

ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
THE SHORTER CATECHISM,
FOR
CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

BY
JONATHAN CROSS.

“HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS.”

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE author of this volume had committed to memory perfectly the questions and answers in this Catechism by the time he was six years old, and at that time they seemed to be of no more use to him than old lumber in the garret.

From that time until he was sixteen years old he attended monthly catechetical examinations by the pastor, who mostly used Brown's, Willison's, and Fisher's Helps in order to make his pupils understand it. Those works, at that time, were as hard for him to comprehend as the Shorter Catechism itself, and he often sighed for some simple exposition of this wonderful compendium of Christian doctrine.

Shortly after he arrived at manhood he collected his neighbours' children into what was called a Sabbath-school, but it was more properly a Bible

and Catechetical class. The Shorter Catechism was his principal text-book, and here he felt the need of some simple, illustrative commentary, or help, more than he ever did before.—He sought but found none.

For a score of years he has travelled more or less in most of the states of this Union, and been in some Sabbath-school almost every Sabbath, and whenever this Catechism was in use he has found superintendents and teachers labouring under the same difficulties. Many of our teachers are young and inexperienced in the Christian life, and many not even professors of religion. These often say that the Catechism is so dry they cannot get the children to learn it, and many honestly confess that they cannot understand it. In this way the Catechism fails to be taught to many of the rising generation in our churches.

The same is true with thousands of parents. They say, “We cannot get our children to learn the Catechism, it is such a dry study; and we are not competent to explain it to them in a way to interest them.” These complaints have been so long made, and to such an extent, that the author

has been surprised that some one, much more competent than he, has not given to our Church long ere this a suitable work.

The author has bestowed much labour and thought, accompanied with earnest prayer, upon this work. Half the labour would have prepared the book if it had been designed for only an intelligent adult population, but his object has not only been to interest the rising generation by anecdote and illustration, but to aid Sunday-school teachers and parents in interesting those whom God has committed to their care.

He has first given question and answer in full, then the proof text to substantiate the answer to the question, with an exposition almost as brief as the text itself. Then follow practical remarks and illustrations drawn from Christian experience, and God's works of nature, as well as every other source from which he could get any aid for shedding light on the answers.

The work is not designed for theologians and scholars, but to be an elementary work for beginners. The hay is put low in the gospel rack, so that the lambs can reach it.

In treating upon those doctrines and usages in which God's people cannot see alike as yet, the author has not penned one word that can justly give offence to any. He has simply stated what he believes the Catechism and Bible teach with as little reference as possible to the opinions of those who differ with him on minor points.

Commending this effort to the sympathy and kindness of God's people, and with earnest prayer for the blessing of the Triune God to rest upon its perusal, I offer my thanks to the Board of Publication for sending it forth to the world.

JONATHAN CROSS.

BALTIMORE, *August*, 1864.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF
THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

QUESTION I.

What is the chief end of man ?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Proofs.

1. *The chief end of man is to glorify God.*
—1 Cor. x. 31: Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

2. *Man's present and future happiness arises from the enjoyment of God.*—Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26: Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth:

but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Exposition.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS, supposing I were to give you a long purse, one end filled with golden guineas, the other filled with coppers; which would you call the chief end of the purse? I think you would say the end which had the gold in it. Well now the chief end or aim of your life should be to live so that you will glorify God. 1 Cor. x. 31. "Whether therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." That means that we should honour and serve God. You honour and glorify your parents and teachers, when you do as they command you; so you glorify God when you obey the precepts of his word. If you are untruthful, if you swear, or play on the Sabbath; if you are ill-tempered or unkind, you dishonour God. He is your Maker, and when you do wrong you cast reflections on his work. If a man were to make you a pair of very ugly shoes, or an ill-fitting coat, you would say he is a bad

workman, and his work would give him a bad name as a mechanic. So any wicked, naughty things you do, dishonour God. The promise is, They who glorify God shall enjoy him for ever. You could not be happy in the company of any one whom you had dishonoured. When you do wrong and grieve your parents, you want to stay out of their sight. You cannot look at any one you have wronged, without blushing; and could you dwell where God is, whose commands you have broken and slighted, and be happy? No, my dear children, we cannot be happy in the society of those we do not love, and heaven itself would be a place of punishment if you do not love God; so that you must love and serve him here, if you hope to enjoy him hereafter.

QUESTION II.

What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Proofs.

1. *The word of God is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.*—Eph. ii. 20 : And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.

2. *The word of God is the only rule to direct us how to glorify and enjoy him.*—2 Tim. iii. 16, 17 : All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

HAVE you ever thought, my young friends, how kind our heavenly Father has been, in giving us this blessed rule to direct us how to glorify and enjoy him? When he made our first parents he gave only one simple rule for them to follow, one single command to obey, "Eat not the forbidden fruit."—A very simple rule it was, and very easily kept. But they did not mind that rule, and for breaking it, God turned them out of the garden. They were so much ashamed of what they had done that they went and hid themselves, just as many little boys and girls do still, when they are guilty of any naughty thing. And what was worse than all, they never could mend the rule they had broken. The rule or law of God was perfectly holy, and their sin in breaking it could never be mended by a sinful creature. They could never blot out the dishonour done to God and his law. But God, in his great mercy and love for them and us, their sinful descendants, sent his own Son, who was altogether sinless, to repair the broken law; and has also given

us his written word, which is the only rule to direct us how we may find our way back to God and holiness.

Now suppose you were lost in some dreary wilderness, where snares and pitfalls were scattered all along your path, and where wild beasts howled for prey, would you not be very thankful to any one who would show you the way home? Certainly you would. Now this is just what God has done for us all. By breaking these rules which God gave us, we get lost in the wilderness of sin, we wander among fallen angels, we are beset with danger. But God, in his great love, has given us his word to be a lantern to our feet and a light to our path to guide us back to him. Thus, if we make his word our rule of life, and love and serve him, we glorify him and insure our own happiness.

Were you to see a boy or girl lost in some very dangerous place, and you should offer a light to point out the way of escape, and they refuse to accept of your kind services, would you not think that they deserved to be se-

verely punished? Well, children, you are lost in a wilderness, wandering away from God, and in danger of falling into the pit of eternal woe; and God has given you this rule to guide you out of this dangerous ground. Now if you refuse to be guided by his directions, do you not deserve to perish? I entreat you to take the Scriptures, the word of God, as your guide, just as you would take a torch in your hand to lighten your path along some dark, dangerous precipice. If you do this, you will in the end enjoy God for ever.

QUESTION III.

What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

Proofs.

1. *The Scriptures teach what man is to believe concerning God.*—John xx. 31: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life through his name.

2. *The Scriptures teach what duty God requires of man.*—Micah vi. 8: He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, we call the Old and New Testaments the Scriptures; and the only rule of our faith and practice. They are some-

times called the Oracles of God, or the Book of God. They were not always divided into chapters and verses as they are now. This division was made in the thirteenth century.

To believe the Scriptures is to assent and give full credit to all the truths they contain; and we are to believe nothing in point of faith and to do nothing as to duty but what they teach.

Everything taught in the Bible is equally true, but all is not of equal importance for us to know. It is the most wonderful history in the world. It runs back more than two thousand years further than any other history, and gives us more knowledge of our race than all the other books that have ever been written. Without it we never could have known what kind of beings we are. It is the best law book in the world, and in it all good laws have their foundation. But its greatest excellency consists in its being the only book that can guide us in the way to heaven.

It is the only book that ever told us how we became sinners, and what we must do to be saved. Suppose you were on board a ship far out at sea and the ship were to take fire, and you had no hope of escape; and some one were to hand you a book containing full directions how you might be saved from the devouring element; with what eagerness would you scan its pages! How you would bless the writer! Well, my young friends, you are sailing on the ocean of life, and unless you study this book with care and follow its directions, your ship will certainly be stranded on the rocks of everlasting perdition. You must *practise the duties* that God commands in this book, or *suffer the penalties* that he threatens *in it*. You must believe that God is very great, very good, and very just in all his ways, and that he will by no means clear the guilty until they repent, believe on his Son, and turn from their sins. God has in his great kindness sent this book to show you how it must be done.

What the compass is to the mariner on the

ocean, showing him how to steer his ship aright over the trackless waters, the Bible is to guide you along the journey of life; and you can no more get to heaven without a knowledge of its doctrines and precepts than the ship can reach the desired haven without the compass, if the sun, moon, and stars were all blotted out.

QUESTION IV.

What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Proofs.

1. *God is a Spirit.*—John iv. 24: God is a Spirit.

2. *God is infinite in his being.*—Job xi. 7: Canst thou by searching find out God?

3. *God is eternal in his being.*—Psalm xc. 2: From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.

4. *God is unchangeable in his being.*—Mal iii. 6: I am the Lord, I change not.

5. *God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his wisdom.*—Psalm cxlvi. 5: His understanding is infinite.

6. *God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his power.*—Job xlii. 2: I know that thou canst do every thing.

7. *God is infinite, eternal, and unchange-*

able in his holiness.—Rev. iv. 8: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

8. *God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his justice.*—Isaiah xlv. 21: A just God and a Saviour: there is none beside me.

9. *God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his goodness.*—Psalm cxxxvi. 1: O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good.

10. *God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his truth.*—Psalm c. 5: His truth endureth to all generations.

Exposition.

THIS is the most important question that ever was asked, and the most difficult to answer. It was once put to a great philosopher; he begged a day to consider it; finding a day not sufficient, he asked a week, and again a month, but finally gave it up as beyond his ability. The committee of Westminster divines who drew up this Catechism, appointed the youngest man among them to write an answer to this question. His name was George Gillespie. He asked them all to join

him in prayer for Divine guidance; and began his prayer in the words of the answer. All were struck with the propriety of these words, and voted unanimously to adopt them.

God is a Spirit. He has no body as we have, nor can we see him as we see each other. But we must not be Atheists because we cannot see him with our natural eyes. We cannot see the wind; but we can see the trees torn up by the roots by its power, and buildings and fences blown down. So we know there is wind because we see its effects. And we know there is a God because we see his wonderful works. You see the sun, moon, and stars, and this great world on which we live, all must have been made by some great being. Our reason tells us so.

God is infinite, which means, that he fills every place at the same time. A little boy was offered an orange if he would tell where God was. "Ah," said he, "I will give you two oranges if you will tell me where he is not." If we ascend into heaven, he is there. If we make our bed in hell, he is there. What a

fearful thought it is, that God sees all you do, by day or by night, and that he never forgets anything, as we do. Dear children, always remember the words of Hagar, "Thou God seest me."

God is eternal. He never had a beginning and will never have an end. We must all be laid in the grave, and our bodies return to dust. The heavens will pass away and this world be burnt up; but God will be the same through all eternity. Were you to ask what eternity is, I could only say, the lifetime of God. And, dear children, you have to live somewhere while God lives; and if you die in your sins you will have God for your enemy *all that time*; but if you love and serve him here you will have him for your friend for ever.

God is unchangeable. He says, "I am the Lord, I change not," and again, he is the "Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." But you change your minds very often; we all do; you often feel that you ought to love God, and even promise yourselves to do better, but afterwards neg-

lect it, so you are constantly changing; but God knows the end from the beginning. All his plans are made for the best; hence he does not need to change them, as we do; for with us, what seems right to day may be all wrong to-morrow.

He is eternal in his *being*,—that is, his essence, or what he is in himself. He is glorious in his nature, happy in his own existence: nothing can be added to, nor anything taken from him. He is the only self-existent, perfect being. Angels and men are beings, created by his power and wholly dependent on him. But the being of God depends entirely on himself. Remember then at all times that, In him we live, and move, and have our being, Acts, vii. 28, and also that from him cometh every blessing and every comfort that we enjoy.

God is infinitely wise. He knows all things; the Lord is a God of knowledge; by him actions are weighed truly; for he knows the motives which influence them. His wisdom is displayed in his works. The sun, moon,

and stars, which move in such perfect harmony, the earth, with all its creatures, trees, fruits and flowers, all prove his *wisdom*. Then in the management of all this vast dominion, there is nothing so great that he cannot comprehend it, and nothing so small as to be beneath his notice.

A little girl once said, that God must be all eyes, he knows and sees all things at the same time.

God has the power to perform what his wisdom plans. There are many things you would like to do that are right; but you cannot do them.

For instance, it would be right for you to become rich if you could get riches by fair and honest means; yet you may not have the power to do it. But God can do everything he wills to do. His power is also shown in creation. He made all things out of nothing by the word of his power.

Holiness is next in order in the character of God. He is necessarily holy, he cannot be otherwise. His name is holy, his Sabbath

is holy, and he dwells in the high and holy place. Holiness means purity, something that is without a stain. When you see a very clear stream of water, you say it is pure ; so God is pure and spotless in his character, and in all his works and ways. He says to you and me, Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. And what is more, he says that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

The next attribute in the character of God is justice. We see this in the good laws he has given us in his word. He might have left us without any rule for our conduct, but as a just Ruler he has told us what to do, and how to do it. If you obey these laws, you shall live ; if you disobey, you shall die.

His justice will compel him to punish you for your sins, unless you repent, and forsake them. He cannot help it ; he is a God of truth as well as justice.

The next attribute is goodness. This is an essential part of God's nature. It is manifested in numberless ways. He gives you all you have ; life, health, home and friends, eyes to

see, feet to walk, tongue to speak, food, raiment and the full enjoyment of these things, all come from God. If he were a bad, contrary being, like some boys and girls, he might have put your eyes in the back of your head, or your hands inside out, and have so arranged your whole body, that life would have been a burden and a pain; but he has in his goodness so arranged it, that each member contributes to the good of the whole. "He makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Surely you ought to love and serve such a good God as this.

The last attribute given in this question is truth. This seems to complete the perfections of his nature. It is impossible for God to lie. He never forgets what he has said, nor has he ever broken a promise, or changed his mind. The Psalmist says, "He keepeth truth for ever." His word is truth. He hates all liars, and says they shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Try to think of this when you

are tempted to utter a falsehood. His truth will compel him to punish you for it.

We have often regretted that in this excellent and truly sublime answer to the question, What is God? that one attribute has not been more distinctly marked; it is mercy. Some one has said this is "God's darling attribute," and it would seem that it is. Mercy may be defined as affectionate pity towards such as are in misery and distress, and a desire to do them good. How great then is the mercy of God! How full of compassion to our sinful, ruined race! What a wonderful provision he has made for our redemption! Truly the Lord is a God of mercy as well as truth.

Oh! what a wonderful being! how glorious are all these attributes of his character, and what a fearful thing it is for a sinner such as are you and I to have a God such as this taking notice of all we do. Dear children, remember that you must meet this great God at the day of death and of judgment. If you die in your sins, where will you flee on that awful day? May God in his mercy be your friend.

QUESTION V.

Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Proofs.

1. *There is only one God.*—1 Cor. viii. 4. There is none other God but one.

2. *This God is the living and true God.*—Jer. x. 10: The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king.

Exposition.

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS, in trying to explain these great truths, so as to bring them within your grasp, I must draw all my light from the Bible. Moses said to the children of Israel, Hear, oh Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord. And God said to Isaiah, I am one God, and beside me there is none other. A little boy was once asked, how he knew that there was but one God? Why, said he, God fills every place, and there is no room for

any other. The boy was right. There cannot be more than one infinite, eternal and unchangeable being. He could not be omnipotent if there were another, capable of opposing his power; and there would not be such uniformity in the government of this world, if there were more gods than one. Their plans and purposes would clash, and in their strife, what they had made would be destroyed. *All this reason teaches.*

The manner in which some of the divine perfections are expressed, proves that there is but one God. For instance, God is light—God is love—God is our strength and our shield. Such expressions of holy writ, all denote but one God.

Some have taught that God is a compound being, made up of different perfections; this is false doctrine. All God's perfections combined are only the one infinite perfection of his most simple, uncompounded nature. It is only to bring this great truth down to our weak human understanding, that he is described with these several parts.

Perhaps, when you look at the heavens, spangled with stars, the moon walking in her brightness, the glorious sun travelling in his strength, the clouds for ever changing; sometimes pouring out showers to fertilize the earth, or again spreading over all a mantle of snow; or when you look at this wonderful world, so full of beauty and variety, you will be ready to think that so many wonderful things would require a great many gods to make them. But such a God as we have described, stands in no need of help; for he is Almighty. He is called the only living and true God, to distinguish him from the idol gods, made of gold and silver, wood and stone, which the heathen worship.

A poor heathen child was taught in a mission school and became a Christian. He was ridiculed for his religion by one much older than himself, and asked to show them the God he worshipped. The child answered, "I cannot do that, but I can soon show you the god you worship." He took a block of wood and daubing it with mud made some resemblance

to a human face, saying, That is the God you worship. A converted heathen boy was reproving some of his young companions for stealing. He told them the great God saw them steal. They taunted him by saying he had no God to see, and pointing to an idol close by, said, "Our God sees us, but he don't care." The young Christian then took mud, and daubed over the eyes of the idol, and said, "Your god can't see either, and he must be a poor god to let me daub up his eyes."

This one living and true God is the only one we have any right to worship and adore.

QUESTION VI.

How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Proofs.

1. *There are three persons in the Godhead.*
—Matt. xxviii. 19: Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

2. *These three persons are the same in substance.*—1 John v. 7: There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.

3. *These three persons are equal in power and glory.*—John v. 21: As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them;

even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. Heb. i. 8: But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11: But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Exposition.

THIS doctrine of the Trinity is the most difficult to explain of any in the Bible, if, indeed, it can be explained or comprehended by any finite mind. The best way is, for us just to take God's word for it in meekness and humility. When you grow older and wiser than you are now, you will see that the whole of Revelation would lose its beauty and harmony, were this great doctrine left out or mutilated. It is the foundation stone of the edifice. Even our holy religion derives its name from it. For if Christ be not God, then is our religion vain, and we worship a mere creature like ourselves. No sect which denies this doctrine deserves the name of Christian. You see in the texts quoted above, the Father is called God, the Son is

called God, and the Holy Ghost is called God.

We might give many more passages from the Bible to prove the same thing. Creation is called the work of the Son. "By whom also the worlds were made;" and of the Spirit, it is said, "He garnished the heavens." How these three persons are one God, we can neither understand nor explain; neither can we understand or explain our own natures. We have a corporeal or physical nature, we have a moral nature, and we have a spiritual nature, three in one. Who can explain this? Not the wisest man that ever lived.

I once had a controversy with a sceptic, who made this doctrine one of the reasons for not believing the Bible. He said it was an absurdity, and such an absurdity, that nothing in heaven or earth could illustrate. A number of wicked men were present. I felt embarrassed, for I feared the truth would suffer for want of an able advocate. I lifted my heart to God for aid. A candle was

burning on the table before me. Pointing to it, I said, Sir, there is a trinity, tallow, wick, and fire, three in one. Let the tallow represent the Father, the wick the Son, and the fire the Holy Ghost. Now if you will explain the philosophy of how these three unite to make light, I will explain the mystery of the Trinity in the Godhead. He said no more. This, my dear children, is the best illustration I can give you.

It is not strange that unconverted people have difficulty about this doctrine; but the soul that has felt the curse of God's broken law resting on it, and has been led by the Spirit to accept of pardon through the atoning blood of Christ, sees an indescribable beauty in it, and feels an indescribable joy in believing it. If you are ever saved, it will be the joint work of these three persons. You must pray God the Father for Christ's sake to pardon all your sins, and to send the Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify your soul; and when this is done you will be prepared to praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost for ever.

QUESTION VII.

What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Proofs.

1. *God's decrees are from eternity.*—Eph. iii. 11: According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. *God's decrees are according to the counsel of his own will.*—Eph. i. 11: Predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

3. *God decrees whatsoever comes to pass, for his own glory.*—Isaiah xlvi. 10: There is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, this question, like the last, embraces a doctrine hard to understand. I do not expect that any of you will understand it fully till the Spirit of God opens your eyes, and changes your hearts. When I was a little boy I lived with a man who was over six feet high. He had a nail in the wall higher than *he* was, on which he used to hang his hat. I often wondered whether I should ever be tall enough to hang my hat on that nail. I can now hang my hat almost as high as he could. If you receive the grace of God into your hearts and then examine how it got there you will have no trouble with this doctrine.

In my boyhood I did not believe the doctrine taught in this answer, and often argued against it. When I became a Christian, I began to think, How did I become such? Did I make myself a Christian? No. When God's Spirit strove with me, I resisted; but God followed me, and gave me no rest till I had found Christ. I then asked myself,

When did God determine to do this? The answer came from God's word, "Known to him are all his works from the beginning."

