

THE  
WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY'S  
SHORTER CATECHISM  
EXPLAINED,  
BY WAY OF  
QUESTION AND ANSWER.  
PART I.  
OF THE DUTY WHICH GOD REQUIRES OF MAN.

Hold fast the form of sound words"—2 Tim. i. 13.

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## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE *Shorter Catechism*, composed by the *Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, with assistance of *Commissioners* from the Church of *Scotland*, being approved by the General Assembly of the said church in 1648, and ratified by the Estates of Parliament in the year following, is above any recommendation of ours ; having its praises already in all the churches of CHRIST, abroad and at home, among whom it has been justly admired as a *master-piece* of its kind, both for the fulness of its matter, and the compendious and perspicuous manner in which it is expressed.

Although it is only a human composure, yet being a *form of sound words*, agreeable unto, and founded on the word of GOD, it ought to be held fast, and earnestly contended for, by all the lovers of truth, in opposition to the contrary errors that are revived and raging in our day ; and, in order hereto, it ought to be considered, that a divine faith is due to the words of the HOLY GHOST supporting it, as the evident *proofs* thereof.

Nothing tends more to the advantage and well-being of the church, than sound standards of doctrine, worship, and government ; because, as they are a strong bulwark against contrary errors and opinions, so they tend to preserve truth in its purity, and the professors of it in unity and harmony among themselves. On the other hand, there is nothing more galling to the adversaries of truth, than such public standards, because they are a very severe check and curb upon their unbounded and licentious liberty,

being directly levelled against their erroneous schemes and plainly discovering the harmonious chain of scripture truth, in opposition to them.

The *divine warrant* for such composesures, is abundantly clear from 2 Tim. 1. 13, where we read of the *form of sound words* wherein Paul instructed Timothy; and Heb. v. 12, of *the first principles of the oracles of God*; and chap. vi. 1, of *the principles of the doctrine of Christ*. — Besides, there are several *summaries*, or compendious systems of divine truth, recorded in scripture; such as Exod. xx. 2—18; Matt. vi. 9—14; 1 Tim. iii. 16; and Tit. ii. 11—15, with many others, which are the examples, or patterns, upon which the Christian churches, both in ancient and latter times, have deduced, from the pure fountain of the word, the principal articles of their holy religion, as a test and standard of orthodoxy amongst them.

The *Shorter Catechism* sets forth the principles of Christianity in the most excellent method and order. It would be tedious to give a particular *analysis* or division of the several heads of divinity, according to the order of the *Catechism*. But, in general, the method of it may be taken up under these four comprehensive articles, namely, the *chief end*, the *only rule*, the *glorious object*, and the *great subject* of the Christian religion.

I. The *chief end* of the Christian religion, which is the glorifying of God, and the enjoying him for ever. Quest 1.

II. We have the *only rule* of the Christian religion; describe

1. In its *matter*; which is the *word* of God, contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Quest. 2.

2. In its *principal parts*; which are, first, what man is to *believe* concerning God; and then the duty which God requires of man. Quest. 3.

III. The *glorious object* of the Christian religion; which is God; considered,

1. *Essentially*, in his spiritual nature, infinite perfections, and in his most perfect unity and simplicity. Quest. 4, 5.

2. *Relatively* or *personally*, in the three distinct persons of the Godhead; and in the consubstantiality, and absolute equality of these persons. Quest. 6.

3. *Efficiently*, in his acts and operations, which are either immanent and essential, such as his decrees; or transient and external, such as his works of creation and providence, wherein he executes his decrees. Quest. 7—12.

IV. The *great subject* of the Christian religion, which is *man*; considered,

1st, In his state of *innocence*, where the covenant of works is opened. Quest. 12.

2dly, In his *state of nature*, together with the sinfulness and misery of that state. Quest. 13—20.

3dly, In his *state of grace*, or begun recovery; where the *Catechism* treats,

1. Of the *nature* of the covenant of grace. Quest. 20.

2. Of the *Mediator* of the covenant; who is described, in his person, offices, humiliation, exaltation, and in the application of his purchased redemption by the HOLY SPIRIT. Quest. 21—32.

3. Of the *benefits* of the covenant; in this life, at death, at the resurrection, and through all eternity. Quest. 32—39.

4. Of the *duties* by which we evidence our covenant relation and gratitude to God, in the *Ten Commandments*, as connected with their *Preface*. Quest. 39—82.

5. Of man's utter *inability* to obey the law in this life. Quest. 82.

6. Of the *aggravation* and *desert* of sin. Quest. 83, 84.

7. Of the *means* by which our salvation is carried on and perfected at death: the internal means, faith and repentance; the external means, the word, sacraments and prayer. Quest. 85, to the end.

The *first part* of this catechetical treatise ends with Quest. 38. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?* containing the doctrines we are to believe concerning God. The *second part* respects the *duty* which God requires of man.

The *materials* of the following Catechism are collected by several ministers, and it was recommended to *three* of their number, to revise what should be done by so many hands, that there might be a uniformity of style and method, and that repetitions might be prevented as much as possible. It has pleased the LORD to take home to himself *one*\* of these three, who assisted in the composing and revising of this *first part*; but, though he be dead, he yet speaketh, and will be spoken of for his excellent works (which have already, or may hereafter see the light,) by all those who shall have any relish or taste for sound doctrine and experimental godliness.—Whatever loss the *second part* of this Catechism may sustain, by the removal of such an able and skilful hand, the *other two* make not the least doubt, but the LORD would carry on this work with as great, or greater advantage, though they were laid in the grave likewise.

Mean time, that what is here presented to public view may be blessed of God, for the edification of souls, is, in the name of our brethren, the earnest prayer of

February, 1753

EBEN. ERSKINE.  
JAMES FISHER.

\* The Rev. Mr. Ralph Erskine, of Dunfermline.

## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD EDITION

**T**HE words of the *Shorter Catechism*, being advised with the greatest judgment, and with a peculiar view, both for establishing scripture-truth, and likewise for refuting contrary errors, they are, therefore, in this edition, particularly taken notice of: and to distinguish them, they are enclosed within *brackets*, that the reader may the more easily discern how they are explained in this treatise.

As the *Confession of Faith* and *Larger Catechism* are granted to be the best interpreters of the *Shorter*, the latter is carefully explained by the former; and several of the following questions and answers framed from these standards, as will easily appear by the quotations taken from them, and the references made unto them.

In this edition, almost every answer is confirmed by the scriptures; many are added, where they were formerly wanting, and several exchanged, for those that are thought more apposite.—In the former impressions, the scripture-proofs were, mostly, subjoined to the end of the answer; but *now*, each scripture is immediately annexed to that part of the answer it is designed to confirm, that it may be consulted with greater certainty, and less trouble, by those who incline to bring every position, here advanced, to the unerring rule and standard of the word.—Some of the longer answers are divided into two or more, for sake of the memory; and some additional questions are interspersed, through the whole, for illustration. A short *Index* is likewise annexed, of the most material things in both parts.

I have employed my spare time for several months, in studying to make this edition as correct and useful to the public as I could; and now I leave it in the hands of the *God of truth*, that he may use it for the purposes of his own glory, in *edifying the body of Christ, till they all come, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

JAMES FISHER.

GLASGOW, Jan. 14, 1765.

THE

SHORTER CATECHISM EXPLAINED

QUEST. 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

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

Q. 1. What is meant by man's [*chief end?*]

A. That which ought to be man's chief aim and design; and that which he should seek after as his chief happiness.

Q. 2. What ought to be man's chief aim and design?

A. The glory of God. 1 Chron. xvi. 28, 29: "Give unto the Lord, ye kindreds of the people,—give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name."

Q. 3. What should he seek after as his chief happiness?

A. The enjoyment of God. Isa. xxvi. 8: "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and the remembrance of thee."

Q. 4. What connexion is there between the glorifying God, and the enjoyment of him?

A. They are connected by rich and sovereign grace, persuading and enabling the sinner to embrace Jesus Christ as the only way to God and glory. Eph. ii. 8: "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." John xvi. 6:—"I," says Christ, "am the way; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Q. 5. Does the chief end exclude subordinate ends?

A. No: for, in aiming principally at the glory of God, men may use the supports of natural life for refreshing their bodies, 1 Cor. x. 31; and be diligent in their particular callings, that they may provide for themselves and their families, 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12; 1 Tim. v. 8.

Q. 6. Why ought the glory of God to be the chief end and design of man?

A. Because it is God's chief end in man's creation, preservation, redemption, and regeneration. Prov. xvi. 4: "The Lord hath made all things for himself;" and therefore it ought to be man's chief end likewise. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20: "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a

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

Q. 7. How manifold is the glory of God?

A. Twofold; his essential and his declarative glory.

Q. 8. What is God's essential glory?

A. It is what he is absolutely in himself. Exod. iii. 14—

I AM THAT I AM.

Q. 9. What is his declarative glory?

A. His showing, or making known his glory, to, in, and by his creatures, Isa. xlv. 23; 2 Thess. i. 10.

Q. 10. Can any creature whatsoever add any thing to God's essential glory?

A. No: for his essential glory is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, Job xxxv. 7.

Q. 11. Do not the heavens and the earth, and all inferior creatures, glorify God?

A. Yes: in a *passive way*, all his works praise him; Psal. xix. 1, and cxlv. 10.

Q. 12. How ought man to [*glorify*] God?

A. Man being endued with a reasonable soul, ought to glorify God in an *active way*, Psal. lxxiii. 4, by declaring his praise, Psal. ciii. 1, 2; and essaying to give him the glory due to his name, Psalm xcvi. 7.

Q. 13. How was man to glorify God in a state of innocence?

A. By a perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience to his law, Gen. i. 27; and by giving him the glory of all his works, chap. ii. 19.

Q. 14. Has man answered his chief end?

A. No: for, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Rom. iii. 23.

Q. 15. Has God then lost his end in making man?

A. No: for God will glorify his justice and power upon some, and his grace and mercy upon others of Adam's family, Rom. ix. 22, 23.

Q. 16. Was ever God glorified by a perfect obedience since Adam's fall?

A. Never, until CHRIST, the *second Adam*, appeared as a new covenant head, Isa. xlii. 21, and xlix. 3.

Q. 17. How did Christ, the second Adam, glorify God, as our surety and representative on earth?

A. By finishing the work the Father gave him to do John xvii. 4.

Q. 18. What was the work the Father gave him to do?

A. It was to assume a holy human nature, Luke i. 35; to yield a perfect sinless obedience to the whole law, Mat. iii. 15; and to give a complete satisfaction to justice, for man's sin, by his meritorious sufferings and death, Luke xxiv. 26.

