

INSTRUCTION
FOR
THE
IGNORANT

JOHN BUNYAN'S CATECHISM

1675

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Q. (1) How many gods are there?

A. To the Christians there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we of him. 1 Co. viii. 6.

Q. (2) Why is not the God of the Christians the God of them that are no Christians?

A. He is their maker and preserver; but they have not chosen him to be their God. Ac. xvii. 24. Ps. xxxvi. 6. Ju. x. 14.

Q. (3) Are there then other gods besides the God of the Christians?

A. There is none other true God but HE; but because they want the grace of Christians, therefore they choose not him, but such gods as will suit with and countenance their lusts. in. viii. 44.

Q. (4) What gods are they that countenance the lusts of wicked men?

A. The devil, who is the god of this world; the belly, that god of gluttons, drunkards, which are, for the most part, the gods of the youth. Job viii. 4. 2 Co. iv. 4. Phil. iii. 19. Ex. xxiii. 6. 1 Co. x. 7. 2 Ti. ii. 11. 1 in. v. 21.

Q. (5) Who is a Christian?

A. One that is born again, a new creature; one that sits at Jesus' feet to hear his word; one that hath his heart purified and sanctified by faith; which is in Christ. in. iii. 3,5,7. Ac. xi. 24. xv. 9; xxvi. 18. 2 Co. v. 17.

Q. (6) How do you distinguish the God of the Christians from the gods of other people?

A. He is a Spirit, in. iv. 24.

Q. (7) Is there no other spirit but the true God?

A. Yes, there are many spirits. 1 in. iv. I.

Q. (8) What spirits are they?

A. The good angels are spirits; the bad angels are spirits; and the souls of men are spirits. He. i. 7, 14. 1 Ki. xxii. 21,22. Re. xvi. 13, 14. Ac. vii. 59. He. xii, 23.

Q. (9) How then is the true God distinguished from other spirits?

A. Thus: No Spirit is eternal but HE, no Spirit is almighty but HE, no Spirit is incomprehensible and unsearchable but HE: HE is also most merciful, most just, most holy. De. xxxiii. 27. Ge. xvii. I. Ps. cxiv. 3. Mi. vii. 18. Job xxiv. 17. 1 Sa. ii. 2.

Q. (10) Is this God, being a Spirit, to be known?

A. Yes, and that by his works of creation, by his providences, by the judgments that he executeth, and by his word.

Q. (11) Do you understand him by the works of creation?

A. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work.' Ps. xix. 1. 'For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.' Ro. i. 20.

Q. (12) Do his works of providence also declare him?

A. They must needs do it, since through his providence the whole creation is kept in such harmony as it is, and that in despite of sin and devils; also, if you consider that from an angel to a sparrow, nothing falls to the ground without the providence of our heavenly Father. Mat. x. 29.

Q. (13) Is he known by his judgments?

A. 'The Lord is known by the judgments which he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.' Ps. ix. 16.

Q. (14) Is he known by his word?

A. Yes, most clearly: for by that he revealeth his attributes, his decrees, his promises, his way of worship, and how he is to be pleased by us.

Q. (15) Of what did God make the world?

A. 'Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.' He. xi. 3.

Q. (16) How long was he in making the world?

A. 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is.' Ex. xx. 11. 'And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made.' Ge. ii. 2.

Q. (17) Of what did God make man?

A. 'The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.' Ge. ii. 7.

Q. (18) Why doth it say, God breathed into him the breath of life; is man's soul of the very nature of the Godhead?

A. This doth not teach that the soul is of the nature of the Godhead, but sheweth that it is not of the same matter as his body, which is dust. Ge. xviii. 27.

Q. (19) Is not the soul then of the nature of the Godhead?

A. No, for God cannot sin, but the soul doth; God cannot be destroyed in hell, but the souls of the impenitent shall. Eze. xviii. 4. Mat. x. 28.

Q. (20) How did God make man in the day of his first creation?

A. God made man upright. Ec. vii. 29. 'In the image of God created he him.' Ge. I. 27.

Q. (21) Did God, when he made man, leave him without a rule to walk by?

A. No: he gave him a law in his nature, and imposed upon him a positive precept, but he offered violence to them, and brake them both. Ge. iii. 3, 6.

Q. (22) What was the due desert of that transgression?

A. Spiritual death in the day he did it, temporal death afterwards, and everlasting death last of all. Ge. ii. 17; iii. 19. Mat. xxv. 46.

Q. (23) What is it to be spiritually dead?

A. To be alienate from God, and to live without him in the world, through the ignorance that is in man, and through the power of their sins. Ep. iv. 18, 19.

Q. (24) Wherein doth this alienation from God appear?

A. In the love they have to their sins, in their being loth to come to him, in their pleading idle excuses for their sins, and in their ignorance of the excellent mysteries of his blessed gospel. Ep. ii. 2, 3, 11, 12; iv. 18, 19. Ro. i. 28.

Q. (25) What is temporal death?

A. To have body and soul separated asunder, the body returning to the dust it was, and the spirit to God that gave it. Ge. iii. 19. 1k. xii. 7.

Q. (26) What is everlasting death?

A. For body and soul to be separate for ever from God, and to be cast into hell fire. Lu. xiii. 27. Mar. ix. 43.

Q. (27) Do men go body and soul to hell so soon as they die?

A. The body abideth in the grave till the sound of the last trump; but the soul, if the man dies wicked, goes presently from the face of God into hell, as into a prison, there to be kept till the day of judgment. 1 Co. xv. 52. Is. xxiv. 22. Lu, xii. 20.

Q. (28) Do we come into the world as upright as did our first parent?

A. No: he came into the world sinless, being made so of God Almighty, but we came into the world sinners, being made so by his pollution.

Q. (29) How doth it appear that we came into the world polluted?

A. We are the fruit of an unclean thing, are defiled in our very conception, and are by nature the children of wrath, Job xiv. 4. Ps. Ii. 5. Ep. ii. 3.

Q. (30) Can you make further proof of this?

A. Yes, it is said, That by one man came sin, death, judgment, and condemnation upon all men. Ro. v. 12-19.

Q. (31) Do we then come sinners into the world?

A. Yes, we are transgressors from the womb, and go astray as soon as we are born, speaking lies. Is. xlvi. 8. Ps. lviii. 3.

Q. (32) But as Adam fell with us in him, so did he not by faith rise with us in him? for he had no seed until he had the promise.

A. He fell as a public person, but believed the promise as a single person. Adam's faith saved not the world, though Adam's sin over-threw it.

Q. (33) But do not some hold that we are sinners only by imitation?

A. Yes, being themselves deceived. But God's word saith, we are children of wrath by nature, that is, by birth and generation.

Q. (34) Can you bring further proof of this?

A. Yes: in that day that we were born, we were polluted in our own blood, and cast out to the loathing of our persons. Again, the children of old that were dedicated unto the Lord, a sacrifice was offered for them at a month old, which was before they were sinners by imitation. Eze. xvi. 4-9. Nu. xviii. 14-16.

Q. (35) Can you make this appear by experience?

A. Yes: the first things that bloom and put forth themselves in children, shew their ignorance of God, their disobedience to parents, and their innate enmity to holiness of life; their inclinations naturally run to vanity. Besides little children die, but that they could not, were they not of God counted sinners; for death is the wages of sin. Ro. vi. 23.

Q. (36) What is sin?

A. It is a transgression of the law. I Jn. iii. 4.

Q. (37) A transgression of what law?

A. Of the law of our nature, and of the law of the ten commandments as written in the holy scriptures. Ro. ii. 12-15. Ex. xx,

Q. (38) When doth one sin against the law of nature?

A. When you do anything that your conscience tells you is a transgression against God or man. Ru. ii. 14, 15.

Q. (39) When do we sin against the law as written in the ten commandments?

A. When you do anything that they forbid, although you be ignorant of it. Ps. xix. 12.

Q. (40) How many ways are there to sin against this law?

A. Three: by sinful thoughts, by sinful words, and also by sinful actions. Ro. vii. 7; ii. 6. Mat. v. 28; xii. 37.

Q. (41) What if we sin but against one of the ten commandments?

A. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all; 'For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.' Ja. ii. 10, 11.

