

Instruction for the Ignorant

Being a Salve to Cure That
Great Want of Knowledge,
Which So Much Reigns Both in
Young and Old. Prepared and
Presented to Them in a Plain
and Easy Dialogue, Fitted to
the Capacity of the Weakest.

*'My people are destroyed for lack of
knowledge.'*—Hosea 4:6

By John Bunyan, edited 1875.

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This little catechism is upon a plan perfectly new and unique. It was first published as a pocket volume in 1675, and has been republished in every collection of the author's works; and recently in a separate tract. The earliest edition that has been discovered bears the date of 1691; from which our copy has been prepared for the press. This is the first book of this class that was composed upon the broad basis of Christianity, perfectly free from sectarian bias or peculiarity. It is an exhibition of scriptural truths, before which error falls without the trouble of pulling it down. It is in the world, like the ark of God in the temple of Dagon. It is alike admirably calculated to convey the most important truths to the inmates of a palace or of a workhouse,—to the young or to the aged,—to the ignorant Roman Catholic, or to the equally ignorant Protestant. Its broad catholicity is its distinguishing excellence. In the separate communions included within the general church of Christ are various, and in many respects, inestimable compendiums of Christian truth, arranged for the catechetical instruction of the young and

ignorant; but it cannot be denied that these, one and all, exhibit some marks of sectarian feeling and dogmatic teaching in the details that relate to the special views which each communion takes of certain scriptural doctrines. The reason why this should be the case is very obvious: there would be no differences of opinion amongst Christians except from conviction that these differences are essential, and such conviction naturally leads to these points of disagreement being (may we not say?) rather too obtrusively enforced as part and portion of a saving belief. All Bunyan's efforts were to awaken sinners to a sense of their degradation, misery, and danger, and to direct them to the only refuge from the wrath to come—the hope set before them in the gospel; and then leaving the pious convert to the guidance of his Bible in forming his connections in the pilgrimage of life. Bunyan is solemnly in earnest; his desire is, that poor sinners should be relieved from ignorance, darkness, and destruction, and be introduced into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. May his impressive injunction be indelibly fixed upon our souls, 'To read, ponder over, and receive the wholesome medicine as we shall answer in the day of the terrible judgment.'—GEO. OFFOR.

TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN AND ABOUT BEDFORD,

WALKING IN THE FAITH AND
FELLOWSHIP OF THE GOSPEL, YOUR
AFFECTIONATE BROTHER AND COMPANION
IN THE KINGDOM AND PATIENCE OF JESUS
CHRIST, WISHETH ALL GRACE AND MERCY
BY JESUS CHRIST. AMEN.

Holy and beloved,

Although I have designed this little treatise for public and common benefit, yet considering that I am to you a debtor not only in common charity; but by reason of special bonds which the Lord hath laid upon me to you-ward, I could do no less, being driven from you in presence, not affection, but first present you with this little book; not for that you are wanting in the things contained herein, but to put you again in remembrance of first things, and to give you occasion to present something to your carnal relations, that may be, if God will, for their awakening and conversion: accept it therefore as a token of my christian remembrance of you.

Next I present it to all those unconverted, old and young, who have been at any time under my preaching, and yet remain in their

sins:¹ and I entreat them also that they receive it as a token of my love to their immortal souls; yea, I charge them as they will answer it in the day of terrible judgment, that they read, ponder over, and receive this wholesome medicine prepared for them. Now the God of blessing bless it to the awakening of many sinners, and the salvation of their souls by faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Yours, to serve you by my ministry, when I can,² to your edification and consolation,
JOHN BUNYAN.

¹ How awful the thought that persons should sit under so faithful and searching a ministry, and still remain in their sins. Is it so to the present day under a faithful ministry? then, Oh *my* soul, how is it with thee?—Ed.

² A painful recollection of his long and cruel imprisonment for conscience sake led Bunyan to feel the value of liberty. Still he forcibly appeals to his reader on the *necessity* of private judgment in divine things. His twelve years' converse with God and his word in prison had confirmed his principles; while divine love had swallowed up the fear of man.—Ed.

Instruction for the Ignorant

Question. How many gods are there?

Answer. To the Christians there is but one God, the Father of whom are all things, and we of him (1 Cor 8:6).