Q. 19. How does Christ glorify God in heaven?

A. By appearing in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24, and applying, by the power of his Spirit, that redemption which he purchased by the price of his blood on earth, Tit. iii. 5, 6.

Q. 20. When is it that a sinner begins uprightly to aim at the glory of God?

A. When, through a faith of God's operation, he believes in Christ: Acts viii. 37, 39.—“The eunuch answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God.—And he went on his way rejoicing.”

Q. 21. Can no man glorify God acceptably, unless he first believe in Christ?

A. No: for, “Without faith it is impossible to please him.” Heb. xi. 6; and, “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin,” Rom. xiv. 23.

Q. 22. How is it that faith in Christ glorifies God?

A. As it sets its seal to the record of God, John iii. 33; and unites us to Christ, from whom only our fruit is found, Hos. xiv. 8.

Q. 23. Is not God glorified by the good works of believers?

A. Yes: “herein,” says Christ, “is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, John xv. 8.

Q. 24. What are these fruits brought forth by believers, by which God is glorified?

A. They may be summed up in faith working by love, Gal. v. 6; or, their aiming, in the strength of Christ, at universal obedience to the law, as the rule of duty. Phil. iv. 13: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

Q. 25. How should we glorify God in eating and drinking?

A. By taking a right to the supports of natural life, through the second Adam, the heir of all things, who has purchased a covenant right to temporal, as well as spiritual mercies, for his people, 1 Cor. iii. 21—23; and thankfully acknowledging God for the same, 1 Tim. iv. 4, 5.

Q. 26. How must we glorify God in our religious worship, and other acts of obedience?

A. By doing all that we do in the name of the Lord Jesus, Col. iii. 17; worshipping God in the Spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh, Phil. iii. 3.

Q. 27. What is it, next to the glory of God, we should aim at?

A. Next to God's glory, we should aim at the *enjoyment* of him, Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.

Q. 28. Why should we aim at the enjoyment of God?

A. Because he is the chief good of the rational creature, Ps. cxvi. 7; and nothing else besides him, is either suitable

to the nature, or satisfying to the desires of the immortal soul, Ps. cxliv. 15.

Q. 29. How may a finite creature [*enjoy*] an infinite God?

A. By taking and rejoicing in him, as its everlasting and upmaking portion, Ps. xvi. 5, 6, and xlvi. 14.

Q. 30. Did our first parents, in a state of innocence, enjoy God?

A. Yes: there was perfect friendship and fellowship between God and them; for, "God made man upright," Eccl. vii. 29.

Q. 31. What broke that blessed friendship and fellowship?

A. Sin: our iniquities have separated between us and our God, and our sins have hid his face from us, Isa. lix. 2.

Q. 32. Can a sinner, in a natural state, enjoy God, or have any fellowship with him?

A. No: for, "What communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

Q. 33. How may a lost sinner recover the enjoyment of God, and fellowship with him?

A. As we lost it by our fall in the *first Adam*, so it can only be recovered by union with a *second Adam*, Rom. v. 18, 19; for there is no coming to God but by him, John xiv. 6.

Q. 34. When is it that a sinner begins to enjoy God?

A. When, having received Christ by faith, he rests upon him, and upon God in him, for righteousness and strength, Isa. xlv. 24; and out of his fulness receives, and grace for grace, John i. 16.

Q. 35. What are the external means by, or in which, we are to seek after the enjoyment of God?

A. In all the ordinances of his worship, public, private and secret; such as the word read and heard, the sacraments, prayer, meditation, fasting, thanksgiving, and the like.

Q. 36. Are the saints of God admitted to enjoy him in these?

A. Yes: they are the tristing places where his name is recorded, and to which he has promised to come and bless them, Ex. xx. 24—"In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

Q. 37. What scripture-evidence have we, of their enjoying God in the duties and ordinances of his appointment?

A. We find them much employed in religious duties, Song iii. 1—3; and expressing the utmost regard for the ordinances of his grace, Ps. lxxxiv. 1, 2.

Q. 38. What satisfaction has the soul in the enjoyment of God?

A. Unspeakably more gladness than when corn, wine, and all earthly comforts, do most abound, Ps. iv. 7

Q. 39. Is there any difference between the enjoyment of God in this life, and that which the saints shall obtain in the life to come?

A. Not an *essential*, but a *gradual* difference, as to the *manner* and *measure* of it.

Q. 40. What is the difference as to the *manner* of the enjoyment here and hereafter?

A. Here, the enjoyment is *mediate*, by the intervention of means; hereafter, it will be *immediate*, without any use of these means: "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then FACE TO FACE," 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

Q. 41. What is the difference as to the *measure* of the enjoyment, in this life, and that which is to come?

A. In this life the enjoyment is only *partial*; in that which is to come, it will be *full* and complete, 1 John iii. 2—here, the enjoyment is only in the seed, or first fruits; there it will be in the full harvest, Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6.

Q. 42. Is the partial enjoyment of God in grace here, a sure pledge of the full enjoyment of him in glory hereafter?

A. It is both the pledge and earnest of it, Eph. i. 13, 14. Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

Q. 43. Does the gracious soul, in that state, fully receive its chief end?

A. Yes; in regard that then it shall be brimful of God, and celebrate his praises with high and uninterrupted *Hallelujahs* through all eternity, Ps. xvi. 11; Isa. xxxv. 10.

Q. 44. Why is the glorifying God made the leading part of man's chief end, and set before the enjoyment of him?

A. Because, as God's design in glorifying himself was the reason and foundation of his design in making man happy in the enjoyment of him, Rom. xi. 26; so he has made our aiming at his glory, as our chief end, to be the very way and means of our attaining to that enjoyment, Ps. l. 23.

Q. 45. Is our happiness, in the enjoyment of God, to be our chief end?

A. No: but the glory of God itself, Isa. xlii. 8; in our aiming at which *chiefly*, we cannot miss the enjoyment of him, Ps. cxi. 14, 15.

Q. 46. Is not our delighting in the glory of God, to be reckoned our chief end?

A. No: we must set the glory of God above our delight therein, otherwise, our delight is not chiefly in God, but in ourselves, Isa. ii. 11. Our subjective delighting in the glory of God belongs to the enjoyment of him, whose glory is above the heavens, and infinitely above our delight therein, Ps. cxiii. 4.

Q. 47. Whom does God dignify with the enjoyment of himself, in time and for ever?

A. Those whom he helps actively to glorify and honour him; for he has said, "Them that honour me, I will honour," 1 Sam. ii. 30.

Q. 48. Does any thing so much secure our happy enjoyment of God, as the concern that the glory of God has in it?

A. No: for as God cannot but reach the great end of his own glory, so, when he has promised us eternal life, in Christ, before the world began, Tit. i. 2, we cannot come short of it; because it stands upon the honour of his faithfulness to make it good, Heb. x. 23; "He is faithful that promised."

Q. 49. How does it appear, that the enjoyment of God, which is connected with the glorifying of him, shall be [*for ever?*]

A. Because he who is the object enjoyed, is the *everlasting God*, Isa. xl. 28; and the enjoyment of him is not transitory, like the passing enjoyments of time, but the eternal enjoyment of the eternal God, Ps. xlviii. 14.

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

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

Q. 1. What necessity is there of a rule to direct us how to glorify and enjoy God?

A. It is necessary, because, since God will be glorified by the reasonable creature, nothing can be a perfect rule for that end, but his own revealed will, Rom. xii. 2.

Q. 2. Can man, by any wisdom or power of his own, ever attain to the glorifying of God, and the enjoyment of him, which he has come short of, by his fall in the *first Adam?*

A. No: his wisdom and knowledge in the things of God, are become folly and ignorance, Job xi. 12; and his power to do good is turned into utter impotency, John vi. 44.

Q. 3. Where has God revealed the way, in which man may recover and attain the end of his creation?

A. In [the word of God, which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,] John v. 39. *Search the scriptures, &c.*

Q. 4. How do you know the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the *word of God*?

A. By the *print* of God that is evidently to be seen upon them: for, as none works like God, Isa. xliii. 13; so none speaks like him, John vii. 46.

Q. 5. What do you understand by the print or impress of God that is so discernible in the scriptures?

A. That majesty, holiness, light, life, and efficacy, which shine in the word itself, Rom. i. 16; Ps. xix. 7.

Q. 6. What may be said of those who do not see that print of God in the word, though they read it?

A. It may be said, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not," 2 Cor. iv. 4.

Q. 7. Since all men are spiritually blind by nature, is it not in vain for them to read the scriptures?

A. No: it is the will of God that they should read and search the scriptures, John v. 39; and the entrance of his word gives light and sight to them that are blind, Psalm cxix. 130.

Q. 8. What should a man do that the Bible may not remain a sealed book to him?

A. Whenever he looks into the word of God, he should look up to God, the author of it, saying, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law," Ps. cxix. 18. "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me," Ps. xliii. 3.

Q. 9. By what arguments may we persuade men that are infidels, to receive the scriptures as the word of God?

A. We may deal with them by rational arguments drawn from their antiquity; the heavenliness of the matter; the majesty of the style; the harmony of all the parts, though written in different ages; the exact accomplishment of prophecies; the sublimity of the mysteries and matters contained in the word; the efficacy and power of it, in the conviction and conversion of multitudes; the scope of the whole, to guide men to attain their chief end, the glory of God in their own salvation; and the many miracles wrought for the confirmation of the truth of the doctrines contained in them.\*

Q. 10. Can these or the like rational arguments, ever produce a divine faith?

A. No: for rational arguments can only produce a mere rational faith, founded on reason; but a divine and saving faith rests wholly upon the divine testimony inherent in the word itself; or upon a "Thus saith the Lord."

Q. 11. How is this inherent testimony discovered?

A. By the same Spirit of God that dictated the word, 2 Pet. i. 21; he being an "Interpreter, one among a thousand," John xvi. 13.

\* See Confession of Faith, chap. i. § 5.

Q. 12. What is it that will fully persuade and assure a person that the scriptures are indeed the word of God?

A. "The Spirit of God bearing witness by, and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it, that they are the very word of God," John xvi. 13, 14. 1 John ii. 27.\*

Q. 13. Whether does the authority of the scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, depend upon the testimony of the church, or wholly upon God?