Q. (42) Where will God punish sinners for their sins?

A. Both in this world and in that which is to come. Ge. iii. 24; iv. 10-12. Job xxi. 30.

Q. (43) How are men punished in this world for sin?

A. Many ways, as with sickness, losses, crosses, disappointments and the like: sometimes also God giveth them up to their own heart's lusts, to blindness of mind also, and hardness of heart; yea, and sometimes to strong delusions that they might believe lies, and be damned. Le. xxvi. 15, 16. Am. iv. 7, 10. Ro. i, 24, 28. Ex. iv. 21; ix. 12-14. Zep. i. 17. Ro. xi. 7, 8. 2 Th. ii. 11, 12.

Q. (44) How are sinners punished in the world to come?

A. With a worm that never dies, and with a fire that never shall he quenched. Mar. ix. 44.

Q. (45) Whither do sinners go to receive this punishment?

A. 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.' Ps. ix. 7.

Q. (46) What is hell?

A. It is a place and a state, most fearful. Lu, xiii. 28; svi. 28. Ac. i. 25.

Q. (47) Why do you call it a place?

A. Because in hell shall all the damned be confined as in a prison, in their chains of darkness for ever. Lu. xii. 5, 58; xvi. 26. Jude 6.

Q. (48) What [kind of] a place is hell?

A. It is a dark bottomless burning lake of fire, large enough to hold all that perish. Mat. xxii. 13. Ro. xx. 1, 15. Is. xxx. 35. Pr. xxvii. 20.

Q. (49) What do you mean when you say it is a fearful state?

A. I mean, that it is the lot of those that are cast in thither to be tormented in most fearful manner, to wit, with wrath and fiery indignation. Ro. ii. 9. He. x. 26, 27.

Q. (50) In what parts shall they be thus fearfully tormented?

A. In body and soul: for hell-fire shall kindle upon both beyond what now can be thought. Mat. x. 28. Lu, xvi. 24. Ja. v. 3.

Q. (51) How long shall they be in this condition?

A. 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment.' Mat. xxv. 46. 'And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night.' Re. xiv. II. For they 'shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.' 2 Th. i. 9.

Q. (52) But why might not the ungodly be punished with this punishment in this world, that we might have seen it and believe?

A. If the ungodly should with punishment have been rewarded in this world, it would in all probability have overthrown the whole order that God hath settled here among men. For who could have endured here to have seen the flames of fire, to have heard the groans, and to have seen the tears, perhaps, of damned relations, as parents or children? Therefore as Tophet of old was without the city, and as the gallows and gibbets are built without the towns; so Christ hath ordered that they who are to be punished with this kind of torment, shall be taken away: 'Take him away,' saith he (out of this world) 'and cast him into outer darkness,' and let him have his punishment there 'there shall he weeping and gnashing of teeth.' Mat. xxii. 13. Besides, faith is not to be wrought by looking into hell, and seeing the damned tormented before our eyes, but by 'hearing the word of God.' Ro. x. 17. For he that shall not believe Moses and the prophets, will not be persuaded should one come from the dead, yea should one come to them in flames to persuade them. Lu. xvi. 27-31.

Q. (53) Are there degrees of torments in hell?

A. Yes, for God will reward every one according to their works. 'Wo unto the wicked, It shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.' Is. iii. 11.

Q. (54) Who are like to be most punished there, men or children?

A. The punishment in hell comes not upon sinners according to age, but sin; so that whether they be men or children, the greater sin, the greater punishment; 'For there is no respect of persons with God.' Ro. ii. II.

Q. (55) How do you distinguish between great sins and little ones?

A. By their nature, and by the circumstances that attend them.

Q. (56) What do you mean by their nature?

A. I mean when they are very gross in themselves. 2 Ch. xxxiii. 2. Eze. xvi. 42.

Q. (57) What kind of sins are the greatest?

A. Adultery, fornication, murder, theft, swearing, lying, covetousness, witchcraft, sedition, heresies, or any the like. I Co. vi. 9, 10. Ep. v. 3-6. Ccl. iii. 5, 6. Ga. v. 19-21. Re. xxi. 8.

Q. (58) What do you mean by circumstances that attend sin?

A. I mean light, knowledge, the preaching of the Word, godly acquaintance, timely caution, &c.

Q. (59) Will these make an alteration in the sin?

A. These things attending sinners, will make little sins great, yea greater than greater sins that are committed in grossest ignorance.

Q. (60) How do you prove that?

A. Sodom and Gomorrah wallowed in all or most of those gross transgressions above mentioned: yea, they were said to be sinners exceedingly, they lived in such sins as may not be spoken of without blushing, and yet God swears that Israel, his church, had done worse than they, Eze. xvi. 48. and the Lord Jesus also seconds it in that threatening of his 'I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee.' Mat. xi. 24. Lu. x. 12.

Q. (61) And was this the reason, namely, because they had such circumstances attending them as Sodom had not?

A. Yes, as will plainly appear, if you read the three chapters above mentioned.

Q. (62) When do I sin against light and knowledge?

A. When you sin against convictions of conscience, when you sin against a known law of God, when you sin against counsels and dissuasion of friends, then you sin against light and knowledge. Ro. i. 32.

Q. (63) When do I sin against preaching of the word?

A. When you refuse to hear God's ministers, or hearing them, refuse to follow their wholesome doctrine. 2 Ch. xxxvi. 16. Je. xxv. 4-7; xxxv. 15.

Q. (64) When else do I sin against preaching of the Word?

A. When you mock, or despise, or reproach the ministers; also when you raise lies and scandals of them, or receive such lies or scandals raised; you then also sin against the preaching of the Word, when you persecute them that preach it, or are secretly glad to see them so used. 2 Ch. xxx. 1, 10. Ro. iii. 8. Je. xx. 10. 1 Th. ii. 15, 16.

Q. (65) How will godly acquaintance greaten my sin?

A. When you sin against their counsels', warnings, or persuasions to the contrary; also when their lives and conversations are a reproof to you, and yet against all you will sin. Thus sinned Ishmael, Esau, Eli's sons, Absalom and Judas, they had good company, good counsels, and a good life set before them by their godly acquaintance, but they sinned against all, and their judgment was the greater. Ishmael was east away, Ge. xxi. 10. Esau hated, Ge. iv. 30. Eli's sons died suddenly, Mal. i. 2. 1 Sa. ii. 25, 34; iv. 11. Absalom and Judas were both strangely hanged. 2 Sa. xviii. Mat. xxvii.

Q. (66) Are sins thus heightened, distinguished from others by any special name?

A. Yes; they are called rebellion, and are compared to the sin of witchcraft, 1 Sa. xv. 23. they are called wilful sins, He. x. 26. they are called briars and thorns, and they that bring them forth are 'nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.' vi. 7, 8.

Q. (67) Are there any other things that can make little sins great ones?

A. Yes; as when you sin against the judgments of God. As for example, you see the judgments of God come upon some for their transgressions, and you go on in their iniquities; as also when you sin against the patience, long-suffering, and forbearance of God, this will make little sins great ones. Da. v. 21-24. Ro. ii. 4,5.

Q. (68) Did ever God punish little children for sin against him?

A. Yes; when the flood came, he drowned all the little children that were in the old world: he also burned up all the little children which were in Sodom; and because upon a time the little children at Bethel mocked the prophet as he was a going to worship God, God let loose two she-bears upon them, which tore forty and two of them to pieces. 2 Ki. ii. 23, 24.

