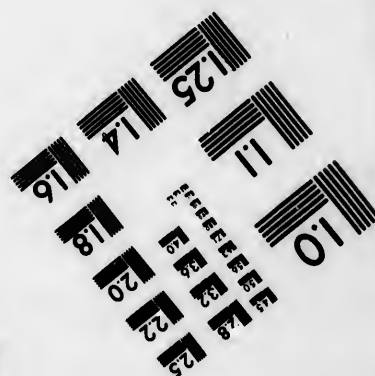
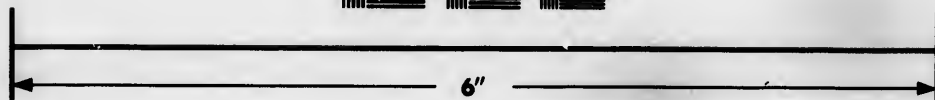
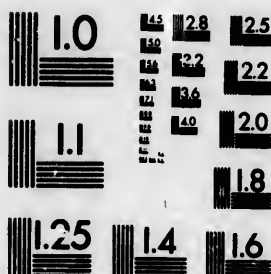


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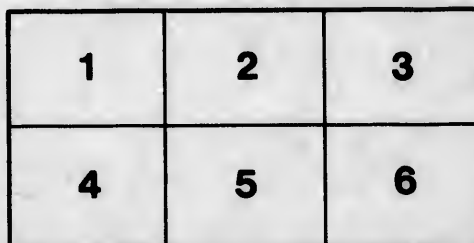
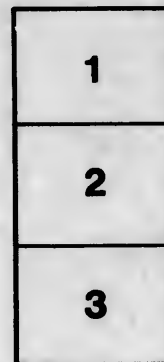
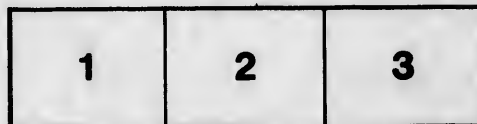
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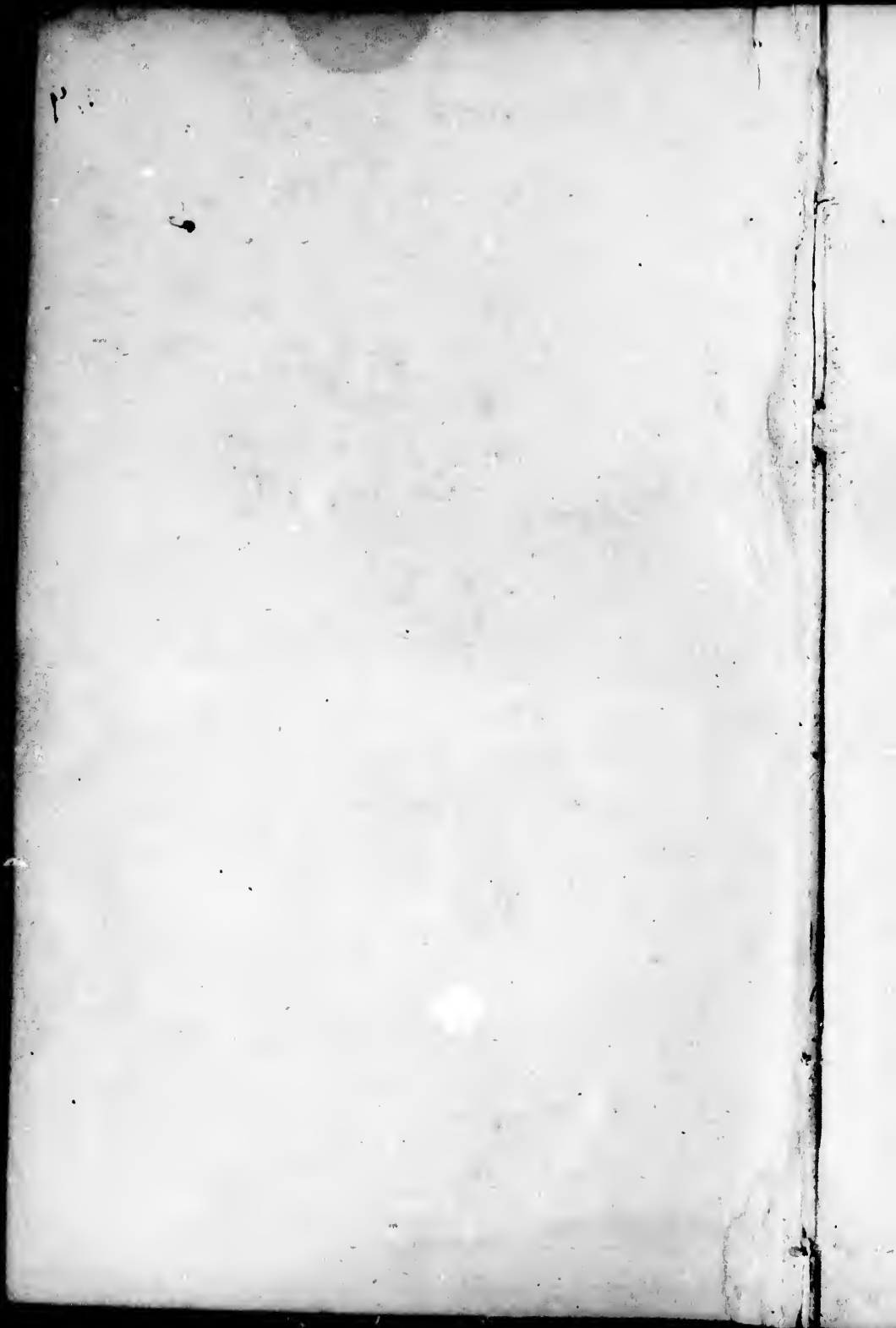
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THE KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE

OF

# CHRISTIANITY:

AN ESSAY,

ORIGINALLY INTENDED FOR THE

INSTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN INDIANS.

Which will likewise be of use to all such who are called Christians,  
but have not well considered the meaning of the Religion they profess;  
or, who profess to know God, but in works do deny Him.

IN TWENTY DIALOGUES.

TOGETHER WITH

DIRECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR

THE HEATHEN WORLD—MISSIONARIES—CATECHUMENS—

PRIVATE PERSONS—FAMILIES—OF PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN—

FOR SUNDAYS, &c.

BY THE LATE RIGHT REV. FATHER IN GOD,

THOMAS WILSON, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.



NEW EDITION.

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GILBERT & RIVINGTON, Printers, St. John's Square, London.

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AN

## ESSAY

TOWARDS AN

### INSTRUCTION FOR THE INDIANS.

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#### PART I.

*Which is in order to Christian Baptism.*

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#### DIALOGUE I.

INDIAN.

‘WHY are you so earnest in persuading me to become a Christian?’

*Missionary.* Because I know for certain, that it is the only SURE way to preserve you from misery, and to make you happy both *here* and *hereafter*.

*Ind.* ‘I shall be very thankful, if you will be so kind as to explain what you say concerns me so very much.’

*Miss.* That I will most freely do: for my heart’s desire is, that all persons may have the same knowledge of God, and his will, as we Christians have; and besides, by instructing you, I myself shall be a very great gainer.

B

*Ind.* 'I do not understand what you mean by that.'

*Miss.* I will tell you then: THE GREAT GOD, whom we Christians worship, he who made the world, and all things in it, and in *whose hands our breath and life is*<sup>1</sup>, and who would have all his creatures to be happy,—he has promised an exceeding great reward to all such as shall endeavour to make *him*, and his glorious *perfections*, and his most gracious *purposes* known unto men, especially to such unhappy people as you, who know not for what end you were *made* and *sent* into this world; who know not what *duties* you owe to your Maker, nor on what *conditions* he will keep you from misery, and make you for ever happy when you die.

*Ind.* 'Be pleased then to tell me what you know more than we do, concerning the God you worship; for we *know* and *believe* that there must be some GREAT POWER above us, who made us, and does *govern* all things here below.'

*Miss.* But we Christians know much more of *that Great Power above*, than you in your present state of ignorance can possibly do. We were indeed once as ignorant of him (and of our most unhappy condition on that account) as you now are; but *he* has been so good as to make *himself* and his will known to us, to our very great comfort and happiness; and we cannot but desire that every one may be happy, as all true Christians are in knowing their Maker's will, and honouring him, as reasonable creatures ought to do.

*Ind.* 'May I ask you one thing?—Why did not that good Being, whom you call your God, make all this known to us as well as to you?'

*Miss.* I must tell you once for all, that we poor creatures ought not to expect that the GREAT GOD should give us an account of every thing he has thought fit to do<sup>2</sup>. It is enough for us to know for

<sup>1</sup> Dan. v. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Job xxxiii. 13.

certain, that he is *good* and *just* in every thing he *does* or *permits* to be done.—And be assured, that sooner or later, every tongue shall confess, and every soul acknowledge, the *JUSTICE* and *EQUITY* of God's proceedings with mankind.—At present it concerns you much more to know what we Christians believe of God, and his will, according to the account which he himself hath given us.

*Ind.* 'This Sir, is what I now desire you to instruct me in.'

*Miss.* That I will most gladly do; for the knowledge and belief of God is the foundation of all true religion, and of the happiness of men.

*First*, then, we know the God we serve to be the most perfect of all beings; and that there is no other God beside to be *feared*, *loved*, or *worshipped*.

That it is he who made the world; and that he *preserves* and *governs*, and *orders* all things by his wonderful wisdom and power.

That amongst other creatures he made *man* to be partaker of his happiness; in order to which, he gave him reason that he might *understand* and *adore*, and *obey* his Maker.

And that men might *know* him more perfectly, and *love* and *fear* him as they ought, he has given an account of his government of the world ever since he made it.—By which account it appears,—that he is *Almighty*—*i. e.* is able to do whatever he thinks fit;—that he is exceeding *wise*, and *good*, and *just*; and therefore can *command* nothing but what is for our advantage; and will most surely *reward* such as *comply* with his laws, and punish those that disobey them.

We thereby also know, that he is a most *Holy* Being, and has ever been displeased with wicked men. He is also most *kind* and *compassionate* to those, who having offended him, are truly sorry for it, and returned to their duty;—that he *sees* and *knows* all the actions of men, whether good or bad; and that even our very thoughts are known to him;—that he not



only knows things *past* and *present*, but even all things which shall ever happen *hereafter*:—*lastly*, that he is most *faithful* to his word, so that whatever he has *promised*, he will most surely make good; and whatever he has *threatened*, he will as surely execute.

*Ind.* 'I confess this account of the GREAT and GOOD GOD seems most agreeable to reason; now you have put me upon considering it so particularly.'

*Miss.* But there are other truths of the greatest moment, which God has also in that account made known to us, and which our reason could never have clearly discovered; such as these that follow;—that there will be another life after this;—and that the true happiness or misery of men will not be fully known till after they are dead.

*Ind.* 'Till after they are dead, Sir?—Why do you Christians really know what shall become of men after they are dead?'

*Miss.* Yes, we do, and that most certainly,—we know that this short life is only a *life or state of trial*, in order to change and amend our corrupt nature, that we may be fit for a much better world when we die; and be for ever happy *there*, if we behave ourselves as we should do, while we live *here*.—For God has made known to us, that after death, the souls of all good people go to a place of *rest*, and *peace*, and *happiness*:—and the souls of wicked people to a place of *sorrow* and *misery*, there to remain till the end of this world, and the day of judgment.

*Ind.* 'Pray, what do you mean by the *END OF THE WORLD*, and by the *DAY OF JUDGMENT*?'

*Miss.* Why, God has assured us, that this world should have an end; that then *there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust*<sup>1</sup>, both of good and bad men: that all who have ever lived shall then be raised to life, and give an account for whatever they have done in this world, whether good

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxiv. 15.

or evil:—and that such as have done good shall be made happy for ever;—and such as have done evil, that is, have led wicked lives, and have not repented in due time, shall be for ever miserable.

*Ind.* 'These indeed are truths which we know nothing of; and if they be really true, it certainly concerns me, and every man living, to think of them in good earnest, and to order his life accordingly.—But let me ask you,—do all you Christians know these things, and believe them to be true?'

*Miss.* It is at the peril of their souls if they do not.—But I know why you ask that question, and I promise to answer and satisfy you upon that head hereafter.—In the mean time it is certainly your best and wisest way to take care of yourself, in an affair of the highest importance to you; and not to neglect this opportunity, which God of his mercy and goodness gives you by me, of coming to the knowledge of your Maker, and of the duties you owe to him, to yourself, and to all others, lest they should be hereafter for ever hid from you, to your eternal ruin and destruction.

*Ind.* 'I hope I shall take your good advice. But in the mean time you will give me leave to ask you,—how did God make these things known unto you Christians?'

*Miss.* That you shall know in due time, for you cannot know all things at once.—And these few truths only I have told you, at this time, that you may know and consider what you have to do; that you may in good earnest desire to be further taught, and told how you may be for ever happy (if it is not your own fault); and how you may avoid the danger and misery which you and all men are exposed to, who are not very seriously concerned for their own safety.—For once and again I must assure you, as certain as there is a God, that you and every man living shall be happy or miserable when they die.—*We therefore (knowing these things,)—and that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of God, and receive a sentence according to*

*what we have done in the body, whether it be good or bad*<sup>1</sup>, we, knowing these things, *endeavour to persuade men to be afraid of themselves, and to live an holy and virtuous life here, so as to escape being miserable hereafter.*

What therefore I would recommend to you at present, (for I would not overburden your memory at once) is this:—that you would pray to God to give you an heart disposed to hearken to the truth: for he has promised to enlighten the understanding, and open the hearts, of those who humbly and devoutly pray to him for his direction and assistance.

*Ind.* 'I hope I shall follow your advice; and I believe I shall hardly forget the things you have told me.'

*Miss.* Farewell, for the present; and may God keep you in this good disposition, and give you a teachable temper; and for this purpose join with me in the following prayer.

#### THE PRAYER.

ENLARGE thy kingdom, O God, and deliver the world from the dominion and tyranny of *Satan*.—Hasten the time, which thy Spirit has foretold, when all nations, whom thou hast made, shall worship thee, and glorify thy name.—Bless the good endeavours of those who strive to propagate the truth, and prepare the hearts of all men to receive it. To the honour of thy holy name. *Amen.*

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 10.

DIALOGUE II.

*Of the Corruptions of our Nature.*

INDIAN.

'I AM come again, kind Sir, for your further instruction. Your last words have made me very thoughtful and uneasy, when you told me with so much earnestness—THAT HAPPINESS OR MISERY WILL BE THE CERTAIN PORTION OF EVERY ONE AFTER DEATH !'

*Miss.* I told you nothing but the truth ; and I am not sorry for your uneasiness ; since *that* may prove in its consequence the greatest blessing of your life.

*Ind.* ' I do not understand how that can be.'

*Miss.* But this you can easily understand,—*that they who are in health, and think themselves in no danger, will not look out for a physician and other help ; but they that are sick, and sensible of their disease, will be glad of advice, and will be apt to follow it*<sup>1</sup>,—when once you are sensible, that of yourself you are *an ignorant, helpless, sinful creature*<sup>2</sup>, incapable of either knowing or performing the will of your Maker, or of reconciling yourself to him, whenever you have offended him.

Besides, I must tell you another truth,—that the more you are afraid for yourself, the more will the great God be disposed to pity you, and to deliver you from the danger you are justly afraid of<sup>3</sup> ; and to enable you to attain the end for which you were made, and sent into the world.

*Ind.* ' Will you be pleased to let me know what the end is for which God made us, and sent us into the world ?'

*Miss.* God made man, that he might have a crea-

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 12

<sup>2</sup> Rev. ii. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Isa. lxvi. 2.

ture upon earth endued with reason, and capable of adoring his Maker, and of imitating his perfections; and fit to partake of his bounty and happiness.

*Ind.* 'Pray what is the happiness you speak of?'

*Miss.* It is the happiness of going to a place of perfect *knowledge, goodness, love, joy, and peace*, which is to last for ever.

As nothing is more desirable than life, nothing should more forcibly work upon human nature, than the hopes of everlasting life.

Which life God himself hath set forth to us by all such things as we are most commonly affected with;

As a CROWN, a KINGDOM, a TREASURE, an INHERITANCE *undefiled, that fadeth not away*; and a STATE of everlasting joy and pleasure.

*Ind.* 'If God originally designed men for this happiness, how came they to forfeit their title to it?'

*Miss.* They do it by being guilty of *sin*; that is,—by transgressing the law which God has given them.

*Ind.* 'Has God given us any law?'

*Miss.* Yes, surely.—He hath given you and all men *reason*, which is instead of a written law or rule, by which *you* ought to live, and may in some measure know what is good, and what is evil; what will please, and what will displease, an *holy, just, and good* God.

*Ind.* 'But it is too plain that people do not always observe this rule or law.'

*Miss.* It is so, and *that is their sin*, by which they displease God, and debar themselves of his greater favours, and are in danger of being miserable, even beyond what they can imagine.

*Ind.* 'But is not this the case of many Christians, as well as of us?'

*Miss.* It is surely so,—and they must suffer severely for it; God having given them plainer rules, and greater helps, to overcome and cure that *corruption of nature*, which is one great occasion of all the wickedness which we see in the world.

*Ind.* 'Pray what do you mean by THE CORRUPTION OF OUR NATURE<sup>1</sup>?'

*Miss.* That I will now tell you;—and what by your own reason and experience you must acknowledge to be true. By *the corruption of nature* we mean a strong inclination to evil, which we not only *see* and *blame* in other people, but very sensibly *feel* in ourselves; that is—something within us, which often opposeth our reason (and the other laws which God hath given us); so that we are often tempted and prevailed upon to do what our own judgment condemns us for, at the time of doing it.

*Ind.* 'This indeed is too plainly the case.—Men follow not their *reason*, but their *passions*, their *inclinations*, and their own perverse *wills*; and which too often they have cause to repent of.'

*Miss.* You cannot but have observed, that this inclination to evil is often so violent, that *men commit all iniquity with greediness*; and this is the occasion of all the wickedness which we see and hear of.—All the *cruelty*, the *oppression*, the *pride*, the *injustice*, the *malice*, the *covetousness*, the *lewdness*, the *impurity*, *murders*, *drunkenness*, and all other sins, by which men dishonour their Maker, and themselves, and are a plague to others; insomuch that it is found necessary to have severe laws made, even by men, to hinder wicked people from hurting one another;—of which laws there would be no occasion, if *reason* had been sufficient to *govern* men; which sad experience shows it is not; there being too many, whom no *reason*, no *advice*, no *prospect of danger*, no *hopes* of happiness, can keep from ruining themselves and others.

*Ind.* 'I confess there is truth in what you say,—but sure this is not the case of all people.'

*Miss.* I must tell you,—that the wickedness of others shows us plainly what all men are by nature.

<sup>1</sup> It is our religion which has first taught,—That man is born in sin; no sect of philosophers ever said this, and therefore no sect ever said the truth h.—Mons. Paschal's Religious Thoughts, p. 63.

All men have the seeds of evil within themselves, which would spring up and appear upon every temptation if not hindered by something more than their own reason; and that they are not so wicked as others, may be thankful to a *Power above*, who restrains them;—And your own *heart* and *experience* must tell you, that such as are not so wicked as these we have been speaking of, are forced to strive hard against the temptations they meet with, before they can follow what their reason tells them they ought to *do* or *avoid*;—that they are but too often unwilling to follow the LIGHT of REASON, which God hath given them; and too often make use of it only to *hurt* and *over-reach* one another.—All which shows, *that our nature is strangely corrupt*—so that no man can say he is free from sin, or not guilty before God.

*Ind.* 'I must confess, indeed, that, according to my best understanding, there is truth in every thing you have told me.'

*Miss.* Well, then, let this truth sink deep into your heart; for without a firm belief of this, you will never have any true notion of the *goodness, justice, or mercy* of God to men; nor will you ever know the value of Christianity.

*Ind.* 'But how man, *the creature of so holy and good a God*, should come to have a nature so *corrupt and disordered*, and prone to evil—This indeed surprises me.'

*Miss.* Far be it from any man to imagine, that a good and holy God, who hateth sin, should be the cause of this corruption of our nature, and of the evil it occasions!—No,—He made man at *first upright, holy, just, and good*, and capable of doing every thing that became a reasonable creature; but how he fell into this wretched and distempered condition you shall know in due time.

*Ind.* 'But since sin and wickedness are displeasing to God, why does he suffer sin and sinners to be in the world?'



*Miss.* You do not consider, that, all men being sinners, God must either suffer sin to be in the world, or destroy the sinners; that is, all the race of men.—But when you come to know the *Christian Religion*, and what God has done to *cure* this great disorder of our nature, you will find that God can take occasion from the sins of men to display the greatness of his mercy and compassion for sinners; and you will have reason to admire and adore his wonderful *wisdom*, and *mercy*, and *goodness*, to all such as shall lay hold on the offers of grace,—as well as dread his just displeasure against such as despise his mercy.

And this is one reason that I have taken so much pains to convince you of the *corruption of our nature*, and of the danger we are in on this account that you may have no ease in your mind, until you know how to be delivered from so bad a bondage, and the fears which ought to attend it.

There is another danger which we are all exposed to, and which you ought to know;—and that is, the *power and malice of Evil Spirits*.

*Ind.* ‘What do you mean by EVIL SPIRITS?’

*Miss.* God has made known to us, that there are creatures, both *good* and *bad*, which we call *Angels* or *Spirits*, and which are ever about us, though we do not see them, they having no bodies as we have.—The *Good Spirits* are appointed by God, to take care of his servants; and the *Evil Spirits* are such as have rebelled against their Maker, and, having utterly lost his favour, strive to tempt men to all manner of wickedness, that they may be as miserable as themselves. And through *their* temptations the wickedness of the world was grown so great, that God was provoked at one time to drown all the people of the earth except ONE GOOD MAN, NOAH, and his HOUSEHOLD<sup>1</sup>;—and at another time, to destroy several great towns,

<sup>1</sup> Gen. vi. 7, 8, &c.



SODOM and GOMORRAH, with *fire* from Heaven, for the wickedness of them that dwelt in them<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'These indeed are reasonable proofs of the power which EVIL SPIRITS may have over wicked men, and of the great danger we are in of being ruined by it.'

*Miss.* But it is necessary that you should know these things; for whoever is not a *worshipper* of the only true God, whom Christians serve, is a *slave* to these evil spirits, and too often is a *worshipper* of them, though he does not know it. When you consider these things you will have reason to be concerned and afraid for yourself.

*Ind.* 'And so indeed I shall be, if this is our own case.'

*Miss.* This is, in truth, the case of every one who is ignorant of the true God, and of the way of salvation which he has revealed to his unhappy creatures, the way by which they may be prevented from ruining themselves, and losing that happiness which he has provided for such as *love* and *obey* him.

*Ind.* 'I do most earnestly entreat you that at your leisure you would give me an account of the Christian religion, which you say is the way that God has revealed to save all men from ruin.'

*Miss.* That I will do through the favour of God, the next time we meet: In the mean while remember—what I assure you of—'that this life is the time, in which you are to choose whether you will be happy or miserable for ever: and that your happiness or misery will depend upon your embracing or rejecting the offer now made you, by Almighty God, of becoming a Christian.' You ought therefore to pray to the GREAT GOD, to enable you to lay hold of this opportunity of being happy.

#### THE PRAYER.

O God, the foundation of all wisdom, I most humbly

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xviii. 19.

beseech thee to enlighten my mind, that I may come to the knowledge of thee and of thy goodness. Give me a serious, an understanding, and a religious heart, that as I grow in years, I may grow in grace. — Bless all the means of salvation which thou hast afforded me, and *especially this instruction*, that it may sink into my heart, and bring forth in me the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy holy name. *Amen.*

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### DIALOGUE III.

#### *The Proofs of the Christian Religion.*

#### INDIAN.

‘ I AM come again, Sir, to trouble you sooner, I believe, than you expected. You said, *that it was good for me, that I was in fear for myself*; I cannot choose but be so, since you told me, “ That my happiness or misery will depend upon my embracing or rejecting the offer now made me of becoming a Christian.” I own I am not satisfied with my present condition; I am convinced by my reason, as well as by what you told me, that we *were made to be an honour to the Being that made us*, by living according to that light and reason which he hath given us.—For my own part, I fear I have not done so; and if he shall be displeased with me, I know not how to help myself, or make my mind easy.’

*Miss*<sup>1</sup>. Assure yourself this is the case of every thoughtful person, who has no knowledge of Christianity. And therefore our *great and good* Creator, in compassion to those unhappy men who labour under such doubts and fears, has graciously pointed out the way by which they may be freed from them; *viz.*—*By embracing the Christian Religion.*

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 15.

*Ind.* 'What does the Christian religion propose to us, to *cure* us of those fears?'

*Miss.* I will first tell you in short, and afterwards explain myself more fully. In the first place,—It will lead you to the knowledge of the true God, the Maker of the world, and convince you of his great love for his unhappy creatures, and of his earnest endeavours to keep them from ruining themselves. It shows us also how we must answer the end for which God made us and sent us into the world. It sets before us the miserable circumstances into which we are sunk by nature, the dangers we are liable to, and teaches us the way to escape them. It makes known to us those laws by which God will judge the world; that men may order their hearts and lives accordingly. It shews us how we may be restored to the favour of God. It gives us all rules necessary to make us happy when we die, and promises us all necessary assistance to observe those rules. It directs us in the course of our lives, how we may obtain the pardon of God, whenever we shall have been so unhappy as to have offended him by our sins which we are but too apt to do. It assures us, *that God is a bountiful rewarder of all such as seek to please him*<sup>1</sup>. In short, *Christianity* is the only remedy to cure all the *disorders* and *dangers*, and *miseries*, which we are subject to in this life; to support us in the hour of death, and secure our happiness in the future state; in short, it is the only sure means, where it is *seriously* embraced, of *correcting* and *reforming* this world, and leading men to a better.

*Ind.* 'This is, Sir, a most desirable account you have given me of the Christian religion. Will you be pleased, as you promised, to explain these things more fully?'

*Miss.* You must know, then, that we are called Christians, from professing ourselves to be the disci-

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xi. 6.

ples and followers of a most holy and divine person, JESUS CHRIST, who being the Son of God, was sent by him from heaven to make his will and gracious purposes known unto men.

In order to this, he being a pure spirit, it was necessary that he should take a body like one of ours, that he might be seen by and converse with men. He therefore submitted to be born of a woman, and he took the soul and body of a man, and in that nature he lived among men, and made known to them the things which I have already mentioned to you. Particularly he gave them a clear knowledge of their Maker; and by his most *perfect, innocent, and holy* life, showed what an excellent creature man was, when he was first made, before he fell into sin, and became prone to evil as he now is.

He assured them that he came as a *peace-maker* betwixt God and his rebellious creatures, who by their disobedience had lost his favour: and forfeited the happiness he had prepared for them.

And in order to reconcile them to God, and to the duty and obedience which they owed to him, he brought them this most gracious message:—‘That all such as became sensible of their error and misery, and were willing to give themselves up to the Son of God as their Lord and Saviour, should, through his merits and mediation, receive a full and free pardon for all their past offences, be restored again to his favour, and obtain that happiness which they had forfeited by their offences.’

*Ind.* ‘These are, indeed, wonderful proofs of the great goodness of God.’

*Miss.* But then you are to know that all such as *despise* this surprising goodness of God, are not only to be deprived of his favour, but are to be punished with *torments* exquisite beyond all we can now imagine. For you must never forget what I told you before, and what JESUS CHRIST has assured us of,—‘That this short life is only a passage to another,

which is to last for ever : ' and where every man is to be *rewarded* or *punished* according to his behaviour in this world.

*Ind.* ' I have not forgot that. But give me leave, Sir, to ask you one question : how are you Christians sure that THIS EXTRAORDINARY PERSON was the SON OF GOD, and came from him with this message to men ?'

*Miss.* It is necessary that every one who intends to be a Christian should have the greatest assurance of it ; for on this truth the Christian Religion is founded.

You must know, then, that this DIVINE PERSON, in order to give men all possible assurance, that he was what he declared himself to be, performed before their eyes such wonderful works, as showed that in him *dwelt all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily*. For example,—He healed all manner of *sickness and disease* with the word of his mouth. He gave *sight* to such as *were born blind*. To such as were *dumb and deaf* he gave the *power of speech and hearing* ; and *he made the lame to walk*. He fed and satisfied the hunger of *many thousands of people* more than once with a few *loaves* and small *fishes*, which they saw *multiplied* before their eyes, so that *thousands* were at one time all *eye-witnesses* of this *miracle*. He commanded the *winds*, the *storms*, and the *seas*, and they obeyed his word. He *raised to life* those that had for some time been dead. He convinced those with whom he conversed, that he knew the very thoughts of their hearts, which none but God can do. Lastly,—the great God himself did more than once, by a voice from *heaven*, declare, *that he was his beloved Son ; and commanded, that as such, he should be heard and obeyed*.

*Ind.* ' Indeed, these are most sure proofs that THIS DIVINE PERSON was what he said he was ; and that whatever he taught must be true.'

*Miss.* But I have other evidences to give you, in

order to confirm your faith or belief in this divine *person*, and his *message*.—Amongst many other things which he foretold his followers, this strange thing was one; that notwithstanding the wonderful works which he had done before their eyes, his enemies would put him to death; *but that within three days he should rise again to life*. Accordingly, after they had treated him with all the evil usage that *spite* and *malice* could invent, they did most barbarously *murder* and *crucify* him. *And after three days he rose again from the dead*, and conversed with his disciples and followers, with no less than *five hundred* at one time, many of whom lived very long after, and bore witness of his resurrection, at the expense of their lives.

*Ind.* 'I should be glad to know some more particulars relating to so *divine, holy, and wonderful a person*.'

*Miss.* JESUS CHRIST, after having conversed with his disciples many weeks, and in the sight of many of them, *ascended into heaven*. But, before his departure from them, he promised them, that *he and his Father* would send another DIVINE PERSON (not in the form or fashion of a man, but) as a pure spirit to *dwell in them*; to *guide* and *comfort*, to *inspire* them with all truth necessary to be known by them, and to enable them, for the confirmation of such truths to others, to do all such mighty works as he had done among them:—according to which promise, ten days after he had ascended into heaven, THAT DIVINE SPIRIT descended upon them after a most wonderful manner, and enabled them to understand and speak all the languages of the then unknown world, to which they went in order to carry those good tidings; whereby we and many other nations were brought out of error, ignorance, and darkness, into the clear light and true knowledge of *God*, and of his *Son Jesus Christ*, and of that *Holy Spirit*, which enabled them to preach this joyful doctrine to all the world: that Christ has made our peace with God, if we sub-

mit to be governed by him, and by his laws, and put our whole trust in him.

*Ind.* 'Well, Sir, you have given some ease to my mind. *I believe*, that what this *holy person* said must be certainly true: and I suppose all that know these things are Christians.'

*Miss.* Indeed they are not: and you will not wonder at it, when you consider what it is that hinders people from being Christians. There are many who never think of their Maker, or what must become of them when they die. Many indeed hear these things; but their affections are so set upon this *world*, its *pleasures* and *profits*, that they do not lay them seriously to heart. And too many are so fond of their own perverse ways, to which they have been long accustomed, that they see not the truth of what is proposed to them. Besides all this;—the APOSTLE taught many things which wicked people would not hear with patience: for example, that *murderers, drunkards, adulterers, oppressors, covetous persons, the proud, malicious, and revengeful people, all lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*, that all such who were guilty of those things, must forsake them, in order to become Christians.

*Ind.* 'Well, Sir, I am convinced that notwithstanding the proofs of the truth of the Christian religion, there might be people who would not become Christians. But I should be very thankful, if you would let me know, how the Christian religion did prevail at the time the apostles of Christ made it known to all nations.'

*Miss.* That you shall know when you come again to me. In the mean while, forget not to beg of God to give you an heart always disposed to receive the truth; which you may do in some such short prayer as this following.

#### THE PRAYER.

MERCIFUL GOD, and lover of mankind, enliven my mind with saving faith; enable me to withstand the



temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and with a pure heart to follow thee, the only true God, and thy only Son the Lord *Jesus Christ*. Amen.

# DIALOGUE IV.

*The wonderful success and progress of the Gospel, when it was first preached to the world.*

INDIAN.

‘WHEN I left you last, Sir, you promised to let me know what followed the DESCENT OR COMING down of that HOLY SPIRIT upon Christ’s apostles ; and how the Christian religion was received in the world.’

*Miss.* You must know then, that when this happened, there were people out of all nations at *Jerusalem*, the city to which they were come to worship the great God<sup>1</sup>.—Now when all these heard the APOSTLES of CHRIST (who before that time knew no language but their own) declaring the wonderful works of God, in the language of every nation then present, they were astonished : and being convinced that such men must have been divinely inspired, they therefore gave heed to them, while they declared God’s most gracious purposes—of *mercy, pardon, and happiness*, to all such as would *obey* the message he had sent to them by his Son :—insomuch that no less than THREE THOUSAND embraced the Christian religion that very day, and FIVE THOUSAND more immediately after ; and these converts became so many *witnesses* of these wonderful things to the several nations, from whence they came thither to worship.—After this the Apostles went into all nations, making known this joyful message of God to men, —‘ That he would have all

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii.



men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth,' or the Christian faith;—that he was ready to be reconciled to all such as had *offended* him; and that he would make them happy for ever, if they would be persuaded to *forsake* their evil ways, believe in Jesus Christ, and be *governed* by such rules he had given them.—So that, in all nations, all such persons as were truly concerned for themselves, and disposed to receive the truth, became Christians; and very great was their number every where.—And indeed Christ himself foretold it would be so;—though at that time it seemed the most unlikely thing in the world,—that all nations should receive a religion opposed by their RULERS and PHILOSOPHERS, upon the preaching of a few POOR STRANGERS, who had no worldly *power*, *riches*, or *learning*, to induce people to *believe* and *follow* them; and who at the same time required all men to forsake the *customs* and *religion* of their forefathers, to embrace the salvation proposed by this divine Messenger Jesus—to restrain their appetites, and govern their passions,—to leave their impious ways of living,—and to lead sober, honest, and good lives, and to suffer death rather than deny the truths they told them:—now does not the *miraculous success* they met with in propagating such a religion, under such circumstances, demonstrate it to be the work of the GREAT GOD?

*Ind.* 'Pray will you inform me how I may be sure that these MIRACLES were performed by the APOSTLES OF CHRIST?'

*Miss.* The MIRACLES recorded in the *New Testament* recommend themselves to our belief upon many accounts.

They were wrought by persons who appealed to God, and declared *beforehand* that they *would* perform them.

They were performed in a public manner, and by persons known to be of a low condition, destitute of *great friends* and *powerful patrons*.

They were wrought in a learned age, before *enemies* or *unbelievers*, who were not easily to be imposed upon, or deceived.

The writers of the New Testament, when they relate the miracles, of *en* name the *time*, the *place*, the *occasion*, the *diseases* that were removed, the *persons* healed or raised from the dead, the *persons* who were present, and the things that were said and done, by *friends* and *foes*, on the occasion, giving men a fair opportunity to inquire into the facts, and to disprove them, if they were able.

These MIRACLES were wrought for no worldly advantage, but on the contrary, subjected the APOSTLES of our blessed Lord to many *injuries*, *afflictions*, *persecutions*, and cruel *deaths*.

*They* were wrought in confirmation of doctrines good and useful to mankind, and were intended to destroy,—all *atheism*, *idolatry*, *profaneness*, and *immorality*.

*They* prevailed upon many people to quit the religion in which they had been educated, to forego *ease* and *pleasure*, and *worldly* conveniences, and to leave their *friends*, *relations*, and *country*, and to suffer all kinds of temporal evils, and often the loss of life itself.

These *miracles* were likewise attested by proper witnesses.—The *disciples* of Christ *saw* the miracles of their *Master*, and *died* in confirmation of the truth of *them*, particularly of his RESURRECTION from the dead.

*They* were foretold ages before by the PROPHETS, that they were *such* miracles as the *Jews* expected, and had reason to expect, from their MESSIAH, when he did appear.

