

THE CHARACTER OF GOD; OR, PRAYER IN THE ASSEMBLY.

QUESTION IV. *What is God?*

ANSWER. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and

unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

ISABELLE DERMOTT was a lovely child. She had just attained her seventh year. From her birth she had occasioned her parents great solicitude on account of the peculiar delicacy of her constitution. Her mind was precocious; and until within a few months, she had been withheld from mental labor. Now, however, she had commenced attending school, and was advancing rapidly in her studies.

When the question for the day had been asked and answered, Mrs. Dermott began the lesson by the inquiry,—

"Anna, what is that within you which thinks and feels?"

"My soul."

"Yes, your soul, or spirit. Can we see it?"

"No, mamma," replied Helen, gravely.

"Do you remember that dreadful thunder shower last summer, when Isabelle was so much alarmed?"

"I do!" "And I!" "And I!" called out one and another.

"You know, Helen, I told you to look for the next flash of lightning. It came as I was speaking,

and almost blinded you. The air was full of electricity, which causes the lightning; but you could not see it until it flashed. Just so it is with God, who is a Spirit. He is everywhere, and makes himself known by what he does. He is in the air we breathe, in the sunshine and in the storm, in the merry warbling of the birds, in the pleasant gurgling of the brooks, in the sighing of the forest, and in the blooming of the tiniest flower. It is God who swells the buds in the spring, clothes the trees with foliage, forms and ripens the pleasant fruit, causes the sun to shine, and the rain to fall.

"He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man . . . The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.'

"Can you tell me, Walter, the meaning of the word infinite?"

"Yes, mamma; father explained it to me. God is infinite because he extends through all space, and without limit."

Mrs. Dermott rose, and drawing up the window curtain, called her young audience to view the beautiful stars which spangled the sky. Fixing their attention upon one brighter than the rest, she said, "Isabelle, does not that seem a great way off?"

"O, yes, mamma."

"Well, if you could approach it, and look out just as far beyond, you would only be looking

upon the beginning of the infinite space filled by God.

"Eternal means the same with regard to time as infinite does with regard to space. When we have lived hundreds of thousands of years in the eternal world, we shall be not one minute nearer the end of our existence. God never began to live, and he never will cease to live.

"Helen, the other day you were complaining that the rules or regulations of your school were so often changed that you could not remember them. You can never complain thus of God, for he is unchangeable. The apostle James says,—

"'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'

"God says of himself,—

"'I am the Lord; I change not.'

"What a wonderful blessing is this attribute of God! With what certainty we can rely upon his promises! We can be sure that his designs of mercy toward the children of men will never, never fail.

"We learn by this answer that God is without bounds as to space, and as to time, never varying in himself, nor in the counsels of his mind.

"Can you tell me, Walter, the meaning of the word wisdom?"

"I suppose it means very skilful, and able to do a great many things."

"Yes, Solomon says,—

"'The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth.'

"God is infinite not only in wisdom, but also in power. He can not only devise wonderful things, but he can accomplish whatever he pleases. Luke, in his Gospel, says of the Jews,—

"'And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.'

"They had been witnessing the miracles he had wrought, and their hearts were filled with wonder and awe.

"Anna, can you think of any thing which we call holy?"

Anna hesitated a moment, and then replied, "The Sabbath is holy, because it is God's day."

"God is unchangeable in holiness.

"'Who is like thee, glorious in holiness?'

"He is also immutable in justice.

"Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.'

"He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, also, in goodness and truth.

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.'

"Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

"In 1643, the Westminster Assembly, of one hundred and fifty-one laymen and divines, met by order of Parliament. One committee of that body framed a Catechism which expresses the common faith of the reformed churches, and is adapted to general use. When they came to the question, 'What is God?' an awful solemnity fell upon them. Who could venture to express in words the momentous truth? All shrunk from the too sacred idea.

"At length it was resolved, as an expression of the committee's deep humility, that the youngest member should make the first attempt. He consented, but begged that the brethren would first unite with him in prayer for divine enlightenment. Then, in slow and solemn accents, he thus began his prayer:

"O God! Thou art a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in thy being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth!"

"When he ceased, the first sentence of his prayer was immediately written down and adopted, as the most perfect answer that could be conceived; as, indeed, in a very sacred sense, God's own answer, descriptive of himself."

CHAPTER V.

THE UNITY OF GOD; OR, THE MISSION HOUSE.

QUESTION V. *Are there more Gods than one?*

ANSWER. There is but one only, the living and true God.

BEFORE the evening on which the next lesson of the Catechism occurred, Mr. Dermott unexpectedly returned home. He was welcomed by the children with almost boisterous affection.

And after relating many incidents which had occurred during his absence, Helen exclaimed, "O papa, we do have such nice times at the catechising! I never liked the Catechism before, because I did not understand the meaning of the words. But now you may ask me any question that you like. I mean about those mother has explained to us."

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Dermott, with an arch smile. "I must obtain permission to join this wonderful class; for I confess there is much that I could learn about these sublime truths. What is the lesson for to-night?"

"We don't have to look out any of the references, as we did at the Sabbath school," exclaimed Walter, earnestly. "We only commit the answer to the question; and when it's Belle's turn, mother lets her read it from the book."

Helen, having easily obtained permission for her father to be present, gayly seated him between Isabelle and herself, and clasping his hands affectionately, informed her mother they were ready for her to commence.

Anna having repeated the answer to the question in course, Mrs. Dermott asked, "What are the gods of the heathen called?"

"O mamma!" cried Isabelle. "Ask father first; he is the oldest!"

The lady smilingly nodded assent, and Mr. Dermott replied, "I think it is the prophet Jeremiah who calls them idols and images."

"Of what, Walter, do the heathen make their idols?"

"Of wood and stone."

"That great one, we saw at the Mission House was made of gold," cried Helen, "and another was made of some old straw, stuck all over with elegant red feathers. Some of them were worn off, and I peeped inside. It was an ugly-looking thing."

"Here is an idol made of brass," added Mrs. Dermott, rising and taking from the mantel a small calf, about an inch in length. "Dreadful as it may seem, this little image has had a human sacrifice offered to it. This was afterward given up to the missionaries, who sent it to me. Probably this was made in imitation of the golden calf which the Israelites worshipped; the sight of which caused Moses such wrath that he threw down the tables of stone upon which the commandments were written, and broke them."

"Beside images of every imaginable shape and size," remarked the gentleman, "the poor deluded heathen worship many objects in nature, such as the sun and moon, very many kinds of animals—cows, dogs, crocodiles, and even mice. When I was in India, I saw the Hindoos engaged in offering sacrifices to the sun. Early in the morning, men, women, and children gathered together in an open field, carrying fruits, sweetmeats, pigeons, kids, &c. These were all set in a row, and a small pot of water placed by each person's offering, around the edge of which they wove a kind of wreath in imitation of the sun. They also had a small vessel of coals for incense, and a lamp, which was kept burning all day, by

each sacrifice. At sunrise they walked four times around the whole row of offerings, with the smoking censers on their heads; after this they returned to their former station, where, I was informed, they stood erect all day, occasionally throwing a little incense into the fire, but without tasting food. About sunset, when I was told their ceremonies would be concluded, I returned. They again took their censers, and walked three times around the field. The pigeons were thrown into the air, and scrambled after for food, when each one threw his lamp away, and hastened home. This was merely a senseless and foolish idolatry. The next day one of the missionaries invited me to the hook swinging, in which the deluded Hindoos had iron hooks fastened into the flesh of their backs, and swung through the air, to appease the wrath of their gods. I had no heart to witness so cruel an exhibition. But no matter where I went, in every part of India there were idols of wood, stone, and clay; some ornamented with silver and gold, others in forms the most hideous and repulsive."

"How can they be so silly as to worship idols?" inquired the impulsive Helen. "I stuck a pin through that old feather god, and it could feel nothing; it only kept grinning with its two rows of ugly teeth; and I might have screamed in its ears all day, it could never have heard me."

The children smiled, but Mrs. Dermott said, gravely, "In contrast with these senseless images, which have eyes, ears, and hands, but can neither see, hear, nor dispense favors, how great and glorious appears the one living and true God, whose throne is in the heavens, but who is so condescending that he stoops to listen to the earnest prayer of the humblest child!"

"Walter," inquired Mr. Dermott, "is there no duty we owe these poor heathen?"

"Yes, sir; we ought to send Bibles and missionaries to teach them about our God; and then they would throw away their idols, as the Sandwich Islanders did."

"Yes, my child; and we ought to pray for them, that their hearts may be enlightened to see the folly of their worship."

"I pray for the heathen every night," faltered Isabelle, with tearful eyes, "and I mean to save all my pennies to send them Bibles."

"A missionary," said Mr. Dermott, "once gave an account of a poor man who came into his house. 'When he had sat down, he took up a book of missions which lay upon the table, in which were plates of heathen idols, hideous and ugly in their appearance.'

"'What game is this?' he asked my daughter.

"'They are not game,' replied the little girl; 'there are nations who worship those things.'

"'O,' said he, 'how you tell fibs!'

"'No, I am not telling fibs. My mamma said so, and she does not tell fibs.'

"'Well,' he said again, 'tell me what games they are.'

"'They are things that people worship, just as we worship Jehovah and Jesus. If you do not believe it, go and ask papa.'

"He then came to me, and said, 'Look at that!' And repeated what Mary had told him. 'Is it true?' he asked.

"'It is,' was the reply.

"Having gazed at me for a moment, in astonishment, he said, 'I know you do not lie; but how can it be?'

"And laying the book down upon a piece of timber I was planing, he looked at it, putting his hands to both sides of his head, and waving it backward and forward.

"Presently he asked, 'Have those people that make these things of wood and stone, heads like me?'

"'Yes.'

"'Have they got legs?'

"'Yes.'

"'Can they talk and think? Can they explain a difficult thing? Can they speak in a public meeting, like our senators?'

"'Yes.'

"'Then never say that our people are foolish or ignorant.'

"Taking from his neck a whistle, made of ivory, and carved with some device, perhaps a man's face, he nodded his head to it in a most solemn manner, and said, 'If my people should see me worshipping my whistle, which looks much better than those monsters, they would

think I was mad. They would throw me over a precipice, and cover me with stones.'"

CHAPTER VI.

THE GODHEAD; OR, THE SILENCED INFIDEL.

QUESTION VI. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?*

ANSWER. There are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

"I DON'T believe this lesson will be as interesting as the last," whispered Helen to her cousin Anna, as they sat together an hour or two before the exercise commenced.

"I'm sure I can never understand about the Godhead. I hope mother will tell us a good, long story."

"O, I dare say we shall understand it," replied Anna, promptly. "Aunty makes it so clear and plain; and then uncle will be here too. What a dreadful thing it is to worship idols, as he saw the poor heathen in India!"

"Children, are you ready for the lesson," called out Mr. Dermott, taking a seat near the fire.

The mother smiled as she saw how eagerly her young audience arranged themselves in order, and, having listened to a correct answer of the question in course, asked, "Anna, what name do we commonly give to the Son of God?"

"Jesus Christ."

"Can you think of no other?"

"Yes, ma'am; Saviour and Redeemer."

"And what name do we generally apply to the Holy Ghost?"

"The Spirit—the Holy Spirit," responded Walter.

"That is right; and the Bible teaches us that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, are three persons, not separate, but united in one God, and that they are equal in substance or nature, in power and glory. What is the union of these three persons called?"

The children not being able to reply, Mr. Dermott answered, "The Godhead."

"We cannot understand how these three distinct persons can be one God," continued the lady; "but neither can we understand a thousandth part of what we see every day, and believe to be true. For instance, we do not know, when an acorn is put into the ground, how a little sapling springs up, which, in due time, becomes a tall, giant oak; nor why, on the same stalk, a

green leaf and a red rose should grow; neither can we fully understand the framework of our bodies, the curious mechanism of the arteries, and veins, and nerves; nor the structure of our minds; how we can think, and weep, and rejoice; how we can call to mind events long passed. Still less can we understand the silken cord which unites the body and soul. But we do not hesitate to believe that these things are so.