This forced me to the conclusion that God knew I was to be converted from the beginning, and satisfied me that I was chosen in him before the foundation of the world; and all my trouble with this doctrine was gone. An aged and very pious man once told me that in his youth he learned the Shorter Catechism, but that he then hated this question. Said he, "I became desperately wicked, and a scoffer at religion. When about thirty years of age, I went to a religious meeting; but went as a mocker. During the sermon, I became alarmed about my condition, and to prevent any one from knowing it I started for home upon the run. But my distress and alarm became so great, that I was constrained to cry to God for mercy; and he heard and answered my cries, by making me willing to be saved in his own way. And now I love this doctrine of decrees; for I know that if God had not determined to save me, before I

became so desperately wicked, he never would have done it afterwards.”

By the decrees of God we understand that he has purposed or appointed all things that come to pass. They imply his foreknowledge and fixed settlement of all persons, events, and circumstances. That God has thus decreed all things, is evident from his knowledge, which is infinite, from his leaving all creatures dependent on him, and his having so often foretold the birth and death of persons in the most circumstantial manner. God had a right to make everything as he pleased, and to put it to what use he pleased.

To deny God this right would be to take from him a right you claim for yourself. Suppose you were making a kite, and some boy should come along and begin to complain of the way you were making it, and to find fault with the use you would put it to. You would tell him it was none of his business, that it was your own kite, and you would do what you pleased with it.

And shall a sinner who has been trans-

gressing God's law all his life, find fault with his Maker? But God did not *make us sinners*. He only decreed to *permit* our first parents to break his one command, if they *chose* to do so; and to punish them if they did. The highest possible motives were held out to them not to sin, and death, the most awful calamity, was the punishment threatened if they *did*. Their sin was their own act. Man is not a machine, but is what is called a *free agent*, that is, a being who acts as his own will prompts him. *All men are free agents*. Yet every one who professes to believe the Bible, must admit that God knew all things from the beginning, and that everything will come to pass just as he knew it would, and decreed it should.

Some, to set aside this doctrine of God's sovereignty, say that God determined *not* to know all things. Now it would seem to me, that on that principle God would first have to know all things, before he could know what things not to know. How could God govern the universe if he did not know beforehand

what was going to take place? How do we know that he may not change, and become a different God, if he is still learning new things? As for us, when we find one of our plans is bad, we try to get a better one. God must have *all knowledge*, so as to know what is best, *all wisdom*, to make all things tend to his own glory, and *all power*, to make all things work to his mind. He says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

God decreed, or foreordained, all things for his own glory. Suppose you were cast away on some lone island, with no human creature near you, you might make many things, but you could have no motive apart from *yourself* for making them. So there was a time, or period, when God dwelt alone in the past eternity. And what motive *could* he have but his own glory in creating anything? But some object to this, and say, Why, God has foreordained sin also? We say, he has only foreordained that he will permit sin. God has

foreordained that we shall have night ; but if a thief takes advantage of the darkness to steal, it does not make God responsible for the theft. Does not this show that there is a difference between the author of a sin and the permitter of it ? But the objector says, How can we be free to do as we please, if God has foreordained whatever comes to pass ? God foreordained that Jesus Christ should be put to death by wicked men ; and so he was. Those men acted in that awful murder of their own free will. But by so doing, they fulfilled the decree of God. Suppose I were to see a boy making a trap to catch partridges, and I were to say to him, You do not know what use you are going to make of that trap, he would be insulted. Now to my mind, to deny this doctrine of the decrees, is to make God more ignorant than ourselves. If the will of God is dependent on our wills, and he has to change his plans and purposes to suit his creatures, then he is no God at all. But the very thought is both profane and absurd.

Dear children, God has decreed that those who repent and believe shall be saved. And this is your duty and privilege.

Let us thank God that he has decreed mercy for us through his dear Son, and that whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely. Let me entreat you to accept of this decree of mercy and live for ever.

There was a good system of theology once given by an old negro to his master. It seems the latter was struck under conviction, and being a proud man, he was unwilling for a long time to ask any one to be his guide, but the pains of hell had a hold upon him, and his anguish was extreme. He must seek counsel of some one. * * * Finally he bethought himself of an old Christian negro, whose name was Pompey; so, strange as it may seem, he called him in, for it is true that a man can talk to his own servant in such a case, with less actual humility than to one nearer on an equality with himself. There is a kind of familiarity resulting from the very distance between the two.

“Pompey,” said the master, “I am a great sinner.”

“Yes, massa,” replied the godly old man.

“Pompey, if I die as I am now, I shall be damned.”

“Yes, massa,” was the plain answer of the old negro.

“You pray often, Pompey; and I know you feel that God hears you.”

“I does,” said the negro; “and de Lord aint a bit ashamed to answer Pompey.”

Then came the struggle, greatest of all, as the poor, convicted sinner stammered out:

“*Pray for me, Pompey.*”

Instantly the master’s prayer to the one who served him was answered, as the good old negro replied:

“I will, massa.”

Long and earnestly did Pompey cry aloud in his little cabin that God would send the seal of pardon into the heart of the wicked master. From the lonely dwelling of the old man the supplication ascended to the

throne on high, *and was heard* amid the harpings and hallelujahs of the heavenly host, and an answer of infinite grace returned.

For three days the master was rejoicing in Christ, but on the fourth he fell stumbling among the great truths of the Gospel. Again he called his spiritual adviser, and asked for aid.

“Pompey,” said he, “I am in the dark.”

“What is the matter, massa?” asked the negro.

“Why,” said he, “I cannot understand this language: *‘Whom he did foreknow, he did also predestinate; whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.’*”

“Why,” said Pompey, “where do you find that?”

“In the 8th of Romans,” he replied.

“Oh!” exclaimed the negro, “you go fast, don’t you? *You was only converted four days ago, and now you’ve got clear to Romans.*”

You go back, and beginning with the first chapter of the New Testament, do you *read*, and *believe*, and *do* all it tells you in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and the Acts, and then, when you come to Romans, I guess you will understand the 8th chapter, too."

QUESTION VIII.

How doth God execute his decrees ?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Proofs.

1. *God executeth his decrees in the works of creation.*—Rev. iv. 11 : Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

2. *God executeth his decrees also in the works of providence.*—Dan. iv. 35 : He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.

Exposition.

IN all God's plans, both the means and the result are certain. The only knowledge we can obtain of his decrees is by his works, and by the events which he brings about. Take a beautiful

illustration from Bible history. God decreed to make out of Abraham a great nation. But before that could happen they were to be bondmen in a strange land, four hundred years. This was accomplished without any coercive measures on his part. All the parties concerned acted according to their own free will. The first direct step in the chain of providence for its accomplishment, seems to be Joseph's dream about their binding sheaves in the field, and all the sheaves falling down before his sheaf. In his next dream, the sun, moon, and stars made obeisance to him. Then to make the matter worse for Joseph, his father must needs make him a coat of many colours.

His other sons immediately set on foot a plan to get Joseph out of their way. Jacob sent him one day to where his brethren were keeping the flocks, to carry them food and to see how they were getting along. When they saw him coming, they said, "Here comes the dreamer, let us throw him into a pit, then we shall see what will become of his dreams."

This wicked design was soon carried out; and his coat, being first dipped in blood, was sent to the poor old father, who knew at once that it was Joseph's coat, and cried out that a wild beast had devoured him. One of his brothers, however, it may be for pity, or perhaps for gain, had proposed to sell Joseph to a company of traders, who took him down to Egypt, and sold him to a heathen priest. Here his integrity of character brought him into trouble, and he was cast into prison where he remained two years. The dreams of the baker and butler were the means of his release. The interpreting of Pharaoh's dreams made him governor of Egypt. The seven years' famine, foreshown in the dream, was the cause of bringing the whole family to Egypt, where they remained four hundred years. Now you see through all this narrative, that Joseph's brethren, the Midianitish merchants, Potiphar, and Pharaoh, all acted entirely free, and by so doing fulfilled the divine decree. This, dear children, is one of those great truths I love to think of. How sad

would be our condition had God left everything in uncertainty and to be driven about by chance.

Thanks be to God, there is no such thing as chance. His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. His promise is Commit thy way to him, he will direct thy steps. Do this, and you are safe for time and eternity.

QUESTION IX.

What is the work of creation ?

A. The word of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Proofs.

1. *God made all things of nothing.*—Heb. xi. 3 : Through faith, we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God ; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

2. *God made all things by the word of his power.*—Psalm xxxiii. 6 : By the word of the Lord were the heavens made.

3. *God made all things in six days.*—Exod. xx. 11 : In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.

4. *God made all things very good.*—Gen. i. 31 : And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.

Exposition.

The text quoted from Hebrews, xi. 3, says: Through faith we understand the worlds were *made*, or *framed*. The apostle evidently designs to teach that we cannot understand how God performed this work, but as these things exist, we must believe them. Making a kite, a whistle or a doll is not creating. You make them out of something that existed before. To create, is to make something out of nothing. If a man up in the air, say a mile high, were to set to work and make a balloon without either tools or materials, you might say he created that balloon. But you know that would be impossible. God made this world on which we live and all other worlds out of nothing. He had no materials to work upon. He spake, and it was done. Atheists deny the existence of a God; but their arguments are too absurd and foolish even to notice. The idea that atoms floating about in chaos, would attract each other and so combine as to form a world like this, with all its seas, mountains, rivers,

trees, fruits, men and other animals, is so ridiculous, that only a fool or a madman could believe it.

Suppose in travelling through a wilderness you find a beautiful gold watch; you pick it up, and find it in perfect order; you hear it ticking, and see the hands moving with regularity; you would say in a moment, somebody has lost his watch. Then suppose some one should say to you, Nobody ever owned that watch, nobody ever *made* that watch: it made itself, and came there by chance; or the pebbles and grains of sand having an attraction for one another, united of their own accord and made that ingenious little piece of mechanism;—would you not say such a man was crazy, or worse?

A great philosopher was once found deeply engaged in the examination of a flower, when a friend invited him to go with him to see a magnificent building. Well, said he, it is a fine building, but I see more of God in this flower, than in all the edifices in the world.

We are told that Plato, the Grecian philoso-

pher, was convinced that there was a God by looking at a fly. Why, said he, all the world could not make that little insect. If you were to cut the letters of the alphabet on little square blocks, and then shake them about in a vessel of some kind, do you think they would ever arrange themselves so as to form one single word? You think not. Well it would be far more reasonable to expect them to come together so as to spell the word Constantinople, as to think this great world came by chance, or was formed without a designer.

The only reasonable account that ever has been given of the work of creation is found in the Bible. When the time that God had decreed came, he spake and it was done. We are told that the work of creation was performed in six days. Whether they were days such as we call days now, we cannot say positively. Many very wise and good men think that each day of creation comprised an immense period of time, perhaps thousands of years. If this be so, it only the more enlarges our ideas of the great Creator.

When it was done, God said it was very good ; and if sin had not *got into the world*, it *would have remained very good*.

Now, dear children, God, not only made this world, and all other things you see, but he made you, and he has made you an intelligent creature. When you make anything, you think you have a right to put it to what use you please, and serve yourself with it. Has not God the same right to your services, that you have to the services of anything you have made ? If you do what God commands, then you honour your Maker ; if not, then you cast dishonour on him, and God will certainly punish you for it. Begin at once without delay : for he has promised, “ Those that seek me early shall find me.”

QUESTION X.

How did God create man?

A. God created man, male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Proofs.

1. *God created man male and female in his own image.*—Gen. i. 27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

2. *God's image consists in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.*—Eph. iv. 24: And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Col. iii. 10: And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

3. *God created man with dominion over the*

creatures.—Gen. i. 28: And God said unto them—have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Exposition.

THIS image of God in which our first parents were created, consisted in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. It was not in the perfection of man's body; though, no doubt, Adam was a model of manly beauty; nor was it in his mind or intellect. It was in his moral nature. The soul of man was holy. He resembled God in his moral attributes. The apostle urges us "to put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on the new man, which is renewed in *knowledge*, after the *image* of him that created him." Then also he says, "Put on the new man which after God is created in *righteousness* and *true holiness*."

How happy were our first parents in this beautiful garden! They were the owners of the whole world. All the beasts of the field were subject to them, and they felt no fear

of anything. God talked with them face to face, and no doubt the angels, those messengers of love, visited and conversed with them on heavenly subjects. The garden of Eden was perfect like its owners. It probably presented every variety of scenery ; the sublime and the picturesque combined in beautiful harmony. Here was everything to please their taste and excite their mind to inquiry. The birds sang sweetly to them as they walked or worked or rested from their light labours. Man was holy, and for this reason he was happy. Oh what a blessed state of innocence and happiness this must have been! It may seem insipid and dull to those who delight in carrying out their schemes of ambition, who love war and conquest ; or to the politician, who spends all his strength to raise himself or his party into power ; or to the worldling, who makes gold his supreme good. But to the care-worn, the down-trodden, the poverty-stricken and the afflicted among men, what a desirable picture it presents. To all who love God and desire to be reinstated in his

image, what a consolation it is to know that Christ has opened the way to the second Eden, the paradise of God. May you, dear children, regain the lost image of God; and being renewed in the spirit of your mind, “put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

QUESTION XI.

What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Proofs.

1. *God's works of providence are most holy.*

—Psalm cxlv. 17: The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.

2. *God's works of providence are most wise.*

—Isaiah xxviii. 29: This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

3. *God's works of providence are most powerful.*—Heb. i. 3: Upholding all things by the word of his power.

4. *In providence, God preserves all his creatures.*—Psalm xxxvi. 6: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast.

5. *In providence, God governs all the actions of his creatures.*—Prov. xvi. 9: A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps.

Exposition.

' MY DEAR CHILDREN, there is an unseen hand which controls all events in this world. It reaches to all places. Our Saviour himself says, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered; and not a sparrow shall fall on the ground without your Father."

Behold the providence of God in the life of Moses. A wicked, idolatrous king issued a decree that all the male Hebrew children should be put to death. He feared they would become so numerous, that he should not be able to hold them in slavery under his control. When Moses was born, his mother hid him for three months. At the end of this time she, no doubt, fearing discovery, concluded to try another mode of concealment. With true womanly ingenuity, she wove a basket or boat of rushes, and coating it with pitch, to make it water-proof, she placed her

pretty baby in it, and taking her daughter Miriam with her, she carried the basket with its precious freight to the river Nile, and hiding it among the tall flags that lined the shore, she left it there, telling Miriam to watch through the day, and, it is likely, she charged her to bring it home at night. What a trial it must have been to this poor mother to leave her infant thus exposed to danger. How she would shudder when she thought of the fearful crocodile, and other monsters that infest the Nile. One day the daughter of Pharaoh came down to the river with her maidens, to bathe, as was her wont, in the river. She spied the little basket in the rushes, and sent one of her maidens to fetch it, and when it was opened, beheld a baby; "and it wept." The heart of the princess was touched with pity for the forlorn boy. She concluded to take him for her own son. Miriam no doubt was terribly alarmed when she saw that her little brother was found by the Egyptian ladies. So she stole up close to them, to find out what they were going to

do with him. How delighted she must have been when she heard the princess speak in tones of compassion, saying, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then Miriam presses eagerly up and says, "Shall I go and find a Hebrew nurse for the child?" And thus was Moses, through God's providence, restored to the fostering care of his mother, and finally raised to the rank of a prince of the realm, and to all the advantages of an education in the court of Pharaoh, as heir presumptive to the throne of Egypt.

Now here is a wicked decree of the most mighty potentate then in the world, overruled by the providence of God for good. The little boat with its precious freight put by an anxious mother in the most unlikely place of safety, but the very place, and perhaps the only one, where the king's daughter would have found it. The presence of Miriam, and her adroitness in providing a nurse, and the willingness with which it was accepted, all prove the hand of God was in it. The story of Joseph, the crucifixion of Jesus Christ,

and many other Scripture narratives show us clearly how God overrules the desperate wickedness of man for his own glory and their good.

Some seventy years ago, in what was called the back-woods in Western Pennsylvania, there lived a man, who had a small field enclosed about a mile from the cabin where he dwelt with his family. While engaged in the culture of this field, his little son was often sent to call his father to his dinner. The child took great pleasure in this. He loved to go for his father and ride home on one of the horses. One day, however, the little fellow got tired with the long walk; he laid down under a tree, and presently fell asleep. The father continued his work till long after the time when little Benny usually came, and then started for home, thinking that something had prevented his son from coming that day. He had not ridden far, however, till he saw a large pile of leaves under a tree. Though it was autumn, and the leaves were driven about by the wind, he thought this

pile of leaves looked singular. He dismounted, and scattering them with his foot, discovered his son covered up under them. He knew the habits of the panther. He knew that a she panther had been there and covered his son while asleep, and that she had gone off to bring her young to their horrid repast. He snatched up his son, and mounted his horse to escape. When he got so far away as to feel safe he stopped to look back. He saw the old panther come creeping up to the place where his boy had lain. She gave one leap, and with an awful yell, made the leaves fly in every direction; but the prey was gone. God in his providence directed this father in such a manner as to save his son's life. Five minutes later, and the boy would have been dead. How true it is "that man proposes, but God disposes."

At a time of bitter persecution against the protestants, when they were besieged in the city of Rochelle by the king of France, all their food was consumed, and they were at the point of starvation, when shoals of fishes

were blown by the wind into the harbour, which furnished food to all the people for a long time. They were a kind of fish that had never before been seen in the harbour, and the poor people looked upon it as a direct interposition of Providence in their favour; and no doubt it was.

The whole book of Esther is a wonderful history of God's providence in protecting his people. He often overrules the most adverse events for their good. All Jacob's trouble was over when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to take him down to Egypt, where there was plenty of food, and where he should again behold the face of his long-lost son.

A driver of a hack has neglected to wind his watch. The consequence is, that he fails to meet his appointment to carry a passenger in time to meet an ocean steamer. The steamer sets sail without him, and in three days she is lost with all on board. This is the way God in his providence saved that man. If he had gotten his own will he

would have been lost. Another man was running to get on board a steamer : he fell and broke his leg. In twelve hours the boat took fire, and all on board perished. This man's accident was the means of saving his life.

The only way to secure the protection of Providence is to repent, forsake sin, and believe in Jesus Christ. Whenever you do that God has promised that you shall be *provided for*. It may not be in the way you desire ; it may be very different ; but remember that God is infinitely wise and knows what is best for you. Lazarus had a hard time of it on earth, but in the end, he had no reason to regret his rags and hard fare. They may have been the means of saving his soul ; while Dives may be mourning in the place of torment that he ever wore purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. Whatever God in his providence orders for us, if we are his children, we may rest assured that it is for the best. Now, dear children, let me entreat you to commit your way unto God by earnest prayer. Conse-

crate all your powers to his service, and rest assured that he will direct your steps by his providence. He says a mother might possibly forsake her helpless babe; such a thing has been done, though not often; but the Lord never forsakes his children. You are living in a world where snares and temptations beset your path. Your heavenly Father is stretching out his hand, saying, "Son, daughter, give me thy heart, and I will lead you by my grace and providence, up to a land where all danger is over." You have full confidence in your earthly parents, that they love you and are willing to do all they can to promote your comfort and happiness, but there are some things they cannot do. Sometimes they may not be able to help you. They can attend you, perhaps, down to the verge of the dark river of death, which you may be called to cross; for you know many children die; but they cannot go with you to the further shore. Oh! make Jesus your friend, and then you are safe, in life and in death.

QUESTION XII.

What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created?

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

Proofs.

1. *God entered into a covenant with man at his creation.*—Hos. vi. 7: (*Compared with the margin.*) They, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant.

2. *The condition of the covenant of works, was perfect obedience, and the penalty, death.*—Gen. ii. 17: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

Exposition.

IF God had not condescended to make

himself known to his intelligent creatures in some such way as this, though they might have felt their obligations to obey and worship him, they could never have known him as their highest blessedness and reward. Thus on account of the great distance between him and his creatures, God chose in his infinite condescension to make himself known by way of covenant. It was such a covenant, as he in his wisdom saw, was for man's highest good, and when the conditions were made known to Adam, he assented to them with his whole heart as well as with his lips. A covenant is an agreement between two or more persons, in which they bind themselves to fulfil the terms specified in that agreement. For example, John agrees to deliver a horse to Harry, on the first of May, 1864, for which Harry is to pay him one hundred dollars. If John fails to bring the horse on that day, he has broken his covenant. Or if Harry fails to pay, when the horse is brought, he has broken his covenant.

We are very far from thinking that God's covenant with Adam in any way resembles the bargains men make with each other, but merely use this illustration to make it meet the young understanding.

This is called the covenant of works, to distinguish it from the covenant of grace, the second covenant, which was made with Christ, who is called by the apostle the second Adam, because he restores the image of God on the heart of man, which was lost by Adam's breaking the first covenant.

