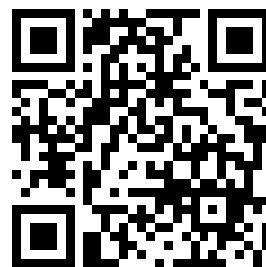

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Am A PLAIN *Ford*
CATECHISM: 5

OR
FAMILIAR INSTRUCTIONS
FOR
CHILDREN
IN THE
TRUTHS OF CHRISTIANITY.



LONDON

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PREFACE.

Christianity, like its divine Author, the adorable JESUS, is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*: consequently, all *new* doctrines are false and deceitful. Hence the Apostle advises, *be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.* With this view the following work is attempted; if by any means it might be made profitable to the hearts of *little ones*, by instructing them in the truth of the gospel—impressing their tender minds with a sense of the Redeemer's love—and making them the happy partakers of those glorious privileges and inestimable blessings, which JESUS hath obtained for sinners; and which those that believe in him, joyfully receive.

• If under the influence of his eternal Spirit, the Lord is pleased, by *weak things, and things that are despised*, to accomplish the designs of his love, to HIM be all the glory.

A PLAIN CATECHISM, &c.

Question.

WHAT Religion are you taught to profess?

Answer. The Christian Religion.

Q. What do you mean by the Christian Religion?

A. All those truths which GOD has made known to us, in his holy book the BIBLE.

Q. Why do you call yours the Christian Religion?

A. Because our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of it.

Q. Who is Jesus Christ?

A. The only-begotten Son of GOD: who is over all, GOD blessed for ever, (*Rom. ix. 5.*) and the precious Saviour of poor sinners.

Q. How do you know that Jesus Christ is the Son of GOD?

A. Because GOD spake from Heaven, and said of him, This is my beloved Son, (*Matt. iii. 17.*)

Q. How do you know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of poor lost sinners?

A. He is the GOD of Truth, and he says of himself, The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost, (*Luke xix. 10.*)

Q. How did Jesus Christ, who is the Lord our Jehovah, become our Saviour?

A. He took our nature upon him; he was made flesh, (*John i. 4.*) was born of the Virgin Mary, and became a little child like unto me: he was wrapped in swaddling-cloth, and laid in a manger, (*Luke ii. 12.*) So he humbled himself for us.

Q. Why did Christ take our nature upon him?

A. He loved us; he saw that we had all sinned and

that our nature was very wicked, and that we deserved to go to hell, therefore he would come to redeem and save us, (*Titus* ii. 14.)

Q. Did our Saviour Christ take our sinful nature upon him?

A. No. Though He was in all other things like unto us yet he was without sin, (*Hebrews*, iv. 15.) He never did sin, nor did any wicked words come out of his mouth. He was the holy, innocent, harmless Lamb of GOD, (*Peter* ii. 22.)

Q. How doth Christ save us by appearing in our flesh?

A. He saves us both by his life and his death; so he became man; he is our Saviour; so he loved sinners, and gave himself for our sins. (*Galatians* i. 4.)

Q. How doth Christ save sinners by his Life?

A. He became the SON of MAN that he might be one with us, and that we might be one with him; that, though by nature we are the children of wrath, (*Ephes.* ii. 3.) hence we might be the children of GOD by faith in Christ Jesus, (*Gal.* iii. 26.) and so live in heaven for ever and ever.

Q. How did our Saviour live while here upon earth?

A. A holy, innocent life. He went about doing good, (*Acts* x. 38.) He obeyed GOD's law perfectly, and fulfilled all righteousness, (*Matthew* iii. 15.)

Q. Why did our Saviour do this?

A. For our sakes: Because we had all sinned against GOD, and broken GOD's laws, and GOD was angry with sin, and his law cursed us for our sins, which saith, Cursed is every one that sinneth: that soul shall die and be miserable, (*Gala.* iii. 10.)

Q. What are you a sinner?

A. Alas! I am indeed. Young as I am, yet I am sinful by nature. I have said many naughty words, which I confess to be sins; all have sinned, (*Romans* iv. 12.)

Q. You are to die very soon, and you must shortly appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, what then will become of you, seeing God is angry with sinners and sinners?

A. Unless the Lord delivers me from the power of sin and satan, and brings me into the kingdom of his dear Son, surely I shall be miserable. O may our dear Saviour give me faith in him, that I may be found in him. Phil. iii. 9. pardoned by his blood, and sanctified by his Holy Spirit. Then I am sure God will be pleased with me, and I shall be very happy.

Q. How doth Jesus Christ save sinners by his death?

A. He gave his innocent life a sacrifice for our souls, and shed his most precious blood for our sins and wickedness. So he loved sinners; so our Jesus bought them with his blood, Cor. vi. 20.

