

Family Circle.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

NO. VI. GOD UNCHANGEABLE.

I. Change darkens all; we walk 'mid graves; Earth heaves and sinks like ocean waves; The mountain peaks are scorched by time; Proud domes decay; The sun shall stop his course sublime, And pass away.

II. Rejoice that He is by thy side In whom th' eternities abide. On His bright, awful, glorious brow, Age writes no stains; The Noon of Day, the unchanging Now, He still remains.

III. Rebellion cannot shake His throne! As wildest tempest, rushing on, But higher lifts the ocean's flow In might abroad, So hell's worst storms but brighter show The might of God.

IV. When demon-kings 'gainst Him have striven, He laughs, this God who sits in heaven— He needs not rise to crush their deeds, A laugh, a frown, Are all this calm Jehovah needs To crush them down.

V. Haste, when the work is dying man's! No hurry in God's awful plans; Terrific patience, that gives scope To acts impure! The oppressor's doom, the lowly's hope Are thrice secure!

VI. In these long eras who can trace What darkening changes may have place, Even in the bowers that bloom above? No! God's the same; Dread no eclipse! for Changeless Love Is still His name.

VII. Changeless Inertness?—No! but Power That rays forth worlds with every hour; Like the calm mountain range that throbs In brightening thrill A hundred rivers from its snows So pure and still!

JENNIE'S DISAPPOINTMENT.

BY M. E. M. [CONTINUED.]

Somehow, when Jennie and Alfred went back into the room, the interest had gone from the blocks, and it seemed to have grown ever so much darker. In spite of herself, Jennie's thoughts would fly to the merry group in Kittie's parlor, only three squares off, and then that magic lantern!

"Dennie," said Alfred, "me hungry." "Well, dear, you shall have your farina—and go to sleep. Wait till sister gets it out of the closet." After Alie had been fed, he wanted to sit on his sister's lap. So she drew up her mother's low rocking chair near the lounge, that she might lay him down easily and safely when he should sleep; and, hugging his little head to her breast, began to sing soft lullaby songs, in a crooning, coaxing way, till the little restless hands dropped down on his breast, and the violet eyes shut softly—softly—till the long, fair lashes swept the pink cheeks, and the breath came gently through the parted lips.

"Fast asleep," said Jennie. "Now, if I can only lay you down without waking you, how nice it will be." Nice, indeed! Jennie's arms were not so strong as her mother's, and a sleeping child is very heavy. She was just about to lay him down when his lips moved in a little fretful way—his eyes opened, and her work had to be done over again. How provoking! Jennie felt as if she could have shaken the child, but she kept down the impatient spirit, and resolutely began again. Happily he soon fell asleep; and Jennie, to be quite sure of him, sang four songs through, after his slumbers had begun, before she put him down.

"Now I'll arrange mother's desk," thought Jennie, "and afterwards study my lessons for to-morrow. Poor little Henry; I hope he isn't so badly hurt after all. I'll know when mother comes home." A pleasant surprise awaited Jennie when she opened the desk. It did not require much arrangement; and Mrs. Martin had only directed Jennie to it as a "ruse" to cover her real design. There, in a paper parcel, directed to Jennie Martin, was a large slice of Mrs. Martin's plum cake, which was kept in a big stone jar in the pantry, up stairs, with the preserves, and never brought forth except on special occasions. It was oiled with fruit, and beautifully iced and washed; and Jennie saw at once that her mother had wished to give her a treat, and had taken this way of doing it—putting the cake in her desk while she had been absent from the room.

"What a dear, kind mother!" thought Jennie, as she ate her cake. "Mother was right; it was not love for the soldiers, but selfishness, that made me so cross this afternoon, and so angry because I had to deny myself the lint party. For though I should be delighted to pick lint there, I don't care a straw about doing it here by myself. And there's the roll of old linen, all the same, up stairs in my apron pocket. I have a great mind to go directly up and get it, and pick my share of the lint. I can give it to Kitty Red-path to-morrow. I'll do it! Yes, I will!"