*Lastly* the *persons* whose miracles are recorded in the Gospel *foretold* many events, some of which did not come to pass till a considerable time after the books of the New Testament were written, and the writers themselves were dead.—And this is a still stronger

confirmation of the truth and certainty of the miracles related in those books.

*Ind.* 'Pray, Sir, what became of these APOSTLES after this?'

*Miss.* As they had taught all others to suffer death, rather than deny the truths which they had received from God *by Jesus Christ*, so most of them laid down their lives for those truths they had preached.—But, before they suffered, they appointed *others* to succeed them in publishing these truths to all nations;—by which Christianity has continued unto this day;—and we are assured, by Christ himself, will continue unto the world's end.—And a very great change for the better has been made in all nations where it has been received.

*Ind.* 'You will oblige me, if you will let me know in what the world is become better by this religion?'

*Miss.* In the first place, it gave the thoughtful and penitent satisfaction how their sins might be forgiven, and their persons accepted and saved by a righteous and holy God.—They who then embraced the Christian religion professed *that they were strangers in this world*, and therefore looked upon this life only as a journey to a much better, which they expected after death.—This made them content with any condition, which God should think fit to place them in.—This kept them from being covetous, or over-much concerned for the things of this world; they believed, that if they were *poor* or in *misery*, God would abundantly make up in the *next* life, what was wanting, or they had suffered *in this*.—Their great rule given them by Christ was this,—THAT THEY SHOULD DEAL WITH ALL OTHERS AS THEY THEMSELVES WOULD DESIRE TO BE DEALT WITH.—This made them very just in all their actions, and careful not to *wrong* or *oppress* any person.—*Defrauding, cheating, and lying*, were not so much as known among them.—Their religion obliged them to be at peace with all men as much

as possible. So that *quarrels*, and *wars*, and *murders*, were utterly abhorred. On the contrary, they were *kind* and *compassionate* even to their enemies; never returning evil for evil. They had always a tender compassion for such as were in want, or in misery; *clothing the naked*, *feeding the hungry*, and *lodging the stranger*, according to their ability. As to themselves, they were exceeding *sober* and *temperate*, not given to *gluttony* or *drunkenness*, which they knew God would be highly displeased with. They were *chaste* and *modest*, both men and women; all kept strictly to their own wives and husbands, as God had appointed, who had declared that no *adulterer* or *whoremonger*, must hope for heaven or happiness.—And then in their strictest conformity to these rules of uprightness, they humbly acknowledged their many failings, and great unworthiness; and—lastly, they suffered all manner of torments, and even death itself, rather than they would renounce the religion which they had embraced on a full conviction that it came from God.

*Ind.* 'Indeed, Sir, this is a most wonderful account of those who first professed the Christian religion.—One cannot, surely, imagine, that such good men should have any enemies.'

*Miss.* But indeed they had, and very many:—for those EVIL SPIRITS, which I told you of before, tempted all sorts of wicked people to destroy them and their religion, if possible: and would certainly have done it, but that the great and all-powerful God hindered it:—and caused, that *the more it was persecuted the more it increased*.—All such as had been brought up in any other religion became their mortal enemies, especially such as worshipped *idols*, *false gods*, or *evil spirits*, which the greatest part of the world then did, and too many do to this day.—Besides these, men of wicked lives, hated and persecuted those who professed the Christian religion, because they declared that God would most surely call them to an account, and judge them to a misery that

would never end, if they did not forsake their sins, and lead better lives.

On these, and on many other accounts, Christians were every where persecuted, and vast numbers were most barbarously murdered: which grievous sufferings they patiently endured, in a full assurance of a better life, which God, who cannot deceive them, had promised.

*Ind.* 'Pray, Sir, are Christians still used after this cruel manner?'

*Miss.* No;—for in time the KINGS and PRINCES of the world became Christians; and when they favoured and protected that religion, their subjects followed their example, though it was not always in order to save their souls, but for other unworthy and worldly ends. And it was then, that many began to call themselves Christians, who in their hearts and lives were far from being such—by which *Christianity* became extremely corrupted, and men outwardly professed the Christian religion, at the same time as they lived in those sins, which it forbids on pain of damnation.

Notwithstanding this, the Christian religion, where it is truly professed, is still the same; and it is the only method of restoring men to the favour of God, and bringing them to the happiness which we all wish to enjoy.

We have the same just and holy God to worship, that those *first Christians* had; a God who loveth the good and pious, and hateth the wicked; who will most surely call all men to an account, judge them according to their works, and reward or punish them as they have deserved.—And we have the same Jesus for a Saviour, who is able to save us to the uttermost;—so that every man who has any concern for himself, and would escape the anger of an offended God, will not only be a Christian in name, but in good earnest will live as a true Christian ought.

*Ind.* 'I most heartily thank you, Sir, for this ac-

count you have given me of the Christian religion.—Now one would hope, that, if our people knew these things, they might be prevailed on to become Christians as easily as those nations were who first embraced Christianity.'

*Miss.* We may wish and pray for this; but there are some reasons, which you may know hereafter, that we fear may, for the present, hinder so general a conversion and blessing to your people; but a time will certainly come, when you will all know and worship the true God, the Maker of heaven and earth, and HIS ONLY SON, *whom he has ordained to be the Judge of the living and the dead.*—In the meanwhile take you care for yourself, and beg of God that you may not lose the favour which is offered you at this time by me, one of his unworthy servants.

*Ind.* 'I hope I shall do so, and shall not forget what you have said to me at this time.—And I believe I shall very soon wait on you again for your *further instruction.*'

*Miss.* In the meantime join with me in the following prayer.

#### THE PRAYER.

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger *John the Baptist* to prepare thy way before thee, grant that the ministers of thy holy word may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: that at thy second coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

## DIALOGUE V.

*Objections against the bad lives of Christians answered.*

## MISSIONARY.

I EXPECTED, as you promised, to have seen you sooner. Has any thing extraordinary hindered you from coming to be further instructed?

*Ind.* 'Why, truly, Sir, since I was with you, I have met with such discouragements as have given me great doubts and scruples, and had almost made me resolve against troubling you any more.'

*Miss.* I shall be exceedingly sorry if any thing should make you do yourself so great an injury.—Pray, what are the *discouragements* you have met with?

*Ind.* 'I will tell you the truth.—After I had parted with you, upon what you had said to me, I told our people that I had some thoughts of becoming a Christian: for that I had met with one who had convinced me, that my condition at present was not so safe as I imagined, and that I should certainly lose the greatest happiness which the heart of man can desire, if I refused, now it was offered me, to be instructed in the knowledge of myself, and of the true God, and how to live and die in his favour.—I told them also, that you assured me from the mouth of God himself, that every man after death will certainly be happy or miserable for ever: this short life of ours being only a time of trial, and a passage to a state of happiness or misery, which is to last for ever. I told them moreover,—that Christians were assured that God had appointed a day in which he would judge most righteously, even all that have ever lived in this world; and that, such as had served and obeyed, God would be happy for



ever; and such as had led wicked lives, and did not repent of and amend them, should be punished with everlasting fire:—and that, in order to this great account and judgment, God has given us, and all men, reason, whereby to know good from evil, that they might choose the one, and refuse the other;—but that, beside this, he had given unto Christians, by His own SON, sent from heaven, a revelation of his will, which, if they embrace, and according to that revelation, if they repent of their sins, and believe in this Son of God, and walk according to the holy rules he has given them, they shall be made partakers of happiness with them for ever. Then I told them, that for my own part I was persuaded of the truth of all this; which I thought then all Christians believed as surely as any thing they see with their eyes.'

*Miss.* And so, I assure you, all true Christians do. But what did they say against your purpose of becoming a Christian?

*Ind.* 'Though I am almost afraid to tell you, yet I must do it, both to ease my mind, and to know whether any thing can be said to their objections.

'In the first place, they made a jest of my purpose, but I told them, that if what I had been taught was true, as I did believe it was, it concerned me so much, that I should not be laughed out of my intention.

'Then they told me plainly, the Christians would have you believe what they do not believe themselves.—For is it likely that people, who are fully persuaded of such things as they tell you, would lead such lives as they commonly do? What, said they, does it signify to know the God which they worship, and the good rules he has given them, if those rules are not able to make them better than other people?—Are they not as careless as if they were sure that nothing is to be feared or hoped for after this life?—You may be certain, that if Christians did really believe what they told you, there would not be a wicked man among them;—and yet many of them are as bad, if



not worse, than those who know nothing of the religion they pretend to, or of the *happiness* or *misery* they speak of. Are not the same wickednesses seen among them as among the worst of us?—They make no conscience to *cheat* and *defraud* even one another; and where they have power, they *oppress* without pity—*whoredom* and *drunkenness*, *falseness* and *deceit*, *lying*, *cursing*, and *swearing*, and calling upon the God they worship to *damn* each other, upon every foolish occasion:—These and many others are the crimes common among these very people, who tell you that the GREAT GOD will call all men to account, and reward or punish them according to their works. Can you think that they themselves believe this?

*Miss.* Well, what answer did you give them?

*Ind.* 'Why, indeed, I gave them no answer. I considered, that what they said had too much truth in it, and I held my peace, and doubted with myself, whether I should trouble you any more or not.'

*Miss.* I hope, however, that you will change your mind, when you have heard what we have to say to the objections.

In the first place, all good Christians know this, and are grieved to see how much the Christian religion must suffer by the bad lives of such people, by whose evil doings, the name of God and of Christ is blasphemed.

However suffer not yourself to be too soon discouraged: nor judge of our religion by the disorderly lives of those people you have mentioned; for assure yourself, that all are not true Christians who go under that name. There are too many who live in a shameful ignorance, both of the *truths* and *duties* of Christianity; and will not be at any pains to consider the religion they profess, nor the sad danger they themselves are in. And many there are, who have been instructed in the way that leads to everlasting happiness; but the *cares* of this world, the *deceitfulness* of riches, or the *love* of worldly pleasures, have blotted

the remembrance of the truths they had learned out of their minds. Nay, there are too many, who even strive to forget such truths, because they condemn their ungodly lives. They therefore endeavour to cast off all fear of God, and provoke him to give them up to a mind void of judgment, to commit all iniquity with greediness.

Lastly, *many profess to know God, but in their works do deny him.* These, and all such as these, are an abomination in the sight of God, and a grief to all true Christians.

*Ind.* 'But you know, Sir, that these will take it ill, if they are not called *Christians*.'

*Miss.* They will so; but that is, because they think it a name of *credit* and *respect* in the place where they live; and they content themselves with the name, without thinking seriously what it is to be a Christian.

*Ind.* 'Since so many go under the name of *Christians*, and are not such, how shall we know who are true Christians?'

*Miss.* The God whom Christians worship hath given them a rule, by which every one may know who are true Christians. The rule is this:—'LET EVERY ONE THAT NAMETH THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY<sup>1</sup>.' Whoever does not do so is no true Christian in the account of God:—and they, and they only, are true Christians who not only *believe* the truths, but also *obey* the laws, of the Christian religion. That is, such as *love* the God that made them, with all their hearts, and *fear* to displease and offend him; who *love*, *obey*, and *trust in* Jesus Christ his *Son*, their *Saviour*, and their *Lord*; and bring forth the fruits of the *Holy Ghost* in all kinds of goodness, righteousness, and truth; and lastly, such as having always a conscience void of offence, towards God and men, dare not for all the world be guilty of those vices which you just now mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 19.

But then, that you may not be offended with the infirmities, faults, and failings, of those that are even *good* Christians, you must remember what I have already often told you, concerning the weakness and corruption of human nature. For the best of Christians are men of like passions with others, and may, through the weakness of their nature, or for want of consideration, be sometimes overtaken in a fault, of which they afterwards truly repent. But a true Christian will not, cannot *live* or *continue* in any *known* sin, or bad way of life.

*Ind.* 'Pray then, good Sir, what answer shall I give to our people, who to be sure, will endeavour to dissuade me again from hearkening to your instructions, by such arguments as I have already mentioned?'

*Miss.* Ask them, whether THE GREAT GOD has not given every one of them *reason* and *understanding*, in order to judge betwixt good and evil? Surely they will not say, that *reason*, the *good gift of God*, is in fault when many of their own people do such wicked things as their reason forbids and condemns. No more ought they to blame the Christian religion, because some that call themselves *Christians* lead such lives as are a reproach to Christianity.

*Ind.* 'It may be, they will tell me, that if neither *reason* nor *Christianity* can keep people from being wicked, I need not be at the pains of learning the Christian religion, or hearkening to reason.'

*Miss.* Well then, I will show you in a few words, that of all means the Christian religion is most likely (*even better than reason itself ever can be in its present state*) to make men wise and good, unto their salvation and happiness.

1st. Your nature is corrupt and prone to evil; and experience convinces you, that your reason alone cannot mend and cure this corruption:—but the Christian religion, where it is sincerely embraced, will most surely do this.

2dly. Your reason will indeed accuse and condemn

you when you do amiss, but cannot give you any certain assurance of God's pardon, but the *Christian religion* will show you a sure way to be *forgiven* and *restored* to the favour of your Maker, whenever you have offended him.

*3dly.* We are but too apt to think every thing very reasonable to which we have a great inclination; and this is the occasion of very much *evil* and *mischief* in the world, when men make *their own will the measure* of what they ought to do; but the Christian religion, and that only, will inform you what is right in the sight of God, and what you must do, on pain of his most severe displeasure.

*Lastly.* Your reason cannot inform you what will become of you when you die: but the Christian religion can assure you, as I have shown you already, that such as live according to the rules of that religion, will be happy for ever; and that such as do not so, shall be most unhappy and miserable: and this will be a very powerful means of obliging you to live as becomes a good Christian.

*Ind.* 'Sir, I do most heartily thank you.—You have given me great ease of mind, and I hope I shall meet with no more such discouragements from hearing your instructions. But some few things I have to ask you for the confirmation of the truths I am to believe.'

*Miss.* Come when you will, I shall be ready to instruct you. And may God bless my endeavours with success; and do you pray for yourself in the following words:

#### THE PRAYER.

LORD, the frailty of man without thee cannot but fail:—In all temptations, therefore, I beseech thee to succour me, that no sin may ever get the dominion over me: give me a salutary dread of the corruption of my own heart; make me truly sensible of the end of sin, and mindful of my own infirmities; make me

afraid of thy judgments, and give me grace and strength to break my bonds; correct me in mercy when I go astray; make me ever mindful of my latter end, and fix in my heart a lively sense of the happiness and misery of the world to come. *Amen.*

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## DIALOGUE VI.

*The Holy Scriptures both necessary and sufficient for the Salvation of Man.*

INDIAN.

'You have convinced me, Sir,—that our reason alone is not sufficient to make known to us the things which you say are most surely believed among Christians; that *reason* cannot tell us with what *worship* the GREAT GOD will be pleased, nor give us any certainty of the *happiness* or *misery* of the life to come; which, to be sure, makes men less concerned how they lead their lives here. You have told me, and I am convinced of it, that our reason alone cannot assure us *upon what terms* the GREAT GOD will *pardon* us, when we have offended him, as all men are apt to do; and we know and feel, how hard it is even to follow what our reason tells us we ought to do. *Of what use then is reason to us?*'

*Miss.* Of very great use most certainly: it will keep you from being imposed upon, when any thing is proposed to your belief, as coming from God; you will be able to judge whether you have sufficient proof to receive it as such: and then, if you find you have, your reason will convince you, that it must be necessary for your happiness, because a God of truth and goodness cannot deceive his creatures, or require any thing of them but what must necessarily be for their good.

*Ind.* 'It is on this very account, Sir, I am now come to you, not only to learn from you, by what other ways God has made his will known unto Christians; but to

inquire, whether those ways be such as no man of common sense and reason ought to call in question.'

*Miss.* I hope I shall give you all the satisfaction in those things, that unprejudiced reason can desire. You will remember then what I told you before, that the GREAT GOD, in compassion to his poor bewildered creatures, sent his own Son to let them know how far they were departed from the ways of reason and truth; and that they would be for ever miserable, if they did not return to the duty they owed their Maker: and, lastly, that God *was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*, and would pardon mankind upon condition of their *faith* in him, their *repentance* and *future obedience*. I told you also, that he gave them such evidences, that this message came from God, as could not be justly called in question by any man, and, among the rest, this very extraordinary one; he declared, and his enemies knew it, *they will put me to death, and after three days I will rise again from the dead*; which also came exactly to pass.

*Ind.* 'I do remember all this. But how can you be sure that this was really so, it being so very long since these things were done?'

*Miss.* You yourself shall judge. You must know then, THAT DIVINE PERSON, when he was on earth, appointed several *persons* to be *witnesses* of every thing which he *did, said, taught, or suffered*; and that the most necessary of these things were put in writing, and published by some of them, even at the time when great numbers were alive, who had been witnesses of his words and actions, and while his enemies, who had put him to death, were also alive; and yet no one charged them with having written any thing that was not true. Now, *these writings* we call THE HOLY SCRIPTURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

*Ind.* 'But how are you sure, that the people did set down in writing that message of God to men, and all other things, just as THAT DIVINE PERSON had done and told them?'

*Miss.* We are well assured they did so ; because they were directed and assisted to write those things by God himself, *who bore them witness, by signs, and wonders, and miracles, and other gifts of the Holy Spirit, that he was with them*<sup>1</sup>. And they were themselves so well convinced of the truth of what they had written, and what they taught, that they chose to suffer any death, rather than be silent, or deny what they had *seen* with their *eyes*, and *heard* with their *ears*.

*Ind.* ‘ Pardon me for asking you one question more, how can you be assured, that those writings which you now have and call the Holy Scriptures of the NEW TESTAMENT, are the very same which those persons who conversed with Christ, did then write ? May they not have been altered since that time ? ’

*Miss.* We have this assurance, that they are the very same, and that they have not been altered :— THOSE WRITINGS were *copied* at that time, by many Christians, and *carried* with them into divers countries, and distant nations, which had no knowledge one of another, and were put into their several languages ; and they all continue to be the same in *substance*, wherever they are found, to this day.

And that these *facts* were so, as they are reported to us, we have the credible relation of those who were EYE-WITNESSES of them, and who approved themselves to be faithful *historians, lovers of truth*, even where it showed their own great weaknesses ; delivering all things plainly and naturally without any the least appearance of disguise. They mentioned *these* facts with all the circumstances of *time* and *place*, and so soon after the death of their LORD and MASTER JESUS CHRIST, that if they had not been exactly true, they would have been *then* contradicted : *they* published these relations in the country, where these *mighty* wonders and *miracles* were performed ; and at a time when their very profession lay under the severest reproach ; when *they*

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 4.



were so far from even the remotest prospect of advantage, that they were sure of *persecution*, and an ignominious and cruel *death*; which they might have *avoided*, if they could have prevailed upon themselves to be *silent*, or even *prevaricated* in the least degree. The *commands* they prescribed were *contrary* to the prevailing *passions* and corrupt *affections* of mankind; the *rewards* they promised were, for the most part, to be *enjoyed* in another world, and therefore would not have prevailed much, without the strongest evidence of their being *divine*:—and yet this GOSPEL OF SALVATION was *received and believed* by the world,—though it was preached at first by *mean instruments*, and, for the most part, *unlearned* men, who had neither *eloquence* to recommend, *power* to force, or *riches* to bribe their followers. And what could all this be ascribed to, but to the *mere truth* and *evidence* of its divinity, and to the mighty *power* of God?

Besides all this, from that very time to this, there was also ONE DAY IN SEVEN appointed, and very strictly observed by Christians, on purpose, amongst other things, to read these *Scriptures* in public, and to keep up the *memory* of these things which I have told you of, so that if any body had attempted to *add* or *alter* any thing of moment, it would have immediately been taken notice of by all good Christians.

*Ind.* ‘Indeed, Sir, a man must be very unwilling to believe these things who will not be satisfied with this account of the truth of these writings, especially if they contain nothing but what is highly worthy of the GREAT GOD to command his reasonable creatures.’

*Miss.* That you will be convinced of, when you come to know what he has commanded them to believe and do.

*Ind.* ‘But is it true, Sir, that Christians themselves are not agreed about them?’

*Miss.* Pray consider, that as long as men have *corrupt hearts*, and different *capacities* and *inclinations* and *interests*, they will differ with one another,



not only in what concerns Christianity, but in all other matters. But assure yourself, that all Christians are agreed in these necessary things: that these Scriptures are the very WORD and WILL of God, being the revelation of his Holy Spirit.

*Ind.* 'In what is it then that they differ among themselves?'

*Miss.* Some *differ* about *words* only, and often about matters of no great moment. Many are of a contentious spirit, and exercise their wits about *foolish questions, which minister strife*<sup>1</sup>, rather than the design of God in his word, which is to save us from ruin. Many take upon them to be *teachers of others, without understanding what they say, or whereof they affirm*<sup>2</sup>. Many will *expound* the Scriptures as will best suit with their own private opinions, or corrupt ways, inventing ways of serving God, which he has not commanded. And, lastly, too many are brought up in gross ignorance, and either are not permitted, or will not be at the pains, to see and know the truths which concern their salvation. These and many such are the causes of Christians differing among themselves. But be assured of this, that an all-wise and good God can make *these very differences* serve most blessed ends; *his glory* and the *good* of his chosen and faithful servants, for *by these* he *tries* their faith, whether they will give credit to his word, or to the delusions of those evil spirits, which lead the simple into error. By *these* he makes his true servants more careful of their ways, and to place their whole dependence upon him, and his grace, which they therefore pray for more earnestly.—Lastly, *these differences* have had this good effect, that forasmuch as all parties of Christians do acknowledge these Scriptures to be from God, they have ever been jealous of one another, that nothing be *added, omitted, or altered*, by any party of Christians.

And remember what I tell you for a certain truth,

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Tim. i. 7.

that the *differences* amongst Christians are not always of such a nature as to deprive men of God's favour. —For he knows all our hearts, and the reasons of men's mistakes;—and no doubt will pity and pardon such errors and mistakes as are not wilful, and do not plainly tend to deprave their own manners, or the lives of other people.

*Ind.* 'I have only one favour more to ask you concerning these Scriptures:—*What is the great use and necessity of them?*'

*Miss.* In the first place, *they* are graciously given by God to supply the defects of our reason, and to hinder us from abusing and perverting that great blessing and gift of God, which, through our lusts and passions, we are but too apt to do, to the hurt of ourselves and others.

In the next place, be assured that you can have no full and true knowledge of the GREAT GOD, or of his *will* and *purposes*, and *gracious designs*, but from his own *Son*, and from what *he* has made known to us in these Scriptures<sup>1</sup>.

By these Scriptures, as in those of the Old Testament, wherein holy men *spake* and *acted*, as *they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, we learn how *sin* and *wickedness*, *sickness*, *miseries*, and death itself came into the world;—and how men lost their innocence, and forfeited that happiness for which God made them.—And in the Scriptures we have also a most particular account, how God in mercy to his unhappy creatures, in his own good time, sent His own SON, to show poor sinners their miserable condition; to deliver them out of it; and by the most wonderful way, as I shall show you hereafter, to reconcile God to them, and them to God.—And in order to awaken all who come to the knowledge of these things, and engage their attention to them, these *Scriptures* give them the utmost assurance,—that God has prepared for them

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi. 27.

who believe in his Son, and are willing to receive salvation at his hands, and who can make this appear by loving him, and obeying his commands, a happiness which passeth man's understanding; and that such as will not regard these things, shall be miserable for ever.—And forasmuch as in the issue, this happiness and misery will depend upon man's good or bad behaviour in this life,—these Scriptures contain that law by which God has determined to judge the world, that all men may order their lives accordingly.—They teach us what service is due from reasonable creatures to their Maker :—how we must live so as to please him ;—what is truly just, and good, and acceptable to his Divine Majesty ;—as also, what is wrong, and what he has forbidden, upon pain of his everlasting displeasure.—They contain many wonderful examples of God's care of those that love and obey him, and of his displeasure against such as neglect or despise his commands. In short, these Scriptures are a most *invaluable* blessing, without which we should be ignorant of those things that are of the greatest concern to the glory of the great and eternal God, and our own everlasting welfare.

*Ind.* ' Well, Sir, you have raised in me a very great desire of knowing more of these Scriptures, which contain things wonderful and unknown to us indeed.'

*Miss.* You must give God the thanks for that desire, if it be sincere.—I can only speak to your *ears*; it is God alone that can speak to your *heart*. Forget not, therefore, to beg of him to make himself and his will known to you, and to bless the endeavours of such as desire to instruct you in the ways of truth and happiness.

#### THE PRAYER.

BLESSED LORD, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; grant that I may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of

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thy holy word, I may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given me, in my Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

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## DIALOGUE VII.

*An Account of the Fall of Man, and what followed thereupon, till the Coming of Christ.*

### INDIAN.

‘You assured me, Sir, when I was last with you, that God had made known to you many things, which our reason cannot account for:—I am now come to put you in mind of one difficulty, which I beg you would explain to me:—“How man the creature of an holy and good God, came to have such a strangely disordered nature, and so prone to evil?”’

*Miss.* I am obliged to do so! for, without the knowledge of this, you can have no true notions of the *justice*, and *mercy*, and *goodness* of God.

What, therefore, he has made known to us in the Holy Scriptures, is:—That after he had made this world and all things in it, in six days, and that he might have creatures capable of praising him for his wonderful works, he made one man and one woman, called ADAM and EVE, *determined to make of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon all the face of the earth*<sup>1</sup>; all which are the offspring of that one man and woman. He has also made known to us, that these *two persons* were at first made after the likeness of their Creator, being endued with reason in perfection, and other heavenly gifts. We learn also, that these our *first parents*, being thus made *perfect and good*, and *capable of living for ever*<sup>2</sup>, were placed in a happy state, called *Paradise*, with a promise of

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Wisd. ii. 23.

life and happiness, as long as they continued obedient to their Maker's commands. Now these two persons where in a state of trial and probation, as we all are at this day, though in a manner quite different from ours:—For *they*, coming out of their Maker's hands *perfect*, that is, endued with clear and strong apprehensions of their indispensable obligation to perform all the great points of morality, could not well be supposed to lie under any temptation of violating that chief part of their duty. It was therefore necessary, *that some other TEST* suitable to the place and circumstances they were in, should be required of them, to prove what was in their hearts; and whether they would choose, under the most tempting offers, to break an express commandment of God, their CREATOR, PRESERVER, and GOVERNOR, *even though the reason of such a commandment was not made known unto them.*—A *positive injunction* of this kind God was pleased to give them;—at the same time enforcing their obedience to it, by threats of a most dreadful *penalty*, if they should ever transgress it.

And we are to consider the command given to *Adam* concerning the forbidden tree, not as if God only spoke concerning *that*, but he herein commanded him this one thing,—OBEY MY VOICE:—This is, you are to do whatever I shall declare to be the duties of your life:—For it was necessary that man should obey the Divine Being, and never be left to his own guidance, but to be always kept in the hand of God's counsel.

How long *our first parents* continued in their duty, *we are no where told*; but at length, by yielding to the temptation of an evil spirit, and not regarding the command of their Maker<sup>1</sup>, they did *fall* from that holy and happy condition they were in; and by that most grievous crime (for so it appears by the punishment a most righteous God inflicted on them for it) they highly displeased their Maker, who left them to them-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. iii

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selves;—and, having lost their innocence, and that image of God in which they were created<sup>1</sup>, their nature became sadly changed for the worse.—And the children which they afterwards begot, being born of sinful parents, became even like their parents, disobedient, and prone to evil, as you see they are at this day :—All which these FIRST PARENTS OF MANKIND brought upon *themselves* and their *posterity*.

It was thus that *sin* and *evils* of every kind, and *death at last*, entered into the world, as the just punishment of their disobedience to the commands of God; by which *all right* to his free promise of eternal life and happiness was *forfeited* and *lost*.

*Ind.* ‘This is indeed a plain account how sin and wickedness entered into the world; and we ought to believe it to be a just account, since God has made it known to you in his revealed will.’

*Miss.* As to the corruption of our nature, and the sin that does so easily beset us, your own experience will convince you of the truth of it. And no other reasonable account can be given how it came into the world.—And you will learn by what followed this act of disobedience, how displeasing to God it was, and the punishment it deserved.

*Ind.* ‘Will you be so kind as to let me know what followed this sad calamity?’

*Miss.* You will easily conceive how miserable the conditions of these our *first parents* was now become :—They knew that they had *failed* in their duty to their Maker :—Their reason could not inform them how to help *themselves* :—The *loss* of their innocence, and of their Maker’s favour ;—their *forfeiture* of the happiness they had enjoyed,—with their dreadful *apprehensions* of that death which was threatened ;—the *sense* of these things would most certainly have overwhelmed them, had not the goodness of God

<sup>1</sup> Gen. v.

immediately interposed to keep them from despair.—For though his perfect holiness could not but *hate* the sin, yet his goodness *inclined* him to have compassion on the sinner; and from thence he took occasion to make known another of his most glorious perfections, *his infinite mercy*.

*Ind.* 'I am most desirous to hear how that was done.'

*Miss.* Why as a remedy for what had been done amiss, and could not be undone, their Maker was pleased to enter into a NEW COVENANT with them:—so that neither they, nor any of their posterity, should on account of *their disobedience*, be ruined, except it was purely their own fault.

*Ind.* 'That was indeed a most kind offer of their offended Maker;—pray, what was that COVENANT?'

*Miss.* It was this:—That on account of one, who would in due time satisfy his divine justice for their offence (and take vengeance on that evil spirit, that had tempted them to disobey his command) he would *restore* them to his favour upon certain conditions; and would appoint them *means*, by which they, and their posterity, might upon their repentance, obtain his pardon, when they should do amiss, as since their fall they would be but too apt to do<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'You may now be so kind, as to let me know what followed this promise of God to his sinful creatures.'

*Miss.* You must know then—that some of their children and posterity, exercising themselves in repentance of sin, depending on this promised Saviour, keeping up a sense of these things, and an expectation of this promise, lived in the fear of God<sup>2</sup>.—But many others of them, through the corruption of their nature, became exceeding wicked: one of their own *sons* murdered his *brother*; for which God, to keep others from committing such horrid crimes, banished

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 16, and 1 John iv. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. v. 24.



him from his presence, and he spent his days in misery.

At last wickedness increase to such an height, and became so general, that God was provoked to destroy the whole race of men by a flood (except one upright man, whose name was NOAH<sup>1</sup>, together with his little family) as I hinted to you before.

*By this good man and his family*, the whole earth was again filled with people, as it is this day.—And while his good instructions, and the memory of that dreadful judgment lasted, men lived in the fear of God;—but too soon fell into wickedness again:—And most of these, losing the knowledge of the true God, *fell into idolatry*, a sin which God principally abhors as most dishonourable to his nature, authority, and glory, and as *leading men into all other wickedness*<sup>2</sup>.

*Ind.* 'Pray what is that sin of *idolatry*, which God so hateth?'

*Miss.* It is the giving that honour and worship which is only due to the true God, to his *creatures*, to the *sun and moon*, and to *evil spirits*—and to the *images* representing these.

Notwithstanding this,—God never left himself without witness<sup>3</sup>; but gave continual proofs of his hatred against wickedness, and of his favour and protection of good men, in all ages, and amongst all nations, even unto this day. And thus it is,—that calamities of all kinds are brought upon the earth; that one nation makes war upon another; these being only instruments in the hands of God, and by his wise and just appointment, for the punishment of their sins.

*Ind.* 'Pray, had any of these nations ever afterwards an opportunity of coming to the knowledge of the true God, and of the worship due to him?'

*Miss.* Yes, indeed they had. For the Holy Scriptures inform us, that God made choice of a certain person, whose name was ABRAHAM<sup>4</sup>, and called him

<sup>1</sup> Gen. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. i. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xiv. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. xiii.

and his family from the midst of a nation given to idolatry; that to this man he made himself and his glorious perfections known; and for his encouragement to persevere in his duty, he promised—that out of his loins in due time the DELIVERER OF THE WORLD from sin and death should proceed, and that in the mean while he would make his descendants a great and numerous people:—All which was made good in a most wonderful manner. His posterity increased exceedingly; and wherever they travelled—they communicated the knowledge of the true God,—and told men how he ought to be feared and worshipped; so that many nations might have known these things, had it not been their own fault;—for God caused them often to wander, that they might make him known amongst men, and cure them of their wickedness and idolatry.

It was in the time of that good man, that God showed his hatred of wickedness, and his displeasure against great and bold sinners, after a manner the most frightful and astonishing—there were several considerable cities, the chief of which were SODOM and GOMORRAH, the inhabitants of which, through pride, fulness of bread and much idleness, fell into all manner of wickedness; which provoked God to make them an example of his displeasure against such sins:—for he reigned down fire and brimstone upon them<sup>1</sup>, and utterly destroyed both them, their towns, and their whole land, the dreadful marks of which are to be seen at this day.—At the same time, God, to show his care for those that feared him, sent his angels, and delivered one good man, whose name was Lot, and his family, out of that fearful destruction<sup>2</sup>.

After this the children of ABRAHAM, to whom the promise was made, multiplied exceedingly; to whose posterity God gave very particular laws and directions, how they might live so as to please their Maker, and not hurt one another<sup>3</sup>—and wrought most won-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xix. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xix.

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derful things before their eyes, when he delivered them out of a most cruel bondage ;—to convince them and all other nations, that should hear of these things, —that the idols and evil spirits, which they worshipped were no gods—and that there was no God, but the God of this people.

*Ind.* ' Pray what were the laws and directions that God gave this people and nation ?'

*Miss.* The chief of them were these that follow :— That they should neither have nor worship any other God but him who had done such wonders for them ; that they should not make any visible *image* or *representation* of him :—that they should not profane his holy name : that they should keep holy *one day in seven*, to preserve the remembrance of him and his works :—that they should *love* and *honour* their parents<sup>1</sup>. That they should love one another as being all the creatures of a good God ;—and neither *hate* nor *murder* any one ;—that they should not commit *adultery*, or be guilty of any *lewdness* :—that they should not *steal*, or *lie*, or *bear false witness*, or *covet*, or *set their hearts upon what was another man's*.— And remember what I tell you,—the substance of these laws was given soon after the flood to NOAH and his *family*, from whom the présent race of mankind is derived, though the greatest part of their posterity soon forget them.

Soon after God had given his peculiar people these laws, he settled them after a most wonderful manner, and in a fruitful land, which he had long before promised to ABRAHAM their great *forefather*, and blessed them exceedingly while they observed his laws.—But even these people, through the corruption of nature, often transgressed his commands, and were as often punished, and upon their repentance pardoned ;—till, at last they growing incurably wicked, he permitted their enemies to destroy most of them, their *cities*,

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xx. 12.

their *land*, and their *place of worship* ;—and they are at this day dispersed over the face of the earth, without any sure settlement.

Now a few years before this happened, the time was come when the GREAT GOD was pleased to send into the world,—‘that PERSON or PROPHET, whom he had promised to our first parents, and who had engaged to make satisfaction to the Divine Justice for their great offence.’—But a particular account of this PERSON and BLESSING will take up more time than I believe you now have to spare :—I shall, therefore, defer it till you come next to me. In the meantime pray earnestly to God, that he may not suffer your heart to be hardened, but that you may ever believe his promises and stand in awe of his judgments.

#### THE PRAYER.

I BELIEVE : Lord increase my faith, and give me grace that with a holy life I may adorn the religion I profess.—Keep me stedfast in this faith, that no errors may separate me from thee :—but that thy love, O merciful God : thy grace, O blessed Jesus ;—thy fellowship, O Holy Ghost, may defend and comfort me in all dangers and adversities, until I attain the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul.  
*Amen.*



#### DIALOGUE VIII.

JESUS CHRIST, *the MEDIATOR and SAVIOUR of the World, and the Head of all Christians.*

#### INDIAN.

‘ You showed me, Sir, when I waited on you last, how man came to fall from the upright and happy condition in which he was created ; and how he, and all his posterity, became subject to *sin*, to *misery*, and to *death* :—As also how their Maker spared the lives of

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our first parents, although they had deserved immediate death, on account of One who was engaged to satisfy the Divine Justice for their transgressions and for the offences of all their posterity, upon the most merciful conditions. And I left you with a more earnest desire of knowing more of that SACRED PERSON, who was to come into the world for that end ;—and as you intimated to me, did come about that time, when God had, for their sins, cast off that people whom he had so long and so remarkably favoured and protected above the other nations of the world.'

