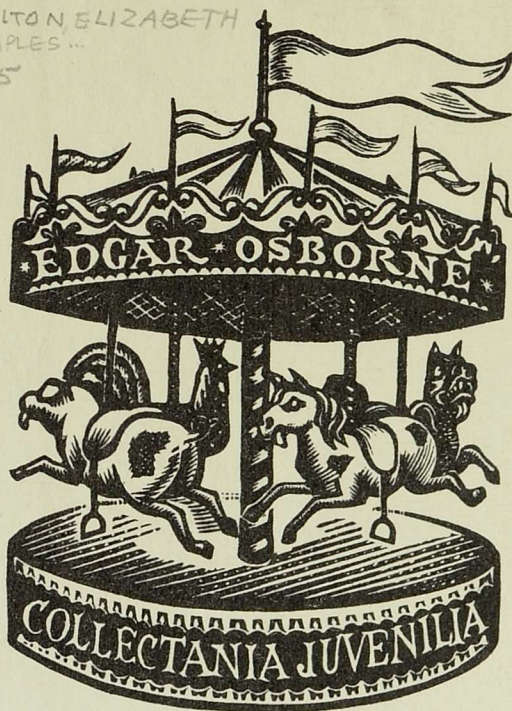


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EXAMPLES ...
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EXAMPLES
OF
QUESTIONS,
&c.

QUESTIONS
TO
EXAMPLES

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CALCULATED TO
EXCITE AND EXERCISE
THE
INFANT MIND.

BY
MRS ELIZABETH HAMILTON,
AUTHOR OF LETTERS ON THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF
EDUCATION, &c. &c.

LONDON:
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BROWN, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE method of instructing by interrogation is not an invention of modern date; it is, on the contrary, known to have been practised by some of the wisest and most revered of the ancient philosophers; nor has it, indeed, at any period fallen totally into disuse; but, though retained in form, it has been so perverted from its original purpose, that instead of being regarded as a mode of exciting the mind to an exertion of its powers, it is only resorted to as an expedient for assisting the memory, when it is our wish to impress it with axioms which the intellect is not prepared to receive, or comprehend. The pupil, in this case, does

not refer the question to his understanding, but finds it connected with the answer in his mind by an arbitrary association; and should he at an after period be led to reconsider the important truths which he thus learns to repeat by rote, as it is in the answers that he will find them to be contained, he will set aside the questions as superfluous.

But though the questions, in such instances, contribute little to instruction, when propositions are to be committed to memory, of a nature far remote from every idea with which the mind of the pupil is familiar, their use as a *memoria technica* is sufficiently obvious. Wherever, therefore, it is deemed necessary to impress upon the memory words and terms of mighty import, while the mind is yet incapable of attaching to them any corresponding idea, the form of question and answer will justly obtain a preference. Concerning the benefits

to be derived from the exercise, opinions may differ, but it must be admitted by all, that when a child is to be made to repeat answers to propositions beyond his comprehension, the words must necessarily be put into his mouth, for by his own mind they could not possibly be suggested.

What is thus learned may, at a future period, be recollected with advantage; but if the instruction contained in those propositions be of the utmost importance to his soul; if it be of a nature that nearly concerns his eternal welfare; can it be deemed safe or prudent to cast our sole dependance on the strength of his memory, which may, perchance, as the understanding opens, recal the truths we have impressed upon it to his consideration? Would it not be a safer and a better course, to endeavour to prepare his mind for comprehending the doctrines we so justly value, by enabling

him, through the exercise of his faculties, to acquire the intermediate ideas?

For the accomplishment of this high object the mode of instructing by interrogation appears well adapted. But when it is to be thus applied, we must carefully abstain from helping the pupil to the proper answer, as otherwise we shall be defeating our purpose; nor will such assistance be necessary, for questions that are calculated to excite to the acquirement of new ideas must be so adapted to the present state of the mind as to be easily understood; in which case the reply will be given spontaneously.

As questions are on this system resorted to, not as expedients to assist the memory, but as means of suggesting new ideas to the mind, and thereby preparing it for comprehending the important truths of religion, every question found beyond the comprehension of the pupil must be put aside as useless,

until, by suggesting ideas more nearly connected with those he is possessed of, the mind has been gradually expanded to the degree necessary for comprehending them.

In the following pages an attempt has been made to form a series of questions on this model. The examples given are, however, by no means presented as being adequate or complete, but merely as affording hints to the instructor concerning the mode of bringing the powers of the infant mind into action, and of exercising those powers. In each description of questions, as they severally apply to the understanding or the heart, much must necessarily be left to the discretion of the instructor, who may omit or enlarge at pleasure; taking care, in every instance, to modify the question so as it may be thoroughly understood. With this precaution, teachers in private families, by selecting such parts of the work as ap-

pear to them best adapted to the minds of their pupils, may avail themselves of whatever assistance it is calculated to afford in developing the faculties. It may thus, though composed chiefly with a view to the instruction of children in the lower stations, become in some degree useful in every station.

As, happily, in this part of the kingdom, a notion of the existence of a Supreme Being is in every situation in life one of the first ideas communicated to the infant mind, I have proceeded on the supposition, that some notion of Deity has been received. And as the questions intended to lead to a consideration of the attributes of the divine nature have been found perfectly intelligible to little girls of seven and eight years of age, recently admitted into a charity-school, it is to be hoped they will not be found beyond the capacity of any children of the same

age. To some they may perhaps appear objectionable, as being too simple and obvious. But if we wish to apply to the minds of children, we must not disdain to stoop to them. It is by taking hold of what they know, that we can alone lead them to greater knowledge, and only by awakening the affections that we can hope to raise the heart to God.

A 3

Q. Let all hold the first finger of their right hands pointing upwards, and then do you tell me which is most truly and exactly upright.

EXAMPLES, &c.

PART I.

Examples of Questions intended to exercise the Perceptions by attention to external objects.

SECTION I.

Questioner. Do you know the meaning of the words upright and across, and flat and crooked?

Answer.

Q. Let all hold the first finger of their right hands pointing upwards, and then do you tell me which is most truly and exactly upright.

A.

Q. Now let all hold the same finger straight across, or horizontal, as it is properly termed. Very well; next shew me what crooked means, by holding your finger crooked.

A.

Q. Do you know what is meant by slanting, or oblique? If you do, explain, by holding your finger in an oblique direction.

A.

Q. Let us now examine the tables and desks in the room: Is any part of that before us what you call flat?

A.

Q. Are any parts of the table upright?

A.

Q. Are any of its parts horizontal or straight across?

A.

Q. Is the surface of that desk flat like the table, or is it slanting?

A.

Q. Can you now describe to me the form of the table?

A.

Q. Are all tables made exactly of the same form? Describe then the form of any other table that you have seen.

A.

Q. Do you know the difference betwixt square and round? Here are two bits of paper, one square and one round; tell me which is square and which round?

A.

Q. Are all sides of a square of equal length? Fold that piece of paper from corner to corner, and you will discover whether they are exactly equal.

A.

Q. Can you now describe the nature of a square?

A.

Q. Examine this round or circular paper; fold and refold it, now open it, and

observe whether all the folds do not meet in the middle, or what is more properly called the centre. Next, look and tell me whether the outward edge be more distant from the middle in one part than in another?

A.

Q. A circle is always perfectly round, and the middle point of the circle is called the centre: Now give me an accurate description of a circle.

A.

Q. Can you describe to me the form of a cart-wheel? Is it square or circular?

A.

Q. Where do the spokes of the wheel meet?

A.

Q. Are all the spokes of a wheel of equal length?

A.

Q. Why are wheels made of a circular form, instead of being made square?

A.

Q. How many corners has a square?

A.

Q. Is every thing which has four corners exactly square?

A.

Q. Observe the shape of the door: Has it not four corners?

A.

Q. And is it exactly square? Is it equal in length and breadth?

A.

Q. When a thing is made longer than it is broad, it is called oblong: Now tell me the form of the door.

A.

Q. Repeat to me the meaning of the word *circular*.

A.

Q. Is a circle long or broad, or is it quite round?

A.

SECTION III.

On different Substances.

Questioner. Saw the air in this manner, back and forwards, with your hand : Does the air make any resistance ?

A.

Q. Strike the table with your hand : Does it yield to you as the air did ?

A.

Q. The table is a substance, and is therefore seen and felt. In this respect all substances are alike. What then is the nature of a substance ?

crease in them the quickness of discernment. The exercises, of which examples have been given in the two preceding sections, may be extended at pleasure, until accurate notions concerning the forms and appearances of all objects within reach of observation has been obtained.

A.

Q. But are all substances of the same sort or class?

A.

Q. You are to be seen and felt, your body is therefore a substance, so is a cabbage, for it also is a thing that we can both see and feel; but there is surely some difference between you and a cabbage-stock.

A.

Q. True, a cabbage grows in the ground, and you are a living creature: What grows in the earth is called vegetable, what lives is called animal, because it is animated. Now tell me whether you are an animal or a vegetable?

A.

Q. Is the hair of your head a substance?

A.

Q. Is hair an animal or vegetable substance?

A.

Q. Of what is that table made?

A.

Q. But what is wood? Did it ever grow in the earth?

A.

Q. Of what substance then is the table? Is it animal or vegetable?

A.

Q. Of what are those shoes made?

A.

Q. Of what is leather made?

A.

Q. Of what substance then is leather?

A.

Q. Are there any other sorts of substances besides animal or vegetable?

A.

Q. Look at the grate and fire-irons: are they either animal or vegetable?

A.

Q. They are made of iron, which is a metal, and all metals are mineral substan-

ces. Is this penny-piece made of copper?

A.

Q. Is copper a metal?

A.

Q. Of what substance then is the penny-piece?

A.

Q. Here is a pin. Of what substance is the pin? Is it mineral or vegetable?

A.

Q. Your memory may perhaps be assisted by a rhyme; learn to repeat,—

In earth the vegetables grow,

Fast rooted in the soil,

And minerals lie deep below,

Dug thence with care and toil.

But animals have power of motion,

For life to them is given;

On earth, or in the air or ocean,

Each kind's preserved by heaven.

SECTION IV.

Same Subject continued.

Questioner. Can you point out to me any thing of mineral substance?

A.

Q. Can you show me a vegetable production; for you know that whatever has been once a vegetable is of vegetable substance?

A.

Q. Can you show me any thing of animal substance?

A.

Q. But there is another class of which we have not yet spoken; I mean earthy substances, or substances belonging to the earth, being neither mineral nor vegetable. Did you ever see clay dug from the earth? Of what substance is the clay?

A.

Q. Does stone belong to the earth?

A.

Q. Of what substance is stone?

A.

Q. Yes, it is a hard earthy substance.

Now examine that framed writing-slate :

Are the slate and frame of the same sub-

stance?

A.

Q. Of what substance is the slate?

A.

Q. Of what substance is the frame?

A.

Q. Of what substance is the pencil?

A.

Q. Is this pen of the same substance
as the pencil?

A.

Q. Of what substance is the pen?

A.

Q. I shall now name things with
which you are familiar, and expect who-

ever I point to, or look at, to answer me, by saying of what substance the thing is of. To begin, then, I say, the floor?

A.

Q. The nails by which the boards are fastened?

A.

Q. The hearth?

A.

Q. A paper book?

A.

Q. The binding of a bound book?

A.

Q. A golden guinea?

A.

Q. The gold leaf with which bound books and other things are gilded?

A.

Q. A hair-brush?

A.

Q. A birch or broom besom?

A.

Q. A spinning-wheel?

A.

Q. Woollen yarn?

A.

Q. Lint or flax?

A.

Q. Linen yarn?

A.

Q. Cotton?

A.