"Now, in the word of God we are expressly taught that 'the Lord our God is one God;' and we are also taught that Jesus Christ is God.

"'Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.'

"Then, in the sad story of Ananias and Sapphira, Peter said to the former,—

"'Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost. Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.'

"The Bible abounds in passages teaching this doctrine, such as these: Christ says,—

"'I and my Father are one.'

"Paul writes to the Philippians,—

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.'

"God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"And it is equally explicit with reference to the Holy Ghost," added Mr. Dermott. "John says,—

"There are three that bear record in heaven,—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost,—and these three are one.'

"He is called 'the Comforter, who will teach all things,' knowing 'the mind of God,' preserving and governing the world."

After a moment's pause, the gentleman added, "I remember to have heard an account of an infidel which well illustrates the point your mother has explained, that though we cannot understand, we must believe spiritual and experimental truths. This infidel was sitting with many others in a public room belonging to a hotel. At length he began to talk upon the absurdities of the Christian religion, quoting these expressions—,'I and my Father are one;' 'I in them and thou in me;' and 'three persons,' 'in one God.' Finding his auditors were not disposed to applaud his blasphemy, he turned to one

gentleman and said, with an oath, 'Do you believe such nonsense?'

"'Tell me,' asked the gentleman, in reply, 'how that candle burns.'

"'Why,' answered he, 'the tallow, the cotton, and the atmospheric air produce the light.'

"'Then they make one light, do they not?'

"'Yes.'

"'Will you tell me how they are one in the other, how the three unite and form but one light?'

"'No, I cannot.'

"'But you believe it?'

"He could not say he did not.

"The company all smiled at the man's inconsistency and folly; and the conversation was changed. So, my dear children, if you believe only what you can understand, and can explain, you may as well part with your senses, as you are surrounded by the wonderful works of God, whose ways are past finding out."

"Jehovah!—Father, Spirit, Son!
Eternal Godhead! Three in One!
Before Thy throne we sinners bend;
Grace, pardon, life, to us extend."

CHAPTER VII.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD; OR, THE NEW HOUSE.

QUESTION VII. *What are the decrees of God?*

ANSWER. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

A FEW days succeeding the last lesson, Mr. Dermott received letters which rendered it necessary for him to leave home sooner than he had anticipated. His wife keenly regretted this, as, aside from the great pleasure she experienced in his society, she had been so much assisted by him in the catechisings. As he must leave two days before the evening for another lesson, it was proposed by the children that the exercise should be anticipated that length of time; and Mrs. Dermott requested him to assume the character of teacher for the occasion. This she would at all times have preferred him to do; but he thought her gifted with a peculiar tact at imparting instruction; and then he was so liable to be called away.

It was Isabelle's turn to answer the question, but she begged her mother, who sat by her side, to do it for her; when Mr. Dermott inquired, "Wife, where is the plan of our new house?"

"In the secretary. Walter, pass it to your father."

The boy opened wide his eyes with astonishment, but immediately obeyed, while little Belle whispered to her mother, "Shan't we have any story, then?"

"I think so, my dear; but hear what papa is saying."

"Who drew this plan, Walter?"

"I heard you say, sir, that Mr. Bond, the architect, did, and that you gave him fifty dollars for doing it."

"Yes, and it was cheap enough too; a very nice house it is; and how comfortable we have been since we moved into it! I remember well how pleased I was when he showed me this plan; and that after your mother and I had passed a whole evening in carefully examining every part, I determined, or purposed, that my house should be like it."

The children had gathered around their father, though wondering not a little that he had so entirely forgotten their lesson.

"See here," added the gentleman, turning the large sheet of stiff paper, at which they had been looking. "Here is what is called a framing plan, so that the carpenters may know, before they buy their lumber, exactly how much they shall need,

and of what size. And here at the corner is a little sketch of the pillars to support the piazza, and the form of the brackets that go around the coving."

"I heard the carpenters say," exclaimed Walter, "that it was a great help to have such a plan, and prevented much misunderstanding and unkind feeling; for often the carpenter will understand the contract one way, and his employer quite another; and he wished every man, who was going to build a house, would have an exact framing plan, as well as a profile of the rooms."

"Yes, it is very important," replied the gentleman. "The house we rented while ours was building, is an illustration of the folly of not having a plan. Mr. Longworth wished to build a house. He wanted one that would look handsomely outside; but his own family was small, and so he concluded to make a building with two tenements. He consulted Mr. Bond about it, and found that an exact plan of the building, and of framing, with specifications, would cost him sixty-five dollars. It was to be larger than mine. Sixty-five dollars was quite too much money, he thought, to pay for the plan of a house, when he could make one just as well himself. I told him he would find it would be a saving of money in the end. But he thought otherwise, and, having engaged the carpenters, set them to work.

"As I was to have the tenement when it was ready, I felt an interest to watch the job. The workmen knew that they were to put up a frame forty-four feet front and forty deep; and so far they went on tolerably well, though even here

there were some hard words about the size of timbers, &c. But after that, every thing went 'at sixes and sevens,' as old Mr. Carter used to say. The men would go on from day to day, receiving their directions from Mr. Longworth; but as he was a hatter, and not a mechanic, he did not make his plans aright, and the men used often to pull down one day what they had built up the preceding.

"You know the consequences, for we all suffered from living in an ill-contrived, sham-built house; and we were glad enough to get away from it. Now, Mr. Longworth cannot rent it at all; and he told me, a few days since, that if he had followed my advice, and let Mr. Bond make a plan, he should have been a thousand dollars better off than he is at present.

"Now, children, I am going to apply this to your lesson. More than six thousand years ago, before God had said,—

"'Let there be light, and there was light.'—

"He took counsel of himself, and determined to create a world; and, first of all, he made a plan, or, as the Catechism calls it, a decree. There should be in the new world a great light for the day, called the sun, and a lesser light for the night, called the moon. There should be trees, and fruits, and flowers, each in their season. There should be beasts, and birds, and fishes, and insects. He also determined to make a man and woman, with souls to think and feel. These would be at the head of a race of beings capable

of worshipping him, and enjoying him forever. If I lived a hundred years, and talked all the time, I could not begin to tell you all the little minutiae of God's plan, or decree, about his new world.

"Now, I can only give a very imperfect outline. God decreed, or planned, or determined, that when Adam was formed, he should be a holy being; but as he wished to try him, and see whether he would obey God's holy laws, he decreed that Satan should tempt him to eat the forbidden fruit; and, as he knew that neither Adam nor Eve would resist the temptation, but would fall from holiness to sin, he formed a wonderful plan of redemption through his own Son, who should suffer for the guilty race, that those who accepted him as their ransom, might be saved, and, at length restored to holiness and happiness.

"God is a being of wondrous power, and he knew exactly who would love this dear Saviour whom he had sent into the world. He knew from all eternity that there would be this catechising this evening, and what would be the thoughts of each one of our hearts. Yes, he made a plan of it all, though it seems as insignificant as the planning where a little screw should go in one of our door handles; and he determined, or ordained, beforehand,—or foreordained, as the Catechism has it,—that whatsoever should come to pass should be for his own glory."

"It seems the most blessed thing for us that God did make such a plan," remarked Mrs. Dermott, as her husband ceased speaking.

"Yes, indeed, we can see the sad effects of the want of plan in Mr. Longworth's house; but we

cannot conceive the awful results which would have followed had God been changeable; one day governing the world in one way, and the next in another way; and we must bless him to all eternity."

"What does God call this plan?" asked Mrs. Dermott. "I think in the Bible it is nowhere called a decree."

"No, that word is not used. In Proverbs it is called God's counsel.

"The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.'

"In Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, he calls the plan of God his purpose.

"According to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

"In Romans it is called foreknowledge and predestination.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and

whom he justified, them he also glorified.'"

CHAPTER VIII.

EXECUTION OF GOD'S PURPOSE; OR, THE POOR MINISTER.

QUESTION VIII. *How doth God execute his decrees?*

ANSWER. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

AFTER being absent three days, Mr. Dermott wrote his wife that he hoped to be with them before the close of the week, and if they chose to put off the catechising until Saturday night, he should be most happy to go through the exercise with them. When the lady read the letter to the children, they unanimously requested that the lesson be postponed until their father returned.

Mrs. Dermott was much pleased to see that the questions which had been explained were frequently talked of during the day, and the illustrations repeated. The account of little Lotty, and of the boy who prized his Bible, were commented upon again and again.

Saturday evening arrived, and great was the disappointment that their father had not yet returned. It was now quite dark, and as Ruth was bringing in the tea, their mother called them to drop the curtains, and take their places at the table. They were scarcely seated, however, when they heard a firm step on the piazza, and all sprang toward the door to welcome the traveller.

"You see I have kept my word," he said, as an hour later they were seated around the cheerful fire. "We have another lesson on the decrees, or plan, of God; and I wished to study it with you. Are we sure that God's plan will not fail?"

"Yes, sir," cried Helen.

"Why so? I made a plan of this house, but I might have died long before it was finished; or I might have changed my mind, and concluded not to build at all; or I might have lost all my property, and not been able to finish it."

"But God can't die, nor lose his property," exclaimed Walter; "and in one of our lessons we learned that he is unchangeable. So we know that he will act according to his plan, or will do as he planned to do."

"Very true, my son," said his father, affectionately patting his shoulder. "He will certainly execute his plan or purpose. Is there any way in which we can learn what his plan, or any part of his plan, is?"

"I should think not, sir," replied the boy.

"But does not the Bible reveal to us his plan for saving sinners?"

Walter blushed as he replied, "Yes, sir; I didn't think of that."

"Yes, the Bible reveals to us the gift of a Saviour.

"To refer once more to my plan. While the building was in progress, I used to hear men talking with the carpenter, curious to know whether the house was to have an L, or a piazza, or an observatory. He smiled pleasantly as he told them to wait and see. We know that God made the world in six days, and that he executed the work of creation according to his plan, previously conceived and adopted. He is still carrying on this work by the creation of human beings.

"God reveals his decree, or purpose, also in his providence, in which the great plan of redemption may be considered as included. The choosing of the Israelites to be his peculiar people—their exodus from Egypt, their rejection of and wicked crucifixion of the Saviour, are parts of his government, or providence, the leaves of which are unfolding every hour.

"What his soul desireth, even that he doeth."

"Nearly a hundred years ago, there was an eminent clergyman by the name of Thoroughgood. He was an exceedingly pious, amiable man; but during a persecution, he was imprisoned and cruelly treated. After his release, he suffered from poverty. One day he and his

family were reduced to their last scanty mouthful of food. The children were hanging about their mother crying for bread, which she was unable to give them. With streaming eyes she turned to her husband and asked, 'What shall I do for my poor children?'

"The good man had been greatly moved by the scene. His chin quivered; but gazing at his beloved one, he inquired, in a touching voice, 'Can you not trust in God?'

"Soon after he persuaded his wife to take a walk. A robin was perched upon a bough singing a merry song. He stopped and gazed at it, saying, 'Let us learn a lesson from this bird, who sings his praises to God and trusts him, though he knows not where he shall get his next meal. Let us, my dear wife, trust to the providence of God, who counts us of more value than many sparrows.'

"As they drew near the house on their return, they heard sounds of joy, where so lately there had been only cries of distress; and upon entering, a happy sight awaited them. In the centre of the room, a table was loaded with provisions sufficient to last for many days, while Martha, the faithful serving woman, tearfully pointed to the corner of the room, where stood sack of corn and a bag of flour. The children could scarcely restrain their joy, as their father gratefully raised his hands and eyes to heaven, saying, in a trembling voice, 'They who trust in the Lord shall not want any good thing.'

