

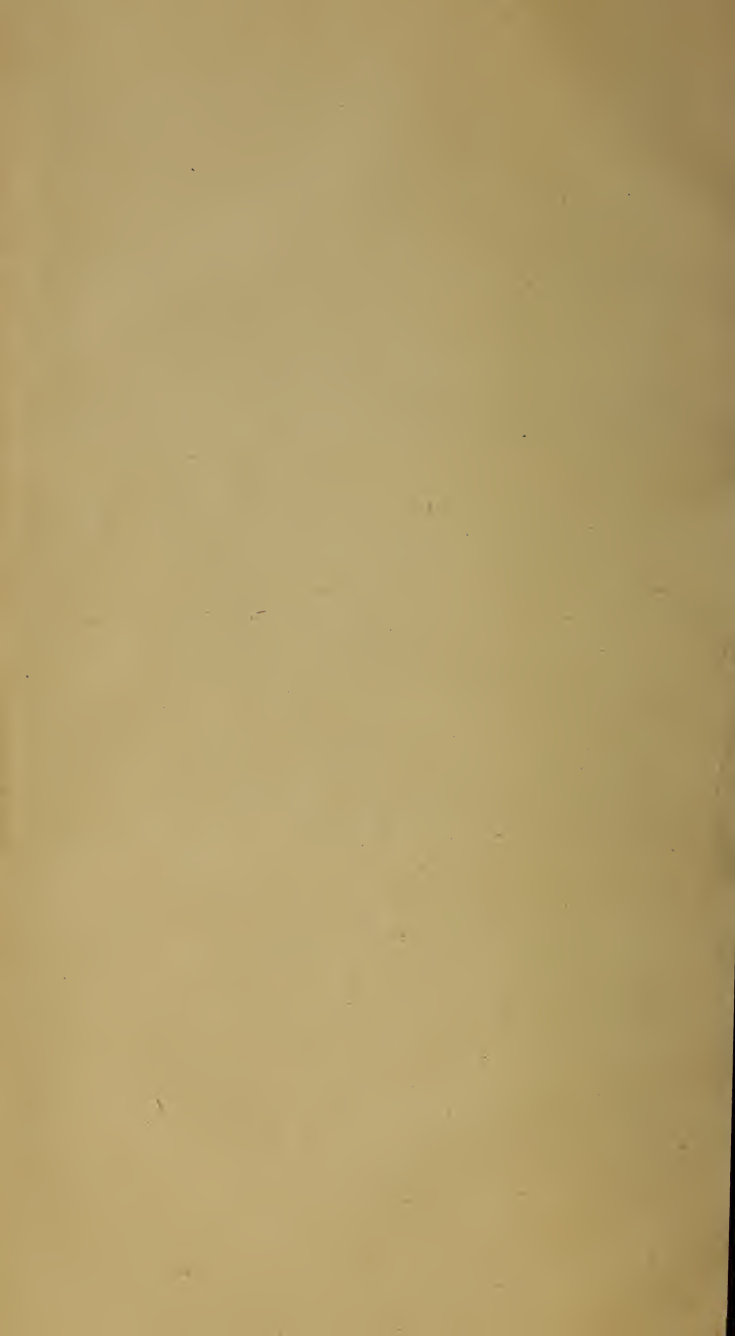




Class BJ47

Book .S82



















PRINCIPLES  
OF  
Religion and Morality.

31

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IN FOUR PARTS.

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- I. OF THE EVIDENCES OF RELIGION.  
II. PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION.  
III. PRINCIPLES OF MORALITY; WITH FOUR  
LESSONS ON THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.  
IV. LESSONS ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.
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The whole in short Lessons, in the form of Dialogues;  
adapted to Schools, and private Instruction in Families.

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*Third Edition.—Improved with Copy Right.*

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BY CHARLES STEARNS, A. M.  
Minister of the Gospel in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

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## PREFACE.



**T**HE Compiler of the following Dialogues made use of them, for many years, in his School, without the remotest idea of their publication. In process of time, numerous copies were taken of them in writing; and the manuscripts, written out for the use of the School, were almost defaced and destroyed.

He was accordingly reduced to the necessity, either of printing his little system, or renewing it in a number of manuscript copies, for the use of his scholars. Printing he found would be much the cheapest method. His school might thus be easily supplied; and, possibly, a few copies might sell elsewhere. With these ideas he committed the little work to the press.

He has here, for the facility of demonstration, reduced Religion to five great principles, which, he believes, comprehend the substance of that which has been true religion, in all ages and nations. Then has shewn how these apply to the Mosaic, and Christain dispensations. And how the idolatrous systems, as such, were altogether deviations from the great, and necessary principles of religion.

It will be easy for the discerning reader to see, how the peculiar doctrines of Christianity harmonize with, and promote the grand design of universal piety, and genuine religion. They shew wherefore men may safely confide in the mercy of God. Also the reason why, they who hear the gospel, must believe in Christ, as the Mediator, and the great Savior of men. And this without supposing, that all are necessari-

ly excluded from happiness, who never had it in their power to know Jesus by name.

He has considered the principles of religion in connection with its history ; supposing that the history would throw light on its various dispensations ; and shew the manner, in which, its principles have been displayed. When we find the principles of religion, which stand the shocks of various revolutions ; and are equally benign and useful in all ages ; then we need no longer doubt, whether we have found those which are true. I trust it must appear to persons of due consideration, that religion, since the fall of man, has always been the same. And that the religion of the holy scriptures, is the proper religion of man. This will supersede a thousand frivolous disputes ; and teach human egotists, that the collected wisdom of many ages and generations, contained in the scriptures, is superior to the opinions of a single ephemeron called a man. That being of yesterday—who is not sure of to-morrow. Reason in such a being, can do little ; though it may do something. Certain knowledge of the truth is the result of much experience.

The Rev. H. Packard has given a very useful collection of religious and moral principles, in an easy method, well suited to the instruction of young children. *This* collection aims at the instruction of persons, whose minds are nearly arrived to maturity. It is suited to persons who are between 15 and 25 years of age. Schoolmasters, Preceptors, and Parents, may find it useful. Nay persons may instruct one another, who are of equal condition, by reciting to each other, and conversing on these subjects.—Studious individuals may, perhaps, use their leisure time, on Lord's Days, very profitably, by committing these principles to memory. Had not the compiler supposed these Lessons might prove useful he never would have committed them to the Public,

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PRINCIPLES  
OF  
RELIGION and MORALITY.

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*PART I.*  
OF THE EVIDENCES OF RELIGION,  
AND OF  
CERTAIN DISTINGUISHED PERIODS OF TIME  
WHICH ARE INTERESTING IN RESPECT  
OF RELIGION.

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Lesson I.

*General Nature of the Proofs of Religion.*

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*Preceptor,* **O**N what does the proof of religion depend ?

*Student.* Like all other matters of knowledge, on the clear evidence of truth.

*P.* How many kinds of evidence are there of religion ?

*S.* Three. External, comparative, and internal.

*P.* What is the external evidence of religion ?

*S.* Any fact recorded in history, a proof arising from the works of God, or from his providence, or, indeed, any thing which creates a belief of its reality and yet is not religion itself, makes a part of its external evidence.

*P.* What is the internal evidence of religion ?

A 2

S. That

S. That which arises from the system itself ; its principles being either evident in themselves, or capable of clear demonstration.

P. What is the comparative evidence of religion ?

S. That which arises from comparing its principles with our state, our faculties, with our wants and our destination.

P. Will any evidence of religion arise from these comparisons ?

S. Yes, certainly. If it be suitable to our state, harmonize with our faculties, relieve our wants, and make us wise, and good, it is true religion.

P. How will these evidences operate taken together ?

S. Most happily. If certain religious principles be demonstrable in themselves ; if they have been the religion of the wisest, and most virtuous men in every age ; if the adoption of them makes men holy, virtuous, and happy, then we have all the evidence of the absolute truth of them which we need.

P. How comes it—when there are so many proofs of religion, that men do not regard it more ?

S. Because they do not pay due attention to them. Proofs are of no avail ; when they are not regarded.

## Lesson II.

*Of certain periods of time, which are interesting as they respect Religion.*

P. **I**NTO how many periods is the history of religion divided ?

S. Into



S. Into four, each having its peculiar dispensation.

P. What was the first ?

S. The state of pure innocent nature, in which our first parents were bound simply to love and obey God. Some call this dispensation the *covenant of works*. The duration of this period is uncertain.

P. What was the duration of the second period ?

S. From the apostacy of our first parents to the giving the law by Moses, men believed in God, and kept the ways of the Lord. The spirit of this dispensation is expressed in the *covenant with Abraham*.—It may be called the period of the patriarchal religion.

P. Of what extent was the third period ?

S. It reached from Moses to Christ. The Jews received the law by Moses, and this was called the *Mosaic dispensation*. Among the Gentiles was the reign of idolatry, as is testified by all historians.

P. What were Idols ?

S. They were supposed representations of the Deity, under some bodily shape, of man, or of a mere animal, wholly unworthy of the divine majesty.

P. How far does the fourth period extend ?

S. From the time of Christ down to the present day. Christianity has prevailed, in many nations. It has been known, in some degree, by nearly all. Some still remain Pagans.

P. What have been the principal causes which have checked the progress of Christianity ?

S. The progress of Mahometanism ; the angry controversies,

controversies about doctrines and ceremonies ; the errors of the Romish church ; and more than all the wicked lives of Professors.

P. Which is the best way to escape those controversies and those errors, and lead us by truth to a good life ?

S. To reduce the theory of religion to a few points, and those as clear as possible.

### Lesson III.

*Of the clear and necessary principles of Religion.*

P. **W**HAT are the principles of that religion which is necessary to man ?

S. The two following principles are demonstrable—viz. 1st That man should love God. 2d. That he should obey him. These were necessary to man in a state of innocence.

P. Are these principles still necessary to man ?

S. Certainly. And to him who is a sinner, two other principles are equally necessary ; That he should believe in the divine mercy ;—And that he repent of his sins. These also are demonstrable.

P. And is there no other principle necessary in that religion which is essential to man ?

S. Yes. That a man consider himself as accountable to God, who will punish him if he do evil, or reward him if he do well.

P. Are these principles invariable ?

S. Yes they undoubtedly are. And without these for its basis, there can be no system of religion.

P. How

P. How does it appear that none of these can be omitted ?

S. No one surely would leave out the love of God ; for that is the grand principle of all attachment to the Deity. If any say we need not obey him, that denies all religion at once. If a man owns God, and disobeys him, unless he believes that God is merciful he must be in a state of despair.

P. May not God make men happy though they continue in Sin ?

S. That is a contradiction, because sin is erring from happiness as well as duty. No sinner can be happy but by leaving sin. This makes repentance necessary.

P. But why need a man believe that God will treat him according to his works ?

S. Because the hope of escaping punishment, is the greatest incitement to sin ; and the denial of a reward, cuts off the principal encouragement to virtue.

P. How many principles are then necessary to the religion of such a being as man ?

S. Five at least ; 1st. Love to God. 2d, Obedience to him. 3d, Faith in his Mercy. 4th, Repentance of Sin. 5th, Belief that God will deal with him according to his works. So many principles at least are necessary in religion. How and when faith in Christ is necessary, we shew hereafter.

P. How does it appear that they are necessary ?

S. Because, if you take away any one of them, no real system of religion can remain. For religion

gion is nothing but the obligation of the soul of man to God.

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## Lesson IV..