Adam must have thought the conditions reasonable and the terms easy, and God had a perfect right to reserve any tree in the garden to himself. Adam had full liberty to eat of the fruit of all the rest of the trees in the garden. Hence there was no excuse for his transgression. I will state a case for illustration. Mr. Jones had a fine orchard laden with excellent fruit. He told all his neighbours who had none, that they might have all the fruit they wanted from one half of his orchard; but that he had reserved the

other half for himself; and that any one who trespassed on that half of his orchard should never enter it again. In a short time he found that some of his neighbours had disregarded his covenant, and had taken *his* share of the fruit. He immediately set a guard around his orchard, and so kept out the intruders. Did he not do right?

God's covenant with Adam was, You may eat the fruit of every tree of the garden except one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and while you do that, you may live in the garden, but if you eat of that forbidden tree, you shall die.

The highest possible inducements were held out for him to avoid that tree, and the most terrible punishments threatened, if he disobeyed. The motives to obedience were all that could be desired, while the warning against disobedience was terrible.

This tree was *God's test of man's obedience*. How could man have known the will of the Creator without a law? Now a law would be nothing without a test and a pen-

alty, and what test could be more simple and easily understood than the one given? If the keeping of this covenant had required some severe penance on the part of Adam, there would have been more excuse for his breaking it. But not to eat the fruit of one tree was all that was demanded.

An old Scotchman was always complaining to his minister of the foolish conduct of Adam. Ah! said he, if I had been Adam, I would never have done such a foolish thing. His pastor at length getting tired of his continual croaking about Adam's folly, concluded to teach him a lesson. He invited him to dinner, and having caught a mouse, he put it under a bowl on the study table. At the set time the old caviller came. The minister and he had quite a discussion on the old subject. At length the parson was called out, but before leaving the study he begged his friend, with a very grave face, not, by any means, to touch the bowl that was turned mouth down on the table. No sooner was his back turned than the man began to wonder what the min-

ister could have hidden under that bowl. At last he could restrain his curiosity no longer. So raising the edge of the bowl, out ran the little mouse. When the minister returned, he told the good man to come and see his pet, and he, too, raised the bowl. But the mouse was gone. Why, blundered out the man, you so excited my curiosity that I could not help looking to see what was under the bowl. The minister only said, Oh, Adam, what hast thou done? The caviller was silent on the subject of Adam's sin, after that. This tree probably had its name from the fact that Adam would come to a knowledge of the good of innocence on his losing it, and of the evil of disobedience by the suffering it would bring on him.

Let us thank God that he has, in his infinite grace and love through Christ, opened the way to the tree of life again.

The flaming sword that guarded the way to it, is bathed in the blood of Christ, and whosoever will, may come and eat of the fruit of the tree of life and live for ever.

QUESTION XIII.

Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Proofs.

1. *Our first parents were left to the freedom of their own will.*—Gen. iii. 6: And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

2. *Our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.*—Gen. iii. 17: And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake.

Exposition.

IF you will turn to 1 Kings ii. 36, you will find a case that illustrates this doctrine. When Solomon was established on the throne of Israel he called Shimei to account for cursing David when he fled from Absalom. He ordered him to build himself a house in Jerusalem, and to stay there. But, said he, "The day thou goest out and passest over the brook Kedron, thou shalt surely die." Here Shimei was left "to the freedom of his own will." After a time he did leave the city, he went to hunt up a runaway slave, he got out of his bounds, incurred the penalty of death, and suffered accordingly. His freedom of will in that case, cost him his life. So our first parents being left to the freedom of their will, transgressed that one command; they sinned, they fell, and oh what a fall! Holiness was lost, the divine image stamped upon their hearts, defaced, their souls forfeited, and all the blessedness of Eden fled for ever.

We learn from this what an awful thing it is to disobey God, and on how small a thread hangs our eternal destiny. If what seems to many, a small matter, the eating of a little fruit, has filled the world with pains, groans, tears, and graves, how terrible will be the condition of those who will have to undergo the woes of the second death. Many trouble themselves much more about the way we became sinners, than they do about the way to become holy again.

An old Scotchman once said, "For a long time I puzzled my brain about the difficulties of the Bible; at last, however, I came to the conclusion that I ought to read the Bible as I eat fish. When I find a difficulty I lay it aside and call it a bone. Why should I choke myself on a bone, when there is so much nutritious meat? Some day perhaps I may find that even the bones may afford me nourishment." Some people seem to overlook the whole Bible except the difficulties that are in it. Such people are more interested to know who Melchisedek was, than who Jesus

Christ is; more anxious to know how they became sinners, than to know how they can be saved from sin. They are like the man who falling into a well, refused to be helped out, till he was informed how he fell in. We have fallen into sin, and God in his rich mercy lets down the golden chain of divine love. And if we take hold of it by faith he will lift us out.

We may learn from this subject to guard against all sin. We are surrounded by trees that bear forbidden fruit. Turn where we will, the tempter is at hand. He does not take the form of a serpent, but he still offers forbidden fruit. He tempts us to do what God has forbidden. Satan is just as crafty now as he was six thousand years ago.

QUESTION XIV.

What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Proofs.

1. *Any want of conformity to the law of God is sin.*—James v. 17: Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

2. *Any transgression of the law of God is sin.*—1 John iii. 4: Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, if the whole surface of the globe were one sheet of paper, the ocean filled with ink, and all the men, women and children were the writers, they could never record what sin has done. Sin had its sad beginning in Paradise, but it will

never have an end. It will end in this world, but not in the world to come.

Sin, says the answer, is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God. If you take a ruler and apply it to an uneven surface, you say there is a want of conformity. Or if you put a piece of new cloth into an old garment, you say there is a want of conformity. So anything you do that does not precisely accord with the law of God is a lack of conformity to that law ; and that is sin. Doing anything that God has forbidden in the ten commandments is sin. And failing to do what God requires is sin. But it goes further still ; you can sin all day, and every day without any outward act. For God's law reaches to the thoughts and feelings of the heart. The apostle tells us that " He that hateth his brother is a murderer."

Here you see the awful sin of murder can be committed without *doing* anything, and you may break any one of the ten commandments without speaking or moving. A very moral man once heard a sermon on sin, which was

the means of his awakening and conversion. His statement when he came to unite with the church was to this effect. "The preacher made me out a sinner for doing nothing." The poor man had been flattering himself with the idea that he had not done anything very bad, and he found that his greatest sin was the very thing in which he had taken comfort to himself; he did nothing. I fear greatly that a large portion of my readers are doing the very same thing. When your parents require you to do something, and you neglect or refuse to do it; that is one way of committing sin; disobedience is sin. Now God not only commands but he entreats you to repent, forsake your sins and believe in his Son Jesus Christ; and you do nothing. When the Holy Spirit stirs up your heart and brings your sins to remembrance and you refuse to forsake them, you commit an awful sin.

The Rev. John Newton once observed of a certain preacher, "I never heard him preach but once; and then he made this observation, If you ask me what a sinner is?"

I answer, he is a young devil, and if you wish to know what a devil is, I answer, an old sinner.”

If we want to know what sin is, let us look at what it has done. Sin thrust angels out of heaven and sent them to the bottomless pit for ever. It drove our first parents from Paradise, and “brought death into this world, with all our woe.” It led Cain to murder his brother, and made the antediluvian world so offensive to the Creator that he swept them all away in the deluge except Noah and his family. It has deluged the earth with blood for nearly six thousand years, and has brought war and pestilence, which have swept away hundreds of millions of its inhabitants. It has drawn tears enough from the eyes of mankind to float all the ships in the world. It has filled the earth with graves. It has produced idolatry, false swearing, disobedience, Sabbath-breaking, fraud, lying, murder, and every evil that can be named. It has peopled hell with millions of lost souls, and will cause millions more to reach that dread abyss.

And to crown all, it was the agent in the cruel death of our blessed Saviour; the innocent, compassionate Jesus, who, though himself sinless, fell by this terrible monster. But he gave the monster a deadly wound, and wrested from its grasp millions of captive souls, and will finally banish it with all its horrors to its appointed place where Satan dwells.

How strange it is that any human being can serve such a cruel tyrant, can love and cherish a serpent that is stinging him to death.

Dear children, rouse yourselves at once, there is no time to lose. Thrust from you this vile monster, turn from it, forsake it. Seek in the blessed Saviour the pardon of your sins, and he will protect you from its consequences here and hereafter. "Turn ye, Turn ye, for why will ye die," since God has provided a way of escape? Beware of any act of disobedience, however small. Abstain from all appearance of evil. As little acorns grow into towering oaks, so little sins grow into

big ones. A small leak will sink a ship. So one little sin may, and certainly will, unless repented of, sink a soul to endless ruin. And remember that you cannot, in your own strength, withstand temptation. Without the grace of God in your heart, you are like an unarmed man, in the midst of enemies. Go then to Christ and seek aid to resist all temptation, and he will guard you from danger, and lead you to your heavenly home in safety.

QUESTION XV.

What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Proofs.

1. *Man's first sin was eating the forbidden fruit.*—Gen. iii. 12: And the man said, The woman, whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

2. *By eating the forbidden fruit, man fell from his original state.*—Gen. iii. 23, 24: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground, from whence he was taken; so he drove out the man.

Exposition.

HERE we are told how sin and death were introduced into our world. Some think the

offence was too small for such an awful penalty. Now, my young friends, moral evil cannot be estimated in this way. Suppose a man sets fire to his neighbour's house and burns it down; this would be a great sin, but the house can be rebuilt or paid for. I think it may be possible that Adam might have *destroyed* all the trees in the garden without incurring either the sin or the penalty. The evil of the act consisted in their doing what God had forbidden. Some people think it a small matter to steal a cent or a crust of bread: and so it is, so far as the value is concerned. But when it is done through a covetous desire to appropriate the property of others, the sin is as great in the sight of God as if the amount were a thousand dollars. The motive that leads to the act, is what constitutes the sin. Our Saviour says, "He that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."

It was not anything in the forbidden fruit that introduced sin into the hearts of Adam and Eve: it was their disregard of God's

command in relation to eating it. If your mother commands you not to pull a certain flower in the garden and you go and do it, the sin is just as great as if you had pulled not only that flower, but fifty more beside it. Your disregard of her authority constitutes the sin. It seems to me that there is a degree of meanness in little acts of disobedience that does not belong to greater ones. The boy who will steal only ten cents because he fears detection if he takes more, is a despicable thief, and quite as bad as the one who steals ten dollars.

Our first parents were guilty of both unbelief and disobedience. They did not believe that God would punish them; they believed Satan, who promised them exemption from punishment. So it was the greatest sin they could possibly commit. There is a tree called the Manchineel, which grows in the island of Martinique, noted for the poisonous qualities of a milky juice which exudes from every part of it. The fruit is very beautiful, resembling the golden pippin, but

is a deadly poison. Another tree grows near it which resembles the fig tree. When the natives are poisoned by the Manchineel they immediately apply the juice of this other tree, which is an infallible remedy. This poisonous tree is a symbol of the destructive nature of sin; the other, of the precious word of God, which points to Christ as the only antidote.

Why God permitted Adam to fall into sin, we cannot tell, and if we did know, it would be of no benefit to us. We all, alas, know enough of its terrible consequences. We might just as well ask, why God permits some fathers to become drunkards, and to bring poverty and distress on their little children. Now God could just as easily have prevented those parents from doing that, as he could have prevented Adam from committing the first sin. But he did not do it in Adam's case, and he does not do it in theirs.

This truth is plain, that God governs the world and controls every event. It is also plain that it is a world full of sin and sorrow

and trouble. But I have never yet found one wise enough to tell why it is so. I only know that we are sinners in the sight of a pure and holy God,—a God who, though he tells us himself that judgment is his strange work, yet will show mercy unto all who love him and keep his commandments. So, dear children, do not trouble yourselves about how you became sinners, but be very earnest in seeking the way to escape from its consequences. Let us leave that other knotty question till we get safe in heaven, where we can better study and understand it. May all my readers, through God's grace, finally reach that happy place.

QUESTION XVI.

Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

Proofs.

1. *The covenant was made with Adam, both for himself and his posterity.*—Rom. v. 14: Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

2. *All mankind descend from our first parents.*—Gen. iii. 20: And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

3. *All mankind have sinned in Adam.*—Rom. v. 19: By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

4. *All mankind are fallen in Adam.*—Rom.

v. 12: By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Exposition.

GREAT men have written and disputed much about the origin of evil. All the controversy, however, has not removed the difficulty. But God, in his love for us, has provided a way by which it may be greatly mitigated here, and be entirely removed hereafter. What would you think of a crowd of men around a burning house, refusing either to remove the goods or to throw water on the flames till they were informed how the fire originated? Would you not say they were all insane? Let each one exert himself to save all he can first, and then settle about the way the fire was kindled. Whichever way we turn we behold the sad havoc sin is making. Men, women and children led captive, and hurrying on to eternal death. Let us do all we can to arrest their steps, to induce them to pause and consider, before it is for ever too late. If each one of the human family were now

to begin to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, nine tenths of all the misery in the world would be removed in a few years. Let each one of my readers resolve at once to correct his own faults and failings, and so far as he or she is concerned, it will relieve them of one half of their troubles. I do not wish to convey the idea that, if all were as holy as the Apostle Paul, it would relieve them of trouble and sorrow in this world, but they would have grace to bear the trials and sorrows of this life, which is the same thing in another form. It is of no use for us to deplore Adam's first sin; we know that from him we inherit a fallen nature, that we are by nature "dead in trespasses and in sins." Let us rather deplore our own actual transgressions, which proceed from this original corruption of our whole nature, and which has made us so opposed to all good, and so wholly inclined to all evil. Dear children, I pray God that you may soon become the subjects of his renewing grace, and then you will be safe, though you will

learn, by sad experience, that this depraved nature, inherited from Adam, is not entirely destroyed thereby. It will remain; though pardoned and subdued through Christ, it is still sin.

QUESTION XVII.

Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Proofs.

1. *The fall brought mankind into a state of sin.*—Rom. v. 12: By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

2. *The fall brought mankind into a state of misery.*—Rom. v. 16: The judgment was by one to condemnation.

Exposition.

OUR first parents were created holy, and perfectly free from any inclination to sin, though it pleased the all-wise Creator to make them mutable. The world with all it contains was given them. No potentate ever had so fair a dominion as had Adam to reign

over, and no newly married couple ever began life with such goodly prospects. Beautiful and grand beyond conception must have been that Paradise, for God himself designed and decorated it. What flowers, what fruits, what shady alleys, what green slopes, what sunny uplands, mountains perhaps in miniature, with waterfalls here and there, and dim forests, and bright rivers, whose sands sparkled with gold. For we are told that a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and that it parted and became four heads or branches, and that “the gold of that land is good ;” and then the inspired penman speaks of the precious stones that were there. It appears from the Scripture account to have combined all that is beautiful and grand in nature, and all sparkling with sunshine, redolent with sweets, and vocal with song. Here, probably, our first parents might have remained until their time of probation was accomplished, and then been translated to the heavenly Paradise, to be for ever established in a state of blessedness, where there was no

possibility of change, but the tempter came, and oh! what a fall was there.

I once met a man who had been reared in luxury. He and his wife started in life, the possessors of vast wealth. He was dissipated, and she was indolent and extravagant. In twenty years from their marriage all their wealth was gone. When I found them they were living in a miserable cabin, with an earthen floor, and neither chair, bed, nor table in the wretched abode, and their children, five in number, untaught, unfed, and almost naked. The father's drunkenness was the cause of all this misery. Ah! I could not help thinking, here is a good illustration of the fall of man and its bitter consequences. These people had fallen from their first estate, and their children were reaping the bitter fruits of their father's sin.

This wretched man's children seemed to be satisfied with their condition. They were so ignorant and degraded, that no idea of a better estate seemed to enter their minds,

and they never seemed to feel that it was possible for them to rise any higher among their fellow creatures, or to reflect at all on the cause of all this degradation. What a sad type of human nature is this. "The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery;" and we all show by our conduct that we fully approve of what our first parents did. It is only when the truth shines like a lighted lamp into our hearts and understanding that we can see our misery and degradation. Sin is the cause of all our misery. What a monster it is to the eyes which are opened by divine grace to see it. Then how must it appear to a pure and holy God? If you were to see a great giant marching through the land, with a sharp sword in his hand, killing all the men, women and children he met, you would hate him intensely. Well, sin is that very giant. His awful tread is heard every where; his garments are "rolled in blood:" his sword is cutting and slashing right and left. My young friends, are you under the control of

this fearful demon, doing his bidding? If you are, remember that he is leading you to your final destruction. Oh, follow him no longer. You have only to open your eyes and look around to see the misery that sin has brought into the world. All nature proclaims it, famine, blight, storms and earthquakes. And among God's rational creatures what do we see? Man's utmost ingenuity set at work to invent instruments of death that he may destroy his fellow man. The whole history of this world is one of wars and fightings. The strong oppress the weak; bad men are often in high places, and good men, poor and unknown. Famine, pestilence, want and woe, more than we can imagine, have visited this sin-stricken world. We can scarcely call anything our own, so uncertain are all sublunary things. Our very reason tells us that things could not have been always so. A perfect God would not make a world of so much disorder. When it came from his hands it was "all very good." Sin has introduced all this dis-

order and misery. When we look around and see all this, we are very apt to ask the question, will these things always be so? Will man's estate always be one of sin and misery? My dear young friends, I hope to be able soon to show you from God's infallible word that there is hope of a better time; a faint light glimmered very soon, even on the darkness that succeeded the fall.

QUESTION XVIII.

Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Proofs.

1. *The sinfulness of man's fallen state consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin.*—Rom. v. 19: By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

2. *The sinfulness of man's fallen state consists in the want of original righteousness.*—Rom. iii. 10: There is none righteous, no, not one.

3. *The sinfulness of man's fallen state consists in the corruption of his whole nature.*—Psalm li. 5: Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

4. *All actual transgressions proceed from original sin.*—Matt. xv. 19: Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false-witness, blasphemies.

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, the depravity of our nature is ours by inheritance. God chose Adam as our federal head, or our representative. He stood for us, his posterity, betrayed the trust committed to him, and involved the race in ruin; a truth plain to be seen wherever man is found. The fountain is polluted, and how can the stream that runs from it be pure? A thistle seed will produce a thistle.

Eccles. vii. 20: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not." If our nature were not wholly corrupt, some of the human family would be found free from actual transgression of the law of God; but, there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Mark vii. 21: "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders," &c. Here the heart is

represented as the source of all the evil actions which are exhibited in life. The doctrine taught in this answer is, that we come into this world destitute of piety towards God, and that this was brought on us by the sin of our first parents. That as soon as we begin to act, we begin to make a wicked use of both body and mind, running counter to the will of God, and transgressing his law daily. The Scripture proofs of this doctrine are so numerous that we cannot quote them all here, and our own observation confirms it beyond a doubt, and the whole superstructure of man's redemption is based on it.

The phrase, "The guilt of Adam's first sin," means that we are exposed to the penalty of the broken law for that sin, since Adam was our representative. The expression, "The corruption of his whole nature," does not mean that all men are alike sinful, nor that any man is as bad as he can be; but simply that all the powers of man's being are out of harmony with God and holiness.

A man took a scion from a crab apple tree,

and planted it in his garden; it grew with vigour and beauty, was annually laden with fruit, but it was still crab apples, though of a better kind. Cultivation had done something for it. So it is with human nature, all are naturally depraved, but through good moral culture some are much better than others.

A skeptic once said to Dr. Nettleton, "Tell me how I came by my wicked heart?" That, replied the doctor, is not of half so much importance as to know how you can get rid of it. As the man manifested no disposition to hear anything on that subject, but still pressed the question how he came by his wicked heart, Dr. Nettleton told him his condition resembled that of a man, who is drowning, while his friends are trying to save his life. Each time he rises to the surface of the water, he exclaims, "How came I here?" They cry to him, that question does not concern you now, take hold of the rope. "But how came I here?" he asks again. We will not stop to answer that question now, reply his friends.

“Then I’ll drown,” replies the infatuated man, and down he sinks to the bottom.

While it is right, my young friends, to try to learn all you can and all that God has revealed concerning those mysterious doctrines, still it is of infinitely more importance for you to know how this corrupt nature can be renewed in the image of God. The fact that you are a sinner you cannot help knowing. Unless you have been regenerated by the grace of God, you do not love God, nor his law, nor his holy service; and that itself proves the doctrine contained in this answer true. God in his infinite love has provided a way, by which your corrupt nature can be purified and his divine image again stamped on your hearts. Go to him then in earnest prayer, crying, “Create in me a clean heart, O God! and renew a right spirit within me.”

QUESTION XIX.

What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Proofs.

1. *By the fall all mankind have lost communion with God.*—Psalm lviii. 3: The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

2. *By the fall all mankind are brought under God's wrath and curse.*—Eph. ii. 3: And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

3. *By the fall all mankind are liable to present misery.*—Gen. iii. 17: Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it, all the days of thy life.

4. *By the fall all mankind are subjected to death.*—1 Cor. xv. 22 : In Adam all die.

5. *By the fall all mankind are liable to the pains of hell, which are for ever.*—Rom. v. 18 : By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.

