

NOTES

ON THE

SHORTER CATECHISM.

BY

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"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."—PROV. xxii. 6.

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."—2 TIM. iii. 15.

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## THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

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THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States has said, "We believe that no uninspired men have ever been able to exhibit, in as short a compass, safer and sounder views of the doctrines of salvation than are contained in our Larger and Shorter Catechisms." It may well be assumed that many who love these precious standards of our Church, and have not access to fuller sources of information respecting them, will be gratified to glance at the history of the Assembly in which they originated.

On June 12, 1643, in the reign of Charles I., an ordinance of Parliament was issued calling an assembly of divines to meet at Westminster on the first day of the next month. This ordinance originated in a grateful recognition of the blessings of Almighty God upon the nation, and in a conviction that as yet many things remained in the liturgy, discipline and government of the English Church which necessarily required a further and more thorough reformation than had yet been attained. The names contained in the ordinance amounted to one hundred and fifty-one—namely, ten lords and twenty commoners as lay assessors, and one hundred and twenty-one divines. Of this list, about twenty-five never appeared at the Assembly, one or two having died about the time it

met, and others fearing the displeasure of the king or having a preference for the prelatic system. In order to supply the deficiency thus caused, and also occasional diminution caused by death during the protracted sittings of the Assembly, the Parliament summoned about twenty-one additional members, who were termed the superadded divines.

On Saturday, the first day of July, the members of the two Houses of Parliament named in the ordinance, and many of the divines therein mentioned, with a vast congregation, met in the Abbey Church, Westminster. Dr. Twisse, who had been named in the ordinance as president, preached an elaborate sermon from the text, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you" (John xiv. 18). After the sermon all the members present adjourned to Henry VII.'s Chapel, and the roll of members being called, it appeared that there were sixty-nine clerical members present on that the first day of the Westminster Assembly.

Our limits will only allow us to notice the Scottish ministerial members of this body, so famous for its intellectual force and adherence to truth. Henderson, Gillespie, Rutherford and Baillie occupied a high and commanding rank in the Scottish Church. The great abilities of these eminent men attracted the attention of the English of all ranks in a very remarkable manner, and recommended the Presbyterian system of church government much more effectually than arguments alone could have done. Nor was this strange. Henderson was a man of uncommon prudence and sagacity, profound judgment, decided eloquence and

the most attractive amenity of manners. He was one of those gifted men whom the Ruler of all events sends forth, in time of great emergency, to mould the minds of his fellow-men and aid in working out the will of the Most High. He was one of the most distinguished of an age fertile in great men, and, with all due veneration for the names of Knox and Melville, we do them no discredit when we place that of Henderson by their side—the “first three” of the Church of Scotland’s worthies. Baillie, though greatly inferior to Henderson in mental powers and somewhat fickle in disposition, arising from a facile temper and constitutional timidity, was one of the most learned men of his time. Rutherford, in addition to his scholarly attainments, was possessed of peculiar heavenly-mindedness. For his fidelity to principle the deadly gripe of the Parliament, in his subsequent history, was attempted to be laid on him. Not content with burning his work entitled *Lex Rex*, they summoned him to appear before them at Edinburgh to answer to a charge of high treason. He was at that time lying on his death-bed. “Tell them,” replied he, “that I have received a summons already to appear before a superior Judge and judicatory, and I behoove to answer my first summons; and ere your day arrive, I will be where few kings and great folks come.” Gillespie, though still a very young man, had already proved himself to be endowed with powers and possessed of acquirements of the very highest order; his learning was both extensive and singularly minute, his intellect clear, acute and powerful, qualifying him for eminence in debate, and his high and fervid elo-

quence was pervaded by that electric energy which is an essential attribute of true genius.

The chief duties of the Assembly, of which these men were ornaments, were discharged when they had prepared and laid before the Parliament directories of ordination and worship. Its attention was occupied almost entirely by the discussions respecting these till toward the end of 1644. The Assembly then began to prepare for composing a Confession of Faith and a Catechism, and, according to its usual course of procedure, committees were appointed to draw up an outline, in regular systematic order, for its consideration. But progress in these points was retarded by various events. On the 22d of October, 1647, "the Larger Catechism was ordered to be sent up to both Houses of Parliament, by the prolocutor, attended with the whole Assembly." Nov. 26, 1647, "the prolocutor informed the Assembly that he had delivered the Short Catechism and message to the House of Commons [25th November] . . . the Short Catechism be printed as the Larger, and Scriptures affixed to the margins of both the Catechisms." April 14, 1648, "the prolocutor informed the Assembly he had delivered the Catechisms [to the House of Commons], and was called in and told that they had ordered 600 copies with the proofs to be printed for the use of the Assembly and two houses." (See *Minutes of the Westminster Assembly*, Edinburgh, 1874.) After they had been carefully perused by the Parliament, an order was issued on the 15th of September, 1648, commanding them to be printed for public use.

By whom was the original outline of the Catechism

prepared? We find no separate committee named expressly for the purpose of drawing up the Catechism, and we find repeated proofs of a very close connection between the Catechism and the Confession. It may reasonably be inferred, therefore, that both subjects were conducted by the same committee, which was composed of Drs. Gouge and Hoyle, and Messrs. Herle, Gataker, Tuckney, Reynolds, Vines and the Scottish ministers.

After the completion of the Catechism the business of the Assembly was virtually at an end. But the Parliament neither fully approved nor rejected the Assembly's productions, nor yet issued an ordinance for a formal dissolution of that venerable body. Negotiations were still going on with the king, and in one of the papers which passed between His Majesty and the Parliament he signified his willingness to sanction the continuation of Presbyterian church government for three years, and also that the Assembly should continue to sit and deliberate, His Majesty being allowed to nominate twenty Episcopalian divines to be added to it for the purpose of having the whole subject of religion again formally debated. To this proposal the Parliament refused to consent, but it probably tended to prevent them from formally dissolving the Assembly, so long as there remained any shadow of hope that a pacific arrangement might be effected with His Majesty.

In the mean time many members of the Assembly, especially those from the country, returned to their own homes and ordinary duties, and those who remained in London were chiefly engaged in the exami-

nation of such ministers as presented themselves for ordination or induction into vacant charges. They continued to maintain their formal existence till the 22d of February, 1649, about three weeks after the king's decapitation, having sat five years six months and twenty-two days, in which time they had held one thousand one hundred and sixty-three sessions. They were then changed into a committee for conducting the trial and examination of ministers, and continued to hold meetings for this purpose every Thursday morning till the 25th of March, 1652, when Oliver Cromwell having forcibly dissolved the Long Parliament, by whose authority the Assembly had been at first called together, that committee also broke up, and separated without any formal dissolution and as a matter of necessity.

We only add that what the Westminster Assembly did in the formation of a rule of faith and a form of church government, and, as it hoped, for both nations, was ultimately rejected by the English and adopted by the Scotch. The Presbyterian Church in our country derives its origin from that of Scotland, and has taken its Confession of Faith, with some important alterations relative to magistrates and civil government, and its Catechisms, with only one slight alteration, from the Scottish model. The present standards of our Church were adopted by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, sitting in the latter city, in May, 1789. In reference to the slight alteration—or omission rather—just mentioned, Dr. Ashbel Green says: "It was in the Larger Catechism, where, in stating what is forbidden in the second commandment,

the original framers of the Catechism, among many things which they specify, mention this: ‘tolerating a false religion.’ This clause, as a member of the Synod that adopted our standards, I remember was rejected very promptly—I think without debate—and by a unanimous vote.”

## NOTES ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

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QUESTION 1.—*What is the chief end of man?*

ANSWER.—*Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.*

*President Humphrey* says: "For myself, though I confess with shame that when my mother used to give me my little task and teach me *The chief end of man*, I would gladly have been excused from both, and wondered what good thing they could ever do me; I subsequently found abundant cause to be thankful for her fidelity and perseverance. I was astonished, when I began to read the Bible seriously, and to collect and arrange its doctrines, to find what a fund of definitions and important scriptural truths I had got treasured up for the occasion. And how delightful it is to hear, as we sometimes do, the aged disciple just on the verge of heaven repeating with thrilling interest and feasting his soul upon the definitions of *justification*, *adoption*, *sanctification* and the like, which, three-quarters of a century before, were imprinted indelibly upon his memory in the nursery!"

The daughter of a faithful minister who died in Pennsylvania, in describing his final hour, says: "He summoned his family to his bedside; gazing upon us all, he thus addressed us: 'My poor girls!' paused, and then asked: 'What is the chief end of man?' This question I answered in the words of the Shorter Catechism. After this not another word was spoken by him; he closed his eyes, and soon calmly and peacefully expired. At the time I did not feel that much had been said to me by my dying father, as I had so often been asked, and answered, the question before. Very different, however, has been my opinion under a ripe judgment and experience. A volume

could not have embodied more. In no way could the momentous importance of that weighty question have been presented so as to secure for it a more abiding remembrance and a deeper lodgment in the soul."

#### RIGHT WAY TO BEGIN.

This question is with great propriety made the first subject of attention in a system of theological truth. Even in natural religion this is considered as the place at which all inquiry and discussion must commence. Dr. Hall says: "'Man's chief end!' From man up to God! It was fitting that the Catechism should begin in this noble manner. It is characteristic of the strong, clear, positive religious truth that runs through it. And as we conceive of the aim and object of life, life is likely to be. Oh for grace to judge of it justly, and to yield it up to God in Jesus Christ our Lord!"

A twofold end of man's life is here stated, or, rather, one end, consisting in *action* and *fruition*.

#### I. GLORIFYING GOD.

The glory of God is *essential* and *declarative*. The former belongs to him as light to the sun, and can receive no addition, because it is infinite. (Acts vii. 2; Job xxxv. 7.) In this sense he is exalted above all blessing and praise. Our goodness extendeth not to him. (Ps. xvi. 2.) But "the heavens declare the glory of God," all his works praise him. (Ps. xix. 1.) How? By the impressions and displays of his perfections; by showing what he is and what he deserves. (1 Chron. xvi. 29.)

In *general*, we are to glorify God in our "body" and in our "spirit"—that is, by exertions peculiar to each. (1 Cor. vi. 20.) As to the *body*, we are to do

this in guarding our health, watching our senses, regulating our appetites, opposing idleness and intemperance, yielding our members as instruments of righteousness unto God (Rom. vi. 13), and rendering our natural refreshments and our secular callings subservient to religion. (See 1 Cor. x. 31.) As to the *spirit*, we are to glorify God in the understanding by exploring his truth; in the memory, by retaining his word; in the conscience, by fearing to offend him; in the will, by submitting to his commands and acquiescing in his dispensations; in our affections, by loving him above all; and in our dependence, by rejoicing in Christ Jesus and having no confidence in the flesh. (Phil. iii. 3.)

In *particular*, we are to glorify God—I. By believing. (Rom. iv. 20; Acts viii. 37, 39; Dan. iii. 17; Ps. xxxi. 5; John iii. 23; Heb. xi. 6; 1 John v. 10.) II. By a penitent confession of sin. (Luke xxiii. 41; xv. 18; Josh. vii. 19; Neh. ix. 33.) III. By laying to heart any dishonor done to God. (Ps. lxix. 9.) IV. By acknowledging that he is the Author of all that is good in us. (Ps. cxv. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 10.) V. By praising him. (Ps. l. 23; lxxxvi. 12; Rev. v. 8, 10.) VI. By our holy walk. (Matt. v. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 9; 1 John ii. 6.)

“Thus shall we best proclaim abroad  
The honors of our Saviour God,  
When the salvation reigns within  
And grace subdues the power of sin.”

VII. By the cheerfulness of our lives. (2 Cor. vi. 10; Ps. c. 2.) VIII. By our profession of the name of God. (Rom. x. 10; Heb. x. 23.) IX. By faithful-

ness in his service. (John xv. 8 ; Luke vii. 47 ; Rom. xiv. 8 ; 2 Cor. v. 15 ; Phil. i. 11.) X. By our readiness to suffer for his sake. (Acts v. 41 ; 2 Cor. xi. 25-27 ; John xxi. 18, 19 ; Rev. xii. 11.) XI. By preferring his glory to all other things. (Deut. xxxiii. 9 ; John xii. 28 ; Phil. i. 15.)

## II. ENJOYING GOD.

What is it to "enjoy God"? To acquiesce or rest in him as the chief good with complacency and delight. (Ps. cxvi. 7.) God is the proper portion of the soul (Ps. xvi. 5), and without a saving interest in him through Christ there cannot be any real or enduring happiness. (Eccles. i. 2 ; Ps. xxx. 5 ; lxxiii. 3, 4, 6, 7 ; lxxiii. 28.) There is, let it be observed, *an inseparable connection* between *glorifying* and *enjoying* God. We must have conformity with him in grace before we can have communion with him on earth or in glory. (Ps. lxxxiv. 4, 11 ; Matt. v. 8 ; 2 Thess. i. 10.) God is enjoyed by his people in *this* life when they cleave to him by faith, taste his goodness and delight themselves in his gracious presence and the sensible manifestations of his special love to them. (Josh. xxiii. 8 ; Ps. xxxiv. 8 ; Rom. v. 5.)

"God has been cutting off one source of enjoyment after another," said the Rev. Dr. Payson on a sick bed, "till I find I can do without them all, and yet enjoy more happiness than ever in my life before."—"It has pleased God lately to teach me more than ever," said the Rev. Samuel Peirce, "that likeness to him, friendship for him and communion with him, form the basis of all true enjoyment."

"The men of grace have found  
Glory begun below,

And heavenly fruits on earthly ground  
From faith and hope will grow."

The *principal* enjoyment of God, however, is reserved for heaven. (Ps. lxxiii. 25-28; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; Heb. iv. 9.) *Here* the enjoyment is only *partial*—*there* it will be *full* and *complete* (1 John iii. 2); *here* it is only in the *seed*, or first-fruits—*there* it will be in the full harvest. (Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.) That enjoyment will be not only in inspection, but also in possession. (John xvii. 4, 5; Rom. viii. 18.) His presence is the source of happiness. (Ps. xvi. 11.)

"Blessed be God," said Dr. Preston, when dying, "though I change my place, I shall not change my company, for I have walked with God while living, and now I go to rest with God!"

#### FOR EVER.

"The thing I rejoice in is this," said Halyburton, "that God is altogether full, and that in the Mediator, Christ Jesus, is all the fullness of the Godhead, and it will never run out."

An eminent minister, after having been silent in company for a considerable time, and being asked the reason, replied that the powers of his mind had been solemnly absorbed with the thought of eternal happiness. "Oh, my friends," said he with an energy that surprised all present, "consider what it is to be for ever with the Lord—for *ever*—for EVER—for EVER!" (Ps. xvii. 15; xxxvi. 9; 1 Pet. v. 4.) How should the prospect of being eternally under the divine rapture of joy stimulate to diligence in duty! (1 Cor. xv. 10; 1 Thess. iv. 17.)

#### "CHIEF END."

These words mean that it is our great *duty* and *interest* to "glorify God and to enjoy him for ever." Our happiness is not our chief end, but the glory of God itself, in aiming at which *chiefly* we cannot miss the enjoyment of him. (Isa. ii. 11; xlii. 8; Ps. cxiii. 4.)

We may have other objects in view, such as providing for ourselves and our families, and securing such a portion of the good things of the world as are needful and useful, but these are to be *subordinate* ends, and *subservient* to the *great* end of our existence as already stated. (Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26; 1 Cor. x. 31; 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 1 Tim. v. 8.)

#### REASONS.

Why are we thus to do? I. *Because we are rational creatures.* (Job xxxii. 8; xxxv. 11.) The inanimate creatures glorify God (Ps. xix. 1; Isa. xliii. 20); how much more should man who has been made “a little lower than the angels”! (Heb. ii. 7.) II. *Because God is our Creator, Preserver and Redeemer.* (Ps. c. 3; Isa. xliii. 21; Rom. xi. 36; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) III. *Because God has made all things for his own glory.* (Prov. xvi. 4; Isa. xliii. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 9.) IV. *Because God has given us his word to direct, his Spirit to assist, and promises his kingdom to encourage us to glorify him.* (Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20; Rom. viii. 26; James ii. 5.) V. *Because God is the chief good,* and in the enjoyment of him consists man’s highest happiness. (Ps. iv. 6, 7; Matt. xvi. 26; Ps. xvi. 5.) VI. *Because nothing so much secures our happy enjoyment of God as the concern that his glory has in it.* His promise of eternal life to us stands upon the honor of his faithfulness. (Heb. x. 23.)

Thomas Carlyle, who is still a power in literature, says: “As I stand on the brink of eternity no truth so fully meets my wants or so satisfies my intellect as that stated in the Shorter Catechism: ‘Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him for ever.’”

QUESTION 2.—*What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

“This lamp from off the everlasting throne  
 Mercy took down, and in the night of time  
 Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow,  
 And evermore beseeching men with tears  
 And earnest sighs to hear, believe and live.”

POLLOK.

Colonel Allen, a celebrated infidel of this country, was one day summoned from his library to the chamber of a dying daughter, whom her pious mother instructed in the principles of Christianity. As soon as he approached her bedside she said to him: “Father, I am about to die. Shall I believe in the principles which *you* have recommended, or shall I believe in what my mother has taught me?” He became extremely agitated, his chin quivered, his whole frame shook, and after waiting a few moments he replied, “Believe what you have learned from your mother.”

#### A RULE NEEDED.

“Although the light of nature” (*Confession of Faith*, chap. i. 1) “and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God as to leave men inexcusable (Rom. i. 19, 20; ii. 14, 15; Ps. xix. 1–3), yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of his will which is necessary unto salvation.” (1 Cor. i. 21; ii. 13, 14.)

#### WORD OF GOD.

The Bible is called “the word of God” in Luke xi. 28; Rom. ix. 6. When great religious truths are to

be unfolded to men, existing words must be used as the instruments of such teaching. The Bible is the *utterance* of divine wisdom and love. "Word" (in Greek *Logos*) is a name given to Him who "was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John i. 14) as the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. It may denote that he is the medium by which the Father declares his will.

**HOW DO WE KNOW THAT THE SCRIPTURES ARE  
INSPIRED?**

I. By their antiquity. They relate matters of fact that have been from the foundation of the world. II. By their miraculous preservation. They have withstood the efforts of their enemies in every age either to destroy or corrupt them. III. By their depth. The mystery they exhibit could never have been set forth by man or angel unless it had been divinely revealed. IV. By their purity. Their holiness is a reflection of the very image of God. (Ps. xii. 6; cxix. 140.) V. By their predictions. (Ex. xii. 41; Dan. ix. 26; Isa. vii. 14.) VI. By their impartiality. The men of God who wrote them recorded their own failings. VII. By their mighty power and efficacy. They change the hearts of men. (2 Cor. iii. 3.) They also comfort their hearts. (Rom. xv. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 17; Lam. iii. 31; Ps. cxix. 50.) VIII. By the miracles wrought in attestation of their divine origin by the prophets and by our Lord and his apostles. IX. By the majesty of their style. X. By the agreement of all their parts. XI. By their scope, which is to give all glory to God. XII. By their adaptedness to man's necessities in every age and country. XIII. By the full discovery they make of the only way of

man's salvation. XIV. By their own testimony that they are inspired. (2 Tim. iii. 16; 1 John v. 9; 1 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Pet. i. 21; Heb. ii. 4.) After all, however, our full persuasion and assurance of the divine origin of the Scriptures is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts. (1 John ii. 20, 27; John xvi. 13, 14; 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.)

"I use the Scriptures, not as an arsenal to be resorted to only for arms and weapons, . . . but as a matchless temple, where I delight to contemplate the beauty, the symmetry and the magnificence of the structure, and to increase my awe and excite my devotion to the Deity there preached and adored."—BOYLE.

"Scarcely can we fix our eyes upon a single passage in this wonderful book which has not afforded comfort or instruction to thousands, and been wet with tears of penitential sorrow or grateful joy drawn from eyes that will weep no more."—PAYSON.

"Whence, but from heaven, could men unskilled in arts,  
In several ages born, in several parts,  
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,  
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?  
Unasked their pains, ungrateful their advice,  
Starving their gain and martyrdom their price."

DRYDEN.

Professor Dana, the foremost of living geologists, packs a whole volume of argument into two sentences in holding that if the first chapter of Genesis is proved to be the right natural account of creation, then it must have been written by inspiration. "Examining it as a geologist," adds Professor Dana, "I find it to be in perfect accord with known science; therefore as a Christian I assert that the Bible narrative must be inspired."

*SCRIPTURES.*

This word signifies "writings." In the Bible God has *written* to us the great things of his law and covenant. (Hos. viii. 12.) Before God's will was committed to writing it was made known to the Church by immediate revelation (Gen. ii. 16, 17; iii. 15); by frequent appearances of the Son of God (Gen. xviii. 2, compared with verses 5, 13; Judg. xiii. 11, compared with verses 18, 19); by the ministry of angels (Gen. xix. 1, 15; Heb. ii. 2), and of the patriarchs (Heb. xi. 7). The word of God was committed to writing, (1) that the history and doctrine of the word might be better transmitted to posterity than it could have been by tradition (2 Pet. iii. 1); (2) that the truth might be better propagated through the world; and (3) that there might be in the Church a standing rule of faith and life by which all doctrines and all actions might be tested. (Isa. viii. 20.)

*THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.*

The Bible is called the Old and the New Testament (that is, covenant or appointment), the term by which God was pleased to indicate the relation or settled arrangement between himself and his people. The term was first applied to the relation itself (Ex. xxiv. 7; 2 Kings xxiii. 2; 2 Cor. iii. 6-14), and afterward to the books in which the records of the relation are contained. The Scriptures from *Genesis* to *Malachi* are called the *Old Testament*. The Old Testament was written mostly in Hebrew, and was the Bible of the ancient Jewish Church. It was divided into three parts—the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke xxiv. 44). The Scriptures from *Matthew* to *Revelation*

are called the *New Testament*. It was written mostly, if not wholly, in Greek, and fully unfolds the history and doctrine of our divine Redeemer and the way of salvation through him. Its parts are united in one book, and called *The Scriptures* (or writings), because they form a connected written history and are necessary to illustrate, to explain and to confirm each other.

#### THE ONLY RULE.

The Scriptures as a rule are to direct and regulate our faith and practice with a view to our attainment of the "chief end of man." (Gal. vi. 16.) They are the judge of controversies, the rock of infallibility; that only is to be received for truth which is in accordance with them. (Luke x. 26; Isa. viii. 20; Acts xv. 15; Matt. iv. 10; Eph. vi. 17.) They are a *sufficient* and *complete* rule. "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life; is either expressly set down in Scripture or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture, unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men." (*Confession of Faith*, 1, vi.) [See Ps. xix. 7; Rom. x. 8; Ps. xix. 105, 130; 1 Cor. ii. 5; 1 Tim. iv. 7; 2 Tim. iii. 15; Rev. xxii. 18.] The Scriptures are the *only* rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God. We are not to rely on natural reason, for it is utterly unable, as we have seen, to give the smallest discovery of Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant (1 Cor. ii. 14), who is the only way of salvation for lost sinners. (John xiv. 6.) Neither are we to depend on what some call the "inner light," for whatever light may be

in men without the word is but darkness. [See Luke xvi. 29, 31; Isa. viii. 20; Acts iv. 12; 1 John iv. 1, 6.]

**THE SCRIPTURES THEIR OWN INTERPRETER.**

They are plain. (Rom. x. 8; Ps. cxix. 105, 130.) All traditions are to be examined by the Scriptures. (Isa. viii. 20.) Paul commends the Bereans, "because they searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so." (Acts xviii. 12.) And he commanded the Galatians to reject all teaching opposed to the truth they had already received. (Gal. i. 8.)

**HOW SHOULD THE SCRIPTURES BE STUDIED?**

[See John v. 39; Col. iii. 16.] I. *With reverence*, remembering that in every line God is speaking to us. II. *With seriousness*, remembering that it is a matter of life or death to us. III. *With affection*. (Ps. cxix. 97; xix. 10; Luke xxiv. 32.) IV. *With prayer*, that the Spirit who wrote the word may make it profitable to us. V. *With high appreciation of the truth*. (Job xxiii. 12.) VI. *With faith*, getting our hearts wrought to a firm belief of them. (Luke xvi. 31; 1 John ii. 14; 2 Thess. ii. 13.) VII. *With a desire to be sanctified through the truth*. It is not only a light to our eyes to improve our sight, but also to our feet to improve our walk. (Ps. lxxxvi. 11; cxix. 105.) VIII. *With thankfulness*. (2 Pet. i. 18.) IX. *With adoration of God's grace* if we can say with David, "Thy word hath quickened me." (Ps. cxix. 50.)

Sir Walter Scott, in his final sickness, said to Lockhart, his son-in-law, "Bring me the book." "What book?" said Lockhart. "Can you ask?" said the expiring genius. "There is but one—the *Bible*."

Patrick Henry, the distinguished Virginia statesman and orator, a little before his death remarked to a friend, who found him reading his Bible, "Here is a book worth more than all other books which ever were printed, yet it is my misfortune never to have, till lately, found time to read it with proper attention and feeling."

QUESTION 3.—*What do the Scriptures principally teach?*

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

This answer consists of two parts.

#### **I. WHAT MAN IS TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD.**

Faith is a dependence on the veracity of another or belief on testimony. In Scripture the testimony which is the ground of faith means generally the divine testimony announced either by God himself or by his accredited messengers. (John iii. 33; Heb. xi. 7.) Faith may be dead if it be merely in the understanding, admitting facts as true, but not realizing their bearing upon ourselves. (James ii. 19.) True faith is the substance (or realizing) of things hoped for, the evidence (or sure persuasion) of things not seen. (Heb. xi. 1.) If genuine, it will work by love (Gal. v. 6), yielding the fruits of a holy life and conversation. (Matt. vii. 20; James ii. 26.)

Observe: (1) It is necessary that we have a faith concerning God. (Heb. xi. 6; Rom. x. 14.) (2) Only in the Scriptures have we the revelation of God which we need. (Ps. lviii. 11; John i. 18; Rom. i. 20.) (3) We are to believe what the Scriptures reveal concerning God. (John xvii. 3; xx. 21; Acts xxiv. 14; Prov.

ix. 10; ii. 1-5; Deut. xxxi. 12.) That there are difficulties in the Bible cannot be denied. These difficulties are a trial of man's faith, like our Lord himself in the state of humiliation and suffering, who to some was precious, but to others a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. They call for docility and humble submission to divine authority; and wherever these tempers are, revelation will be cordially received.

The following lines were found upon a blank page in Lord Byron's Bible:

" Within this awful volume lies  
The mystery of mysteries.  
Oh happiest they of human race,  
To whom our God has given grace  
To hear, to read, to fear, to pray,  
To lift the latch and force the way!  
But better had they ne'er been born  
Who read to doubt or read to scorn."

#### *FAITH AND PRACTICE CONNECTED.*

There is a most intimate connection between truth and duty. Hence, belief concerning God is blended with corresponding obedience in the answer before us.

#### *II. WHAT DUTY GOD REQUIRES OF MAN.*

By the "duty" here designated is to be understood that which is God's due, or that which we owe to God, and are bound to do, with the powers we possess and in the various relations we sustain. (Job xxviii. 28; Mic. vi. 8; Luke x. 27.) As we have already seen, it is not enough to believe the truth revealed if we do not the duty required. (Josh. i. 7.) "Faith without

works is dead." (James ii. 26.) That they which believe in God might be careful to maintain good works. (Titus iii. 8.) Neither is it enough to do the duty required, though we do not believe the truth revealed, for "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar." (1 John v. 10.) Our practice is to be regulated by the requirements of the Scriptures.

#### ORDER OF STATEMENT.

It will be observed that faith is here made the foundation of our obedience, and not obedience the foundation of our faith. (Titus iii. 8.) In the covenant of *works*, which was made with man in his innocency, doing or perfect obedience to the law was the basis of the promised privilege of life. "The man which doeth these things shall live by them." (Rom. x. 5.) But this order is inverted in the covenant of *grace*, or under the gospel revelation. The promise is now to be believed, and the promised privilege—namely, life—must be freely received, and upon this *follows* our obedience to the law from gratitude and love. (Jer. xxxi. 18, 19; Ps. xlv. 11; Rom. xvi. 26.)

#### "PRINCIPALLY TEACH."

The Bible contains a good deal of biography and history and many genealogies, and none of it is without its use. But the *principal* or *most important* parts of it are those which teach us what to *believe* and what to *do*. If men were uninformed in regard to some of the other parts of Scripture, they might still understand the revealed parts of salvation; and when real Christians differ, as they often do, about other things, the

difference is about the unessentials of religion. (See John xx. 31; 2 Tim. i. 13; 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13; Ps. cxix. 105.)

Amidst the great variety of books which Sir Isaac Newton had constantly before him, that which he studied with the greatest application was *the Bible*.

"I never knew happiness" (said Wilberforce a little before his death) "till I found Christ as a Saviour. Read the Bible! Let no religious book take its place. Through all my perplexities and distresses I never read any other book, and I never knew the want of any other. It has been my hourly study, and all my knowledge of the doctrines and all my acquaintance with the experience and realities of religion have been derived from the Bible only."

"My practice, since I was thirty years of age," said President John Quincy Adams to a friend, "has been to read the Bible the first thing I do every morning. This practice I have followed, with but few interruptions, for fifty years."

QUESTION 4.—*What is God?*

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

#### A SPIRIT.

A spirit is a being that has none of the properties of matter. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John iv. 24; Job x. 4; 1 Tim. vi. 16.) The angels are spirits. (Ps. civ. 4; Heb. i. 14.) So are the souls of men. (Zech. xii. 1; Eccles. xii. 7.) But God is "the Father of spirits." (Heb. xii. 9.) As God is a Spirit, it is absolutely unlawful and idolatrous to form any external image of him with the hand or any internal

imaginary idea of him in the fancy. (Deut. iv. 12, 15; Rom. i. 23.)

As a missionary in India was catechising the children of one of the schools, a Brahmin interrupted him by saying that the spirit of man and the Spirit of God were one. In order to show him the absurdity of such a declaration, the missionary called upon the boys to refute it by stating the difference between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. They readily gave the following answers: "The spirit of man is created—God is its Creator; the spirit of man is full of sin—God is a pure Spirit; the spirit of man is subject to grief—God is infinitely blessed and incapable of suffering. These two spirits, therefore," replied the boys, "can never be one."

#### INFINITE.

To be infinite is to be without measure, bounds or limits. Thus God differs from all created beings, which are finite. He is infinite in his being and perfections. (Job xi. 7; xxxvi. 26; Ps. cxlv. 3.) He is everywhere present. (1 Kings viii. 27; Ps. cxxxix. 7.) As God is infinite in his glorious perfections, let us adore where we cannot comprehend. (Rom. xi. 33; Isa. vi. 3; Job xi. 7.) Let us be careful also not to limit the Holy One of Israel (Ps. lxxviii. 41) by confining him within the narrow compass of our reason.

The teacher of a Sabbath-school once asked his class, "Where is God?" One of the elder boys immediately answered, "In heaven." The teacher, not satisfied with this reply, again repeated the inquiry, when a lad younger than the other answered, "Everywhere." Requiring still further explanation, the question was again put, "Where is God?" when a third boy called out, "God is here." The views of the teacher were now met, and he endeavored to impress upon the minds of the children the important truth that God is in heaven—God is everywhere—God is here.

*ETERNAL.*

God has always existed and always shall exist. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." (Ps. xc. 2, 4; Job x. 5; Ps. cii. 12, 27; 2 Pet. iii. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 16; Heb. i. 8.)

One of the deaf and dumb pupils in the institution of Paris being desired to express his idea of the eternity of the Deity, replied, "It is duration, without beginning or end; existence, without bound or dimension; present, without past or future. His eternity is youth, without infancy or old age; life, without birth or death; to-day, without yesterday or to-morrow."

*UNCHANGABLE.*

I am Jehovah and change not. (Mal. iii. 6.) He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turring. (James i. 17.) In such passages as Gen. vi. 6; 1 Sam. xv. 11, in which God is represented as having changed, he accommodates his language to our conceptions—the change of his mind signifies merely a change of dispensation. So, when God is said to love a person whom he once hated, or to hate one whom he once loved, he no more changes than the sun does when the different parts of the earth successively come into his light and retire into darkness. The change is in themselves. God's immutability ensures the fulfilment of his promises (Isa. liv. 10) and the execution of his threatenings. He "will by no means clear the guilty." (Ex. xxxiv. 7.)

*BEING.*

"Thou art the same." (Ps. cii. 27.) At every point of God's existence it may be said to him, "Thou art." His name, "I AM" (John viii. 58), implies that in his being; the distinctions of past, present; and to come;

have no place. (Ex. iii. 14; 1 Cor. viii. 6; 1 Tim. vi. 16; 2 Pet. iii. 8.)

#### *WISDOM.*

The wisdom of God consists not only in knowledge, but in the right use of his boundless stores of knowledge. He knows all things, and he turns his knowledge to the best account. (Job ix. 4; xxxiv. 21, 34; 1 Tim. i. 17; Ps. cxlvii. 5; cxxxix. 1; Heb. iv. 13; Ps. civ. 24; 1 Cor. ii. 6, 7; Eph. iii. 10; Isa. xl. 13, 14; xli. 10; Acts iv. 28.)

#### *POWER.*

By this is meant God's ability to do what he desires or purposes to do. "If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong." (Job ix. 19.) "I am the Almighty God." (Gen. xvii. 1.) [See Dan. iv. 35; Ps. lxxv. 5, 7; Isa. xli. 10; Rev. xix. 16; Ps. viii. 3.]

#### *HOLINESS.*

This is that essential uprightness or integrity of the nature of God by which he infinitely delights in his own purity and in everything that is pure, and so agreeable to his will, and has a perfect hatred and abhorrence of everything contrary to it. (Hab. i. 13; Jer. xlv. 4.) "Glorious in holiness." (Ex. xv. 11.) "Holy and reverend is his name." (Ps. cxi. 9.) "The Holy One." (Job vi. 10.) [See also Isa. vi. 3; Ps. xxx. 4; 1 Pet. i. 16.]

#### *JUSTICE.*

The justice of God is the rectitude of his nature, by which he is moved to the doing of that which is righteous and equal. (Prov. xxiv. 12.) "Just and right is he." (Deut. xxxii. 4.) "He is excellent in power and

in judgment." (Job xxxvii. 23.) "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne." (Ps. lxxxix. 14.) God cannot but be just. His holiness will not suffer him to do anything but what is righteous. (Heb. i. 9.) [See also Ps. cxlv. 17; xcii. 15; xi. 7.]

### GOODNESS.

The goodness of God is his essential property, by which he is altogether good in himself and the Author of all good. "Thou art good and doest good." (Ps. cxix. 68.) He is "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." (Ex. xxxiv. 6.) He "is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Ps. cxlv. 9.) He is in a special manner good to his people. "Truly God is good to Israel. (Ps. lxxiii. 1.) [See Ps. xxxiv. 8.]

As a missionary in the South Sea Islands was one day reading the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of John to the natives, one of them exclaimed, "Can that be true? God love the world when the world not love him! God so love the world as to give his Son to die that man might not die! Can that be true?" When the missionary told him it *was* true, he burst into tears, retired to meditate in private on the great love of God which had that day touched his soul.

### TRUTH.

This is that essential perfection of God's nature by which he cannot but fulfill and accomplish whatever he has spoken, or do as he has said. (Num. xxiii. 19.) "A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." (Deut. xxxii. 4.) "For thy mercy is great unto the heavens and thy truth unto the clouds." (Ps. lvii. 10.) Plenteous in truth. (Ps. cxxxvi. 15. See

also 1 Kings viii. 56 ; Tit. i. 2 ; 1 Sam. xv. 29 ; Ps. cxvii. 2 ; Heb. x. 23 ; vi. 18.)

The following account of the way in which the answer, just considered, was prepared, is full of interest :

The committee to which was referred the question, *What is God?* all felt the unapproachable sublimity of the divine idea suggested by these words, but who could venture to give it expression in human language? All shrank from the sacred task in awe-struck, reverential fear. At length it was resolved, as an expression of the committee's deep humility, that the youngest member should first make the attempt. He consented, but begged that the brethren would first unite with him in prayer for divine enlightenment. Then, in slow and solemn accents, he thus began his prayer : "O God, thou art a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in thy being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." When he ceased, the first sentence of his prayer was immediately written down and adopted as the most perfect answer that could be conceived ; as, indeed, in a very sacred sense, God's own answer descriptive of himself. The youngest member of that committee was George Gillespie—the man, therefore, who was thus guided to frame this marvellous answer.

QUESTION 5.—*Are there more Gods than one?*

ANSWER.—*There is but one only, the living and true God.*

#### TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE.

The Scriptures plainly teach that there is but one God. (Deut. vi. 4 ; 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6 ; Mark xii. 29, 32.) He is the "only God." (Deut. iv. 39 ; Isa xlv. 21 ; xlv. 9. See also 1 Kings xviii. 39 ; Ps. xcv. 3 ; xevi. 5 ; Isa xxxvii. 16.)

#### EVIDENCE FROM REASON.

*How is it evident from reason that there is but one God?*

1. There can be but one First Cause, that has its being of itself, and on which all other beings depend. Hence there can be but one God, because there is but one First Cause.

2. Because God is infinite, and there cannot be more than one infinite being, forasmuch as one infinite being sets bounds and limits to all other beings, and nothing that is bounded and limited can be infinite. (See Jer. xxiii. 24.) The argument has been thus stated: "One infinite and perfect Being absolutely and necessarily precludes a second. If two beings be supposed of equal or similar attributes, neither can be infinite or perfect, because it is manifest that if to either were given the powers and prerogatives of the other, there would be an increase of what was possessed before. But what is infinite is perfect, and therefore, as God is infinite and perfect (see on Question 4), there is and *can be but one God.*"

3. Because there could not be a uniform governing of all things in the world to one certain end if the infinitely wise Governor, who is at the helm, were not one only. If there were two Omnipotents, then we must always suppose a contest between these two. (Isa. xlv. 6; Job ix. 12.) Throughout its whole extent our globe exhibits proof of its having been formed by the same almighty hand. Everywhere the dry land is composed of the same materials, and the sea has the same properties. Throughout the entire visible universe, indeed, we behold a *unity and simplicity* of design and end which most powerfully impress the conviction that one, and but one, glorious Being created it at first, and upholds and governs it continually.

**THE LIVING GOD.**

*Why is God said to be the "living" God?* Not only in contrast with the gods whom the heathen worship, and which are without life and without understanding, but because he has life essentially in himself (John v. 26); is the great Author and Preserver of the life of every living creature; and gave existence to all things. (Acts. xvii. 28; Jer. x. 18, 20; Gen. xvii. 1; 1 Tim. vi. 13.)

**THE TRUE GOD.**

*Why is God called the "true" God?* Because all other beings that are called and regarded as gods *are not really such*; they are *false* gods: those who worship them are *deceived*. (Jer. x. 10, 11, 15; John xvii. 3; Ps. xcvi. 5.)

**THE LIVING AND TRUE GOD.**

*Why are "living" and "true" put together in the answer?*

Because they are inseparably conjoined in the infinitely perfect nature of God. He who is the living God is the only true God; and the true God the only living God. (1 Thess. i. 9.)

**PRACTICAL LESSONS.**

From the truth that there is but one God the following things are evident:

1. There can be but one true religion in the world. "One Lord, one faith." (Eph. iv. 5.)
2. We should present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service. (Rom. xii. 1.)

3. We should take heed of setting up more gods than one. (Ps. xvi. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 4; Eph. v. 5.)

4. From gratitude that we possess a knowledge of the only true God; we should pity and pray for the heathen who are living in idolatry, and try to send them the Bible.

5. As God is one, they who serve him should be one. This is what Christ prayed so earnestly for. (John xvii. 21. See also Acts iv. 32; Ps. cxxxiii. 1.)

6. We should strive for assurance that God is ours. What comfort is it to know that there is a God, and that he is the only God, unless he be *our* God? (Ps. xlviii. 14.)

The Rev. Narayan Sheshadri, the eloquent converted Brahmin who visited America in 1873, says that the study of the wonderful announcement made in the first words of the Bible, of one personal Creator of the universe, existing from all eternity, was one of the chief means of turning him from idolatry. The same declaration has been made by many others who have been brought from heathen darkness to the light of faith in the One Living and True God.

QUESTION 6.—*How many persons are there in the Godhead?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

#### THE GODHEAD.

By "the Godhead" is meant the divine nature and essence. God is one, yet there are three distinct persons subsisting in one Godhead. This is a sacred mystery which the light of reason could never have discov-

ered. The three Persons in the blessed Trinity are distinguished, but not divided—three subsistences, but one essence. This is entirely a doctrine of revelation.

An old writer ventures to shadow the doctrine by this similitude: “In the body of the sun there is the substance of the sun, the beams and the heat; the beams are begotten of the sun, the heat proceeds both from the sun and the beams, but these three, though different, are not divided; they all three make one sun. So in the blessed Trinity the Son is begotten of the Father, the Holy Ghost proceeds from both, yet though they are three distinct Persons there is but one God.”

#### *AN ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE.*

That this doctrine of the Trinity is a fundamental article is beyond all doubt, because without the knowledge and belief of the Trinity of Persons we would remain ignorant of the love of the Father, the merit of the Son and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, in the purchase and application of redemption, without which there could be no salvation. “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” (John xvii. 3. See also John xiv. 17; i. 18; 1 John ii. 23; v. 20; Rom. viii. 9; x. 14.)

#### *PROOF FROM SCRIPTURE.*

How can the Trinity of Persons be proved from the Scriptures?

By many express declarations. “In the beginning, *Elohim*”—literally *Gods*—“created the heavens and

the earth." (Gen. i. 1.) Here God speaks of himself in the plural number. "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Gen. i. 2.) Here is a distinct recognition of the First and Third Persons of the Trinity. By the Word of the Lord, or *Jehovah*, were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath, or spirit, of his mouth. (Ps. xxxiii. 6.) Here the plurality already referred to is expressly limited to three Persons—*Jehovah*, the Word and the Spirit, all concurring in the creation of all things: accordingly, we are told that all things were made by the Word (John i. 3), and that the Spirit garnished the heavens. (Job xxvi. 13.) The same truth is also evident from Isa. lxiii. 7, 9, 10, where we read of the loving-kindness of *Jehovah*, of the Angel of his presence saving them, and of their vexing his Holy Spirit. There are several passages of the Old Testament in which God speaks of himself as more than one. (Gen. i. 26; iii. 22; Isa. vi. 8; Gen. xi. 7.) The benediction of Aaron (Num. vi. 24–26), in which there is a threefold repetition of the name *Jehovah*, corresponds with the Christian benediction. (2 Cor. xiii. 14.) The same construction may be put on the threefold ascription of holiness to God by the seraphim, as recorded in Isa. vi. 3.

The New Testament Scriptures furnish the clearest and most satisfactory testimony. (Matt. xxviii. 19; John xiv. 26; xv. 26; 1 John v. 7; Titus iii. 5, 6; Eph. ii. 18; 2 Cor. xiii. 14; Gal. iv. 6. See also Phil. ii. 6; Prov. viii. 23; Heb. i. 3; Col. ii. 9; John i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 16; Deut. vi. 5; compared with Matt. xxii. 37; John x. 30; Rev. i. 8; Col. i. 16; Matt. ix. 2; John xiv. 1–3; Heb. i. 6; John xvi. 13;

1 Cor. xii. 5, 6; Matt. xii. 32; Ezek. xxxvi. 26; Rom. viii. 11; 1 Cor. vi. 19.)

### THREE PERSONS.

As already stated, there is only one essence of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, but in this one essence there is a threefold distinction, which we express by saying that there are three Persons. These Persons are distinguished from each other by their personal properties. Divine perfections are common to them all—eternity, immutability, power, wisdom and goodness—but a personal property is something peculiar to each, something which may be affirmed of one, but cannot be affirmed of the other two. It is the personal property of the Father to beget the Son. (Ps. ii. 7; Heb. i. 5, 8.) It is the personal property of the Son to be begotten of the Father. (John i. 14.) It is the personal property of the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son. (John xv. 26.)

The Persons of the Trinity are further distinguished by their operations. We cannot now understand how, the nature being one, acts are performed by one Person which cannot be ascribed to another, but the fact is so stated in the Scriptures, and we are bound to receive their testimony. (See John v. 17, 19; Isa. xlviii. 16.)

The Father is called the first Person, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third. This is the order of their subsistence, and it is pointed out by their internal relations, but it does not imply the priority of one to another in time or in dignity. The three Persons are co-eternal and co-equal, so that in all things the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in

Unity is to be worshiped. In proof of the divinity of the respective Persons, see Eph. iv. 6 ; 1 Cor. viii. 6 ; xv. 24 ; John i. 1 ; Rom. ix. 5 ; John viii. 58 ; xxi. 17 ; Matt. xviii. 20 ; Heb. i. 3 ; 1 Cor. i. 2 ; Matt. xxviii. 19 ; Acts v. 3, 4 ; Ps. cxxxix. 7 ; John xiv. 17 ; 1 Cor. ii. 10 ; John iii. 5 ; xv. 26 ; Rom. xv. 16.

The Rev. Thomas Doolittle says: " May I not, for my admonition, make use of what I have read of Augustine, who, as he was walking by the seaside and meditating on the Trinity, saw a child pouring the water of the sea into a shell having a hole in the midst thereof, and demanded of the child what he was doing. The child said, ' I am putting all the sea into this shell.' Augustine answered, ' Thou playest the child ; can a shell, thinkest thou, comprehend all this sea ? ' The child replied, ' So, good sir, do you who would by reason comprehend the Trinity.' The child vanished. Augustine perceived it was an angel, and was instructed by it that this doctrine was above the reach of reason."

QUESTION 7.—*What are the decrees of God ?*

ANSWER.—*The decrees of God are his eternal purpose according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.*

No one will deny that there are divine decrees who believes that God is an intelligent being, and considers what this character implies. An intelligent being is one who knows and judges, who purposes ends and devises means, who acts from design, conceives a plan, and then proceeds to execute it. When various plans are laid before us, and we prefer one to the rest, this act of our minds is a decree or purpose by which our subsequent conduct is regulated. The works of God,

in like manner, necessarily presuppose a decree, as the plan of which they are the development. It will certainly be admitted that God intended to create the world before he actually created it; that he intended to make man before he fashioned his body and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils; that he intended to govern the world which he had made according to certain laws. And it will be further admitted that when he resolved to create the world and to make man, and to establish laws physical and moral, he had some ultimate object in view. Having constructed a machine and set it in motion, he knew what would be the result, and this result was the true reason, or the final cause, why the machine was constructed. This intention of the Deity is his decree. In other words, the decree of God is his will, in which the exertions of his power and the manifestations of his other perfections originated.

#### *“PURPOSE.”*

Though we speak properly of the “decrees” of God inasmuch as they relate to many things, yet are we to regard his decreeing act as one simple act only, because of the perfect oneness or simplicity of his nature, on account of which he could not but decree all things at once, and because all things are naked and opened unto his omniscient eye (Heb. iv. 13), and because also of his immutability. (Mal. iii. 6.)

#### *ARGUMENT FROM FOREKNOWLEDGE.*

That God *foreknew* all things we must believe, or we cannot believe in the *perfection* of his nature. But nothing can be foreknown whilst it remains *uncertain*.

Future events, then, to be foreknown, must be perfectly certain. Now, before the events took place—innumerable ages before they took place—nothing could make their occurrence perfectly certain but the *determination* of God.

**PROOF FROM SCRIPTURE.**

The Scriptures make mention of the decrees of God in many passages and in a variety of terms. (See Eph. i. 9-11; Acts ii. 23; iv. 27, 28; xxvii. 23, 24; Rom. viii. 29; Prov. xvi. 33.)

**“ETERNAL PURPOSE.”**

When an apostle says, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts xv. 18), he virtually teaches that his decrees are eternal, for his words import that at the commencement of time the plan was arranged according to which his works were to be executed. If they had not been determined upon, they could not have been foreknown as certain. Temporal decrees suppose the knowledge of the Deity to be limited, and that he is receiving accessions to it in the progress of time. (See Eph. i. 4; 2 Tim. i. 9; Rom. xi. 33; 1 Cor. ii. 7.)

**“THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL.”**

This implies that the decrees of God are infinitely wise, as what is done with counsel is said, according to human modes of speaking, to be done advisedly, in opposition to its being done rashly or with precipitation. (See Eph. i. 11; Matt. xi. 26; Heb. vi. 17; Ps. cxv. 2; Dan iv. 35; Isa. xlvi. 10.)

**FOR HIS OWN GLORY.**

Eph. i. 12; Rev. iv. 11; Acts xv. 18, in connection with Ps. civ. 31; Prov. xvi. 4; Rom. ix. 22, 23.

**FOREORDAINED WHATSOEVER COMES TO PASS.**

Ps. xxxi. 15; Prov. xvi. 33; xix. 21. The decrees of God extend to things naturally and morally good *effectively*, because he is the Author and efficient cause of all good. (Phil. ii. 13.) They extend to things morally evil *permissively* and *directively* only, yet God overrules them for good, contrary to the intention both of the work and worker. (Ps. lxxvi. 10. See Gen. xlv. 5-8 and l. 20.)

“There is” (says an old and able writer) “a twofold will of God—the will of God’s precept and of his decree. While the wicked resist the will of God’s precept, they fulfill the will of his permissive decree. Judas betrays Christ—Pilate condemns him—the soldiers crucify him; while they resisted the will of God’s precept, they fulfilled the will of his permissive decree. (Acts iv. 22.) Such as are wicked God commands one thing, they do quite the contrary; to keep the Sabbath, they profane it; while they disobey his command, they fulfill his permissive decree. If a man sets up two nets, one of silk, the other of iron, the silken net may be broken, not the iron: God’s commands are the silken net. While men break the silken net of God’s command, they are taken in the iron net of his decree, his decree to permit their sin, and to punish them for their sin permitted.” (See James i. 13, 17; 1 John i. 5; Eccl. vii. 29.)

**OBJECTIONS ANSWERED—MEANS NOT SUPERSEDED.**

The divine decrees do not, as some allege, render the use of means unnecessary. God had decreed to preserve Paul and those who were with him in the ship (Acts xxvii. 24), yet lawful means were to be used; the sailors must not get leave to flee out of the ship, otherwise the rest could not be saved (verse 31). No man argues thus: "God hath decreed how long I shall live, therefore I will not use means to preserve my life—not eat and drink." God has decreed the time of our lives in the use of means. So has he decreed our salvation in the use of means, and as a man that refuses food murders himself, so he that refuses to work out his salvation destroys himself. The *means* are decreed as well as the *end*. "Prepared unto glory" (Rom. ix. 23); "Chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2 Thess. ii. 13.) An old writer well says: "Hast thou a heart to pray to God? It is a sign no decree of wrath hath passed against thee."

**LIBERTY OF WILL NOT VIOLATED.**

Neither do the decrees of God destroy the liberty of man's will or the contingency of second causes. (See Matt. xvii. 12.) Voluntary agents may act freely, and yet act in exact accordance with what is, upon the whole, God's pleasure. In the execution of his decrees he does not change the nature of things, but suffers rational agents to act freely and voluntarily, as being under no more restraint or compulsion than though there had been no such decree. For example,

what Pilate and the Jews did when they crucified the Lord of glory was with full freedom of their own will, and yet they did nothing but what God's hand and counsel determined before to be done. (Acts iv. 27, 28.)

#### *COMFORT FROM THE DOCTRINE.*

The immutability of God's decrees affords comfort. 1. In relation to his providence towards his Church. The troubling of his Church is like the angel's troubling the water. (John v. 4; Dan. xii. 6.) The wheels in a watch move opposite to one another, but they all carry on the motion of the watch; so the wheels of Providence often move contrary to our desires, but still they carry on God's unchangeable purpose concerning his Church. (Ps. xlv. 5.) 2. In relation to the salvation of the godly. (2 Tim. ii. 19. See also Rev. iii. 5; John xiii. 1.)

#### *GOD'S COUNSELS UNFATHOMABLE.*

Can we fathom God's counsels? No, for his judgments are a great deep. (Ps. xxxvi. 6.) Ought we not therefore to acquiesce in them? Yes. (See 2 Sam. xv. 26.) May we question God's proceedings? No, for his thoughts are above our thoughts. (Isa. lv. 9.)

The following conversation between Mr. Wesley and Mr Simeon is related by Dr. Dealtry in his sermon on the occasion of the death of the latter:

"Pray, sir," said Mr. Simeon, "do you feel yourself to be a depraved creature—so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God if God had not first put it into your heart?"

"Yes," says the veteran Wesley, "I do indeed."

"And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to

God by anything that you can do, and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?"

"Yes, solely through Christ."

"But, sir, supposing you were first saved by Christ; are you not, somehow or other, to save yourself afterward by your own works?"

"No; I must be saved by Christ from first to last."

"Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?"

"No."

"What, then! are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother's arms?"

"Yes, altogether."

"And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom?"

"Yes; I have no hope but in him."

"Then, sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism, this is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance; it is, in substance, *all that I hold, and as I hold it.*"

QUESTION. 8.—*How doth God execute his decrees?*

ANSWER.—*God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.*

What is it for God to execute his decrees? God executes his decrees when he does what he eternally purposed to do—when he brings to pass what he had before ordained should be.

All God's decrees shall be executed. (Isa. xiv. 24; xiv. 27; xlv. 10; Dan. iv. 35.)

#### CREATION.

How do we know that God executed his decrees in the work of creation? (Rev. iv. 11. See Heb. i. 10; Prov. viii. 22; 2 Pet. i. 3.)

## PROVIDENCE.

How do we know that God executes his decrees in the works of providence? "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." (Ps. ciii. 19; xxxiii. 18; exxxix. 2; xciv. 9; Isa. lix. 1; 1 Cor. iii. 7.) It is sometimes said that though God's providence may rule in great things, small events must be beneath his notice. Our Lord expressly contradicts such a notion. (Matt. x. 29, 30.) Besides, the smallest link in the chain is as necessary as the greatest; its failure would disarrange and dislocate the whole.