*Miss.* I told you before,—that this Divine Person, knowing into what a miserable condition *the two first parents of mankind* had brought themselves and their posterity, by their disobedience to their Maker ;—how dreadfully sad their punishment would be, and of what an invaluable happiness they would be deprived ;—he, by God's most gracious appointment, undertook to satisfy the Divine Justice, by submitting to such sufferings as God was pleased to accept by way of atonement for the sins of men.

*Ind.* 'Pray, Sir, how did Jesus Christ do this?'

*Miss.* As I told you before, he, out of love to his otherwise lost creatures, took the perfect nature of a man, both body and soul, into union with his divine nature, and was born of a pure virgin, that he might be seen and converse with men, and in their nature be capable of suffering for the sins of men.

Now, in that body here upon earth, in the first place he let mankind know God's wonderful goodness, and his readiness to forgive offenders, even the greatest offenders upon their repentance, belief in him and his undertaking, and return to their duty ; as also, how they ought to live so as to please God, and be an honour to their Maker.—And by his most wise and holy life, and doctrine, and example, he showed what an excellent creature man was, before he lost his innocence, and fell into a state of sin and corruption ; as also how hateful to God sin must be, since so divine

a Person, which you will see hereafter was the *Son of the Most High God*, was obliged to come down from heaven, to satisfy God's justice, and to save men from the punishment it deserved. For his divine nature, though it could not suffer, yet being thus divinely united to his humility, gave such a virtue and value to the sacrifice, as rendered it a proper and sufficient atonement to the Divine Justice for our sins.

After he had in his public ministry fully declared the design of his coming, and performed such miraculous things as were sufficient to convince all well disposed people, that he was *the Son of God*, and sent by him to declare his Father's will to men;—after this, that, as Son of God, he might make full satisfaction to the Divine Justice, since no less a sacrifice could do it, he willingly laid down his own life for his otherwise undone creatures.

*Ind.* 'I begin now to understand what before I was amazed at, *why God would suffer his own Son to be put to death by wicked men*; and why his Son would choose to be so dealt with, when he could have hindered it: I suppose it was because he had undertaken the cause of sinners, and suffered death to make an atonement for them, and to satisfy the justice of his offended Father, who therefore permitted him to be put to death.'

*Miss.* You understand it right.—And the GREAT GOD, to convince the world that his justice was satisfied by this most worthy sacrifice, raised him from the death the third day after he had been crucified and buried;—*by which he was in the most convincing and powerful manner, declared to be the Son of God*<sup>1</sup>; of all which the Holy Scriptures give us a particular account; and, for our comfort, declare, *that God had laid on him the iniquity of us all*<sup>2</sup>; *that he tasted death for every man*<sup>3</sup>, i. e. for every penitent sinner, from the first man that was made, to the last that shall be

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 4.<sup>2</sup> Isa. liii. 6.<sup>3</sup> Heb. ii. 9.

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born into the world; lastly, *that he has saved us by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'It seems, then, that we also have an interest and right in the blessings which he has purchased by his death.'

*Miss.* Most certainly you have; for so he hath declared,—*that the Gentiles, such as were strangers to the true God, should be fellow heirs with his chosen people, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ*<sup>2</sup>.

*Ind.* 'Pray what is meant by the *Gentiles being of the same body*?'

*Miss.* The meaning is this:—That you should be of the same holy society with God's chosen people; and that as we are the creatures of one and the same God, and children of one and the same Father, and *redeemed* by the same Saviour, you shall now be made members of the same body, an holy society, which is called the Church of God, of which JESUS CHRIST is the HEAD AND GOVERNOR.

*Ind.* 'I should be very thankful if you would explain that to me more particularly.'

*Miss.* You must know then,—that after the *Son of God* had by his death made an atonement for the sins of mankind, he commanded his Apostles to offer the blessings he had purchased unto all the nations of the earth, *in order to take out of them a people for the glory of God*<sup>3</sup>;—and to let all men know the merciful favours which the GREAT GOD offered them by his Son, which were,—*repentance on men's part, and forgiveness of sins on the part of God; and that this should be preached in his name among all nations*<sup>4</sup>; and that all such as would receive him as their Redeemer, and Law-giver, should be entered into one society, called the *Church or body of Christ*, because he is the Head of this body and Governor of this

<sup>1</sup> Rev. v. 9.    <sup>2</sup> Eph. iii. 6.    <sup>3</sup> Acts xv. 14.    <sup>4</sup> Luke xxiv. 47.



society, which is made up of all true believers in all nations of the world; that as he had *redeemed* them, he might *protect*, and *govern*, and *keep* them in the way of life and happiness; and lastly, that the great truths of Christianity, and the Holy Scriptures, in which they are contained, might be preserved, being to be constantly read, explained, and preached among them.

*Ind.* 'But, good Sir, how can people, of so many distant nations, and different laws and languages, be *one society* ?'

*Miss.* They are all of *one society*, as they all agree in *one faith*, and profess to be governed by *one law* of Jesus Christ;—as they all engage to renounce the *devil*, and all the *ways* of an evil world, and to *worship* the *one* and only true *God*;—as they all profess to *receive* the Holy Scriptures to be the only *rule* of both their *faith* and *manners*;—as they are all redeemed by the same sacrifice;—as they all pray to *one* and the *same God*, in the name and for the sake of the same Mediator and Advocate;—as they are all received into the same society, by one and the same ordinance of *baptism*; and are under the *direction* and *influence* of the same *Holy Spirit*;—and as they all hope to meet together hereafter in the same place of joy and felicity, the *kingdom of heaven*.

*Ind.* 'I think I understand you very well. I should be thankful, therefore, if you would let me know what are the privileges or blessings of being a member of this society.'

*Miss.* The blessings are many and great,—such as these following:—You will be enabled to answer the end for which we were made and sent into the world. If you enter into this society with true repentance of your sins, true faith in Jesus Christ, and a sincere purpose of living as a Christian ought to do, *all your past sins will be forgiven you*; and, if you afterwards fall into sin (as you will be but too apt to do) *you will have Jesus Christ an Advocate with his Father for your par-*

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*don, upon your repentance and return to your duty*<sup>1</sup>.— Besides this, you will be under the *special care and protection of God*;—you will have the ministers of Christ to instruct you, and God's all-powerful Spirit to *direct, support, and comfort* you in all your distresses. —You will have an interest in all the *prayers and blessings* of that society throughout the world; every member of that society being bound to seek the good of the whole body, to *relieve* the necessities of such as are in want or in misery, and all being mutually obliged to pray for each other.—Lastly, you will have a most sure title to eternal life and happiness after death.

*Ind.* 'There is no man, sure, who is in his right mind, but would most earnestly desire to be a member of such a society, if he could hope to do what will be required of him as a Christian. For, as I remember, you told me, that a Christian has many enemies and difficulties to strive with.'

*Miss.* That is true.—But then take this most certain truth along with you,—*that a righteous and good God will not require any thing of his creatures, but what he will enable them to do, if they will but use their own endeavours*;—every person, who sincerely proposes to become a Christian, having a most sure promise of being assisted by God's Holy Spirit to please his Maker, and to keep his commands.

And, forasmuch as we must be made *holy*, as ever we hope to happy, it is this good, and Holy Spirit, that must make us so.—Which he doth, by putting into our hearts good desires and purposes of pleasing God, and a fear of offending him; by convincing us, that nothing is required of us but what is absolutely necessary for our good and happiness,—by helping our good endeavours, and defending us against the malice and power of evil spirits;—by setting home upon our hearts the joys and happiness that are pro-

<sup>1</sup> 1 John i. 9. ii. 1.

posed to us, and the dreadful misery which will be the portion of such as despise them:—All which that Holy Spirit doth perform in us by a sure, though an invisible power.

*Ind.* 'How can you be sure of this, since you say he is not to be seen?'

*Miss.* Can you see the wind?

*Ind.* 'No.'

*Miss.* How can you be sure there is such a thing?

*Ind.* 'Because I hear the sound of it, and feel the force of it upon myself.'

*Miss.* Are you sure that you have a soul or spirit within you, which governs all your actions?

*Ind.* 'I cannot but be sensible and sure of that, because I feel something within me, sometimes accusing, sometimes excusing, according as I do what is good or otherwise.'

*Miss.* Yet you never saw that power: you are sure of it only by its effects.

*Ind.* 'Pray make that plain to me.'

*Miss.* Do not you know a tree by the fruit it bears?—Doth not a *good tree bring forth good fruit*?—Doth not a *corrupt tree bring forth bad fruit*<sup>1</sup>?—Just so when a good spirit governs any person, you see it plainly by his life and conversation;—as also, when you see any man lead an evil life, you may be sure he is governed by an evil spirit.

*Ind.* 'I understand you very well;—and would be thankful, if you would let me know what are the fruits which distinguish a good spirit from one that is evil?'

*Miss.* The sure signs, that the Holy Spirit of God governs any man, are these following fruits: *a love of God*, and of men for his sake;—*living in peace* as much as possible, with all others<sup>2</sup>:—*forgiving* those that have injured us, as we hope to be forgiven our many offences against God;—*a readiness* to do good

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 27.

to all men :—a constant *endeavour* to mortify our corrupt affections, our lusts, and evil desires ;—being content with our condition ;—being *humble, meek, and temperate* ;—and in all improvements in knowledge, faith, holiness, and obedience, making an humble acknowledgment of our unworthiness, giving Christ the glory of our salvation, and the Holy Spirit the honour of our improvement in these things :—These, and such as these, are sure signs that a man is governed by the Holy Spirit of God<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand,—the sure signs of a man's not being under the influence of the good spirit, are such evil fruits as these following : *adultery, fornication, idolatry, witchcraft, envy, hatred, and malice* ; a disposition to *revenge* and *murder, drunkenness, revellings*, hardness of heart, unbelief, and contempt of the Gospel, and such sins as these :—God having expressly declared, that they who do such things shall never be happy, but shall have their portion with those *evil spirits*, by whose wicked suggestions they had been seduced to commit them.

*Ind.* 'One would think that such as know the dreadful punishment denounced against wickedness, would never persist in it, but immediately endeavour to escape from so dangerous a condition.'

*Miss.* They certainly would do so ;—but having wilfully forsaken the ways of God, they have grieved the Holy Spirit, and forced him to depart from them, and to leave them to themselves :—so that their hearts are hardened, and their minds are void of understanding.

*Ind.* 'If I remember well, you told me, that all men are subject to sin, even Christians, as well as others, though they have received that Holy Spirit for a principle of a new life.'

*Miss.* I told you so, and I told you nothing but the truth ; for so they are, until, by the influence of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 14.

that good Spirit, they are made completely holy, which is not to be expected till we die, and go to heaven.—I told you also another truth ;—that a Christian is not one who has no failings ;—but he is one, who, by the power and favour of that Holy Spirit, watches and strives against the corruption of his nature continually, so as never to live in any known sin whatever.

*Ind.* ‘ I remember you told me so before ; and I am convinced of the truths you have now explained to me. And I must beg of you at your leisure to let me know, what will be required of me in order to my being baptized, and made a member of that society, to which you have convinced me so many blessings have been promised by the GREAT GOD.’

*Miss.* That I will very willingly endeavour to do the next time you come to me.—In the meantime, forget not to beg of God to give his blessing and success to such as desire and strive to instruct you in the ways of life and happiness, and to give you grace to follow their godly instructions and admonitions, in words to the following purpose.

#### THE PRAYER.

O MERCIFUL GOD, and lover of souls, bless the pious endeavours of such as are appointed to instruct me in the ways of truth and godliness :—leave me not to my own choice, but give me a heart always open to receive the truth, and a constant resolution to observe and obey it ; and that I may remember thee, my Creator, all my days, cheerfully embrace salvation by thy Son our Lord, and submit to his government,—let thy HOLY SPIRIT ever accompany me, and inspire me with sound principles of virtue, religion, and holiness, for thy mercy’s sake in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

DIALOGUE IX.

*Being an Abstract of the former Dialogues and Instructions.*

INDIAN.

‘KIND Sir, I am come to put you in mind of your promise to instruct me, *how I may become a member of that society to which you <sup>1</sup>ld so many blessings do belong.*

*Miss.* I would now do it, but upon second thoughts I am of opinion, it will be best for you, that I put you again in mind of the truths you have already learned, and assented to, that you may be able to answer it to your own *reason*, and to every one who shall ask you, —‘Why you choose to be a Christian?’—And that your faith being surely established, you may be convinced that it is your *interest*, as well as *duty*, to make such a choice; and that you may not hereafter become a scandal to the Christian religion, or be tempted to forsake it, on account of any difficulties you may meet with, or the bad examples of wicked men who profess it.

*Ind.* ‘I heartily thank you for so kind a proposal; and I will hear you most willingly.’

*Miss.* You have declared already that you are fully convinced, that there is but one God of all the nations of the world;—that is,—a Being, most *wise*, most *powerful*, most *holy*, most *just*, and *good*,—who, after he had made the world, and all things in it, by his great power, made man, and endued him with *reason* and *understanding*, to the end he might have a creature on earth capable of knowing and honouring his Maker.

*Ind.* ‘I am most fully convinced of this, and do most firmly believe it.’

*Miss.* How then do you think it comes to pass, that so many people endued with reason are so far from

being an honour to that God on whom they depend for life and breath, and all things which they enjoy or hope for,—that they neither *fear* nor *love*, nor *honour*, nor *are concerned to please him*?

*Ind.* ‘I have not, Sir, forgotten the account you gave me,—how this came to pass;—how the first parents of mankind came to fall from that happy temper and condition in which they were made,—by yielding to the temptation of an evil spirit, and breaking a strict command which their Maker had given them for a trial of their obedience.—And what a sad change and disorder was thereby made in their nature, and in the world, inasmuch that both they, and their posterity, which inherited their corrupt nature, became prone to *evil*, and subject to *sin*, and *death*, and to all the *sorrows*, *miseries*, and *afflictions*, which lead to death;—and that this was the true occasion of all the mischiefs and wickedness which we see and hear of in the world.’

*Miss.* I am very glad you remember this so well.—For indeed, without the knowledge of this unhappy fall of man, and the corruption of our nature, which followed, you can never fully understand, nor truly value, the *wisdom*, the *justice*, the *mercy*, and the *goodness of God*; nor would the Christian religion appear to you so great a blessing as it really is.

*Ind.* ‘You will be so kind as to explain this to me a little more particularly; that I may embrace it with full satisfaction, and never forsake it.’

*Miss.* You will remember then what I told you before:—that we know and are assured of this by a writing which came from God, of which we have most undoubted proofs, and by which we are informed how merciful God was in sparing the lives of these our unhappy parents, which they had forfeited by their great offence, and this for the sake of his beloved Son, who undertook to see his justice fully satisfied, and to use all proper means to make men sensible of their offences, and bring them back to the duty they owe to their Maker.

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That in order to this HIS SON, who his called CHRIST, and *from whom we Christians have our name*, came down from heaven to earth, and was made man, and conversed with men:—and declared unto them, as he was the Son of the Most High God, and had a tender compassion for poor sinners, so he had undertaken to be a Peace-maker between God and them;—and that he was a messenger sent from him to make his will known unto men;—and that God had committed the government of all mankind to him.

All which God himself confirmed by a voice from heaven<sup>1</sup>.—And his *Son*, when on earth, convinced all who were disposed to receive the truth, that these things were true by his doing such wonderful works as none but God could do;—by the holiness of his life;—by the most righteous laws which he gave unto men,—and above all, by his rising again from the dead, after he had, by wicked hands, been murdered.

*Ind.* ‘All this I remember, and only desire you will repeat *the message which this WONDERFUL PERSON brought from God to men.*’

*Miss.* In the first place *he* made known to them their miserable condition by nature and practice: and that it was yet a condition not without hope—that as his justice could not let sin go unpunished,—so his goodness would not let his unhappy creatures be ruined, except they obstinately refused to accept of the merciful terms proposed to them.

That therefore God had been pleased, for his Son’s sake, to promise,—that all such as should be made sensible of their bad condition, and would return to the duty which they owe to their Maker, should have all their past offences pardoned, should be received into his favour again, and be made for ever happy with him;—but that all who knew this, and would not receive, and thankfully comply with, so kind an offer, should die in their sins, and be punished without mercy.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. iii. 17.

In a word, that their happiness or misery would depend upon their *good* or *bad* behaviour in this world. For that God had appointed a day in which he would judge the world most righteously,—reward the truly penitent and good, and punish those that continue obstinate and wicked<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* ‘Will you now, Sir, be so good as to let me know the way which this wonderful person did make use of to prevail with men to embrace this most kind message of God to men?’

*Miss.* In the first place,—he showed them, what a tender compassion God had for his unhappy creatures, who were wilfully going on in the way of ruin, without perceiving it:—and that he was so good as to send his own Son from heaven to save them from destruction.

He told them further—that the sins of men were so many, so great and universal, that no less a satisfaction would be accepted for their pardon than the death of his own Son; that therefore he had taken upon himself the cause of sinners, and put himself in their place and stead, that he might suffer and die for them.

And God, to show men how well he was satisfied with his Son’s sufferings for the sins of men, raised him from death, and set him at his own right-hand; *where he lived for ever, to make intercession for all such as come unto God by him*<sup>2</sup>.

*Ind.* ‘All this I remember, and I cannot but admire the great love of God and Christ for such unworthy creatures.—Pray, have any other ways been taken of bringing men to a sense of the duty they owe to their Maker, and of promoting their happiness?’

*Miss.* I hope you have not forgot what I told you,—that Christ, after his ascent into heaven, sent down the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles in a most wonderful manner, who established that society which we

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. vii. 25.

call the *Church of Christ*, as the most proper means of bringing men to the knowledge of the true God—of salvation by his Son,—and of engaging in the regular and faithful discharge of the several duties they owe to God, to themselves, and to all mankind.

For in that society he has appointed certain persons *his ministers, who are to watch for the souls of men as they that must give account of them*<sup>1</sup>;—to let them know what they must do to be saved;—to minister to men the means of grace and salvation;—*to instruct the ignorant;—to comfort and help the weak, and raise up them that fall;—to offer up to God supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanks for all men;—and, in one word, to endeavour that all men may attain that happiness, which Jesus Christ has purchased by his most precious blood.*

*Ind.* 'This I have not forgot:—nor what you told me further,—that forasmuch as God had determined to judge mankind according to their behaviour in this life, he has given to Christians certain laws and rules, by which they shall be judged to happiness or misery, at that great day; and that these laws and rules are to be found in that book which you call *the Word of God*, because it was written by men appointed of God. May I beg you to give me a short account of that book?'

*Miss.* In the first part of those Scriptures, called *the Old Testament*, we have an account of the creation of the world, and of God's infinite power, wisdom, justice, and goodness in the government of it:—we have there an account, as I told you, of the original happiness of our first parents, and of their sinful fall from that condition?—we have also encouraging notices of the recovery of mankind from this sad condition,—and are informed how, in all ages, God has often protected and blessed the good, and punished the wicked;—in order to convince men, that he sees

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xiii. 17.

and ordereth all things for his own glory, and the good of his creatures.

In that part of the Scriptures which we call *the Gospel*,—we have a particular account of the life of Christ;—his most perfect example;—his most holy precepts;—some of his numberless and wonderful miracles:—how he was approved of God to be his Son, and the Messenger of his will to men: how he was by wicked hands crucified and slain: that he *died*, was *buried*, and that all these his sufferings were a proper atonement for our sins;—that he *rose again the third day from the dead*;—*conversed* with his followers, and in their sight ascended into heaven; from whence he *sent down* the Holy Ghost, who enabled them to speak all manner of languages;—that they might by this astonishing miracle prove their mission, and be able to teach all men these wonderful things, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth, that they might be saved:—and lastly, how great number of all the then known world embraced the Christian religion;—that is, all such as feared God, and were concerned to save themselves from that wicked generation, saw plainly, that the Christian religion was most agreeable to reason, and the blessings it proposed to men, greater than all the world besides could give them.

*Ind.* ‘Will you be so good as to repeat again the chief of those great truths, and the blessing you speak of?’

*Miss.* The truths which it concerns us to know, and which the Christian religion, and that only, teaches us, are such as these:—That we are fallen under God’s displeasure, and yet may be restored to his favour, and have all our offences pardoned through the satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ: that our life here is only a state of trial, and a passage to a life either of happiness or misery, which is to last for ever; that this happiness or misery will be according to our behaviour here,—and that we should so live,

as to glorify God, and be blessings to ourselves and others.

In short,—the Christian religion proposes a remedy for all the evils we are subject to, which we either feel or fear; and is designed to restore men to that holy temper which is absolutely necessary to fit them for heaven and happiness;—that is, to make them truly *good* and *just*, *wise* for themselves, *kind*, *sober*, *chaste*, and *temperate*, *peaceable*, and useful in their generation.—And it will be purely their own fault if they are not such; for this religion affords them all the encouragement and assistance, that their case can possibly demand, or their hearts can reasonable desire.

*Ind.* 'You have, Sir, fully convinced me of the great blessing of being a Christian; for which I heartily thank you.'

*Miss.* Give God the thanks; it is he only can open your eyes, to see both your danger, and your interest.

*Ind.* 'If I shall not be too troublesome, I would only ask you at present, what answer I shall give to such of our people as shall press me to tell them,—*Why I am resolved to become a Christian?*'

*Miss.* After what you have already learned, you can tell them the truth, that you found you wanted something which you had not in yourself, to make your mind easy, and your condition safe;—that your own reason convinced you, that such a creature as man could not be made, and sent into the world, only to eat and drink, and live and die, as the beasts of the field;—that you had often wished to know for what end the GREAT GOD made men; what service they owe him:—whether the way you were in was pleasing or displeasing to him;—and often wished to know,—*What becomes of men after they die, and leave this world.*

You can tell them, that none with whom you had conversed could give you any reasonable satisfaction concerning these matters, until, meeting with sober

people among Christians, you have been convinced, —*That you and many other people and nations had lost the knowledge of the only true God, who made the world, and all things in it*;—and that Christians have among them a WRITING, which gives them a full and most worthy account of that great and good Being;—*how he made of one blood all the nations of the earth*<sup>1</sup>: —what excellent and innocent creatures he made the first parents of mankind<sup>2</sup>; and how they and their posterity came to be changed so much for the worse, and subject to such evil dispositions, to so many miseries and afflictions as now we see they are. By whose writings you can tell them, Christians are assured how wonderfully good and kind God will be *to such as diligently seek him*<sup>3</sup>, and desire to please him; and that all who are not enemies to themselves may be as happy as their own hearts can wish.

You can tell them moreover,—that God has made known in these writings, what men endued with reason ought to *do*, and what to *avoid*, if they hope to please their Maker and their Lord; what great happiness they will deprive themselves of, if they strive not to know, and do his will; for that such as repent of their sins, believe in the SAVIOUR he has sent, and obey his commands, will, when they die, be happy for ever;—free from *fear*; from the malice of their enemies, from *pain*, from *sorrow*, from *cares*, from *oppression*, from *sickness*, and from *misery after death*: and enjoy all the blessedness of which their nature is capable.—And that such as have not been careful to please their Maker, shall be condemned to everlasting misery.

If they ask you, as to be sure they will, how Christians can be assured, that these writings and truths came from God?—You may assure them, *that, if any man sincerely desires to know God's will, he shall find such proofs as shall convince him that these writings,*

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvii. 26.<sup>2</sup> Gen. i. ii. iii.<sup>3</sup> Heb. xi. 6.

and the doctrines they contain, are from God, and not of men<sup>1</sup>.

If they tell you, as they did before, that many who call themselves Christians live as if not one word of those Scriptures were true: you may assure them, that all good Christians are much concerned for the offence these give to you and to others; that indeed they are not true Christians, but such as, being unwilling to forsake their sins, and resolved to follow their lusts without disturbance, strive to forget the truths they have learned, because the remembrance of them makes them uneasy; and being by a just judgment of God left to themselves, they have at last lost all sense of the dreadful punishment which hangs over their heads;—that *this falling away* of Christians from their holy profession, and turning the grace of God, which teaches them to *deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, into wantonness*, is so far from being an objection to the truth of Christianity, that it is an argument for it; since this was foretold by the divinely inspired penmen of the Holy Scriptures, that there would be *some, who would hold the truth in unrighteousness*, and *others* that would *draw back to perdition*, and quite forsake the holy commandments.

*Ind.* 'Kind Sir, your repetition of these things, for which I am most thankful, has confirmed me in my earnest desire and purpose to become a Christian,—and I beseech you once more to instruct me what will be required of me in order to be made a member of that society, which you call THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.'

*Miss.* That I will gladly do when you come to me again. And may that *Good Spirit*, which has put this purpose into your heart, keep you in this good disposition; and do not yourself forget to beg of God that he may perfect the good work which he has begun in you.

<sup>1</sup> John vii. 17.



## THE PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men, grant me grace to withstand the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, that I may never follow, nor be led by them. Keep it ever in the heart of thy servant, that it is indeed an evil and bitter thing to forsake the Lord, that I may never return to the sins I have repented of. Make me ever mindful of my infirmities, that I may look up to thee for help and assistance; and grant that we, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray, may, by thy mighty aid, be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Redeemer.—*Amen.*

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## ESSAY

TOWARDS AN

### INSTRUCTION FOR THE INDIANS.

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#### PART II.

*Of BAPTISM, and the LORD'S SUPPER; the CREED,  
the LORD'S PRAYER, and the COMMANDMENTS,  
explained.*

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#### DIALOGUE X.

*Of Baptism.*

MISSIONARY.

I AM glad to see you here again so soon. It is a good sign that you are in earnest, and sincerely desirous of becoming a Christian.

*Ind.* 'Indeed, Sir, so I am. You have convinced me, that it is my interest as well as duty to be a Christian.'

*Miss.* I must not suffer you to be under such a mistake:—It was not I alone that could convince you;—It was the *good Spirit of God*, who is always ready to *enlighten* the minds, and *open* the hearts, of such as are in fear for themselves, and would gladly know the

will of God, and the way to please him. I am only *his messenger* to you, and I hope, for your everlasting good.

*Ind.* 'I hope so too;—and therefore am now come to be instructed,—“How I may be admitted into the society of Christian people.”’

*Miss.* You must know, then, that CHRIST the SON of GOD, and the *Head* and *Governor* of that society, has appointed two HOLY ORDINANCES, which we call SACRAMENTS, to be of perpetual use in his Church,—as SIGNS, SEALS, and PLEDGES of God's fulfilling his promises of blessing upon our compliance with the rules of our duty; and by which he has determined to bestow his favours and blessings on such as are worthy of them:—The one is called BAPTISM, or the *washing* of water, a *figure of regeneration*, by which all that are well disposed and qualified are to be received into his church, which is the society of all Christian people throughout the world: the other sacrament is called, the LORD'S SUPPER, and appointed by Christ himself as an especial means by which that society is to keep up the remembrance of what he has done and suffered to redeem them from misery.

By the sacrament of *baptism*, God is graciously pleased to enter into COVENANT with his poor creatures, whereby he promises, *on his part*, to take them under his especial protection, and to give them all that is necessary to fit them for heaven and happiness, when thy die; and *Christians*, *on their part*, bind themselves to become Christ's faithful servants unto their lives' end.

*Ind.* 'Sir, you often mention your being *God's servants*, and *serving God*;—Does God want any service that we can do him?’

*Miss.* No, truly; he stands in no need of our *prayers*, our *praises*, or our *services*.—They cannot *profit* him: but he having given us certain commands about our addressing ourselves to him in *adorations*, *supplications*, and *thanksgivings*; when we obey these

commands, (though purely for our own good) he is graciously pleased to deem it serving, honouring, and glorifying him, though in truth, we only *profit* ourselves hereby.

*Ind.* 'You will be pleased to let me know *when* and *how* Christ appointed the sacrament of baptism?'

*Miss.* Just before he left this world, he gave his Apostles, who were his ministers, *this command*,—'Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you <sup>1</sup>.'

Now here are several things which I would have you carefully observe and remember:—*First*, the absolute necessity of believing and receiving the message which God sent to the world by his Son:—*Secondly*, the necessity of being joined to his Church by baptism, when that blessing can be obtained:—*Thirdly*, the dreadful condition of such as obstinately continue in their unbelief, when the Gospel is preached to them:—And *lastly*, observe the very strict command of Christ to his ministers, first to *teach*, but then to teach *only*, whatever he has commanded; by which true ministers of Christ are to be known from false teachers.

*Ind.* 'How is baptism administered?'

*Miss.* By dipping the person under water, or pouring or sprinkling water upon him, at the same time pronouncing these words: 'I baptize thee in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*?'

*Ind.* 'What do you mean by being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and of the Holy Ghost?'

*Miss.* It is to show that men, who through the corruption of their nature are no more worthy to be called the children of God, are by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, born as it were again, and made new creatures, and thus admitted into a new covenant, on condition of their entering into a solemn engagement to *believe* and *obey* whatever is

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

commanded in the Gospel of Christ, in the name or by the authority of *God the Father*, who created them; of *God the Son*, who redeemed them; and of *God the Holy Ghost*, who enlightens and sanctifies them.

*Ind.* 'Are all persons capable of baptism?'

*Miss.* Yes:—both *infants* and *grown* persons.

*Ind.* 'What is required of those persons who are grown to years of discretion, in order to their baptism?'

*Miss.* *Faith* and *repentance*; that is, to believe sincerely all the doctrines of the Gospel, and to repent of all former sins.

*Ind.* 'But what if he fall again into sin?'

*Miss.* It is then necessary that he should restore himself to the *benefits* of his baptism by a *renewal* of his repentance.

*Ind.* 'But why are *infants* baptized, who are not capable of these qualifications?'

*Miss.* Though they are not capable of *faith* and *repentance*, they are capable of being admitted into *covenant* with God, as the children of the *Jews* were, by the especial appointment of God, by circumcision.

*Ind.* 'What is meant by washing with water such as are baptized?'

*Miss.* It is an *outward sign or token*, signifying, and assuring us, from Christ himself, that as our bodies are made clean by water, so surely the souls of all who are true believers and penitents, being thus *dedicated* to God, are *cleansed* from all past sins, and are put into the way of salvation, by being admitted into the church of Christ, and made members of his mystical body, which is the blessed company of all faithful people.—And lastly,—we are by the words used in this ordinance, made to understand, how our salvation is brought about; that is to say,—*by God the Father* who loved us, even after we had rebelled against him;—*By his Son*, who purchased salvation for us;—*and by the Holy Ghost* who *sanctified* us.

*Ind.* 'Pray, Sir, explain this a little clearer and fuller to me.'

*Miss.* You must know then, that—the washing with

water in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, *confirms* and *seals* to the person thus washed, the covenant of repentance for the remission of sins, of which covenant Christ is the Mediator; for by him only we have access to the Father:—*We are born in sin*, and liable to the displeasure of our Maker; but by embracing and complying with the terms of the Gospel, we become *children of God*, according to the new covenant<sup>1</sup>; and by outward sensible *signs* or *sacraments*, are confirmed in the hopes of eternal life, the *free gift of God*, through Jesus Christ our Lord: but then *remember*, if you do not endeavour to live in obedience to the commands of your heavenly Father, it will be no profit to you at all to be called the child of God. *Lastly*, by baptism you are admitted into the hope of everlasting happiness, and to a *title* to the inheritance of the saints, upon your *believing*, *embracing*, and *obeying* the gracious terms of the Gospel of the *blessed Jesus*. God will then treat you as a *father* does the child he loves;—he will, upon your hearty repentance, and sincere return to your duty, *pity* your manifold infirmities, and *forgive* all your past offences. He will *correct* you in mercy when you do what would hurt yourself; and will upon your prayers, *for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ*, give you the grace of his all-powerful Spirit, *to guide, assist, comfort, and support* you in the way leading to everlasting life.

*Ind.* ‘Had I no *right* to these blessings before I was baptized?’

*Miss.*—Consider what favours they are, and you will find nothing in yourself that can deserve such<sup>2</sup>.

Can *sinful dust* and *ashes* pretend to heavenly privileges, the favour of God, and the graces of his Holy Spirit?

Can *corrupt nature* think of *deserving*, or be *capable* of *glory*, and *honour*, and *immortality*?

Endeavour *to know yourself* better, that being truly

<sup>1</sup> Gal. iv. 7. Rom. viii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. iii. 23.

humbled with a sense of your own vileness and misery, you may thankfully accept of *help* and *mercy* from God.—*For they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick*<sup>1</sup>.

And seeing God has promised to do so much for you, be persuaded to do something for yourself.

*Ind.* 'What can so miserable a creature do for himself?'

*Miss.* You can lament your own unworthiness, and pray God to pity you.—

You can use the graces he bestoweth upon you, and be thankful for his favours.—

You can do your best, and his goodness will expect no more.

*Ind.* 'Was the sacrament of baptism ordained by Christ himself?'

*Miss.* It was, in these words—*Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost*<sup>2</sup>.

—Which command the Apostles of Christ observed:—they preached the Gospel, *and as many as believed, them they baptized*<sup>3</sup>.

By this sacrament, *adding to the Church such as should be saved*<sup>4</sup>.—Holding it necessary to baptize with water even those that *had received the Holy Ghost*<sup>5</sup>.—Teaching us that this command of Christ, where it may be duly observed, is not to be neglected on any account whatever.

*Ind.* 'What further use am I to make of this sacrament?'

*Miss.* It ought always to bring to your remembrance, that you are a *Christian*: that you have a *new name* and *new powers*, given you, on purpose that you may become a *new creature*.

If you are indeed a *child of God*, you will think what a *dutiful* child ought to do.—You will *fear* his

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ix. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Acts ii. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Acts. ii. 47.

<sup>5</sup> Acts x. 47.



displeasure, and *trust* in his love : you will pray to him for what you want, and be thankful to him for what he gives ; and you will own his affection when he *corrects*, as well as when he *smiles* upon you.

If you look for an *inheritance in heaven*, your thoughts will be often *there* : for *where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*<sup>1</sup>.

And you will not be too eager or anxious for the things of this world—you will neither be much afraid of its *troubles*, nor too fond of its *vanities*, remembering that *both* will soon have an end.—

And as you *ever* hope to go to *heaven*, you will endeavour to *fit* yourself for that *glorious place* :—Remembering,—that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*<sup>2</sup>.

The sure promise of God will not suffer you to despair :—and the joy that is set before you will encourage you to press forwards.

You will be thankful to God for calling you to this state of salvation ;—and gladly undertake the conditions he requires of you. What these conditions are, you shall know the next time I see you. But first, with a thankful heart, say,

#### THE PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting GOD, heavenly Father, I give thee humble thanks that thou hast vouchsafed to call me to the knowledge of thy grace and faith in thee, increase this knowledge, and confirm this faith in me evermore. Heal all the evil inclinations of my soul ; and create in me a hearty love unto holiness, that continuing thy servant, I may attain thy promises, and be made a partaker of thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vi. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xii. 14.

## DIALOGUE XI.

*The conditions required of such as are to be baptized.*

INDIAN.

‘THE last time I waited upon you, you were pleased to promise to instruct me in those conditions that persons are required to know, and promise to perform, in order to be baptized.’

*Miss.* I shall gladly do this.—As Christ will most surely keep the promise he has made of many great and valuable blessings:—so you must *on your part* promise,

*To renounce the devil and all his works :*

*The world and all its evil ways and customs :*

*And the flesh, and all its sinful lusts.*

And secondly,

*That you will receive and believe the truths and message which God sent unto men by his Son, which are contained in the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament; and summed up in what we call the Apostles’ Creed.*

And lastly,

*You must promise to use the utmost diligence, and sincere endeavours, to keep the commands of God all the days of your life.*

And here, on one hand, I would not discourage you, so on the other, I must tell you the truth,—*that these things are not so easily performed as promised.*

*Ind.* ‘I see I must give you the trouble of explaining yourself further:—I shall be glad, therefore, to know what sort of life is required of a person that is come to years of discretion, after he is baptized, that I may not promise what I do not perfectly understand, nor undertake more than I am able to perform.’

