

his eye beaming with love, his encouraging invitation given. No doubt about his willingness to receive his desire to be trusted. Thomas yields at once to the power of such a gracious presence unshackled by any of those false barriers we so often raise; the full, warm, gushing tide of adoring, embracing, confiding love, goes forth and pours itself out in the expression, *My Lord, and my God!* Best and most blessed exercise of the spirit, when the eye in singleness of vision fixes upon Jesus, and, oblivious of itself, and all about itself, the abashed heart fills with adoration, gratitude, and love, and in the fulness of its emotion casts itself at the feet of Jesus, saying with Thomas, *My Lord, my God.*

Second. Let us take this instance of our Lord's treatment of Thomas, as a guide and example to us how to treat those who have doubts and difficulties about the great facts and truths of religion. There was surely a singular toleration, a singular tenderness, a singular condescension in the manner of the Saviour's conduct here towards the doubting, unbelieving apostle. There was much about those doubts of Thomas affording ground of gravest censure, the bad *morale* of the heart had much to do with them. It was not only an unreasonable, it was a proud, a presumptuous position he took up, in dictating the conditions upon which alone he would believe. What abundant materials for controversy, for condemnation did his case supply! Yet not by these does Jesus work upon him, but by love,—by simply showing himself, by stooping even to comply with the conditions so unreasonably and presumptuously prescribed. And if, in kindred cases, when the spirit of religious incredulity is busy in any human breast, doing there its unhappy work in blasting the inward peace, waiving all controversy we could but present the Saviour as he is, and get the eye to rest upon Him, and the heart to take in a right impression of the depth and tenderness and the condescension of His love, might not many a vexed spirit be led to throw itself down before such a Saviour, saying, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.

FAMILY DEPARTMENT.

EASTER.

BY JULIA LARNED.

What saith He as He walks in light
Among the lilies fair and white—
More fair than they—
The risen Lord on Easter Day?

"O ye that suffer, sin and die,
I suffer with you even I,
Those thirty years
Of human pain, and toil, and tears.

"And when ye called Me to the tree
I knew My dying love would be
A power so vast
That all the world must yield at last.

"Triumphant over death and sin,
Behold My joy and enter in;
O rise with Me
Glad shares in love's victory!

"My quenchless love that burst the grave,
My risen love is strong to save;
Where'er I reign
From captive souls falls every chain.

"Before Me flies the brooding night,
The sky of dawn is flushed with light;
O lift your eyes
And watch the morn of hope arise."

—The Churchman.

CONFIRMATION.

Some of our boys and girls are now looking forward to being confirmed; perhaps have already pronounced the solemn words "I do," in answer to the question of the Bishop, "Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that ye made, or that was made in your name, at your Baptism; ratifying and confirming the same; and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things

which ye then undertook, or your Sponsors then undertook for you?"

It was a very large promise, and they were very great things that were then promised for you, as you will see by referring to the Baptismal service; such a large promise and such great things as were far above your power and the power of your parents to keep. They were promised *by faith*; that is, in a strong belief that all the power of God would be at your disposal to help you to keep them, and that His promises of help and grace, "He, for His part, would most surely keep and perform."

Now we are so anxious that all the boys and girls to whom we talk from month to month, and who are thinking of taking this solemn step, should realise and understand fully what they are about to do, that we want to warn them just here of a serious danger. It is this: older people are sometimes apt to tell young people who wish to be confirmed, that the words in the Baptismal service, "I renounce the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh, so that I will not follow nor be led by them," "do not mean *quite* what they seem to mean; that, of course, it could never be expected that young persons should really do all this—should really live up to these words in their strict sense," and so they soften them down and take from their meaning, until those who are about to promise them hardly know what they are to promise.

Now we want to have our young friends understand that these words mean *just what they say*, and that if they intend to take them upon their lips, they must do it with the full knowledge that only by the great power of God can they either understand or do what they promise by them. That great power of God is the Holy Spirit, who will come, if you ask Him, right into your heart, and, when He is come, will show you what these words mean; and, more than that, will make you want to promise them *just as they stand*; and, still more than that, will be in you the power by which you will do them. He knows just what secret spring in your heart must be touched to make you feel as you ought about this solemn step. The best preparation for Confirmation is such a real love for the Lord Jesus that you will want to do *all* that He requires, not just as little as you can. This love is the work of the Holy Spirit to give you, for the Bible says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."—*Parish Visitor.*

TWO FRIENDS.

