

prayers should be offered to God, and the mystery of our redemption brought before men's minds. May it not be the case that much of the unbelief, or misbelief, of this present age would have been prevented, and now by God's help would be remedied, if the clergy were more particular in observing the seasons of devotion appointed by the Church, and in bringing forward those great doctrines which are there enshrined?

But this all members of the Church may do,—carefully avail themselves of all the means of devotion which their clergyman places within their reach. And if it should so happen that their lot is cast in some remote settlement,

far away from the residence of their pastor, then let them, day by day, in their families, read the mystery of the Redeemer's passion and death. And especially on that great day of the Crucifixion, which alas! by the influence of puritanism is only recognised by the world as a day of idleness and pleasure, when it is not devoted to the usual business of life, on that day let us learn to contemplate the death of the Son of God, and try to realize the force and meaning of our Litany prayer, "by Thine Agony and Bloody Sweat, by thy Cross and Passion, by Thy precious Death, and Burial, Good Lord, deliver us."

A.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

LESSONS—ECCLESIASTICUS XI.

ECCLESIASTICUS XIX.

"I AM puzzled again, to-day, mamma," said Hugh Clifton, one Sunday evening in March. "I know you will soon make all clear to me, but why is there a service appointed in our Church for the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, as Mr. Paget gave out to-day for next Thursday? and last month, too, on the 2nd, I remember when I was at my uncle's, they all went to Church because it was the Purification. I had a cold and could not go, but I wondered at the time, for I thought it was only Roman Catholics who ever kept festivals in her honour."

"I do not quite know, Hugh," replied Mrs. Clifton, "why we should not remember the blessed mother of our Lord as well as His apostles; but open your Prayer-book and I think you will find it is only *as* His mother that we do give her honour. Is there not another title for the second of February, besides that of The Purification?"

"Ah, yes, mamma. The Presentation of Christ in the Temple."

"Right. Now tell me what is the meaning of The Annunciation. You will soon see if you will look through the Gospel for the day."

"It is all about the angel Gabriel coming to tell St. Mary of the birth of our Saviour, mamma."

"Yes; to annunciate means to announce—to tell tidings. So one festival is to commemorate the announcement of Christ's birth, the other His presentation as a babe in the Temple."

"But, mamma, how is it that this last festival comes first in the year?"

Mrs. Clifton smiled. "You might as well ask, Hugh, why is it that the Annunciation falls during Lent, when we are commemorating the forty days Fast in the wilderness. You forget our *one year* comprises the principal events of our Saviour's whole life. Thus the Annunciation is observed several months before His birth at Christmas, the Purification and the Presentation forty days after, according to a law given to the Jews long before, whilst journeying towards the promised land. Does the presentation of Christ in the Temple remind you of anything?"

"Of Holy Baptism, do you mean, mamma?"

"Yes; and whenever you hear and think of this festival, I trust you will always remember that day when you yourself were presented to God in His Church; when His Holy Spirit was first given to you, and when because you were such an infant, others promised in your name that you should renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, and walk in the ways of God's commandments all the days of your life. Christ's little soldier must pray to be like Him, and may He, my dear boy, give you the pure, clean heart fitted for His presence."

There was silence for a few moments, then Hugh asked:

"Will you tell me more about the Annunciation, mamma?"