*Miss.* You remember, I hope, what I have often told you,—‘*That this life is a state of trial;*’—that God having prepared the greatest happiness for such

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as *believe* in him, *love*, *honour*, and *obey* him,—that he may make them fit for the reward he intends them, he hath determined to try their *faith*, their *love*, and their *obedience*,—Not that *he* is ignorant of their hearts and their sincerity: but his design is by these trials to shew them to themselves, and to humble them by seeing how much they must depend upon his grace and help;—and to shew the power of his grace over the greatest adversaries of their souls,—He has therefore permitted *evil spirits* to make this trial, by *tempting* men to the sins which they renounced at their baptism.

*Ind.* 'I remember what you told me concerning the DEVIL and his EVIL SPIRITS;—that they are such as rebelled against their Maker, and for that sin were cast out of heaven;—that their evil nature leads them to *tempt* and *draw* men from the true God;—and that God permits them to try the faith of Christians, and to execute his judgments upon sinners.—Besides these enemies of our souls, I remember what you told me, and what I find true by experience, that we have an enemy within ourselves, even our own corrupt nature, very prone to evil; and that we have also an evil world, and evil examples, to lead us to forget or to neglect God, and our own promise.'

*Miss.* I am glad you remember these things so well.—I must, therefore, now give you the *necessary advice*, which our Lord Christ has given to all such as design to become Christians;—that is, to do what all wise men will do, who have any thing of moment to undertake.—'To sit down and consider, what it is to be a Christian<sup>1</sup>, lest afterwards you expose to shame and disgrace the religion you profess, as too many do.'

*Ind.* 'I heartily thank you, Sir, for this caution and advice:—and beg you will let me know the sins I may be tempted to;—and how I may oppose and avoid falling into them.'

<sup>1</sup> Luke xiv. 28.

*Miss.* The sins to which the devil and his evil spirits are most eagerly bent to tempt men,—are first of all, to forsake the true and only God, to *trust* in themselves, and to *fear* and *worship other beings*.—This is called IDOLATRY, and provokes God to give such persons up—to *a mind void of judgment*,—to *commit all iniquity with greediness*<sup>1</sup>.—This is the sad case of all the nations of the world, who worship not the true God.—They are under the power of *Satan*, his *angels*, and his *agents*; and so are you, until, through the favour and mercy of God, and in the proper exercise of faith and obedience, you are received into his church and family.

REVENGE, and MURDER that too often follows it, are *Satan's* darling temptations: by which millions of souls have been sent out of this world.—This is what you must resolve against as a sin more especially hated of God.—If you are *injured* or *oppressed*, you must leave your cause to God:—He, and he only, knows what punishment every *injury* and *injustice* require: and will call offenders to an account in his own proper time. It is true, revenge is sweet and tempting to our corrupt nature; but corrupt nature you must not follow, if you resolve to be the servant of God.

Another sin, which the devil tempts men to, is *lying*; HE IS THE FATHER OF LIES, and would have all men like himself; because he knows that God has declared, that *such as love and make lies*<sup>2</sup>, shall have no inheritance in his kingdom. This you will consider and resolve against, as you hope for the favour of God.

There is another very dangerous error, to which men are strongly tempted: that is,—to be proud, and to have a high conceit of their own *reason*, *wisdom*, and *ability* to know and to *do* what is good, and best for themselves. Now this *pride* and *self-conceit* takes men off from their *dependence* upon God, his *will* and

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 28.<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxii. 15.

word, by which alone we can know *what we must do to be saved*;—upon what terms God will pardon a sinner; and what will become of us when we die. Now nothing can provoke God more, than for us poor creatures to think, that we want not his help, his grace, and light.

*Lastly*, you must know,—that the devil hath his agents in every place: These are—men of *wicked lives, and wicked principles*:—who make a mock of sin; who fear not to blaspheme that God, *who can destroy both body and soul in hell*. Now the Spirit of God has assured us, that *conversation with such persons will corrupt good manners*<sup>1</sup>. Here then will be your trial; and you ought to consider beforehand, whether the pleasure of such company should prevail with you to neglect the council of God; which is, to avoid them as you would avoid your own destruction: or whether you will run the hazard of being ruined for ever, by conversing with such wicked persons.

The next thing, which at your baptism you promise to renounce is, 'the world and all its evil customs and manners;—as, also, all the sinful lusts of the flesh, so that you will not follow, nor be led by them.'

*Ind.* 'I am afraid Sir, that, without your instructions, I shall not understand this as I ought.'

*Miss.* You will remember, that this is not the world for which you were chiefly made; nor must you look for any true and lasting happiness here. Now you will meet with many things in the world which will tempt you with an appearance and show of happiness; and if you are not resolved to avoid them, they will turn your heart from the love of God and the care of your soul.

*Ind.* 'You will be so kind as to let me know what these are.'

*Miss.* The Spirit of God will tell you:—They are 'the lusts of the flesh.'—that is, all sinful, unchaste,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 38.

and impure pleasures, and whatever leads to such sins. *Secondly*, 'the lust of the eyes,' that is, all sinful and covetous desires, and love of riches. And *thirdly*, 'the pride of life'<sup>1</sup>; or an *excessive* value of themselves, accompanied with an *unreasonable* desire of the esteem of the world.

*Ind.* 'Pray let me know more particularly what are the lusts "of the flesh," which I am to resolve against.'

*Miss.* I will repeat to you the very words of God, that you may be convinced I do not tell you any thing but what will be necessary to your salvation. Now these *works of the flesh are manifest*; that is, they may easily be known by any considering person, though never so unlearned, to be displeasing to a good and holy God. Such as *adultery, whoredom, idolatry, witchcraft, drunkenness, hatred, malice, revenge, strife, seditions, murders, revelling*<sup>2</sup>, and such like. Now however tempting many of these sins may be,—you must sit down, consider, and resolve against them, or never hope for the favour of God.

*Ind.* 'You will now let me know what is meant by "the lust of the eyes."'

*Miss.* 'I told you before that it is the eager and covetous desire of riches. And that you may be convinced how dangerous a sin that is, you may hear what Christ himself has said,—*That it is very hard for rich men to be good Christians*<sup>3</sup>; because they are so much exposed to many evils and temptations,—such as these following:—They that have riches are apt to *love* them too much—to *put their trust in them*, and to *forget* their dependence upon God; to *lord it over* and *oppress* their inferiors; and to *make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*: and this may be the true reason, *why* our blessed Saviour says, *it is so hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God*; because being exempted from all the toil and care of life, he is

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xix. 23.

*apt to enter too far into the pleasures of it, and to say to his soul, soul, take thine ease, and enjoy the good things before thee;—whereas, our portion here is labour and exercise, not full enjoyment.*

The business of our salvation is a great work, which cannot be effected without diligence, and zeal, and earnest contention; but he that is unacquainted with labour, will scarce take the pains that is required, towards *working out his salvation, and making his calling and election sure.*

Besides all these,—great wealth is often attended with such cares as *choke the good seed*<sup>1</sup> sown in the hearts of men, that is, the holy desires, and good resolutions, which are wrought in men by the Spirit of God, so that this good seed becometh unfruitful.

And though *riches* may be made use of to good purposes, yet it will require a more than ordinary grace of God so to use them; which extraordinary grace is seldom asked by, and therefore seldom given, to such whose hearts are possessed with the love of riches.

*Ind.* ‘One would conclude then,—that Christians ought not to desire riches so eager as generally they do;—nor ought they who want them to think themselves unhappy or not beloved of God.’

*Miss.* That is very true. And they who will not be convinced of these truths, by what God has declared in his word, will one day be convinced by sad experience, when it may be too late to do them any service.

*Ind.* ‘Must then every man who would save his soul, renounce the thoughts of riches?’

*Miss.* No: riches may be used to many good purposes. A great Apostle of Jesus Christ tells you how;—‘*Charge (says he) them who are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who gives us richly all*

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 22.



things to enjoy :—*That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life*<sup>1</sup>. But still they are dangerous things ;—they are fluctuating and precarious ; the means, not the end of happiness :—They may be instruments of giving large scope to virtue ; great blessings in the hands of the upright ; to the good of his own soul, and the welfare of mankind ;—But *they are thorns and snares in the way of the froward*<sup>2</sup>.

*Ind.* 'What advice will you give me, that I may neither *desire* nor *enjoy* them too eagerly ?'

*Miss.* That you may not endeavour by unjust ways to better your condition, you will find these words of Jesus Christ in his Gospel ;—*What will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul*<sup>3</sup> ?

To moderate your desires, consider that *the more you have, the more you must account for*.

To make you more *contented*, you must know, that men are not happy, because they have a great deal, but because God gives them power to enjoy what they have, be that more or less.

That the favours of God may not tempt you to idleness, remember,—*That slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep* ; that is, it makes men insensible of what concerns the next world, and in this world—*covers them with rags*<sup>4</sup>.

And, lastly, if you let no worldly business hinder you from serving God daily, it will keep in your mind a constant sense of *your dependence* upon him, and make you set your thoughts upon another world, to which *this* is only a *passage*.

*Ind.* 'Pray instruct me how I may best avoid temptations.'

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Mark viii. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Prov. xxiii. 21.

*Miss.* The directions I give you shall be short and plain, and suited to your condition.

Let this be ever in your mind, that sin is the worst of all evils,—for all other evils will have an end, at farthest when you die ; but sin will make you miserable for ever.

Remember that you are naturally inclined to sin, that the *devil* will tempt you to it, and that God only can save you.

And then you will never trust in your own strength, but in the living God.

To him therefore you will constantly pray for help, and if you draw nigh to him, he will draw nigh to you<sup>1</sup>.

And yet you must not expect God's assistance without using your own endeavours ; for that is to tempt the Lord.

If sinners entice you, you must not consent unto them<sup>2</sup> : for they are the devil's instruments.

If you fall into evil company, you must go out of it immediately, and not walk in the way with them, lest God forsake you.

When the *Holy Spirit* of God puts into your mind good desires, or checks you for doing ill, you must obey the voice of God ; and he will love you, and preserve you from your spiritual enemies, and from everlasting death.

*Ind.* 'You will now be pleased to explain to me THAT PRIDE OF LIFE, which a Christian renounces at his baptism.'

*Miss.* By the *pride of life*, is meant,—that great opinion, which through the corruption of nature, all people are apt to have of themselves ; with an eager, restless, and immoderate desire after every thing that may distinguish them from others, which may set them high in the esteem of the world.

Now this *pride of life* is the occasion of many evils,

<sup>1</sup> James iv. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. i. 10.

which are highly displeasing to God, and must be resolved against by every good Christian.

The *evils* are these that follow : They who are under the power of this vice, are more concerned for the esteem of the world, than how to please God. They are, therefore, too often tempted to support the good opinion of the world, by laying that out on vanity, which should be the support of their families, or of the poor; and they are too apt to despise the poor, as if they were not creatures of the same kind with themselves. They look upon all the advantages or blessings they have, whether in their *persons*, or in their *possessions*, as their due; and are therefore generally *unthankful* to God, and *rob* him of the honour of his own gifts;—in short, they are angry, when they are not valued as they think they *deserve*; they are apt to be *discontented*, and to think that they deserve *more* than they have; to *repine* at their misfortunes; and overlook their own infirmities; and are therefore utter strangers to that *humility*, which must recommend them to the grace and favour of God; *For he resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble*<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* ‘Since this pride of life and heart is so natural to us, what can cure us of it?’

*Miss.* Nothing but the *grace of God*, and possessing your heart with things of greater moment.

Consider, that you are liable to *eternal misery*:—That your great business in this world is to prepare for a happy DEATH, and the DAY of JUDGMENT; and you will be very indifferent about several things which you now take too much pleasure in.

For which reason you will neither study to be *vain* and *foolish* in your dress, nor *singular* nor *conceited* in your opinions, but imitate such as are sober-minded; as knowing, *That the ornament of a meek and humble spirit*<sup>2</sup> is in the sight of God of great price, and should therefore be your great concern.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter v. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Peter iii. 4.

And then, if you remember,—*that you have nothing that you have not received*<sup>1</sup>,—nothing but what you must give an account for, you will have more reason to *fear*, than to be *proud* of your advantages.

*Ind.* ‘Well, Sir, I see sufficient reason why every one, who purposes to become a Christian, *should renounce the devil, and all his works,—the vanities of the world, and the lusts of the flesh.*—I am also convinced of the great advantage those will reap, who are able to overcome these difficulties.—But them I am discouraged exceedingly, when I see so many, who have undertaken to be Christians upon these conditions, in a manner renounce that religion afterwards,—either finding it impossible to observe these conditions, or thinking that they are not so very necessary to salvation as you say they are.’

*Miss.* Believe not this because of *our saying so only*; but because *the God of truth and mercy* hath so said, who would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth, and requires nothing to be *done* or *avoided* by Christians, but what is absolutely necessary to their salvation; and which he will enable them to perform, if it is not plainly their own fault.

As for such as *call* themselves *Christians*, but *do not* the things which Christ has commanded, you must not judge of the Christian religion *by them*, but by your own *sense*, and *want of a Redeemer*. The Christians you speak of have never duly considered the extreme danger they are in, nor what the Son of God has declared:—*That it were better for them, that a mill-stone was hanged about their necks, and they cast into the sea, than they should be the occasion of offence to well-disposed people*<sup>2</sup>. And indeed none serve the designs of *Satan* more than such sort of Christians; and who have no other choice, but a true and timely *repentance*, or *everlasting misery*.—And *repentance*, one would hope they would choose, if they would

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iv. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xvii. 2.

consider the great patience of God, which ought to fill their eyes with tears, and their hearts with that shame and sorrow which is the work of true repentance.

Do but remember what I have told you before, *that a true faith in God and in his word*, will enable you to overcome all the difficulties you can possibly meet with.

It is for this reason that every one, before he takes upon himself the Christian profession, is obliged to give an account of his *faith, without which it is impossible to please God.*

*Ind.* 'Having given you so much trouble already, I must not now ask you to explain to me the particulars of the Christian *faith*, but with your leave I will wait on you again very soon.'

*Miss.* As soon as you can. In the mean time I must put you in mind—to beg of God to deliver you from the attempts of the devil and his wicked agents, who will try all ways to divert you from your good purposes—and may God keep you in the good disposition you seem to be in.

#### THE PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful Father, preserve me from all the temptations of my adversary the devil, who goeth about seeking whom he may be permitted to devour. Give me holy resolutions and a watchful spirit, that I may persevere in the way of godliness, and my life correspond with the purity of my faith. Oh! let me never dishonour so excellent a title as that of *Christian*; but do thou reign in my heart, by the spirit of grace guiding all my actions, and directing my intentions, that I may be the servant of thy divine will here, and be admitted to the holiness and glories of that state, where thou reignest for ever and ever, and art all in all. *Amen.*

## DIALOGUE XII.

*The Articles of the Christian Faith practically explained.*

INDIAN.

‘ You told me, Sir, when I left you last—*that without faith no man can please God*<sup>1</sup>, nor ought to be admitted into the society of Christians,—I am therefore now come to learn of you, *what that faith is*, which Christians *profess to believe*, before they are baptized.’

*Miss.* You must know then, that there are many things which Christians believe, and which you will know hereafter, when you hear the HOLY SCRIPTURES read and explained. In the mean time there are certain truths necessary to be known and believed, before you can be baptized.

*Ind.* ‘ How shall I know what these truths are?’

*Miss.* For the benefit of young beginners, and for such as cannot read or remember many things, truths of the greatest moment, are contained in this following short account, which we call the CREED, or the ARTICLES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH; and I must prevail with you so to fix them in your memory, that you may not forget them as long as you live: for the belief of these will be a powerful means to make you *holy, righteous, and happy*.

THE CREED, OR THE ARTICLES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;—and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,—who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,—born of the Virgin *Mary*,—suffered under *Pontius Pilate*,—was crucified, dead, and buried;—he descended into hell;—the third day he rose again from

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xi. 6.

the dead;—he ascended into heaven;—and sitteth at the right-hand of God, the Father Almighty;—from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;—the holy catholic Church;—the communion of saints;—the forgiveness of sins;—the resurrection of the body;—and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

*Ind.* 'I will endeavour to learn them by heart;—and I hope I shall remember them as long as I live. And now I shall be very thankful, if you would show me,—how the knowledge and belief of these things are necessary to make men good, as you very justly say all Christians ought to be?'

*Miss.* Remember then,—*that to believe in God, is not only to profess, that there is such a glorious Being, who made the world, and all things in it;—but also to believe whatever he hath made known to us, either concerning himself, or the duties we owe to Him ourselves, and others; which is all contained in the holy Scriptures, written by the inspiration of God<sup>1</sup>, who can neither be deceived nor deceive us.*

Now in these Scriptures he hath made known to us,—*that he never left himself without witness<sup>2</sup>; but hath given sufficient proofs of his almighty power, wisdom, justice, goodness, and truth, in all ages of the world.—He hath made known to us,—that by his almighty power he created the world and all things in it;—and that, by his most wonderful wisdom, he has governed and preserved it ever since it was made.*

That he is the *author of our being*, and of all the good we do or ever can enjoy<sup>3</sup>.

That he is perfectly holy, and requires all his servants to be holy<sup>4</sup>.

That he sees us wherever we are, and whatever we do, so that if we pray to him we are sure to be heard; if we sin we are sure to be punished<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xiv. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xvii. 28.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

<sup>5</sup> Prov. xv. 3.

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For his *power* is *mighty* to reward his faithful servants, and punish the disobedient <sup>1</sup>.

That he is *just* in all his ways; commandeth nothing but what is for the good of his creatures; and never punisheth but when they truly deserve his displeasure <sup>2</sup>.

That he is *long-suffering*, and ready to receive all that are sensible of their misery <sup>3</sup>.

And, that he is a *faithful* God; whatever he has promised, will certainly be performed; whatever he has threatened, will surely come to pass <sup>4</sup>.

For he governeth all things, both in heaven and earth; *and nothing is too hard for him that he thinks fit to do* <sup>5</sup>.

Now the *belief* of these truths is necessary to give us such worthy thoughts of the *great* and *glorious* God, as may *humble* us in our own eyes;—and make us *fearful* of offending, and *glad* to please, one who has power to *reward* or *punish* such as *please* or *offend* him.—On the other hand, we shall be disposed to *love* him above all things, because we believe him to be the giver of all the good we either *enjoy* or ever *hope* for.—And he having made known to us,—that *his eyes are in every place beholding the evil and the good* <sup>6</sup>: and that from him no secrets are hid;—this consideration is proper to make us careful of our words and actions, and afraid of *doing* or *saying* any thing which may displease so great and holy a Being.—And for his *justice* we have the greatest reason to *fear* it; because he has in the Holy Scriptures made known to us many dreadful examples of his displeasure against those who have no regard to reason, or his commands; by which we learn what we must expect, if we provoke him by our sins.—*Lastly*,—when we see, as we find it in his word, that this great God has been so good, as to spare men, even when they have deserved

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xvii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xviii. 25.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Deut. vii. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Jer. xxxii. 17.

<sup>6</sup> Prov. xv. 3.

punishment, we are hereby powerfully led to adore and admire his goodness and patience, *which doth, or ought to lead men to repentance.*

*Ind.* 'Why is God called the FATHER?'

*Miss.* Because he is the *maker* and *preserver* of all creatures, which, with the care and affection of a father, he watches over continually.

He is the father of man, *because he created him after his own image.*

Because he *teacheth* man knowledge;—*corrects* him when he does amiss;—and *rewards* him when he does well.

*Ind.* 'What is meant by God's *providence*?'

*Miss.* The *wisdom* and *power* of God, by which he *knows* and *appoints* how every thing in the world shall be, so that the whole creation is taken care of:—*not the meanest creature can suffer* without God's leave, either by *malice* or *accident*<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'Why then do evils befall men?'

*Miss.* Very often to *punish* them, and to bring them to repentance; but *especially* to *wean* our hearts from being too fond of this life; and that we may *think* of, *delight* in, and *prepare* for a better.

*Ind.* 'Doth God govern the seasons? *Do not summer and winter, spring and harvest*<sup>2</sup>, return certainly at their appointed time?'

*Miss.* They do:—but then to put men in mind that they depend upon *God only*, and not upon the *seasons*, for their daily bread,—the *summer* sometimes returns without its usual *heat*, and the *harvest* without its *fruitfulness*<sup>3</sup>.

*Ind.* 'Have not wicked men, and wicked spirits great power of doing mischief?'

*Miss.* 'Tis true—God hath given them great power both to punish the wicked, and to try the faith of the righteous<sup>4</sup>:—But the word of God assures us, that neither men nor devils can do the least hurt, without

<sup>1</sup> Matt. x. 29. <sup>2</sup> Hag. i. 10, 11. <sup>3</sup> Hag. i. 9, 10, 11. <sup>4</sup> 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

the leave of God; and this is the reason that there is not more mischief in the world, and that all things are not every where in confusion <sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'Of what use is it to believe, that God is our Father?'

*Miss.* If you, indeed, believe this, you will take your Father's word for what he promiseth: be pleased for what he ordereth;—*cast all your care upon him, for he careth for you* <sup>2</sup>.

You will never abuse his *goodness* and *long-suffering*; for though he hath the *compassion* of a *father*, yet if his *children* are obstinately *disobedient*, he is a *God terrible in judgment* <sup>3</sup>.

In all your afflictions you will have this comfort: *'tis good for a man to be in trouble* <sup>4</sup>, and to bear *chastening*, if it so *seemeth good* to his all-wise and gracious Father; not for his own *pleasure*, but our *profit*, as it may make us *partakers* of his holiness, and *yield the peaceful fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby* <sup>5</sup>.

*Lastly*, If God is *your Father*, your inheritance is in heaven; which you ought frequently and seriously to think of.—'That *where your treasure is, there may your heart be also* <sup>6</sup>.'

*Ind.* 'I am convinced, and do believe these perfections of God: and I see how necessary they are to be known and believed, in order to make men *fear* before him, and to *love* and *obey* him.'

*Miss.* But you have not perhaps considered—what little comfort the belief of these things will be to a man who knows himself to be a sinner, and that as such he must needs be under the displeasure of this *holy, just, and powerful God*;—and yet knows not how to be restored to his favour.

*Ind.* 'This is indeed a perplexing, tormenting thought:—and I remember what you told me before,

<sup>1</sup> Job i. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxix. 71.

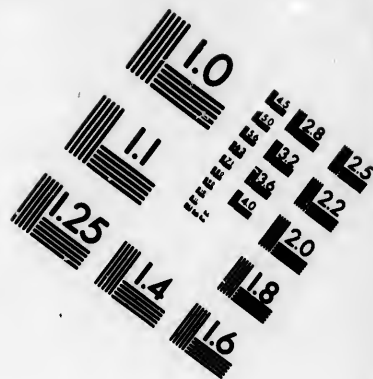
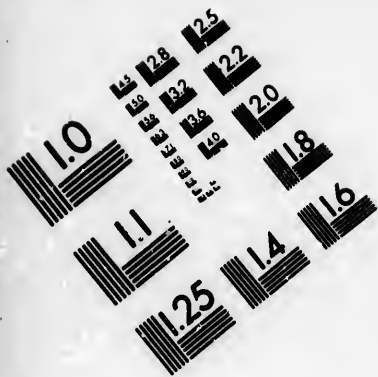
<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. v. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. xii. 5, &c.

<sup>3</sup> Psalm xlvi. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. vi. 21.





# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (MT-3)

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—that, until God was pleased to let men know upon what terms he would accept of their repentance, and pardon them, the wisest men on earth could not find it out, so as to make the minds of sinners easy.’

*Miss.* This will convince you of the great blessing of Christianity, and the great goodness and mercy of God in delivering mankind from the fear of death, and what will certainly follow;—which without the Gospel was the torment of sinners, and kept them in bondage all their life long<sup>1</sup>.—How God has delivered us from this bondage, you will understand in the next article of the Christian faith.

*Ind.* ‘You will be so kind as to explain that to me.’

*Miss.* That I will do.—But I must be obliged to repeat some truths of moment, which I have told you before;—That after the FIRST PARENTS OF MANKIND had lost their Maker’s favour by their disobedience, and brought sin, and misery, and death into the world,—God in great pity promised them a SAVIOUR; one who would satisfy his justice, for the dishonour done to him by their sins, and would restrain the power of that evil spirit, which had tempted them to so great a sin.

Now this promised SAVIOUR is the very person, in whom we Christians profess to believe, when we say, —*We believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of our Lord.*

For when the world was grown exceeding wicked, and ignorant of the only true God, this his SON took upon himself the nature of man, by being born of a virgin, that as a man he might be capable of suffering for the sins of men, for which from the beginning of the world he hath engaged to suffer<sup>2</sup>, to save us from being lost for ever.

Accordingly the rulers and the generality of the people of the Jews, amongst whom he was born and

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xiii. 8.

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lived, being grown very corrupt and wicked, did not only reject him, and the message of salvation that he brought them from God, and the holy rules of living which he assured them were necessary to please God: but they also used him most barbarously, and at last prevailed with *Pontius Pilate*, the *Roman* governor, to put him to death, *even against his conscience*;—which death the Son of God submitted to; *for he could easily have delivered himself out of the hands of his enemies*.—Now by willingly offering himself to death, he became a *sacrifice* acceptable to God for the sins of the whole world;—and *restored* mankind to the favour of their Maker, upon most *reasonable conditions*.—And that all such as do believe in him might be assured of this,—*God raised him the third day from the dead, and showed him openly*. And by this most powerful proof,—*declared him to be his Son*;—and that whatever he had *said*, or *done*, or *taught*, was agreeable to his will and appointment.

After this, in the sight of many, *he ascended into heaven*, and was *set at the right hand of God*: having all power granted him for the benefit of his church, *to give eternal life to all such as shall believe in, and obey him*<sup>1</sup>.—And *lastly, we believe that this our Saviour shall come again at the end of the world, to judge the living and the dead*.

*Ind.* ‘You will now be so good as to show me,—what effects this belief ought to have upon those that know these things.’

*Miss.* You cannot but perceive the powerful influence, which the belief of these things must needs have upon every thoughtful Christian.

The person in whom we believe is THE SON OF THE MOST HIGH GOD; his true and proper, his *only begotten*, and *dearly beloved Son*.—Surely, said God himself, *they will reverence my Son*<sup>2</sup>.—And have not men all the reason in the world, to reverence and

<sup>1</sup> John xvii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxi. 37.

obey him, since for us men, and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,—to *redeem us*,—to *suffer* for our sins, to declare to us his Father's readiness to pardon sinners,—and to put us in the way of salvation.

In the next place,—we receive Jesus Christ for *our Lord*;—we are therefore no longer *our own masters*;—but we are to do what he hath commanded.—*Nor must we pretend to serve two masters*, that is, *our Lord*, and *our own corrupt inclinations*.

*Our Lord*, is the *Son of God*, and as such, *has all power given him in heaven and in earth*;—he is therefore able to defend us in all assaults of our enemies; nor need we fear the power of any adversaries of our souls.

*He was made man*;—he knows, therefore, the *temptations*, the *weaknesses*, the *miseries*, we are subject to; and will pity us, being as willing, as he is able, to help us in all our distress, when we call upon him.

*By his being obliged to suffer death in the place of sinners*,—we learn how sad the condition of mankind was, since the *justice of God* would not be satisfied with a *less sacrifice*.—By this also we see the dreadful nature of sin, how displeasing it is to God; and what punishment it must have, if it be not repented of.

But then, for our comfort, we have this assurance, that though our sins be never so great, they cannot be greater than the price the Son of God has paid for our pardon, if we do *repent* and *return* to our duty.

By the *resurrection* of Christ, and his *ascension* into heaven, our belief in him is confirmed beyond any doubt;—and he having all power with God—(for that is the meaning of *sitting at his right hand*) *he is able to do for us more than we can ask or think*.

*You believe that he died, was buried, and rose the third day from the dead*.

Then you are sure, that *God can raise the dead*: and therefore we hope, both for ourselves and friends,

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that we shall live again *for them that sleep in Jesus, shall God bring with him*<sup>1</sup>.

If God raised Christ from the dead, then are we most sure, that whatever he *taught* was true;—whatever he *promised*, will be performed; whatever he *threatened*, will come to pass? otherwise God would not have raised him from death to life;—for that would have been to have deceived his creatures.

But further, the belief of *his return from heaven to judge the world in righteousness*, is a most powerful motive to awaken Christians, and oblige them to endeavour to *live* answerable to their *profession* and *belief*; that their sins may not rise up in judgment against them at the great day of account.

And will not this awaken you, and make you seriously prepare for that great day, by a timely repentance?

Can you think of *judgment* and *wrath to come*, and will not this terrify you from following your sins?

If the secrets of all hearts will then be disclosed, will not you be afraid to indulge such thoughts, and such designs, as will not bear the light and judgment of God?

And, above all, consider that you must then be judged, not as the world judgeth of things, but by the word of God: by which therefore, you must resolve to live, and not according to the foolish opinions, and sinful customs of the world.

*Lastly*, this belief hath *comforts* as well as *terrors*; for though we shall indeed be called to a strict account, yet we are sure to be heard with favour, and treated with compassion, if our case will bear it:—For *he* who *knows* our infirmities,—he that *died* to save us, is to be our JUDGE.

In one word you may see, that THE SON OF GOD has given Christians the greatest reason to love and adore him, that they might have the greatest reason

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. iv. 14.

to obey him, and trust in him as their LORD and REDEEMER, and by doing so, by him be made happy for ever.

*Ind.* 'I am very thankful for what you have now told me.—But may I ask you this question;—if Christ has *redeemed* Christians, are they not then *safe* and *out of danger*?'

*Miss.* Yes, most surely, if it is not their own fault.

*Ind.* 'I wish you would explain to me what you mean by that.'

*Miss.* It is very true,—JESUS CHRIST has *redeemed* us, and *restored* us to the favour of God. But then it is upon condition, that since we know God, and what he has done for us, we glorify him by our *deeds*, as well as by our *words*;—but if men call themselves Christians, and yet will not obey him in their practice, he deals with *them* as he did with the *Heathens*; he *gives them up to a mind void of judgment*<sup>1</sup>, to follow the desires of their own hearts, by which they will be ruined for ever.

And this is the reason why you see so many even among Christians,—upon whom neither the *fear* of an Almighty and just God,—nor the *love* of Christ his Son, who has saved them, has any power to keep them in their duty.—And although they have had the Holy Spirit to *direct*, *sanctify*, and *govern* them, yet him they grieved by their wilful sins, and forced him to forsake them, *so that they commit all iniquity with greediness*<sup>2</sup>.

*Ind.* 'You will now be so good as to let me know what Christians believe concerning the HOLY GHOST.'

*Miss.* I have already shown, that before JESUS CHRIST ascended into heaven,—he promised his disciples to send another Divine Person, the HOLY GHOST, to supply his place and presence with them.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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—Accordingly, this HOLY SPIRIT descended upon them in a most wonderful manner, and enabled them to speak all languages, as also to remember the truths which Christ had taught, and the works which he had done, and to write them truly for the benefit of mankind.

He also assisted and directed the Apostles of Christ to lay the foundation of the society of Christians, which are now spread over the whole earth, and are called the HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, because it consists of Christians of all nations and languages, who ought all of them to be holy.

All Christians, thus dedicated to God, are *one body*, under *one Head*, THE LORD CHRIST; and, as such, are obliged to *hold communion* one with another, as members of the same body ought to do.

To every member of this society is promised the *forgiveness of sins*, upon his true repentance, and return to his duty.

To this church the same Holy Spirit has made known that all men shall *rise again from the dead* with their own bodies. and give account of their own works; —and that after this will follow *an everlasting life* of happiness or misery.

*Ind.* ‘Will you, Sir, now be pleased to make me understand, what are the natural fruits of such a faith, and what such a belief obliges Christians to do?’

*Miss.* Remember, then,—that the HOLY GHOST is he, to whom, with the Father and the Son, all Christians are dedicated in baptism;—that it is this HOLY SPIRIT who is to fit men for heaven and happiness;—which he does,—by convincing all such as are *disposed for eternal life*, and will attend to his holy motions,—by convincing them that they are *sinners*, that, as such, they stand in need of a *Redeemer*;—as also, by putting into their hearts *the fear of God*,—*a love of his laws*,—and *a serious concern* for their souls;—by *restraining* them from evil,—and *changing* their dispositions from evil to good.

*Ind.* 'But it is plain, Sir, that this Holy Spirit doth not thus govern and direct all Christians.'

*Miss.* That is too true;—but then, as I told you before, the fault is purely in themselves.—They neglect to use the means God has bestowed upon them, and the graces he has provided for them; and then they become useless, and *he often takes them away*<sup>1</sup>. Too many grieve the Holy Spirit by their evil deeds, and force him to forsake them:—And very many, who are not so wicked, do yet never lay claim to that promise of God,—*that he will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*<sup>2</sup>:—Whereas all good Christians do pray for this Holy Spirit, and do find the wonderful effects and blessing of his guidance and assistance.

And here take notice of a truth I now tell you, that every soul of man is under the influence either of *good* or *evil spirits*:—But then these *good spirits* may be provoked by our evil lives to forsake us: and then the *evil spirits* are always ready to take possession of such as they find forsaken of God, and not under his immediate protection.

*Ind.* 'And pray, Sir, how is this to be prevented?'

*Miss.* Every Christian must keep in his mind the promise he made when he was baptized; and in every thing wherein he fails, he ought forthwith to beg forgiveness of God, lest, continuing in sin *wilfully*, he becomes a *slave* to *Satan* and his angles, instead of being a *servant* of God.

I shall only mention another blessing which we receive from the Holy Ghost, and the effect it ought to have upon us.—It is from him we have the Holy Scriptures, which are therefore very truly called the **WORD OF GOD**;—and the **WORD OF OUR SALVATION**.

These *Scriptures*, therefore, every one who would continue in the favour of God, must *read*, or *hear* them read, with the greatest reverence and attention, and conform his belief and practice strictly to them.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Luke xi. 13.

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*Ind.* 'I desire you would explain more particularly what you mean by THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH,—and the COMMUNION OF SAINTS.'

*Miss.* It is plain from the Holy Scriptures, that it was the design of our Lord *Jesus Christ* to deliver to mankind the whole will of God, as far as their salvation was concerned in it. All these things which were thus revealed, are called the Christian religion:—And this religion was taught to the world by our SAVIOUR, and by his APOSTLES: and this religion was put into writing by inspired men, and is now extant amongst us in the books of the New Testament. It was our Lord's design, that all who should embrace this religion of his, should be united among themselves, and with this Head, JESUS CHRIST, and so become *one Body* by the means of one HOLY SPIRIT, which should actuate and influence them.—And it was our Lord's design that all *believers*, all that profess his religion, should be admitted to the participation of this *Spirit*, and so be made members of this common body, by the sacrament of BAPTISM, and receive continual influence from the same Spirit, by eating and drinking in the *sacrament of the communion of his body and blood*; or what we call the LORD'S SUPPER.

By the CHURCH then is meant the whole multitude of those persons, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that do embrace and profess the Christian religion,—and are joined together by the means of these sacraments, in one body or society, under one Head JESUS CHRIST.—This church was to extend throughout all the world, and to be made up of all nations.

*Ind.* 'Pray what is meant by the *Catholic Church*?'

*Miss.* By CATHOLIC is meant UNIVERSAL, so that whenever we name or speak of the *Catholic Church*, we mean by those words, the whole multitude of Christians throughout the world, that profess the common faith, and enjoy the administration of the word and sacraments.—All these people, wherever



they live, or by what name soever they call themselves, make up together, *that one body of Christ*, which we call the CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The Church is called *holy*, because every member of that society obliges himself, by the gracious assistance of God's Holy Spirit,—*to be holy*.—He that is not so, or does not immediately repent, and become such, is but a *rotten* member, and is in danger of being *cut off*.