Q. 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 (Acts 17:24; Psa 36:6; Ju 10:14).

Q. 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 (John 8:44).

Q. 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, and riotous persons; and idle pleasures and vanities, which are, for the most part, the gods of the

youth (Job 8:4; 2 Cor 4:4; Phil 3:19; Exo 32:6; 1 Cor 10:7; 2 Tim 2:2; 1 John 5:21).

Q. 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,³ which is in Christ (John 3:3,5,7; Acts 11:24, 15:9, 26:18; 2 Cor 5:17).

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

A. He is a Spirit (John 4:24).

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

A. Yes, there are many spirits (1 John 4:1).

Q. What spirits are they?

A. The good angels are spirits; the bad angels are spirits; and the souls of men are spirits (Heb 1:7,14; 1 Kings 22:21,22; Rev 16:13,14; Acts 7:59; Heb 12:23).

Q. 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 (Deut 33:27; Gen 17:1; Psalms 145:3; Micah 7:18;

³ Faith is the only principle that, by the power of the Holy Ghost, can purify the heart. It leads the soul into holy communion with a pure and holy God, and thus cleanses the heart.—Ed.

Job 34:17; 1 Sam 2:2).

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

A. 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work' (Psa 19:1). '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' (Rom 1:20).

Q. 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 (Matt 10:29).

Q. 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' (Psa 9:16).

Q. 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. Of what did God make the world?

A. 'Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear' (Heb 11:3).

Q. 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*' (Exo 20:11). 'And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made' (Gen 2:2).

Q. 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' (Gen 2:7).

Q. 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 (Gen 18:27).

Q. 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 18:4; Matt 10:28).

Q. How did God make man in the day of his

first creation?

A. God made man upright (Eccl 7:29). 'In the image of God created he him' (Gen 1:27).

Q. 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 (Gen 3:3,6).

Q. 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 (Gen 2:17, 3:19; Matt 25:46).

Q. 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 (Eph 4:18,19).

Q. 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 (Eph 2:2,3,11,12, 4:18,19; Rom 1:28).

Q. What is temporal death?

A. To have body and soul separated asunder,

the body returning to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it (Gen 3:19; Eccl 12:7).

Q. What is everlasting death?

A. For body and soul to be separate for ever from God, and to be cast into hell fire (Luke 13:27; Mark 9:43).

Q. 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 Cor 15:52; Isa 24:22; Luke 12:20).

Q. 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.⁴

Q. 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

⁴ All mankind, as born into the world, show, as soon as the mental powers open, aversion to God, to his purity, his law, his gospel; the doctrines of grace and the work of the Spirit upon the heart. A solemn proof of the universal taint given by original sin.—Ed.

nature the children of wrath (Job 14:4; Psa 51:5; Eph 2:3).

Q. 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 (Rom 5:12-19).

Q. 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 (Isa 48:8; Psa 58:3).

Q. 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,⁵ but believed the promise as a single person. Adam's faith saved not the world, though Adam's sin overthrew it.

Q. 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. Can you bring further proof of this?

A. Yes: in that day that we were born, we

⁵ By the word 'public' is to be understood a federal head, or the representative of all his posterity. Adam's faith can only save his own soul; his sin taints all his seed.—Ed.

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 16:4-9; Num 18:14-16).

Q. 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 (Rom 6:23).

Q. What is sin?

A. It is a transgression of the law (1 John 3:4).

Q. 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 (Rom 2:12-15; Exo 20).

Q. 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 (Rom 2:14,15).

Q. 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 (Psa 19:12).

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

A. Three: by sinful thoughts, by sinful words, and also by sinful actions (Rom 7:7, 2:6; Matt 5:28, 12:37).

Q. 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' (James 2:10,11).

Q. Where will God punish sinners for their sins?

A. Both in this world and in that which is to come (Gen 3:24, 4:10-12; Job 21:30).

Q. 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 (Lev 26:15,26; Amos 4:7,10; Rom 1:24,28; Exo 4:21, 9:12-14; Zeph 1:17;

Rom 11:7,8; 2 Thess 2:11,12).

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

A. With a worm that never dies, and with a fire that never shall be quenched (Mark 9:44).

Q. Whither do sinners go to receive this punishment?

A. 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God' (Psa 9:17).

Q. What is hell?

A. It is a place and a state most fearful (Luke 13:28, 16:28; Acts 1:25).

Q. 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 (Luke 12:5,58, 16:26; Jude 6).

Q. What [kind of] place is hell?

A. It is a dark bottomless burning lake of fire, large enough to hold all that perish (Matt 22:13; Rev 20:1,15; Isa 30:35; Prov 27:20).