CHAPTER IV.—CONTINUED.

Reggie said nothing, but looked straight before him as if he had not heard.

"Perfectly stubborn and sulky," said Miss Everson to Hannah with a sigh. "It is distressing to see a child so hardened. I think he ought to be sent at once to some strict school. I do hope his mother will not be weak and give way to him."

Reggie was not so indifferent as he had looked. He was filled with wonder as to whether this would make any change in his fate. Surely it was not possible that his mother could be more particular than Miss Everson, and yet she was always referred to as if she were. In story books too, mothers were generally represented as nice. But then in story books there were so many wonderful things that were not true, and besides the people who wrote them were most likely old and had forgotten.

On the earliest opportunity he told Sam, and Sam's view was a decidedly hopeful one. "Your Ma coming home, Master Reggie, that

is nice for you. She'll be kind to you, you'll see, and give you lots of treats and things."

"Do you think so?" asked Reggie, doubtfully. "Hannah always tells me she'll make me mind when she comes home."

"Never you heed what Hannah says. You'll see I'm right," said Sam cheerfully.

"You haven't got a mother, I suppose?" asked Reggie.

"Bless, you, no, my dear! She's dead this many a long day. But she was a good 'un, she were, and a hard-working soul as ever wos. Nine of us she brought up, she did, and three she buried, and me and my sister Martha, as lives over Stoneham way, is all as is left now."

Reggie was a little puzzled by Sam's way of expressing himself, and thought his mother could not have been very nice if she had buried some of her children. Besides, it must have been so very long ago, that he surely could not recollect a great deal about her.

There was a certain stir and bustle in the quiet household on account of Mrs. Lacy's expected arrival. Miss Everson held great consultation with Hannah as to whether it would be advisable to have the spring cleaning before she came. They would certainly not be able to leave of fires, for Indian people were always so chilly on first coming to a colder climate.

Before it was finally settled one way or the other, a new event engrossed every one's attention; Miss Everson was taken ill. Hannah, in all the years she had been with her, had never known her to have more than a slight cold, or a headache for half a day, but now she was really ill, and confined not only to her room, but to her bed. Hannah was in close attendance. Her mistress was of much more importance to her than was Master Reginald. Yet she took all precautions that she could concerning him, and begged Sam to see that he did not leave the garden.

Sam promised and would not yield to Reggie's entreaties and assurances that he would come whenever he whistled.

"No, no, Master Reggie, you got into trouble once that way, and you shan't again if I can help it. Your Ma coming and all. Why, if Miss Everson had a knowd as I let you go out, do you suppose I'd be here now?"

"But won't you let me go just once, Sam, to say good-bye to Nat. I want to do it so very, very much."

"He's gone long ago, Master Reggie, you may be sure of that, and a good riddance too."

"Well, just let me go out and see, then," pleaded Reggie.

For two or three days Sam turned a deaf ear, but at last he said:

"Well, Master Reggie, if I let you go just once, you won't ask again, will you?"

"No," said Reggie eagerly, "I promise. That is if I see him, you know. It's no good if I don't see him."

"And s'pose he's gone, how are you to see him?" enquired Sam. "Look here, Master Reggie, you promise you'll not worry about it no more, and I'll let you go to-day, and if you don't see him to-day you may go to-morrow. But that's to be an end of it, do you hear? You must make a bargain, or you'll not go at all."

Reggie was obliged to promise, as it was his only chance. He went down the lane, and on to the edge of the Common, and looked all about and could see no one. He waited and waited, and at length Sam's whistle sounded, and he turned to go. Just at that moment a figure appeared in the distance. He ran back to the garden gate.

"Oh Sam, he's just coming, mayn't I stay and speak to him, to tell him to come to-morrow?"

"Very well," agreed Sam, "but it's near your dinner-time now, and you must go in."