

Ministering Children's League.

SIR.—In a letter from Cannes, France, to an associate of the Ministering Children's League in London, Ontario, the Countess of Meath writes: "I am sending you a letter for the Canadian M. C. L. little ones which may be a help perhaps to you all. Surely, if we can train many to love ministering, we may hope that much fruit will grow from the seeds we are now seeking to plant. We are starting our 'Home of comfort for the aged,' and a lovely house it is. My idea is that when our English M.C.L. children grow up they will help in this scheme, the young helping the aged."

CANNES, FRANCE, Easter Day, 1891.

Good morning to my dear ministering children on this bright and beautiful Easter Day, which I am spending in the "Sunny South." May God's love shine richly into your hearts, and then your lives will be blessed; then you will be true ministering children. I have just been saying our league prayer. I hope you have been using it too, for I am very anxious that you should use it often, every day if possible. If you did not use the prayer I would be afraid lest after you had done something which you thought was a kind deed, you would go away thinking you had done something to boast about. On the other hand, if you had been praying to be loving and kind, and then a thought came into your mind as to how you might do a kind deed, you would be able to think "this is something I must do because God wishes me to do it." Supposing your father was to see a poor hungry child in the street, and he said to you, "go and take that piece of bread to that little one," and you did it. Would you think yourself very good and generous for so doing? No, you would not, because you would only be doing just what your father had told you. You would have done your duty and no more. So it is with our kind deeds; we pray God to make us loving, kind and useful to others, and then we think that *He* gives us the thoughts and shows us what we are to do, and so there is nothing to boast about. We ought only to feel very thankful if we can do something which our Father would like us to do. So let us try to be loving and humble and also watchful. What does a watchful person do? Does he go to sleep at his post or go about with his eyes only half open? No, he looks all round him and he watches many things which others would have failed to see, and he hears sounds which might escape the ears of other people. Many years I remember trying to learn something about birds. I wanted to know what they looked like, what kind of nests they built, what kind of songs they sang. I succeeded in learning a little about them—very little it was, I fear—but I learned something else, and that was to know how very blind and deaf I had been in the past not to have seen or heard more of my feathered friends. One day I looked up and saw a dear little fluffy-faced tom-tit; another day a dear little tree-creeper mounting the trunk of a tree so softly; on another occasion I saw a great woodpecker in his bright green plumage and with his red top-knot. Probably these or other birds had been near me before, but I had not been on the look out for them, and so unless a bird came and hopped right under my nose, I would perhaps not have seen him. In the same way with kind deeds, people often don't mean to be unkind, but they do not watch for opportunities of helping others. Your little will can here be of service to you, to help make you watchful. The happiness of making others happy is worth watching for.

Good bye, dear children, and may God bless you and help you to grow stronger to do right as you grow older.

Your loving friend,
M. J. MEATH.

Members of the Church of England.

SIR.—One point, it seems to me, is not brought out strongly enough in your answers to correspondents' queries on the subject of vestrymen and churchwardens, etc., as *communicants necessarily*. They have to sign a declaration that they are members of the Church of England. It is absurd to suppose that if they are not really members, such a declaration qualifies them. In fact the regulation about foundation of new congregations expressly says they must be members, etc., and sign a declaration. Besides, the offic of the parochial tribunal is to admit formally those whom they decide to be "entitled." Their business is to ascertain the facts, not merely depend on declaration. Now, you, sir, have intimated that the *continuance* of membership in the Church, originated through the initiation of Baptism, depends on compliance with the regulations and ordinances of the Church. The canons and rubrics are explicit on the subject of the necessity of *confirmation and communion* after a certain age. Any man, therefore, who disregards these obligations, becomes *de facto* and *ipso facto* "excommunicate"—is cut off from membership. He is as a branch

broken off. He is—being disorderly—to be treated "as a heathen man and a publican." Of course, he may be restored, grafted on *again*—meantime his membership is gone by default, and he himself is necessarily suspended from the exercise of all his privileges.

SMILAX.

Notes and Queries.

SIR.—Will you explain the terms, Eve, Even, Vigil, Abstinence, Fast, etc., and distinguish them.

Z.

Ans.—"Eve" (or Even) is the day before any festival. It is called a "Vigil" or watching-time, if the festival happens outside of Christmas, Easter or Whitsuntyde. St. Luke's and St. Michael's are two other festivals without vigils—for special reasons. The eve or vigil ends and the festival begins about 6 p.m. of the former—whatever time the festival collect is said at evening service, so that the fast of the vigil ends also at that time. It was a primitive custom to hold a vigil (not as a fast, however,) up to midnight of the festival, but this watchnight custom was soon abandoned on account of excessive festivity and consequent scandals, except in the case of Christmas and Easter—the latter chiefly in the Eastern Church. Fast is used as equivalent to total abstinence from food, and was proper (in strictness) for all the day till 3 or 6 p.m., when the fast or abstinence was relaxed in Lent, or suspended in the case of isolated abstinence, or fasting days such as *Fridays* in every week. The Church of England does not draw the line between fasting and abstinence; it is a matter for the individual conscience and constitution.