*Of historical evidence of Religion, and of the scriptures more particularly.*

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P. **H**AVE the genuine principles of religion always been the same ?

S. Faith in God's mercy, and repentance of sin, could not take place in a state of perfect innocence ; but from the moment that men became sinful ; the above described necessary principles took place ; and have, in all periods constituted, whatever there has been, of true religion.

P. By whom, according to history, have they been taught ?

S. First, by the Patriarchs ; then by Moses and the Jewish Prophets ; and, after they long had been obscured by Idolatry, they were revived by Jesus Christ and taught by him in the most explicit manner.

P. Have not the ideas of religion varied among the nations in every age ?

S. Yes. The systems of religion have been various ; some more, some less remote from the absolute truth. But, as truth is invariable, real religion hath always been the same.

P. Is not the variety of the modes of religion, an argument against the genuineness or reality of religion ?

S. Not

S. Not any more than the variety of human forms is an argument against the reality of a human being.

P. What reason have Christians to adopt the Bible as the standard book of their religion?

S. This were a sufficient reason, if no other, that, in the books of the old and new testament, the true necessary, and demonstrable principles of religion are contained, and professedly taught; which cannot be said of any other ancient book whatever. Add to this, that every society must have its standard. And this is a standard, in which the Christians have been able to agree. They think also that the writers of it were moved by the good spirit of God.

P. What further use is there of the scriptures as the rule of faith?

S. They contain accounts of some remarkable works called miracles—If any think the testimony of these not sufficient, yet the necessary principles are still demonstrable. To those, who deem the testimony concerning miracles sufficient, they prove the system absolutely divine. But we shall say more of miracles hereafter.

P. What further historical evidence have we of religion?

S. History confirms, that nations, and individuals, who have acted on the necessary principles of religion, have been prosperous and happy; those who have neglected them, have neither been happy nor prosperous.

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## Lesson V.

### *Of the internal evidences of Religion.*

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P. **W**HAT is the internal evidence of Religion ?

S. Its intuitive evidence at the first view, or the demonstrability of its first principles ; with our clear discernment of its dignity, and utility. And indeed, the clearness of the consequences which flow from the first principles, may be considered as a part of the internal evidence of religion.

P. Can the five grand principles you have mentioned be demonstrated ?

S. Yes. But perhaps they are sufficiently clear without it.

P. Nevertheless, I should be happy to hear how you prove them. How do you prove that man ought to love God.

S. Man derives his existence from God, and every degree of enjoyment is from him ; he ought to love the Being from whence all good is derived. Man ought to love God, because God first loved man.

P. How does it appear that man ought to obey God ?

S. Because, if a man love God, his obedience will follow ; and as God, has given man all his powers, faculties, and enjoyments ; they ought to be used as God pleases. Man is wholly dependent on God at every step, and in every condition ; therefore, should be always obedient to him.

P. But

P. But supposing a man be disobedient to God and do wrong, must he believe in divine mercy?

S. That will become necessary. For he can never be in a capacity to accept, or improve, the mercy of God who does not believe in divine mercy; and that it may be obtained for his own benefit. No man seeks that which he does not believe to exist; nor strives to use that which he does not suppose to be attainable, therefore without faith in God's mercy, we shall never see, or enjoy his favor—after having once offended him.

P. How do you prove the necessity of repentance?

S. The conduct of a man follows the prevailing inclination of his mind. A wicked man therefore will never leave his wickedness unless he repents of it. Repentance therefore is necessary as a principle of religion.

P. How does it appear that man is accountable to God?

S. From his reason which supposes a law, by which to govern himself. Man cannot govern man; but by his own consent; nor even then, unless this consent be bound by some superior sanction. It is necessary to have recourse to the authority of God, to bind men to one another, in covenants, matters of office, &c. else no dependence can be placed on them, in cases where there is no fear of human punishment. Hence it is necessary, that a man believe himself accountable to God. The remorse or delight of the conscience, the general success of virtue, and, in many instances remarkable punishment of vice, prove the same point.

As do also our hopes and fears, respecting a world to come. Further it is common to find those who have no fear of God before their eyes; abandoning themselves to all manner of wickedness.

P. Will not any clear consequence of these principles be equally true?

S. Yes; and from these five, enough will flow to answer every purpose of religion.

P. Does morality depend on the sentiment of religion?

S. It does principally; because the law of God must give force to all human laws, and properly engage the mind to all sentiments of duty.

## Lesson VI.

### *Of the Comparative Evidence of Religion.*

P. **I**S it any proof of religion that it suits with our state, harmonizes our faculties, relieves our wants, and makes us wise, and good?

S. Certainly. For if it have all the effects which can be rationally expected, we need not doubt its reality, or efficacy.

P. How does it appear that religion is suited to the state of man?

S. Because it prevents us from sinking under the miseries of the present life. There would be no being so miserable as man; without the hope inspired by religion, and the morality built upon it. Human passions, aided by human reason, and unrestrained by fear of God, make a hell of this world.



world. This is proved by the conduct of Atheistical nations. But religion makes us kind to one another, inspires us with fortitude, and ennobles our state, by presenting a career of virtue which ends in immortality.

P. How does religion harmonize our faculties ?

S. In human beings the spiritual powers always impel to eminence and excellence ; while the sensitive powers always impel them to excesses, utterly inconsistent with dignity. Hence a man without religion and morality, is at perpetual war with himself. But religion teaching man that he is subject to a Law above himself ; and that his reason and his passions, answer the same purposes under that Law, brings his faculties into harmony among themselves, and directs them to the happiness of man, and the glory of his Maker.

P. How does religion relieve our wants ?

S. Our greatest wants are want of comfort, and want of virtue. These religion supplies. It gives us comfort by showing all things by a most wise, and good Being conducted for the benefit of them that love him ; and promising the most ample rewards to suffering piety and virtue ; with divine support under afflictions ; and the pardon of all sin, to them who sincerely repent ; with kind reception when we return to God, and duty.

P. But how will religion supply us with virtue ?

S. It has that very tendency, by bringing us into willing subjection to the great Ruler of the universe ; and making us willing to obey his will, expressed in us, and all his works ; and to be such persons, in all respects as we ought to be.

P. But will that make us, of consequence wise and good ?

S. Certainly ;

S. Certainly ; for no course of life can be more wise than that, which is according to the very nature of things, established by the supremely wise and powerful Author of nature. Or how shall man be more certainly good, than by following the precepts, and copying the example of HIM, who is perfect in goodness.

P. Have you any further confirmation of the sentiments you have expressed ?

S. Yes. It is a fact, that Atheistical, and vicious men are never prudent for themselves, and always are troublesome to others.

## Lesson VII.

### *Of the Christian Religion.*

P. **W**HAT evidence have we of the Christian religion.

S. It has all the characters of the religion essential to man. Love of God. Obedience to his Laws. Faith of sinners in God's mercy. Repentance of sin, and the accountableness of men, to God, for their actions. These are the express doctrines of Christians. They make the main substance of their religion.

P. What need was there of Christ's publishing these doctrines if they had been known before ?

S. Because the Jews had corrupted their religion by traditions, and dependance on ceremonies ; and the Gentiles had entirely confounded their religion by the worship of idols. Christ came not to set up a new, and partial system ; but to restore that  
which

which was in danger of being lost ; to revive true religion, and open the door of faith to the Gentiles.

P. Why did Christ call his doctrine a new commandment ?

S. Because it was hid from ages, and generations of men, immersed in superstition, and Idolatry ; and overlooked by the Jews attached to ceremonies. To persons affected, in either of these ways, it would seem to be a new commandment.

P. Why then does Christ say, it is not a new commandment ; but the same which had been heard from the beginning ?

S. Because Christ taught not any new system of religion ; but the unalterable principles of religious truth known to holy men of old. And this must ever be the right system ; because it is founded in truth itself.

P. Does the authority of this religion depend on its being true, and correspondent to nature and to the condition of man ; or does it depend on its being revealed from Heaven ?

S. It has both at its basis, though it may safely depend on either.

P. How do you know that any person ever had a revelation from Heaven ?

S. For this we must depend on testimony ; but the persons pretending to revelation may prove their testimony by miracles.—Their constancy in maintaining their point against every temptation and losses, even the loss of life itself ; and their having no temporal interest to serve by their assertions, greatly corroborate their testimony. But the grand testimony of actual revelation is that of miracles.

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## Lesson VIII.

### *Of Miracles as evidences of Religion.*

Acts the whole book. Read in proof of this Section the history of the three first centuries after Christ, with the Lives of the twelve Apostles.

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P. **W**HAT is a miracle ?

S. It is an appearance in sensible objects, contrary to, or different from the common course of nature.

P. Is it not then impossible to believe that a miracle ever existed ?

S. No, for unless we suppose some things to have taken place contrary to, or different from, the common course of nature, we must doubt of our own existence.

P. Why doubt of our own existence ?

S. Because we, to suppose our own existence, must suppose first, the existence of the world ; which was created in time, and certainly the creation of a world ; the coming of a man and a woman into existence, in full perfection of body and mind, are things out of the common course of nature. Also the deluge, which is testified, both by the tradition and history, of all the ancient nations, was not according to the common course of nature.

P. But how can we believe a thing to happen, contrary to what we see in a thousand instances ?

S. Reasonably, if it be attested by credible witnesses. For instance, if ten thousand men cross a ferry, and not one of them is drowned ; yet the drowning

drowning of the very next man is a possible thing; and may be proved by witnesses.

P. Are we to look for miracles to happen frequently and on common occasions?

S. No, but we may think it credible that they have been wrought on great and important occasions, worthy the peculiar manifestation of divine power.

P. Of what use are miracles, with respect to truths, which you say are self evident, or demonstrable?

S. To dissolve, by means of surprize, the powerful charm of superstition and error; to gain attention to the doctrines of religion, which, without the lively impression of miracles, might have been as little regarded as the demonstrations of Euclid, by those very people, to whom this instruction was most necessary.

P. Is there not a very short way to prove the religion of the Christians?

S. Yes, by the resurrection of Christ — For men who were with Jesus in his life, who conversed with him forty days after his resurrection, testified without any temporal interest to serve by it, and in defiance of every threatened punishment, that he so lived, and died, and rose again, as is mentioned in the Scriptures.

P. Did they never fail in this testimony?

S. No, but all exposed themselves to death in defence of it, and most of them actually suffered it — Many others did the same, and left the strongest testimonial proof of Christ's resurrection that we have of any fact in ancient history.



PRINCIPLES  
OF  
RELIGION and MORALITY.

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*PART II.*  
PRINCIPLES OF RELIGION.

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Lesson I.

*Cf the Being and Perfections of God.*

Genesis—i & ii. Psalms—xix, civ. Romans—i, 19, 20.  
Cambray on divine Existence—*passim*. St. Pierre. Studies  
of Nature—*passim*.

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P. **H**OW is the existence of God proved?

S. From the existence of the world, as every well built edifice must be supposed to have had a builder.

P. How does it appear that there is but one God?

S. Because all things natural are regular, and there is no real confusion in them; especially there is none which indicates contrary wills and powers to be concerned. Wherefore it is most rational to conclude, that they all proceed from one will and one power.

P. Why might not the universe be the mere effect of chance?

S. Because

S. Because of the manifest order of the universe and harmony of its parts. Whereas order, and harmony do not belong to mere effects of chance.