Let it be observed that whilst God executes the work of *creation* entirely without means, by the word of his power, he executes the work of *providence*, ordinarily, in the use of them. It should also be noted, that whatever use God may make of second causes in the execution of his decrees, yet they are merely instruments in his overruling hand to bring about his glorious designs; they are his servants, and must do all his pleasure. (Acts iv. 27, 28. See on Question 11, Gen. i. 1; Ex. xx. 11; John i. 1, 2, 3; Ps. cxlviii. 5.) Is not God still working? "My Father (says Christ) worketh hitherto, and I work." (John v. 17. See Heb. i. 3; Ps. xlvii. 7, 8; Isa. lv. 8; xlv. 7; xl. 22.)

In relation to the works of God let it be observed—  
 1. They are manifold. (Ps. civ. 24.) 2. They are honorable and glorious. (Ps. cxi. 3.) 3. They are perfect. (Deut. xxxii. 4.) 4. They ought to be studied. (Ps. cxi. 3; xxviii. 5.) 5. They cannot be thoroughly discovered. (Ecl. iii. 11: Ps. lxxvii. 19.) 6. All his works praise him. (Ps. clxv. 10.)

*THE GREATEST WORK.*

To which of the works in which God executes his decrees does *redemption* belong? To the *providence* of God, as the most glorious part of it toward men.

“Redemption! ’twas creation more sublime;  
Redemption! ’twas the labor of the skies;  
Far more than labor; it was death in heaven;  
A truth so strange, ’twere bold to think it true,  
If not far bolder still to disbelieve.”

*PRACTICAL LESSONS.*

From the doctrine now stated we learn—1. That in God’s plans the means as well as the results are embraced, and rendered certain to be employed. 2. That we can come to a knowledge of God’s decrees only by the acts which he performs, and by the events which he brings about or suffers to take place. 3. That all the promises of God shall be punctually accomplished, and not one of them fall to the ground. (Mark xiii. 31.)

“Nothing was more remarkable,” says the biographer of Mr. Newton, “than his constant habit of regarding the hand of God in every event, however trivial it might appear to others. In walking to his church he would say, ‘The way of man is not in himself, nor can he conceive what belongs to a single step. When I go to St. Mary Woolnoth, it seems the same whether I turn down Lathbury, or go through the Old Jewry, but the going through one street, and not another, may produce an effect of lasting consequence. A man cut down my hammock in sport, but had he cut it down half an hour later, I had not been here, as the exchange of the crew was then making. A man made a smoke on the seashore at the

time a ship passed, which was thereby brought to, and afterward brought me to England."

QUESTION 9.—*What is the work of creation?*

ANSWER.—*The work 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.*

The world must have had a maker—it could not make itself. If one should go into a distant country and see stately edifices there, he would never imagine that these could build themselves, but that that there had been some artificer there to raise such goodly structures; so the great fabric of the world could not create itself—it must have had some builder or maker.

#### ***DID NOT EXIST FROM ETERNITY.***

There is not the slightest foundation for the opinion of some ancient philosophers that the world existed from eternity. This supposition is not only contrary to Scripture, but to common sense and reason, which tell us that what is created, and has a duration by succession of time, must have had a beginning.

#### ***PROOF FROM SCRIPTURE.***

That God created the world we know—I. From the testimony of Scripture. (Gen. i. 1, etc.; Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9. See also Ps. civ., cxxxvi., cxlvi.; Job xxxviii. and xxxix.; John i. 3.) II. *From other considerations*, such as (1.) The origin of nations, as given by Moses. This account could not have been invented by him when there were some remembrances of it still in the minds of many, which, however, in the course of time

became lost. (2.) The novelty of all other histories as compared with the antiquity of sacred history. (3.) The age of man decreasing shows that there was at first a greater strength in nature, and that it has decreased hitherto, not without some first cause. (4.) The certain course of time from the beginning of the world down to the coming of the Messiah. (5.) The constitution and preservation of commonwealths. (6.) The order of things in nature, which must of necessity have been produced by some intelligent mind superior to all things. (7.) The excellency of the mind of man and of angels. These intelligent beings have a beginning. They must therefore have sprung from some intelligent cause. (8.) The natural principles and notions which are engraven upon our hearts. (9.) The chidings or reproofs of conscience in the ungodly. (10.) The ends of all things wisely ordered. (11.) Finally, all the other arguments which prove that there is a God prove also that the world was created by him.

III. From *philosophical arguments*, such as (1.) There is in nature no infinite progress of causes and effects, otherwise nature would never attain its end. Therefore, the world had a beginning. (2.) The world is the first and most excellent of all effects. Therefore, it is from the first and most excellent cause, which is God.

God the Father created the world through the Son and Holy Ghost. (John i. 3; Gen. i. 2; Job xxxiii. 4.)

#### OF NOTHING.

God made the world without any pre-existent matter. This is the difference between *making* and *creation*. In making there is some material to work upon,

but in creation there is no pre-existent matter. (See Heb. i. 10; Gen. i. 2; 2 Cor. iv. 6; Heb. xi. 3.)

*BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER.*

The creation of all things out of nothing is an act of divine power beyond our conception, because it is totally different from the effects which our own power or that of other creatures can accomplish. We must, as has just been stated, have a subject upon which to operate. We must be furnished with materials for our work, and then all we can do is to mix or join them together, to separate them, to change their position and arrange them in a new order. We may compress or expand them, but we cannot add a single particle to the mass. The description of the work of creation in the book of Genesis is sublime, but simple. It was effected without means, without labor, by a mere act of volition. God "spake, and it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast." (Ps. xxxiii. 6-9; Isa. xl. 20 Heb. xi. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 5, 7; Isa. xlv. 24.)

*IN THE SPACE OF SIX DAYS.*

(See Exodus xx. 11.) God could have created all things together, in a moment, but he took six days' time to work in, and rested on the seventh day. 1. Because he designed that the creation of matter should be a thing distinct and manifest from the formation of the bodies of the world, which were made out of it. 2. That we might the better apprehend the order of the creation, and thus discern his wisdom, goodness and power. And, 3. That we might imitate him in working but six days of the week, and in resting on the seventh.

*AND ALL VERY GOOD.*

God made everything perfect, according to its kind and degree. There was no defect or deformity; all was free from evil under every form. Creation was a fair copy, without any blot, written with God's own fingers. (Ps. viii. 3.) All the works of the divine Hand were severally pronounced by their great Author to be very good. (Gen. i. 31.)

*PRACTICAL LESSONS.*

As God is the Creator of the world—1. We have a strong support for our faith. (Ps. xxxiv. 8; Isa. lxxv. 18.) 2. We see the evil of sin that has cursed the world. (Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19; Rom. v. 12.) 3. We should wisely observe the works of creation. (Ps. cvii. 24; civ. 24.) 4. We should obey our Maker. (Acts xvii. 28.) The fact that our bodies were made out of dust, and that dust out of nothing, should keep down pride. (Ps. lxxii. 6.)

Plato, the Greek philosopher, was convinced of the existence of a Deity upon observing that all the world could not make so insignificant a creature as a fly.

Dean Swift (borrowing the idea from Cicero) says that he will no more believe that the universe was formed by a fortuitous concourse of atoms than that the accidental jumbling of the letters of the alphabet would fall by chance into an ingenious and learned treatise of philosophy.

The hand that built the palace of the sky  
 Formed the light wings that decorate a fly;  
 The power that wheels the circling planets round  
 Rears every infant floweret on the ground;  
 That bounty which the mightiest beings share  
 Feeds the least gnat that gilds the evening air.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

QUESTION 10.—*How did God create man?*

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

Man is distinctly affirmed to be a creature of God. (Gen. ii. 7. See also Acts xvii. 28.) When the earth was prepared by the hand of the Almighty and enriched by his liberality, man was introduced into it as his dwelling and placed at the head of its other inhabitants. In vain should God have displayed the wonders of his power and wisdom if no being had been raised up to contemplate them and to offer up the just tribute of praise.

#### WHEN AND HOW CREATED.

The creation of man took place on the sixth day, and was delayed till that time that the earth might be prepared for his reception. (Gen. i. 26, 27.) Two things in regard to it deserve particular attention: 1. It was marked with unusual solemnity. While on the other days nothing is heard but the simple and majestic command, which is instantly obeyed, "Let there be light," "Let the earth bring forth grass," on this occasion there is something like what we call deliberation and consultation—a sort of preparation for the work, as if it were of superior importance. 2. The plural instead of the singular pronoun is used. God said not "Let *me* make man," but "Let *us* make man after our image." In the use of this plural word on this occasion, there is generally supposed to be a reference to a plurality of persons in the Godhead, which some conceive to be implied in the plural name of God (*Elohim*),

and which is manifestly signified in several other passages of the Old Testament, that were quoted in the exposition of Question 6.

#### MALE AND FEMALE.

God created man *male* and *female*. The sacred text informs us that he called them Adam. (Gen. v. 2.) Adam, in the Hebrew language, denotes *earthy*, and both the man and woman were named *Adam*, or *earthy*, to remind them of their original. The words *man* and *woman* in the Hebrew language differ in nothing except in the feminine form of the latter term. This, it is believed, was intended to intimate that man and woman are not only of the same nature, but, so to speak, the counterparts of each other. The name *Eve*—that is, *Life*—was not given to our first mother till after the fall. It was then given by her husband Adam, undoubtedly by divine direction, because, says the sacred record, “she was”—*i. e.*, was to be—“the mother of all living.”

The sexes, having a common origin, were formed to promote the happiness of each other. “The woman (says *Henry* the commentator) was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be *equal* with him, under his arm to be *protected*, and near his heart to be *beloved*.”

#### OF WHAT CREATED.

Man’s body was made of the dust of the ground—immortal if he continued in righteousness, but mortal if he fell, for mortality followed sin as a punishment. (Gen. ii. 7; Job xxxiii. 6; Ps cxxxix. 14; Job x. 11;

Prov. xx. 12.) His soul was made out of nothing. It was immediately breathed into him by the Almighty. It was therefore rational, spiritual and immortal. God created and united the soul and the body, so as to constitute, by this union, one person, performing such internal and external functions and actions as are peculiar to human nature, and which are just, holy and pleasing to God. (Jer. xxxviii. 16; Prov. xx. 27; Eccl. iii. 21; xii. 7; Ezek. xviii. 4.) Man was also created "in the image of God." (Gen. i. 27.) This image may be conceived to consist in the *essence* of the human soul, which is spiritual like the divine essence. God created matter, but it was not made after his image, because he is not himself material. But the soul resembles him, because it is uncompound-ed, indivisible, immortal, capable of thought and activity. The image of God, however, principally and properly consisted in the *qualities* of man's soul, which were similar to the perfections of his Maker. In what did this image chiefly consist?

### 1. KNOWLEDGE.

(Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10.) Man was not created in a state of ignorance, nor only with those faculties by the exercise of which he might acquire knowledge, but in the actual possession of such a measure thereof as was suited to his condition. He had a perfect knowledge of God, of his will and works, so far as was necessary to render him happy and fit for universal obedience.

### 2. RIGHTEOUSNESS.

(Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24.) Man, at his creation, had not an imputed but an inherent righteousness,

which consisted in a perfect conformity of all the powers and faculties of his soul to the pure nature of God and the moral law written upon his heart. (Ezek. xxviii. 15; Eccles. vii. 29.)

### 3. HOLINESS.

(Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24.) Man's affections were holy and pure, free from all sin and defilement, free from all disorder and distemper, and placed upon the most holy, high and noble objects. All that was pure and good was the object of his love; all that was impure and sinful was the object of his dislike and abhorrence. The outer life was in perfect harmony with the inward state.

### 4. DOMINION OVER THE CREATURES.

(Gen. i. 26; Ps. viii. 6.) Man was constituted the lord of this lower world; all the creatures were inspired with respect for him and submitted to his government, and he was at liberty to employ them for such ends as an innocent being could desire to accomplish. He might be said to have been created in the image of God, because he was his representative and vicegerent.

Alas! the unspeakable difference between man's *present* and *former* condition! In our bodies what seeds of weakness, distress and decay! How are our minds the sport of evil, ungovernable passions, ignorant, wild, wayward, the seat of a thousand weaknesses and follies! In the moral world what scenes of pollution, fraud, tyranny, war and ravage! In the natural world what a host of enemies—famine, disease, storm and tempest—everything a means of destruction! (See Lam. iv. 1; v. 16.)

When Galen, a celebrated physician, but atheistically inclined, had anatomized the human body and carefully surveyed the frame of it, viewed the fitness and usefulness of every part of it, and the many several intentions of every little vein, bone and muscle, and the beauty of the whole, he fell into a frame of devotion and wrote a hymn to his Creator.

QUESTION 11.—*What are God's works of providence?*

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

When God made the world, he did not leave it to itself, but continued to uphold and control it.

#### PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE.

The Scriptures teach that there is a Providence. (Ps. ciii. 19; John v. 17.) As God rested from the works of creation (Gen. ii. 2), the declaration of the Saviour just quoted must refer to works of Providence. (See also Ps. xxxiv. 6; Acts xiv. 17.)

Providence is also proved by reason. The admirable order and harmony among such a vast variety of creatures in the world, continuing for so many ages, notwithstanding their different and opposite natures; the accomplishment of future events exactly according to the predictions of them long before; the revolutions of kingdoms; the orderly returns of seed-time and harvest; and the preservation of a Church on earth against the fury of hell and wicked men;—all these plainly evince the existence of a superintending Providence.

The first part of God's providence mentioned is

**PRESERVATION.**

This is taught in Ps. xxxvi. 6 and Heb. i. 3. God preserves things—(1) When he continues and upholds them in being. (Ps. cxix. 89, 90, 91.) (2) When he provides things needful for their preservation. (Ps. cxlv. 15, 16; Neh. ix. 6; Ps. xxxiv. 20.)

The second part of God's providence is

**GOVERNMENT.**

This is taught in Ps. lxxvii. 4; ciii. 20; cxlviii. 8; Dan. vi. 22. God governs things when he rules over them, disposes and directs them to his and their end. (Ps. lxvi. 7; Prov. xvi. 9.)

**"ALL."**

God's providence is universal. It reaches—I. *To all places.* (Jer. xxiii. 23, 24; Ps. cvii. 23, 24.) II. *To all persons*, especially the persons of the godly. (1 Pet. v. 7; Ps. xxxiii. 18, 19; xxxiv. 10; lvi. 8; xxiii. 5; 1 Kings xvii. 6; Ps. xxxvii. 9.) III. *To all affairs and occurrences in the world.* (Ps. lxxv. 6, 7; 1 Sam. xi. 13; Ps. cxlvii. 9; Eccles. ix. 11; Prov. xxii. 2; Matt. x. 30.)

As to the *character* of the divine providence, it is

**I. HOLY.**

(See Ps. cxlv. 17.) All the providential acts or dispensations of God are, like himself, perfectly righteous, equitable, just and good. That his providence is concerned in the good actions of men cannot be denied. (Phil. ii. 13.) But it may be asked, How is it conversant about sinful actions? To this it may be replied—1. God *permits* such actions. (Ps. lxxxix. 11, 12;

Acts xiv. 16.) The permission of such actions, however, does not import that he approves of them; for, as he is infinitely holy, sin must always be the object of his abhorrence; and accordingly we find him testifying against the sins into which he permits men to fall, uttering his threatenings against them and actually punishing the sinners. (See Acts ii. 23.) 2. God *limits* sinful actions. (Matt. xvi. 18.) "The remainder of the wrath of man thou restrainest." "Hitherto shall ye come, and no farther." 3. God *overrules* sinful actions, so as to accomplish great and good designs by them, and thus he makes the wrath of man praise him. (See Gen. i. 20; Heb. xii. 10; 2 Cor. iv. 17; Isa. x. 7; Hab. i. 12.)

## II. WISE.

God is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working." (Isa. xxviii. 29.) His wisdom appears in every process and operation in the natural world, by which the wants of every living thing are consulted, provided for and supplied; or if we examine the moral world the same wisdom is not less conspicuous. Good (as we have just seen) is brought out of evil, light out of darkness, and order out of confusion. The jarring passions, views, interests and pursuits of men are so overruled and directed as to be made to issue invariably in the accomplishment of the designs of Heaven. (See Acts xiv. 16; iv. 28; 2 Kings xix. 28.)

## III. POWERFUL.

(See Dan. iv. 25; Ps. lxvi. 7.) We see the power of Providence in bringing about great events by small

and apparently contemptible means ; thus God makes the *worm Jacob* to thresh mountains (Isa. xli. 15), and by the foolishness of preaching saves them that believe. (1 Cor. i. 21.) How few events have been productive of such great changes of almost every description as the Protestant Reformation ! Yet this Reformation was chiefly effected by the instrumentality of an obscure Augustinian monk ; for such was Martin Luther when he commenced the great and glorious work which he was preserved and honored to accomplish. On the other hand, the best concerted plans and the most powerful preparations of earthly princes have been often turned to confusion and brought to destruction by causes which were overlooked or despised. Whom God will protect, none can injure. Whom God will destroy, none can save. “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

#### *PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.*

Let us (1) admire God’s providence. 2. Quietly submit to it. (Ps. xxxix. 9.) 3. If we are Christians, believe that all the dispensations of providence will combine for our good at last. (Rom. viii. 28.) 4. Guard against immoderate fear, since nothing can befall us by chance. 5. Rest assured that God’s providence will protect his Church, which is the apple of his eye. 6. Long for the time when the mysteries of providence shall be fully unfolded to us.

We are too apt to forget our actual dependence on Providence for the circumstances of every instant. The most trivial events may determine our state in the world. Turning up one street instead of another may bring us into company with a

person whom we should not otherwise have met; and this may lead to a train of other events which may determine the happiness or misery of our lives.—*Richard Cecil.*

“All these things are against me,” thought good old Jacob when he exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul, “Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and will ye take Benjamin away?” And it did seem as if these bereavements would “bring down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.” But it was all cleared up when “he saw the wagons” which Joseph had sent to carry him and all his numerous family down to Egypt, and save them alive during the terrible seven years’ famine. So Joseph himself must have thought when his brethren cast him into the pit, when they sold him as a slave to the Ishmaelites, and when, upon the false charge of an adulterous woman, he was thrown into prison, without any hope of relief, or any prospect of it, except by a violent and ignominious death. But how was it when he found himself suddenly raised to the viceroyalty of Egypt, and that God had sent him down to preserve the life of his venerable father and of the very brethren who had so cruelly sold him to the passing caravan? Thus is it evident that “all things work together for good” to the people of God.

QUESTION 12.—*What special act of providence did God exercise towards man, in the estate wherein he was created?*

ANSWER.—*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 pain of death.*

Man, immediately after his creation, was placed in a state of active employment. God “put him in the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”

He was also placed in a state of trial; that is, he was put in such a condition as to show whether he

would obey or disobey his Maker. Having been created a moral agent, possessed of understanding and will, and therefore free and capable of obeying, it was in every sense right and reasonable that he should be tested as to his willingness to recognize his allegiance to the God of infinite greatness and excellence, who was infinitely deserving of his supreme love, reverence and obedience. Accordingly, God revealed to him in direct and definite terms his whole duty, and disclosed to him the law by which his life was to be governed.

#### COVENANT OF LIFE.

The immediate means of trial were reasonably and benevolently selected. (Gen. ii. 15-17. See Hos. vi. 7, marg.) God had given to man with the bounty of a God. Nothing was denied which was either necessary or useful. A trifling gratification of either taste or curiosity was the utmost which he could expect from disobedience. The continuance of all his enjoyments was the reward of obedience.

*The law*, already referred to, under which our first parents were placed is styled in the Scriptures *the first or old covenant*, and is commonly called by divines *the covenant of works*, in distinction from *the new or second covenant*, of which Christ is the Mediator, and which is called *the covenant of grace*.

#### THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL.

Why did this tree receive the name it bore? Wo answer, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." By the very prohibition to eat of this tree man was taught that it was good to obey and evil to disobey.

The knowledge of the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience was intimated and inculcated as often as he looked at the interdicted tree. It stood "in the midst of the garden," that he might often see it, and that the sight of it might constantly lead him to say, "There is the tree which teaches me that it is good to obey and evil to disobey."

#### OBJECTIONS.

It has been said that it was unworthy of God to interpose his authority in a matter so trifling, and that it is incredible that he would have exposed our first parent to the hazard of ruining himself and his posterity by eating an apple. But it is not difficult to perceive that if God had an intention to make trial of the dispositions of this newly-formed subject, he could not have chosen a more proper method. "A saying of God," remarks *Dr. Chalmers*, "was involved in the matter; and heaven and earth must pass away ere a saying of his can pass away. And so the apple became decisive of the fate of a world, and out of the very scantiness of the occasion did there emerge a sublime display of truth and holiness. The beginning of the world was, indeed, the period of great manifestations of the Godhead, and they all seem to accord in style and character with each other; and in that very history which has called forth the profane and unthinking levity of many a sinner may we behold as much of the majesty of principle as in the creation of light we behold of the majesty of power."

To the objection, "Why did God give Adam this law, knowing that it would be transgressed?" an old writer replies: 1. It was Adam's fault that he did not

keep the law. God gave him a stock of grace to trade with, but he of himself broke. 2. Though God foresaw Adam would transgress, yet that was not a sufficient reason that Adam should have no law given him; for by the same reason God should not have given his written word to men to be a rule of faith and manners, because he foresaw that some would not believe and others would be profane. Shall not laws be made in the land because some break them? 3. God, though he foresaw Adam would break the law, knew how to turn it to a greater good in sending Christ. The first covenant being broken, he knew how to establish a second and a better.

*PECULIARITIES OF THE COVENANT OF LIFE.*

I. Its form was *working*: Do this and live. Working was the ground and condition of our justification. (Gal. iii. 12; Rom. vii. 10.) Not but that working is required in the *covenant of grace*: we are commanded to work out our salvation and be rich in good works. But works in the covenant of grace are not required under the same notion as in the first covenant with Adam. Works are not for the justification of our persons, but as an attestation of our love to God—not as a cause of our salvation, but as an evidence of our adoption. Works are required in the covenant of grace, not so much in our own strength as in the strength of another. (Phil. ii. 13.)

II. The covenant of works was *very strict*: God required of Adam and all mankind perfect obedience. *All things* written in the “book of the law” (Gal. iii. 10, 12) must be done. The obedience was to be perfect

—1. In respect to the matter of it; all the powers of soul and body were to be employed in God's service. 2. In respect of the principle; namely, habitual righteousness and natural disposition and inclination to do anything God required. 3. In respect to the end, which was chiefly to be God's glory, swaying all the actions. 4. In respect to the manner, with perfect love and delight. 5. In respect to time, it was to be constant and perpetual. (Gal. iii. 10.) Thus the covenant was very strict. There was no mercy in case of failure.

III. The covenant of works was the covenant of innocency. It was made with man immediately after his creation, when he had committed no sin. Nor had it a mediator. It is the better covenant that is established in the hands of a Mediator. (Heb. viii. 6.)

#### LIFE.

The promise of *life* was included in the threatening of death in the covenant of works. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," necessarily implies, If thou dost not eat thereof thou shalt surely live. (Gal. iii. 12.) The life thus promised was—1. The continuance of his natural life, consisting in the union of his soul and body. 2. The continuance of his spiritual life, consisting in the favor of God (Lev. xviii. 5), and his entering upon perfect immortality and eternal happiness, both of soul and body, in heaven after he had passed through the time of his trial upon earth. (Rom. vii. 10.) That eternal life was thus promised is evident from Matt. xix. 16, 17.

*DEATH.*

(See Rom. vi. 23 ; v. 12 ; Ezek. xviii. 4.) The death which God threatened as the punishment of man's sin was—1. Temporal death, consisting in the separation of the soul from the body. To this man was liable in the day that he ate of the forbidden fruit, and not before. 2. Spiritual death, consisting in the separation of the soul from God and the loss of God's image. This death seized upon man in the moment of his first sin. 3. Eternal death. Whose end is destruction. (Phil. iii. 19.) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. (2 Thess. i. 9.) Perdition of ungodly men. (2 Pet. iii. 7.)

*LIGHT UPON THE DARKNESS.*

Blessed be God ! a new covenant more glorious than the old has been made. The former has no glory by reason of that which excelleth. More is regained in Christ than was lost in Adam. (Rom. v. 19.)

In the reign of King Charles I. the goldsmiths of London had a custom of weighing several sorts of their precious metal before the privy council. On this occasion they made use of scales poised with such exquisite nicety that the beam would turn, the master of the company affirmed, at the two-hundredth part of a grain. Noy, the famous attorney-general, standing by and hearing this, replied, "I should be loath then to have all my actions weighed in these scales." With whom I heartily concur, says the pious Hervey, in relation to myself. And since the balances of the sanctuary, the balances in God's hand, are infinitely exact, oh what need have we of the merit and

righteousness of Christ to make us acceptable in his sight and passable in his esteem.

QUESTION 13.—*Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?*

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

The *origin of moral evil* is, in every view of the subject, an inexplicable mystery. It is one of the secrets of the moral world. While no one can doubt or deny the fact that it does exist—for we do not believe that even professed atheists doubt it—yet to account for its existence, or to explain the process or manner in which it came into existence, is not, we suspect, within the reach of the human faculties in the present life.

Newton says: “Many have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil; I observe there *is* evil, and that there is a way to escape it, and with this I begin and end.”

#### THE FREEDOM OF THEIR OWN WILL.

“As Adam was a moral agent,” says *Dr. Dick*, “we must hold that his will was free; and that it was so is manifest from the event, for he did turn aside from the path of duty and make a choice which proved fatal to himself and his posterity. ‘God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.’ (Eccles. vii. 29.) By freedom of will, however, I do not mean that his mind was in a state of suspense or of indifference to good and evil. I believe such a state to be impossible, unless it be preceded by complete ignorance of both; and, if possible, to be crimi-

nal, because our knowledge of what is right and good should immediately determine the choice. His mind was not *in equilibrio* like a balance, the scales of which are pressed down by equal weights; he was averse to evil and inclined only to good, but he might reject the good and choose the evil. He was not confirmed in purity, as angels and glorified saints are; he was a mutable creature, and might change by an act of volition; and in this consisted his freedom of will." (Prov. ix. 12; James i. 13; Job xxxiv. 10; Isa. v. 4; Matt. xx. 15; Hos. xiii. 9.)

**FELL FROM THE ESTATE IN WHICH THEY WERE CREATED.**

By "estate" is meant man's state of innocence, in which he had his standing under God as his great Lord and Creator—perfect conformity to him, intimate fellowship and communion with him, and an ample dominion over all the works of his hand in this lower world, as explained in Questions 10 and 12. (Hos. xiv. 1; Rom. v. 12.)

**INSTIGATION OF THE DEVIL.**

The fall of man had not its origin in God, but was brought about by the instigation of the devil and the free will of man. The devil entered into a serpent; and therein, by seducing words, enticed the woman to take and eat the forbidden fruit, and she gave to her husband and he did eat likewise. (Gen. iii. 1-6.)

But notwithstanding the agency of Satan in it, the fall of man must be laid at his own door, for he willingly yielded to the temptation of the devil. (James i.

14.) From this yielding has proceeded our depravity and misery. (See Eccles. vii. 29; Job ix. 20; Jer. ii. 21; Gen. iii. 7; xix. 22-24.)

*"BY SINNING AGAINST GOD."*

Our first parents were sufficiently furnished with everything necessary for yielding perfect obedience to the divine will. They had, as we have seen, perfect knowledge in their understanding, freedom and inclination to good in their will, and spotless holiness in their hearts and affections. (Eccles. vii. 29.) Their eating the forbidden fruit, therefore, was an act of contempt and disobedience to God. (Hos. xiv. 1; Rom. v. 12; James i. 15.) The fault was entirely their own. God was in no sense the author of their sin. Had Adam exerted the power which he possessed, he would have stood.

*PRACTICAL LESSONS.*

1. As Adam in the state of integrity fell, how unable are *we*, whose original righteousness is gone, to stand in our strength! 2. How important is it to guard against temptation! (Matt. iv. 3; vi. 13; xiii. 25, 26; 2 Cor. ii. 11; Rev. ii. 24.) 3. How impossible is it for us to be our own saviour! (2 Cor. iii. 5.) 4. How much do we need an interest in the *second Adam* to recover, and more than recover, that which was lost by the *first*! (Ps. lxix. 4.) Under the first covenant the justice of God as an avenger of blood pursues us; but if through faith in Christ we are interested in the second covenant, we are in the city of

refuge, the justice of God is pacified toward us. (Rom. viii. 1.)

An old man once said, "For a long period I puzzled myself about the difficulties of Scripture, until at last I came to the conclusion that reading the Bible was like *eating fish*. When I find a difficulty, I lay it aside and call it a *bone*. Why should I choke on the bone when there is much nutritious meat to use? Some day, perhaps, I may find that even the bones may afford me nourishment."

QUESTION. 14.—*What is sin?*

ANSWER.—*Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.*

That man's apostasy from God consisted in sinning against him is evident from Lam. v. 16. That sin is in the world, and also in us, may be proven by a variety of arguments: 1. God declares that we are all guilty of sin. (Gen. vi. 5; xviii. 21; Jer. xvii. 9; Rom. i. 21; iii. 10; vii. 18; Ps. xiv. and liii.; Isa. lxix.) 2. The law of God recognizes sin. (Rom. iii. 20; iv. 15; v. 20; vii. 7.) 3. Conscience convicts and convicts us of sin. (Rom. i. 19; ii. 13, 14.) 4. Punishments and death, to which all men are subject—yea, our cemeteries, graveyards and places of execution—are all so many sermons upon the evil of sin, because God, being just, never inflicts punishment upon any of his creatures unless it be for sin. (See Rom. v. 12; vi. 23; Deut. xxvii. 26.)

#### THE LAW OF GOD.

What are we to understand by this? All the precepts or commandments God has given to man as a rule of his obedience. There was a bright and fair copy

of this law written upon the heart of man in innocence, but that being, in a great measure, lost by the fall, God has written again to us the great things of his law in the Scriptures of truth. (Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20. See also Rom. ii. 14, 15.) We are not to regard all the laws of God mentioned in Scripture as of binding force now under the New Testament. The *ceremonial* law, which was a shadow of good things to come, is now abrogated since the coming of Christ in the flesh; and many of the *judicial* laws, in so far as they had a particular relation to the state of the Jewish nation, are laid aside but the *moral* law is perpetually binding on all mankind in all ages and periods of the world. (Ps. cxix. 160.) Does sin suppose a law? Yes. (Rom. iv. 15; v. 13.) Is sin the breach of a law? Yes. (1 John iii. 4.) Is it God's law only that can make a thing to be sin? Yes. (Ps. li. 4.) Is every breach of God's law sin? Yes. (1 John v. 17.) Are we to judge of sin by the law? Yes. (Rom. iii. 20.) Could we discover sin without some law? No. (Rom. vii. 7.) Is the transgression of the law of nature sin? Yes. (Rom. ii. 14, 15.) Does the written law discover the root of sin? Yes. (Rom. vii. 7.)

#### SIN DEFINED.

In the original language of the New Testament the word for sin (*hamartia*) is derived from a word whose primitive signification is, *to miss the mark*. This suggests as perfect and extensive an idea of sin as perhaps can be given. The law of God holds up to us *a mark* at which we are to aim, or *a rule* or *line* to which we are to conform. Everything which misses or falls short

of this mark, or which deviates from this rule or line, is *sin*. (See Ps. iv. 4; 1 Thess. v. 22; 2 Cor. vi. 17, Ps. xcvii. 10; Prov. xiv. 9; Ps. cxix. 11.)

#### ANY WANT OF CONFORMITY UNTO.

By want of conformity to God's law is meant both an unsuitableness and disagreeableness to the law, and a non-observation and non-obedience to it. This want of conformity includes—1. Original sin, and that natural enmity which exists in the heart against the law of God. (Rom. viii. 7.) 2. All sins of omission. The former is a want of conformity of heart, the latter a want of conformity of life, to God's law. (See Deut. vi. 5; John xvii. 3; Ex. xx. 3; Deut. xxvii. 26; Gen. iv. 7; Jer. xvii. 9; Rom. vii. 7; John iii. ; 1 Cor. ii. 14; xv. 28.)

#### TRANSGRESSION OF.

The Latin word *transgredior*, “to transgress,” signifies to go beyond one's bounds; the law of God is to keep us within the bounds of our duty—sin is going beyond our bounds. As a sin of *omission* is a neglecting or forgetting to do that good which the law commands (James iv. 17; Matt. xxv. 30), so a sin of *commission* is a doing of what the law forbids. (Eccles. x. 8; Gal. iii. 10; Ps. li. 4; 1 John iii. 4; Rom. vii. 14; viii. 7.) Is nothing a sin, then, but what is against God's law? Nothing is a sin but what God has either expressly or by *consequence forbidden in his law*.

A minister, explaining the distinction between sins of omission and commission, made use of the following simile by way of illustration: “Behold yonder fire, which lately burnt with

so much brightness; it is now dull; let it alone, and it will soon go out, but if you pour water on it you will put it out. The first is an act of omission, the second of commission."

### EVIL OF SIN.

In order to see this, let it be considered that—1. Sin is evil in its origin. It is of the devil. (John viii. 34.) 2. It is evil in its nature. It is compared to the vomit of dogs (2 Pet. ii. 22), to the plague (1 Kings viii. 38), to a canker. (2 Tim. ii. 17.) 3. It is high treason against heaven (1 John iii. 4; Neh. ix. 26), a contumacious affront to God (Lev. xxvi. 40; Job xv. 25), an act of base ingratitude. (Hos. ii. 8; 2 Sam. xvi. 17.) 4. It is a foolish thing. (Luke xii. 20; Prov. i. 18.) 5. It is a polluting thing. (2 Cor. vii. 1; Tit. i. 15.) 6. It is a debasing thing. (Dan. v. 21; Ps. xlix. 20.) 7. It is an enslaving thing. Satan bids men sin, and they do it. (Acts v. 3.) 8. It is an offensive thing. (Ps. xiv. 3.) 9. It is a painful thing. (Jer. ix. 5.) 10. It is a disturbing thing. (Isa. lvii. 21.) When Spira had sinned, he was in such horror that he said he envied Cain and Judas. Charles IX., who was guilty of the massacre in Paris, was afterward a terror to himself; he was frightened at every noise, and could not endure to be awakened out of his sleep without music. Cain, in killing Abel, stabbed half the world at a blow, but could not kill the worm of his own conscience. 11. Sin, unrepented of, brings the "second death"—a death always dying. "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Rev. xx. 14. See also Mark ix. 44.)

*THE GREATEST SIN.*

The transcendent mercy of God has provided a Saviour from sin. We may be “washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor. vi. 11.) Guilty, polluted, condemned and perishing as we are, we may obtain forgiveness and salvation. (Mark xvi. 16.) To reject this Saviour is the sin of sins; this cuts the soul off from the provided remedy and seals its perdition; this is the *damning sin of unbelief!* (Mark xvi. 15.)

The Rev. John Newton said of a certain clergyman that he had never heard him preach but once, on which occasion he had observed, “If you wish to know what a sinner is, he is a young devil; and if you wish to know what a devil is, he is an old sinner.”

The last words that Archbishop Usher was heard to express were, “Lord, forgive my sins, especially my sins of *omission.*”

“He made me out a sinner for doing nothing,” said one under the conviction of sin, and who in a revival had been asked, “How were you awakened?” It was a new thought to the poor man, who had been comforting himself with the plea that he had done nothing very bad. But now he saw that his greatest sin was the very thing in which he had been comforting himself—*doing nothing.*

“Who loves to sin, in hell his portion’s given;  
Who dies to sin shall after live in heaven.”

QUESTION 15.—*What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

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

*THE FALL.*

By the "estate" in which our first parents were created, is meant the state of innocence, in which they had their standing under God as their great Lord and Creator. "God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions." (Eccles. vii. 29.)

*PARADISE.*

"The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed." (Gen. ii. 8.) Eden was the region in which the garden of Paradise was planted. Its site cannot be determined.

*THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT.*

(See Gen. ii. 16, 17.) God did not forbid our first parents to eat of the forbidden tree because there was any intrinsic evil in the fruit of it, it being as indifferent in itself to eat of this tree as any other tree in the garden; but he forbade them to eat of the fruit of this tree to try their obedience.

The trial man had was very fair. Adam was very intelligent. He was in the full vigor of his powers. He well understood God's will. The test to which he was subjected was very slight.

*OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.*

It has been said that it was unworthy of God to interpose his authority in a manner so trifling, and that it is incredible that he would have exposed our first parent to the hazard of ruining himself and his posterity by eating an apple. But to this Dr. Dick replies: "The morality of an action does not depend upon its abstract nature, but upon its relation to the

law of God. Men seem often to judge of actions as they judge of material substances, by their bulk. What is great in itself or in its consequences they will admit to be a sin, but what appears little they pronounce to be a small fault or no fault at all. Had Adam, it has been remarked, been possessed of preternatural power, and wantonly and wickedly exerted it in blasting the beauty of Paradise and turning it into a scene of desolation, they would have granted that he was guilty of a great and daring offence, for which a curse was justly pronounced upon him. But they can see no harm in so trifling a matter as the eating of a little fruit. Nothing, however, is more fallacious than such reasoning. The essence of sin is the transgression of a law; and whether the law forbids you to commit murder or to move your finger, it is equally transgressed when you violate the precept. Whatever the act of disobedience is, it is rebellion against the lawgiver, it is a renunciation of his authority, it dissolves that moral dependence upon him which is founded on the nature of things and is necessary to maintain the order and happiness of the universe."

*ELEMENTS OF THE SIN OF OUR FIRST PARENTS.*

The conclusiveness of this reply is the more manifest when we consider the elements of the sin of our first parent. It involved—1. Pride, ambition and an admiration of self. (Gen. iii. 5, 6.) 2. Unbelief, for he believed the devil rather than God. (Gen. ii. 17; iii. 4.) 3. Contempt and disobedience to God, for eating the fruit was directly contrary to his command. 4. Ingratitude for having been created in the divine

image and for the enjoyment of eternal life; he hearkened to the devil more than to God. (Gen. ii. 16.) 5. The want of love to posterity; he did not think that he would, by sinning, lose those gifts for himself and his posterity. (Rom. v. 12.) 6. Apostasy, or a manifest falling away from God to the devil, whom he believed and obeyed rather than God, and whom he set up in the place of God, separating himself from God. Thus is it evident that the fall of man was no trifling or single offence, but a sin manifold and horrible in its nature.

#### *AGENCY OF SATAN.*

We are told that it was by the instrumentality of a serpent that our first parents were tempted to commit the sin which forfeited their happy state. (Gen. iii.) We find repeated instances in Scripture of God's making use of inferior creatures and their natural organs to teach great lessons to men. It was by giving voice to the ass that Balaam's rashness was reproofed. (Num. xxii. 22-35.) It was by means of a fish that Jonah's disobedience was punished. (Jonah i. 17; ii. 10.) Other examples also are to be found. (Matt. xvii. 27; Luke v. 4-9; John xxi. 3-8.) Not only have the devils become identified, as it were, with men, but they have also instigated animals to strange unnatural deeds. (Matt. viii. 28-34.) Quite analogous, therefore, is Satan's using the serpent as the means of his machinations in Eden.

#### *LESSONS.*

From our first parents being seduced by Satan to eat the forbidden fruit we may learn—1. To resist the

first motions of sin in the heart and the temptations of Satan to it (Ps. lxvi. 18 ; James iv. 7) ; 2. That since man, innocent, fell before the temptation, fallen man must be an easy prey if not kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. (1 Pet. i. 5.) Let us therefore seek to be strong only “in the Lord and in the power of his might” ! (Eph. vi. 10.)

Mr. Thomas, a missionary at Serampore, was one day, after addressing a crowd of the natives on the banks of the Ganges, accosted by a Brahmin as follows: “Sir, don’t you say that the devil tempts men to sin?” “Yes,” answered Mr. Thomas. “Then,” said the Brahmin, “certainly the fault is the devil’s; the devil, therefore, and not man, ought to suffer the punishment.” While the countenances of many of the natives discovered their approbation of the Brahmin’s inference, Mr. Thomas, observing a boat with several men on board descending the river, with that facility of instructive retort for which he was so much distinguished, replied, “Brahmin, do you see yonder boat?” “Yes.” “Suppose I were to send some of my friends to destroy every person on board and bring me all that is valuable in the boat; who ought to suffer punishment—I for instructing them, or *they* for doing this wicked act?” “Why,” answered the Brahmin with emotion, “you ought *all* to be put to death together.” “Ay, Brahmin,” replied Mr. Thomas; “and if you and the devil sin together, the devil and you will be punished together.”

QUESTION 16.—*Did all mankind fall in Adam’s first transgression?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

*THE COVENANT.*

The covenant referred to, is the convention entered into between God and man concerning the method of obtaining eternal happiness, which was accompanied with a threatening of death in the case of disobedience. It is sometimes called the covenant of nature, because it was entered into with man while he was in his natural state, which was a state of innocence. (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) It is more commonly called the covenant of works; and this denomination is evidently appropriate, showing us at once what is its nature, and in what respect it differs from the other covenant, which bestows its reward not upon him who works, but upon him who believes. The transaction was federal on the part of God, as he proposed a condition, sanctioned with a promise and a threatening; and on the part of Adam, as he pledged himself to fulfill the condition.

*NOT ONLY FOR HIMSELF, BUT FOR HIS POSTERITY.*

By this is meant that the covenant was made with Adam not only personally or individually, but in a representative character; so that if Adam had continued obedient to God as long as God chose to try him, it would happen that his posterity would be born with a sinless nature, and remain in an innocent and happy condition. But, on the other hand, if Adam should prove disobedient, his posterity would possess his nature in its changed and fallen state. Thus it appears that he acted not for himself alone, but for them also. It was appointed that his conduct would affect their character and condition.

*SCRIPTURE PROOFS.*

That the extension of Adam's fall reached all who have sprung from him is thus evident:

1. The Scriptures so testify. (Eph. ii. 3; Rom. v. 6, 19; Job xiv. 4; John iii. 5.)

2. Infants die, and are to be baptized. Therefore, they must have sin. But they cannot sin by imitation. It remains, therefore, that it must be born in them. (Isa. xlviii. 8; Gen. viii. 21.) *Ambrose* says: "Who is just before God, when an infant but a day old cannot be free from sin?"

3. Everything that is born has the nature of that from which it has proceeded, as it respects the substance and accidents of the species to which it belongs. But we are all born of corrupt and sinful parents; therefore we all by our birth inherit or become partakers of their corruption and guilt. (Gen. v. 3.)

4. By the death of Christ, who is the second Adam, we obtain a twofold grace—we mean justification and regeneration. It follows, therefore, that we must all have derived from the first Adam the twofold evil of guilt and corruption of nature, otherwise there had been no necessity for a twofold grace and remedy. The first Adam was the figure of the second (Rom. v. 14), if he was a public person, a federal head. On this supposition we perceive the resemblance, but it fails if there was no covenant with our great progenitor, and the words of Scripture, as found in 1 Cor. xv. 22, convey a false idea. Jesus Christ, who was the surety of sinners, might with propriety be called the second Adam, if the first Adam was the representative of his seed; but if there is no legal relation

between him and them, the appellation is not founded on truth.

(See Rom. v. 18; vi. 15, 17; vii. 18; Gen. iii. 20; ix. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 49.)

#### HOW IS ADAM'S SIN MADE OURS?

1. By *imputation*. It is ours not by imitation only, but by imputation. (Rom. v. 12.) Is it asked, How could Adam's posterity, being then unborn, fall in his first sin? We answer, Because they were considered as *in him*. (1 Cor. xv. 22.) They were *in him virtually*, as a natural root; and *representatively*, as a covenant head.

2. By *propagation*. Not only is the guilt of Adam's sin imputed to us, but the pravity and corruption of his nature are communicated to us as a poison is carried from the fountain to the cistern. This is what is called original sin. (Ps. li. 5.)

#### THE DEGENERACY UNIVERSAL.

(Gen. vi. 12; Rom. iii. 10; Job xxv. 4.) Did our Lord Jesus descend from Adam by "ordinary generation"? No. (1 Cor. xv. 47.) Did he then sin in Adam? No. (Heb. vii. 26.) The body of Christ was conceived in the womb of a virgin by the power of the Highest, that his human nature might not be stained or tainted with original sin, which is conveyed by Adam to his posterity; hence, that which was born of the virgin is called "that holy thing." (Luke i. 35.)

A minister having preached on the doctrine of original sin, was afterward waited on by some persons who stated their objections to what he had advanced. After hearing them, he said, "I hope you do not deny actual sin too?" "No," they

replied. The good man expressed his satisfaction at their acknowledgment, but to show the absurdity of their opinions in denying a doctrine so plainly taught in Scripture, he asked them, "Did you ever see a tree growing without a root?"

"The fact is plain, that God governs the world and controls every event, and yet the world is full of sin and woe. I cannot discover the reason why it is so, though I can see that by this means God will have an opportunity to make manifest his abhorrence of sin, his justice and his mercy. Had it not been so there had been no displays of punitive justice, no ransomed sinners, no bleeding Saviour, no songs of redeeming love in heaven. Still, much darkness overspreads the subject. Restless curiosity starts many questions to which no answer can be found. Is my heart, nevertheless, filled with love to this supreme Governor, 'whose judgments are unsearchable and whose ways are past finding out'?"—*Pliny Fiske*.

QUESTION 17.—*Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

ANSWER.—*The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.*

Why is man's apostasy from God called *the fall*? Because man is not now where God set him at the creation, but is *fallen* by his iniquity. (Hos. xiv. 1.) Where did God place man at his creation? Upon the high pinnacle of holiness and happiness. (Eccl. vii. 29; Zech. ix. 11.) The word "estate" signifies condition.

#### SIN.

That the fall brought mankind into a state of sin is evident—

1. *From Revelation*. (Hos. xiii. 9.) Adam begat a son in his own likeness (Gen. v. 3); that is, in the moral character which he possessed after his apostasy.

But if this was the nature of *the immediate children of Adam*, it cannot even be suspected that it is not equally the nature of *his remote progeny*, or that they do not all bear the likeness of their common parent. Not a shadow of reason can be given why one law should have governed the birth and character of his immediate descendants, and another the birth and character of the rest. Paul says of "both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin." (Rom. iii. 9; see also v. 19.) He also declares that by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God. As, therefore, *no flesh*, no child of Adam, *shall be justified by the works of the law*, it follows irresistibly that every one is sinful. Our Saviour said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) The only use or effect of the new birth is that in it holiness is implanted in the mind. But if any man were sinless he could not need regeneration nor be regenerated.

2. *From Fact.* The laws of all nations prove that the human character is universally sinful. These laws are made only to repress and restrain sin, and are forced upon mankind by iron-handed necessity. Nor have they ever been able so far to change the character of man as to exterminate even a single sin. The religions of all nations prove the same thing, for the religion of every nation is *expiatory*; that is, it has been so formed as intentionally to make satisfaction for sin and to obtain reconciliation with a God acknowledged to be offended. Again, the writings of all nations confirm this doctrine. Man, as described by history, is undeniably and always has been an evil,

odious being. Not to multiply proofs, the state of every man's heart and life proves the sinfulness of the race. Every one knows that he has fears concerning his future existence, which he would not have if he was sinless. Every man knows that he does not perform all his duty and that he commits many positive sins. Every man is conscious that he loves sin and hates holiness.

Dr. Blair, when concluding a public discourse in which he had descanted with his usual eloquence on the amiability of virtue, gave utterance to the following apostrophe: "O Virtue! if thou wert embodied all men would love thee."

His colleague, the Rev. R. Walker, ascended the same pulpit on a subsequent part of the same Sabbath, and addressing the congregation, said, "My reverend friend observed in the morning that if Virtue were embodied all men would love her. Virtue has been embodied, but how was she treated? Did all men love her? No; she was despised and rejected of men, who, after defaming, insulting and scourging her, led her to Calvary, where they crucified her between two thieves."

#### *MISERY.*

The state of sin is put before the state of misery, because there could be no misery if there were no sin, sin being the procuring cause of all misery. (Eccles. viii. 6.) By nature we are under the power of Satan, who is called the "prince of the power of the air." (Eph. ii. 2.) Before the fall man was free—now he is enslaved; before, a king on the throne—now, a captive in fetters. The devil rules all the powers and faculties of a sinner. 1. He rules the understanding; he blinds men with ignorance, and then rules them as the Philistines first put out Samson's eyes, and then

bound him. (2 Cor. iv. 4.) 2. He rules the will. Though he cannot force the will, yet he can, by a temptation, draw it. (John viii. 44.) The sinner's condition is like that of the Prodigal, who went into a far country, wasted his substance, began to be in want, and was sent into the fields to feed swine. (Luke xv. 13-15.) "Evil pursueth sinners." (Prov. xiii. 21.) All the creatures share in the sad effects of sin. (Gen. iii. 17.) All our troubles, sorrows, losses, fears, bereavements, afflictions, are the product of sin. By it death entered (Rom. vi. 23)—death temporal, spiritual and eternal. (Rev. xxi. 8.) Sin has shame for its companion and death for its result. A wicked man knows what sin is in the pleasure of it, but not what it is in the punishment of it hereafter.

#### REFLECTIONS.

1. What sad thoughts should we have of the original sin that has created so many miseries! (Isa. in. 5, 6.) "What honey," says an old writer, "can be got out of this lion? What grapes can we gather off this thorn? It sets heaven and earth against us: while we choose this bramble to rule, fire comes out of the bramble to devour us."

2. How are all believers bound to Jesus Christ, who has freed them from that misery to which sin has exposed them! "In whom we have redemption through his blood." (Eph. i. 7.) Sin has brought trouble and a curse into the world; Jesus has sanctified the trouble and removed the curse. This he does for all who do not reject the only help of God's appointment. (Ps. lxxxi. 11, John v. 40; Rom. viii. 7.)

The Rev. Dr. Ives, whose house was on Oxford Road, and past which the criminals were carried weekly in carts to Tyburn, used to stand at his window and say to any young friends who might be near him, pointing out any of the most notorious malefactors, "There goes Dr. Ives!" If an explanation was asked, he took occasion to expound the innate corruption of the human heart, and appealed to the experience of his auditors "whether they had not felt the movements of those very passions, errors, prejudices, lusts, revenge, covetousness, etc., whose direct tendency was to produce the crimes for which these offenders satisfied the claims of public justice, and which were solely prevented from carrying them to the same dreadful fate by the restraining grace of God."

QUESTION 18.—*Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

#### GUILT.

Guilt means obligation to punishment on account of sin. (Rom. vi. 23.) By Adam's sin his posterity became liable to the punishment denounced against himself. They became guilty through his guilt, which is imputed to them or placed to their account, so that they are treated as if they had personally broken the covenant. (Rom. v. 19.) It is not satisfactory to say that they are treated as sinners, although they are not really such, because the question naturally follows, How can they be justly treated as sinners if they are

not guilty? and the question is unanswerable. "The judgment was by one," or by one offence, "to condemnation." (Rom. v. 16.) Here we have an act of judgment ascribed to God—who always judges according to truth—the ground upon which it proceeded, the one offence, the deed of one man, and the sentence expressed in the term condemnation. The apostle expresses the same mournful truth by saying again, "Through the offence of one many are dead." (Rom. v. 15.) Besides, it is the doctrine of Paul that death came upon us by the sin of Adam—not accidentally or naturally, but by the operation of law. (Rom. v. 12.) But this cannot be true if the imputation of Adam's guilt be denied, for thousands of the human race die in infancy before they are capable of committing actual sin. (See Rom. v. 14.) How are all men guilty of Adam's first sin? On account of their legal union. (1 Cor. xv. 22.) As the righteousness of Christ, the second Adam, is imputed to all believers, so the sin of the first Adam is imputed to all his posterity. (Rom. v. 19.)

#### *THE WANT OF ORIGINAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

"Original sin," says *Ursinus*, "is the guilt of the whole human race on account of the fall of our first parents. It consists in a want of the knowledge of God and of his will in the mind, and of an inclination to those things which the law of God forbids, and an aversion to those things which it commands, resulting from the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve, and from them male to pass over into all their posterity, thus corrupting our whole nature, so that all, on ac-

count of this depravity, are subject to the eternal wrath of God, nor can we do anything pleasing to him, unless forgiveness be obtained for the sake of the Son of God, our Mediator, and the Holy Ghost renew our nature. (Rom. v. 14; Ps. li. 7.) It comprehends, therefore, these two things—exposure to eternal condemnation on account of the fall of our first parents, and a depravity of our entire nature since the fall. (Rom. v. 12.) Original righteousness was not only a conformity of our nature with the law of God, but it also included divine acceptance and approbation. In the place of this conformity with the divine law we now have depravity, and in the place of this approbation, we have the displeasure of God, which has followed in consequence of the fall.” (For proof of this see Rom. iii. 19; Gal. iii. 22; Ps. li. 5; Isa. i. 4; xlviii. 8; Rom. iii. 10; viii. 7; Hos. xi. 7; Rom. vii. 21, 23; iii. 23; Job xi. 12; Prov. xxii. 15.)

#### THE CORRUPTION OF HIS WHOLE NATURE.

Original sin has—

1. *Depraved the intellect.* As in the creation “darkness was upon the face of the deep” (Gen. i. 2), so with the understanding, darkness is upon the face of this deep. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”—“having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” (1 Cor. ii. 14; Eph. iv. 18.)

2. *Defiled the heart.* (Jer. xvii. 9; Eccles. ix. 3.) In

the heart are legions of lusts, obduracy, infidelity, hypocrisy; it boils as the sea with passion and revenge.

3. The *will*. The sinner crosses God's will to fulfill his own. (Jer. xlv. 16-18.) There is a rooted enmity in his will against holiness. "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."