"Thus you see, dear children, it is safe to trust in the providence of God."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD; OR, THE PATENT OFFICE.

QUESTION IX. *What is the work of creation?*

ANSWER. The work of creation is God's making all things out of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

EARLY in the week following the return of Mr. Dermott, Mrs. Lang, a sister of Mrs. Dermott, arrived at their residence to make a short visit. She was accompanied by her twin daughters, who were near Walter's age. Thursday was the evening appointed for the catechisings, and during Mrs. Lang's visit, she so often heard the children refer to these occasions, as possessing great interest, that she was induced to accept her sister's urgent invitation, and remain to witness, what now seemed to her so incomprehensible, how children could be made to understand the doctrines of the Catechism.

Helen joyfully clapped her hands as Louise and Lucia made known their mother's decision, and exclaimed, "O, I'm so glad! You'll hear such a

nice story; and then you'll always understand the answer when you've heard father and mother explain it!"

The little girls thought otherwise, but they wisely said nothing, and looked forward to the evening, with feelings of curiosity, rather than with anticipations of pleasure.

Mr. Dermott was still at home, and, at his wife's earnest request, had consented to act once more in the capacity of teacher. Anna having passed him the Catechism, and promptly repeated the answer to the question, he asked, "Who made the world, Isabelle?"

"God."

"Yes, my dear, God made the world and all things that are therein."

The gentleman arose from his seat, and paced the room two or three times without speaking.

At length he stopped opposite the chair of his sister-in-law, and said, "That was a delightful winter we passed in Washington together."

"Yes," she replied, in a low voice, as if she were speaking in meeting.

"That was a sensible arrangement."

"To what do you refer?" asked his wife.

"Why, to your plan of being married on the same evening as your sister, instead of a month in advance, so that we could be together at Washington during the honeymoon."

The sisters smiled; but Helen asked, rather abruptly, "Papa, have you forgotten the catechising?"

Mr. Dermott smiled archly, but did not reply to the child. "I recalled our visit to the capital of our Union, as I have been thinking to-day of the Patent Office. What a remarkable institution that is!"

"Yes, I was more interested in it than in any other place we visited. One might spend weeks there with profit."

"Will you please, uncle, to tell us about it some time?" timidly urged Anna.

"I will tell you now, my dear," he said, patting her head affectionately. "In the first place, we went to examine the models of machinery, telegraphs, lightning rods, and agricultural implements. There were miniature steam engines, cotton gins, spinning gins, weaving looms, and carding machines. Then there were ploughs, and harrows, and cultivators, and seed sowers, and hay cutters, and corn shellers, and churns, and household utensils, together with every conceivable variety of implement in agriculture, beside a great many things which seemed to be of no possible use. The room was thronged with visitors, and there was some difficulty in getting near enough to examine the various articles. Then we went on to the patented articles for catching fish, of which there was a great variety; then for trapping game, and from that to the ordnance department. Here were pistols of every size and capacity, guns, firelocks, field pieces, and batteries; models of weapons offensive and defensive.

"As I stood gazing at one article after another, I thought, 'What a wonderful power there is in the human brain! How it has contrived and fashioned things, new and old, great and small, curious, ingenious, and useful, for every conceivable purpose of art or industry.'

"Upon some of these inventions men have labored their whole lives, and have expended vast fortunes to bring them to that state of perfection which we here witness. But, after all, what are these models of human skill, to the wisdom and power of God in the work of creation! These are made from material already existing. God created the world from nothing. The inventors of these articles passed, in many cases, their whole lives in toiling to attain their prize. God spoke the world into being by the word of his power.

"'He spake and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast.'

"Can you tell me, Walter, how many days God was in making the world?"

"Six days."

"For whom did God create all things?"

"I suppose he made them at first for Adam and Eve."

"Solomon says in the Proverbs,—

"'The Lord hath made all things for himself.'

"Can you tell me for what purpose?"

Walter shook his head, and his father, taking a small Bible from the table, turned to the first verse of the nineteenth psalm, and gave it to him to read.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

"How important, then, that when we view the hills and vales, the moon and stars shining in their splendor, the trees and flowers, the birds and beasts, and every other work of creation, we should remember God, the Maker and Giver of all these blessings, and that our hearts should flow out toward him in gratitude and praise!"

"We sing of God, the mighty source
Of all things, the stupendous force
On which all things depend;
From whose right arm, beneath whose eyes,
All period, power, and enterprise,
Commence, and reign, and end."

CHAPTER X.

THE CREATION OF MAN; OR, THE WAX DOLL.

QUESTION X. *How did God create man?*

ANSWER. God created man, male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over his creatures.

IT so happened that Helen's birthday, which was on the twelfth of February, occurred on Thursday following her aunt's visit. When she came down to breakfast in the morning, a high chair, which had in turn been used by all the children, was drawn up to the table, and in it was seated a beautiful wax doll. It had long, flaxen ringlets, and blue eyes, which could be made to open and shut, beautiful red cheeks, a white neck and arms, and taper fingers. It was dressed in a sky-blue merino, with a dainty silk apron, with tiny pockets, while its feet were covered with pink silk stockings and gaiter boots. This was papa's birthday present to his little daughter; and what a shout of joy rung through the house, as he took it from the high chair, and placed it in her arms! There was little breakfast eaten that morning by either of the children, for Helen's excitement communicated itself to the others, and the time was consumed in asking and answering questions.

Helen understood now why it was her mother had so often, within a few days, requested her to play in another room. She was making the

dresses for Dolly, and wished to give her little girl a pleasant surprise.

"O, what a good time we will have!" cried the happy miss, as they rose from the table. "You shall play with it half the time, Anna, and I'll take yours. Perhaps mamma will let us take your birthday present of cups and saucers, and play 'come and see.'"

Her little cousin's cheeks were as rosy, and her smile as bright, as if the doll had been presented to her.

After Helen had given her father and mother another kiss, and thanked them for making her so happy, Anna followed her to their chamber, where, with the little Isabelle, they passed an hour in the happy sports of childhood.

In the evening, when they were drawn up in a circle around the fire, Dolly had her seat between the cousins, Isabelle having pulled an ottoman to her mother's side, where she could see if the beautiful stranger conducted herself with steadiness and decorum.

"Isabelle," said her father, "what was the name of the first man?"

"Adam."

"What was the name of his wife, Anna?"

"Eve."

"Who was created first?"

"Adam," replied Helen.

"Out of what did God create him?"

"Out of dust," answered Walter.

"In whose image was Adam created, my son?"

"God created man in his own image."

"Over what was he to have dominion?"

"Over all other creatures."

"On what day were they created?"

"The sixth."

"Can you tell me the meaning of the word Adam?"

"No, sir."

"It signifies red earth. All along on the banks of the river, where the garden of Eden is supposed to have been, the earth is red; and being created from that, he was called Adam, or the red man. It is said,—

"'The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden.'

"I suppose it is hardly possible for us to conceive the luxuriant beauty of the place.

"It was the sixth day of God's work of creation. The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, fresh from his forming

hand, had appeared before their Maker, who pronounced them 'very good.' And God said,—

"Let us make man in our image,'—

"And behold 'earth into flesh transformed,
and clay to man.'

"Adam, arise, since I to thee impart
A spirit warm from my benignant breath
Arise, arise, first man,
And joyous let the world
Embrace its living miniature in thee!"

* * * * *

"Man, be thou lord of all that now the sun
Warms, or the ocean laves; impose a name
On every thing that flies, or runs, or swims." *

* Gio. Battista Andreini, Italian poet, from whom
Milton drew for his "Paradise Lost."

"God brought every beast of the field, and
every fowl of the air, unto Adam, to see what he
would call them; and whatsoever Adam called
every living creature, that was the name thereof.'
'But for Adam, there was not found a helpmeet
for him.'

"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall
upon Adam, and from one of his ribs made fair
woman's lovely form. And Adam awoke from his

sleep, and beheld that 'marvel most sublime.' We can imagine with what rapture of delight he pressed this new and cherished being to his breast, exclaiming,—

"O Eve,
Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all.
Under a tuft of shade, that on a green
Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain's side,
They sat them down; and to their supper fruits they
fell.
Nectarine fruits, which the compliant boughs
Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline.
On the soft, downy bank damasked with flowers,
The savory pulp they chew, and in the rind,
Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream."

* * * "About them frisking played.
Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
Dandled the kid: bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant,
To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
His lithe proboscis." *

* Milton's "Paradise Lost."

"Thus, dear children, were formed the parents of our race, made in the image of their Creator, and endowed with knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. How different would have been our condition had they never fallen from that high estate!"

CHAPTER XI.

PROVIDENCE; OR, THE ILL-FATED BOAT.

QUESTION XI. *What are God's works of providence?*

ANSWER. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions.

THE morning of Thursday dawned clear and bright, and at the breakfast table the children eagerly reminded their father of his promise to improve the first fine day by teaching them to skate. At the distance of one quarter of a mile from their house, there was a large pond, which was now covered with firm, smooth ice. Mr. Dermott told them that he would endeavor to return from the city to take an early dinner with them, after which, provided their lessons had been well learned, he would accompany them to the pond.

Every thing was propitious; the children studied diligently, and, of course, recited correctly. The weather continued fine, and their father arrived in ample season for dinner. A merry party that was, consisting of father, mother, and

four happy children; and a delightful afternoon they passed, filling their lungs with the clear, bracing air, as they lightly skimmed over the pond, making the woods, which lined the banks, ring with their cheerful tones and merry laughter.

"I don't believe any body in the world is as happy as I am," exclaimed the enthusiastic Helen, as she sat by the fire after tea, waiting for her parents to be ready for the catechising.

"Come, my daughter, I should like to have you tell me why you are so happy," remarked Mr. Dermott, after Walter had repeated the answer for the evening.

"Is it in the lesson, papa?" asked the child, glancing merrily into his face.

"Yes, if you choose to have it so."

"Well, it is because I have such dear, kind parents, who do every thing to make me happy; and such a darling brother, and cousin, and little sister; and O, there are ever so many reasons!"

"Go on, my dear, let us hear them all." Mr. and Mrs. Dermott gazed into her glowing countenance, radiant with life and hope, and thought, "We, too, are happy in having such a child."

"Well, then," continued Helen, "I have such a pleasant home, and plenty to eat and drink, and pretty clothes, all ready for me to wear, and nice playthings to amuse myself with. O, I can't help being very happy."

"Then you are thankful to your parents for providing for your wants?"

"Yes, indeed, papa."

"It is right you should be so, my daughter. Children seldom realize how much their parents do for them. Your mother knows, for instance, that in an hour or two from this time, your eyes will begin to grow heavy with sleep; and she has provided each of you with a comfortable bed. She is sure that when you awake in the morning, you will be hungry; and she has provided breakfast. She knows that if you are not warmly clad on such a day as this, you can take no comfort in your walks or plays; and see how carefully she has arranged for you! Each little one with a warm hood, tippet, and mittens, made by her own hands! This is only a small part of what she does, even for your physical wants. And then we endeavor to provide for your moral and intellectual improvement. We teach you, provide you healthful amusements, give you books to read, and do all in our power to fulfil aright our duty as parents.

"But what is all we do compared with the loving care of Him who giveth us life, and breath, and all things? This constant, tender, overruling care of our heavenly Father, is called his providence, and extends to the very meanest of his creatures. He watches over us, guards us from dangers often unseen by us, gives us food to eat and clothes to wear, preserves and governs us. What does the Catechism say of God's providence?"

"That it is holy, wise, and powerful," replied Walter.

"Over whom is it extended?"

"To all his creatures and all their actions."

"Yes, there is not a thought in our hearts, nor a word upon our lips, nor all action of our lives, but he notices it. David has most beautifully and comprehensively expressed his sense of the government and providence of God in these words:

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting, and mine up-rising; thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether."