Q. 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 (Rom 2:9; Heb 10:26,27).

Q. 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 (Matt 10:28; Luke 16:24; James 5:3).⁶

Q. How long shall they be in this condition?

A. 'These shall go away into everlasting punishment' (Matt 25:46). 'And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night' (Rev 14:11). For they 'shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power' (2 Thess 1:9).

Q. 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

⁶ A state of hostility to God plunges the soul into mental darkness, rage, horror, anguish, despair, and endless and unutterable misery and woe. How ought we to love the Lord Jesus for his GREAT salvation!—Ed.

towns;⁷ 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 be weeping and gnashing of teeth' (Matt 22:13). 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' (Rom 10:17). 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 (Luke 16:27-31).

Q. 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' (Isa 3:11).

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

A. The punishment in hell comes not upon

⁷ It is a very modern custom to have the place of execution within a city—formerly they were always without—their position being still noted by the name 'Gallow Knowe,' the knoll or mound of the gallows; 'Gallowgate,' the gate or way leading to the gallows; and so on. Happily for the well-being of society, these exhibitions are less frequent than they formerly were.

sinner 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' (Rom 2:11).⁸

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

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

Q. What do you mean by their nature?

A. I mean when they are very gross in themselves (2 Chron 33:2; Eze 16:42).

Q. What kind of sins are the greatest?

A. Adultery, fornication, murder, theft, swearing, lying, covetousness, witchcraft, sedition, heresies, or any the like (1 Cor 6:9,10; Eph 5:3-6; Col 3:5,6; Gal 5:19-21; Rev 21:8).

Q. 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. 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. How do you prove that?

⁸ 'That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*' (Luke 12:47)—Ed.

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 16:48), 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' (Matt 11:24; Luke 10:12).

Q. 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. 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 (Rom 1:32).

Q. 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 Chron 36:16; Jer 25:4-7, 35:15).

Q. 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;⁹ 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 Chron 30:1,10; Rom 3:8; Jer 20:10; 1 Thess 2:15,16).

Q. How will godly acquaintance greater 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 cast away (Gen 21:10), Esau hated (Gal 4:30), Eli's sons died suddenly (Mal 1:2; 1 Sam 2:25,34, 4:11), Absalom and Judas were both strangely hanged (2 Sam 18; Matt 27).

Q. Are sins thus heightened, distinguished

⁹ Which is the greatest sinner; he who invents scandal, or he who encourages the inventor to retail it? If there were no receivers, there would be no thieves.—Ed.

from others by any special name?

A. Yes; they are called rebellion, and are compared to the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam 15:23), they are called willful sins (Heb 10:26), they are called briars and thorns, and they that bring them forth are 'nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned' (6:7,8).

Q. 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 (Dan 5:21-24; Rom 2:4,5).

Q. 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 Kings 2:23,24).

Q. Alas! what shall we little children do?¹⁰

A. Either go on in your sins, or remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come (Eccl 12:1).

Q. 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. 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' (Eccl 11:9).

Q. What a kind of mocking is this?

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

¹⁰ The terms in which this question is put, shows that the little children here intended were capable of repentance and faith. That Bunyan believed, as Toplady did, the salvation of all that die in infancy by the atonement of Christ, there can be no doubt. 'In my remarks on Dr. Rowell, I testified my firm belief that the souls of all departed infants are with God in glory.' See the Introduction to Toplady's Historic Proof.—Ed.

judge you for them.

Q. Is not this just as when my father bids me be 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 (Josh 24:15).

Q. 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 (John 12:26; Matt 25:41).

Q. 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. 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 Proverbs 1:24-26.

Q. 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 (Prov 1:22).

Q. If I serve God sometimes, and my sin sometimes, how then?

A. 'No man can serve two masters.' Thou canst not serve God and thy sins (Matt 6:24). God saith, 'My Son, give me thine heart' (Prov 23:26). Also thy soul and body are his; but the double-minded man is forbidden to think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord (1 Cor 6:20; James 1:7,8).

Q. 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 Sam 3:1). When Josiah was young he began to seek after the God of his father David (2 Chron 34:3). 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? (Matt 21:15,16).