Exposition.

WE learn from this answer, that sin destroyed that happy communion which existed between man and his Creator, alienated him in all his affections from God, and brought him under his displeasure.

An aged minister once preached on this subject; he raised his voice with each succeeding word, and at last exclaimed with tremendous emphasis, “A wicked man is not fit to serve God, man, or the devil.”

Then, after a pause, he added, “And I will tell you why. He is not fit to serve God, because God is holy. He is not fit to serve man, because he is deceitful. And he is not fit to serve the devil, because he is not satisfied

with his wages. No, my young friends, the sinner is not satisfied with the wages he gets here, and he will be worse satisfied with them in the world to come. I beseech you strike for higher wages at once, even the wages of righteousness, which is life eternal.”

A missionary, speaking of the Hindoos, says, “They traverse the burning plains, sandy deserts, and fatal jungles of India for hundreds of miles, measuring their way through mud and water by the length of their bodies, to bathe in some sacred river, in the vain hope of washing away their sins. They throw themselves beneath the wheels of the car of Juggernaut. They lie for weeks stretched on planks filled with sharp spikes, till the blood oozes from every pore.

“They suspend themselves by hooks thrust through the muscles of the back, and sometimes hang thus until they die. They pierce their tongues with sharp spears, and are led about for hours with the inserted weapon. And yet, after enduring all these modes of torture, I have heard them exclaim, We

have no peace, we have not found God." These poor heathen are groping in darkness, after God: but you, dear children, live in the full blaze of gospel light; and you know that no such self-torture is required, to secure God's favour. Nothing is required but to feel your sinfulness to be a burden more than you can bear, and to fly to Jesus Christ, who is so willing to save. He will help you to bear the calamities of life here, and after death translate your redeemed soul to heaven, where communion with God will be no more interrupted by sin or Satan, and where the lost paradise will be restored, without the possibility of danger that it ever will be lost, as Eden was to our first parents.

QUESTION XX.

Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation, by a Redeemer.

Proofs.

1. *God's election is from eternity.*—Eph. i. 4: He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.

2. *God's election is of his mere good pleasure.*—Eph. i. 5: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children,—according to the good pleasure of his will.

3. *God elected some to everlasting life.*—2 Thess. ii. 13: God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation.

4. *God entered into a covenant of grace to redeem the elect.*—Isaiah xlii. 6, 7: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people.

5. *God delivers his elect out of sin and misery by a Redeemer.*—Luke iv. 18: He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives.

6. *God brings his elect into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.*—Rev. v. 9: Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.

Exposition.

HERE we have a ray of light to gild the gloom. God chose from eternity to save a part of our race. Some of my young readers, no doubt, are ready to cry out, “And why did he not choose to elect all to everlasting life?” Now let us suppose a case. Two boys applied to Mr. A. for employment as clerks. Mr. A. set one of them immediately at work, the other one was sent away unemployed. Mr. A. gave no reason for his choice. He chose the one, “out of his mere good pleasure.” Had the other

any right to complain? Mr. A. was under no obligation to choose either of the boys. This is just what we mean by God's choosing some and passing by others. Has not the Supreme Ruler of the universe a right to do what men claim the right to do, and are doing every day?

None of us have any claims on God. All was forfeited at the fall; and death is the just desert of every descendant of Adam from the highest to the lowest; for all have sinned. But some of my young readers may say, But why did God make this election, or choice, away back in eternity? Eph. i. 4: According as he hath chosen us in him, (in Christ) before the foundation of the world. "Known to God are all his works from the beginning." If God knew as well from eternity as he does now, or as he could know at any other time; what objection can there be to his doing it? Besides, time is a word that belongs to earth. It is one of our words. God uses our language in order that we may comprehend what he means; but, dear children,

time does not belong to God ; with him there is no past, no future ; all is an eternal now. Take another illustration. Mr. B. had a fine peach tree in his garden, laden with fruit, and to save it from being stolen, he wrote on the gate, " I will shoot any one whom I see stealing my peaches." He knew there were two thievish boys in the neighbourhood, who would steal them at the risk of their lives. At the same time he determined of his free will, and " out of his mere good pleasure," to subdue one of those boys and make him a good man. Accordingly he set himself to watch. Soon after dark, as he expected, the two boys climbed the fence, and began to load their pockets with peaches. Instead of shooting, Mr. B. took after them, and caught the one he intended to catch, as he was climbing the fence. The boy struggled with all his might to get away, but Mr. B. was stronger than he, and held him fast. He brought him into the house, had him washed and decently clothed, set before him in words of warning the folly and wickedness of his conduct, and by

his kindness led him to repent of his sin, and finally he adopted him as his son. The other boy made his escape, and went on stealing, until he was apprehended by the officers of justice. He was tried, found guilty, and sent to prison for life. Though he was often heard to boast how he had out-run Mr. B., he never expressed any sorrow that he had not been caught instead of the other boy, or complained that Mr. B. had done him injustice in any way. It may be, that when he got into prison and began to reflect, he was sorry that he had not been caught. Now, did Mr. B. do that boy any injustice? Certainly not! He broke the law Mr. B. had made concerning his peaches, and deserved to be punished. And did Mr. B's. knowing all this beforehand, and laying his plans as to how he would catch that boy, and what he would do with him, alter the case? Certainly not. He was under no obligations to give any one a reason for his choice, though no doubt he had good reasons for it.

These illustrations, we think, are so plain

that any child may understand them. God forbade our first parents to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death, knowing from all eternity that they would eat of it. At the same time, he determined, out of his mere good pleasure, to glorify his own most holy name by exhibiting to all his intelligent creatures, the attributes of justice and mercy, which would never have been heard of had there been no sin to punish, or no sinner to need mercy.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in his infinite love, entered into a covenant with the Father, to redeem by his own precious blood a part of the rebel race. What his reasons were for choosing only a part, he has not told us, and we have no business with that, as, "Secret things belong to God." So you have no right to make that an excuse for not serving him. In no part of his sacred word has he told you that he has not chosen you to salvation, but he has said this. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

And no one who sought earnestly in the appointed way has ever failed. The only hope any one has of getting to heaven, is based on this decree of election, and all the saved will thank God through eternity for it, and none of the lost will ever plead it as an excuse for their going to hell.

I never yet heard any one complaining against God for giving him poor parents while others were born rich. God accomplishes all this work in bringing us out of an estate of sin and misery into an estate of salvation, without offering any violence to our will. "We are made willing in the day of his power."

Jesus Christ has bought us from sin and hell, by his own blood, shed for the remission of sins, and if you will seek his favour with your whole heart, he will not let you perish. Now instead of troubling yourself about whether you are of the elect or not, call on God in earnest prayer, for Christ's sake to create in you a clean heart and renew a right spirit within you. Every real Christian, when he looks back, is compelled to say, "By

grace was I saved, through faith, and that not of myself, it was the gift of God." Repent and believe in Christ first, and then you will have no difficulty about the doctrine of election.

QUESTION XXI.

Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be God and man, in two distinct naturès, and one person for ever.

Proofs.

1. *Christ is the only Redeemer of God's elect.*
Gal. iii. 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

2. *Christ, our Redeemer, is the eternal Son of God.*—Psalm ii. 7: Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

3. *Christ, our Redeemer, became man.*—John i. 14: The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

4. *Christ has the natures of God and man*

united in his one person.—Rom. ix. 5: And of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. 1 Tim. iii. 16: Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh.

5. *Christ continues to be God and man for ever.*—Col. ii. 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Exposition.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS, this answer shows us the way God saves those whom he has chosen to eternal life. Jesus Christ was appointed from eternity to do this work. He was always the Son of God, and at the time appointed he became the Son of man, uniting the human and divine natures in one person. These natures are not mixed, but merely united. Iron and wood are united in a wagon-wheel. Each has some distinct work to do, or part to sustain. In the work of redemption Christ suffered in every part of his human nature to make an atonement for sin, while his divine nature gave to it its sa-

ving efficacy. Thus he became a Redeemer, in all points suited to our necessities.

Hebrews i. 8: "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever, and ever." Thus God the Father calls him God. Hebrews i. 2: "By him also he made the worlds." Here the works of God are attributed to him. He created the worlds, therefore he must be God. On the other hand he eat like a man, he slept like a man, he wept like a man, but he died like a God. He lived a perfect, holy man, to set an example for us to follow. He is the only perfect example that has ever appeared on earth in our nature. He had no sin, neither was there any guile found in his mouth. He went about doing good. He never broke a bruised reed, nor quenched the smoking flax. He showed himself God by his works, and man by his sympathy with man. Those who deny that he was God, rob him of his glory, and unfit him for the work necessary to be done for us. None but a God could open the eyes of the blind, and raise the dead by

his own power; none but a God could lay down his life, and take it up again; and he did that. Everything necessary to prove him God was done by him, and likewise everything necessary to prove him man. It is necessary too for him to continue man, as he must of necessity continue God. As man, he can represent us before the Father in our own nature, he can plead his own sufferings in our stead, he can point to his scars, where the nails and the spear pierced his body. Oh what solemn obligations we are under to this blessed Saviour, for his infinite condescension, in stooping so low, as to take upon him our degraded nature, and unite it with his divine nature. You would think it very degrading to you to be tied fast to some vile, filthy boy or girl, for a month, or a year; but what would that be to the glorious Son of God uniting our nature with his.

We are not to understand from this that he lowered his divine nature by taking ours, or that he in any sense lost his equality with the Father as God. He still remained the

same eternal, unchangeable God, that he was from all eternity. The apostle says in 1 Tim. iii. 16: And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh. Although we may not be able fully to understand this wonderful doctrine by human wisdom, still there is one way by which we can satisfy ourselves of its truth. When the soul is bowed down under a sense of sin and ill desert, by exercising faith in Christ, as God and man, the soul can find peace, when it can be found no where else. All other appliances have entirely failed in giving relief to a sin-sick soul; but the moment the soul in its distress looks by faith, at this Emmanuel, God with us, the burden falls, and all is peace within. When this God-man says to the storm, "Peace, be still," the wind falls, and the waves cease to roll in angry foam. O how our hearts should swell with gratitude to this blessed Jesus, for taking our nature upon him, to relieve us from our sins, and prepare us through the riches of his grace, to live and reign with him, in those

blessed mansions he has gone to prepare for us. Let it then be, my young friends, the first business of your lives, to make your peace with this blessed Saviour. If you do, this doctrine will be your consolation in life, your hope in death, and your highest happiness in heaven. The redeemed will for ever gaze at this God-man Redeemer in heaven, still discovering new beauties, and drinking in new glories, throughout all the cycles of eternity. May God grant this to be the happy lot of him who writes and of those who read,

QUESTION XXII.

How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man ?

A. Christ, the Son of God, became man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul ; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Proofs.

1. *Christ became man by taking a true body.*—Heb. ii. 14 : As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.

2. *Christ became man by taking a reasonable soul.*—Luke ii. 52 : And Jesus increased in wisdom.

3. *Christ was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost.*—Luke i. 35 : The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee ; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.

4. *Christ was born of the Virgin Mary.*-- Luke ii. 7 : She brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.

5. *Christ was always without sin.*--Heb. vii. 26 : For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, this answer teaches us how the Son of God became man, not a man in appearance alone, but a real man. John i. 14 : "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." He had a woman for his mother, as we have ; he was a helpless babe once, as we were ; he was a real boy, but possessed of more than a boy's wisdom ; he grew as other boys do, up to manhood ; he eat, he slept, he waked and talked ; as boys and men do. His divinity, or divine nature, began to be manifested when he was about twelve years old, at the time he went up to Jerusalem with his mother, and supposed father, when he astonished the Jewish doctors with his questions.

We hear no more of him till he entered on his public ministry; except that he was subject to his parents. No doubt he was a model in his obedience to parental authority, as he was a perfect model during his lifetime, as a man on earth.

The answer says he had a reasonable soul. This means that he had a human soul, as well as a human body; that he was endowed with human wisdom and human sympathies as other men, independent of his divine nature.

The two natures were not mixed; the divine nature abode in the human nature, and gave efficacy to it as the machinery within the clock gives motion and direction to the hands. Our minds or souls give motion and direction to all our actions; so his divine nature directed both his soul and body. We learn from this the mysterious greatness of the God-man Christ Jesus, and his wonderful condescension to come, and manifest himself in the flesh that men might see God and hear him. He appeared in human form to men of old as the Angel of the covenant, and talked with them,

but not in a real human body, as he did after he was born in Bethlehem.

The Rev. J. Williams, missionary to the South Sea Islands, relates the following discussion on the divinity of Christ, which took place at a weekly meeting for religious inquiry. "I believe," said the first speaker, "that Jesus Christ is God as well as man." "Are you not mistaken?" was the reply. "Was not Jesus man, and man only?" "I believe," rejoined the first, "that Jesus was really man, for he had both the soul and body of a man; but he was God as well as man, for he took on himself the form of man. If he had been only man he could not have died for sinners." "Is that not proof," said another, "that he is not God? If God, why die?" First speaker, "His dying only proves him to be man; his rising again proves him to be God." "And if," adds another, "he was only man, why such an ado about his death? Many have died such deaths. Paul was beheaded, and Peter was crucified, but there is not so much said about their deaths." "Ah

but," rejoined another, "Tuike died among us, and there was great ado about his death, what he said, and how happy he died." "But stop," cried one, "did the sun hide himself in darkness at Tuike's death? Did the rocks rend at Tuike's death?" "But did not Jesus eat food while on earth, and will God eat food?" "I say," was the answer, "he was man as well as God, therefore he did eat food." It seems to me one of the plainest truths in the Bible that Jesus Christ was, and is, both God and man; and to deny it, is to deny one of the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion in the very face of God's own testimony.

As I told you in the last question, man's soul has wants, that nothing short of such a being as Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us, can satisfy. It filled Stephen with joy, when he was stoned to death, to see Jesus at the right hand of God in our nature. It has cheered millions when passing through the valley of death, the sight of this God-man. And if you believe in him as the Son of God and the son of man, he will light up that dark

valley for you. Go to him, then, in full confidence that he has sympathy for you, and that he is both able and willing to save you from the dominion of sin here, and from all its awful consequences hereafter.

QUESTION XXIII.

What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

Proofs.

1. *As Redeemer, Christ is our prophet.*—
John vi. 14: This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.

2. *As Redeemer, Christ is our priest.*—
Heb. v. 6: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek.

3. *As Redeemer, Christ is our king.*—
Luke i. 33: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, the answer to this question unfolds to us the various offices our

blessed Redeemer holds for our special benefit. In proof of the fact that Christ is the prophet of his people we refer you to John vi. 14: This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. A prophet is one who not only foretells future events, but teaches. Christ foretold his own cruel death and the destruction of Jerusalem, besides many other things, all of which have or will come to pass. Psalm cx. 4: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. As Melchizedek had been a priest of God's own appointing, without predecessor or successor, and not after the order of Aaron, whose origin, consecration, life, and death are known, so Christ was made a priest by God's own appointment, without the imposition of hands, or Levitical succession.

All the victims that were offered on Jewish altars were only types of him. He offered himself unto God, as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour in our room and stead, and his sacrifice was, and is, a full satisfaction to God for our sins.

Matt. xxi. 5: Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass. This denotes his great power to subdue and conquer all his and our enemies. All things in heaven and upon earth are under his control. See these more fully explained in their proper place.

QUESTION XXIV.

How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

Proofs.

1. *As a prophet, Christ reveals to us the will of God by his word.*—John xv. 15: All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.

2. *As a prophet, Christ reveals to us the will of God by his Spirit.*—John xiv. 26: The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.

3. *As a prophet, Christ reveals to us the will of God for our salvation.*—Isaiah lxi. 1: The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up

the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Exposition.

SOME years ago a traveller, who visited Rome, determined to explore some portion of the catacombs, the place where thousands of the dead had been buried in vaults hundreds of years before. Deep excavations had been made, and the sides walled up with statues and niches, where the bodies were laid.

These passages extend for miles underground, without a ray of light. This man got a large ball of cord, and put it in a basket at the entrance, and with the end of the cord tied to one hand, and a lamp in the other, he started on his subterranean journey. As he was moving along examining the skulls and bones of the men and women of past ages, he stumbled and fell. His lamp was broken, and the cord lost off his hand. Here he was among the dead of past centuries, far from the light of day, and out of the reach of human aid. Awful condition! He wan-

dered for some time, and at last fell down in despair. But his hand fell on the cord. His heart beat with joy. He began to wind up the cord, and it led him to behold once more the light of day.

The disobedience of man had placed him in a hopeless condition. He was wandering in darkness, dead in trespasses and in sin, without one ray of light, till Christ came to reveal to him the way out of this awful darkness. What the cord when found, was to this miserable explorer, the word of God, revealed to us by Christ, is to bring us out of our prison house of darkness and death. All the expedients that human wisdom can devise have been tried in vain. Some one must come from God, to reveal what is required, and teach us how to come back to God from whom we have wandered.

The will of God is revealed to us in two ways, by his word and Spirit. Both of these ways are necessary. The law, or word, killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. That is, the law condemns us to death, and places us

in that condition by its teachings, that we are made willing, by the power of the Spirit, to accept of the provisions made for us in the Gospel. Christ makes known to us the will of God for our salvation. He taught while he was here on earth, and spake as no one ever spake before. He astonished all that heard him, till they said, "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" The lessons he taught, were the most important ever taught on earth. He taught the way from death to life, and from earth to heaven; the way to be delivered out of a state of sin and misery, and be brought into a state of holiness and happiness. We learn from this answer, that Christ makes known to us outwardly by his word, and inwardly by his Spirit, what God would have us know, believe, and do to be saved. Then prize his word more, and yield to the sweet influences of his Spirit, and he will lead you safely through this wilderness world to that blessed world, where sin and death are found no more.

Some forty-five years ago when the writer

was a youth, he went to what was called the far west. There were but two or three cabins within many miles of where he was. He went out alone one day to hunt deer. He had not gone far till he wounded a very large one. The snow was deep, and the country entirely level, no roads or water courses for guides, and the day dark and gloomy. He was soon lost, and wandered on without knowing where he was going, till it became so dark that he could not follow the trail of the wounded deer any longer. The cold was intense, and he began to think he must perish. To make the matter worse, the wolves began to howl at a distance. He would have given all the world if he had owned it, for a guide. At last he came to the conclusion that the only way for him to get back was to take his own trail, which he could still see, and about midnight he got to his lodgings. He would certainly have perished if he had not had his own trail to follow back.

Now what that trail was to guide him back, God's word and Spirit is to bring lost sinners

back to God. All mankind were lost, wandering away from God till Christ came, and showed the way back to God. Our lost and ruined state reached his heavenly mind, and pity brought him down, to guide us out of the wilderness of sin, and lead us back to God. Take this lamp of God in your hand, and pray for the Spirit to guide you, and he will lead you safely to his holy hill in the heavenly Zion.

QUESTION XXV.

How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

Proofs.

1. *As a priest, Christ offered himself once in sacrifice to God.*—Eph. v. 2: Christ also hath loved us and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour.

2. *As a priest, Christ offered himself to satisfy divine justice.*—Gal. iii. 13: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

3. *As a priest, Christ reconciles us to God.*—Heb. ii. 17: That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining

to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

4. *As a priest, Christ makes continual intercession for us.*—Heb. vii. 25: He ever liveth to make intercession for them.

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, this answer tells us the way in which Christ removed the penalty of the broken law of God from our souls. It was done by substituting himself in our place. He stepped between us and God, when the stroke of divine vengeance was ready to fall on our heads, and he received the blows we deserved. There was a very bad boy called Bill, that went to the same school with me. The teacher had to whip him every day for his disobedience. He had a very kind sister who loved him very much, bad as he was. The moment the teacher would go to whip Bill, he would fall down and his sister would lie down beside him, with her head on his bosom, to save him from the whipping. She sacrificed herself to save him; got between him and the rod. So Christ took on himself the chastise-

ment we deserved. The dignity of his person, and the holiness of his character, enabled him to satisfy all the law's demands. Being free from sin, he offered a pure offering of both body and soul, and the Father accepted of his sacrifice in the room of his chosen ones. His intercession is based on the ground that he has paid all claims against those for whom he died. All their sins were charged to his account, and he paid all demands against them. When a man is put in prison for debt, if another comes and pays the debt, he demands the prisoner's release on the ground of justice. This is the reason why his intercession is always successful; none for whom he intercedes will fail to escape. When Æschylus was about to be condemned to death for some act of impiety, a historian tells us that his brother stepped between him and the judge, and held up his arm minus the hand, which he had lost in the service of the state, and so obtained his pardon.

Thus it is, when the justice of God lays any thing to the charge of the saints, Christ

shows his own wounds, and by virtue of his blood shed on the cross, his people are released from all the demands of the violated law.

