

Youth's Department.

SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

XV. MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS IN A.—CONTINUED.

148. What was the important charge which St. Paul gave to Archippus?—(*Coloss.*)

149. What transaction is recorded as having taken place at Areopagus or Mars' Hill, which was the court of the Areopagites, or highest court of Athens?—(*Acts.*)

150. Who was Asahel? and for what was he remarkable?—(*2 Sam.*)

151. How did he meet with his death?—(*2 Sam.*)

152. In what country was the city Ashdod, and what happened in the idolatrous temple there?—(*1 Sam.*)

153. How do you distinguish between Asher and Ashur?—(*Gen.*)

154. It is repeatedly stated that the Israelites worshipped Ash-taroath—who was she?—(*1 Kings.*)

CHURCH CALENDAR.

Jan. 7.—First Sunday after Epiphany.

14.—Second do. do.

21.—Third do. do.

25.—Conversion of St. Paul.

28.—Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

To the Editor of the Church.

REV. SIR,—A small publication has lately fallen into my hands entitled "The Young Churchman Armed" by the Rev. T. Biddulph of Bristol, and as it appears to me to contain matter suitable to the "Youth's Department" of "The Church," I send you the first chapter for insertion. Should you coincide with me in this opinion and give it a place, I will furnish you with the remaining chapters for future numbers of your journal. The object of the writer cannot be better explained than in the following statement which forms the preface to this little work.

"It is a matter of surprise and regret, that so little instruction is afforded to children at public and private schools on the nature and principles of the Church of England, to which they belong. Hence boys and girls of every rank grow up in great ignorance on these subjects, unable to give a reasonable account of their adherence to the Church, and exposed unarmed to the specious reasonings of every zealous Dissenter they meet with.

"The author is not aware, that among the many and valuable publications existing on the points at issue between Churchmen and Dissenters, there is any work adapted by its construction and character for the information of youth on these matters. He considers this to be one of the causes which have tended to produce the state of things alluded to; and he puts forth this short and simple Catechism in the hope that it may in some degree serve to supply the defect; and that, while those to whom the members of the Church of England entrust the care of their children, are hereby reminded of their duty, they may be aided and encouraged in the attempt to instil just notions respecting the Church into the minds of their youthful charge, and to fortify them with sound reasons against efforts to withdraw them from its communion, and to enlist them in the ranks of dissent."

G. T.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER.

Question 1. By whom and at what time was the Book of Common Prayer composed or compiled?

Answer. Chiefly by those learned and holy men, who were the instruments under God of reforming the Church of England from the corruptions of Popery nearly three hundred years ago. (1)

2. What are its contents?

It contains forms of prayer, to be used on various occasions in the Church.

3. What do you mean by forms of prayer?

Prayers, written and arranged for the use of the Minister and Congregation.

4. Do all Christians make use of forms of prayer in public worship?

No, many make objections to them, and their ministers pray extempore, that is, without having any thing written or printed before them. (2)

5. What are the chief of these objections?

It is said that the use of written prayers is not warranted by Scripture, and that it is not calculated to promote devotion.

6. What have you to say in answer to the first?

That our Lord himself gave his disciples a form of prayer, commonly called the Lord's Prayer, as we read Matt. vi. 9, and Luke xi. 2.

7. Have you any thing else to observe?

That most of the Psalms, many of which are forms of prayer as others are forms of praise, were composed to be used in the public worship of God, and were actually so used when our Lord attended the temple and made no objections to them.

8. Is there any other remark you have to make?

That as it can be clearly proved that from the very earliest ages of the church, Litanies and other Forms of Prayer were commonly used in public worship, it is reasonable to conclude that they were originally sanctioned by the Apostles themselves. (3)

9. But does not our Lord expressly forbid the use of repetitions in prayer, or repeating the same words over and over again, Matt. vi. 7?

He forbids the use only of vain repetitions.

10. Are all repetitions wrong?

They cannot be; for it is expressly told us, that when He was in the garden of Gethsemane, He prayed three times using the same words, Matt. xxvi. 44.