P. What are we able to know concerning the perfections of God ?

S. That he is infinitely wise, good, powerful, and just.

P. How does it appear that he is wise ?

S. It is evident in the just, and accurate design, and contrivance of all things in the whole system of nature.

P. How does it appear that he is good ?

S. From the various instances of his kindness, and benevolence to his creatures.

P. How do we know that he is powerful ?

S. From the amazing effects of his power, which come frequently under our observation.

P. How do we know that he is just ?

S. We have present conviction of it in our own minds, in the satisfaction we have in doing good, and remorse in doing evil.

P. What is the counsel of our reason concerning him, as a being possessed of these perfections ?

S. That it is best to submit to his direction and disposal.

P. What is our state or condition with respect to him.

S. That of mere dependance.

Lesson

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## LESSON II.

*Of the Existence of Man, and his Relation to God.*

Gen.—ii, iii, iv. Matt.—i, 18 verse to the end. John—iii, 16, 21. Eph.—i, 4.

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P. **H**OW did mankind come into existence at first?

S. One pair, at least, of human beings, came into existence by the immediate act of divine power.

P. What was the natural state in which they existed at first?

S. In complete state of body and mind.

P. What was their moral condition at first?

S. That of innocence and happiness.

P. What was their duty towards their Maker, in that state?

S. To love, and to obey him.

P. And did they do this?

S. No, but disobeyed him, and of consequence became miserable.

P. What could rational beings have thought of their Maker, had he left them to the misery which they brought on themselves?

S. Only that he was just.

P. What then must we think of that procedure by which, they were put into a way of recovery?

S. It was the act, and dispensation of mere mercy.

P. By what means were they restored?

S. Through the eternal mercy of God, by the intercession of Jesus Christ.

P. And



P. And was this designed before it was manifested to man?

S. Yes, even from the foundation of the world.

P. Had our first parents any reason to believe that they might obtain favor of God, and be reconciled to him?

S. They had; because he told them, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.

### Lesson III.

*Of the Religion of the first Period. Or the Religion of Man in the state of Primitive Innocence.*

Gen.—ii. Rom.—iii & v. Acts—xix & xx.

P. **W**HAT was the religion of man in the state of innocence?

S. It must consist in love to God; and obedience to him, performed by purely innocent beings.

P. Could they have any form of worship?

S. It is altogether probable, that they had. Since their love and veneration of the Deity must have expressed itself in speech, and outward actions.

P. Can purely innocent beings be capable of Repentance?

S. They cannot; because they have no sin.

P. Are they capable of faith in divine mercy?

S. They must have trust in divine goodness; but none, except a guilty person, is a proper subject of mercy.

P. Is not every man who sins a proper subject of repentance, and of faith in divine mercy.

S. Certainly;

S. Certainly ; and can expect the divine favor in no other way.

P. Are not faith in divine mercy, and repentance of sin, the main doctrines of christianity ?

S. They are, by the testimony of Christ, and the Apostles.

P. Is the religion of the period of innocence then suited to man in a state of sin ?

S. It is not ; because it excludes those things which are most necessary to the sinner, faith, and repentance—and rests in simple innocence of which a sinner is incapable.

P. Is it not then demonstrated, that Christianity is even necessary to man in his present state as a sinner ?

S. To confess freely, it does appear to me that it is.

## Lesson IV.

*Of the Religion of the Patriarchal Age, or the Second Period of Religion.*

Gen.—iv. viii. xiv. xv. Gospel John—xiv. Acts—ii, 38th  
Rom.—iv. Gal.—iii. Heb. xi.

P. **I**S not the state of human beings changed by the introduction of sin ?

S. Certainly, and all men offend more or less. Yet, though offenders, they are under the hope of mercy.

P. What duties will become them in such a state ?

S. That they should believe in the offers of mercy made to them. This, when directed immediately

mediately to the eternal Father, is called, faith in God—when it is by the instruction and mediation of Jesus Christ, it is called faith in Christ; or faith in God by Christ.

P. Is nothing *more* necessary that a sinner against GOD may be saved?

S. That they should be sincerely sorry for, and forsake all their sins. This is repentance; and he who sincerely repents, will live in obedience to God.

P. Should not men, in the state of sinners under hope of salvation, worship God?

S. Past all doubt, and pay all due attention to the means provided for their recovery.

P. But are not faith, repentance, and consequent obedience, principles of the Christian religion?

S. Certainly.

P. Was then the religion of the Patriarchs the same in substance with the Christian?

S. It appears that it was. The religion of Abel, for example, was the same with that of St. Paul.

P. What was the Patriarch's mode of worship?

S. They worshipped God by prayers, and praises; and by the sacrifice of innocent animals.

P. What did they mean by those sacrifices?

S. It is probable that they had reference to the great sacrifice, which the Son of God should make of himself for the sins of men—since, past all doubt, sacrifices were connected with the idea of reconciliation.

Lesson

C

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## Lesson V.

### *The same Subject Continued.*

Gen.—III, 15. v, 24. vii, 1. xlix. Deut.—xviii. 1st Epistle  
John—ii, 7, 8. Heb.—xi. Jude—14. 15.

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P. **D**O you think that the ancient saints had any idea of the mercy of God through a Saviour?

S. There is great reason to suppose that they had.

P. Is it asserted concerning any of them, that they believed in God, and it was counted to them for righteousness?

S. Certainly it was, from whence it appears that they obtained justification by their faith.

P. Did they shew any thing in their conversation similar to christian obedience?

S. They did. They walked with God. They were perfect in their generation. They were just men. They feared God, They commanded their children and their households after them, that they keep the way of the Lord; to do justice, and judgment.

P. Could any man receive benefit from the appointed Saviour before he was manifested to the world?

S. There is no difficulty in supposing this, any more than after his manifestation to the world; the difference being only in point of time, and some external circumstances.

P. Had the ancient Saints any intimations of the coming of a Saviour into the world?

S. They

S. They had ; and these were repeated from time to time.

P. Do you suppose they had any hope, or even idea of immortality ?

S. Yes. For Enoch prophesied of the day of judgment. He was not on earth, for God took him ; that is, to a state of reward for his piety. And the author of the epistle to the Hebrews expressly says, of the ancient worthies, that they sought a better country.

P. And by what means did they expect it ?

S. By the intercession of the Messias. They endured as seeing him who is invisible.

P. What then is the difference between the religion of the first ages and ours ?

S. Nothing in the main principles, the difference is only in point of time, and external circumstances.

P. Has there never been but one religion in the world ?

S. But one true religion, since the fall of Adam, and that, the same in substance, as the Christian religion.

## Lesson VI.

*The third period of Religion, or the theocracy of the Jews opposed to the idolatry of the Gentiles.*

*1st. Of the corruption of the patriarchal religion by the introduction of idolatry.*

Exod.—xx. Judges—xvii. 1 Kings—xviii. 2 Kings—xxi. Isa.—xliv. Ezek.—viii. Rom.—i. Homer's works—*passim*.

P. **W**HAT do you mean by idolatry ?

S. The worship of God by means of images of men,

men, animals, &c. which images were supposed to represent the Deity, or some perfection of the Deity.

P. What was the first occasion of idolatry?

S. It was occasioned, in the first instance, by men's keeping images, or pictures, of their deceased friends, in their houses.

[*Book of Wisdom, xiv.*]

P. Was there not a remarkable kind of idolatry which originated in Egypt. [*Vid Universal History and Tenison on Idolatry.*]

S. There was. The most ancient religious books of the Egyptians, being written in figures of animals, instead of letters; those figures, in process of time, were taken for representations of the Deity, and became objects of worship.

P. Were there not some nations who worshipped the heavenly bodies?

S. Yes. The sun, moon and stars, being objects, glorious in their appearance, were thought to be deities, or, at least, representations of the Deity.

P. Were there not some human persons honored as Gods after death?

S. Among the Pagan nations, many persons of uncommon characters, both men and women, were honored as Gods after death.

P. Did not idolatry sometimes arise from conquest, and tyranny?

S. It did. Conquerors, and other tyrants commanded themselves, or their favorites to be worshipped.

P. Was not the worship of the Heathens, in most instances paid to dead men?

S. Yes,

S. Yes, to such as in their life were famous for dominion, arts, or virtues. But in some instances they worshipped devils, or evil spirits; and offered human sacrifices. [*Vid Homer, Virgil.*]

P. Were there not some among the heathen nations, who proposed the worship of new gods from selfish motives?

S. Some for the sake of gain, as in the example of Diana of the Ephesians. Some for the indulgence of the sensual passions, as Bacchus, Venus, &c.

P. What were the effects of idolatry on the minds of men?

S. They were pernicious in the extreme to those who received it. They became dreadfully superstitious and immoral. They sacrificed their children to false Gods. And while they lived in all lewdness, malice, and revenge, they pleaded the example of their Gods to justify all their crimes.

## Lesson VII.

*2d. Of the means by which the true religion was prevented from universal corruption.*

Exodus—xx. ii. Chron.—vi. 1 Kings—viii. Acts—ii.

*The Mosaic dispensation; and the establishment of the Temple of Solomon.*

P. **W**AS the true God known to the Patriarchs?

S. Yes, he revealed himself to them very often.

P. What prevented the universal prevalence of idolatry?

S. The giving the law at mount Sinai, in which the worship of the true God was expressly enjoined; and idolatry strictly forbidden.

P. What relation did the Jews sustain with respect to him?

S. He revealed himself frequently to them by the prophets; he gave them the Ark of the testimony and established the temple of Solomon among them.

P. Was the temple of Solomon erected to the supposed Deity of a particular place, or of one nation only?

S. By no means, but it was to the God of the universe, whom heaven, and the heaven of heavens could not contain.

P. Were the Jews the only people who could receive benefit by worshipping at the temple?

S. They were not; but even the stranger afar off might receive benefit, by worshipping the God, who resided in the temple.

P. What then was the intention of establishing the temple and its worship?

S. That it might prove a central point, to unite all people of the earth, who worshipped the true God.

P. And did it in any measure answer this purpose?

S. Yes, on the famous day of Pentecost, there were collected thither devout people from every nation under heaven.

P. Then the Jewish or Mosaic dispensation was on the foundation of the religion essential to man?

S. Certainly.



S. Certainly. Love of God, and obedience to him were its basis—It held forth the necessity of believing, and trusting in the gracious, long suffering, and merciful God; and of reconciliation by sacrifice. It required repentance of sin, and shewed the benefit of repentance. It also contained most expressly the doctrine of man's accountability to God. Since man's happiness in this life and his hope in death, are represented as depending on his serving the Lord; and being faithful in his commandments.

P. Then you suppose the Jews' religion to be divine?

S. Assuredly; for from whence should truth come but from the author of all truth.

## Lesson VIII.

*3d. Of means of religion which related to the Gentiles as well as the Jews.*

Gen.—xiv. Book of Job—*passim*. 2 Chron.—xxxvi. Ezra—i. Daniel whole book. Hag.—ii. 9. Zech.—vi. 12. Micah—vi. 2. Prideaux Connection. Stackhouse History of the Bible.

P. **W**AS any thing done to preserve true religion among other nations.

S. There were eminent men among them whom God raised up. Such as Melchizedek and Job, who could testify of true religion, and the memory of whom was not lost after the day of Moses—They had the testimony of conscience and could observe the works and providence of God to awaken their hearts to religion.

P. Were

P. Were God's dealings with the Jews of any use to other nations ?

S. He made the dispersion of the Jews, and much more the re-assembling of them the means of making true religion known among other nations.

P. What think you of Daniel the prophet ?

S. His residence, and prophesying in the courts of Babylon and Persia, the remarkable events respecting him and his companions had a tendency to spread very far the knowledge of true religion.