Q. (69) Alas! what shall we little children do?

A. Either go on in your sins, or remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come. Ec. xii. 1.

Q. (70) Why do you mock us, to bid us go on in our sins? you had need pray for us that God would save us.

A. I do not mock you, but as the wise man doth; and besides, I pray for you and wish your salvation.

Q. (71) How doth the wise man mock us?

A. Thus; 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' Ec. xi. 9.

Q. (72) What kind of mocking is this?

A. Such an one as is mixed with the greatest seriousness; as if he should say, Ay, so sinners, go on in your sins if you dare; do, live in your vanities, but God will have a time to judge you for them.

Q. (73) Is not this just as when my father bids me naught if I will: but if I be naught he will beat me for it?

A. Yes; or like that saying of Joshua, 'If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve;' serve your sins at your peril. J05. xxiv. 15.

Q. (74) Is it not best then for me to serve God?

A. Yes; for they that serve the devil must be where he is, and they that serve God and Christ, must be where they are. Jn. xii. 26. Mat. xxv. 41.

Q. (75) But when had I best begin to serve God?

A. Just now: 'Remember NOW thy Creator;' NOW thou hast the gospel before thee, NOW thy heart is tender and will be soonest broken.

Q. (76) But if I follow my play and sports a little longer may I not come time enough?

A. I cannot promise thee that, for there be little graves in the churchyard; and who can tell but that thy young life is short; or if thou dost live, perhaps thy day of grace may be as short as was Ishmael's of old: read also Pr. i. 24-26.

Q. (77) But if I stay a little longer before I turn, I may have more wit to serve God than now I have, may I not?

A. If thou stayest longer, thou wilt have more sin, and perhaps less wit: for the bigger sinner, the bigger fool. Pr. i. 22.

Q. (78) If I serve God sometimes, and my sins sometimes, how then?

A. 'No man can serve two masters. 'Thou canst not serve God and thy sins. Mat. vi 24. (iod saith, 'My Son, give me thine heart.' Pr. xxiii. 26. Also thy soul and body are his; but the double-minded man is forbidden to think that shall receive anything of tl~e Lord. I Cor. vi. 20. Ja. i. 7, 8.

Q. (79) Do you find many such little children as I am, serve God?

A. Not many; yet some I do, Samuel served him being a child. 1 Sa. iii. 1. When Josiah was young he began to seek after the God of his father David. 2. Ch xxxiv. 3. And how kindly did our Lord Jesus take it, to see the little children run tripping before him, and crying, Hosannah to the Son of David? Mat. xxi. 15, 16.

Q. (80) Then I am not like to have many companions if I thus young begin to serve God, am I?

A. 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' Mat. vii. 14. Yet some companions thou wilt have. David counted himself a companion of all them that love God's testimonies. Ps. cxix. 63. All the godly, though grey-headed, will be thy companions; yea, and thou shalt have either one or more of the angels of God in heaven to attend on, and minister for thee. Mat. xviii. 10.

Q. (81) But I am like to be slighted, and despised by other little children, if I begin already to serve God, am I not?

A. If children be so rude as to mock the prophets and ministers of God, no marvel if they also mock thee; but it is a poor heaven that is not worth enduring worse things than to be mocked for the seek- ing and obtaining of. 2 Ki. ii. 23, 24.

Q. (82) But how should I serve God? I do not know how to worship him.

A. The true worshippers, worship God in spirit and truth. Jn. iv. 24. Phi. iii. 3.

Q. (83) What is meant by worshipping him in the spirit?

A. To worship him in God's Spirit and in mine own; that is, to worship him, being wrought over in my very heart by the good Spirit of God, to an hearty compliance with his will. Ro. i. 9; vi. 17. Ps. ci. 1-3.

Q. (84) What is it to worship him in truth?

A. To do all that we do in his worship according to his word, for his word is truth, and to do it without dissimulation. He. viii. 5. Job. xvii. 17. Ps. xxvi. 6; cviii. 19, 20. You may take the whole thus, Then do you worship God aright, when in heart and life you walk according to his word.

Q. (85) How must I do to worship him with my spirit and heart.

A. Thou must first get the good knowledge of him. 'And thou, Solomon my son,' said David, 'know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart.' I Ch. xxviii. 9. Mind you he first bids know him, and then serve him with a perfect heart.

Q. (86) Is it easy to get a true knowledge of God?

A. No; Thou must cry after knowledge, and lift up thy voice for understanding. 'If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.' Pr. ii. 4, 5.

Q. (87) How comes it to be so difficult a thing to attain the true knowledge of God?

A. By reason of the pride and ignorance that is in us, as also by reason of our wicked ways. Ps. x. 4. Ep. iv. 18, 19. Tit. i. 16.

Q. (88) But do not every one profess that they know God?

A. Yes; but their supposed knowledge of him varieth as much as do their faces or complexions, some thinking he is this, and some that.

Q. (89) Will you shew me a little how they vary in their thoughts about him?

A. Yes; Some count him a kind of an heartless God, that will neither do evil nor good. Zep. i. 12. Some count him a kind of an ignorant and blind God, that can neither know nor see through the clouds. Job. xxii. 13. Some again count him an inconsiderable God, not worth the enjoying, if it must not be but with the loss of this world, and their lusts. Job. xxi. 9-15. Moreover, some think him to be altogether such an one as themselves, one that hath as little hatred to sin as themselves, and as little love to holiness as themselves. Ps. 1. 21.

Q. (90) Are there any more false opinions of God?

A. Yes; There are three other false opinions of God. 1. Some think he is all mercy and no justice, and that therefore they may live as they list. Ro. iii. 8. 2. Others think he is all justice and no mercy, and that therefore they had as good go on in their sins and be damned, as turn and be never the better. Je. ii. 25. 3. Others think he is both justice and mercy, but yet think also, that his justice is such as they can pacify with their own good works, and save themselves with their own right hand; Job. xl. 14. contrary to these scriptures. Ha. 1. 13. Is. xiv. 21.

Q. (91) How then shall I know when I have the true knowledge of God?

A. When thy knowledge of him and the holy Scriptures agree.

Q. (92) The Scriptures! Do not all false opinions of him flow from the Scriptures?

A. No, in no wise; it is true, men father their errors upon the Scriptures, when indeed they flow from the ignorance of their hearts. Ep. iv. 18.

Q. (93) But how if I do not understand the holy Bible, must I then go without the true knowledge of God?

A. His name is manifested by his Word: the Scriptures are they that testify of him. Jn. xvii. 6-8; v. 39. And they are able to make the man of God perfect in all things, and wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. 2 Ti. iii. 15, 16.

Q. (94) But what must one that knoweth not God do, to get the knowledge of God?

A. Let him apply his heart unto the Scriptures. Pr. xxii. 17; xxiii. 12. 'As unto a light that shineth in a dark place,' even this world, 'until the day dawn, and the day star arise in his heart.' 2 Pe. i. 19, 20.

Q. (95) But how shall I know when I have found by the Scriptures the true knowledge of God?

A. When thou hast also found the true knowledge of thyself. Is. vi. 5. Job xlii. 5.

Q. (96) What is it for me to know myself?

A. Then thou knowest thyself, when thou art in thine own eyes, a loathsome, polluted, wretched, miserable sinner; and that not anything done by thee, can pacify God unto thee. Job xlii. 5. Eze. xx. 43, 44. Ro. vii. 24.

Of Confession of Sin

Q. (97) You have shewed me, if I will indeed worship God, I must first know him aright, now then to the question in hand, pray how must I worship him?

A. In confessing unto him. Ne. ix. 1-3.

Q. (98) What must I confess?

A. Thou must confess thy transgressions unto the Lord. Ps. xxxii. 5.

Q. (99) Was this the way of the godly of old?

A. Yes; Nehemiah confessed his sins. Ne. i. 6. David confesses his sins. Ps. xxxii. 5. Daniel confessed his sins. Da. ix. 4. And they that were baptized by John in Jordan confessed their sins. Mat. in.