11. What have you to say to the objection, that the use of forms of prayer in public worship is not calculated to promote devotion?

That this is mere assertion, and has no evidence to support it. On the contrary, by far the greater part of the excellent of the

earth in every age have used forms of prayer, and have never complained of finding them unedevotional.

12. Supposing then that these objections to the use of forms of prayer are entirely unfounded, are there any advantages in such a practice?

Yes, many; for instance, a form of prayer such as that of the Church of England, is the most effectual security for the preservation of purity of doctrine from one generation to another, and against the introduction of error and heresy. (4)

13. What is the next advantage?

Uniformity in Divine Worship is hereby secured; and it is very pleasing to the pious mind, to reflect on the number of congregations scattered all over the world, hearing on the Sabbath-day the very same portions of Scripture, and joining in the very same prayers and praises as ourselves.

14. Mention another.

A body of prayers is hereby provided, which those who cannot, through sickness or any other hindrance, attend public worship, can use in private, and thus join with other worshippers in spirit, though absent in body.

15. Can you recollect another?

A Minister may be a good man, and yet be incapable of making a suitable extemporaneous prayer: or he may be otherwise, and his prayers not be such as a devout worshipper can heartily approve: in each of these cases, the benefit of a sound and scriptural form of prayer to be used in the congregation, is clearly seen. (5)

16. I shall ask you to name but one more.

A form of prayer, broken as that of the Church of England is into various parts and portions, and requiring certain responses or answers to be made by the people, is more calculated to keep up attention, than an unbroken, extemporaneous prayer, which the most highly-gifted ministers cannot always prevent being tedious, uninteresting and unprofitable. (6)

17. But are those forms of prayer, provided by the Church of England for the use of her members, such as a pious and well-instructed worshipper can conscientiously and profitably use?

Assuredly they are; they contain nothing but what is in accordance with God's Holy Word, and they are admirably adapted to the different capacities and the various circumstances of those who use them. (7)

NOTES ON CHAPTER I.

(1) Before the Reformation, the Liturgy was in Latin, and consisted partly of Forms used in primitive times, and partly of others of a much later date, in accordance with the corrupt doctrine and practice of the Romish Church. Something was done towards its improvement in the reign of Henry the Eighth, by translating it into English, and otherwise amending it. In 1548 the Book of Common Prayer was compiled by a number of pious and learned divines, among whom were Craumer and Ridley. This book, after undergoing several revisions, was finally brought to the state in which it now is, in 1661.

(2) To be consistent, those who object to the use of Forms of Prayer, ought certainly to abandon the use of Forms of Praise; and having sent away the Prayer-books, to send the Hymn-books after them.

(3) Especially as St. Paul (2 Tim. i. 13) speaks of "a form of sound words," which must have been either a creed, or a form of service to be used in the churches, to either of which modern Dissenters would make the same objection.

(4) No instance is recorded of a Christian congregation worshipping God in its public and stated service without a precomposed form, till after the Reformation. It is well known, that many of those chapels, in which Unitarian or Socinian doctrines are now preached, were built and endowed by orthodox Christians, and that originally the truth of Christ was faithfully proclaimed from their pulpits. Could such a melancholy lapse into heresy have possibly taken place, had a form of sound words, like the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England, been made by their founders the standard of the doctrines which their ministers were to preach from generation to generation?

(5) No one can tell, when he enters a dissenting place of worship, whether he may not hear from the mouth of the minister petitions offered up in the name of the congregation, in direct opposition to all the feelings and desires of his heart; particularly should he happen to be in a strange place. The churchman, in whatever part of the world he may be, goes into a place of worship belonging to his church in full confidence, knowing beforehand the nature of the petition in which he is about to join.

(6) Were the Church service to be abolished to-morrow, would any conscientious and well-informed dissenter be bold enough to say, that duly-qualified persons, capable of leading the devotions of a congregation in extempore prayer, could be found in sufficient numbers for the supply of all the churches and chapels of the Establishment throughout the world, even out of the whole body of Christians of every denomination in the land?