P. Were not some of the great emperors and conquerors of the world, made instruments of propagating religion ?

S. The remarkable conversion of Nebuchadnezzar, and his proclamation to all nations, that they should honor the God of heaven—The proclamation of Cyrus to restore and build Jerusalem, and the temple, were illustrious testimonies in favor of true religion.

P. What was done for the promotion of religion, between the time of restoring Jerusalem and the time of Christ ?

S. The temple was re-established and the worship of God therein became frequented and venerable—The old Testament was compiled and acknowledged as the standard of religion under the name of the Scriptures. Hence many proselytes from other nations revered the true God, and worshipped in the temple of the Jews.

P. While these things were doing, was nothing said concerning Christ ?

S. God by giving notice in the prophecies of his  
his

his intention to send a remarkable person into the world to restore religion, kept alive the attention and hopes of pious persons.

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## Lesson IX.

### FOURTH PERIOD.

*On the restoration of true religion by Jesus Christ.  
The Christian dispensation.*

Matth.—i, 18 *ad finem*. Matth.—v, 13, &c. Idem.—xix, 3, &c. Rom.—iv, v, vi. Gal.—iii.

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P. **W**HAT was the state of religion when Christ came into the world ?

S. It was in the lowest state among the Gentiles, and greatly corrupted among the Jews.

P. What do the Scriptures say concerning his coming into the World ?

S. That he was born of a virgin, as foretold by the prophets.

P. Are there any wonders of God's power, previous to this, which prepare us to believe it ?

S. Yes. God no less wonderfully formed man from the clay, and made the woman from the substance of the man.

P. Had Christ any existence before he was born of the virgin ?

S. The word, or wisdom of God no doubt had existence from eternity. When the word was made flesh, or the wisdom of God became incarnate ; that is, united to man in the flesh, then existed that complete person, who is called Immanuel, Messias or Christ.

P. Why is he called the Mediator ?

S. Because

S. Because he conveys to us the merciful intentions of the Father, and offers our services to God, so as to make peace between man and his Maker.

P. Why can there be but one Mediator ?

S. Because the supposition of many Mediators produces the same confusion in religion, as the multiplicity of Gods.

P. For what purpose did he come into the world ?

S. To save men from sin ; and, by that, from punishment. Which he did, by restoring true religion, by making atonement for sin ; and giving the holy spirit to purify them from sin.

P. What is justification ?

S. It is our being treated as just persons in the sight of God, although we have sinned.

P. By what means do we obtain our justification before God ?

S. By believing in God ; if we know not Christ particularly, which Faith is counted to us for righteousness.

P. How is it if we know Christ particularly ?

S. If we believe in God, we must believe also in him.

P. Is there then such merit in faith ?

S. No, but God for Christ's sake, Christ the righteous, Christ who made himself an offering for sin, forgiveth our iniquities, and receiveth us graciously.

P. What is the benefit of justification ?

S. That we have peace with God.

P. Does that peace terminate with this life ?

S. No,

S. No, but we have hope of eternal glory.

P. And may men live as they please after their redemption ?

S. Nay, they are expressly redeemed that they may live to holiness.

P. If belief in God may be counted for righteousness ; why may not a man, in any nation, believe to the salvation of his soul ?

S. It becomes not us to determine in things belonging to God ; but we answer in the words of scripture : he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him—"in every nation."

## Lesson X.

*Of Repentance, of Faith, and their consequences.*

Matth.—iii, 2, 8. Mark—i. Acts—xvii. & xx. John Gos.—iii. 1Pet.—i, 23. Heb.—xi. James—ii. Phillip—iv, 8.

P. **W**HAT are the great and essential duties of every one, to whom the gospel is preached ?

S. To repent and believe the gospel.

P. Is repentance then necessary ?

S. It is, for if a man doth not repent of his sins he will not forsake them.

P. What doth true repentance imply ?

S. It implies regeneration, or a real change of the heart from a bad to a good disposition, by the influence of God's word and spirit.

P. What do you mean by the influence of God's word ?

S. The

S. The power of divine truth in teaching, convincing and persuading the mind.

P. What do you mean by the influence of the divine spirit ?

S. That energy, or impulse of divine power which leads men to repentance, and the acknowledgment of the truth.

P. Why is faith required of every one who seeks salvation ?

S. Because he who does not believe in divine mercy, is not in a proper capacity, either to receive mercy, to be thankful for it, or improve it.

P. What is the reason that he who has heard of the Saviour should believe in him ?

S. Because as Christ is the very messenger of God's mercy to us, to reject his testimony, is generally, if not always, equivalent to rejecting salvation itself.

P. What are the fruits of true faith and repentance ?

S. Love to God and man restored in the heart, which shall be treated of in the principles of morality.

P. Are faith and repentance necessary to salvation ?

S. The scripture faith, that without faith it is impossible to please God. And except sinners repent they shall perish.

P. Does faith regard this life alone ?

S. No, it chiefly looketh at things unseen and eternal.

P. Does Christianity then comprehend the religion essential to man ?

S. It

S. It does with the greatest advantage, teaching its doctrines expressly and fully. It teaches faith and repentance, in which Christ and his apostles sum up christianity. Repentance prepares the heart to love God, and obey his will : and it is clearly revealed that God will judge every man according to his works.

P. What are the peculiar excellencies of the Christian religion ?

S. That of all known systems, it creates the greatest horror of sin, the greatest encouragement to virtue, and the strongest motives to repentance, and a good life.

P. In what light should the duties of morality be considered by Christians ?

S. They ought to be considered as connected with their religion. The law is administered by Christ, and whosoever hath this hope purifieth himself even as God is pure.

## Lesson XI.

### *Of Doctrines peculiar to Christianity.*

Isa.—vi, 14. Matt.—i, 18. Matt.—xxviii. 1 Cor.—v, ix.  
Rev.—iii, 12. Rev.—xx, xxii. Acts—i. 1 Ep. John—i, 1.

P. **W**HAT are the doctrines which are peculiar to Christianity ?

S. They are summarily these that follow :

1. That Jesus Christ is, in a sense peculiar to himself, the son of God.

2. That he became incarnate, being born of the Virgin Mary.

D

3 That

3. That he made atonement for the sins of men, by his sufferings and death. So that by the righteousness and passion of Christ, we have theremission of sins.

4. That for his sake the Holy Ghost is given to be our comforter and guide, and to work in us the good pleasure of the father.

5. That he dwelleth forever in heaven as the intercessor of the saints with God.

6. That there will be a general resurrection of the dead.

7. That there will be a day of Judgment, in which, all men shall be judged according to their works.

8. That the church of Christ is ONE. There being among the saints in all ages, and nations, certain common principles of union, and that these subsist between the saints in heaven, and in earth.

9. That the state of future happiness shall certainly be eternal.

P. What is the scripture doctrine concerning the future state of the wicked.

S. The scripture threatens sinners with everlasting destruction; therefore, let us improve our present probation; and once saved, we shall be happy forever.

P. Are these peculiar doctrines sufficiently proved?

S. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that he was no impostor; and, he being a true witness, then these doctrines are certainly true.

Lesson



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## Lesson XII.

### *Of the Sacraments.*

Matt.—xxvi, and xxviii. Acts—ii, 38. 1 Cor.—xi.

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P. **W**HAT do you mean by a sacrament?

S. It is a solemn public act conveying some important sentiments concerning religion.

P. How many sacraments are there?

S. Two; baptism, and the Lord's supper.

P. What is baptism?

S. It is the washing or sprinkling a person with clean water, in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

P. What is the meaning of this sacrament?

S. It signifies that christians must be purified from sin, and for this reason, is a very fit ordinance to signify our first introduction to the christian religion.

P. What is the sacrament of the supper?

S. It is eating bread, and drinking wine, in a prescribed form, in the name and remembrance of Christ.

P. What is the meaning of this sacrament?

S. It signifies our affectionate remembrance of Christ, our brotherly affection to each other, and is a virtual solemn promise to abstain from wickedness.

P. Who may receive this sacrament?

S. All persons who in rational supposition are Christians.

P. Who are bound to attend this sacrament?

S. All followers of Christ.

Lesson

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## Lesson XIII.

### *Recapitulation.*

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P. **W**ELL, now you have considered religion in four interesting periods of the existence of man, what do you think of it ?

S. It appears that its essential principles are always the same, since sin first entered into the world.

P. Do the differences between various dispensations destroy its genuine nature ?

S. They do not, but each dispensation seems to be an improvement on that which preceded.

P. Can you think of any time, since sin entered into the world, in which, any of those, which we have considered as essential principles, could have been dispensed with ?

S. I cannot. That it is always the duty of men to love and obey God is very certain. Nor can I doubt any more that it is the duty of him that hath done wrong, to repent of it. And there is this propriety in faith ; that he who receives mercy should be persuaded of the bounty of the giver, and of the value of the gift, so that I can say nothing against it.

P. But what do you think of man's being accountable to God ?

S. It seems so necessary that I doubt whether human society can long subsist without it.

P. Now then let me ask you whether you find these

S. Yes, and we should attend it with the people among whom we live ; if their mode of worship be not so absurd as to offend against conscience.

P. How ought men to be affected towards God ?

S. They should confide in divine Providence, or in other words, trust in God.

P. In what light ought we to consider the duties of morality ?

S. Not as arbitrary impositions ; but as regulations necessary for our good.

P. Is there not a system of morality, which is considered as divine ?

S. Yes, the Ten Commandments.\* Rules respecting morality, worthy to be learned, remembered, and practised, by every human being.

P. Could not the commandments, or the moral rules of any system, that is real, have been more convenient, and easy to be observed than they are ?

S. Not unless our natures were altered ; they being the consequences of our being created as we are ?

P. What is the final design, and proper use ?

S. They lead us in the directest path to happiness.

Lesson

\* See Lessons on the Ten Commandments.

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## Lesson III.

*The duties of a man respecting himself.*

Psal.—xxxvii. Prov. vii, and xxiii Philipians—iv.

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P. **W**HAT is a man's duty respecting his own life and estate ?

S. He should use all lawful means to preserve both.

P. How should a man qualify himself with regard to the rest of human kind ?

S. He should render himself capable of serving them.

P. What is necessary to preserve a man's personal dignity, and importance ?

S. That he keep himself from all vices of the sensual kind.

P. Is it right that a man take measures to increase the good opinion of the public concerning himself ?

S. He may take all lawful means, and perhaps ought to do it.

P. What is the readiest way to attain a good character ?

S. The surest and most certain way to attain a good character is, **TO BE GOOD.**

P. What would be the consequence if each individual should neglect the rules of morality ?

S. It would be the destruction of all society.

P. Are the rules of morality the same for both sexes ?

S. They

S. They are, very nearly.

P. Do both sexes suffer equally by violating the rules of morality ?

S. They do not. The women suffer much more by their immoralities than the men.

P. What reason can you assign for this ?

S. Women are more confined in their situation, and less independent than men.

## Lesson IV.

*The third branch of Morality, or Duties to our fellow Men.*

Gen. xvii, 19. Ex.---xx. Deut.---xxx, 46. Prov.---i, ii.  
Psal.---xv. Eph.---vi.

P. **H**OW are these duties divided ?

S. Into two classes, 1st. Relative duties. 2d, Social duties, not founded on domestic relations.

P. What are relative duties ?

S. Those founded on domestic or other peculiarly interesting relations.

P. The kinds of them. How are they distinguished ?

S. We shall reduce them to three sorts, between parents and children. Between husbands and wives. And the duties between friends.