Q. 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' (Matt 7:14). Yet some companions thou wilt have. David counted himself a companion of all them that love God's testimonies (Psa 119:63). 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 (Matt 18:10).

Q. 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 seeking and obtaining of (2 Kings 2:23,24).

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

A. The true worshippers, worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:24; Phil 3:3).

Q. 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 (Rom 1:9, 6:17; Psa 101:1-3).

Q. 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 (Heb 8:5; John 17:17; Psa 26:6, 108:19,20). You may take

the whole thus, Then do you worship God aright, when in heart and life you walk according to his word.

Q. 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' (1 Chron 28:9). Mind you, he first bids *know* him, and then *serve* him with a perfect heart.

Q. 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' (Prov 2:4,5).

Q. 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 (Psa 10:4; Eph 4:18,19; Titus 1:16).

Q. 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. 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 (Zeph 1:12). Some count him a kind of an ignorant and blind God, that can neither know nor see through the clouds (Job 22:13). 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 21:9-15). 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 (Psa 50:21).

Q. 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 (Rom 3:8). 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 (Jer 2:25). 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 40:14); contrary to these scriptures (Habb 1:13;

Isa 45:21).

Q. 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. 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 (Eph 4:18).

Q. 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 (John 17:6-8, 5:39). And they are able to make the man of God perfect in all things, and wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Tim 3:15,16).

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

A. Let him apply his heart unto the Scriptures (Prov 22:17, 23:12). '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 Peter 1:19,20).

Q. 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 (Isa 6:5; Job 42:5).

Q. 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 42:5; Eze 20:43,44; Rom 7:24).¹¹

Of Confession of Sin.

Q. 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 (Neh 9:1-3).

Q. What must I confess?

A. Thou must confess thy transgressions unto the Lord (Psa 32:5).

Q. Was this the way of the godly of old?

A. Yes; Nehemiah confessed his sins (Neh 1:6). David confessed his sins (Psa 32:5). Daniel confessed his sins (Dan 9:4). And they that

¹¹ The knowledge of ourselves as vile and abominable, hopeless and helpless, is an *essential* step towards our recovery. The next step that leads to heaven, and lands us there, is to 'know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent,' as revealed in the word of truth. 'This is eternal life.'—Ed.

were baptized by John in Jordan confessed their sins (Matt 3:6).

Q. 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' (Prov 28:13; 1 John 1:9).

Q. 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 (Lam 3:40; Psa 77:6).

Q. 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 (Psa 50:21,22).

Q. 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 Sam 12:7-14; Dan 9:3-9).

Q. 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 Kings 8:38; Psa 55:5).

Q. 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' (Mark 7:21,23).

Q. 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 (Isa 64:6; Prov 28:26; Isa 44:20; Gen 6:5).

Q. 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. 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 (Rom 7:7-10).

Q. 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' (Rom 8:7).

Q. 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 (Prov 1:24-26; Isa 43:22; Mal 1:12,13; Ju 3:7; Jer 2:32; Psa 106:21; Hosea 2:13; Prov 30:20; Jer 2:25; Rom 1:32, 2:5; Zeph 1:11-13).¹²

¹² The unrenewed heart is the sink of sin, the fountain of pollution. 'Out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these defile a man.' Create in us a clean

Q. 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' (1 John 3:20); besides, he hath set thy secret sins in the light of his countenance (Psa 90:8).

Q. 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. 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 what warnings and judgments thou hast sinned; and against how many of thine own vows, promises and engagements, thou hast sinned: these things heighten and aggravate sin (Ezra 9:10-14).

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

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

Q. 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 (Exo 20).

Q. Can you show me another reason?

A. Yes; By confessing thy sin, thou subscribest to his righteous judgments that are pronounced against it (Psa 51:3,4).

Q. Can you show me another reason?

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

Q. 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.

Q. Give me one more reason why I should confess my sins to God?

A. He that confesseth his sin, casteth himself at the feet of God's 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 (Psa 51:1-3; 1 John 1:9; Phil 3:6-8).

Q. 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. 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. 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 (Prov 28:13; Job 31:33). Or when in their confession they turn not from all sin to God, but from one

sin to another (James 3:12). They turned, *'but* not to the most High,' none of them did exalt him (Hosea 7:16).

Q. What is it to confess sin without the sense of sins?

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

Q. 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 20:12,13; Jer 8:5); when *'with their mouth they show much love, but* their heart goeth after their covetousness' (Eze 33:31).

