

THE BENEDICITE.

To the Editors of the Evangelical Churchman.

DEAR SIRS,—This canticle, called "The Song of the Three Children," is a Greek addition to the third chapter of Daniel. It was not written by that prophet, but is a *spurious* production of much later date, and in the Bible was transferred to the Apocrypha long ago, and if people would listen to common sense when talking of the Prayer Book one would think the retention therein of this fraudulent production alone would be sufficient to prove that there is some need of Revision.

Why do any of our clergy allow it to be sung instead of the Te Deum? It rests entirely with them, for the use of it is optional. Is it because the "Priests" are particularly addressed therein, or is it through ignorance of its origin? If the latter, is there any excuse for such ignorance? Singing to spirits and souls of the righteous and to Ananias, Azarias and Misael is praying to the dead!

It is considered by some to be appropriate for Lent, but it is not obligatory.

PROTESTANT.

March 12th, 1884.

Children's Corner.

CONQUERING BY LOVE.

I. (continued.)

The question was soon answered by Dr. Blake, an old friend of Mrs. Wimborne's and the village generally.

"Don't be alarmed!" he said kindly as they drew up before the gate. "There's nothing very much amiss, only a sprained ankle."

"Only!" But Theo's white face, drawn with pain, yet trying bravely to smile away his mother's anxiety, seemed to put another construction on the word.

Dr. Blake, throwing the reins on the well-drilled horse's neck, leapt to the ground, and then almost lifted Theo down to his own level.

"I'm all right, mother, don't look so frightened!" he said. "Now, Doctor, if you'll give me your arm"—the rest of the sentence was lost in a sharp cry of pain, as the helpless foot twisted again under his weight. A dark cloud seemed to come between him and his mother's face, which did not lighten until he found himself lying on the faded chintz-covered sofa in the dining-room.

It was very humiliating to be obliged to stay there, and have eau-de-cologne sprinkled on his hot forehead and cold hands; but nevertheless he had to submit to all this, and the doctor's examination and bandaging of the swollen ankle. One thought was still uppermost in his mind.

"I say, Dr. Blake, you'll manage to get me all right for next Saturday. I am to run then you know, in our sports."

The doctor shook his head kindly.

"My dear boy, I'm afraid that's out of the question altogether. You've got a hurt there which will keep you quiet for a week at least."

"Oh, Doctor!"

Theo turned away his face, so that the quivering of his under-lip should not be noticed. Mrs. Wimborne came to the rescue.

"Now, Dr. Blake, I forbid Saturday being mentioned for this evening at any rate! I want to give our patient some tea; will you not stay and have a cup too?"

"No, thanks, Mrs. Wimborne. I ought to be half-way on the road now to Appleton, and musn't linger another minute, or perhaps my horse will go on without me. Good-bye, Theo, I'll come round again in the morning, and we'll talk over matters then."

Theo watched the short, stout figure hurrying through the garden, and into the buggy, and then applied himself languidly to tea and bread and butter. His mother had brought a

small table to his sofa, so that he might be more comfortable, and by the time the second cup of tea had disappeared, things began to wear a brighter aspect.

"And now tell me, dear, how this all happened?" Mrs. Wimborne said, when she saw it would do him really good to talk.

Theo's face clouded.

"I hardly like to tell even you, mother, but of course you'll never let any one else have an inkling of it."

"Of course not!" replied Mrs. Wimborne gravely, who was used to all sorts of school-confidences.

"Well, then, mother, most of the fellows had left the ground except Mason and me. We were practising, and every minute I thought I'd leave off, as it must be getting near tea-time. I wish now I had, yet it was so tempting to go on trying to beat him in every turn. We were only just running round the cinder path, you know, and every time I passed him he looked as black as thunder. I must have been getting tired without knowing it, for just as I passed him the last time, he sprang forward, tripping me up, and I fell with my leg under me. I hadn't a notion I was hurt, and he ran off. When I tried to move I soon found it out, and called to the few who were left, to come and help me up. Dr. Blake happened to drive by at that moment, and they stopped him, and he drove me home. That's all I know about it."

One of Theo's helpers appeared at this moment, full of sympathy and concern, which he expressed in true school-boy fashion. Mrs. Wimborne left them alone for a little while together, thinking that a talk with someone of his own age would be the best salve for Theo's pain.