"God's providence extends, also, to the angels, to the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, the beasts of the field, and even the little insects; over the clouds, winds, and storms; over the waves of the sea; and over the sun, moon, and stars. To each he extends his powerful protection, and has only to speak to have them perform his holy will.

"Our dear Helen acknowledged, to-night, her indebtedness to her parents for their watchful care of her. How thankful, then, ought she, and all of us, to be to that Merciful Being whose tender love watches us with more than any earthly father's solicitude, who numbers even the hairs of our heads, and whose power is able to protect us from all harm!"

"More than a dozen years ago, a gentleman by the name of Norcross was visiting New York city upon important business. He had nearly completed it, when he received a letter from his daughter, living near Boston, saying that her little sister was ill, and her mother hoped he would return at once. He looked at his card stating the hour when the steamboat left the wharf, and found that by using despatch, he should have just time to conclude his business, and return by the first boat.

"He hurried to the store where he had made large purchases, and by great exertion, both on his own part and that of the clerks, had his goods packed, marked, and delivered to the truckman, promising to meet him at the wharf. He delayed only long enough to pass a check to the merchant in payment for the goods, and, congratulating himself that his business was so satisfactorily performed, hastened on foot to the boat.

"In consequence of his watch being too slow, he reached the wharf just five minutes after she had started. Disappointed more than he could express, he congratulated himself that his goods were safely on board; when, hearing a sound behind him, he recognized the truckman who had them in charge. With an impatient expression, he rebuked the man for his delay. But it had been a necessary one. In passing through one of the narrow streets, it became so crowded with trucks, that for some minutes he was obliged to stand entirely still.

"Now mark the overruling providence of God. He had determined that this child of his should be

spared to his family, and all these circumstances, as the not keeping his watch up to the time, and the crowd of carriages in the street, were the means by which God saved both the life and property of Mr. Norcross. That boat was the ill-fated Lexington, which was burned on her passage from New York to Providence. Had he arrived in season, no doubt he would have perished."

"Just as a mother, with sweet, pious face,
Yearns toward her children from her seat,
Given one a kiss, another an embrace,
Takes this upon her knee, that on her feet;
And while from actions, looks, complaints, pretences,
She learns their feelings and their various will,
To this a look, to that a word dispenses,
And whether stern or smiling, loves them still;—
So Providence for us, high, infinite,
Makes our necessities its watchful task,
Hearkens to all our prayers, helps all our wants;
And even if it denies what seems our right,
Either denies because 'twould have us ask,
Or seems but to deny, or in denying grants."

CHAPTER XII.

THE COVENANT OF WORKS; OR, THE FIRST WEDDING.

QUESTION XII. *What special act of providence did God exercise toward man in the estate wherein he was created?*

ANSWER. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

WALTER DERMOTT was, as I have said, a boy of remarkable intelligence for one of his years. He had naturally a quick and somewhat passionate temper; but this had been so controlled by his parents, that at the present time he was a conscientious, amiable youth.

He was exceedingly fond of his sisters and cousin, especially of Isabelle, who was, indeed, a pet of the whole family. Helen was more nearly like himself—active, enthusiastic, and energetic. Belle was quiet, and though affectionate, yet not demonstrative. She rarely lost her temper, and gained many friends by her readiness to oblige all who were in need of her services. She was very fond of hearing stories, especially those contained in the Bible; and Walter could at any time attach her to himself by the promise of story.

Since the lessons in the Catechism had commenced, he had often been called upon to repeat the stories which had illustrated them. She had been particularly interested in the narrative

of the creation, and was delighted to learn that there would be a continuation of this account.

"Isabelle," called her father, when her mother had read the answer for her, "have you ever been to a wedding?"

"No, sir."

"O, yes, you have!" cried Helen. "Only you didn't know what it was. You remember when cousin James stood up with Sarah Churchill?"

"And she cried so when they were bidding her good by?"

"Yes, that was a wedding."

"Once I was a boy like Walter," added Mr. Dermott, "and lived at home with my father and mother. Your mother was younger than you are, and lived nearly a mile distant. By and by, as I grew up, I wanted some young lady, who knew about housekeeping, to come and take care of me. There were a great many young ladies in the town, and a great many more in the city where I was doing business; but somehow I liked your mother the best, and thought, if she would consent to leave her parents, brothers, and sisters, I would purchase a house, and we would have a home of our own."

"And did she?" eagerly asked the child, fixing upon her father a pair of bright blue eyes.

Mr. Dermott gave his wife a glance of affection; and Helen exclaimed, "Why, yes, we know she did, or else she would not have been here now."

"I hope no one will ask me to go away," said Isabelle with a deep sigh. "I should not like to go away from home."

"Of course they won't while you are a little girl," remarked Walter in a comforting tone.

"I was very glad that she said yes," continued the gentleman; "indeed, I don't know what would have become of me if she had refused, for I could think of no one else, among all my friends, who would do as well."

Helen caught her mother's hand, and pressed it enthusiastically to her lips.

"Then I went to her father's house," added the gentleman, "and we stood up together and were married, and that was called a wedding. We promised to love and cherish each other as long as we lived. The Bible has rules for persons who live together as we intended to, and we promised to try to live according to them. Now, Walter, can you tell me what relation Adam was to Eve?"

"He was her husband."

"Where was their wedding?"

"In Eden."

"Who married them?"

"God."

"There was a great and glorious company present; can you tell me who they were?"

"I suppose," replied Mrs. Dermott, "you refer to the angels, as the Bible says,—

"The morning stars sang together,
and all the sons of God shouted for
joy."

"Then God entered into a covenant, here called a covenant of life,—perhaps you would call it an agreement,—with the newly married pair, that if they would render perfect obedience to his one command, and not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they might enjoy all the pleasures of the beautiful garden, and a whole eternity of joy and bliss. But if they disobeyed his command, and ate the forbidden fruit, they would be cast out of the garden, and becoming sinful, would be made miserable forever."

"I think it was real mean in them to eat the forbidden fruit," cried Walter, indignantly, "when God had done so much to make them happy."

"Yes, my dear, those who commit sin are always guilty of meanness. But is it any less mean and foolish in us to sin than it was in them?"

"It seems to me it would have been very easy for them to obey in just one thing," added the boy.

"Yes, to us it does seem so, especially as they had not the temptation of wicked hearts prompting them to sin. Their only temptation was from Satan, who, from the moment they were placed in paradise, watched for an opportunity to destroy their happiness. Remember, children, he is just as busy now as he was then. He is

constantly whispering in the ear of some little boy or girl, that it would be no harm for them to disobey their father or their mother—no harm to break the laws of God.

"To impress this answer upon your minds, I shall illustrate it by a story which is not true; but which I shall invent for this occasion. It is called a parable, and is like what the Saviour used, to illustrate and enforce the truths which he taught."

"There was once a boy by the name of Edward. He had a father, mother, and one sister. He had also a rich uncle, named Mr. Tudor, who had lived for many years in India, and brought home a great many curious things. Some of these were placed for safe keeping with his sister, who was the mother of Edward. The boy had amused himself for hours in examining them. But there was in the attic a small, curiously-shaped box, which very much excited his attention. There must be something very wonderful in it. Edward longed to see it opened. When his uncle visited them, Mrs. Rowe told him of the boy's desire, and he immediately sent for his nephew to come into the room.

"'Edward,' said he, 'your mother says you are curious to know what is in that foreign box up stairs.'

"The boy looked rather confused, but answered, 'Yes, sir.'

"'Well, I sent for you to tell you that on no account must you touch it. Remember if you are ever so curious, don't go near it, for you might be

seriously hurt, and perhaps killed. But I will make a covenant, or agreement with you, that if you will not go near it until my return, which will be in one month, I will give you all that it contains, which will be a very valuable present.'

"'I will be sure to remember,' exclaimed Edward, in an animated tone.

"The next day, when his uncle left, he said, 'Remember our agreement, my boy, and be sure not to go near the box.'

"This was said in an impressive voice, and deepened Edward's determination to fulfil his part of the agreement. In order to do this, he promised himself that he would not go into the attic, for fear it would be a temptation to open the forbidden box, as the key, he found, was attached to the trunk by a string. But in two or three days he found himself sitting again by its side, and wondering at its contents. He began to reason, as Eve did, that his uncle really meant nothing by the threat. He thought about the box, and dreamed about it, until he lost his appetite, and grew thin and pale.

"In Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' he says that Eve dreamed of eating the fruit; then she persuaded Adam that they should accomplish more in tending their garden, if they were separated for a season, as it took up too much time to talk, and bestow glances of affection. So she went to a distance from him, where the tempter found her; and we know too well the sad consequences. We must defer the conclusion of our story until the next lesson."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FALL OF MAN; OR, THE MYSTERIOUS BOX.

QUESTION XIII. *Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?*

ANSWER. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

VERY many times, during the week following the story of Edward, did the children discuss the probabilities of his obtaining the prize.

"I do wonder what was in the box," exclaimed Helen.

"I can't think, or even guess," responded Walter; "but I could hold on for one month, I know. Just think how silly 'twould be to go and look when he was certain of knowing so soon, and of having such a reward besides."

"I hope he kept the agreement," said Anna, "because his uncle said if he opened the box, he would be very much hurt."

"Perhaps it was a spring lock," suggested Walter, "that would catch his fingers and tear them right off."

On Thursday evening the little ones were punctually in their places, which, as Mrs. Dermott remarked, was a proof of Walter's great interest in the lesson, as it was bright moonlight night, and he had been enjoying a fine skate in front of the house.

Anna repeated the answer in course, and then Mrs. Dermott asked, "Who were our first parents, my dear?"

"Adam and Eve."

Mr. Dermott having taken his seat, said, "Walter, what is it to be left to the freedom of one's will?"

"I always thought," replied the boy, "that it meant you might do a thing or not, just as you chose."

"A very good definition, my boy! When God had placed Adam and Eve in their beautiful home, he said,—

"Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.'

"Would God have told Adam not to eat of it, and threatened him with death provided he did, if he was not left free to act in any way he chose?"

"No, sir. If God knew he would be obliged to eat it, I don't believe he would have told him not to."

"Do you suppose Edward, about whom I told you, had the freedom of his will?"

"Yes, sir."

"It would have been foolish for his uncle to tell him to be sure not to touch the box, and to offer him a reward for not touching it, if he knew that he could not act according to his own choice. Satan evidently thought that our first parents could eat of the forbidden fruit, or abstain from eating, as they chose; for he presented many arguments to induce them to partake of it. These would have been breath spent in vain, if he was sure they would eat of it. Poor Eve yielded to his wicked solicitations; and when—

"'She saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat.'

"By what arguments she prevailed upon him to disobey the only command of their Maker, the Bible does not inform us. Having eaten the forbidden fruit, the covenant of life was forfeited; they fell from the state of purity and holiness, wherein they were created, by sinning against God."

"We will now return to the history of Edward. One, two, three weeks of the month had passed away, and Mrs. Rowe had entirely forgotten the conversation about the box; but she had noticed that for a day or two her son had not appeared well. She determined to question him upon the subject.

"She was sitting after dinner with her husband, who had not yet left the house, when they were startled by a loud scream of distress. Starting to their feet, they knew not which way to run, when there came another prolonged, agonizing cry. Rushing up stairs in the direction in which the sound seemed to proceed, they distinctly heard dreadful groans from the attic.

"There lay poor Edward upon the floor, his hands pressed convulsively to his side, from which the blood was oozing through the clothes. The fatal box was opened, and a pistol, which had been so arranged as to protect the contents, had gone off when the boy lifted the lid."



Edward opening the fatal box.

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Edward opening the fatal box.

"Mr. Rowe tore open his clothes and tried to stanch the blood, while the almost distracted mother flew down stairs to send for a physician. For weeks Edward lay in bed after the ball had been extracted, suffering the most acute pain, and tortured by bitter remorse for his conduct. The physician at length told his mother that he feared her poor boy would never again be perfectly well.