1st CLASS OF RELATIVE DUTIES BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

*THE DUTIES OF PARENTS TO THEIR CHILDREN.*

P. **W**HAT are the principles, which constitute the foundation of parental duties ?

S. The relation which parents bear to children,  
as

as to their existence, the tender affections of parents, and the dependent state of children.

P. What duties should parents perform towards their children ?

S. They should supply all their real wants if they be able, protect them from violence, endeavor to preserve their health and secure their welfare. They should educate them to piety, to virtue, and the useful arts.

P. Have parents any right to diminish the real happiness of their children ?

S. They have not, and we believe very few would wish to do it.

P. What should be their view then in any restrictions which they may see cause to lay upon them ?

S. The good of their children ; that the present sufferings of their children, should be recompensed by far greater good in time to come.

P. How should parents conduct themselves with regard to the marriages of their children ?

S. They have no right to compel their children to marry, or to abstain from marriage. They do wrong when they urge, or strongly tempt them to marry a person not beloved. Even while their children, are minors, it may not be prudent to forbid them marrying, when they have a prospect of being happy : they ought to give their children wise counsels ; but let them marry according to their own choice.

P. Have parents any right utterly to abandon their children ?

S. In one case only, which is hardly supposable,  
when

when they are in danger of losing life by means of their children?

P. Why may not parents abandon their children for any act of disobedience?

S. 1, Because they have no right to destroy them, or leave them to be destroyed.

2. The parents cannot impose the care of their children on other persons.

3. They have no right to cut them off from the means and motives of reformation. The Almighty claims no right to reject a repenting and a returning sinner. Yet a parent has a right to reduce a notoriously disobedient child to the mere necessaries of life.

## Lesson V.

### *The duties of Children to Parents.*

Exod.---xx. Eph.---vi. Luke---ii, 51. John---xix,<sup>1</sup>26.

P. **W**HAT duties do children owe to their parents?

S. At all times to treat them with affection, and respect, and obey all their commands, which are not absolutely cruel, wicked, and unreasonable.

P. Do they owe any duties of obedience to their parents, when they are out of their minority?

S. If they remain in the family with their parents, they ought to comply with the general rules, and orders of the family. They ought, also, if able, and their parents need it, to maintain their parents in old age.

E

P. Have

P. Have children a right to marry without their parents consent ?

S. During their minority they have not : after that, the parent retains no more right of compulsion, or prohibition, in that, than any thing else.

P. By what means shall young persons, in the age of inexperience, be secured from making an unhappy choice of partners, for the marriage state ?

S. By acting with consideration in all things not being married hastily, by thoroughly learning the public characters of the persons whom they propose to marry ; and being well assured that they are not contaminated with any remarkable vice.

P. But are they to omit all regard to the advice, and counsels of their parents, in a matter of so much consequence ?

S. By no means: Children should always seek to be in perfectly good intelligence with their parents, respecting the persons they intend to marry. They should listen to good advice, and let it have its full weight. And if it be possible, marry with the complete approbation of their parents, and friends. Because, to do otherwise, tends to interrupt that harmony, and delightful intercourse, which ought to take place among family relations.



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## Lesson VI.

*2d. Class of relative duties.*

*Of Husbands and Wives, or, the moral laws of marriage.*

Gen.—ii. Prov.—v. Matth.—xix, 3—10. 2 Cor. vi. and vii.  
Eph.—v. Titus—ii. Heb.—xii.

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P. **I**N what light should married persons consider their faith mutually pledged in their marriage?

S. As a most sacred and solemn compact, never on any occasion to be violated.

P. As we consider persons as being related to civil society. Can a private, unwitnessed contract between a man and woman, constitute a marriage?

S. It cannot. 1. Because it cannot be proved, should either of the parties deny it. Therefore 2d. the reputation of the parties cannot be secure. 3d. A woman's maintenance cannot be secured. 4th. Nor her offspring be considered as legitimate.

P. What should be a point of prudence in this particular, and more especially for women?

S. To consider no agreement as a marriage, but that which is strictly so, according to law.

P. What are the obligations of persons married to each other in regard to property?

S. Their endeavors should be mutual to preserve and increase their estate. It should be the property of both, and neither should spend it wantonly.

P. What

P. What is that principle by which the happiness of the married state is made certain ?

S. By a mutual and constant desire, in the parties to please each other ; in all things consistent with their duty to other persons.

P. By what means is the happiness of marriage most impeded, and often destroyed ?

S. By an indiscreet resolution of the parties, each to be indulged in particular caprices, and humours.

P. What should be the active principle of government in families ?

S. The united influence of both parents when both are capable, and both living.

P. Which of the parties in the marriage state ought to have the predominant influence in the affairs of the family ?

A. This is a question of some delicacy. We believe that the scriptures give it to the man.—“The head of the woman is the man.” Superior force seems to indicate controul, and the man ought to be the most capable of exercising it. This, however, is not always the case, and the good of the family requires that ability should govern. Sometimes the laws interfere, in either case there is no need of dispute, for it is an eternal order in the system of providence, that the party which has the best command of temper, and acts most rationally should have the greatest influence in the affairs of the family.

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## Lesson VII.

### *3d Class of Relative Duties.*

#### *Duties of Friends.*

Gen.—xiii. Ruth—ii. 1 Sam.—xx. Luke—x, xviii.

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P. **W**HAT are the reciprocal duties of friends ?

S. Secrecy in all things respecting their friendship which are improper to be revealed; steady and invariable attention to each other's interest and happiness ; and, in every respect, strict fidelity to each other.

P. What are the duties of brethren and sisters ?

S. The duties of such are precisely the same with those of friends ; except the difference made by natural relation, which peculiarly animates the designs of benevolence. Persons attached with a view to marriage, or whose interests are any way necessarily connected, are subject to the laws of friendship.

P. What are the duties of neighbors ?

S. They are a kind of friends, who should endeavor always to preserve peace, and good will between themselves. They should greatly revere each other's rights ; they should mutually pay attention to, and assist each other, in sickness, and unusual calamities.

P. What is the indispensable principle of friendship ?

S. To seek the real good of the person to whom  
E. 2
friendship

friendship is professed. Genuine love worketh no ill to his neighbor. To injure a person under the pretence of friendship, or love, is the extreme of perfidy.

P. Are there not relative duties between masters and servants ?

S. In free states there are no servants, but such as serve voluntarily for a limited time. Their duties are defined by the contracts which they make with their employers. The same contract is also a rule to those whom they serve.

P. What is necessary to all the relations of life ?

S. That we endeavor to understand well, and punctually to execute the duties of all, in which we are concerned. Such is the character of the man of probity and worth.

P. Are there not reciprocal duties of rulers and citizens ?

S. Yes. Rulers are always bound to act according to the true intent of their office. And citizens are bound in conscience to obey lawful authority. But these perhaps should be ranked with social duties of a larger extent.

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## Lesson VIII.

*Second kind of duties to our fellow men, or, social duties of a larger extent than domestic relations.*

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P. **W**HAT is a state or republic ?

S. An association of a large body of men under common laws, with a view to the common good.

P. What

P. What is our duty to the state, or republic ?

S. To submit to, and obey all laws regularly expressing the will of the majority—and ordained for the common good. The will of towns, cities or other regular societies known in law, must be obeyed also.

Rom. xiii.

P. What are those virtues which tend to build up human society ?

S. A proper sense of justice, and of the utility of public order ; a disposition to promote the public good or at least to be quiet in our own sphere, and mind chiefly our proper business.

2 Chron.—xix.

P. What are those vices which have a peculiar tendency to destroy society ?

S. All vices have this tendency ; but especially a rough disorderly spirit, selfishness, a disposition to meddle with things which belong not to us ; but above all, lawless and unbounded ambition. These should be avoided, and we should learn and practice the principal heads of social duty.

2 Sam.—xv. 2 Kings—vii, 7th &c. Acts—xix.

P. What is justice ?

S. The virtue by which we wrong no one ; but render all their dues, in public or private stations.

Rom.—xiii, 7th &c.

P. What is fidelity or good faith ?

S. The virtue by which we fulfil all our voluntary contracts to the utmost of our ability.

Psalm—xv. 4.

P. What is honesty, or probity ?

S. The virtue by which we disdain to cheat or deceive any man ; and speak, and act with candor, and sincerity.

Psalm—xv.

P. What

P. What is patriotism?

S. The virtue by which we honor, and love, and obey our own lawful government; and endeavor to promote the honor, and real felicity of our republic, as much as may be.

Psalm—lxxxvii. cxxxvii. Lamentations—*passim*.  
Matt.—xxiii, 37. Rom.—x.

P. What is liberality?

S. A disposition to relieve the necessitous by money or services, on all proper occasions.

Prov.—xi. 24, 25.

P. What is humanity?

S. The virtue by which we compassionate and assist the distressed.

Luke—10. 1 Ep. John—iii.

P. What constitutes property?

S. It is sometimes given providentially to men, and then first possession makes property:—sometimes by inheritance by the will of the donor or the laws of society, respecting purchases. In the common goods of providence when any man before all others annexes his labor, or attention to any thing, he makes it his property.

Gen.—xxiii, and xxvi. 1 Kings—xxi:

P. If one man has a full right to enjoy any thing, can another innocently deprive him of it?

S. No. A man has as good a right to take another's money as to deprive him of any thing else, to which his claim is complete.

1 Kings—xxi.

P. What duties do we owe to mankind at large?

S. We must never injure any of the human species, but do all men all the good we can.

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## Lesson IX.

*On the connection between Religion and Morality.*

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P. **W**HAT is the great maxim concerning this point ?

S. That there can be no true religion without morality ; nor any true morality without religion ?

P. Why is it thus ?

S. Because a sentiment of religion only can bind the conscience ; and good deeds only can prove the reality of religious sentiment.

P. What does real morality always pre-suppose ?

S. That the laws of God, are duly published, and of sufficient authority.

P. Why is religion alone sufficient to establish the moral system ?

S. Because 1st, it promises a reward in all cases sufficient.

2d. Threatens a punishment more than sufficient, if duly considered, to balance the motives to any crime.

3d. Arms us with sufficient cautions, and assistance, to resist any temptations.

P. Is not the principle of honor sufficient to support morality ?

S. It is not, because honor depends wholly on public opinion, which is variable, and often wrong.

P. Why might not self interest do it ?

S. Because it is often on the contrary side, and opposed to virtue.

P. How

P. How is it that the worship of the Deity binds the bands of society, and makes men act rightly towards one another?

S. Because it gives men a common standard of right to which they all submit, and in which all agree, **THE WILL OF THE SUPREME BEING.**



# FOUR LESSONS

ON THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES.

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*What are the four Cardinal Virtues? They are Justice, Temperance, Fortitude and Prudence.*

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## Lesson I.

*Of Justice.*

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P. **W**HAT is justice?

S. It is that virtue by which we abstain from injury to any person whatever, and render to all their dues.

P. Why is justice placed at the head of the social virtues?

S. Because it has perfect rectitude for its object, and standard. And by giving to every one his due, peace in human society is best maintained. By it also our persons, property, and rights are secured from harm.

P. Must not it be extremely useful?

S. Nay more it is necessary. For a person destitute of justice cannot possess any other virtue, in any great degree.

P. Is not veracity necessary to justice?

S. Yes, for persons and things must be represented in a proper light, else every one cannot have his due.

P. Doth

P. Doth not justice presuppose sincerity ?

S. Certainly, because without real intention and desire, it is not probable that we should do right respecting ourselves, our neighbor, or our God.