Q. (100) What sins must I confess to God?

A. All sins whatsoever: for He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Pr. xxviii. 13. 1 Jn. i. 9.

Q. (101) But how if I do neither know nor remember all my sins?

A. Thou must then search and try thy ways by the holy Word of God. La. iii. 40. Ps. lxxvii. 6.

Q. (102) But how if I do not make this search after my sins?

A. If thou dost not, God will; if thou dost not search them out and confess them, God will search them out and charge them upon thee, and tear thee in pieces for them. Ps. 1. 21, 22.

Q. (103) Where must I begin to confess my sins?

A. Where God beginneth to shew thee them. Observe, then where God beginneth with conviction for sin, and there begin thou with confession of it. Thus David began to confess, thus Daniel began to confess. 2 Sa. xii. 7-14. Da. ix. 3-9.

Q. (104) What must I do when God hath shewed me any sin, to make right confession thereof?

A. Thou must follow that conviction until it shall bring thee to the original and fountain of that sin which is thine own heart. 1 Ki. viii. 33. Ps. iv. 5.

Q. (105) Is my heart then the fountain and original of sin?

A. Yes; 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications,

murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.' Mar. vii. 21, 23.

Q. (106) When a man sees this, what will he think of himself?

A. Then he will not only think but conclude, that he is an unclean thing, that his heart has deceived him, that it is most desperate and wicked, that it may not be trusted by any means, that every imagination and thought of his heart, naturally, is only evil, and that continually. Is. lxiv. 6. Pr. xxviii. 26. Ge. vi. 5.

Q. (107) You have given me a very bad character of the heart, but how shall I know that it is so bad as you count it?

A. Both by the text and by experience.

Q. (108) What do you mean by experience?

A. Keep thine eyes upon thy heart, and also upon God's word, and thou shalt see with thine own eyes, the desperate wickedness that is in thine heart, for thou must know sin by the law, that bidding thee do one thing, and thy heart inclining to another. Ro. vii. 7-10.

Q. (109) May I thus then know my heart?

A. Yes, that is something of it, especially the carnality of thy mind. 'Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be..' Ro. viii. 7.

Q. (110) Can you particularize some few things wherein the wickedness of the heart of man shews itself?

A. Yes; by its secret hankering after sin, although the Word forbids it; by its deferring of repentance; by its being weary of holy duties; by its aptness to forget God; by its studying to lessen and hide sin; by its feigning itself to be better than it is; by being glad when it can sin without being seen of men; by its hardening itself against the threatenings and judgments of God; by its desperate inclinings to unbelief, atheism, and the like. Pr. i. 24-26. Is. xliii. 22. Mal. i. 11, 13. Ju. iii. 7. Je. ii. 32. Ps. cvi. 21. Ho. ii. 13. Pr. xxx. 20. Je. ii. 25. Ro. i. 32; ii. 5. Zep. i. 11-13.

Q. (111) Is there any thing else to be done in order to a right confession of sin?

A. Yes: Let this conviction sink down into thy heart, that God sees much more wickedness in thee than thou canst see in thyself. 'If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things;' I Jn. iii. 20. Besides, he hath set thy secret sins in the light of his countenance. Ps. xc. 8. Q.

(112) Is there any thing else that must go to a right confession of sin?

A. Yes; In thy confessions thou must greaten and aggravate thy sin by all just circumstances.

Q. (113) How must I do that?

A. By considering against how much light and mercy thou hast sinned, against how much patience and forbearance thou hast sinned; also against how many of thine own vows, promises and engagements, thou hast sinned: these things heighten and aggravate sin. Ezc. ix. 10-14.

Q. (114) But what need I confess my sins to God, seeing he knows them already?

A. Confession of sin is necessary, for many reasons.

Q. (115) Will you show me some of those reasons?

A. Yes; One is, by a sincere and hearty confession of sin thou acknowledgest God to be thy Sovereign Lord, and that he hath right to impose his law upon thee. Ex. xx.

Q. (116) Can you show me another reason?

A. Yes; By confessing thy sin, thou subscribest to his righteous judgments that are pronounced against it. Ps. ii. 3, 4.

Q. (117) Can you show me another reason?

A. Yes; By confession of sin, thou showest how little thou deservest the least mercy from God.

Q. (118) Have you yet another reason why I should confess my sins?

A. Yes; By so doing thou showest whether thy heart loves it, or hates it. He that heartily confesseth his sin, is like him who having a thief or a traitor in his house, brings him out to condign punishment; but he that forbears to confess, is like him who hideth a thief or traitor against the laws and peace of our Lord the King. Give me one more reason why I should confess my sins to God?

Q. (119) He that confesseth his sin, casteth himself at the feet of God's

A. mercy, utterly condemns and casts away his own righteousness, concludeth there is no way to stand just and acquit before God, but by and through the righteousness of another; whether God is resolved to bring thee, if ever he saves thy soul. Ps. li. 1-3. 1 in. i. 9. Phi. iii. 6-8.

Q. (120) What frame of heart should I be in when I confess my sins?

A. Do it HEARTILY, and to the best of thy power thoroughly. For to feign, in this work, is abominable; to do it by the halves, is wickedness; to do it without sense of sin cannot be acceptable. And to confess it with the mouth, and to love it with the heart, is a lying unto God, and a provocation of the eyes of his glory.

Q. (121) What do you mean by feigning and dissembling in this work?

A. When men confess it, yet know not what it is; or if they think they know it, do not conclude it so bad as it is; or when men ask pardon of God, but do not see their need of pardon; this man must needs dissemble.

Q. (122) What do you mean by doing it by the halves?

A. When men confess some, but not all that they are convinced of; or if they confess all, yet labour in their confession to lessen it. Pr. xxviii. 13. Job. xxxi. 33. Or when in their confession they turn not from all sin to God, but from one sin to another. Ja. iii. 12. They turned, 'but not to the most High,' none of them did exalt him. He. vii. 16.

Q. (123) What is it to confess sin without the sense of sin?

A. To do it through custom, or tradition, when there is no guilt upon the conscience, now this cannot be acceptable.

Q. (124) What is it to confess it with the mouth and to love it with the heart?

A. When men condemn it with their mouth, but refuse to let it go; Job. xx. 12, 13. Je. viii. 5. when 'with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.' Eze. xxxiii. 31.

Q. (125) But I asked you what frame of heart I should be in, in my confessions?

A. I have showed you how you should not be. Well, I will show you now what frame of heart becomes you in your confessions of sin. Labour by all means for a sense of the evil that is in sin.

Q. (126) What evil is there in sin?

A. No man with tongue can express what may by the heart be felt of the evil of sin; but this know, it dishonoureth God. Ro. ii. 23. It provoketh him to wrath. Ep. v. 5, 6. It damneth the soul. 2 Th. ii. 12.

Q. (127) What else would you advise me to in this great work?

A. When we confess sin, tears, shame, and brokenness of heart becomes us. Je. 1. 4. Is. xxii. 12. Ps. li. 17. Je. xxxi. 19.

Q. (128) What else becomes me in my confessions of sin?

A. Great detestation of sin, with unfeigned sighs and groans, that express thou dost it heartily. Job. xlii. 6. Eze. ix. 4. Je. xxxi. 9.

Q. (129) Is here all?

A. No; Tremble at the word of God; tremble at every judgment, lest it overtake thee; tremble at every promise, lest thou shouldst miss thereof; for, saith God, 'To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' Is. lxvi. 2. He. iv. 1, 2.

Q. (130) What if I cannot thus confess my sins?

A.. Bewail the hardness of thy heart, keep close to the best preachers, remember that thou hangest over hell, by the weak thread of an uncertain life. And know, God counts it a great evil, not to be ashamed of, not to blush at sin. Is. lxiii. 17. Je. vi. 15; viii. 12.