A. "Wholly upon God, (who is truth itself,) the author thereof; and, therefore, it is to be received, because it is the word of God," 1 John v. 9. 1 Thess. ii. 13.†

Q. 14. Why cannot the authority of the scriptures depend upon the church?

A. Because the true church of Christ depends, in its very being, on the scriptures; and therefore the scriptures cannot depend upon it, as to their authority, Eph. ii. 20, 22.

Q. 15. Are not the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, sufficient to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy God?

A. These "do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable, Rom. ii. 14, 15, and i. 19, 20; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation, 1 Cor. ii. 13, 14."‡

Q. 16. What makes a further revelation, than nature's light, necessary?

A. The glory of the Divine perfections, particularly his mercy, grace, love, and faithfulness, Ps. lxxxv. 8, 10, 11; the gross ignorance and degeneracy of mankind, 1 Cor. i. 20, 21; the sublimeness of the things revealed, which otherwise had never been known by men or angels, John i. 18: it is also necessary for trying the spirits and doctrines of men, and for unmasking the impostures of the devil, 1 John iv. 1—3.

Q. 17. How does it appear that the scriptures are not an imposition upon mankind?

A. If the penman of the scriptures had inclined to deceive, they would have accommodated themselves to the dispositions of the people with whom they conversed, and connived at their lusts; but, on the contrary, we find they faithfully exposed the errors and vices of men, and impartially set themselves against every thing that corrupt nature is fond of; and that, though they were laid open to the greatest hardships and sufferings for so doing, Acts v. 29, 30, 31—40, 41.

Q. 18. What is the meaning of the word [*scriptures* ?]

A. It signifies *writings*; and the word of God is empha-

\* Larger Cat. Q. 4.

† Confession, chap. i. § 4.

‡ Confession, chap. i. § 1.

tically so called, because God has therein *written* to us the great things of his law and covenant, Hos. viii. 12.

Q. 19. Why was the word of God committed to writing?

A. "For the better preserving and propagating of the truth; and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church, against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, Luke i. 3, 4. Prov. xxii. 20, 21."\*

Q. 20. How was the will of God made known to the church, before it was committed to writing?

A. By immediate revelations, Gen. ii. 16, 17, and iii. 15; by frequent appearances of the Son of God, delighting, beforehand, to try on the human likeness, Gen. xviii. 2, compared with v. 3, Judg. xiii. 11, compared with verses 18, 19; by the ministry of the holy angels, Gen. xix. 1, 15, Heb. ii. 2, and of the patriarchs, Jude, ver. 14, 15. Heb. xi. 7.

Q. 21. Why are the scriptures of the Old and New Testament called [*the word of God?*]

A. Because "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," 2 Tim. iii. 16, being immediately indited by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21.

Q. 22. Why are they commonly called the BIBLE?

A. The word BIBLE signifying a book; the holy scriptures are so called by way of eminence, because they are incomparably the best of all books, as containing the invariable grounds of faith in Christ, for life eternal, John xx. 31: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name."

Q. 23. Why are the holy scriptures called a [*Testament?*]

A. Because they are the last will of the glorious Testator, first typically, and then actually confirmed by his death, concerning the vast legacies therein bequeathed to his spiritual seed: Heb. ix. 16, "Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the Testator."

Q. 24. Why are the writings of Moses and the prophets called the [*Old Testament?*]

A. Because the will of the Testator, Christ, was veiled, legally dispensed, and typically sealed by the blood of sacrificed beasts, upon which account it is called comparatively faulty, Heb. viii. 7, 8; and was therefore to vanish away, verse 13.

Q. 25. To whom were the oracles of God, under the Old Testament, committed?

A. To the church of the Jews, Rom. iii. 1, 2: "What advantage hath the Jew? Much every way: chiefly, because unto them were committed the oracles of God."

\* Confession, chap. i. § 1.

Q. 26. Why are the scriptures from Matthew to the end of the Revelation, called the [*New Testament* ?]

A. Because they contain the most clear and full revelation, and actual ratification of the covenant of promise, by the death of Christ the Testator, who is also the living Executor of his own testament, Rev. i. 18: "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore." John xiv. 19: "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Q. 27. Will this New Testament dispensation of the grace of God ever undergo any other alteration?

A. No: it will remain new and unalterable, till the second coming of the Lord Jesus, Mat. xxvi. 29.

Q. 28. Do the scriptures of the Old Testament continue to be a rule of faith and practice to us who live under the New?

A. Yes: because they are the record of God concerning Christ, as well as the scriptures of the New Testament; for all the prophets prophesied of him; to him they did all bear witness, Acts x. 43; and Christ commands all to search them, because eternal life is to be found in them, and they testify of him, John v. 39.

Q. 29. How could the Old Testament be of force when it was not confirmed by the death of the Testator?

A. The death of Christ, the Testator, was typified in all the expiatory sacrifices of that dispensation; hence is he called, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8.

Q. 30. Is not that typical dispensation now quite abolished, under the New Testament?

A. Yes: for it was promised, that the Messiah should "cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease;" and accordingly, "Christ being come,—neither by the blood of goats nor calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," Heb. ix. 11, 12.

Q. 31. Why was that ceremonial dispensation abolished?

A. Because it was only "a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things;" that is, not the very things themselves, Heb. x. 1.

Q. 32. Wherein does the New Testament excel the Old?

A. Amongst other things, it excels it in respect of evidence, worship, extent, gifts, and duration.

Q. 33. Wherein does the New Testament excel the Old in respect of *evidence*?

A. The Old Testament speaks of a Messiah to come, but the New presents him as already come, John i. 29, 41; The Old was dark and cloudy, but the New clear and perspicuous, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Q. 34. How does it excel in respect of *worship*?

A. The worship of the Old Testament was a yoke of bondage; but the worship of the New is free, spiritual, and easy, Gal. v. 1.

Q. 35. How does the New Testament excel in respect of *extent*?

A. The Old was confined to the Jews, Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20, and a few proselytes among the Gentiles, Ex. xii. 48; but the New extends to all the world, Mark xvi. 15; and its converts are vastly more numerous than under the old dispensation, Rev. vii. 9.

Q. 36. How does it excel in respect of *gifts*?

A. The gifts of the Spirit are more plentiful, and more efficacious under the New, than under the Old, Acts ii. 17, 18.

Q. 37. How does the New Testament excel in respect of *duration*?

A. The dispensation of the Old Testament, by types and sacrifices, was only for a time, Heb. viii. 13; but the dispensation of the New, is to continue unalterable to the end of the world, Matt. xxviii. 20.

Q. 38. Why are the scriptures said to be [*the only rule*] to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy God?

A. Because none but God, the author of the scriptures, could, by them, show the way, how he himself is to be glorified and enjoyed by fallen sinners of mankind, Mic. vi. 6—9. Matt. xi. 25—28.

Q. 39. Although the light of nature, or natural reason, should not be *the only rule*, yet may it not be admitted as a *sufficient rule*, to direct us how to glorify and enjoy God?

A. By no means; because of its utter incapacity to give the smallest discovery of Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant, 1 Cor. ii. 14, who is the only way of salvation for lost sinners of Adam's family, John xiv. 6.

Q. 40. Is it enough to assert, that the word of God is the *principal rule* to direct us?

A. No: because this would leave room to conceive of *another* rule, beside the scriptures, which, though it might not be called the *principal one*, yet might be in itself abundantly *good* and *sufficient* for directing sinners to their chief end; which is false, and contrary to scripture, Luke xvi. 29, 31. Isa. viii. 20. Acts iv. 12.

Q. 41. Wherein consists the *perfection* of the scriptures?

A. It consists in this, that, "the whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture, 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. Gal. i. 8, 9."\*

Q. 42. Are plain and necessary scripture consequences

\* Confession, chap. i. § 6

so be admitted as a part of the rule, as well as express scriptures?

A. Yes: as is evident from the instance of our Lord, in proving the doctrine of the resurrection against the Sadducees, Matt. xxii. 31, 32. "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

Q. 43. Are the scriptures a clear and perspicuous rule?

A. All things necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation, are so clearly laid down in one place of scripture or another, that every one, in the due use of ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them, Ps. cxix. 105, 130.\*

Q. 44. Are human and unwritten traditions, how ancient soever, to be admitted as a part of the rule?

A. No: all human traditions are to be examined by the scriptures; and, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20.

Q. 45. Can the heathens, by all the helps they have, without revelation, attain to such a knowledge of God, and his will, as is necessary to salvation?

A. By no means: for they are declared to be "without God, and without hope in the world," Eph. ii. 12. "And where there is no vision, the people perish," Prov. xxix. 18; there being "no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," but that of Jesus, Acts iv. 12.

Q. 46. Is the light within men, or the Spirit without the word, which is pretended to by the Quakers, and other enthusiasts, to be used as any rule for our direction?

A. No: because whatever light or spirit is pretended to, without the word, it is but darkness, delusion, and a spirit of error, 1 John iv. 1, 6.

Q. 47. In what language were the scriptures originally written?

A. The Old Testament was written originally in *Hebrew*, and the New Testament in *Greek*.

Q. 48. Why ought the scriptures to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation where they come?

A. Because sinners of mankind have a right to, and interest in the scriptures, Prov. viii. 4; and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, John v. 39.

Q. 49. Who is the supreme judge, in whose sentence we are to rest in determining all controversies of religion, and examining the decrees and doctrines of men?

\* Confession, chap. i. § 7.

A. "No other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scripture," Matt. xxii. 29. Acts xxviii. 25.\*

Q. 50. Why are the books called the *Apocrypha* to be rejected as no part of the canon of scripture?

A. Because they were not written in the original language of the Old Testament; nor acknowledged for scripture by the Jews, to whom the oracles of God were committed; and have nothing of that impress of majesty, holiness, and efficacy, which shines so conspicuously in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; and because they were written after Malachi, whose book is called, *the end of the Prophets*; and contain many false things, contradictory and heretical.

Q. 51. Wherein consists the incomparable excellency and usefulness of the scriptures?

A. They are the well furnished dispensatory of all sovereign remedies, Ps. cvii. 20; the rich magazine of all true comfort, Rom. xv. 4; the complete armoury of all spiritual weapons, Eph. vi. 13—18; and the unerring compass to guide to the haven of glory, 2 Pet. i. 19.