Up stairs ran Jennie, and brought down her bundle of linen. It was rather slow, tedious work, doing it in the lonely sitting room, with no one in all the house but Alfred, asleep, and herself, with the clock keeping up its monotonous tick, tack, tick, and giving, every now and then, a defiant whirr, as it passed the quarter hours. Very stupid to strain her eyes over the white, fine threads, and lay them, one at a time, in a straight, smooth pile on her lap, looking from the white work outside, to the whiter snow that lay all over the ground, like Gideon's fleece. Many a time she was tempted to put it away, but the thought of the poor soldiers, marching, with weary feet, over rocky paths or gloomy woods, fighting and getting wounded in those terrible battles in the South, and lying, day after day, far from home and kind, loving friends, in the hospital-tent or the long, low barrack room, made her keep on. Very bravely Jennie worked, until the clock struck five. Then she drew the table out, and set it for tea, and ran, with fear and trembling, to the kitchen, to put the kettle on the fire. It was growing dark, and Jennie was a timid child, and by no means liked being alone in the house after sunset. She knew that her fears were foolish, but, like many another little girl, she could not quite get over them. How she wished that Alie would wake up, or, better still, that Horace were at home, and not at grandmother's. She thought repentantly how often she had considered her noisy brother a great trouble, and how glad she had been that he was at grandma's instead of at home, in the beginning of the afternoon.

Tick, tack, tick went the clock, and the curtain of twilight settled down on the world. Peeping out from the window, Jennie saw nothing but the cloudy, leaden sky and the pure, white earth, with people hurrying to and fro on the dimly lighted street. She drew down the shades, struck a match, and, standing on a chair, just managed to reach the gas burner in the centre of the room. The flare of light disturbed little Alfred, and he sat up on the lounge, rubbing his eyes and calling for sister to take him up. Nothing could have delighted Jennie more just then; and, lifting her little brother, she drew his high chair to the table and established him in it, with two or three playthings before him. Then taking her basket again, she began earnestly to work at it—and was pleased to see the square pieces of linen gradually disappear, and soft, smooth bundles of snowy lint taking their places. She worked so busily that she quite forgot her loneliness, and found herself singing, as merrily as a cricket, one sweet Sunday-school melody after another; and, just as her clear, mellow voice was singing out loudest—

"Jesus loves me; this I know, For the Bible tells me so, Little ones to him belong— They are weak, but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me! yes, Jesus loves me!"

she heard a shuffling on the steps as of some one brushing away the snow, and then a loud ring at the door. Jennie was half afraid to open it. It was too soon for her mother, and she knew that her father would go to Aunt Emma's to see how Henry was, and accompany her mother home. Horace was at his grandma's, and not coming home until to-morrow. All the foolish stories Jennie had ever heard of burglars and their deeds rushed into her mind. Who knew that this intruder was not a robber, who had taken advantage of her being all alone to get into the house? Jennie raised the curtain and took a timid peep out, and saw, not much to her satisfaction, a great, tall man standing on the step, and knocking the snow from his feet. The ring was repeated—this time a long, loud ring, that said plainly, "Make haste and open the door. Don't keep me standing here, all night, in the cold." Murmuring a little prayer—"Oh! our Father in heaven protect poor Jennie and Alie!"—Jennie opened the room door, went cautiously through the passage, and undid the latch on the hall door. Opening it first the least bit, that she might shut it, if necessary, she said—

"Who's there?" "Who's there?" This is pretty hospitality!"

There's always morning somewhere in the world.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

LILLIE'S PRAYER AND CONSOLATION.

Lillie R. A.—is the youngest daughter of pious parents, and a member of one of the Sabbath-schools in this city. Two weeks ago her dear, Christian mother was brought suddenly to a bed of sickness, and as was feared almost from the first, to a bed of death. An affectionate husband, numerous children and kind friends watched by her bedside night and day. All seemed anxious, but none more so than little Lillie. Quietly taking her seat by a table, a few days after the commencement of her mother's sickness, this child of eleven years, wrote upon her slate the following, which we will call "Lillie's prayer."