As to the *communion of saints*:—As every person owes something to the society of which he is a member, so especially in the society of Christians, every one is bound, by the laws of the Gospel, to use the talents and advantages which God has given him, whether of *knowledge* and *learning*, or *power*, or *riches*, or *grace*, for the good of the whole body:—To pray for them;—to assist those that are in want;—to instruct the ignorant, and them that are out of the way; *and to study the things that make for peace, and for mutual edification*<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'You told me before, that in the church of Christ there is a promise of THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.'

*Miss.* And a mighty blessing sure it is,—that men who on account of their many sins, are liable to the displeasure of God,—may be assured, that in the Church of Christ they will obtain *the forgiveness of their sins*, upon most merciful conditions;—upon a true repentance, and return to their duty;—and a ready disposition to forgive others, as they themselves do hope for forgiveness from God.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, and AN EVER-LASTING LIFE AFTER DEATH—these are the truths which Jesus Christ has made known to his church;—and they are as certain as God himself is true. And that that they may make the greater impression upon your heart, I will repeat to you the very words of Christ:

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiv. 19.

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—‘The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation<sup>1</sup>.’—So that all Christians who know this, may be assured, that this life is the only time to chuse, *where* and *what* they are to be for ever; and may learn not to trifle away that precious time, which is chiefly allowed them to prepare for eternity.

*Ind.* ‘Well, Sir, I plainly see the reason why every one who desires to be a Christian should believe these truths.’

*Miss.* These things are true, and will at last be found to be so, whether men believe them or not.—And if a man is lost for ever, for want of giving credit to them, or for not considering them, it will signify little whether he was called a *Christian* or a *Heathen*.

*Ind.* ‘Indeed one would wonder, that so many Christians who know these things, can be so easy, and so careless of their salvation.’

*Miss.* Be you careful for yourself, and continue so, when you are a Christian.—In the mean time, I tell you again,—the true reasons, why so many among Christians forget the promises they made at their baptism, are these:—Through the corruption of nature they fall into sin; they do not what they ought to do, that is, *repent and turn to their duty immediately*;—and continuing in sin, *these truths* are *uneasy* to them, because they put them in mind of their ingratitude to the THE GOD who made them;—to GOD THE SON, who died for them;—and to GOD THE HOLY GHOST, whom they had grieved by obstinately persisting in a vicious course of life.—They will not consider that *without holiness*, i. e. without keeping the commands of God, and doing his will, no man can be saved: and besides this, these truths put them in mind of an *endless life of happiness*, which they are

<sup>1</sup> John v. 28, 29.

not disposed to prepare for,—and of a *miserable eternity*, which they have reason to fear above all things:—Therefore they *strive to forget* the truths they have known and believed:—and if the goodness and long-suffering of God does not lead them to repentance,—“*These articles of their faith will be the articles of their condemnation.*”

*Ind.* ‘I am convinced, Sir, that these truths are most powerful motives, where they are known and believed, to oblige men to keep the holy will and commands of God, and to walk in the same all the days of their life:—Which you told me was another part of that promise which Christians make at their baptism, and which I hope you will explain to me when I come again.’

*Miss.* That I will gladly do.—And for *your* part, I exhort you to beg of God to confirm your faith in him, and his Son Jesus Christ, and cause it to bring forth in you the fruit of good living, *to his glory, and your own salvation.* Amen.

#### THE PRAYER.

O SAVIOUR of the world, who by thy cross and precious blood hast redeemed us, save us, we most humbly beseech thee.—Grant that the belief of these great truths may ever be present in our minds,—that we may die from sin, and rise again unto righteousness;—that we may with joyful hearts, ascend to thee, and with thee continually dwell;—that we may judge ourselves, and that we may not be condemned, when thou comest to judge the world in righteousness.—O Lord, grant that we may expect thy coming with joy, and find mercy in the great day of recompence. *Amen.*

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## DIALOGUE XIII.

*The COMMANDMENTS of God practically explained.*

## PART I.

## INDIAN.

'You told me, Sir, that my believing the truths of the Gospel will not qualify me to become a Christian, unless I promise to obey the will of God, and endeavour to keep his commands.'

*Miss.* I told you the truth:—For although we firmly believe, that it is only on the account of what his Son Jesus Christ has done and suffered for us, that God will pardon our sins, and receive us into favour;—yet it is on this condition, that we repent and forsake our sins, and obey his commands.

*Ind.* 'I hope you will continue your kind instructions, and let me know what his *will* and *commands* are.'

*Miss.* We learn from the holy Scriptures, that, when almost all mankind had lost the knowledge of the true and only God, and the way of worshipping him, which he had appointed, it pleased him to make himself and his will known again, at first to one man, whose name was *Abraham*<sup>1</sup>, and afterwards to his most numerous posterity, after he had convinced them, that he was the true and only God, by many amazing *miracles* and *judgments* upon their oppressors, and by delivering them out of a most cruel *bondage* and *slavery*.—After which, in order to preserve this knowledge among them, and to keep them from being corrupted, he gave them certain commands, in a manner so *dreadful* and *astonishing*, that they could not but be convinced, that they were the commands of a most holy, and an *all-powerful God*, in disobeying of

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xx.

whom they were sure of exposing themselves to the greatest punishments.

And that these commands belong to us *Christians* as well as unto the people of *Israel*, we may be sure of,—because *Jesus Christ* has confirmed, explained, and enforced them in the Gospel—he is the Lord our God, as well as *theirs*<sup>1</sup>.—He brought *them* out of the house of bondage—*And he brought us from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.*

*Ind.* ‘You will be pleased to let me know these commands.’

*Miss.* They were ten in number.—The first of which was this:

I. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have none other gods but me.

*Ind.* ‘Why do these commands begin with these words,—*I am the Lord thy God?*’

*Miss.* That we may prepare our hearts to receive his commands, with the greatest concern, attention, and reverence.

When the Lord of *heaven* and *earth*, or *life* and *death*, speaks, sure his creatures will *hear* and *obey*, for conscience-sake,—that is—because God commands them.

The design of this first command was,—to *restore* and *preserve* the knowledge of the true God; He having a right to be *honoured*, *feared*, and *loved*, as the author of all the good we enjoy or hope for; by which therefore we are forbidden to expect our happiness from any other, or *place our dependence on*, or exercise our religious fear towards any other being in *heaven* or *earth*.

The full import of this grand first command is,—that we should have the LORD for our God; and that we should have no other besides him.

*Ind.* ‘What is it to have the Lord for our God?’

*Miss.* It is to *think* of him, and to *worship* him, as God.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxvi. 18.

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*Ind.* 'How ought we to think of God?'

*Miss.* As of an *eternal* and *all-perfect* Being, the MAKER and PRESERVER of all things, and our most gracious and merciful FATHER, in and through his *Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

You are forbidden by this law to depend upon *yourself*, upon your own *labour* and *care*, for *prosperity*,—upon your *friends* for *security*,—upon your *wealth* for *happiness*:—for these are blessings, *only* when God is pleased to make them so.

You are also, by this command, forbidden to *murmur* at God's dealings with yourself or others; *for he is Lord of all.*

*Ind.* 'What is further *commanded* in this law?'

*Miss.* You are hereby commanded to live always *as in the sight of God*:—to pray for his blessing in *public* and in *private* upon every thing you undertake;—and to give him thanks for all his favours:—and to do all this with the *heart* as well as the *lips* and *bodily gestures*:—for whatever you *think* is known to him, as well as what you *speak.*

*Ind.* 'What is the other thing included in this command?'

*Miss.* You are forbid having any other, besides the LORD, for your GOD.

*Ind.* 'Is there any other God, besides the LORD?'

*Miss.* No, there is not; nor does this commandment at all suppose that there is. But, when these commandments were delivered, the world generally *believed* in, and worshipped OTHER GODS besides the LORD, who was almost utterly forgotten by them.—And therefore it was highly necessary, that the *great God* of heaven and earth should, in the first place, caution his people, and, in them, all future generations, against this folly, impiety, and idolatry.

The following was the *second command*:

II. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under

the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and show mercy unto thousands, in them that love me, and keep my commandments.

*Ind.* 'You will be so good as to let me know the meaning and reason of this command.'

*Miss.* You must know then, through the suggestions of the *devil*, most nations had been led into a vile custom of representing and worshipping God by images; by which they came to have mean and unworthy thoughts of the Divine Majesty, as if he were like any of his creatures.

Now by this command, God has forbid all that love and fear him, even to attempt to represent him by any image or picture, or to worship him before such; and this on pain of his most high displeasure upon them, and their posterity, who shall disobey this command;—promising an especial blessing to them and their children, who shall take care to worship him as he has commanded.

*Ind.* 'What is the *positive duty* required of us in this commandment?'

*Miss.* You are to *worship God*, after a manner suitable to his spiritual nature:—*God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth*<sup>1</sup>:—that is to say,—with *sincerity, love, and purity of heart*;—with the *inward* devotion and fervour of the mind, without which the *outward* exercises of prayer and adoration will be of no worth.

*Ind.* 'How must I behave myself in God's *house* and *presence*?'

*Miss.* Consider seriously—that you go to church to ask such things, which you cannot want without being miserable.

Therefore your behaviour must be such as may be

<sup>1</sup> John iv. 24.

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apt to procure in yourself and others a great regard for God, and a humble opinion of yourself.

You must with great humility ask God's pardon and blessing, and praise him for his works and favours.

You must carefully attend to what is read and explained to you out of the Scripture;—*for it is the word of God.*

And then you will return home with God's blessing upon your *self*, your *family*, and your *labours*.

*Ind.* 'Doth the command afford any further instruction?'

*Miss.* Yes.—It shows us that the piety of parents shall be remembered for the good of their children, to many generations.

That the best portion children can receive from their parents is God's blessing.

And that such parents as are not careful to love God, and to keep his commandments, do leave calamities to their posterity.

The *third command* is this:

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain.

The intent of this command is,—to preserve the great regard which all men ought to have for God, forbidding them to speak of him or even use his holy name without fear and consideration.

*Ind.* 'What are the necessary occasions which men have to make of the name of God?'

*Miss.* First, when they worship him, which they should strive to do with reverence and attention.—Secondly, when by a lawful authority they are obliged to take an oath.—And lastly, when they speak of God, or of any thing that belongs to him, upon any serious occasion.

*Ind.* 'Why are people obliged to take an oath before a magistrate?'

*Miss.* *It is to put an end to strife amongst men;—it being God's pleasure, that the truth should appear, and*

*justice* be done to every one. Now the likeliest way to come to the truth is this:—To put men in mind, when they are going to swear: that they are in the presence of that great God, who has declared—that *a curse shall enter into the house of him that sweareth by his name, to consume it*<sup>1</sup>. Which is surely sufficient to oblige every man who believes and fears God to *speak the whole truth, and nothing but the truth*, as they hope to escape that curse, and God's vengeance. As for those who out of an evil custom do *swear or curse, blaspheme* or speak lightly of God, such persons have no other choice but *repentance and amendment, or damnation*. And where these sins are become common, and are not punished, that *nation and people* may expect *public and heavy* judgments to fall upon them<sup>2</sup>.

*Ind.* 'What is the meaning of that expression, *the Lord will not hold him guiltless*?'

*Miss.* The meaning is, that this sin shall certainly be punished, and that in a manner more dreadful than words can express; however common it is, and little regarded.

*Ind.* 'What are we commanded in this law?'

*Miss.* To speak of *God* and of *religious* matters, *after such a serious manner*, that people may learn to have the most devout and reverend thoughts of him and his service.

We come now to the *fourth command*.

IV. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day; six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy manservant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle, and the stranger that is within thy gates;—for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it.

<sup>1</sup> Zech. v. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xxiii. 10. Mal. ii. 2.

*Ind.* 'You will be so good as to shew me the reason and intent of this command.'

*Miss.* Remember what I told you before,—that after God had made this world in six days, and man the governor of it, he ordained, by a perpetual law, that the *seventh day* should be set apart, and kept holy in memory and honour of him, the Creator and Maker of all things.

Now, in process of time, this command, through the corruption of man's nature, became neglected, and the true God forgotten, and wickedness and idolatry increased every where, which is the miserable case of very many nations to this day.

But when God separated the people of *Israel* from the rest of the nations, he renewed this command, so that the knowledge of the only true God, the great *Creator* of heaven and earth, has been preserved among them through all ages.

*Ind.* 'Do Christians observe that day?'

*Miss.* Christians do, according to the design of the law, observe one day in seven, which we call the *Lord's day*, because on that day the Lord Christ our Redeemer rose from the dead;—and on the same day sent down the *Holy Ghost*, to guide his church unto the world's end:—the *apostles* of Jesus Christ therefore set apart that day, calling it—the *Lord's day*. Since which time all good Christians do, or should lay aside all worldly business, cares, and pleasures, and meet together,—to give public honour to God, to *acknowledge* his power, wisdom justice, and goodness,—to *praise* him for the *blessings* he has given them,—and to *pray* for the *blessings* they want.

*Ind.* 'Why are we bid in an especial manner to keep this law?'

*Miss.* Because if this HOLY DAY should be forgotten, all religion would soon be forgotten with it, and the very knowledge of the true God (as it is in many nations) would be lost amongst us, were not *this day* set apart, and *persons* appointed to bring to our remem-

brance truths of the highest consequence both to our present and everlasting interests.

*Ind.* 'Are all bound to observe this day?'

*Miss.* Yes—all that can be spared from the NECESSARY business of the family.

*Children*,—that they may learn their duty, and from their infancy to fear God.

*Servants*,—that they may not forget that they have a Master in heaven.

And the *very beasts* are to rest, unless necessity requires it to be otherwise, that the WHOLE CREATION may rejoice in the mercies of God.

*Ind.* 'Why is it said,—*six days* shalt thou labour?'

*Miss.* To put us in mind, that it is God who gives us *all our time* :

That we are fallen from a state of happiness, and must labour for our daily bread :

Lastly,—that it is purely by God's permission, that we *prosper* in our daily labours,—that therefore we ought to serve him truly all our days.

*Ind.* 'How is the Lord's day profaned?'

*Miss.* By neglecting to go to the place where the *great God* is *publicly* worshipped; by neglecting family and private devotion; by not meditating upon, and recollecting in *private*, what we are taught, or pray for, in *public*;—by *idleness*, and trifling *conversation*;—unnecessary *business* and *journies*:—and by vain *sports* and *gaming*, unbecoming *the seriousness* of the day, and of Christianity.

*Ind.* 'It is well, if too many Christians will not think this a hard command, and neglect it, when they must lose so much time, in which they might increase their wealth, or enjoy their pleasures.'

*Miss.* They must be Christians then of very little knowledge and faith; and do not consider the power and the promises of God and of *his Son*<sup>1</sup>, to make them sufficient amends for the loss of their own and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vi. 33.

their servants' labour. And especially when the respite of one day in seven would enable their *servants* to perform the business of the other six days with more *cheerfulness* and *vigour*.

*These four commands* have respect to *God*, and the honour due to him.—The *six following* concern our *neighbour*, and the *peace* and *welfare* of *mankind* in general.

*Ind.* 'You will be pleased to let me know what they are.'

*Miss.* Remember what I have at present told you, and the next time you come I will explain to you the rest of the commands:—In the mean time pray to God in the following words:—

#### THE PRAYER.

O God, who alone art worthy of our love, give me grace that I may never forget thee, nor thy glorious perfections; but that I may serve thee according to thy word, in sincerity and godly fear;—that I may never mention thy sacred name without reverence;—that I may not spend thy holy day in vanity and idleness, nor in a customary attendance at thy house only:—but that I may serve thee with my soul as well as with my body, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*Amen.*

### DIALOGUE XIV.

#### PART II.

#### INDIAN.

'I AM come to desire you to explain to me those commands that relate to my duty to my *neighbour*.'

*Miss.* The *fifth command* is this:

V. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

*Ind.* 'I beg you will explain these commands to me, and let me know the design of them.'

*Miss.* The design of this *fifth command* is,—to teach us from our very childhood, to shew *honour* and *obedience* to our parents; that when we grow up, we may know how to respect and honour all who are our betters;—that *subjects* may honour their *governors*;—*servants* may obey their *masters*; and all may love and esteem their spiritual *pastors* and *teachers*.—And the *peace and good* of the world do so much depend on the discharge of those obligations, that God for encouragement hath promised an especial blessing to such as shall observe them faithfully.

*Ind.* 'Why is the duty of children to their parents only mentioned?'

*Miss.* Because that is a duty *first* learned, and *best* understood:—*Children* very naturally *love* their *parents*, and are generally kept in subjection by them, and therefore when they are commanded *so to honour* others as they do their parents, they easily know what that meaneth, and will more readily pay the duties owing to all their *superiors*.

*Ind.* 'How must I honour my father and mother?'

*Miss.* You must in all lawful things cheerfully submit to them, be careful not to grieve them by stubborn or evil courses;—you must show them all due respect, and thankfully acknowledge their kindness to you:—*bear* with their infirmities,—*hide* their failings,—*supply* their wants,—and *pray* for their present and everlasting happiness:—Which if you do, in obedience to the command of God, you may expect to live to be a happy parent yourself.

*Ind.* 'What would then be my duty?'

*Miss.* The duty of parents is, to bring up their children in obedience, and in the fear of God; to take care that they be instructed in true religion;—to *provide* for them by all lawful ways; to admonish and correct them when they say or do things which are amiss;—to be *examples* to them of *piety*, *sobriety*, and

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*diligence*;—and, lastly, to *bless* them, and *pray* for them.—All which—*parents* will be careful to do, if they consider what a dreadful thing it will be, should their children be miserable in *this* world, and the *next*, through their negligence, countenance, or example.

*Ind.* 'What is the duty of *servants*?'

*Miss.* The duty of servants is, to be obedient to their masters, *diligent* in their business;—*not with eye-service as men-pleasers*,—but to use the same industry and integrity in their master's absence, as they would do if he was present with them;—to be as careful of their master's goods, as if they were their own;—neither *wasting* them, nor suffering *others* to do so,—to be no *tale-bearers*; but, above all, to be *honest*, not only for *conscience*, but for *credit's* sake:—*deceit* and *pilfering*, and *stealing*, being abominable qualities, never forgotten by others, and very hardly left off by those who give way to them.

*Ind.* 'What is our duty towards them that have the rule and government over us?'

*Miss.* Your duty is to obey them, not only for fear of punishment, but for conscience sake<sup>1</sup>;—not to speak evil of them, but to show them all becoming respect;—and to pray that God may bless them, and make them instruments of great good to the world.<sup>2</sup>

For men in authority, fearing God, are a great blessing;—*their duty* being to keep the people in *peace* and *quietness*;—to *defend* the *persons* and *rights* of honest men;—to *punish* the *unruly*;—to *advise* them that have no counsellors;—and in all things to promote the glory of God, and the welfare of all<sup>3</sup> below them.

*Ind.* 'What is the duty of people to their *ministers* and *pastors*?'

*Miss.* To *respect* them<sup>2</sup>, for their *Master's* sake, and for their *work's* sake. Your duty it is to attend at

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 5. 2 Pet. ii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. v. 13.



the public service of the church, and hearken to their instructions; . . and to pray that God may bless their labours.

For it is their business and duty, to study all ways of *teaching you how you should walk and please God*:—to *reprove* you when you do amiss;—to *pray* that you may do well;—to be *wholesome examples in word and deed*:—and they have much to answer for, if they are not such.

*Ind.* 'Whom else must I honour?'

*Miss.* All that are your superiors, by reason of their greater *age*,—their *learning*,—their *places* and *stations*,—to whom you must show a just regard.

*And it is their duty* not to be *high-minded*, but to be *grave, courteous, easy* to be spoke to, and ready to help all that want their assistance.

*Ind.* 'What is the meaning of the promise which God hath made to such as keep this command?'

*Miss.* That God will bless them in the way they shall go, which will be a means of *prolonging* their lives:—On the contrary,—*he that despiseth his father and mother, the ravens shall pick out his eyes*<sup>1</sup>;—that is, this sin has a tendency to lead men into such practices, as will bring them to an unnatural, untimely, and ignominious death.

VI. Thou shalt do no murder.

This is the *sixth command*:—and is intended to secure the *life* of every man from the *malice, revenge, and violence* of others.—This is a *sin* most odious to God, and a sure vengeance has been frequently observed to follow those who send men out of the world by a violent death, sooner than God and nature intended. And for the same reason we are not to shorten men's lives by *oppression, injustice*, or any other *evil dealings*, for a man may be *murdered*, and his heart *broken*, by these as well as by *violence*;—as

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxx. 17.

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also by *intemperance, gluttony, and drunkenness*.—By these we may shorten our own, or other people's lives, which is absolutely forbidden by this precept.

*Self-murder* is also forbid by this command. For consider, *that the great God, the Maker of all things, has assumed to himself the power and lordship of life and death*.—‘I kill, and I make alive’<sup>1</sup>.—It is God sends us into the world, and *he* expects that we should wait his will, to send us out of it:—He has the only right to determine the time of our continuance in it, and when we shall remove out of it:—And it is a gross invasion of that *divine right and prerogative*, for us to appoint the time for ourselves, without his order, and contrary to the rules he has given us for our government—As this action is highly criminal in the sight of God, so *remember*, that whoever is so hardy as to commit it, sends himself out of the world with the guilt of a wilful sin.—And a *wilful sinner, thus dying impenitent, has no hopes of salvation*: and this is a dreadful consideration.

There are several other practices too common in the world, which have a tendency to this sin of murder, and which, in some measure, partake of the *guilt* of it, though the sinner himself does not intend violence against his own life:—particularly that *pernicious and fatal* custom of drinking RUM, GIN, and other SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS, which kills, every year, *many thousands* of the *lower* part of mankind. This is a practice which you must abhor, as you would do *poison* itself; for so it actually is in its consequence. It is highly to be wished, that the GOVERNORS of every country would have a strict eye, to the bold encroachments of this terrible destroyer, *by which so many make themselves away*, and remove it at least out of the reach of the *laborious, industrious, and useful* part of mankind.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. xxxii. 39.

*Ind.* 'What is the duty required in this commandment?'

*Miss.* It is your duty, as much as in you lieth,—to *live peaceably with all men*<sup>1</sup>;—to avoid the company of angry, passionate, and contentious people;—to *deliver the oppressed*<sup>2</sup>;—to be merciful to such as are in misery:—to forbear, and forgive one another<sup>3</sup>:—and be well pleased with the welfare and happiness of all men.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

This is the *seventh command*. In order to understand the reason of this, you must know that God, at the beginning of the world, did appoint *marriage* for the increase of mankind, and for the society, help, and comfort of a man and his wife.—Now you cannot but observe the great goodness of God in commanding, on pain of his displeasure, that neither the man nor his wife should be unfaithful to the marriage-bed;—which would occasion infinite troubles and calamities in families, and after all, a very bitter repentance, or damnation.—By virtue of this command we are likewise bound to abstain from *fornication*, and from all manner of *lewdness*, *wantonness*, and *debauchery*:—from all *lascivious actions*, *immodest words*, and, *impure desires*, and whatever else has any tendency towards the heinous vices of *whoredom* and *adultery*.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

This is the *eighth command*:—and is intended by a righteous God to secure to every man what is his own;—he having declared, *that a curse shall enter into the house of a thief and a robber, even to consume it*<sup>4</sup>; and which is worst of all, such persons must not expect to go to heaven, but to hell.

*Ind.* 'How is this command further transgressed?'

*Miss.* Not only by *theft*, which is a base vice, and openly abhorred; but by *oppression*, *deceit*, *concealing* of found goods<sup>5</sup>;—*receiving* goods knowing them to

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxii. 22:

<sup>3</sup> Ephes. iv. 32.

<sup>4</sup> Zech. v. 4.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 10.

be stolen:—*defrauding* the public by running of goods, and buying or receiving such as we know are run, and for which the King's custom is not paid;—*wearying* men out of their rights by vexatious *law-suits*, by *power*, *interest*, *bribery*, or *craft*;—which are crimes too often committed by those who never expect to be punished for the breach of this command; and yet God is most surely *the avenger of all such deeds*<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'What is required of us, that we may keep this law?'

*Miss.* It is your duty to be *diligent* in your calling, that you may be able to live without taking unlawful ways; to be careful of what God has given you, lest, having vainly or wickedly thrown it away, you be tempted to live by deceit.

To be contented with your condition, believing, *that better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right*<sup>2</sup>.

*Lastly*, to depend upon God's good providence, which takes care of all creatures, and will certainly reward the *honest poor man*, who chuses to *beg*, if he cannot *labour*, rather than *steal*.

*Ind.* 'What is the duty of one who is sensible of his sin, and sorry that he hath broken this law?'

*Miss.* He must confess his sin unto God, and, if he can possibly do it, *he must make amends to the person he has wronged*<sup>3</sup>.

And this is that which makes THIS SIN so very hard to be repented of; because, through *shame* and *stubbornness*, people will not make RESTITUTION of what they have got by *fraud*, *injustice*, *violence*, and *oppression*;—and yet they hope to be saved;—*but this is the hope of hypocrites, which shall perish*<sup>4</sup>.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

This is the *ninth command*:—and whoever considers

<sup>1</sup> Thes. iv. 6.    <sup>2</sup> Prov. xvi. 8.    <sup>3</sup> Levit. vi. 2.    Ezek. xxxiii. 15.

<sup>4</sup> Job viii. 13.

the mischiefs men are capable of doing to the *lives* and the *estates* of their neighbours, by *false oaths* and *perjuries*, or *concealing*, or *disguising* the truth, when they are *lawfully* called upon to declare or attest it; must see how kind and good God has been to men, to forbid, on pain of his displeasure, such sins as these, which are the occasion of so much sorrow and loss to the unhappy sufferers.

*Ind.* 'Is any thing more forbidden, than the being a false witness?'

*Miss.* Yes:—you are hereby forbidden to say any thing of other men which may hurt them, unless it be with an honest design to bring them to *repentance*, or to hinder them from doing great mischiefs to others.

Therefore to *invent* stories, to *add* to them, and to *set them abroad*:—to encourage *tale-bearers*:—to give men *ill-names*;—to publish *their infirmities*;—to make their faults *worse* than they are; are all condemned by this law, and in many other places of the Holy Scriptures;—as the very *work of an evil spirit*<sup>1</sup>, as the destruction of all good neighbourhood and Christian charity.

This sin proceeds from a base disposition;—some people love mischief, and are pleased the more there is of it in the world—sometimes from a *busy temper*; from *pride*; from *evil designs*; and sometimes people do it for *diversion*.—But from whencesoever it proceeds, it is a sign of a very evil heart, to speak ill of others, as if such men had *no faults of their own*, to jest with a man's good name, *which is more valuable than his estate*<sup>2</sup>;—to set friends at *variance*, and to disturb the *peace* and *happiness* of families; and therefore *revilers* are reckoned amongst those that, without repentance, *must not go to heaven*<sup>3</sup>.

*Ind.* 'What is further required of us by this law?'

*Miss.* It is your duty to speak the truth, *when it is fit and proper*, as well as when you are *upon your oath*:

<sup>1</sup> John viii. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xxii. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 10.

—to be tender of your neighbour's reputation ;—to be disposed to hear, to believe, and to speak the best, and never to take pleasure in *foolish, malicious, and wicked* stories :—and we shall be disposed to observe these good rules the better if we consider,—‘ What a sore grief it is to ourselves to be abused, by *lies, calumny, and defamation.*

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house ; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife ; nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his.

This is the *tenth* and *last* of these commands.—Now the gracious design of God, in this command, is *to lay a restraint* upon the very *desires* of our hearts, which are all known to him, forbidding us to *covet*, that is, to set our hearts upon that which is another's right, and which he is not willing to part with—for an *unjust* desire, through the temptation of the devil, has too often been followed by an *unjust* attempt to get what we desire, either by *fraud* or *violence*,—so kind is God in putting a stop to the very beginning of sin, *which is in the heart*<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* ‘ But may not a man desire to buy what belongs to another.

*Miss.* Yes, no doubt of it, provided the other can lawfully dispose of it, and that he is *willing* to do so ;—but if he is not willing, then to continue to desire it, is a sin against this law.

GAMING is certainly a violation of the *tenth* command.—It is a vice that has always its root in covetousness, and which in its greedy wishes devours—its neighbour's *houses and lands, and every thing else that is his.*

This *sin* is often found to go still further, to bring men at last to downright *stealing, robbery, and murder* :—and when the near prospect of death obliges these wretched creatures to confess the evil of their ways, it may be observed, that a caution against this

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xv. 19.

abominable vice of *gaming* always makes one part of their *dying* admonitions, as it hath always been one main road that led them to that miserable end.

*Ind.* 'What does this law require?'

*Miss.* *That you keep your heart with all diligence, because out of it proceedeth all manner of wickedness.*

1 Kings xxi. Prov. iv. 23.

That you be contented with your own lot, as that which is appointed you by a wise and just God.

Lastly,—that you set God always before you, who seeth the very secrets of your heart, and will punish all its sinful lusts and appetites.

*Ind.* 'I am convinced, Sir, of the truth of what you told me before,—that these commands of God are *holy, just, and good*, and necessary to keep the world in order.'

*Miss.* But I must tell you besides,—that *by these commands*, as they have been explained by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, we must all be *judged* at the last day to happiness or misery; these being the foundation of the duty which men owe to *God*, to their *neighbour*, and to *themselves*.

*Ind.* 'Are these duties hard to be understood and remembered?'

*Miss.* You shall judge yourself, when I have repeated them to you, which I will do the next time you come to me: in the mean time use the following prayer.

#### THE PRAYER.

OPEN mine eyes, O Lord, that I may see that thy law is holy, just, and good, and that I may keep it with my whole heart;—that I may love and honour all those whom thy providence hath made my betters;—that I may do violence to no man;—that I may abhor all unchaste desires, words, and actions: all deceit and oppression;—all the evils of a lying tongue, all covetous desires, and first beginnings of sin.

Lord have mercy upon me, and write all these laws in my heart I most humbly beseech thee. *Amen.*



DIALOGUE XV.

*Duty towards God explained.*

INDIAN.

‘THE last time I was here you promised to explain to me what was my duty to God.’

*Miss.* Your duty to *God* is—

“To believe in him, to fear him, to love him, with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength: to worship him, to give him thanks, to put your whole trust in him, to call upon him, to honour his holy name, and his word, and to serve him truly all the days of your life.”

Now this should be fixed strongly in your memory, so as never to be forgot; and it will direct you, on all occasions, how to live so as to please God:—these words often repeated, and imprinted upon your memory, will also awaken your conscience, when, at any time you do amiss, that you may repent, and amend, and obtain forgiveness of your sin, through God’s infinite goodness and mercy, and the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Ind.* ‘Is a Christian’s duty hard to be understood?’

*Miss.* By no means:—Religion being the business of all men.—*A plain man*, if he is well-disposed, may know his duty, and be able to perform it, as well as the greatest scholar.

*Ind.* ‘This is a comfortable truth, pray make me sensible of it.’

*Miss.* Do you not see, that all necessary knowledge lieth in a very narrow compass?—YOUR DUTY TO GOD,—and TO YOUR NEIGHBOUR, is contained in a few words, very easy to be *understood* and *remembered*, where people truly believe in God, and heartily desire to be saved.

*Ind.* 'Then I trust I shall not perish; for *I do believe in God*,—and I heartily wish to be saved.'

*Miss.* You must not be mistaken in a matter of so great moment.—It may be *you do not believe in, nor fear, nor love God with all your heart*, though you are persuaded you do.

*Ind.* 'Can you, Sir, direct me how to know for certain when I do, or do not my duty?'

*Miss.* You must consult your life to know this,—and compare your way of living with these rules of your duty.

*Ind.* 'I wish you would show me how, by some instances.'

*Miss.* Your *duty is* to believe in God;—that is, to keep these great truths in your mind,—that God is most *powerful, most holy, just, merciful, and good*; and that none of our *thoughts, words, or actions*, can be hid from him;—that therefore his displeasure is more to be feared than all things;—and that his love and goodness to us require all possible acknowledgments on our part.

Now you will very easily see, that you do not fear God as you ought, if you are more afraid of *men* than of *God*;—or if you wilfully do any thing which he has *forbidden*, or which you know will *displease* him:—or lastly,—if you do not immediately *repent* when you have done amiss, and *return* to your duty.—Nor must you say that you love God,—if you do not often think of him, of his *mercy and goodness*, and of the *happiness* he has promised to them that love him:—if you do not take delight in doing what you believe will please him,—rejoice to see him obeyed and honoured, and be troubled to see him dishonoured by his own creatures.

It may be you think—*you love God above all things*;—but if you are not concerned to keep his laws, and angry with yourself when you break any of them:—then you do not love God;—for this (says

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the Apostle St. John)—is the love of God, that we keep his commandments<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'I see it is my duty to put my whole trust in God;—but is it possible for me to do so, when he suffers me to fall into affliction?'

*Miss.* Good men have always done so;—*Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, saith holy Job.*—Remember,—that it is good to be in trouble<sup>2</sup>, when God sees meet, who otherwise doth not delight in the misery of any of his creatures.—It is therefore your duty to be patient under afflictions;—to consider your ways;—to turn to God immediately, and pray that he may make the troubles of this *life* a means to bring you to a *better*.

*Ind.* 'Must I trust in God, and believe that he careth for me, though I am in poverty?'

*Miss.* You must do so:—For *riches* are not always a sign of God's favour, nor *poverty* of his displeasure.

To comfort yourself, and confirm your faith, consider, that this is the will of God;—that he can make you sufficient amends in the *next* world for what you want in *this*.

Think of these things, and you will be content with your condition, and never desire to better it by unjust or wicked ways.

You will, therefore, neither envy the rich or great, nor question the goodness of God, under the greatest difficulties of life.

Again, you will not say that you *trust* in God, if you are not well pleased with his providence, so far, at least, as cheerfully to submit to what his infinite *wisdom* and *goodness* orders as the very best for you, and for all others.

You will not imagine, that you *worship* God as you ought to do, if you content yourself with having a high esteem for him in your heart, without paying him the honour due unto his Divine Majesty, both

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm cxix. 71.

in your *secret retirements* as well as in the *public assemblies of Christians*,—acknowledging before the world, that you are a miserable sinner, and daily stand in need of his mercy and pardon;—that you owe him all possible thanks for the blessings you have received from him;—and that you want his grace and help every day of your life.

Lastly,—you yourself will not say—that you *honour God's name and his word*, if you take an oath without thought and fear; or speak of God and of what belongs to him, after an *idle* manner, and *without reverence*:—or delight in the company of such as do so. You cannot but know, that this is not the proper behaviour of one who purposes to serve God all the days of his life.

*Ind.* 'I find it is my duty to *honour God's holy name and his word*.—How shall I bring myself to do so?'

*Miss.* Take care never to speak of the *great God of heaven and earth*, but when you are very *serious*. Consider often that he seeth you, and so you will be apt to do what is most for the *honour of his name*.

And if you often remember, that the *BIBLE* is a *book* given by *God*, to *teach* us what we are to believe, and how we are to *live*, that we may attain eternal happiness;—and that your salvation depends upon knowing what *that book* containeth;—you will often read it, or hear it read and explained, and whenever you do so, you will attend to it carefully, as the rule of your life;—endeavour to follow the directions it gives you; never repeat any part of it but to serious and holy purposes; and so you will delight in, and *honour his holy word*.

*Ind.* 'Pray what is meant by *loving God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength*?'

*Miss.* This is for the great comfort of such as sincerely strive to do their duty;—they shall be accepted of God, though they attain not to that high degree of love and obedience, which God himself

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commands in his law, or even to that which some others arrive at, provided they *love*, and *fear*, and *serve* God, *with all their hearts*, that is, *as well as they are able*.—God will proportion their *rewards* to their *endeavours*.

*Ind.* ‘You say it is my duty to *serve him truly all the days of my life*.—But will not necessary business hinder me from doing so much as is required of me?’

*Miss.* No:—Whatever God requireth of any man may be done without neglecting his worldly business.