Q. 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. 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;¹³ but

¹³ No poor soul was more severely visited with these feelings than Bunyan. 'Now I beheld the condition of the dog and toad; and counted the state of every thing that God had made far better than this state of

this know, it dishonoureth God (Rom 2:23). It provoketh him to wrath (Eph 5:5,6). It damneth the soul (2 Thess 2:12).

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

A. When we confess sin, tears, shame, and brokenness of heart becomes us (Jer 50:4; Isa 22:12; Psa 51:17; Jer 31:19).

Q. 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 42:6; Eze 9:4; Jer 31:9).

Q. 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 shouldest 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' (Isa 66:2; Heb 4:1,2).

Q. 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 (Isa 63:17; Jer 6:15, 8:12).

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

A. O 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 (Jer 31:18-20).

Of Faith in Christ.

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

A. Thou must believe his word.

Q. 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 prophets,' &c. (Acts 24:14).

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

A. Because without faith it is impossible to please him (Heb 11:6).

Q. 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' (Rom 14:23).

Q. 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' (John 3:6). 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' (Rom 9:8).

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. Thou must be born twice before thou canst truly believe once (John 3:3,5).

Q. How do 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. 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' (John 1:13).

Q. What is believing?

A. It is such an act of a gracious soul, as layeth hold on God's mercy through Christ (Acts 15:11).

Q. 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' (Rom 15:13).

Q. 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? (John 9:35,36).

Q. On whom then must I believe?

A. On the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31).

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

A. He is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16).

Q. Why must I believe on him?

A. Because he is the Saviour of the world (2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 4:14).

Q. 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' (John 3:17).

Q. 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 (Gal 4:4; Rom 10:4, 8:3; Heb 2:14,15, 6:20).

Q. 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' (Acts 4:12); and therefore 'he that believeth not, shall be damned' (Mark 16:16; John 3:18,36).

Q. What is believing on Jesus Christ?

A. It is a receiving of him with what is in him, as the gift of God to thee a sinner (John 1:12).

Q. 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 (Isa 45:24,25; Dan 9:24; Phil 3:7-9; John 3:34).

Q. Is this made mine if I receive Christ?

A. Yes; If thou receive him as God offereth him to thee (John 3:16).

Q. 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 (John 6:32-35).

Q. 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 (Eph 4:32; Rom 3:24; Matt 28:18-20; Acts 13:32-39; Heb 6:17,18, 2:3; Mark 16:16).

Q. 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 (Matt 11:28).

Q. Did ever any come thus to Christ?

A. David came thus (Psa 51:1-3); Paul and the jailor came thus (Acts 9:6, 16:30); also Christ's murderers came thus (Acts 2:37).

Q. 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' (Mark 2:17).

Q. 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 should say, When I am cured I will lay on the plaster.¹⁴

Q. 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' (Isa 35:4, 66:2).

Q. 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 (Luke 15). Thus he received the Colossians, and consequently all that are saved (Col 2:13).

Q. Will you give me one more encouragement?

A. The promises are so worded, that they that are scarlet sinners, crimson sinners, blasphemous sinners, have encouragement to come to him with hopes of life (Isa 1:18; Mark 3:28; John 6:37; Luke 24:42,43; Acts 13:26).

Q. Shall every one that believeth be saved?

¹⁴ How pointed and forcible is this illustration of the absurdity of neglecting the Physician of souls, when the malady of sin is felt. The more desperate our disease, the faster we should fly to Christ for cure.—Ed.

A. If they believe as the Scriptures have said, if the Scriptures be fulfilled in their believing (John 7:38; James 2:23).

Q. 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 (James 2:19-23).

Q. 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 (Luke 8:13).

Q. 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 (James 2:26).

Q. 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 (Eph 2:8).

Q. 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' (1 Cor 2:5).

Q. 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 Peter 2:9; Jude 20).

Q. 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' (1 Cor 6:9). 'Let no man deceive you' (Eph 5:6), and 'If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself' (Gal 6:3).

Q. 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. 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. 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 (Gal 3:23-25).

Q. 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' (Rom 11:32).

And again it is said, 'faith cometh' (Rom 10:17). And again, the Holy Ghost insinuateth our estate to be dreadful 'before faith came' (Gal 3:23).

