

for her son, by the love of a patriot for his country. So, when God foresaw the world in danger of perishing forever, He incarnated Himself as its Savior. 1 John 4:8 — "God is love," i. e., He is a God of love. John 3:16—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON TWO

15. Q. What is one commonplace proof of God?
16. Q. How does life prove that there is a God?
17. Q. What is a second commonplace proof of God in our world?
18. Q. How does law prove that there is a God?
19. Q. What is a third commonplace proof of God in our world?
20. Q. How does love prove that there is a God?

Lesson Three

WHO IS GOD?

Scripture Reading: Acts 17:22-31.

Scripture To Memorize: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

21. Q. Is God just an idea?
 - A. The Scriptures teach what God is, i. e., that He has actual being.

(1) Heb. 11:6—"he that cometh to God must believe that he is," etc. (2) The favorite claim of the "Humanist" is that God is just an idea ("concept") of the human intellect; that, instead of God having created man in His own image, man has created God in his own imagination. This is pure atheism. It asserts that there is no God in fact, i. e., apart from our thinking. (3) To this notion we object: that any human being capable of imagining a God with all the perfections of the God revealed in the Scriptures, particularly as He is fully revealed in the New Testament, would himself be a god. "Had Jesus never lived," says Rousseau, "the writers of the gospels would themselves have been as great

as he;" that is, by virtue of their ability to imagine and to portray such a Person and to put upon His lips such a Teaching, as that revealed in the New Testament Scriptures. (4) Even in the dim light of the Old Testament revelation, and in a document as old as the Creation narrative in Genesis, God is presented as the Eternal Spirit who "moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:2); i. e., who nourished incipient energy and life into operation. Moses presents Him as the one true and living God. Hosea portrays His matchless love and compassion; Amos, his righteousness and justice; and Isaiah, His wisdom and holiness. God manifested His love in and to Israel; and in turn, His mercy, His pity, His justice, and His longsuffering patience. In such times of barbarous iniquity, war, sensualism, and selfish greed, how could man have imagined a God of such exalted attributes? (5) It is highly irrational to think that God is just an Idea, corresponding, let us say, to Uncle Sam, or Santa Claus. The notion is absurd and profane. Heb. 11:6—"he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him."

22. Q. Is God a material object or idol?

A. The Scriptures teach that God is a Spirit.

(1) This means that He is not to be conceived of as a material being, hence He cannot be apprehended by any physical means. (2) The ancients were prone to worship the most powerful object visible to them, such as the sun, for instance. The worship of idols, animals, even insects, has always been characteristic of heathenism. Paul says that the Gentile peoples "changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Rom. 1:23). (3) Idolatry in any and every form is expressly condemned in scripture. Exo. 20:4—"thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them." Acts 17:24—"God . . . dwelleth not in temples made with hands." 1 John 5:21—"My little children, guard yourselves from idols." "The second command of the Decalogue does not condemn

sculpture and painting but only the making of images of God. It forbids our conceiving God after the likeness of a thing, but it does not forbid our conceiving God after the likeness of our inward self, i. e., as personal. This again shows that God is a spiritual being)) (Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 250).

Is not the "veneration" of images, icons, etc., as practised by many of the older denominational groups of institutionalized Christianity, closely related to idolatry, if not in fact the real thing?

23. Q. Is God identical with Nature?

A. The Scriptures teach that God is the Creator and Ruler of Nature.

(1) The theory that God and Nature are one and the same, is quite prevalent in higher educational circles today. This theory is known as pantheism (God is all, i. e., "the totality of things"). Yet this notion is as old as the human race itself. The Brahman philosophy, for example, one of the most ancient of systems, is pure pantheism. (2) The Scriptures teach that God is not "the totality of things," but that He is the Creator and Preserver and Ruler of this "totality." Gen. 1:1—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Acts 17:24—"the God that made the world and all things therein." Col. 1:16, 17—"for in him were all things created . . . and he is before all things, and in him all things consist."

24. Q. Is God an impersonal influence, energy, or principle?

A. The Scriptures teach that God is personal.

(1) God is not an impersonal energy, such as electricity. God is a Spirit, and where there is Spirit, there is personality and vitality. (2) God is not just an impersonal Principle, such as Mind, for instance. We are right in saying that God has Mind, but we are in error if we say that God and Mind are identical. This is the fundamental error of the disciples of Mrs. Eddy. (3) Nor is God just an impersonal influence. God is good, of course; but God is not to be identified with the abstract moral influence, Good. God is Love, too; but this does not mean that God and Love are one and the same; it means that our God is a God of love.

25. Q. Who, then, is God?

A. God is the one and only infinitely perfect Spirit, the Creator and Ruler of all things, and the Author of all good.

(1) We must keep in mind that it is difficult for the finite to define the Infinite; and that any human definition of God Almighty is necessarily imperfect. Richard Hooker, eminent English divine, says: "Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade into the doings of the Most High, and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence, when we confess without controversy, that His glory is inexplicable, His greatness above our capacity and reach." (2) By the term God, we mean the creative Eternal Spirit behind and in the universe to whom we are indebted for our capacities, our privileges and our innumerable blessings. William Newton Clarke says, *Outline of Christian Theology*: "God is the personal Spirit, perfectly good, who in holy love creates sustains and orders all." (3) "Jesus is God's own manifestation of Himself. He is 'the true light, even the light which lighteth every man coming into the world,' and all revelation must be read in this light" (Boswell, *God's Purpose Toward Us*, p. 9). Heb. 1:3—"who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance," etc. Jesus Christ revealed the nature, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, compassion, longsuffering, sacrificial love, in fact every attribute of God that needed to be revealed to man. John 14:9—"he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." It is our privilege to know God in the respects, and to the extent, that He revealed Himself in and through His Son Jesus Christ.