P. In what cases does the utility of justice appear ?

S. In all cases, and at all times; but most of all the affairs of the commonwealth.

P. Then you would not approve that, in state affairs, we should do that which is really wrong, to promote the public good.

S. The very idea is absurd, and the attempt preposterous. Hence they who do things properly unjust, to promote what they call the public good, deserve the detestation of human kind.

P. Does not justice regard the affections of the heart, as well as our outward rights, and property ?

S. Yes, and they should be given to those persons to whom they properly belong.

P. But is this possible ?

S. In most cases it is completely in our power; for the habit of treating a person well, will create love to that person, as the habit of treating a person ill, will create hatred.

P. Is liberality consistent with justice ?

S. It is in some sense a part of it. For it is certainly right to bestow our donations on proper objects.

P. But is a man bound to liberality as to absolute justice ?

S. He is not; for to give away that which he cannot afford to give, would be injurious to himself, and family.

P. Is

P. Is not mercy inconsistent with justice ?

S. It may be contrary to the letter of a particular law ; but not to the general spirit of justice, if mercy be extended to proper objects.

## Lesson II.

### *Of Temperance.*

P. **W**HAT is temperance ?

S. It is that virtue, by which we abstain from all unlawful pleasures ; and all violent excesses of the passions.

P. What pleasures, and what passions are unlawful ?

S. All which tend to bring real evil on ourselves, or others ; or which unfit us for the good of society.

P. Is not temperance a great diminution of human happiness.

S. By no means. It promotes it exceedingly.

P. Can this be made evident ?

S. Yes, if we will only consider, that it preserves our faculties in their proper order, by which means, our lawful enjoyments become the more delicious. It also creates a sense of dignity, which enables us to anticipate delight, or reflect on it with pleasure, and with the fullest approbation of the mind, and conscience.

P. What are the effects of intemperance ?

S. It ruins our natural powers ; creates disgust and remorse ; excites the resentment of injured  
 F persons

persons, brutalizes our disposition, and renders us infamous. It often brings on diseases and death.

P. Are then persons who are strictly virtuous, more happy, than they who set no limits to their desires?

S. They certainly are. Temperance is to all the enjoyments of life, what neatness, order and elegance are to a feast. It gives them their highest relish.

P. Does temperance require us to abstain from those enjoyments of life which are altogether innocent?

S. No, but only from such as are hurtful.

P. What are noblest among the pleasures of sensation?

S. The kind and benevolent affections of the heart. These are incapable of satiety, or disgust, even in the present life.

P. What are the most excellent, and sublime of all human enjoyments?

S. The pleasures of knowledge, virtue and piety. These never cease but with our existence.

P. May we not reasonably conjecture, that the happiness promised by religion consists in these?

S. We cannot tell precisely what it consists in, but it is very probable, that knowledge, virtue, and piety, exalted to the highest degree, make no small part of the happiness of heaven.

Lesson

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## Lesson III.

### *On Fortitude.*

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P. **WHAT** is fortitude ?

S. It is that virtue, by which, we encounter dangers with firmness of mind, or patiently endure sufferings.

P. It seems then that fortitude has two objects ?

S. When it contemplates or encounters danger calmly, it is called courage. When it endures pain it is called patience ?

P. Have women as much fortitude as men ?

S. It is supposed by some philosophers, that they have. That if they have less courage, they have more patience.

P. What is the use of courage ?

S. To assist in defending ourselves from assaults and injuries.

P. Are malice, envy, or desperation any parts of true courage ?

S. They certainly are not ; but are mere vices and weaknesses of the mind.

P. Which is to be preferred, courage, or patience ?

S. It is somewhat uncertain. Courage serves us in the most extraordinary cases ; but patience is the most constantly useful.

P. What is resolution ?

S. It is a virtue seemingly compounded of patience and courage ; by which, we firmly carry any point we aim at to complete success.

P. What

P. What is the use of resolution ?

S. Its uses are various ; but especially to prevent the excesses of the softer passions.

P. What is the use of patience ?

S. It serves to restrain violent resentments, and to prevent our sufferings from entering too deeply into the heart, and producing discontent. It renders an afflicted person amiable, and respectable, in the view of those, who behold his sufferings.

P. What is the noblest instance of courage ?

S. A determined opposition to the popular and fashionable vices of the age.

P. What is the noblest instance of patience ?

S. When we persevere in the most difficult duties, while their reward seems at a distance.

## Lesson IV.

### *On Prudence.*

P. **W**HAT is prudence ?

S. It is that virtue by which we avoid censure ; or secure ourselves from other harm.

P. Of what use is prudence ?

S. Our intentions being supposed good, it secures the good opinion of other persons, and removes those obstacles, which hinder the accomplishment of our just designs, and prevents our suffering in consequence of virtuous actions.

P. Is it our duty to avoid in the ways of virtue such sufferings as may be avoided ?

S. Yes, it certainly is, for we have a right to self preservation.

P. Is

P. Is there not still further use for prudence ?

S. Yes, in avoiding the occasions of vice, and finding opportunities and advantages for the practice of virtue.

P. When many evils present, and one must inevitably be chosen. What is the point of prudence ?

S. It is the office of prudence to chuse the least in such a case ; but never to chuse evil, natural, or moral, if it can be avoided.

P. Does prudence require us absolutely to avoid all incentives to vice ?

S. Not absolutely, for then we must needs go out of the world, but it requires us punctually to attend the business of life, and not without great, and just cause, expose ourselves to temptations.

P. Does not prudence require the utter extirpation of the passions ?

S. No, but the proper management of them ?

P. By what means are the passions most easily managed ?

S. By finding means to let them take an innocent course, as an inundation of waters is best prevented, not by stopping the stream ; but by giving it a free and safe channel. Passions which must not be indulged at all, must be cured by consideration, or by counter passions ; that is by opposing one passion to another.

P. What are the subordinate qualities assistant to prudence ?

S. 1st, Decency in speech and behavior. 2d, Politeness, or the art of pleasing. 3d, Moderation in opposition to rashness. 4th, discretion, or

the power of distinguishing between good and bad conduct. 5th, Consideration, or weighing the different consequences of human actions.

P. Does prudence regard ourselves only?

S. Certainly it does not, but avoids the evils which may arise from our conduct to other persons, and chiefly aims at the approbation of the Supreme Being.

P. What is the highest point of prudence?

S. To conduct ourselves so, in this life, that we may have a reasonable hope of being happy forever.

## Methods of Instruction.

ON THESE PRINCIPLES.

**T**HE preceptor of any school, or any person of abilities will easily perceive that many of the single principles, taken up in the above dialogues, are of great extent. A single proposition might afford sufficient matter for a paraphrase, a commentary, a new dialogue, or even a lecture. The instructor, for the time, will choose his own method. But the compiler of these dialogues, though he has occasionally made use of all the methods above mentioned, thinks he has cause to say, that the instituting of a new dialogue, is the best for general use.

For example. If the student appear not to comprehend the meaning of this proposition, we have present conviction of the justice of God, in the satisfaction we feel in doing good, and remorse  
in



in doing evil. Then the instructor make it very clear, by resolving it into a new dialogue, thus :

P. What are the feelings of any one's mind being conscious of having done that which is evidently wrong, foolish, or wicked ?

S. I suppose they must be very disagreeable.

P. What must they be when one does that which is known to be generous, good, excellent ?

S. I am sure they must be very agreeable.

P. Is not the necessity of having these feelings as much the work of God ; as the shape of a man's body, or any of his natural powers ?

S. Yes. It certainly must be, there is no denying it.

P. If a man then suffers by his sins, from the hand of God, and cannot avoid it ; what do you call that treatment of him ?

S. I call it punishing him.

P. When man by the same necessity, receives happiness from the hand of God, what is that ?

S. It is rewarding him.

P. Which of the perfections of God is concerned in rewarding the good, and punishing the wicked ?

S. It is, undeniably, the work of his justice.

P. What would be the conclusion, which your mind would draw from all these propositions, taken together ?

S. I must needs say : that it appears to me clearly demonstrated, that God is just, and hath given sensible proof of it, in " the satisfaction we feel in doing good, and remorse in doing evil."

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 SECOND EXAMPLE.
 

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THE act or habit of repentance is necessary, since he who still loves his sins will not forsake them.

P. What principle is that which a man always acts upon ?

S. When a man acts quite freely without coercion or urgency, he always acts agreeably to his own inclination.

P. If a man then incline to commit sin, he will commit it ?

S. Certainly, if this be his prevailing inclination.

P. But if he change his mind concerning it, so that he inclines to it no more, the very idea being bitter, and offensive to him ?

S. He will commit sin no longer.

P. What is repentance ?

S. It is the very change of a man's mind, by which sin becomes the object of his sorrow, his loathing and regret.

P. Then the repenting man will not commit sin.

S. He will not.

P. Does the morality of human actions admit of any medium between repenting of sin, and not repenting of it ; inclining to sin, or not inclining to it ?

S. It does not.

P. Is it not then plain that the repenting sinner will forsake sin ; the unrepenting will not ?

S. As

S. As plain as it is possible for any thing to be.

P. What conclusion necessarily then follows ?

S. That repentance is necessary ; since he who repents of sin will forsake it, but he who does not repent, will not.

### THIRD EXAMPLE.

**H**OW does the principle of sociability manifest itself ?

If this question be not sufficiently understood, it may be resolved into a number of others.

P. Is any man perfectly indifferent to the sentiments and speeches of others ?

S. I cannot answer that question in a moment, I must think on it a little.

P. Suppose then it were just as easy, in every view, to make men think and speak well of you, as ill ? Which would you prefer ?

S. I do not hesitate to say that, I should prefer, that they should think, and speak well of me.

P. Then you depend on society for a part of your happiness ?

S. I must, indeed confess that I do.

P. Let me then question you, my friend, a little further. Had you all the wealth you could desire, would you not wish that somebody else should know it ?

S. Yes, and enjoy it too. That is one of the greatest blessings of wealth, to be magnificent, and generous, in the view of one's friends.

P. Then even the rich depend on their neighbors

bors, for a part of the enjoyment of their wealth ?

S. It must be so: The sense which others have of our magnificence, and grandeur, is one of our greatest enjoyments arising from wealth.

P. Are not our joys, of every kind, increased by being communicated to some confidential friend ?

S. They certainly are: This is mere matter of fact, and experience.

P. Do we not also feel a sympathy of joy, and of sorrow, in observing those affections in other persons ?

S. We do, and by compassion are led to assist the distressed.

P. Is there not then a distinct principle of sociability, which, according to nature forms a part of the moral character of man ?

S. I cannot deny it ; the proofs appear plain and decisive.

P. Then we must not act merely for ourselves in this life ?

S. No, we must pay a sacred regard to the rights of our neighbor ; and even love him as ourselves, if we would be happy ; since genuine self love and social, are original principles of man's nature.

Lessons

# LESSONS

ON THE

## TEN COMMANDMENTS.

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### Lesson I.

#### THE INTRODUCTION.

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**Q.** **W**HAT are the Ten Commandments?

**A.** Ten remarkable Laws proclaimed by God Almighty, from Mount Sinai, to the children of Israel.

**Q.** What appears to have been the design of Almighty God in publishing those Laws?

**A.** To give his chosen people, and by their means to other nations, a moral system, the most concise, and yet the most perfect ever known among men.