The gardener of Elizabeth, consort of Frederick II., had one little daughter with whose religious instruction he had taken much pains. When she was five years old, the queen met her one day, and was so much pleased with her that a short time after, the artless child, at the queen's request, was brought to the palace. She approached the queen with natural courtesy, kissed her robe, and modestly took her seat, which had been placed for her by the queen's order near her own person. From this position she could overlook the table at which the queen was dining with the ladies of the court, and they watched with interest to see the effect of so much splendour on the simple child.

She looked carelessly on the costly dresses of the guests, the gold and porcelain on the table, and the pomp with which all was conducted, and then folding her little hands she

sang with her clear and childish voice these words :

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
Are all my ornament and dress,
Fearless, with these pure garments on,
I'll view the splendour of thy throne.

All were struck with surprise on seeing so much feeling, penetration, and piety in one so young. Tears filled the eyes of the ladies, and the queen exclaimed, "Ah, happy child, how far are we below you." Christ has purchased, by the sacrifice of himself, more costly robes than princes wear, for all his people, however poor and despised they may be here.

As the sight of Cæsar's bloody robe incensed the Romans against those who slew him, so let the sight of Christ's broken body and the cross incense you against your sins that slew him. Every saved sinner may say, Christ died for me. The salvation of one sinner would have cost the Son of God his life ; so you and I may say with an emphasis, *Christ died for me.*

During the revolutionary war two young men in South Carolina went out as spies in disguise, to ascertain the strength and position of the enemy. They fell in with a squad of six British soldiers leading away five men handcuffed, to be tried and executed as traitors, their wives and children following weeping in the deepest agony. The names of the young men were Jasper and Newton. Their hearts were pained at the sight. Jasper whispered to Newton, I feel as if I must save the lives of those men or lose my own. That is just the way I feel, replied Newton. They were not suspected of disloyalty to the British government. They passed on ahead, and began to lay their plans. The prospect of saving the men seemed almost hopeless, as they were entirely unarmed. They finally concluded to pass on to a place where there was a spring of water in a dense forest of small hemlocks, and secrete themselves as near the spring as possible, expecting they would stop there for water. In a little time the melancholy procession came along, and

stopped as they had anticipated. Five of the soldiers laid down their muskets, and went to the spring with their canteens for the water, while the other stood guard over the prisoners. "Now is our time," whispered Jasper, and in a moment the sentinel was prostrate, each seized a musket, and demanded the surrender of the guard. The handcuffs were transferred to the hands of the guard in a few moments. While this was going on the women and children were prostrate on the ground at the feet of these young men, bathing them with their tears. They thought for a time they must be angels, and offered divine adorations to them. But as soon as they got to a place of safety, they learned their names, and while they lived they wrought the names of Jasper and Newton with their needles on all their garments. This was a noble manifestation of gratitude, for a temporal deliverance; but oh, how much more should our hearts swell with gratitude to Jesus Christ, for not only risking, but shedding his own precious blood, to redeem

us, as we were going, handcuffed with sin, to the place of our final execution. O God, give to all who read this hearts to love Jesus Christ.

QUESTION XXVI.

How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Proofs.

1. *As a king, Christ subdues us to himself.*
—Psalm cx. 3: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

2. *As a king, Christ rules and defends us.*
—Isaiah xxxiii. 22: The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our king, he will save us.

3. *As a king, Christ restrains and conquers all his and our enemies.*—1 Cor. xv. 25: For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

Exposition.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS, this answer

teaches us that Jesus Christ is a king. The title denotes his great power in bringing to pass all that his people need, and conquering all their enemies.

The first conquest he makes as a king, is to subdue us unto himself. Although he laid down his life for us, we still remain his enemies, till he sends his Holy Spirit, to subdue the enmity of our hearts. Strange as it may appear, man by his sin, not only offended God, but put enmity in his own heart against God. The first work of Christ was, to offer himself a sacrifice to satisfy God's law in man's place, and the second work is, to subdue our enmity to himself.

He first subdues us to himself, then he rules us. This he does in a variety of ways. Sometimes he does this by his love. The goodness of God sometimes leads his people to repent; at other times he rules them by his chastisements, but more generally by his providence, often leading them in a way they know not. He has given us his law to be the rule of our lives, and when we violate

it, as a king, he punishes us. He defends us from our enemies. These are numerous. The worst of them are in our hearts, fighting us at every step we take heavenward. Unless his kingly power is exercised over our hearts, subduing these vile affections, they will prove our ruin.

It has been common for kings to stamp their own image on their coins; so Christ stamps his image on the hearts of his people, by which he knows all his subjects. He claims them as his own, and defends them as his subjects. It is always dangerous to interfere with the subjects of a king, just in proportion to his power to punish. A petty king may not be able to deliver his subjects, but woe to that enemy who injures one of Christ's subjects. He not only stamps his image on them but he writes his laws upon their hearts, and binds them to him with cords of love. His grace makes them willing subjects.

How vain it is to rebel against such a king. He has all the hosts of heaven at his com-

mand. He can at any time surround his people with horses and chariots of fire. Pharaoh tried his strength with him fairly, backed by all the powers of hell, but the Red Sea buried him and his mighty hosts. So every sinner that will not yield to his grace will be crushed by his power.

In a missionary speech an old native convert of Rarotonga, among other things, observed, "I have lived during the reign of four kings. In the first I was but young; we were continually at war, and a fearful time we had of it.

"During the reign of the second we were overtaken with a severe famine, and all expected to perish. During the third we were conquered, and became the prey of two other tribes on the island; then, if a man went out to fish he rarely ever returned, or if a woman went any distance to fetch wood she was rarely ever seen again. But during the reign of this third king we were visited by another King—a great King—a good King—a most powerful King—a King of love,

Jesus, the Lord from heaven. He has gained the victory, he has conquered our hearts, we are all his subjects; therefore we have now peace and plenty in this world, and hope soon to go and dwell with him for ever in heaven." Subjects are generally proud of the power of their sovereign; and should not saints boast of the power of King Jesus, who is mighty to save all who put their trust in him?

My young friends, I entreat you to enlist in his service at once, and become the subjects of his government. Many of the most powerful governments of earth have crumbled to the dust, and those that administered them are long since forgotten. But the throne of Jesus Christ will stand firm when all the kings and nations of the earth have perished. Make this King of heaven and earth your friend, and then you need not fear what men or devils can do, for Christ is stronger than the strongest. But if you refuse to let him rule over you in love, you may depend upon it, he will in the end dash

you to pieces like a potter's vessel. Fly to him now in the morning of your days, and he will bring you off conqueror, and more than conqueror, by his own almighty power.

QUESTION XXVII.

Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Proofs.

1. *Christ humbled himself by being born in a low condition.*—Luke ii. 7: And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.

2. *Christ humbled himself in being made under the law.*—Gal. iv. 4: God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

3. *Christ humbled himself in undergoing the miseries of this life.*—Isaiah liii. 3: He is

despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

4. *Christ humbled himself in enduring the wrath of God.*—Matt. xxvii. 46: And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

5. *Christ humbled himself in submitting to the cursed death of the cross.*—Phil. ii. 8: He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

6. *Christ humbled himself by being buried in the grave for a time.*—1 Cor. xv. 4: That he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, this answer tells us in part the manner in which the blessed Redeemer performed his offices of prophet, priest, and king.

The texts here cited are sufficient to prove the humiliation Christ underwent in his birth, life and death. His mother was an humble virgin, his birth place a stable, and his cradle

a manger. Oh what infinite condescension ! Kings are generally law makers, but he becomes a law keeper ; humbles himself to become the subject of a law that had been shamefully violated, and to be treated as one of the violators. His humiliation further consisted, in his suffering the miseries of this life. He had no place to lay his head ; he was not as well off in worldly comforts as the foxes and birds ; they have holes and nests, but he had not even a bed.

He came to appease the wrath of God for us, stepped between God and us, and bared his own bosom, to suffer what we deserved. He was put to death as a criminal ; the degrading and painful death of the cross. This was humiliation of the lowest kind. He humbled himself to be laid in the grave, and there to lie three days. Oh what a strange sight for the angels who worshipped him to behold. All this humiliation and suffering of God's Son was for us. If you were in prison, chained down under sentence of death, and some one should undergo all

Christ did for you, and save your life, could you ever forget his love to you? If you did ever forget it, would you not deserve to be driven out of all respectable society?

Well now Christ has died to save you. Should not this melt your ungrateful heart into penitence for your sins and past ingratitude? Consider his humiliation for you, and turn to him with your whole heart to-day.

“Mamma,” a little maiden said,
Almost with her expiring sigh,
“Put no sweet roses round my head
When in my coffin dress I lie.”

“Why not, my dear,” the mother said,
“What flower so well a corpse adorns?”
“Mamma,” the innocent replied,
“They crowned our Saviour’s head with thorns.”

On one occasion a missionary was describing the death of Jesus, at a time of deep religious interest among the Indians. One of the tall sons of the forest arose with the tears raining down his red cheeks, and said, “Did Jesus die for me, die for poor Indian? Me

have no lands to give to Jesus, the white man take them away, me give him my dog and my rifle." The minister told him Jesus could not accept such gifts. "Me give Jesus my dog, my rifle, and my blanket; poor Indian, he got no more to give, he give Jesus all." The minister replied again, that Jesus could not accept them. The poor Indian looked down in sorrow for some time. At last he raised his noble head once more, and fixed his eye on the preacher, while he sobbed out, "*Here is poor Indian; will Jesus take him?*" A thrill of joy ran through the heart of minister and people, as this son of the forest yielded to Christ. The Spirit of God had done his work, and the Indian was rich.

Oh what adorable mysteries shine forth in this God-man! "He wept like a man, he healed like a God. He hungered like a man, he blasted the fig tree like a God. He slept like a man, he stilled the waves of the sea like a God. He prayed like a man, he raised the dead like a God. He suffered and died like a man, he burst the tomb and

rose from the dead like a God. Again he eat fish like a man, he ascended to heaven like a God." He intercedes for us in heaven as a man, he will come to judge the world as a God. He now pleads with you to be saved, like a man, but if you turn a deaf ear to his voice, he will ere long punish you, like a God. Make your peace with this Jesus without delay, secure his protection; then let the rains descend, and the winds blow, and the floods rise, you will be safe. Neglect his invitations, and die in your sins, and he will punish you, as a God, where hope and mercy can never come."

QUESTION XXVIII.

Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?

A. Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Proofs.

1. *Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising from the dead.*—Rom. i. 4: And declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

2. *Christ's exaltation consisteth in his ascending up into heaven.*—Luke xxiv. 51: And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

3. *Christ's exaltation consisteth in his now sitting at the right hand of God.*—Col. iii. 1:

Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

4. *Christ's exaltation consisteth in his coming to judge the world.*—Acts xvii. 31: He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, there are various important truths, embraced in the answer to this question. All our hopes for heaven are based on Christ's resurrection. If he has not risen, then is our faith vain.

The texts which have been cited, prove clearly that Christ rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven.

The Jews did all they could to conceal his resurrection, but their efforts only established it beyond all doubt. The sealed stone, and guard of soldiers, all became, in the end, witnesses of the fact.

This question also tells us the position he

occupies in heaven. “He sitteth at the right hand of God.” This metaphor is taken from the practice of kings who were wont to seat their favourites at their side; but, properly speaking, God has no right or left hand. This shows the exalted position which Christ occupies in the heavenly world. He is God the Father’s favourite. Blessed be God, he has admitted him there to advocate our cause, to plead the merits of his own death in our behalf. This is our only hope. We cannot go directly to God as sinners, but we can go through Christ; he is there to present our petitions with his own.

Another truth which is embraced in this answer, is, that he will come to judge the world at the last day. “He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

The resurrection of Christ from the dead, as the first fruits of them that slept in the

grave, is full assurance to us, that he will raise us also from the dead. They that are Christ's will rise at his second coming, when he will re-unite soul and body, and take his people to dwell for ever with him. What honour Christ hath conferred on our nature to wear it himself, and glorify it. He has taken it to heaven to represent us there, not in our defiled, sin-polluted dress, but in spotless innocence. At our resurrection we will receive our bodies again, purified from all their pollution, and glorified like Christ's body, which he now has in heaven. He has taken our body to heaven to represent us, and implants in us a new nature by his Holy Spirit, so that we may represent him on earth. Watson says of him, "When he was on earth he lay in a manger; now he sits on a throne. Then he was hated, and scorned of men, now he is adored by angels. Then his name was reproached, now 'God hath given him a name which is above every name.' Then he came in the form of a servant, and as a servant stood with his towel and basin, and

washed his disciples' feet, now he is clad in his princely robes, and the kings of the earth cast their crowns at his feet. On earth he was a man of sorrows, now he is anointed with the oil of gladness. On earth he wore a crown of thorns, now he is crowned King of kings. Then his Father frowned upon him in desertion, now he hath set him at his own right hand."

Thus we have traced our blessed Redeemer through the several states and conditions in which he appeared on earth, and as he appears now in heaven. Let me ask you, dear reader, what do you think of Christ? Does he still appear to you like a root out of dry ground, without form or comeliness? or is he altogether lovely? You can easily decide as to your present condition in God's sight by your views and opinions of Christ. If you have right views of his person, work, and character, you do love and obey him; if you have not, you are yet in your sins. If you love him, you love to talk about him, to read about him, and pray to him. How is it with you in

these regards? No other question of equal importance can claim your attention. All your hope of happiness in the world to come depends on your having correct views and feelings about Christ. However far you may be away from a friend you love, whenever you think of him your heart will warm towards him. How is it with you towards Christ? look well to the matter. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha," accursed from his presence, when he cometh in his glory.

QUESTION XXIX.

How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

Proofs.

1. *Christ purchased redemption for his people.*—Heb. ix. 12: By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

2. *The Holy Spirit effectually applies redemption.*—1 Cor. vi. 11: Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, this answer points out to us the only way, in which we can be benefited by Christ's sufferings and death.

By the sacrifice of himself, in our place, he ransomed us from the curse of the law we had broken. He paid the price demanded for our redemption, and satisfied God's claim against us. But such is the moral degradation into which man has fallen, that he is not able of himself to receive the gift. His whole body and soul are utterly prostrated with sin; he is even dead in trespasses and in sin. Hence Christ had not only to purchase redemption for us, but give us strength to accept of it. We cannot reach out our withered hands to take hold of this bread of eternal life without divine aid. The Spirit of God, the third person in the godhead, is therefore sent to enlighten our minds in relation to our condition, and work in us repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The condition of the sinner is fully illustrated by an occurrence on the battle field of Gettysburg. The writer was passing along among the wounded and dying, doing all he could for their comfort. He came to one

poor fellow lying on his back with a piece of a blanket laid over his body, and a tin cup, containing soup, standing by his side. "Well," said I, "my good fellow, I see you have a nice cup of soup by your side. I hope it will do you good this morning." "It is of no use to me, sir. I have no hands; they have both been shot off." I uncovered his bosom, and found it even so. Said I, Shall I feed you? "Oh, yes, if you know how to feed a baby." I knelt by his side, and fed him with the soup. This represents our condition as sinners. In the conflict with Satan, we have been left on the battle-field mortally wounded. Christ has provided for us a healing balm, but we are so disabled that we cannot reach it; and the worst of all is, we have no disposition to accept it, as this poor wounded soldier had to receive the food, until the Holy Spirit makes us willing. The Spirit of God puts a new life into the soul, and feeds it with that bread of God which came down from heaven.

We learn from this answer then, that Christ has bought pardon and deliverance for his

people, and that it is the office of the Holy Ghost to put them in possession of it; that the Holy Spirit is promised, to those who seek his aid, and without this the death of Christ will be of no avail; that you ought to love and cherish the visits of the Spirit of God to your heart, and never grieve him away by any sinful indulgence. Earnestly seek his aid, and he will renew your heart, and cleanse you from all sin, and fit you to dwell in heaven for ever.

QUESTION XXX.

How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling.

Proofs.

1. *The Spirit applies redemption by working faith in us.*—Eph. ii. 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.

2. *In effectual calling we are united to Christ by faith.*—Col. ii. 6, 7: As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him and stablished in the faith.

Exposition.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS, this answer il-

illustrates more fully the nature of the Holy Spirit's work, and shows us that faith is the product of his work, and not of our own.

The union between Christ and the believer is formed by faith. As the bud is grafted into the tree, and becomes one with it, so believers are grafted into Christ and become one with him, by the act of faith. Saving faith is taking God at his word, and doing what he commands; while it is the gift of God, induced by the Spirit of God, working faith in us, still we will never receive it without effort on our part. We have to labour and pray for it with as much earnestness, as if we had to obtain it entirely by our own works. This we can illustrate by the conduct of the farmer.

The farmer plows his ground and sows his seed with all possible care, just as much so as if his success depended entirely on his labour, still he knows that he cannot make one grain grow. He depends entirely on God for the increase. But he knows well, that if he does not sow, he cannot reap.

There is just as intimate a connection between faith and works in the kingdom of grace, as there is between plowing and sowing, in the natural world. He that refuses to plow and sow here, will never reap, so those who neglect to pray and serve God here, will never enjoy God in the world to come.

We learn from this answer, that the Holy Ghost secures to us the benefits of Christ's death, and brings us into union and communion with him, and that without faith it is impossible to please God.

It is recorded in the Memoirs of Harlan Page, that he was so habitually impressed with the necessity of the new birth and of faith in Christ, that as soon as any person came into his presence, it seemed to be the first question of his mind, "Is this a friend or an enemy of God?" The next thing was, if impenitent, to do something for his salvation, or if a Christian, to encourage him in duty. Whatever else he saw in an individual, he felt that it availed him nothing unless he

had received Christ into his heart by faith. This he felt and urged to be the sinner's first, great, and only duty in which he could be acceptable unto God. This, my dear reader, is your immediate duty, and the longer you delay doing it, the greater will be the difficulty. Your heart will become harder each day you delay, and Satan will present new difficulties and increase the power of old ones, till all desire on your part will cease. Respond at once to the first moving of the Spirit on your hearts, and pray God to enable you to believe in Christ, who alone is the way, the truth, and the life.

QUESTION XXXI.

What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

Proofs.

1. *Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit.*—Titus iii. 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

2. *In effectual calling the Spirit convinces us of sin.*—John xvi. 8: And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin.

3. *In effectual calling the Spirit convinces us of misery.*—Acts ii. 37: Now when they

heard this they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

4. *In effectual calling the Spirit enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Christ.*—Eph. i. 17, 18: That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

5. *In effectual calling the Spirit renews our wills.*—Ezek. xxxvi. 26: A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

6. *In effectual calling the Spirit persuades and enables us to embrace Christ.*—John vi. 45: And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and

hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

7. *Christ is freely offered to us in the gospel.*—Rev. xxii. 17: And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Exposition.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS, this answer explains more fully the manner in which the Holy Spirit effects his work in bringing us to Christ. The calling by the Spirit of God is twofold, the outward and the inward call. The outward call, is by the word of God, which was indited by the Spirit. It is the unlimited offer of salvation made to all men, showing them what Christ has done for them, and what he offers to them. But owing to the deep depravity of the human heart no one will be saved by the outward call alone, while all will be left without excuse. The inward call is the Spirit's power, giving

efficacy to the outward call, which alone can make it effectual to save the soul.

We may illustrate this important truth in this way. Your father has a beautiful pear-tree in his garden, loaded with fruit, which he finds is gradually disappearing, and he believes one or all of his sons are guilty. You have taken some, but as he wishes to punish only the guilty one, he gives you all his law about the fruit in future, and threatens to punish severely, the guilty one. You feel the power of his command, and your own guilt; but the impression is not strong enough to prevent you from taking more. The next time you are caught, and your guilt is charged home on you personally; then you feel in your own person that you are the transgressor, and deep conviction for your sin follows. So the outward call by the word, makes all men who believe the Bible, feel somewhat guilty, but the Spirit has to accompany the word, to make the sinner feel, I am the guilty one myself.

This is what is meant by convincing us of

sin. 1 Peter ii. 9: "Who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Whenever you get in a place of great danger, and you are fully convinced of the fact, you look out for some way to escape. Four men went out some miles in a little boat to fish in a lake. A violent storm arose, and they soon lost sight of land, and were driven for some hours by the winds in great peril. After the wind had abated, darkness came upon them, and they did not know what direction to take to find land. They discovered some distance from them a ship coming towards them. They called to the pilot for directions how to find land. He pointed to a small speck of light at a great distance. It was a lighthouse; they steered their little boat in the direction of it, and the nearer they got to it the clearer was the light, till they landed safely.

The Spirit of God first convinces of sin, and danger, and when the soul has lost all hope of safety in itself, points it to Christ, the great lighthouse for a shipwrecked world. At

first the light may be very dim, but by rowing on in faith the harbour will be certain. Ezek. xxxvi. 26: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you." The great difficulty in the way of salvation is, our wills are opposed to God's will. The Spirit renews our wills, or persuades them to bend to the will of God. He says, My people shall be made willing in the day of my power—not by any act of Divine coercion, but by a Divine persuasion.