&c. &c. *

* Children will soon learn to proceed of themselves in this exercise. Nor let it be supposed, that in being thus converted into an agreeable recreation, its utility in promoting the ends of education will be diminished. Between children who have spent their play hours in listless indolence, and those who, during the intervals devoted to relaxation, have been actively engaged in amusements which afford exercise, either to body or mind, a radical difference will be

 PART II.

*Examples of Questions calculated to lead
the mind to such a consideration of the
Divine Attributes as may tend to im-
press the heart.*

SECTION I.

Questioner. You are a living being ;
Who gave you life ?

Answer.

Q. Did not your parents live before
you were born ? Who gave life to them ?

A.

discernible. Much therefore does it concern every
teacher to encourage such recreations as may tend
to invigorate the faculties of his pupils.

Q. And who gave life to the parents of your parents?

A.

Q. Do you suppose, that in time to come God will give life to creatures yet unborn?

A.

Q. God has then existed in times that are past, and shall continue to exist in times that are to come?

A.

Q. Do you think that the earth, and the seas, and the skies, have been lately made; or that they were made a great great many ages ago?

A.

Q. By whom were they made?

A.

Q. God must then have lived before all worlds. Are there many sorts of living creatures in the earth?

A.

Q. Who made all those living creatures to exist?

A.

Q. Does the earth produce what is needful for the support of all who live in it?

A.

Q. Is it from the earth alone that we derive all that is necessary for our comfort? or has God been pleased that we should receive benefit from things placed at a distance from the earth?

A.

Q. What is it that gives us light by day?

A.

Q. Is not the sun at a great distance from the earth?

A.

Q. Yet, are we not cheered by its light, and warmed by its heat?

A.

Q. Does the sun shine on us because

it loves us ; or is it the love and mercy of God that makes it continue to enlighten us day by day ?

A.

Q. Is it not in the power of God to extinguish (or put out) the light of the sun, and thence to leave us in perpetual darkness ?

A.

Q. Is it not in the power of the Maker of all things to destroy the earth and all the worlds that he has made ?

A.

Q. But do you not trust and expect that God will continue to permit the sun to shine in its season ?

A.

Q. Do you not hope and trust that the earth will continue to produce food to supply the wants of living creatures ?

A.

Q. Why do you thus expect the continuance of these mercies ? Is it because

you believe that God is as good as he is powerful?

A.

Q. Where is God? Is he in heaven?

A.

Q. Are we then far removed from his sight?

A.

Q. Does he behold us continually?

A.

Q. Can we with our bodily eyes see God?

A.

Q. You see me and hear my voice; but do you see the spirit within me? Do you see the thoughts which stir my heart?

A.

Q. My spirit is confined within this body; but do you think that the spirit of the great and incomprehensible Father of our spirits is confined in the manner that ours are?

A.

Q. Is then the Almighty, by whose power the heavens and the earth were made, *now, at this moment*, near us? Do we stand in his sight?

A.

Q. When shall we be out of his sight?

A.

Q. At whatever time we pray to God, we are certain then of his being present to hear us?

A.

Q. When any one gives you what is good, do you feel glad and thankful?

A.

Q. If you were in danger of being killed, would you not be very grateful to any one who rescued you from the danger?

A.

Q. Would you strive on such occasions to show your gratitude?

A.

Q. Who gave you life and every blessing that you enjoy?

A.

Q. Who has by night and by day preserved your life?

A.

Q. And ought you not then to feel very thankful to God?

A.

Q. But if you really feel thankful, will you not express your thanks?

A.

Q. When you awake to the light of a new day, ought you not to thank him who has preserved you through the dark hours of night?

A.

Q. When you go to your bed at night, ought you not to express your gratitude to him who has protected you through the day from numerous dangers?

A.

SECTION II.

Experience of Personal Mercies.

Questioner. Can you walk and run?

Answer.

Q. Could you walk as soon as you were born?

A.

Q. Who taught you to walk? or do you think that you would have learned to walk without being taught?

A.

Q. No. If you had been left in a wood as soon as you were able to creep upon the ground, you would not have learned to walk, but have run upon your hands and feet all your life. Some poor unfortunate children, who, when deserted by their parents, have been found in different parts of the world; and these, even at the age of fourteen and fifteen,

did not walk as we do, but on their hands and feet; for they, poor things, had no example before them but the beasts of the field? Can you put on your own clothes? Can you dress yourself?

A.

Q. Who taught you thus to use your hands?

A.

Q. Do you think if you had been left in a forest, like the poor deserted children I have mentioned, that you could have dressed yourself if clothes had been given you?

A.

Q. Who carried you until you were able to walk?

A.

Q. Who cherished you in her bosom, and fed you and took care of you when you could not take care of yourself?

A.

Q. Were you ever sick ?

A.

Q. When you were sick, did your mother then watch over you, wishing all the time that you might recover ?

A.

Q. But had she it in her power by her wishes to preserve your life ?

A.

Q. By whose power then were you restored to health ?

A.

Q. Was it by God's blessing on your mother's care that you were restored ?

A.

Q. God then heard your mother when she prayed for you ; she asked for your recovery, and God granted what she asked.

A.

Q. You are much indebted to your mother ; is she not still anxious that you should be preserved from every danger ?

A.

Q. Can she save you from danger when you are out of her sight?

A.

Q. But does she not think of you, and love you, when you are absent from her?

A.

Q. Her mind can then be with you, though her body is at home: But can she, by thinking of you, prevent your being exposed to any injury?

A.

Q. It is then only while she is present with you that the strength of her arm has power to help you?*

* It will be perceived, that where children have been early deprived of parental care, by death or desertion, the form of the questions must be altered to suit their peculiar circumstances; and framed in such terms as may lead to a consideration of the goodness of God, in raising up to them the benefactors who have supplied to them the place of parents.

A.

Q. Is God Almighty confined to one place as we his creatures are?

A.

Q. Is God equally present, and always present, in heaven and earth, and in all places?

A.

Q. Can we ever, for a single moment of our existence, be out of his sight?

A.

Q. Can we speak so low as that God cannot hear what we say?

A.

Q. Can we think without his knowing the thoughts of our hearts?

A.

Q. Is God, who is thus all-seeing and all-wise, visible in our eyes? Can we see him as we see one another?

A.

Q. You believe that your mother thinks of you and loves you; but do you

see the thoughts of her heart? Do you see that within her which thinks and loves?

A.

Q. You feel the effects of her kindness, and therefore believe that she loves you in her heart, do you not?

A.

Q. And do you not feel the effects of the kindness and goodness of God, who has given you eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a mind capable of receiving instruction?

A.

Q. Who gave your mother the heart to love you? Who inspires every mother with fondness for the child of her bosom?

A.

Q. Who has given you the friends who have taken care of you when too young to take care of yourself?

A.

Q. By whom has your life been preserved to this present moment?

A.

Q. Is God still able to protect you?

A.

Q. Is it only in day-light, and while you are in company of your friends, that God is able to preserve you?

A.

Q. If God can preserve you by night as well as by day, would it not be very foolish to fear to be alone?

A.

Q. Have you ever heard of silly children who were afraid of being in the dark?

A.

Q. But can those who know and are assured that God surrounds them, and that his presence is on every side, be ever thus afraid?

A.

Q. Do you think yourself safe when

under the immediate care and protection of your mother?

A.

Q. But by whom has your mother been so long protected and preserved?

A.

Q. Has she from the first moment of her existence been in the presence of God, and fed by his bounty, and cherished by his goodness, and preserved by his mercy?

A.

Q. Has God, in giving life to you, bestowed a blessing on your parents?

A.

Q. Do we call that which makes us happy, or that which makes us unhappy, a blessing?

A.

Q. Do naughty and disobedient children make their parents happy?

A.

Q. But do not good and obedient chil-

dren gladden the hearts of their parents, and make them very happy indeed?

A.

Q. Would you like to be looked upon as a blessing by your parents and friends?

A.

Q. By what sort of behaviour will you give them most reason to rejoice in you?

A.

Q. Think then often of all that they have done for you; and, when you think of it, be thankful?

A.

SECTION III.

*Relating to the Provision made for our
Sustenance.*

Questioner. Are you glad to have bread to eat when you are hungry? . . .

A.

Q. Where does the bread come from ?

A.

Q. But of what does your mother or the baker make the bread ?

A.

Q. Who makes the flour or the meal ?

A.

Q. Of what does the miller make the meal ?

A.

Q. Meal or flour may be made of many different kinds of grain ; but of whatever sort it is made, whether of wheat, or oats, or barley, it is still made of grain. Now, of what is the flour that makes white bread or wheaten bread made ?

A.

Q. Of what is oat-meal made ?

A.

Q. Of what is barley-meal made ?

A.

Q. Well, you see, they are all made of grain. But where does the wheat, and oats, and barley come from? Does corn fall in showers from the skies, like hail or snow?

A.

Q. True: it does grow in the fields. But does the corn grow without having been sown?

A.

Q. Well, it is, as you say, sown by the farmer; but, after it is sown, can the farmer make it grow? Can the farmer nourish it with dews from heaven, and make the sun shine to ripen it?

A.

Q. You answer well; he cannot. The farmer tills the ground and sows the grain, but he can do no more. Who then is it that sends the rain in its season, and makes the summer's sun to shine, that it may ripen the fruits of the

earth, to fill our mouths with food, and our hearts with gladness ?

A.

Q. It is to God then that we are indebted for the bread we eat ; and do you not ask him for your daily bread ?

A.

Q. Repeat the Lord's Prayer.

A.

Q. In what part of this prayer do you ask of God the food of which we have been speaking ?

A.

Q. Are all sorts of food equally from God ?

A.

Q. Have you not been fed every day of your life with food necessary to your support ?

A.

Q. Has not God then been very good to you ?

A.

Q. And do you not love God for his goodness?

A.

Q. Ought you not to thank him for having been so good to you?

A.

Q. But how can you show that you are grateful to God?

A.

Q. When your parents or friends are very kind to you, do you not feel a desire to please them?

A.

Q. Then, if you believe that God has been very good to you, will you not desire to please him?

A.

Q. Do you think that God, who is all goodness, can be pleased with you if you are naughty, and obstinate, and disobedient?

A.

Q. Is it then only by being a good

child that you can show your sense of God's goodness to you?

A.

Q. If you really wish to show your gratitude to God, you will endeavour to please him, by being a good child. All who hear me will remember this;—If we love God for his goodness, our love to him will make us strive to be good, that we may please him.

A.

SECTION IV.

Clothing.

Questioner. Of what is that linen made?

Answer.

Q. Of yarn, spun by the wheel: but of what was the yarn made?

A.

Q. Do you know whether lint or flax (for it is the same thing) be a production of the earth, or an animal substance?

A.

Q. Very well. It does grow in the earth, and is beat out and combed by the lint-dressers, so as to be made fit for being spun upon the wheel. Can you now tell me if that stuff is made of lint?

A.

Q. Of what is it then made?

A.

Q. Of what is worsted yarn composed?

A.

Q. What is wool? Does wool grow in the earth like lint?

A.

Q. You have told me what wool is, and what lint is; now tell me distinctly which is the animal production, and which the vegetable production?

A.

Q. Of what is that calico made?

A.

Q. Is cotton an animal or vegetable production? If you do not know I will tell you.

A.

Q. Who buys the clothes you wear? who gives them to you?

A.

Q. Are you not very thankful to your friends for giving you clothes to keep you warm?

A.

Q. You ought indeed to be very grateful to the friends who take such kind care of you? But where do they get the clothing with which they provide you?

A.

Q. And who blesses them with the means? Would they have money to buy clothes for you were it not by the good providence of God?

A.

Q. You have told me that that stuff is made of worsted, spun from wool, and that wool grows on the backs of sheep: How do the sheep live? what is their food?

A.

Q. Who makes the grass to spring upon the mountains, for the subsistence of the flocks?

A.