4. The *affections*. These are the lesser wheels, which are strongly carried by the will, the master-wheel. Our affections are misplaced, set on wrong objects. They are as a sick man's appetite, which craves the things which are noxious and hurtful to him. Their language constantly is, "Who will show us any good?"—that is, earthly good. And they constantly lead every unsanctified child of Adam to "worship and serve the creature more than the Creator, who is God over all, blessed for ever."

5. The *memory*. It is prone to retain what is vain and unprofitable, and to drop its hold on what is spiritual and truly advantageous. It is mentioned as a general characteristic of the wicked that they "forget God," that "God is not in all their thoughts;" and experience abundantly confirms this truth.

6. The *conscience*. Sometimes it is violated till it becomes seared "as with a hot iron." But when this is not the case, it too often performs its office imperfectly, not reproving and condemning when it ought, especially for secret sins. Sometimes it is so perverted that it calls evil good and good evil, puts light for darkness and darkness for light. (Isa. v. 20.)

(See Eph. iv. 18; 1 Cor. ii. 14; Isa. xlviii. 4; Job

xxi. 15; Ge i. viii. 21; Jer. iv. 14; Rom. viii. 7; Tit. i. 15; John iii. 6; Job xiv. 4; Ps. v. 5; Rom. v. 14.)

In regard to *our bodies*, which are the instruments of corrupting the soul, and which are called “the flesh,” and are represented as the seat and source of sin, they have become mortal in consequence of sin; they are polluted and defiled in all their members. Hence the apostolic caution, “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.” (Rom. vi. 13.)

#### ACTUAL TRANSGRESSIONS.

*Actual* sin is distinguished from *original*, as the *act* is distinguished from the *habit*, or a fault of a person from a fault of the nature. *Omission* of what is required is an actual sin, because all omissions are either accompanied with some act of the will consenting directly or indirectly to them, or they flow from some antecedent act which is either the cause or occasion of omitting the duty required.

*Original* sin is the cause of all actual sins. It is the womb in which all actual sins are conceived. Hence come murders, adulteries, rapines, envies, hatred, malice, pride, covetousness and every evil work. (Mark vii. 21.) It is the Trojan horse out of which a whole army of impieties come. (Matt. vii. 18; Ps. lviii. 3.) Original sin produces actual sin naturally. (See Jer. vi. 7; Jude 15.)

#### REFLECTIONS.

One sin may have many sins in it. We are apt to have slight thoughts of sin, and ask, “Is it not a little one?” How many sins were in Adam’s sin? Oh take heed of any sin! “There was but one crack in

the lantern, and the wind has found it and blown out the candle. How great a mischief one unguarded point of character may cause us! One spark blew up the magazine and shook the whole country for miles around. One leak sunk the vessel and drowned all on board. One wound may kill the body, one sin destroy the soul."

A cavalier once asked Dr. Nettleton, "How came I by my wicked heart?" "That," he replied, "is a question which does not concern you so much as another—namely, how you should get rid of it. You have a wicked heart, which renders you entirely unfit for the kingdom of God, and you must have a new heart or you cannot be saved; and the question which now most deeply concerns you is, how you shall obtain it?" As the man manifested no wish to hear anything on that subject, but still pressed the question how he came by his wicked heart, Dr. Nettleton told him that his condition resembled that of a man who is drowning, while his friends are attempting to save his life. As he rises to the surface of the water he exclaims, "How came I here?" "That question does not concern you now; take hold of this rope." "But how came I here?" he asks again. "I shall not stop to answer that question now," replies his friend. "Then I'll drown," says the infatuated man, and, spurning all proffered aid, sinks to the bottom.

Dr. Milne says of Boston's *Fourfold State*, "It conducted me to my own heart, discovered the evils which before lay hid in the chambers of imagery, the monstrous ingratitude to God which had marked all my conduct, and the pollution of original and actual sin with which my soul was contaminated. I saw that I was necessarily under the strongest and most righteous obligations to God, and had never for one hour of my life discharged these, but lived in rebellion against the Author of my life; so I was justly under the curse of God's righteous law and exposed to everlasting misery."

QUESTION 19.—*What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?*

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

Man's misery by the fall consists in three things: 1. In what man has lost. 2. In what man is brought under. 3. In what man is liable to.

#### I. LOST COMMUNION WITH GOD.

By "communion" here is meant friendship, fellowship and favor. Before the fall Adam had the most delightful intimacy, the most pure and sublime intercourse, with his Maker in the uninterrupted enjoyment of his gracious presence. Of this he was instantly and totally deprived by the fall. He feared and fled from the presence of God, and vainly attempted to hide himself among the trees of the garden. (See Gen. iii. 8; Ps. v. 4, 5.)

"Behold him now,  
So lately rich in happiness and blessed  
With converse of the living God, o'erwhelmed  
In misery, and tortured by the stings  
Of conscious guilt."

From that unhappy hour till the present man in his natural state has no desire after communion with God. (Ps. x. 4; Job xxi. 14; 2 Cor. vi. 14; Amos iii. 3; Eph. ii. 12; iv. 18; see Gen. iii. 24.) God is our chief good, and in communion with him consists man's chief happiness; therefore the loss of this communion is man's greatest loss.

*II. UNDER HIS WRATH AND CURSE.*

What is it to be under the “wrath” of God? To be under his anger in the sad and dismal effects of it, whether in a more visible or more secret way. (Ps. xi. 6 and l. 21.) What is it to be under his “curse”? To be under the sentence of his law denouncing all evil upon the transgressor. (Gal. iii. 10; Rom. i. 18; Eph. v. 6; Isa. lix. 5; Eph. ii. 2; Gal. iii. 10; Prov. iii. 33.)

What shall we say of the heathen? Are they also condemned? Paul says of them: “For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law.” (Rom. ii. 12.) It is true they did not have the law as the Jews had, and they have not heard the gospel as we have. But they will not be tried by a law which was never given to them, nor condemned for not believing a gospel which was never preached to them. The light which they had will be the standard by which they will be tried. Tried by that, however, they are already found guilty before God. If they are not guilty, then the darkness of heathenism is a blessing; and why jeopard their salvation by sending the gospel to them, and thereby exposing them to the perils of rejecting it? As to infants, we believe that all infants dying in infancy are saved. “But saved from what? To affirm that infants are saved is to affirm that they need a Saviour. To admit that they need a Saviour is to allow that they are sinners, for Christ came to save sinners. We believe that they are saved, for we believe that they are redeemed by the blood of Christ and regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Sharing in the curse of sin, they also share in

the song of the redeemed.” How terrible is the wrath of God! This wrath is not a passion as in us, but an act of God’s holy will, whereby he abhors sin and decrees to punish it. How did Haman’s heart tremble when the king rose up from the banquet in wrath! (Esth. vii. 7.) But God’s wrath is infinite; all other is but as a spark to a flame. “Who knoweth the power of thine anger?” (Ps. xc. 11.)

### *III. ALL MISERIES IN THIS LIFE.*

Man is subject in this world to many inward and outward miseries. (See Job xx. 22; Eccles. i. 2.) We come into this world with a cry, and go out with a groan. (Ps. xc. 10. See also Job v. 7.) Whence all our calamities—sorrows, sicknesses, bereavements, fears and disappointments—but from sin? It is on account of sin that God has inflicted all these things upon the human race. (See Gen. iii. 17–19; Ps. xxxviii. 3 Jer. v. 25; Rom. viii. 20; 1 John iv. 18.)

### *DEATH ITSELF.*

What death is here intended? The death of the body. Of this sin is the cause (Gen. iii. 19; Rom. v. 12; vi. 23) and the sting. (1 Cor. xv. 55, 56.) There is an inseparable connection between sin and death by the appointment of a righteous God. (Ezek. xviii. 4; Heb. ix. 27; Job xxiv. 19.) Is death a punishment to all upon whom it is inflicted? To this we reply: 1. Though death be the consequence of sin in all, yet to believers through Christ it is without a sting, and it is an outlet from misery and an inlet to glory.

“Death has no terrors for the Christian’s soul;  
His sting’s extracted, and his mighty dart  
Was blunted by its task on Calvary.”

2. Death to the wicked and unbelievers is a dreadful punishment, being a king of terrors, as the grim messenger sent to arrest the wicked and convey them into future misery. (Prov. xiv. 32.)

#### THE PAINS OF HELL.

Do not sinners receive all their punishment in this world? No. “*After this the judgment.*” (Heb. ix. 27.) We are warned to “flee from the wrath *to come.*” (Matt. iii. 7. See also xxiii. 33; Rom. ii. 8, 9; Luke xii. 5; Heb. ii. 3.)

The pirate Gibbs, whose name was for many years a terror to commerce with the West Indies and South America, was at last taken captive, tried, condemned and executed in the city of New York. He acknowledged before his death that when he committed the first murder and plundered the first ship his compunctions were severe; conscience was on the rack and made a hell within his bosom. But after he had sailed for years under the black flag, his conscience became so hardened and blunted that he could rob a vessel and murder all its crew, and then lie down and sleep as sweetly at night as an infant in its cradle. His remorse diminished as his crimes increased. So it is generally. If, therefore, remorse in this life is God’s way of punishing crimes, the more they sin the less he punishes them! How absurd!

How is hell represented in the Scriptures? “The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.” (Isa. xxx. 33.) “Their worm dieth not.” (Mark ix. 44.) “Between us and you there is a great

gulf fixed." (Luke xvi. 26.) "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." (Matt. xxv. 46.) "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 31 ; Isa. xxxiii. 14.)

*FOR EVER.*

"That mysterious thing,  
Which hath no limit from the walls of sense—  
No chill from hoary time—with pale decay  
No fellowship—but shall stand forth unchanged,  
Unscorched, amid the resurrection-fires,  
To bear its boundless lot of good or ill."

A lady, having spent the afternoon and evening at cards and in gay company, when she came home found her servant-maid reading a pious book. She looked over her shoulders and said, "Poor melancholy soul! what pleasure canst thou find in poring so long over that book?" That night the lady could not sleep, but lay sighing and weeping very much. Her servant asked her once and again what was the matter. At length she burst out into a flood of tears, and said, "Oh! it is one word I saw in your book that troubles me; there I saw the word *eternity*! Oh how happy should I be if I were prepared for eternity!" The consequence of this impression was that she laid aside her cards, forsook her gay company and set herself seriously to prepare for another world.

Mrs. Susan Huntington of Boston in a letter to a friend thus writes: "I am afraid I have never been brought truly to submit all things to the disposal of God, especially to submit to his righteousness in the condemnation of sinners. I fear I have never yet seen aught of the dreadful evil of sin, and that this is the source of the misgivings I sometimes experience as to its just desert of eternal punishment. But Jehovah is—I know he is—righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works; and he has said that the wicked shall be turned into hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire shall never be quenched. Hush, then, every murmuring, doubting thought, every rebel-

lions, discontented feeling ! Oh for deeper views of the vileness, the exceeding vileness, of sin—for stronger and more abiding confidence in the rectitude and the goodness of God !”

What should all this teach us ? To flee from the coming wrath to the New Testament altar, the satisfaction and intercession of Christ, there being no name by which we can be saved from sin and wrath except the name of Jesus only. (Acts iv. 12.)

QUESTION 20.—*Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery ?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

A young person, riding one day with a friend, asked him, “What is your opinion of election, sir ?” His friend judiciously replied, “Stephen, you have learned fractions, decimals, etc. ; do you understand them ?” “Yes, sir.” “Do you think when you were in addition you could ?” “No sir.” “Neither can you, my dear boy, at present comprehend the deep things of God.” The youth appeared much interested, and during the remainder of the journey he seemed to be absorbed in his own reflections.

It may not be questioned that God might justly have left all mankind to perish in their fallen state. As the righteous Governor of the world he might have proceeded to uphold the authority of his law by executing its penalty upon the disobedient, and to give an awful example of vengeance to the intelligent inhabitants of the various provinces of his empire. His

goodness does not require that he should rescue his rebellious subjects from the misery which they had brought upon themselves, because he had already given an ample display of it in their creation, and it was still exhibited in the happiness diffused through all the regions of innocence. Nor would he have been a loser by it if they had all been left to perish. (Job xxii. 2; Ps. cxliii. 2.) Instead of pursuing this course, however, "the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared." (Titus iii. 4. See also 2 Pet. iii. 9; Ezek. xxxiii. 11.)

*ELECTED SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE.*

"There is a remnant according to the election of grace." (Rom. xi. 5; 2 Thess. ii. 13; Phil. iv. 3; Rev. xiii. 8; Acts xiii. 48; John vi. 37.)

Mr. Winter was out in company with an Arminian, who spoke violently against the doctrine of election. "You believe election," said Mr. Winter, "as firmly as I do." "I deny it," answered the other; "on the contrary, it is a doctrine I detest." "Do you believe that all men will be saved on the last day, or some only?" "Only some." "Do you imagine that those some will be found to have saved themselves?" "No, certainly. God in Christ is the only Saviour of sinners." "But God could have saved the rest, could he not?" "No doubt." "Then salvation is peculiar to the saved?" "To be sure." "And God saves them designedly, and not against his will?" "Certainly." "And willingly suffers the rest to perish, though he could easily have hindered it?" "It should seem so." "Then is not this election? It amounts to the same thing."

*FROM ALL ETERNITY.*

"He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." (Eph. i. 4; ix. 11; 2 Tim. i. 9; 1

Thess. v. 9. See also Rom. viii. 30 ; ix. 11-13 ; Eph. i. 11 ; John vi. 39.)

*OUT OF HIS MERE GOOD PLEASURE.*

(2 Tim. i. 9 ; John xv. 16 ; Eph. i. 5, 11 ; Rom. ix. 15, 18 ; xi. 33.) Election does not result from faith foreseen. We are not elected *for* holiness, but *to* holiness. (Eph. i. 4.) We are not justified *for* faith, but *through* faith as an instrument (Eph. ii. 8) ; not for faith as a *cause*, but as a *medium*, and if not justified for faith, then much less elected. "As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." (Acts xiii. 48.) They were not elected because they believed, but they believed because they were elected. (Eph. i. 4-6.) "As God (says our Confession of Faith, chap iii. sec. vi.) hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto." (Eph. i. 4 ; ii. 10 ; 2 Thess. ii. 13.)

An old writer well says : "Hast thou an heart to pray to God ? It is a sign no decree of wrath hath passed against thee."

*DID ENTER INTO A COVENANT OF GRACE.*

A covenant is an agreement between two parties who come under mutual engagements. Something is to be done by one of the parties, in consequence of which the other binds himself to do another thing in return. How do we know that there was a covenant transaction entered into for the salvation of all those that are ordained unto life ? (Ps. lxxxix. 3. See also Rom. viii. 3 ; Isa. xlii. 6 ; Tit. iii. 4, 5, 6, 7 ; Gal. iii. 21 ; Rom. iii. 20, 21, 22.) What is this covenant

called? I. *The covenant of peace* (Ezek. xxxvii. 26), because it seals up reconciliation between God and humble sinners. II. *A covenant of grace*. It is thus named—1. Because it was with free, sovereign, rich grace or favor that, when we had forfeited the first covenant, God should enter into a new covenant after we had cast away ourselves. 2. Because it is all made up of terms of grace: that God will cast our sins behind his back, that he will love us freely (Hos. xiv. 4), and that he will give us a will to accept of the mercy of the covenant and strength to perform the conditions of the covenant. (Ezek. xxxvii. 26.)

#### THE COVENANT MADE WITH CHRIST.

With whom was the covenant of grace made? As the covenant of works was made with the first Adam, for himself and his posterity, so the covenant of grace was made with Christ, the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed, which are the Israel of God. (Gal. iii. 16; Heb. vii. 22; viii. 6, 10; xiii. 20. See also Rom. v. 15; Isa. xlii. 6; liii. 10, 11; Tit. i. 2.) Was it the same covenant which was made with Christ and the elect? No; for there was a covenant made with Christ as mediator and the representative of the elect, which was the foundation of all that grace which was afterward promised in that covenant of grace that the Father made with themselves in and through Christ. (See Luke xxii. 29; Heb. vii. 22; Gal. iii. 16, 17; Ps. cxix. 122; Isa. xxxviii. 14; Zech. vi. 13.)

#### CONDITION OF THE COVENANT.

The covenant of grace is strictly conditional *as to the Surety* (Isa. xlix. 3), but is absolutely free to the

sinner. (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.) The proper condition of the covenant of grace is the *fulfilling* by Christ, as representative and surety, of *all righteousness* owing to God by his spiritual seed in virtue of the broken covenant of works. (Matt. iii. 15; Phil. ii. 2; iii. 8, 9; Gal. iii. 13; Eph. v. 2; Rom. v. 21.) The means by which the elect have an actual interest in the things promised in the covenant of grace is *faith*. (John iii. 16; Acts xvi. 31.) Is not faith a *condition* of such an interest? No; it is promised in the covenant itself (Zech. xii. 10), and therefore cannot be the condition of it. True, it is said that Abraham's faith "was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3), but it was *the object upon which his faith terminated*, and not his faith itself, which was counted to him for righteousness. Faith is an *instrument* and *gift*, and is necessary, as such, savingly to interest us in Christ (John i. 12), and to determine us to acquiesce in his fulfilling the condition of the covenant for us. (Isa. xlv. 24.) The covenant of works made with Adam ran all upon "working," the covenant made with Christ, upon "believing." (Rom. iv. 5.) In the first covenant, works were required as the *condition* of life; in the second, they are required as the *evidences* of life: in the first, for the justification of our persons; in the second, for the attestation of our grace. (Tit. iii. 8.)

#### BY A REDEEMER.

(Acts iv. 12; John iii. 16. See also Gen. iii. 15; Ps. cx. 1-4; Isa. liii. 3, 12.)

#### TO DELIVER THEM, ETC.

(See on Questions 17, 18 and 19, John iii. 16.) "He

that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." (John iii. 36.) Nothing more than this can be desired. "This is all my salvation and all my desire." (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.)

#### METHODS OF TRIAL.

We may try whether we are the covenant people of God by the three following particulars: 1. *Humility*. (1 Pet. v. 5; Phil. ii. 3; Ps. xxii. 6.) 2. *Willingness*. (Ps. cx. 3.) 3. *Consecration*. (Deut. vii. 6; John x. 4.)

#### HOW TO BE IN COVENANT WITH GOD.

1. Seeking him by prayer. (Zech. xiii. 9.) 2. Breaking off the covenant with sin. (1 Sam. vii. 3.) 3. Getting faith in the blood of Christ. (Eph. ii. 13. See Rev. xxii. 17.)

From my childhood my mind had been full of objections against the doctrine of God's sovereignty in choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased, leaving them eternally to perish and be everlastingly tormented in hell. It used to appear a horrible doctrine to me. But I remember the time very well when I seemed to be convinced and fully satisfied as to this sovereignty of God and his justice in thus eternally disposing of men according to his sovereign pleasure. But I never could give an account how or by what means I was thus convinced, not in the least imagining at the time that there was any extraordinary influence of God's Spirit in it. However, my mind rested in it, and it put an end to all these cavils and objections.—*Jonathan Edwards*.

A certain individual said to the Rev. Dr. Nettleton, "I cannot get along with the doctrine of election." "Then," said he, "get along without it. You are at liberty to get to heaven the easiest way you can. Whether the doctrine of election is true or not, it is true that you must repent and believe and love God. Now, what we tell you is, that such is the wickedness of your heart that you never will do these things unless God

has determined to renew your heart. If you do not believe that your heart is so wicked, make it manifest by complying with the terms of salvation. Why do you stand caviling with the doctrine of election? Suppose you should prove it to be false, what have you gained? You must repent and believe in Christ after all. Why do you not immediately comply with these terms of the gospel? When you have done this without the aid of divine grace, it will be soon enough to oppose the doctrine of election. Until you shall have done this, we shall still believe that the doctrine of election lies at the foundation of all hope in your case."

QUESTION 21.—*Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

ANSWER.—*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 natures, and one person, for ever.*

#### JESUS CHRIST.

The name *Jesus*, or, as the Hebrews pronounce it, *Jehoshua* or *Joshua*, signifies *he who shall save*. (Matt. i. 21.) *Christ* is a Greek word, answering to the Hebrew *Messiah*, the consecrated or anointed one. (Heb. i. 9; John i. 41; Acts x. 38.)

#### REDEEMER.

This name is given by way of eminence to Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, because he *redeems* or delivers mankind from the bondage and burden of their sins. (Isa. lix. 20; Job xix. 25.) As this title implies, we were by nature in bondage and captivity to sin, Satan, the world, death and hell, through the breach of the first covenant, hence called *lawful captives*. (Isa. xlix. 24; l. 1.) Redemption is deliverance from bondage by means of a ransom. Thus Christ

has ransomed sinners from their thralldom to the guilt and power of sin by dying in their place. (Rom. iii. 24; Gal. iii. 13; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; Eph. i. 7; Tit. ii. 14.) The Scriptures invariably attribute redemption to the death of Christ, which is the redemption price (Matt. xx. 28; 1 Tim. ii. 6; Rev. v. 9); and though he was perfectly innocent, yet his being substituted for the guilty has nothing in it inconsistent with justice, especially since he voluntarily undertook to suffer and die, and since he had an absolute right over his own life, being both God and man. (John x. 18.) Christ is *the only* Redeemer. An angel could not have undertaken the work, for he charges his angels with folly. (Job iv. 18.) None but himself was capable of the vast undertaking. (See Isa. lxiii. 5; Acts iv. 12.) In addition to being Redeemer by *purchase*, Christ is so by *conquest*. (Isa. xlix. 25; Col. ii. 15.) The name *Lord* belongs to both natures of Christ. His human nature paid the price of our redemption by dying for us, and the divine gives and offers to the Father this price, and applies it unto us by the Spirit. (See Ps. lxxxiii. 18; Matt. xxviii. 18.)

#### OF GOD'S ELECT.

Christ "gave himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. ii. 6; John iii. 14, 15.) But he was in a special manner the Redeemer of God's elect. (John x. 15.) Their sanctification was particularly designed in Christ's undertaking. (John xvii. 19.) Their salvation was particularly designed in it. (John xvii. 2.)

#### BEING THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD.

(Matt. xvi. 16; Col. i. 17; Heb. i. 8; 1 John v. 20;

Rom. ix. 5; Phil. ii. 6.) He is one with the Father. (John x. 30.) He is to be worshiped as God. (John v. 23; Heb. i. 6.) He was begotten by the Father before all worlds. (Ps. ii. 7.) He is the only-begotten Son of God. (John i. 14.)

#### BECAME MAN.

Our Lord subsisted in the Godhead, not only as a *distinct* but as a *divine* person, before he assumed our nature. (See John xvi. 28.) He had a personal glory with the Father before time. (John xvii. 5.) His goings forth as a divine person were before all worlds. (Mic. v. 2.) He did not only subsist as a *distinct* person before he became incarnate, but he was also a *divine* person. (John i. 1, 3; Phil. ii. 6-8.) This divine person, who was in the form of God, actually assumed our nature into union with his divine nature. (John i. 14; 1 Tim. iii. 16.) The nature he assumed was our nature—not simply like ours, formed out of nothing, but made of the seed of David according to the flesh, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. (Heb. ii. 14.) This was his own personal act. The Father, by the agency of the Spirit, prepared for him a body, but the act of assumption was exclusively his own. (Heb. ii. 16.) It was necessary that Christ as Redeemer should become man—1. That he might be capable of suffering death for sinners. (Heb. ix. 22.) 2. That he might be their High Priest to reconcile them to God. (Heb. ii. 16, 17.)

#### GOD AND MAN IN TWO DISTINCT NATURES.

It was also necessary that Christ as Redeemer should be God as well as man—1. Because he could not

otherwise have borne up under the weight of wrath which was laid upon him for the sins of men; and 2. Because his sufferings would have been but of finite extent, and so could not have made satisfaction to God's infinite justice, which was offended by sin. Though there is an intimate union between the two natures of our Lord, yet they are not confounded, nor their properties mixed. By this union his divine nature did not become finite, neither did his human nature become infinite. They continued to retain their distinct properties or attributes. They have distinct understandings and distinct wills, though their operations are always in unison. Thus, though as God he knew all things, yet as man he is said not to have known the day of judgment (Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36); and though as God he is omnipotent, yet as man he is said to have been crucified in weakness. (2 Cor. xiii. 4.)

#### ONE PERSON.

The union did not change our Lord's personal identity. His person was *one* before he became incarnate, and it continued to be *one* after he was manifested in the flesh. The Son given, and the Child born, are one person. The incarnation produced no change in his divine person. Such a change would have been incompatible with his true and proper divinity. The change was purely relative. He who, previous to his incarnation, subsisted simply as a divine person, had, posterior to it, a human nature subsisting in his divine person by a personal union. (See Isa. ix. 6; Rom. ix. 5; Matt. i. 23; John i. 14.)

*FOR EVER.*

“Because he continueth for ever, he hath an unchangeable priesthood.” (Heb. vii. 24.) The union of the divine and human nature in Christ will never be dissolved. This union is an everlasting security for the *perpetuity* of the union between Christ and believers, for he has said, “Because I live ye shall live also.” (John xiv. 19.)

At a weekly meeting for religious conversation, some South Sea Island converts (as Rev. John Williams informs us) thus talked with each other concerning Christ: “Give us some other proof that he was God,” said another. “The various miracles that he wrought,” was the reply. “But did not Peter and all the apostles work miracles?” “Yes, but they did their miracles with borrowed power; and when they returned, did they not tell Jesus that they did all in his name and not in their own?” Another said, “Is not the star that led the wise men from the East a proof of the divinity of Jesus?” “But, if really God, would he have been laid in a manger?” “Yes,” said another, “for did he not humble himself and lay aside his glory as God? If he had come in his glory, would not man have exceedingly feared? We know what Moses said.” Another said he believed Christ was God, because he said, “I and my Father are one;” and “I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.” Another believed it “because he is to judge the world, and must therefore be God.” Another said, “He himself has promised where two or three are met in my name, there am I in the midst of them, and I will be with you always, even to the end of the world. Now, how can he fulfill these promises? While we are gathered here to worship and pray, others are gathered in distant lands—some in Britain—and how can he be with them all if he is not God?”

QUESTION 22.—*How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

In referring to the subject of this answer an able writer says: "What is the greatest wonder that the world ever saw? The incarnation of the Son of God. The word was made flesh and dwelt among us." (John i. 14.) Two natures infinitely distinct and united in one person. Astonishing, glorious, mysterious fact! Well might the inspired apostle in contemplating it exclaim, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." (1 Tim. iii. 16.)

#### CHRIST THE SON OF GOD BECAME MAN.

"Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." (Heb. ii. 14.)

#### A TRUE BODY.

It was a voluntary act in Christ the Son of God to become man. He *took* on him the human nature that he might be thereby fitted to be our Redeemer. (Heb. x. 6, 7; ii. 14, 16.) It was *real* flesh he took, not the mere shape, image and appearance of a human body, as some ancient heretics alleged. Hence he is called *man* and the *Son of man*. He was conceived and born, he was subject to hunger, thirst and weariness, like other men; he was crucified, dead, buried, and

rose again, none of which could be affirmed of him if he had not had a true or real body. (See Luke xxiv. 39; 1's. lxxx. 17; Matt. i. 20, 25; Gal. iv. 4; Heb. x. 5; Rom. viii. 3; John i. 1.)

#### *AND A REASONABLE SOUL.*

That Christ took a rational soul is evident from the fact that this is expressly mentioned by himself, when he said in his agony, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38), and when on the cross he committed his soul to his Father. Besides, there is the same evidence that he possessed this essential part of our nature as there is that it belongs to any other man, his thoughts, his reasonings, his feelings, his affections, his joys and sorrows, his hopes and fears, being all indications of the existence of that living and intelligent principle, of the operation of which we are conscious in ourselves, and to which we give the name of the soul. (See Heb. iv. 15; Isa. liii. 10.)

#### *BEING CONCEIVED, ETC.*

(Gal. iv. 4, 5.) Was there no other way for the restoring of fallen man but this, that God should take flesh? "We must not," says an old writer, "ask a reason of God's will; it is dangerous to pry into God's ark; we are not to dispute, but adore. The wise God saw this the best way for our redemption, that Christ should be incarnate; it was not fit for any to satisfy God's justice but man; none could do it but God; therefore, Christ being both God and man, he is the fittest to undertake this work of redemption." What was the peculiar agency of each person of the adorable

Trinity in this wonderful work? The Father *prepares* a body or human nature for the Son (Heb. x. 5); the Holy Ghost *forms* it, by his overshadowing power (Luke i. 35); and the Son *assumes* the entire human nature to himself. (Heb. ii. 14, 16. See also Gen. iii. 15; Gal. iv. 4; Gen. xii. 2; John viii. 28.)

#### BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

Why was Christ born of the Virgin Mary? 1. Because this had been predicted. (Isa. vii. 14; Gen. iii. 15; Matt. i. 23; Luke i. 34, 35.) 2. Because Christ was to be a High Priest, pure and holy. Had he been born after the ordinary course of nature, he had been defiled. By his birth he was kept free from the contagion of original sin, which is conveyed to all Adam's posterity by natural generation. 3. That the truth of the human nature assumed by the Son of God might thus be signified. 4. That we may know that Christ has descended from the fathers, from whom Mary also was—that is to say, that he was the true seed of Abraham, being born from his seed, and that he was the Son of David, being born from the daughter of David, according to the prophecies and promises. 5. That the birth of Christ might be a sign of our spiritual regeneration, which is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

When was Christ born? “When the fullness of time was come” (Gal. iv. 4); that is, the determinate time that God had set. More particularly, this fullness of time was, when all the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah were accomplished, and all legal shadows and

figures, by which he was typified, were abrogated, and the world prepared for his coming by the providence of God.

#### *WITHOUT SIN.*

(Luke i. 31; Heb. iv. 15. See 1 Pet. ii. 22; Heb. vii. 26.) Christ could not have satisfied for our sin if he had had any sins of his own, for he must through the eternal Spirit offer himself without spot. (Heb. vii. 26; ix. 14.)

#### *WHY WAS CHRIST INCARNATE?*

1. As a deep humiliation. He "emptied himself." As he became the substitute and representative of sinners, it was necessary that he should take the humble rank of the guilty. He descended, therefore, from the height of heaven to the humblest condition of earth.

2. That he might familiarize himself with the human condition, as a qualification for his office as our High Priest. The compassion of his Godhead resulted from the perfection of his nature, his feelings of humanity from personal experience, and both together form one fit and sympathizing High Priest, and lay a foundation for our trust under all the sorrows and trials of life. (See Heb. ii. 11-18.)

3. To embody and exemplify his own religion. In the entire spirit and conduct of our Lord we see his doctrine living and acting. He hath left us an example that we should tread in his steps. (1 John ii. 6; 2 Pet. ii. 21.) His example was divine, and yet human—a perfect model.

4. The crowning purpose of our Lord's incarnation

was, that he might suffer for the sins of men. He was "made flesh" that he might hunger and thirst, endure the contempt of the people, weep over Jerusalem, feel the hour and the power of darkness, agonize in the garden, and die upon the cross, and thus pay the penalty, the rigid satisfaction, death for death, and redeem a guilty world.

In the year 1811 the Moravian missionaries in Labrador determined on the introduction of the gospel in the northern parts of that land. They embarked in company with a Christian pilot whom they had obtained, named Jonathan. The sacrifices which this man made to accompany them were very great. At Hopedale he was considered the principal person or chief of his nation, but being made a partaker of the same spirit by which the missionary brethren were actuated, he was willing to sojourn among strangers, where he would have no pre-eminence, and to expose himself to unknown hardships and dangers, sustained only by the hope that the projected voyage might open the way for the introduction of the gospel among a portion of his countrymen still sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. When any of his countrymen represented to him the danger of the expedition, he used to say, "Well, we will try, and shall know better when we get there;" and once he said, "When I hear people talk about the danger of being killed, I think Jesus went to death out of love to us; what greater matter would it be if we were to be put to death in his service, should that be his good pleasure?" So effectually had he been taught that Christ died for all, that we who live should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again. Nor was this a mere empty boast; this generous principle of devotedness to Jesus evidently actuated our Esquimaux captain during the severe trials of a most perilous voyage; his cheerful, firm and faithful conduct under all circumstances being quite consistent with his Christian profession.

QUESTION 23.—*What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

The general office with which our Redeemer was invested is that of Mediator between God and man. (1 Tim. ii. 5. See on Question 29.) This mediatory office he always and invariably sustains, and the others are only particular and constituent parts of it; that is, the office of Mediator is never laid aside or suspended by Christ when he acts as Prophet, Priest and King of his Church. Sin had separated between us and God, and sin could only be expiated by sacrifice; hence the necessity of his *priesthood*. If he had not been a priest he could not have been a prophet and a king, it being evident that unless salvation had been obtained for us it could not be revealed and applied. We are alienated from the life of God by the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our hearts; hence the necessity of Christ's *prophetical office*. We are under bondage to sin, Satan and the present evil world; and not only captives, but also willing captives, and hence the necessity of his *kingly office*. Thus his official character is complete, as it is commensurate with the utmost extent of our miseries and wants. (See Col. i. 19; John iii. 34; Matt. xi. 27; John v. 22, 26; xiv. 6.)

#### OFFICES.

Christ is a Redeemer in office. (1 Pet. i. 20; Acts v. 31; John vi. 27; Heb. iii. 2.)

*CHRIST.*

Our Saviour is called in the Old Testament the Messiah, and in the New Testament the Christ, and both terms import that he was the Anointed One. This designation is given to him in allusion to the rite by which persons were consecrated to their offices under the former dispensation—namely, by being anointed with oil. This rite was observed in the case of the three offices which were most celebrated, those of prophet, priest and king. We have an example of the first in Elisha; of the second in Aaron and his sons; and of the third in David and Solomon. In allusion to this rite our Redeemer was called the Messiah or the Christ, to signify, not that he was consecrated by the same rite, but that he was solemnly appointed to his office by his Father, and furnished with all the requisite qualifications. He was anointed, says the Scripture, “with the Holy Ghost.” (Acts x. 38.) This anointing took place—1. At his conception, when he was sanctified by the Holy Ghost, endowed with all the graces which can adorn human nature, and with those faculties which, being afterward developed, excited admiration even in his youth, for at the age of twelve he astonished the doctors of Jerusalem by his wisdom both in asking and answering questions. 2. At his baptism. (Matt. iii. 16.) The Spirit coming down from the opened heavens in a visible form rested upon him, to signify, in conjunction with the voice which proceeded from the excellent glory, to all who were present, that God recognized him as his Son, and bestowed upon him an abundant measure of heavenly influences. In this manner he was publicly installed

in his office and fitted for the discharge of his duties. (See Isa. xi. 2-5.)

The particular offices to which our Saviour was anointed were the three already mentioned as existing among the Jews—the prophetical, the sacerdotal, and the regal. The first is ascribed to Christ in Deut. xviii. 14; the second in Ps. cx. 4; and the third in Ps. ii. 6. Here observe—1. That the anointing related to the human nature of the Saviour. The *person* of Christ was anointed in the *human nature*, which was the immediate *receptacle* of all gifts and graces (Ps. lxxviii. 18): “Thou hast received gifts for men;” margin, *in the man*—that is, in the human nature. 2. All these offices never centred in any one person but in Christ alone. In order, as it would appear, to show the unequaled dignity of our blessed and glorious Redeemer, none of those who were typical of him under the Old Testament were ever clothed with them all. Melchisedec was a king and a priest, Moses was a ruler and a prophet, Jeremiah was a priest and a prophet, David was a king and a prophet, but Christ alone was prophet, priest and king.

#### ESTATE OF HUMILIATION AND EXALTATION.

To “execute” an office is to do or perform what belongs to the office. Christ executed all these offices—1. In his *state of humiliation*—that is, during his residence here on earth. (See on Questions 27, 28. John xvii. 4.) 2. In his *exaltation*—that is, since he returned to heaven. (Heb. ix. 24.) Is he then an all-sufficient Saviour? Yes. (Heb. vii. 25.) And is he as willing to save as he is able? Yes. (John vi. 37.)

*THE ORDER IN WHICH THE OFFICES ARE  
EXECUTED.*

It should be observed that the *order* in which the offices of Christ are *here* stated, is the very order in which they are *executed*. In the salvation of the soul, as in the creation of our world, he commences with the diffusion of light. The knowledge of ourselves and of the Saviour is necessary to the production of faith, by which his righteousness is embraced as the only foundation of our acceptance with God. Conversion consists in “the opening of the blind eyes and the turning of the soul from darkness to light;” and this is the work of his prophetic office. When our Prophet manifests himself to us by his word and Spirit in his mediatorial character, we come to him as our Priest whose sacrifice has expiated our guilt, and submit to him as our King whose service is perfect liberty, and whose power will defend us from every evil.

When faith closes with Christ, does it accept him in all his offices? Yes, for Christ is never divided. We must have him *wholly* or *none* of him. (John viii. 24.) His investiture with this threefold office encourages us to employ him in every one of them, that in like manner as he is *made over* of God *unto us*, so we may actually have him for our “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.” (1 Cor. i. 30.)

CLEMENTINE CUVIER.—This lovely, honored and accomplished young lady says in a letter to a friend: “I want to tell you how happy I am. My heart has at length felt what my mind has long understood. *The sacrifice of Christ answers to all the wishes and meets all the wants of my soul*; and since I

have been enabled to embrace with ardor all its provisions, my heart enjoys a sweet and incomparable tranquillity. Formerly, I vaguely assured myself that a merciful God would pardon me, but now I feel that I have obtained that pardon, that I obtain it every moment; and I experience inexpressible delight in seeking it at the foot of the cross."

QUESTION 24.—*How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?*

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

#### THE OFFICE OF A PROPHET.

When we contemplate Jesus Christ simply as a divine person, we must consider him as the uncreated Source of all intelligence and wisdom. (John i. 9.) In his mediatorial character, however, he speaks not properly in his own name, but in the name of Him who gave him his commission, and brings to us his Father's message. Hence, we say that he was invested with the prophetic office, the term office implying that he acted a subordinate part and by the authority of another. (See his own declarations: John vii. 16, 17; xii. 49, 50; Rev. i. 1.)

#### NAMES GIVEN TO CHRIST AS A PROPHET.

He is called—1. "The Counsellor" (Isa. ix. 6), because in him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col. ii. 3; John xii. 46.) 2. "The Messenger of the Covenant." (Mal. iii. 1.) 3. "A Lamp." (2 Sam. xxii. 29.) 4. "The Morning Star." (Rev. xxii. 16.) 5. An "Apostle" (Heb. iii. 1), because he is the great Ambassador of heaven sent to

declare the will of God to men. 6. A "Witness" (Isa. lv. 4; Rev. iii. 14), because, being a son of Adam (Luke iii. 38), he was the more fit to attest the will of God to men, and being the eternal Son of God, was therefore liable to no error or mistake in his testimony. 7. An "Interpreter," because the mystery of godliness lies so far beyond the reach of our natural understanding, that we could never savingly comprehend it unless the Son of God gave us an understanding "that we may know Him that is true." (1 John v. 20. See also Luke xxiv. 45; Isa. xlviii. 17; John iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 6; Heb. i. 2; 1 Pet. i. 11; Matt. vii. 29.)

**FITNESS OF CHRIST FOR HIS PROPHETICAL  
WORK.**

Considered *as God*, he is in the bosom of the Father, and has the most perfect knowledge of his nature, perfections and purposes, and when he unfolds these to men he testifies what he has seen. (John i. 18; Matt. xi. 27.) Viewed *as man*, he has a peculiar fitness for communicating these mysteries to the human race in such a way as to prevent them from losing the benefit of his instructions by his overwhelming majesty. (Heb. xii. 18-24.) With regard to Christ's official gifts, "it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." (Col. i. 19.) The Divine Spirit, in his grace and gifts, was conferred first upon Christ as the Head of the Church to qualify him for his work in his assumed nature, and to be communicated by him to the members of his mystical body. (Isa. xi. 2, 3; John iii. 34.) He is full of grace and truth. (John i. 14. See Ps. xlv. 2; Isa. l. 4; Luke iii. 21, 22.)

*BY HIS WORD.*

We owe it entirely to our Lord Jesus Christ in his prophetic character that we have a Bible. (2 Pet. i. 21.) But the blessed Spirit who proceedeth from the Father and the Son is specially considered in this work as "the Spirit of Christ." (See 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.) As the planetary stars that rule the night shine in light borrowed from the sun, so the prophets derived all their light from the Sun of Righteousness, and when he arose with healing under his wings their glory was eclipsed by his superior lustre. There is every reason to believe that all the appearances of Deity under that economy to converse with men were appearances, not of God in his absolute character or in the person of the Father or Spirit, but in the person of the Son and in the character of Mediator. At the close of the Jewish dispensation Christ appeared in human nature as the Prophet of the Church. (Heb. i. 2; Col. iii. 16; Matt. xiii. 16, 17.) Nor did the exercise of his prophetic office terminate with his abode on earth. He continues by the written word and the ministers of the gospel, commissioned to act in his name, to speak to us from heaven. (Heb. xii. 25, 26.)

*AND SPIRIT.*

The Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration the sacred Scriptures were penned, opens the eyes of the human understanding to perceive the moral glory, beauty and excellence of divine truth, beyond any attainment made by mere learning or study without this heavenly aid. (Ps. cxix. 130; John xiv. 26; Isa. liv. 13; 1 Cor. ii. 14.)

*THE WILL OF GOD*

means the whole counsel of God, or whatever God would have us know, believe and do in order to salvation. In general, it may be observed that while Jesus corrected the false notions of religion and the perverse interpretations of the law of Moses which prevailed among the Jews, he unfolded the character of God in all its perfection, called the attention of men to the cultivation of piety and holiness as alone acceptable to him, exhibited himself as the Messiah whom they expected, and gave intimations of the design of his mission and the nature of the salvation which he had come to accomplish.

*FOR OUR SALVATION.*

Many kinds of knowledge can only amuse and instruct, but that which Jesus communicates is designed to *save* the soul from the wrath of God and prepare it for the employments and enjoyments of heaven. (John xx. 31 ; Isa. xlix. 6.)

*HOW MAY WE HAVE CHRIST FOR OUR TEACHER?*

1. By seeing our need of his teaching. (Rev. iii. 18.)  
 2. By going to him to teach us. (Ps. xxv. 5 ; Luke xi. 1 ; Ps. xliii. 3.) 3. By waiting upon the means of grace which he has appointed. (Eph. iv. 11.) 4. By walking according to the knowledge which we have already. (John vii. 17.)

The comforting influence of the precious truths of the Bible at a dying hour, was manifested in the case of a poor soldier who was mortally wounded at the battle of Waterloo. His companion conveyed him to some distance and laid him down

under a tree. Before he left him the dying soldier entreated him to open his knapsack, and take out his pocket Bible, and read to him a small portion of it before he died. When asked what passages he should read, he desired him to read John xiv. 27: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "Now," said he, "I die happy. I desire to have peace with God, and I possess the peace of God which passeth all understanding." A little while after one of his officers passed him, and seeing him in such an exhausted state, asked him how he did. He said, "I die happy, for I enjoy the peace of God which passeth all understanding," and then expired. The officer left him and went into the battle, where he was soon after mortally wounded. When surrounded by his brother-officers, full of anguish and dismay, he cried out, "Oh, I would give ten thousand worlds, if I had them, that I possessed that peace which gladdened the heart of a dying soldier whom I saw lying under a tree! for he declared that he possessed that peace of God which passeth all understanding. I know nothing of this peace. I die miserable, for I die in despair."

QUESTION 25.—*How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

A priest is a public person who in the name of the guilty deals with an offended God for reconciliation by sacrifice, which he offers to God upon an altar, being thereto called of God, that he may be accepted. A priest was needed to be an umpire, to mediate between a guilty creature and a holy God. (Heb. v. 1–4.) All the priests of the Old Testament were types

of Christ, yet the typical character of the high priest was the most notable of them all, because in him there were many things—as, for example, offering sacrifices and making intercession for the people—that represented Christ, the true and great High Priest of the Church.

*CHRIST'S SUPERIORITY.*

The superiority of Christ as a priest over all who sustained that office in the Mosaic ritual is evident—

1. From the superiority of his nature and person. The Jewish priests were but men; he was “the true God and eternal life.” They were sinful men, and needed to offer “first for themselves and then for the people;” he had no sins of his own, but was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.
2. From the manner of his investiture or installation. “Those priests were made without an oath, but this”—that is, Christ—“with an oath, by Him that said unto him, “The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.” By so much is Jesus made a surety of a better testament.
3. From the efficacy and perfection of the sacrifice offered by our Redeemer. It was infinitely superior to those sacrifices which were but types of his. “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. For by one sacrifice he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”
4. From the unchangeableness and perpetuity of the priestly office of Christ. “They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of

death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood."

#### *DIVINELY APPOINTED.*

Christ was called and anointed by God to the office of priest. (See Heb. v. 4-6; vii. 21.)

The priestly office of Christ has two parts: First, his

#### *SATISFACTION.*

This, again, consists of two branches—1. His active obedience. (Matt. iii. 15.) He did everything which the law required, his holy life was a perfect commentary upon the law of God, and he obeyed the law for us. 2. His passive obedience. Our guilt being transferred and imputed to him, he suffered the penalty which was due to us. The paschal lamb slain was a type of Christ who was offered up in sacrifice for us. Sin could not be done away without blood. (Heb. ix. 22.) Christ was not only a Lamb without spot, but a Lamb slain. How do we know that Christ, as priest, made atonement for sin? (Heb. ii. 17.) Did he do this by the sacrifice of himself? (Heb. ix. 26.) Was he himself the priest? (Heb. ix. 14.) Was he himself the sacrifice? (Isa. liii. 10.) Was he himself the altar? (See Heb. xiii. 10.) Did Christ offer himself voluntarily? (See John x. 18; Luke xxiii. 46.) Which of the two natures of Christ was the sacrifice? The human nature, soul and body (Isa. liii. 10; Heb. x. 10), which were actually separated by death. (John xix. 30.)

For additional proof that Christ offered himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile us to

God, see Matt. xx. 28; Col. i. 20; Rom. v. 6; viii. 34; 1 John ii. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 24; iii. 18; Rev. v. 9; xiii. 8.

#### ONCE OFFERING.

Christ only offered up himself once a sacrifice. (Heb. ix. 28.) This offering need not be repeated, because as once dying was the penalty of the law, so once suffering unto death was the complete payment of it in regard of the infinite dignity of the **SUFFERER**. (Heb. ix. 27, 28; x. 14.)

The *other* part of Christ's priestly office is

#### INTERCESSION.

(Isa. liii. 12.) Our great High Priest, in his intercession, prays to and pleads with God, as our Advocate, that through the merit of his death we may be actually reconciled, our persons accepted, our sins pardoned, our consciences quieted, our prayers answered, and at last our souls saved. (1 John ii. 1; John xiv. 14.) This intercession is made for us at the right hand of God in heaven. (Rom. viii. 34.) And it is made for us *continually*. Our Advocate never dies.

#### PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS.

1. In the bloody sacrifice of Christ see the horrid nature of sin. The sight of Cæsar's bloody robe incensed the Romans against them that slew him. The sight of Christ's bleeding body should fill us with hatred of sin. 2. In the sacrifice of Christ see God's justice and mercy displayed. (Rom. xi. 22.) 3. From the sufferings of Jesus learn his strong affection for sinners. 4. Let us by faith apply the blood of Christ to ourselves. (Phil. ii. 8.) 5. If Christ is our Inter-

cessor, then we know where we must chiefly fix our eyes when we engage in prayer. 6. If Christ be praying for us, then his Spirit is praying in us. (Gal. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 26.) By this interceding of the Spirit within us we may know that Christ is interceding above for us. 7. How sad the condition of the unbeliever! He has none in heaven to speak a word for him. The law and conscience and the Judge are against him, and there is no friend to plead his cause.

The gardener of Elizabeth (consort of Frederick II.) had one little daughter, with whose religious instruction he had taken great 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 intanght 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 splendor 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 hands, she sang with her clear, 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 splendor of thy throne.”

All the assembly were struck with surprise at 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!”

A soldier on furlough went into the office of a certain judge

in an Eastern city and waited for an audience. The judge was most busily employed, and after giving a hasty glance at the suppliant resumed his work. The soldier, after one or two ineffectual attempt to secure his attention, placed an open letter before the judge. On glancing at the signature and perceiving it to be his son's, he paused at once and read the letter, while it besought him to show kindness to this sick comrade, who had gone home to die, "for Charlie's sake." The judge arose at once, took the poor soldier by the hand to his own home, and dressing him in a suit of "Charlie's" and giving him his vacant room, showed him all possible attention, and took the greatest care of him, "for Charlie," his own dear son's, "sake." He said he could not do enough for him, because Charlie desired it. Our Advocate with the Father is the precious Son, to whom nothing can be refused.

QUESTION 26.—*How doth Christ execute the office of a king?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

#### CHRIST A KING.

That Christ is a King is everywhere taught in the Scriptures. (Ps. ii. 6; Isa. ix. 6; Luke i. 33; Heb. i. 8; John xviii. 36; Rev. xix. 16.)

#### EXTENT OF DOMINION.

Over what a molehill does the most extensive worldly monarch reign! Jesus claims unbounded empire. All kings and rulers are subject to him; they are amenable to his authority, they rule by his permission, they are controlled by his power. He girds them and guides them, though they know him not. As far as they move in the direction of his purpose they are

invincible; when they oppose it a straw checks and overthrows them. He is peculiarly King in Zion. He is "Head over all things to the Church." (Eph. i. 22.) As Mediator "all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth." (Matt. xxviii. 18.) God has anointed and sealed him to his regal office. "Him hath God the Father sealed." (John vi. 27.)

#### *SUBDUING US TO HIMSELF.*

Christ as a King subdues his people to himself. (Tit. iii. 3-8; Col. i. 21.) He finds them, like the rest of the world, lying in wickedness, the captives of Satan and the slaves to sin, in bondage to both. He delivers them by the instrumentality of his word applied by the power of his Spirit. (Ps. cx. 3; Hos. xi. 4; Luke i. 17; 2 Cor. x. 4.)

#### *RULING US.*

How does Christ rule his people? 1. By giving them laws to which they are to conform their hearts and their lives. (Isa. xxxiii. 22.) 2. By annexing or adding to his laws threatenings of punishing the disobedient and promises of rewarding the obedient. (Rev. ii. 23.) 3. By appointing church officers not only for declaring and publishing his laws, but also for the execution of some threatenings, who, having the key of discipline, as well as the key of doctrine, committed to them, are to rule under him in the Church, and have power of binding and loosing, of administering church censures and relaxing or removing them. (Matt. xvi. 19.) 4. And chiefly, Christ rules his people inwardly by his Spirit, whereby he writes his law in their hearts, working in them a disposition and strength to yield to

him that obedience which he requires. (Heb. viii. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 3; x. 5.)

#### DEFENDING US.

Christ defends his people—1. From their *temptations*. He gives them all the instructions, precepts, warnings, reproofs, threatenings and promises which are contained in his word; and by these they are prompted to suspend the dangerous purpose, to watch against the rising sin, to oppose with vigor the intruding temptation, and to pray for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, which *every one that asketh shall receive*. 2. From their *sins*. In the present world, where all things are imperfect, this deliverance, indeed, partakes of the common nature, yet it is such as to secure them from every fatal evil, and such as we know to be one of those *things which work together for their good*. Their progress in holiness, though slow, yet is such as to give them hope and comfort. 3. From *evil men*. They may be, and are, maligned, calumniated, despised and persecuted, but this is overruled so as to wean them from that love of the world, that desire of human favor and that thirst for human applause which so naturally charm the eyes and fascinate the hearts even of Christians, and which are wholly inconsistent with the law of God. 4. From *death*. Jesus for his people has taken the sting from death and the victory from the grave. (Ps. iii. 2, 3; cxxiv. 2, 3; Isa. xxvii. 2, 3; 2 Tim. iv. 1.)

#### RESTRAINING AND CONQUERING ALL HIS AND OUR ENEMIES.

(See 1 Cor. xv. 25.) Whence is it that this glorious King and his subjects have the same *enemies*? He

and they make up that *one body* of which he is the *Head* and they are the *members* (1 Cor. xii. 12), and therefore they cannot but have *common* friends and foes. (Zech. ii. 8.) What is it for Christ to *restrain* his and his people's enemies? It is to overrule and disappoint their wicked purposes (Isa. xxxvii. 29), to set limits to their wrath, and to bring a revenue of glory to himself out of the same. (Ps. lxxvi. 10.) What *restraints* does he put upon them? He bounds them by his power, as to the kind, degree and continuance of all their enterprises and attacks upon his people. (Job i. 12; ii. 6.) What is it for Christ to *conquer* all his and his people's enemies? It is his taking away their power, so that they cannot *hurt* the least of his *little ones* with respect to their *spiritual state*. (Luke x. 19.) How does he conquer them? He has always conquered them in his *own person* as the Head of the new covenant by the victory he obtained over them in his death (Col. ii. 15), and he conquers them daily in his *members*, when he enables them by faith to put their feet upon the neck of their vanquished foes. (Rom. xvi. 20.)

Ought we to rejoice in Christ's dominion? Yes. (Ps. cxlix. 2.) Must we accept him for our King? Yes. (Matt. xi. 29.) Must we pay tribute to him? Yes. (Isa. xvi. 1.) Must we obey him? Yes. (Heb. v. 9.)

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 season it was; watching and hiding with fear, were all our engagements. 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 settlements in the island;

then if a man went to fish he rarely ever returned, or if a woman went any distance to fetch food 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 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 now have peace and plenty in this world, and hope soon to dwell with him in heaven.”

QUESTION 27.—*Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

“A distinction,” says Dr. Dick, “has been made between the *condescension* and the *humiliation* of Christ, the former consisting in the assumption of our nature, and the latter in his subsequent abasement and sufferings. The reason why the assumption of our nature is not accounted a part of his humiliation is, that he retained it in his state of exaltation. The distinction seems to be favored by Paul.” (Phil. ii. 7, 8.)