Rev. xxii. 17: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Here is an offer that leaves all without excuse. Some may be ready to say, I cannot reconcile this with what is said in John vi. 44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." We told you the difficulty was in the *will*. None will ever *will* to come till the Holy Spirit persuades them to come. I think I hear some of my readers say, Well that reconciles those two texts, but it leaves all whose wills are not drawn to Christ to perish. Well this is certainly true, that none will ever

be saved but those whose wills he inclines or draws to Christ. If the salvation of men had been left to the will of men, Christ would have died in vain. All mankind are in open rebellion against God, and his throne would be guiltless if all were sent to hell. Suppose ten boys were put in prison for stealing, all equally guilty, and some kind man came and paid the owner for all the property five of them had stolen, took them out of prison, and by the power of persuasion made them good boys and useful men. Would the other five have any reason to say he had done them injustice? Certainly not. He had a right to do with his own as he pleased; he did not make their case any worse; they had brought their punishment on themselves; and they had no right even to demand of that man his reasons for leaving them.

Some people say, that to teach sinners their entire dependence on God for a new heart, tends to discourage all effort. Now the very reverse of this is true. Suppose a number of men are in a bar-room, drinking

and carousing. The cry of fire is raised outside, all the roof above their heads is in flames, and they must make their escape or perish.

Oh, says one of them, there is no need to be in a hurry, let us take another mint julep. But some one cries from without, Your door is locked. The bar-keeper replies, You need not fear; I have a key that will open the door at any time for you all to escape. The voice from without cries again, Your key will not fit the lock. The bar-keeper, as he hears the crackling flames above his head, flies to the door, tries the key, but all in vain; they are locked in, and *perish*.

So sinners, while they believe they can repent just when they please, and that there is no difficulty in the way of salvation, will remain at ease. But when they are taught that their whole being, body and soul, is at enmity with God, and they are so desperately wicked, that nothing but the almighty power of God can subdue them unto himself, they will immediately cry for deliverance.

I believe if we could convince all the peo-

ple of our land in one hour, that there was no salvation for them, that the next hour every soul would be so terror-stricken that reason would be dethroned. The fixed, firm belief of this doctrine in the minds of all men, would lead to the cry, What shall I do to be saved, by the whole world. When the writer was a boy, nothing else drove him to the throne of grace with the same earnestness as the dread of being among those whom God might in justice pass by. Reader, try to realize the fact, that you are to be among the lost, and I believe it will lead you to seek God's favour as you never did before. Seek and ye shall find, knock, and he will open unto you. His purpose is to save those that seek, and pass by those who do not. May God incline all that read this to seek till they find.

QUESTION XXXII

What benefits do they that are effectually called, partake of in this life?

A. They that are effectually called, do in this life partake of justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

Proofs.

1. *They that are effectually called are justified.*—Rom. viii. 30: Whom he called, them he also justified.

2. *They that are effectually called are adopted.*—Rom. viii. 14: For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

3. *They that are effectually called are sanctified.*—1 Cor. vi. 11; And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

4. *They that are effectually called partake of all the benefits which accompany or flow from these blessings.*—Rom. viii. 32: He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Exposition.

DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS, this answer points out to us the blessings that we receive with, or by, our effectual calling in this life.

Said John Newton to a gay friend, “I need not turn Deist to enjoy the best and the most that this life can afford.” Newton had a right to say this, and so he believed. He had, as he says, “experienced the good and the evil on both sides.” He had been a man of pleasure and of impiety, and knew how to estimate them. Thus he says to his friend, “If you were to send me an inventory of your pleasures, how charmingly your time runs on, and how dexterously it is divided between the coffee-house, play-house, the card-table, and tavern, with intervals of balls, and concerts, &c., I could answer that

most of these I have tried, and tried again, and know the utmost they can yield, and have seen enough of the rest most heartily to despise them all. You know all a life of pleasure can give, and I know it likewise."

So far they were equal. But Newton had found another experience, "in the pardon of his sins, communion with God, calm reliance on Divine Providence, with the cheering prospect of a better life, with the foretastes of heaven in his soul." Supposing that such pleasures would be despised, he adds, "Here lies the difference, my dear friend; you condemn that which you have never tried." This is a sufficient answer to every one who questions the superiority of religion over worldly pleasure.

There is perhaps no other way by which Satan deceives so many souls as by holding up the religion of Christ as a constant penance—a something that will destroy all the pleasures of this life. This is his plea especially with the young. The writer has given both as fair a trial as most others; and his expe-

rience is the same, in that respect, as John Newton's.

That religion requires the denial of all sinful pleasures we readily admit, but while it does that, it destroys the desire for them, and fills the soul with another class of pleasures, as high above them as the heavens are above the earth. Let not Satan deceive you by holding up religion before you in the habiliments of mourning. There is a pleasure in the service of God which this world can neither give nor take away. Who can be so happy as those who have provision made for two worlds; the promise of God for this world, that their bread shall be given and their water shall be sure; and in the world to come, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens? These are the benefits which God gives to those whom he effectually calls.

QUESTION XXXIII.

What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Proofs.

1. *Justification is an act of God's free grace.*—Rom. iii. 24: Being justified freely by his grace.

2. *In justification all our sins are pardoned.*—Acts x. 43: To him give all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

3. *In justification God accepts us as righteous, only on the ground of Christ's righteousness.*—2 Cor. v. 21: For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we

might be made the righteousness of God in him.

4. *In justification Christ's righteousness is imputed to us.*—Rom. v. 19: By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

5. *In justification we receive Christ's righteousness by faith alone.*—Rom. iii. 22: Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.

Exposition.

JUSTIFICATION is a law term borrowed from courts of justice among men. When a man is tried for any offence, and there is no evidence to convict him, he is openly justified. If a man is put in prison for debt, and appeals to court, and shows the debt has been paid, he is justified and released from prison. So God justifies us on the ground that Jesus Christ by his own death has paid all the demands of law and justice for us.

Justification is an act; it is completed instantly. In this act we are passive, but as

soon as our sins are pardoned, he accepts us as righteous in his sight. Some may be ready to ask if future sins will revoke the pardon. We say no. They may, and often do, provoke the Lord to withdraw from the soul the sense of the former pardon, but never the pardon itself, because "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

The holiness of Christ's human nature, the righteousness of his life, and satisfactory death on the cross in man's place, is the alone ground of our justification and acceptance with God. If Christ had not been free himself from all sin, he could not have satisfied the claims of God's law for us. But the holiness of his character, combined with his divine nature, enabled him to meet in full all the claims of God against us.

These blessings become ours by faith. Faith is the hand that receives and applies the righteousness of Christ by which we are justified.

We learn from this, that all pilgrimages and penances on the part of sinners are vain, and that all our own righteousness is but as filthy rags. This is one of the fundamental doctrines of our holy religion, and lies at the foundation of every orthodox creed. Luther climbed the stone stairs of St. Peter's at Rome on his bare knees, in vain, to obtain peace to his soul. The moment he saw that man was justified by faith in Christ alone, all was peace.

The venerated Dr. A. Alexander said in his last moments, "All my theology is now summed up in Christ crucified." Few men have ever been more entirely devoted to God's work than Harlan Page, and yet on his deathbed, when allusion was made to his great usefulness, he replied; I am nothing, and have done nothing; I am nothing but a poor sinner. I am a blank, and less than a blank. I hang on the merits of Christ. I have come short in everything. I have done wrong, and felt wrong,

and I cast myself alone on the blood and righteousness of Christ.”

“In vain we seek for peace with God,
By methods of our own.
Blest Saviour, nothing but thy blood,
Can bring us near the throne.”

QUESTION XXXIV.

What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

Proofs.

1. *Adoption is an act of God's free grace.*—Eph. i. 5. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

2. *By adoption we are received into the number of God's children.*—John i. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.

3. *By adoption we obtain a right to all the privileges of God's children.*—Rom. viii. 17

If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

Exposition.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS, this is the blessed privilege of all that are justified; they are taken into the family of God, as his children. 1 John iii. 1: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God."

There are two kinds of adoption noticed in the Bible, general and special. General adoption brings men into church relations by baptism; but special adoption translates the sinner, out of the family of hell and Satan, into the family of heaven, and household of God, and invests him with the privileges of the sons of God.

God's adoption differs entirely from the adoption of men. Men generally adopt but one into their family, and that one is chosen on account of some amiable qualities supposed to belong to the adopted one. But God adopts many of the most degraded into his family; a Mary Magdalene, a persecuting Saul, and

a miserable Lazarus, out of his own free unmerited love.

1. We learn from this answer, that adoption is an unmerited favour, whereby God receives into his family strangers, who are in a most wretched condition, without one redeeming trait in their characters, and confers on them all the blessings of children.

2. If I have been adopted into this noble family, it should be my daily aim to honour God in all that I do, so as not to bring reproach on my family connections.

Moses was adopted as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and by right of his adoption was taught in all the learning of the Egyptians, and entitled to all the honours of the royal family.

Queen Esther was the adopted daughter of her uncle Mordecai. Mrs. Susan Huntingdon, upon the loss of her mother, writes, "Oh to be adopted, taken into God's family, to have him exercise over us the endearing, the watchful attention and care of our omniscient and almighty Parent. But he promises

to be a father of those only, who disclaiming all other dependence, fly to him, through Christ, as their only hope; who feel the vanity of all human helpers; who love him with a filial and holy love, and who manifest their attachment to him by a hatred of sin, which he hates, and by the pursuit of holiness, which he loves”

Says John Newton, “I feel like a man that has no money in his pocket, but is allowed to draw for his wants upon one infinitely rich. I am therefore a beggar, and a rich man.” An adopted child of God in this world is like a poor boy, who has an immense estate ready as soon as he becomes of age. Reader, give yourself, soul and body, to Christ and he will make you one of this noble family.

QUESTION XXXV.

What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Proofs.

1. *Sanctification is the work of God's free grace.*—1 Tim. ii. 13: God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

2. *In sanctification, we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God.*—Col. iii. 10: And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

3. *In sanctification, we are enabled to die daily unto sin.*—Rom. vi. 6: Our old man is

crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

4. *In sanctification, we are enabled to live daily unto righteousness.*—2 Tim. ii. 21: If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

Exposition.

DEAR READER, the process of sanctification commences immediately after justification and adoption. They are acts of God in which the sinner is passive; in which he cannot take any part, any more than a dead man can, in bringing himself to life. But sanctification is a work in which we are co-workers with God. Phil. ii. 13: "For it is God which worketh in you, to will, and to do, of his good pleasure." Before regeneration a man is like an old mill, with all the machinery deranged and out of repair. Regeneration, justification, and adoption, renovate and repair it; and the free grace of

God drives the machinery, as the water or steam-power does the mill.

2 Cor. iv. 16 : "For which cause we faint not ; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." This work of sanctification is a daily work, carried on within us by the providence and grace of God. Sanctify, means to cleanse or purify. Justification changes a man's state ; sanctification his heart and life. Justification is effected by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us ; sanctification by the implantation of his grace in us. The former is perfect at once, the latter is gradual, and not complete until death. The instrument of sanctification is the word of God. "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." The truth of God reproves and rebukes us for our sins. The word of God is our schoolmaster to teach us, and correct our faults. God often uses afflictions as a means of sanctification. David says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I learned thy law." God often baffles our

plans and purposes, to cure our sinful propensities, to promote sanctification. The answer says we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God. Before we are renewed we bear the image of the first Adam : after we are renewed, we bear the image of the second Adam, "being sanctified in Christ Jesus." The evidence of sanctification, consists in a heart-felt regard for all God's commandments, and a sincere love for them, because they are holy ; a hatred to all sin, and a constant desire to abstain from all appearance of evil ; a delight in doing good for the honour of God, with an earnest spirit of prayer.

A boy made some frivolous excuse to stay at home one Sabbath day from church, that he might go out into the woods to trap part-ridges. He was in such a hurry that he started before his mother had gone to church, and on her way she discovered him setting his traps. She drove him home before her, and whipped him very severely, and made him go to church with his old clothes on.

This cured him effectually from sporting on the Sabbath-day. That whipping was sanctified to him, and corrected his sinful desires.

Another boy had a very kind, indulgent mother, who was a widow. He was so disobedient to her that she died with a broken heart; her last words were, "Tommy, you have broken my heart." These awful words rung in his ears like seven thunders, till he was brought to sincere repentance for his sins. They were sanctified to his good, by God's Spirit and grace. God in promoting our sanctification uses various means, always suiting them to our disposition and character.

Reader, go to Christ by faith, and touch the hem of his garment for healing and purification; make a wise and proper use of his word and ordinances, and he will bless them to your final sanctification from all sin, and by them fit you for heaven.

QUESTION XXXVI.

What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A. The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Proofs.

1. *Believers in this life have assurance of God's love.*—Rom. v. 5: The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

2. *Believers in this life have peace of conscience.*—Rom. v. 1: Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. *Believers in this life have joy in the Holy Ghost.*—Rom. xiv. 17: The kingdom of God

is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

4. *Believers in this life grow in grace.*—Prov. iv. 18: The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

5. *Believers persevere in grace to the end of their lives.* 1 Cor. i. 8: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Exposition.

THIS question and answer points out minutely the blessings of redemption secured to believers in this life till it closes.

Rom. v. 5: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." This is the first link in the chain of blessings enumerated in this answer; the assurance of God's love. The promises of God are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Infallibly sure and certain as the oath and promise of God can make them.

Rom. v. 1: "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the second link in the chain, peace of conscience. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." It is utterly impossible for those who are God's enemies to have peace of conscience. They may conceal their trouble and anxiety from others; but when they do wrong their peace is broken. But the true child of God has an inward peace to which the man of the world is an entire stranger. There is a secret fountain in his soul springing up to calm his spirit. 1 Pet. i. 8: "In whom though ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." This third link we possess through the Holy Ghost, which dwells with us, and works in us this secret joy and peace. Prov. iv. 18: "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The fourth blessing is growth in grace. Every thing comes to maturity by growth. The acorn produces the oak, the infant the

full grown man, and the new born soul grows into the glorified saint. The progress depends on the kind of food and culture.

Man in his unregenerate state is like a dark body; the grace of God puts light into his soul, and the more oil and trimming it gets the better it shines. The perfect day of shining will not come till this mortal has put on immortality, and death is swallowed up in victory.

Jer. xxxii. 40: "I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." This is the fifth and last link in this chain of blessings. Through the constant supplies we receive of God's grace we are enabled to persevere. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. God must guide us to make us safe. He has promised that his grace shall be sufficient for us, and none shall ever be able to pluck us out of his hand. Our bread shall be given and our water shall be sure. David says, "I have been young and now I am old, yet never have I seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

The following fact will illustrate this whole subject. About thirty years ago in the city of P—— a merchant on his way to his store met a policeman leading a poor little ragged boy to prison. He inquired why he was taking such a little boy to prison. The reply was, "He has stolen a roll of butter, and a chicken." The little boy was crying bitterly. Said the gentleman, "I will take charge of the boy, and pay for the butter and chicken, and see if I cannot do something better for him than to put him in jail." He was a poor little orphan, without any one to take care of him or teach him better.

The gentleman paid for what he had stolen, adopted him as his son, gave him a new suit in place of his old rags, educated him to industry, and he grew up to be a useful man.

This illustrates justification, adoption, and sanctification. He paid for the injury done, became responsible for the boy as his father. That was justification. He took him before the court, and by process of the law made him his son. That was adoption. He washed

and clothed him, and educated him, and by his example impressed his image upon him. That was sanctification. The claims of law were met, and the boy saved.

Dr. Nettleton once fell in company with two men who were disputing on the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints. One of them said, "I believe this doctrine has been the means of filling hell with Christians."

"Sir," said Dr. N.; "do you believe God knows all things?"

"Certainly I do," said he.

"How, then, do you interpret this text, I never knew you?"

After reflecting a moment he replied,

"The meaning must be, I never knew them as Christians."

"Is that the meaning?" said Dr. N.

"Yes, it must be," he replied, "for certainly he knows all things."

"Well," said Dr. N., "I presume you are right."

Now, this is what the Saviour will say to

those who at the last day shall say, Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence, and prophesied in thy name? Now when Saul and Judas, Hymeneus, Philetus, and Demas, who you suppose have fallen from grace, shall say to Christ, Lord, Lord; and he shall say, I never knew you as Christians, "where, then, are the Christians that are going to hell?"

Some years ago the writer had a neighbour who was a minister. He was frequently bantering me about our doctrines of election and perseverance. This man had been one of a number who had held a meeting night and day, in a neighbouring village, at which time there were near four hundred conversions reported, and in six months all went back to the world. Said I, "Brother C., do you believe that all whom you reported at G. last year, were really converted?"

"Yes," said he. "I never saw sounder conversions in my life."

"Do you think if they had all died then they would have gone directly to heaven?"

“Yes,” said he, “I have no doubt of that.”

“Well,” said I, “I am credibly informed that they have all backslidden.”

“Well,” said he, “I never did know of such a universal going back to the world in my life.”

Said I, “Brother C., go buy a good tomahawk, and go back and convert them all over again, and as soon as you get one through, knock him in the head, and send him to heaven; for in this case the end will justify the means.”

He never alluded to those doctrines in my presence again.

QUESTION XXXVII.

What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Proofs.

1. *At death the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness.*—1 John iii. 2: We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

2. *At death the souls of believers pass immediately into glory.*—Luke xxiii. 43: And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

3. *In death the bodies of believers continue united to Christ.*—1 Thes. iv. 14: For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

4. *The bodies of believers rest in their graves till the resurrection.*—Psalm xvi. 9: My flesh also shall rest in hope. John v. 28, 29: For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth.

Exposition.

THE answer to this question shows us that at death the saints are for ever released from all sin and sorrow, restored to the moral likeness of God, and pass into a state of perfect holiness and happiness, that will run parallel with eternity.

We learn from the proof texts, the utter fallacy of believing in any such place as purgatory, or any place where the souls of men exist after death, except heaven or hell. The day of death is the day of judgment to the soul of every one of us, and our doom will be as certainly fixed, the moment we die, as it will be on the last day. On the judgment day when body and soul are re-united, there will be a publication made to the assembled world, of what had been done

in a more private way at the moment of death.

Death is called the king of terrors, and the terror of kings; but who that has received the grace of God into his heart, would live always in this world of sin, trial and temptation? To run an eternal round of cares and anxieties, such as mankind generally have, would be intolerable to think of. It is better to depart and be with Christ, where there will be an eternal cessation from all sin and sorrow. It is true, most persons, however holy they may be, when in health are afraid to die, and some are all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death. But with few exceptions, (and those arise from the nature of the disease with which they die,) those who have been truly pious in life, have peace in death. The writer has witnessed many a death-bed, when he almost envied the dying. Mrs. F. was one of those who had the most distressing fears of death of any person I ever knew. She was subject to sudden attacks of sickness, and she would say, "Oh, I

cannot be a child of God, or I would not be so much afraid to die." I knew her manner of life, that she had been for many years a pious, praying woman. I often told her that when she came to die, she would receive dying grace. The last night of her life, I sat all night at her bedside. About midnight she said to me, "I now realize all you have told me in past time. All fear of death is gone, Jesus is with me; I see heaven in all its glory." Her countenance became radiant, and for eight hours she praised God, and then died with a smile on her face.

Mrs. B. died at ninety-eight years of age, having been a member of the Presbyterian church eighty-six years. For six months before her death, almost every day she would break out in raptures, and say, O how those angels sing! and she would immediately utter the most heavenly strains of praise I ever heard. She died in this triumphant frame. A few days before the Rev. Dr. Payson died he wrote to his sister as follows, "Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date

this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The celestial city is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me, its breezes fan me, its odours are wafted to me, its sounds strike upon my ears, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God shall give me permission. The sun of righteousness has been gradually drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter, as he approaches, and now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun. . . . A single heart and a single tongue seem altogether inadequate to my wants; I want a whole heart for every separate emotion, and a whole tongue to express that emotion." This is glory begun on earth.

Take an illustration on the other side. A young man of fine talents died at the age of twenty years. I witnessed the awful

scene. I went to the house late in the evening to help take care of him through the night. He was dying when I went in. His oaths and blasphemies sent cold chills to my heart. His constant cry was, "Drive away those devils, they are dragging my soul down to hell, oh drive them away." His teeth were gnashing, and every feature distorted with despair; it took four men to hold him for a time. His groans were unearthly. Years have passed away, but I almost tremble as I write about it. May God grant the reader and writer the death of the righteous.

QUESTION XXXVIII.

What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?

A. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity

Proofs.