**Q.** Do the commandments forbid crimes, or enjoin duties only in the highest degree?

**A.** No. But in forbidding crimes, or enjoining duties, they comprehend all things of like kind, in whatever degree?

**Q.** How are you assured of this?

**A.** We have direct assurance of it, on the authority of Jesus Christ; who condemns, as sin, the  
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the evil desires of the heart. The scripture further asserts, "that the thought of foolishness is sin" and "that the commandment is exceeding broad."

Q. May not the Ten commandments, be comprehended in two original precepts?

A. They may. Jesus Christ asserted; that on two commandments, hang all the law, and the prophets.

Q. What is the first of those two commandments.

A. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and the great commandment.

Q. What is the second?

A. The second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

## Lesson II.

### *The First Commandment and the Second.*

Q. **O**F the ten commandments, what is the first?

A. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.

Q. What is the meaning of this commandment?

A. That we must acknowledge and worship one God, and him only; the creator, and preserver of all things; and the high possessor of heaven and earth;—who righteously governs all things according to his own will. And that we PREFER no will, or authority, to his.

Q. What reasons are there for this commandment?

A. Many

A. Many and weighty reasons might be assigned. We shall give three of peculiar importance.

Q. What is the first ?

A. As all things are "before him ;" in his presence and knowledge ; it is an affront to his Majesty, to have any other God.

Q. What is the second reason ?

A. He has, and claims a right to our worship, and our obedience. To worship or obey, any other God, in preference to him, is, therefore, a denial of his right.

Q. What is the third ?

A. By the worshipping and obeying any other, in preference to him, our hearts would be alienated from him ; so that we should neither love him sincerely nor obey him from our hearts.

Q. What is the second commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likenels of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.

Q. What is the intention of this commandment ?

A. To forbid the making use of any image, or picture ; of any natural or artificial thing ! as the immediate object of our worship, either as a resemblance of the Deity, or as a symbol of any of his perfections.

Q. Can you give the reasons of this commandment ?

A. Perhaps not all—But we shall mention four.

Q. What is the first ?

A. Because the essence of the Deity, and the

manner of his being, are utterly unknown to us. We have neither known his face, nor seen his shape. We have therefore no principle on which such resemblances can be made, and the attempt to make them must lead us at once into error.

Q. What is the second?

A. God is "jealous" of his honor. There is no symbol, or resemblance which will not dishonor him, by being infinitely inferior to him.

Q. What is the third?

A. To employ sensual objects, as resemblances of the Deity, has a tendency to corrupt our worship, by making it an exercise of the sensual affections, instead of spiritual devotion.

Q. What is the fourth?

A. The experience of the fact has proved;—That wherever worship by images has prevailed,—men's ideas of the Deity have been debased;—the wildest vagaries of imagination have been indulged; and the morals of the people have been exceedingly corrupted.

### Lesson III.

#### *The Third Commandment.*

Q. **W**HAT is the third commandment?

A. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Q. In what instances is this commandment violated?

A. In the crime of perjury. In profane swearing and cursing, in the using of oaths or divine names



names in any false, trifling, or indecent discourse. In blasphemous, and reproachful speaking concerning God, religion, divine worship, the scriptures, sacraments, or any thing appropriated to religious uses.

Q. What reasons are there for this Commandment?

A. The contrary practice tends to destroy all reverence for the Deity—to take away all respect for testimony, though taken in the most solemn manner, and by such means, to let loose all the bands of social union; and introduce universal impiety, profaneness, and disorder among men.

Q. What are the duties implied in the third commandment?

A. That we entertain in the highest degree, love and reverence for the Deity; speak the truth in his name, and for his sake; and treat every thing with singular respect, by which, he makes himself known to mankind.

Q. What is meant by the threatening annexed to this commandment?

A. That God will assuredly punish and with singular severity those who break this commandment.

Lesson

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## Lesson IV.

### *The Fourth Commandment.*

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Q. **W**HAT is the fourth commandment ?

A. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Q. Of what events is the sabbath a memorial ?

A. Of two, great and interesting to mankind—The creation of the world, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Q. How is the Sabbath day a memorial of the creation of the world ?

A. From the creation till Christ's time, the seventh day was the sabbath : For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth—the sea and all things in them—and he *rested* on the seventh day ; wherefore the Lord blessed and sanctified the sabbath day—as a day of rest, it still refers us to the *rest* after the creation.

Q. How is it to us a memorial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ ?

A. Christ established the authority of his doctrine, by rising from the dead, on the first day of the week ; which from that event has since been called the Lord's day.

Q. What evidence have you of the propriety of changing the sabbath from the seventh day of the week to the first.

A. Two days of rest, in one week are no where required in the scripture. The *rest* of the day is a memorial of creation—its being on the *first day* of

of the week, and called the *Lord's day*, makes a memorial of Christ's resurrection. So it answers both purposes.

Q. And do you think this proof sufficient.

A. Yes, if we consider that the disciples of Christ, never taught any but Jews to keep the seventh day—They were instructed by Jesus and inspired by the holy Ghost—they devoted the first day to religious worship—the Christians since, with very few exceptions, have kept the Lord's day in all ages, and nations, and all states of the church.

Q. What kinds of work are forbidden on the sabbath?

A. All servile labour, whether, in agriculture, trades, or commerce. All labour whose object is mere gain, seeking our own pleasure in amusements, as also unnecessary travelling for diversion, or secular purposes, on the Lord's day.

Q. What works are permitted on the Sabbath?

A. Those which are necessary to preserve life and health—all the works of humanity and mercy—all parts of religious worship—and which specially tend to the promotion of religion.

## Lesson V.

### *Of Religious Worship.*

Q. **W**HAT should be our employment on the Lord's day.

A. Reading and hearing the word of God with prayer, study and meditation on religious subjects—with all suitable acts of public and private worship.

Q. Is it our duty to attend the public assemblies for this purpose ?

A. Yes, and to do it devoutly, not offering the sacrifice of fools.

Q. What is the use of religious worship ?

A. To produce in our minds a constant sense of our dependence on God ; and an habitual regard to him ; and by the exercises of holiness, to prepare us for his heavenly kingdom.—Public worship answers other purposes also.

Q. Will you enumerate them ?

A. It were a task indeed to enumerate the whole, I shall mention four.

Q. What is the first ?

A. By means of sympathy to increase devotion, and render it more intense, and permanent—and by means of devotion, to strengthen our social principles.

Q. What is the second ?

A. To improve, and refine, both the tempers, and manners, of human beings ; by presenting them frequently to each other, in the best point of view, while engaged in the best actions.

Q. What is the third ?

A. By the refinement which it produces, it becomes the best remedy ever yet known, against barbarism, ferocity, and brutality in human manners.

Q. What is the fourth ?

A. It affords the best means ever yet discovered, for diffusing the knowledge of religion, and other of the most important concerns of men, among the people at large.

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## Lesson VI.

### *The fifth Commandment and the sixth.*

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Q. **W**HAT is the fifth commandment ?

A. Honour thy father and thy mother ; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Q. What is the intention of this commandment ?

A. To oblige us to love and revere our parents ? and to treat civil rulers, instructors, and all aged persons with due respect according to their relation to us ; to be mindful of and practice all duties which we owe to all persons according to those relations which they and we sustain in life.

Q. What reason have you to suppose that civil magistrates, and aged persons are by this commandment entitled to respect ?

A. Civil rulers resemble parents, in the lawful command they have over us. Instructors in the office of teaching and giving counsel.—Aged persons resemble parents in their superior age, their experience and ability to give advice, wherefore, we must not treat their persons or opinions with contempt.

Q. What modes of conduct does this commandment forbid and reprove ?

A. Disobedience to parents and treating them with indecency or levity—insulting the aged, refusing customary submission and respect to civil magistrates and instructors, the exciting of sedition in  
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the State—or endeavoring to make those appear ridiculous and contemptible whom we ought to revere.

Q. Why is it said: That thy days may be long upon the land, &c. ?

A. To encourage all persons in the duties belonging to this commandment with the hope of a long and pleasant life, and strike the disobedient with fear of the contrary.—This addition to the commandment is often verified in fact.

Q. What is the sixth commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not kill.

Q. What is the intention of this commandment ?

A. To forbid murder, or unjustly killing a human being, by any means whatever ; whether maliciously killing a person, in the peace of society, killing one's self, duelling, killing by assault ; or by engaging in exercises dangerous to life, or doing any thing tending to destroy our own life or that of others, either of ourselves, or by means of other persons.

Q. What affections of the mind does this commandment forbid ?

A. All unkind affections, but especially malice, envy, and revenge.

Q. What virtues does it imply ?

A. Benevolence, charity, due attention to the wants, and welfare of our neighbours in every view.

Q. Does not this commandment forbid all war ?

A. Not absolutely. It forbids all except defensive war ; but that it does not forbid ; for they who assault others have renounced the peace of God,

God, and society, and the violent, must be destroyed, that the peaceable may live in safety.

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## Lesson VII.

### *The Seventh Commandment.*

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Q. **W**HAT is the seventh commandment?

A. Thou shalt not commit adultery?

Q. What is forbidden in this commandment?

A. The breaking of the marriage covenant, all lewdness in whatever kind or degree; all immodest speech and behavior; indulging irregular desire, or contemplating any thing with approbation, unbecoming the dignity of human nature.

Q. What does it enjoin?

A. Keeping strictly the marriage contract, entire chastity and purity of heart, and strict propriety of conversation, and behavior.

Q. Why must this commandment be observed?

A. For the purpose of supporting the dignity of the human character in general, specially to maintain order in families, to regulate the descent of inheritances, to ascertain whose duty it is to take care of, maintain and educate children.—Chastity may also be considered as the key of all the virtues. They who have not this virtue, seldom possess any other.

Q. Is not the keeping of this commandment necessary to the well being of civil society.

A. Most certainly. For as marriage is the first bond of civil society—and families are its first elements—violation of that contract tends most of all

all things to the dissolution of civil society and the universal degradation and misery of the human race.

## Lesson VIII.

*The Eighth Commandment and the Ninth.*

Q. **W**HAT is the eighth commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not steal.

Q. What is the intention of this commandment ?

A. It forbids us to take any thing from our neighbor to which he has a prior right, except by his consent ; or any way to injure him in his property or enjoyments ; and requires us to do all in our power, consistent with our own right of property, or enjoyment, to encrease the state, and promote the welfare of our neighbour.

Q. Are frauds then forbidden by this commandment ?

A. Most certainly. Such as representing articles for sale to be good when they are bad ; and warranting them as such. It requires that we deal in trade, on the principle of mutual satisfaction and advantage to the parties.

Q. What is the ninth commandment ?

A. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Q. What is forbidden in this commandment ?

A. Every instance of perjury, especially the giving of false testimony in courts of justice—  
 slander,



flander, either by libels, or verbal defamation. Lying either from malice, levity, or officiousness; in a word all violation of the truth.

Q. What virtues are enjoined?

A. Strict truth in witness, bearing sacred regard to oaths and promises, carefulness to avoid injuring any person's character—speaking truth in common conversation, and in every sense a due regard to truth.

Q. Is the observance of this commandment of great use to men in society.

A. It is, for the whole useful INTERCOURSE of human beings depends on the confidence which they have in the veracity of one another.

## Lesson IX.

### *The Tenth Commandment, and Conclusion.*

Q. **W**HAT is the tenth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not covet.

Q. What is meant by coveting any thing?

A. To desire it, though it can never be lawful for us to have it—or when not lawful at the time. To desire any thing, to excess; or to neglect of things more useful. Desire when unlawful, excessive or irregular, is covetousness, and is forbidden.