"O, God! please may mamma get well, once more to be with us, once more to be with us at worship every morning. O, God! it would please us very much to have her once more in our family, O, God! hear my prayer and answer it, for Christ's sake. Amen. LILLIE R. A.—"

"God is good and great." How sweet it is to hear the children sing of Jesus. How sweet it is to hear them pray to Jesus. But how much sweeter is it, to find one of such tender years as Lillie, retiring from her own sorrowful family group for a season, and unobserved, penciling upon her slate, such sweet expressions of a child's love for its parent, and such sweet expressions of faith in Christ. God in his wisdom however, was pleased to call that sick mother to himself, and she went to sleep in Jesus on last Christmas morning. I stood by her bed-side when she passed away, and with the family, I felt that what was our loss was her gain. Lillie wept for a season bitterly. She realized that she had lost her mother. But after a time, she again went to a table, and unobserved, upon a small piece of paper, wrote the following, which we will call "Lillie's consolation in sorrow."

"My mother is now dead. Sweet mother! Sweet mother! Ah! she died in Christ Jesus; that dear mother will never speak again. Dead! dead! Her spirit has fled to that mansion above, where the angels will forever sing glory! glory! glory! No sorrowing there, no pain, no sickness there, nothing but happiness there; no night, nothing but prayer and singing. Never go to bed, never get tired, because the shine of the light keeps them awake. Oh! but to think that she is happy, and sitting at the right hand of our dear Saviour. LILLIE R. A.—"

Uncorrected, unadorned, yet give this innocent expression of a child's consolation in sorrow. It was Christmas, and thousands of children were around their Christmas trees, and in the smiles of their friends, but this little Lillie in the house of mourning rejoiced in the sweet abiding promises of the Gospel. How pleasant for a Pastor to testify concerning these things. J. Y. M.

YOUTH, MANHOOD, AGE.

In youth the mind goes irresistibly toward the future, living faster than the flight of time, peopling the coming years with creations of fancy and hope. In manhood the current of feeling and of thought eddies along the shore that separates the past from the future, yielding sometimes to the momentum that youth has given it, going onward in its wonted way, then thrown aside, and pressed back towards its source. But when we cross the limits of middle age, the visions of the future fade, or are mellowed into soberness, and we turn to the past, like children to their mother, when their little inventions fail to give them happiness. Like the rivulet, rushing impetuous down the mountain-side, our fresh life goes in light and gladness. Our middle age flows like the majestic stream, ever pressing toward the sea, yet winding through the broad lands, and sometimes turning back in its wide curves toward the hills that supply its waters. But like the deep river, where its floods mingle with the sea, its general motion hardly perceptible, while daily the ocean-tide drives its mighty fullness back over its oft traversed bed—the full soul of age is reluctant pressed back on its former life by its nearness to the "great hereafter."

Some whose eyes rest on these words have already gone through joyous youth, and the middle age of life, and touched the period of mental reflux, in which the past calls us, and the future presses thought back again on the paths already trod, in which, "The loved and lost arise to view, Remembered groves which greenly grew, Bathed still in childhood's morning dew, Along whose bowers of beauty sweep Whatever memories mourners weep, Sweet faces which the charnels keep, Young, gentle eyes so long asleep." Age has this advantage, that its life on earth is manifold. In youth it lived a future life by hope and imagination; in manhood it had the past and the future, and in its evening it lives youth and manhood over again by memory, while in each separate stage, it possesses the present. But there is a future in

which youth and age are one. In heaven are no sad memories. The current of life is ever full, joyous, onward, without fluctuation, without end. REV. E. E. ADAMS.

THE HELMET OF SALVATION.

"A helmet?" said Julia looking up. "What is a helmet?" "The warriors of old time," said Mr. Rhys, "used to wear a helmet to protect their heads from danger. It was a covering of leather and steel. With this head-piece on, they felt safe; where their lives would not have been worth a penny without it."