1. *At the resurrection believers shall be raised up in glory.*—1 Cor. xv. 42–44: So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

2. *In the last judgment, believers shall be openly acknowledged.*—Matt. x. 32: Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I

confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

3. *In the last judgment believers shall be openly acquitted.*—Matt. xxv. 34 : Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

4. *Believers shall be perfectly blessed in fully enjoying God to all eternity.*—Psalm xvi. 11 : Thou wilt show me the path of life ; in thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Exposition.

WE have now come to the point where all the promised blessings of God's covenant are to be bestowed on his redeemed people. The coronation day, when all the unnumbered millions will rise out of their graves, and the scattered dust that once formed their bodies will be brought together, and be reanimated, and enter upon a life that will never end. "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory."

Burying the dead is like sowing seed in the ground; the body we sow is corruptible; nothing is more loathsome than a dead, putrid human body; it is cast into the grave as a useless broken vessel. As the putrified grain brings forth the beautiful living stalk, so the putrified body we bury in the grave, will rise a beautiful glorified body like unto Christ's resurrection body.

Luke xii. 8: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess, before the angels of God." The righteous shall be openly acknowledged before God and angels. In the day of judgment, he will present them before his Father's throne as the trophies of his victory over earth and hell. They will be acquitted from all the claims of divine law on the ground of the atonement Christ made for them on Calvary's cross.

1 Cor. ii. 9: Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. The human mind is not capable of conceiving the infinite blessedness

that Christ will confer on his blood-bought people.

To be certain of everlasting freedom from all care, pain, and anxiety, to be filled with the love of God in Christ Jesus, are things we are entirely incapable of comprehending. We are so accustomed to sorrow and disappointment in this world, that we cannot imagine any place free from it. Oh for faith to realize something of it: 1 Thess. iv. 17: "So shall we ever be with the Lord." Here our homes and possessions are only held for a few years at most, and our best friends soon leave us, or we leave them; but then our best friends will be for ever with us, and all our dear, loved ones on earth who loved Christ.

Reader, what is your hope of being there among that glorified throng? Are you now united to Christ by faith? is his service now, your chief delight? is one day in his courts here better than a thousand spent in the pursuit of the world? If so, on the day of judgment you will enter the house not made with hands, and be for ever with the Lord.

A man of infidel sentiments once travelling in a stage-coach, had indulged in a strain which betrayed licentiousness and deep depravity. He seemed hurt that no one agreed or disputed with him. "Well," he exclaimed, as a funeral procession slowly passed the coach, "there is an end of all." "No," replied one opposite him, "no, for after death, the judgment."

These words produced a good effect at the time, for they silenced the speaker. Perhaps they were by God's grace the means of his salvation.

Lord Henry Otto, a follower of John Huss, having received sentence of condemnation from his popish judges, said, "Kill my body, disperse my members whither you please; yet I do believe that my Saviour will gather them together again, and clothe them with skin, so that with these eyes I shall see him, with these ears I shall hear him, with this tongue I shall praise him, and rejoice with this heart for ever." As he was going to the scaffold, he said to the minister, "I am sure that Christ

will meet my soul with his angels ; this death I know shall not separate me from him." After he had prayed silently, he said, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit ; have pity on me through Jesus Christ, and let me see thy glory ;" and so he received the stroke of the sword.

A free thinker once said to R. Gahita, "Ye fools, who believe in a resurrection, don't you see the living die ? How can ye believe that the dead shall live ?" "Silly man," replied Gahita, "thou believest in creation. Well, then, if what never before existed, now exists, why may not that which once existed, exist again ?"

We have now passed over that part of our excellent catechism which treats of our duty to God, and the rewards God has promised to them that strive to render obedience to his commands. Dear reader, how have you discharged your duties ? how do matters stand between God and your soul ? If called to die to-day, what are your prospects for a happy death and a glorious resurrection ?

Examine the ground of your hopes, and see that you are built on a sure foundation; as the rains will descend, and the wind will blow, and the floods will rise, and sweep away all that are not built on Jesus Christ, the true foundation stone.

PART II.

THE DUTIES WHICH GOD REQUIRES OF MAN.

QUESTION XXXIX.

What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man is, obedience to his revealed will.

Proofs.

Man is bound to perform the whole revealed will of God.—Eccles. xii. 13. Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.

Exposition.

THIS answer points out man's duty to God in general, and refers him to the revealed will of God for more special direction.

It teaches us that we should make the law

of God the constant rule of our lives. In all our dealings with our fellow men to act honestly, as in the sight of God, not because honesty is the best policy, but out of regard and love to his holy name. James ii. 10 : “ Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.” This does not mean that the man who breaks but one commandment, is equally guilty with the man who breaks all the commandments. For another Scripture says, he that knows his master’s will, and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, while he that knows not his master’s will, shall be beaten with few stripes. It simply implies that the least breach of the law involves the soul in guilt, and exposes it to the curse of God. So all are guilty, as no man liveth and sinneth not. Matt. xxii. 37 : “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

From this text we learn that the obedience required is perfect and perpetual obedience, not only in our outward conduct but in

our thoughts and desires. Our whole being must be in entire subjection to the will of God, cheerfully and constantly.

Micah vi. 8: He hath showed thee, oh man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

That is, he hath taught thee in his word what he requires of thee, in relation to himself, and to thy fellow men, and the directions are so plain that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

We learn from this that we are not at liberty to do our own will, but the will of God, and that we should earnestly study the Bible to know what that will is, both in precept and obedience.

As Mrs. Judson one day was reading our Saviour's sermon on the Mount with a Burman convert, he was deeply impressed and unusually solemn. "These words," said he, "take hold of my very heart, they make me tremble. Here God commands us to do everything that is good in secret, not to be

seen of men. How unlike our religion is this! When Burmans make offerings to the pagodas they make a great noise with drums and musical instruments that others may see how good they are. But this religion makes the mind fear God; it makes it of its own accord fear sin." Some one has said, "We must take up all duties in point of performance, and lay them down in point of dependence. Duty can never have too much of our diligence, nor too little of our confidence." Reader, scan with a jealous eye the motive that prompts to every duty; for God shall bring all our motives, as well as our actions, into judgment.

QUESTION XL.

What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

Proofs.

1. *Man's first rule of obedience was the moral law.*—Rom. ii. 15: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts.

2. *The moral law is of universal and unchangeable obligation.*—Matt. v. 18: Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Exposition.

THE moral law as embraced in the ten commandments was the first written law that God gave to man.

God's law was impressed on man's heart at his creation, and was not entirely erased at his fall, as to its general principles. "For the Gentiles which have not the law (that is the written law) do by nature the things contained in the law." All idolatrous worship is the result of these general principles which remain.

The law of God is natural and positive. The natural law is a necessary, unalterable rule of right, vestiges of which are to be found among the most barbarous nations. God's positive laws are embraced in the ten commandments, or at least they can be all fairly deduced from them. This is proved from Rom. ii. 15: "Which show the work of the law written in their hearts." This was the rule given to man in the constitution of his nature. Gal. iii. 19: Wherefore then serveth the law (the ceremonial law)? It was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.

This was the second rule for direction which

God gave to his church, and was only temporary, and acted the part of a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. It did not annul the moral law, nor the law written in the constitution of man's nature. When Christ came he set aside the ceremonial law, "for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof." But the moral law remains in full force, and will so remain till the end of time, and after death its penalties will be inflicted to all eternity on the finally impenitent.

Matt. v. 18: Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. This proves this law to be universal and unchangeable; all are bound to obey it, ruler and ruled, king and subject.

This is the law that gives conscience its power over men, and there is nothing I admire so much as a tender conscience. I admire that young man who cried out when his axe slipped off the helve and fell into the water, Alas! master, for it was borrowed. No wonder the prophet made it swim. And

Paul, who said, If eating meat will make my weak brother to offend I will eat no meat while the world stands. So far as Paul himself was concerned it made no difference how his beef was prepared, but he would not do anything, though lawful, that would injure others.

“The consciences of some men are like the stomach of the ostrich which can digest iron. They can swallow and concoct the most notorious sins without regret. But a good conscience is the most tender thing in the world; it feels the touch of known sin, and grieves at the grieving of God’s good Spirit.”

Some may call it cowardice to be afraid to break God’s law, but I call it true courage, real heroism. Many of you have heard of the boy Ivison near Chicago, Illinois, who suffered death rather than break God’s law. I thank God that good men raised a monument to commemorate, and hand down his heroism to future generations. Reader, when urged to violate this law of God, say *no*,

with an emphasis; do not tamper with it, or try to bend it to your evil inclinations; but make every desire of your heart bend to it; for in keeping it there is a great reward.

QUESTIONS XLI., XLII.

Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

What is the sum of the ten commandments?

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Proofs.

1. *The first part of the moral law is to love God supremely.*—Matt. xxii. 37, 38: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

2. *The second part of the moral law is to love our neighbour as ourselves.*—Matt. xxii. 39, 40: The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On

these two commandments háng all the law and the prophets.

Exposition.

THE ten commandments contain a brief outline of all the duties we owe to God and man. All the rules for the government of our lives, that are more fully detailed in the Scriptures, are either expressed or implied in these commandments. The Bible may be regarded as an exposition or commentary on the moral law, illustrated by facts, showing God's strict adherence to this law in all his dealings with men, rewarding the obedient, and punishing the disobedient. The moral law, summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, is like an index board to a traveller in a strange country; it points out the main road by which he is to pursue his journey. The Scriptures at large are like the guide book, with which that traveller is furnished; they explain in full the nature of the country through which he is passing, the dangers to which he is exposed, and the course he must pursue. Both the wisdom

and the goodness of God are manifested in giving us his law in so condensed a form, that the most feeble mind can commit it to memory in a few hours, and thus have it ready for use at all times.

The moral law as comprehended in the ten commandments is again summed up by our Saviour himself, in two points, as stated in the answer to the 42d question, viz., to love God supremely, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Our first duty is to God, whom we are to love with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. God has a just right to our first and highest affections on the ground that he is our maker. All we have, and are, is given to us by God as a free gift, and to withhold our affections from him is robbing God of his right to us as our Creator, and this obligation is increased a thousand fold by his giving his Son to die in our place. Oh, the base ingratitude of those who refuse to love

God! Mat. xxii. 39: "The second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Love to our neighbour should flow from love to God as the only proper fountain, and principle of it.

Thus our whole duty is embraced in the proper exercise of love, and this must centre on God, radiate from that to our fellow men, so as to lead us to do unto them as we would that they should do unto us, if our positions were reversed. What a wonderful law this is! If its principles were carried out into practice by all men, it would close every court-house, empty every prison, and remove the necessity for locks and bolts, all the world over. It would remove one half of all the sorrow and trouble of the world, double man's days on earth, and elevate the whole race, as far above their present condition, as the king is above the poor peasant.

There once lived a boy in Chester, named William Tyrrel. He was a rosy-cheeked, brave little fellow, and a great favourite with

all the neighbours. One night as the family were all sitting round a bright fire, Mr. Tyrrel said, "Children, what makes you most happy?" Some answered one thing, and some another, but William looked up and said, "Father, I think I am happiest when I can make other people happy." "Right, right, my son," said Mr. Tyrrel. "Stick to that all your life, and you will be a happy man. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, it is more blessed to give than to receive." Dr. Doddridge asked his little girl one day why it was that every body loved her. "I don't know," she replied, "except that I love every body." Love begets love. If no body loves you it is your own fault.

During one of the wars in Germany a party was sent out foraging. They came to a cottage where lived an old man. The officer said to the old man, "Show me a barley field, as I must have grain." The old man led the way; presently they came to a field where the men set to work. "Stop," says the aged saint, "this is not mine." He led them a little farther,

and pointed to a small field ; “ That is mine ; supply your wants.” The grain was taken without reward. This is a beautiful illustration of neighbourly love.

Cromwell said one day to his chaplain, the Rev. John Howe, “ You have asked favours for every body but yourself.” “ My turn, my Lord Protector, is always come when I can serve another.”

The spirit of love indicated in this law is one of the purest sources of happiness that man can enjoy on earth. Nothing else makes us so much like Christ, “ who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, and despised the shame,” for us.

QUESTIONS XLIII., XLIV.

What is the preface to the ten commandments ?

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us ?

A. The preface to the ten commandments teacheth us, that because God is the Lord, and our God and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

Proofs.

1. *God is the Lord, and our God.*—Psalm xlviii. 14 : This God is our God for ever and ever.

2. *God is the Lord, and our Redeemer.*—Isaiah lxiii. 16 : Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, thy name is from everlasting.

3. *Because the Lord is our God and Redeemer, we are bound to keep all his commandments.*—1 Cor. vi. 20 : Ye are bought with a

price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Exposition.

A PREFACE is an introduction to a discourse or book, setting forth the design of the author in writing it. Here it means the introduction of God, the great Lawgiver, to this law of the ten commandments, given to men for the government of their conduct. "I am the Lord." In these words God asserts his authority to make laws for the government of his creatures. Because he is the Lord all obedience and subjection are due to him. He has a right to the sole worship which is enjoined in the first four of these commandments, and to obedience to the other six, out of pure love and reverence for him. He is "the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." His claim to our devotion and obedience is therefore above all other claims, and to refuse him our worship and service, is to rob him of his rights.

This God is *our* God. "I am the Lord thy God." Here is a second reason to oblige

and persuade us to keep all his commandments. He was the God of the Israelites, inasmuch as he had separated them from among all the nations of the earth, had chosen them to be his peculiar people, and had brought them into covenant relations with himself. And the same reason enforces obedience on us. "This God is our God for ever and ever." He has taken us into covenant, has brought us into a special relation to himself, and thereby laid us under obligation to do him service. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and keep his charge and statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments alway."

This consideration that the Lord is our God, is not only a reason for obedience, but also an incentive to confidence. He is our God, and therefore will provide for us. The widow of a pious minister was weeping bitterly over her lonely and desolate condition, one day, when her little son approached her with tears in his eyes, and said, "Dear mother, is God dead?" In a moment her tears

were dried; she clasped her dear boy in her arms, and said, "No, no, my son, God is not dead; he lives, and has promised to be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow." Yes, blessed be God, "he is our God for ever and ever."

A third reason enforcing obedience, is given in the preface to the ten commandments, "which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." All men are bound to obey God because he is the Lord their Creator. But the Israelites were under additional obligation to obedience because he was their Redeemer. They were slaves in Egypt, and subject to the most cruel treatment from their task masters. The Lord their God delivered them out of this bondage. Gratitude therefore required that they should bestow upon him the love and obedience of their hearts and lives. And, my dear children, this reason applies with increased force to us. Our state by nature, is one of slavery to the Devil, and our own vile lusts, from which we can never free ourselves.

God in his infinite love has provided a great deliverance for us. We are therefore bound to obey him. We are bought with a price; therefore we should glorify God in our bodies, and in our spirits, which are his. "Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer." Because he has redeemed us, as a father rescues his children from danger, we should show our gratitude by keeping his commandments. As he bought us, he has the right to use us for his own glory. The answer says we are bound to keep all his commandments. That is, the highest possible obligation rests on us to obey him. We are bound by every dictate of reason, of gratitude, and of honour, to love God, and obey his commandments to all eternity. And this obedience is a personal, an individual obedience. You will notice that each commandment is addressed, not to men in the mass, but to each individual soul. The language is, "Thou shalt," &c. To this there is no exception. We each must obey for ourselves; for "every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

My young friends, we cannot overestimate the benefits that arise from a correct knowledge of God's word. Our minds should be so well stored with it, that whatever emergency we may have to meet, we may be able to call up some precept or promise that will impart strength. We should never misapply or trifle with its blessed truths; for to do so is trifling with God himself; and we can scarcely imagine any sin of greater magnitude than to trifle with the infinite God. Dear children, he is the Lord, your God, and your Redeemer. Render him therefore the obedience of your lives, and the homage of your hearts. Forget not his commandments; hide his word in your hearts, that you may not sin against him.

QUESTION XLV.

Which is the first commandment ?

A. The first commandment is, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*

Exposition.

THIS law which we are now about to explain and illustrate, is one of the most wonderful laws known to man, and with a view to impress man with its vast importance, God gave it to him under the most awful circumstances. You have heard of that wonderful mountain in Italy, called Vesuvius, which sometimes pours out red hot lava, over the country for miles, with a noise louder than all the thunders you ever heard, while smoke rises above the clouds and darkens the light of the sun. Would you not fear and tremble to behold such a sight? And suppose that

above all this roaring of fire, a voice should be heard, "*I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*" Would you not listen with the most intense interest to every word that voice would utter? And if that awful voice went on to proclaim a law, by which all your conduct should be regulated, and closed it with the declaration, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them; would you not be very careful to keep the law? Well, this law was delivered to Moses under circumstances more awful than those we have supposed. It was not only uttered by the voice of God, but it was written by the finger of God on two tables of stone, so that the Israelites might never forget it. This same law we have now in our Bible, recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus.

This law is divided into ten commandments; the first four containing our duty to God, and the other six our duty to man. Short as these commandments are, every duty we owe to

God or man is either taught or implied in them. None but a God of infinite wisdom could have given such a just and righteous law in so little compass.

The first precept of this law is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

There cannot possibly be any other God than the one who gave this law, for the simple reason, that he fills every place in heaven and earth at the same time, so that there is no room left for any other God. When God gave this law to Moses on Mount Sinai, he was present everywhere else, as well as there. The Psalmist says, "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." A pious mother was once talking to her little daughter about God being everywhere, and seeing and knowing all things. The little girl replied, "Why, mother, God must be all eyes." I want you to remember that although

God is so great, and fills all space at the same time, still he can dwell in your heart and mine. This is the God who tells us we must have no other gods before him, and surely he has a right to the highest devotion of our hearts. God teaches us the same truth in many other places in the Bible. "Thou shalt know no god but me." "Thou art God, even thou alone." "This God is our God for ever and ever." "I will extol thee, my God, O King, and I will bless thy name for ever and ever."

Now after God has given this commandment in such positive terms, and enforced the same idea in so many other places in the Bible, surely it is a great offence to him for us to have any other gods that we serve more than him. I am afraid many people have other gods without knowing it. What do you love most? Think over all you have, and love, before you answer the question, and then remember that whatever you love most is your god. Some love money more than any thing; that is their god. Some love their fathers and mothers, wives and

children, brothers and sisters, more than their Creator; those are their gods. Some even love horses and dogs, fine clothes, and elegant furniture, more than their Maker. All such break this commandment; for God has said, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. There is one easy way to know what we love most, and that is by ascertaining in what we find the most pleasure.

Those who really love God more than they do any thing else, will not neglect the worship and service of God for any thing else; and all those who give more attention to any thing else than they do to God's service, love that thing, whatever it may be, more than God.

When we see any person or thing we love very much, it is well for us to think of this command, and inquire, Do I love this more than God my Maker? and then to think what God has told us by the apostle, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." A three cent piece put

over the sight of the eye will shut out the light of the sun; so to love any one thing, however small it may be, more than we love God, will shut him out of our hearts.

A good man some years ago took a poor ragged boy that was suffering from cold and hunger into his house; he fed him and clothed him for a while, and did all he could to make him a respectable and useful man; but all was in vain. He associated with bad boys and men, and got some of them to join him, and robbed this good man's house, and escaped. Did not such a boy deserve to be put in a dungeon for life? Now, my dear reader, all this and more God has done for you. He has clothed and fed you all your life, and if you are an unconverted sinner still, you have loved and served other gods, and robbed him of his right to your love and service, and you are no better in God's sight to-day, than that ungrateful boy is in your sight. But those who will not love and serve God here, will have nothing to love in the other world. In hell all will hate each other.

There is no attraction there ; all is repulsion. Devils hate God and each other. All the wicked in hell will hate each other, and none so much as those who were their companions in wickedness here. This will greatly aggravate the torments of those who are finally lost.

QUESTION XLVI.

What is required in the first commandment ?

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Proofs.

1. *We are required to know and acknowledge God as the only true God.*—Hosea xiii. 4: Thou shalt know no God but me.

2. *We are required to acknowledge the true God as our God.*—Psalm xlvi. 14: This God is our God for ever and ever.

3. *We are required to worship and glorify God as the true God, and our God.*—Psalm cxlv. 1: I will extol thee, my God, O King; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever.

Exposition.

THIS answer teaches us that God requires us to know him, and that ignorance of God is sin; and we may add, disgrace also. Job xxii. 21: "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace." The way we become acquainted with God, is by storing our minds with his word. Every time we read or hear God's word, we are in communication with him.

Collins, the celebrated English infidel, once meeting a plain-looking countryman on his way to church, inquired where he was going. "To church, sir." "What to do there?" "To worship God?" "Pray tell me, is your God a great or a little God?" "He is so great, sir, that the heavens can not contain him, and so small that he can dwell in my heart." Collins afterwards said that this simple but sublime answer had more effect on his skeptical mind than all the volumes he ever read.