Q. What doth this commandment require?

A. Self government, or the entire command of all our appetites, passions, and desires—that all emotions of body or mind may be subject to the law of God, and regulated by his will.

Q. Does any man perfectly keep the commandments of God?

A. No

A. No, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Q. Will not God punish those who break his laws ?

A. He hath denounced his indignation and wrath against every soul of man that doth evil in this world and the world to come.

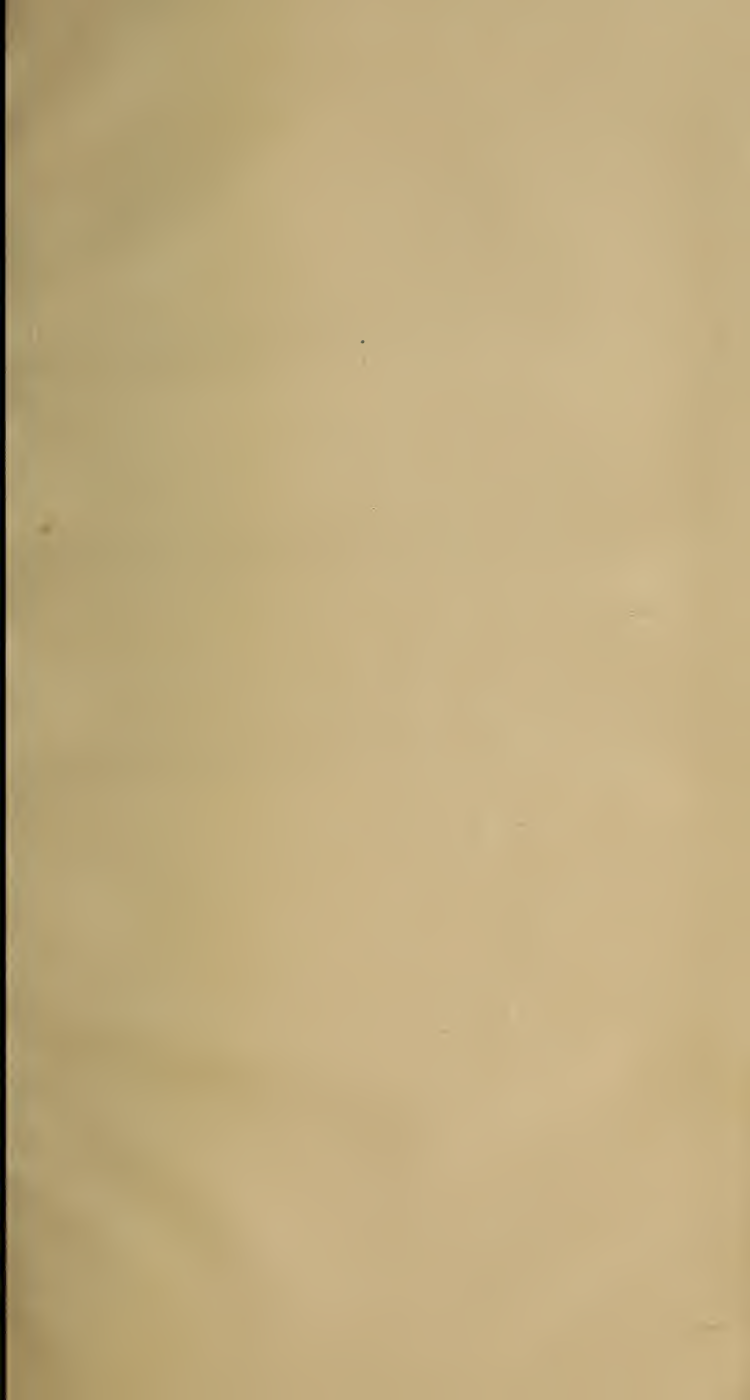
Q. And is it possible for us to escape this dreadful sentence ?

A. The law brings us to Christ ; who is our teacher and saviour ; and who informs us of what God requireth of us ; that we may escape his indignation and wrath.

Q. And what doth God require ?

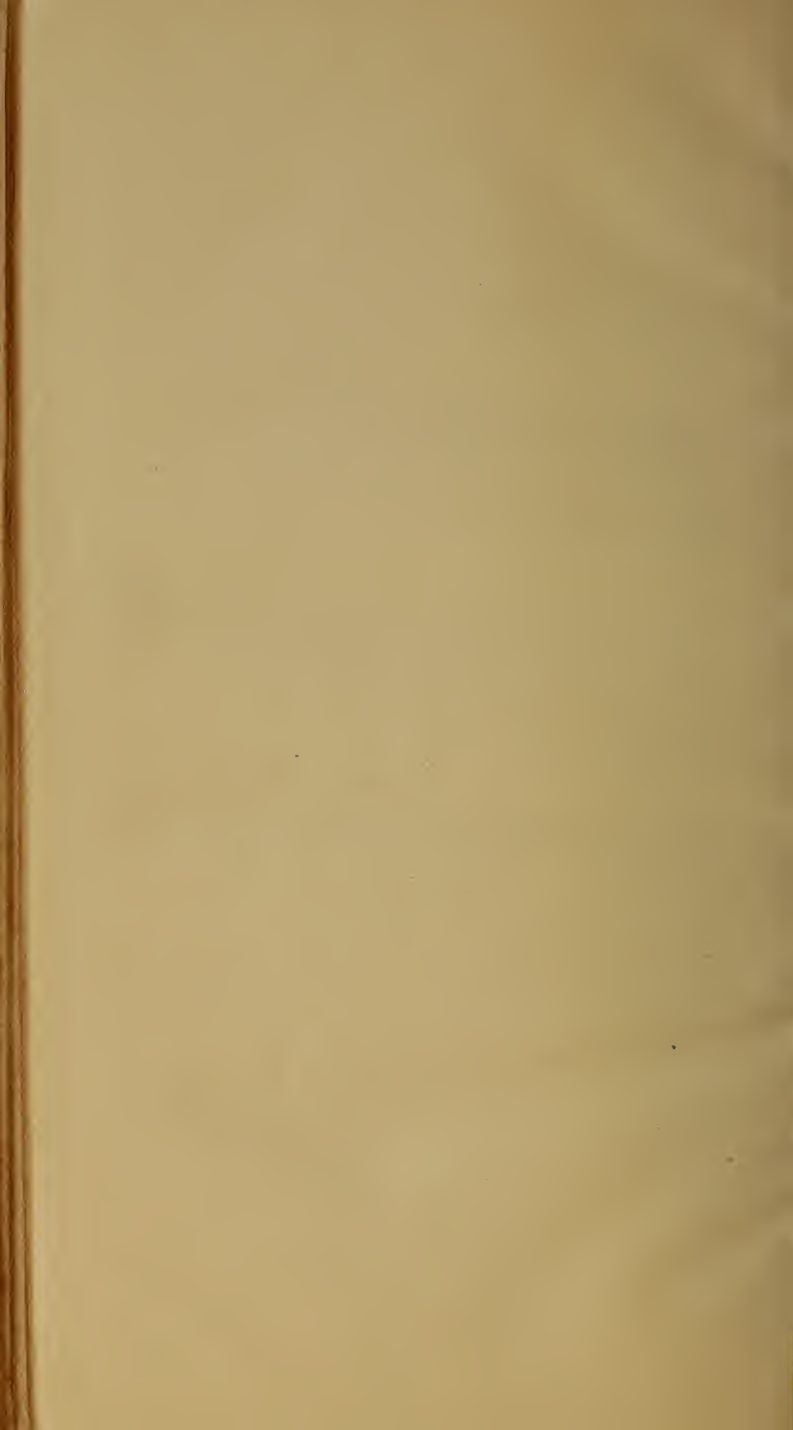
A. That we believe in him, and in his son Jesus Christ, that we repent of all our sins, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

FINIS.

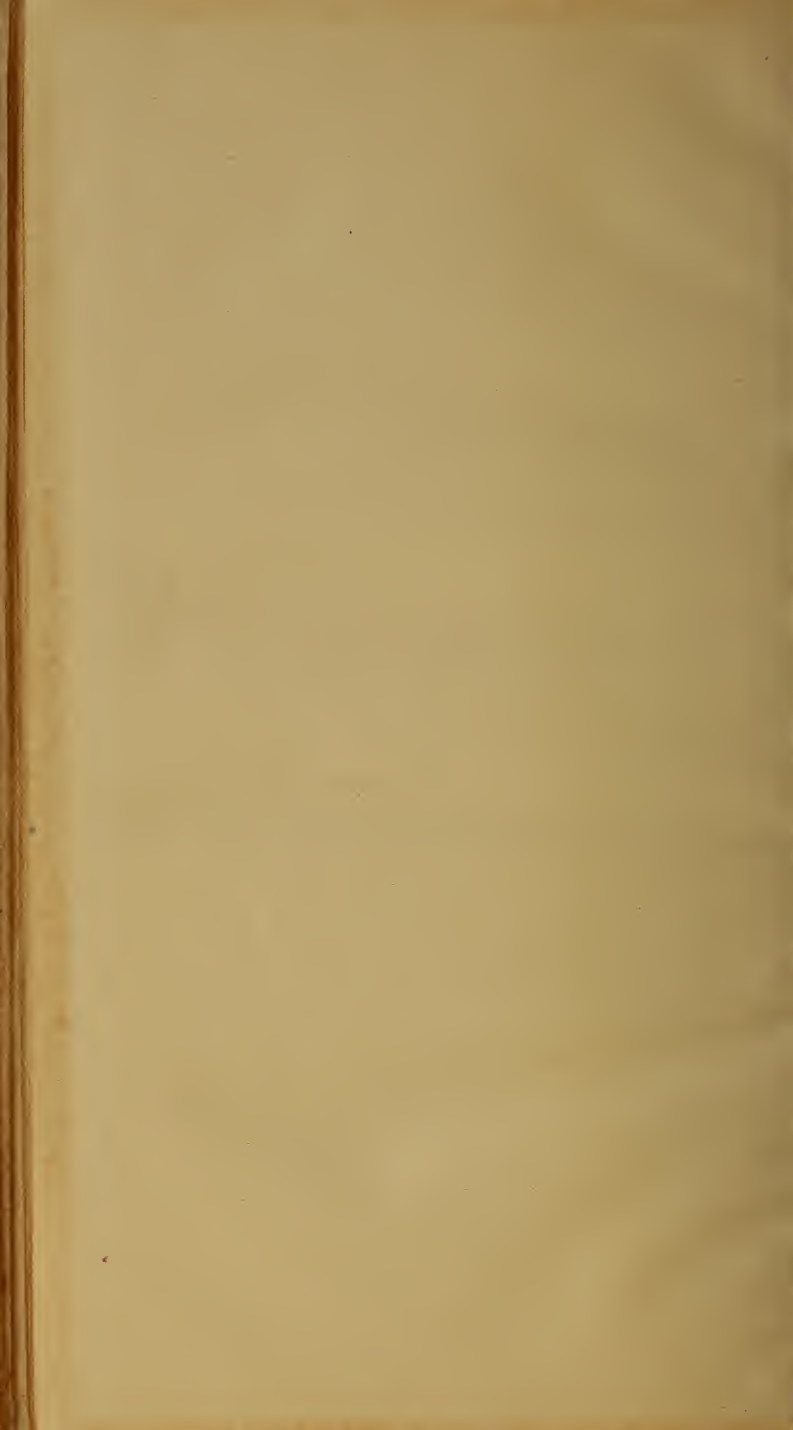




















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