

Twelve Questions for Ministers of Christian Churches.

1. *Why did I become a minister?* Was it vanity, ease, respectability, or the persuasion of mistaken friends; or was it love to Christ, the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, that induced me to step into the sacred office?

2. *What evidence have I that I am called of God to the work of the ministry?* Am I adapted for it? Have I the scriptural qualifications? Have I ever been the means of the conversion of one soul? Did God call me in his providence, or did I run uncalled?

3. *What am I doing in this field?* Am I a witness for God? Do I bear testimony to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? Is my testimony plain, earnest, faithful? Am I a laborer in God's vineyard, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth? Am I acting as a lord, or as a servant?

4. *What are my views of the pastorate?*—Do I feel I am my own master, or God's servant, appointed by Him to watch for souls?—Do I feed the flock, or amuse them? Do I direct their attention to my Master, or to myself? Do I point them to heaven, or to the trifles of time? Who is my master?—the church, the congregation, the world, or Jehovah? What says my conduct? Oh, my soul, be honest! Do I feed, comfort, and watch over the sheep? Do I feel the responsibility of my charge?

5. *Do I visit the people of my charge as I ought?* It is true some people have strange notions about a minister visiting, which have no foundation in Scripture, and the impropriety of which a little reflection would convince them of; but still, do I do my duty in this department? What is the character of my visits? Do I visit the sick, the wanderer, the backslider, and those who are out of the way? Do I visit as a pastor, to speak of and for Christ, or as a trifler, who has too much time on hand—time to "crack a joke" to be "frolicsome," to hear and retail the gossip of the day?

6. *Do I love the people of my charge as I ought?* Have I love enough for them to bear, forbear, and forgive? Do I feel resentment or compassion, when any of them do wrong? Do I despise them, or love them? Do I help to bear their burdens, or do I increase them? Do I rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep? Is the whole of my conduct kind, forbearing, and loving?

7. *Do I pray for my charge as I ought?*—not only in the sanctuary and the prayer-meeting, but in the closet? Do I bear them before the Lord in private, frequently, earnestly, constantly, and in faith? Do I plead with God for the weak, that they might be strengthened; for the tempted, that they might be kept; for the tried, that they might be supported; for the mourners, that they might be comforted; for inquirers and the unconverted?

8. *What is the character of my preaching?* Is it the gospel of Christ I preach? Do I preach it with energy, earnestness, and unction; or with coldness, weakness, and carelessness? Is it God's truth, or my own notions about it, that I preach? Will the truths I preach do to die by? Do I preach plainly, clearly, so that all can understand me? Do I preach to the people, or at them; over their heads, or, through the understanding, to the heart?

9. *Where do I get the food for the flock?*—Is it from the green pastures of the Word of God, or from other sources? How do I study the Bible? Is my head and heart in it at all times? Do I study it to make out the mind of God, or merely to find a text to hang a subject upon? As I pore over its sacred pages, do I sufficiently feel my dependence upon God, and look up for the Spirit's assistance, that I may bring out of this heavenly treasury things new and old? Do I study for God's glory, or my own?

10. *Am I living a holy life,* such as becomes a minister of Christ? Do I indulge in any "little" known or secret sin? Am I laboring to mend my own heart, as well as those of my hearers? Am I a pattern of good works to believers? (Tit. ii. 7, 8.) Am I known by my savor as well as my service?

11. *Do I live under the impression that I am accountable for time, talents, and opportunities of usefulness?* How much time have I squandered? How have my talents been employed? How many opportunities of usefulness have I lost?

12. *Am I prepared to die?* Should my Master at once summon me into the eternal

world, are my accounts correct—is my work done—is my soul prepared? How many souls will welcome me to glory, should I be permitted to enter, as the fruit of my ministry?—*N. Y. Recorder.*

The Working Card.

In the fall of my first year at —, my church became anxious that we should have a protracted meeting or some special effort for the salvation of sinners. For various reasons which I need not mention here, I was opposed to a protracted meeting at that time among my people.

In the course of the week, I prepared the following card:

Resolutions adopted by the bearer of this card.

1. *Resolved,* That as I am a sinner, redeemed by the blood of Christ, I will do all that I can to save the souls for whom he died.

2. *Resolved,* That to prepare myself to do good to others, I will strive to have the same mind in me which was in Jesus Christ.

3. *Resolved,* That I will from time to time select from among my neighbors some one or more individuals with whom I will, in tenderness and affection, labor steadily, daily, if possible, or even many times a day, until God shall either bring them to Christ, or I shall be convinced that I should give them up.