Q. Have you ever seen the young lambs sporting by the side of their dams, and looking so happy, though so helpless?

A.

Q. Do you think that the little lambkins, when they first begin to eat, require young and tender grass?

A.

Q. What then do you think of the goodness of God, who ordains, that at the very season when the little lambs

come forth, the young grass should shoot its tender sprouts that they may feed?

A.

Q. Have you ever heard the bleating of a flock of sheep?

A.

Q. Do you think you could know the voice of one sheep from that of another?

A.

Q. Who then teaches the mother to know the bleat of her own lamb, and the lamb to know its own mother?

A.

Q. It is God then that preserves the flocks from perishing: and is it not then to God that we are indebted for all that the flocks produce?

A.

Q. The flax and the cotton grow in the fields, and are cultivated by the hands of man: but who made the earth in which they grow?

A.

Q. Does the lint, when it grows up and ripens, produce seed? and is that seed fit to be again sown to produce another crop of lint?

A.

Q. Suppose that the farmer, after he has dressed his ground, were to sow it with sand or pebbles instead of lint-seed, do you think that the pebbles and the sand would spring up and grow like corn or lint?

A.

Q. Can you tell me why we expect that the seeds should spring, and that the pebbles should not?

A.

Q. It is the nature of the seed to sprout on being placed in the earth; but who gave to the seed this nature?

A.

Q. Nature is then but another name for what is wrought and designed by Almighty God.

A.

Q. When you then hear it said that such and such things are the works of nature, do you clearly perceive and understand that the things spoken of are the works of God?

A.

Q. Has God in mercy made such provision for our food and clothing; and can any one deserve to be called *good* who is unthankful for his mercies?

A.

SECTION V.

Difference between Understanding and Instinct.

Questioner. Are you an animal; that is to say, a living creature?

Answer.

Q. Are birds and fishes, and cats and dogs, also living creatures?

A.

Q. Birds can fly in the air, and fish swim in the sea, but dogs and cats live on the earth as you do: In what then do you differ from a cat or dog?

A.

Q. But in what respect, besides shape, do you differ from them? Do they not eat, and drink, and sleep, as well as you do?

A.

Q. Do dogs and cats like to be kindly treated, and love those who treat them kindly?

A.

Q. Do you not likewise like to be kindly treated, and love those who are good to you?

A.

Q. So far then, it seems, there is no difference between you and them. But

can dogs and cats speak? Have they the use of language?

A.

Q. Though they cannot speak as we do, they make sounds to be understood by one another; and can plainly signify when they are angry or pleased. What can you do more?

A.

Q. Do the grown up people who are now your teachers know more than you do? Are they wiser than you are at present?

A.

Q. Were they not once little children like you?

A.

Q. When they were children, did they know as much as they know now; or were they then like you, ignorant of almost every thing?

A.

Q. Was it merely by growing big

that they became wise? or was it by attending to instruction?

A.

Q. Though only a little child, you can understand what I say to you: do you think a kitten could thus understand me?

A.

Q. Besides the gift of speech, you have then another gift bestowed on you above what is enjoyed by other sorts of animals; for have you not the gift of understanding?

A.

Q. That you may perceive this point distinctly, tell me, if you were very cold and saw the fire likely to go out, and that pieces of coal, or turf, or of wood fit for burning, were within reach, could you not contrive to keep in the fire?

A.

Q. How would you effect your purpose?

A.

Q. Do not dogs seem in cold weather to like the warmth of a good fire?

A.

Q. Large dogs can carry very heavy things in their mouths; but could the wisest of dogs contrive to mend the fire by adding fuel to it?

A.

Q. To contrive requires thought. You then have a degree of thought which the wisest of dogs have not; but if you were left by a friend in a strange place, when you lost sight of that friend could you trace him out by smelling his footsteps, following his course, and turning where he had turned, until you discovered where he was?

A.

Q. When a dog loses his master he can do all this; and though he were to be blindfolded and led to a great distance, could return on his own steps,

though he never saw the road; in this a dog can do more than any of us can do. Did he learn to do this (as we learn to do things) by attending to instruction; or did he do it from nature?

A.

Q. Did you ever see a bird's nest?

A.

Q. Would it not be a long time before you could learn to form such a nest; even though all the materials were placed within your reach?

A.

Q. Who taught the little bird to make its nest so neatly? Did it learn at a school?

A.

Q. Every kind of bird builds its nest in the way that is common to its kind.

A sparrow does not make its nest like the nest of a swallow, nor does the swallow build hers in the manner of the sparrow.

Do you think that either of them could

learn to imitate what is done by the other?

A.

Q. But though you perhaps might never be able to build a nest so neatly as a little bird, are you not in many instances able to do what you see done by others?

A.

Q. Do you wish and expect to be able in a little time to do more than you yet can do?

A.

Q. Do you think that any bird or beast has the wish or expectation to be able to do more than it can do at present?

A.

Q. Does not this show that your nature is superior to theirs?

A.

Q. If you had no wish or desire to learn more than you have yet learned, do you think that by such indifference

you would give proof of the superiority of your nature?

A.

Q. It is the nature of cats to catch mice. When you see a little kitten at play, and observe how quickly it springs on whatever it can lay hold of, and toss it in its paws, do you think it is acting contrary to nature?

A.

Q. If you, who are by nature capable of improvement, do not wish and endeavour to improve, whether will the kitten or you be acting most agreeably to your respective natures?

A.

Q. You think you have more understanding than a kitten?

A.

Q. How do you show or prove that you have more understanding?

A.

Q. Can you learn much in a single day?

A.

Q. What is twice one?*

A.

Q. Monday and Tuesday make two days:—If you learn, then, something on Monday, and as much on Tuesday, how much wiser will you be on Tuesday night than you were on Monday morning?

A.

Q. Go on to learn as much more on Wednesday, which will make three days; how much wiser will you then be?

A.

Q. Add a fourth day, Thursday, and will you not then be four times as wise as you were on Monday morning?

A.

* In what follows, the pupils are supposed to have obtained some knowledge of numbers.

Q. Friday will make a fifth, Saturday a sixth day; so that by Saturday you will have advanced six degrees in learning. But will you not still have much to learn?

A.

Q. If you spend one whole day without learning any thing, will you then, on Saturday night, know six times more than you did on Monday morning?

A.

Q. See then the value of a single day. You have told me that human beings are distinguished from brutes, by having minds capable of improvement: Will any who desire to improve be happy at the end of a week to think that they have lost a day?

A.

SECTION VI.

*Observation directed to Objects of
Nature.*

Questioner. You have discovered that corn, when sown in the ground, springs up and produces more corn; now, tell me, if you were to put a single grain (or pickle) of barley in the ground, what would you expect to spring from it?

Answer.

Q. You then expect that it would produce corn of its own kind, and not of any other kind?

A.

Q. Do shrubs and trees produce seed, each of its own kind?

A.

Q. Yes. The largest tree that you ever saw in all your life was once wrap-

ped up in a seed very little larger than the tip of your finger. From the seed it sprouted up, like the buds of a small flower; then it grew to the size of a small twig; and, year after year, continued growing and growing, till it raised its stately head to meet the skies, and spread its mighty branches on every side. Who formed it of a nature thus to grow, and to increase in bulk from year to year?

A.

Q. Are all trees of one kind, or have you ever observed any difference in their forms, and in the shape and colour of their leaves?

A.

Q. Do you know at sight the difference between a fir-tree, an oak-tree, and an apple-tree?

A.

Q. Trees which, when cut down, supply the carpenter with wood, are called forest-trees. Trees which produce fruit

are called fruit-trees. The floor of the room is made of fir-wood : Whether is fir a forest-tree or a fruit-tree ?

A.

Q. Of what kind is the apple-tree ?

A.

Q. Is there any seed in the heart of an apple ?

A.

Q. Has every seed in the apple a nice little chamber to itself, covered with a thin substance, which serves as a wall to separate the apartments, so as that one seed may not be injured by another ? *

A.

Q. It seems, then, that nature has provided for the preservation of the seed of the apple ?

* It will here be expedient to have an apple or orange to cut up before the pupils, in order to convince them of the truth of these remarks.

A.

Q. But does the part of the apple which we eat, and which we find so very good, tend also to protect the seed, and to afford it nourishment?

A.

Q. Yes. If the seeds were to be taken from the apple, and exposed to the air and to the cold, before they were quite ripe, they would be entirely spoiled. But might not the seeds have been preserved equally well in a substance not fit for eating?

A.

Q. Did God, in making every tree to bear seed after its kind, provide in his wisdom for the continuance of every sort of tree?

A.

Q. Did God in his goodness make the fruit which nourishes the seed afford, in many instances, a supply of wholesome and delicious food?

A.

Q. Have we not, then, even in the common productions of the earth, proofs of the wisdom and goodness of the Creator of all things?

A.

Q. Do you know that in some parts of the world the weather is always very warm, much warmer than on the hottest of our summer days?

A.

Q. Don't you think that people in such climates, oppressed as they must be by excessive heat, stand still in more need than we do of an abundant supply of refreshing fruit?

A.

Q. In our country, where it is never very warm, it requires care and pains to bring any fruit to perfection: But have you ever seen lemons and oranges, and other foreign fruits, which are sold in the shops?

A.

Q. In warmer climates, these, and various other fruits, grow naturally in the fields. Is it not happy for the inhabitants that they are there so plentiful?

A.

Q. Did the Creator of the world know that the people who were to live in such warm climates would stand particularly in need of fruit to quench their thirst and revive their spirits?

A.

Q. If, therefore, God ordained, that in those countries fruits of all kinds should grow in greater abundance than with us, what does it teach us to think of the wisdom and goodness of God, in having thus provided beforehand for the wants of his creatures?

A.

Q. But is it for human beings only that God has provided a supply of food and clothing?

A. But has God enabled you to know

Q. In what manner are the birds of the air clothed? How are their bodies covered from the cold?

A.

Q. What clothing have the beasts?

A.

Q. Can animals of any kind live without food?

A.

Q. Are the birds and wild animals that live in the fields fed by the hands of men, or do they gather food for themselves?

A.

Q. Who directs them to chuse the sort of food that is most proper for them? Who informs each little bird what seed or berry is fit for its nourishment, and what is not?

A.

Q. Who provides for every species what is necessary for its existence?

A.

Q. But has God enabled you to know what is good for you?

A.

Q. Birds and beasts are directed by the nature which God has given them. What name do we usually give to the sagacity which enables them to chuse what is good for them?

A.

Q. If God has not given you an equal portion of instinctive sagacity, has he bestowed on you nothing in its stead?

A.

Q. Are ripe cherries very good to eat?

A.

Q. Birds are as fond of cherries as any of us can be: But can a bird, after having pecked the pulp of a cherry, be made to observe the stone in which the kernel is enclosed, so as to perceive in it the means taken by the wisdom of Providence for securing the safety of the

kernel, which may afterwards become a cherry-tree?

A.

Q. Which, then, is best,—to have instinct to direct to food fit for the support of the body, or to have understanding capable of perceiving, in the works of God, the wisdom and goodness of the great Creator?

A.

Q. From the time that a little bird is able to use its wings, and to fly from the nest, it never improves in knowledge: But have not you learned much since you first began to walk?

A.

Q. How have you learned all that you already know? Was it by observing and listening to others?

A.

Q. Who provided for you such opportunities of instruction?

A.

Q. God has then not only given you understanding, but supplied you with the means of improving it: Does it stand still in need of farther improvement?

A.

Q. You have not, then, as yet acquired all the sense and all the knowledge which you think it will be necessary for you to have?

A.

Q. Suppose that you were to be now shut up apart from all society; do you think, that as you grew big your understanding would improve without farther instruction?

A.

Q. Do you then still stand in need of continued opportunities of improvement?

A.

Q. Who is alone able to provide for you the continuance of such opportunities?

A.