SIR.—Please explain the meaning of I H C

VIATOR.

Ans.—These letters are the three first of the sacred name *Jesus*, the I in greek being the same as our J, and the H being the Greek letter *Eeta*, or long e, by coincidence resembling our letter H; and the last of the three, which resembles our letter C, is the Greek letter corresponding to our letter S. The three letters are sometimes written IHS, in which case, if the middle letter be taken for the Roman H, they stand for the initials of the Latin words "Jesus Hominum Salvator"—Jesus, Saviour of men.

Sunday School Lesson.

Rogation Sunday.

May 3, 1891

GENERAL.—THE LITANY.

Read the Rubric before the Litany. The word "Litany" then means *supplication*. The term is used when we mean supplication, as sinners, for God's mercy, and generally indicates a kind of supplication in which the minister reads the petition, and the people say, "Lord, have mercy," or some such response.

I. THE ORIGIN OF OUR LITANY.

A heretic, Arius, who did not believe that Jesus is God, used to have grand processions through the streets and sing litanies. St. Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, had litanies sung in procession through the streets to prevent his people joining the procession of this heretic. Litanies were used in the Church long before this, but this circumstance shows how much they were thought of. After this they came to be used, with fasting and prayer, in any great trouble or difficulty.

St. Augustine entered Canterbury singing litanies. In the fifth century, when there was great trouble at Vienne, in Gaul (France), the Bishop of Vienne (Mamertus) appointed solemn litanies to be used on the three days before Ascension Day. Perhaps these supplications were for food, and for good weather for the corn and other crops. Turn now to the Table of Vigils and Fasts to be observed. See the three *Rogation Days*, "the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension-Day." Next Thursday will be Ascension-Day; Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday are therefore Rogation Days. *Rogation* means *Litany* or *Supplication*. The Church of England has retained these days as a period of fasting or abstinence in preparation for the great Festival of the Ascension.

Our Litany took its present form at the Reformation.

II. THE INVOCATION.

The beginning of the Litany—a very solemn form of invocation. Four times we ask for mercy. We supplicate, (1) the Father; (2) the Son; (3) the Holy Ghost; (4) the Blessed Trinity. The Trinity addressed. (Isa. vi. 1-3; Rev. iv. 8). We address the Trinity also in "Te Deum," and in the "Ter Sanctus" in Holy Communion.

In these two latter cases we offer praise to the Three Persons in the One Godhead. In the Litany we cry for mercy.

The Father made us and preserves us. We have not loved Him and obeyed Him as we ought to do. We must, therefore, cry for mercy. He gave His Son (S. John iii. 16). Have we valued this gift, and loved the Son as we ought? No. We therefore want mercy.

The Son "loved me and gave Himself for me." Have we loved Him as we ought? Have we taken His easy burden and light yoke? Have we kept His commands, and followed His law of love? (S. John xiv. 15). Then we want mercy.

God the Holy Ghost "sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God." He speaks through conscience. Have we always followed conscience? Have we done as the Holy Ghost would have us do? What does St. Paul tell us our bodies are? (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). Have we defiled our bodies by any unclean thought or deed? Then we want mercy.

We collect our prayers together and offer them to the Trinity. Sin is misery: we are therefore miserable sinners.

Repeat Is. lv. 7, using plural first personal pronoun.

Family Reading.

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

GOING TO HEAVEN.

Have you ever thought much about Heaven, that "other world," as people call it? Do you ever try and fancy to yourself what sort of place it is? Children often think about Heaven as a golden city, very bright and light, the streets beautiful and shining, and people walking in them dressed in white, with harps in their hands.

Well, we mustn't say that children are all wrong. Surely it must be *light* and *bright* there!

Did you ever go into the back streets of a big town—the *slums*, as they are called? I dare say one thing particularly struck you—that was the blackness of everything. And inside the houses, owing to the narrow streets and smoke, it is nearly always dark. Fancy that! *never* to have the broad light of day, but sort of dim dusky twilight instead.

Perhaps you noticed that in one small, dull-looking house the blinds were pulled down. That was because some one was lying dead behind the dingy blinds. Some one had had a long illness on a poor bed in a little sad, dark room, and very weary the sick person must have got as the days and nights went on.

And then as death drew near—"It's getting dark, I can't see you now." And the blackness closes in, and the dim daylight doesn't matter any more.

For what a change has come to that poor soul!—the dark earthly home left behind; now a heavenly one exceeding light. What a contrast!

A welcome and beautiful one, for we all love light! Surely the childish idea of Heaven can't be all wrong. Only I should like to think of Heaven as more like country than town. I should like Heaven to have hills and valleys, and great stretches of beautiful country, and trees and flowers. An old man said once he thought there must always be fine weather in Heaven. Glorious sunshine! Yes, one can understand that.

But some people do not care for country, and are more pleased and excited by seeing a crowd of human beings than anything else in the world. I can enter into that too, for people are more interesting and worth studying than trees or flowers.

And then, too, we read in the Revelations about a city of pure gold, with gates of pearl. So we may believe that there are noble and beautiful cities, with buildings and streets, as well as lovely country, in that Land.

It is all rather dim and indistinct to us; but the