Q. (131) Are there no thanks to be rendered to God in confessions?

A. Yes. Thank him that he hath let thee see thy sins, thank him that he hath given thee time to acknowledge thy sins; thou mightest now have been confessing in hell: thank him also that he hath so far condescended as to hear the self-bemoaning sinner, and that he hath promised, SURELY to have mercy upon such. Je. xxi. 18-20.

Of Faith in Christ

Q. (132) I am glad that you have instructed me into this part of the worship of God, pray tell me also how else I should worship him?

A. Thou must believe his word.

Q. (133) Is that worshipping of God?

A. Yes; 'After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophetsi &c. Ac. xxiv. 14.

Q. (134) Why should believing be counted a part of God's worship?

A. Because without faith it is impossible to please him. He. xi. 6.

Q. (135) Why not possible to please him without believing?

A. Because in all true worship, a man ‘must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’ Besides, he that worships God, must also of necessity believe his word, else he cannot worship with that reverence and fear that becomes him, but will do it in a superstitious profane manner: ‘For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.’ Ro. xiv. 23.

Q. (136) But do not all believe as you have said?

A. ‘That which is born of the flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.’ in. iii. 6. And again ‘the children of the flesh these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.’ Ro. ix. 8.

Q. (137) What do you mean by that?

A. Thou must be born twice before thou canst truly believe once. Jn.

Q. (138) you prove that?

A. Because believing is a christian act, and none are true Christians but those that are born again. But I mean by believing, believing unto salvation.

Q. (139) Can you prove this?

A. Yes. They that believe in the name of Christ are such which are born ‘not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.’ Jn. i. 13.

Q. (140) What is believing?

A. It is such an act of a gracious soul, as layeth hold on God’s mercy through Christ. Ac. xv. 11.

Q. (141) Why do you call it an act of a gracious soul?

A. Because their minds are disposed that way, by ‘the power of the Holy Ghost.’ Ro. xv. 13.

Q. (142) If such a poor sinner as I am would be saved from the wrath to come, how must I believe?

A. Thy first question should be on whom must I believe? Jn. ix. 35, 36.

Q. (143) On whom then must I believe?

A. On the Lord Jesus Christ. Ac. xvi. 31.

Q. (144) Who is Jesus Christ that I might believe in him?

A. He is the only begotten Son of God. Jn. iii. 16.

Q. (145) Why must I believe on him?

A. Because he is the Saviour of the world. 2 Pe. 1. 3. 1 Jn. iv. 14.

Q. (146) How is he the Saviour of the world?

A. By the Father’s designation and sending: ‘For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.’ Jn. iii. 17. A

Q. (147) How did he come into the world?

A. In man’s flesh, in which flesh he fulfilled the law, died for our sins, conquered the devil and death, and obtained eternal redemption for us. Ga. iv. 4. Ro. x. 4; viii. 3. He. ii. 14, 15; vi. 20.

Q. (148) But is there no other way to be saved but by believing in Jesus Christ?

A. 'There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved;' Ac. iv. 12. and therefore 'he that believeth not, shall be damned.' Mar. xvi. 16. Jn. iii. 18, 36.

Q. (150) What is in Jesus Christ to encourage me to receive him?

A. Infinite righteousness to justify thee, and the Spirit without measure to sanctify thee. Is. xiv. 24, 25. Da. ix. 24. Phi. iii. 7-9. Jn. iii. 34.

Q. (151) Is this made mine if I receive Christ?

A. Yes; if thou receive him as God offereth him to thee. Jn. iii. 16.

Q. (152) How doth God offer him to me?

A. Even as a rich man freely offereth an alms to a beggar, and so must thou receive him. Jn. vi. 32-35.

Q. (153) Hath he indeed made amends for sin? and would he indeed have me accept of what he hath done?

A. That he hath made amends for sin it is evident, because God, for Christ's sake, forgiveth thee. And it is as evident that he would have thee accept thereof, because he offereth it to thee, and hath sworn to give thee the utmost benefit, to wit, eternal life, if thou dost receive it; yea, and hath threatened thee with eternal damnation, if, after all this, thou shalt neglect so great salvation. Ep. iv. 32. Ro. iii. 24. Mat. xxviii. 18-20. Ac. xiii. 32-39. He. vi. 17, 18; ii. 3. Mar. xvi. 16.

Q. (154) But how must I be qualified before I shall dare to believe in Christ?

A. Come sensible of thy sins, and of the wrath of God due unto them, for thus thou art bid to come. Mat. xi. 28.

Q. (155) Did ever any come thus to Christ?

A. David came thus; Ps. li. 1-3 Paul and the jailor came thus; Ac. ix. 6; xvi. 30. also Christ's murders came thus. Ac. ii. 37.

Q. (156) But doth it not seem most reasonable that we should first mend and be good?

A. The 'whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick; Christ came 'not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Mar. ii. 17.

Q. (157) But is it not the best way, if one can, to mend first?

A. This is just as if a sick man should say, Is it not best for me to be well before I go to the physician; or as if a wounded man would say, When I am cured I will lay on the plaster.

Q. (158) But when a poor creature sees its vileness, it is afraid to come to Christ, is it not?

A. Yes; but without ground, for he hath said, 'Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not;' and 'to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' Is. xxxv. 4; lxvi. 2.

Q. (159) What encouragement can be given us thus to come?

A. The prodigal came thus, and his father received him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him. Lu. xv. Thus he received the Colssians, and consequently all that are saved. Cob. ii. 13.

Q. (160) Will you give me one more encouragement?

A. The promises are so worded, that they are scarlet, crimson sinners, blasphemous sinners, have encouragement to come to him with hopes of life. Is. i. 18. Mar. iii. 23. Jn. vi. 37. Lu. xxiv. 42, 43. Ac. xiii. 26.

Q. (161) Shall every one that believeth be saved?

A. If they believe as the Scriptures have said, if the Scriptures be fulfilled in their believing. Jn. vii. 38. Ja. ii. 23.

Q. (162) What do you mean by that?

A. When faith, which a man saith he hath, proveth itself to be of the right kind by its acts and operations in the mind of a poor sinner. Ja. ii. 19-23.

Q. (163) Why, are there many kinds of faith?

A. Yes. There is a faith that will stand with a heart as hard as a rock; a short-winded faith, which dureth for a while, and in time of temptation such fall away. Lu. viii. 13.

Q. (164) Is there any other kind of faith?

A. Yes. There is a faith that hath no more life in it than hath the body of a dead man. Ja. ii. 26.

Q. (165) Is there yet another of these unprofitable faiths?

A. Yes. There is a faith that is of ourselves, and not of the special grace of God. Ep. ii. 8.

Q. (166) Tell me if there be yet another?

A. There is a faith that standeth 'in the wisdom of men,' and not 'in the power of God.' I Co. ii. 5.

Q. (167) Is here all?

A. No. There is a faith that seems to be holy, but it will not do, because it is not the most holy faith. 2 Pe. ii. 9. Jude 20.

Q. (168) Alas! if there be so many kinds of faith that will not profit to salvation, how easy is it for me to be deceived?

A. It is easy indeed, and therefore the Holy Ghost doth in this thing so often caution us, 'Be not deceived.' I Co. vi. 9. 'Let no man deceive you,' Ep. v. 6. and 'If a man think himself to be some- thing when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.' Ga. vi. 3.

Q. (169) But is there no way to distinguish the right faith from that which is wrong?

A. Yes; and that by the manner of its coming and operation.

Q. (170) What do you mean by the manner of its coming?

A. Nay, you must make two questions of this one; that is, what is it for faith to come, and in what manner doth it come?

Q. (171) Well then, what is it for faith to come?

A. This word faith comes, supposeth thou wert once without it; it also supposeth that thou didst not fetch it whence it was; it also supposeth it hath a way of coming. Ga. iii. 23-25.