#### BEING BORN.

Jesus Christ did not bring his assumed nature from heaven, nor was it formed like the body of Adam out of the dust of the ground. “He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.” He *became* incarnate. “The word *was made* flesh.” It was real flesh Christ took—not the image of a body, as some

ancient heretics held, but a true body. Hence he is said to be "made of a woman." (Gal. iv. 4.) As the bread is made of the wheat and the wine is made of the grape, so Christ is made of a woman. His body was part of the flesh and substance of the Virgin. In the creation man was made in God's image; in the incarnation God was made in man's image. "As," says Ursinus, "we are born of God because he made us, so Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost because it was by his virtue and operation that he was conceived, and not because he was formed from the substance of the Holy Ghost." (Luke i. 35. See also Col. ii. 9; John i. 14; Heb. ii. 16; 1 Tim. iii. 16.)

#### *IN A LOW CONDITION.*

Jesus was born of that which, though once an honorable, was then a poor family. (Isa. liii. 2.) He was born of a poor woman. (Luke ii. 24; compare Lev. xii. 8.) His supposed father was a poor man. (Matt. xiii. 55.) He was born in a poor place and in poor circumstances. (Mic. v. 2; Luke ii. 7.) He had not the respect paid to him that was due to an incarnate Deity. (John i. 10, 11.) He was not born honorably, for "he took upon him the form of a servant." (Phil. ii. 7.) He was not born wealthy, for "though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) Let us remember that we are describing the state of Him who is now "King of kings" and "Lord of lords," and was then "God over all, blessed for ever." He made "himself of no reputation" (Phil. ii. 7); or, as the phrase might be better translated, "he emptied himself." Though he did not divest himself of his

glory literally, he did so economically ; that is, he as effectually concealed it as if he had laid it entirely aside. No trace of divine perfections could be seen in a new-born child. He who is greater than all appeared in the lowest stage of human existence. This was humiliation indeed. Never let a poor disciple of Jesus blush or complain, nor let any fail to admire the grace by which he thus interposed to rescue fallen man. (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

#### *MADE UNDER THE LAW.*

It was a most amazing condescension that the Lord and Lawgiver of heaven and earth should become subject to the law which he had enacted for humble and inferior creatures, especially when he did it to fulfill that law in the place of those very creatures after they had transgressed it and incurred its penalty. Jesus was made "under the law." He subjected himself to it. (See Gal. iv. 4 ; Luke ii. 21, 22 ; xlii. 51 ; Matt. xvii. 24, 27 ; iii. 15 ; Ps. xl. 8.) By being made under the law Jesus was made under the curse. (Gal. iii. 13.) The law made no concession to his dignity ; it waived none of its rights in his favor.

#### *THE MISERIES OF THIS LIFE.*

Jesus was tempted. (Matt. iv. 1.) Endured the contradictions, reproaches and indignities of wicked men. (Heb. xii. 3 ; Matt. x. 55.) Underwent the sinless infirmities of the flesh, such as weariness, hunger, thirst and the like in regard to his body, and grief and sorrow in regard to his soul. (John iv. 6 ; Matt. iv. 2 ; viii. 20 ; Isa. liii. 3 ; Rom. viii. 3 ; Heb. iv. 15.)

## THE WRATH OF GOD.

Christ suffered the utmost effects of God's holy and righteous displeasure against sin. (Ps. xc. 11.) The union of the human nature with his divine person, by which it was impossible it could sink under the weight, made him capable of supporting that wrath. He endured it chiefly in his agony in the garden. (Matt. xxvi. 38; Luke xxii. 44; Matt. xxvii. 46.) He underwent it as the Surety of his people. (Isa. liii. 6.) Though the *sin of the world* which he was bearing was the object of God's infinite hatred, yet the glorious Person bearing it was even then the object of his infinite love. (Isa. liii. 10.)

## THE CURSED DEATH OF THE CROSS.

The death of the cross was called a *cursed death*, because they who endured it were separated from all good and devoted to all evil. Christ, although sinless in himself, was separated from all happiness and devoted to all misery while he suffered on the accursed tree. God spared him not, but gave him up to this awful death for us all. (Phil. ii. 8; Gal. iii. 13; Matt. xxvii. 46.)

## BURIED, AND CONTINUING UNDER THE POWER OF DEATH.

"Christ's humiliation after his death (says *The Larger Catechism*) consisted in his being buried and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, till the third day, which hath been otherwise expressed in these words,—he descended into hell." (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4; Matt. xii. 40; Ps. xvi. 10, compared with Acts ii. 24, 25, 26; Rom. vi. 9.) The re-

ceptacle of our Saviour's soul was Paradise, and the place of his body was the grave. Death and the grave were not able to maintain their dominion over Christ, because of the complete payment of all demands made upon him as a Surety. (Rom. vi. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 4; Eph. i. 7.)

#### *PRACTICAL LESSONS.*

Christ's humiliation teaches us—1. To humble ourselves. 'Tis the humble saint that is Christ's picture. (Matt. xi. 29.) 2. That as he died for our sins, so we should die to sin, and not be unwilling to suffer and die for his sake if called thereto. (Rom. vi. 8, 11; 1 Pet. iv. 1.) 3. That the grave, being "the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. xxviii. 6), must be sweet to a dying saint. (1 Thess. iv. 14.)

In a portion of the American territory from which the red man has now been driven, at a protracted meeting held in the wild forest, the subject of "Christ and him crucified" was illustrated with surpassing beauty and grandeur. The preacher spoke of the Good Shepherd who came into the world to seek and to save the lost. He drew a picture of Gethsemane and the unbefriended stranger who went there. He told of the rude buffetings which he met from the heartless soldiers. He pointed to him as he hung bleeding on the cross. The congregation wept. Soon there was a slight movement in the assembly, and a tall son of the forest, with tears on his red cheeks, approached the pulpit 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 these 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 that Jesus could not accept them. The poor

ignorant but generous child of the forest bent his head in sorrow, and meditated. He raised his noble brow once more, and fixed his eye on the preacher while he sobbed out, "Here is poor Indian; will Jesus have him?" A thrill of unutterable joy ran through the souls of minister and people as this fierce son of the wilderness now sat, in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus. The Spirit had done his work, and he who had<sup>e</sup> been so poor received the earnest of his inheritance.

QUESTION 28.—*Wherein consisteth Christ's exaltation?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

The two states in which our Redeemer is presented to us in the last question and in this, though very different in themselves, were both necessary to the execution of his offices. The one exhibits him humbled and abased, the other exhibits him exalted and glorified. In the one we see the Sun of Righteousness in the eclipse; in the other we see it coming out of the obscuration and shining in its full splendor and glory.

#### EXALTATION.

Christ has not been exalted in respect of his Godhead, for that cannot be exalted higher than it is, but he is exalted as Mediator; his human nature is exalted. There was thus a manifestation in the human nature (which had concealed it for a while) of the same glory of which he was eternally possessed as the Son of God. (John xvii. 5.) His *exaltation* immediately follows his *humiliation*, because it is the proper reward of it. (Phil. ii. 8, 9 Luke xxiv. 26.)

*RISING AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.*

Ancient prophecy foreshadowed Christ's resurrection (Ps. xvi. 10), and ancient history typified it. (Jonah i. 17; Matt. xii. 40.) In his teaching he repeatedly told his disciples that he should be put to death and rise again. (Matt. xvi. 21; xvii. 9.) After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to some or other of the apostles, or their companions, eight times. He appeared to Mary Magdalene alone (Mark xvi. 9), to her in company with several other women (Matt. xxviii. 9), to Peter (1 Cor. xv. 5), to the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 13), to the apostles in Jerusalem (John xx. 19; Luke xxiv. 13), to the apostles a second time (John xx. 26), to Peter and several of the disciples (John xxi. 1), and to above five hundred brethren at once. (1 Cor. xv. 6.) Could all these different persons have been deceived in these appearances of one with whom they had been for so long a time perfectly well acquainted? (See also Acts i. 3; ii. 24; Rom. xiv. 9; Rev. i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 21; Matt. xxviii. 6; Acts x. 40, 41.)

*THE THIRD DAY.*

As our Lord was in the tomb a part of three days, and it was customary with the Jews and agreeable to the language of Scripture to represent an event as extending through all the days on which any part of it took place, there was a complete fulfillment, according to the current use of language, of the declaration that "the Son of man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matt. xii. 40; John ii. 19.) Jesus rose upon the first day of the week, which is ever since called "the Lord's Day," and is to be observed to

the end of the world as the *Christian Sabbath*. (Acts xx. 7.)

#### ASCENDING INTO HEAVEN.

(See Luke xxiv. 51; Acts i. 9.) Christ's ascension was forty days after his resurrection. (Acts i. 2, 3.) He ascended—1. That his mediatorial person might be glorified. (John xvii. 5.) 2. That he might, as Head of the Church, take possession of heaven for all his members. (Heb. vi. 20.) We are taught by the ascension that heaven is a place; also to set our affection on things above. (Col. iii. 2. See also John xvi. 17; xiv. 2; Eph. iv. 8; Heb. ix. 12.)

#### SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER.

(Mark xvi. 19.) The right hand is the place of *honor*. (See 1 Kings ii. 19.) In the position assigned to our Saviour in heaven he is invested with great dignity and glory. His human nature is elevated above men and angels. His saints will sit down with him upon his throne. They will share in his glory, but not in equal measure. Their glory will be similar, but not in the same degree. (Rev. v. 11, 12; Heb. ii. 9; Rom. viii. 29; Ps. xvi. 11.) The "right hand" is the emblem of *power*. (Matt. xxvi. 64; Ps. cx. 1; Dan. vii. 13, 14; Matt. xxviii. 18; Phil. ii. 9–11.) The legal priests *stood*, their posture denoting that they were constantly engaged in the service of the altar, but had not accomplished the design of their office. (Heb. x. 11–13.) But Jesus, when he entered heaven, *sat down* at the right hand of God, his posture signifying that his work is fin

ished, his oblation has been accepted. (See Rom viii. 34; Acts vii. 56; Phil. ii. 9.)

#### COMING TO JUDGE THE WORLD.

Jesus has been constituted Judge of the whole world. (John v. 22.) At the day of judgment he shall be exalted pre-eminently. He shall wear the same robes of majesty as the Father, and he shall come with all his holy angels. (Mark viii. 38; Matt. xxv. 31.) He who was led to the bar with a band of soldiers shall be attended to the bench with a guard of angels. Christ shall judge his judges. He shall judge Pilate that condemned him. Kings must leave their thrones and come to his bar. *All* will appear before his judgment-seat to receive the things done in the body, whether they have been good or evil. (Acts xvii. 31; Rev. i. 7; Heb. ix. 28.)

“Christ has taken our nature into heaven to represent us, and has left us on earth with his nature to *represent him*.”—*John Newton*.

QUESTION 29.—*How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

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

#### REDEMPTION.

This term is borrowed from certain pecuniary transactions among men, as the release of an imprisoned debtor by liquidating his debt, or the deliverance of a captive by paying a ransom. These are transactions

with which mankind in general, and especially the Jews and primitive Christians, have been perfectly familiar. Accordingly, both in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures the deliverance of man from sin is frequently represented by language borrowed from such negotiations. The term before us is of this nature. It involves all the ideas included in atonement. It supposes sin, which is the cause of imprisonment or captivity. It supposes deliverance by a substitute, the captive or debtor being unable to effect his own escape. And of course it supposes also a clear emancipation or restoration as the result of the ransom being paid. (See Matt. xx. 28 ; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.)

#### PURCHASED BY CHRIST.

“The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto him.”—*Confession of Faith*, chap. viii. sec. 5. (Rom. v. 19 ; iii. 25, 26 ; Heb. x. 14 ; Eph. v. 2 ; i. 11, 14 ; John xvii. 2 ; Heb. ix. 12, 15. See also Heb. v. 9 ; 1 Cor. vi. 20 ; Ps. lxvii. 18 ; Isa. lxi. 1 ; lv. 1 ; Mark xvi. 15 ; John xiv. 22.)

#### WE ARE MADE PARTAKERS.

It is not enough for us that there is a redemption purchased, for there are those who deny the Lord who bought them. (2 Pet. ii. 1.) It is not enough to hear of it, for to some it is “a savor of death unto death.” (2 Cor. ii. 16.) It is not enough to have a name among

the redeemed. (Rev. iii. 1.) It is also necessary that we be partakers of the purchased redemption. Although, as a consequence of Christ's having paid the price of his precious blood, the salvation of his people was certain, yet something further was necessary to make them actual partakers of it. As they come into the world in a state of guilt and depravity, are "by nature children of wrath even as others," they must undergo a change both relative and real—relative, in respect of the law, by being acquitted of its charges; and real, in respect of their views and dispositions. (See Acts xxvi. 18.) The order of the divine procedure toward them is represented in Rom. viii. 29, 30. (See also Heb. ii. 14; Col. ii. 6; i. 27.)

#### EFFECTUAL APPLICATION.

When may the application of redemption be said to be *effectual*? When it produces the *saving effects* for which it is designed. What are these saving effects? The opening of sinners' eyes, and turning them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. (Acts xxvi. 18.) The *purchase* of redemption is a work done *without us*, but the *application* of it takes place *within us*.

#### BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT.

The external means which God employs in the application of redemption are his ordinances, and particularly his word, read and heard (2 Tim. iii. 15, 16; Rom. x. 17); but conversion is effected by the Holy Spirit. (1 Thess. i. 5; 2 Thess. i. 11.) Each person of the Godhead has a peculiar province in the work of redemption. As it originated with the Father, on whose love the eternal purpose of saving sinners was founded,

and was obtained by the obedience and death of the Son, so it is applied by the Holy Ghost, the author of spiritual wisdom and faith and holiness and consolation. Hence this office is expressly ascribed to him. He is called the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. (Eph. i. 17.) God promises to put his Spirit within us, that we may walk in his statutes and keep his judgments, and do them. (Ezek. xxxvi. 27.) In a word, we are said to be “born of the Spirit.” (John iii. 5. See also Tit. iii. 5, 6; John vi. 63; xvi. 15; xiv. 26.) Why is the Spirit, the third person of the adorable Trinity, in the application of the work of the redemption called the *Holy* Spirit? Because he is essentially holy, and because all his works and operations are of a like nature or character with himself. (Ps. li. 11; Rom. xv. 16.) Why is redemption said to be applied by the Spirit of Christ or “*his* Holy Spirit”? Because the Spirit is sent for this work more immediately by Christ, and through his mediation, as the leading fruit of his purchase. (John xiv. 16.)

#### EVIDENCE OF BEING REDEEMED.

How shall we know that we are in the number of them that are redeemed by Christ? Those of whom this is true are—1. Reconciled to God; their enmity is taken away; their judgments approve, their wills incline to that which is good. (Col. i. 21.) 2. They are redeemed from the world. (Gal. i. 4.) They are “dead to the world,” its honors, profits and preferments. They are “risen with Christ.” (Col. iii. 1.)

When Bishop Butler lay on his deathbed he called for his chaplain and said, “Though I have endeavored to avoid sin

and to please God to the utmost of my power, yet from the consciousness of perpetual infirmities I am still afraid to die." "My lord," said the chaplain, "you have forgotten that Jesus Christ is a Saviour." "True," was the answer; "but how shall I know that he is a Saviour for me?" "My lord, it is written, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'" "True," said the bishop, "and I am surprised that though I have read that scripture a thousand times over, I never felt its virtue till this moment; and now I die happy."

"In my preaching," said Bunyan, "I could not be satisfied unless some fruit did appear in my work." "I would think it a greater happiness," said Matthew Henry, "to gain one soul to Christ than mountains of silver and gold to myself. If I do not gain souls, I shall enjoy all my other gains with very little satisfaction; and I would rather beg my bread from door to door than not undertake this great work." Doddridge, writing to a friend, remarked, "I long for the conversion of souls more sensibly than for anything besides. Methinks I could not only labor, but die for it with pleasure."

The Rev. Pliny Fiske in his diary thus writes: "There is nothing I desire so much for myself and my friends as the influence of the Holy Ghost. I am clearly convinced that my sins will prevail and my lusts increase their strength in spite of all my efforts, unless the Holy Spirit purify and elevate my affections. I am persuaded that he can give me humility, repentance, benevolence, faith, love and every grace. Blessed agent in the work of salvation! it is thine to sanctify. Oh, let thy purifying influences come into my soul and make me holy!"

QUESTION 30.—*How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

## UNITING US TO CHRIST.

We cannot have any share in the redemption purchased by Christ without union to him, because all purchased blessings are lodged in him and go along with him. The union between Christ and his disciples is not a mere figure of speech, but a reality. They are one, not merely in sentiment and affection, by consent of mind and heart, but by a real conjunction. This union is—1. *Spiritual*. In forming an idea of it we must elevate our conceptions higher than the most intimate connection which can be formed between two individuals by the operations of intellect and will. The same Spirit lives in our exalted Redeemer and in his people upon earth, and hence, although separated from him and from one another, they are but one. 2. *Indissoluble*. *He* will not dissolve it, for those whom he loves he loves to the end. Nor will *they*, for as he prays that their faith may not fail, so the Spirit, dwelling in their hearts, preserves it amidst the dangers to which it is exposed. There may, indeed, be a temporary turning from Christ, in consequence of the decline of grace or the suspension of the activity of the spiritual principle, but there can be no total or final falling away from grace.

How can we be united to Christ, seeing he is in heaven and we on earth? Although the human nature of Christ be in heaven, yet his person is everywhere. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Where can he be found on earth, in order to our being united to him? In the word, which is *nigh* to us, and Christ in it. (Rom. x. 8, 9.)

*PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE.*

(1 Cor. vi. 17; Gal. ii. 20; Rom. vi. 4; Eph. ii. 5, 6; Col i. 18; Eph. v. 30; John i. 16; xv. 5; Isa. xxviii. 16; 1 Pet. ii. 5. See also Heb. ii. 11; John x. 28; Rev. xiv. 13; 1 Thess. iv. 14.)

*FAITH.*

The principal bond of union between Christ and his people is the *Spirit*, who, being in him and in them, makes them truly one. But as the union is mutual, something is necessary on their part, to complete it; and this is *faith* or believing. Hence, Christ is said to dwell in our hearts by faith. (Eph. iii. 17.) Faith is everywhere commanded in the Scriptures. (See 1 John iii. 23; Mark i. 14, 15; John vi. 35.) There is an *historical* faith, which is the believing the truths revealed in the word, because of divine authority; a *temporary* faith, which soon vanisheth (Matt. xiii. 21); a *miraculous* faith, which was granted to the apostles to work miracles for the confirmation of the gospel, and which Judas had, who, after casting out devils, was himself cast out to the devil; a true *justifying* faith, which consists in a cordial approbation of the Saviour, a hearty consent to his offers, an acceptance of him in his entire character, as made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. i. 30.) Though faith is our act, yet it is God's gift. (Eph. ii. 8; Col. ii. 12.)

*HOW IS FAITH WROUGHT IN US?*

By the blessed Spirit, who is called the "Spirit of grace" (Zech. xii. 10), because he is the spring and efficient applicer of all grace. "Faith," says an old

writer, "is the chief work which the Spirit of God works in a man's heart. In making the world God did but speak a word, but in working faith he puts forth his arm. (Luke i. 51.) The Spirit's working faith is called the exceeding greatness of God's power. (Eph. i. 19, 20.) What a power was put forth in raising Christ from the grave when such a tombstone lay upon him—"the sins of all the world"! Yet he was raised up by the Spirit; the same power the Spirit of God puts forth in working faith." (See Eph. ii. 18, 22; iii. 17; Rom. viii. 9.)

Mrs. Romaine was once in company with a clergyman at Tiverton who spake with no little zeal against what he called "irresistible grace," alleging that "such grace would be quite incompatible with free will." "Not at all so," answered Mrs. Romaine; "grace operates effectually, yet not coercively. The wills of God's people are drawn to him and divine things, just as your will would be drawn to a bishopric, if you had the offer of it."

#### IN OUR EFFECTUAL CALLING.

The common call will not unite us to Christ. (Matt. xxii. 14.) It is in our effectual calling that this is done. (1 Cor. i. 9.) "Whom he called, them he also justified." (Rom. viii. 30. See Notes on next Question.)

#### IMPROVEMENT.

What improvement ought both saints and sinners to make of the doctrine of *union with Christ*? Saints ought to show that Christ is *in them*, by endeavoring that his image shine forth in their conversation, studying to "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." (Col. i. 10.) Sinners ought to seek after this

happy relation to Christ while he is yet *standing* at their *door* and *knocking* (Rev. iii. 20), and while the gates of the *city of refuge* are not yet closed. (Zech. ix. 12.)

That active and useful Christian, Harlan Page, is said to have been habitually impressed with the necessity to every man of being born again. 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 conversion, 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 a living faith. This he felt and urged to be the sinner's first, great and only duty in which he could be acceptable to God.

QUESTION 31.—*What is effectual calling?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

#### EFFECTUAL CALLING.

There is an *external* and general call of providence, and especially of the word, by which all sinners are freely invited to Christ, that they may have life and salvation by him. (See Ps. xix. 1; Mic. vi. 9; Isa. lv. 1; Rev. xxii. 17; Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 3.) This outward call shows men what they ought to do in order to salvation, and renders them inexcusable in case of disobedience. *Effectual* calling is the internal call of the Spirit, accompanying the outward call with saving power and efficacy upon the soul. (John vi. 45, 63;

Matt. xxii. 14; 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14; 2 Cor. iii. 3, 6; Rom. viii. 2; 2 Tim. i. 9, 10; Eph. ii. 1-5.) With this calling sanctification is inseparably connected. It is a holy calling. (2 Tim. i. 9; 1 Pet. i. 15; ii. 9; Gal. i. 6.) The outward call may bring a man to the profession of Christ; the inward brings him also to a possession of Christ. This call is

#### THE WORK OF GOD'S SPIRIT.

An *act* is a *single* exertion or operation, and takes place and is finished *at once*. A *work* is a *series* or continuation of acts or operations, and continues for some length of time. As effectual calling consists, as the answer shows, of several progressive steps, it is, of course, *a work*. It should be noted, however, that the several steps or gradations of advance in this work, although capable of being separately considered, are not so separated in experience as that one is always completed before another is begun. On the contrary, he who is effectually called seldom, perhaps, thinks of the several parts or steps of his calling till the whole is completed, when by reflection he may perceive that he has shared in all. Effectual calling is termed a work of *God's Spirit*, because it relates to the application of redemption, which is the *special* work of the Holy Spirit. (John xvi. 14. See also 2 Cor. iii. 5; Jer. xxxi. 18; Isa. lvii. 17, 18; Acts xvi. 14; Rom. ix. 16; John vi. 37.) Four steps are specified as being the Spirit's work:

#### 1. CONVINCING US OF OUR SIN AND MISERY.

(See on Question 17.) There is an actual necessity that we should be convinced of *our sin*. (Matt. ix. 12.)

We must be convinced of the fact of it (Ps. l. 21), of the fault of it (Jer. ii. 10), of the folly of it (2 Chron. xvi. 9), of the filth of it (Jer. ii. 23), of the fruit of it (Isa. lix. 1, 2), and of the fountain of it. (1 Kings viii. 38.) We must also be convinced of our *misery* (Rev. iii. 17; Matt. iii. 7; Rom. vii. 9), and of the possibility of our being helped by the grace of God. (Luke xv. 7; Matt. xi. 28.) The Spirit works in our minds a conviction of our sin and misery, when he gives us a clear sight and full persuasion of the dreadful wrath of God, and the endless miseries of hell which we have deserved for sin, and to which we are every hour exposed; which wounds our hearts and consciences and fills us with perplexing care what to do to be saved. (John xvi. 8; Acts ii. 37; Jer. l. 5.) This he does by the law. (Rom. iii. 20; Gal. iii. 10.) All who are effectually called are thus convinced. All, however, have not an *equal measure* of this conviction—some more and some less, as in the instances of Paul and Lydia. (Acts ix. 6, as compared with chap. xvi. 14.) But all have enough to make them feel their guilty and lost condition and their need of Christ.

## 2. ENLIGHTENING OUR MINDS IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

“The understanding is opened to understand the Scriptures, to discern with some clearness the plan of salvation by Christ, to perceive the practical use of his offices, to receive the knowledge of his atonement, righteousness and fullness—to see, in a word, that he is a Saviour of matchless excellence, inexhaustible sufficiency and unspeakable suitableness. The anxious

sinner sees with an impression never known before, that Christ Jesus is indeed a Saviour—exactly fitted to his state and necessities; able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; and willing to save without money and without price. He sees, too, that Christ is freely tendered, sincerely offered, with all his benefits, to every one who is willing to accept him.” (See Hos. vi. 1; xiii. 9; Eph. i. 17, 18; 2 Cor. iv. 6, Ps. lxxxix. 19; Zech. ix. 12; Phil. iii. 8.)

### 3. *AND RENEWING OUR WILLS.*

(See Ps. ex. 2, 3.) The will is naturally wicked and rebellious, full of enmity against Christ and the way of salvation through him. (John v. 40.) Nor can any man change or renew his own will. (Jer. xiii. 23.) The renovation of the will consists in working in it a new inclination or propensity to good, and a fixed aversion to whatever is evil. The Spirit, in renewing the will, does not use any violence or compulsion. God here acts by his almighty power, without, however, forcing our will; for, communicating to us spiritual properties, he gives us to will and to do of his good pleasure. His influence, therefore, cannot be resisted by the hardness of a man’s heart, since it removes that hardness, and is the converting of hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. (Ps. cxix. 36; Ezek. xxxvi. 26.)

### 4. *DOTH PERSUADE AND ENABLE US, ETC.*

Christ is “offered to us in the gospel.” (Rev. iii. 20.) He is “freely” offered. (Isa. lv. 1.) We are concerned to embrace that offer. (Prov. ix. 5.) What is it to

“embrace” Christ? It is, like Simeon, to clasp him in the arms of faith with complacency and delight. (Luke ii. 28.) *Where* is it that faith embraces him? In the promises of the gospel. (Heb. xi. 13.) What warrant has faith thus to embrace him? His Father’s *gift* (John iii. 16) and his own offer of himself. (Isa. xlv. 22.) God conducts us to Christ, not like slaves driven to their task by the terror of punishment, but in a manner suitable to our rational and moral nature. His power, although able to subdue opposition, is of the mildest and most gentle kind. While he commands, he persuades; while he draws, the sinner comes without reluctance; and never in his life is there a freer act of volition than when he believes in Christ and accepts of his salvation.

A person once said in the presence of Dr. Nettleton, that to inculcate upon sinners their dependence on God for a new heart is suited to discourage effort and to lead them to sit down in despair. He replied: “The very reverse of this is true. Suppose a number of men are locked up in a room playing cards; some person informs them that the roof of the building is on fire, and that they must make their escape or they will perish in the flames. Says one of them, ‘We need not be in haste; we shall have time to finish the game.’ ‘But,’ says the person who gave the alarm, ‘your door is locked.’ ‘No matter for that,’ he replies; ‘I have the key in my pocket, and can open it at any moment.’ ‘But I tell you that the key will not open the door.’ ‘Won’t it?’ he exclaims, and rising from the table flies to the door and exerts himself to the utmost to open it. So sinners, while they believe there is no difficulty in securing their salvation at any moment, quiet their consciences and silence their fears. But when they are taught that such is the wickedness of their hearts that they will never repent unless God interposes by his regenerating grace, they are alarmed

and begin to inquire in deep distress what they shall do to be saved."

The Rev. Thomas Doolittle used to catechise the members, and especially the young people, of his congregation every Lord's Day. One Sabbath evening, after having received an answer in the words of the Assembly's Catechism, to the question, "What is effectual calling?" and having explained it, he proposed that the question should be answered by changing the words *us* and *our* into *me* and *my*. Upon this proposal a solemn silence followed; many felt its vast importance, but none had courage to answer. At length a young man rose up, and with every mark of a broken and contrite heart, by divine grace was enabled to say: "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing *me* of *my* sin and misery, enlightening *my* mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing *my* will, he did persuade and enabled *me* to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to *me* in the gospel." The scene was truly affecting. The proposal of that question had commanded unusual solemnity. The rising up of the young man had created high expectations, and the answer being accompanied with proofs of unfeigned piety and modesty, the congregation was bathed in tears. This young man had been convicted by being catechised, and to his honor, Mr. D. says, "From being an ignorant and wicked youth, he had become an intelligent professor, to God's glory and my much comfort."

QUESTION 32.—*What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

All those are happy who, as we have seen in considering the preceding question, are "effectually called" and "embrace Jesus Christ." They enjoy communion with Christ. 1. Communion of *intercourse*—that is, that near

intimacy and sweet freedom which Christ and his people have with one another. (Isa. lviii. 9.) 2. Communion of *interest*, consisting in their actual title to and possession of Christ himself and his purchased blessings. (Song ii. 16; 1 Cor. i. 30. See also Eph. ii. 5; 1 Thess. ii. 12; Rom. iv. 16.) They are happy even in this life. (Eph. i. 13.) They are dignified and preferred. (1 Pet. ii. 9.) They are brought near. (Eph. ii. 13.) They are enlightened. (Isa. ii. 5.) They are taken into the communion of saints (Heb. xii. 22), and into communion with the holy angels. (Heb. xii. 22.) They are entitled to the best possessions. (1 Cor. iii. 22.) They enjoy the best blessings. (Eph. i. 3.) They are happy both for soul and body. (2 Pet. i. 3.) How are all these benefits *connected* with effectual calling? By a connection established in the eternal purpose and counsel of God, in which all these blessings or benefits are sweetly linked together. (Rom. viii. 30.)

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. Then 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, concerts, etc., 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 that a life of pleasure can give, and I know it likewise." So far they were equal. But Newton had another experience, found "in the pardon of his sins, communion with God, calm reliance on the divine Providence, the cheering pros-

pect of a better life, with foretastes of heaven in his soul." Supposing that such pleasures would be despised, he adds, "But here lies the difference, my dear friend. You condemn that which you have never tried." An all-sufficient answer is this to every one who questions the superiority of religion.

#### *JUSTIFICATION.*

All the blessings here enumerated flow from our union to Christ. (1 Cor. i. 30.) Justification is a legal term, used to imply the declaring or accounting of a person just or righteous before God. If any one were free from sin, if he perfectly obeyed God's commandments, he would naturally be pronounced, for he would really be, just—not exposed to the penalty of transgression. (Rom. ii. 13.) But mankind, as sinful, are not just in this sense, and cannot be so treated. (Ps. cxliii. 2; Rom. iii. 19, 20, 23; 1 John i. 8.) If, then, they are to be freed from the condemnation of sin, if they are to be dealt with as those not amenable to God's law, it must be, not by the establishment of their innocence, but by the remission of their guilt. Justification is an unspeakable benefit. (Ps. xxxii. 1.)

What is the connection between effectual calling and justification? "Whom he called, them he also justified." (Rom. viii. 30; 2 Cor. v. 21.) In effectual calling, sinners, being united to Christ by faith, have thereby communion with him in his righteousness, for justification. (Phil. iii. 9.)

#### *ADOPTION.*

Adoption is an act whereby one takes another into his family, owns him for his son and appoints him his heir. It obtained among the Greeks and Romans and

many other nations. We meet, however, with few or no traces of it among the Jews. In theology it denotes that act by which God takes into his family and invests with a title to heaven all who believe in Jesus Christ. (John i. 12; 1 John iii. 1.) This is also an unspeakable benefit. (Rom. viii. 17; Eph. i. 5.) Adoption is connected with effectual calling thus: In virtue of the union which takes place in effectual calling, believers stand related to Christ as having a *new* kind of interest in God as *his Father*, and consequently *their Father* in him. (See John xx. 17; Eph. i. 3; Rom. viii. 15; Gal. iii. 26.)

#### SANCTIFICATION.

Sanctification is renewal after the image of God. It is the end, so far as respects us, of our election; it is a capital promise and distinguishing blessing of the covenant of grace, a precious fruit of redemption by the blood of Christ, the design of God in regeneration, the primary intention of justification, the scope of adoption, and absolutely necessary to glorification. So that in the sanctification of a sinner the great designs of all the divine operations respecting that most glorious of all the divine works, *redemption*, are united. Believers are "sanctified in Christ Jesus." (1 Cor. i. 2.) They are made "partakers of his holiness." (Heb. xii. 10.) How is effectual calling connected with sanctification? In virtue of the union which takes place in effectual calling, believers are related to Christ as the Lord their strength, their quickening and influencing Head, who of God is made unto them sanctification. (1 Cor. i. 30.)

*AND THE SEVERAL BENEFITS.*

Of what other benefits do believers partake? Everything essential to their comfort, usefulness and preparation for heaven. (Ps. lxxxiv. 11.) They receive "the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 38.) Everything shall turn to their advantage. (Rom. viii. 28.) They shall have a happy death. (Rev. xiv. 13.) They shall have a happy resurrection. (1 Cor. xv. 20.)

*IMPROVEMENT.*

In view of the benefits of which believers are partakers, they ought through grace, in the use of all the means and ordinances of God's appointment, to "give all diligence to make their calling and election sure." (2 Pet. i. 10, 11.) They ought to walk holily. Theirs is a holy calling. (2 Tim. i. 9.) They are called to be saints. (Rom. i. 7 ; 1 Pet. i. 15.) When Antigonus was about to commit a vile sin, one reminded him that he was a king's son. Christians should ever remember that they are of the blood-royal of heaven. (1 Thess. iv. 7.) Holiness is the livery or silver star the godly wear. (Isa. lxiii. 18.) They are anointed with the consecrating oil of the Spirit. (1 John ii. 20.) Sinners also should make it sure that they are effectually called by coming at the call. "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." (Jer. iii. 22.)

A minister of the seventeenth century, having finished prayer, looked round upon the congregation, and observing a young man who had just been put into one of the pews very uneasy in his situation, adopted the following singular expedient to detain him: Turning to one of the members of his church who sat in the gallery, he asked him this question aloud: "Brother, do you repent of coming to Christ?" "No, sir," he replied. "I never

was happy till I came. I only repent that I did not come to him sooner." The minister then turned to the opposite gallery, and addressed himself to an aged member in the same manner: "Brother, do you repent of coming to Christ?" "No, sir," said he; "I have known the Lord from my youth upward." He then looked down upon the young man, whose attention was fully engaged, and fixing his eyes upon him, said, "Young man, are *you* willing to come to Christ?" This unexpected address from the pulpit so affected him that he sat down and concealed his face. The person who sat next him encouraged him to rise and answer the question. The minister repeated, "Young man, are you willing to come to Christ?" With a tremulous voice he replied, "Yes, sir." "But *when*, sir?" added the minister in a solemn and loud tone. He mildly answered, "Now, sir." "Then stay," said he, "and learn the word of God, which you will find in 2 Cor. vi. 2: 'Behold, *now* is the accepted time: behold, *now* is the day of salvation.'" By this sermon he was greatly affected, and came into the vestry, after the service, bathed in tears. The reluctance to stay which he had discovered, was occasioned by the strict injunction of his father, who threatened that if he went to hear the fanatics he would turn him out of doors. Having now heard the gospel, and being unable to conceal the feelings of his mind, he was afraid to meet his father. The minister sat down and wrote an affectionate letter to him, which had so good an effect that both father and mother came to hear for themselves. They were both brought to a knowledge of the truth, and together with their son were joyfully received into Christian communion.

QUESTION 33.—*What is justification?*

ANSWER.—*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 unto us, and received by faith alone.*

Justification, in common language, signifies a vindication from any charge which affects the moral character,

but in theology it is used for the acceptance of one, by God, who is, and confesses himself to be, guilty. (See on Question 32.) We all need to be justified, for we are "all guilty before God." (Rom. iii. 19.) It is not enough that we justify ourselves. (Job ix. 20.) Nor is it enough that our neighbors justify us. (Luke xvi. 15.)

#### *GOD'S FREE GRACE.*

Justification is God's act. (Rom. viii. 33; Mark ii. 7.) And it comes from his free grace. The *cause* (says an old writer), "the inward impellent motive or ground of justification, is the free grace of God." We are justified freely by his grace (Rom. iii. 24), which Ambrose expounds, "not of the grace within us, but the free grace of God." If it be asked how it is an act of *free grace* by which we are justified, since it is through the redemption that is in Christ, the answer is this: The redemption that is in Christ is the channel through which justifying grace freely flows to us. It was infinite grace that provided a Saviour, pure grace that led the soul to the Saviour and gave it an interest in him; and therefore an act of free grace is clearly performed when the sinner is declared to be justified in virtue of his righteousness. To the Saviour himself it is indeed an act of strict justice that his people should be justified, since he has paid the full price of it. But to his people, who receive the benefits of his redemption, it is grace from the foundation to the topstone.

#### *AN ACT.*

Justification is called an *act*, because, like the sentence or decision of a judge, it is done and completed

at once, and not carried on gradually like a work of time. It denotes an *act of jurisdiction*, and not an *inward change* upon the soul. This is evident from its being opposed to *condemnation*, which all own to consist, not in the *infusing of wickedness* into a person, but in *passing sentence* upon him according to the demerit of his crime. (Ps. cix. 7.) To *justify* a person, then, is not to *make* him righteous, but to *declare* him to be so, upon a legal ground, and trial of a judge. (Isa. xliii. 25, 26.)

Our justification consists in two things: 1. In the pardon of all our sins. (Acts xiii. 39; see also Rom. viii. 1; Isa. lvii. 5; Heb. viii. 12; Mic. vii. 19.) 2. In the acceptance of our persons as righteous. (Rom. v. 1, 3; Eph. i. 6.) Wherein do pardon and acceptance differ? Pardon sustains us as innocent in law, and frees us from the sentence of death, but acceptance sustains us as positively and *perfectly righteous* in law, and entitles us to eternal life. (Eph. i. 6; 2 Cor. v. 21.) In whose *sight* are we accepted as righteous? In the sight of God as a just judge. (2 Cor. v. 21.) How can a holy and righteous God, whose judgment is according to truth, accept sinners as righteous?

**ONLY FOR THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST  
IMPUTED UNTO US.**

By "the righteousness of Christ" we are to understand his obedience and suffering. (Phil. ii. 8.) It is ordinarily distinguished into his obedience, *active* and *passive*. (Dan. ix. 4, etc.) By the former is meant his holiness of nature and righteousness of life. (Rom. v. 19.) By the latter is meant his satisfactory sufferings,

which are a full compensation for all the injury done to the honor of God by our sin. (Eph. v. 2.) Christ's righteousness is the *only* ground or medium of our justification. (Rom. iii. 24, 26, 28; Eph. ii. 9; Isa. lxiv. 6; 1 Cor. i. 30; Isa. liii. 11; 1 John i. 7; Rom. v. 9; iv. 25; Isa. xlv. 24.) How is it, then, said (James ii. 24), "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only?" The answer is, Works declare us to be righteous before *men*, but they do not make us righteous before *God*. They are *evidences* of our justification, not *causes*. Besides being the *fruits* of a true and living faith (James ii. 18), they adorn the profession of the gospel (Tit. ii. 11, 12; iii. 8), stop the mouths of adversaries (1 Pet. ii. 15), and glorify God. (John xv. 8.) The righteousness of Christ is *imputed to us* when, though it be subjectively in Christ or the righteousness which he wrought, yet by God it is accounted ours as if we wrought it ourselves in our own persons. (Rom. iv. 6; viii. 4; 2 Cor. v. 21; Rom. iii. 22, 24; Gal. iii. 12; Rom. v. 19.)

#### RECEIVED BY FAITH ALONE.

The righteousness of the Redeemer is of no avail to those for whom he acted as Surety in his obedience and suffering, until it is applied. We must *receive* his righteousness (Rom. v. 11), and receive it by *faith*, which is not only an assent to the testimony of God concerning his Son, but the reliance of the soul upon his atonement and righteousness as the only ground of acceptance with God. (See Acts x. 43; xvi. 31; Hab. ii. 4; Jer. xxiii. 6.) The dignity is not in faith as a grace, but relatively as it lays hold on Christ's merits. We

are to understand the expression "that Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. iv. 3) in consistency with Paul's uniform doctrine that a sinner is just before God only in the righteousness of Christ, and regard him here as using a metonymy by which the efficient is put for the effect, or the *instrument* for the *end* accomplished by it. Faith is merely the *hand* that *receives* and applies the righteousness of Christ by which we are justified.

#### INFERENCES.

1. The happy state of believers. (Rom. v. 1.) 2. The excellence and necessity of faith. 3. The greatness of sin is no bar to faith. (2 Cor. v. 21.) 4. Believers ought to be exceedingly humble. God must have all the glory of their salvation. (Rom. iii. 27; 1 Cor. xv. 10.)

Bishop Asbury, being asked his thoughts on imputed righteousness, observed: "Were I disposed to boast, my boasting would be found true. I obtained religion near the age of thirteen. At the age of sixteen I began to preach, and traveled some time in Europe. At twenty-six I left my native land and bade adieu to my weeping parents, and crossed the boisterous ocean to spend the balance of my days in a strange land, partly settled by savages. I have traveled through heat and cold for forty-five years. In thirty years I have crossed the Allegheny Mountains fifty-eight times. I have often slept in the woods without necessary food or raiment. In the Southern States I have waded swamps and led my horse for miles, where I took colds that brought on the diseases which are now preying on my system and must soon terminate in death. But my mind is still the same—that it is through the merits of Christ I am to be saved."

"It has been often observed that the schoolmen themselves, in

their meditations and devotional writings, speak a language quite different from that which they use in their disputes and controversies; and I had rather learn what men really think on this head from their prayers than from their writings. Nor do I remember that I ever heard any good man in his prayers use any expression about justification wherein anything of self-righteousness was introduced. Nor have I observed that any public liturgy, the mass-book excepted, guides men in their prayers before God to plead anything for their acceptance with him, or as the means or condition thereof, but grace, mercy, the righteousness and blood of Christ alone.”—*Owen*.

QUESTION 34.—*What is adoption?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

#### ADOPTION.

Two kinds of adoption are ascribed to God—*common* and *special*. Common or general adoption is his taking some part of mankind into his family of the visible Church. (Rom. ix. 4.) Circumcision was the badge of this under the Old Testament (Gen. xvii.), and baptism is so under the New. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Special adoption is his bringing a child of the devil into his family of the invisible Church, and giving him a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. (Col. i. 13; Gal. iv. 5, 6; 2 Cor. vi. 18.) Though by nature the children of wrath (Eph. ii. 3), all believers are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (Gal. iii. 26.)

#### AN ACT OF GOD'S FREE GRACE.

Adoption is an *act*, because it is completed *at once*, and not carried on gradually like a work of time. (See

on Question 33.) Men do not deserve to be made God's children. (Jer. iii. 19.) They are altogether unworthy of such a favor. (Luke xv. 19.) It is bestowed upon them notwithstanding their unworthiness. (2 Cor. vi. 18.) It is an act of God's *free grace*. (1 John iii. 1.) By it they are received into the number of God's children. (Rom. ix. 26.) They are thus received upon their believing. The Greek word for "power" in John i. 12 signifies dignity and prerogative; he dignifies them to become the sons of God.

#### *RECEIVED INTO THE NUMBER.*

The "number" of the sons of God is constituted by all the individuals who compose the whole body of the elect, both angels and men. For holy angels are also denominated the sons of God, as in Job, where it is said, "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy." Holy angels, however, are the sons of God, so to speak, by *birth*, and not by *adoption*. They have retained that sinless and happy state in which they were at first created.

#### *ALL THE PRIVILEGES OF THE SONS OF GOD.*

Consider the cost of these privileges. (Gal. iv. 5.) Consider their greatness. Believers can call God Father. (Rom. viii. 15; Jer. iii. 19; Luke xv. 18.) They can look upon all good Christians as their brethren. (Matt. xxiii. 8.) They all make one family. (Eph. iii. 15.)

"Oh, sweet it is through life's dark way  
In Christian fellowship to move,  
Illumed by one unclouded ray,  
And one in faith, in hope, in love!"

They are privileged persons. They will be protected from temporal and spiritual evils. (Ps. cxxi. 7 ; xci. 10.) All needful things shall be provided for them, both for soul and body. (Ps. xxxiv. 10.) They shall be bettered by affliction (Heb. xii. 10), as the furnace makes gold purer. They shall have an audience and an answer to their prayers. (1 John v. 14, 15.) They have an interest in all the promises, which are children's bread. The promises to them are sure; God's truth, which is the highest pearl in his crown, is pledged for their fulfillment. In the dark night of desertion God has promised to be a sun to us in temptation, to enable us to tread down Satan. (Rom. xvi. 20.) Does sin prevail? He has promised to take away its kingly power (Rom. vi. 14.) Oh, the preciousness of the promises! Believers are heirs of them all. There is not a promise in the Bible but they may say, This is mine. To crown all, they have a sure title to the kingdom of heaven. (Rom. viii. 17.)

#### IMPROVEMENT.

1. We should extol and magnify God's mercy. Adoption is a free gift ; we have enough in us to move God to correct us, but nothing to move him to adopt us ; therefore we should bless Him with our praises who hath blessed us in making us his sons and daughters.

2. We should resemble our Father (1 John iii. 2), know his voice (John x. 4), delight in his company (Rom. viii. 15), be deeply concerned for his absence (Job xxiii. 3) and out of love to him that *begat* have great love to all them that are *begotten of him*. (1 John v. 1.)

3. We should submit to him. (Heb. xii. 9.)

4. We should in trusting faith depend on him. (Matt vi. 32.)

Mrs. Susan Huntington, 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 the Father of those only who, disclaiming all other dependence, fly to him through Jesus Christ, as their best, their only portion; who feel the vanity of all human helpers, who love him with a filial and holy love, and who manifest their attachment by a hatred of sin which he hates, by a pursuit of the holiness which he enjoins, by a life of universal obedience to his law."

A priest in Ireland, who was making the Scriptures his daily study, and was an advocate for the schools in that country, which most of the priests oppose, met one of the scholars going to school, and asked him what book it was he carried under his arm? "It is a will, sir," said the boy. "What will?" rejoined the priest. "The last will and testament that Jesus Christ left to me and to all who desire to claim a title in the property therein bequeathed," replied the boy. "What did Christ leave you in that will?" "A kingdom, sir." "Where does that kingdom lie?" "It is the kingdom of heaven, sir." "And do you expect to reign as a king there?" "Yes, sir, as joint heir with Christ." "And will not every person get there as well as you?" "No, sir; none can get there but those that claim their title to that kingdom upon the ground of the will." The priest asked several other questions, to which the boy gave such satisfactory answers as quite astonished him. "Indeed," said he, "you are a good little boy; take care of the book wherein God gives you such precious promises; believe what he has said, and you will be happy here and hereafter."

QUESTION 35.—*What is sanctification?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

**WHEREIN DOES SANCTIFICATION DIFFER FROM JUSTIFICATION AND ADOPTION?**

1. Justification and adoption are acts of God without us. 2. Justification and adoption make only a change of relation—sanctification makes a change of heart. In the first two a man's state is changed; the other changes his character. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26; 1 Pet. iii. 4; Ps. li. 6.) 3. Justification and adoption are perfect at first; sanctification is carried on by degrees to perfection.

**THE WORK OF GOD'S FREE GRACE.**

Sanctification is called *a work*, because it is not, like an act, completed at once, but is continued progressively through the whole life. (2 Cor. vii. 1; Col. i. 10; 2 Cor. x. 15; Eph. ii. 10.) It is called a work of *God's free grace*, because God is the agent by whom it is performed, and his free grace is displayed in effecting it, inasmuch as there is not an individual who is the subject of it but might have been justly left to perish in his sin and pollution. (Jude 1; 1 Pet. i. 2; Tit. iii. 5.)

**RENEWED IN THE WHOLE MAN AFTER THE IMAGE OF GOD.**

Sanctification is a renovation of the *nature*. (Eph. iv. 24.) None can have *sanctified life* who have not a *renewed nature*. (Matt. vii. 18.) By "the whole man" is meant both *soul* and *body*—all the powers of the one and members of the other. (2 Cor. vii. 1; 1 Thess. v. 23.) Sanctification extends as far as original corrup-

tion. Thus it is said, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly." (1 Thess. v. 23.) He is not a sanctified person who is good only in some part, but who is all over sanctified; hence in Scripture grace is called "a new man" (Col. iii. 10), not a new eye, or a new tongue, or a new will, or a new memory and affections, but a "new man." A good Christian, though he be sanctified but in part, yet is sanctified in every part. After whose *image* is the whole man renewed? After the image of God, consisting in knowledge, righteousness and holiness. (Col. iii. 10; Eph. iv. 24.) *Before* we are renewed in the whole man, we bear the image of the *first Adam* after the fall, having his nature corrupted. (Gen. v. 3.) Nor can we be renewed in the whole man, without being united to the *second Adam*. (Acts xv. 9; xxvi. 18; 1 Cor. i. 2.)

The fruit of the sanctification of our *nature* is the sanctification of our *life*. The *first* strengthens us in holy and generous dispositions, but in the *last* we exert that strength in holy thoughts, words and actions. (Matt. xii. 35.) Sanctification has two parts:

#### I. DYING UNTO SIN.

This is a *privative* part—mortification, which lies in the purging out of sin. Sin is compared to leaven which sours, and to leprosy which defiles. Sanctification purges out "the old leaven." (1 Cor. v. 7.) Though it takes not away the life, yet it takes away the love of sin.

#### II. LIVING UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS.

This is a *positive* part—vivification, which is the spiritual refining of the soul, called in Scripture "a

renewing of the mind" (Rom. xii. 2) and a "partaking of the divine nature." (2 Pet. i. 4.) The priests in the law not only were washed in the great laver, but also adorned with glorious apparel (Ex. xxviii. 2); so sanctification not only washes from sin, but adorns with purity.

#### *MORE AND MORE.*

Sanctification, as already hinted, is progressive. It admits of degrees. It is compared to seed which grows, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. It is like the morning sun, which grows brighter to the full meridian. (See 2 Cor. vii. 1.) We are commanded to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. iii. 18.) Like the ancient painter, who, when he had drawn a picture, was ever improving it with his pencil, we, in whom the image of God is drawn but imperfectly, must still be drawing it in more lively colors. If our sanctification does not grow, it is because it does not live. It must go forward, and it will only be perfected in our glorification, when we shall be made free from sin and fully conformed to the image of God. (1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11.)

#### *NECESSITY OF SANCTIFICATION.*

It is necessary, not for justification before God, but for evidencing our justification and faith (James ii. 10), for glorifying God (Matt. v. 16), for showing forth his praise (1 Pet. ii. 9), for adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour (Tit. ii. 10), for proving our union to Christ (John xv. 5, 6), for promoting inward peace and rejoicing (Ps. cxix. 165; 2 Cor. i. 12) for main-

taining fellowship and communion with God (John xiv. 21, 23), for making us meet for heaven (Heb. xii. 14), for making us useful to men (Tit. iii. 8), and for stopping the mouth of calumny when we are reproached as evil-doers. (1 Pet. iii. 16.)

#### *EVIDENCES OF SANCTIFICATION.*

These are a cordial respect to all God's commandments, loving them because they are holy ; a hatred of all sin, and avoiding the appearance of evil ; a spirit of watchfulness and warfare against sin ; a delight in doing good ; communion with God ; a conversation becoming the gospel ; an habitual use of the precious promises of God, particularly with a view to increasing holiness ; and a constant improvement of the blood of Christ by faith and prayer for cleansing from the filth as well as the guilt of sin.

#### *MOTIVES TO SANCTIFICATION.*

These are the holiness, command and love of God, Christ's dying to save and sanctify us, and the great dignity of holiness. (1 Pet. i. 16 ; 1 John iv. 19 ; Tit. ii. 14.) Sanctification is also a great privilege as well as duty. (Phil. ii. 12, 13.) It is the end of Christ's offices, death, exaltation, and of all the precepts, promises and providences of God. (Tit. ii. 14 ; Heb. ii. 10, 11.)

John Newton, in his old age hearing this Scripture repeated, "By the grace of God I am what I am," paused for some moments, and then offered this affecting soliloquy : "I am not what I *ought* to be. Ah, how imperfect and deficient ! I am not what I *wish* to be. I abhor that which is evil, and I would cleave to that which is good. I am not what I *hope* to be. Soon, soon shall I put off mortality, and with mortality all sin

and imperfection. Though I am not what I *ought* to be, what I *wish* to be, and what I *hope* to be, yet I can truly say I am not what I *once* was, a slave to sin and Satan ; I can heartily join with the apostle, and acknowledge, By the grace of God I am what I am.’”

QUESTION 36.—*What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

There are *five* benefits springing from the sources specified. They all relate to *this life*, but there are others in death, and the best of all are in the life to come.

#### 1. ASSURANCE OF GOD’S LOVE.

This certainly is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion grounded upon a fallible hope (Heb. vi. 11, 19), but an infallible assurance of faith founded upon the divine truth of the promises of salvation (Heb. vi. 17, 18), the inward evidence of those graces unto which these promises are made (2 Pet. i. 4, 5, 10, 11 ; 1 John iii. 14 ; i. 3 ; 2 Cor. i. 12), the testimony of the Spirit of adoption witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God (Rom. viii. 15, 16), which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption. (Eph. i. 13, 14 ; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22 ; 2 Pet. i. 10.) “I know whom I have believed,” said Paul. (2 Tim. i. 12.) Here was the faith of sense, the reflex act of faith. And again, “Christ hath loved

me." (Gal. ii. 20). Here was faith flourishing into assurance. This assurance is an unspeakable comfort. (Rom. v. 5.) What is the difference between the *assurance of faith* and the *assurance of sense*? The object of the assurance of FAITH is "Christ in the promise" (James ii. 23), but the object of the assurance of SENSE is "Christ formed in the soul" (2 Tim. ii. 12); or, which is the same thing, the assurance of faith is founded on the *infallible word* of God, who *cannot lie*, but the assurance of sense upon the person's *present experience* of the communications of divine love. Is personal assurance absolutely necessary to salvation? No; a man may be saved, and in Christ, without it. (Isa. l. 10.) It is by FAITH we are saved, not by the ASSURANCE of it. What sins usually eclipse our assurance? Negligence in duty starves it (2 Pet. i. 10), and sinning against light stabs it. (Ps. li. 8.)