"After two months, he was able to sit bolstered up in a large chair, when his uncle came to visit him. Upon talking with him for an hour, the gentleman went to the attic and brought from thence the box which had occasioned his young

nephew so much trouble. He told him that while he was in India, a young man assisted him in packing his goods for his return home. He had a quantity of gold which he wished to bring, and this young man begged his acceptance of this box with the pistol, which he thought would betray any robbers who might approach it. He, then, without loading the fire-arms, explained to the boy how it had been arranged; after which, he took out a false bottom to the box, and displayed to the gaze of the astonished youth a greater number of gold pieces than he had ever seen together.

"'Perhaps,' added the gentleman, addressing his sister, 'it would have been better for me to have told Edward what consequences would certainly follow if he disobeyed my orders, and persisted in gratifying his curiosity. I intended to make him a present, and thought it would be a pleasant and profitable lesson to him. But I calculated too much upon the strength of his moral principle.'"

"But, father," cried Walter eagerly, "didn't his uncle give him any of the gold?"

Mr. Dermott smiled as he replied, "You know, my boy, I told you that this was not a true story, but a parable."

"O, I'm glad," said Anna, with a sigh of relief. "I thought Edward would have to be sick all his life."

"'Tis fearful building upon any sin;
One mischief entered, brings another in;

The second pulls a third, the third draws more,
And they for all the rest set ope the door:
Till custom take away the judging sense,
That to offend we think it no offence."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NATURE OF SIN; OR, THE CONVICT.

QUESTION XIV. *What is sin?*

ANSWER. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

THE account of Edward made a deep impression upon the minds of the children, although well aware it was only an imaginary sketch. They prayed more earnestly to be assisted to do what was right, and were more conscientious in the performance of their duties.

Mr. Dermott one day overheard Walter and Anna talking about Edward.

Walter said, "I bet I wouldn't have opened that box; and I think he was real silly for doing it."

"Don't you ever do wrong?" asked Anna, simply.

"Yes, of course I do," replied the boy, in an embarrassed tone; "but if I was tried in that way, I wouldn't."

"I'm afraid I should," replied Anna, humbly. "I did want to know so much what was in the box."

"What is conformity to any thing, Helen?" asked her father, after the answer had been correctly repeated.

"I don't know, sir."

"Walter, do you remember, when I took you to the academy, I requested the teacher to give you a list of the rules or laws of the school? And when he did so, I told him that I hoped you would always conform to them. What did I mean by that?"

"I suppose you meant that you hoped I should comply with the rules, or do every thing the laws required."

"Just so. Well, whose laws must we conform to?"

"The laws of God."

"In what book are these laws written?"

"In the Bible," replied Helen.

"What is breaking God's law called?"

"Transgression of it," said Walter.

"And what other word denotes nearly the same idea as transgression of God's holy law?"

"Sin."

"Yes, and it is equally sin if we do not conform to the law. Suppose God had commanded Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of a particular tree, and they had not done it, would they not have sinned just as much as by eating the forbidden fruit?"

"Yes, sir."

"But for a long time after the creation of the world, God's law was not written down in the Bible; your mother will tell you where it was written."

"Paul says it was written in the hearts of men,
—

"their conscience also bearing witness."

"Before the Bible was completed, God wrote his commands upon two tables of stone. Do you know what became of them?"

"Moses broke them in pieces, because he was so angry that the Israelites worshipped the golden calf; but God wrote them again, and afterward they were put into the ark."

"In what part of the Bible do we find them?"

"In the twentieth chapter of Exodus, and also in Deuteronomy."

"Has any one ever lived in perfect conformity to the law of God?"

"Jesus Christ did."

"Now for a story, father," said Helen.

Mr. Dermott smiled, and commenced.

"Very late one evening, a good clergyman was called upon to go to a house in the outskirts of his parish to visit a poor woman, who, the messenger said, was nigh unto death. The night was extremely cold, and the minister was by no means young; but he hesitated not one minute in the performance of this duty. He set out, in company with his guide, who was a lad apparently just entering his teens; and, by walking at a rapid pace, reached the spot in about twenty minutes. The boy seemed averse to conversation, and only said he was the son of a neighbor of the poor woman who was sick.

"The house, or rather hovel, seemed to be filled with people, as they approached. But the clergyman made his way inside the door, where his footsteps were arrested by the most distressing sounds he had ever heard. They seemed to be the wailings of a broken heart; and so, indeed, they were. Lying on a cot bed, in the centre of the apartment, was a poor woman, her hair pushed back from her head, and lying loosely upon the pillow. Her face was thin, while a paleness, like that of death, was spread over it.

Her eyes were closed; but the rigid features and the pinched nostrils disclosed the fact that she was conscious of her sufferings. Close by her, and grasping her tightly by the hand, sat a young girl, with her face buried in the pillow; but her convulsed form and long-drawn sighs showed that she was in the deepest affliction.

"It was a long time before the minister could ascertain the circumstances connected with these poor suffering persons. The woman lying before him was a widow. Her only son had that day been convicted of forgery, and condemned to the state prison for a long course of years. He had transgressed the laws of his country, and now he must pay the penalty. The young woman, clinging so tightly to the pale sufferer, was betrothed to the son. But now her light was turned into darkness, her joy into the deepest sorrow. One of the neighbors, returning from the city, had brought the fatal news; and, ever since she heard it, the poor broken-hearted mother had seemed more dead than alive.

"'If she would only cry, now, as Malissy does,' said one of the women, 'I should have more hopes of her; but she does nothing but moan, moan, as if her heart was breaking.'

"Mr. Lawson, having requested the women to retire to the farther part of the room, drew near the couch, and placed his hand on the cold, damp forehead. There was no answering sign. He then kneeled by the side of the bed, and, in words the most compassionate and tender, he besought the mercy of God for the poor guilty son. He was a father; and he well knew how a parent's heart was wounded by the ill-doing of a child.

"The moanings ceased, and presently the features relaxed. The mother whispered a feeble response. The young girl raised her head to listen. But her grief was not wholly unselfish. The guilty man was lost to her forever. The clergyman increased in fervor. He besieged the mercy-seat, and would not be denied a blessing. A bright, red spot, on either cheek of the mother, proved that hope for her son was once more springing up in her breast.

"O my God, be merciful to my sinful boy!" burst from her lips, as the prayer ceased. 'Let me die, if, by that means, his soul may be saved.'

"God in heaven grant him forgiveness,' said Mr. Lawson, his voice trembling with emotion.

"But I must cut short my story. The good clergyman became so much interested in these poor afflicted ones, that he visited the prison, and, through the kindness of the chaplain, was allowed free access to the culprit. At first the young man was stubborn, and declined talking with a stranger. But at length, moved by the account of his mother's heart-rending grief, his proud heart was softened, and he wept like a grieved child. When Mr. Lawson gave him Malissy's last farewell, he said, 'I supposed it would come to that,' but presently added, 'Tell me more about my mother.'

"From time to time, Mr. Lawson visited the youth; and at length, he had the happiness to soothe the dying moments of the mother with the tidings that her poor, guilty boy had cast himself at the feet of the Saviour, with the prayer of the publican upon his lips,—

"God be merciful to me a sinner.'

"But what a dreadful thing that for his transgression he must remain shut up from the light of day, or from any intercourse with his race, until his heart was chilled, and his hair white with premature old age!

"Dear children, though I hope you have never been guilty of any outward transgression, such as this poor youth committed, yet have you not often, yea, every hour of your lives, been guilty of sins of omission, such as the neglect of prayer, and of choosing Christ to be your Saviour; cherishing a carnal mind, which is enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be; and, also, want of conformity to his laws, such as a disinclination to obey him and all his requirements?"

CHAPTER XV.

THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT; OR, THE BROKEN RULE.

QUESTION XV. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

ANSWER. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating

the forbidden fruit.

ON Thursday, the very day of the next exercise, Mr. and Mrs. Dermott were suddenly called away to attend the funeral of an aged relative. They were absent until Saturday; and much to the children's disappointment, they concluded to postpone the lesson until Thursday of the next week.

When the answer had been repeated, Mr. Dermott asked his wife to give an account of the trees in the garden of Eden.

"We read in Genesis," she said, "that God created every tree that is pleasant to the sight, which I suppose means beautiful plants or flowering shrubs, such as roses, magnolias, and jessamines; or those that emit fragrance, or in any other way delight the senses. He created also every tree that was good for food, whether of the pulpy fruits, such as oranges, lemons, and apples; or of the kernel and nut kind, such as dates and nuts of different sorts. I suppose these also include all running vines, bearing melons, &c., and all esculent vegetables.

"Walter, can you tell me the names of two trees which stood in the midst of the garden?"

"Yes, sir. The tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."

"Which tree was forbidden to our first parents?"

"The latter one."

"Among all the fruits which they had eaten, had they ever tasted of the tree of life?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Probably not; for after they had eaten of the tree of knowledge, God said, 'Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken,' and he placed 'a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.'

"Many writers consider this tree an emblem of that life which man should ever live, provided he continued in obedience to his Maker. And probably the use of this tree was intended as the means of preserving the body of man in a state of continual vital energy, and an antidote against death.

"What other command did God give respecting the tree of knowledge, beside forbidding them to eat of it?"

"He forbade them to touch it," answered Helen.

"Why did God forbid them to eat of it, or even to touch it?"

"To try them, and see whether they would obey him."

"Do you not think there was some other reason?" asked Mrs. Dermott, of her husband. "It would seem God thought man really had acquired undue knowledge."

"It is exceedingly difficult to understand exactly how much is here meant. Some writers think the sight of the tree was always to remind man that there was a bound set to his knowledge; that there was one thing God had seen proper to deprive him of. Others think that the tree possessed a particular property of increasing knowledge, a physical influence, having a tendency to strengthen the understanding, and invigorate the faculties.

"Who tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit?"

"The serpent."

"By what other names is he called in the Bible?"

"Satan."

"Yes, and Apollyon or Abaddon. He is also called the father of lies, and the roaring lion who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. By what arguments did he prevail with her to eat?"

"In the first place," answered Mrs. Dermott, "he charged God with a lie. She had said, 'God has given us every tree but this. If we eat of this tree, he says, we shall die.' But Satan said, 'That is not true, and God knows it is not. He wishes to keep you ignorant. I am sincerely your friend, and I tell you that if you eat of this tree, you will become as gods, knowing good and evil.'

"O, what a wicked serpent!" cried Walter. "I should have thought Eve would have known better than to believe him."

"What three reasons induced her to disobey God, and to eat of the tree? You may read, Anna, from the Bible."

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat."

"Alas! How many children are tempted to their ruin by the appeal to their senses! Some become intemperate and gluttons from their inordinate love of eating; others, from their overweening fondness for dress and display, are carried into the vanities of the world, and thus lose their souls."

"I once heard," continued the gentleman, "of a poor peasant in England, who, on one occasion, met with a company of persons that disbelieved the Bible and the sacred truths it contained.

"They argued and reasoned," said the poor man, 'until they shook my belief. But all the time I knew I was in error, only I was so ignorant I could not answer their objections.

"At length one of them asked me, "How can you be so foolish as to suppose that God would destroy Adam and all his descendants just for eating an apple?"

"I had often reflected upon this weak objection raised by unbelievers; and I instantly answered, "It was not that our first parents ate a particular kind of fruit; it was, that they had disobeyed God. It was, sir, that they broke the rule.""

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BROKEN COVENANT; OR, THE FAMILY OF THIEVES.

QUESTION XVI. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

ANSWER. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

"I HOPE we shall have a long story this time," exclaimed Isabelle, as they were seated around

the fire, waiting for their father and mother, who were engaged with company.

"That was a good story last time," rejoined Walter. "Don't you remember father told us about the trees in the garden, and how the serpent talked with Eve? I wonder if the serpent looked like the great snakes we have now."