QUEST. 3. *What do the scriptures principally teach?*

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

Q. 1. What is it [*to believe*] what the scriptures teach?

A. It is to assent and give credit to the truths thereof, because of the authority of God, whose word the scriptures are, John iii. 33. "He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true."

Q. 2. Are we to believe nothing in point of faith, and do nothing in point of duty, but what we are taught in the scripture?

A. No: because the scripture is the only book in the world of divine authority; and the revealed will and command of God therein, being so exceeding broad, nothing is incumbent on us to believe and do, but what is either directly, or consequentially prescribed in it, Isa. viii. 20.

Q. 3. Why are the scriptures said [*principally*] to teach matters of faith and practice?

A. Because though all things revealed in the scripture be equally true, yet every thing in it is not equally necessary to salvation, 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13.

\* See Confession, chap. i. § 10.

Q. 4. What is the order of doctrine laid down in this question?

A. Faith or believing is made the foundation of duty, or obedience; and not our obedience, or duty, the foundation of our faith, Tit. iii. 8.

Q. 5. Why are the things to be believed, set before the things to be practised?

A. To distinguish between the order of things in the covenant of grace, from what they were in innocency, in the covenant of works, Gal. iii. 12.

Q. 6. What was the order of things in the covenant of works?

A. Doing, or perfect obedience to the law, was the foundation of the promised privilege of life: "The man which doeth these things, shall live by them," Rom. x. 5.

Q. 7. Is this order inverted in the covenant of grace, or gospel revelation?

A. Yes: the promise is to be believed, and the promised privilege, namely, life, must be freely received; and upon this follows our obedience to the law, from gratitude and love, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19.

Q. 8. How does it appear that this is the order of gospel doctrine?

A. Because this is the order that God laid, in delivering the law at Mount Sinai; the foundation of faith is first laid in these words of the preface, "I am the Lord thy God," &c., which is the sum and substance of the covenant of grace; and then follow the *Ten Commandments*, which are, as it were, grafted upon this grant of sovereign grace and love, Ex. xx. 2—18.

Q. 9. Is this the order of doctrine laid down in the standards of the church of Scotland?

A. Yes: as appears from this *Answer* to that *Question* in the *SHORTER CATECHISM*, "What doth the preface to the ten commandments teach us?" The *Answer* is, "That because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer; therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments."\*

Q. 10. Are we then to keep the commandments, that God *may become* our God?

A. No: for this were to slide into a covenant of works; but we are to keep them, BECAUSE *he is our God*, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace; Ps. xlv. 11, in metre,—"Because he is thy Lord, do thou him worship reverently."

Q. 11. Why do men naturally think, that upon their doing certain acts, God will be their God?

A. Because of the natural bias of the heart of man, to the

\* See also Confession, chap. xvi. § 2. Larger Catechism, Q. 101, 104.

*order* in the covenant of works, *do*, and *live*, Rom. ix. 32, and chap. x. 3.

Q. 12. Does not this order make void the law, or weaken our obligation to the duties of it?

A. By no means; but rather establishes the law, and settles our obligation to duty upon its proper foundation, Rom. iii. 31. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

Q. 13. How is this order of doctrine further evinced?

A. From the method of doctrine observed by the apostle Paul, who tells us, that all true gospel obedience is the obedience of *faith*, Rom. xvi. 26. And accordingly in his epistles, he first lays down the doctrine of faith to be believed; and, upon that foundation, proceeds to inculcate the duties that are to be practised.

Q. 14. Does gospel obedience interest us in God, as our God?

A. No: but it is a fruit and evidence of our interest in him, 1 John ii. 3, 5.

Q. 15. Is there any danger of inverting this order, and of making duty done by us, the foundation of believing the Lord to be our God?

A. There is exceedingly great danger; for it is the very soul of Popery. By inverting this order, they were led back to a covenant of works, and the doctrine of the merit of good works, which is the foundation of the whole Antichristian superstructure.

Q. 16. Do not we find frequently in scripture, a reward promised to good works, Ps. cxix. 1. "In keeping of thy commandments there is a great reward:" Ps. lviii. 11. "Verily there is a reward to the righteous?"

A. True; but this is a reward of grace, not of debt: the man that is rewarded, must be a believer in Christ, whose person is first accepted, through his union to Christ by faith, and the imputation of his righteousness, before any of his works or duties can be accepted, Eph. i. 6. Gen. iv. 4.

Q. 17. What may be said of the works of a man that has no faith?

A. They are dead works, and so cannot please a living God. An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, Matt. vii. 18: and without Christ, and union with him, we can do nothing, John xv. 4, 5.

Q. 18. What is to be thought of those who inculcate moral duties, without discovering the necessity of the new birth and union with Christ by faith, as the spring of all acceptable obedience?

A. They are foolish builders, laying their foundation on the sand, perverting the gospel of Christ; against whom

the apostle denounces an awful doom, Gal. i. 9: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

QUEST. 4. *What is God?*

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

OF THE NATURE AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD IN GENERAL.

Q. 1. What is the first fundamental truth to be believed, and upon which all other truths depend?

A. That God is; or that there is a God, Heb. ix. 6. "He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is."

Q. 2. Is this fundamental truth known by the light of natural reason?

A. Yes: as the apostle declares, Rom. i. 20. "The invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and Godhead."

Q. 3. In what *volumes* has God discovered the knowledge of himself to all mankind?

A. In the great volumes of *creation* and *providence*; which he opens to all the world.

Q. 4. What says the volume of *Creation* as to the *being* of a God?

A. All creatures in general, and every creature in particular, say that God "made us, and not we ourselves," Ps. c. 3.

Q. 5. What says the volume of *Providence*?

A. It says, that the same God who gave us being, upholds us therein; and governs us to the end for which he made us, Heb. i. 3.

Q. 6. Is not every man's *own being*, a convincing evidence that there is a God?

A. Yes: for, "in him we live, move, and have our being." No man can have any hand in his own formation in the womb, Ps. cxxxix. 15, 16; nor can he add a cubit unto his stature, or make one hair of his head either white or black, Matt. vi. 27; and v. 36.

Q. 7. Though the works of creation and providence declare *that* God is, can they also tell us *what* God is?

A. They afford us some dark glimpses of his eternal power, wisdom, greatness, and goodness; but it is only by and through the scriptures of truth, set home on the soul by his Spirit, that we can attain the saving know-

ledge of God, and of his perfections, John v. 39. 2 Pet. i. 19. Rom. xv. 4.

Q. 8. Who is it that reveals God to the sons of men in the word?

A. Christ, the eternal Son of God: "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," John i. 18.

Q. 9. What account of himself, has God given us in the scriptures?

A. There are three short, but comprehensive descriptions which he has given of himself there; (1.) That God is light, 1 John i. 5. (2.) That God is love, 1 John iv. 8, 16. (3.) That God is a Spirit, John iv. 24.

Q. 10. Why is God said to be light?

A. Because of his infinite purity and omniscience, Hab. i. 13. Heb. iv. 13; and because he is the fountain and father of all light, whether material, natural, gracious, or glorious, James i. 17.

Q. 11. Why is God said to be love?

A. Because, according to the manifestation he has made of himself in Christ, love is the reigning excellency of his nature, which gives a dye or tincture to all his other perfections, in their egress, or exercise about the salvation of sinners, of mankind, John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 8—10.

Q. 12. Why is he said to be [*a Spirit?*]

A. Because he is necessarily and essentially a living intelligent substance; incorruptible, incorporeal, without flesh, or bones, or bodily parts, Luke xxiv. 39.

Q. 13. How far does God transcend all created spirits?

A. He is as infinitely above the being of all created spirits, as he is above the conception of all intelligent creatures. Job xxxvii. 23: "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out."

Q. 14. Since God is a most simple and pure Spirit, why are bodily parts, such as eyes, ears, hands, face, and the like, ascribed to him in scripture?

A. Such figurative expressions ought not to be understood in their literal sense, but according to the true scope and intent of them; which is to set forth some acts and perfections of the divine nature, to which these members of the body bear some faint resemblance. Thus, when eyes and ears are ascribed to God, they signify his omniscience; hands are designed to denote his power; and his face, the manifestation of his favour: and in this light, other metaphors of like nature, when applied to God, ought to be explained.

Q. 15. Is it lawful to form any external image of God with the hand, or any internal imaginary idea of him in the fancy?

A. It is absolutely unlawful and idolatrous; condemned in the second commandment, and other scriptures, Deut. iv. 12; 15. Rom. i. 23. Man cannot form an imaginary idea of his own soul or spirit, far less of Him who is the Father of spirits.

Q. 16. What may we learn from God's being a spirit?

A. To worship him in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24.

Q. 17. What is it to worship him in spirit and in truth?

A. It is to worship him, from a real and saving knowledge of what he is in Christ to lost sinners of mankind, John xvii. 3.

Q. 18. Is it possible for man to attain the real and saving knowledge of God?

A. Although neither men nor angels can have a comprehensive knowledge of God, Job xi. 7—9; yet, besides the speculative and merely rational knowledge of him, which men have, and may have much of, by the light of nature, a saving and satisfying knowledge of him is attainable, and is promised in the word, Jer. xxiv. 7. "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord." And John vi. 45. "It is written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of God."

Q. 19. Wherein consists the saving knowledge of God?

A. It is like the *white stone* and *new name*, which no man knows but he that receives it, Rev. ii. 17; and he that attains it, cannot make language of it, but silently admires what he cannot comprehend: only, there is no saving knowledge of God, but in and through Christ the Saviour 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Q. 20. What is the language of the soul that sees God, and knows him savingly in Christ?

A. It is like that of Moses, Ex. xv. 11: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord!—who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders!" Or that of the Psalmist, Ps. xlvi. 14: "This God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death."

Q. 21. What are the rays of divine glory in the face of Jesus Christ, by which we come to know God savingly?

A. They are the attributes and perfections of his nature, by which he is pleased to manifest himself; such as, that he is [infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.]

Q. 22. Are these attributes of God, distinct things from God himself, or the divine essence?

A. By no means; for, *whatever is in God, is God himself*; and therefore the infinity of all perfection, is inseparable from the divine essence.

Q. 23. Are the divine attributes separable from one another, so as that which is infinite should not be eternal,

and that which is infinite and eternal, should not be unchangeable, and so of the rest ?

A. All perfections whatsoever being inseparable from God, must also be inseparable from one another ; for though we, through weakness, must think and speak of them separately, yet all of them taken together, are, properly speaking, but the one infinite perfection of the divine nature, which cannot be separated from it, without granting that God is not infinitely perfect, which would be the height of blasphemy to suppose.