## 2. PEACE OF CONSCIENCE.

Peace of conscience is a holy quiet of mind arising from the views of our being in favor with God. (Rom. v. 1. See also John iii. 21; Isa. xxxii. 17; John xiv. 27.) Unbelievers cannot have peace of conscience, but many of them have a false peace. (Isa. lvii. 21.) The difference between true and false peace of conscience is, that the one stirs up against sin, the other encourages in sin. (2 Cor. i. 12.) Those that are justified should labor after peace. (Ps. cxvi. 7.) It should govern them. (Col. iii. 15.) It will preserve them. (Phil. iv. 7.) It will comfort them in the day of trouble. (2 Cor. i. 12.) It is therefore their interest to secure it. (Acts xxiv. 16.)

*3. JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST.*

Joy in the Holy Ghost is that inward elevation of soul which flows from the lively exercise of faith, feasting on Christ in the promise. This joy is described in Scripture as hidden, permanent and unspeakable. The peculiar seasons of this joy are the times of special manifestation after a dark night of desertion, the time of tribulation for Christ's sake, the time of God's remarkable appearance for his Church, and sometimes in and about the time of death. But it is not confined to such seasons, and may be experienced at other times. By its humbling, sanctifying and quickening effects it distinguishes itself from all the false joys of fanaticism and hypocrisy. (See 1 Pet. i. 8; Phil. iv. 4; Neh. viii. 10; Rom. v. 3; Ps. iv. 7.)

*4. INCREASE OF GRACE.*

A Christian grows in the exercise of grace. His lamp is burning and shining; therefore we read of a lively hope. (1 Pet. i. 3.) He grows in the degree of grace. He goes "from strength to strength" (Ps. lxxxiv. 7), from "faith to faith" (Rom. i. 17), and his "love abounds more and more." (Phil. i. 9.) Grace is "seed" (1 John iii. 9), and it is the nature of seed to grow. It does not lie in the heart as a stone in the earth, but as seed in the earth, which will spring up, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear. It cannot but grow from the sweetness and excellency of it. He that has grace is never weary of it, but still would have more. (Job xvii. 9; Prov. iv. 18; 2 Pet. iii. 18; Phil. iii. 14; Matt. xxv. 29; Hos. xiv. 5.)

“Nearer, my God, to thee,  
 Nearer to thee.  
 E’en though it be a cross  
 That raiseth me,  
 Still all my song shall be,  
 Nearer, my God, to thee,  
 Nearer to thee.”

#### 5. PERSEVERANCE THEREIN TO THE END.

How do we know that all truly justified, adopted and sanctified persons do persevere in grace to the end, and shall assuredly attain the heavenly inheritance? 1. From God’s everlasting, unchangeable love, and his faithfulness to his promises of perseverance, as well as of heaven, which he has made to them. 2. From their union and relation to Christ, and his undertaking for them. 3. From the constant abode and indwelling of the Spirit of God in them. 4. From the nature of grace, which is an abiding seed that can never be totally extirpated. (Phil. i. 6; Luke viii. 15; 1 John ii. 19; Rom. viii. 30; Ps. xxxvii. 24; Luke x. 42; Rom. xi. 29; 1 Pet. i. 5; John x. 29; 1 Cor. x. 13; Jer. xxxii. 40; Luke xxii. 32; 1 John ii. 27; Ps. lxxxix. 34; 2 Tim. iv. 18.)

“Grace led my roving feet  
 To tread the heav’nly road,  
 And new supplies each hour I meet  
 While pressing on to God.”

#### IMPROVEMENT.

What improvement should be made of the *connection* of the benefits and blessings that “accompany and flow from justification, adoption and sanctification”? It should excite in us a desire after the saving knowledge

of the truth *as it is in Jesus*, in whom all the lines of divine truth meet, as in their *centre* (Eph. iv. 21), and to admire the infinite goodness and wisdom of God, who has so linked all the blessings of the covenant *into one another*, that they who are possessed of ONE are possessed of ALL. (1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.)

The Rev. Samuel Pierce toward the close of his last and very painful sickness writes to Dr. Ryland: "Now I see the value of the religion of the cross. It is a religion for a dying sinner. It is all that the most guilty, the most wretched, can desire. Yes, I taste its sweetness and enjoy its fullness with all the gloom of a dying bed before me. . . . I was delighted the other day, in re-perusing the *Pilgrim's Progress*, to observe that when Christian came to the top of hill Difficulty he was put to sleep in a chamber called Peace. 'Why, how good is the Lord of the way to me!' said I. 'I have not reached the summit of the hill yet, but, notwithstanding, he puts me to sleep in the chamber of Peace every night.' . . . True, it is often a chamber of pain, but let pain be as formidable as it may, it has never yet been able to expel that peace which the great Guardian of Israel has appointed to keep my heart and mind through Christ Jesus."

QUESTION 37.—*What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

#### AT THEIR DEATH.

"Death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned." But for the righteous an atonement has been made, by which their guilt has been expiated. How, then, it may be asked, comes it to pass that they are sub-

ject to death, which is acknowledged to be the penalty of sin? But with equal reason may it be asked, Why are believers, since Christ has atoned for their sins, not completely delivered from the pollution of sin as soon as they believe? Why does it remain in them to taint their duties and to impede their consolation? Why are they still exposed to the malignity of Satan? Why are they compelled to carry a heavy burden of affliction? These things are as inconsistent with our notions of the effect of a perfect expiation of sin, as their subjection to temporal death. Besides, in the present state we must walk by faith, and not by sight; in other words, we are to be regulated in the choice and practice of religion not by the evidence of sense, but by the evidence of testimony. But were it known exactly, by the exemption of the righteous from temporal death, who are the objects of God's love and who are not—that is, were it known in any other way than by the testimony of Scripture—the province of faith would be greatly circumscribed, and we should then see what we are now called to believe. Believers die in virtue of the promise of the *covenant of grace*, in which death is made over to them deprived of its sting, as a part of Christ's legacy. (1 Cor. iii. 22.)

#### *MADE PERFECT IN HOLINESS.*

The souls of believers do not die with their bodies. They go to a "house eternal in the heavens." (2 Cor. v. 1.) They cannot properly die, for they are spiritual, and not constituted of parts, and so cannot be dissolved. (Matt. x. 28; Luke xxiv. 39.) God will not suffer them to return to nothing. They are *active* after the

death of the body. (Heb. xii. 23.) He has promised eternal life to his saints. (Matt. xxv. 46.) He called himself the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" long after their death, as an evidence that their *souls* were *living*. (Matt. xxii. 32.) Are believers perfect in this life? No. (Phil. iii. 12.) Why must the soul be made perfect at death? Because the purity of the heavenly state admits no sin or imperfection. (Rev. xxi. 27.) What is the state of perfect holiness? Freedom from sin or the least inclination to sin. (Eph. v. 27.) In what else does perfection consist? In the attainment of the highest measures and degrees of holiness of which a creature is capable. (Eph. iv. 12, 13.) Holiness is the beauty of God and angels; it makes heaven. What is happiness but the quintessence of holiness? Here a Christian's grace is imperfect; he cannot write a copy of holiness without blotting. He receives but the "*first-fruits* of the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 23.) But at death believers shall arrive at perfection of grace; then their sun shall be in its meridian splendor; then shall they not need to pray for increase of grace, for they shall be as the angels; their light shall be clear as well as their joy full. (Heb. xii. 23; 1 Cor. xiii. 12; Eph. iv. 13; Rev. xxii. 11.)

"The ransomed shout to their glorious King,  
Where no sorrow shades the soul as they sing,  
But a sinless and joyous song they raise,  
And their voice of prayer is eternal praise."

#### PASS INTO GLORY.

The souls of believers at death pass into—1. *A glorious place*—their Father's house in heaven, where there

are mansions prepared for them by Christ. (John xiv. 2.) 2. *A glorious company*—the company of God and Christ, of angels and of “the spirits of just men made perfect.” (Heb. xii. 23. See also 2 Cor. v. 6–8; Heb. xii. 22–24.) The seeing of God, the loving of God, and being beloved of God, will cause a jubilation of spirit and create such holy raptures of joy as are “unspeakable and full of glory.” (1 Pet. i. 8.) And as in heaven knowledge is perfected, they shall not only know their godly friends and relations, but know even the glorified saints whom they never saw before, and be infinitely delighted in each other’s company. (Matt. xvii. 4.) 3. *A glorious state*—a state of dignity and honor, reigning as kings, with white robes and golden crowns. (2 Tim. iv. 8.) They shall have “a weight of glory,” and an “eternal” weight. (2 Cor. v. 17.) Eternity is written upon their joys; their garlands, made of the flowers of Paradise, fade not. (1 Pet. v. 4.)

#### IMMEDIATELY.

The souls of believers do not sleep with their bodies—do not enter into an intermediate state or into a place which the Church of Rome calls purgatory. “We are confident,” says Paul, “and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” He had said before, “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.” (2 Cor. v. 8 and 6.) It is impossible to express in a clearer manner the immediate transition of the soul from its present habitation into the presence of Christ. What detains us from his presence is our continuance in the body. What intro-

duces us into it is our departure from the body. Our presence with him succeeds our absence from the body, without any interval. (See also Acts vii. 59 ; Luke xxiii. 43 ; 2 Cor. v. 1 ; Phil. i. 23 ; Luke xvi. 22.)

#### **THEIR BODIES BEING STILL UNITED TO CHRIST.**

The bodies of believers sleep in Jesus. They are a part of Christ's mystical body. (1 Thess. iv. 14 ; Rev. xiv. 13.) Even death does not break the bond of this union. The grave is their dormitory, where they quietly repose in Christ. There they *rest* from all toil and trouble (Job iii. 17), and will continue to rest until awakened by the trumpet of the archangel. The Spirit of Christ keeps possession of every particle of their dust, which he will quicken and rebuild as his *temple* at the last day. (Rom. viii. 11.)

#### **THE RESURRECTION.**

The doctrine of the resurrection is plainly revealed. (Acts xxiv. 15 ; Job xix. 26 ; 1 Cor. xv. 22 ; Dan. xii. 2 ; John v. 28, 29.) The dead shall be raised with the same bodies which they had when alive before. If they were not, it could in no proper sense be called a resurrection, but a new creation. Besides, the first body was an instrument of righteousness or sin, and therefore shall share in the reward or punishment.

“My first convictions on the subject of religion were confirmed by observing that really religious persons had some solid happiness among them, which I felt the vanities of the world could not give. I shall never forget standing by the bedside of my sick mother. ‘Are not you afraid to die?’ I asked. ‘No.’ ‘No ! Why does the uncertainty of another state give you no con-

cern? ‘Because God has said, “Fear not. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.” Let me die the death of the righteous.’”—*R. Cecil.*

The Rev. John Wesley, after a long life of great labor and usefulness, being sixty-five years in the ministry, concluded his course, as might have been expected, in peace and holy joy. Having been laid on the bed from whence he rose no more, he called to those who were with him to “pray and praise.” Soon after he again called upon them to “pray and praise,” and taking each by the hand and affectionately saluting them, bade them farewell. Attempting afterward to say something which they could not understand, he paused a little, and then, with all the remaining strength he had, said: “The best of all is, God is with us.” And again, lifting his hand, he repeated the same words in a holy triumph, “The best of all is, God is with us.”

QUESTION 38.—*What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

The benefits here specified may be considered in three respects: 1. In respect of the resurrection itself. 2. In respect of the day of judgment after the resurrection. 3. In respect of heaven after the day of judgment.

#### RAISED UP IN GLORY.

The doctrine of the resurrection is a fundamental article of our faith. The apostle puts it among the principles of the doctrine of Christ. (Heb. vi. 2.) (For proof that the bodies of believers will be raised see 1 Cor. xv. 52; Acts xxvi. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 13; John xi.

25 ; Matt. xxii. 29.) It must not be supposed, however, that none but the bodies of the righteous will be raised. All that are in the graves shall hear Christ's voice and come forth. (John v. 28 ; Acts xxiv. 15 ; Rev. xx. 12.) Some hold that the soul will be clothed with a new body, but then it were improper to call it a resurrection ; it would be rather a creation. (See Job xix. 26 ; 1 Cor. xv. 53.) What is meant by the "glory" in which the bodies of believers shall be raised ? They shall be incorruptible, glorious, powerful and spiritual bodies. (1 Cor. xv. 42-44.) They shall leave all the seeds of corruption behind them in the grave, be for ever incapable of any pain, sickness or death, and have an everlasting youth and vigor. (Isa. xxxiii. 24.) They shall "be fashioned like unto his glorious body," full of splendor and brightness. (Phil. iii. 21 ; Matt. xiii. 43.) They shall be able to bear up under an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and "rest not day and night" in praising and serving God. (2 Cor. iv. 17 ; Rev. iv. 8.) Though they shall retain the essential properties of bodies, yet they shall have spirit-like qualities and endowments, being of an active nature and of a most refined constitution.

#### **OPENLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND ACQUITTED.**

There must be a day of judgment, that there may be a day of retribution, when God may render to every one according to his work. Such a day is revealed in the Scriptures. (Rom. xiv. 10 ; Eccles. xii. 14 ; Ps. xevi. 13 ; Dan. vii. 9, 10.) What is meant by Christ's *acknowledging* believers ? That he will own the special relation between him and them. (See Matt. xxv. 34-

40 ; x. 32 ; Mal. iii. 17 ; John xii. 26.) He will confess them before his Father, angels and men. (Rev. iii. 5.) He will openly acknowledge them, to remove all aspersions and censures that now are cast upon them. (Isa. lxvi. 5.) This acknowledgment will put a full end to all doubts, fears and jealousies of themselves. (1 Cor. iv. 15.) It will also produce in them joy unspeakable and transcendent ; hence called time of refreshing. (Acts iii. 19.) What is meant by Christ's *acquitting* believers ? His declaring the pardon of all their iniquities and the injustice of all the calumnies and reproaches ever cast upon them. In *this life* believers are acquitted *secretly*, out of the sight of the world, and frequently without any intimation of it to themselves ; but *then* the acquittal shall be pronounced in the most solemn and public manner. (2 Thess. i. 10 ; Matt. xxv. 35.)

#### MADE PERFECTLY BLESSED.

The perfect blessedness of believers in heaven will consist—1. In their perfect freedom from all evil, and that both of sin and misery. (Eph. v. 27.) 2. In their full enjoyment of God, the chiefest good. This enjoyment implies—1. That they shall have the glorious presence of God with them. (Rev. xxi. 3.) 2. That they shall have the immediate and beatific vision of his face. (Rev. xxii. 4 ; 1 Cor. xiii. 12 ; 1 John iii. 2.) 3. That they shall have both a full persuasion and sense of God's love to them, and perfect love in their hearts toward him, which necessarily results or arises from the vision of God in heaven. 4. That they shall have fullness of joy. (Ps. xvi. 11 ; Jude 24.)

*ALL ETERNITY.*

The crowning glory of the happiness of believers in heaven is the eternity of its duration. (Matt. xxv. 46.) They then enter upon a career which will never be finished. Ages will run on more rapidly than hours among mortals, but thousands of ages will take nothing from their felicity. God has made them by his gift what he himself is in his own nature, and of them, as well as of him, it may be said that their years shall have no end. Whilst all saints will be perfectly happy in heaven, yet they will be as vessels of different sizes which are all full, although some contain a greater quantity than others. The following passages teach a diversity of degrees of glory: Matt. xxv. 15; 2 Cor. ix. 6; Dan. xii. 3.

Lord Henry Otho, 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 do I 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 Jesus 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.

An infidel and profligate youth, who had formerly disregarded all the pious injunctions of his parents, on one occasion went with them to hear a popular minister who had come to the town where they dwelt. The subject of discourse was the heavenly state; and the minister described in glowing language the nature of the happiness, employment and company of the spirits

of just men made perfect. On his return home the youth expressed his admiration of the speaker's talents. "But," said he, turning to his mother, "I was surprised that while the smile of approbation was visible in the countenances of all around me, you and my father appeared gloomy and sad, and more than once were in tears. I was surprised," continued the youth, "because I thought that if any could claim an interest in the subject, you were the happy persons." "Ah, my son," replied the anxious mother, "I did weep; but it was not because I feared my own personal interest in the subject, or that of your affectionate and pious father. I wept when I thought of you. It is the fear that YOU, the son of my love and the son of my vows, would be banished at last from the delights of the celestial paradise, which caused my bursting heart to seek vent in tears." "I supposed," said the father, turning to his wife, "those were your reflections. The thought of the spiritual condition of our son forcibly impressed my own heart, and made me weep too." The pointed yet cautious and tender admonition of the mother, wisely sanctioned by the husband, found its way to the heart of her child, and terminated in his saving conversion to God.

QUESTION 39.—*What is the duty which God requireth of man?*

ANSWER.—*The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.*

The maxim so often heard from the lovers of lax principles, "that it is no matter what a man believes if his life be good," is a compound of absurdity and falsehood. In the sight of God *principle* is everything, and principle refers to the understanding as well as to the heart. It is consequently of infinite importance that our faith, as to the essentials of religion, be right, because this is the foundation and vital spring of duty. It is also evident that the authors of our Catechism acted with great propriety

in stating the essential articles of faith, or the things to be believed, before they gave a detail of duties, or things to be done.

#### **OBLIGATIONS TO OBEDIENCE.**

Our obligation of obedience to God arises from his universal supremacy and sovereign authority over us as rational creatures (Lev. xviii. 5), who depend entirely upon him for life and breath and all things. (Acts xvii. 25.) Christians have a motive, above others, to the duties of obedience, inasmuch as they have the revelation of God's free love, mercy and grace in Christ bringing salvation to them, which should teach them to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. (Tit. ii. 11, 12.)

#### **RULE OF OBEDIENCE.**

The rule of our obedience to God is his *revealed* will in his word. (2 Tim. iii. 16; Mic. vi. 8; Isa. viii. 20.) The *secret* will of God is his purpose or decree respecting that which comes to pass. (Eph. i. 11.) We are not to regard fulfilling of it as any part of required obedience, for it is unknown to us. It is the rule of God's conduct, not of ours. It ascertains future events, but does not prescribe our duty. God only can require obedience of man for his own sake. He is the only Lord of the conscience; and though we are to obey magistrates, parents and masters, yet we are chiefly to do this because God requires us so to do, and if they command us to do anything which Gods forbids, we are to refuse obedience, and to obey God rather than any man in the world. (Acts iv. 19.)

*CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE OBEDIENCE.*

Obedience must be—1. Sincere. “Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth.” (Josh. xxiv. 14.) 2. Universal. “Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.” (Ps. cxix. 6.) 3. Devout and fervent. “Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” (Rom. xii. 11.) 4. Free and cheerful. “If ye be willing and obedient.” (Isa. i. 19.) 5. With delight. “I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” (Rom. vii. 22.) 6. Constant. “Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.” (Prov. xxiii. 17; Ps. cvi. 3.) 7. In and through Christ. “He made us accepted in the Beloved.” (Eph. i. 6.) Not our obedience, but Christ’s merit, procures acceptance. We must in every part of worship and service present Christ to God in the arms of our faith. Unless we serve God thus, we rather provoke than please him.

*PRACTICAL INFERENCES.*

1. It is highly sinful and dangerous to disobey the known will of God in anything. (Rom. i. 18.) 2. That is a blessed man who conscientiously labors to obey the will of God so far as he can discover it. (John xiii. 17; Gal. vi. 16.) 3. It is highly sinful and dangerous to give commands to others, or obey commands from others, which are not according to God’s command. (Hos. v. 11; Jer. v. 31.)

Dr. F——, the chaplain of Newgate, relates the incident, that when a reprieve arrived for one under sentence of death, he returned a Bible and prayer-book, which the doctor had given him, with his thanks, observing that he had no further need of them now. So much is it beyond the power or disposition of unas-

sisted nature to attend any longer to the requisitions of God than while the terrors of the law and the dread of wrath are impending, and so little is this state of feeling worth, if that be all !

Antonio Guevaza used to say "that heaven would be filled with such as had done good works, and hell with such as *intended* to do them." A very suitable hint to those who put off their convictions to what they think will be a more convenient season.

As Mrs. Judson one day was reading with a Burman convert Christ's Sermon on the Mount, 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."

QUESTION 40.—*What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?*

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

#### **LAWS OF GOD—HOW DISTINGUISHED.**

"The chief difference," says Ursinus, "between the *moral law* and the *ceremonial* and *judicial law* lies in their obligation, manifestation, duration and use. The *moral law* is known naturally, binds all men, and that perpetually; it is different, however, with the ceremonial and judicial law. The *moral law* requires obedience which is both internal and external; the others merely require that which is external. The precepts of the *moral law* are general, having respect to all men, whoever they may be; the others are special, and do

not thus apply to all men. The *precepts of the moral law* are the ends of the others, whilst they again are subservient to those which are moral. The ceremonial and civil laws were also types and figures of other things for which they were instituted; it is different, however, with the moral law. The moral law does not give place to the ceremonial; it, on the other hand, gives place to the moral."

#### THE MORAL LAW.

God revealed this "rule of obedience" to Adam by writing it on his heart in creating him. (Gen. i. 27; Eccles. vii. 29.) It is called a *law*, because it not only directs, but binds us, to our duty. As the moral law was at first revealed that it might be a rule of man's obedience, so it continues to be to all men, in every nation, to the end of the world. Is it asked, "How can the moral law be a rule of obedience to the heathen world, who are without the light of the Scriptures to make it known to them?" The answer is, Though without the light of the Scriptures there cannot be so clear a discovery of the moral law, yet by the light of Nature it is made known to all nations in some measure, sufficient to leave the very heathen without excuse for their disobedience. (Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15; Jude 10.)

#### THE RULE AND THE REASON.

It should be observed that the moral law is to be regarded not only as the *rule* of our obedience, but also as the *reason* of it. We must not only do what is commanded and avoid what is forbidden in the law, but we must also do good for this very reason, that God

requires it, and avoid evil because he forbids it. "I am the Lord your God; ye shall *therefore* keep my statutes and my judgments." (Lev. xviii. 4, 5.)

#### PROPERTIES OF THE MORAL LAW.

It is spiritual and holy, just and good, perfect and exceeding broad. (Rom. vii. 12, 14; Ps. xix. 7-10.) It is *spiritual*, reaching to our hearts, and requiring obedience from spiritual motives in a spiritual manner and to spiritual ends. (Luke i. 74; Jer. iv. 14.) It is *holy*, being the transcript of God's holiness, commanding everything holy and condemning all impurity. (1 Pet. i. 15, 16; Matt. v. 48.) It is *just*, binding us to give every one his due, and requiring no more than God originally gave man ability to perform. (Ps. cxix. 128.) It is *good*; the keeping of it tends greatly to God's glory and our advantage. It is *perfect*, a complete standard of right and wrong, requiring every duty in the highest degree. (Matt. v. 48; Ps. cxix. 9.) It is *exceeding broad*; it binds our whole nature at all times and in every situation, and requires many duties in every case and season.

#### IS LIFE ATTAINABLE BY OBEDIENCE?

If any could yield perfect obedience to the moral law, he might attain life thereby, but all being sinful by nature, perfect obedience is impossible, and life thereby is unattainable; therefore the law was not given to man after his fall, that it might give life. (Gal. iii. 12, 21, 22; Rom. iii. 19.) "Wherefore," says the apostle, "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." (Gal. iii. 24; Rom. x. 4.) As we are to prize the

moral law highly as the rule of life (Ps. cxix. 105), so we are to bless God for the gospel dispensation by which we can attain to justification and salvation. (Heb. xii. 22.)

**OBLIGATION OF THE MORAL LAW ON BELIEVERS.**

The moral law is abrogated to believers as a *covenant of works*. It is also abrogated to them as to its *condemning power*. (Gal. iii. 13; Rom. ii. 1.) But as it has a power of binding the conscience as a standing rule for our obedience, it remains still in its full vigor and authority. It still directs us as to what we ought to do, binds the conscience to the performance of it, brings guilt upon the soul if we transgress it, and reduces us to the necessity either of bitter repentance or of eternal condemnation. Jesus Christ has adopted the moral law into his religion—re-enacted it, if we may so speak, by his authority—and commanded all his disciples to conform to it.

A GOOD SORT OF COWARDICE.—To be such a coward as not to dare to break any one of God's commandments is to be the most valiant person in the world, for such a one will choose the greatest evil of suffering before the least of sinning, and, however the jeering Ishmaels of the world may be ready to reproach and to laugh one to scorn for "this niceness and scrupulosity," as they term it, yet the choice is a very wise one.

A certain preacher in the west of England, remarkable for his opposition to the moral law as a rule of life to believers, was preaching on a week-day evening at a village in a cottage full of poor people, when, declaiming in his usual way against the law, and seeming at a loss for expressions sufficient to degrade it, he said, "The law is dead; it is fallen; it is done with." Having just then occasion to use his handkerchief, he spread it out, and holding a corner in each hand, said, "The

law, my friends, has fallen down before the believer like this handkerchief;" then letting it go from his hands, it unfortunately fell on the candles and extinguished them, leaving the preacher and all his hearers in darkness—a very just though accidental representation of that mental and practical darkness which such preaching is likely to produce.

QUESTION 41.—*Wherein is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

ANSWER.—*The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.*

#### **"THE TEN COMMANDMENTS."**

The popular name "Ten Commandments" is not that of Scripture. In Ex. xxxiv. 28, Deut. iv. 13, x. 4 the Hebrew has "ten words." The number "ten" was then and at all times, among the Israelites, the received symbol of completeness. Hence, from these being ten words, we may learn—1. The *perfection* of this law, that no more was needed to be added. (Ps. xix. 7.) 2. The *excellence* of it, being so short and yet so perfect.

#### **HOW "SUMMARILY COMPREHENDED."**

The moral law is said to be "summarily" comprehended in the ten commandments—1. Because the sum and chief heads of the law are therein contained; and 2. Because much more is included in every command than is expressed.

#### **THE GIVING OF THE LAW.**

The ten commandments were first promulgated by God himself. (Ex. xx. 1.) It was the triune God considered as in the person of the Son who was the speaker of them, as is evident from Acts vii. 37, 38,

where the prophet whom the Lord was to raise up unto the Jews of their brethren, like unto Moses, is expressly called the angel which spake to him in Mount Sinai. (See also Heb. xii. 25, 26.) When God had spoken these commandments in the hearing of all Israel, he made or engraved them with his own finger on the tables of stone. They were written on stone to show the perpetual obligation of the law, and to represent the natural hardness of our hearts in which the Spirit writes it. (Jer. xxxi. 33; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.) Each of these tables was written on *both* sides. (Ex. xxxii. 15.) This signified that nothing was to be added to the words of the law or taken away from them (Deut. iv. 2), and likewise that the whole man, soul, spirit and body, must be sanctified wholly. (1 Thess. v. 23.) The law was given upon a mount that burned with fire and with blackness and darkness and tempest. (Heb. xii. 18.) So terrible was the sight to Moses that he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." (Heb. xii. 21.) It struck an awe upon the people, for they said, "All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient." (Ex. xxiv. 7.) And should not *we* be moved by the consideration of it? "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (2 Cor. v. 11.)

**RULES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE COMMANDMENTS.**

1. Every command requires many duties and forbids many sins which are not expressly named in it. 2. Wherever a duty is required, the contrary sin is forbidden; and wherever a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is required. 3. Wherever a sin is forbidden, all sins

of the same kind, and all occasions, causes or appearances of those sins, are forbidden ; and wherever any duty is commanded, all duties of the same kind, and all the means of performing them, are commanded. 4. Whatever we ourselves are bound to do, we are obliged to do what in us lieth to cause others to do the same. 5. That which is forbidden may never be done, but actions required are only to be performed when God gives opportunity. 6. The same sin is forbidden and the same duty required in different respects in many commandments. 7. In a command partly moral and partly positive, as in that relating to the Sabbath, obligation to the duties of the second table often supersedes our obedience to that command of the first table. 8. The connection between the commands is so close and intimate that whosoever breaks one of them is guilty of all. (James ii. 10.) 9. The commands are *spiritual*, reaching to the thoughts and motions of the heart as well as to the words and actions of the life. Our Saviour was particular in inculcating this. He taught that causeless anger is a breach of the sixth commandment, and impure desire a violation of the seventh.

An Antinomian one day called on Rowland Hill to bring him to an account for preaching what he regarded as a severe and legal gospel. "Do you, sir," asked Mr. Hill, "hold the ten commandments to be a rule of life to Christians?" "Certainly not," replied the visitor. The minister rang the bell, and on the servant making his appearance, he quietly added, "John, show that man the door, and keep your eye on him until he is beyond the reach of every article of wearing apparel or other property in the hall."

QUESTION 42.—*What is the sum of the ten commandments?*

ANSWER.—*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 neighbor as ourselves.*

There is no duty required nor sin forbidden by God, but it falls under one at least of the ten commandments, and sometimes under more than one; and therefore to the right and genuine interpretation of the law we must take in whatsoever the prophets, apostles or our Lord himself has taught as comments and expositions upon it, for the Decalogue is a compendium of all they have taught concerning duty to God and duty to man.

Our Saviour, indeed, epitomizes this very epitome itself, and reduces the ten precepts to two—*love to God*, which comprehends all the duties of the first table; and *love to our neighbor*, which comprehends all the duties of the second table; and he tells us that “upon these two hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matt. xxii. 37–40.) And certainly a due love of God and our neighbor will make us careful to perform all the duties of religion to the one and of justice to the other, and keep us from attempting any violation to his honor or violence to their right; therefore the apostle tells us that “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Rom. xiii. 10); and (1 Tim. i. 5) that “the end of the commandment is charity,” or love; the end—that is, the completion or the consummation—of the commandment is love, both to God and to one another. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with a

supreme love, and men with a sincere love in and for him.

#### LOVE TO GOD.

It is not necessary to distinguish the exercises of love as they separately flow from each of those powers or principles of our nature which are designated by the words, *heart, soul, mind* and *strength*. These expressions were chosen, as they are admirably adapted, to show that all our faculties, with all their energies, are to be exerted to the utmost in the love of God. To be more specific, supreme love to God is—1. Loving him purely and absolutely for himself, for the excellences that are in him. (Canticles i. 3; Ps. cxvi. 1.) 2. Devoting the whole man to God and Christ, so that in life and death that man designs the glory of God as his main end. (Rom. xiv. 7, 8.) 3. It causes the soul to depreciate and slight all other things in comparison with God's glory and an interest in Christ. (Acts xx. 24; Phil. iii. 8.) 4. It centres the soul in God as its only rest. (Ps. cxvi. 7; 2 Thess. iii. 5.) We must love God with a supreme love, because such a love only suits the transcendent excellency of God, commands all we are and have for God, and is the only love that will continue to the end. (Rom. viii. 35. See also 1 John iv. 8, 19; Prov. viii. 17; Rom. viii. 28; 1 Cor. ii. 9.)

#### SIGNS.

The *visible signs* of love to God are—1. Desire for communion with him. (Isa. xxvi. 8; Ps. xlii. 2; lxxiii. 25.) 2. Taking contentment in nothing without him. (Ps. xliii. 5.) 3. Hating that which would separate between him and us, and that is sin. (Ps. cix. 128.)

4. Sympathy with him. (Ps. cix. 136.) 5. Laboring to render him lovely to others. (Cant. v. 11.) 6 Weeping bitterly for his absence. (John xx. 11.) 7 Willingness to do and suffer for him. (1 Cor. xiii. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 6; Rev. xii. 11.) What shall we do to love God aright? 1. Wait on the preaching of the word, in which God is exhibited in all his glory. 2. Beg of God that he will give us a heart to love him. 3. If we have love to God, keep it flaming upon the altar of our heart. Through neglect of duty or too much love of the world, our love to God will cool. (Rev. ii. 4.)

#### OUR NEIGHBOR.

We are to understand by this expression all mankind to whom we have any way access to be useful either as to their temporal or spiritual good. (Luke x. 36, 37.) Lawful self-love is an aiming at our own happiness in subordination to the glory of God, which ought to be our chief and ultimate end. (1 Cor. x. 31.) We are to love our neighbors *as ourselves*—*as truly as ourselves*. (Rom. xii. 9.) We should do to them all the good we would from a well-informed judgment wish them to do to us in like circumstances. (Rom. xii. 9–21; Matt. vii. 12.) *As fruitfully as ourselves*. (1 Cor. x. 33.) *As constantly as ourselves*. (Heb. xiii. 1. See Rom. xii. 15; xv. 2, 3; Gal. vi. 2; James v. 16.) We should love all men in general with a love of benevolence, and likewise of beneficence, according to our ability (Gal. vi. 10), but we should love the saints with a love of complacency and delight. (Ps. xv. 4; xvi. 3.) We must love even our enemies, in

forgiving, praying for and rendering them good for evil. (Matt. v. 44; Luke vi. 27, 28, etc.)

A martyr was asked whether he did not love his wife and children, who stood weeping by him. "Love them? Yes," said he. "If all the world were gold and at my disposal, I would give it all for the satisfaction of living with them, though it were in a prison. Yet in comparison with Christ I love them not."

The Rev. John Howe, one of the chaplains of Cromwell, was applied to by men of all parties for protection, nor did he refuse his influence to any on account of difference in religious opinions. One day the Protector said to him, "Mr. Howe, you have asked favors for every one besides yourself; pray, when does your turn come?" He replied, "My turn, my Lord Protector, is always come when I can serve another."

QUESTION 43.—*What is the preface to the ten commandments?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

QUESTION 44.—*What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

A "preface" is something spoken before, or a preparatory introduction to, the following discourse. This preface carries an equal respect and reverence to all the commandments.

*A DESCRIPTION OF GOD.*

Here we have a description of God—1. By his essential greatness—*I am the Lord*, or, as it is in the Hebrew, *Jehovah*. By this great name God sets forth his majesty. 2. By his relative goodness—*thy God*. Had God only called himself *Jehovah*, it might have terrified us and made us flee from him, but when he says “thy God,” this may allure and draw us to him. God becomes our God through our faith in Jesus Christ. Being “Immanuel, God with us,” he restores friendship between God and us, and brings us within the verge of the covenant, and so becomes our God.

*THREE REASONS.*

There are, it will be observed, three reasons or arguments stated, to oblige and persuade us to keep all God’s commandments: 1. Because God is the Lord. 2. Because God is our God. 3. Because God is our Redeemer. As *fear* and *love* are the two passions by which we are swayed in all the actions of our lives, so God accommodates himself to our constitution, and proclaims, first, his *authority*, to beget fear, and then his *benefits* and *mercies*, to engage love. And both these he proclaims that, having so strong an obligation on our very natures as the motives of love and fear, he might the more readily influence us to obedience.

*EGYPT—HOUSE OF BONDAGE.*

“Egypt” and “the house of bondage” are the same, only they are expressed under different ideas. By Egypt is meant a place of affliction, such as the Israelites experienced under their cruel taskmasters. God mentions this deliverance out of Egypt because of its

strangeness and its greatness. Egypt is a synonym for an ungodly world which captivates the heart of man, and from which the grace of God releases the renewed soul.

#### CAUTION.

It is not by any means to be inferred from the preface to the Decalogue that it was not given as a revelation of God's will to mankind at large, but was simply and exclusively intended for the Israelites, binding, indeed, on them so long as the peculiar policy lasted under which they were placed, but also ceasing as an obligatory rule of conduct when that was abolished. On this ground the gospel itself will be found scarcely less imperfect, and we might almost at every step question the fitness or obligation of its precepts in respect to men in general; for it carries throughout a reference to existing circumstances, and by much the fullest development of its principles and duties, that contained in the Epistles, was given directly and avowedly to particular persons and churches, with the primary design of instructing them in the will of God. (See Ex. i. 13; Ps. cxxxvi. 11; Jer. vii. 22, 23; Heb. iv. 2; Rom. iii. 29.)

#### FOUNDATIONS OF OBLIGATION.

We are bound to keep God's commandments—1. Because he is *the Lord*. He is our Creator and supreme Sovereign, and we owe to him all obedience, as we are his creatures and subjects. (Ps. c. 2, 3; Jer. x. 7.) 2. Because he is *our God*, and as such he has taken us into covenant and brought us into a special relation to himself, and thus laid a greater obligation upon us to do him service. (Deut. xi. 1.) 3. Because as *our Re-*

*deemer* he has redeemed us for this end, that, being free from the slavery of sin and Satan, we might be encouraged and enabled to yield obedience to him. (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; Luke i. 74, 75; Isa. lxi. 1; Ps. cxxx. 8; John viii. 36; Tit. ii. 14; Isa. i. 18.)

#### *I AM THY GOD.*

God makes the declaration of his grace in the present time, *I am*, and not in the future, *I will be*, thy God, in order to show that his covenant of promise is always a solid ground and foundation for the present actings of faith in every case and circumstance in which we can be situated. (James ii. 23.) He also addresses the sinner in the singular number, *I am thy* God, that every individual sinner to whom the revelation of his grace may come should believe it with a particular applicatory faith. (Zech. xiii. 9.)

#### *PRACTICAL LESSONS.*

1. How great is the condescension of God to man that he will use arguments to induce him to obedience, when he might exact it only by his sovereignty and justly condemn us for our disobedience! (2 Cor. v. 20.) 2. The more mercy any receive from God, the more obligations are laid on them to obey him. (Ps. cxvi. 1, 2.) 3. The more mercies and favors any man sins against, the greater is that man's sin and the sorer will be his punishment. (Amos iii. 2.) 4. God's expectations are greater where his mercies and favors have been so. (Isa. v. 4.) 5. The memorials of God's mercies are to be kept by us to stimulate us to constant and cheerful duties of obedience. (Ex. xvii. 14; Ps. ciii. 2, 3.)

A friend, calling on the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine during his last illness, said to him, "Sir, you have given us many good advices. Pray, what are you now doing with your own soul?" "I am doing with it," said he, "what I did forty years ago. I am resting on that word, *I am the Lord thy God*; and on this I mean to die." To another he said, "The covenant is my charter, and if it had not been for that blessed word, *I am the Lord thy God*, my hope and strength had perished from the Lord." The night on which he died, his eldest daughter was reading in the room where he was, to whom he said, "What book is that you are reading, my dear?" "It is one of your sermons, sir." "What one is it?" "It is the sermon on that text, *I am the Lord thy God*." "Oh, woman," said he, "that is the best sermon I ever preached." And it was most probably the best to his soul. A little afterward with his finger and thumb he shut his own eyes, and laying his hand below his cheek, breathed out his soul into the hands of his living Redeemer. Happy the man that is in such a state! Happy the man whose God is the Lord!

Children should be early taught that the Bible is the great authority, and that when it speaks upon any point the question is settled for ever. They should be taught to go directly to the Scripture to find what is good and what is bad, what is true and what is false. Thus, with the blessing of God, they will acquire the habit of constantly subordinating their own notions and inclinations to the plain declarations of Scripture. It is a good sign to have a child often use the expression, "*The Bible says so.*"

QUESTION 45.—*Which is the first commandment?*

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

QUESTION 46.—*What is required in the first commandment?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

QUESTION 47.—*What is forbidden in the first commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshiping 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.*

QUESTION 48.—*What are we especially taught by these words, “before me,” in the first commandment?*

ANSWER.—*These words, “before me,” in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other god.*

The first table of the Decalogue, which embraces the first four commandments, enjoins the duties which we owe to God; the second table, the duties which we owe to our neighbor; yet in such a way that the former are referred *immediately*, the latter *mediately*, to God.

This commandment may well lead the van, and be set in front of all the commandments, because it is the foundation of all true religion. *Thou.* The commandment runs in the second person singular, because it concerns every one, and God would have us take it as spoken to us by name. It is important that we should feel ourselves individually addressed, because, though forward to take privileges to ourselves, yet we are apt to shift off duty from ourselves to others. *Another god* is any and every thing to which we may attribute the properties, attributes and works of the true God, even though the thing itself does not possess them, and even though they are inconsistent with its nature. *Before me*, or in my sight, as if he would say, *Thou*

shalt have no other gods, not only in the words and actions in the light of men, but thou shalt have none besides me in the secret chamber of thy heart, for nothing is concealed from my view ; I am the searcher of hearts and the trier of the reins of the children of men, and all things are naked and open to my view. (See Ps. l. 7 ; lxxxi. 8, 9 ; Deut. xiii. 7 ; Jer. xlv. 3, 4.)

*Inferences :* 1. It is a special mercy to be born in a land where the true God is known and worshiped. (Ps. cxlvii. 20.) 2. It is a great and dreadful sin to live without the worship of God in the world. (Eph. ii. 12.) 3. Christians must not comply with idolatrous and superstitious worship when they are cast into idolatrous places, however great the danger may be. (Ps. xvi. 4.) 4. The supreme love, fear and trust of the soul are God's peculiar right and due. (1 John ii. 15 ; Job xxxi. 24-28.) 5. God's eye discovers the closest idolatry in the world, whether it be in secret devotions (Ezek. viii. 12) or inward affections. (Col. iii. 5.) 6. A high and full condition in the world is a dangerous condition, and lies most exposed to the danger of heart-idolatry. (Prov. xxx. 9 ; Mark x. 24.) 7. In covenanting with God and avouching him for our God, we must wholly renounce all others, and take God alone for our portion and the object of our love and dependence.

#### WHAT IS REQUIRED.

Three duties are required in the first commandment :  
 I. *To know God.* (1 Chron. xxviii. 9.) We must know (1) that God is, or that there is a God. (2.) What God is in all those glorious attributes and per-

fections whereby he has made himself known. II. *To acknowledge God.* (Deut. xxvi. 17.) (1.) We ought to acknowledge him to be the only true God. (1 Cor. viii. 6.) (2.) We ought to take and own God for our God. (Ps. xlviii. 14.) III. *To worship and glorify God.* (Matt. iv. 10.) We ought to worship and glorify God as the only right object of divine worship and honor. (1.) In our minds, by thinking, meditating, remembering and highly esteeming him. (Mal. iii. 16; Ps. lxiii. 6; lxxi. 19.) (2.) In our wills, by choosing him for our chief good and devoting ourselves to his service. (Josh. xxiv. 23.) (3.) In our hearts, by loving, desiring, fearing, believing and trusting in him, grieving for our sins against him, hoping in him, delighting and rejoicing in him. (Deut. x. 12; Isa. xxvi. 49; Ex. xiv. 31; Ps. xxxviii. 18; cxxx. 7; xxxvii. 4.) (4.) In our lips, by calling upon him and speaking well of his name. (Phil. iv. 6; Ps. cxlv. 21.) (5.) In our lives, by yielding all obedience to him, being zealous for his glory, careful to please him, fearful of offending him, and by walking humbly before him. (Jer. vii. 23; John ii. 17; Col. i. 10; Gen. xxxix. 9; Micah vi. 8.)

#### WHAT IS FORBIDDEN.

The sins more generally forbidden in the first commandment are atheism, profaneness and the worship of false gods.

It is a sin to deny the being of God. (Ps. xiv. 1), or his omniscience (Ps. xciv. 7), or his justice (Ps. x. 13), or his holiness (Ps. l. 21), or his goodness (Matt. xxv. 24), or his faithfulness (2 Pet. iii. 4), or his prov-

idence (Ex. xvii. 7), or his power (Ps. lxxviii. 19); and it is a great sin to admit the existence of God and yet be practically atheistical. (Tit. i. 16.) The profaneness forbidden is our not worshiping and glorifying God as God, and our God in Christ. (Mal. i. 6.) The worship of false gods forbidden is—I. Gross or open—the external worshiping of sun, moon, stars, angels, men, demons or any other creature instead of God. (2 Kings ii. 7; Rom. i. 24, 25; 1 Cor. i. 21.) II. Secret or spiritual idolatry. We may make imaginary beings a god when we boast of false gifts, ascribe events to what men call fortune, luck or chance. We may make a god of ourselves, our wisdom, will, righteousness, strength, beauty, appetites, riches, reputation, etc. (Isa. xiv. 13, 14; Rom. x. 3; Isa. x. 13, 14; 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4; 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10; Phil. iii. 19; Col. iii. 5.) It is a sin to love anything more than God. (Ezek. xlv. 4; Isa. xlii. 8; Matt. x. 37; Jer. xvii. 5; Hos. ii. 13.)

Lord Rochester was one day at an atheistical meeting in the house of a person of quality. He undertook to manage the cause, and was the principal disputant against God and religion, and for his performance received the applause of the whole company. "Upon which," says he, "my mind was terribly struck, and I immediately replied thus to myself: Good God! that a man that walks upright, that sees the wonderful works of God and has the use of his senses and reason, should use them to the denying of his Creator!"

Rev. Dr. Witherspoon was once on board a packet-ship where, among other passengers, was a professed atheist. This unhappy man was very fond of troubling every one with his peculiar belief, and of broaching the subject as often as he could get any one to listen to him. He did not believe in a God and a future state—not he! By and by there came on a terrible storm, and the prospect was that all would be drown-

ed. There was much consternation on board, but no one was as greatly frightened as the professed atheist. In his extremity he sought out the clergyman, and found him in the cabin calm and collected in the midst of danger, and thus addressed him: "Oh, Dr. Witherspoon! Dr. Witherspoon! we're all going; we have but a short time to stay. Oh how the vessel rocks! We're all going; don't you think we are, doctor?" The doctor turned to him with a solemn look and replied in broad Scotch, "Nae doubt, nae doubt, man; we're a' ganging, but *you and I dinna gang the same way.*" The poor man was speechless; and the worthy doctor, who had not said much before, then took the opportunity of setting before him the guilt and folly of his conduct.

QUESTION 49.—*Which is the second commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing 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.*

QUESTION 50.—*What is required in the second commandment?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

QUESTION 51.—*What is forbidden in the second commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The second commandment forbiddeth the*

worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

QUESTION 52.—*What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

In this commandment we have two points—the *precept* itself, and the *sanction* of the precept—each of which is twofold.

The *precept* runs negatively in the several prohibitions, both tending to the same end and effect—the one forbidding images to be *made*, the other forbidding them to be *worshipped*. The *sanction* contains a severe *threatening* against those that shall presume to violate this command, and also, for the encouragement of obedience, a *gracious promise*.

The *difference* between the first and the second commandment ought to be distinctly noted. The first relates to the *object* of worship, and the second to the *mode* or *manner* of that worship; the first forbids the worship of any other than the true God; the second forbids the worshipping even of the true God by the use of images or any other visible symbols; the first impliedly requires all *right* worship of Jehovah; the second prohibits all that is even *circumstantially* wrong in his worship.

#### WHAT IS FORBIDDEN.

*Thou shalt not make.* The prohibition is general. Thou shalt not imagine or invent, or imitate the inventions of others. Thou shalt not make, or cause

to make. In a word, thou shalt not be in any way accessory to the corrupting of divine worship with any *resemblance* (or image) or human *device* at all. The *former* is a particular word, signifying the then most particular kind of imagery, but the *other* is a word of most large and general sense, and is put for all kinds of similitude and representation.

*Anything that is in heaven above, etc.* Neither the sun, moon or stars in the heavens, nor men on earth, nor beasts, creeping things and fishes in the water, all of which were common objects of idolatry. Of course the commandment forbids not the making of an image for civil use (Matt. xxii. 20), but it does forbid the setting up an image for religious use or worship. God is to be adored in the heart, not painted to the eye.

*Thou shalt not bow down, etc.* "The advocates of image-worship," says Dr. Dick, "endeavor to evade the precept by subtle distinctions. They tell us that there are two kinds of adoration, the one absolute and the other relative, and that the image is the object only of relative worship; that is, the worship does not terminate upon the image itself, but passes from it to the original. Again, they tell us that in an image two things are to be considered—the matter of which it is composed, gold, silver, wood or stone, and its representative character. Considered as a material substance, it ought not to be adored, but as an image or representation it is entitled to respect. These, however, were the identical distinctions by which the heathens attempted to vindicate themselves when they were accused of idolatry by the Christians. As papists find it necessary to defend themselves with the arguments

of the heathens, it is plain that they are guilty of the same crime and involved in the same condemnation. All their subtilties vanish before the plain words of the precept, 'Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.' (See Rom. i. 25; Hab. ii. 18; Acts xvii. 29; Isa. xl. 18; Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 9.)

#### WHAT IS REQUIRED.

It is right that God should *appoint* the means of his own worship, because he *only* knows sufficiently what means of worship best suit his own honor and our advantage, and he *only* can authorize and make means effectual. (Deut. xii. 32; v. 32; James iv. 12.) The instituted means of worshipping God are his ordinances which he has appointed in his word. (Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20; Prov. viii. 34.) They are called *ordinances*, because they are established by the supreme authority and will of God. (Deut. vi. 1.) They are principally meditation, self-examination, prayer, reading, preaching and hearing God's word, administering and receiving the sacraments, singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, religious fasting, thanksgiving, instruction of families, religious conference, vows, and church government and discipline. (Ps. cv. 2; 2 Cor. xiii. 5, etc.) The worship and ordinances which God has appointed in his word are to be *received*; that is, we are to take them simply on the divine authority, without caviling or objecting to any of them. They are to be *observed*; that is, *practically* treated as of God's appointment. They are to be kept *pure*; that is, free from all human corruptions. And they are to be kept *entire*; that is, nothing is to be added to them or sub-

tracted from them, and there is to be an entireness in observing them both on the part of churches and individuals. (Matt. xv. 9; Ps. cvi. 39; Lev. x. 1; Mal. i. 13, 14; Rom. i. 21.)

#### REASONS ANNEXED.

1. *For I the Lord.* The peculiar feeling with which Jehovah regards all *rivalry* in the affections and homage of his subjects is here called "jealousy," implying a peculiar *sensitiveness* to everything that threatens to trench upon the honor, reverence and esteem that he knows to be due to himself. "Some," says an eminent theologian, "consider the *visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children* as peculiar to the Jews, who were placed under a dispensation of temporal rewards and punishments, and understand it to import that under such a dispensation, by the overruling providence of God, a man's family would be placed in such circumstances as would accord with his conduct, or that their degradation and suffering would be the effect of his sins." "A nobleman," says Dr. Cumming, "rebels against his prince; he loses his coronet, and his family suffers for centuries afterward. A father, through gambling, loses all his property, and his children and his children's children suffer. A parent becomes a drunkard and a debauchee, wastes his health and injures his constitution, and his offspring are diseased to the third and fourth generation. Now, what is all this but *the sins of the fathers visited upon the children* in the arrangements of a Providence we can see, and in occurrences of daily life?"

2. *And showing mercy.* Mercy is the darling attri-

bute of God. for if the judgments reach to the third or fourth, the mercy descends to thousands of generations, and we must wait all the widening and coming enlargements of the blessedness in reserve for the human family, ere we can compare aright the goodness with the severity of God. (See Ezek. xviii. 14, 17, 25.)

Mr. Scott, the venerable expositor of the Bible, speaking of his early years, says: "A hymn of Dr. Watts, entitled 'The All-seeing God,' at this time fell in my way. I was much affected by it, and having committed it to memory, was frequently repeating it, and was thus continually led to reflect on my guilt and danger. Parents," he adds, "may from this inconsiderable circumstance be reminded that it is of great importance to store their children's memories with useful matter, instead of suffering them to be furnished with such corrupting trash as is commonly taught them. They know not what use God may make of these early rudiments of instruction in future life."

A lady who once heard Mr. Romaine, expressed herself greatly pleased with his discourse, and told him afterward that she thought she could comply with his doctrine and give up everything but one. "And what is that, madam?" "Cards, sir." "You think you could not be happy without them?" "No, sir; I know I could not." "Then, madam, they are your god, and they must save you." This pointed and just reply is said to have issued in her conversion.

QUESTION 53.—*Which is the third commandment?*

ANSWER.—*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.*

QUESTION 54.—*What is required in the third commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The third commandment requireth the holy*

*and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.*

QUESTION 55.—*What is forbidden in the third commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The third commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of anything whereby God maketh himself known.*

QUESTION 56.—*What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.*

This commandment has three parts: 1. A negative expressed. 2. An affirmative implied. 3. A threatening denounced.

#### THE NAME OF GOD.

This expression signifies in the Scriptures—1. *The attributes of God.* (Gen. xxxii. 29; Ex. iii. 15; xv. 3.) 2. *God himself.* (Ps. v. 11; cxvi. 13; vii. 17; Deut. xvi. 2; 1 Kings v. 5.) 3. *The will or commandment of God.* (Deut. xviii. 19; 1 Sam. xvii. 45.) 4. *The worship of God*—confidence, prayer, praising and professing God. (Mic. iv. 5; Acts xxi. 13.) In a word, by God's "name" is meant anything by which God may be known, as a man is known by his name.

#### WHAT IS FORBIDDEN.

*The taking of God's name in vain.* We do this—1. When we speak lightly and irreverently of it. (Deut. xxviii. 58.) 2. When we profess his name,

but do not live answerably to it. (Tit. i. 16.) 3. When we use it in idle discourse, as when, in ordinary conversation and without a holy awe upon our hearts, we introduce such expressions as "O God!" "O Christ!" or as "God shall save my soul!" etc. 4. When we worship God with our lips, but not our hearts. (Prov. xxiii. 26; Isa. xxix. 13.) 5. When we pray to him, but do not believe in him. (Rom. iv. 20; 1 John v. 10.) 6. When we in any wise profane or abuse his word; for instance, in speaking scornfully of it (2 Pet. iii. 4), in speaking jestingly of it (Prov. i. 26), and in forcing the interpretation of it, as, for example, the covetous man does when, being told that covetousness is idolatry, he attempts to support his covetousness by such passages as these: "Six days shalt thou labor," and "He who provides not for his family is worse than an infidel." 7. When we swear by his name. Many seldom mention God's name but in profane oaths; for this sin the land mourns. 8. When any wicked action is baptized with the name of religion. 9. By rash and unlawful vows. (Ps. lxvi. 13; Judg. xi. 31, 34.) 10. When we speak evil of God by murmuring at his providences, as if he had dealt hardly with us. (Ps. lxxvii. 19; Gen. xviii. 25; Num. xiv. 27.) 11. When we falsify our promise, saying, "If God spare our life we will do this," and never intend it. 12. When we take a false oath.