At this moment Mrs. Dermott returned to the room, and, having heard her son's remark, took from the library a volume of Milton's Paradise Lost, and read,—

"His head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant; pleasing was his shape and lovely."

"I shouldn't want to see him," cried Helen, with an air of disgust; "I hate snakes."

Mr. Dermott having come into the room, Helen repeated the answer, when he continued, "You will remember that God made a bargain or agreement with Adam and Eve, that if they would yield obedience to his command about the forbidden fruit, they should live forever. This I told you was called a covenant of life, or of works. They forfeited the reward by their disobedience; and now they must pay the penalty. They were driven out of that pleasant home, and were condemned to eternal death.

Was this covenant, Walter, made for themselves alone?"

"It was made for all mankind."

"Where do we learn this?"

Mrs. Dermott turned to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and read,—

"For as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.'

"Is it common for God to join children with their parents in his covenants?"

"He does in the second commandment."

"Yes, and he did with Noah, and also with Abraham.

"And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you."

"What is the meaning, father, of 'ordinary generation'?"

"It means, Helen, that children follow their parents; then they grow up and have families; and thus one generation follows another. Do you remember that very old gentleman we saw at your grandfather's? He said he had lived to see married members of four generations—himself and wife, his son with his wife, his grandson with his wife, and now he has a great-granddaughter, who is just married.

"Adam lived to be nine hundred and thirty years old, so that he must have seen many generations of his posterity. How sad must his life have been to think that by his disobedience he had not only forfeited the favor of God, the delightful pleasures of paradise, and the joys of eternal life, but that all who would descend from him must participate in the consequences of his first transgression! They fell with him from his high estate, just as when a man who is immensely wealthy fails. He does not suffer alone. His children and his children's children must become sharers in his poverty. Or as a man who is executed upon the gallows does not suffer alone; his children, to the latest generation, suffer with him. They can never get rid of the disgrace.

"Or suppose a man, like our neighbor, Mr. Morse, is dreadfully deformed by scrofula, and has suffered from it all his life, as his father did before him. Now, look at his children. Every one of them is tainted with the same disease. Lydia has it in the form of consumption, Esther in sore eyes, while the little boys, James and Joseph, are always breaking out in great sores upon their bodies.

"So it is in the case of Adam. He sinned, and all his race are infected with the plague of sin. In one it shows itself by unbounded ambition; in another by pride; in another by selfishness. In one little girl we see vanity; in another disobedience to her parents. One boy tells lies; another steals; another swears. Some do all these; but every one of the race has inherited the fatal taint, and is neither morally nor physically sound."

"In a town situated near the centre of the State of Connecticut there lived a man who, in early life, was often detected in stealing small articles from his playmates. As he grew older, he became more hardened in crime. He married, and had four sons and three daughters. But during this time he had been sentenced twice to the state prison once to serve out a term of three years, the other of two.

"As soon as his sons were old enough, each one of them became addicted to pilfering, so that they were considered a nuisance to the whole neighborhood. One by one they left home to seek their fortune in a wider sphere; and the first news of them that came back was, that they had been convicted of this crime, and were sentenced to prison for a longer or shorter period.

"The daughters were all younger. One of them was taken into the service of a lady at the age of thirteen: In a few months her mistress detected her in purloining articles of clothing from her wardrobe. She was dismissed from service after a trial of several months, during which she often repeated her offence.

"The second daughter was a very handsome girl. She went to the city to learn the trade of a milliner, and was soon after sent to jail for what was called shoplifting. She was shopping for her employer, saw an elegant lace cape which she coveted, and while the clerk was waiting upon another customer, endeavored to hide it beneath her shawl. The article was missed, she was pursued, the cape discovered, and she was punished for her theft.

"The youngest daughter was taken from her mother's arms by a benevolent lady who believed the sad fate of the children to be the consequence of their early training. She began very early to teach the little one the difference between mine and thine, and through all the years when the young mind is so susceptible to outward influence, endeavored to impress upon her, both by precept and example, that it was sin to appropriate to one's self the property of another; but it was in vain. The seeds of sin were planted at her birth; and though she knew not even of the existence of her relatives, yet she followed in the same footsteps, and brought sorrow and disgrace into the family of her kind benefactress.

"A few years since, the father, now a white-haired old man, and his four sons, were confined together in the state prison. In the father's case, as in the second son's, it was an aggravated one; and they were condemned to pass the rest of their lives within the prison walls. The others would be released in a few years, but would probably return to spend their days in confinement."

"O Sin, what hast thou done to this fair earth!"

"Sin hath broken the world's sweet peace—unstrung
The harmonious chords to which the angels sung."

CHAPTER XVII.

MAN'S FALLEN STATE; OR, THE DEPOSED MINISTER.

QUESTION XVII. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

ANSWER. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

IT was a rare event in the family of Mr. Dermott for the children to disagree to such an extent as to use unkind words. They had early been taught the beauty of yielding to each other's wishes, and thus gaining a conquest over themselves. With Isabelle's quiet temperament, this was comparatively easy; but with Walter and Helen it was far more difficult, as they were naturally hasty and impulsive, often reminding

their father of his own youth by their striking similarity to himself.

On the very afternoon of the catechising, however, Walter came in from his play somewhat out of temper, and, taking a book from Anna's hands, sat down to read. The tears quickly filled the eyes of the little girl; but Helen loudly remonstrated, "How unkind you are, Walter, when Anna is just in the midst of a story!"

"So am I," replied the boy, petulantly, "and it's my book."

"I lent you my new one before I had read it myself," sobbed Anna.

"Here, take it, then!" exclaimed Walter, angrily. "Such a fuss when a boy sits down to read his own book!" And he threw the volume into the lap of the weeping girl.

"You're an ugly boy," cried his sister. "Anna and I were having a real nice time, when you came in—and spoiled it all. Mother says she wishes you would govern your temper."

Walter got up, and was walking angrily out of the room, when he met his mother. She saw at once that there had been trouble, and, taking him gently by the hand, requested him to return. With a few judicious words, she soon succeeded in quieting the ruffled waves, and in fifteen minutes the children were sitting lovingly together—the boy with his arm thrown around his cousin's neck, and reading from the same page.

In the evening, when they had seated themselves for their favorite exercise, Mrs.

Dermott asked, "Helen, can you tell me, my dear, where was the first quarrel?"

The little girl arched her eyebrows and shook her head.

"It was in the garden of Eden, my child, immediately after the first pair had partaken of the forbidden fruit."

Helen's face was crimson, and she quickly replied, "I didn't begin the quarrel, mother."

"Well, you called me names," replied Walter, looking very much ashamed.

"Stop at once!" exclaimed Mr. Dermott. "Or we will discontinue the lesson."

"Do you understand, Anna," inquired Mrs. Dermott, "what is meant by the fall?"

"No, aunt, not exactly."

"You know Adam and Eve were created in the image of their Maker, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. By their disobedience they were cast down from their high estate; and this is called the fall. Milton and Beaumont thus graphically describe it:—

"Her rash hand in evil hour
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate;
Earth felt the wound, and Nature, from her seat
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe
That all was lost.'

"Up went her desperate hand, and reached away

All the world's bliss, when she the apple took;
When, lo, the earth did move, the heavens did stay,
Beasts and birds shivered, absent Adam shook."

"I remember well," remarked Mr. Dermott, "that there was a great excitement about a minister who had for many years been settled in the town adjoining the one where your mother and I lived. For a year he had been absent from his people, soliciting funds from the churches for some charitable object. At length it was ascertained that he had appropriated almost all the money he had raised to his own use, and thus been guilty of breaking the eighth commandment. A council of ministers was called, who took away his license, and deposed him from the pastoral office. This was called his fall; and I remember afterwards hearing my father ask,—

"'Where is Mr. Monson?'

"The gentleman replied, 'After his fall, he removed his family from town, and for months we have heard nothing from him.'"

"By what was the fall of Adam followed?"

"By additional sin and misery."

"Do these always go together?"

"Yes, sir," replied Helen.

"How did sin and misery first exhibit themselves?"

"I don't know, sir," answered Walter; "but I should think when Cain killed Abel."

"It was long before that. Soon after Eve had persuaded her husband to partake with her of the fruit of the forbidden tree, she heard God calling,
—

"'Adam, hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?'

"And he said, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.'

"In this reply, he not only endeavored to shield himself from responsibility by throwing the blame upon his wife, but he virtually reproached God—'the woman whom thou gavest me.' 'If I had been alone, I never should have done it; but she tempted me, and I could not resist.'

"And the Lord God said unto the woman, 'What is this that thou hast done?'

"And the woman said, 'The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.'

"Neither would she bear the blame, but cast it upon another. How much better would it have been for them to cast themselves down at the feet of their Maker, and confess their guilt! How unkind for Adam not to try to shield his wife! But such were the early fruits of sin. No doubt after this, there were many unkind words and feelings between the once happy pair.

"The next occasion of quarrelling which is recorded in Scripture is the melancholy story of Cain and Abel. The dreadful plague of sin, which

they had inherited from their parents, had sprung up in their own hearts, and in Cain it yielded bitter fruit, bringing misery and death into their household."

"Who can doubt," remarked Mrs. Dermott, "that the fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery when he looks around and realizes that but for sin there would be no wars, no armies, no hospitals?"

"No prisons, jails nor houses of correction," added her husband. "There would be no physicians, because there would be no sickness nor suffering; no orphan asylums nor houses for the blind; no unhappy marriages; no deeds, nor bonds, nor suits at law; and no divorces, no murders, thefts, nor backbitings; no quarrels between children, nor throwing the blame upon each other. There would have been no need of the spilling of a Saviour's blood, for man would have been at peace with his Maker. No; the world would present one glorious scene of holiness, and happiness, a heaven upon earth, the delight of angels and of God himself. The joy of one would make more complete the bliss of all. The beasts of the field, instead of preying upon each other, would find their appropriate food growing spontaneously upon the earth. The lion would lie down with the lamb, and a little child would lead them."

"Our sins, like to our shadows
When our day is in its glory, scarce appear;
Toward our evening, how great and monstrous

They are!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

MAN'S SINFULNESS; OR, THE DISEASED FAMILY.

QUESTION XVIII. *Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

ANSWER. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

"I WISH father wouldn't bring me into the lesson," cried Walter, as he was sitting in a large stuffed chair before the fire, waiting for his parents and sisters to be through with their tea.

"I'll ask him not to," replied Helen, just then entering to room. "Here, I've brought you a cup of milk and water, and mother says if you relish it, you may eat this toasted cracker. I hope you'll like it," added the sympathizing child, "for I fixed it myself with nice cream and salt."

"You're a dear little girl," replied Walter, "and I'll try to eat it just because you have taken so much pains."

For several days the boy had been ill in his chamber, but at his earnest request, his mother had allowed him to come down to the parlor, where, wrapped in a loose dressing gown, he was awaiting the exercise.

"How do you find yourself to-night, my boy?" asked his father, placing his fingers upon his son's pulse. "Helen says you don't wish to be brought into the catechising. Do you mean that you feel too ill to recite with the others?"

"O, no, sir!" responded the boy, a slight flush overspreading his pale countenance. "I meant that I don't like to have you speak about my temper and such things; I'd rather hear about that some other time."

Mr. Dermott smiled, and told Isabelle it was her turn to repeat the answer, and then asked her, "What was Adam's first sin?"

"Eating the apple, papa."

"Do you remember what I told you about Edward?"

"O, yes, papa," cried Helen.

"I think perhaps you will understand this question better, if I illustrate it by a continuation of the story of Edward. When we left him, he had somewhat recovered from the occasioned by his wound, but was still far from well. He gradually recovered, so as to be able to attend school, and then went into his father's store as clerk. But the

wound in his side had caused a pulmonary complaint which often confined him to the house for weeks together.