Q. (172) That I was once without it, you intimated before, but must I take it without proof for granted?
A. I will give you a proof or two: 'God hath concluded them all in unbelief.' Ro. xi. 32. And again it is said, 'Faith cometh.' Ro. x. 17. And again, the Holy Ghost insinuateth our estate to be dreadful before faith came.' Ga. iii. 23.

Q. (181) But may not faith come to a man without he see himself to be first in this condition?
A. It is God's ordinary way to convince men of this their sad condition before he revealth to them the righteousness of faith, or work faith iii them to lay hold of that righteousness. Jn. xvi. 9-11. Ga. iii. 23-25.

Q. (182) How then do you conclude of them that never saw themselves shut up by unbelief under sin and the curse of God?
A. I will not judge them for the future, God may convert them before they die; but at present their state is miserable: for because they are shut up and held prisoners by the law, by their lusts, and by the devil, and unbelief; therefore they cannot so much as with their hearts desire that God would have mercy upon them, and bring them out of their snares and chains.

Q. (183) Then do you count it better for a man to see his condition by nature than to be ignorant thereof?
A. Better a thousand times to see it in this world than to see it in hell fire, for he must see it there or here: now if he sees it here, this is the place of prayer; here is the preaching of the word, which is God's ordinance, to beget faith. Besides, here God applieth promises of mercy to the desolate, and Christ also hath protested that he that cometh to him he 'will in no wise cast out.' Jn. vi. 37.

Q. (184) I am convinced that I was once without faith, and also that I cannot fetch it, but pray tell me the way of its coming?
A. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' Ro. x. 17.

Q. (185) How by hearing?
A. God mixeth it with the Word when he absolutely intendeth the salvation of the sinner. He. iv. 2. Ac. xiii. 48. Q. (186) And how do men hear when faith is mixed with the Word? A. They hear the Word, 'not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.' I Th. ii. 13.

Q. (187) Pray tell me now the manner of its coming?
A. It comes through difficulty, it comes gradually.

Q. (188) What are the difficulties which oppose it at its coming?
A. Sense of unworthiness, guilt of conscience, natural reason, unbelief, and arguments forged in hell, and thence suggested by the devil into the heart against it. Lu. v. 8. Mar. ix. 24. Is. vi. 5. Ro. iv. 18-21.

Q. (189) How doth faith come gradually?
A. Perhaps at first it is but like a grain of mustard-seed, small, and weak. Mat. xvii. 20.

Q. (190) Will you explain it further?
A. Faith, at first, perhaps may have its excellency lie in view only, that is, in seeing where justification and salvation is; after that it may step a degree higher, and be able to say, it may be, or who can tell but

I may obtain this salvation? again, it may perhaps go yet a step higher and arrive to some short and transient assurance. He. xi. 13. Joel ii. 13, 14. Zep. ii. 3. Ps. xxx. 7.

Q. (191) But doth faith come only by hearing?

A. it is usually begotten by the word preached, but after it is begotten, it is increased several ways. It is increased by prayer. Lu. xvii. 5. Mar. ix. 24. It is increased by christian conference. Ro. i. 12. It is increased by reading. Ro. xvi. 25, 26. It is increased by meditation. 1 Ti. iv. 12-16. It is increased by the remembrance of former experiences. Mat. xvi. 8, 9.

Q. (192) What do these things teach us?

A. They teach us, that the men of this world are very ignorant of, and as much without desire after faith: they neither hear, nor pray, confer, nor read, nor meditate for the sake of faith.

Q. (193) But you said even now, that this faith was distinguished from that which profiteth not to salvation, as by the manner of its coming, so by its operation: pray what is its operation?

A. It causeth the soul to see in the light thereof, that there is no righteousness in this world that can save the sinner. Is. lxiv. 6.

Q. (194) How doth it give the soul this sight?

A. By giving him to understand the law, and his own inability to fulfil it. Ga. ii. 16.

Q. (195) And doth it always shew the soul where justifying righteousness is?

A. Yes. It shews that justifying righteousness is only to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ, in what he hath done and suffered in the flesh. Is. xiv. 24, 25. Phi. iii. 3-9.

Q. (196) How doth faith find this righteousness in Christ?

A. By the word, which is therefore called the word of faith, because faith, by that, findeth sufficient righteousness in him. Ro. x. 6-9.

Q. (197) How else doth it operate in the soul?

A. It applieth this righteousness to the sinner, and also helps him to embrace it. Ro. iii. 21, 22. 1 Co. i. 30. Ga. ii. 20.

Q. (198) How else doth it operate?

A. By this application of Christ, the soul is quickened to life, spiritualized and made heavenly. For right faith quickeneth to spiritual life, purifies and sanctifies the heart; and worketh up the man that hath it, into the image of Jesus Christ. Col. ii, 12, 13. Ac. xv. 9. xxvi. 18. 2 Co. iii. 18.

Q. (199) How else doth it operate?

A. It giveth the soul peace with God through Jesus Christ. Ro. v. 1.

Q. (200) Surely Christ is of great esteem with them that have this faith in him, is he not?

A. Yes, Yes. Unto them therefore which believe he is precious, precious in his person, precious in his undertakings, precious in his Word. 1 Pe. ii. 7; i. 18, 19. 2 Pe. i. 3, 4.

Q. (201) Can these people then, that have this faith, endure to have this Christ spoken against?

A. No! This is a sword in their bones, and a burden that they cannot bear. Ps. xlii. 10. Zep. iii. 19.

Q. (202) Doth it not go near them when they see his ways and people discountenanced?

A. Yes; and they also choose rather to be despised and persecuted with them, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He. xi. 24, 25.

Q. (203) Do they not pray much for his second coming?

A. Yes, yes; they would fain see him on this side the clouds of heaven, their 'conversation is in heaven, from whence also they look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' Phi. iii. 20.

Q. (204) And do they live in this world as if he were to come presently?

A. Yes; for his coming will be glorious and dreadful, full of mercy and judgment. 'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness.' 2 Pe. iii. 10, 11.

Of Prayer

Q. (205) Well, I am glad that you have shewed me that I must worship God by confession of sin, and faith in Jesus Christ: Is there any other thing a part of the true worship of God?

A. Yes, several; I will mention only two more at this time.

Q. (206) What are they?

A. Prayer and self-denial.

Q. (207) Is prayer then a part of the worship of God?

A. Yes; a great part of it.

Q. (208) How do you prove that?

A. 'O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.' Ps. xcv. 6.

Q. (209) Is there another scripture proves it?

A. Yes; 'Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.' Mat. xv. 25.

Q. (210) What is prayer?

A. A sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of 3~bè soul to God in the name of Christ for what God hath promised. Pr. xv. 8. Je. xxxi. 18, 19. Ps. xlii. 2-5. Jn. xiv. 13, 14. 1 Jn. v. 14.

Q. (211) Doth not everybody pray?

A. No; 'The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thought.' Ps. x.4.

Q. (212) What will become of them that do not pray?

A. They do not worship God, and he will destroy them; 'Pour Out thy fury (said the prophet) upon the heathen,—and upon the families that call not on thy name.' Je. x. 25. Ps. lxxix. 6.

Q. (213) But seeing God knoweth what we want, why doth he not give us what we need, without praying?

A. His counsel and wisdom leadeth him otherwise. 'Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' Eze. xxxvi. 37.

Q. (214) Why will God have us pray?

A. Because he would be acknowledged by thee, that he is above thee, and therefore would have thee come to him as the mean come to the mighty. Thus Abraham came unto him. Ge. xvii. 27, 30.

Q. (215) Is there another reason why I should pray?

A. Yes. For by prayer thou acknowledgest, that help is not in thine own power. 2 Ch. xx. 6, 12.

Q. (216) What reason else have you why I should pray?

A. By prayer thou confessest that help is only in him. Ps. lxii. 1.

Q. (217) What other reason have you?

A. By prayer thou confessest thou canst not live without his grace and mercy. Mat. xiv. 30. He. iv. 16.

Q. (218) Are all that pray heard of the Lord.

A. No; 'They looked,' that is prayed, 'but there was none to save; even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.' 2 Sa. xxii. 42.