#### *WHAT IS REQUIRED.*

That we should have a care to reverence and honor the name of God. We reverence or hallow God's name when we profess it. It is an honor done to him when

we meet in his holy assembly. But this is not enough. (Matt. vii. 23.) We must go further. Therefore we sanctify God's name when we have a high appreciation and esteem of him; set him highest in our thoughts—when we trust in his name (Ps. xxxiii. 21; Rom. iv. 20; 1 John v. 20); when we never mention it but with the highest reverence (Gen. xiv. 20; Neh. ix. 5); when we love it (Ps. v. 11); when we render him spiritual and holy worship (Lev. x. 3; Rom. xii. 11); when we sanctify his day (Jer. xvii. 22; Rev. i. 10); when we ascribe the honor of all we do to him (Ps. xcvi. 8; 1 Cor. xv. 10); when we obey him (Ps. xl. 8; Matt. ii. 11; Gen. xx. 16, 17); when we exalt God's name in our praises (Ps. lxxi. 8; Rev. v. 13); when we sympathize with him, being grieved when his name suffers (Neh. ii. 2; Isa. xxxvii. 17; 2 Kings xix. 14); when we honor the Son as we honor the Father (John v. 23; Ps. viii. 5; Heb. i. 3; Col. ii. 9); when we stand up for his truth; when we seek by counsel, prayer, example and effort the salvation of others (Josh. xxiv. 15; Col. iv. 12); when we prefer the honor of God's name before the dearest things (Ps. lxxix. 7; Heb. xi. 26; Acts v. 41); and when we are characterized by a holy walk and conversation. (1 Pet. ii. 9.)

#### *THE REASON ANNEXED.*

Why is it that those who profane God's name "escape punishment from men"? 1. Because no laws of men do or can reach all profanations of God's name. 2. Because such laws as reach blasphemy, perjury, swearing and the like grosser profanations of God's name are not executed by many in authority, who oftentimes, being profane and wicked persons them-

selves, are more ready to punish those that hallow God's name than those that profane it. What is the import of the threatening, "the Lord will not hold him guiltless"? It is a form of expression by which less is said than is intended. It imports that God will hold him guilty in a peculiar manner, who presumes to profane or abuse his name, so that divine vengeance shall be infallibly certain against him. (Zech. v. 3.) In what light does the Scripture represent those who take God's name in vain? As his open and avowed *enemies*. (Ps. cxxxix. 20.) How does it appear that divine vengeance is infallibly certain against the profaners of God's name? It appears from the terms of the threatening. The Lord *will not* hold him guiltless; that is, so sure it is that this sin shall then be taken particular notice of as a main article in the list of sins which are to be accounted for (Mal. iii. 5; Deut. xxviii. 59; Matt. xxiii. 13; Isa. xxviii. 13; Ezek. xvii. 18; Zech. v. 3; Ps. lxiv. 8.)

"Once, when I was returning from Ireland," says Rowland Hill, "I found myself much annoyed by the reprobate conduct of the captain and mate, who were sadly given to the scandalous habit of swearing. First, the captain swore at the mate, then the mate swore at the captain, then they both swore at the winds, when I called to them with a strong voice for fair play. 'Stop! stop!' said I. 'If you please, gentlemen, let us have fair play. It's my turn now.' 'At what is it your turn, pray?' said the captain. 'At swearing,' I replied. Well, they waited and waited until their patience was exhausted, and then wanted me to make haste and take my turn. I told them, however, that I had a right to take my own time and swear at my own convenience. To this the captain replied with a laugh, 'Perhaps you don't mean to take your turn?' 'Pardon me, captain,' I an-

swered, 'but I do as soon as I can find the good of doing so.' My friends, I did not hear another oath on the voyage."

Within the first month after the Declaration of Independence Washington gave a noble testimony against profaneness by declaring in his public orders that "he hopes the officers will, by example as well as influence, endeavor to check it, and that both they and the men will reflect that we can have little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our arms, if we insult it by our impiety and folly. Added to this, it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense and character despises it."

QUESTION 57.—*Which is the fourth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The fourth commandment is, Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.*

QUESTION 58.—*What is required in the fourth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.*

QUESTION 59.—*Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?*

ANSWER.—*From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day*

*of the week to be the weekly Sabbath ; and the first day of the week, ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.*

QUESTION 60.—*How is the Sabbath to be sanctified ?*

ANSWER.—*The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days ; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.*

QUESTION 61.—*What is forbidden in the fourth commandment ?*

ANSWER.—*The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments or recreations.*

QUESTION 62.—*What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment ?*

ANSWER.—*The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day.*

#### REMEMBER.

The origin of the Sabbath is stated in Genesis ii. 1-3. It did not take its rise, like other sacred days and seasons, with the Jewish system of worship

which was to pass away, nor was it instituted for any ceremonial reason, such as existed in the case of sacrifices and of the priestly office.

#### *PERPETUITY OF THE SABBATH.*

In proof of this let it be observed—1. This precept is united with other commands of the moral law, which are acknowledged to be binding on men of every age and every country. 2. It was spoken, together with the other nine, with an awful and audible voice from the midst of the thunders and lightnings which enveloped Mount Sinai. 3. It was written by the finger of God on one of the two tables of stone originally prepared by himself, and destined to contain nothing but this and the other precepts of the Decalogue. 4. This command is delivered in the same absolute manner as the other nine. There is no limitation in the phraseology in which it is embodied. For what ends was the Sabbath instituted? To give the laborious classes of mankind an opportunity of resting from toil; to be a commemoration of the wisdom, power and goodness of God in the creation of the universe; to furnish an opportunity of increasing holiness in man while in a state of innocence; to furnish an opportunity to fallen man of acquiring holiness and of obtaining salvation. In every one of these respects the Sabbath is as useful, important and necessary to every child of Adam as it was to the Jews.

#### *CHANGE OF THE DAY.*

Although we cannot produce any positive precept for the change of the day from the seventh to the first, yet we have the example of the apostles and of the

primitive Church, who were under the guidance of the Spirit in all things relative to doctrine and worship.

Immediately after the resurrection of Christ the disciples began to assemble on the first day of the week, and by meeting repeatedly with them on that day he gave countenance to the practice. It was continued after his ascension and after the mission of the Holy Ghost, whose office it was to lead them into all the truth. Thus at Troas, when the disciples came together on the first day of the week, Paul preached to them (Acts xx. 7), and the time of meeting is manifestly mentioned as the usual one. On that day the Corinthians were commanded to lay by them in store as the Lord had prospered them (1 Cor. xvi. 2); and it is reasonable to think that the first day was specified as the proper time to make collections for the poor because it was consecrated to religious duties. It is undoubtedly the same day to which the beloved disciple refers when he says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. i. 10)—the day which Jesus Christ peculiarly claimed as his own, or the first day of the week, which is consecrated to his honor.

If the finishing of the works of creation was a reason why the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, there is a reason at least equally strong for the consecration of the first day, on which our Saviour rose from the grave.

#### *OBSERVANCE OF THE DAY.*

This precept requires us to set apart for rest, refreshment and the service of God one day of every seven. It requires us to abstain from our worldly employ-

ments, manual and mental, from the labors of the body and the labors of the mind about secular studies, and from all unnecessary words and thoughts respecting such subjects. It requires us to spend the time in devotional exercises, in prayer, religious reading and meditation, in the instruction of our families and pious conversation with them and our friends, and in attendance upon the public ordinances of grace. It requires us to abstain from secular recreations and amusements, because we can very well dispense with them for one day, since we are at liberty to use them on the other six; they would engross a portion of the time which is sacred to other purposes, and would dissipate our thoughts and indispose us for the proper duties of the Sabbath.

*Thou, nor thy son*, etc. The family of the house and all belonging to it. By the *gates* are meant the doors of the private house, and also, as the commandment applies to rulers, the entrances to the city or village. (Deut. xiv. 21.) The general character of the prohibition is illustrated in detail, as, for example, Neh. xiii. 15; Jer. xvii. 21; Amos viii. 5; Num. xv. 32.

#### REASON ANNEXED.

*For in six days*, etc. The reason is historical. It refers to the original division of time into six days of work, and a seventh day of rest, on the occasion of the creation of man. Then God not only rested after the six days of creation, but blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. He thus instituted a seventh-day Sabbath of perpetual obligation, and therefore now enforces its constant remembrance and observance.

*RESULT OF EXPERIENCE.*

A committee was appointed in the legislature of Pennsylvania, who made a report with regard to the employment of laborers on the canals. In that report they say, in reference to those who had petitioned against the employment of the workmen on the Sabbath: "They assert, as the result of their experience, that both man and beast can do more work by resting one day in seven than by working on the whole seven." They then said, "Your committee feel free to confess that their own experience as business-men, farmers or legislators corresponds with the assertion."

Mr. Philip Henry used to call the Lord's day the queen of days, the pearl of the week, and observed it accordingly. His common salutation of his family or friends on the Lord's day in the morning was that of the primitive Christians: "The Lord is risen! he is risen indeed!" making it his chief business on that day to celebrate the memory of Christ's resurrection; and he would say sometimes, "Every Lord's day is a true Christian's Easter day."

QUESTION 63.—*Which is the fifth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The fifth commandment is, Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

QUESTION 64.—*What is required in the fifth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties, belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.*

QUESTION 65.—*What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing anything against, the honor and*

*duty which belongeth to every one in their several places and relations.*

QUESTION 66.—*What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment ?*

ANSWER.—*The reason annexed to the fifth commandment is, a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.*

[The laws of the second table of the Decalogue commence with this commandment.]

By the terms “father” and “mother” are meant “not only natural parents, but all superiors in age and gifts, and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are over us in places of authority, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.” (*Larger Catechism*, Q. 124.) Superiors are styled father and mother, “to teach them in all duties toward their inferiors, like natural parents, to express love and tenderness to them according to their several relations, and to work inferiors to a greater willingness and cheerfulness in performing their duties to their superiors, as to their parents.” (*Ib.*, Q. 125.)

#### WHAT IS REQUIRED.

The honor to be preserved and the mutual or correlative duties to be performed by *superiors* and *inferiors*, refer to the places and relations of rulers and ruled, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, ministers and people, old and young, and the possessors of superior and inferior gifts and graces. In all these relations there is a subordination of rank or character which is clearly recognized in

the Scriptures. It is the duty of children (1) to reverence their parents. (Lev. xix. 3; Mal. i. 6; Prov. xxiii. 22; 1 Kings ii. 19; Prov. xxxi. 28.) (2.) To obey their parents. (Eph. vi. 1; Prov. i. 8; Heb. xii. 9; Prov. xxiii. 15; 1 Tim. v. 4; Gen. xxviii. 7; Luke xv. 2.) (3.) To be respectful to the aged. (Lev. xix. 32; 1 Pet. v. 5.) It is the duty of parents (1) to be tender of their children. (Isa. xlix. 15; Ps. ciii. 13; Mal. iii. 17; Prov. xiii. 24.) (2.) To pray for their children. (Job i. 5; Gen. xxxiii. 5.) (3.) To bring up their children in the fear of God. (Eph. vi. 4; Deut. vi. 7; Gen. xviii. 19; Ps. ci. 2; Gen. xxii. 16.) It is the duty of servants to honor their masters and mistresses. (1 Tim. vi. 1; Eph. vi. 5; Titus ii. 10; Col. iii. 22.) It is the duty of masters to be just to their servants. (Col. iv. 1; Eph. vi. 9.) It is the duty of wives to be respectful to their husbands. (Eph. v. 33; Titus ii. 4; Col. iii. 18.) It is the duty of husbands to love their wives. (Col. iii. 19; Eph. v. 33; 1 Pet. iii. 7.) It is the duty of husbands and wives to be pleasing to one another. (1 Cor. vii. 33, 34; 1 Pet. iii. 7; 1 Cor. vii. 16.) It is the duty of the ruled to reverence their rulers. (1 Pet. ii. 17; Tit. iii. 1; Rom. xiii. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 2.) It is the duty of people to love and respect their ministers. (1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 7; Gal. vi. 6.) It is the duty of equals to be kind one to another. (Rom. xii. 10; 1 Pet. v. 5.)

#### *WHAT IS FORBIDDEN.*

To neglect the honor and duty which belong to every one in their several places and relations, is not only to omit the performance of such relative duties

altogether, but even when they are performed to do them without any regard to the command and authority of God enjoining them. (Isa. xxix. 13.) To do anything against the honor and duty which belong to every one, is to commit those sins which are the very opposite of the relative duties incumbent on us. (Rom. ii. 22.) What are the sins of inferiors against superiors? “Envyng at, contempt of, and rebellion against their persons and places in their lawful counsels, commands and corrections.” (Larger Catechism, Ques. 128.) What are the sins of superiors? “Commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform, counseling, encouraging or favoring them in that which is evil,” and “dissuading, discouraging or discountenancing them in that which is good.” (Ib. 130.) What are the sins of equals? “Envyng the gifts, grieving at the advancement or prosperity one of another, and usurping the pre-eminence one over another.” (Ib. 132.)

\*  
**REASON ANNEXED.**

The *promise of long life* includes not only the continuance of life for a long time, which may be so accompanied with miseries that death may be more desirable, but also the blessing and prosperity of life. (Eph. vi. 2, 3 ; 1 Tim. iv. 8 ; Prov. iii. 1, 2.) Though all good children may not prosper in this world, yet they are most likely to prosper (Prov. xxii. 4), and they shall prosper as far as is for their own good and for God's glory. (Ps. l. 15.) “Even for the Israelites,” says *Calvin*, “long life in that land was not in itself a blessing, but only so far as it was a pledge of divine

grace. Therefore, if God early removes from this life an obedient son, he is no less mindful of his promise than if he had given a hundred acres of land to every one to whom he had promised one. All depends on our understanding that a long life is promised us, so far as it is a blessing from God, but it is a blessing so far as it is a pledge of grace; and this God can often accord more richly and more certainly to his servants in their death, which leads to eternal life."

On his way to Washington to enter upon the duties of the Presidential chair, General Harrison made a visit to his native place in Virginia, and here, for the last time, saw the home of his infancy. He passed through the house from room to room until, upon arriving at a retired bed-chamber, he burst into tears, saying to a friend who accompanied him, "This is the spot where my mother used to pray with me." This was the hidden influence which had followed him through all the exciting scenes of his eventful life.

There is too little respect paid to parental authority at the present day. It is grievous to go into many families and hear the language daily used by the children. There is truth as well as rhyme in a couplet by Randolph:

"Whoever makes his parent's heart to bleed,  
Shall have a child that will revenge the deed."

One thing is certain—an undutiful son and a disobedient daughter cannot long prosper. For a season they may appear well to the eye of a stranger, but their self-will and stubbornness are soon discovered, and they are despised.

One day some men who had been condemned to hard labor on the public works for various crimes were occupied in repairing one of the Vienna streets. There passed that way a good-looking, well-dressed young man; he stopped near one of the convicts, embraced him affectionately, and then went on.

A state official had been at his window during this scene, and was much astonished at it. He had the young man brought to him, and said : " My friend, there is something very peculiar in embracing a convict in the street. What will people think of you ? "

The young man said nothing for a few moments, but soon recovering himself, he replied : " My lord, I only followed the dictates of duty and my heart, for the convict is my father. "

Touched by these words and admiring the noble conduct of the young man, the official hastened to tell the emperor what had happened. The sovereign recognized the beauty of this filial act, and gave the convict's son an important post. He wished at once to show that the punishment of crime should be individual and not general, and that nothing should interfere with the divine precept, " Honor thy father and thy mother. "

QUESTION 67.—*Which is the sixth commandment ?*

ANSWER.—*The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.*

QUESTION 68.—*What is required in the sixth commandment ?*

ANSWER.—*The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others.*

QUESTION 69.—*What is forbidden in the sixth commandment ?*

ANSWER.—*The sixth commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbor unjustly, or whatsoever tendeth thereunto.*

" It must be noticeable to every reader of the Decalogue that its commands are nearly all prohibitions. There are but two exceptions in the ten—the com-

mandment of the Sabbath and that of respect to parents. All the rest enjoin upon man not to perform, but to abstain. This fact exhibits sin as an ever-acting principle which man is called upon to thwart. This principle acts against God and against our fellow-man, and its cessation of energy can only be founded on a love to God stronger than love to self, and a love to our neighbor equal to the love of self, So when God commands us to cease from sin he is really bidding us to be holy."

This sixth commandment chiefly respects the life of man. The love of life is the strongest of all our natural instincts, and the wisdom and benevolence of our Creator in making it so is obvious, since on the preservation of our life depend all the purposes of our existence.

#### *LAWFUL ENDEAVORS.*

Dear, however, as life is to every human being, we are not to use for its preservation any other than "lawful endeavors," and must be ready to resign it rather than violate our duty to Him who gave it. The cases are not a few in which duty must be preferred to life. Of such a preference the whole host of Christian martyrs have exhibited noble examples. Our Saviour has told us in the most emphatic language that if we do not love him more than "our own life" we cannot be his disciples. (Matt. x. 33; xvi. 25, 26.) What lawful endeavors should we use for the preservation of our own life? The "just defence thereof against violence, a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor and recreation." (*Larger Catechism*, Question 135.) By what means should we endeavor to preserve the life of oth-

ers? “By resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations and practices which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any.” We are restricted by the answer to “lawful endeavors,” in order to caution and guard us against the unlawful means which some have used for the preservation of their lives. (Gen. xii. 12, 13.)

#### FORBIDDEN.

As there is no object expressed in this commandment, it prohibits suicide as well as homicide. It is absolutely unlawful in any case whatever to desert our station or leave the world without the permission and allowance of the sovereign Lord of our life. (Acts xvi. 27, 28; Job xiv. 14.) Any instances the Scripture gives of self-murder are in men of the most infamous character, such as Saul, Ahithophel, Judas and others of the like stamp. (1 Sam. xxxi. 4; Matt. xxvii. 5.) Magistrates, as God’s ministers in executing vengeance, are in some cases *commanded* to put men to death, and in others it may be *allowable* because conducive to the public good. (Rom. xiii. 4.) Witnesses or executioners may also concur in such capital punishments without the guilt of murder. We may doubtless take away another’s life in defence of our own, for he who assaults another’s life by that action forfeits his own, and there is no opportunity of referring the cause to the civil magistrate. Some wars are necessary and unavoidable to one party because of the injurious conduct of the other, and the blood shed in them is not imputed as murder; yet the guilt of it must rest somewhere, and few wars indeed are so entered upon and conducted as to leave any of

the contending parties free from blood-guiltiness. The duelist is a proud, unjust and revengeful murderer of the most atrocious kind, and in general he is distinguished from all other criminals by an habitual determination to commit the sin whenever he shall be tempted to it. All fighting for wages or prizes or renown violates this command, and the blood thus shed is *murder*. (Gen. iv. 10; ix. 6; Prov. xxviii. 17; John viii. 44; Ps. li. 14.)

This commandment likewise prohibits us to assault, maim or wound others or to assist those who do, to tempt men to crimes that destroy their constitutions or endanger their lives, either from the sword of justice or the resentment of the injured party—nay, to entice them, by the prospect of a large reward, to such enterprises and labors as are known generally to shorten life. The spiritual import of it prohibits all envy, revenge, hatred or causeless anger, all that insulting language which provokes to wrath or murder, and all the pride, ambition, covetousness which prompt it. That man, indeed, will be condemned as the hater and murderer of his brother who, seeing his life endangered by the want of food, raiment or medicine, and having ability to relieve him, selfishly neglects to do it. (1 John iii. 13–17; Matt. v. 22; Rom. xii. 19.) The *spirit* of this commandment extends to a proper concern, also, for our own *souls* and those of others.

“What do you mean to do with K——?” said a friend of Theodore Hook, alluding to a man who had grossly vilified him. “Do with him?” rejoined Hook; “why I mean to let him alone *most severely*.”

Thomas Watson well remarks that surfeiting shortens life:

"More die of it than by the sword. Many dig their graves with their teeth. The cup kills more than the cannon."

In a schoolroom in Boston a little boy about seven years of age was sitting beside his sister, about five years old. George got angry with his sister about something, doubled up his fist and struck her on the head. The little girl was just going to strike him back again when the teacher, seeing it, said, "My dear Mary, you had better kiss your brother. See how angry and unhappy he looks!" Mary looked at her brother; he looked sullen and wretched. Her resentment was soon gone, and love for her brother returned to her heart. She threw both her arms around his neck and kissed him. The poor boy was wholly unprepared for such a kind return for his blow. He could not stand before the generous affection of his sister. His feelings were touched and he burst into tears. His gentle sister took the corner of her apron and wiped away his tears, and sought to comfort him by saying, "Don't cry, George; you did not hurt me much." But he only wept the more.

QUESTION 70.—*Which is the seventh commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

QUESTION 71.—*What is required in the seventh commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The seventh commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.*

QUESTION 72.—*What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The seventh commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.*

Leighton, in explaining this precept, says: "I purpose not to reckon up particularly the several sorts and

degrees of sin here forbidden, for chastity is a delicate, tender grace, and can scarcely endure the much naming of itself, far less of those things that are so contrary to it. Though in the law of God, given to the people of the Jews, there is express mention of the gross abominations of this kind, because practiced by the Gentiles, and to be forbidden them, and though the apostle, writing to the Gentiles newly converted from these abominations, of necessity mentions particulars of them, yet, further than that necessity of re-proving them where they are in custom requires, he hates the very naming of them. (Eph. v. 3-12.) As the old Roman satirists, while they seem to reprove vice, rather teach it, by their impudent descriptions of it, the new Roman casuists, some of them, are as foul that way." It may suffice to regulate us in this if we believe this truth: that whatsoever is in this kind, besides the lawful use of marriage, is a breach of this holy law of God, whether it be in action or in words, or so much as in thought. And if this be true—as it is, if we believe truth itself, our Saviour's interpretation—that an unchaste look or thought makes a man guilty, then surely whatsoever is beyond these is more grossly sinful.

If you would be freed from the danger and importunity of this evil, make use of these usual and very useful rules: 1. Be sober and temperate in diet—withdraw fuel. 2. Be modest and circumspect in your carriage. Guard your eyes and ears and watch over all your deportment. Beware of undue and dangerous familiarities with any upon what pretence soever. 3. Be choice in your society, for there is much in that

4. In general, flee all occasions and incentives to uncleanness.

But the solid cure must begin within, otherwise all outward remedies will fail. Then—1. Seek a total, entire change of heart and to have the sanctifying Spirit of grace within you. 2. Labor to have the heart possessed with deep apprehension of the holiness and purity of God, and then of his presence and eye upon all your actions and thoughts. 3. Acquaint yourself with spiritual enjoyments. 4. Increase in the love of Christ. Alas the misery which the sin here forbidden produces! (See 1 Thess. iv. 4; Rom. xii. 1; 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20; iii. 17; vii. 34; 2 Tim. ii. 22; James i. 15; Col. iv. 6; Zeph. iii. 9; 1 Pet. iii. 1; 1 Tim. ii. 9; Jude 23; Prov. v. 8; Job xxxi. 1; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Gal. v. 24; Eph. v. 3; 1 Cor. vi. 10; Matt. v. 28; Ezek. xxiii. 19; Eph. v. 4; iv. 29; Gal. v. 19; Rom. xiii. 13; Eph. v. 11; 1 Cor. vi. 13; Eccles. vii. 26.)

William Kelly, of the Isle of Man, was very earnest and affectionate in his exhortations to his young friends, and used often to repeat to them that passage in the 119th Psalm:

“How shall the young preserve their ways  
From all pollution free?  
By making still their course of life  
With thy commands agree.”

And he would conclude by saying, “Remember the word *all*.”

Dr. Hugh Latimer, one of the primitive Reformers, was made bishop of Worcester in the reign of Henry VIII. It was the custom of those times for each of the bishops to make presents to the king on New Year's Day. Bishop Latimer went with the rest of his brethren to make the usual offering, but instead of a purse of gold he presented the king with a New Testa-

ment, in which was a leaf doubled down to this passage: "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."

The pious M'Cheyne of Scotland remarks: "Eve, Achan, David, all fell through the 'lust of the eye.' I should make a covenant with mine, and pray, 'Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.' . . . Satan makes unconverted men like the deaf adder to the sound of the gospel. I should pray to be made deaf by the Holy Spirit to all that would tempt me to sin. I ought to meditate often on heaven as a world of holiness—where all are holy, where the joy is holy joy, the work holy work; so that without personal holiness I never can be there."

QUESTION 73.—*Which is the eighth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.*

QUESTION 74.—*What is required in the eighth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.*

QUESTION 75.—*What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth, or may, unjustly hinder our own, or our neighbor's, wealth or outward estate.*

To steal is to take privately the property of others with an intention to convert it to our own use. To rob is to take the same property for the same purpose openly and with violence. The crime of stealing has its origin in that spirit of covetousness which prompts us to wish inordinately for the enjoyments and possessions of others. This spirit when indulged continually

acquires strength, and in many instances becomes ultimately so powerful as to break over every bound of right and reputation. He who indulges covetousness will find himself in danger wherever there is a temptation.

The following sorts of thieves have been specified: 1. The highway thief. (Lev. xix. 13.) 2. The house-thief, who steals his employer's money or goods. 3. The thief that under the pretence of law robs his client of his property. 4. The shop-thief, who uses false weights and measures, or puts excessive prices on his commodities. (Amos viii. 5; Hos. xii. 7; Lev. xix. 13; xxv. 14; 1 Thess. iv. 6.) 5. The usurer, who takes of others even to extortion, taking advantage of their necessity. (Luke xix. 8.) 6. The trustee, who appropriates the property committed to him to his own use. 7. The borrower, who borrows money from others with an intention never to pay them again. (Ps. xxxvii. 21; 2 Kings iv. 7.) 8. The man who receives goods which he knows or has good reason to believe have been stolen.

It is possible for a man to steal from himself—1. By niggardliness, not allowing himself what is fitting. 2. By prodigality, wasting his estate. 3. By idleness, spending the time in pleasure and vanity, which God has given him to work out his salvation. 4. By suretyship. (1 Cor. vi. 10.)

We ought to forbear all manner of theft and endeavors to enrich ourself by the wronging of others, because it is the express prohibition of God written in the Word, and most agreeable to the law of Nature written upon the heart; as also because the riches got

by theft and wrong are accompanied with God's curse, and, if not here, God's vengeance is sure to overtake such persons as are guilty of theft and unrighteousness in the other world. "This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off on this side; and it shall enter into the house of the thief, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof and the stones thereof." (Zech. v. 3, 4.) "As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool." (Jer. xvii. 11.) "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." (James v. 1, 3.) We may be kept from the sins forbidden in this eighth commandment, by mortified affections to the world through Christ's death and Spirit, by raised affections to the things above, by a love of justice, by prayer, by faith in God's promises and special providence in making all needful provision without this sin for his people.

Mr. Boston states in his memoirs that having been employed when a young man for some time by a notary, his employer failed to pay him for his services. Seeing a neglected book lying in the notary's chamber, he secretly took it away, thinking he might lawfully use this method of paying himself; but on further reflection he viewed his conduct as sinful and inconsistent with strict justice. Impressed with this conviction, he replaced the book with the same secrecy in which he had taken it away. An amiable instance of that tenderness of conscience for which the venerable man was remarkable.

A beggar asking Dr. Smollett for alms, he gave him, through mistake, a guinea. The poor fellow, perceiving it, hobbled after

him to return it, whereupon Smollett returned it to him with another guinea as a reward of his honesty, exclaiming at the same time, "What a lodging has honesty taken up with!"

QUESTION 76.—*Which is the ninth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*

QUESTION 77.—*What is required in the ninth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The ninth commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbor's good name, especially in witness-bearing.*

QUESTION 78.—*What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The ninth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbor's good name.*

This precept differs from the three preceding in the fact that whilst they have respect to injuries done by *deeds* or *actions*, this has reference to wrong done by *words*. The predominant sense of "bearing witness" is clearly indicated by the verb thus rendered, yet the term is of large import, equivalent to *utter*, *pronounce*, *declare*; and while the letter admits, the spirit of the precept requires, that it should here be understood as forbidding everything that is contrary to strict veracity in our communications with our fellow-men. We say "with our fellow-men," for though the phrase "against thy neighbor" might seem to limit it to the narrower circle of our immediate neighbors, yet the interpretation given to the term by our Saviour in the parable

of the Good Samaritan plainly teaches us that a more extended application is to be assigned to it.

The guilt of every species of lying, when perpetrated under the solemnities of an oath, is enhanced by these considerations: The sin in almost all cases is more deliberately committed. The person to whom an oath is administered has every opportunity which he can wish, for summoning up to the view of his mind every motive to the performance of his duty and every inducement to abstain from falsehood. These inducements also are the strongest conceivable. God in a peculiar manner is present to his thoughts—the *God of truth*, who has declared that *all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone*. His soul is put at hazard on his utterance of truth or falsehood. If he speaks falsehood, he voluntarily consigns himself to perdition. If he is guilty of perjury, he is ruined also for this world. The stain is too deep ever to be wiped away. At the same time he does what is in his power to cut up confidence by the roots. “*An oath for confirmation*,” says Paul, “*is to them an end of all strife*.” (Heb. vi. 16.) If the confidence reposed in an oath could be reposed no more, human disputes must either be unsettled or terminated by the strength of the arm, and to this end he who perjures himself does all in his power to conduct them.

But, as already intimated, the scope of the prohibition embraces a multitude of aberrations from the strict law of sincerity and veracity embodied in this precept, which, at the same time, have nothing to do with judicial proceedings. Lies are commonly distinguished into three kinds: First, *malicious or pernicious*

*lies*, or lies the design of which is to do mischief. These are universally condemned. Secondly, *jocose lies*, or lies told for the purpose of amusement and merriment. However common these are, and however lightly they are thought of, a strict moralist will condemn them also, because truth is too sacred to be trifled with. Third, *officious lies*, which are so called because they are intended to promote the benefit of others. Equivocation is another species of falsehood, and consists in the studied use of terms which bear two different senses, in one of which the speaker understands them, while he means them to be understood in the other by the person addressed. He violates truth because he intends to deceive. It is violated also by mental reservation, which has been justified by popish casuists, but deserves universal execration, because it subverts all faith and confidence between man and man.

Not only, however, does this commandment *forbid* all lies against our fellow-beings, and even injurious thoughts, groundless suspicions and secret prejudices or envy of the praises and commendations which they receive, but it also *requires* sincerity, truth, fidelity, candor and caution in all our conversation and conduct, and a disposition to honor in every man what is honorable, to commend what is commendable, to vindicate and excuse what can be vindicated and excused, and to conceal what may be lawfully concealed, and in every respect to consult his reputation, and even to rejoice in his credit and renown, as we should were it our own.

(See Ps. xxxix. 1; Zech. viii. 16; Prov. xiv. 5; 2 Cor. x. 16; Phil. iv. 8; 1 Pet. iv. 8; Col. iii. 9; Prov.

xii. 22; Ps. cxix. 163; Prov. xxvi. 18, 19; xxi. 6; Ps. xxxv. 11; Prov. x. 18; James iv. 11; Lev. xix. 16; Acts xxiii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 9.)

It was a law of the Scythians that the man who told a lie in connection with an oath should lose his head, because such an offence was adapted to take away all truth and mutual confidence among men.

"God," says Watson, "hath set two fences to keep in the tongue—the teeth and the lips; and this commandment is a third fence set about it, that it should not break forth into evil."

Slandering is to report things of others unjustly. Holiness itself is no shield from slander. You may smite another and never touch him. *The wounds of the tongue* no physician can heal, and to pretend friendship to a man, and yet slander him, is most odious.

QUESTION 79.—*Which is the tenth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.*

QUESTION 80.—*What is required in the tenth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The tenth commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor, and all that is his.*

QUESTION 81.—*What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

ANSWER.—*The tenth commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbor, and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.*

This commandment refers to the thoughts, inculcates disinterestedness, and prohibits indulging a desire after that which belongs to another. The all-wise Lawgiver knew both the blindness of man's mind and the hypocrisy of his heart, as shown in being less concerned about his state of mind than his outward conduct, and therefore takes away all pretext and deprives him of all excuse, by giving this last commandment concerning the heart, and so teaching him the exact and spiritual nature of all the rest.

#### COVETOUSNESS.

This precept forbids—1. Covetousness in general: *Thou shalt not covet.* A man may be said to be given to covetousness—(1.) When his thoughts are mainly absorbed by the world. (2.) When he is more anxious to get earthly things than to prepare for heaven. (3.) When his conversation is chiefly about the world. (John iii. 31; Eccles. x. 12.) (4.) When he overloads himself with worldly business. (5.) When his heart is so set upon the world that to get it he cares not what indirect unlawful means he uses. (Hos. xii. 7, 8.)

This precept forbids covetousness in particular. The special objects here enumerated are not exhaustive, but only representative of a large class. The last clause denotes the wide range from which the enumerated objects are taken as specimens. The house, the wife, the servants, the cattle, represent the four principal departments of a man's earthly establishment—namely, his material possessions, his family, his household and his “live-stock.” They illustrate and tend to define

the comprehensive phrase, "any thing that is thy neighbor's."

Covetousness is—1. A subtle sin. It is called "a cloak" (1 Thess. ii. 5), because it cloaks itself under the name of frugality and prudence. 2. It is a dangerous sin. It hinders the efficiency of the preached word (Matt. xiii. 7), and makes men have "a withered hand" which they cannot stretch out to the poor. (See Luke xvi. 14.) 3. It is a mother-sin, a radical vice. (1 Tim. vi. 10.) 4. It is a sin dishonorable to religion. How disgraceful for those who say their hopes are above, to have their hearts below—for those who say they are born of God to be buried in the earth! 5. It exposes to God's abhorrence. 6. It shuts men out of heaven. (Eph. v. 6.)

#### REQUIRED.

By "full contentment with our condition" is meant a cheerful acquiescence in the lot which God, in his holy and wise providence, is pleased to carve out for us in this world. (Heb. xiii. 5.) Though the perfection of no grace is attainable in this life, yet a great measure and eminent degrees of grace, particularly that of contentment, may be, and have been, attained by Christians in this world. (Phil. iv. 11.) We may attain true contentment by looking above all the enjoyments of time as transitory and vain, to God himself as our chief good and eternal inheritance. (Ps. lxxii. 10; xvi. 5, 6.) For reasons of contentment under adverse providences see Hos. vii. 9; Lam. iii. 39; James ii. 5; Luke xxii. 28, 29; Matt. xxv. 34; 2 Cor. iv. 17; Heb. xii. 10. We may be said to have "a

right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbor and all that is his " when our inward motions and affections are influenced by grace to sway and determine us to promote and rejoice in the welfare of our neighbor, both as to his spiritual and temporal concerns. (1 Cor. xiii. 4-8.)

#### *FORBIDDEN.*

The sins forbidden in this commandment are—1. All sinful and inordinate desires and motions after other men's enjoyments. (Col. iii. 5.) 2. All cruelty and incompassionateness to others in necessity, and keeping back from them that which is made theirs by God's command. (Prov. xi. 24; Lev. xix. 9, 10.) 3. The detaining of the hireling's wages when it is due. (Hab. ii. 9-11.) 4. All inward grudgings at the enjoyments of others, and envyings of them, whether pertaining to the mind or the body. (1 Cor. xiii. 4.)

Men first break the tenth commandment by coveting, and then they break the eighth by stealing. It was an excellent appeal that Samuel made to the Hebrew people: "Witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded?" And it was a brave speech of Paul, "I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel." Whence was this? It was from contentment. "I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content."

In speaking of contentment, Philip Henry used to say: "When the mind and the condition meet, there is contentment. Now, either the condition must be brought up to the mind—and that is not only unreasonable, but impossible, for as the condition riseth the mind riseth with it—or else the mind must be brought down to the condition, and that is both possible and

reasonable." And he observed, "that no condition of life will of itself make a man content without the grace of God, for we find Haman discontented in the court, Ahab discontented on the throne, Adam discontented in Paradise; nay—and higher we cannot go—the angels that fell were discontented even in heaven itself."

QUESTION 82.—*Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?*

ANSWER.—*No mere man, since the fall, is able, in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.*

To keep "perfectly" the commandments of God is to keep *all* the commandments of God and at *all* times, without the least breach of them in regard of disposition, inclination, thought, affection, word or conduct. (Gal. iii. 10; Matt. v. 21, 22; xxii. 37–39; James ii. 10.) That every man *ought* to keep all the commandments of God perfectly is evident from Deut. xviii. 13 and xii. 32. And the reason of this is obvious. God requires and has a just title to our perfect obedience, and it tends to the advantage of ourselves and others.

#### SINCE THE FALL.

Adam kept the law in his innocent state (Eccles. vii. 29; Gen. i. 27), and Christ perfectly kept it. (Matt. v. 17; Heb. iv. 15.) But since the fall *no mere man*—*i. e.* no one of Adam's family descending from him by ordinary generation (see Acts xvii. 26)—has ever been able to keep the commandments perfectly. Do not Christians obey the law perfectly? No, "for there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Eccles. vii. 20.) Christians keep the com-

mandments of God sincerely, but not perfectly. (See 2 Cor. i. 12; Ps. cxxx. 3; Rom. vii. 18, 19.) The Lord's Prayer, which is to be used *daily*, has this petition: "Forgive us our debts," or sins. But though no Christian on earth ever attained absolute perfection, so as to obey God in all things, at all times, without any sin, yet, as already remarked, all Christians ought to endeavor after perfection, that they may attain higher and higher degrees of personal holiness. (Matt. v. 48.) Such an aim and effect are essential to the authentication of Christian character. Is it asked, Why does God suffer such impotency to lie upon man that he cannot perfectly keep the law? the answer is: 1. To humble us. We are self-exalting creatures, but when we come to see our deficiencies and failings, and how far short we come of the holiness and perfection God's law requires, this is a means to pull down our plumes of pride, lay them in the dust and lead us to weep over our inability, blush over our leprous spots, and say, as Job, "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." 2. God suffers our impotency to remain upon us, that we may have recourse to Christ to obtain pardon for our defects, and to sprinkle our best duties with his blood.

#### THOUGHT, WORD AND DEED.

Do we sin daily? Yes; "in many things we offend all." (James iii. 2.) Do we daily sin in thought? Yes; "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Gen. viii. 21.) Are we guilty of many tongue-sins? Yes; "in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." (Prov. x. 19.) Are the best guilty of many defects? Yes; for often "the spirit indeed is willing but

the flesh is weak." (Matt. xxvi. 41.) And of many inadvertencies? Yes; "they are overtaken in a fault." (Gal. vi. 1.) Can we tell how often we offend? No; "who can understand his errors?" (Ps. xix. 12.) Should we not, therefore, have recourse to Christ daily by faith and repentance? Yes; "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father." (1 John ii. 1.)

Note, 1. That we are wholly indebted to the free grace of God for salvation and eternal life (Tit. iii. 5), and not to anything in ourselves, who are, at best, but unprofitable servants. (Luke xvii. 10.) 2. That a dreadful curse must needs lie on all unbelievers that are out of Christ. (John iii. 36; Gal. iii. 10.) 3. That all God's people should sigh under their unhappy sinful inclinations. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24), and long to be with Christ in the perfect state, and with "the spirits of just men made perfect." (Heb. xii. 23.)

Dr. Gill once preaching on human inability, a gentleman present was much offended, and took him to task for degrading human nature. "Pray, sir," said the doctor, "what do you think that man can contribute to his conversion?" He enumerated a variety of particulars. "And have you done all this?" said the doctor. "Why, no, I cannot say I have yet, but I hope I shall begin soon." "If you have these things in your power, and have not done them, you deserve to be doubly damned, and are but ill qualified to be an advocate for free-will when it has done you so little good."

A woman professing to be under deep conviction went to a minister, crying aloud that she was a sinner. But when he came to examine her in what point, though he went over and explained all the ten commandments, she would not own that she had broken one of them!

QUESTION 83.—*Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?*

ANSWER.—*Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.*

#### MORE HEINOUS.

What is it for sin to be “heinous”? Sins are heinous as they are grievous and offensive to God. (Ezek. viii. 6, 13, 15.) Are not all sins hateful and offensive to God? Yes, but not equally so. (Matt. vii. 3; John xix. 11.) Every sin has a voice to speak, but some sins cry. As some diseases are worse than others, and some poisons more venomous, so some sins are more heinous. (Ezek. xvi. 47; Jer. xvi. 12.) Every sin is done *in the sight of God*, who is the best judge of the heinousness of sins. (Ps. li. 4; Job xxxvi. 9; Hab. i. 13.)

#### IN THEMSELVES.

For sins to be heinous “in themselves” is to be heinous in their own nature, though no other aggravating circumstances should attend them. Sins committed more immediately against God, or the first table of his law, are more heinous in their own nature than sins committed more immediately against man or any precept of the second table. Likewise, some sins against the second table are more heinous in themselves than other sins against this table. For example, blasphemy against God is more heinous in its own nature than defaming or speaking evil of our neighbor (1 Sam. ii. 25), and adultery is more heinous than theft. (Prov. vi. 33-35 )

## AGGRAVATIONS.

Sins are aggravated by the following circumstances:

1. *From the person offending or offended.* The sins of superiors in gifts, graces, age or station, as parents, husbands, masters, magistrates, professors of religion or ministers, are more heinous than the same sins committed by their respective inferiors. (Hos. v. 1; Rom. ii. 24, 21.) This is so because their sins prostitute more of the image or authority of God lodged in them, and do more to harden and encourage others in sin. (1 Kings xii. 25–33.) So, too, as previously hinted, sins committed immediately against God, or Christ as Mediator, or the Holy Spirit, are more heinous than like sins committed against men; sins against many are more heinous than like sins against few; sins against Christians, particularly weak ones, more heinous than like sins against others; sins against superiors more heinous than like sins against inferiors; and sins against men's souls than like sins against their bodies.

2. *From the means against which they are committed.* Sins committed against the express letter of the law, clear revelation, manifold warnings, reproofs, convictions, vows, resolutions, mercies, judgments, etc., are more heinous than the same sins committed in contrary cases, because, besides the sin itself, there is an abuse of those clear revelations, etc. (Isa. xxvi. 10; Luke xii. 47.)

3. *From the quality of the offence.* Sins committed in word and deed, or which cannot admit of restitution, are more heinous than like sins only conceived in thought, or which admit of restitution.

4. *From the place in which they are committed.* Thus sins committed in a land of light are more heinous than the same sins committed in a place of darkness; sins in a place of great deliverance and mercies than the same sins in another place (Ps. cvi. 7); and sins in a public place, whereby others may be enticed and defiled, than the same sins in secret places. (2 Sam. xvi. 22.)

5. *From the time when they are committed.* Thus sins may be more heinous from having been committed on the Sabbath; sins after trouble and affliction more heinous than the same sins at another time (2 Chron. xxviii. 22; Isa. i. 5); and sins after repentance and engagements to be the Lord's, than the same sins before such repentance and engagements.

6. *From the manner in which they are committed.* If by contrivance (Mic. ii. 1); by delight (Prov. ii. 14); without blushing (Isa. iii. 9); with boasting (Phil. iii. 19); by frequent repetition. (Num. xiv. 22.) We should take notice of these aggravations in our confessions. (Lev. xvi. 21.)

The most heinous of all the sins in the world is the sin against the Holy Ghost. (See Matt. xii. 31; Mark iii. 29; 1 John v. 16; Heb. vi. 4-8; x. 26, 29; Tit. iii. 10, 11.) "This sin," says Ursinus, "is a denial of the acknowledged truth of God, and a willful opposition to it in connection with his will and works, concerning which the mind has been fully enlightened and convinced by the testimony of the Holy Ghost; all of which proceeds, not from fear or infirmity, but from a determined hatred to the truth and from a heart filled with bitter malice." This sin shall not be forgiven—not be

cause the blood of Christ is not sufficient to wash it away, for his blood "cleanseth from all sin," but because those who are guilty of it willfully, maliciously and perseveringly reject the testimony of Christ speaking by the Holy Ghost in his word.

"Once I was blind to the evil of sin in general, and in particular to the number and aggravation of my own transgressions. Except for some overt transgression I felt but little consciousness of guilt. But I have since realized that sin is an evil and bitter thing, and that my own sins are exceedingly numerous and aggravated. Many things which once appeared lawful, and even laudable, appear now exceedingly sinful and odious; and never more so, I think, than when all thought of punishment is out of mind. When I think of my sins as violations of God's reasonable and holy law, they appear inexcusable and criminal beyond description. When I consider them as committed against God, they look like a compound of the most presumptuous rebellion, the most wanton ingratitude, the most wicked irreverence. When I dwell on their tendency, as it respects my fellow-sinners, they seem to be unmingled malevolence."—*Pliny Fiske*.

Respecting the danger of what some improperly call little sins, it has been said, "A small penknife will take away life as well as a large sword."

QUESTION 84.—*What doth every sin deserve?*

ANSWER.—*Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.*

"A principal design of this answer doubtless was," says Dr. Ashbel Green, "to oppose the absurd and dangerous distinction which is made in the Romish Church between some sins which are represented as *venial*—that is, such as are in their nature so small and trivial that they may be expiated by *penance* or

by some other mode of making satisfaction for them by the offenders—and other sins which are *mortal*—that is, such as subject the parties committing them to the penalty of death, even death eternal.”

#### EVIL OF SIN.

The evil of sin consists principally in the offence it gives and the wrong it does to God. (Ps. li. 4.) It is enmity to God. (Rom. viii. 7; Lev. xxvi. 40; Acts v. 39; vii. 51.) It is called hatred of God (Rom. i. 30), rebellion against God (1 Sam. xv. 23), contempt of God. (2 Sam. xii. 9.) It wrongs all God’s attributes. It slights his sovereignty (Ex. v. 2), resists his power (1 Cor. x. 22), despises his goodness (Rom. ii. 4), impeaches his justice (Ezek. xviii. 25), clouds his holiness. (James ii. 7.)

By sin’s *deserving* God’s wrath and curse is meant, that it is worthy of it. The desert of sin is not separable from the nature of it. As sin is the very opposite of God’s holy nature and righteous law, it cannot but deserve his wrath and curse. (Rom. i. 32. See also Gal. iii. 10.) “The wages of sin is death,” says the apostle. (Rom. vi. 23.) He makes no distinction between one kind of sin and another; and by the *wages* of sin he manifestly means the *desert* of sin. Death, therefore, according to him, is the desert of *every* sin; which is precisely what our Catechism affirms, for by *death* in this place, the context proves beyond a question, we are to understand *everlasting punishment*, which is the same thing that is intended in the answer before us by “the wrath and curse of God, both in this life and in that which is to come,” all the sufferings of this

life being the deserved effects of sin, and the commencement to every finally impenitent sinner of the wrath of God to endless ages. It is scarcely necessary to say that by the *wrath* of God is not meant anything like *passion*, which always implies change, and therefore imperfection, which we know cannot belong to the Supreme Being. By the wrath of God we are to understand "that most pure and undisturbed act of his will which produces most dreadful effects against the sinner." (See Ezek. vii. 27 ; John iii. 36 ; Rom. ii. 5, 6, 8, Deut. xxviii. 15 ; Col. iii. 6 ; Prov. i. 26.) Whilst every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, greater sins deserve greater wrath, and shall be punished accordingly.

#### PRACTICAL LESSONS.

1. We learn the safety of believers. Christ has freed them from the desert of their sins. (John iii. 18 ; Zeph. iii. 17 ; Hos. xiii. 14 ; Rom. iv. 25 ; viii. 1, 33, 34.) 2. The impossibility of satisfying God's justice for the least sin that ever we committed. (Job vii. 20 ; Ps. cxxx. 3.) 3. The necessity of a Mediator between God and us. (Ps. xl. 6, 7.) 4. The amazing love of God in transferring the guilt and punishment of sin to the glorious Surety. (2 Cor. v. 21.) 5. The wonderful patience of God in not bringing this wrath and curse upon us all this while. (Ps. ciii. 8, 10.) 6. The importance of laboring to prevent the wrath we have deserved. How careful are men to prevent poverty or disgrace ! Oh, labor to prevent God's eternal wrath, that it may not only be deferred, but also removed ! This can be done, and only done, by getting an interest in Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. i. 10.)

The heinousness of any sin is not to be judged of by the magnitude of the object about which it is conversant, or the grossness of the outward action. When the Lord expressly says, "Thou shalt not," and his rational creature says, "I will," whether the contest be about an apple or a kingdom, it is stubbornness and rebellion.

A venerable minister at H—— preached on the subject of eternal punishment. On the next day it was agreed among some thoughtless young men that one of them should go to him and endeavor to draw him into dispute, with the design of making a jest of him and his doctrine. The wag accordingly went, was introduced into the minister's study, and commenced the conversation by saying, "I believe there is a small dispute between you and me, and I thought I would call this morning and try to settle it." "Ah," said the clergyman, "what is it?" "Why," replied the wag, "you say that the wicked will go into everlasting punishment, and I do not think that they will." "Oh, if that is all," answered the minister, "there is no dispute between you and me. If you turn to Matt. xxv. 46, you will find that the dispute is between you and the Lord Jesus Christ; and I advise you to go immediately and settle it with him."

QUESTION 85.—*What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse, due to us for sin?*

ANSWER.—*To escape the wrath and curse of God, due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.*

Our greatest concern is to inquire what is to be done by us "that we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin." (Mic. vi. 6.) A convinced conscience will put us upon this inquiry. (Acts ii. 37.) We must be serious and solicitous in this inquiry.

(Acts xvi. 30.) We must be prompt in this inquiry. (Isa. xxi. 12.) We must make this inquiry with resolution. (Jer. l. 5.) We must apply ourselves to Christ with this inquiry. (Matt. xix. 16.)

### THREE THINGS REQUIRED.

God requires three things of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin: 1. Faith in Jesus Christ. 2. Repentance unto life. 3. The diligent use of all outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.

Are the things which God requires of us in man's power to perform? No. Though they are our duties, yet we have no power in ourselves by nature to perform them, but the power is of God. (2 Cor. iii. 5.) Why does God require those things from us when he knows we cannot perform them? To show us our duty, convince us of our weakness, and chiefly to excite us to embrace his gracious promise, that we may receive them from Christ as our *free privilege*. Does God require anything of us in point of duty without promising suitable strength for the performance of it? No; for he has said, "I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." (Ezek. xxxvi. 27.)

### FAITH.

God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, because by such faith we have an interest in him and in his imputed righteousness and the promise he has made to us of remission and salvation. (Phil. iii. 9; Acts x. 43; Eph. ii. 8.) Faith is placed first, because till we have

faith we can neither repent nor rightly attend on God's ordinances. (Rom. xiv. 23.)

#### REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.

God requires of us repentance unto life, because the promise of forgiveness of sin is made to repentance as a concomitant of faith, and it is not for God's honor to pardon and save any that go on still in their trespasses. (Acts iii. 19 ; xx. 21.)

#### OUTWARD MEANS.

God requires of us the use of all outward means to escape his wrath and curse, because, although he could save without means, yet it is his will to appoint means which have been instituted by him. We cannot expect the benefits of redemption and salvation to be communicated to us in any other way. (1 Cor. i. 21 ; Acts viii. 22.) By a "*diligent* use" of such means is meant an embracing every opportunity offered in providence for attending upon God in them, looking earnestly for his blessing upon them, by which alone they become efficacious for our spiritual benefit. (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.) The external ordinances should be used diligently, because our eternal salvation is so connected with the right use of them. (Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7.) Do all believing and penitent sinners escape God's wrath and curse? Yes, they do, and shall for ever escape it. (Rom. viii. 1 ; Col. i. 12, 13 ; John v. 24.)

A certain man in Hindostan had inquired of various devotees and priests how he might make atonement for his sins ; and he was directed to drive iron spikes, sufficiently blunted, through his sandals, and on these spikes he was di-

rected to place his naked feet and to walk about four hundred and eighty miles. If through loss of blood or weakness of body he was obliged to halt, he might wait for healing and strength. He undertook the journey, and while he halted under a large shady tree where the gospel was sometimes preached, one of the missionaries came and preached in his hearing from these words: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." While he was preaching, the man rose up, threw off his torturing sandals, and cried out aloud, "This is what I want;" and he became an earnest witness that the blood of Jesus Christ does cleanse from all sin indeed.

"Mamma," said a little child, "my Sabbath-school teacher tells me that this world is only a place in which God lets us live a while that we may prepare for a better world. But, mother, I do not see anybody preparing. I see you preparing to go into the country, and Aunt Ellen is preparing to come here. But I do not see any one preparing to go there. Why don't you try to get ready? You scarce ever *speak* about going."

QUESTION 86.—*What is faith in Jesus Christ?*

ANSWER.—*Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.*

The faith to which the answer to this question refers, is *justifying* faith, or the faith by which a sinner obtains an interest in Jesus Christ and the blessings of salvation. It is called justifying faith on account of the design to which it is subservient, and in this view its exclusive object is that part of revelation which relates to the Saviour, or the gospel strictly so called.

Why is faith called a *grace*? Because it beautifies our soul and is freely given by God to us. Why is it called a *saving* grace? Because it interests us in Christ

and his salvation. Faith is a saving grace, not by the act of believing as an act, for then it would save as a work, whereas we are saved by faith in opposition to all works; but faith is a saving grace as an instrument, apprehending and applying Jesus Christ and his perfect righteousness, whereby alone we are saved. (John iii. 16; Acts xvi. 31; Rom. iii. 22.) It is the hand that is stretched out to receive Christ in the promise. (Ps. lxxviii. 31; Mark xvi. 16.)