Q. 24. Why are the perfections of God called his *attributes* ?

A. Because they are *attributed* or ascribed to him, as the essential properties of his nature, 1 Chron. xxix. 11.

Q. 25. How are the attributes of God commonly divided ?

A. Into incommunicable and communicable.

Q. 26. What are the incommunicable attributes of God, mentioned in the *Answer* ?

A. His infinity, eternity, and unchangeableness.

Q. 27. Why called incommunicable ?

A. Because there is not the least resemblance of them to be found among the creatures.

Q. 28. What are the attributes that are called communicable ?

A. They are being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Q. 29. Why called communicable ?

A. Because there is some faint resemblance or similitude of them to be found among the creatures, namely, angels, and saints : hence are they proposed in scripture for our imitation, Ps. xi. 6 : " The righteous Lord loveth righteousness."—1 Pet. i. 16. " Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Q. 30. Can these communicable attributes be ascribed to any creature, as they are in God ?

A. No : for they are in God, infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably ; he is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being ; infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his wisdom, and so on of the rest, which would be blasphemy to affirm of any creature : hence it is said, Matt. xix. 17, " There is none good but one, that is God :"—none infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably good, but he only.

#### OF GOD'S INFINITY.

Q. 1. What is it for God to be [*infinite* ?]

A. It is to be absolutely without all bounds or limits in his being and perfections, Job xi. 7—9.

Q. 2. What does the infinity of God imply in it?

A. His incomprehensibility, immensity, and omnipresence.

Q. 3. What is it for God to be incomprehensible?

A. It is infinitely to transcend the most enlarged capacity of men or angels, as to his being and perfections, Ps. cxlv. 3. Job xxxvi. 26.

Q. 4. What is the immensity of God?

A. As it includes his omnipresence, it is that perfection of his nature, by which he is every where present with all and every one of his creatures; and infinitely exceeds all their limits and boundaries, 1 Kings viii. 27.

Q. 5. What is the difference between the omnipresence and immensity of God?

A. The omnipresence of God is included in his immensity, and though not separable therefrom, yet may be conceived as having a respect to created substances, with every one of which he is intimately present; whereas his immensity extends infinitely beyond the boundaries of all created substance, 2 Chron. vi. 8.

Q. 6. Is God every where present only as to his knowledge and power?

A. He is every where present also as to his essence or being, as is evident from Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.

Q. 7. How may this be evinced also from reason?

A. Reason teaches us that no creature can subsist by itself, without the presence of God to uphold it in its being and operation. Acts xvii. 28: "In him we live, and move, and have our being."

Q. 8. How is God present with the church here on earth?

A. He is present, with the church visible, by the ordinances and symbols of his institution, Ex. xx. 24; and with the church invisible, or believers, by the inhabitation and operation of his Holy Spirit, Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

Q. 9. How is he present in heaven?

A. By the most bright and immediate displays of his glory; all the inhabitants of the upper sanctuary seeing him as he is, and enjoying him without interruption for ever, 1 John iii. 2. Ps. xvi. 11.

Q. 10. How is he present in hell?

A. In a way of tremendous power and justice, upholding the damned in their being, that they may lie under the strokes of his vindictive wrath for evermore, Ps. xc. 11. Matt. xxv. 46.

Q. 11. What may we learn from God's omnipresence?

A. That no affliction or temptation can befall the saints without his knowledge and sympathy, Isa. xliii. 2.

## OF GOD'S ETERNITY.

Q. 1. What is the difference between time and eternity?

A. Time has a continual succession, the former time passing away, and another succeeding; but eternity is an infinite immutable duration.

Q. 2. What is it for God to be [*eternal*?]?

A. It is that perfection of his nature, by which he continually exists, without any beginning, end, or succession of time.

Q. 3. How do you prove that God is without beginning?

A. From Ps. xc. 2, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God;" that is, since thou didst exist before the mountains were brought forth, or before the beginning of time, thou art absolutely eternal.

Q. 4. How do you prove that God is without end?

A. From Ps. cii. 12, 27, "Thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever,—and thy years shall have no end;" for that which had no beginning of duration, can never have an end of it, but must always necessarily exist.

Q. 5. How do you prove that he is without succession of time?

A. From Ps. xc. 4, "A thousand years are in thy sight but as yesterday when it is past:" and 2 Pet. iii. 8, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." He does not only always remain in being, but is always the same in that being, Ps. cii. 27.

Q. 6. What is the difference between God's eternity, and the eternity of angels and the souls of men?

A. God's eternity is essential, absolute, and independent, without beginning, as well as without end; but the eternity of angels, and of the souls of men, is quite of another nature; for, as they had a beginning, so their duration admits of a succession, as long as time lasts: and though they shall never have an end, yet this eternity of theirs is not necessary and essential to their nature, but flows from the will and power of God; who, if he pleased, could bring them to an end, as well as he gave them a beginning.

Q. 7. What use should the wicked make of God's eternity?

A. It should be matter of the greatest terror to them while they continue in their wickedness; for, in this case, God will be their eternal foe, and will punish them with everlasting destruction, 2 Thess. i. 9.

Q. 8. What use should the godly, or believers in Christ, make of it?

A. They should improve it as matter of unspeakable comfort; because their God, being the eternal God, will therefore be the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever, Ps. lxxiii. 26.

#### OF GOD'S UNCHANGEABLENESS.

Q. 1. What do you understand by God's being [*unchangeable* ?]

A. His most perfect constancy, by which he is infinitely free from any actual or possible change, and is always the same.

Q. 2. How is God's unchangeableness proved from scripture?

A. From Mal. iii. 6, "I am the Lord, I change not;" and James i. 17—"The Father of lights, with whom is no variability, neither shadow of turning."

Q. 3. How may it be proved from reason?

A. Reason teaches, that if God did change, it behoved either to be to the better, or to the worse; neither of which is consistent with his absolute perfection, Matt. v. 48.

Q. 4. Can any creature be unchangeable in its nature?

A. No: because every creature depends upon God for being and operation, Acts xvii. 28.

Q. 5. Are not holy angels, and glorified saints, unchangeable?

A. They are in a state of unchangeable happiness, Eph. i. 10; but this is owing to sovereign grace, and not to their own natures, Rom. vi. 23.

Q. 6. Did *creation* make any change in God?

A. It made a change in the creature, from nothing to being; but none in God, because his will and power to create were the same from eternity.

Q. 7. How is God unchangeable, when he is sometimes said in scripture to *repent*, as in Gen. vi. 6. Jonah iii. 10?

A. When, in these or the like places, he is said to repent, it imports only an alteration of his way, or outward conduct, according to his infallible foresight, but no change of his mind or will, Job xxiii. 13.

Q. 8. What may we learn from God's unchangeableness?

A. That he will accomplish his promise, Micah vii. 20; rest in his love, Zeph. iii. 17; and finish the good work which he has begun in the soul, Phil. i. 6.

Q. 9. In what is God infinite, eternal, and unchangeable?

A. [In his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.]

## OF GOD'S BEING.

- Q. 1. What is understood by God's [*being*?]  
 A. It is what is usually called his essence.
- Q. 2. What is the divine essence?  
 A. It is the glorious and transcendent nature of God, by which he is infinitely blessed in himself, and comprehended by none beside himself.
- Q. 3. What is the highest perfection of *being*?  
 A. That to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken, and which is independent of all things else, Job xxxv. 6—8.
- Q. 4. Can *being* itself, or *being* in a proper and strict sense, be attributed to any, but God only?  
 A. No: for though the heavens and the earth, angels and men, have a being; yet there is no infinite, eternal, and unchangeable being, but God only. It is God alone that can say, I AM, Ex. iii. 14.
- Q. 5. What is the import of that name, I AM?  
 A. It is of the same import with the name  $\text{J}\epsilon\text{H}\text{O}\text{V}\text{A}\text{H}$ : as if he had said, I am being itself, the author and fountain of all beings in heaven or earth.
- Q. 6. What are all other beings, in comparison with the being of God?  
 A. All other beings are but created, contingent, and shadowy beings, if compared with his, who spoke them into being, Ps. xxxiii. 6, 9.
- Q. 7. What says God concerning those that are taken up with created beings, without ever reflecting upon the supreme, infinite, and eternal Being?  
 A. That they are brutish among the people; fools, destitute of wisdom, Ps. xciv. 8; more brutish than the ox that knoweth his owner, Isa. i. 3.
- Q. 8. Are not all created beings, with their perfections, originally in God, and from him?  
 A. Yes; as is evident from the unanswerable reasoning of the Spirit of God, Ps. xciv. 9, 10:—"He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see?—He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?"
- Q. 9. What may we learn from God's *being*?  
 A. That as he gave being to all the creatures, so he will give being to all his promises, in their full accomplishment Ex. vi. 3

## OF GOD'S WISDOM.

- Q. 1. Is not omniscience, or infinite knowledge and understanding, inseparably connected with infinite [*wisdom*?]

A. Yes: "For the Lord is a God of knowledge, by him actions are weighed," 1 Sam. ii. 3.

Q. 2: What is God's omniscience?

A. It is that perfection of his nature, by which he knows all things most perfectly in himself, by one eternal act, Acts xv. 18.

Q. 3. How do you prove from scripture that he knows all things?

A. From 1 John iii. 20: "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."

Q. 4. How does God's omniscience appear from reason?

A. He who made all things, cannot but know and comprehend his own workmanship, Ps. xciv. 9.

Q. 5. How does it appear that he has a perfect knowledge of intelligent creatures?

A. If he did not perfectly know them, and their actions, he could not be their supreme governor and judge, Heb. iv. 13.

Q. 6. What is the object of the divine knowledge or omniscience?

A. God himself, Matt. xi. 27, and all other things whatsoever, John xxi. 17.

Q. 7. How is it evident, that God has a most perfect knowledge of himself, and his own glorious excellencies?

A. Because otherwise his understanding would not be infinite, as it is asserted to be, Ps. cxlvii. 5, in regard all other objects, beside himself, are but finite.

Q. 8. Is the knowledge of God absolutely independent upon the creature?

A. It is so independent upon the creature, "as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain," Acts xv. 18. Ezek. xi. 5.\*

Q. 9. How does it appear, that God has a certain and infallible knowledge of contingent actions, or of such things as seem casual and accidental to us?