Q. (219) To what doth God compare the prayers which he refuseth to answer?

A. He compareth them to the howling of a dog. Ho. vii. 14.

Q. (220) Who be they whose prayers God will not answer?

A. Theirs, who think to be heard for their much speaking, and vain repetition. Mat. vi. 7.

Q. (221) Is there any other whose prayer God refuseth?

A. Yes; There are that ask and have not, because what they ask, they would spend upon their lusts. Ja. iv. 3.

Q. (222) Is there any other whose prayer God refuseth?

A. Yes; 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' Px. lxvi. 18.

Q. (223) Is the regarding of sin in our heart such a deadly hinderance to prayer?

A. 'Son of man,' saith God, 'these men have set up their idols in their heart, and have put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face; should I be enquired of at all by them? I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb. And I will cut him off from the midst of my people.' Eze. xiv. 3, 8.

Q. (224) Whose prayers be they that God will hear?

A. The prayers of the poor and needy. Ps. xxxiv. 6. Is. xli. 17.

Q. (225) What do you mean by the poor?

A. Such as have poverty in spirit. Mat. V. 3.

Q. (226) Who are they that are poor in spirit?

A. They that are sensible of the want and necessity of all those things of God, that prepare a man to the

kingdom of heaven.

Q. (227) What things are they?

A. Faith, hope, love, joy, peace, a new heart, the Holy Ghost, sanctification. See Ja. ii. 5. 2 Th. ii. 16. Eze. xxxvi. 26, 27.

Q. (228) What do you mean by the needy?

A. Those whose souls long and cannot be satisfied without the enjoyment of these blessed things. Ps. lxiii. 1; cxix. 20.

Q. (229) Will God hear the prayers of such?

A. Yes; 'For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.' Ps. cvii. 9.

Q. (230) How shall I know that I am one of those to whom God will give these things?

A. If thou seest a beauty in them beyond the beauty of all other things. Ps. cx. 3.

Q. (231) How else shall I know [that] he heareth me?

A. If thou desirest them for their beauty's sake. Ps. xc. 14, 17.

Q. (232) How else should I know I shall have them?

A. When thy groanings after them are beyond expression. Ro. viii. 26.

Q. (233) How else should I know, and so be encouraged to pray?

A. When thou followest hard after God in all his ordinances for the obtaining of them. Is. iv. 1, 3; lxiv. 5.

Q. (234) How else should I know?

A. When thou makest good use of that little thou hast already. Re. iii. 8.

Q. (235) Are here all the good signs that my prayers shall be heard?

A. No; there is one more without which thou shalt never obtain.

Q. (236) Pray what is that?

A. Thou must plead with God, the name and merits of Jesus Christ, for whose sake only God giveth thee these things. If we ask any thing in his name, he heareth us, and whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, saith Christ I will do it. Jn. xiv. 13, 14.

Q. (237) Doth God always answer presently?

A. Sometimes he doth, and sometimes he doth not. Is. xxx. 19. Da. x. 12.

Q. (238) Is not God's deferring, a sign of his anger?

A. Sometimes it is not, and sometimes it is.

Q. (239) When is it no sign of his anger?

A. When we have not wickedly departed from him by our sins. Lu. xviii. 7.

Q. (240) When is it a sign of his anger?

A. When we have backslidden, when we have not repented some former miscarriages. Ho. v. 14, 15.

Q. (241) Why doth God defer to hear their prayers that hath not wickedly departed from him?

A. He loves to hear their voice, to try their faith, to see their importunity, and to observe how they can wrestle with him for a blessing. Ga. ii. 14. Mat. xv. 22-28. Lu. xi. 5-8. Ge. xxxii. 25-28.

Q. (242) But is not deferring to answer prayer a great discouragement to praying?

A. Though it is, because of our unbelief, yet it ought not, because God is faithful. Therefore 'men ought always to pray, and not to faint.' Lu. xvii. 1-8.

Of Self-Denial

Q. (243) I am glad you have thus far granted my request: but you told me that there was another part of God's worship; pray repeat that again?

A. It is self-denial.

Q. (244) Now I remember it well; pray how do you prove that self-denial is called a part of God's worship?

A. It is said of Abraham, that when he went to offer up his son Isaac upon the altar for a burnt-offering, which was to him a very great part of self-denial, that he counted that act of his worshipping God.

Q. (245) Will you be pleased to read the text?

A. Yes; 'And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship.' &c. This now was when he was a-going to slay Isaac. Ge. xxii. 5.

Q. (246) What is self-denial?

A. It is for a man to forsake his ALL, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Q. (247) Will you prove this by a scripture or two?

A. Yes; 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' Lu. xiv. 33.

Q. (248) Indeed this is a full place, can you give me one more?

A. Yes; 'What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,' &c. Phi. iii. 7, 8.

Q. (249) These two are indeed a sufficient answer to my question; but pray will you now give me some particular instances of the self-denial of them that have heretofore been the followers of Christ?

A. Yes; Abel denied himself to the losing of his blood. Ge. iv. 8. Abraham denied himself to the losing of his country and his father's house. Ge. xii. 1-4. Moses denied himself of a crown and a kingdom, and of ease and tranquility. He. xi. 24-27. Joseph denied himself of fleshly lusts. Ge. xxxix. 7-9.

Q. (250) But these men each of them denied themselves but of some things, did they?

A. You see Abel lost all, his blood and all; Abraham lost his country to the hazard life. Ge. xii. 13. So did Moses in leaving the crown and kingdom. He. xi. 27. And Joseph in denying his mistress. Ge. xxxix. 10-15.

Q. (251) Will you discourse a little particularly of self-denial?

A. With all my heart.

Q. (252) First then, pray in what spirit must this self-denial be performed?

A. It must be done in the spirit of faith, of love, and of a sound mind. Otherwise, if a man should sell all that he hath and give to the poor, and his body to be burnt besides, it would profit him nothing. 1 Co. xiii. 1-3.

Q. (253) Who are like to miscarry here?

A. They whose ends in self-denial are not according to the proposals of the gospel.

Q. (254) Who are they?

A. They that suffer through strife and vain-glory; or thus, they who seek in their sufferings the praise of men more than the glory of Christ, and profit of their neighbour.

Q. (255) Who else are like to miscarry here?

A. They that have designs like Ziba to ingratiate themselves by their pretended self-denial into the affections of the godly, and to enrich themselves by this means. 2 Sa. xvi. 1-4.

Q. (256) Are there any other like to miscarry here?

A. Yes. They that by denying themselves think with the Pharisee, to make themselves stand more righteous in God's eyes than others. Lu. xviii. 11, 12.

Q. (257) Who else are in danger of miscarrying here?

A. They who have fainted in their works, they whose self-denial hath at last been overcome by self-love. Ga. iii. 4; vi. 9. Q. (258) Shall I propound a few more questions? A. If you please.

Q. (259) What then if a man promiseth to deny himself hereafter and not now, is not this one step to this kind of worship?

A. No, by no means; for the reason why this man refuseth to deny himself now, is because his heart at present sticks closer to his lusts and the world, than to God and Christ.

Q. (260) Can you give me a Scripture instance to make this out?

A. Yes; Esau never intended for ever to part with the blessing, he intended to have it hereafter; but God counted his not choosing of it at present, a despising of it, and a preferring of his lusts before it: and therefore when he would, God would not, but reject both him and his tears. Ge. xxv. 30-34. He. xii. 14-16.

Q. (261) How and if a man shall say thus, I am willing to deny myself in many things, though he cannot deny himself in all, is not this one step in this part of this worship of God?

A. No, in no wise; for this man doth, just like Saul, he will slay a part, and will keep a part alive; the kingdom must be taken from him also. 1 Sa. xv.