4. *Resolved,* That I will carry those with whom I thus labor, on my heart, and pray for them continually, and with them frequently, if they will permit me to do so.

5. *Resolved,* That while I labor, and pray for the salvation of sinners, I will depend alone on the Holy Ghost to make me successful in my work.

I had enough of these cards printed to supply every member of the church with a copy, and on the next Lord's day distributed them, with the understanding that so long as any individual should retain his card he should consider himself bound by the resolutions, and when he wished to be released from them he must return the card to me.

The next night after my distribution I was called from my bed to go and visit a distressed sinner, which was the commencement of a work of grace that continued with us all the fall and winter, and resulted, as I trust, in bringing many souls to a knowledge of the Saviour.

A reason that Christians labor with the impatient is not more productive is, that it is so much scattered that the impression made by one visit is worn out before another is made, if made at all, and thus Satan has a fair opportunity of catching away the word out of the heart. But if the labor should be followed up every day, and the truth in this way kept burning upon the heart and conscience, the result would astonish the most sanguine laborer. He would find that God was not unfaithful to forget his work and labor of love, nor forgetful of the promise, that he that should go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, should doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. This is a kind of labor that we need at this day; it is one, too, that the weakest brother or sister in the church can perform and one which will act upon those labored with, and re-act with power upon the heart and life of the laborer.

Let me entreat the Christian reader to try the experiment and see if he will not water and be watered also himself.

First, Think much of your own obligation to Christ, and pray much to God to restore unto you the joys of his salvation, and uphold you by his free spirit, that you may be prepared to teach transgressors their ways, and that sinners may be converted unto him. Don't ask to have the joys of your salvation restored that you may be happy, but that you may be useful. Selfishness is the gangrenous part of the body of sin and death, and Christians should endeavour to keep it out of their hearts.

Secondly, Select from among your acquaintances one or more that you will be most likely to have an influence with, write their names in a book, and on your own heart, and in your labor and prayers with and for them, bear in mind that the redemption of their souls is precious, and that it will soon cease forever. This will keep you much at the throne of grace, and will increase and sweeten your communion with God, while it will elevate your Christian affections, and imbue your heart with the love of souls.—*Rev. W. Wisner.*

Telling Jesus.

"Things always go smoothly with you," said a complaining disciple to Mr. F. "I never hear you make any complaints."

"I have found out an effectual way of guarding against that fault," said Mr. F.

"I did not know that you ever had any reason to complain."

"I don't know that I ever had; but I used to find myself doing it, until one day, in reading the Bible, I came across this passage: 'The apostles gathered themselves unto Jesus, and told him of all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.' It occurred to me that, when I had any trouble, before I told any one I should first tell Jesus.—And I found, on trial, that if I told him first, I seldom had any occasion to tell any body else. I often find the burden entirely removed while I am in the act of telling him about it, and trouble which has its burden removed is no longer trouble."

"We ought to pray for deliverance from our trials; but Jesus needs no information respecting them. He is omnipotent, and has no need that anything be told him."

"That is true, and yet he listened with complacency and kindness when his disciples told him all things. In his sympathising condescension, he permits us to repeat to him our troubles, cares and joys, though he knows them all. He listens to them with interest; just as the tender father listens to the narrative of his child, though it conveys no information. And he has connected great blessings with this exercise of filial confidence. It lessens one's sorrows, and doubles joys, and increases faith and love. The more assiduously we cultivate an intimate acquaintance with the Saviour, the greater will be our happiness, and the more rapid our progress towards heaven. If we should make it a rule to go to Jesus every night, and tell him all the events of the day, all that we have purposed, and felt, and said, and done, and suffered, would it not have a great influence on our conduct during the day? It certainly would. The thought that we should have to tell Jesus about it, would restrain us from an unholy act. We could not wilfully indulge in what caused the agonies of the garden and the cross, if we were to make it the subject of conversation with him before committing ourselves to slumber."

"It seems to me, that for me to tell him all my experience would be occupying his attention with trifles; I should have nothing but sin and folly to tell him."

"Sin and folly are no trifles; and the way to get a right view of the evil of sin is, to speak it out before him in our confidential intercourse with him. You may depend upon it my brother, that if you will go to Jesus every night, and tell him things that have occurred during the day, it will speedily lift you above the world. It will do much towards making the will of Christ your guiding, governing principle. It will enable you to bear your crosses without repining. It will make you in mind and temper like him with whom you hold this most intimate communion. O, that all Christians were in the habit of closing the day by going to Jesus, and telling him all the things that they have done, and omitted to do, during the day!"—*Christian Miscellany.*

The Sinner's Need of Christ.