ONE DAY IN SEVEN, you are forbid to labour:—Do what you are commanded *on that day*, and spare a few moments, in the *morning* and *evening* of every other day, to praise God, and to ask his blessing:—And then, when in the fear of God, and a just sense of your duty, you are employed with honest industry in your daily labours, you are serving God as truly, and you are as certainly in the way to heaven,—as *they* who are at their prayers,—*and this you may do all the days of your life*.

*Ind.* ‘Pray will you show me my duty towards my neighbour?’

*Miss.* When you come next, I will endeavour to explain it fully to you.—In the mean time pray to God to enable you to perform your duty to him.

#### THE PRAYER.

GRACIOUS GOD, who alone art worthy of all our service, grant that I may serve and please thee according to my duty, with all my heart and strength;—that I may give thee thanks, and do thee honour; and that continuing in the faith, and fear, and love of God, unto my life’s end, I may be made by him eternally happy, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## DIALOGUE XVI.

*The duty towards our NEIGHBOUR explained.*

INDIAN.

'I AM come now to beg that you would teach me my duty towards my neighbour.'

*Miss.* Your duty to your neighbour is,

To love him as yourself, and to do unto all men as you would they should do unto you ;—to love, honour, and succour your father and mother ;—to honour and obey the king, and all that are put in authority under him ; to submit yourself to all your governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters ;—to order yourself lowly and reverently to all your betters ;—to hurt nobody by word nor deed ;—to be true and just in all your dealings ;—to bear no malice nor hatred in your heart ;—to keep your hands from picking and stealing, —your tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering ;—to keep your body in temperance, soberness, and chastity ;—not to covet nor desire other men's goods, but to learn and labour truly to get your own living, —and to do your duty in that state of life, unto which it shall please God to call you.

*Ind.* 'Now, Sir, if it would not be too much trouble, I beg you would explain to me that love which Christians owe *to themselves*, and *to their neighbours*, that is, as you told me, *all mankind*.'

*Miss.* In the first place observe, —that this is a rule to such only as *first love and fear God* —*Thou shalt love thy neighbour, as men fearing God love themselves*, —that is '*to do to others as we think they ought to do to us in the like case*.'

Now God being the *God and Father of mankind*, he would have every one to be secure in *life and estate*, easy in his *mind*, good and holy while he lives, and happy when he dies. —For this reason, he has

given this command,—*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*—which, if truly observed, would have a most happy and blessed effect, and be a direction to the most unlearned, how to behave himself to others, so as to please God<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'You will, I hope, explain this a little more particularly.'

*Miss.* Consult then your own reason, and you will acknowledge the *justice* of this command,—that men should love and deal with others as sincerely as they would have others to love and deal with them:—and that they should do nothing which they themselves would condemn as hard and unjust, if done by another person.

For example:—your own desire is, that all should *respect* and *love* you;—that none should *oppress*, *wrong*, or *deal deceitfully* with you;—should take advantage of your *ignorance* or *necessities*;—or should take *tedious*, *spiteful*, or *expensive* ways to keep you from your rights. You would have nobody to *bear malice*, or imagine *evil* in their hearts against you:—You are concerned for your own *good name* and *credit*:—you grieve to be despised by those above you, as well as to be disregarded by your inferiors:—you earnestly desire your own *welfare* and *prosperity*, and *peace of mind*, and *health of body*. Now as you, and every man living, is thus affected towards himself, so will every man living be condemned by God, and his own conscience, who does not thus deal with others, and act by this short and plain rule.

Men cannot live without the assistance and support of one another. Their *governors* protect them.—The concern of *parents* for their *children*,—the care of *masters* for their *servants*,—the account that *pastors* must give of their *flocks*, are great and necessary; and if all these are not *honoured* and *obeyed*, the world would every day grow more and more *wild*, and wicked, and

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiii. 10.



we ourselves, as well as others, should be sufferers, and miserable.

*Ind.* 'Are Christians obliged to love those that do not love them?'

*Miss.* Yes, most certainly, or they are no better than unbelievers,—*for these love those that love them.*—But God so *loved us*, when we were enemies to him by our evil deeds, as to *give his only begotten Son to die for us*; and therefore he most reasonably requires, that we should *love one another.*

*Ind.* 'How may we attain to such a Christian temper?'

*Miss.* You must take all occasions of wishing well, and doing good to others, continually exercising your compassion, by relieving the poor, helping such as are in distress, comforting the afflicted, and *mourning with them that mourn*; which will *sweeten* your temper and inure you to this happy disposition.

You must beware of taking pleasure in the calamities of other men, though your greatest enemies: For that would make you inhuman and hard-hearted.

But above all, consider that this is God's express command,—*that we love one another*; and it is greatly enforced by his amazing and condescending love to us.

When you have gained these good dispositions, you will find, that being *obedient* and *dutiful* to your *governors, masters, and betters, civil* to your *equals*, and *kind* to your *inferiors*, is the true way of being easy and happy yourself.

*Ind.* 'What is my duty, if my neighbour speaketh ill of me?'

*Miss.* If you are indeed abused, you ought privately to reprove him that hath done it; and if he should not amend, your duty is to bear the injury patiently, to return good for evil, to forgive and to pray for him.—For so hath Christ expressly commanded<sup>1</sup>.

And for your comfort consider, that, by thus freely

<sup>1</sup> Matt. v. 44.

forgiving him, you may with the more courage and comfort plead the gracious promise God has made of the pardon of your own sins, so that you become the greatest gainer by the wrong that was done you.

*Ind.* 'But will not this encourage bad men to abuse their innocent neighbours?'

*Miss.* *It is probable it will not*<sup>1</sup>.—However that be, we are not to be more concerned for our own reputation, than for the honour and commands of Jesus Christ; *who hath also set us an example, that we should follow his steps, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, but committed his cause to Him that judgeth righteously*<sup>2</sup>.

*Ind.* 'Will my duty to my neighbour oblige me at all times to conceal his faults?'

*Miss.* No: sometimes it is your duty to speak of them;—but then it must be with a good design of leading him to repentance,—by bringing him before such persons as have authority to call him to an account;—otherwise you are a *slanderer* or *backbiter*, and as such, *reckoned amongst the most scandalous offenders*<sup>3</sup>.

*Ind.* 'May I not be true and just in my dealings, and yet make myself as good a bargain as I can?'

*Miss.* Only consider, that if the person you deal with makes himself an ill bargain, out of *ignorance*, *necessity*, or out of *fear*, it is a wicked thing to take advantage of him; and though you may defend it by law, you cannot answer it to God.

*Ind.* 'What is my duty if I have wronged my neighbour?'

*Miss.* You are bound to acknowledge your fault, and make him what amends you can, to ask God's pardon, and then you may hope for forgiveness; for this is what you would expect from others.—And this is the great rule of the Gospel:—'Whatsoever ye

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. i. 30.

would that men should do unto you, do you even so to them<sup>1</sup>.'

*Ind.* 'But how should such poor, ignorant people as we, know how to walk at all times by this rule?'

*Miss.* One of our Saviour's *Apostles* saith—*He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him*<sup>2</sup>; that is, his love will always direct him what to do, and will not suffer him to do wrong to others, either in word or deed.—*For love worketh no ill to his neighbour; thinketh no evil, and therefore speaks none: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*<sup>3</sup>.

*Ind.* 'Must I always speak the truth?'

*Miss.* Yes, sure; for if you consider what mischief is done by falsehood—how ill you take it to be deceived yourself,—you will be convinced, that *lying* is a base vice, and that there is great reason for those terrible *threatenings*<sup>4</sup>, which we find in God's word against such as are guilty of this sin.

*Ind.* 'What are the rules of *temperance, soberness, and chastity*, which a Christian is to walk by?'

*Miss.* *Whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God*<sup>5</sup>;—that is,—take care that the name of God, and the holy religion you profess, be not evil spoken of by your excess in these things.

*Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness*<sup>6</sup>. For no man that doth so habitually, can with any true delight think of the joys of heaven.

Besides, sure it is, that they who give themselves up to *intemperance*, are in great danger of dying suddenly in their sins unrepented of.

What was inflicted upon man for the punishment of his first transgression [*that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread*] is now become the most likely means of preserving us from all other sins—for our souls are as active and inquisitive as ever, and must always be employed one way or other: and therefore,

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vi. 12.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John ii. 10.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. xiii.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. xxi. 8. 27.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Cor. x. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. xiii. 13.

if we don't constantly find some proper business for them—the *thoughts and imaginations of our hearts will be only evil continually.*

*Ind.* 'What reason have we to be contented, and not to desire other men's goods?'

*Miss.* Because our own condition is certainly the best for us, being the appointment of a wise, just, and good God,—who will supply us with every thing needful here, and give us our portion in a better world, where we shall not need these things.

*Ind.* 'But may we not endeavour to better our conditions?'

*Miss.* Yes, by God's blessing upon your honest industry; but no man should desire to live in plenty here, and hazard his salvation for it; nor strive to leave his family a great deal, and be miserable for ever in another life, for his covetousness, oppression, and ill dealing here.

*Ind.* 'May I do what I please with what is justly my own?'

*Miss.* No:—but you must do good with it.—First, live decently yourself; *provide for your own house*; that is, such of your relations as are in want; and then relieve the poor with what you can well spare.—And so you will show your thankfulness to God—and *he will reward you for it*<sup>1</sup>.

And this is the best security you can have that you shall never want.

*He that giveth unto the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again*<sup>2</sup>.

*Ind.* 'Sure, Sir, Christians do not believe these duties to God and man to be so *necessary* as you say they are, or else they think it *impossible* to observe them.'

*Miss.* Assure yourself they are the *duties* and *conditions* on which their happiness or *misery* everlasting depends; and they know this; but too many will not lay it to heart.—They know also that God, to whom all

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxv. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Prov. xix. 17.

things are possible, will not let them want any assistance, which they sincerely desire and ask for. But they who are not willing to forsake their sins, are not disposed to beg that help of God which is necessary to enable them to break their bonds; and such persons, by a just judgment of God, are often left to their own evil dispositions;—and this is the great occasion of so much wickedness as is seen among Christians.

Therefore, as ever you hope to do the will of God, and by him be made happy, keep these truths in your mind and memory:—‘That such is the corruption of our nature, and proneness to evil, that we cannot of ourselves, without God’s special grace and help, keep his commands, and serve him as we ought to do;—that when we have done our best, we are but unprofitable servants; and it is only through the satisfaction of Christ we can be justified;—and that God is so good and merciful, that he has promised, upon our sincere desires and prayers, to give us all the help we shall want to do our duty, so as to please him, and to secure our happiness for ever.’

PRAYER, therefore, being appointed by God himself as a means of obtaining all the blessings we stand in need of, you must be instructed in that duty, how to ask of God so as to obtain his grace and help.

*Ind.* ‘I cannot in reason expect that favour from you now; but I will wait on you as soon as I can hope you will have leisure.’

*Miss.* It will be a great pleasure and blessing to me, to be made an instrument in the hand of God, to bring you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God<sup>1</sup>, that you may be made happy for ever.

#### THE PRAYER.

O LORD Jesus Christ, who hast loved us, and given thyself for us, give us grace to love, and to forgive, and to do good;—and that running the way of thy com-

<sup>1</sup> Acts xxvi. 18.

mandments, I may live and die thy servant, and find mercy at the great day, when we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. *Amen.*

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## DIALOGUE XVII.

*Of PRAYER and THANKSGIVING, being the MEANS and CONDITIONS of obtaining the GRACES and BLESSINGS of God.*

### INDIAN.

‘I AM come again, good Sir, for your further instruction.—You have explained to me the commands of God, and convinced me of the necessity of observing them in order to be happy.—At the same time you told me, *that we cannot observe them as we ought to do without the grace of God, which I must seek by diligent prayer.*’

*Miss.* So indeed it is.—For such is the disorder and weakness of our nature, and the temptations to sin so many, that neither our *reason*—nor the *goodness* of God’s commands,—nor the *authority* of so powerful a being,—nor the *happiness* which he proposes,—nor the *danger* of our disobedience, are sufficient to keep us within the bounds of duty without God’s especial *grace* : which he is so good as to promise to all such, as being sensible of their wants, do pray for his grace and assistance.

*Ind.* ‘Pray, Sir, what do you mean by the *grace* of God?’

*Miss.* We mean every favour which God freely bestows on us, in order to make his ordinances and commands effectual for our salvation.

For example :—God gives us his Holy Spirit to be the author of a new and holy life.—This *Holy Spirit* has made known to us in the Scriptures the ways of life and of death,—the blessing and happiness of such

as love and obey God,—and the miserable end of the wicked and disobedient—these are the first graces and favours of God.

Besides these,—to all such as are well-disposed, and receive these truths, *the Spirit of God* enlightens their understandings;—touches their hearts with the fear of *God*, and with a fear for *themselves*, on account of their sins, and the corruption of their nature; he shews them the necessity of a *Saviour*, and what he has done to deliver them from misery, and to make them happy for ever.

In short,—whatever saving *truths* men know, whatever *good* they do, whatever *evils* they avoid,—*these*, and many, very many more, are the effects of the *grace and favour* of God, and the effectual workings of his *good Spirit* on our hearts and minds.

*Ind.* ‘What do you mean by *prayer*?’

*Miss.* We mean,—the laying our wants and desires before God, and begging of him to hear and help us, and particularly to give us the assistance of his Holy Spirit.

*Ind.* ‘Doth not God know all our wants, before we lay them before him?—And doth not he give his blessings to many that never pray for them?’

*Miss.* God doth most surely know our wants much better than we ourselves do?—He also often gives us those things which we neither *desire* nor *deserve*;—and yet he has commanded us to pray, and hath made it a part of the duty we owe to him;—and that for our own sake, and that we may be made more worthy of the favours which he designs us, and that we may not forget (as too many do) our dependence upon him for *life and breath*, and *all things*.

For being obliged to pray to God daily, we can hardly choose but think of him often;—of his *power* to help us;—of his *goodness* and promise to do so;—of his *wisdom* to give what is best for us;—and of his *justice* to punish those that live without God in the world: we can hardly help thinking of our own sinful-



ness and unworthiness of any favour at the hand of God;—and we are led to remember the only way by which every mercy is to be obtained: even through the merit and mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ.—By all which we are taught to *know*, to *love*, to *honour*, to *obey*, to *rely* upon, and to *praise* our Maker every day more and more perfectly, in all our ways, to acknowledge him, and live in an entire dependence upon him;—which is the sure way to be happy for ever.

*Ind.* ‘Hath God promised to give Christians what they pray for?’

*Miss.* He hath promised to give them whatever they ask agreeable to his will, and whatsoever he in his infinite wisdom shall think proper for them<sup>1</sup>.—And because through our *ignorance*, and *the corruption of our nature*, were we left to ourselves, we should be tempted to pray for such things as might hurt both ourselves and others, and which would not be for the honour of God, or for his goodness, to grant; therefore his *Son*, and our merciful *Saviour*, hath given us a *pattern of prayer*, in order to direct us what to pray for, so as to please God.—And this prayer is so short, that the most unlearned Christian may get it by heart, and, by a very little help and attention, may understand it so well, as never to be at a loss what to ask of God.

*Ind.* ‘I hope you will be so good as to teach me that prayer, and to explain it to me.’

*Miss.* I will do so, and endeavour to make you understand the reason and meaning of every petition:—You must know then, that it is called the LORD’S PRAYER, because it was given by our Lord Christ to his disciples, for the use of them and his followers; and it is in these words:

### *The Lord’s Prayer.*

Our Father, which art in heaven;—Hallowed be

<sup>1</sup> John xiv. 14.; xvi. 23. Matt. xxi. 22.

thy name.—Thy kingdom come.—Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.—Give us this day our daily bread.—And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.—And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.—For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

*Ind.* ‘I should be much to blame, indeed, if I should not get so short a prayer by heart. You will now be so kind as to explain it to me.’

*Miss.* Before I do that, I must first observe to you, that we are not taught to say, *My Father*, but *Our Father*,—because God, who is the God of all mankind, would have all of us to love and to be concerned for one another.—And to increase and confirm our love, he hath taught us, when we beg any favour for ourselves, to pray for all *others*, that he may be glorified by *them*, as well as by us;—and that none may be deprived of those blessings which *Jesus Christ* hath purchased for mankind.

You will also observe, that God hath permitted us to call him *Our Father*, to the end that we may pray with a humble confidence of being kindly received:—Being assured, *that as a Father pitieth his own children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him*<sup>1</sup>.

But then we are to consider,—that this FATHER is the GOD of HEAVEN, who sees our *behaviour*, and the very *thoughts of our hearts*, which should oblige us to approach him with *reverence and godly fear*,—because *he* is in heaven, and *we* are upon earth, which is his footstool.

Lastly,—observe—that *in the three first petitions*, we pray for the glory of God; that we, and all people, may know him, worship and obey him, as we ought to do.—And *in the three last petitions*, we pray for ourselves,—for the *necessaries* of life,—for the *pardon* of our sins, and *grace* to do our duty,—and for God’s

<sup>1</sup> Psalm ciii. 13.

*protection and deliverance*, from the evils we either *suffer or fear*.

‘And therefore I beseech thee, O heavenly Father, not for myself only, but for all thy children, that we may all live worthy of the relation which we bear to thee;—that we may not sin, knowing that we are accounted thine, nor wilfully offend so great, so good, so tender a Father:—But that we may love thee not as *slaves*, but as *children*;—that we may put our whole trust in thee, and depend upon thine infinite *power, wisdom, goodness, and promise*, to take care of us:—That we may leave it to thee to choose what is best for us, and bear with patience and resignation all thy fatherly corrections.—And that we may serve thee with comfort and pleasure all our days, in hopes of the everlasting inheritance which thou hast promised to thy obedient children.’

*Hallowed be thy name.*

Now in this first petition we pray,—that all men may have a very high regard for the divine majesty of God, and for his honour:—And especially, that all Christians, to whom he has made himself and his will known by no less a person than his own Son, may honour him, by a firm faith in him, and by leading *just and holy* lives, as becomes the children of God, that others, seeing their good works, may be converted, and glorify their Father which is in heaven,—and for their encouragement in doing this, God hath declared, *That them who honour him, he will honour*<sup>1</sup>; that is, he will bless them, and make them happy.

‘Let us ever remember, O God, that thou art our great *Creator*, our absolute *Lord*, our merciful *Saviour*, and our *all-seeing Judge*.—May we stand in awe of thy *almighty power*, thine *all-seeing providence*, and thine *angry justice*, and love thy *boundless goodness*, and be always thankful for thine innumerable *benefits*,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. ii. 39.

and trust in thy *wisdom*, and *truth*, and *call upon thy name*, as long as we live!

*Thy kingdom come.*

In order to understand this petition, you must know,—that wherever the Christian religion is received, *there is the kingdom of God*, because God is there obeyed, feared, and loved.—We pray, therefore, in these words, that all the nations of the earth may come to the knowledge of the true, and only God, the Creator and Preserver of all things;—and that the Gospel of his Son, which contains the laws of his kingdom, may every where be received, to the glory of God, and the good of mankind;—and that every one of us may labour to advance the kingdom of God and his honour.

‘And thus, O Lord, *let thy kingdom come*,—let it be as universal, as the PROPHETS foretold it should be, and extend to every corner of the earth, and reach every man’s heart and soul:—And may the days come, when no persecution, division, or schism, no evils or troubles of any kind shall be known in it!—And may none who are called by thy name, oppose this coming of thy kingdom by any scandal, or by resisting the power and efficacy of it in himself!’

How meanly and basely do those act, who profess themselves *members* of this kingdom, and yet have no care or concern for the conduct of it;—but withal how inconsistently, while they are bidding open defiance to their Lord, to wish, as they do in this prayer—for his coming.

We are also supposed to pray in this petition—that God would be pleased to remove whatever hinders so glorious a work;—that he would restrain the power of the devil, *who leads so many nations captive at his will*:—that all such as are yet ignorant of the true God, may no longer want the necessary means of their conversion; and that all Christians may, by their good lives, convince unbelievers, *how happy they are in being under the laws and government of their Maker*.

*Ind.* 'But pray, good Sir, how can that be called the kingdom of God, in which there are so many wicked subjects?'

*Miss.* God permits it to be so for the present, *in this state of trial*, to make all men see what they would be without the assistance and help of his grace; to show his goodness and patience, *by which many of the wicked are brought to repentance*; whereby also the power of his grace is both seen and glorified.—By these also he tries the sincerity of his faithful subjects.—But a time is coming, when a separation will be made of the *wheat* from the *tares*, the good seed from the bad, and the justice of God will appear in the dreadful punishment of all such as now give offence to his good subjects, and hinder the *propagating the Gospel*.

*Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

This is the next petition;—by which we pray,—that God by his grace may dispose the hearts of all his subjects to a cheerful obedience to his laws, and an entire submission to his will and direction;—and to a performance of their duty in that state of life, in which his providence hath placed them:—and this as cheerfully as his angels do their duty and obey his will in heaven;—by which God will be greatly glorified,—his kingdom enlarged,—his angels delighted, and all who obey him, will be prepared for eternal happiness.

Now we come to the three last petitions, which concern our own wants, and which none but God can supply.—And these I shall explain to you the next time you come.—In the mean time address yourself to the throne of grace in the following words:

#### THE PRAYER.

DISPOSE me, and all thy children, O Lord and Father, to submit cheerfully to whatever thy providence shall order for us:—Hearken not to the corrupt de-

sires of our own hearts, but to the voice of thine own wisdom, goodness, and mercy.—Give us a true knowledge of our duty, and a heart disposed to close with thy will, wherever it shall be made known to us, and to obey it with pleasure.—Subdue in us whatever is contrary to thy holy will, that, through thy grace, we may at last become perfect, as our heavenly pattern is, through Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

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## DIALOGUE XVIII.

### INDIAN.

‘I am now come to desire you would explain to me the remaining part of the Lord’s Prayer.’

*Miss.* The three last petitions concern our own wants, and which none but God can supply. The first of these is,

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

In which words we pray, that God would be pleased to give us all things which are either needful or convenient for the health and support of our bodies, and for the good of our souls.—BREAD, being of most necessary and universal use, has obtained not only in Scripture, but in common discourse all over the world, to be put very often for all the necessities of life.—Thus, *poverty* is expressed by *want of BREAD*, and *prosperity by fulness of bread.*

*Ind.* ‘Why do you ask for these things day by day?’

*Miss.* Because we have by this an occasion of remembering our daily *dependence* upon God, and of giving him *thanks* for his favours to us every day of our lives; and forasmuch as we acknowledge that we depend upon God’s blessing, on our honest endeavours, for our daily bread, we should not for our lives attempt

to take such ways for a livelihood as we cannot hope God will bless. And lastly,—we learn by this prayer,—not to be too much concerned or anxious for ourselves for the time to come, because God ever liveth to supply our wants.

*Ind.* 'It seems, then, that Christians are not to pray for *great riches, honours, and powers*, since they are directed only to pray for their daily bread.'

*Miss.* It is certainly so: For these things should be left wholly to God's wisdom, since men *cannot*, and none but God *can*, know what use any one may make of such things.—Not but that, if God gives men such things, they may receive them with thanks, and should use them to good purposes.

*Ind.* 'How may they do that?'

*Miss.* By assisting, *with their riches* those that are in want:—by defending, *with their power*, such as are oppressed, &c. And taking care always to remember God in the midst of their abundance, and the account they must give to him of both the *use* and *abuse* of it.

We look up unto, and depend upon thee, O heavenly Father, for all the necessities, conveniences, and comforts of this life;—and may our bodily wants engage us to go daily to the throne of grace, for the wants of our souls!

'—Let thy blessing go along with our honest endeavour, and keep us from all unjust ways of bettering our condition; and that with all thy other favours, give us, we beseech thee, the blessing of a thankful and contented mind!'

The next petition which concerns ourselves, is this following:

*Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.*

Now in these words we pray,—that God for Christ's sake would be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins, whether known or unknown, and that he would not punish us as we deserve. And, to show our *thank-*



*fulness* fr : this great mercy, we oblige ourselves to *forgive*, and *love*, and *do good* to those who have any way injured us, as sincerely as we hope for pardon from God.

*Ind.* 'And may a Christian be assured, that God will pardon his sins, provided he deals with others as kindly as he desires God would deal with him?'

*Miss.* We have his faithful promise by his Son, that, upon our true repentance, he will do so<sup>1</sup>:—By which he hath, as it were, put our pardon into our own power, and left us to consider, that there will be no mercy for him who will not show mercy.

'Forgive us those sins, O heavenly Father, which separate us from thee: Forgive us every day of our lives, for every day we stand in need of pardon.—Give me, and all Christians, a forgiving temper, that we may fulfil the condition of our pardon.—Thou art good and merciful in forgiving us,—grant that we may all live in the same charitable temper, in which we hope and desire to die.'

The last petition of this prayer is :

*Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*

That is, we pray that God would so order things in the course of his providence, that we may not be exposed to great and dangerous trials, which may prove hazardous to our virtue.—*That he would not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but would with the temptation make a way for us to escape, that we may be able to bear it.*

*Ind.* 'What must I understand by the word *evil*?'

*Miss.* First and chiefly, the evil spirit, *i. e.* the DEVIL, who is the great tempter of mankind to all evil.

*2dly.* Evil practices and evil examples.

*3dly.* Everlasting misery.

Now you will observe from this petition, that it is

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vi. 14.

not sufficient to beg pardon for our past offences,—but that every good Christian must pray God to enable him to keep out of the way of temptation, and not suffer him to fall again into the sins he has repented of:—And that whenever he suffers us to be tempted for the trial of our faith and trust in him, he would in mercy deliver us from the *powers* and *snare*s of the *devil*;—from our own *corrupt inclinations*;—from the *ill examples* of a wicked world;—and from *everlasting misery*, the most dreadful of all evils whatever.

And the reason why this desire is by our Lord expressed in these words—*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*, is this:

To admonish us, that even the best of us are in danger of falling into the same sins, that we have once, much more that we have often, been guilty of; and that, because there are several *temptations*, which in the course of our lives we shall surely meet with; and therefore, that none of us are to be secure, but ought always to *watch* and *pray*, and stand upon our guard, and to look well to ourselves, that we be not overcome.

And you will be further convinced of the absolute necessity of this petition, when you see so many, even amongst those who bear the name of Christians, running headlong into everlasting ruin, for want of God's gracious assistance, which can only be obtained by constant and diligent prayer.

'O God, who hatest iniquity, and knowest our infirmities,—leave us not to the *malice* and *power* of the *evil one*, the *devil*, to deal with us as he pleaseth;—leave us not, O merciful Father, to ourselves, and to our own corrupt hearts and lusts, lest we rashly run into temptations:—Keep us always under the protection of thy good Spirit; suffer us not to be surprised, nor off our guard, nor tempted above what we are able to bear;—give us grace to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to watch and pray daily, that we enter not into temptation.'

We conclude this prayer with these following words ; which are a solemn form of *praise* and an *acknowledgment* to him to whom we have been praying.

*For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

That is, in other words—we *praise* and *worship*, and *depend* upon thee, the *great* and *true*, and *only* God ;—whose *kingdom* ruleth over all the world ;—whose *power* nothing can resist ;—whose *glory* ought to be our chief aim and desire ;—who alone can give us what we want and pray for ;—who alone can forgive us our sins, and dispose us to forgive one another ;—who can *help*, *secure*, and *save* us in the hour of temptation, and *deliver* us from the evils to which we are daily exposed. To thee, therefore, we give all *honour*, *praise*, and *thanks*, and wish that all the world would do the same. *Amen.*

*Ind.* ‘I observe, that you conclude all your prayers with that word—AMEN.’

*Miss.* We do so.—By which we express our most earnest desire, that God would grant us what we have prayed for ;—which we firmly believe he will do, so far as may really promote his *glory* and our *best interest* ;—forasmuch as we are assured *that no man did ever trust in the Lord, and was confounded*<sup>1</sup>, or *disappointed* of his hopes ; and therefore we conclude all our prayers with saying *Amen*, or *so be it, let it be as we have prayed, and do desire.*

*Ind.* ‘Can it be expected, that the IGNORANT and UNLEARNED should pray ?’

*Miss.* It is most surely the duty of every man, however *ignorant* and *unlearned*, to pray and give praise to God ; whereby he owns his dependence upon him, for every thing he wants, and *returns his thanks*, for all the blessings he receives.

Now every man, even the most *unlearned*, cannot

<sup>1</sup> Ecclus. ii. 10.

but know, that he is *subject to be tempted to sin*, and that God only can deliver him from it. Every one knows, that it is God only that can *bless* his honest endeavours for a livelihood;—that God therefore ought to be sought to for these blessings, and that every one is obliged to be thankful to him when he receives them.

A very *child* can tell his *father* what he wants; and you see God permits us to call him OUR FATHER, that we may lay our desires and wants before him after the best manner we are able, and leave it to him to help us:—he knows our wants, however imperfectly we express them with our tongues. And we may be assured, that when we devoutly use this very prayer, God will hear and answer us, not according to our weak understandings, but in a manner suitable to our real necessities, *and according to the love of a father for his children.*

*Ind.* ‘Do Christians think that they are bound to pray every day?’

*Miss.* They should do so: and every good Christian will do so: because he knows he wants God’s *help*, and *pardon*, and *blessing* every day of his life. And it is chiefly owing to the omission of this duty, that we see so much wickedness and mischief even amongst Christians. People venture every day into a world full of temptations to sin, and of dangers innumerable, without begging the protection of God:—and they too often lie down to sleep, without praying to be delivered from the powers of darkness, and the sad accidents which may befall them, *when all eyes are shut, but his only who never sleepeth.*

*Ind.* ‘Is it expected that such as cannot read, should pray?’

*Miss.* It is an unhappiness that people cannot read: but God forbid *that* should hinder them from praying!—Whoever hath sense to know that he is a sinner, or that he wants God’s help, is bound to pray as well as he can. If such a person wants a kindness from his

neighbour, he will find words to ask it in: if he is to ask it of his betters, he will think of doing it in a becoming manner, and will wait with patience, and receive it thankfully—let him so behave himself towards his *Maker*; and God, who is alway pleased with the desires of a heart truly sensible of its misery and wants, will favourably answer his requests.

*Ind.* 'I observe that you make *thanksgiving* also a duty, and a service which you owe to God.'

*Miss.* *God himself has made it so*<sup>1</sup>,—and it is agreeable to our reason.—We expect thanks from one another, when we have done a kindness.—And if Christians would take notice of, and give God *thanks* for the *mercies* and *blessings* they receive daily from his bounty, they would engage the divine goodness to *multiply* his favours, which they often *hinder* by their *ingratitude*. 'But then they must show their thankfulness, not only with their lips, but by their lives.'

*Ind.* 'How often should we pray?'

*Miss.* We should *pray without ceasing*<sup>2</sup>; that is, we should let no day pass, without begging God's blessing; and giving him thanks for his mercies;—for every *blessing* we receive; for every *danger* we escape;—and for every affliction we meet with, and are supported under. Our *meals* should put us in mind—that we do not live by bread alone; that therefore God's blessing must *make our meat to do us good*<sup>3</sup>.—In our business we should remember, that it is but lost labour, *to rise early and take little rest*,—if God blesses not our endeavours<sup>4</sup>. In the *morning*, we should pray to God to bless our labours all the day; and in the *evening*, return our humble thanks for all the *mercies* of the foregoing day, and pray for preservation, and the other mercies of the night.

*Ind.* 'Are there any further instructions that you think necessary to give me, concerning this duty of prayer?'

<sup>1</sup> 1 Thess. v. 18.    <sup>2</sup> 1 Thess. v. 17.    <sup>3</sup> Deut. viii. 3.    <sup>4</sup> Ps. cxxvii. 2.

*Miss.* Only remember—that whenever you say this prayer, or beg any favour from God, you do it with the humility of one who is *sensible* of his *wants* and *misery*;—with *submission* to God's will; with great *reverence*, *attention* of mind, and deliberation, that your *heart* may go along with your *lips*.—And lastly, which you must never forget,—you must ask every blessing you want of GOD, FOR THE SAKE OF HIS SON JESUS CHRIST; it being on *his* account alone, and *for what he has done and suffered*, that God will own us for his children, or grant us what we pray for.

*Ind.* 'I hope I shall always remember *to do so*.'

*Miss.* Indeed, it is of so very great moment, that JESUS CHRIST himself has appointed an HOLY ORDINANCE to be observed by all Christians, on purpose that they may always *remember* the wonderful things he has done, and the great blessings he hath obtained for them:—Particularly *the sacrifice of his death*, and the benefits which we receive by it; *viz.* the pardon of our sins, and the sure and certain hope of everlasting life.—When, therefore, you come again to me, I will explain *this* to you more fully, than I can do at present, for want of time.

*Ind.* 'You have said enough, Sir, to make me return to you as soon as I possibly can.'

#### THE PRAYER.

BLESSED be thy name, O God, for this great privilege of laying our wants before thee, and for the great hopes we have of being heard.—Make me ever sensible of my wants, and of thy power and goodness to help me, that at all times I may call upon thee, by diligent prayer.—And hear me, O King of Heaven, when I call upon thee, in the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*; that I may effectually obtain the relief of my necessities, and ever give thee praise for the same. *Amen.*

## DIALOGUE XIX.

*The SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER explained.*

INDIAN.

'YOUR promise, Sir, to explain to me an HOLY ORDINANCE, which, you told me, all Christians are bound to observe for a continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, ever since that sacrifice was offered, this has brought me to you now as soon as I could hope you would have time to instruct me.'

*Miss.* I have now time to do it—you remember, I hope, what I have told you before;—that there are *two special ordinances* of the Christian religion, which we call SACRAMENTS, appointed by Christ himself as necessary means of salvation, when they may be regularly had.—These are, BAPTISM and the LORD'S SUPPER.—By *baptism* we are introduced into the Christian character;—at which time we enter into a *covenant with God*, wherein, on our part, we promise,—to *believe* in him, to *fear*, to *love*, and *obey* him all our days:—And God, on his part, receives us into his family, which is his church, and promiseth to treat us as his children, to *protect us*, while we live, and, when we die, to make us happy, if we have behaved ourselves as his dutiful children ought to do; *and thus we give ourselves up unto Christ.*

*Ind.* 'This I have not forgot.'

*Miss.* But then, forasmuch as this high favour hath been bestowed upon Christians—to *be called and treated as the children of God, not for any thing they have done to deserve it, but purely for the sake of what his Son Jesus Christ hath done and suffered for them*—he hath appointed ANOTHER SACRAMENT, which we call the LORD'S SUPPER, in order to keep up the remembrance of what he hath done for us:—His laying



down his life for us to *redeem* us from the wrath of *God*, to *purchase* us to himself to be a people *zealous of good works*.

*Ind.* 'Why do you call THIS SACRAMENT by the name of the LORD'S SUPPER?'

*Miss.* Because our Lord Christ did appoint THIS ORDINANCE at *his last supper* with his disciples, the evening before he was crucified, to preserve the *memory* and the *reasons* of his death; the knowledge of which is the foundation of the Christian religion, and *that* on which the *happiness* and *salvation* of all men doth depend.

*Ind.* 'You will not wonder, if I am very desirous to know all that is necessary concerning this ordinance.'

*Miss.* That you may do so, you must carry your thoughts back to what I have already told you of—the *first parents of mankind*;—that they *rebelled* against their Maker's command;—that they *lost* his favour, and all right and title to the happiness which he had promised them;—that this very *nature* became *prone* to evil;—and both *they* and their *posterity* became subject to *sin*, to *misery*, and to *death*:—And, lastly, that *the Son of God*, pitying their calamity, undertook to *redeem* them,—to *satisfy* his Father's justice, and to *suffer* in his own person for their sins; as also to impart to them a *spirit* and *principle* of a new life; in order to renew that nature which they had so sadly spoiled.

In order to which he was made *man*; and having put himself in the place of sinners, he offered himself to suffer death for their redemption; by which he restored them to his *Father's* favour, and to a possibility of obtaining the happiness for which they at first were made.

By which wonderful goodness, and most worthy *sacrifice*, God was so well pleased,—that he hath, for *his Son's sake*, promised to pardon all penitent sinners, and to make them happy for ever.