#### *OBJECT.*

The primary object of faith is the person of Christ, and the secondary are his benefits. (Phil. iii. 8, 9.) Nothing can fill the eye or hand of faith but Christ only, or God in him. (Ps. lxxiii. 25.) Nothing will relieve the mind of a criminal doomed to die, but authentic information that his sovereign is willing to pardon him, and nothing will set the convinced sinner free from the terror which he feels, but the knowledge of the mercy of God through the mediation of his Son. The object, then, of justifying faith is Christ crucified—Christ as having borne our sins in his own body on the tree, his blood shed as a propitiation for sin, and the everlasting righteousness which he brought in as the foundation of hope to those who had no hope in themselves. May not a man look partly to Christ and partly to his own works and duties for righteousness? No; he must look to Christ, and exclude everything else, or he cannot be justified. (Phil. iii. 9.) Is it enough to look to the person of Christ only in believing? No; we must look to the person of Christ as clothed with all his offices. (Acts xvi. 31.) Our ignor-

ance needs him as a Prophet, our guilt as a Priest, our sins and enemies as a King. (See John xiv. 1; Rom i. 17; x. 8; Phil. i. 29; Heb. iii. 19.)

#### *ELEMENTS.*

Faith is here represented as “receiving Jesus Christ” (John i. 12) and “resting” on him. (Ps. lxxiii. 25.) There are other representations of faith in Scripture. It is called a persuasion, a looking, coming, running, fleeing, flying and entering with Christ, a testing and leaning on him, a believing, trusting, living, dwelling and walking in him, etc. (See Heb. xi. 13; Isa. xlv. 22; Matt. xi. 28; Prov. xviii. 10; Isa. xl. 31; Heb. vi. 9; Isa. lx. 8.) These various representations show the extensive improvement which faith as a habit makes of Christ in his manifold relations to us. When the flesh and blood of Christ are exhibited as meat indeed and drink indeed, faith is called eating and drinking of the same; when he is held forth as a refuge, faith is a flying to him for safety (Heb. vi. 18); when he is called a door, faith is an entering in by him. (John x. 9.) The seat or habitation of faith is not only the head or understanding, but principally the heart and will. (Rom. x. 10; Acts viii. 37.) The mere assent of the understanding to the truths of Scripture is not such a faith as will save the soul. Saving faith is the receiving of Christ by the full and hearty consent of the heart. (John i. 12.) In the answer this faith is called a “receiving” of Christ, because he, as the glorious object of it, is revealed in Scripture under the notion of a gift (2 Cor. ix. 15), presented to such as are quite poor and have nothing

of their own. It is also called a “resting” on Christ, because he is revealed in the word as a firm foundation (Isa. xxviii. 16) on which we may lay the weight of our everlasting concerns with the greatest confidence and satisfaction. (Ps. cxvi. 7.) The soul, convinced of its lost condition, lays hold on Christ, relies upon him and puts confidence in him, and in him alone, for salvation. (See John iii. 33; Matt. xi. 29; 1 Tim. i. 15; Col. ii. 6; Rom. v. 11; Acts v. 31.)

#### *OFFERED IN THE GOSPEL.*

We are to receive and rest upon Christ upon the warrant of his being offered. He is offered to us sinners of Adam’s race in contradistinction to the angels that fell. (Heb. ii. 16.) This offer is made in the gospel. (Luke ii. 10; 1 John ii. 25; Prov. viii. 4.) It is made in the form of a deed of gift or grant, in which God the Father makes over his Son, Jesus Christ, to mankind lost, that whosoever of them shall receive this gift shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John iii. 16.) That the universality of Heaven’s grant infers a universal warrant to believe is evident, because if there were not such a gift and grant of Christ as warranted all to receive him, the unbelieving world could not be condemned for rejecting him, as we find they are. (John iii. 18.) Christ is offered in the gospel freely (Isa. lv. 1), wholly (1 Cor. i. 30), particularly. (John vii. 37; ix. 35; 1 Tim. i. 15.)

“My confidence is,” said the pious Dr. Doddridge shortly before his death, “not that I have lived such or such a life or served God in this or the other manner. I know of no prayer

I ever offered, no service I ever performed, but there has been such a mixture of what was wrong in it that, instead of recommending me to the favor of God, I needed his pardon through Christ for the same. Yet I am full of confidence, and this is my confidence: There is a hope set before me. I have fled, I still fly, for refuge to that hope."

"It is just a year this day," says Mrs. Judson, "since I entertained hope in Christ—about this time in the evening, when reflecting on the words of the lepers, 'If we enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also,' and I felt that if I returned to the world I should surely perish. If I stayed where I then was, I should perish, and I could but perish if I threw myself on the mercy of Christ. Then came light and relief, and comfort such as I never knew before."

QUESTION 87.—*What is repentance unto life?*

ANSWER.—*Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.*

This means of salvation is called "repentance unto life," because it proceeds from and is an evidence of spiritual life, and issues in eternal life. (Acts xi. 18.) It is also so called to distinguish it from the sorrow of the world, which worketh death (2 Cor. vii. 10), and from legal repentance. Legal and evangelical repentance differ—1. *In their order.* The former goes before faith in Christ, the latter follows after it. (Zech. xii. 10.) 2. *In their cause.* The former flows from the view of God's justice and wrath in his threatenings and judgments, the latter flows from the view of God's

holiness and love manifested in the death of Christ and the precepts of the law. 3. *In their object.* In the former we are affected chiefly with the guilt of sin and with gross sins, but in the latter we are affected chiefly with the filth of sin, the dishonor done to God by it, and with secret and beloved sins. (Gen. iv.) 4. *In their fruits.* The former turns us only from some acts of sin, and worketh death by exciting lust and filling us with wrath against God because of his justice and holiness, but the latter turns us from the love of every sin and leads to eternal life. (1 Kings xxi. 27.) Repentance is a “grace;” that is, an unspeakable and unmerited favor. (2 Tim. ii. 25; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.) It is a “saving” grace. (2 Cor. vii. 10.) By faith the redeemed of the Lord become *entitled* to heaven, and by repentance they become *prepared* or qualified for its employments and enjoyments.

#### TRUE SENSE OF HIS SIN.

The true sense of sin which is requisite in repentance, consists in such an inward feeling of our miserable and lost estate, by reason of the wrath and curse of God and the everlasting punishment to which, for our sins, we are exposed, as puts us into great perplexity and trouble of spirit, so that our consciences, being thereby pricked and wounded, can find no quiet and take no rest in this condition. (Acts ii. 37; Josh. vii. 20; Ps. li. 4, 5; Job xl. 4; Ps. cxxx. 3.) There is need of this sense of sin to true repentance, because without this sense of sin sinners will not forsake sin, nor apply themselves to the Lord Jesus for pardon and healing. (Matt. ix. 12, 13.)

*APPREHENSION OF THE MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST.*

When there is a distinct apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, it furnishes the only pure as well as the most powerful motive to genuine repentance. While the soul is filled with self-abhorrence in the view of having sinned against a merciful God and Saviour, it is melted into genuine sorrow for all its sin, made to look on it with the greatest detestation, and at the same time is filled with humble love and adoring gratitude to God, and with a most intense desire to avoid offending him in time to come. (Ps. cxxx. 4; Rom. ii. 4; Matt. iii. 2.) There cannot be true repentance where there is a despair of mercy. (Jer. ii. 25.) We have reason to hope for that mercy. (Isa. lv. 7.)

*GRIEF AND HATRED OF SIN.*

The grief which is an ingredient of true repentance is a real, inward and abiding sorrow for sin as offensive and dishonoring to a holy and gracious God. (Job xl. 4, 5; Acts ii. 37; Ezek. vii. 16; Matt. xxvi. 75; Zech. xii. 10.) The hatred of sin which accompanies true repentance is not only a loathing and abhorring of our sin, but of ourselves on account of it. (Isa. vi. 5; Ps. cxix. 128; Job xlii. 6; Ezra ix. 6; Luke xviii. 13.)

*TURN FROM IT UNTO GOD.*

We must turn from sin as well as grieve for it. (Isa. lv. 7; Prov. xxviii. 13.) Though repentance begins at the heart, it does not rest there, but goes into the life. What a change did it make in Paul! (Acts xxvi. 9; Phil. iii. 8.) What a change did it produce in the

jailer! (Acts xvi. 33.) “Break off thy sins by righteousness.” (Dan. iv. 27.) The breaking off of sin must be—1. *Universal*, a breaking off of all sins. 2. *Sincere*; it must be from the heart. (Ezek. xviii. 31.) 3. *Perpetual*. (Hos. xiv. 8.) Turning from sin, however, is but the negative part of religion; there must also be a sincere turning to God. (Ps. cxix. 59; Acts xi. 23; Jer. iii. 22; Josh. xxiv. 24.) We are to have “repentance toward God.” (Acts xx. 21.) We are not only to cease to do evil, “but learn to do well.” “’Tis not enough,” says an old writer, “when we repent, to leave old sins, but we must engage in God’s service, as when the wind leaves the west it turns into a contrary corner. The repenting Prodigal did not only leave his harlots, but also did arise and go to his father. (Luke xv. 18.) In true repentance the heart points directly to God, as the needle to the north pole.” (See 2 Cor. vii. 11.) The “purpose” of duty to God, into which the true penitent enters, is a purpose or resolution to return to the practice of every known duty (Ps. cxix. 106), and to spirituality in it. (Phil. iii. 3.) It is a “full” purpose, because it is a determined one and immediately put in execution. (Ps. cxix. 60.) It is connected with “endeavor,” because purposes without endeavors are like blossoms without fruit. (Matt. xxi. 30.) The “obedience” mentioned is “new,” because it proceeds from a new principle (Matt. vii. 17), is influenced by new motives, is directed by a new rule, and has a new end—the glory of God. (Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.) None that truly repent do in this life perform new obedience fully without any failure or defect, but they diligently endeavor to

do it, and wherein they fall short it is their grief and trouble. (Ps. xxxviii. 17.)

"Which is the most delightful emotion?" said an instructor of the deaf and dumb to his pupils after teaching them the names of our various feelings. The pupils turned instinctively to their slates to write an answer, and one with a smiling countenance wrote Joy. It would seem as if none could write anything else; but another with a look of more thoughtfulness put down Hope. A third with beaming countenance wrote Gratitude. A fourth wrote Love, and other feelings still claimed the superiority on other minds. One turned back with a countenance full of peace, and yet a tearful eye, and the teacher was surprised to find on her slate, "Repentance is the most delightful emotion." He turned to her with marks of wonder and asked, "Why?" "Oh," said she in the expressive language of looks and gestures which marks these mutes, "it is so delightful to be humbled before God!"

"I pay more attention," says Mr. Booth, "to people's lives than to their deaths. In all the visits I have paid to the sick during the course of a long ministry, I never met with ONE that ever recovered from what he supposed the brink of death, who afterward performed his vows and became religious, notwithstanding the very great appearance there was in their favor when they thought they could not recover."

QUESTION 88.—*What are the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?*

ANSWER.—*The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.*

By "the benefits of redemption" we are to understand all the blessings of Christ's purchase, which may

be summed up in grace here and glory hereafter. (Ps lxxxiv. 11.) It is Christ that communicates these blessings. "Of his fullness have all we received." (John i. 16.)

#### OUTWARD AND ORDINARY MEANS.

The "means" here specified are called "outward" to distinguish them from the Spirit and his grace, which are the inward means of salvation. (John iii. 5, 6.) They are called "ordinary," because the Lord has not wholly limited and bound up himself to his ordinances, for he can in an extraordinary way bring some out of a state of nature into a state of grace, as Paul, who was converted by a light and a voice from heaven. (John iii. 8.) But the ordinances are the most usual way and means of conversion and salvation, without the use of which we cannot, upon good ground, expect that any benefit of redemption should be communicated to us. (Ex. xx. 24; Ezek. xxxvi. 37; xxxvii. 28.)

#### HIS ORDINANCES.

Nothing makes anything a divine ordinance but the institution or appointment of God. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) The three *great* gospel ordinances are "the word, sacraments and prayer." (Acts ii. 41, 42.) They are called Christ's ordinances, because they are all of them instituted and prescribed by him in his word, as the only King and Head of his Church, to be observed in it to the end of the world. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) May not men institute ordinances of divine worship? No; this in Scripture is condemned as will-worship. (Col. ii. 20, 21, 23.)

*THE WORD.*

By this phrase is meant the whole revealed will of God contained in the Bible, consisting of the Old and New Testaments. No part of this word is superfluous, but some portions of it are more practical than others, and on that account ought to be more frequently perused and more diligently studied. It is an error which cannot be committed without suffering loss, to omit the attentive and repeated reading of the *whole* of the Sacred Scriptures. In the word we have God's will revealed, and by it the intellectual and moral powers of man are influenced in subservience to his purpose, for God deals with him in religion as a rational being. What is the special usefulness of the word for communicating the benefits of redemption? In it these benefits are exhibited and offered to sinners of mankind as the ground of their faith, that believing they may be possessed of them all. (John xx. 31.)

*SACRAMENTS.*

Some suppose the word sacrament is borrowed from *sacramentum*, a Latin word, which signifies an oath, and particularly the oath by which the Roman soldiers bound themselves to fidelity to their commander, and that the word is applied to the symbolical institutions of the Church because in these we, as it were, enlist under the banner of Jesus Christ and engage to follow him whithersoever he leads us. But it is probable that the symbolic ordinances of our religion were called sacraments because they were considered as mysteries, on account either of the recondite sense of the symbols or of the air of mystery with which the sacred

Supper was celebrated in the ancient Church. The special usefulness of the sacraments for communicating the benefits of redemption is, that they represent to our senses what the word does to our faith, and are designed for the confirmation of it. (1 Cor. x. 16; Rom. iv. 11.)

#### PRAYER.

“The prayer of faith,” says an old writer, “fetches home to the soul all the good that is wrapped up both in the word and in the sacraments.” (Mark xi. 24.)

#### MADE EFFECTUAL.

The means have no inherent efficacy in themselves to produce the blessings of redemption. They must be *made* effectual to salvation. *Means* are not *ends*, and are never rested in till the end is attained, for which alone they are used. The ordinances are made effectual to salvation by being made means not only of revealing and offering salvation, but also of giving the real possession of it to us. (Eph. i. 13, 14.)

#### ELECT.

Are gospel ordinances made effectual to all for salvation? No. (1 Cor. x. 5.) Are they made effectual to the elect? Yes. (Acts xiii. 48.)

#### SALVATION.

By this is meant not only a begun deliverance from all sin and misery, and a begun possession of all happiness and blessedness in this life (John iii. 15), but likewise a total freedom from the one, and a full and uninterrupted enjoyment of the other in the life to come. (Rev. xxi. 4.)

On a certain occasion, when a minister was speaking of the neglect of family duties—of reading the Scriptures and of family prayer—a little girl, who listened attentively and perceived that the preacher was describing a neglect that she had herself noticed at home, whispered to her mother, “Ma, is the minister talking to you?” To the mother this simple question was more powerful than the sermon. She was immediately brought under deep convictions of sin, which resulted in her hopeful conversion to God.

“It was our communion last Sabbath,” wrote Mr. Patterson to his friend Mr. Ede, “and I think I never felt my soul more drawn forth to Jesus and away from myself and every creature. And oh, if communion on earth be so sweet, what must it be in heaven, where there is no wandering heart and no tempting devil and no ensnaring world! . . . The marriage supper hastens. Oh, how little have we seen of Christ! There is enough in him to fill men and angels with new wonder to all eternity.”

QUESTION 89.—*How is the word made effectual to salvation?*

ANSWER.—*The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation.*

#### THE WORD.

By this expression is meant the whole of divine revelation contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which though ministered by men, yet is no other than the very word of God, and is to be received as such. (1 Thess. ii. 13.) (See p. 263.)

#### AN EFFECTUAL MEANS.

The Holy Spirit makes the word effectual for our salvation. (1 Thess. i. 5; ii. 13; Acts ix. 21; Rom. i.

16.) The word is a means of *conviction*, because it shows what is sinful, and exhibits the nature, aggravations and wages of sin. (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25; Ps. xix. 11; Acts ii. 37; Heb. iv. 12; Jer. xxiii. 22.) It is a means of *conversion*, because it shows why, from what and to what we should turn, and by it the Spirit of God conveys his converting grace, or the new nature, into our heart. (Mal. ii. 6; Rom. x. 17; Luke viii. 11; Ps. xvii. 4.)

#### *HOLINESS AND COMFORT.*

Christians are said to be *built up* in holiness, because the work of sanctification, like a building, is gradually carried on toward perfection until death. (Prov. xiv 18.) The word builds up Christians in *holiness*—1. As it is a means to work them into a greater conformity to the image of God, and to cause an increase of every grace in them. (2 Cor. iii. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 2.) 2. As it reproves, corrects, instructs in righteousness, and thereby perfects them more and more, and fits them for good works. (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) 3. As it is a means of pulling down strongholds in the soul, and more and more subduing all thoughts and affections to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) 4. As it is a means to strengthen Christians against the temptations of the devil and the corruptions of their own hearts. (Eph. vi. 13, 17; Matt. iv. 10; Ps. cxix. 9.) 5. As it is a means to establish Christians in the truths and ways of God, and to strengthen them against error and enticements to sin. (Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iv. 14.) The word builds up Christians in *comfort*, by conveying with power to their souls the great and precious promises,

which contain all the grounds of real and lasting comfort. (Gal. iii. 29; iv. 28; Rom. xv. 14; Isa. xl. 1, 2; 1 John ii. 25; 1 Thess. i. 6.)

#### *READING THE WORD.*

This is the first appointment of the Lord in reference to the word, that it may be read by all. (Deut. vi. 7; xvii. 19; xxxi. 9, 11.) The reading of it apart by ourselves is necessary for every one, because it is a sword for defence (Eph. vi. 17), a lamp for direction (Ps. cix. 105) and food for nourishment (Jer. xv. 16); in all which respects it is necessary for every Christian traveling Zionward. (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.)

#### *PREACHING THE WORD.*

The word of God is to be preached only by such as are sufficiently gifted (Mal. ii. 7), and also duly approved and called to that office. (Rom. x. 15; 1 Tim. iv. 14. See also 2 Tim. iv. 2; Rev. ii. 7.) The preaching of the word is "especially" made an effectual means of convincing, converting and edifying those who have it. Inspiration testifies that "faith cometh by hearing," and all experience, from the days of the apostle who wrote these words to the present hour, bears witness to the truth of his declaration. Probably a hundred, perhaps a thousand converts, have in every age been made by the ear for one that has been made by the eye. In the matter of edification the proportion may have been less, but it has always been great in favor of hearing beyond that of reading (Acts ii. 37; iv. 4; vi. 7; xi. 20, 21.)

## THROUGH FAITH.

The word is made effectual "through faith." (1 Thess. ii. 13; Rom. i. 16.) Thus it accomplishes the end for which sinners are convicted, converted and edified—viz. their *salvation*, complete and eternal.

## INFERENCES.

1. The enjoyment of the Scriptures, and an able, faithful ministry to expound and apply them, is a special mercy to any people. (Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20.) 2. Man cannot expect special and spiritual blessings from God in the willful neglect of the ordinances. (Prov. xxviii. 9.) 3. Sad is their condition who will sit all their days under the word to no purpose. (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.) 4. Christ's ordinances and ministers should be most welcome to the people to whom God sends them. (Isa. lii. 7.)

A certain libertine of the most abandoned character happened one day to stroll into a church, where he heard the fifth chapter of Genesis read, reciting that so long lived such and such persons, and yet the conclusion was "they died." Enos lived nine hundred and five years, and he died; Seth nine hundred and twelve, and he died; Methuselah nine hundred and sixty-nine, and he died. The frequent repetition of the words "he died," notwithstanding the great length of years they had lived, struck him so deeply with the thought of death and eternity that, through divine grace, he became a most exemplary Christian.

QUESTION 90.—*How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?*

ANSWER.—*That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, prep-*

*aration, and prayer; receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it in our lives.*

What is meant by the word “becoming effectual to salvation”?

The word of God is said to work effectually, when it has that good effect upon us for which it was appointed of God—namely, when the word works powerful illumination and thorough reformation. “To open their eyes and turn them from the power of Satan unto God.” (Acts xxvi. 18.) The opening their eyes denotes illumination, and turning them from Satan to God denotes reformation.

#### **ATTEND THEREUNTO.**

As it is from the word of God alone that we can learn the way of salvation, it is obviously not too much to say that *an attention to the word of God* should be regarded as the principal object of our existence in this world, and that we ought to treat it accordingly. How few, alas! do this! and yet in doing it consists our giving that *attention* to the divine word, the revealed truth of God, which our duty demands, which our safety requires, and which the answer before us enjoins. (Deut. xxxii. 47.)

#### **DILIGENCE.**

To attend to the reading and hearing of the word is the main business of our life—to have it chiefly at heart, because the word contains “that good part which shall not be taken away.” (Luke x. 42.) By attending to the word with “diligence,” is meant a careful observing and embracing of every seasonable

opportunity that may offer in Providence for reading and hearing the same. (Prov. viii. 34.)

#### PREPARATION.

We are to make some *special* preparation for reading and hearing the word of God if we hope to experience its salutary and saving effects, as the human mind is so constituted that it cannot readily pass from one subject to another of a different character without some preparation; and least of all is it reasonable to expect this when the transition is to be made from sensible objects to spiritual contemplations. In making this preparation we should meditate on the greatness and goodness of God, the Author of the word, on its own excellence, stability and fullness, on the excellency of Christ, the subject and confirmer of it, and on our own vileness, etc. (Ps. xlv. 1.) This will make us read and hear the word with faith, love, humility and thankfulness. We should also examine ourselves concerning our state and our present condition (Lam. iii. 40), that we may with knowledge and care apply whatever portions of the word suit our case. (James i. 21.)

#### PRAYER.

Prayer is requisite for reading and hearing the word in a right manner, because as it is God alone who can dispose our hearts for the right performance of those religious exercises, so he ought always to be addressed and supplicated for that end. (Ps. cxix. 18.) We should pray that what we read or hear may be "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16), or an effectual means in his hand for convincing, converting and edifying our souls. (John vi. 63.)

*READ.*

To be somewhat more particular, in order that the word of God may conduce effectually to our salvation we must—1. Have a reverent esteem for it. This book is to be valued above all other books. It is a golden epistle, indited by the Holy Ghost, sent us from heaven. 2. Peruse it with intensesness of mind. Search the Scriptures. (John v. 39.) The Greek word signifies to search as for “a vein of silver.” The Bereans “searched the Scriptures daily.” (Acts xvii. 11, 18, 24.) 3. We should delight in it. (Jer. xv. 16; Ps. cxix. 24, 50.)

*HEARD.*

We must hear the word with a spiritual appetite. (1 Pet. ii. 2); with earnestness (James i. 19); with reverence (Neh. viii. 5); with care (Luke viii. 18); with meekness (James i. 21); with a holy fear (Isa. lxvi. 2); not as the word of men, but as the word of God. (1 Thess. ii. 13.)

*FAITH AND LOVE.*

The faith required implies in *general* a believing assent to the divine authority of the whole Scriptures. (1 Thess. ii. 13; 2 Tim. iii. 16; 2 Pet. i. 21.) It implies in *particular*—1. A believing assent to the truth and excellency of all Scripture *history*, especially the history of our Lord Jesus Christ in his birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. 2. A believing assent to all Scripture *prophecy*. 3. A believing assent to the truth and excellency of all Scripture *doctrine*. 4. A believing assent to the truth and righteousness of all Scripture *threatenings*. 5. A believing assent

to the holiness, righteousness and goodness of al. Scripture *precepts*. 6. A believing application of all Scripture *promises*. (Heb. iv. 2; John iv. 1; Prov. xxx. 5.) The *love* required in reading and hearing the word of God is love of the word because it is the word of God. (Ps. cxix. 159, 167.)

**LAY IT UP IN OUR HEARTS.**

We must not only be attentive in reading and hearing, but retentive afterward. (Heb. ii. 1; Ps. cxix. 11; Mark iv. 15.) Our memories should be like the chest of the ark where the Law was put.

**PRACTICE IT IN OUR LIVES.**

We must live on the truth which we read and hear. (Ps. cxix. 166.) What is a knowing head without a fruitful heart? "Filled with the fruits of righteousness." (Phil. i. 11.) It is obedience crowns hearing; no receiving of the word of God will ever save the soul which does not reform the life. (James i. 22; John xxiii. 17; Phil. i. 27; Ps. cxix. 105.)

Some years ago a vessel which was blessed with a pious chaplain, and was bound to a distant part of the world, happened to be detained by contrary winds over a Sabbath at the Isle of Wight. The chaplain improved the opportunity to preach to the inhabitants. His text was, "Be clothed with humility." Among his hearers was a thoughtless girl who had come to show her fine dress rather than to be instructed. The sermon was the means of her conversion. Her name was Elizabeth Wallbridge, the celebrated Dairyman's Daughter, whose interesting history, by the Rev. Legh Richmond, has been printed in various languages and widely circulated, to the spiritual benefit of thousands. What a reward was this for a single sermon preached "out of season"!

A New England clergyman, enforcing on his congregation the necessity of practical godliness, and contrasting the early Christians with those of the present generation, very properly remarked, "We have too many resolutions and too little action. 'The Acts of the Apostles' is the title of one of the books of the New Testament; their *resolutions* have not reached us."

QUESTION 91.—*How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?*

ANSWER.—*The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.*

#### SACRAMENTS.

The word "sacrament" primarily signifies a solemn oath taken by soldiers when they enlist themselves under a prince or general. Though this word is not found in Scripture, yet the thing intended by it is, and that brings the word into use. (See Rom. iv. 11; vi. 3, 4.) The reason why God has instituted sacraments is his condescension to our infirmity. "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." Although it is the design of religion to withdraw us from the government of our senses, yet since it does not propose to make us totally different creatures, and since, from our natural constitution, our senses have a powerful and necessary influence upon us, he has been pleased to render them subservient to the purposes of religion. What we hear often awakens very strong emotions in our minds, but it is an old remark that the impressions of the eye are more vivid than those of the ear. "If thou wert an incorporeal being," says Chrysostom,

“God would have delivered his gifts to thee naked and incorporeal; but since thy soul is connected with a body, he has delivered things intellectual by sensible signs.”

By “salvation” is meant our complete and final deliverance from sin and misery, both temporal and eternal. (Matt. i. 21; 1 Thess. i. 10.) “Means” of salvation signify any appointments of God whereby he promotes and accomplishes his design of saving our souls. (Rom. i. 16.) “Effectual” means are such as fully obtain and accomplish the end for which they were appointed. (1 Thess. ii. 13.)

#### NOT FROM ANY VIRTUE IN THEM.

The meaning of these words is, that the sacraments have not, as the Roman Church maintains, any virtue or efficacy *in themselves*, but are only among the outward and ordinary means of grace, which can have no more efficacy *of themselves* to confer any saving benefit than the rainbow, of itself, has to prevent a deluge. That this is true is evident from the fact that if the sacraments *had* any innate or intrinsic virtue to confer grace or salvation, then grace or salvation would be infallibly connected with the external use of them. But we find that Simon Magus, after he was baptized, remained still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity (Acts viii. 13, 23); and we know that in the primitive Corinthian Church a number of those who had partaken of the Lord’s Supper, so far from being placed in a state of salvation by the act, had most grievously sinned in that very act, and were visited in consequence with temporal judgments to bring them to repentance. (See 1 Cor. xi. 27–32.) The gos-

pel does not produce its effects *ex opere operato*, or by the mere sound of the words in our ears, but by the power of the Spirit opening the understanding and heart to receive it. What ground is there for supposing that the mode of operation is different in the sacraments, or that here alone these words are not true, "Neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase"? (1 Cor. iii. 7. See also Luke xiii. 26; 1 Tim. iv. 8; Rom. ii. 25, 29.)

#### OR IN HIM WHO ADMINISTERS THEM.

The Roman Church also maintains that the efficacy of the sacraments depends on the will of the priest who dispenses them, and is communicated or withheld just as he intends or purposes at the time of the administration. But this is an absurd and impious tenet. It was never pretended that the intention of the preacher is necessary to give efficacy to the word, and it is altogether arbitrary to suppose it to be necessary to the efficacy of the sacraments. As the latter were instituted by God, and not by men, nothing besides his blessing can rationally be conceived to be requisite to accomplish their design, but the administration of them according to the prescribed form. The intention of the administrator has as little to do with the effect as the intention of the physician has with the success of the medicine which he gives to his patient, or the intention of the husbandman with the fertility of the soil. God has not suspended our salvation upon the precarious volition of other men, over whom we have no power. (1 Cor. iii. 5; Acts i. 17, 24; viii. 13, 23.)

*ONLY BY THE BLESSING OF CHRIST.*

Having stated on what the efficacy of the sacraments does *not* depend, the answer before us affirms how they become effectual means of salvation. (See Matt. xviii. 20 ; xxviii. 20.)

*WORKING OF THE SPIRIT.*

By the working of the Spirit, the effect and evidence of Christ's blessing and presence, Christ puts life and virtue and efficacy into his sacraments and ordinances, without which they would be wholly dead and altogether ineffectual. (1 Cor. xii. 13 ; John vi. 63 ; xv. 5.)

*WHO BY FAITH RECEIVE THEM.*

To receive the sacraments by faith is to apply Christ and the benefits of his purchase as represented and exhibited to us in them. (Luke xxii. 19, 20.) The Spirit by the sacraments does not work effectually to the salvation of all that receive them, but of all that *by faith* receive them. (Mark xvi. 16.)

*INFERENCES.*

1. Men enjoying all the ordinances of the gospel and partaking of the sacraments annexed to the covenant of grace may yet perish for ever. (1 Cor. x. 3-5 ; Luke xiii. 26, 27.) 2. We should not idolize some ministers for the excellency of their gifts, and slight others whom, though equally sound and faithful, we may deem inferior in outward gifts, seeing it is not in any man to make the means effectual. (1 Cor. iii. 7.) 3. We should cry earnestly for the Spirit and blessing of Christ in the sacraments, and beware of resting in them. (Sol. Song iv. 16 ; Ps. ci. 2.)

A gentleman of intelligence, who was born of Catholic parents and educated in the Catholic Church, but left it for Protestantism, said to his brother, who is still a Catholic, "Why, brother, as long as I was a Catholic I never knew that there was a Holy Spirit." And what do you think was the brother's reply? "Well, I don't know that there is one now." The narrative of what passed between these two men strikes one with great force. A religion without a Holy Spirit! and this the religion, according to the computation of Bishop England, of two hundred millions of mankind! It made me sorry. My religion, thought I, would be very imperfect without a Holy Spirit. I want a Sanctifier as well as a Surety. I want one to act internally *upon* me, as well as to act externally *for* me. What should I do with my *title* to heaven without a *fitness* for it? As a sinner I am equally destitute of both. There can be no heaven without holiness. And whence has any man holiness but from the Holy Spirit? And is it likely he will act within us when he is not acknowledged? —*Rev. Dr. Nevins.*

QUESTION 92.—*What is a sacrament?*

ANSWER.—*A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.*

#### SACRAMENT.

(For explanation of this term, see notes on Question 91.)

#### HOLY ORDINANCE.

A sacrament is so called in the answer before us, because the elements which compose it have been set apart from a common to a sacred use, because it is designed to promote holiness in those who receive it, and because they are, by profession, a holy or peculiar people. (1 Cor. ix. 13; Isa. lii. 11.)

*INSTITUTED BY CHRIST.*

It is essentially necessary that a sacrament have Christ's express and immediate warrant and institution, otherwise it does not deserve the name. (See Matt. xxviii. 19, 20 ; 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.) Why must sacraments be expressly or immediately instituted by Christ? Because he alone is the Head of the Church, and has the sole power and authority to institute sacraments and other ordinances in it. (Eph. i. 22, 23.)

*SENSIBLE SIGNS.*

Each sacrament has two parts—1. The sign. 2. The thing signified. (Ex. xxiv. 8 ; 1 Cor. x. 4.) By the *sign* we are to understand that outward thing in the sacrament which may be seen, felt or tasted. By the thing signified we are to understand Christ and the benefits of the new covenant. The sign and thing signified differ in this respect: the former is something *natural* and sensible, but the latter is *spiritual*. Outward signs are of use—1. To inform our understanding. (Gal. iii. 1.) 2. To refresh our memories. (Josh. iv. 7.) 3. To stir up our affections. (Zech. xii. 10.) 4. To transmit the things of God from generation to generation. (Ex. xii. 26.)

*CHRIST AND THE BENEFITS OF THE NEW COVENANT.*

By the *new covenant* is meant the covenant of grace, so called because it succeeded to the covenant of works, which was broken by our first parents when they lost their innocence by eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree. The uses of a sacrament, in reference to Christ

and the benefits of the new covenant, are—1. To represent Christ and the benefits of the new covenant (Gen. xvii. 10.) 2. To seal and apply Christ and the benefits of the new covenant. (Rom. iv. 11.) What is meant by the sign's *representing* Christ and his benefits? Its carrying a resemblance of him and his benefits. (1 Pet. iii. 21; 1 Cor. xi. 23–29.) What is meant by the sign's *sealing* Christ and his benefits? Its confirming our interest in Christ and his blessing. (Rom. iv. 11; 1 Pet. iii. 21.) Though our interest in Christ and his promise is not thus made firmer in itself, yet the sign shows the firmness of it and tends to strengthen our faith in Christ and his promise. (See Rom. iv. 11; John xx. 27.) What is meant by the sacramental sign's *applying* Christ and his benefits? That by the right and lawful use of this sign Christ and his benefits are really communicated, conveyed and made over to the worthy receiver. (1 Cor. xi. 24; Gal. iii. 27; Gen. xvii. 7.) In the use of the sacraments there is a present experience and enjoyment of these benefits. Probably there are few of the people of God who would not be ready to testify that some of their sacramental seasons have been those in which their graces were in the most delightful exercise, their communion with Christ and his people the most sensible, and their assured hope and expectation of the heavenly inheritance the most lively, strong and satisfying. Are Christ and the benefits of the new covenant separable from one another? No, for “he that hath the Son hath life” (1 John v. 12), and whosoever has Christ has all things along with him—“all things are yours, and ye are Christ's.” (1 Cor. iii. 21.)

*TO BELIEVERS.*

A sacrament represents, seals and applies Christ and the benefits of the new covenant—not to all that partake thereof, but to believers only, faith being the eye of the soul to discern the things represented, and the hand of the soul to receive the things sealed and applied in the sacrament.

*PRACTICAL LESSONS.*

1. We see that the abuse of such holy and solemn mysteries is a sin of dreadful aggravation, and such as God will punish. (1 Cor. xi. 27.) 2. We learn the tender care and love of Christ over the Church in instituting such useful and comfortable ordinances for us.

“On Sabbath last,” says a good man, “we were enabled to keep our New Testament Passover; it was a good day—a day of salvation. At the sacred banquet my hard heart melted and the tears flowed plentifully from my eyes, but they were tears of joy; my heart was full. On Monday, Mr. B—— preached from these words: ‘And one shall say, I am the Lord’s.’ Oh what a sermon to me! My heart made the happy claim and cheerful surrender again and again. My soul said, I am the Lord’s, and with my hand I subscribed it, and I hope and believe will never unsay it.

‘Sweet was the hour I freedom felt  
To call my Jesus mine—  
To see his smiling face, and melt  
In pleasures all divine.’

Truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant the son of thine handmaid, thou hast loosed my bonds. Why me, O Lord? Why me? What am I, or what is my father’s house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?”

QUESTION 93.—*Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?*

ANSWER.—*The sacraments of the New Testament are, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.*

When the sacraments of the *New Testament* are specially mentioned, there is an implication that there were also sacraments under the *Old Testament*. Such is the fact; and it is a fact to be noticed, because we believe that the Christian dispensation was engrafted on the Mosaic, both dispensations being equally given under the covenant of grace, and the latter being only the completing or perfecting of the former.

#### **SACRAMENTS UNDER THE OLD TESTAMENT.**

The ordinary sacraments under the Old Testament were two—*Circumcision* and the *Passover*. (Gen. xvii. 24; Ex. xii.)

#### **SUPERSEDED BY CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.**

The sacraments of the Jewish Church have been superseded by the Christian sacraments. This is plain with respect to the *Passover*, for immediately after the celebration of it the Lord's Supper was instituted, and an intimation was thus given that the latter was thenceforth to supply the place of the former. Besides, the apostle Paul obviously refers to the change when he describes the new ordinance by terms borrowed from the old. (See 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.) That baptism has come in the room of circumcision may be inferred from two considerations—that, like circumcision, it signifies our purification from sin, and that it is the ordinance by which we are admitted into the

communion of the visible Church. As Paul connects the Passover and the Lord's Supper, so he connects circumcision and baptism, leading us to conclude that there is a change or substitution in the one case as well as in the other. (Col. ii. 11, 12.)

**AGREEMENT OF SACRAMENTS OF THE OLD AND  
NEW TESTAMENTS.**

The sacraments of the Old and New Testaments agree in having God for their author, and in the things which are signified; for the sacraments signify, promise and offer the same blessings—viz. the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost through Christ alone, as the following passages of Scripture prove: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and for ever.” (Heb. xiii. 8; 1 Cor. x. 2, 3, 4; Col. ii. 11; 1 Cor. v. 7.) Without Christ, who is the thing signified in the sacraments of both Testaments, no one ever has been saved or can be saved. It follows, therefore, that the fathers who lived under the Old Testament had the same communion with Christ which we also have, and that this was signified no less to them by the word and sacraments than it is now to us under the new covenant.

**DIFFERENCE OF SACRAMENTS OF THE OLD AND  
NEW TESTAMENTS.**

The sacraments of the Old and New Testaments differ mainly in the following particulars: 1. *In signification.* The Old signify Christ who was to come; the New show his death as having already taken place. 2. *In duration.* The Old were to continue merely to the coming of the Messiah; the New will continue to

the end of the world. 3. *In extent of obligation.* The sacraments of the Old Testament were binding merely upon the Jews, for godly persons of other nations were not required to be circumcised; the sacraments of the New Testament are binding upon the whole Church, to whatever nation they may belong. (Matt. xxvi. 27; xxviii. 19) 4. *In clearness.* Those of the Old Testament were more obscure, inasmuch as they shadowed forth things that were to come; those of the New Testament are better understood, because they declare things which have already come to pass, and which have been fulfilled in Christ.

#### DIFFERENCE OF CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

In what do baptism and the Lord's Supper differ? Baptism seals an entrance into the Church and covenant of grace, is administered but once, and to infants as well as others; but the Lord's Supper is a seal of spiritual nourishment, is to be frequently received, and by such only as can examine themselves.

#### LAWFUL ADMINISTRATION.

Who may lawfully dispense the sacraments of the New Testament? Neither of them may be dispensed by any but a minister of the word lawfully ordained. (1 Cor. iv. 1.)

What! seven sacraments? How is this? I read in the Bible of only *two*. Whence have they the other *five*? Oh, they came from the other source of Christian doctrine (?)—*tradition*. It is true the apostles *wrote* of only two sacraments; but Catholics would have us believe that they *preached* and *conversed* about five others, and those that heard them spoke of these sacraments to others, and they to others still; and so the

story passed from lip to lip until the Council of Trent (I believe it was) concluded that something had better be written about those five *extra* sacraments. I wonder that was never thought of before. It is surprising that it never occurred to the apostles, when they were writing their Epistles, to say a syllable about these *seven* sacraments. I may be very hard to please, but I cannot help feeling a desire to have *Scripture* as well as *unwritten tradition* in support of a doctrine or practice called Christian. I like to be able to trace a doctrine all the way back to the Bible, and to find it originating in the very oracles of God themselves.—*Rev. Dr. Nevins.*

QUESTION 94.—*What is baptism?*

ANSWER.—*Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.*

After his resurrection Jesus gave the following commission to his disciples: "Go ye therefore and teach," or *make disciples of*, "all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) Baptism had been previously administered to those who acknowledged him as the Messiah and desired to be admitted into the number of his followers—not, however, by himself, but by his disciples. (John iv. 1–3.) We cannot, therefore, consider the ordinance as new when he gave a commission to the apostles prior to his ascension, but it then received a more extensive application, as they were authorized to administer it to men of every nation.

**WATER.**

Baptism is performed by the application of water to the body. The water is emblematical of the blood of Christ. (Rev. i. 5.) It resembles his blood—1. In the freeness of it to all. (Isa. lv. 1.) 2. In its refreshing quality. (John vi. 35.) 3. In its cleansing property. (Heb. ix. 14.) 4. In the necessity for it, for as the body cannot live without water, so neither can the soul without Christ's blood. (Heb. ix. 23.) 5. In the essential importance of its application. As water neither refreshes nor purifies the body without application, so neither does Christ's blood refresh or purify the soul till applied. (1 Cor. i. 30. See also John i. 31; Isa. lii. 15; 1 Cor. vi. 11; 1 Pet. iii. 21.)

**WASHING.**

The word *baptism* signifies *washing*, *dipping* or *sprinkling*. (Mark vii. 4; Heb. ix. 10.) "Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary, but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the persons." (*Confession of Faith*, chap. xxviii. § 3.) How does it appear from Scripture that baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person? From repeated instances of the administration of baptism by the apostles in this manner, particularly when three thousand were baptized by them (Acts ii. 41), water must have been sprinkled upon them, as the apostles could not have had time in a part only of one day to take them one by one and plunge them into it. Nor is it probable that the jailer (Acts xvi. 33) had such store of water in the night season as was sufficient for himself and whole family to be dipped into, or that they went abroad in quest

of some river for that purpose. It is much more reasonable to infer that in both the above instances they were baptized by sprinkling. The same may be said of Paul's baptism (Acts ix. 18) and of the baptism of Cornelius and his friends. (Acts x. 47, 48.)

"When a word is used to denote an action which is figurative," says Dr. Dick, "it seems a fair way of determining its sense to observe how the thing which the action represents is in other places expressed. As the water in baptism is emblematical of the influences of the Spirit, we may bring to the illustration of the term *to baptize* the passages of Scripture which speak of the communication of these influences; and there is not one of them which alludes to immersion. The Holy Ghost is said 'to fall' upon men, to be 'poured out' upon them; and in reference to the same subject God promises 'to sprinkle clean water upon us,' 'to be as the dew unto Israel,' and that his grace shall 'come down as rain upon the mown grass, and as showers which water the earth.' If water is a significant emblem of the Spirit because it purifies, is it not reasonable to suppose that a resemblance was intended between the application of the water and the manner in which the communication of the Spirit is described? It is by no means probable that God should speak of his own operations in one way and symbolically represent them in a different way—that he should promise to sprinkle or pour out his Spirit upon us, and, to confirm this promise, would command us to be plunged into water. There would be no analogy in this case between the promise and the seal, and the discrepancy would give rise to a confusion of ideas."

*THE NAME.*

Baptism is to be administered “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;” and as this is in accordance with the express and particular command of Christ himself (Matt. xxviii. 19), it must be held as essential to the validity of the ordinance that these words of the original institution be used in every instance of its administration. The Greek preposition *eis*, which, in the common version of our Bible, is in this place rendered *in*, properly denotes *into*, and is so rendered in many other passages of the New Testament. Christians are therefore baptized “*into* the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” The administration of baptism in this form signifies—1. That we are baptized by the authority of the persons of the Holy Trinity. 2. That we are baptized into the faith and profession of the Holy Trinity. 3. That we are dedicated to the service of these divine persons—that we are engaged to offer religious worship to them as separately and conjunctly the proper objects of it, and to yield unreserved and unintermitted obedience to their law as revealed in the Scriptures. (See 1 Cor. i. 13; Eph. iv. 5.)

*SIGNIFY AND SEAL.*

There is signified and sealed and engaged on God’s part by our being baptized into his name—(I.) *His engrafting us into Christ.* By this is meant our being cut off from our old stock of nature and being joined to Jesus Christ, whereby we come to draw virtue from him as our root, that we may grow up in him and bring forth fruit to him. (John xv. 6; Rom. xi. 17.) (II.)

*His making us partakers of the benefits of the new covenant.* (Rom. vi. 3.) These benefits are—1. Admission into the visible Church. (Matt. xxviii. 19.) 2. Remission of sins by Christ's blood. (Acts ii. 38.) 3. Regeneration and sanctification by Christ's Spirit. (Tit. iii. 5.) 4. Adoption, together with our union to Christ. (Gal. iii. 26, 27.) 5. Resurrection to everlasting life. (1 Cor. xv. 29; Rom. vi. 4, 5.)

#### ENGAGEMENT TO BE THE LORD'S.

The consequence of its being signified and sealed to us in baptism that we partake of such great and glorious benefits is, that on this account "we enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's." (*Larger Catechism*, Question 165.) We engage to be his *wholly* in all that we are, soul, spirit and body (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20), and in all that we have, whether gifts, graces or worldly comforts. (1 Chron. xxix. 14.) We engage to be his *only*, in opposition to all his rivals and competitors, every one of whom we profess to renounce in baptism. (Hos. xiv. 8.) These rivals and competitors with God are sin (Rom. vi. 6), Satan (Acts xxvi. 18) and the world. (John xvii. 14.)

The Rev. Philip Henry, for the use of his children, prepared this short form of words, showing what is implied in baptism, taught it to his children, required them to repeat it every Sabbath evening after their recitation of the catechism, and was wont to add: "So say and so do, and you are made for ever. I take God the Father to be my chiefest good and highest end. I take God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour. I take God the Holy Ghost to be my Sanctifier, Teacher, Comforter and Guide. I take the word of God to be my rule in all my actions, and the people of God to be my people in all conditions.

I do likewise devote and dedicate unto the Lord my whole self, all I am, all I have and all I can. And this I do deliberately, sincerely, freely and for ever." He also took pains with his children to lead them into the understanding of it, and to persuade them to a free and cheerful consent to it. And when they grew up he made them all write it over severally with their own hands, and very solemnly set their names to it; which he told them he would keep by him, and it should be produced as a testimony against them in case they should afterward depart from God and turn from following after him.

QUESTION 95.—*To whom is baptism to be administered?*

ANSWER.—*Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him: but the infants of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized.*

Neither of the two sacraments "may be dispensed by any but a minister of the word, lawfully ordained." (Confession of Faith, chap. xxvii. § 4. 1 Tim. iv. 14.) Why should ministers lawfully ordained, and no other persons, dispense the sacraments of the New Testament? Because they only are the stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. iv. 1), and have the sole commission and authority from Christ to preach and baptize. (Matt. xxviii. 19.)

#### OUT OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

The apostles were sent to teach or make disciples of all nations by instructing them in the religion of Christ, and when those whom they had addressed, acquired a competent measure of knowledge and recognized Jesus

Christ as their Lord and Saviour, they were then to baptize them. (Acts viii. 37.)

#### FAITH—OBEDIENCE.

To *profess faith in Christ* is to profess a belief of all the doctrines of the Christian religion. (Acts viii. 37.) To *profess obedience to Christ* is to declare a willingness and purpose to yield subjection to all his commands, ordinances and institutions. (Acts ii. 46.) That a profession which implies a saving reception of evangelical truth is to be made by all who receive baptism in adult age, may be gathered from the command to “teach” the recipients of this sacrament—to *disciple* them it is in the original—to observe all things whatsoever which Christ delivered to his apostles (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20); for the injunction here given manifestly related to *a teaching* which should be *effective*, and which appears to be so at the administration of the ordinance.

#### INFANTS.

Thus far, the answer relates only to *adults*, or such as are grown up to ripeness of age. Now it proceeds to speak of *infants*, who can make no such profession of faith and obedience. It is no objection to the doctrine that the children of believing parents are to be baptized in their infancy, that infants cannot understand the mystery of baptism. Neither could the child that was to be circumcised understand circumcision, yet the ordinance of circumcision was not to be omitted or deferred. An infant, though it understand not the meaning of baptism, yet may partake of the blessing of baptism. The little children that Christ

took in his arms understood not Christ's meaning, but they had Christ's blessing. (Mark x. 16.) That the children of believing parents may and should be baptized in their infancy is evident from many considerations, among which are the following: I. Infant children, being Abraham's seed, were taken into covenant with God and ordered to have the sign of the covenant (circumcision) applied to them, and that grant was never reversed, Gen. xvii. 10. See also Col. ii. 11, 12, which shows that baptism now occupies the place of circumcision. That the privilege of infants being made visible church members was never taken away under the gospel is evident—(1) from the words of the apostles, "Repent and be baptized, for the promise is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 38, 39. See also Rom. xi. 17; iv. 11; Matt. xix. 14.) (2.) Because if this privilege were repealed we would have some notice of its repeal in the Scripture; but we have no notice or signification of God's will to repeal this privilege throughout the whole book of God. (3.) Because Christ did not come to take away or straiten the privileges of the Church, but to enlarge them; and who can upon Scripture grounds imagine that it was the will of Christ that the infants of the Jewish Church should be church members, but the infants of the Christian Church should be shut out like heathens and infidels? II. As children during their infancy are capable of grace, they are capable of baptism. If they can have the thing signified, they should have the sign. (Mark x. 14; Acts ii. 39; x. 47; Isa. xlv. 3; Luke i. 15.) III. As infants may be among

the number of God's servants, there is no reason why they should be shut out of God's family. (Lev. xxv. 41, 42.) IV. The children of the faithful, though they are not free from original sin, yet as soon as they are born have a covenant holiness, and so a right and title to baptism, which is the token of the covenant. (1 Cor. vii. 14.) V. A sacrament which God has instituted to be a solemn rite of initiation into the Church, and which is designed to distinguish the Church from all the various sects, ought to be extended to all, of whatever age they may be, to whom the covenant and reception into the Church rightfully belong. Baptism is such a sacrament. Therefore it ought to be administered to all ages, and as a necessary consequence to infants also, for to whom the final cause belongs, to him the effect is properly and necessarily attributed. (Josh. xxii. 25; Acts iii. 25.) VI. The Scriptures mention whole families baptized, as the household of Lydia, Crispus and the jailer (Acts xvi. 15, 33), in which it is not easy to suppose there were no little children. (See Luke ii. 21.) VII. The opinion of the Fathers and the practice of the Church prove infant baptism. It is strongly asserted by Irenæus, Basil, Lactantius, Cyprian and Austin. Paul informs us that he baptized the whole house of Stephanas. (1 Cor. i. 16.) Origen, who possessed more information than any man of his day, and who lived near the time of the apostles, says: "The Church received a tradition or order from the apostles to give baptism to little children also." Augustine, who was born in the middle of the fourth century, affirms: "The whole Church practices infant baptism. It was not in-

stituted by councils ; it was always in use." Pelagius, who lived at the same time, and who had visited the most noted churches in Europe, Asia and Africa, declares that he never heard of any one, even the most impious heretic, who asserted that infants were not to be baptized.

"There never was any age, at least since Abraham, in which the children, whether of Jews or proselytes, that were admitted into covenant, had not some badge or sign of their admission. The male children of Abraham's race were entered by circumcision. The whole body of the Jews, men, women and children, were in Moses' time baptized. After which the male children of proselytes that were entered with their parents were, as well as their parents, admitted by circumcision, baptism and a sacrifice. Now, after that circumcision and sacrifice were to be abolished under the gospel dispensation, there was nothing left but baptism or washing for a sign of the covenant and of professing religion. This our Saviour took, probably, as being the easiest and the least laborious of all the rest, and as being common to both sexes, making no difference of male or female, and enjoined it to *all who should enter into the kingdom of God*. And St. Paul does plainly intimate to the Colossians (Col. ii. 11, 12) that it served them instead of circumcision, calling it *the circumcision of Christ or Christian circumcision*."—*Wall's Hist. Inf. Baptism*.

QUESTION 96.—*What is the Lord's Supper ?*

ANSWER.—*The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth ; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.*

**SACRAMENT.**

(For explanation, see notes on Questions 88 and 95.)

**NAMES OF THE SACRAMENT.**

This sacrament is called—I. *The Lord's table*. (1 Cor. x. 21.) This name shows with what reverence and solemn devotion we should approach to these holy mysteries; the Lord takes notice of the frame of our hearts when we come to his table. (Matt. xxii. 11.) II. *The Lord's Supper*. (1 Cor. xi. 20.) This title is given to it—(1) because it was instituted immediately after eating the Passover (Matt. xxvi. 26), which was always at night (Ex. xii. 6, 8); (2) because the Lord Jesus was the sole Author of it; and (3) because it is a spiritual feast. (1 Cor. xi. 23.) His design in instituting it on “the same night in which he was betrayed” was to show that it was to come in the room of the Passover, which was abolished by his death, to manifest his great love to his people in giving them such a solemn pledge of it when entering on his sufferings, and to stir us up the more affectionately to remember his death therein. III. *The communion*. (1 Cor. x. 16.) This name indicates—(1) that this ordinance is only for believers, because none else can have communion with Christ in these holy mysteries; and (2) that this ordinance is a bond of that love and union which should be among Christians. (1 Cor. x. 17.)

**GIVING AND RECEIVING BREAD AND WINE.**

Bread is to be used in this sacrament, for Jesus ‘took bread’ (Matt. xxvi. 26.) This denotes it to be

a strengthening ordinance, for bread strengthens man's heart. (Ps. civ. 15.) Wine is to be used in this sacrament, for our Saviour "took the cup." (1 Cor. xi. 25.) This denotes it to be a refreshing ordinance. (See Ps. civ. 15.) The bread and wine signify the body and blood of Christ. (1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.) By Christ's body and blood are to be understood his incarnation and satisfaction for the complete accomplishment of our redemption. (John vi. 51.) The *breaking* of the bread is a part of the ceremony, because a part of that which is signified—viz. the breaking of the body of Christ—answers to it. (1 Cor. xi. 24.) So the wine is separated from the bread, to signify the violence of his death when his blood was spilt and separated from his body. The bread and the wine must be *given* and *received*. Jesus took bread and "gave it to the disciples"—"took the cup and gave it to them." (Matt. xxvi. 26, 27.) That the people are to partake not only of the bread, but also of the cup, is evident from our Lord's words, "Drink ye all of it" (Matt. xxvi. 27), as well as from the apostle's direction to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. xi. 26, 28.) The "giving" the bread and wine intimates to us that Christ is the free gift of God to sinners of mankind for salvation and eternal life. (John iii. 16.) The "receiving" the bread and the cup imports that our receiving of Christ is founded on the gift and grant that is made of him in the word (John iii. 27), and the eating a part of the bread and drinking a part of the wine imply that there ought to be an application of Christ to the soul in particular, in virtue of the particular endorsement of the promise to every one that hears the gospel. (Acts ii. 39.)