A. It appears from this, that future events, which depend upon the freedom of man's will, or upon second causes, are expressly foretold in scripture, and, therefore, certainly foreknown by God; such as, Joseph's preferment, and Israel's oppression in Egypt; Ahab's death, though by an arrow shot at a venture; Cæsar's decree, that all the world should be taxed, bringing about Christ's birth at Bethlehem; and many other instances.

Q. 10. How does God know things that are only possible?

A. He knows them in his power, which could easily bring them to pass if he had so decreed, Matt. xix. 26.

Q. 11. How does he know things future, or such as actually come to pass in time?

\* Confession, chap. ii. § 2.

A. He knows them not only in his power, as able to effect them; but in his will, as determining their futurity or after-existence, Gen. xvii. 21.

Q. 12. Is God's knowledge of things general or particular?

A. It is a particular knowledge of every individual creature, and every circumstance about it, Ps. cxxxix. 2. Matt. x. 29, 30.

Q. 13. Is there any succession in his knowledge, or does he know one thing before another?

A. As there is no succession in his essence, so there is none in his knowledge; he knows all things eternally; infallibly, and immutably, by one single act of his infinite understanding, Heb. iv. 13: "All things are naked and opened, unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

Q. 14. What conception may we have of the difference between the infinite knowledge and wisdom of God?

A. His infinite knowledge comprehends all things in heaven and earth, by one intuitive glance of his infinite mind; but his infinite wisdom directs these things to the proper ends, for which he gave them their being, Rom. xi. 36.

Q. 15. How does the wisdom of God appear in the work of creation?

A. It appears in the excellent order, beauty, and harmony that are to be seen in all parts of the creation, Ps. xix. 1—7; in the subserviency of one thing to another, Hos. ii. 21, 22; the tendency of the whole, to manifest the glory of God, Rev. iv. 11; and calculate also for the good of man as his peculiar favourite, Ps. cxv. 16.

Q. 16. How does the wisdom of God appear in the works of providence?

A. In adjusting the whole of his administrations according to the plan laid in his infinite mind from eternity; or his most judicious and regular putting his counsels into execution, Ps. xxxiii. 10, 11.

Q. 17. How does the wisdom of God shine in the work of redemption?

A. In making an honourable egress and vent for his mercy and love to sinners of mankind, in the way of satisfying his justice to the full, by the obedience and death of the blessed Surety, Rom. v. 21.

Q. 18. What encouragement ought we to take from the wisdom of God?

A. That he will make all things work together for our good, Rom. viii. 28; and that no plot can be so deeply laid for our ruin, but his wisdom can easily frustrate and disappoint, Job v. 13.

## OF GOD'S POWER.

Q. 1. What is the [*power*] of God ?

A. It is that essential perfection of his nature, by which he can do whatsoever he pleases, in heaven and earth, in the seas, and all deep places, Ps. cxxxv. 6.

Q. 2. What is the object of divine power, or to what does it extend ?

A. To all things possible, though limited, by his will, to those things only which he has decreed to be done, Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.

Q. 3. Is it any impeachment of God's omnipotence, that he cannot lie, cannot deny himself ?

A. By no means ; for, on the contrary, God is therefore omnipotent, because it is impossible for him to do evil or depart from the infinite rectitude of his own will, 1 Sam. xv. 29 : "The strength of Israel will not lie."

Q. 4. In what does God manifest his infinite power ?

A. In creation, providence, and redemption.

Q. 5. How is the power of God manifested in creation ?

A. In calling "those things that be not as though they were," Rom. iv. 7 ; without the assistance or instrumentality of any whosoever, Isa. xlv. 24.

Q. 6. How is it displayed in the conduct of providence ?

A. In upholding and preserving all his creatures from sinking into their original nothing, Heb. i. 3 ; and, particularly, in protecting and defending his church, in midst of all the dangers and enemies, with which it is surrounded, Matt. xvi. 18.

Q. 7. How is the power of God illustrated in the glorious work of redemption ?

A. By laying the chief corner-stone thereof, in the union of the human nature to the person of the Son of God ; supporting him under the inconceivable load of divine wrath, for our sins, and spoiling principalities and powers in that very nature which Satan had vanquished at first ; hence he is called "the power of God," 1 Cor. i. 24 ; "the arm of the Lord," Isa. liii. 1 ; and "the man of his right hand," Ps. lxxx. 17.

Q. 8. How is the power of God denied or abused by men ?

A. By limiting it, as Israel did, Ps. lxxviii. 19 ; by trusting more to an arm of flesh, than to the arm of God, Jer. xvii. 5 ; and by fearing the wrath of man more than the displeasure of God, Isa. li. 12, 13.

Q. 9. What improvement may faith make of the power of a promising God ?

A. It can fasten upon it, for the performance of his gracious word, Rom. iv. 20, 21 : for resisting and conquering

sin, Satan, and the world, saying, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Rom. viii. 31; and for the practice of any commanded duty, however difficult, saying, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 13.

## OF GOD'S HOLINESS.

Q. 1. What is the [*holiness*] of God?

A. It is that essential rectitude or integrity of his nature, by which he infinitely delights in his own purity, and in every thing agreeable to his will, Hab. i. 13; and has a perfect hatred and abhorrence of every thing contrary to it, Jer. xlv. 4.

Q. 2. Is God necessarily holy?

A. Holiness is as necessary to him as his being: he is as necessarily holy, as he is necessarily God: "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord!—for thou only art holy," Rev. xv. 4.

Q. 3. What peculiar honour does God put upon his own holiness?

A. He singles it out as the attribute to swear by, for the accomplishment of his promises and threatenings, Ps. lxxxix. 35: "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David."

Q. 4. Are finite creatures able to behold the brightness of God's holiness?

A. No: for when the angels themselves view his infinite holiness, as manifested in Christ, they are represented as covering their faces with their wings, Isa. vi. 2.

Q. 5. How are sinners of mankind made partakers of his holiness?

A. By regenerating grace, and spiritual ingraftment into the *second Adam*, John xv. 4, 5; by faith's improvement of the great and precious promises, 2 Pet. i. 4; and by beholding the glory of this attribute, as it shines in the person and sufferings of the Son of God, presented to our view in the glass of the gospel revelation, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Q. 6. Does every thing pertaining to God, bear the stamp and impress of his holiness?

A. Yes: he is *holy in all his works*, Ps. cxlv. 17; his word is holy, Rom. i. 2; his covenant or promise is holy, Ps. cv. 42; his Sabbath is holy, Isa. lviii. 13; his people are holy, chap. lxii. 12; his ministering spirits are the holy angels, Rev. xiv. 10; and the place where he dwells, is the high and holy place, Isa. lvii. 15.

Q. 7. In what did the holiness of God appear in the creation of man?

A. In making him upright, Eccl. vii. 29, after his own image, Gen. i. 27; and writing a law upon his heart, which was the transcript of his holiness, Rom. vii. 12.

Q. 8. How has God discovered his holiness in his providential procedure?

A. In not sparing the angels who sinned; and in the visible and remarkable judgments, which he has inflicted upon notorious offenders in this life, 2 Pet. ii. 4—6.

Q. 9. What was the highest display of God's holiness, and detestation of sin?

A. His hiding his face from his own beloved Son, as bearing our iniquity, Matt. xxvii. 46.

Q. 10. What is the greatest opposite of the holiness of God?

A. Sin: therefore called that abominable thing which God hates, Jer. xlv. 4.

Q. 11. How does God hate sin?

A. He hates it necessarily, and with a "perfect hatred," Ps. v. 4—6.

Q. 12. Since God thus hates sin, how does his permission of it consist with his holiness?

A. It fully consists with it, because his permission of sin has no influence upon the commission of it, which entirely flows from the free will of the sinner, James i. 13, 14. Besides, God thereby takes occasion to give a brighter display of his holiness and detestation of sin, than though Adam had continued in innocence; when he spared not his own Son, but gave him unto death on account of it, Rom. viii. 32.

Q. 13. What improvement ought we to make of the holiness of God?

A. To "give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness," Ps. xxx. 4; to proclaim the glory of it, Ex. xv. 11; and to study holiness in all manner of conversation, 1 Pet. i. 15.

Q. 14. How may we know if we have suitable impressions of God's holiness?

A. If we stand in awe to offend him, Gen. xxxix. 9; and have an habitual desire after more conformity to him, 1 John iii. 3.

## OF GOD'S JUSTICE.

Q. 1. What is the [*justice*] of God?

A. It is that essential attribute of his nature, by which he is infinitely righteous and equal in himself, and in all his ways towards his creatures, Deut. xxxii. 4.

Q. 2. How may the justice of God be considered?

A. Either as it relates to himself, or to rational creatures.

Q. 3. What is God's justice as it relates to himself?

A. It is his making his own glory the fixed and invariable rule of the whole of his procedure, Isa. xlii. 8.

Q. 4. What is God's justice in relation to rational creatures?

A. It is his righteous government of them, according to their nature, and the law he has given them, Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15.

Q. 5. How is it usually distinguished?

A. Into legislative and distributive justice.

Q. 6. What is *legislative* justice?

A. It is his giving most holy, just, and good laws to rational creatures, commanding and forbidding them, what is fit for them to do, or forbear, Isa. xxxiii. 22.

Q. 7. Has man a power to give obedience to these laws?

A. He once had power, but by the fall has lost it, Rom. iii. 23.

Q. 8. How does it consist with the justice of God to demand that obedience, which man has not power to give?

A. God cannot lose his right to demand obedience to his laws, though man has lost his power to give it; especially as man's inability was contracted by his own voluntary apostasy and rebellion, Eccl. vii. 29: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

Q. 9. What is God's *distributive* justice?

A. It is his constant will, to render to rational creatures their due, according to law, without respect to persons, Job xxxiv. 11. 1 Pet. i. 17.

Q. 10. What are the laws according to which God will distribute justice among men?

A. They are two: the law of *works*, and the law of *faith*.

Q. 11. Where are they mentioned?

A. In Rom. iii. 27: "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."

Q. 12. What is understood by the law of works, and the law of faith?

A. By the law of works, is understood the covenant of works; and by the law of faith, the covenant of grace.

Q. 13. What is due to the sinner, in justice, according to the law of works?

A. Death, and the curse; which include all wo and misery, in time, and through eternity, Rom. vi. 23. Gal. iii. 10.

Q. 14. What is the sinner's due according to the law of faith?

A. Acquittance and acceptance, on account of the surety-righteousness imputed to him, and apprehended by faith, Rom. iii. 24, and viii. 1.