Q. Is it to the goodness and mercy of your heavenly Father that you are indebted for the friends and benefactors that have taught you all you know?

A.

Q. Are you thankful for his goodness?

A.

Q. How may you best shew your gratitude?

A.

SECTION VII.

Farther Consideration of Personal Endowments.

Questioner. Can you tell me how many fingers you have upon each hand?

Answer.

Q. What is this hard substance that I feel within? Is it bone?

A.

Q. How many pieces of bone are there in this thumb?

A.

Q. How many in each of these fingers?

A.

Q. By what means are these three pieces of bone in each finger so firmly joined one to the other?

A.

Q. Bend your fingers, and try whether these joints or hinges are not very firm.

A.

Q. With what are the bones immediately covered?

A.

Q. Can you see in some places the veins that carry the blood down to the very finger ends?

A.

Q. Would it give you pain to have these small veins laid open?

A.

Q. By what means are the flesh and blood covered and protected?

A.

Q. What is it that gives firmness to the ends of your fingers, and protects the skin from injury?

A.

Q. Can you turn the middle joint of your finger as you turn the joint of your wrist?

A.

Q. Had the joint of your wrist been made exactly like the joints of your fingers, would you ever have been able to play at ball?

A.

Q. Do you see any other advantage in being able to turn the hand upon the wrist?

A.

Q. Your hand seems then to have been formed for some particular purpose: What do you think it was intended for?

A.

Q. Did you ever take notice of the paw of a cat?

A.

Q. In what does the cat's paw differ from your hand?

A.

Q. The bones and joints of the cat's paw are formed as nicely as the bones and joints of your fingers. The cat has as much the use of its joints as you have of yours: But can it use them to the same purpose; or do they seem formed for a different purpose?

A.

Q. Is it the nature of cats to catch mice?

A.

Q. If, instead of being armed with

sharp claws, they had only nails such as we have, would it be an advantage to them, or otherwise?

A.

Q. Think again of the difference between the form of your hand and the paw of a cat; then tell me whether each were fitted for the same purpose, or for different purposes?

A.

Q. Were both formed by one wise and great Creator?

A.

Q. Does it then appear to you that God gave to every living creature the form best suited or adapted to its particular nature?

A.

Q. Our hands are evidently fitted for performing various sorts of work: Do those who employ their hands usefully, or those who never do any thing, best answer the design of their Creator, who

bestowed on them hands formed for use?

A.

Q. Have you ever known or heard of children who employed their hands in doing mischief or injury to others?

A.

Q. Was it, think you, to enable us to hurt or molest our fellow-creatures, that God bestowed upon us hands so admirably formed?

A.

Q. But perhaps the great and wise Creator of all things no longer sees or knows what is done in the world which he made: What is your notion of this?

A.

Q. If God sees us always, during every moment of our lives, he must see when we make an ill use of any of his gifts: Are our hands the gift of God?

A.

Q. Do you think that God can ap-

prove of our making an ill use of the hands which he has given us?

A.

Q. Can you now do much that is useful?

A.

Q. You have not then as yet attained the full use of your hands?

A.

Q. Though you were never to do any thing your hands would in time grow large and strong; but, though increased in strength and size, if not accustomed to work, they would not be serviceable: What then must you now do, in order to prepare your hands for being fully serviceable to yourself and others?

A.

Q. Describe to me the shape of your foot.

A.

Q. Have the animals that go on four legs feet of the same form as yours?

A.

Q. What posture does the form of your feet enable you to assume?

A.

Q. Would such a form of foot be of any use to horses and cows?

A.

Q. But by the form of your feet you are not only enabled to stand erect, but to walk and run: Rise on tiptoe, and observe whether there be any joint in your foot that assists you in running and in walking.

A.

Q. Can you turn out your toes?

A.

Q. How are you enabled to do this?

A.

Q. Can your leg turn in the same manner on the knee-joint?

A.

Q. The joint at the knee and the joint at the ankle must then, it seems, be

somewhat different in their form or construction?

A.

Q. It is but little that any of you can at present comprehend of the nature of your frame; but, even in the few particulars that you are able to notice, you may see enough to give you some distant notion of the wisdom of Him who formed you: Do you know how many senses you have?

A.

Q. Can you see?

A.

Q. Well, you have then seeing; that is one sense. Can you hear?

A.

Q. Hearing is another sense. Can you feel what you touch?

A.

Q. Feeling or touch is a third sense. If you can smell, and taste, these are two other senses. Reckon them distinctly, and tell me how many there are in all?

A.

Q. Have you ever seen the inside of a watch or clock, with all its wheels in motion?

A.

Q. You are not yet wise enough to be made to understand the nature of such curious machinery, but you understand the effects: You know that these wheels are contrived so as to make the hands upon the dial-plate move, and point exactly to the hour of the day?

A.

Q. When you observe how punctually the hand of the clock points to the hour,

you are not so foolish as to suppose that it would thus go, if the workmanship within were destroyed or taken away?

A.

Q. Do the movements of the clock depend on the nature of the workmanship?

A.

Q. You are not yet capable of comprehending the wonderful and admirable structure or formation of the eye; but do you not think that it must be infinitely more nice and curious than that of the inside of a watch or clock?

A.

Q. Look straight forward,—then up,—and down,—to the right,—and to the left;—and then tell me whether your eyes are fixed so as to see only in one direction?

A.

Q. Do you derive great advantage

from this power of looking round you in all directions?

A.

Q. Did the great Creator provide for you this advantage when he ordained the form of the eye?

A.

Q. Are your eyes dry like the skin, or have they over them a certain portion of moisture?

A.

Q. Are your eyes ever filled with water, so as to overflow in drops?

A.

Q. What do you call those drops of water which fall from your eyes when you cry?

A.

Q. Do you see very clearly when your eyes are thus filled with water?

A.

Q. Neither could you see if your eyes were quite dry. It seems then neces-

sary that there should be some contrivance for wiping the eye, to disperse the tears, and keep it in a proper state of moisture : What is there about your eye that seems intended to answer this useful purpose of wiping it?

A.

Q. Have you ever had a mote in your eye?

A.

Q. Would the smallest grain of sand blown into the eye, not only hinder one to see, but occasion great pain?

A.

Q. Are your eyes, like the rest of your face, exposed to every shower of dust; or are you provided with the means of protecting them?

A.

Q. You wink hard when aware of the danger; but, were your eyelids not furnished with that little fringe at the edge, they could not afford to your eyes con-

stant and complete protection as they now do: What do you call that fringe which is so ornamental and so useful to the eyelid?

A.

Q. Is the ear the organ of hearing?

A.

Q. Do you suppose the frame or construction of the ear to be less wonderful than that of the eye?

A.

Q. But do you see so much of the construction of the ear, as to enable you to form a notion of the parts within that are concealed from our observation?

A.

Q. Why is the machinery of a watch enclosed within a case? Is it because it is coarse and ugly, or because it is so very nice and delicate that it would suffer from exposure?

A.

Q. Now, tell me why the machinery

of the ear is, in your opinion, concealed from our view?

A.

Q. True; it is indeed admirably fine and delicate. Nor are the organs by which you are enabled to feel, and to taste, and to smell, less wonderfully formed. Would you greatly feel the want of any of these senses?

A.

Q. They then contribute greatly to your happiness?

A.

Q. Who bestowed on you the blessings of sight and hearing, and the other senses?

A.

Q. But if the organs of all your five senses be very nicely and delicately formed, may they not be very easily injured?

A.

Q. You have lived some time, and yet

they seem to be all safe: by whom have they been preserved?

A.

Q. It seems then that you have, ever since you came into the world, been under the care and protection of God?

A.

Q. Does God, even to the present moment, still continue to protect you?

A.

Q. Do you naturally love them who are good to you?

A.

Q. When you walk upon your feet, when you use your hands and arms, is it from the goodness of God that you are thus happy in the enjoyment of such powers of motion?

A.

Q. Is God good to you, in enabling you to see and hear?

A.

Q. And do you love the Being who is so very good to you?

A.

Q. Will you think more of his goodness than you have ever thought of it before?

A.

Q. The more you think of it will you not love him the more?

A.

Q. Do children feel very joyful when running and skipping at their sports?

A.

Q. But does not a little kitten, when it frolics about at play, seem also to be very happy?

A.

Q. Does the kitten know to whose goodness it owes the power of being happy?

A.

Q. The kitten enjoys itself as much as

you do; in what then are you happier than the kitten?

A.

Q. Do birds and beasts see, and hear, and touch, and taste, and smell, as well as you?

A.

Q. The great Creator of all things has then, it seems, given to other animals beside man the nice and delicately formed organs of those different senses. But when birds and beasts open their eyes on the light of day, do they know who gave them the power of seeing what the light of day displays to view?

A.

Q. A dog is very grateful to the master who feeds him, and even cats, though not so sensible as dogs, shew a sense of gratitude to those who are kind to them. Were those thankful creatures capable of being made to understand that all they enjoy is from God, would they, do

you think, be grateful to him for his gifts?

A.

Q. Are you less capable of thankfulness than a cat or dog?

A.

Q. And do you know that it is from God you have received all that you have and enjoy?

A.

Q. What use do you make of this knowledge?

A.

SECTION VIII.

On the necessity of Notice or Observation.

Questioner. Has God, in giving you sight, bestowed on you a great blessing?

Answer.

Q. Are you very thankful to God for being able to see?

A.

Q. Do you think that God gave you sight in order that you might always see what was before your eyes?

A.

Q. But do you really always see all that is within reach of your sight?

A.

Q. Does it never happen, that though sitting within sight of the door, you do not perceive whether it is shut or open?

A.

Q. Does it never happen, that though sitting by the fire-side, you do not observe whether the hearth be clean or dirty; or whether the fire-irons be in their proper places?

A.

Q. Do you always, without being desired to notice, observe whether things

that ought to be laid in a straight line are so or not?

A.

Q. When you do not perceive these things, is it because they are not within reach of your sight?

A.

Q. Do you at such times make use of your eyes, or do you not?

A.

Q. If any of your companions were to come before you with a fool's cap on her head, do you think that you would not immediately observe her dress?

A.

Q. It seems, then, that you do not fail to see whatever by its strange appearance attracts your notice?

A.

Q. But did God bestow on you the blessing of sight, for no other purpose but that you might see such things as strike your fancy?

A.

Q. Have you the power to see whatever you chuse to notice?

A.

Q. Is it by noticing useful things, or by noticing foolish things, that you will be most likely to improve in knowledge and in usefulness?

A.

Q. Have we in the glorious works of creation, in the sun, and moon, and stars, and in the earth and all that it produces, proofs of the wisdom, and goodness, and power of the great Creator?

A.

Q. Ought we then, or ought we not, to take notice of every object of nature which comes within reach of our observation?

A.

Q. When you take notice of the beauty of the sky above, or of ought that springs in the earth, and at the same time raise

your heart in thankfulness to the Creator, are you then making a good use of the blessing of sight?

A.

Q. But were you to take notice only of such things, would you ever learn to become useful to others?

A.

Q. Is it then necessary for you to learn to observe things of a lower order,—the things that are commonly around you?

A.

Q. Of two threads, one person sees at a glance which is the finest, while another, with sight equally good, sees no difference between them. Now, tell me to which of these two persons the blessing of sight is most truly useful?

A.

Q. Of two servants employed in such household work as necessarily soils the hands, one sees not that her hands are dirty, and even sees not the dirty marks

they make on the walls or doors, or whatever they touch, while the other no sooner soils her hands than she observes the circumstance, and touches nothing until they are restored to cleanness. Now, tell me the cause of this difference between them; does one see better than the other?

A.

Q. Of two girls walking in the street, one shall see a horse or carriage coming up, and, while it is yet at a distance, shall move deliberately out of its way, while the other, not seeing its approach, walks on till it is quite close to her, and then, in fright, knows not which way to run, and is perhaps run over at the peril of her life: Is it not then happy for her who had acquired the habit of taking notice?