This need of the sinner is strikingly illustrated by the necessities of the children of Israel at Rephidim. They had been traveling day after day in the sterile desert of sin, and now stood in the midst of a barren, dreary waste, gloomy with blackened rocks and shattered cliffs, lying beneath a scorching sun which consumed every vestige of verdure, save the stunted growth of herb or shrub in the deep glens, moistened by the winter rains. One might travel mile after mile in either direction, might ascend an eminence, and gaze over the broken, billowy scene of rock and mountain height, as far as the eye could reach, and find nothing but the same wild, bleak, melancholy scene of lonely grandeur and desolation. There were no fresh, sparkling springs, no cool mountain streams save here and there, perchance, some scanty drippings from the overhanging ledges, only mocking the wants of that vast army of man and beast. Fainting, and parched with thirst, death stared them in the face; for, as there was no fountain or stream by their side, so there was none within any possible distance from which an adequate supply could be brought; Edom's wells were left far behind, and who could bring the cooling draught from the flinty rock? In view of their helpless desolation, well might

their hearts sink within them. Their need was literally a *dying need*; and unless God had miraculously interposed, and made the arid rock to yield the refreshing supply, that mighty multitude had soon left their bones bleaching on the bosom of the wild desert.

Man is totally alienated from God; he wanders from the green pastures and still waters of God's presence. He is "in the desert now." No verdure of holiness, no spring of moral purity, rises up in his soul; no rills of comfort from the throne, and such as his spiritual nature craves, flow through it as an earnest of heavenly blessedness. He is "dead in trespasses and sins," with no right desires, no aspirations after God and holiness. In his natural state, man is not only in a moral desert, but is himself a moral waste, an object of God's fiery indignation. For he has broken a law of infinite holiness; and God as the infinitely Holy, must be "angry with the wicked every day." Divine wrath, as a burning sun, hangs over him, and sooner or later, he must wither under its scorching rays and perish, unless God himself step aside from the ordinary method of proceeding to which Infinite justice dictates, and, of his own abounding grace, give life to the death-doomed. God saw the perishing necessity of man, he *was* moved with compassion, he *did* turn aside from the ordinary proceedings of his righteous providence. He smote the Rock, and the waters flowed through the moral desert. He sent "forth his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh." The Son became "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and shed his blood, the "living water," of which, if a man drink, he shall thirst no more. A fountain is thus opened in this wilderness, to supply the dying necessities of man. Here he may drink and live forever.

This sinner, is your relation to Christ.—You may not realise it. But whether you are sensible of your true condition, as were the Israelites at Rephidim, or not, such is, undeniably, your position in respect to the Saviour of men. Your insensibility cannot alter your perishing need of the water of life. You must drink of the rock, Christ, or die—eternally die.—*Puritan Recorder.*

Short Sayings of Dr. Emmons.

In reading the Memoirs of the late excellent Dr. Emmons, I have been interested in many of his pithy remarks. Thinking they may be acceptable to others, I send a few of them for your columns.

The Doctor preached a sermon on the perdition of Judas, which was reviewed by a Universalist, and both sermon and review having been printed in one pamphlet, he was asked,

"What do you think of sending out together before the world two such things as your sermon and a Universalist's reply?"

"It is against the law," was his reply, "for it is written, 'Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together.'"

When asked, what is the difference between natural depravity and original sin? he answered instantly, "natural depravity is the truth; original sin is a lie."

When asked what was the best system of rhetoric for a clergyman, he replied, "First, have something to say; second, say it."

"Strict Calvinism brings God near to us; all opposing systems put him far away."

"The weakest spot in any man is where he thinks himself the wisest."

"The more men have multiplied the forms of religion, so much the more has vital godliness declined."

"Style is only the frame work to hold our thoughts. It is like the sash of a window; a heavy sash will obscure the light. The object is to have as little sash as will hold the lights, that we may not think of the frame, but have the most light."

Being asked what is the secret of popular preaching? he replied, "To preach without meddling with your hearers' consciences;—preach with animation to produce a great excitement of the natural sympathies, which will make persons think that they have some native goodness;—and let your sermons be without beginning, middle or end."

"Let your eloquence flow from your heart to your hands, and never attempt to force it the other way."

"The most important requisites for an *extemporaneous* preacher are ignorance, impudence, and presumption. It is a great blessing to be able to talk half an hour about nothing. The great body of extemporaneous preachers are *pro tempore* preachers."