"But Eleanor—what does Eleanor want of a helmet?" said Julia. And she went off into a shout of ringing laughter. "Perhaps you want one," said Mr. Rhys comely. "No, I don't. What should I want it for? What should I cover my head with leather and steel for, Mr. Rhys?" "You want something stronger than that."

"Something stronger? What do I want, Mr. Rhys?" "To know that, you must find out first what the danger is." "I am not in any danger." "How do you know that?" "Am I, Mr. Rhys?" "Let us see. Do you know what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us all?" "No." "Do you know whether God has given us any commandments?" "Yes; I know the ten commandments. I have learned them once, but I don't remember them."

"Have you obeyed them?" "Me." "Yes, you." "I never thought about it." "Have you disobeyed them then?" Eleanor breathed more freely, and listened. It was curious to her to see the wayward, giddy child stand and look into the eyes of her questioner as if fascinated. The ordinary answer from Julia would have been a toss and a fling. Now she stood and said sedately, "I don't know." "We can soon tell," said her friend. "One of the commandments is, to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Have you always done that?" "No," said Julia bluntly. "I don't think anybody else does."

"Never mind anybody else. Have you always honored the word and wish of your father and mother? That is another commandment." "I have done it more than Alfred has." "Let Alfred alone. Have you always done it?" "No, sir." "Have you loved the good God all your life, with all your heart?" "No." "You have loved to please yourself, rather than anything else?" "The nod with which Julia answered this, if not polite, was at least significant, accompanied with an emphatic "Always!" Mr. Rhys could not help smiling at her, but he went on gravely enough. "What is to keep you then from being afraid?" "From being afraid?" "Yes, you want a helmet." "Afraid?" said Julia. "Yes, afraid of the justice of God. He never lets a sin go unpunished. He is perfectly just."

"But I can't help it," said Julia. "Then what is to become of you? You need a helmet." "A helmet?" said Julia again. "What sort of a helmet?" "You want to know that God has forgiven you; that he is not angry with you; that he loves you, and has made you his child." "How can I?" said the child, pressing closer to the speaker where he sat on the step of the door. And no wonder, for the words were given with a sweet, earnest utterance which drew the hearts of both hearers. He went on without looking at Eleanor; or without seeming to look that way. "How can you what?" "How can I have that?" "That helmet? There is only one way."

"What is it, Mr. Rhys?" "They were silent a minute, looking at each other, the man and the child; the child with her eyes bent on his. "Suppose somebody had taken your punishment for you? borne the displeasure of God for your sins?" "Who would?" said Julia. "Nobody would." "One has." "Who, Mr. Rhys?" "One that loved you, and that loved all of us, well enough to pay the price of saving us." "What price did he pay?" "His own life. He gave it up cruelly—that ours might be redeemed."

"What for, Mr. Rhys? what made him?" "Because he loved us. There was no other reason." "Then people will be saved"—said Julia. "Every one who will take the conditions. It depends upon that. There are conditions." "What conditions, Mr. Rhys?" "Do you know who did this for you?" "No." "It is the Lord himself—the Lord Jesus Christ—the Lord of glory. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death—even the death of the cross. So now he is exalted a Prince and a Saviour—able to save all who will accept his conditions." "What are the conditions, Mr. Rhys?" "You must be his servant. And you must trust all your little heart and life to him." "I must be his servant?" said Julia. "Yes, heart and soul, to obey him. And you must trust him to forgive you and save you for his blood's sake."