"At the age of twenty-four he was married, and resided with his wife in his father's family. In a course of years, five children were born to them, each of whom, after a few months, began to show certain signs of the disease which they had inherited from their father. The symptoms of these were indeed slight at first, but just sufficient to show that the seeds of consumption were implanted, and would at some time cause their death. They were, however, an interesting family; and Edward loved them with all a father's fondness.

"On a certain occasion, he perceived in one of his boys some symptoms of that unbounded curiosity which had caused him the loss of health and of independence; and he determined to relate his own story as a warning to his children. With a bleeding heart and tear-dimmed eyes, he did so.

"When, with a burst of grief, his oldest daughter cried out, 'O, father! How sorry I am you touched the box. If you had not, you would never have been sick; and mother would not have looked so pale and frightened as she does now, when you raise blood from your lungs.'

"'No, and we should have been rich too,' added the youngest boy; 'and now we are so poor, I hardly ever have any new clothes, and I can't have a sled, like all the other little boys.'

"Edward sighed heavily, as the children openly expressed what had for many years been

the burden of his thoughts by day and of his dreams by night. 'Yes,' he cried bitterly, as he rushed from the room to conceal his emotion; 'but for that one act of disobedience, I should now have been blessed with health and an independent fortune. O, why did I not die of the dreadful wound, instead of living to convey the seeds of death to those so dear to me! This is my bitterest thought, that they must suffer in consequence of my sin; and if they should live to become parents, they must transmit the infection to future generations.' Overcome by these thoughts, he wept aloud.

"And when his daughter rushed into the room, she saw that the handkerchief with which her father was wiping his mouth was saturated with blood.

"'O father,' exclaimed Helen, 'I don't like Edward's uncle at all. He might have given him some money, when he had so much.'

"Now," resumed the gentleman, "we will leave the story of Edward, and go back to the lesson, which says 'the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin,' just as the children of Edward, by his disobedience, forfeited the favor of his uncle, lost all the healthfulness and the property which they might have inherited, and were visited with poverty, disease, and wretchedness.

"Adam, you know, was created holy, or righteous—a quality here called 'original righteousness.' When he fell, he lost all this; and all those who descended from him lost it with him. Their natures, which would have been holy, causing them to think holy thoughts, to speak

holy words, and to perform holy actions, became wholly corrupt. And henceforth they went 'astray from the womb speaking lies;' 'they have all gone out of the way;' 'they have altogether become sinful;' 'there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' The chief prophet of Israel gives this account of the human heart: 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it.'

"Can you tell me, Walter, what are actual transgressions?"

"I suppose they are such as are acted out, as when we steal, or lie, or swear, we commit actual transgressions."

"Yes, and we also commit them when we indulge wicked or unkind thoughts, which proceed from a corrupt heart. If we neglect the duty of prayer, or of keeping holy the Sabbath, all these flow from a carnal mind, and are actual transgressions of the law of God. David prays,—

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer!"

"Last Sabbath there were three infants baptized," added Mrs. Dermott. "Can you tell me, Walter, why water was used?"

"No, ma'am."

"Water is an element used for cleansing. Parents who carry their children to this ordinance realize that they have inherited corruption, and are unholy and unclean; therefore they desire them to be washed, or purified. But I shall explain this more fully to you under another question."

CHAPTER XIX.

MAN'S MISERY; OR, THE BATTLE FIELD.

QUESTION XIX. *What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?*

ANSWER. All mankind by the fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever.

IT was now the last week in March; and the children were looking forward with great delight to the making of their gardens.

The last year, Mr. Dermott selected from his grounds a pleasant, sunny spot, had it ploughed and enriched, and then divided it into four small lots for his children. They were allowed to plant

just what they chose, and to take the entire care of their own enclosure. This plan succeeded so well, and afforded so much innocent and healthful amusement to the little ones, that their father was induced to repeat the experiment.

These pleasant anticipations, however, did not detract from their interest in the catechisings; and on the evening of Thursday they were in their places, eager as ever for the exercise to begin.

"We learn," commenced Mr. Dermott, "in the third chapter of Genesis, that when God first created man, he allowed him to have free communion with himself. Adam and Eve expressed no surprise when they heard the voice of the Lord in the garden. It seems to have been an event of frequent occurrence; but after they had sinned, they were afraid to come into his presence, and hid themselves; just as a child who has disobeyed the commands of his father is afraid to meet his eye.

"All communion between them was lost, and they fell under his wrath. He told Eve that, in consequence of her disobedience, she should have sickness and sorrow; and that, instead of the confiding love with which her husband had heretofore regarded her, as she had so wickedly misused her influence, she should henceforth become subject to his rule. To Adam he said,—

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee, and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread

till thou return unto the ground.'

"Just see what misery the first married pair brought upon themselves by their rash defiance of God's commands. Into how many parts does the answer divide this misery?"

Walter glanced at the answer in the book, and replied, "Into six."

"And do all Adam's descendants come under the same?"

"Yes, sir, just as the children of Edward inherited their father's sickness and poverty."

"To the first of these we have already alluded;—loss of communion with God. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, says,—

"'For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? what communion hath light with darkness?'

"We have seen, too, how Adam and all mankind are under God's wrath and curse, and so are made liable to all the miseries of this life—to profaneness, idolatry, and other sins. Even the tilling of the ground, which before the fall was a recreation and delight, now became laborious and painful.

"Mankind are liable also to death itself, and to the pains of hell forever. It is written,—

"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.'

"And who can lay his hand upon his heart and say that he has done this? No one born of woman except the Son of God. How terrible to be under the wrath and curse of the Almighty! Thanks, everlasting thanks to Him who hath given up his own life to redeem us from this dreadful curse, and to provide a way for us to be again received into favor.

"Perhaps there is not a more impressive illustration of the miseries of sin than that afforded by the battle field. An inspired apostle inquires,—

"Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?"

"As a specimen of those, I will relate an incident, from the pen of a clergyman, concerning the battle of Soldin.

"At one o'clock the cannonading ceased. Toward evening, seven hundred Russian fugitives came to Soldin, a most pitiful sight! Some holding up their hands, cursing and swearing; others praying and praising the King of Prussia; without hats, without clothes; some on foot, others two

on a horse, with their heads and arms tied up; some dragging along by the stirrups, and others by the tails of the horses.

"When the battle was decided in favor of the Prussians, I ventured to the place where the cannonading had been. After walking some way, a Cossack's horse came running at full speed toward me. I mounted him, and on my way, for seven miles and a half on this side the field of battle, I found the dead and wounded lying on the ground sadly cut in pieces. The farther I advanced, the more these poor creatures lay heaped upon one another. That scene I shall never forget. The Cossacks, as soon as they saw me, cried out, "Dear sir, water, water, WATER!"

"Righteous God! What a sight! Men, women, and children, Russians and Prussians, carriages and horses, oxen, chests, and baggage, all lying upon one another to the height of a man! Seven villages around me in flames, and the inhabitants either massacred or thrown into the fire.

"A noble Prussian officer, who had lost both his legs, cried out to me, "Sir, you are a priest, and preach mercy: pray show me some compassion, and despatch me at once.""

"In the next lesson I shall give you an account of a new covenant of grace."

CHAPTER XX.

ELECTION AND REDEMPTION; OR, THE NEW HOME.

QUESTION XX. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?*

ANSWER. God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.

THIS year the old adage was verified. March had come in like a lion, and it went out like a lamb. The air was warm and soft, and the children could hardly believe that there would still be cold weather, which would injure their seeds if they put them into the earth.

In the middle of the day, the ground for their little gardens was so soft that Walter, who went out to make a survey, as he called it, was glad to hobble into the house, leaving one shoe sticking fast in the mud. This satisfied him that he had better follow his father's advice, and wait until the frost was out of the ground, and the water had had time to drain off or dry up. He changed his stockings, therefore, and began to think what he should do until tea time, when, seeing the Catechism lying upon the table, he looked at the answer, and committed it to memory for the evening.

"You all seem to like to hear about Edward," remarked Mr. Dermott, when they were ready for the lesson; "and perhaps it would be well for me to illustrate the meaning of this answer by a continuation of my parable."

Helen clapped her hands, while the countenances of the others expressed their pleasure.

"We will suppose, then," added the gentleman, "that Edward's rich uncle returned to India soon after his nephew's accident, and that he had only occasionally heard rumors of the sad consequences of his disobedience.

"There he married, and had one son, Joshua, to whom he often related the sad story of Edward, and whose love, sympathy, and pity were greatly moved toward his relative. When he attained his majority, his father settled upon him a large portion of his vast estate. About this time, however, both father and son returned to the land of their ancestors, and, bringing with them their vast treasures, they built a splendid palace,—which they adorned with all that art or money could obtain,—and then, when Edward was reduced to the last extremity of poverty and wretchedness, his cousin went to visit him.

"'My dear friend,' he said, gazing with tender compassion upon the sunken eyes and hollow cheeks of the once bright and rosy youth, 'my heart aches to find you reduced to such a state of misery. For a long time I have had a purpose of mercy toward you; indeed, I have satisfied for your offence, propitiated my father's favor, prepared a home where every comfort and happiness shall be yours. Leave this wretched

abode; come and share with me; I will provide for you forever."

The tender-hearted Anna wiped the tears from her eyes as she exclaimed, "O, I am so glad he was provided for at last!"

"And could all his family go with him?" inquired Walter.

"All who pleased could go; the invitation was made freely to all of them."

"Of course they did, then," cried Helen. "I wouldn't have staid a minute in that old ugly place, when I could live in a palace, and have such nice things."

"When Edward heard this noble, generous offer," resumed Mr. Dermott, "he could hardly believe it. With a choking voice, he replied, 'Dear cousin, your kindness overcomes me; but I am not ungrateful, and whatever conditions or agreement you may see fit to make, I will do my part toward their fulfilment.'

"'No, my poor Edward,' responded the gentleman; 'formerly my father, as you well remember, made an agreement with you, whereby you could secure your own happiness. That was forfeited; now I make another covenant with you, whereby I promise all the blessings which, by means of my immense estates, I have it in my power to grant. You have nothing to do but to accept of them as freely as they are offered.'"

"O, what a kind man!" exclaimed Helen. "I was afraid he was going to try them with another

box."

"If he had," cried Walter, "they wouldn't have been such fools as to touch it, after all they had suffered. If I had been there, 'I should have said, I thank you exceedingly, sir, for your kind offer, but I had rather earn the privilege of living in such a fine mansion. Won't you please to try me in some way, and see if I don't exactly obey your orders.' Then he'd have seen one boy that could walk right up to the mark." Walter drew up his form, and stood resolute and determined.

His father gazed at him with a sad smile; and Anna wondered to see her aunt wipe a tear from her eye.

"What did Edward say?" asked Helen.

"He said nothing. He had no voice in which to utter his thanks; the proposition was beyond what he could realize, from his utter, forlorn, and hopeless wretchedness, to free, full, and entire bliss. Indeed he was lost in wonder, love, and praise. He lifted his eyes, streaming with tears, to his cousin's face, and, catching him by the hand, whispered, 'I accept your offer, and henceforth shall delight to know that all my dependence is upon one I so much esteem and love.'"

"And what did his wife and children say?" urged Walter, more moved than he cared to have seen.

"His wife acknowledged that she was very grateful; but she thought it would be too great an obligation. She told her husband, when their benefactor had gone to make arrangements for the sick man's removal, that she should feel

awkward, living in so splendid a place, dependent upon a man with whom she was so little acquainted. And when, with kindling eye, he urged her to give a full and hearty acceptance of so generous an offer, saying that, since he had done so, he already began to feel the comfort and blessedness of his new home, she replied that she would think of it. On the whole she thought she would do so, but not quite yet. When she had decided, she could easily follow him.

"Mary and Lucy, the two daughters of Edward, had sat, through the whole interview with their relative, tightly clasping each other's hands. When the glorious offer of a happy home was extended to them, they rose at once, and going to him, said, 'We gladly, joyfully accept the invitation. We are both of us sadly weary of this wretched life, and are ready to leave it immediately.'