*HIS DEATH IS SHOWED FORTH.*

The Lord's Supper is a commemorating ordinance (Luke xxii. 19.) It is a confessing ordinance. (1 Cor. xi. 26.) It is a memorial of his death, which serves not only to perpetuate the knowledge of that event, but also to signify in what esteem it is held and what importance is attached to it by his followers. It is commemorated not merely as the death of a friend and benefactor, of a teacher distinguished by his wisdom or of a saint illustrious for his virtues, but of a Redeemer who laid down his life as a ransom for our souls.

*THE WORTHY RECEIVERS.*

Paul, in rebuking the Corinthian Church (1 Cor. xi. 23-34) for a scandalous profanation of this sacred institution, twice speaks of eating and drinking "unworthily." The meaning of the apostle in this word manifestly is, *a manner unsuitable to the nature of the ordinance*, which in the case of the Corinthians was a grossly profane, carnal and irreverent manner. The general truth, therefore, taught by the apostle is that all who partake in a manner suited to the nature of the ordinance, partake *worthily*, and that those who partake in any way or manner not suited to the nature of the ordinance, partake *unworthily*. None are worthy receivers of this sacrament but true believers, and they are worthy not on account of any worthiness in themselves, for they have nothing of their own of which they can boast, but because they are united to Christ, and have all that grace from him which enables them

to partake in a suitable and becoming manner. (2 Cor. iii. 5.)

#### *PARTAKERS OF HIS BODY AND BLOOD.*

The participation here meant is not corporal, but spiritual, and embraces—1. Faith in Christ's sufferings and death. 2. The forgiveness of sins, and the gift of eternal life through faith. 3. Our union with Christ through the Holy Spirit, who dwells both in Christ and in us. 4. The quickening influence of the same Spirit. In other words, it is to believe, to obtain the remission of sins by faith, to be united with Christ and to become partakers of his life, or to be made like unto Christ by the Holy Spirit, who works the same things both in Christ and in us. (Ps. xvi. 5, 6; Matt. xxvi. 28, 29; John xx. 22; Luke xxii. 30.) These great blessings are called "*His—i. e.* Christ's—benefits," because he is the purchaser (Tit. ii. 14), proprietor (John iii. 35) and dispenser of them. (Eph. iv. 8.)

#### *SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT AND GROWTH IN GRACE.*

Believers receive spiritual nourishment and growth in grace in and by this sacrament—1. As they draw virtue from Christ's death for the crucifying of the flesh, for mortifying and purging away sin, which hinders their spiritual nourishment and growth. 2. As the Lord conveys by his Spirit, and they receive in this sacrament by faith, further supplies of his grace, which by his death he has purchased for them, and which in his covenant of grace (of which this sacrament is a seal) he has promised to them. (1 Cor. v. 7, 8; 2 Pet. iii. 8; Matt. xxvi. 28.) Spiritual nourishment and

growth in grace are indicated by more enlarged views after the sincere milk of the word (1 Pet. ii. 2), more living by faith and not by sense (2 Cor. v. 7), more inward opposition to sin (Ps. lxvi. 18), and outward tenderness in deportment (Ps. xxxix. 1.)

“It is enough for me that my Saviour inclined to this mode of being remembered, and expressed such a wish; the least I can do is to comply with it. He did not express a great many wishes. I cannot help regarding it as unkind that this one wish of Jesus should not be complied with; and especially when I consider what a friend he was, what a benefactor. . . . All his wishes, I think, should be complied with, but this was his last. He was going to suffer, he was to die in a few hours; and such a death too! and for them for whom he made the request that they might never die. . . . I wonder these words, broken for you,’ do not break the heart of every one who refuses.”—*Rev. Dr. Nevins.*

“Supposing the doctrine of transubstantiation had been delivered in Scripture in the very same words that it is decreed in the Council of Trent, by what clearer evidence could any man prove to me that such words were in the Bible, than I can prove to him that bread and wine after consecration are bread and wine still? He could not but appeal to my eyes to prove such words to be in the Bible, and with the same reason and justice might I appeal to several of his senses to prove to him that the bread and wine after consecration are bread and wine still.”—*Archbishop Tillotson.*

QUESTION 97.—*What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?*

ANSWER.—*It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they examine themselves, of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love,*

*and new obedience ; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.*

#### **WORTHY RECEIVING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.**

(See on Question 96.) To receive the Lord's Supper worthily, is not to receive it meritoriously, as if we were to bring any merit or worth of our own thereto, for so none can be worthy of Christ or any of his benefits. We receive the Lord's Supper worthily, when we receive it with due preparation before we come to it, and with suitable behavior when we are at the table of the Lord. "We are all unworthy by nature and in ourselves," says Ursinus, "but we are made worthy by the grace of Christ if we come with faith and a good conscience." No one ought therefore to absent himself because of his unworthiness, seeing that all who come with faith and penitence are counted worthy guests. (Isa. lxvi. 2.) The preparation required for the ordinance is *habitual* and *actual*. By the former is meant that the persons who receive it be in a state of grace ; by the latter, that their graces be drawn forth into exercise. (Amos iii. 12 ; Eph. iv. 24 ; 2 Chron. xiii. 18 ; 1 Cor. v. 7 ; Ps. xxvi. 6.)

#### **EXAMINE THEMSELVES.**

Self-examination is at all times a duty of great importance, and one in which every Christian ought to be much employed. No day should ordinarily pass without some attention to it, and no Lord's day should go by without attending to it more particularly. But in the immediate prospect of the holy communion, unless prevented by uncontrollable circumstances, there ought to be a formal, extensive and thorough exam-

ination. (1 Cor. xi. 28.) In order to this there must be—1. A solemn retiring of the soul. We should withdraw to our closet, that we may be more intent in the work. (Num. ix. 13.) 2. We must set up a court of conscience, and keep a register there, that by strict scrutiny we may see how matters stand between God and our soul. (Ps. lxxvii. 6.) 3. We must make the Holy Scripture, not fancy or the good opinion of others, the rule or measure by which our self-examination is conducted. (Isa. viii. 20 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5 ; Lam. iii. 40 ; 1 Cor. xi. 31.) This examination must have respect to

*KNOWLEDGE TO DISCERN THE LORD'S BODY.*

There must be some understanding of the person, offices and righteousness of Christ, of the fullness, freedom and stability of the covenant of grace, of the nature, use and end of the sacrament of the Supper, and likewise of our manifold sins and wants. Why is such a knowledge necessary? To “discern the Lord's body.” What is it to discern the Lord's body in this sacrament? It is to view the meritorious atonement made by the Son of God in our nature through the symbols of bread and wine, which are designed to signify and represent the same. (1 Cor. xi. 29.)

*FAITH TO FEED UPON HIM.*

“We partake aright,” says an able writer of the last century, “when we come in faith. Faith has a twofold act—an adhering and an applying. By the first act we go over to Christ; by the second act we bring Christ over to us. (Gal. ii. 20.) Faith is the eagle eye that discerns the Lord's body. Faith causes a virtual

contact, it touches Christ. Christ said to Mary, "Touch me not," etc. (John xx. 17.) She was not to touch him with the hands of her body, but he says to us, "Touch me—touch me with the hand of your faith." Faith makes Christ present to the soul. The believer has a real presence in the sacrament. The body of the sun is in the firmament, but the light of the sun is in the eye. Christ's essence is in heaven, but he is in a believer's heart by his light and influence. (Eph. iii. 17.) Faith is the palate which tastes Christ. (1 Pet. ii. 3.) Faith causes the Bread of life to nourish. Faith makes us one with Christ. (Eph. i. 23.) Other graces make us like Christ; faith makes us members of Christ. (2 Cor. xiii. 5; Heb. xi. 6; Acts xv. 9; Phil. iii. 8; Tit. iii. 7.)

#### *REPENTANCE, LOVE AND NEW OBEDIENCE.*

How may we know that our repentance is true and saving? If our sin is imbittered to us by the views of Christ and the love of God—if we seriously repent of all known sins and resolve on every known duty. (Zech. xii. 10; Ps. li. 4.) We may know our love to God is true, if we are careful to please him, afraid to offend him, and prize his presence in gospel ordinances. We may know that our love to Christ as Mediator is true, if we love him in all his offices, relations, ordinances and people, and love him as a pattern of holiness as well as a purchaser of happiness. (John xiv. 21.) We may know if our love to the saints is a gracious love, if we love them all, poor or rich, and even though they have injured us and maintain some opinions different from us, and love them in proportion to

the appearance of Christ's image in them. (Ps. cxix. 63.) We may know if our obedience is of a gracious nature, if we habitually study obedience to all the commands of God, and depend on Christ, as our only righteousness and strength, for assistance in our obedience and acceptance of it. (Isa. xlv. 24; 1 Cor. v. 8.)

#### LEST COMING UNWORTHILY.

The *sin* of unworthily receiving the Lord's Supper is, that such are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord—that is, they are guilty of an affront and indignity which they offer to the Lord's body and blood. (1 Cor. xi. 27.) The *danger* of our unworthily receiving the Lord's Supper is the eating and drinking judgment to ourselves—that is, provoking the Lord by our unworthy receiving, to inflict temporal, spiritual and eternal judgments upon us. (1 Cor. xi. 29, 30.)

What is the duty of worthy receivers *after* the sacrament? Heartily to bless God for Christ and the benefits of his blood (Matt. xvvi. 30); to double their care and watchfulness against sin (Eph. iv. 30); to grow more fruitful in all spiritual obedience. (Col. i. 10.)

“I do not go to the Lord's table to give, but to receive—not to tell Christ how good *I* am, but to think how good *he* is. The words are, ‘Do this in remembrance of me,’ as if the Saviour said, ‘Remember who I am and what thou art; remember me as thy Saviour, as thy Master; remember my love and thy obligations; remember me as hating thy sin, as bearing thy sin; remember me and fear not; remember me and sin not; remember me to live *for* me, *by* me, *with* me.’”—*Rev. Thomas Adam.*

QUESTION 98.—*What is prayer?*

ANSWER.—*Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.*

It is natural for man to pray. The child of God learns it as soon as he learns to speak. The child does not first require instruction concerning prayer. He employs it as a practice that is self-understood, and soon becomes an admonisher to us concerning this duty. The eternal world of God to which prayer ascends is to him a well-known home, and it may almost be said his first and dearest words are the words of prayer. And when the old man of many years can scarcely any longer collect the thoughts of his spirit which refer to the things of this world, and they are confused or have altogether vanished, yet the word of prayer remains in his heart and comes forth from his lips; the prayer of his youth is that which is last forgotten.

It is sometimes objected that prayer cannot possibly have any influence in obtaining what we need and request from God, because all his purposes are fixed and immutable. To this it may be replied that what the Scriptures teach in regard to the direct influence of prayer in obtaining what it seeks from God, is just as reasonable as, and no more difficult to be understood than, that ploughing and sowing should have an immediate and indispensable influence in the production of a crop. In both cases the divine purpose is equally certain, and in both the influence of means or secondary causes is precisely the same. (Luke xviii. 1; Ps. xxxii. 6; 1 Thess. v. 17; Matt. vi. 6.)

*AN OFFERING UP OF OUR DESIRES.*

Our petitions are called *our desires*, because the words of our mouth, without the desires of our heart, are nothing but empty sounds in the ears of God. (Isa. xxix. 13.) Our desires flow from a sense of need. We cannot have any earnest desire after that with the want of which we are no way affected, for “the full soul loatheth a honeycomb.” (Prov. xxvii. 7.)

*UNTO GOD.*

Prayer is not to be made to any but God. The papists pray to saints and angels, but they know not our grievances. “Abraham be ignorant of us.” (Isa. lxiii. 16.) And all angel-worship is forbidden. (Col. ii. 18, 19.) God only knows the hearts of all the children of men. (1 Kings viii. 30.) God only hears prayer. (Ps. lxxv. 2; 1 Kings xviii. 37.) God only can help. (2 Kings vi. 26, 27; Matt. iv. 10; Ps. xxxiv. 15; cxlv. 18, 19.)

*FOR THINGS AGREEABLE TO HIS WILL*

We may not pray for the fulfilling of any sinful desires. (James iv. 3.) We may and ought to pray to God only for such things as are agreeable to his will. What are the things agreeable to God’s will for which we may pray? All things which are agreeable to God’s revealed will in his word, such as the pardon of our sins, the supplies of his grace, spiritual life and strength here, eternal life and glory hereafter, deliverance from spiritual and eternal evils; also whatever temporal good things of which we stand in need, and all those things which either expressly or inclusively he has promised

in his covenant to us. (1 John v. 14; Heb. iv. 16; Ps. cxix. 49, 81.)

#### IN THE NAME OF CHRIST.

Our prayers are to be directed to God only through Christ and in his name, for the merit and satisfaction of Christ alone give success and acceptance to our prayers. It was in this way that Daniel prayed and asked to be heard *for the Lord's sake*. (Dan. ix. 17.) Christ also commands us to pray to the Father in his name. (John xiv. 13.) Our prayers must be placed upon our altar, even Christ, so shall they be acceptable to God. (Heb. x. 19; Rev. viii. 4; 1 Tim. ii. 5.)

#### WITH CONFESSION OF OUR SINS.

*Confession of sin* is another important part of prayer. In standing as parties with God it is indispensable that we should distinctly recognize our true character; and as we are sinners, the full and free admission of this humiliating fact should make a part of all our prayers. We should confess all our sins, with the several aggravations of them. (Ps. xxxii. and li.) This we should do to testify our belief of God's holiness and omniscience, and to affect our hearts with a sense of our vileness and unworthiness before him. (Dan. ix. 3-19; Ps. xxv. 11.) The confession of our sins is to be made in an humble and affectionate manner, with faith's views of a crucified Christ as the propitiation for them. It should also be made with grief and hatred of our sins (Luke xviii. 13), and with full purpose, in the strength of grace, to forsake them. (Job xxxiv. 32.)

*THANKFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS MERCIES.*

The third part of prayer is thankful acknowledgment of God's mercies, temporal and spiritual, here, and the promises of life and happiness in the other world, which we ought to acknowledge with admiration, faith, love, joy and every kind of suitable affections. Thanksgiving in prayer is necessary as an acknowledgment of the goodness of God and to stir up our heart to love him. (Ps. c. 4; cxvi. 17; Phil. iv. 6.)

We must be constant in prayer. (Ps. cix. 4.) Humble in prayer. (Gen. xviii. 27.) Earnest in prayer (Col. iv. 12.) Sincere in prayer. (Heb. x. 22.) Charitable. (1 Tim. ii. 8.) God will hear and accept those who thus pray to him. (Isa. xlv. 19.) But the love of sin will prevent the success of prayer. (Ps. lxvi. 18.)

In the life of Philip Henry it is said "he and his wife constantly prayed together, morning and evening." He made conscience of closet-worship, and abounded in it. It was the caution and advice which he frequently gave to his children and friends, "Be sure you look to your secret duty. Keep that up, whatever you do. The soul cannot prosper in the neglect of it. Apostasy generally begins at the closet-door."

Two young men, members of a family the greater number of which was devoted to God, left the house of their widowed mother to reside in a distant State. After a little while they imbibed exceedingly erroneous views of religion, and were thus exposed to the utmost danger. Their sisters heard of their errors, and resolved to seek their deliverance from them by earnest prayer. They agreed separately to spend half an hour at sunset every Saturday evening in fervent supplication for their brothers. The Hearer of prayer was not unmindful of their requests. The two brothers were awakened to a sense of their danger, and hopefully converted to God.

QUESTION 99.—*What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?*

ANSWER.—*The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer, which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called, The Lord's Prayer.*

#### **DIRECTION IN PRAYER.**

Why do we need direction in prayer? Because man is naturally a stranger both to God and himself, being ignorant both of the glorious perfections of God (Rom. iii. 11) and of his own sins and wants. (Rev. iii. 17; Rom. viii. 26.)

The “whole word of God” is generally useful for our direction in prayer, as it contains plenty of matter for prayer, guides us to the manner of it, and abounds with a variety of expressions which most fitly may be used in it. It directs us—1. By its *prayers*. They show us to whom, for what, and for whom and in what manner we should pray. (Dan. ix. 14; 1 Kings viii.) 2. By its *threatenings and histories of God's judgments*. They show us what sins we ought to confess, and what evils we should pray to have prevented or removed. 3. By *God's merciful providences*. They encourage us to prayer, and show us what good things God is ready to bestow. 4. By its *doctrines*. They show us what God is and is disposed to do, what we are and need, and in what manner we may come to God for the supply of our wants. 5. By its *precepts*. They show us what sins we ought to confess and from what sins to seek deliverance, what graces we should desire and what duties we need strength to perform.

6. By its *promises*. They show us the various conditions we may be in, and what blessings God has engaged and is ready to give us.

**SPECIAL RULE.**

The "form of prayer" here referred to is in Matthew (vi. 9) prefaced with the words, "After this manner therefore pray ye," or, as the original word may be more simply rendered, "thus;" and in Luke (xi. 2), "When ye pray, say." Evidently it was not our Lord's meaning that we should use this prayer exclusively, for the second form of it (in Luke) varies considerably from that in Matthew. It was intended as a model rather than a mould. Highly appropriate as it is both in public and private devotion, it was never intended to confine within the limits of its few sentences the free spirit of prayer. It was given rather as a specimen, by the spirit and order of whose several parts we should guide our own spontaneous petitions, than as a rigid and imperishable enclosure in which all our pious acknowledgments and supplications should be compressed. It was intended not so much as a sacred formulary, as for divine instruction as to what petitions are universally good, universally necessary, universally acceptable, as well as to inculcate simplicity and brevity in the expression. The example of our Lord himself, of the apostles of the Church in all ages, shows how full and varied are the utterances of the human heart when it breathes itself out unrestrainedly unto God in prayer. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

**ADMIRABLENESS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.**

From its delivery to the present hour this prayer

has excited the admiration of the wise and good throughout the world, and down through all these centuries it has been the single golden link running through the ages, that has bound together in one the whole vast company of the prayerful. Even the stupid infidel and the shallow scoffer have not failed to perceive its beauty, sublimity and comprehensiveness. It is little in words, but great in substance; so short that the weakest memory may retain it, and yet so full that it comprehends all things which relate to ourselves or others, to our bodies or souls, to time or eternity; proper for all exigencies and occasions—as well for the last ages of Christianity as the first—as well for the private devotions of the closet as the public service of the temple, including every part of religious worship, supplication and intercession, confession and deprecation, resignation and thanksgiving; adapted to all periods of life, to all kinds of character, to all countries and capacities, and suited to all conditions—equally proper for high and low, rich and poor. The child may lisp its simple sentences as soon as it knows how to pray; it comes with no less fitness from the wrinkled lips of age. It may be taken up and used alike by the penitent in the first hour of his return to God, the struggler in the thick of the spiritual conflict, and the believer in the highest soarings of his faith and love. The youngest, the oldest, the simplest, the wisest, the most sin-stained, the most saintly, can find nothing here unsuitable, unreasonable. It gathers up into one what they all can and should unite in saying as they bend in supplication before God.

In a certain town there had been no revival for many years; the church was nearly run out, the youth were all unconverted, and desolation reigned unbroken. There lived in a retired part of the town an aged man, a blacksmith by trade, and of so stammering a tongue that it was painful to hear him speak. On one Friday, as he was at work in his shop alone, his mind became greatly exercised about the state of the church and of the impenitent. His agony became so great that he was induced to lay aside his work, lock the shop-door and spend the afternoon in prayer.

He prevailed, and on the Sabbath called on the minister and desired him to appoint a conference-meeting. After some hesitation the minister consented, observing, however, that he feared but few would attend. He appointed it the same evening at a large private house. When evening came more assembled than could be accommodated in the house. All were silent for a time, until one sinner broke out in tears and said if any one could pray he begged him to pray for him. Another followed and another, and still another, until it was found that persons from every quarter of the town were under deep convictions. And what was remarkable was, that they all dated their conviction at the hour when the old man was praying in his shop. A powerful revival followed. Thus this old stammering man prevailed, and as a prince had power with God.—*Rev. Charles G. Finney.*

QUESTION 100.—*What doth the preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

ANSWER.—*The preface of the Lord's Prayer, which is, "Our Father, which art in heaven," teacheth us to draw near to God, with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a father, able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.*

The Lord's Prayer consists of three parts—1. A preface. 2. Petitions. 3. The conclusion.

*OUR FATHER, WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.*

Prayer cannot begin in a more beautiful or more lovely way than with these words and this address to God. *Father!* This is the most beautiful name that men can give to God; it is the true name by which the children of God call their Father; it is the name of a child's simplicity as well as the name of the highest knowledge of the divine nature. For to learn to know God aright means simply to learn to know him as our Father. This is the knowledge which we owe to Christ. My Father, your Father. For we call him so not merely because God is the Father of all men, by being Creator and Preserver of all, but we call him Father as in Christ he has become our Father, while we in Christ have become his children. (Gal. iv. 6; Luke xv. 18; Hos. xiv. 13.)

We have here grouped together the three principles, which settle man's just relations to this and to the next world: 1. The *filial*. We see in the Most High a Father. (Acts xvii. 28; Col. i. 20-22; John i. 12.) This representation of God as a Father of those who worship him, teaches us that he stands in a relation toward them similar to that in which a father stands to his children, and that he regards them in a manner similar to that in which a father regards and acts toward his children—really loving them and disposed to bestow on them everything that is necessary to their true happiness. 2. The *fraternal*. We come not with our private needs and vows alone, but with those of our race and household. *Our Father*. The renewal of the parental reknits the fraternal tie. Believers

in all their prayers should think of others as well as themselves. Though we go *alone* into the closet, we are not accepted there if we go in *selfishness* and *isolation*. (Acts xii. 12; Eph. vi. 18.) 3. The *celestial*. Though we are now of the earth and attached to it by these mortal and terrene bodies, we are not originally from it, nor were we made to be eternally *upon* it. We are *of* heaven and *for* heaven, for there and not here our Father is, and where he is our true home is. (Isa. lxiii. 16; Jer. iii. 4; Mal. ii. 10; Deut. xxxii. 6; 2 Cor. vi. 18.)

The term "heaven" in the answer signifies the abode or habitation of God, of the holy angels and blessed men. (Isa. lxvi. 1; John xiv. 2.) God is indeed everywhere by his immensity, but he is said to exist and dwell in heaven, because he is there more glorious than in the world, and there manifests himself immediately. (Ps. xi. 4.) There must be a region of the universe in which God confers their full reward upon his holy creatures, and he is said to be in it because he there gives the highest manifestations of his goodness and glory. As it is a natural thought that this place is elevated above this terrestrial and the visible creation, we point upward when we are speaking of the habitation of the Divinity, as our Saviour lifted up his eyes when he prayed, acting on that occasion under the influence of the ideas and feelings of a man. (1 Cor. ii. 9; Rev. vii. 16, 17; 1 Pet. i. 4; 2 Cor. v. 1.) It is the presence of God that makes heaven.

#### REVERENCE AND CONFIDENCE.

The representation of God as "in heaven" teaches

us to approach him with *confidence*, because if he is our Father, and is possessed of infinite goodness, which he especially displays in heaven, then he will also give us all things necessary for our salvation. If this our Father be also Lord in heaven and possessed of infinite power, so that he can help us in our need, then he can also easily grant unto us what we ask at his hands. (Luke xi. 13; Ps. lxxxiv. 11; Phil. ii. 13.) This representation of God also teaches us to draw near to him with *reverence*. For since our Father is so great a Lord—even one that is heavenly, who rules everywhere and has power to cast both soul and body into hell—we ought to reverence him and come into his presence with the greatest humiliation of soul and body. By the words “Our Father” we express God’s nearness to us; by the phrase “in heaven,” his distance from us. (See Eccles. v. 2; Isa. lxvi. 1.) By the latter we learn God’s ability to help us; by the former, his willingness to do so. Holy, loving familiarity suggests the one, awful reverence the other. The whole address tends to produce the right disposition of prayer, the mixture of *joy* and *fear*, *confidence* and *reverence*. (Ps. ii. 11; Eph. iii. 12; John x. 29; Matt. vi. 32; John xvi. 27.)

#### PRAY WITH AND FOR OTHERS.

Here, as already hinted, is another lesson which the words “Our Father” teach us. What is it to pray “with” others? To be the mouth of others to God, or to join with them in family or social worship. What is it to pray “for” others? To express our concern about them, or our sympathy with them, before

God as sincerely and ingenuously as we would do with reference to ourselves were we in the same circumstances. (Ps. xxxv. 13.) Who are these "others" for whom we should pray? Not only Christians, but all men; we must pray not only for the Church in general, but also for the nation wherein we live, for magistrates and for ministers; and not only for our friends, but also for our enemies, for the race to which we belong. (Ps. cxxii. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; Matt. v. 44; Eph. vi. 18.)

One of the members of Christ's flock was reduced to great poverty in his helpless old age, and yet he never murmured. A kind-hearted neighbor who met him on the road said to him, "You must be badly off; I cannot tell how you maintain yourself and your wife, and yet you are always cheerful." "Oh, not so," replied the old Christian; "we are not badly off; we have a rich Father, who does not suffer us to want." "Your father not dead yet! he must be very old indeed." "My Father never dies, and he always takes care of me." That aged Christian was a daily pensioner on the providence of his merciful and covenant-keeping God.

"Some impressions," says a young man, afterward a missionary to the heathen, "of the importance and necessity of true religion were made upon my mind at a very early period. The first particular one that I recollect was, I think, when I was about five years of age. There happened one day a very violent storm of thunder and lightning in our neighborhood, on which occasion a few Christian friends who lived near us, terrified by its violence, came into my father's house. When under his roof in a moment there came a most vivid flash, followed by a dreadful peal of thunder, which much alarmed the whole company except my father, who, turning toward my mother and our friends, with the greatest composure repeated these words of Dr. Watts:

“ ‘The God that rules on high,  
 And thunders when he please,  
 That rides upon the stormy sky,  
 And manages the seas—  
 This awful God is ours,  
 Our Father and our love,’ etc.

These words, accompanied with such circumstances, sank deep into my heart. I thought, How safe and happy are those who have the great God for their Father and Friend! but being conscious that I had sinned against him, I was afraid he was not my Father, and that, instead of loving me, he was angry with me; and this, for some time after, continued to distress and grieve my mind.” He then proceeds to say that these early impressions were succeeded by others occasioned by parental admonitions, the death of a sister, the conversation of pious friends and the reading of useful books, which terminated in his conversion.

QUESTION 101.—*What do we pray for in the first petition?*

ANSWER.—*In the first petition, which is, “Hallowed be thy name,” we pray, that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.*

“ But holiest rite or longest prayer  
 That soul can yield or wisdom frame,  
 What better import can it bear  
 Than ‘Father, hallowed be thy name’?”

This is the first petition we address to God. We pray first not for ourselves, but for him and his honor—that to him there may be the honor which is due.

When the blessed spirits bow themselves before him

and praise him, they say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!" That is the cry of the heavenly hosts that stand about his throne. And all creatures give honor to Him who has created and rules them. And when we men draw near his throne to pray, we should bow our faces before him, and all our thoughts should incline to him, and say, *Holy*. That is the first word of petition that we send up to Him that is enthroned on high—*Holy*. To Him to whom all honor in heaven and earth belongs our souls and our lives should also give honor. For not only our thoughts should be a prayer, but our lives, our whole lives, should be prayers.

#### THE NAME OF GOD.

The name of God signifies—1. *God himself*. (Ps. v. 11; ix. 2, 10; cxvi. 13; 1 Kings v. 5.) 2. *The attributes and works of God*. (Ex. xvi. 3; xxxiv. 14.) 3. *The command, will and authority of God*. (1 Sam. xvii. 45; Matt. xxviii. 19.) 4. *The worship, trust, praise and profession of God*. (Acts ii. 38; xxi. 13.)

#### HALLOWED.

The word "hallowed" is nearly synonymous with "sanctified" or "glorified." God's name may be hallowed by us in three ways: 1. In our hearts, by entertaining suitable conceptions of him. 2. By our lips, when we acknowledge his divine perfections and tell of all his wondrous works. 3. In our lives, when the consideration of these divine perfections engages us to suitable obedience. This petition forbids cursing and swearing, perjury and blasphemy. It forbids all lip-service, all hypocritical genuflexions, all mummeries of worship where the heart is not engaged. In pre-

senting this petition we pray that we may be enabled to glorify God. (Ps. li. 15; cxix. 175; cxlii. 7; Matt. v. 16.)

#### *OTHERS.*

When we pray that God would enable "others" to glorify him as well as ourselves, we in effect pray that all atheism, infidelity, idolatry, impiety, superstition, ignorance and false religion may be banished from the world, and that the only living and true God may be worshiped and honored all over the earth, and by every intelligent creature. (Isa. xi. 9; xxiv. 16; Ps. lxxvii. 1-3.) This, in fact, is the very petition which the Lord Jesus himself put up on another occasion. (John xii. 28; Ps. lxxvii. 2, 3; 2 Thess. iii. 1; Phil. i. 11; Isa. lxi. 3.)

#### *DISPOSE ALL THINGS TO HIS OWN GLORY.*

God disposes all things to his own glory, by bringing a revenue of glory to himself even out of those things that seem most opposite to it. For example, he does so in relation to the persecution of believers, by overruling them to the furtherance of the gospel (Acts xi. 19-21), and in relation to the falls of believers, by overruling them in such a manner as that they are made more humble, watchful and circumspect for the future. (Ps. li. 3; lxxvi. 10.)

#### *PLACE THE PETITION OCCUPIES.*

"This petition," says an old writer, "is placed first, to show that the hallowing of God's name is to be preferred before all things. It is to be preferred before life, for we are to pray for it before we ask for 'daily bread.' It is to be preferred before salvation, for

God's glory is worth more than the salvation of men's souls. The time will come when some of the other petitions will be useless and out of date; we shall not then need to ask for bread, because there shall be no hunger; nor for forgiveness, because there shall be no sin; nor to be kept from temptation, because there is no old serpent there to tempt; yet the hallowing of God's name shall be of great use and request in heaven. We shall there be ever singing hallelujahs, which is nothing else but the hallowing of God's name. Every person in the blessed Trinity—God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—must have this honor to be hallowed, their glory being equal and their majesty co-eternal."

Among the dying sayings of the heavenly-minded David Brainerd, President Edwards has recorded the following: "My heaven is to please God, and to glorify him, and give all to him, and to be wholly devoted to his glory; that is my religion and that is my happiness, and always was ever since I supposed I had any true religion; and all those that are of that religion shall meet me in heaven. I do not go to heaven to be advanced, but to give honor to God. It is no matter where I shall be stationed in heaven, whether I have a high or a low seat there, but to love and please and glorify God is all."

QUESTION 102.—*What do we pray for in the second petition?*

ANSWER.—*In the second petition, which is, "Thy kingdom come," we pray, that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.*

*THY KINGDOM*

“God’s kingdom,” says an eminent divine, “is the government in which he rules as King.” Where is this kingdom?

He rules over heaven and earth, and his power absolutely embraces all space and all time. But higher than this kingdom of power is his kingdom of grace, in which his love rules and his eternal counsel concerning the redemption and salvation of men fulfills itself. This kingdom is God’s eternal and first thought, for this kingdom is the goal of all his ways. For he has willed and created the world only because he has willed this kingdom of salvation, and the entire history of his revelation is the progressive realization of this kingdom. But in Jesus Christ it has also come to earth, and has diffused itself through the word of the gospel. It does not spring from the earth, and is not established by earthly means. Its foundation lies in the heart of eternal grace, and its power is the Holy Ghost and his word. The kingdoms of outward form indeed appear to leave no space for it on earth, for they have divided the whole world between them, and he who has an eye only for that which the senses observe, sees nothing of it, for it is a kingdom of the Spirit. But high above all earthly kingdoms this kingdom soars, and deeper than all others are its foundations planted. Hence, where no earthly force reaches its power extends—namely, in the hearts of men—and when the time of the kingdoms of the world has come to an end, the time of the kingdom of God will only rightly begin.

*WHAT THE PETITION IMPLIES.*

This petition implies an earnest desire that the kingdom of God may be set up in our own hearts (Luke xvii. 21), reducing all within us to subjection to Christ, our King; that it may be set up in the hearts of our children, relatives, servants, friends, neighbors; that the word of the kingdom may in all nations be “preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;” that Christian churches may be established in every region of our earth, and that “the kingdoms of this world” may become “the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;” that every opposing power may be put down, and God be all in all. The final setting up of this kingdom has been long predicted. (Gen. iii. 15; Rom. viii. 21, 22; Rev. xi. 15; xxii. 20. See also Jer. xxxi. 8; 2 Thess. ii. 17; Phil. i. 9; Ps. xliii. 3; 1 Thess. v. 23; John xvii. 21; Matt. ix. 38.)

*BROUGHT INTO IT AND KEPT IN IT.*

How are persons brought into God’s invisible kingdom of grace? By regeneration, justification and adoption. (Col. i. 12, 13; Acts xxvi. See on Questions 31, 33, 34.) How are they kept in it? By sanctification, assurance of God’s love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace and perseverance therein to the end. (See on Questions 35, 36.) Why need believers pray for the coming of God’s kingdom of grace with respect to themselves when they are already in it? They need to pray that it would come to them more and more. (Phil. iii. 9–14.) Are not Christians “kept by the power of God, through faith unto

salvation"? (1 Pet. i. 5.) Why, then, should they pray to be kept in it? Because perseverance, being a promised privilege, should on that account be prayed for. (Ps. cxix. 28.)

#### THE KINGDOM OF GLORY HASTENED.

We request in our praying that the kingdom of God's glory may come—that this kingdom of glory may be hastened, which will appear and be manifested to the whole world at the second coming and appearance of the Lord Jesus to judgment. (Rev. x. 7; 2 Pet. iii. 12; 2 Cor. v. 2; Luke ii. 29; Rev. xxii. 20.)

In his account of his views and feelings soon after he received the hope of salvation, President Edwards says: "I had a great longing for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world. My secret prayer used to be in great part taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint of anything that happened in any part of the world, that appeared to me in some respect or other to have a favorable aspect on the interest of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly caught at it, and it would much animate and refresh me. I used to be earnest to read public news-letters mainly for that end, to see if I could find some news favorable to the interests of religion in the world." "He regarded," says the *Puritan*, "the history of this world as the history of redemption. Every event furnished him with an occasion of thanksgiving or of prayer."

QUESTION 103.—*What do we pray for in the third petition?*

ANSWER.—*In the third petition, which is, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," we pray, that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.*

*THY WILL.*

God's will may be considered either as *preceptive* or *providential*. To the former reference is here made, for God's providential will is done in earth equally as in heaven. Or, if the latter is also referred to, that submission, acquiescence and satisfaction in it which angels feel and express, may be intended.

*TO KNOW.*

We must pray God to make us able and willing to know his will. (2 Cor. iii. 5; Gal. i. 15, 16; Eph. i. 17, 19; v. 8.) How must we know God's will? Not speculatively and rationally only, but spiritually also. (1 Cor. ii. 14.) Why is knowing God's will placed here before obeying, etc.? Because the understanding is the leading faculty, without which it is impossible there should be any obedience. (Prov. xix. 2; Jer. v. 4. See also Eph. v. 17; Rom. xii. 2; Ps. cxix. 34; Col. i. 9; Ps. xxvii. 11.) All who are sanctified truly, desire to know God's will. (Josh. v. 14.)

*OBEY.*

The bare knowledge of God's will is inefficacious; it does not improve the heart. Knowledge alone is like a winter sun, which has no heat or influence; it does not warm the affections or purify the conscience. Judas was a great luminary; he knew God's will, but he was a traitor. Knowing without doing God's will, indeed, will make one's case worse. (Luke xii. 47.) Many a man's knowledge is a torch to light him to hell. In this petition we pray for *active* obedience. We pray that we may be sincere in our obedience (Ps.

cxix. 80), that we may be exact in our obedience (Ps. cxix. 5), that we may be universal in our obedience (Col. iv. 12), that we may be armed against that which would divert us from our obedience (Ps. cxix. 37), and that others also may do God's will. (Heb. xiii. 21.)

#### *SUBMIT.*

We pray also for *passive* obedience. We are by nature prone to repine and murmur against the providence of God, especially in afflictive dispensations. (Num. xiv. 2.) In this petition we ask that God, by his grace, would make us able and willing to submit to all his dealings with us, even when they seem to be adverse. When do we submit to God's afflictive dispensations? When we justify God in them (Dan. ix. 7), and acknowledge that he "hath punished us less than our iniquities deserve." (Ezra ix. 13.)

"Whate'er thy lot, whoe'er thou be,  
Confess thy folly, kiss the rod,  
And in thy chastening sorrow see  
The hand of God.

"A bruised reed he will not break,  
Afflictions all his children feel;  
He wounds them for his mercy's sake;  
He wounds to heal."

#### *AS THE ANGELS DO IN HEAVEN.*

. It ought to be the prayer and care, the study and endeavor of every Christian, that the commanding will of God may be done by himself and by all men on earth as it is by the saints and angels in heaven, with entireness, harmony, cheerfulness, diligence, con-

stancy and ineffable delight. (Heb. ii. 4; viii. 11. See also Luke xxii. 42; Acts xxi. 14; Matt. xxvi. 39.) Nor should the knowledge of the fact that in this life, through the imperfection of our nature, we shall never do the will of God in the same absolutely perfect way as it is done in heaven, be regarded as a reason why we should lower the object of our desires or the aim and earnestness of our endeavors. This petition is instinct with the very life of missionary enterprise, and the Church cannot offer this clause of the divine prayer in the full spirit of its power without becoming a missionary Church. There are some who see in it an intimation that our earth is to be one part, at least, of the final and glorious abode of the saints. (See 2 Pet. iii. 13.)

A clergyman once paid a visit to a deaf-and-dumb asylum in London for the express purpose of examining the children in the knowledge they possessed of divine truth. A little boy on this occasion was asked in writing, "Who made the world?" He took up the chalk and wrote underneath the question, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." The clergyman then inquired in a similar manner, "Why did Jesus Christ come into the world?" A smile of delight and gratitude rested on the countenance of the little fellow as he wrote, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." A third question was then proposed, eminently adapted to call his most powerful feelings into exercise: "Why were you born deaf and dumb, while I can hear and speak?" "Never," said an eye-witness, "shall I forget the look of holy resignation and chastened sorrow which sat on his countenance as he took up the chalk and wrote, 'Even so, Father, 'or it seemed good in thy sight.'"

"I have had six children," said Mr. Elliot, "and I bless

God for his free grace they are all with Christ, and my mind is now at rest concerning them. My desire was that they should have served Christ on earth, but if God will choose to have them rather serve him in heaven, I have nothing to object to it. His will be done."

There was a good woman who, when she was sick, being asked whether she was willing to live or die, answered, "Which God pleaseth." "But," said one standing by, "if God should refer it to you, which would you choose?" "Truly," said she, "if God should refer it to me, I would even refer it back to him."

QUESTION 104.—*What do we pray for in the fourth petition?*

ANSWER.—*In the fourth petition, which is, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray, that of God's free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.*

This petition is placed after the three former petitions, because those concern immediately and generally God's glory in the advancement of his name, kingdom and will, which ought to be preferred to all our personal concerns. (Ps. lxi. 9; Acts xxi. 13.) It is put before the following petitions, not for its worth, but for its order, for we can have no spiritual blessings unless we have a natural being in this life.

#### **BREAD.**

Bread is one principal part of the things which are needful for the body, and here, as is often the case, it is put for the whole. It comprehends all temporal blessings, and such as are necessary for the sustenance of life, as food, raiment, health, civil peace, etc. This is evident from the design of the petition, for we pray for

bread from our necessity. But there are many other things besides bread necessary for us. Therefore we pray for them also under the term bread. This synecdoche often occurs in the Bible. (Gen. iii. 19; Ps. xli. 9.) Christ furthermore comprehends all temporal blessings under the term bread—1. That he might restrain our desires, and teach us to pray only for such things as are necessary for the support of life and for the service of God and our neighbor, both in our common and proper calling. 2. That he might teach us to pray not only for such things as are necessary, but also that the use of them might be made profitable to us, and tend to our salvation, inasmuch as these things profit us nothing without such use.

#### DAILY.

We are taught to ask “daily” the supply of the needs of life—1. That we should not have anxious care for the future; and, 2. Because we are not warranted to ask, even of the necessities of life, very large supplies, which may serve for weeks, months or years to come, but are as children continually to exercise the spirit of entire dependence on our heavenly Father’s care, and complete confidence in it. (Acts xvii. 25; 1 Tim. vi. 17; Matt. iv. 4; vi. 34.) The richer sort of persons, in offering this petition, do in effect say, “Let the bread which is ours come to us this day *sanctified by thy almighty hands.*”

#### OUR.

The “our” points to necessary *labor*, the true way of asking and receiving according to God’s original appointment for man in Gen. iii. 19, independently of

which we eat not *our own bread* (2 Thess. iii. 12 ; 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12), but another's. It shows that our food and raiment must be of *God's* giving—that is, honestly and fairly earned, “for,” as an old writer remarks, “to him God gives bread who earns it by righteous means, but to him who earns it by sin the devil it is who giveth.” It points also to the obligatory communion and fellowship, since as we in “our” and “us” pray with and for one another, so we may not hold anything that we receive, exclusively and covetously for ourselves. (Isa. lviii. 7 ; comp. 1 Sam. xxv. 11.)

#### COMPETENT PORTION.

God, who has placed men in different situations, has himself rendered a larger share of worldly good things necessary to a man of rank, for example, than an obscure person—to the father of a numerous family than to him who is childless. Our Saviour has in his wisdom employed a general expression which admits of considerable latitude of application, and authorizes us to pray for sufficient bread, for a competent portion, for all that our station requires. The prayer of Agur will serve as a model, and will show us that, although we should not presume to dictate to God, yet there are two extremes from which we may pray to be preserved, as there is danger to be apprehended from both. (See Prov. xxx. 7-9.)

#### GIVE.

Our praying that God would give us this competent portion imports our desire to receive it as God's free gift. (Gen. xxvii. 28 ; xxxii. 10.) We also thus acknowledge that in Adam and by our own sin we have

forfeited our rights to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God. (See Gen. ii. 17 ; Jer. v. 25.) “The tree of mercy,” says one, “will not drop its fruit unless shaken by the hand of prayer. Whatever we have, if it do not come in the way of prayer, it doth not come in the way of love; it is given, as Israel’s quails, in anger. If everything be a gift, we do not deserve it; we are not fit for it unless we ask for this alms.”

*ENJOY HIS BLESSING.*

Why do we ask for temporal enjoyments from God, when we labor for them with our hands? Because it is God who giveth us opportunities and strength for labor, success in it, and a blessing with it. (Deut. viii.) It is our duty to crave God’s blessing on our food, and return him thanks for it. (Ex. xxiii. 25.) We must pray for God’s blessing on all we have (Matt. iv. 4), for the prosperity of others (3 John 2), and for the support of the poor and needy.

The Rev. Mr. Winter observes that in a time when he was destitute and knew not where to look for a supply, he received a letter of which the following is a copy, and which he kept, as he said, to record the kind providence of the Lord: “Dear and Rev. Sir: I enclose you twenty pounds, as I suppose your purse may be low. I commend you to the grace and love of Jesus; may he long shine upon you and bless you! My dear friend, yours affectionately, JOHN THORNTON.”

Some never unite in any form of social prayer but on the Sabbath. To suit their hebdomadal devotions this (fourth) petition should have run, “Give us this *week* our *weekly* bread.” But as it now is, we have the supplies of the other six days unasked for. We acknowledge our dependence on God for only a seventh part of our time.—*Dr. Nevins.*

Professor Francke relates that at one time all his provision was spent; "but in addressing myself," says he, "to the Lord, I found myself deeply affected with the fourth petition of the Lord's prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread*; and my thoughts were fixed in a more especial manner upon the words *this day*, because on the very same day we had great occasion for it. While I was yet praying a friend of mine came before my door in a coach, and brought the sum of four hundred crowns."

QUESTION 105.—*What do we pray for in the fifth petition?*

ANSWER.—*In the fifth petition, which is, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," we pray, that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.*

#### OUR DEBTS.

As bread in this prayer comprehends all the necessities of life, so forgiveness of sins comprehends the substance of all that is necessary for the well-being of our souls. Sin is the only bar between God and man; if, therefore, this be removed, there is nothing left to impede the most ample communications of his favor. Sins are called *debts*—not properly, but metaphorically. All that belongs to a debt will not apply to a crime. The former, as being a mere private obligation, may be remitted by the creditor, if he please, without any satisfaction; but the latter, being a public evil, committed against God as the Governor of the world, cannot be consistently forgiven without an atonement which shall effectually distinguish that forgiveness

from connivance. There is a sufficient resemblance, however, between them, to justify the use of the term. We *owe* to God, as his creatures, supreme love and unreserved obedience, and in default of paying it fall under an obligation to punishment. As a rebel against the state forfeits his life, which is his all, to his injured country, so, as rebels against God, we have forfeited our souls, which are our all, to his injured government. (See Luke vii. 41, 42; Matt. xviii. 24; Luke xii. 58, 59.) *Forgive us our debts*—*i. e.*, remit the penalty of our offences, and hold us as if we had not sinned. (Job vii. 21; Ps. xxxii. 1; Isa. xliii. 25; xliv. 22; Jer. xxxi. 34; Mic. vii. 19; Mark ii. 7.)

#### *FREELY PARDON.*

Higher than bodily want is the spiritual want of the soul. But of all that our souls need, forgiveness is the most necessary. For of all that oppresses the soul our guilt is the heaviest. And before we begin the work of improvement, and before we can perform works of love, we must first have a free and joyful conscience. and forgiveness from our God must be certain. We all need this forgiveness. Only one man of all had no need to offer this prayer—the Redeemer of our sins—and he alone. All the rest of us need forgiveness, forgiveness from God. For all our sins, manifold as they are, and whosoever be the persons against whom they have been committed, are still in their ultimate foundation sins against God. “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.” Only he can forgive us. Even our secret faults are meant, even those of which we know nothing. For our sins reach much farther than our

knowledge, even to the deepest foundation of our being. Against all these sins there is for us all only one way of deliverance; that is the way of forgiveness and of the humble prayer, "Father, forgive!"

God pardons us *freely*. (Ps. xxv. 11.) And he does this *for Christ's sake*. (Rom. iii. 25.) Is it asked, How can God be said to pardon our sins freely when he does it on account of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us? the answer is, God's accepting of Christ as our Surety and his fulfilling all righteousness in our room, were both of them acts of rich, free and sovereign grace. (Ps. lxxxix. 19; Luke xii. 50.) Though the pardon of our sins be of debt to Christ, yet it is free to us. (Eph. i. vii. See Ps. xxv. 11; xli. 4; li. 1, 2; cxliii. 2; Rom. iii. 24; Hos. xiv. 2; Job x. 2.)

#### AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS.

In Luke xi. 4 it is, "for we also forgive," etc. The word *as*, meaning *according as, like as*, is not a note of equality, but similitude—not that we equal God in forgiving, but imitate him. It has also in a measure the sense of *inasmuch as*. The willingness of the suppliant is by no means a ground upon which God can bestow on him forgiveness, but rather a subjective condition without which he has no boldness to entreat the forgiveness of his own sins. (See Matt. vi. 14, 15; James ii. 13; 1 John iv. 18, 19.) This condition or qualification requires that we forgive cordially (Jer. xxxi. 34; Matt. xviii. 35), fully (Ps. ciii. 3), often. (Isa. lv. 7; Matt. xviii. 21.) It is a very striking consideration that this petition is so framed that, if presented in an unforgiving spirit, it is indeed an

imprecation of divine vengeance. He who does not forgive his neighbor his trespasses, when he uses this prayer in effect asks God not to forgive *him* his trespasses; and if he continues in his present temper, there is no doubt that his prayer will be answered. (Col. iii. 13; James v. 9; Mark xi. 25; Matt. xviii. 33; vi. 14, 15.)

Rev. Charles Simeon says: "To pass by a transgression is more becoming the gospel than to resent it. A man strikes me with his sword and inflicts a wound. Suppose, instead of binding up the wound, I am showing it to everybody, and after it has been bound up I am taking off the bandage continually, and examining the depth of the wound and making it fester, till my limb becomes greatly inflamed and my general health is materially affected; is there a person in the world who would not call me a fool? Now, such a fool is he also who, by dwelling upon little injuries or insults or provocations, causes them to agitate and influence his mind. How much better were it to put a bandage over the wound and never look at it again!"

QUESTION 106.—*What do we pray for in the sixth petition?*

ANSWER.—*In the sixth petition, which is, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.*

#### PETITION FOR THE FUTURE.

As the prayer for daily bread raises us above care for *to-day*, and the prayer for the forgiveness of sins is meant to quiet us concerning the *past*, so is the prayer against temptation a weapon for the uncertain *future*.

It consists of two parts: 1. Deprecatory. 2. Petitionary.

*LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.*

The Greek word rendered *lead* is only used seven times in the New Testament. Excepting in the Lord's Prayer our translators have always rendered it "bring into." (Luke v. 18, 19; Acts xvii. 20; 1 Tim. vi. 7; Heb. xiii. 11.) "Temptation" means "trial." God never puts evil into our hearts or stirs it up there by any positive influence. (James i. 13.) In the former respect our own lusts tempt us (James i. 14)—in the latter, Satan or wicked men. (Matt. iv. 3.) But Providence may permit us to be brought into such circumstances as have a tendency to give our corruptions and the temptations of Satan and his agents peculiar advantage against us. This the Lord sometimes does, to prove the reality or power of our grace, the sincerity or hypocrisy of our profession, or the remaining prevalence of sin. (Gen. xxii. 1; Job i. 11.) "A saint's whole life," says Austin, "is a temptation."

This petition asks that God would graciously prevent us from being brought into circumstances of strong temptation; that he would not leave us to struggle with it in our own strength; that he would instruct us to avoid and enable us to overcome our temptations. He who would honestly and acceptably present this petition, must guard against going into temptation. (Gal. vi. 1; Matt. xxvi. 41. See also 2 Cor. xii. 8; Ps. cxix. 133; cxli. 4; li. 11, 12; Luke xxii. 32; 1 Cor. x. 13; Eph. vi. 13, 18.) But when in the course of God's good providence and the pur-

suit of a known duty we find ourselves involved in circumstances of trial, then we are taught to “count it all joy” (James i. 2), for then it may be humbly hoped that the tempter beholds in us that living principle of earnestness which it is the whole business of himself and his accursed emissaries to assail, and, if possible, to destroy. (See 2 Cor. xii. 10; Heb. iv. 15.)

*BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.*

Here we confess that evil is in us and near us, and on every side, and that we have no power to deliver ourselves from it. We apply to the Strong for strength. We cast ourselves on him for protection. In these words we pray not only to be kept from evil, but also that we may make progress in piety. (Tit. ii. 12; Rom. xii. 9; Isa. i. 16; 2 Cor. vii. 1.) The evil we seek to be delivered from is—1. The evil of our own heart. (Rom. vii. 23; Heb. iii. 12.) 2. The evil of Satan. (Matt. xiii. 19; 2 Cor. ii. 11; Eph. vi. 12; 1 Pet. v. 8.) 3. The evil of the world. (Gal. i. 4.) 4. The evil of God’s wrath. (Rom. vi. 23; Rev. xxi. 8.) The many expressions in the Psalms (liv. 5; lix. 1, 10; cxliii. 12, etc.) which speak of enemies, and pray for victory or deliverance, may be considered in their spiritual meaning to look in the direction of the present petition. On Christian lips they convey a desire akin to that here expressed. (1 Chron. iv. 10; Ps. xvii. 8; xci. 10; 2 Tim. i. 12; 2 Cor. i. 10.)

A plain countryman, who was effectually called by divine grace under a sermon from Zech. iii. 2, was some time afterward accosted by a quondam companion of his drunken revelries, and strongly solicited to accompany him to the ale-house. But

the good man strongly resisted all his arguments, saying, "I am a brand plucked out of the fire." His old companion not understanding this, he explained it thus: "Look ye," said he, "there is a great difference between a brand and a green stick. If a spark flies upon a brand that has been partly burned, it will soon catch fire again, but it is not so with a green stick. I tell you I am that brand plucked out of the fire, and I dare not venture into the way of temptation for fear of being set on fire."

QUESTION 107.—*What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

ANSWER.—*The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen," teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him: and in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen.*

#### FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM.

Some refer this to David's doxology. (1 Chron. xxix. 11.) It has reference as a plea to the first three petitions of the prayer—"Thy kingdom come," *for thine is the kingdom*. Thou hast the government of the world and the protection of thy saints, thy willing subjects, in it. (2 Chron. xx. 6.) "Thy will be done," *for thine is the power* to maintain that kingdom and to make good all thine engagements to thy people. (Jer. xxxii. 17.) "Hallowed be thy name" *for thine is the glory*, as the end of all that which is done for the saints in answer to their prayers, for their praise waiteth for thee. (Ps. lxxv. 1; lxxix. 9.) It is our duty to plead with God in prayer, to fill our mouth

with arguments (Job xxiii. 4)—not to move God, but to affect ourselves, to encourage our faith, excite our fervency, and evidence both. (Job xxiii. 13; Isa. lxiv. 7.) Some see in this threefold doxology an ascription of praise to each of the Persons of the Trinity.

*IN OUR PRAYERS TO PRAISE HIM.*

In prayers we are to praise God. (Ps. cxlv. 2.) This is the way to obtain further mercy, as it qualifies us to receive it.

*AMEN.*

To the whole prayer the Hebrew word “Amen” is subjoined. In this connection the word signifies—1. So let it be, or let that come to pass which we ask. 2. May God, who is not unmindful of his promise, certainly and truly hear us! (Jer. xi. 5; 1 John v. 15; Ps. cvi. 48.)

THE END.