Q. What death did Jesus die?

A. The death of the cross; his holy hands and tender feet were nailed to the tree, and he hung some hours in the greatest pains and bleeding agonies, till he died. Such was his great love to us, such were his grievous sufferings for us, he became obedient to the death of the cross. Phil. ii. 8.

Q. Why did our Saviour suffer this death upon the cross?

A. Because he suffered for sin, and sin is a cursed thing; therefore our Saviour died a cursed death; for cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree, Gal. iii. 13.

Q. How could Christ, who was an innocent, holy person, suffer such a shameful and accursed death?

A. Because he was made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. He suffered, the just for the unjust, 1 Pet. iii. 18. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. All our iniquities were laid upon him, Isa. liii. 6. He was made sin for us, who knew no

sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. He hath put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself, Heb. ix. 26. He died for our sins, 1 Cor. xv. 3.

Q. What should you learn by this great love of our Saviour, and his bitter sufferings on the cross for sinners?

A. First, that sin is a very evil and cursed thing; it put our Saviour to death. Secondly, to believe in and love Jesus Christ, who so dearly loved us.— Thirdly, to be sorry and mourn for my sins before him. And; fourthly, to pray to our Lord and Saviour for the pardon of my sins, and grace to keep me from sin.

Q. You say your Saviour died upon the cross for sin, how then can you pray to him if he is dead?

A. He is not dead, but is alive again. He is risen from the dead, and ever lives to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him; seeing he ever lives to pray for them, Heb. vii. 25.

Q. How long did our Saviour lie in the grave?

A. Only three days, and then he raised himself from the grave, and appeared to his disciples to their exceeding great joy and comfort, John. xx. 20.

Q. What did our Lord and Saviour say to his disciples, after he was risen from the dead?

A. Very comfortable words indeed, both to them, and to all that believe in him: I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God, John xx. 17.

Q. Where is Jesus now?

A. At the right hand of God, Mark xvi. 19.

Q. What doth our Saviour do at the right hand of God?

A. He is the mediator and advocate for poor sinners, and he ever lives and prays for them, Heb. vii. 25.

Q. What should this encourage you to do?

A. To come boldly to the throne of God's grace, in

the name of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Heb. iv. 16.

Q. Are there any blessings and comforts to be received in this life, from praying to our God and Saviour?

A. Yes, a great many, which our Lord has promised in his word to give to all his dear children who come unto him. And this should encourage us to read our Bibles, that we may know the good things our Saviour has promised us, for the Scriptures testify of Christ, John v. 39.

Q. Can you tell me any of these blessings and comforts?

A. Yes, our blessed Saviour will make them happy in the knowledge of his salvation, by the forgiveness of their sins, Luke i. 77, and he will save and keep them from sin and wickedness, that they may serve him in holiness and righteousness.

Q. When doth our Lord make his children so happy as this?

A. Now, in the present life, he gives them faith in his name; then they have the comforts of his salvation begun in their hearts, and it shall be perfected in glory. O this fills their hearts with all joy and peace, Rom. xv. 13.

Q. How doth our Lord give his children to know this?

A. As he promised, he sends his Holy Spirit to assure them of his love. He sheds his love abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them, Rom. v. 5. and his Spirit beareth witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, Rom. viii. 16.

Q. Do you know that Christ loved you, and died for your sins, and that you have redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of your sin?

A. I am but a little child. I know but very little of the comforts of Christianity; but God's word tells me, that all true believers are his children; and the knowledge of this makes them very happy. O may my dear Saviour make me so happy too!

Q. God grant he may! But after God's people are made thus happy in their hearts, do they love sin, and delight in the practice of sin?

A. No. They are born again of the Spirit, and they hate the sinful works of the flesh. God's Spirit sanctifies and makes them holy in their hearts and lives, and they pray and strive against sin. Heb. xii. 4.

Q. Why do God's children pray and strive against sin?

A. Because God is their loving Father, therefore they fear to offend him. They love Christ their dear Saviour, and they can not bear to wound him by sin; and they know sin grieves the Holy Spirit, who is their comforter. Eph. iv. 30.

Q. Did God's children and people always know these things, and thus hate sin and love holiness?

A. No. Before they are converted to God, they are dead in trespasses and sins, and are by nature children of wrath even as others. Ephes. ii. 1, 3.

Q. How then do they live and act before they are made alive unto God?

A. They were sometimes disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. Titus iii. 3.

Q. By what means are sinners brought from such a sinful state.

A. By the kindness and love of our God and Saviour appearing to them, not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to his mercy he saves them. Titus iii. 5.

Q. By what means are sinners led to forsake their former ways of sin and wickedness?

A. Our Lord and Saviour, according to his most true promise, sends his Holy Spirit to convince them of sin. John xvi. 8.

Q. How does the Holy Spirit convince men of sin?

A. He opens the eyes of their understanding, and then they see the unbelief and naughtiness of their hearts, and the wickedness of their lives. Eph. i. 18.