*Ind.* 'All this I now remember you explained to me; and I thank you for putting me again in mind of it: and I hope now I shall never forget it.'

*Miss.* It will certainly be your interest to remember it; for indeed your happiness depends upon it.

*Ind.* 'Is it sufficient for me to remember *in this sacrament*, that there was such a person as Jesus Christ?'

*Miss.* No, surely;—much more is contained in it,—we are to call to mind his wonderful love to mankind, which engaged him to take our nature upon him, and to submit to the infirmities and miseries of it; which made him content to *live* amongst us, and to *die* for us;—It is to call to mind his unwearied *patience* and *diligence* in doing good;—healing the *diseases*, and instructing the *ignorance* of men: and particularly his most grievous *sufferings* and death, by which he made an *atonement* to his Father for the sins of mankind.—He was made *sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*<sup>1</sup>. And if we truly remember him, we shall endeavour to copy the example of his virtues, and especially those which were most conspicuous in his life.

*Ind.* 'Where shall I learn the history of his life and actions, that I may follow his example?'

*Miss.* In the FOUR GOSPELS, or in what is called the NEW TESTAMENT.

*Ind.* 'What do you mean by the GOSPELS?'

*Miss.* I mean FOUR SMALL TREATISES, in which the *life* and *actions* of our *Saviour* are written for the benefit of all succeeding Christians; and, when it shall be your happiness to read them, you will there find abundant matter and reason for the perpetual remembrance of Jesus Christ.

*Ind.* 'What need was there of this sacrament, since it seems impossible for men to forget so great a benefactor?'

*Miss.* Jesus Christ, who knew our nature better

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.

than we ourselves do, and how very apt we are to forget the greatest favours of God, has by this HOLY ORDINANCE provided, that such as have any sense or regard for his love, or even for their own happiness, shall never want a proper occasion of remembering what he hath done and suffered to redeem them from misery, and to put them in a way of being happy for ever:—He likewise intended this HOLY ORDINANCE as a standing proof or evidence of this important fact of his death, thereby to strengthen and renew our faith in it.

*Ind.* ‘You will now, Sir, be pleased to let me know how he hath done this.’

*Miss.* Our GREAT LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, the night before he was crucified, ‘took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, take eat; this is my body, that is given for you:—Do this in remembrance of me.—After supper also he took a cup of wine, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of this;—for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins.—Do this, as often as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.—For as oft as ye shall eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till he come.’

*Ind.* ‘You will now, Sir, let me know how this sacrament is observed amongst Christians.’

*Miss.* They do it after this manner:—First, the minister of Christ placeth, or causeth to be placed, upon a table in our churches, a portion of *bread* and *wine*, in the sight of all the people. This *bread* and *wine*, which are to *represent* the sacrifice of Christ’s body and blood, are *sanctified*, or *set apart*, for this holy use, by giving thanks to God for all his favours, and especially for having sent his only Son to redeem us by his death; and by begging of him, that when we receive, and eat and drink this bread and wine, we may be so far made partakers of the sacrifice of his

most blessed body and blood, as to share in all the benefits which he hath obtained for us by his death. At the same time he breaketh the bread into pieces, and poureth the wine into a cup, to represent unto our senses, by these *outward* and *visible* signs, the death of Christ, whose body was *broken*, and blood *poured out*, upon the cross.

*Ind.* ‘Pray, Sir, how doth he, after this, dispose of this bread and wine?’

*Miss.* This bread and wine, being *sanctified* by the word of God and prayer, he distributes among those who are there present;—putting them in mind, that Jesus Christ died for them and their salvation;—preferring their happiness to his own life;—that therefore they ought never to forget so great a kindness, *but to keep up the remembrance of him*, after this manner, which he hath appointed, UNTIL HIS COMING AGAIN.

*Ind.* ‘Is this all that is required of Christians,—“to keep up the remembrance of Christ, and of his death?”’

*Miss.* No, surely;—no serious Christians think *that alone* sufficient.—They know that it is an humble heart in which Christ delights to dwell;—they therefore look upon this sacrament as a proper occasion of humbling themselves before God, and of abhorring those sins, which cost Jesus Christ his life and blood.

They know also, that the blessings obtained for us by Christ’s death, of which this sacrament is a remembrance, are as much the *food* of the soul, as *bread* and *wine* are of the *body*—that this *food* or *support* we receive by a lively faith in his merits: and do therefore, at this time, more especially acknowledge the efficacy of his death.—*This is the true bread, which nourisheth to eternal life*<sup>1</sup>.—*That God who spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all, will he not with him freely give us all things!*

<sup>1</sup> John vi.

Besides this, every penitent Christian will look upon this as a proper time to remember and comfort himself with the great *extent of God's mercy*, declared by *his Son*, and this even with an oath,—‘that all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men’<sup>1</sup>.

Every humble Christian also, who feels in his soul the want of God's help to support him against the temptations of the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil*, will think this a very proper time to *beg of God* his *Son's* promise,—‘that he will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.’

Lastly,—every Christian must be supposed to receive this sacrament in token that he acknowledgeth Jesus Christ to be *Lord* and *Saviour*, and his *Lawgiver here*, and his *Judge hereafter*.

*Ind.* ‘I remark, that Christ commanded this ordinance to be observed by his followers TILL HIS COMING AGAIN: Pray what is meant by that?’

*Miss.* Why, as I have told you before, we Christians do know, and firmly believe, that Jesus Christ will come again at the end of the world—TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD;—to call all men that have ever lived to an account for the use they have made of the favours which God has given them; and to *reward* or *punish* them, as they have lived well or ill in this world.

And this intimation he gave his followers, when he appointed this ordinance, that they may consider, every time they go to this sacrament, what account they will be able to give of themselves, ‘when he shall come to judge the world in righteousness?’

*Ind.* ‘Is there any thing else required of Christians before they go to this sacrament?’

*Miss.* Yes:—They ought, in the first place, to consider what sort of life they have led since they took on them the Christian character; at which time they obliged themselves to make the laws of God the rule

<sup>1</sup> Mark iii. 28.

of their faith, and life, and actions:—And to examine themselves, whether they have not led a *wicked*, at least an *idle, useless* life;—or whether they now live in any known sin;—because they are bound, when they go to that sacrament,—seriously to acknowledge their offences and sins before God, and to beg his pardon, with a full purpose of amendment of life; otherwise they will receive nothing there, but their own condemnation.

A Christian is obliged also to have a grateful sense of God's goodness, by considering his mercy in sending his own Son to redeem us, whom by his death he hath reconciled to his Father, and put us in a way to be forever happy, if it is not merely our own fault.

And lastly, *Jesus Christ* having expressly commanded, 'that all his disciples should love one another, as he hath loved them, and given his life for them'<sup>1</sup>;—every Christian is bound, before he goeth to this sacrament (the chief end of which is to put him in mind of this great instance of Christ's love, every Christian, I say, is bound), to consider whether he hath any thing in his heart, contrary to this pattern of true love, and command of his Saviour.

*Ind.* 'Do you believe, that Christians are generally careful to prepare themselves for this ordinance after this manner?'

*Miss.* All *serious* Christians are so:—But, too many, it is to be feared, are not.—And this is the reason why so many receive no benefit from this *sacrament*;—for otherwise, THIS ORDINANCE would be a most powerful restraint to keep them from leading a *thoughtless* and an *evil* life,—by affording them so many blessed occasions of remembering and renewing their covenant with God, laying them under continual obligations of leading a new and Christian life, and obtaining grace from God to do so.

*Ind.* 'What do you think of those Christians that never go to this sacrament?'

<sup>1</sup> John xiii. 34.

*Miss.* Why they are generally to be esteemed in the way of ruin, without seeing their danger.—They do not consider, that, as they are sinners, God cannot be pleased with them;—and that there is no pardon for sinners, no salvation to be hoped for, but only through the merits of Christ's death, which is commemorated in this sacrament.

*Ind.* 'But sure, Sir, all Christians are not so thoughtless;—they must have some reasons for neglecting so necessary a duty, as you seem to represent it.'

*Miss.* There may be *reasons* and *scruples* for absenting for a time;—but generally speaking, some of these following are the *true reasons*, why men turn their backs upon the *Lord's Supper*, when invited to it, let them pretend what they please.

Either they live in some *known sin*, which they will not at present resolve to forsake;—or this *world*, its *business* or *pleasures*, have taken such possession of their hearts, that they have no time even to think of their souls, or of what must come hereafter;—or lastly,—they delude themselves with a faint purpose, that thus it shall not always be with them!—that some time or other they will make the care of their souls their great concern. But such persons should consider, that while they thus despise one of the greatest instances of God's love, they continue in a *sin* which too nearly resembles the *denial* of their *Lord* and *Saviour*. More particularly they should reflect, that by persisting in such a wilful disobedience to Christ's positive command, they have no well-grounded assurance, that any of their prayers will be granted: for as Christ's death is the only solid foundation of favour with God, so his *MEDIATION* is the only *channel* through which it is to be conveyed to Christians. Whether, therefore, those who refuse to commemorate the *one*, can lay any just claim to the *other*, is left to every man's serious meditation:—And they should consider with what face they can *hereafter*



appear before their Saviour in judgment, whom they refused to remember in his ordinance *here on earth*;—it having been observed,—*that whatever keeps a man from the sacrament after he has been instructed in the true nature of it, will, generally speaking, hinder him from going to heaven.*

*Ind.* ‘Can a Christian know whether he hath gone to this sacrament as he ought to have done, so as to hope for the blessings attending it?’

*Miss.* That will be best known by the manner of his life afterwards:—If a person went as a *true penitent*, he will be very careful of falling into the sins he hath repented of.—If he was indeed grieved with the remembrance of his sins, and the burthen of them was intolerable:—if he did in good earnest *purpose to lead a new life*, he will be more careful to beg of God to enable him to do so.—If he went with a *lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ*, that faith will appear in a better obedience to God’s laws.—If he had a *thankful remembrance of Christ’s death*,—the grateful acknowledgment of that invaluable blessing will constrain him to live so as to please his merciful Redeemer.—Lastly, if he went with a *truly charitable disposition* to the sacrament, he will afterwards make the love of Christ the pattern of his love to all others,—he will *forgive, and give, and love*, as becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ.

*Ind.* ‘Will not the blessings which Christ hath obtained by his death, as represented by this sacrament, encourage Christians to hope for salvation without amendment of life?’

*Miss.* *Ignorant and unthoughtful* people may delude themselves with such vain hopes; but all well-instructed Christians should know,—that though Christ died for the salvation of all, yet *those only* shall actually enjoy the benefit of his death, who live according to the *will and commands* of Him who died for them; that there will be no forgiveness of sins without repentance, and a thorough reformation of life; and

that the strictest adherence to this or any other positive ordinance of God, will not avail, without an earnest and sincere endeavour to perform the whole will of God as it respects HIM, our NEIGHBOUR, and OURSELVES.

*Ind.* 'I cannot, Sir, but be very thankful for the great pains you have taken to instruct me, and to make me understand the *nature* and *benefit* of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper:—and indeed, Sir, I am very desirous to be baptized, if you know of nothing that ought to hinder me.'

*Miss.* I would not hinder you one moment;—but that I have one thing more to make you sensible of before I would encourage you to be baptized,—and this is—'the delusion, the danger, and the mischief, of being a Christian without Christianity.'

*Ind.* 'Indeed, Sir, I do not understand you.'

*Miss.* I will explain to you what I mean, when you come to me again.—In the mean time, I shall pray God to keep you in this good disposition, and from every thing that may any way hinder your true conversion.

#### THE PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who gavest thine only Son *Jesus Christ* to suffer death for our redemption, give me grace to keep up the remembrance of this great mercy.—Grant that I may never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified;—that I may never despise the blessings he has purchased for me, nor the means of grace which he hath ordained; which I most humbly beg for the sake of the same *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

## DIALOGUE XX.

*The DELUSION, the DANGER, and the MISCHIEF, of being Christians without Christianity.*

INDIAN.

‘Most kind Sir, I left you with a very earnest desire of being baptized; but you said you had something of moment to say to me, before I was to take upon me the character of a Christian: for that reason I am now come to wait on you.’

*Miss.* To tell you the truth, then, notwithstanding the pains I have taken to instruct you, and show you both your true *interest*, and your great *danger* in not following it, I cannot but be afraid, lest, when you come to be more conversant with the world, and instead of finding these good fruits which you might naturally expect from so excellent a religion, you should find amongst too many professing that religion, little or no fear of God, nor any true concern for themselves, or for what must come hereafter:—I cannot but be afraid thereof, lest seeing this, you should be tempted to suspect the *truths* I have told you, and so either *renounce* Christianity, or else content yourself, as too many do, with the *borrowed name* of a Christian, and with mere shadows of religion, without endeavouring after that *substantial holiness*, without which no man must ever hope to be happy.

*Ind.* ‘I am very thankful for your concern for me, and I shall hear with attention the instructions you will be pleased to give, for preventing my fall.’

*Miss.* You must know then,—that the *Christian religion* is intended by God to *cure* the corruption of our nature, and to make us *happy*, by making us *holy, just, and good*;—by making *Christians* the best *neighbours*,—the truest *friends*,—the kindest *masters*;—the most faithful *servants*,—the best *husbands* and *wives*,—the most careful and tender *parents*, and

the most dutiful *children*,—the justest *magistrates*, and most faithful and obedient *subjects*;—and, above all, the devoutest *worshippers* of the true and only God, and strict *observers* of his laws.—Now my fears are,—that when you shall see too many Christians live without any regard to these duties, *professing to know God, but in their works denying him*<sup>1</sup>;—I say again, I cannot but be afraid for you—lest you should forget the HOLY COVENANT you made with God, when you were baptized,—and fall insensibly into the way of the world, which leads to destruction.

*Ind.* ‘Pray, Sir, what do you mean by the *way of the world*?’

*Miss.* I mean, ‘that sad, but too common delusion, of *being Christians without Christianity*.’—that is—of *professing to obey* the laws, and to *follow* the example of Christ, and at the same time leading *careless* and *unchristian* lives;—by which God is exceedingly dishonoured;—the Gospel despised;—and too, too many deceived to their everlasting ruin:—the ill consequences of which can never be sufficiently lamented:—for the poor heathens observing, that these people call themselves Christians; and yet seeing them *corrupt* in their manners, *contemners* of the God they worship, and his laws;—*minding* neither his promises nor threats; but having their hearts wholly set upon their worldly *interests* or *pleasures*;—they, seeing this, do very naturally conclude,—that if such people as these can think themselves secure of happiness in the next life, no one needs to be concerned whether he be a HEATHEN or a CHRISTIAN in this.

*Ind.* ‘You remember, Sir, what I told you before, that this very thing had once made me resolve never to think of becoming a Christian; till you assured me, that such as these are NO TRUE CHRISTIANS;—but are either wholly ignorant of what they profess,

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 21.

or deceive themselves with the thoughts that there is something *in the very name of a Christian*, which may recommend them to the favour of God, and save them from his *displeasure*, and their own ruin.'

*Miss.* I told you the truth, and what the Son of God hath commanded all mankind to take notice of; — 'That not every one who calls himself a Christian, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but only such as do the will of his Father, which is in heaven, and observe his laws<sup>1</sup>.'

*Ind.* 'I shall be very thankful, if you will let me know who they are that thus delude and deceive themselves, that I may not follow them to my ruin.'

*Miss.* I must first tell you, that there are those amongst us, who, *being wise in their own conceits*<sup>2</sup>, will not receive the Son of God *as their teacher*, nor his *Gospel* as the *rule of their faith and manners*:— now these men often lead into very dangerous errors, such people as do not know or consider, upon what certain proofs the truths of the Gospel *are most surely believed amongst us*.

*Ind.* 'I hope my belief in the Gospel is confirmed sufficiently, both by the many and wonderful miracles of Christ, *especially by his resurrection from the dead*<sup>3</sup>.'

*Miss.* But you must not forget, *that your faith, and continuance of it, is the gift of God*; which you must pray for, as ever you hope to be preserved free from error.

*Ind.* 'Well, it is strange, however, that people of understanding in other things, who cannot but see how much we are apt to be mistaken in the common affairs of life, should, in matters of the greatest concern, wholly depend upon their own *wisdom and power*, even where God hath undertaken to direct and assist us.'

*Miss.* You will not wonder at this, if you remember, what hath been so often repeated and proved;— that such is the *corruption* of our nature, that when any man, through a proud *conceit* of his own *wisdom*

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. xii. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Acts ii. 22.

and strength, shall provoke God to forsake and leave him to himself, that a man will be capable of believing and doing the most unreasonable things, to which an *evil spirit*, or his own *corrupt heart*, can tempt him.

*Ind.* 'Pray, Sir, what other mistakes are there amongst Christians, which endanger their salvation?'

*Miss.* There are too many, who, for want of attention to the good instructions which are given them, consider not how they *live*, nor what will become of them when they *die*;—who know not the evil of sin, nor the mischiefs it has brought into the world;—how hateful it is to an holy God,—how strict his commands are to avoid it, and what the portion of sinners in the *next* life is to be;—and therefore propose no other end to themselves, in this life, but only to *live* and *die* as easy as they can.—*Besides those who walk in darkness, and know not whither they go*<sup>1</sup>, and are secure, because ignorant;—there are others, that are even afraid of being instructed.

*Ind.* 'That is strange indeed.'

*Miss.* But it is true: and the reason is, because if we deal faithfully with sinners, we must *testify against them that their deeds are evil*<sup>2</sup>, and that they are in very great danger, if they do not forsake their beloved sins; and then they will hate both us, and those unwelcome truths, which condemn them, and their way of life:—no wonder, therefore, that both these sorts of Christians, by their unrighteous lives, furnish unbelievers with arguments for persisting in their obstinacy,—and hazard their own salvation.

There are others also, who have been better informed, and perhaps well inclined; but suffering their hearts to be possessed with the *love* of the world<sup>3</sup>, its *business*, *riches*, or *pleasures*, they lose thereby the knowledge and remembrance of the truth, and forget their good purposes, and fall into the way of living which the Christian religion condemns, and

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 35.

<sup>2</sup> John vii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xiii. 22.

which will be punished with the loss of *heaven and happiness*. And there are too many, who, having not cast off all fear of God and concern for their souls, yet do content themselves with a punctual performance of the *external* part of religion, vainly thinking that an *outward* show of religious worship will atone for the want of that *inward* purity of heart, which is indispensibly required from every Christian.

*Ind.* 'I would be glad to know who this sort of mistaken Christians are?'

*Miss.* Besides those already mentioned, there are many, who, though they know themselves not to be in the way of salvation, make their minds easy, by purposing to repent and be converted, foolishly supposing *that repentance is absolutely in their own power*;—at the same time provoking God, who alone can give them the grace of conversion, to leave them to their own choice and destruction.

Others flatter themselves, that *repentance*, and a *change* of life, are only required, where people have been guilty of *great and scandalous* sins, such as *murder, adultery*, and the like;—not considering that a man who is innocent of great crimes, may be far from being a true Christian, and in the way of salvation—the best of men standing in need of repentance and pardon, and the mercy of God.

*Ind.* 'I have heard, that Christians do depend very much upon the goodness and mercy of God.'

*Miss.* And so they may, and ought to do, provided they do not deceive themselves, by abusing his mercy, *which is intended to lead men to repentance, and amendment of life*.

*Ind.* 'Pray how do men abuse this mercy of God?'

*Miss.* When they continue to live in any *known* sin, or wilfully neglect any duty, and yet hope that God of his great mercy will forgive them.

*Ind.* 'You have often mentioned the *corruption and wickedness* of human nature; will not this plead our excuse, and prevail with so good and merciful a



Being to pardon such as have not done what he hath commanded ?'

*Miss.* Yes: and he hath faithfully promised, that upon condition of their *repentance and amendment of life* (according to the terms and conditions in the Gospel) he will pardon the greatest sinners.

*Ind.* 'Perhaps they will say, that they are not able to perform these conditions.'

*Miss.* What would you think of one who should make that an excuse, and yet would be sorry to be made *able*, only because he is *unwilling* to part with his sins ?

*Ind.* 'Such an one, to be sure, complains without reason, and his ruin will be from himself.'

*Miss.* And yet this is the case of all *careless* and wicked Christians.—God would have all his creatures happy ;—he knows that man can never be happy, till his corrupt nature be mended ;—he has therefore, as I told you before, appointed the *Christian Religion*, as the most effectual means of our recovery from sin, unto holiness. By which we are taught to depend upon the almighty power of God, *even that almighty power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead*<sup>1</sup>,—to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness ; by enabling us to *see*, to *resist*, to *overcome*, and to *root* out whatever is evil in us, and to restore us to the image of God, in which man was at first created. Christians, therefore, do not delude themselves, and blaspheme God, when they pretend they cannot do what he requires of them, in order to their happiness.

And to name no more ways at present, by which men deceive themselves to their ruin ;—very great is the number of such as depend upon a *death-bed repentance*, for the making their peace with God, and fitting themselves for heaven ;—living in the mean time *without God in the world*, neither fearing his *anger*, nor regarding his *promises*.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 14.

*Ind.* 'Indeed, Sir, these are all sad mistakes; and I hope I shall not fall into any of them.'

*Miss.* I hope so too;—but then you must be very *humble*, and always *fear* for yourself, and beg of God to keep you from such mistakes, which are the ruin of so many, who yet call and think themselves to be Christians;—otherwise your being made a Christian will not secure you from danger.

*Ind.* 'Pray, Sir, what are the things which are most likely to offend the good Spirit of God, and to force him to forsake such as are dedicated to him, and put him under his protection?'

*Miss.* In the first place, Christians do grieve that good Spirit,—by neglecting to improve the graces bestowed upon them;—for, as I told you before, this is a rule of the Gospel,—*that to him who makes good use of the favours which God hath given him, God will give more; and he that will not do so, shall lose what he had*<sup>1</sup>.

*Ind.* 'I hope I shall not forget this rule of truth.'

*Miss.* In the next place a Christian runs the hazard of losing the help and comfort of the Spirit of God, by *returning* into that way of life, and to those sins, which he *renounced* at his baptism;—especially when he falls into, and continues in, any known and wilful sin;—for then he will naturally hate God, and God will forsake him.

*Ind.* 'Hate the God that made us!'

*Miss.* Why, as monstrous a sin as you think that is, it is certainly true;—for any man, whose conscience tells him that he is always doing that which must offend an *holy, just, and powerful* God, cannot but wish there was no such Being to call him to an account, and to punish him; nor can he possibly love such a Being.

Thirdly:—Another way of grieving the Holy Spirit is by neglecting, which in truth is despising, those means of grace, which Jesus Christ hath appointed to bring men *into*, and to keep them *in*, the way of salvation.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 12.

*Ind.* 'I have not forgot what you have formerly told me;—that the hearing and seriously thinking of the word of God, in which a Christian's duty is contained, as well as the promises to *encourage*, and the punishment to *deter* us, is one of those means you speak of, most proper to convert men, and to keep them in the favour of God.'

*Miss.* And the others are,—the *holy ordinances* which Christ himself hath appointed; the one to receive men into his Church, and the other to enable them to grow in grace.

Now as the use of these means, joined with earnest prayer to God, for light to discover what is evil in us, and for power to root it out, is the sure way of preserving the *fellowship of the Holy Spirit*;—so, when any Christian, depending upon his own *reason, wisdom, or power*, and forgetting that all *our sufficiency to do any good is of God*<sup>1</sup>, does neglect these means, the good Spirit will forsake such a person, and leave him to himself, and to the delusion and government of evil spirits, which, without a sincere repentance, will be his ruin. And most of all, when he trusts to any thing he has done as meritorious in the sight of God, instead of that which Christ has done and suffered for him.

*Ind.* 'This I hope will be a warning to me never to neglect these means of grace and safety.'

*Miss.* And I hope too, that you will never forget to give God the glory of all the good you do; for be assured of this,—*That neither the reasonableness of any duty, nor the baseness of any sin, nor any other consideration, can enable you to do what is good, and well-pleasing to God, or to avoid what is evil, but only his grace, and that good Spirit to which you are dedicated at your baptism.*—To him you must apply for light to see your duty, and for strength to perform it—and to him you must give all the glory.

*Ind.* 'Since there are so many bad Christians to

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. iii. 5.

be met with, I should be glad to know who they are whose example I may safely follow.'

*Miss.* I would not advise you to make the lives and actions of other people *altogether* a pattern for you to follow; but always rather have an eye to what you believe will please or displease God, and what you know he has commanded or forbidden: although good and bad Christians may, for the most part, be known by the lives they lead, *as a tree is known by its fruit.*

When, therefore, you see men pay a great regard to God and his *laws*, honouring his Holy Name, and his word, and every thing belonging to him;—when you see them *just*, and *kind*, and *merciful*, and *not given to revenge*, but ready to *forgive*, and *give*, and *love*, as become the followers of Christ;—when you see them *temperate* and *chaste*, *modest* and *humble*, and *dealing with others as they themselves would be dealt with*;—you will have reason to take these for good Christians, if you are convinced that they do these things out of *love* and *obedience* to God; and as the fruit of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the other hand,—if you see among those who call themselves Christians, such as make no conscience of their ways, but lead *careless*, *idle*, or *useless*, *disorderly lives*; exceeding *fond of the world*, and its *vanities*; and striving to be *rich* and *great*, at any rate;—if you see any that live in *adultery*, or *fornication*, or that are *drunkards*, *spendthrifts*, *covetous*, or *oppressors*;—if you see *parents* unconcerned for their children's eternal welfare,—*husbands* and *wives* forgetting or breaking their marriage vows; *masters* and *servants* acting in the course of their behaviour, as if they were insensible that *they* have a *Master in Heaven*;—if you see *men in power* regardless of the honour of that God whose *representatives* they are;—you may be sure, that *these* and *such as these*,—ARE CHRISTIANS WITHOUT CHRISTIANITY, and will be liable to a most severe judgment, for their opposing the gracious designs of God, and of his *Son Jesus Christ.*

*Ind.* 'Pray, Sir, what do you mean by that?'

*Miss.* Why, God is so good and merciful, *that he would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*<sup>1</sup>.

Now, all such as, *usurping* the name of Christians, do lead unchristian lives, these *oppose* their Maker in his most gracious designs, bringing an evil report upon Christianity, as if nothing good were to be got by it—making the ignorant Heathens to take that for Christianity, which is *far* from it,—by which they hinder such as might otherwise desire to become Christians:—they *confirm* unbelievers in their infidelity, and *serve* all the designs of *Satan* in opposing the kingdom of Christ;—and therefore must of necessity be *more hateful* to God, and their punishment be greater than that of the Heathens, as much as they now despise those poor people.

*Ind.* “You have convinced me, Sir, of the danger of being a Christian without Christianity.”—Will you be so kind as to show me how I may avoid falling into such a way of life, as, it seems, too many do?”

*Miss.* In the first place, consider what a blessing it is, that you are not still in darkness, but that you are come to the knowledge of your Maker, and of the way to please him; whereby you will be happy when you die, whatever your lot may have been in this world.

And, in the next place, keep it always in your mind,—that *THIS* God, whom you have chosen to serve, *is every where present*; so that, if at any time you offend him, you offend in his very presence, a Being, who hath power to *punish you for ever*.

Be careful to keep yourself always sober: *DRUNKENNESS* and *INTEMPERANCE* disorder our reason, and make us forget our best resolutions, and the dangers which encompass us.

Do not set your heart upon this *world*, its *HONOURS*, *RICHES* OR *PLEASURES*; for, besides that you must soon

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 4.

leave them, they will be apt to make you *forget* what you will *gain* or *lose* by being a *good* or *bad* Christian.

Never fancy that any sin is small; 'for the least known sin continued in, will lead to a greater;' and, if you should provoke the Spirit of God to forsake you, you will be capable of committing the very greatest crimes. *Human nature*, as it is now corrupt, is the *same* in all men;—we are subject to temptations;—and if ever, by our *repeated* crimes, we should force the *Spirit of God* to leave us to ourselves, no man can tell, no man can foresee, what barbarous wickedness he shall be tempted to commit;—nor what *unwelcome, unlooked for* calamities he may bring upon himself while he goes from sin to sin, till he meets with destruction.——

For no man continues long at one certain pitch of wickedness; for not only one *evil* habit *begets* another, but the more a man sins, the *less capable* he makes himself of judging *what sin is*, and the dreadful consequences of continuing in it.—And the influences of God's *Holy Spirit*, and the gracious interpositions of Providence, have still less effect upon his mind and soul, till he has quite forgotten his Maker,—till he has filled up the measure of his iniquities,———and till he meets with destruction, generally in *this world* as well as in the *next*.

Whenever, therefore, you are sensible you have done amiss, delay not one moment to beg of God to pardon you for Christ's sake, and to give you grace to do so no more.

And forget not an excellent rule, which I have formerly mentioned, to direct you in most actions of moment:—'Do not, at your peril, undertake any thing, which you cannot with confidence beg of God to bless and prosper you in.'

Lastly, and above all, remember what cannot be too often repeated, *that without faith,—a faith which depends on the merits of Jesus Christ for salvation,—a faith which worketh by love, which purifies the heart,*

overcomes the world, and keeps the commandments of God; you cannot possibly live as becomes a true Christian.

*Ind.* 'I beg you will explain what you mean by this.'

*Miss.* By this faith we mean—a *deep, real sense*, and *firm belief*, of the mercy and love of God, for his poor *fallen and lost* creatures; and this kind proposal by his own Son to make them happy for ever.—This is that *saving faith*, which will lead a Christian most powerfully to love God, and obey his Son Jesus Christ, *to whom he hath given all power in heaven and earth*: this is that faith which *will purify your heart*, will lead you to repentance, and keep you in the way to eternal life; and this is what you must beg of God, *for this faith is his gift*; and that he may *increase it* in you unto your life's end.

*Ind.* 'I hope I shall never forget to pray for so necessary a grace.'

*Miss.* I have only a few questions to ask you in order to your being baptized, which you must answer (to God) when you are called upon to make a public profession of Christianity.

And first,—Consider whether there are any *ways of life*, or *customs*, which at present you are fond of, which you will not utterly *forsake*, when you shall be convinced that they are forbidden by God, or displeasing to him.

*Ind.* 'I know of none which I will not forsake in order to please God.'

*Miss.* Will you sincerely devote yourself to *God the Father*, and *Maker* of all things, that you may become his faithful servant unto your life's end?

*Ind.* 'I purpose, by his help, to do so, and become such.'

*Miss.* Will you, with the same sincerity, devote yourself to *his Son our Lord Jesus Christ*, for whose sake God has promised to pardon all your sins, to



receive you into favour, and to make you happy, if you continue to obey him all your days.

*Ind.* 'This I fully purpose to do.'

*Miss.* Lastly,—Will you dedicate and devote yourself to the *Holy Ghost*, that good Spirit, that he may, by his all-powerful grace and help, keep you from sin and wickedness, and assist you in the way of holiness and happiness, that you may never be a reproach to that religion which you are going to profess?

*Ind.* 'I will most thankfully dedicate myself to him, that, by his assistance, I may be able to please God, and perform what I have promised.'

*Miss.* You will not fail to do so, if you often consider, that your everlasting *happiness* or *misery* will depend upon your *observing* or *neglecting* the *vows* and *promises* you make at your *baptism*.

And if to this, you add your sincere *prayers* to God, to *direct* and *bless* you in the work you are desirous to undertake, he will most surely *hear* your prayers, and *grant* your petitions, which you make in some such words as these following.

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## SELECT SCRIPTURES

AND

## PRAYERS.

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MATT. vi. 10. *Thy kingdom come.*

MAY the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

O thou who art the Maker and Redeemer of all, have mercy upon all whom thou hast made and redeemed; and grant that none may make themselves incapable of that happiness which Jesus Christ hath purchased with his most precious blood.—To this end, we beseech thee to bless the pious endeavours of all persons and societies which strive to propagate the Gospel;—that its divine truths may be received in all the world;—that thy ways may be known throughout the earth, thy saving health among all nations;—that thy name may be great among the Heathen, and revered and adored by all those that are yet strangers to thy most glorious perfections. Have pity upon all those miserable people who still sit in darkness, and want the necessary means of instruction: and grant that, by the preaching of the Gospel, they may, in thy good time, be delivered from their *ignorance, idolatry*, and the *bondage of Satan*, in which they have been so long enslaved.—And may thy good providence reveal the means by which thy kingdom may be enlarged,

and the whole earth filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

Grant this, O most merciful God, for Jesus Christ's sake; to whom, with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour, glory, dominion, and power, for ever and ever. *Amen.*



A SUPPLICATION ON BEHALF OF THE HEATHEN  
WORLD.

MATT. ix. 36. *Jesus, seeing the multitude, was moved with compassion, because they were as sheep having no shepherd.—Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send labourers into his harvest.*

How many, O Jesus, of thy sheep have no shepherd!—none to show them their danger!—none to keep them out of danger!—none to lead them where they may find pasture!

May thine infinite wisdom and goodness, O Lord, reveal to us the means, by which thy Gospel may be preached unto them: and prepare their hearts to receive the truth, that they may be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God! Send them pastors after thine own heart; full of knowledge, compassion, and zeal; that, pitying their sad condition, they may instruct them in the ways of truth, and of eternal life. Increase the number and the graces of thy messengers and ministers; and touch the hearts of all Christians with a true compassion, like thine, O Lord, for all such as are strangers to thee, and the merits of thy death, by which they have been redeemed, that they may cheerfully contribute to a work so acceptable to thy divine majesty.—And may thy Holy Spirit, by the preaching of the Gospel, add daily to the Church

such as shall be saved, through thy merits and mediation, O Lord, and lover of souls! *Amen.*

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A MISSIONARY'S PRAYER.

John xvii. 20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those that shall believe through their Lord.*

ON this thy efficacious prayer, O Jesus, I depend for success in this my undertaking and ministry.—To this prayer we all owe our faith and conversion.—In a grateful sense of which, I beseech thee, O Lord, to make me an instrument of propagating thy Gospel, and of converting others, and of fulfilling thy Father's will, who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Teach me, O Lord, by thy Spirit, thy word, and thy example, how I ought to teach others:—and, by thy preventing grace, prepare them for instruction;—give them a great concern and fear for themselves, that, feeling their own misery, they may seek for help, and thankfully accept it, when offered to them.

On thy Almighty grace, O God, I rely for success in all my labours and ministry, and for a zeal both prudent and fervent to promote thy *glory*, the *interests* of thy kingdom, and the *good* of souls, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

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A PRAYER PROPER FOR SUCH AS DESIRE TO BE INSTRUCTED IN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Acts xvi. 30. *Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:—and they spake unto him the word of the Lord, &c. and he was baptized.*

GREAT God have pity on me; for I am in distress and fear for myself—I have been convinced, that I

shall live for ever, after I leave this world, in either happiness or misery.—This gives me great uneasiness when I consider what must become of me when I die. My own conscience accuseth me of having done many things, which I know must greatly displease thee.—I find myself inclined to do evil continually, and I know not how to help it; so that my fears increase upon me daily. Thy people assure me, that thou art good and merciful to such as call upon thee in their distress; and that for the sake of Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, thou wilt pardon sinners, and receive them into favour.—In confidence of this, I beseech thee to pity my distressed condition, and deliver me from the ignorance and fears I labour under. Cause me to know thee, and thy Son Christ, more perfectly; and teach me how I must live so as to please thee. Reward the endeavours of such as are so kind as to instruct me. Give me an understanding heart, a teachable temper, and an obedient will, that I may thankfully use the means which thou hast ordained for my salvation. Defend me from the power and malice of evil spirits, which may strive to hinder my conversion. These blessings I beg for the sake of thy beloved Son, the Lord Jesus.



Dan. xii. 3. *They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.*

O MERCIFUL God, increase the number and the graces of such as are zealous for thy glory, and for the conversion of sinners: impart to them the true way of instruction, and may thy blessing go along with their pious endeavours!

**Tit. iii. 3.** *For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another.*

THIS, O Jesus, had still been our sad condition, hadst not thou redeemed us by thy death, and blessed us with the light of thy Gospel. May this, O Lord, be the fruit of our faith in thee, and of our gratitude for thy mercies to us, that we pity the miseries of the Heathen world, and endeavour to make them partakers of the same blessings we ourselves enjoy!