A.

Q. Do you hear my voice?

A.

Q. Do you hear the people who are talking in the next street as distinctly as you hear me?

A.

Q. You can then only hear at a certain distance?

A.

Q. Do you always notice what is said when those who speak are within reach of your hearing?

A.

Q. I believe so; you do not always notice. Now tell me, when it so happens that you do not notice what is said, is your hearing at such times of any use to you?

A.

Q. Have you it always in your power to notice?

A.

Q. It is then in your power to hear, or not to hear, as you give your mind to it?

A.

Q. If you only hear when you attend to what is said, to what sort of discourse ought you to attend or listen?

A.

Q. Do those who never willingly listen to any thing but nonsense, make a proper use of the gift of hearing?

A.

Q. Do those who willingly listen to bad words, or bad advice, show that they are thankful to God, who gave them ears to hear?

A.

Q. When you listen to the instructions of your parents and teachers, do you then

make that use of your hearing which is pleasing to God?

A.

Q. And ought you not to endeavour to please him, who, in his goodness, has endowed you with so many precious gifts?

A.

Q. Some of the little birds that fly in the air, and some of the four-footed animals that walk the earth, are more quick sighted than any of us; but can they so take notice of what they see as to improve in usefulness?

A.

Q. How are you in this respect superior to them?

A.

Q. To take notice of what one sees, in order to become useful, is then a proof of understanding?

A.

Q. If two branches of berries, one

white, the other black, were placed before you, and you were told that the white berries were poisonous, and the black ones wholesome, which would you chuse to eat?

A.

Q. But if the white berries looked very rich and ripe, might you not be tempted to taste them, though you were told that they would make you sick, and even make you die?

A.

Q. You have then, as you think, sense enough to chuse between good and evil?

A.

Q. But if you had not been told which of the sorts of berries was wholesome and which was poisonous, would you, *of your own self*, have known which to chuse?

A.

Q. Young beasts that graze in the fields learn from nature to avoid what is poisonous; but you, it seems, do not

learn this from nature; you have to learn it in another way: In what way, then, are you to obtain a knowledge of what is good for you?

A.

Q. Whether will he who carefully listens to advice and instruction, or he who never minds or notices what is said to him, be most apt to profit by the advice or admonition of his friends?

A.

Q. Were you ever warned of the danger of going too near the fire?

A.

Q. Have you ever heard of any child who, after having been instructed in the nature of the danger, has, nevertheless, gone so near the fire as to have its clothes set on blaze, by which it has been dreadfully burned?

A.

Q. When a child suffers great pain from such an accident, whether will it

be glad or sorry for not having minded or attended to the warning?

A.

Q. Children are always told, that it is dangerous to go very near the fire; but do those who do not attend to this admonition always suffer? Do they not sometimes go very near the fire, and escape unhurt?

A.

Q. Have those who do not suffer for their disobedience any reason to think themselves very wise for having disobeyed?

A.

Q. It is not then a proof of understanding, but of folly, in children to do what they are forbidden to do?

A.

Q. Are dogs and cats fond of being near the fire?

A.

Q. When a child suffers from such an accident, what should be done?

Q. A well trained dog will not, however, venture in his master's presence to go upon the hearth : How is a dog thus trained to keep from that which he likes? Is it by instructing him in the consequences?

A.

Q. The poor dog could not understand his master's reasons, and therefore he is beat and threatened into obedience;—while his master's eye is upon him he obeys through fear, but, when no one is in the room to see him, will he still keep away from the fire if he has a great inclination to go near it?

A.

Q. The dog, poor creature, is not to blame, for he could not understand why he was forbid : but is this the case with children?

A.

Q. Are children always able to under-

stand the reasons why they are desired to do this, or forbid to do that?

A.

Q. But are not children able to understand, that those who are better instructed than themselves must know many things of which they are as yet ignorant?

A.

Q. Are not children able to understand, that they depend upon instruction?

A.

Q. Whether then is it proper for children to do what they are forbid to do, because of not being able to understand why they are forbid; or is it right and proper that they should obey without murmuring, and attend to the instruction that is to make them wise hereafter?

A.

Q. If you make a good use of the understanding with which God has endow-

ed you, will you not then carefully avoid what you are desired to avoid as dangerous?

A.

SECTION IX.

On Labour and Design, shewing the necessity of Mental and Physical Exertions.

Questioner. Of what are the walls of this house, (or the walls of the church), built?

Answer.

Q. Of what are the partitions which separate one room from another commonly made?

A.

Q. Is there any difference between stone and brick?

A.

Q. Where do stones come from? How are they obtained?

A.

Q. Are bricks likewise quarried from the rock?

A.

Q. True: Bricks are made of earth hardened in the fire; but how is the earth dug up? is it by means of an implement called a spade?

A.

Q. Of what is the spade made?

A.

Q. Of what are the instruments made by which the stones are hewn from the rock, and cut and chiselled by the mason?

A.

Q. Trees are cut down by an axe: Of what are such axes made?

A.

Q. Are the saws by which the wood is cut into boards, and the other tools by

which it is formed to the carpenter's purposes, all likewise from iron?

A.

Q. Is iron a metal, or is it an earthy or a vegetable substance?

A.

Q. Is iron fit for being used, as stone is, on being taken out of the earth; or must it be prepared for use by the smith?

A.

Q. Is it always, for whatever purpose it is intended, equally well polished?

A.

Q. Of what is the fire-shovel made? And the fine needles used in nice needle-work, of what are they made?

A.

Q. You perceive then that iron may be wrought to an extraordinary degree of perfection. Is it by the labour of men's hands that it is made to answer so many useful purposes?

A.

Q. Have the materials of which our houses are built been laid up, as if in stores, for us from the foundation of the world?

A.

Q. But can the metals be taken from the mine, or the trees be cut down for wood, or the stones be quarried from the rock, or the bricks be prepared for use, without much labour?

A.

Q. Was it not in the power of him who made the world and all that it contains, to have formed the rocks into houses and comfortable dwellings?

A.

Q. If God had thought it good for man to live in idleness, would he thus have made him to depend for every comfort on his own exertions?

A.

Q. It seems then that idleness is not good for us in the sight of God, and that

he has in his wisdom ordained that we should depend for all our earthly comforts on the exertion of skill and industry?

A.

Q. Is skill in any art to be obtained at once, or is it acquired gradually by attending to instruction?

A.

Q. Do you see any proofs of contrivance, or design, in the building we are now in; or do you see only proof of the labour of men's hands?

A.

Q. Does contriving require thought? Could any thing useful be contrived without thinking?

A.

Q. Thinking is the labour of the mind: When a man sits down to contrive such a house as this, is it his body or his mind that labours?

A.

Q. Has God then intended and rendered it necessary for us that we should labour with the mind as well as with the body?

A.

Q. Brutes are strong, and many of them can be made to work; but can they be made to labour with their minds?

A.

Q. When you repeat words with your lips, without any attention to the meaning or sense of what you say, is it a part of your bodily frame, or is it your mind that is then at work?

A.

Q. Monkeys can chatter with their lips, and parrots can repeat words very distinctly; but has not God given you ability to do more than monkeys and parrots?

A.

Q. When you repeat what you have got by heart, without knowing or attend-

ing to the meaning, do you at that time make any use of the understanding in which you are superior to parrots and monkeys?

A.

Q. When you endeavour to understand, is it your mind that then labours?

A.

Q. Can you understand a lesson without attention?

A.

Q. But do you not find it necessary to pay attention to other things besides lessons?

A.

Q. When girls are very dirty and slovenly in their persons, is it because they have not hands to make themselves clean and neat?

A.

Q. Can the slovenly make use of their hands when they please?

A.

A.

Q. Are those who are very dirty often found ready enough to use their hands in doing mischief?

A.

Q. But do neatness and cleanliness require attention?

A.

Q. Is attention a labour of the mind?

A.

Q. Have you now discovered the reason why some who have hands do nevertheless remain dirty and slovenly in their persons?

A.

Q. Of two women equally strong, one shall carry a bason full of water from one end of the house to the other without spilling a drop, while the other woman cannot carry the same bason full of water without spilling at every step: What is the reason of this difference?

A.

Q. Yes: One had been accustomed to pay attention to what she was doing, and the other had not. That is to say, one had learned to use her mind when she used her hands, while the other had only learned to use her hands and not her mind. Which of these two persons would first observe that the water had been spilled upon the floor?

A.

Q. Can then a house be kept neat and orderly without some labour of the mind?

A.

Q. Is it by practice and habit that we become able to make good use of our hands in various sorts of work?

A.

Q. How are we to render ourselves able to make constant use of our minds?

A.

Q. In learning to perform any sort of handy-work, are those who have been

early accustomed to employ their hands, or those whose hands have been seldom or never employed in work, most likely to succeed?

A.

Q. In order to be neat-handed, is it then necessary to begin to use one's hands as soon as possible?

A.

Q. But will those who can only work with their hands, without being able to observe, or to know whether they are working to any purpose, be as useful to themselves and others as those who are able both to contrive and to execute?

A.

Q. Are those then best off who can use their hands and their minds at the same-time?

A.

Q. Do you think that this can easily be done by those who have never been

accustomed to pay attention to what they were doing?

A.

Q. It is then as necessary to begin by times to use the mind as to begin by times to use the hands. Those who have never learned to use their minds, will never do any sort of work thoroughly nor properly. Even in such trifling things as washing one's hands and sweeping the hearth, those who have never been accustomed to observe will be found deficient. Learn, therefore, whatever you do, to give attention to what you are about.

 PART III.

*Examples of Questions calculated to lead
the Mind to form just Notions of the
Religious and Social Duties.*

SECTION I.

Treatment of the Inferior Animals.

Questioner. Do you like to feel happy?

Answer.

Q. Who has given you the spirit of
enjoyment?

A.

Q. Yes: When you feel glad and
happy it is God who gives you gladness.
He delights to see all creatures happy,
and if you are good will make you happy

forever. If God who makes you happy has given you power to make other creatures happy or miserable, how ought you to use that power?

A.

Q. Are you happy when in pain?

A.

Q. Do you think that birds and beasts feel pain as much as you do?

A.

Q. Can they be happy while in pain?

A.

Q. God has made happiness for every creature that lives. The very flies, who buzz about and sport in the sun-beam, enjoy themselves as you do in the hours of play: But if you torture them by tearing off their wings, will they then be happy?

A.

Q. Has God given them the power of enjoyment, in order to give you an opportunity of making them miserable?

A.

Q. Do not the birds in the air seem very happy creatures? How joyfully do they sing among the branches of the green trees! With what pleasure do they skim through the air, as they carry home the food they have gathered for their tender young! As they approach the nest, and hear the chirps of the little brood, their hearts beat with joy, and their little wings flutter with delight. But if, instead of hearing the voices of their little ones, they should, on returning to the nest, hear the loud clamours of wicked children, and behold their nest torn down, and their darling young expiring in the grasp of some mischievous boy, would they be any longer happy?

A.

Q. Who gave to little boys and girls the power of making those innocent creatures miserable?

A.

Q. But will God approve of their making such a use of the power he permits them to have over the weaker than themselves?

A.

Q. Are dogs and cats God's creatures?

A.

Q. Do they feel pleasure and pain?

A.

Q. Are they like you glad to eat when they are hungry, and to drink when they are thirsty; and are they grateful to those who treat them kindly?

A.

Q. But have not those who keep dogs power to starve, and kick, and beat them?

A.

Q. Does God, who is everywhere present, observe such conduct with pleasure or with displeasure?

A.

Q. Would the man who starves his dog like to be starved himself?

A.

Q. From whose bountiful goodness is it that he himself has bread to eat?

A.