Q. What follows upon this?

A. They see sin to be exceeding sinful: "The remembrance of sin is grievous unto them, and they feel the burden of sin to be intolerable, and they groan to be delivered from it." Rom vii. 24.

Q. How do they seek for rest and deliverance from the guilt of sin?

A. Not from their own works, for they see that in them dwelleth no good thing, Rom. vii. 18. that they are not sufficient of themselves to think a good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5.

Q. From whom do they find ease and comfort to their troubled mind?

A. Being made humble and penitent before the Lord, they seek redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of their sins, and they cannot rest till they know they are accepted in the beloved Saviour, for this they cry and pray unto God, and his ears are opened to their prayers. 1 Pet. iii. 12.

Q. Will our Saviour receive such vile, unworthy sinners, when they come unto him, and call upon his name?

A. Yes: He receiveth all sinners who come unto him, even the greatest, the worst and vilest: he hath invited them: for he says, Come unto me all that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest, Matt. xi. 28.

Q. Are you sure our Lord will not turn them away and reject them?

A. Yes. We have his own promise, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out, John vi. 37.

Q. Doth our God and Saviour answer their prayers, and doth he speak peace and pardon to their souls?

A. Yes, He speaks to them in his Word and by his Spirit, and saith, Son or Daughter, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee, for he says, All manner of sin shall be forgiven, Matt. xii. 31.

Q. *What should this love and mercy of our Saviour to sinners teach us?*

A. It should teach every one that nameth the name of Christ, to depart from all iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19, to come boldly to God, to pray for mercy for their past sins, and for grace to help them in time of need, against sin and temptation, Heb. iv. 16.

Q. *What doth the scripture declare concerning wicked and impenitent sinners, who live and die in their sins?*

A. Our blessed Lord saith, If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins, And whether I go (that is, to heaven) ye cannot come, John iii. 24. And, except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven, John iii. 3, 5.

Q. *As all men are by nature unholy, impure and unrighteous, how then can they be saved?*

A. It is only in and through the Lord Jesus that any sinners are saved. This is the truth of God's word, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, Acts xvi. 31. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under Heaven, given among men, whereby we can be saved, Acts iv. 12.

Q. *How are believers in Christ Jesus made fit and meet for the kingdom of God?*

A. They are washed and sanctified, as well as justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

Q. *What is the privilege of justification, of which the people of God partake?*

A. All who believe in Jesus are justified, pardoned and acquitted from all their sins, God doth not impute sin unto them, Rom. iv. 8.

Q. How are believers cleansed and purified from the defilement of their sins?

A. By the blood of Jesus Christ, which alone cleanseth from all sin, 1 John i. 7. And through his blood, their consciences are purged from dead works, to serve the living and true God, Heb. ix. 14.

Q. As God's word declares, without holiness no man shall see the Lord, how are believers sanctified and made holy?

A. They are partakers of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10. Their bodies are the bodies of the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. vi. 19. Who enables them to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and to go on perfecting holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Q. What! Doth the Holy Spirit dwell in the hearts of all true believers?

A. Yes: Because they are the children of God, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son, into their hearts, whereby they call God Father, Gal. iv. 6. and indeed, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 6.

Q. What are the fruits and effects which are produced by the Holy Spirit dwelling in the hearts of true believers.

A. He renews them in the spirit of their minds, in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 23, 24. He sanctifies, and makes them a holy people, zealous of good works: And so with their hearts and in their lives, they give thanks to God the Father, who hath made them meet, to partake of the heavenly inheritance, Col. i. 12.

Q. What shall be the portion of all such in the world to come?

A. Being made free from sin, they have their fruit unto holiness, and their end everlasting life; not for their deservings, but it is the free gift of God to them through Jesus Christ. Rom. vi. 22, 23.

Q. Pray what kind of faith is it which enriches the hearts of believers with all these blessed privileges, which are given them by Jesus Christ?

A. It is a precious faith, 2 Pet. i. 1. And Christ Jesus is very precious to their souls who believe, 1 Pet. ii. 7. for they know Christ is made unto them of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30.

Q. How come they by this faith?

A. It is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8. The faith of the operation of God, Col. ii. 12. wrought in their hearts by the exceeding goodness of his power, Eph. i. 19.

Q. What is the nature and properties of this precious faith?

A. He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself, John v. 10. he is born of God, John v. i. True faith brings the peace of God into the soul, Rom. v. i. and it purifies the heart, and works by love to God and man, Gal. v. 6.

Q. Have all who are called Christians this true and saving faith in their hearts?

A. No, all men have not faith, 2 Thes. iii. 2. There are many who believe not, and yet they sadly deceive their poor souls with a vain fancy instead of true faith, and so presumptuously live and die in their sins, though our Saviour hath said, He that believeth not, shall be damned, Mark xvi. 16.