Q. Why, how is it with men, before faith comes?

A. Without faith, or before faith comes, it is impossible to please God, for whether their actions be civil or religious, they sin in all they do. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, and the ploughing of the wicked is sin (Prov 21:4,27).

Q. Is not this a very sad condition?

A. Yes; but this is not all, for their present unbelief bindeth them over to wrath, by shutting them up to the law; it also draweth them away from God, and will drown them in everlasting damnation, if the grace of God prevent not (Gal 3:23; Heb 3:17,18; John 3:36).

Q. What if a man saw himself in this condition?

A. There are many see themselves in this condition.

Q. How came they to see it?

A. By the preaching and hearing the Word of God (John 16:8,9).

Q. And what do such think of themselves?

A. They do not only think, but know that in this condition they are 'without Christ,

without hope, and without God in the world' (Eph 2:12).

Q. Are not they happy that see not themselves in this condition?

A. Yes. If they have seen themselves delivered therefrom by a work of faith in their souls, else not.

Q. How do you mean?

A. I mean if they have seen themselves delivered from this state, by being by the Word and Spirit of God implanted into the faith of Christ (Rom 11:17-19).

Q. Are not they happy that are never troubled with this sad sight of their condition?

A. They are just so happy as is that man who lieth fast asleep in his house while it is on fire about his ears. Can a man be happy, that is ignorant that he is without God and Christ, and hope? Can a man be happy that is ignorant that he is hanging over hell by the poor weak thread of an uncertain life? For this is the state of such an one.¹⁵

¹⁵ The awful condition of the unconverted consists in their being in a state of separation from God, insensible of that dismal state, utterly unable to extricate themselves out of it, and loathsome to God while they continue in it. Reader, do you recollect when this was *your* state; if not, what hope is there that you have passed from death unto life?—Ed.

Q. 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 revealeth to them the righteousness of faith, or work faith in them to lay hold of that righteousness (John 16:9-11; Gal 3:23-25).

Q. 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. 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' (John 6:37).

Q. 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' (Rom 10:17).

Q. How by hearing?

A. God mixeth it with the Word when he absolutely intendeth the salvation of the sinner (Heb 4:2; Acts 13:48).

Q. 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' (1 Thess 2:13).

Q. Pray tell me now the manner of its coming?

A. It comes through difficulty, it comes gradually.

Q. 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 (Luke 5:8; Mark 9:24; Isa 6:5; Rom 4:18-21).

Q. How doth faith come gradually?

A. Perhaps at first it is but like a grain of mustard-seed, small, and weak (Matt 17:20).

Q. 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 (Heb 11:13; Joel 2:13,14; Zeph 2:3; Psa 30:7).¹⁶

Q. 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 (Luke 17:5; Mark 9:24). It is increased by christian conference (Rom 1:12). It is increased by reading (Rom 16:25,26). It is increased by meditation (1 Tim 4:12-16). It is increased by the remembrance of former experiences (Matt 16:8,9).

Q. What do these things teach us?

A. They teach us, that the men of this world

¹⁶ The operation of faith is by steps. 'To open their eyes,' 'to turn them from darkness to light,' 'from power of Satan to God,' 'forgiveness of sins,' 'the heavenly inheritance' (Acts 26:18).—Ed.

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. 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 (Isa 64:6).

Q. How doth it give the soul this sight?

A. By giving him to understand the law, and his own inability to fulfil it (Gal 2:16).

Q. 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 (Isa 45:24,25; Phil 3:3-9).

Q. 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 (Rom 10:6-9).

Q. How else doth it operate in the soul?

A. It applieth this righteousness to the sinner, and also helps him to embrace it (Rom

3:21,22; 1 Cor 1:30; Gal 2:20).

Q. 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 2:12,13; Acts 15:9, 26:18; 2 Cor 3:18).

Q. How else doth it operate?

A. It giveth the soul peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1).

Q. 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 Peter 2:7, 1:18,19; 2 Peter 1:3,4).

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

A. O! No! This is a sword in their bones, and a burden that they cannot bear (Psa 42:10; Zeph 3:19).¹⁷

¹⁷ Under a fear lest he had spoken against Christ, Bunyan thus expresses his misery; 'I fell into a very deep pause about the most fearful state my sin had brought me to; and, lifting up my head, I saw as if the sun did grudge to give me light, and as if the very stones in the street,

Q. 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 (Heb 11:24,25).

Q. 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' (Phil 3:20).

Q. 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 Peter 3:10,11).

and tiles upon the houses, did bend themselves against me.'—*Grace Abounding*, No. 186.—Ed.