Q. 15. Is God just in dealing thus with the ungodly sinner, who believes in Christ?

A. Yes: his righteousness is declared in so doing, Rom.

iii. 25, 26: "Whom God hath set forth for a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness,—that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

Q. 16. Does God reward the sincere, though imperfect obedience of his people to the law, as a rule of life?

A. In keeping of his commandments there is indeed *great reward*, Ps. xix. 11; but then this reward is entirely of free grace, and not of debt, Rom. iv. 4, 5: it is not on account of any worth in their obedience, Ps. cxv. 1; but only on account of what Christ has *merited*, by his obedience to the death, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Q. 17. How is this kind of justice called?

A. Remunerative or rewarding justice, Ps. lviii. 11: "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous."

Q. 18. Is not God's taking vengeance on transgressors, a righteous act of justice?

A. Yes; for "every transgression and disobedience receives a just recompense of reward," Heb. ii. 2. "It is a righteous thing to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you," 2 Thess. i. 6. Hence says the same apostle, Rom. iii. 5, 6,—“Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?”

Q. 19. How is this justice of God called?

A. Vindictive or punishing justice, Acts xxviii. 4.

Q. 20. What is *vindictive justice*?

A. It is God's inflicting the punishment upon sin, which is threatened in the law, Gen. ii. 17, Ezek. xviii. 4.

Q. 21. Could God, of his own free will, have pardoned sin without a satisfaction to his justice?

A. No: for he has declared, "that in forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin," he "will by no means clear the guilty;" namely, without a satisfaction, Ex. xxxiv. 7.

Q. 22. How do you prove, that vindictive, or punishing justice, is essential to God?

A. From the infinite holiness of God, who cannot but hate, and consequently punish sin, Hab. i. 12, 13; from his faithfulness in the threatening, Gen. ii. 17; Ps. xcv. 11; from the remarkable judgments that have been inflicted on sinners in this life, Jude, verse 5, 7; and from the sufferings and death of God's only begotten Son, whom he would surely have spared, if there had been any other possible way of pardoning sin, but through his satisfaction, Matt. xxvi. 42. 2 Cor. v. 21.

Q. 23. What improvement ought we to make of the justice of God, as glorified by the satisfactory death of his own Son?

A. To plead the perfect and full satisfaction of it by the Surety, as the honourable channel, in which we expect all

mercy and grace to flow plentifully to us, as the Psalmist did, Ps. xxv. 11: "For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great."

## OF GOD'S GOODNESS.

Q. 1. What is the [*goodness*] of God?

A. It is that essential property of his nature, by which he is infinitely good in himself, and the author and fountain of all good to others, Ps. cxix. 68.

Q. 2. How may the goodness of God be distinguished?

A. Into his absolute and relative goodness.

Q. 3. What is his *absolute* goodness?

A. It is the essential goodness of his nature, without considering it in relation to the creatures, Matt. xix. 17: "There is none good but one, that is, God."

Q. 4. What is his *relative* goodness?

A. It is the relation that his goodness bears to the creatures; both in the propensity of his nature to do them good, Ex. xxxiii. 19, and in the actual manifestation and communication of the blessings of his bounty to them, in creation, providence, and redemption, chap. xxxiv. 6, 7.

Q. 5. How is the goodness of God manifested in the work of creation in general?

A. In giving being to his creatures, when he stood in no need of them, being infinitely happy in himself, though no creature had ever been made, Ps. xvi. 2; and in making all things very good, Gen. i. 31.

Q. 6. How is the goodness of God displayed in the creation of man in particular?

A. In making him after his own image; furnishing the world with such a variety of creatures for his use; giving him dominion over them, Gen. i. 27, 28; and in entering into covenant with him, chap. ii. 16, 17.

Q. 7. How is the goodness of God manifested in his providence?

A. In preserving his creatures, and making bountiful provision for them, Ps. cxlv. 9, 15, 16.

Q. 8. How is this goodness distinguished?

A. Into common and special goodness.

Q. 9. What is his *common* goodness?

A. His dispensing the good things of this life, promiscuously among his creatures, Matt. v. 45: "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Q. 10. Is God good even to the wicked who are his enemies?

A. Yes; for he not only provides for them, "filling their

hearts with food and gladness," Acts xiv. 17; but exercises long-suffering patience towards them, Neh. ix. 17; and affords such of them as are within the visible church, the means of salvation, Acts xiii. 26.

Q. 11. What is the *special* goodness of God?

A. It is his distinguishing love to a certain number of mankind lost, manifested in their redemption through Christ, Rev. v. 9.

Q. 12. In what does the goodness of God appear in the work of redemption?

A. Both in the contrivance and execution of it.

Q. 13. How does the goodness of God appear in the *contrivance* of redemption?

A. In remembering us in our low state, Ps. cxxxvi. 23; laying our help on his own Son, the mighty One, Ps. lxxxix. 19; and in setting him up as a new covenant head from everlasting, Prov. viii. 23.

Q. 14. How does it appear in the *execution* of our redemption?

A. In sending his Son to assume our nature, and thus to fulfil all righteousness for us, John iii. 16, Jer. xxiii. 6; and on the foundation of that righteousness, giving us grace and glory, and every good thing, from a cup of cold water, to a seat with him on his throne, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Rev. iii. 21.

Q. 15. What are the streams in which the special goodness of God flows out?

A. In the streams of love, grace and mercy, according to his name, Ex. xxxiv. 6,—“the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious,” &c.

Q. 16. What is the difference between the love, grace, and mercy of God?

A. They are much the same, only love considers the sinner simply as God's creature; grace views him as undeserving; and mercy, through a satisfaction, respects him as in misery.

Q. 17. Who are the objects of God's special goodness?

A. His chosen ones, Ps. cvi. 4, 5: “O visit me with thy salvation, that I may see the good of thy chosen.”

Q. 18. Can this special goodness of God be expressed in words?

A. No; for “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,” 1 Cor. ii. 9. And Ps. xxxi. 19. “O! how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee.”

Q. 19. Where is this goodness of God *laid up*?

A. It is laid up in Christ, who has received the gifts of God's goodness for men, Ps. lxxviii. 18: “When he ascend-

ed up on high, he—gave gifts unto men," Eph. iv. 8; and therefore, God has *made him most blessed for ever*, Ps. xxi. 6.

Q. 20. How is this goodness laid out and brought near to us?

A. It is laid out in the exceeding great and precious promises, 2 Pet. i. 4; and brought near in the full, free, and unhampered offer of the gospel, Mark xvi. 15.

Q. 21. How are we savingly interested in all this goodness?

A. By faith, receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation; as he is freely offered in the gospel, John i. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

Q. 22. What are the properties of this goodness?

A. It is seasonable goodness, Heb. iv. 16; it is soul-satisfying, Ps. cvii. 9; and it is immutable and everlasting, Ps. lii. 1.

Q. 23. What improvement ought we to make of the goodness of God?

A. We ought to "praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men," Ps. cvii. 8; to be influenced to repentance from the consideration of his goodness, Rom. ii. 4; and to imitate God in it, Heb. xiii. 16.

## OF GOD'S TRUTH.

Q. 1. What is the [*truth*] of God?

A. It is that essential perfection of his nature, by which he cannot but fulfil and accomplish whatever he has spoken; or do as he has said, Num. xxiii. 19.

Q. 2. What is it that this perfection of God has a special relation to?

A. To the revelation of his will in his word: hence the whole scripture is infallible truth; "one jot, or one tittle, shall in no wise pass therefrom, till all be fulfilled," Matt. v. 18. For, "the word of the Lord endureth for ever," 1 Pet. i. 25.

Q. 3. What is God's truth, as respecting his word, commonly called?

A. His faithfulness, or veracity, Heb. x. 23: "He is faithful that promised."

Q. 4. To what is the truth or faithfulness of God opposed?

A. To all change of mind, Job xxiii. 13: "He is in one mind, and who can turn him?" and to all lying and dissimulation, Heb. vi. 18: "It is impossible for God to lie."

Q. 5. Can there be any inconsistency in his words?

A. No: for truth always hangs with itself, and he "keepeth truth for ever," Ps. cxlvi. 6.

Q. 6. Can he possibly forget what he has said?

A. No, surely; for "he will ever be mindful of his covenant," Ps. cxi. 5.

Q. 7. In what is the truth or faithfulness of God manifested?

A. In the exact accomplishment of his promises, Josh. xxiii. 14; and the certain execution of his threatenings, Zech. i. 6.

Q. 8. How do we give God the honour of his truth and faithfulness?

A. By faith, which sets to the seal that God is true, John iii. 33; and judges him faithful who hath promised, Heb. xi. 11.

Q. 9. By what sin is this attribute of God most dishonoured?

A. By the sin of *unbelief*, which makes God a liar, because it believes not "the record that God gave of his Son," 1 John v. 10.

Q. 10. What record does God give of his Son?

A. "This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son," 1 John v. 11.

Q. 11. To whom is this record given?

A. To all the hearers of the gospel, as a ground of faith. Mark xvi. 15: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature:" Acts ii. 39: "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Q. 12. How does it appear that this record is given as a ground of faith, to all the hearers of the gospel?

A. If it were not so, it were impossible that unbelievers, under the gospel, could make God a liar; for if they have no concern in this record, and are not bound to believe it with application to themselves, their rejecting of it could not be their sin; because "where no law is, there is no transgression," Rom. iv. 15.

Q. 13. If the record, or promise of the God of truth, be made to every one of the hearers of the gospel, is he not, in that case, obliged to fulfil it to every one?

A. By no means: because the unbeliever wilfully rejects the promise, and will have no benefit by it, Ps. lxxxi. 10—13.

Q. 14. By what example, in scripture, may this be illustrated?

A. By the example of the promise of Canaan, made indefinitely to all Israel who came out of Egypt, Ex. vi. 6, 8; yet many of them "could not enter in because of unbelief," Heb. iii. 19: even so, the promise of eternal life is made to all the hearers of the gospel; yet many of them

come short of it, because "the word preached doth not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that hear it," Heb. iv. 1, 2.

Q. 15. What then is the deplorable case of unbelievers under the gospel?

A. They are *condemned already*, and "the wrath of God abideth on them," John iii. 18, 36.

Q. 16. What improvement ought we to make of the truth and faithfulness of God?

A. We ought to choose the way of truth, Ps. cxix. 30; walk in it, 3 John, ver. 4; bear witness for it before the world, Heb. x. 23; praise God for his truth, Ps. cxxxviii. 2; and trust him on his word, without staggering at the promise through unbelief, Rom. iv. 20.