Q. And is it a proper return that he makes to the goodness of God, when he starves or ill uses the creature over whom God has given him power?

A.

Q. Are not cats likewise God's creatures?

A.

Q. And are they not very useful to man?

A.

Q. Are the shape and motions of a cat ugly and disagreeable?

A.

Q. Is not the soft fur with which the cat is clothed very beautiful, stained, as it often is, with various dyes?

A.

Q. What sort of sound does a cat make when it is happy?

A.

Q. And is the purring of a cat disagreeable?

A.

Q. Does a good mind like, or dislike the sight of happiness?

A.

Q. Is it good, or is it wicked, to take pleasure in the misery of any living creature?

A.

Q. Can they then be good boys who take pleasure in chasing, and hurting, and killing cats?

A.

Q. Has not every creature the power of giving pain to those who are weaker than itself?

A.

Q. A dog can kill a cat; a cat can

kill rats and mice. The larger beasts of prey, such as lions and tigers, kill and devour all weaker animals that come within their reach; for God has been pleased to make this their nature: But has God given to these animals instinct, or has he given them understanding for the guide of their actions?

A.

Q. When a cat sees a little mouse, is it capable of thinking of the goodness of the Creator, in conferring, even on such little animals, the power of enjoyment?

A.

Q. When the cat pounces on its little prey, is it capable of reflecting on the pain it gives?

A.

Q. But are boys, like cats and tigers, guided by instinct, or has God endowed them with understanding?

A.

Q. Are they capable of perceiving the goodness of God, in having given to all living creatures the power of enjoyment?

A.

Q. Are they capable of forming a notion of the sufferings occasioned by the pain of blows and wounds; also of the sufferings of terror?

A.

Q. When they then, without any provocation, torture and destroy cats, or other animals, by what spirit are they impelled? Is it by the spirit of cruelty?

A.

Q. It is certainly cruel to take pleasure in inflicting pain. But it is from being vain of the power they have to frighten and molest such creatures, that boys are often led thoughtlessly to acts of cruelty: Now, has any one reason to be vain of the power he derives from his size or strength?

A.

Q. On whom does every human being depend for the preservation of activity, and strength, and every personal advantage?

A.

Q. Is it in gratitude to God, that those who are strong and active employ the power he has given them, in maiming, or hurting the creatures to whom he has given life and happiness?

A.

Q. But has not God given us power over the lives of the inferior animals?

A.

Q. Does this give us any right to torture them? Ought we not rather, in thankfulness to God, to be at great pains, when it is necessary to take life, to make the death of the animal as easy as possible?

A.

Q. God has given his permission that

animals may be killed for the use of man ; but then their lives must be taken from them without putting them to unnecessary torture. The butcher, whose trade it is to kill sheep and oxen, is not cruel, unless he takes pleasure in making them suffer pain : Now, tell me what it is to be cruel ?

A.

Q. Is it likely that any one would, at the very moment he was thinking of God's goodness to himself, be cruel to other creatures ?

A.

Q. In order then to avoid all cruelty, we must often think of the goodness of God to us, and to all other creatures : we must remember, that his mercies are over all his works, and that, as he has made every living creature to be happy while it lives, though he has given us power over the lives of the inferior ani-

mals, he has given us no right to make them miserable.

SECTION VII.

Social Affections.

Questioner. Has God Almighty shewn great goodness and mercy towards you, in blessing you with the friends by whom you have been cherished and protected?

Answer.

Q. Have not your friends been made the instruments of good to you?

A.

Q. Would you think it a great happiness if God should permit you to become the instrument of good to others?

A.

Q. To whom would you, in that case,

think yourself bound to do good? Would it not be to the friends with whom God has blessed you?

A.

Q. Are you sure that you would thankfully receive from God the power of doing good to them?

A.

Q. Do you think that any one does good to you who takes pains to contribute to your happiness?

A.

Q. Can a child, by constant obedience, and affectionate attention to those by whom it is cherished and protected, contribute to their happiness?

A.

Q. And has God not put it in your power to be obedient, and to be attentive, and affectionate?

A.

Q. You perceive then that God Almighty has already enabled you to be

the instrument of good to those who have done good to you : Do you ever rejoice to think of the power that has thus been given you ?

A.

Q. But power has also been given you to become the instrument of evil to those who have done you good : Do you feel any wish to exercise that power ?

A.

Q. You do not then desire to make your friends unhappy ?

A.

Q. Are people made unhappy by vexation ?

A.

Q. Are people made unhappy by disappointment ?

A.

Q. Are people made unhappy by seeing their trouble and labour thrown away ?

A.

Q. Do not children, by perverseness, and obstinacy, and ill temper, cause vexation to those who have the care of them?

A.

Q. As often then as you are perverse, or obstinate, or ill-humoured, you make use of the power with which you are entrusted; but do you not at such times make use of it to do evil?

A.

Q. Do not children, by not making use of their opportunities of improvement, occasion the unhappiness of disappointment to their friends?

A.

Q. As often then as you are idle or inattentive, do you not make use of your power to make your friends unhappy?

A.

Q. Do you consider those who labour for your improvement as your friends?

A.

Q. When you do not apply to learn what they are at pains to teach, do you not make them feel that their pains have been thrown away?

A.

Q. In all such instances, if such ever occur, do you not make yourself the instrument of evil to those whom God has made the instruments of good to you?

A.

Q. As God is ever present with us, must he not know in what manner we use the power he has given us?

A.

Q. Do the good approve of what is good, or do they approve of what is evil?

A.

Q. God is infinitely good. If he, therefore, has blessed us with friends and protectors, and put it in our power to take from their happiness, or to add to it, by our conduct, do you think he will

approve of our making an ill use of that power?

A.

Q. It is then the will of God that children should be always dutiful and affectionate to those whom he has made the instruments of good to them?

A.

Q. But have you no connexion in this life with any besides your parents and instructors? Have you neither brothers, nor sisters, nor companions, nor school-fellows?

A.

Q. Has God given you the power to increase or diminish their happiness?

A.

Q. Have they not the power to increase or diminish yours?

A.

Q. If any of them are quarrelsome and contentious, do they at such times make you happy?

A.

Q. Do those who quarrel and contend with you, make a good, or an ill use, of the power they possess?

A.

Q. In doing so they do very ill. But will their doing ill appear in the sight of God a sufficient excuse for you, if you keep up the quarrel?

A.

Q. Do you think that any one feels happy when ill-humoured?

A.

Q. Those who are cross with you are not then happy in being cross: But do you think that by being cross to them in return, you will restore to them the feeling of happiness?

A.

Q. If it is your duty to use your power to increase the happiness of those around you, ought you not to endeavour to re-

store them to the enjoyment of good temper and good will?

A.

Q. Is it likely, that by answering in anger you will restore them to temper?

A.

Q. If you kept in mind that God is ever present, would you then answer cross or peevish words with words equally cross and peevish?

A.

Q. But is God the less present with you for your being forgetful of his presence?

A.

Q. Do you not often do wrong?

A.

Q. Do you not often do what you ought not to do, and often leave undone what you ought to have done?

A.

Q. You have then, in the short course of your life, often offended God: But

has God therefore withdrawn his mercies from you?

A.

Q. Do you not feel and enjoy the continuance of his goodness?

A.

Q. It seems then, that notwithstanding your undeservings, God is still good and gracious to you: How does this teach you to act with regard to your fellow-creatures? Does it teach you to resent every little injury they may do to you?

A.

Q. If God is ever ready to grant forgiveness to us, do you think he will approve of our expressing great displeasure against such of our companions as offend us?

A.

Q. When any one behaves ill to us, will God approve of our behaving ill to them in return?

A.

Q. When we behave well to them who have behaved ill to us, do we then act agreeably to the will of God?

A.

Q. Has God put it in our power to behave well or ill as we please?

A.

Q. When do we make the proper use of this power?

A.

Q. Ought we not constantly to endeavour to behave to others in the manner which we believe will be approved by the God of mercy?

A.

Q. Do you think that God, who sees our hearts, will approve of our doing to others what we do not like that others should do to us?

A.

Q. Do you like to be treated rudely and unkindly by your companions?

A.

Q. If ever then you are rude or unkind to them, do you not then do what you do not like them to do to you?

A.

Q. Do you like any one to be niggardly, and selfish, and ungenerous in their dealings with you?

A.

Q. If ever you are selfish or ungenerous in dealing with others, do you in such instances do as you would be done by?

A.

Q. Do you like any one to judge harshly of your conduct, and to think worse of you than you deserve?

A.

Q. When you judge harshly of others is it not very possible that you may think worse of them than they deserve?

A.

Q. Do you in this instance do as you like others should do to you?

A.

Q. Do you like to have your faults spoken of, and dwelt upon by your companions in their conversation?

A.

Q. As often then as you speak of the faults of your companions, ought not your conscience to accuse you of then doing what you would by no means chuse others to do to you?

A.

Q. Is it possible that God, who knows all things, does not know when we do to others what we do not like that any should do to us?

A.

Q. Is it possible that our conduct in such instances can be approved by God?

A.

Q. Do you like to be treated with gentleness and good-nature?

A.

Q. When you are good-natured and gentle you then do as you would be done by, do you not?

A.

Q. When you stand in need of help do you like to be readily assisted?

A.

Q. When you readily and cheerfully lend your assistance to others, what do you then do?

A.

Q. When you happen to disoblige or offend any one, do you like to be fully and generously forgiven?

A.

Q. How then ought you to act when any one happens to offend or disoblige you?

A.

Q. Do you like to experience kind-

ness and good-will from all with whom you associate?

A.

Q. How then ought your heart to be disposed towards others?

A.

Q. Will not God, who sees the heart, approve of those who endeavour to cultivate in themselves the spirit of kindness and good-will?

A.

SECTION III.

Social Affections continued.

Questioner. Have your brothers, and sisters, and companions, and school-fellows, derived their being from Almighty God?

Answer.

Q. Have they all from their birth been objects of his goodness and mercy?

A.

Q. Does God continue to bless them by his heavenly kindness and protection?

A.

Q. Does the love of God extend to all his creatures?

A.

Q. Your companions then are objects of God's love?

A.

Q. Are you and they equally the children of one heavenly Father?

A.

Q. Is God equally good and merciful to all the children of his love?

A.

Q. Are not then all bound alike in gratitude to him who is the bountiful Giver of all good?

A.

Q. Can we better shew our gratitude

to God than by studying to obey his will?

A.

Q. Now, call to mind the goodness of God, and then tell me whether it can in your opinion be his will that we should hate or despise any who are the objects of his love and mercy?

A.

Q. If we hate any of our fellow-creatures, what conduct do we then pursue? Do we then pay respect to the will of God, and shew gratitude for his goodness?

A.

Q. If we despise and look down with contempt on any being who shares in the mercies, and is under the protection of God, can we expect to be approved by him who knows what passes in our hearts?

A.

Q. Do you think that you have any faults?

A.

Q. When you commit a fault, do you not hope, and wish, and pray to be forgiven by God for the fault which you have committed?

A.

Q. Would you not think it good and kind of a companion earnestly to desire that God would forgive you?

A.

Q. Does this teach you how you, on your part, ought to act with regard to a companion who is faulty?

A.

Q. When you do well, and are conscious of acting properly, do you like that your companions should give you credit for all the good you do?

A.

Q. Ought you not then to observe and acknowledge what is right and good

in the conduct of any of your companions?

A.

Q. When you obtain commendation or reward from your superiors, do you feel most obliged to the companions who rejoice with you, or to those who seem to begrudge your happiness?

A.

Q. What dispositions then ought you to have towards such of your companions as are preferred to honour? Ought you to rejoice in their success, or to begrudge it them?

A.

Q. Would you like to live in the world alone?

A.

Q. You then think it a great blessing to live in a world so full of people that you can never be out of the reach of society?