Of Prayer.

Q. 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. What are they?

A. Prayer and self-denial.

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

A. Yes; a great part of it.

Q. How do you prove that?

A. 'O come let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker' (Psa 95:6).

Q. Is there another scripture proves it?

A. Yes; 'Then came she and worshiped him, saying, Lord, help me' (Matt 15:25).

Q. What is prayer?

A. A sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the soul to God in the name of Christ for what God hath promised (Prov 15:8; Jer 31:18,19; Psa 42:2-5; John 14:13,14; 1 John 5:14).

Q. Doth not every body pray?

A. No; 'The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek *after* God: God is

not in all his thoughts' (Psa 10:4).

Q. 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' (Jer 10:25; Psa 79:6).

Q. 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 36:37).

Q. 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 (Gen 18:27,30).

Q. Is there another reason why I should pray?

A. Yes. For by prayer thou acknowledgest, that help is not in thine own power (2 Chron 20:6,12).

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

A. By prayer thou confessest that help is

only in him (Psa 62:1).

Q. What other reason have you?

A. By prayer thou confessest thou canst not live without his grace and mercy (Matt 14:30; Heb 4:16).

Q. 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 Sam 22:42).

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

A. He compareth them to the howling of a dog (Hosea 7:14).

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

A. Theirs, who think to be heard for their much speaking, and vain repetition (Matt 6:7).

Q. 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 (James 4:3).

Q. Is there any other whose prayer God refuseth?

A. Yes; 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*' (Psa 66:18).¹⁸

¹⁸ 'The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight. He loveth him that followeth after righteousness' (Prov

Q. 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 14:3,8).

Q. Whose prayers be they that God will hear?

A. The prayers of the poor and needy (Psa 34:6; Isa 41:17).

Q. What do you mean by the poor?

A. Such as have poverty in spirit (Matt 5:3).

Q. 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. What things are they?

A. Faith, hope, love, joy, peace, a new heart, the Holy Ghost, sanctification. See James 2:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; Ezekiel 36:26,27.

Q. What do you mean by the needy?

A. Those whose souls long and cannot be

15:8,9). That our prayers may be heard, the heart should be right with God, and our souls at peace with him through the Son of his love.—*Mason*.—Ed.

satisfied without the enjoyment of these blessed things (Psa 63:1, 119:20).

Q. Will God hear the prayers of such?

A. Yes; 'For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness' (Psa 107:9).

Q. 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 (Psa 110:3).

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

A. If thou desirest them for their beauty's sake (Psa 90:14,17).

Q. How else should I know I shall have them?

A. When thy groanings after them are beyond expression (Rom 8:26).¹⁹

Q. 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 (Isa 4:1,3, 64:5).

Q. How else should I know?

A. When thou makest good use of that little thou hast already (Rev 3:8).

¹⁹ These are parts of a Christian's experience, admirably illustrated in that extraordinary book by Bunyan, 'Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners.'—Ed.

Q. 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. 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 (John 14:13,14).

Q. Doth God always answer presently?

A. Sometimes he doth, and sometimes he doth not (Isa 30:19; Dan 10:12).

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

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

Q. When is it no sign of his anger?

A. When we have not wickedly departed from him by our sins (Luke 18:7).

Q. When is it a sign of his anger?

A. When we have backslidden, when we have not repented some former miscarriages (Hosea 5:14,15).

Q. 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 (Cant 2:14; Matt 15:22-28; Luke 11:5-8; Gen 32:25-28).

Q. 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' (Luke 18:1-8).²⁰

Of Self-Denial.

Q. 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. 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

²⁰ All-prevailing prayers must be offered up through the mediation of Christ, in obedience to God's command, with an eye to his glory, and for what is agreeable to his will and heavenly wisdom to grant. 'Lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting' (1 Tim 2:8). God's service must be in faith, love, and purity of heart.—*Ryland*.—Ed.

burnt-offering, which was to him a very great part of self-denial, that he counted that act of his worshipping God.