Q. Since our Lord and Saviour hath done such great things for sinners, why is it that so many who are even called Christians, do not love and esteem him?

A. Because they so blind themselves by their sinful lusts and passions, and a proud opinion of their own righteousness and goodness, that they see no need of Jesus as a Saviour; and therefore, as he tells them, they will not come to him that they might have life. John v. 40.

Q. Will not our Saviour come again to reward the righteous, and punish the impenitent and unbelieving?

A. Yes, he shall appear a second time to judge the world in righteousness, and we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 10.

Q. In what manner will the Lord the Judge come?

A. The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout; and with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 1 Thess. iv. 16.

Q. How will this appearing of our Saviour affect his righteous children?

A. As they look for, so they love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. and they will greatly rejoice at the sight of him, whom having not seen, they loved; and Jesus will be glorified in his saints, and admired by all them that believe in him. 2 Thess. i. 10.

Q. How will our Saviour behave to them?

A. He will look on them with joy and pleasure, and will say unto them, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, Mat. xxv. 34. and they shall enter into the joy of their Lord.

Q. What will be their employ in God's kingdom of glory and happiness?

A. They will join the glorified host of angels and archangels in praising and adoring their God and Saviour, who hath loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood. Rev. i. 5.

Q. In what manner will the Lord the Judge appear to the wicked and impenitent in the last day?

A. He will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. i. 8.

Q. How will all such appear?

A. With shame and confusion. They will be in distress and agony, and they will say to the rocks and mountains, fall on us, and hide us from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of

his wrath is come, and who can abide it? *Rev.* vi. 16, 17.

Q. What will the Judge say to them?

A. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, *Matt.* xxiv. 36. and they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. *2 Thess.* i. 9.

Q. When shall all these awful things come to pass?

A. Of that day and of that hour, knoweth no man. *Matt.* xxiv. 36. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up *2 Pet.* iii. 10.

Q. As these awful events are drawing near apace, and shall certainly (perhaps suddenly) come to pass, and as you and I, and every soul of man, must shortly die, and after death hear the awful summons to judgment; what conclusion do the holy scriptures teach us to make?

A. Seeing that all these things shall come to pass, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? *2 Pet.* iii. 11. And, as our Lord saith. *Rev.* xxii. 10. Surely I come quickly, O may we watch and pray to be found of him in peace, that we may joyfully reply, *Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus!*

Dear children, I commend you to the love and favour of our God and Saviour. And *as no man can know the things of God, but by the Spirit of God,* *1 Cor.* ii. 11. may that loving Spirit incline your hearts to ask and pray him to teach your young minds the truth as it is in Jesus; that in your youth you may know the things that make for your peace, so as to be made wise unto salvation now, and happy with Jesus to all eternity.

A PRAYER.

O LORD Jesus Christ, who came into this world to seek and save lost sinners; though I am little and young, before thee, O Lord, yet thou canst make known thy salvation to my heart, and perfect thy praise, even from the mouths of babes. May it please thee, O Lord God, to do this for me, even me. Teach me by thy Spirit, to know myself as a sinner, and to know thee as my Saviour. O let not sin blind my eyes to thy love, nor harden my heart against thy fear. O thou Lamb of God, hear me. Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me, and grant me thy peace. O thou dear Saviour of sinners, grant me to know, love, and obey thee as my Saviour and my God, before I appear in thy presence as my Judge, Wash me in the fountain of thy precious blood, from the guilt of my sins. Save me daily by thy grace from the practice of sin; and so instruct me in the truths of thy holy word, and in the knowledge of thy salvation, that I may live holily, die comfortably, and be eternally happy in thy kingdom of bliss and glory, through thee, O blessed Jesus, whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, I would adore and call upon as the one living and true God, as thou hast taught me: *Our Father, &c.*

H Y M N.

THE praises of my tongue
I offer to the Lord;
That I was taught, and learnt so young,
To read his holy word.

Where I am taught to know
The danger I am in;
By nature, and by practice too,
A wretched slave to sin.

May I be led to see,
 I can do nothing well,
 And teach me, Lord, where I may flee,
 To save myself from hell.

Dear Lord, this book of thine
 Informs me where to go,
 For grace to pardon all my sin,
 And make me holy too.

Here I can read and learn,
 How Christ, the Son of God,
 Did undertake our great concern,
 Our ransom cost his blood.

And now he reigns above,
 He sends his Spirit down,
 To shew the wonders of his love,
 And make his gospel known.

Oh! may that Spirit teach,
 And make my heart receive
 Those truths, which all thy servants preach,
 And all thy saints believe.

Then shall I praise the Lord,
 In a more cheerful strain,
 That I was taught to read his word,
 And have not learnt in vain.

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