Q. (262) How if a man be willing to lose all but his life?

A. He that 'will save his life shall lose it,' but he that 'will lose his life for my sake,' saith Christ, 'shall keep it unto life eternal.' Mat. xvi. 25. Jn. xii. 25.

Q. (263) How if a man has been willing to lose all that he hath, but is not now, will not God accept of his willingness in time past, though he be otherwise now?

A. No; for the true disciple must deny himself daily, take up his cross daily, and go after Jesus Christ. Lu. ix. 23.

Q. (264) But how if a man carrieth it well outwardly, so that he doth not dishonour the gospel before men, may not this be counted self-denial?

A. No, if he be not right at heart; for though man looketh on the outward appearance, God looketh at the heart. 1 Sa. xvi. 7.

Q. (265) But if I be afraid my heart may deceive me in this great work, if hard things come upon me hereafter, is there no way to find out whether it will deceive me then or no?

A. I will give you a few answers to this question, and will shew you first whose heart is like to deceive him in this work.

Q. (266) Will you befriend me so much?

A. Yes. 1. He that makes not daily conscience of self-denial, is very unlike to abide a disciple for times to come, if difficult. Judas did not deny himself daily, and therefore fell when the temptation came. Jn. xii. 6.

Q. (267) Will you give me another sign?

A. Yes. He that indulgeth any one secret lust under a profession, is not like to deny himself in all things for Christ.

Q. (268) Who are they that indulge their lusts?

A. They that make provision for them, either in apparel, or diet, or otherwise. Ro. xiii. 12-14. Is. iii. 6-24. Am. vi. 3-6.

Q. (269) Who else do so?

A. They that excuse their sins, and keep them disguised that they may not be reprehended, as Saul did, &c. 1 Sa. xv. 18-22.

Q. (270) Who else are they that indulge their lusts?

A. They that heap up to themselves such teachers as favour their lusts. 2 Ti. iv. 3, 4. Is. xxx. 10.

Q. (271) Who else do indulge their sins?

A. They that choose rather to walk by the imperfect lives of professors than by the holy Word of God: or thus, they that make the miscarriages of some good men an encouragement unto themselves to forbear to be exact in self-denial, these eat up the sins of God's people as men eat bread. Ho. iv. 7-9.

Q. (272) Will you now shew me who are like to do this part of God's worship acceptably?

A. Yes; he whose heart is set against sin as sin, is like to deny himself acceptably. Ro. vii. 13, 14.

Q. (273) Who else?

A. He that hath the sense and savour of forgiveness of sins upon his heart. 2 Co. v. 14.

Q. (273) Who else is like to deny himself well?

A. He that hath his affections set upon things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Col. iii. 1-5.

Q. (274) Who else is like to deny himself well for Christ?

A. He that seeth a greater treasure in self-denial, than in self-seeking. 2 Co. xii. 9-11. He. xi. 24-26.

Q. (275) Are there none other signs of one that is like to do this part of God's worship acceptably?

A. Yes; he that takes up his cross daily, and makes Christ's doctrine his example. Lu. vi. 47, 48. Jn. xii. 25, 26.

Q. (276) But how do you discover a man to be such a one?

A. He keepeth his heart with all diligence, he had rather die than sin; ill carriage of professors break his heart, nothing is so dear to him as the glory of Christ. Pr. iv. 23. Nu. xi. 15. Phi. iii. 18. Ac. xx. 24.

Q. (277) Pray, can you give me some motive to self-denial?

A. Yes; the Lord Jesus denied himself for thee; what sayest thou to that?

Q. (278) Wherein did Christ deny himself for me?

A. He justify his heaven for thee, he denied for thy sake to have so much of this world as hath a fox or a bird, and he spilt his most precious blood for thee. Jn. vi. 38. Lu. ix. 58. 2 Co. viii. 9. Re. i. 5.

Q. (279) Can you give another motive to self-denial?

A. Yes; 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Mar. viii. 36.

Q. (280) But why doth God require self-denial of them that will be saved?

A. God doth not require self-denial as the means to obtain salvation, but hath laid it down as a proof of the truth of a man's affections to God and Christ.

Q. (281) How is self-denial a proof of the truth of a man's affections to God?

A. In that for the sake of his service, he leaveth all his enjoyments in this world. Thus he proved Abraham's affections. Ge. xxii. 12. Thus he proved Peter's affections. Mat. iv. 18-22, and thus he proved their affection that you read of in the gospel. Lu. ix. 57-63.

Q. (282) What reason else can you produce why God requireth self-denial?

A. Self-denial is one of the distinguishing characters by which true Christians are manifested from the feigned ones: for those who are feigned, flatter God with their mouths, but their hearts seek themselves; but the sincere, for the love that he hath to Christ, forsaketh all that he hath for his sake. Ps. lxxviii. 36, 37. Eze. xxxiii. 31, 32.

Q. (283) Is there yet another reason why God requireth self-denial of them that profess his name?

A. Yes; because by self-denial the power and goodness of the truths of God are made manifest to the incredulous world. For they cannot see but by the self-denial of God's people, that there is such power, glory, goodness, and desirableness in God's truth as indeed there is. Da. iii. 16, 28. Phi. i. 12, 13.

Q. (284) Have you another reason why God requireth self-denial?

A. Yes; because self-denial prepareth a man, though not for the pardon of his sin, yet for that far more

exceeding and eternal weight of glory, that is laid up only for them that deny all that they have for the Lord Jesus, his name, and cause in this world. 2 Co. iv. 8-10, 17. 2 Th. 1. 5, 6.

Q. (285) Before you conclude, will you give me a few instances of the severity of God's hand upon some professors, that have not denied themselves when called thereto by him?

A. Yes, willingly; Lot's wife for but looking behind her towards Sodom, when God called her from it, was stricken from heaven, and turned into a pillar of salt; therefore remember Lot's wife. Ge. xix. 17, 26. Lu. xvii. 31, 32.

Q. (286) Can you give me another instance?

A. Yes; Esau for not denying himself of one morsel of meat was denied a share in the blessing, and could never obtain it after, though he sought it carefully with tears. Ge. xxv. 32-34. He. xii. 16, 17. 1—il.

Q. (287) Have you at hand another instance?

A. Yes; Judas for not denying himself, lost Christ, his soul, and heaven: and is continued the great object of God's wrath among all damned souls. Jn. xii. 5, 6. Lu. xxii. 3-6. Mat. xxvi. 14-16. Ac. 1. 25.

Q. (288) Will you give me one more instance, and so conclude?

A. Yes; Ananias and Sapphira his wife, did for the want of self-denial, pull upon themselves such wrath of God, that he slew them, while they stood in the midst before the apostles. Ac. v.

The Conclusion

Before I wind up this discourse, I would lay down these few things for you to consider of, and meditate upon.

I. Consider, that seeing every one by nature are accounted sinners; it is no matter whether thy actual sins be little or great, few or many, thy sinful nature hath already lain thee under the curse of the law.

II. Consider, That therefore thou hast already ground for humiliation, sins to repent of, wrath to fly from, or a soul to be damned.

III. Consider, that time stays not for thee, and also that as time goes, sin increaseth; so that at last the end of thy time, and the completing of thy sin, are like to come upon thee in one moment.

IV. Bring thy last day often to thy bedside, and ask thy heart, if this morning thou wast to die, if thou be ready to die or no.

V. Know it is a sad thing to lie a dying, and to be afraid to die; to lie a dying and not to know whither thou art going; to lie a dying, and not to know whether good angels or gad must conduct thee out of this miserable world.

VI. Be often remembering what a blessed thing it is to be saved, to go to heaven to be made like angels, and to dwell with God and Christ to all eternity.

VII. Consider how sweet the thought of salvation will be to thee when thou seest thyself in heaven,

whilst others are oraring in hell.

The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.