Q. 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 (Gen 22:5).

Q. What is self-denial?

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

Q. 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' (Luke 14:33).

Q. 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. (Phil 3:7,8).

Q. 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 (Gen 4:8). Abraham denied himself to the losing of his country and his father's house (Gen 12:1-4). Moses denied himself of a crown and a kingdom, and of ease and tranquility (Heb 11:24-27). Joseph denied himself of fleshly lusts (Gen 39:7-9).

Q. 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 of his life (Gen 12:13). So did Moses in leaving the crown and kingdom (Heb 11:27). And Joseph in denying his mistress (Gen 39:10-15).

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

A. With all my heart.

Q. 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 Cor 13:1-3).

Q. Who are like to miscarry here?

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

Q. 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. 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 Sam 16:1-4).

Q. 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 (Luke 18:11,12).

Q. 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 (Gal 3:4, 6:9).

Q. Shall I propound a few more questions?

A. If you please.

Q. 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.²¹

Q. 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 (Gen 25:30-34; Heb 12:14-16).

Q. 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 Sam 15).

Q. How if a man he 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

²¹ How debased is the human heart, to delay one moment in giving up its poor all for Christ. In him dwells the fulness of the Godhead; he has unsearchable riches of wisdom and knowledge to bestow; all-sufficient grace and strength, to enable us to do and suffer his will; and everlasting glory at the close of our pilgrimage.—Ed.

Christ, 'shall keep it unto life eternal' (Matt 16:25; John 12:25).

Q. 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 (Luke 9:23).

Q. 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 Sam 16:7).

Q. 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. 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 (John 12:6).

Q. 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. Who are they that indulge their lusts?

A. They that make provision for them, either in apparel, or diet, or otherwise (Rom 13:12-14; Isa 3:6-24; Amos 6:3-6).

Q. 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 Sam 15:18-22).

Q. Who else are they that indulge their lusts?

A. They that heap up to themselves such teachers as favour their lusts (2 Tim 4:3,4; Isa 30:10).

Q. 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 (Hosea 4:7-9).

Q. 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 (Rom 7:13,14).

Q. Who else?

A. He that hath the sense and savour of forgiveness of sins upon his heart (2 Cor 5:14).

Q. 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 3:1-5).

Q. 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 Cor 12:9-11; Heb 11:24-26).

Q. 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 (Luke 6:47,48; John 12:25,26).

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

A. He keepeth this heart with all diligence, he had rather die than sin; ill carriages of professors break his heart, nothing is so dear to him as the glory of Christ (Prov 4:23; Num

11:15; Phil 3:18; Acts 20:24).²²

Q. Pray, can yo give me some motive to self-denial?

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

Q. Wherein did Christ deny himself for me?

A. He left 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 (John 6:38; Luke 9:58; 2 Cor 8:9; Rev 1:5).

Q. 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?’ (Mark 8:36).

Q. 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. 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

²² No tongue can utter, or heart conceive, the unspeakable reward which an unwearied, unfainting diligence in well-doing, attends the humble believer; it begins in this world, and is consummated in endless glory.—Ed.

leaveth all his enjoyments in this world. Thus he proved Abraham's affections (Gen 22:12). Thus he proved Peter's affections (Matt 4:18-22) and thus he proved their affection that you read of in the gospel (Luke 9:57-73).

Q. 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 that 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 (Psa 78:36,37; Eze 33:31,32).²³

Q. 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

²³ Christian, you are not your own, you are bought with a price far above all the treasures of the earth. You must not do as *you* please, but study to do the will of your heavenly Father. The man who is bent upon doing his own will, renounces the name of Christian. REBEL against God is inscribed upon all who do not his will.—Ed.

people, that there is such power, glory, goodness, and desirableness in God's truth as indeed there is (Dan 3:16,28; Phil 1:12,13).

Q. 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 Cor 4:8-10,17; 2 Thess 1:5,6).

Q. 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 (Gen 19:17,26; Luke 17:31,32).

Q. 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 (Gen 25:32-34; Heb 12:16,17).

Q. 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 (John 12:5,6; Luke 22:3-6; Matt 26:14-16; Acts 1:25).

Q. 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 (Acts 5:1-11).

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 bad 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 roaring in hell.²⁴

The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.

JohnBunyan.org

²⁴ How blessed is the hope of the Christian; full of life, power, and much assurance. The salvation by Christ is infinitely precious; it redeems the souls from all possible misery, and introduces it to the favour, love, and protection of almighty God, who will save it from the ruins of time, till possessed of the riches of eternity.—Ed.