A.

Q. But would not this blessing be increased, by the certainty that all you meet will be well-disposed towards you?

A.

Q. Even while yet a child, would you not feel it a happiness to be certain that all your companions regarded you with kindness and affection?

A.

Q. Can you be certain of this?

A.

Q. But do not you know to a certainty what sort of disposition you cherish towards them?

A.

Q. Do you feel kind and affectionate to those who always treat you with affection and kindness?

A.

Q. Are your companions in this respect, think you, different from you?

A.

Q. In order to know how they feel in

general towards you, what then have you to do but to ask your own heart how you feel disposed generally to them?

A.

Q. Ought brothers and sisters to love each other, and to live together in constant harmony?

A.

Q. Do good parents approve of this affectionate conduct in their children towards each other?

A.

Q. Who is the Father of us all?

A.

Q. You, and your companions and school-fellows, are then members of the family of God; and, as such, are you not bound to love each other, and to live in constant harmony?

A.

SECTION IV.

Use and Abuse of the Gifts of God.

Questioner. Can you tell me the number of your senses?

Answer.

Q. Have you all those senses in perfection?

A.

Q. Do you acknowledge the goodness of God in having conferred on you such precious benefits?

A.

Q. Is the wisdom, and power, and goodness of the Creator, manifested in the formation of your body?

A.

Q. Are your hands formed to be useful?

A.

Q. But is it not by their hands that the wicked accomplish their wicked deeds?

A.

Q. We have it then in our power to employ our hands ill or well: But does not the Almighty see and observe our actions?

A.

Q. Do you think it possible that God can approve of our making a bad use of any of his gifts?

A.

Q. Can we do any thing bad without an abuse of the power which God has given us?

A.

Q. Are health and strength the gifts of God?

A.

Q. Have we it in our power to destroy

our health by carelessness, or by doing foolish things to please our fancy?

A.

Q. If we thus destroy our health, do we not in this instance abuse the gift of God?

A.

Q. May strength be usefully employed?

A.

Q. But does not great bodily strength put it in one's power to hurt, and harm, the weak and defenceless?

A.

Q. Has any one reason to boast of possessing strength?

A.

Q. Is it a proper use, or is it an abuse of the gift of strength, to employ it in vain and foolish feats, for the silly purpose of exciting wonder?

A.

Q. Do you consider sight as a very precious blessing?

A.

Q. Have you any power to improve the gift of sight to useful purposes?

A.

Q. May you not, by acquiring the habit of noticing and observing, render the gift of sight always useful?

A.

Q. But may you not, by only noticing such things as strike your fancy, or excite your admiration, become habitually unobserving of other things?

A.

Q. Do you use the gift of sight to good purpose, when you do not observe the things which it is your duty to observe?

A.

Q. Can such an abuse of the gift of sight be pleasing to your Creator?

A.

Q. Is not hearing the gift of God?

A.

Q. Do we hear to any purpose that to which we do not listen with attention?

A.

Q. Is it then in your power to abuse the gift of hearing, by listening with attention only to what is wicked or unprofitable?

A.

Q. Have you it not also in your power to improve the gift of hearing to good purpose, by listening with attention to what is profitable and instructive?

A.

Q. Whether do those who lend a willing ear to good advice, or those who lend a willing ear to nonsense, give best proof of their being mindful that hearing is the gift of God?

A.

Q. Has God bestowed on brute animals the power of speech?

A.

Q. Ought not then the gift of speech, which God has bestowed on us, to be considered as a distinguished blessing?

A.

Q. Did God bestow on us the gift of speech that we might be enabled to communicate our thoughts to each other?

A.

Q. Did God, by endowing us with speech, enable us to be useful to others, by giving them true and satisfactory information concerning what we know?

A.

Q. But have we not, by possessing speech, the power of deceiving others, by telling them we think what we do not think?

A.

Q. When any one asks us concerning what we have done, or said, or seen, or

heard, or known, have we it not in our power to conceal the truth, and to answer falsely?

A.

Q. Does God know all our thoughts and observe all our actions?

A.

Q. Do you think that God, in whom is the perfection of all truth and holiness, will approve of our making use, in any instance, of the gift of speech to deceive others?

A.

Q. Is it very grievous to be severely reprimanded or punished by those who are over us?

A.

Q. But is it not infinitely more grievous and terrible to be exposed to the wrath of God?

A.

Q. Is it not then great folly to incur

the anger of God, in order to escape the anger of man?

A.

Q. Are those who tell lies in excuse for their faults guilty of this folly?

A.

Q. Would it be absurd and ridiculous in you to tell me that your little arm is two yards long, while, by a glance of my eye, I must perceive its length?

A.

Q. And does not God see the thoughts of your heart as plainly as I see the length of your arm?

A.

Q. Is it not then an insult on the majesty of God to speak with an intention to deceive?

A.

Q. Do you truly think that you are bound in duty to shew gratitude to God for his goodness?

A.

Q. Has he put it in our power to manifest our dispositions by the use we make of his gifts?

A.

Q. Have we it in our power to use our speech in praising God for his mercies?

A.

Q. Is it not in our power by speech to entreat the continuance of his goodness, to implore his pardon for our sins, and to recommend ourselves and our friends to his divine protection?

A.

Q. But is it not in the power of wicked men to employ speech in uttering blasphemies against God, and in expressing contempt for his commandments?

A.

Q. Do not bad men often use the gift of speech to take the name of God in vain?

A.

Q. Is it not in our power, by speech,

to express gratitude to our benefactors, and thankfulness to our instructors?

A.

Q. Have we it not also in our power to speak impertinently and uncivilly to those to whom we owe duty and respect?

A.

Q. May we not, by speaking words of kindness, and by expressions full of gentleness and good-will, contribute to the preservation of peace and harmony among those with whom we live?

A.

Q. Have we it not also in our power, by speech, to annoy, and vex, and torment those we live with?

A.

Q. Can we by our tongues spread evil reports of our neighbours, to the injury of their characters?

A.

Q. Can we, by speaking ill of one

neighbour to another, spread discord, and destroy peace?

A.

Q. There is yet another view of the uses of the gift of speech, which it is very proper for you to consider. Let me ask, then, whether we have it not in our power, by giving utterance to lively and cheerful thoughts, to increase the innocent pleasures of life?

A.

Q. When we feel animated by the spirit of joy, may we not by speech animate the spirits of others to equal cheerfulness?

A.

Q. Do we feel happy in the enjoyment of good spirits?

A.

Q. To whom are we indebted for the happiness we enjoy, in being thus formed capable of delight?

A.

Q. Can we better shew our gratitude for this blessing than in endeavouring to promote the happiness and enjoyment of others?

A.

Q. But can there be any happiness independent of the favour of God?

A.

Q. When we in our mirth annoy and disturb others, do we then make use of the blessing of good spirits in the way of which God approves?

A.

Q. Is it then necessary, in order to be truly happy, that our mirth should always be in its nature innocent and free of offence?

A.

Q. Are you now sensible that God has committed to you the power of making a good and proper use of the gifts he has so mercifully bestowed upon you?

A.

Q. Are you likewise sensible that he has given you power to make a bad use of them?

A.

Q. Do you believe that God will call you to account for the use you make of them, whether good or bad?

A.

Q. Do you think that any one, while bearing in mind that God knows their thoughts and beholds their actions, would at that very moment do or say what they knew to be wrong in his sight?

A.

Q. What is then the best preservative against doing wrong?

A.

Q. Whether will he who is thankful to God for all his gifts, or he who is not thankful, be most apt to make a proper use of those gifts?

A.

Q. Whether will the person who never

thinks of God's goodness, or him who thinks of it often, and almost continually, be most inclined to thankfulness?

A.

Q. What then ought you to do in order to incline your heart to thankfulness?

A.

SECTION V.

Of the Use and Abuse of the Capacity for receiving Instruction.

Questioner. Are you learning to read?

Answer.

Q. What is the good of learning to read?

A.

Q. What is the use of books?

A.

Q. You must think farther upon this subject: You hear what is said to you by those who instruct you and give you good advice?

A.

Q. But do you always remember every word you hear?

A.

Q. Should you not wish to remember it?

A.

Q. If every word of that which you wish to remember had been printed in a book, would they have been preserved in the book better than in your memory?

A.

Q. May there not be a great many copies of the same book?

A.

Q. Is it possible that a great number of people, in different parts of the world, may at this present moment be reading those numerous copies of the same book?

A.

Q. Could those people hear, from different parts of the world, the same voice? Do they now hear me speak?

A.

Q. Do books then extend to many those instructions which the voice could only convey to few?

A.

Q. Can those who have learned to read, read the instructions that are printed in a book over and over again?

A.

Q. If those who cannot read happen to forget what has been told them, so as not to be able to think of it, is not what has been told them the same as lost?

A.

Q. When those who can read happen to forget what they have read, have they a certain means of recalling it to their mind?

A.

Q. Do not all of us, and especially young people, stand in need of instruction?

A.

Q. But are people always beside those who are capable of instructing them?

A.

Q. When those who cannot read are alone, or have none near them that are capable of giving them instruction and advice, must they not be at a great loss?

A.

Q. Can those who have learned to read, and have good books to read, be ever thus destitute of advice and instruction?

A.

Q. Is it not then a great happiness to be able to read?

A.

Q. But were you to read the words of an unknown tongue, would you be the better or the wiser for reading them?

A.

Q. Is reading then of any farther use, than as you understand what you read?

A.

Q. It is then a still greater happiness to be able to understand than to be able to read? Who gave you a mind capable of understanding?

A.

Q. For what purpose did God bestow on you the gift of understanding?

A.

Q. When you learn any thing of which you were ignorant, are you then sensible of the blessing you enjoy in being able to understand?

A.

Q. And ought you not to be grateful to God for that great blessing?

A.

Q: You acknowledge that your reason is the gift of God?

A.

Q. Did God, in endowing you with understanding, intend that it should be useful to you?

A.

Q. When you speak or act without thinking, is your understanding at such times useful?

A.

Q. You have then power to use your understanding, and you have power not to use it?

A.

Q. If God designed that your understanding should be usefully employed, can he approve of your letting it remain useless?

A.

Q. Is it in your power to make such bad use of your understanding, as only to employ it in learning what is wicked and pernicious?

A.

Q. But would not this be a most glar-

ing abuse of reason, which is one of the prime gifts of God?

A.

Q. Do you imagine that you could escape punishment, were you thus to abuse the blessing of reason?

A.

Q. Has God endowed you with such capacity as enables you to learn to read and write?

A.

Q. Has God given you such power to learn; that you may every day of your life learn something which you did not know the day before?

A.

Q. Is it in your power every day to learn something that is good and useful; and is it likewise in your power every day to learn something that is bad or useless?

A.

Q. Whether is it when you learn

what is good, or when you learn what is bad, that you best employ the power to learn which God has given you?

A.

Q. When you learn to read you learn what is good: But when you are able to read, will you not then have it in your power to read what books you please?

A.

Q. What use ought you then to make of the power you have thus acquired?

A.

Q. Wise men have written many good books, full of useful knowledge, and these you may always read with advantage: But bad books and silly books have likewise been written. Now tell me, whether it is for the purpose of reading such bad and foolish books that you have been enabled to read?

A.

Q. Were you to read such books,

would you, in reading them, make a bad or a good use of the power of reading?

A.

Q. If you believe that God will punish those who abuse the gift of speech, do you think that he will permit those who abuse the higher gift of reason to go unpunished?

A.

Q. By making use of your understanding you have been able to form a proper answer to my last question: But how did you arrive at the notions you possess of the nature of God? Was it from your own mind, or was it from instruction?

A.

Q. Can any one, without instruction, arrive at the knowledge of what has happened in times past?

A.