Doublets there had been something in the speaker himself that had held the child's attention so fast all this while. Her eyes had never wandered from his face; she had stood in docile wise, looking at him and answering his questions and listening, won by the commentary she read in his face on what her friend was saying. A strange light kindled in it as he spoke; there were lines of affection and tenderness that came in the play of lips and eyes; and when he named his Master, there had shined in his face as it were the reflection of the glory he alluded to. Julia's eyes were not the only ones that had been held; though it was only Julia's tongue that said anything in reply. Standing now and looking still into the face she had been reading, her words were an unconscious rendering of what she found there. "Mr. Rhys, I think he was very good." The water filled those clear eyes at that, but he only returned the child's gaze and said nothing. "I will take the conditions, Mr. Rhys," Julia went on. "The Lord make, it so!" he said gravely.—The Old Helmet.

"JOY OVER ONE."

The sharp, quick sound of a crier's bell was heard above the rattle of carriages and the hum of multitudes hastening home as night came on, and the words "Child lost! child lost!" fell upon the ears, and sent a thrill of pain to the hearts of fathers and mothers, as the crier passed up the street to the next corner, where he stopped to give a description of the wanderer. How many held their breath and listened. "Child lost! child lost! A little girl—not quite three years of age—her hair light and curly—eyes blue; when she left home she was dressed in a scarlet frock and white apron; has been missing four hours!" And again the bell was heard as the crier went on, proclaiming as he went the same mournful story.

And where, all this time, was little Lily Ashton? Soon after she left her father's door she made the acquaintance of other children in the street, with whom she played awhile, and then many things amused her as she ran along on the crowded sidewalk, unnoticed by the busy throng; but at length she discovered that her home was no longer in sight, and that no dear papa or mamma answered her call; and the poor little lost one sat down on a door-step and wept bitterly. A kind-hearted gentleman came that way—one who loved children, and who was never happier than when they smiled on him from their bright faces, which they could hardly help doing when he smiled so pleasantly on them, and who was always ready to speak comforting words when they were in trouble. "What's the matter little Blossom?" he asked.

His voice was so full of love that Lily stopped crying, and brushing back her curls, looked up to see who it was that spoke to her. The light from a street lamp above her shone full upon his benevolent face. "I isn't 'little Blossom?' I is Lily, and I want mamma," she said; and the tears began to flow again. "But Lily won't cry any more, because we will go and find mamma. Will Lily go with me?" Her tears ceased flowing, and she looked up into the kind face once more. "Has you got a little girl, and is she 'little Blossom?'"

"No, my dear; I have no Lily nor Blossom; only when I find one such as you; but I love little girls and boys, and I don't like to see you cry. Will you go with me to find your mamma?" Lily stood up and put her hand in his, for her heart was won. The kind gentleman lifted the tired little girl in his arms, and carried her to the nearest police station, where he knew he would learn what she could not tell him about her home. And in a short time he placed the lost darling in the arms of her mother, whose anguish was thus turned into joy. He found other children—brothers and sisters—in that home; and the parents and children gathered around Lily, lost an hour before, but now found; and as they laughed and wept by turns, he felt that he was receiving a richer reward in seeing their happiness—their joy over one dear child—than thanks, however earnest, could be.

I know you do not wonder that this family were so glad to see Lily again. But their gladness reminds me—perhaps it has reminded you also—of some of the words of Jesus: "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." Can you tell why the happy family of the redeemed in heaven are joyful when a sinner repents? A sinner, you know, is one who is disobeying God; who does not love or trust in Christ; who is lost in the world, and who will never find the way to that beautiful home above, unless he repents. Do you not think that if you were in heaven, and could hear that some one on earth, who had been wicked, had repented and begun to love Jesus, and was coming to be in heaven too—happy and holy forever—you would be glad?

Perhaps some dear friends of yours are there now, and they are hoping to hear that you are in the way to the same home, if you are not already in it. Dear child, have you begun to walk in that path which leads to the "beautiful city built above?" Come with the children of God; and there will be joy in heaven over you far beyond that which was felt in Lily's family when she was found. One is there who loves you far more than any friend on earth can love, and he will receive you gladly into the number of the blessed.—Uncle Paul's Stories.

We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths, In feelings, not in figures on a dial. We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best. And he whose heart beats quickest lives the longest. Life is but means unto an end; that end Beginning, means and end to all things—God.

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