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**Acts xviii. 26.** *When Aquila and Priscilla had heard Apollos speak, who knew only the baptism of John, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*

LET it here be observed,—That these two persons, both of the laity, a man and his wife, were, by the Spirit of God, made instruments of perfecting the faith of *Apollos*, a man of otherwise great abilities—To show Christians the importance of what *St. Paul* tells us, (1 Cor. xii. 21.) *The eye cannot say of the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*

Grant, O Lord, that the exemplary zeal and piety of these two persons may encourage all good Christians to put their helping hand to promote thy glory in the conversion of heathens; and to awaken such Christians, amongst ourselves, as are asleep, into a sense of their danger. Grant this, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake.

*Tit. iii. 8. These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God, may be careful to maintain good works.*

God grant that all Christians may, by their good lives, show the goodness and power of the religion which they profess, and would have others to embrace; that they may add to their faith virtue; and that by their examples the lives and manners of men may be reformed, this being the great design of the Gospel, and the necessary condition of the future happiness of believers!

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EVERY private and well-disposed Christian would do well to consider what a great deal of good he may do, by such hints as these following, to his children, his servants, or his slaves.

The great corruption of human nature—The misery of man, and his danger through sin—The utter impossibility of saving ourselves—The necessity and blessing of a Redeemer—The great love of God for his poor creatures, in sending his Son to redeem them. That all our hopes of pardon and happiness, are from God's mercy through Christ our Saviour. That, as ever we hope for happiness, we must live according to his doctrine and example; endeavouring to grow every day better, without ascribing any thing to ourselves, but all to the grace of God: which grace is sufficient to enable us to overcome all the difficulties we meet with. If we add to these, the certainty of a future life, and a future judgment; and the rewards and punishments of another world, &c.—Such hints as these, seriously and often repeated, will, through the grace of God, awaken the most careless and ignorant, and force them to ask,—What must I do to be saved? And they may be directed to such as are sent and ordained to instruct them in the way of salvation; and the merciful God give them good success!

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PRIVATE AND FAMILY  
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*A seasonable Introduction.*

PUBLIC and *private prayers*, and thanksgivings, are a homage and duty, which all men owe to God as their *Creator*, their *Lord* and *King*; and by which they are to acknowledge their *obedience* to, and their dependence upon him, for life and breath, and all things which they enjoy or hope for.

This, therefore, God hath made our indispensable duty: and it will be a *downright rebellion*, for any man to refuse his homage any day of his life;—the wilful neglect of this, being in effect, to disown his *power* over us,—his *goodness* to help us in our necessities,—and his *justice* to punish such as transgress his commands;—and to question the faithfulness of his *promise* to pardon the truly penitent sinner, and to reward such as sincerely strive to please him.

This neglect and disobedience is very often punished by God's leaving men to themselves, and to their own wicked ways; which ever did, and ever will, end in their ruin, very often in this world, but always in the world to come, without a miracle of grace, which such sinners have no reason to hope for.

The cause of which is plain:—The constant and wilful omission of this duty is a sure way to lose the knowledge and remembrance of God, of his word

and promises:—and then men will have no motives to fear or to love God, nor any reason to hope for any good from him.

It will also very naturally lead such people to depend upon themselves only: to forget their own sad condition and misery:—that they are liable to God's wrath, and even to damnation: which knowledge is necessary; and for this end was revealed, even to awaken and humble sinners, that, by a true repentance, they may escape the bitter pains of eternal misery.

Now the Spirit of God threatens, that such as *will not retain God in their knowledge* (which can be done only by praying to him daily), *shall be given up by God to a reprobate mind*, that is, *to a mind void of judgment*—to do what is right in their own eyes, let what will follow.

And the event will certainly be this:—They will fall under the power and government of *Satan*, and his evil angels, who will lead them, as he did the heathen world, *to commit all iniquity with greediness*, till they are fit for no place but hell.

Now, if these be truths of the Gospel, as most surely they are, one would hope, there would need no other words, to persuade every one who is in his right mind, and not already in the sad condition before mentioned, —to beg of God to keep him, by his grace, from falling into such dreadful circumstances.

The most sure way to avoid it is, to dedicate some time every day of our lives to the worship of God:—humbly to acknowledge our dependence upon him:—to confess our own weakness to help and govern ourselves:—to beg pardon for having offended him:—to pray for his grace, and protection, and blessing:—and to give him thanks for his mercies and favours to us.

By doing this, *we shall retain God in our knowledge*:—This will be a true and solid foundation of peace, and comfort, and happiness:—provided it be per-

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formed out of a deep sense of our own wants and miseries:—with a firm faith in God's promises to *fulfil the desires of them that fear him*:—and with an eye to the blood of Jesus our Redeemer, for whose sake, and through whose sufferings, we are reconciled to God, and God to us.

The following devotions are here added, that they who stand in need of such helps, may be directed what to pray for, *every morning* and *evening* of their lives. Not but that every serious Christian will find occasion to ask many more favours and blessings than can be set down in any form of prayer whatever.

For this reason there are added, after every prayer, some short instructions, as also proper texts of Holy Scripture, with short meditations upon them, to assist the devotion of such as are well-disposed, and also to lead them into a way of profiting at all times, by the Holy Scriptures heard or read by them or others, which we all too often hear without being bettered by them.

*The Duty and Benefit of Morning Prayer for any person in private.*

VERY many are the evil consequences of going without God into a world full of temptations and dangers, which of ourselves we can neither foresee nor escape.

Whoever considers this, and the infinite mischiefs which may follow, will never venture abroad, without praying for God's *guidance, protection, and blessing, every morning of his life.*

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MORNING PRAYER.

BLESSED be the Lord for his mercies renewed unto me every morning:—For my *preservation* and *refreshment*, and for all the blessings of the night past, for which all thanks and glory be to thee, my God and Father!

Gracious God, continue to me these, and all other thy blessings, so long, and in such a measure, as shall be most for thy glory, and my salvation.

Possess my soul, I beseech thee, with a true and saving faith, and with such a sense of thy goodness to *me*, and of my dependence upon *thee*, that it may be my delight, as it is my interest and duty, to serve and obey thee.

But that I may serve thee with a quiet mind, forgive me all my sins, I beseech thee, for thy dear Son's sake, and withhold the judgments of which my conscience is afraid.

Keep it ever in the heart of thy servant, that it is an evil thing and bitter, to *forsake and offend the Lord*.

And, above all things, *keep me from wilful and deliberate sins*, that I may never grieve thy Holy Spirit, nor provoke thee to leave me to myself.

Let thy restraining grace preserve me from the temptations of the *world, the flesh, and the devil*; that I may fall into no sin, nor run into any kind of danger; but that all my doings may be ordered by thee, that I may do always that which is righteous in thy sight;—and that I may live and act as having thee, O God, the constant witness of all my *thoughts, designs, words, and actions*.

May I never render myself, by new sins, unworthy of thy guidance and protection! Suffer me not to go astray, or bring me back by such ways as to thee shall seem meet.

May I love *thee* with all my heart, and all *mankind* for thy sake!—And may I ever have this sure proof of thy love abiding in me, that I may study to please thee, and to keep thy commandments;—and that I may forgive, and love, and do good to my neighbours, as becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Assist me by thy grace, faithfully to perform all the duties of my calling; and thankfully to receive, and faithfully to bear, whatever thy providence shall order for me.

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Preserve me from an *idle* and *useless* life; ever remembering,—*that the night cometh when no man can work*; and that *now* is the time in which to provide for eternity!

And grant, O Lord, that no worldly pleasure, no worldly business, may ever make me *lose the sight of death*.

And may the thoughts of death oblige me to be truly and sincerely good;—to mortify all *pride* and *vanity*,—*covetousness*, *hatred*, *envy*, and *malice*;—to be *serious*, *sober*, and *watchful*, while I continue in this state of trial!

Hear me, O Heavenly Father, not according to my imperfect petitions, but according to the *full meaning* of that holy prayer, which thy only Son hath taught us, in compassion to our infirmities.

Our Father, which art in Heaven;—Hallowed be thy name.—Thy kingdom come.—Thy will be done in earth, as it is heaven.—Give us this day our daily bread.—And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.—And lead us not into temptation.—But deliver us from evil.—For thine is the *kingdom*, and the *power*, and the *glory*, for ever and ever. *Amen*.

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SOME SHORT MEDITATIONS FOR SUCH AS ARE WELL-DISPOSED, AND HAVE TIME TO SPARE.

John xvi. 23. *Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it you.*

EVERY thing is promised to this duty, when we pray as we ought to do; *i. e.*—In the name, and through the merits of Jesus Christ;—out of a sense of our own wants and miseries; with the *humility* of sinful creatures;—and with a full purpose of doing what we know will please God.

O Lord, vouchsafe me these dispositions, that I may

never ask thee any thing in vain, or render myself unworthy to receive thy blessings.

Prov. iii. 5, 6. *Lean not unto thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge God, and he shall direct thy paths.*

Do thou, O God, direct my paths, and teach me to guide my affairs with *charity, discretion, justice, and piety*. Show me the way that I should walk in, and give me grace to follow the conduct of thy good Spirit, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. xv. 33. *Evil communications corrupt good manners.*

No man must say, that he has any respect for God, or fear for himself, who chooseth the conversation of wicked men. Their idle and profane discourses will leave evil impressions upon the mind.—Their indecent freedom with the name of God, and things sacred, will lessen the reverence we owe to the Divine Majesty. Their filthy and lewd talk will destroy modesty, and every grace and virtue; and will not fail to wear off the thoughts and fears of what may come hereafter.—May thy grace, O God, keep me from a conversation so displeasing to thee, and so destructive to the souls of men; grant this for Christ's sake!

1 Pet. i. 17. *Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*

Give me, O God, this most necessary and most useful fear and dread of the unfaithfulness of my own heart.—Make me ever mindful of my infirmities and failings, that I may be more watchful over myself, and more earnest in my prayers for the help of thy grace for the time to come.

*The Duty and Benefit of Evening Prayer for a person in private.*

SLEEP, said a great man, *is so like death, that I dare not trust it without saying my prayers.* And, indeed, for fear of the worst, a thoughtful Christian will take care to make his peace with God, before he goes to sleep;—and put himself under God's protection *every evening of his life*, that he may be safe from fear of evil.

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AN EVENING PRAYER.

O MOST gracious and merciful God, I give thee thanks, that it hath pleased thee to add another day to the years of my life, and that none of thy judgments, to which for my sins I am justly liable, have fallen upon me

Accept, O Lord, of my unfeigned thanks, for this thy constant care over me:—for delivering me from the dangers of an evil world: and for the many undeserved blessings bestowed upon me day after day.

Blessed be thy goodness, that my sins and ingratitude have not prevented thee from bringing me safe to the evening of this day.

O God, infinite in mercy, pardon my sins of the day past, whether in thought, word, or deed, which I have committed through the fraud and malice of the devil, or through my own weakness and frailty; and grant that they may never rise up in judgment against me.

Prepare me, I beseech thee, for the continuance of thy favours by giving me the grace of a true repentance, and a thorough amendment of life.

Make me truly sensible of the weakness and corruption of my nature; and the need I have of thy gracious help, that I may pray for it continually.

May I ever make a right use of the time which



thy goodness shall yet vouchsafe me, and not dare to abuse thy patience and long-suffering.

Make me ever sensible of my *latter end*, that death may not overtake me unprepared,—and in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, good Lord deliver me.

O God all powerful, take me this night under thy protection ;—preserve me from the powers of darkness, and from the dangers of the night ;—and by thy grace and providence, bring me at last through all the trials and temptations of this world to a blessed end :—that I may *die* in peace, and *rest* in hope, and *rise* in glory :—through Jesus Christ—in whose name, and according to the full meaning of that holy prayer which he hath taught us, I most humbly beseech thee to hear me for myself, and for all Christian people.

Our Father, which art in heaven ;—Hallowed be thy name.—Thy kingdom come.—Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.—Give us this day our daily bread.—And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation.—But deliver us from evil.—For thine is the *kingdom*, and the *power*, and the *glory*, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

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SHORT MEDITATIONS FOR SUCH AS HAVE TIME, AND  
ARE WELL-DISPOSED.

Eph. iv. 26. *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*

LORD, grant that I may lie down to sleep, with the same charitable dispositions with which I desire to die.—I beseech thee for all that are my enemies ;—not for judgment and vengeance, but for *thy mercy* ;—for *their* pardon and conversion, and for their eternal happiness.

Heb. iii. 7, 8, *To-day if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts.*

This is the day, and this the life, in which God speaks to us in mercy,—Lord, grant that I may not harden my heart against this truth: nor let me slip this day of thy patience; that neither the cares nor the pleasures of this life may ever make me forget, that this is the day on which my salvation depends, so far that I know not whether I shall have another.

Rev. iii. 3. *Thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

Let me give credit to thee, O God, Lord of truth, and not to my own corrupt heart, which would flatter me, that I might have time and warning sufficient to prepare for death!—But give me grace, O Lord, to be prepared for that *unknown hour*, by a speedy repentance, a true conversion, and a holy life.

Matt. xvi. 26. *What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.*

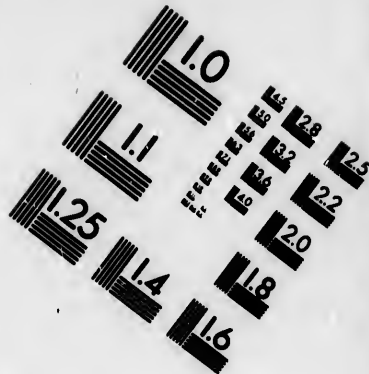
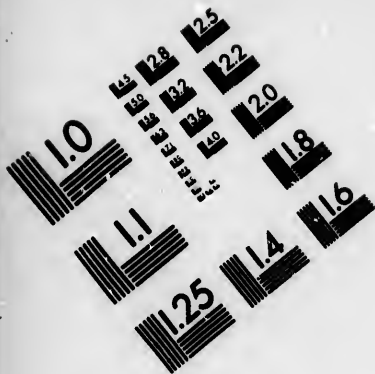
How many live without thinking of this! We admire and envy those who get great estates for themselves, and for their children; making their riches their delight, their happiness, and the whole concern and business of their lives.

Lord, deliver thy servant from such a blindness, as must end in my everlasting ruin, and in the loss of my soul, for which the whole world cannot make me amends.

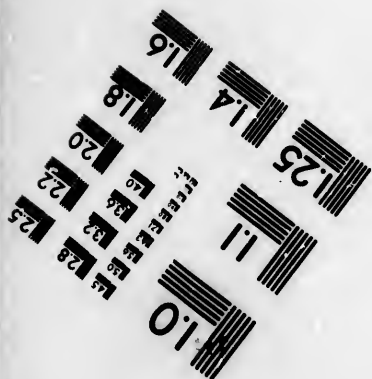
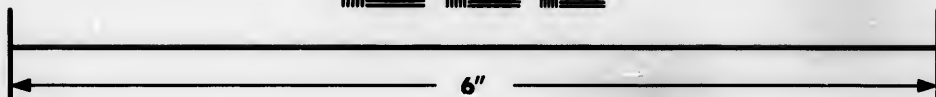
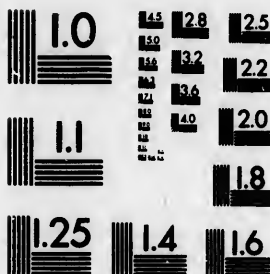
Luke xiii. 7, 8. *Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none. Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?—Lord, let it alone this year also: if it bear fruit, well; if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down.*

I adore thy wonderful patience, O God, towards me; and thy merciful intercession, O Jesus with thy





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Father, for sparing me :—may this goodness and long-suffering lead me to repentance !—And may thy all-powerful grace enable me to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and worthy of thy future care !



MORNING PRAYER FOR A FAMILY.

Josh. xxiv. 15. *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

THIS ought to be the sincere resolution and constant practice of any Christian master of a family.—Without this, none can reasonably expect to have dutiful children, or faithful servants ;—nor justly hope to have God's blessing in this world, or in the world to come.

*Let one devoutly read or say what followeth, the rest of the family seriously attending.*

THE Lord hath brought us safe to the beginning of this day : let us give him thanks for this, and for all his mercies.

Let us pray, that we may live in the fear of God, and continue in love and charity with our neighbours.

That his Holy Spirit may direct and rule our hearts, teaching us what to do, and what to avoid :

That the grace of God may ever be with us, to support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations.

That the Lord may bless all our honest endeavours, and make us content with what his providence shall order for us : and that we may continue his faithful servants this day and all the days of our life.

For all which blessings let us devoutly pray.

*Then all devoutly kneeling, let one say,*

O MOST gracious and merciful God, by whom the world is governed and preserved, we give thee humble thanks for thy fatherly care over us ; in preserving us

from the dangers of the night past, and in bringing us safe this morning to see another day.

We gratefully acknowledge our dependence upon thee, for all the *necessaries, conveniences, and comforts* of our life;—for all the means of our well-being *here*, and of our everlasting happiness *hereafter*.

We give thee thanks for the light of thy Gospel, and the help of thy grace, and for the promise thou hast made us of pardon and forgiveness through thy Son Jesus Christ, on our sincere repentance and amendment.

Give us, we beseech thee, such a sense of these and all other thy mercies to us, as may make us truly thankful to thee for them.

Give us grace that we may ever walk as in thy sight—make a conscience of all our ways;—and, fearing to offend thee, may never fall into the sins we have repented of.

Enable us to resist and overcome the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil;—to follow the motions of thy good Spirit;—to be serious and holy in our lives,—true and just in our dealings;—watchful over our thoughts, our words, and our actions;—diligent in our business, and temperate in all things.

Give us grace honestly to improve all the talents which thou hast committed to our trust: and may no *worldly business*, no *worldly pleasures*, divert us from the concerns of the life to come!

May thy blessing be upon our persons, upon our labours, upon our substance;—and upon all that belong to us:—and may we never undertake any work, which we dare not beg thee to prosper!

May thy grace defend us in all assaults of our enemies:—and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger: but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that which is righteous in thy sight.

Give us, gracious God, what is needful for us, and grace not to abuse thy favours:—give us, we beseech



thee, contented minds;—and make us ever mindful of the wants of others.

Give us, in this world, the knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come, life everlasting. *Amen.*

Hear us, O merciful God, not according to our imperfect petitions, but according to the full meaning of that form of prayer which Jesus Christ hath taught us, and for his sake.

Our Father, which art in heaven;—Hallowed be thy name.—Thy kingdom come.—Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.—Give us this day our daily bread.—And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.—And lead us not into temptation.—But deliver us from evil.—For thine is the *kingdom*, and the *power*, and the *glory*, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

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PROPER MEDITATIONS FOR SUCH AS HAVE TIME, AND  
ARE DEVOUTLY DISPOSED.

Psalm cxxvii. 1. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.*

UNHAPPY and blind are they, who expect to prosper without thy blessing, O Lord.—I do therefore beg that blessing upon myself and *family*, my *labours*, and *substance*.—And may I never hinder thy blessings, undertaking any work that may dishonour thee, or my Christian profession!—Fit us, O Lord, by thy grace *for that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, prepared for them that love and fear thee.

Hab. ii. 9. *Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil.*

Deliver us, O God, from *covetousness, the root of all evil*;—which leads men to trust in themselves;—to forget their dependence upon thee; and foolishly to hope to be out of the reach of misfortunes, and those evils and afflictions, which are designed in great mercy, for the punishment of sin, and for the salvation of sinners.—Preserve us, O Lord, from this too common but damnable sin of covetousness, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

Luke xvii. 26, 27, 28, 29. *As it was in the days of Noah, and of Lot,—they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;—till the day that Lot went out of Sodom, when they were all destroyed.*

Lord open our eyes before we are surprised by death, as those miserable sinners were in the days of *Noah*, and of *Lot*.—May this be a warning to us!—And keep us, by thy grace, from setting our hearts too eagerly upon the *business, the cares, or pleasures*, of this life, without considering how soon and suddenly we may be called out of it; *and that day overtake us unawares.*

Col. iv. 1. *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*

O heavenly Master, bless me with good and faithful servants:—and grant that I may perform all the duties of a Christian master;—that I may have a tender concern for the welfare both of their bodies and souls, and be an example to them of sobriety, justice, and piety; and that we may be a household fearing God.—And may thy blessing be upon them,

and upon all my affairs committed to their trust, for the sake of thy beloved Son.

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PARENTS FOR CHILDREN.

Eph. vi. 4. *Ye parents, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his sake bless my children with healthful bodies, and understanding souls, and sanctified hearts, that they may remember their Creator all their days. Let thy grace preserve them from the temptations of an evil world, and may I never be wanting in any part of my duty to them! But instruct them in the faith and duties of a Christian life:—convince them of their faults, and correct them in reason and love.—O be thou, O God, their father and their portion in this world, and in the world to come! *Amen.*

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EVENING PRAYER FOR A FAMILY.

*Let one of the family read or say distinctly what followeth, the rest seriously attending.*

By the favour of God, we are come to the evening of this day; and we are so much nearer our latter end.

Let us seriously consider this, and pray God to prepare us for the hour of death.

Let us, with penitent hearts, beseech him to pardon our offences, and to deliver us from the evils which they have deserved.

Let us resolve to amend whatever we have done amiss, and pray God, that his grace may keep us from returning to those sins which we have repented of.

And then we may be safe under his protection who alone can defend us from the powers of darkness.

For all which blessings let us devoutly pray.

*Then all devoutly kneeling, let one distinctly say,*

O LORD and heavenly Father, we acknowledge thy great goodness to us in sparing us when we deserve punishment; in giving us the necessities of this life, and in setting before us the happiness of a better life.

O merciful God, pardon our offences, correct and amend what is amiss in us, that as we grow in years, we may grow in grace, and the nearer we come to our latter end, the better we may be prepared for it.

*In the midst of life we are in death.*

LORD, grant that these thoughts may make us careful how we live, that we may escape the bitter pains of eternal misery.

Take from us all ignorance, hardness of heart, and too much carefulness for the things of this life.

Make us a household fearing thee, O God, submitting ourselves to thy good pleasure, and putting our whole trust in thy mercy.

Give us a true knowledge of ourselves;—of the corruption of our nature;—and the necessity of thy gracious help to save us from ruin.

And may the spirit of Christ ever live and rule in us, possessing our souls with a sincere love of thee, O God, with an earnest desire to please thee, and with a dread of offending thee.

Sanctify us wholly, we beseech thee, that our spirits, and souls, and bodies, may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Continue to us, and to all Christian churches, the means of grace and salvation; and may the saving truths of the Gospel be published and received in all the world!

Vouchsafe unto us an interest in all the prayers of thy holy church, which have this day been offered to the throne of grace.

Forgive all that have injured us, and forgive our many offences against our neighbour.

Bless, we beseech thee, O God, all those whom thy providence hath set over us, whether in church or state, and give us grace to honour and obey them for conscience sake.

Defend us from all adversities which may happen to our bodies, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt our souls,—and prepare us to receive with a humble resignation, whatever thy providence shall think best for us.

And, finally, we beseech thee to give us grace that we may lead and end our lives in thy faith and fear, and to thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
*Amen.*

Hear us, O merciful God, for ourselves and for all mankind, not according to our weak understandings, but according to the full meaning of that holy prayer, which thy beloved Son hath taught us.

Our Father which art in heaven ;—Hallowed be thy name.—Thy kingdom come.—Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.—Give us this day our daily bread.—And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.—And lead us not into temptation.—But deliver us from evil.—For thine is the *kingdom*, and the *power*, and the *glory*, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*



*Select Scriptures and Meditations upon them; which may teach us how to profit by reading the Scriptures.*

Matt. x. 30. *The very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

LET this thy wonderful providence, O God, and care over us, be evermore our comfort and defence against all the evils which may happen to our bodies,

and all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt our souls. Against the distracting cares of this life, and against the fear and adversities which may befall us. Thine infinite *wisdom* knows all our wants and dangers, and the properest means of conveying relief and succour to us. Thy fatherly *goodness* cannot but pity us: thy *power* is able to help us,—and thy *faithfulness* can never fail us. O may we never render ourselves unworthy of this thy divine protection.

Luke ix. 23. *Jesus said unto them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

O Jesus, who hast made this the rule and means of our salvation, enable us by thy *Spirit*, thy *doctrine*, and *example*, to observe it daily;—to wean our hearts from a love and fondness for this world, its pleasures, profits, and all its idols;—to mortify our corrupt affections, and to correct and amend what is amiss in us:—That we may be meek, and humble, and temperate; and learn to submit our wills to the will and law of God:—and grant, O Lord, that we may never lead heathens and unbelievers to have unworthy thoughts of thee and of thy religion, by our ungodly lives, while we pretend to be thy followers.

Luke xiii. 24. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

May we never flatter ourselves that the way to heaven and happiness is easy, and that the generality of Christian people are in the way of salvation, when thou hast declared the contrary!—O may thy Spirit convince us that our salvation is not to be secured without great watchfulness and care, without labour, pains, and diligence: and that, on these conditions, thy goodness will enable us to overcome all the difficulties we can possibly meet with!

**Luke xi. 13.** *If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give good things, and his Holy Spirit, to them that ask him!*

O heavenly Father, let it be unto us according to this thy Son's most faithful promise. For his sake, give us thy Holy Spirit to live and act in us, to guide and assist us all our days, and may we ever ask and be content with such good things as it shall please thee to give us!—And grant that we may never grieve thy Holy Spirit;—never reject his godly motions, or render ourselves unworthy of his abode with us, by living in any known sin.

**Rev. iii. 19.** *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.*

O! that we may acknowledge thy loving-kindness to us, in all the dispensations of thy providence! Our corrupt nature will not let us see this! It is thy grace alone which must convince us, that a Father so good would not suffer afflictions to fall upon his children without an absolute necessity. Convince us, therefore, O God, that we stand in need of thy rebukes, to awaken and amend us:—and enable us to bear all the afflictions of this life with patience, and an entire resignation to thy wisdom and goodness, and make them powerful means of our eternal salvation. *Amen.*



*A short and necessary Instruction for the Lord's Day in the Morning.*

THE Lord, who has blessed *one day in seven*, blesseth all those that keep it holy: and very terrible have been his judgments upon them that have profaned it.

It is your duty, therefore, *on this good day*, to lay

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aside, as much as possible, all worldly business; all worldly thoughts; all worldly pleasures; that you may honour your Creator to the best of your power; by owning your dependence upon him; by hearing his word, and his commands; by asking his blessings, and giving him thanks for his favours.

If then it is our interest and our happiness to serve God, it is our duty to be at his house before his service begins: to show that we fear his Majesty, and dare not offer him *a lame sacrifice*; to show that we do indeed desire his blessing, and take delight in serving him.

When therefore you come into the house of God, and first kneel down, *say secretly this short prayer.*

A SHORT PRAYER AT YOUR COMING INTO CHURCH.

MAY the good Spirit of God dispose me unto, and assist me, in his service! The Lord give us all a true and lively sense of our wants, and of his mercy and presence amongst us, that we may serve him with our hearts as well as with our bodies, and that our prayers may be heard, for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord! *Amen.*

After this, attend diligently to what is said, and prayed for; remembering that they are *your* prayers which are offered up to God; but that you have no share in them, if you do not mind what is asked in your name.

That your heart may go along with your prayers, say softly, *Amen*, so be it, to every petition. This is what the most unlearned may do, and it may be the most learned cannot do better, to keep their minds intent upon what they are about.

When you *confess your sins*, do it with great seriousness and concern, remembering that you are for ever undone, if you are not forgiven. And then hear with comfort upon what condition God will pardon you.

If you *repent, and believe the Gospel*, you are sure to be forgiven.

When the *word of God* is read or preached, be careful to mind it, that you may know your duty, and the reward of doing it; that you may observe the way of God's dealing with mankind, in punishing the wicked, and in protecting and rewarding the righteous; that you may know the manner of our redemption, and the great love of God in bringing it to pass; that you may see the dangers you are liable to, and the blessedness that is set before you, ever remembering that *faith, without which we cannot please God, cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Röm. x. 17.

And be sure to behave yourself with great *reverence and devotion*, while you are in the house and presence of God; for if when you should be on your knees, asking God's pardon, and blessings, or standing to praise the Creator of heaven and earth; if instead of doing so, you sit and sleep away the time, or carelessly gaze and think of other matters, then you will return from God's house with a curse, and not with a blessing.

And yet the very best of us, after all our care, have cause to beg pardon even for the faults of our devotions. Therefore, before you rise from your knees, *say privately this short prayer.*

**A SHORT PRAYER BEFORE YOU LEAVE THE CHURCH.**

THE good Lord accept of our duty and service; pardon our sins and infirmities; give us what is needful for our souls and for our bodies; and keep us evermore under thy protection, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour! *Amen.*

And now, God forbid that you should spend the remainder of this good day, so well begun, in sin and vanity! Rather think how you may do most honour to your Creator and Redeemer.

If you can read, you can both instruct yourself, and them that will hear you.

If you have children and servants, you can teach them how to fear, and to love, and to pray to God.

And if you are unlearned, you can think of what you have heard at Church, and resolve to do, to the best of your knowledge, as you have been taught.

Then will the Lord be with you, to bless you in the way you go; to preserve and to prosper you. For this is what he hath declared, *them that honour me, I will honour: and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed.* 1 Sam. ii. 30.

A PRAYER FOR SUNDAY MORNING.

O LORD, who hast consecrated this day to thy service, give us grace so to observe it, that it may be the beginning of a *happy week* to us; and that none of thy judgments may fall upon us for profaning it. Fix in our hearts this great truth, *that here we have no abiding place*, that we may seriously and timely provide for another life; and grant that this great concern may make us very desirous to learn our duty, and to do what thou requirest of us. And blessed be God, that we have churches to go to, that we have such times set apart for the more public worship of our Creator, and that we have pastors to teach us! The Lord prosper their labours, and give us grace to profit by them, that they and we may enjoy an everlasting sabbath with thy saints in heaven, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

A PLAIN AND USEFUL INSTRUCTION FOR SUNDAY EVENING.

*Concerning the Providence of God, or his Wisdom and Goodness in governing the World.*

THAT God is great, and to be greatly feared, we know by the world he hath made, and from his dreadful judgments.

That God is good, and to be loved and worshipped, we are convinced from his care of the whole creation.

*For his tender mercies are over all his works*, Psal. cxlv. 9. Therefore have his creatures the comfort of the rain and sun, of food and shelter; the earth yields increase, and the seas are stored with creatures innumerable.

In the hand of God are these and all other blessings, which he withholds, or giveth, according to his good pleasure, to teach us, that we wholly depend on him; *that man liveth not by bread alone*, nor by his own industry, but by the providence of God, who ordereth all conditions of life for the best, for those that cannot choose for themselves.

And if he suffers *some to be poor*, it is because that condition is best for them *now*; but he will make them a great amends in the next world for what they want in this, if they will be content and honest, neither murmur in their own lot, nor envy that of others.

*When God giveth riches*, it is not to make them an occasion of our ruin, but to try our virtue; for, *if we are not high-minded, if we trust not in uncertain riches, but in the living God; if we do good with them, and readily distribute to the necessity of others; then are riches a real blessing, and help to bring us to eternal life.* 1 Tim. vi. 17.

*If he bringeth us into affliction*, is it not that he is pleased with the miseries of his creatures, *but he is shewing them their transgression, he is opening their ear to discipline, that they may return from iniquity, and save their souls from death eternal.* Job xxxvi. 9.

*If he suffers us to be tempted*, it is not that we might fall, but to make us more sensible of our own weakness, that we may come to him for help, on whom we depend, *who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear*; and who will reward our poor endeavours with unspeakable happiness.

If we have *friends*, it is the favour of God to us ; and, if we have *enemies*, they are rods in his hands, either to correct us, or to make us careful of our ways.

The devil himself, that powerful spirit, is under God's command, to execute his judgments upon wicked men, while they that trust in the Lord have nothing to fear, for he hath no power to hurt them.

Happy are we who know these things now ; and we shall be for ever happy, if we live according to this belief.

For then *we shall trust in the Lord with all our heart, and not lean unto our own understanding.*

We shall call upon *him* for what we want, and thankfully receive what he is pleased to send. *For shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil ?* Job ii. 10.

We shall hope for his favour when we mean well, and never expect his blessing when our designs are evil.

We shall look upon God's time as the best, and not grow impatient when our desires are not answered.

We shall acknowledge his hand in every thing that befalleth us, and hope for his mercy even when he is angry, knowing *that all things shall work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. viii. 28. *Thus shall we dwell under the defence of the most High, and shall be secure from fear of evil.*

A PRAYER FOR SUNDAY EVENING.

ALMIGHTY GOD, by whom all things were *made*, and are *preserved*, make us truly thankful, for thy wonderful works of *creation* ;—for thine adorable *providence* in preserving every thing that thou hast made ;—and for thine infinite *power, wisdom, and goodness*,

in the government of the world.—But above all, we acknowledge thine infinite *love* in the *redemption* of the world, by thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ: and thy *goodness* in sending by him this comfortable message to thy distressed creatures.—*That whosoever receiveth and believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.*—We bless thee for his holy *doctrine* and *example*;—and for his precious *death*, and glorious *resurrection*, by which our sad condition, and *thine* unspeakable love, have been wonderfully shewn to us.—We give thee thanks for thy *Holy Word*, by which thy works of mercy and providence have been preserved, and thy will made known unto mankind.—We bless thy holy name, for sanctifying *one day in seven* to thy service, to keep up the knowledge and remembrance of thee, and of our *creation* and *redemption*;—and for appointing thy *ministers* to publish these truths to us in thy name, that we may render unto thee that *honour, love, and obedience*, which becometh creatures to pay to their great Creator.—And we beseech thee, O God, to give us all such a deep and lasting sense of thy great and undeserved mercies to us, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may shew forth thy praise, not only with our *lips* but in our *lives*, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days;—and as we often hear how we ought to walk, and to please God, we may continue to do so unto our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A SHORT ADMONITION TO ALL, AND ESPECIALLY  
TO MASTERS OF FAMILIES.

AMONGST the many growing vices of this profane age, one wretched and ungodly custom is too common; *viz.* of people's falling to their meals, as beasts do to their fodder, without any thoughts of God, or thanks

for his blessing<sup>1</sup>. And even too many of those who have not quite laid aside this Christian duty, perform it after such a slight and negligent manner as makes it as sinful as the omission.

When a man like ourselves bestows a favour, we naturally give him thanks.—Are not food and the supports of life and health, mighty blessings?—Is not God the sole giver of these?—are they not worth asking, and giving thanks for?—This shews plainly, that this sin, being against the very natural notions of sense and gratitude, is of the devil, who makes the tables of too many to become a snare and a curse to them, by intemperance, gluttony, and drunkenness.

All Christians who have any regard to the example of their Saviour, who always glorified God, and gave him public thanks for his blessings;—or to the example of *St. Paul*, who would not omit this duty, though in bonds, and in the presence of a numerous company of Heathens;—all Christians, seeing the reasonableness of this duty, and the sin of omitting it, or of not performing it after a serious manner, will be inexcusable before God, if they neglect to glorify him at their daily meals.

Now, that the most unlearned may not want words to express their thanks, and beg God's blessings upon themselves, and their daily food, these following may be made use of.

#### GRACE BEFORE OUR MEALS.

O GOD, who giveth food unto all flesh, grant that we may receive these thy gifts with thy blessing, and use them with sobriety and thankful hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

<sup>1</sup> Grace before meals, the practice of the *Romans*.

*Nec prius aut epulas, aut munera grata Lycæi,  
Fas cuiquam tetigisse fuit, quam multa precatus  
In mensam. Sil. Italicus.*

'Nor touch'd the meat, nor tasted was the wine,  
'Till every guest implored the Pow'rs divine.'



GRACE AFTER MEALS.

MAKE us truly thankful, O Lord, for our daily bread, and for all other mercies which we receive; and help us to love and serve thee, the Giver of all good, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

THE END.

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