(7) Wealthy dissenters can procure the services of a talented minister for the chapel they frequent; poorer ones in the country must be content with what they can get. Is it nothing, that according to our system in the important matter of Public Prayer, the peasant is as highly privileged as the prince?

VALUE OF THE GOSPEL.

About six months ago, I was attacked by a violent fever, and in my own apprehensions, for about two days was on the borders of eternity. I never before felt my mind so calm and happy. Filled with the most overwhelming sense of my own unworthiness, my mind was supported merely by a faith in Christ crucified. I would not for the world have parted with that text, "The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." I never before saw such a beauty and grandeur in the way of salvation by the death of Christ, as on that occasion. I am fully persuaded the evangelical doctrines alone are able to support the mind in the near views of death and judgment.—Robert Hall.

MINISTERIAL ENCOURAGEMENT.

What is spoken from the heart, in truth, and earnestness, and sincerity, will never be permitted by the great Head of the Church

to be uttered altogether in vain. And as in the Jewish Temple, there was "no sound of hammer, axe, or of any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was building;" so does God in the same mysterious silence, carry on secretly and unobservedly, his purposes of grace in a tumultuous world. Amid clamour, and strife, and opposition, and mis-giving, the word of God goes on, like the gorgeous Jewish edifice, gradually, surely, silently, constantly. And thus, in the labours of an anxious minister, the seed he has sown will be advancing to maturity; the fruits of his ministry will be ripening into a glorious harvest, long after his mortal vestments have mouldered into the clod of the valley, and his emancipated spirit has ascended to the bosom of its God.—Rev. Erskine Neale.

THE LATE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.

"Yesterday, the 6th August, (1801) I passed a very pleasant day at Shrewsbury House, near Shooter's Hill, the residence of the Princess Charlotte of Wales. The day was fine; and the prospect extensive and beautiful, taking in a large reach of the Thames, which was covered with vessels of various sizes and descriptions. We saw a good deal of the young Princess. She is a most captivating and engaging child, and, considering the high station she may hereafter fill, a most interesting and important one. She repeated to me several of her hymns with great correctness and propriety; and on being told that, when she went to South-End in Essex, as she afterwards did for the benefit of sea-bathing, she would then be in my Diocese, she fell down on her knees, and begged my blessing. I gave it her with all my heart, and with my earnest secret prayers to God, that she might adorn her illustrious station with every Christian grace; and that, if ever she became Queen of this truly great and glorious country, she might be the means of diffusing virtue, piety and happiness through every part of her dominions!"

[The above are the words of the excellent Bishop Porteus; how heartily will they be responded to, in application to the young and guileless Sovereign who now sways the sceptre of Great Britain?]

PARTY SPIRIT.

Those who are actuated by a spirit of party themselves, are sure to attribute similar feelings to others: they cannot imagine that a man can be zealous and in earnest, without feeling an antipathy to those who differ from him. ***** The Church of Christ has no deadlier enemies than those who seek to divide it into parties, and who are always looking out for points of difference rather than those of agreement.—Dr. Burton.

DEPENDENCE ON GOD.

It is no little matter to be a Christian. Nothing, not the union of all earthly power, and human advantages, can make or keep you one. It requires the energies of omnipotent strength, the strength of Him who called light out of darkness, and brought water from the flinty rock. Fear, therefore, continually for yourself; but look to God, and fear nothing. From the first moment of his pilgrimage to the last, the Christian has but one point of safety, and its name is "constant dependence."—M. J. Jewsbury.

BEZA.

It is related of Beza, one of the Reformers, that when he was old, and could not recollect the names of persons and things he had heard but a few minutes before, he could remember and repeat the Epistles of St. Paul, which he had committed to memory when he was young.

The Church

Will for the present be published at the Star Office, Cobourg every Saturday.

TERMS.

To Subscribers resident in the immediate neighborhood of the place of publication, TEN SHILLINGS per annum. To Subscribers receiving their papers by mail, FIFTEEN SHILLINGS per annum, postage included. Payment is expected yearly, or at least half-yearly in advance.

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[R. D. CHATTERTON, PRINTER.]