Q. Could a child, merely by the use of his understanding, and without being informed or instructed, obtain a just no-

tion of the laws of the kingdom in which he lives?

A.

Q. Could a child who never heard of a king, form any just notion of the king's power and government?

A.

Q. How then, without instruction, could we form any just notion of the nature of God, or of our own nature?

A.

Q. The wisest of men could not, from his own understanding, form juster notions of Almighty God, than an infant forms of the king, and his laws and government. How then does it come to pass that so much knowledge of the nature of God has been obtained?

A.

Q. True: It is, as you say, from instruction. Have you been so well instructed as to know that God has given you all that you enjoy?

A.

Q. Do you believe that it is through the mercy of your heavenly Father that you have hitherto been provided with food and raiment, and all the necessaries of life?

A.

Q. Do you believe that it is God who has raised up for you the friends by whom you have been tenderly cherished and protected?

A.

Q. Do you believe that it is God who has put it in the hearts of your instructors to take an interest in your improvement?

A.

Q. And do you believe that God, who has been so good and gracious to you, is ever present with you?

A.

Q. If God were to send a messenger from heaven to tell you what you must

do to please him, would you not earnestly listen to his voice?

A.

Q. If this heavenly messenger were to inform you of things concerning which no human being could give you information, would you not attend to him with thankfulness?

A.

Q. If he were to instruct you in the weakness of your own sinful nature, would you not be glad to learn of him how you might obtain strength?

A.

Q. Suppose farther, that this divine instructor were to shew you the path that leads to everlasting life, and to bring you the certain assurance, that by keeping in it you would be made happy for ever and ever, would it not make your heart bound with joy and gratitude?

A.

Q. Now think a little while, and then

tell me, whether God has not done this for you and for us all?

A.

Q. If God had not vouchsafed to reveal these things to us by his holy Word, we should all have been ignorant of them as the day we were born. These divine instructions have been recorded for our use: In what book have they been recorded or written?

A.

Q. Do you now perceive the great advantage of being able to read?

A.

Q. Can we make a better use of our understandings than in applying with diligence to study the truths which God has been graciously pleased to reveal?

A.

Q. Does it not increase your gratitude for having been taught to read, to think that you have thereby the power of read-

ing again and again, from day to day, the instructions of divine wisdom?

A.

Q. Do you consider it a great blessing to have it thus in your power to become acquainted with the will of God?

A.

Q. But though you gain a knowledge of all that God has revealed and commanded, will that knowledge be of any use to you unless you believe in his promises and obey his commands?

A.

Q. If, after knowing the will of God, you do what he has forbidden, or leave undone what he has commanded you to do, will you not be guilty of an abuse of knowledge?

A.

Q. Is it then necessary, in order to profit by divine instruction, that you cherish in your heart a disposition to obey the will of God in all things?

A.

Q. If you find it to be the will of God that you should not only abstain from injuring others by word or deed, but that you should be humble and meek, kind and gentle, full of tenderness, and ever ready to do good; will you not be bound to keep your heart and mind thus disposed?

A.

Q. If you find that hatred, and malice, and pride, and vanity, and hypocrisy, and falsehood, and selfishness, are all directly contrary to the will of God, to what ought the knowledge of his will, with regard to those bad dispositions, to lead?

A.

Q. But you will probably never be competent to understand of yourself all that is written in the Bible for your instruction: Will you not then be thankful to have the parts which you cannot

understand explained to you by those who are wiser than yourself?

A.

Q. Are not the learned and pious men whom the good providence of God has raised up in his church as our teachers and instructors in religion, capable of explaining what you do not understand?

A.

Q. Ought you not then to listen to their instructions with thankfulness, and to apply with diligence to learn your catechism, and such other books as they may think proper for you to learn?

A.

Q. Is wisdom a grace or favour of which God has the disposal?

A.

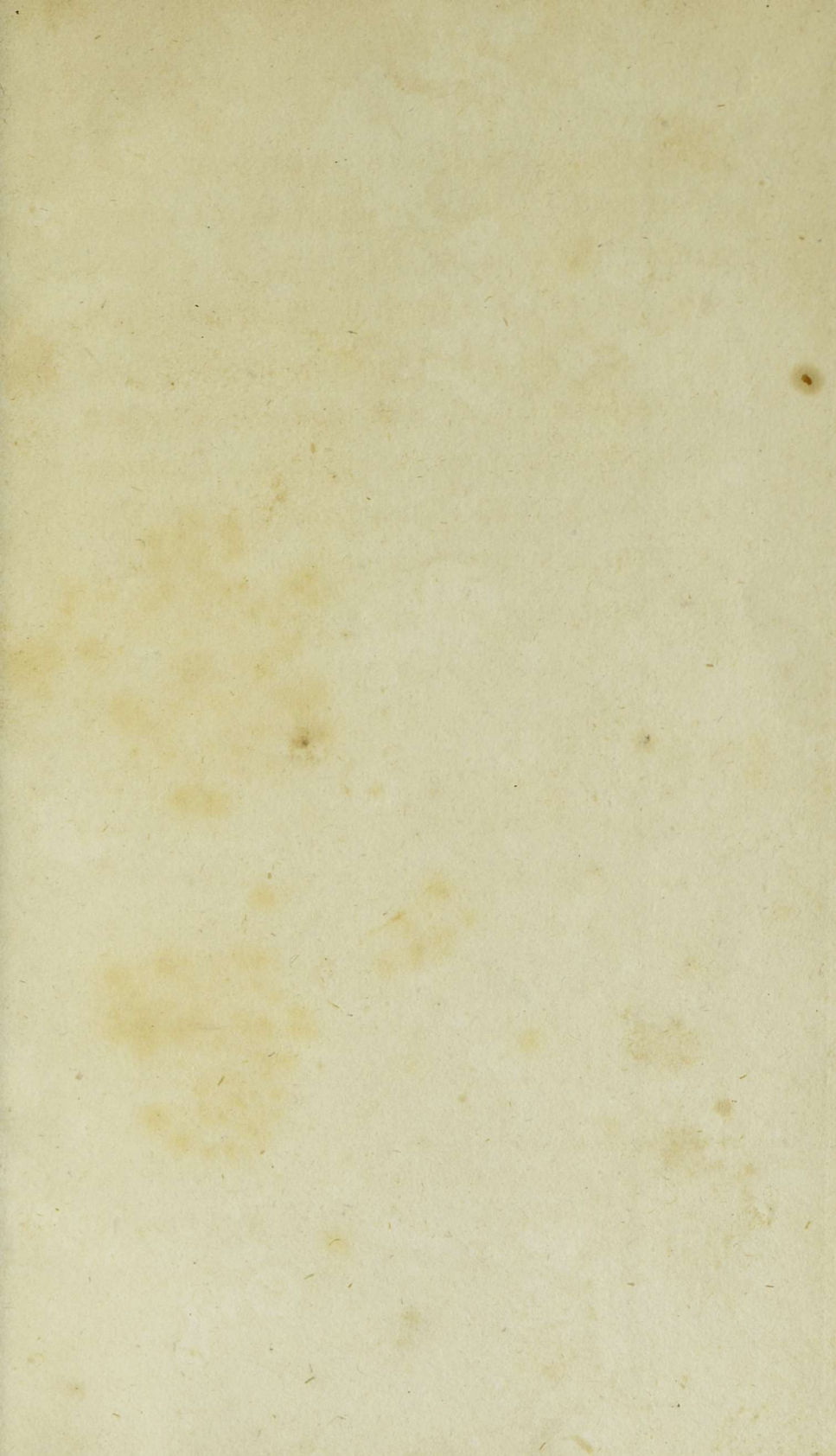
Q. If God has promised to give grace to those who ask it, what ought you to do in order to obtain an increase of true wisdom?

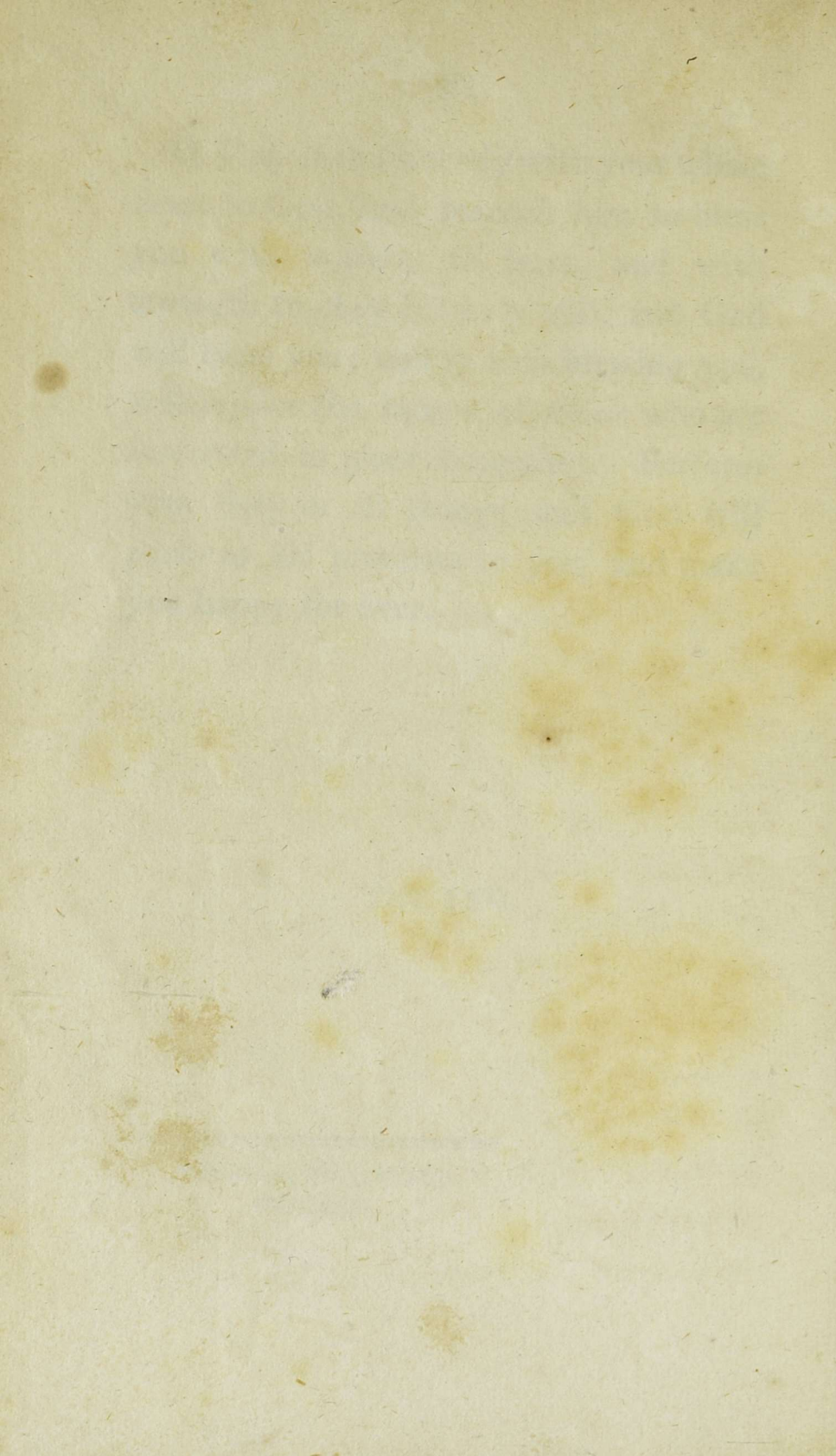
A.

Q. Pray then sincerely with your whole heart to God, and beseech him to bless you with wisdom to learn, and with strength to obey his holy will, and God will bless you; and in thus blessing you, will rejoice the hearts of those who are interested in your happiness. Perform your duty in all things, and God will perform his promises to you, and make you happy for ever.

THE END.

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