"The oldest boy expressed himself very much as Walter did just now. Notwithstanding the wretchedness of the life he now lived, he had a proud, independent spirit, and he said that if the gentleman would make some kind of a bargain with him, he would gladly exchange his poor hovel for a palace, and all the luxuries it contained; but he wanted to earn it. He would do any thing that was required, however painful; but something he must do, or he could not go. His brother, next in age, said that those were exactly his feelings. He should not wish to live in so elegant a home until he had done something to earn the privilege.

"The gentleman sadly shook his head, and told them the offer was gratuitous, and must be accepted as such, adding, 'If you were to work for

me a hundred years, you could never earn such blessings as I am willing freely to bestow.'

"And so, with pride and rebellion in their young hearts, they turned away from him, and determined to live on in their old place.

"Little Freddy, the youngest child, sat by the couch of his father, his little hand striving to wipe the moisture which constantly gathered on the brow of the poor sufferer. As one and another made known their decision, his wan cheek flushed, and a calm resolve passed through his mind. When his brothers turned their backs upon their kind benefactor, he went toward him, and, throwing himself into his embrace, exclaimed, 'O, take me! I love you more than all the world beside. I will go and live with you forever.'"

Mr. Dermott arose, and walked back and forth through the apartment, while the children sat silent and thoughtful.

At length he resumed his seat, and, addressing Anna, asked, "Can you tell me who has prepared for us a glorious home above the skies?"

"Christ," the child seriously answered; "Jesus Christ."

"Yes, he has ransomed us and become the way whereby we may return to our heavenly Father, whom we have offended. There can be no real comparison between the case I have given you and the abounding love and goodness of our Saviour, because, in the first case, I only referred

to the well-being of Edward and his family, and the benefits to them in this world, while the blessings we may receive through the redemption of Christ, which will be hereafter explained, will last through all eternity.

"But I hope by this illustration you may be led to view the wonderful love of our heavenly Father toward our guilty race. Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, says he did this 'according to the good pleasure of his will.'

"In some lessons which we have gone over, we have explained to you that when God created the world, he made his whole plan or decree concerning it; and, of course, the system of redemption, as a whole and in its minute details and application, was a part of it. Those savingly interested in this plan he calls elect. Edward's uncle could not know, beforehand, whether any of his relatives would accept his kind offer. But if he had possessed the power of foreknowledge, they would have been equally free to accept his offer.

"But, Walter, can you tell me what this new covenant is called?"

"The covenant of grace."

"What was the object of it? You may use your own words."

"To deliver men from their wretched condition, just as Edward's uncle intended to deliver him and his family from their poverty and distress."

"Yes, and more than this; God offered to raise them to a seat at his right hand, and to the

glorious privileges of the sons of God. How can he do this, Helen?"

"Through Christ, who died for us."

"Yes, through the sacrifice of his dear Son, who offered to be our Redeemer."

"Do all gladly accept this salvation?"

Walter held down his head as he softly answered, "No, sir."

"No, many poor guilty sinners would do so if they could earn the right to this happy home. Some do, indeed, think they earn it by outwardly conforming to his requirements, while their hearts are alienated from him; others by loudly professing to be his friends, and to be very zealous in his cause; while still others are so deluded that they lie upon beds of thorns, or scourge themselves with small cords, or go on painful pilgrimages, wearing small stones in their shoes. But all these methods cannot avail them; the salvation is free, without money and without price."

CHAPTER XXI.

CHRIST THE REDEEMER; OR, THE PARDONED REBELS.

QUESTION XXI. *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

ANSWER. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, forever.

THE explanations connected with the last lesson made a deep impression upon the mind of Walter. During the week following, he was unusually serious and thoughtful, and at length sought his mother's chamber, when he knew her to be alone, and, with tearful eyes, asked, "How can I be sure that God has elected me to be one of his children?"

Mrs. Dermott, with deep emotion, replied, "If you are willing to give your heart to him, and accept Christ as your Saviour, you may be sure of it, my child."

It was, therefore, with prayerful interest that Mr. and Mrs. Dermott met their dear children on the evening appointed for the exercise.

Having heard the answer repeated, the father asked, "Helen, who is the Lord Jesus Christ?"

"He is the Redeemer, the eternal Son of God."

"Do you understand the meaning of that answer?"

Helen shook her head.

"I will answer for you," said her mother. "It means that from all eternity he sustained the relation of Son to the everlasting Father—

"Thou art the Son of the living God.'

"Twelve years ago, Walter began to sustain the relation of son to your father; and so existence commenced with every son of the human race; the angels also began to be. There was a time when all these did not exist, and another time when they began to be God's children. Jesus Christ, as the son of man, began to exist almost two thousand years ago. But Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, never began to exist. Unto his Son God said,—

"Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.'

"And let all the angels of God worship him.'

"These two natures, that of the Son of God, and that of the son of man," added Mr. Dermott, "he unites in the office of the only Redeemer of God's elect. These will continue forever."

"I will illustrate some of these sentiments by another parable. We will suppose, then, that upon a sea-girt isle, there once reigned a great and good king, who had one only and dearly beloved

son, the heir to his kingdom and great revenues. The son was associated with his father in every act for the good of the empire, and the most tender, confiding affection existed between them.

"On one occasion, a large number of men associated together to rebel against the government. The knowledge of this coming to the throne, the rebels were tried, found guilty, and expelled from the island.

"Not many months elapsed before a rumor reached the king that these men were engaged in privateering around the island, plundering and then setting fire to vessels either approaching or receding from the shore. This unlawful and wicked course was continued for years, notwithstanding the utmost vigilance of the officers appointed to apprehend them.

"At length there arose a great storm, which lasted for several days. Multitudes of small vessels were driven upon the reefs surrounding the shore, and were rescued by the kindness of the islanders. Toward the close of the third day of the terrible tempest, a large vessel was seen driving furiously toward the rocks. The king, from his palace, gazed upon the scene with feelings of the tenderest compassion. The surf, lashing itself into foam, was dashing furiously toward the shore; and there, at the distance of a mile, lay a noble brig dismasted and in distress.

"Summoning the prince, the king ascended to the tower of his palace, where a powerful glass enabled him to view the awful scene with more distinctness. The distressed mariners were running to and fro on board the vessel, some lashing themselves to spars or pieces of broken

masts; others were wringing their hands, or raising their arms imploringly to heaven; while still other's had cast themselves down upon the deck in an attitude of despair.

"With a pallid cheek and a trembling voice, the king announced to his son, who stood at his side, that this vessel contained the company of rebels who had conspired against the throne, and who, for a long period, had been guilty of plundering the sea.

"'Yes, sire,' answered the prince, after having looked through the glass. 'It is indeed so. I can distinctly recognize the ringleaders in the midst of the crew.'

"The king again approached the glass, and gazed in silence upon the wreck. Then hastening to the shore, accompanied by his son, he offered large rewards to those who would go to the rescue of the wrecked and drowning mariners. But no one could be found ready to take his life in his hand, and venture upon the boiling surf, even to obtain the prize.

"At length the prince came forward among the crowd, and, approaching his father, said, 'Here am I, sire; send me.'

"The compassionate heart of the sovereign yearned after his guilty subjects. He longed to rescue them, and restore them to favor. Withdrawing with the prince from the crowd, he cried, 'Go, my son, and my love and blessing shall follow you. Go and tell the poor guilty creatures, I offer them free pardon if they will return to their allegiance, and become dutiful subjects.'

"From his previous knowledge of their character, and of the agencies to be exerted on them, he then told his son who would accept this pardon and be induced to return with him, and, having embraced and blessed him, followed him to the life-boat.

"He then hastened back to the tower, where his eagle eye watched the bark as it floated over the seething, crested waves. Suddenly he cried out in the anguish of his soul. A great wave had struck the frail boat, and it was engulfed in the angry waters.

"But no; there presently appeared a little speck in the distance. With what intense, breathless anxiety he watched the scene!

"Wiping his dim eyes, he at length perceived that his son had buffeted the waves, and was clinging to the bottom of the boat. But he had hardly begun to breathe more freely, before the same thing occurred again and again. So that when the prince reached the wrecked vessel, he was scarcely able to mount the deck, to which the boat was made fast by means of a long rope.

"The prince made his way along the deck, which was covered with broken pieces of timber, and made known his errand. With the earnest love which had led him to encounter so much danger for their sakes, he now besought them to leave their wrecked and ruined brig, and accept his father's offers of mercy. Those whom the king had mentioned to his son, threw themselves, without reserve, into his arms, surrendering themselves, and all they had, to his will. But the others refused to comply, even preferring to remain on board their craft, which was fast going

to pieces. Every tender persuasion was of no avail; and at length, with the chosen few, the prince sadly entered the life-boat to return to the shore.

"But before cutting the line which would destroy the last hope of the poor outlaws, he stretched out his arms toward them, beseeching them, as they valued their own lives, and the sacrifice he had made for them, to lay down their arms in token of their submission to his authority, that he might have the unspeakable pleasure of presenting them all to his father as the fruits of his suffering.

"But all these tender entreaties only made the wrath of the guilty pirates more terrible. With loud cries they bade him begone, hurling their weapons in defiance at the boat, and refusing longer even to listen to his words of love.

"Those who were accompanying the prince, being made willing to accept his mediation with the king, bowed their heads in shame at the insolent conduct of their late companions; scalding tears of anguish and remorse ran down their cheeks as they remembered how recently they had joined in this wicked rebellion. The language of their hearts was, 'O, with what a wonderful love hath he drawn our guilty hearts to himself! What boundless goodness that we are not only saved alive, but pardoned and restored to all the privileges of the kingdom!'

"As they drew near the shore, their emotions increased, and they cried aloud, 'How can we appear in the presence of our justly offended sovereign? Our iniquity seems too great for him to forgive. O, why did we never, till now, view

ourselves as vile and guilty before him! Surely our sins have rendered us blind to our own unworthiness, as well as wanting in obedience toward him.'

"Comfort yourselves, my dear friends,' exclaimed the prince; 'my father has accepted my sufferings and labors as a sacrifice for your guilt, and your pardon is free and entire. Forget, then, the things that are past, and endeavor, by your zeal in his service, to show your gratitude for the favors you have received.'

"When the life-boat, with its precious freight of souls, drew toward the land, many stood back with fear, as they recognized the outlaws; but this emotion was instantly changed to joy, as the prince accompanied them to his father, and presented them as the reward of his toil. 'Here am I, sire, and the people who have been redeemed from death by my agonizing exertions. In your name I have promised that the sentence pronounced against them should be reversed, and that, accepting me as their ransom, they should be admitted to all the privileges of children of a merciful sovereign.'

"Here the pardoned rebels cast themselves down at the feet of the king, confessing their hatred of themselves and the life they had pursued since they departed from his requirements, resolutely declaring their determination henceforth to live lives of obedience and integrity, that they might in some humble degree express their gratitude and love toward him who had been willing to give his life a ransom for theirs.

"When the multitude, who had been crowding near, heard these words, there arose one long-continued shout of rejoicing, in which might be heard these words: 'Our glorious Prince! May he reign over us forever and ever! For his sake we joyfully, exultingly, welcome home those whom he has so loved, and who will help to swell the song of praise to his name forever and ever.'"

While Mr. Dermott had been speaking, Walter's tears silently trickled down his cheeks. He evidently was applying the parable to his own case.

After a moment's pause, the gentleman continued: "We are the rebels against God, the king. Jesus Christ is our prince, who has offered his life a sacrifice for our sins, that we may obtain pardon and peace. Those of us who receive him as our Saviour are his elect, whom he carries in the life-boat of salvation to the kingdom of his Father in heaven."

Dear children, who have all of you violated God's holy law, and are living afar off, having incurred his displeasure, will you not confess and forsake your sins, joyfully embracing his Son as your Prince, your Saviour, and Redeemer?

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