II.

There certainly was no doubt about it. The doctor paid his promised visit on Thursday morning, only to confirm his former statements. No chance of running for Theo for many a day to come.

The boy chafed against it, and friendly inquiries were made daily as to his progress. Mason, it is needless to say, was not one of his would-be comforters, and the mere mention of his name was enough to rouse Theo into his most bitter moods of angry disappointment.

On Friday morning, when Mrs. Wimborne went early into his room, she found him tossing discontentedly from side to side, with a half-open book on the floor which had fallen off the bed.

"Did you want this, dear?" she asked, stooping to pick it up, and recognizing it as a daily text-book, a birth-day gift from herself some months before.

"Oh no, thank you, mother!" Theo answered irritably. "I've read it already this morning, and I've been wishing ever since text-books had never been invented!"

"But the texts would remain the same, and you would read them in the Bible," his mother answered, with a look of wonder at his latest wish.

"Yes, but then a fellow wouldn't have to think about them so much!" Theo answered.

"That would make no difference, my child. What text has troubled you this morning?"

"Oh, it hasn't troubled me, mother!" Theo replied, resenting the word which best described his present feelings. "The verse is still there, I suppose, only please don't read it aloud. I have had enough of it already." He turned away his head with an impatient gesture, whilst Mrs. Wimborne opened the book at the page bearing that morning's date.

"Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 32.)

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel (marg.: complaint)

against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Col. iii. 13.)

"Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Mrs. Wimborne was a wise mother. She simply laid the book down again on the bed, and telling Theo she would go and see about his breakfast, left the rebellious mood to work itself out. Neither did she refer to the subject in anyway during her numerous little visits to Theo's room, until he re-opened it himself.

This was later on in the day, when he was comfortably established on the sofa near the window downstairs. Mrs. Wimborne had just been for a turn round the garden, bringing in with her late spring and early summer flowers. Theo sat watching in silence for some minutes, whilst she arranged pansies and lilies and forget-me nots about the room.

Suddenly he burst out in his usual impetuous fashion:

"Mother, do you think people are bound to go by the Bible? No, I don't mean that exactly, but are there not times when we cannot always do as it says?"

"Does it not always mean what it says then?" Mrs. Wimborne asked quietly.

"Then I think it's too hard for anything!"

"Soldiers do find their orders rather hard, sometimes, I should imagine."

"Supposing it's an order they can't obey?"

"Then it would scarcely have been given by a commander who knows anything about his business. Our Captain can make no mistake, Theo!"

The boy changed his position uneasily.

"I suppose you mean there are times when we feel we cannot carry out orders?" Theo nodded. "But then the strength is always ready to be given at the same time as the orders if we ask for it. Remember a soldier's first duty is to obey!"

"I can't, mother, in this instance!"

"But He can, if you will put it all into His hands."

She did not look at him, but went on filling vase after vase. And once again silence closed over the subject.

It was a tough battle, fierce as most fights are which are carried on in the field of our own shrinking hearts, but in the end Right prevailed; and Wrong fled, as it always will flee if truly resisted, trembling off the ground.

The mother understood it at night, when Theo said with a strangely bright look,

"Do you mind just putting that little text-book near me? I am not afraid of it now!"

But he had not yet done with his task of forgiveness.

One or other of his favourite schoolfellows always made it a loyal point to call in each evening, and give him the latest news, especially when they had any information to communicate touching the coming sports. After a longer chat than usual on Friday night, Mrs. Wimborne heard him calling in a particularly eager tone.

"Well, Theo, what is it?"

"Mother, I want to ask your advice. The fellows say Mason would be sure to win one prize at least, only his father won't buy him any running things, and he's ashamed to seem not dressed like the others."

"Poor boy, that's hard on him!"

Theo flushed up to his forehead, as he reached the point of these foregoing remarks.

"And as it's all up for me this summer, since Dr. Blake says my foot will be good for nothing as far as running is concerned, I wondered, mother, whether you would mind very much if I passed on my flannels you know, the suit you made me, to Mason?"

Mrs. Wimborne stooped and kissed his forehead.

"God bless you, my darling!"

That was all she said.

(To be continued.)

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