"Sir," said a lady to the Rev. W. Romaine. "I like the doctrine you preach, and I think

I can give up every thing but cards, sir.”
“You think you cannot give up cards?”
“No, sir, I could not.” “Then, madam, they are your god, and you must look to them for salvation.” This pointed reply was said to lead to her conversion. The young man who came to Christ to know what he must do to be saved, had his god in his large possessions.

About fifteen years ago in the time of a great revival in the city of L., a German infidel of extensive learning, who had to fly from his native land for inciting to rebellion against the government, came into the church out of mere curiosity. He listened to the sermon with manifest attention, and continued to attend the meetings night and day. His distress became almost overwhelming. This continued till we began to fear he might destroy himself. Late one night as we parted, we desired him to examine carefully whether there was not some idol in his heart he was not willing to part with. At day-break, he came to the pastor's door and

knocked. The pastor rose and let him in. Said he, "There is but one thing I can think of as coming in the way between Christ and me. Here is a box of jewelry, which my mother and sisters took from their persons the night I fled from Germany in servants' clothes; take them, sell them and give it to the poor." The pastor said, "You are not far from the kingdom; let us kneel down and pray." They knelt, and in a few moments he threw his arms around the minister and said, "Ah, Mr. N., I have found Jesus." This man has been preaching in foreign lands for more than seven years. The minister handed him back his box of jewels, and told him the Lord did not need them, but all the Lord required was that feeling of heart that would enable him cheerfully to part with them. This is the point to which all must come, that are seeking Christ. He will not have any rival in our hearts. We must be willing to give up all for him; then our peace will flow like a river: we exchange our base metal for diamonds, our worldly aspirations

for those that are heavenly. Reader, let nothing come between you and Christ, give him your whole heart, and he will give you himself here, and heaven hereafter.

QUESTION XLVII.

What is forbidden in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God, and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due to him alone.

Proofs.

1. *We are forbidden to deny God.*—Jude 4. Ungodly men turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. *We are forbidden to neglect worshipping and glorifying God as the true God and our God.*—Rom. i. 21: When they knew God, they glorified him not as God.

3. *We are forbidden to give the worship and glory due to God unto any other.*—Deut. viii. 19: And it shall be if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify

against you this day, that ye shall surely perish.

Exposition.

THIS answer tells us what we are not to do on the authority of God's word. And if we do what is forbidden we will certainly incur God's displeasure both here and hereafter. Psal. xiv. 1 : "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." This text expressly forbids the denial of God's existence. Truly none but fools will do that. The world, with day and night, men and beasts, trees and plants and flowers, as well as the sun, moon, and stars, all proclaim in unmistakable tones, "God made us." Isa. xliii. 22 : "But thou hast been weary of me, O Israel." We must not neglect to worship God, and glorify him as God. If we do, we violate this commandment, and neglect to do what we are bidden. Rom. i. 25 : "Who change the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, amen." We are not to give the worship and glory due to God to any other. To deny that

God exists is atheism. To worship more gods than one, is polytheism, or idolatry. For any thing to occupy our affection more than God, is expressly forbidden. Whether it be husbands or wives, children or parents, houses, lands, or amusements, all must yield to God's claims for our highest affections.

We learn from this the high claims God has upon us, for time, talents, love and affections, and that he has infinite resources to meet all our wants to the full ; that the glory and honour of God should be our constant aim, and that in keeping his commandments there is great reward.

QUESTION XLVIII.

What are we specially taught by these words, "before me," in the first commandment?

A. These words "*before me*" in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeas'd with the sin of having any other god.

Proofs.

1. *God seeth all things.*—Prov. xv. 3: The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

2. *God takes notice of the sin of having any other god.*—Psalm xlv. 20, 21: If we have forgotten the name of our God or stretched out our hands to a strange god, shall not God search this out? for he knoweth the secrets of the heart.

3. *God is much displeas'd with the sin of having any other god.*—Deut. xxxii. 16: They provok'd him to jealousy with strange gods.

Exposition.

THIS answer teacheth us the heinousness in God's sight of our rendering worship or homage to any thing more than to God, or making him secondary in our affections.

Dear reader, how thankful you and I should be that we have not been taught in childhood to worship idols. A traveller in India, states that one morning about sunrise he came to where two roads crossed each other, and as is usual there at cross roads he found a hideous-looking idol god. While looking at it, a mother came with an infant a few days old in her arms. She took little bits of bread in her mouth and chewed it, then she put it into the mouth of the idol and muttered some prayer, and then put the bread in the infant's mouth. This was done almost daily; and as the child grew up, it was taught to believe that it was indebted to that particular god for its life and all its blessings. What a lesson for Christian parents.

A missionary was once standing near the temple of a cruel goddess, when a father led his

little son to the bloody altar for sacrifice. The little fellow was much alarmed at the crowd of worshippers, and the beating of drums, while the people were bowing frantically before the goddess. He cried out, "Do, father, save me from these cruel people." But no, his father brought him there to consecrate him to the goddess, and to do this he put into the boy's hand a piece of silver. This the boy handed to the priest; and then the father gave the priest two sharp pieces of iron, which the priest sprinkled with the holy water of the river Ganges, and returned to the goddess. They were then handed to a cruel-looking man who plunged them into the boy's side. The boy shrieked and clung to his father. The drums were beat, and the crowd raised their shouts to drown his voice, while he was led away bleeding. Thus that father consecrated his boy to the goddess. This is the way many do where they have no knowledge of the true God.

Rev. Dr. Witherspoon was once on board a ship with a professed atheist, who was

trying to make a mock of religion. By and by there came up a terrible storm, and the prospect was that all would be drowned. There was much consternation on board, but no one was so much frightened as the atheist. He sought after the doctor, and found him calm and collected in his cabin. "O! doctor, we are all going; don't you think we are?" The doctor turned to him with a solemn look, and replied in broad Scotch, "Nae doot, nae doot, man, we're a' ganging; but you and I dinna gang the same way." The man was speechless. Then the doctor set before him the sin and folly of his unbelief.

Men may sail on smooth water without a God, but in time of shipwreck, they feel there is a God, whose name they have dishonoured, and whose presence they dread. Reader, make God your friend, and be ready; for there is a storm coming, that will wreck your soul, if unprepared for it.

QUESTION XLIX.

Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.*

Exposition.

DEAR CHILDREN, you know the first commandment forbids you to worship false gods; this second commandment forbids you to worship the true God in a false manner. No one ever saw God; hence we cannot make anything to represent him. Suppose some one should undertake to make a picture of you, and instead of its resembling you it

should be an ugly, deformed object that you could not bear to look at, would not you be very angry? And is not this great God, who made the universe, offended when men try to make an image of him out of wood or stone, or to paint a likeness of him on paper or canvass? But some one may ask, How can I pray to, or worship, one whom I cannot see? Suppose you were shut up in a dark room, would that prevent you from loving your father or mother? Suppose you were in danger in that dark room, would that darkness prevent you from crying out to them to come and help you? Or suppose you were in danger, and had your father's picture to look at, would that help you to cry out to him for assistance to any better advantage? Certainly not. There is, then, no necessity for any likeness or picture to enable us to worship God, who is all around us and everywhere. We never speak but he hears us; he sees all we do, and every attempt to make anything like God is more vain than it would be to try to paint the universe.

So everything made out of gold, silver, brass, wood, or stone, and every painting made or used to excite devotional feelings, is a violation of this commandment, and a direct insult to God. It seems very strange to us who have the light of God's word, how any rational being can be so besotted and ignorant as to worship idols. And yet it is estimated that at least one half of the human race are idolaters, bowing down to stocks and stones.

But are those all that break this commandment? No. All who use images or pictures for purposes of worship break it; for God has said, "Thou shalt not make any graven image, or any likeness of anything in heaven above or in the earth beneath." You see the making of anything for this purpose is sin. There is little doubt of the fact, that the practice of placing pictures and images in churches, and of bowing to, and praying before them, is a remnant of the old heathen idolatry; or as Dr. J. Breckenridge says, Old Roman and Grecian gods and goddesses

have received Christian names; and perhaps the modern idolatry is more offensive to God than the ancient.

Another way in which some become idolaters is by imagining or having in their minds some likeness of God while they are praying to him. Some glorious being is set before the mind's eye to assist devotion. This will not do; it, too, is forbidden.

Do not understand me to mean that you are not to adore the incarnate Son of God, as he appeared after his resurrection, and to think of all he did and suffered as God-man to save your soul. He was God, and you must adore him, when you see him with his pierced side and wounded hands, as Thomas did.

But we have an infallible guide to direct us in our manner of worship. God has not left us in the dark, and he who alone has the right, has directed us how we must worship him. And how easy it is to worship him wherever you may be. On land or on the sea, in the desert or in the crowded city, the

petition sent up in Christ's name and from the believer's heart will be heard and answered.

An Irishman was once asked by a priest why he did not come to confession. The poor man said, "And does your reverence ever go to confession?"

"Yes," said the priest, "I do."

"And does your reverence pay?"

"Yes, I confess to the rector and pay him."

"And to whom does the rector confess?"

"To the bishop, of course."

"And where does the bishop go to confess?"

"Oh, he confesses to the vicar general."

"And to whom does he confess?"

"Why he confesses to the pope."

"Well, and to whom does his holiness confess?"

"Why, he confesses to Jesus Christ."

"And does Jesus charge him anything for it?"

"Oh, no, he does not."

"Well, please your reverence, I think as

I am a very poor man, I had better go to Jesus Christ at once."

This is the only way for us to do, go right to Christ without images, pictures, or priests, for he is both able and willing to save.

God says in this commandment, he "will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him;" but this means *when the children hate him as their fathers did*, but not on the children, if they serve God; as he says in the last clause, "Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments;" that is, of those very children who have ungodly fathers, if they, the children, love me and keep my commandments. The troubles brought on good children by wicked parents God will overrule for their good.

But to a certain extent, the iniquities of the fathers are visited on the children. If you have a worthless, drunken father who becomes very poor and miserable in consequence of it, you will suffer by it; and if you live

to become a man and follow his example, your children will all be poor too; and so drunkenness with all its accompanying vices and desires may be transmitted from generation to generation. Now, dear children, what stronger motive than this can you have to shun a bad example, and to strive to grow up useful and happy. If any of you have bad fathers or mothers, be sure not to follow their evil example, and the threatening contained in this commandment will never affect your standing in God's sight.

We learn from this commandment that God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must do so in spirit and in truth; that we must not substitute anything in God's place; that he will not tolerate any rival in the hearts of his creatures; that it is dishonouring God to attempt to make anything like him, or to use any of our own, or other people's inventions in his worship. Idolatrous worship degrades all that engage in it, but worshipping God in spirit and in truth raises our fallen humanity into union with him, and with all holy beings.

On one occasion the Israelites, when warring with the Philistines, took the ark of the covenant that contained this law to the battle-field with them, with the expectation that God would fight for them. They were defeated, and the ark was taken from them. The Philistines worshipped in the place of the true God, a great image called Dagon. During the first night, Dagon fell down before the ark of God, and his hands were broken on the floor. God was insulted by placing the ark, where he had recorded his name, beside an idol god.

On another occasion the Lord became so much displeased with the Israelites for worshipping Baal and other heathen gods, that he sent a sore famine on the land. Elijah, one of God's true prophets, summoned all the priests of Baal to meet him and test their gods. The priests of Baal killed their sacrifices and laid them on the altar, and called on Baal, but all to no purpose. Elijah called on the God who gave this law, and he answered by fire. The priests of Baal were all slain

for their idolatry. Nothing is more offensive to God than idol worship.

May God keep us from having idols in our hearts, or in our houses.

QUESTION L.

What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.

Proofs.

We are required to receive and observe all God's worship and ordinances. Lev. xix. 37 : Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them : I am the Lord.

2. *We are required to keep all God's worship and ordinances pure and entire.*—Deut. xii. 32 : What thing soever I command you, observe to do it ; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

3. *God's worship and ordinances are appointed only in his word.*—Psalm lxxviii. 5 :

He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers.

Exposition.

GOD has defined and set forth certain ordinances that are to be observed in his worship. Baptism, as the door of admission now, in the place of circumcision under the Old Testament dispensation; and the Lord's supper, as a memorial of our deliverance from sin through the blood of Christ, in the place of the pass-over, which was designed to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage.

We are not allowed to add anything to the water in baptism, or to the bread and wine in the sacrament of the supper, or to use pictures and images to excite devotional feelings.

The Scriptures alone are to be our guide in directing us how to worship God, both as to manner and means. We must not offer strange fire on the altar of God, or invent new expedients to make God's work more efficacious. All human inventions which have been

added, have only detracted from the glory and beauty of God's worship and ordinances.

The mass as celebrated by the adherents of Rome, is a direct violation of God's requirements. "Kirwan," in his letters to Archbishop Hughes, thus relates his escape from early prejudices. "Some book or tract now forgotten, gave rise to some inquiries about the mass. I asked, what does it mean? I could not tell, though for years a regular attendant on it. Why does the priest dress so? What book does he read from? Why is it carried now from his right hand to his left? What mean those candles burning at noon-day? Why do I say prayers in Latin which I understand not? Should I not know what I am saying when addressing my Maker? Why bow down and strike my breast when the little bell rings? What does it all mean? The darkness of Egypt rested on all these questions. I thus reasoned with myself: God is a spiritual, intelligent being, and he requires an intelligent worship, and what worship I render to him in the mass I know not. My

intelligent worship only is acceptable to him, and beneficial to me. I am a rational being and degrade my nature, and insult my Maker by offering to him a worship in which neither my reason nor his intelligence is consulted. Having come to this conclusion, I gave up the mass as a form of worship well enough fitted for an idol, but unfitted for a rational being to offer to the infinitely intelligent Jehovah." He further says as to confession, "My prejudices said yes, my reason said no, and the same in relation to eating no meat on Friday."

Learn from this answer to adhere closely to the teachings of God's word, and do nothing in the way of his worship and ordinances, except you can find a "Thus saith the Lord for it."

QUESTION LI.

What is forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or in any other way not appointed in his word.

Proofs.

1. *We are forbidden to worship God by images.*—Deut. iv. 15, 16: Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves, (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb, out of the midst of the fire;) Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image.

2. *We are forbidden to worship God in any way not appointed in his word.*—Deut. xii. 30, 32: Take heed to thyself that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. What thing soever I command

you, observe to do it; thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Exposition.

THIS answer forbids the worship of God in any way which he has not prescribed in his word. The use of images in any way, or any likeness or representation of God, is emphatically forbidden.

God withheld any appearance of himself, to prevent any attempt on the part of the Jews, to make any likeness whatsoever of him.

God is a pure Spirit, and the idea of making any thing that can have any resemblance to him is an absurdity, and the best that human ingenuity can make would be an insulting caricature.

Some years ago the writer called at the house of a worthy Irishman to supply them with some religious books and tracts. After mentioning the object of his visit, the father replied, "What kind of religion do you teach?" I replied, "The holy Catholic re-

ligion.” “Ah, it’s not the Roman Catholic religion. What objections have you to the Roman Catholic religion?” I replied that all that I desired was to teach the people to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to lead holy lives. Still he insisted on my telling him what objections I had to the Roman Catholic church. At last I told him they violated the second commandment by the use of images in the worship of God. This he denied. I asked him to get his Bible and compare it with mine. He brought out the Douay Catechism to prove he was right, and told me that was his Bible. I got mine, but he forbid my reading it to him as it was a heretic’s Bible.

I insisted on having Bible authority for the use of images in the worship of God. As the old man seemed to be at a loss to defend his position, one of his daughters, a beautiful girl, presented herself before me, and said, “I can give you Bible authority for the use of images and the good resulting from the use of them. What was it that Moses put

up on the pole for the Israelites to look at when the fiery serpent bit them?" I explained to her that the brazen serpent was set up, not to be worshipped, but simply to be looked at as a type of Christ, to whom dying sinners may look and live; that no adoration was required in looking at it, or faith to be exercised in it. It was simply to be looked at for a temporal cure. But all my efforts were in vain. As I left them, she was still entreating me to repent and come over to the Catholic church, as the only place of safety.

We learn from this answer that all attempts at exciting devotional feeling by the use of images, or pictures, is idolatry, and a direct insult to God, who has commanded us to come boldly to a throne of grace, and we shall have grace to help us in every time of need.

Jesus Christ has become our Advocate with God the Father, and we need no bleeding beast nor sprinkling priest. All that is required of us now is to go right to Christ, and lay our wants before him. His ear is

ever open to hear our cry for help. Let us not insult him by the use of any caricature of his divine person. He is a Spirit, and those that worship him acceptably must worship him in spirit and in truth.

QUESTION LII.

What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

Proofs.

1. *The first reason for worshipping God only is his sovereignty over us.*—Psalm xcvi. 2, 3: Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms; for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

2. *The second reason for worshipping God only is his right in us.*—Psalm xlv. 11: He is thy Lord, and worship thou him.

3. *The third reason for worshipping God only is the zeal he hath to his own worship.*—Exod. xxxiv. 14: Thou shalt worship no

other God: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

Exposition.

THIS answer furnishes us the reason why God prohibits the use of images in his worship. He, himself, is our sovereign, and we are his creatures; and he has a right to all our powers of praise and adoration. Isa. xxxiii. 22: "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us." The Lord has made laws for our government. The Lord will judge us for the violation of his law. The Lord as a king will punish all violations of his law as his judgment dictates. Psalm xcv. 7: "He is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." As a shepherd owns his sheep, and has a right to do as he pleases with them, so God owns us, and has a right to control our words and actions. God will permit no rivalship, no encroachment on his just rights, but will defend his honour.

How any persons professing to believe the

Bible, and to make it the rule by which they worship God, can use images and pictures in his worship I cannot tell. There is no way it can be accounted for but on the principle that man is totally depraved, and loves darkness rather than light.

Let us learn to adore God, and God alone, as our sovereign, and acknowledge his right to direct us in all our approaches unto him in the way of devotion. God will certainly punish all that offer strange fire on his altar. Children have no right to imitate those who depart from God's prescribed mode of worship, or attend any church where such things are done, but should abstain from all associations that are calculated in any way to countenance those that practise such idolatries. The music in those churches is often very fine, and our youth and children are often attracted there on Sabbath afternoons. It is better that they should never enter a church, where the worship of God by images is taught.

QUESTION LIII.

Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

Exposition.

WE are accustomed to speak of persons according to their position and moral worth. We are commanded not to speak lightly of our rulers; and should we not be very careful in speaking of the King of kings, and Lord of lords? Suppose you should hear some boy calling over your father and mother's name in a light, disrespectful manner; would you not be very much offended? And suppose that when he told a lie he would bring in your father's name to prove it; you would be indignant at such an abuse of your parent's character, and you would feel that the boy

ought to be severely punished. Well, this is what God means, when he says he will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. There are few sins that harden the heart like swearing.

After half a century of experience among men, I have never known any one who would trifle with God's name that was strictly reliable and upright with his fellow men. We cannot expect truth and integrity from one who has no regard for his Maker, and so far as this world is concerned it is a dead loss. Very few good men will have a boy about their houses who is profane; and certainly no one would employ a girl who was addicted to such a vice. Children who fall into the habit of taking the name of God in vain are despised by all respectable people, not only because it is so horrid a sin itself, but also because it is so linked with other sins.

If any of my young readers are guilty of this awful sin against God, I beseech them to stop now, and never swear another oath.

But, my dear young friends, swearing is

not the only way of taking the name of God in vain. All who use God's name in a thoughtless manner break this commandment. It forbids all repeating of the Lord's prayer or indeed of any prayer, in an irreverent and thoughtless way. Suppose one of your friends were to come to you to ask some favour, and should make great professions of friendship, saying how much he loved you, when all the time you knew that he cared nothing about you; you would feel very much hurt and displeased, and perhaps you would tell him so, and send him away. Now this is exactly how you treat your heavenly Father every time you say your prayers in a thoughtless manner.

And so when you read the Bible in a heedless way, you take God's name in vain. Suppose some kind friend should send you a letter in which he promised you a great many good things, and you should treat his letter with carelessness, not placing any value on it, or caring for the good things it promised, and your absent friend should learn all this;

would he not be highly offended? He certainly would, and have good reason.

Another way in which many take the name of the Lord in vain, is by repeating the profane words of others. They have heard some story in which the name of the holy God is thus used: and when they repeat the story, they use the same profane words they heard when it was told to them. This is taking God's name in vain. Too many men, even good men, sin in this way.

But I fear that many of my little readers break the commandment, in singing those beautiful hymns in which the name of God and Jesus Christ his Son are so often used, while they do not feel what they sing, and are perhaps looking about and laughing. Now all such are guilty of taking God's name in vain; and unless they cease to do it, and repent of their sins, God will not permit them to enter his holy place.

This commandment requires us to give to the Lord the reverence due to his name. Never use his name in the way you would use

the name of a man or woman; but always think how sinful it is to trifle with the name of this great God who could crush you in a moment.

END OF VOL. I.