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QUEST. 5. *Are there more Gods than one?*

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

Q. 1. How does it appear from scripture, that there is but [one] God [only?]

A. From Deut. vi. 4: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord:" Isa. xlv. 22: "I am God, and there is none else."

Q. 2. How does reason demonstrate this truth, that there is but one God?

A. Reason says, that there is but one first cause and ultimate end of all things: and that there cannot be two, or more, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable beings.

Q. 3. Why is God's omnipotence commonly adduced to prove, that he can be *but one only*?

A. Because he could not be omnipotent, or almighty, if any other could oppose or resist him, Job ix. 12.

Q. 4. How may it be proved from his government of the world?

A. There could not be a uniform governing of all things in the world, to one certain end, if the infinitely wise Governor, who is at the helm, were not one only.

Q. 5. How are some of the divine perfections expressed in scripture, for proving the unity of the essence?

A. They are expressed in the abstract; for instance: God is said to be "light," 1 John i. 5; to be "love," ch. iv. 8; to be "strength," 1 Sam. xv. 29; all which, and the like abstract properties, plainly denote that God is *one only*.

Q. 6. Is God compounded of the several perfections of his nature, as the Socinians speak?

A. By no means: for all the several attributes of God are only the one infinite perfection of his most simple and

uncompounded nature; which infinite perfection, because of our weakness, is described by parts, according to the several objects about which it is conversant.

Q. 7. Is the vast variety of the divine decrees any argument against the divine unity?

A. No: because the decrees are various only with respect to the different objects and effects to which they extend, but not with respect to the act of the divine will, which is but one.

Q. 8. Are there not several in scripture who are called gods?

A. Yes: angels, magistrates, and the idols of the heathen nations.

Q. 9. Why are *angels* called gods? Ps. xcvi. 7.

A. Because of the excellency of their nature, power, and wisdom, Ps. ciii. 20.

Q. 10. Why are *magistrates* so called? Ex. xxii. 28.

A. Because they are God's deputies for government and justice among men, Rom. xiii. 4.

Q. 11. Why are the *idols* of the heathen nations called gods? 1 Chron. v. 25.

A. Because ignorant and brutish persons have honoured them as such; but there is no reason at all to be "afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good," Jer. x. 5.

Q. 12. Why is Satan called the god of this world? 2 Cor. iv. 4.

A. Because he reigns and rules over the greatest part of the world, as his servants and slaves; for he is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2.

Q. 13. Why are covetous men called idolaters? Eph. v. 4.

A. Because the world has that room in their heart which God should have.

Q. 14. What may we learn from God's being *one only*?

A. To beware of mistaken notions of him, as if he were partly in heaven and partly on earth; for he is so much one, that he is wholly every where present, Jer. xxiii. 24.

Q. 15. Why is this one only God said to be the *[living]* God?

A. Because he has life essentially in himself, John v. 26; and is the author and giver of that life that is in any living creature, Acts xvii. 28; and likewise in opposition to dead and dumb idols, Ps. cxv. 4—7.

Q. 16. Why is he called the *[true]* God?

A. In opposition to all false and imaginary gods, Jer. x. 10, 11.

Q. 17. Why are *living* and *true* put together in the answer?

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

Q. 18. What may we learn from his being the living God?

A. To present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1.

Q. 19. What may we learn from his being the only true God?

A. To worship him in spirit and in truth, John iv. 24, because he desires truth in the inward parts, Ps. li. 6; and likewise to beware of setting up an idol, or regarding any iniquity in our hearts; otherwise he will not hear us, Ps. lxvi. 18.



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

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

Q. 1. Whence is it, that this article of our holy religion has been so much opposed by adversaries, in every period of the church?

A. The devil and his instruments have warmly opposed it because they know it is the primary object of our faith and worship; it not being enough for us to know *what* God is, as to his essential attributes, without knowing *who* he is, as to his personality, according as he has revealed himself in his word, to be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, 1 John ii. 23,—“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.”

Q. 2. Is this doctrine of the Trinity, then, a *fundamental* article, upon the belief of which our salvation depends?

A. Beyond all doubt it is: because without the knowledge and belief of the Trinity of persons, we would remain ignorant of the love of the Father, the merit of the Son, and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost, in the purchase and application of redemption; without which there could be no salvation, John xvii. 3,—“This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

Q. 3. Can the Trinity of persons be proved from the *Old Testament*?

A. Yes: not only from the history of man's creation, where God speaks of himself in the plural number, "Let us make man," Gen. i. 26; but likewise from such passages, as expressly restrict this plurality to three persons, such as, Ps. xxxiii. 6,—“By the word of the Lord, or JEHOVAH, were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath, or spirit, of his mouth;” where there is mention made of JEHOVAH, the Word, and the Spirit, as concurring in the creation of all things: accordingly, we are told that all things were made by the Word, John i. 3, and that the Spirit garnished the heavens, Job xxvi. 13. The same truth is also evident from Isa lxiii. 7, 9, 10; where we read of the loving-kindness of JEHOVAH; of the Angel of his presence saving them; and of their vexing his Holy Spirit. A plain discovery of a Trinity of persons.

Q. 4. What is the meaning of the word TRINITY, so commonly used in expressing this doctrine?

A. It signifies the same with TRI-UNITY, or *three in one*; that is, three distinct persons, in one and the same individual or numerical\* essence, 1 John v. 7.

Q. 5. Is not a Trinity of persons, in the divine Essence, an unsearchable mystery?

A. Yes; and so is every perfection of God, which infinitely transcends our thoughts, and finite capacities, Col. ii. 2. Job xi. 6, 7.

Q. 6. Is it not unreasonable to require a belief of what we cannot understand?

A. It is not at all unreasonable in matters that are entirely supernatural; but, on the contrary, it is the highest reason we should believe what God says of himself, and of the manner of his own subsistence, John xx. 31: besides, it is the peculiar office of faith to subject our reason to divine revelation, Heb. xi. 1.

Q. 7. How has God revealed this mystery in his word?

A. He has in it told us, that “there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one,” 1 John v. 7. Or, as our *Confession* expresses it, “In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost,” Matt. iii. 16, 17; and xxviii. 19. 2 Cor. xiii. 14.†

Q. 8. What is meant by the word [*Godhead?*]

A. The divine nature or essence; Rom. i. 20, compared with Gal. iv. 8.

Q. 9. What is meant by a [*person*] in the [*Godhead?*]

A. A complete, intelligent, and individual subsistence, which is neither a part of, nor sustained by any other;

\* That is, *particular*.

† Chap. ii. § 3.

but is distinguished by an incommunicable property in the same undivided essence.

Q. 10. Has each person then a distinct nature, or essence of his own?

A. No: but the same divine nature, or essence, is common to all the three glorious persons, 1 John v. 7,—“These three are one;” not only united in will and affection, but in one and the same common nature, or essence: it being the transcendent and incommunicable property of the divine nature, to reside in more persons than one.

Q. 11. What was the heresy of the Sabellians, and Tritheists, in opposition to this fundamental doctrine of the Trinity?

A. The Sabellians maintained that there is but one person in the Trinity under three different names; the Tritheists, that the three persons are three Gods.

Q. 12. Is the word PERSON, as applied to this mystery, made use of in scripture?

A. Yes; for the Son is said to be the “express image of the Father’s person,” Heb. i. 3.

Q. 13. How do you prove that there are [*three persons*] in the Godhead?

A. From the institution of baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19; from the apostolical blessing, 2 Cor. xiii. 14; from John’s salutation to the seven churches, Rev. i. 4. 5; and from the baptism of Christ, Matt. iii. 16, 17; where the Father is manifested by a voice from heaven; the Son, by his bodily appearance on earth; and the Holy Ghost, by his lighting on him in the shape of a dove.

Q. 14. How is it farther evident that they are three distinct persons?

A. From the distinct capacities in which they are represented to act; for, in the work of redemption, we find in scripture, the Father “ordaining,” the Son “purchasing,” and the Holy Ghost “applying it,” 1 Pet. i. 2.

Q. 15. How are the persons in the Godhead distinguished from each other?

A. By their personal properties, which are incommunicable to each other.

Q. 16. What is the personal property of the Father?

A. To beget the Son, and that from all eternity, Ps. ii. 7.

Q. 17. What is the personal property of the Son?

A. To be eternally begotten of the Father, John i. 14,—“We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.”

Q. 18. What is the personal property of the Holy Ghost?

A. To proceed eternally from the Father and the Son John xv. 26: “When the Comforter is come, whom I will

send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

Q. 19. How does it appear that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son, as well as from the Father, when it is not expressly affirmed that he does so, in the above text?

A. Because he is called "the Spirit of the Son," Gal. iv. 6; "the Spirit of Christ," Rom. viii. 9; the Spirit is said to receive all things from Christ, John xvi. 14, 15; to be sent by him, John xv. 26; and the Father is said to send him in Christ's name, John xiv. 26; from all which, it may be safely gathered, that he proceeds from the Son, as well as from the Father.

Q. 20. What is the difference between a *personal* and an *essential* property?

A. A *personal* property is peculiar to one of the persons only, but an *essential* property is common to them all.

Q. 21. Why are the personal properties called *incommunicable*.

A. Because each of them is so proper to one of the persons in the Trinity, that it cannot be affirmed of any of the other two.

Q. 22. Is it the divine essence that begets, is begotten, or proceeds?

A. No: for these are not essential, but personal acts. It is the Father who begets the Son; the Son who is begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from both.

Q. 23. Are the terms *necessary existence*, *supreme Deity*, and the title of the *only true God*, essential or personal properties?

A. They are essential properties of the divine nature, and so common to all the persons of the adorable Trinity, who have all the same essence, wholly, equally, and eternally.

Q. 24. May the above terms be taken, or are they, by sound authors, taken in a sense that includes the personal property of the Father, and so not belonging to the Son and Holy Ghost?

A. They may not be, and never are, by sound authors, taken in that sense; for this would be to make the Son and Holy Ghost inferior to, and dependent upon, the Father, for being or existence, which is the very soul of Arianism.

Q. 25. Does not the Father, being called the *first*; the Son, the *second*; and the Holy Ghost, the *third* person in the Godhead, imply an inequality, or preference of one person to another?