26. Q. Why do we say that God is the one and only infinitely perfect Spirit?

A. Because the Scriptures teach that there is one, and only one, true and living God.

Deut. 6:4—"Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." Isa. 46:9—"I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me." Eph. 4:4,6, "There is one body . . . one Spirit . . . one hope . . . one Lord, one Faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all,

and in all." Note the perfect harmony between the Old and New Testaments in regard to fundamental truths).

27. Q. Why do we say that God is a Spirit?
 A. Because Jesus says that God is a Spirit, John 4:24.
28. Q. What do we mean when we say that God is a Spirit?
 A. We mean that God as to nature is Personal; having understanding, feeling and free will, but not having a body.

(1) God has mind. Rom. 11:34—"for who hath known the mind of the Lord?" God has feeling. John 3:16—"For God so loved the world," etc. God has free will. Luke 22:42—"not my will, but thine, be done." Isa. 46:10—"My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Eph. 3:11—"according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (2) Where there is spirit, there is personality (self-consciousness, self-determination, conscience, etc.). Where there is spirit, there is vitality (life). Where there is spirit, there is sociality (desire for fellowship with kindred spirits). Therefore, our God, who is a Spirit, is a personal God, a living God, and a loving God. In the sense, too, that God is personal and that we are personal, we have been created in His "image" (Gen. 1:26, 27). (3) "God is not only spirit, but He is pure spirit. He is not only not matter, but He has no necessary connection with matter." Again: "When God is spoken of as appearing to the patriarchs and walking with them, the passages are to be explained as referring to God's temporary manifestations of Himself in human form—manifestations which prefigured the final tabernacling of the Son of God in human flesh" (Strong, *ibid.*, p. 250).

29. Q. What great lesson should we learn from these truths?
 A. That we may commune with our God in loving intimacy.
30. Q. What does the Epistle of James teach us in this respect?
 A. James says: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (Jas. 4:8).

31. Q. How are we to worship God?
 A. Jesus says that we are to worship Him in spirit and truth. John 4:24.
32. Q. What does Jesus teach us in this statement?
 A. He teaches us that true worship is spiritual; that is, it is communion of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit, according to the commands, means and appointments specified in the Word of truth.

(1) Impress upon your pupils the depravity of image worship, nature worship, animal worship, self worship, etc. These are the ear-marks of heathenism. We are not to worship a thing, nor Nature, nor any creature: we are to worship the Creator. (2) Impress upon your pupils the folly of meaningless rites and ceremonies in connection with Christian worship. Ritualism is not an indication of true spirituality. (3) The Word of truth which we are to follow as our standard of worship, and book of discipline, is the New Testament. We are not under the Law, but under the Gospel covenant, the reign of the Holy Spirit. John 1:17—"the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (4) The appointments of Christian worship designated in the New Testament Scriptures are: prayer, praise, thanksgiving, meditation, fasting, Bible study, the giving of substance in the form of tithes and offerings, the public assembly of the saints, the ordinances (baptism and the Lord's Supper), etc. (5) Impress upon your pupils that we meet God in these divine appointments. Hence the importance of cultivating regular habits of worship.

REVIEW EXAMINATION OVER LESSON THREE

21. Q. Is God just an idea?
 22. Q. Is God a material object or idol?
 23. Q. Is God identical with Nature?
 24. Q. Is God an impersonal influence, energy, or principle?
 25. Q. Who, then, is God?
 26. Q. Why do we say that God is the one and only infinitely perfect Spirit?
 27. Q. Why do we say that God is a Spirit?

28. Q. What do we mean when we say that God is a Spirit?
29. Q. What great lesson should we learn from these truths?
30. Q. What does the Epistle of James teach us in this respect?
31. Q. How are we to worship God?
32. Q. What does Jesus teach us in this statement?

Lesson Four

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Scripture Reading: Isa. 55:6-11, Psalm 139:7-10.

Scripture to Memorize: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9).

33. Q. What do we mean when we say that God is infinitely perfect?
- A. We mean that God is not like created things who are good only in part or measure, but that God unites in Himself all perfections without measure or bounds.
34. Q. What do we mean by the Attributes of God?
- A. By the Attributes of God, we mean the Perfections of the Divine Nature.
35. Q. What are the Attributes of God?
- A. These: God is eternal, unchangeable, omniscient, all-wise, omnipresent and omnipotent; infinitely holy, just, and good; infinitely true and faithful; infinitely merciful and long-suffering.
36. Q. What do we mean when we say that God is eternal?
- A. We mean that God is, always; that He has always been and will always be; that He is without beginning and without end.