

THE BISHOP'S CANDLESTICKS

► By Norman Mckinnell

Background of the Play

'The Bishop's Candlesticks' by Norman Mckinnell is dramatisation of a part of Victor Hugo's famous novel 'Les Miserable' (The Miserable).

This play raises a profound and thought-provoking question — Are criminals born or are they made thus by society? The play also deals with the issue of crime, sin, punishment and redemption. Christian beliefs of charity and forgiveness are reinforced in the play and many ethical questions are also answered in the context of the play.

Summary of the Play

The play opens with a scene in the Bishop's kitchen. Bishop's younger sister Persome and maid servant Marie are busy in conversation, while soup is being cooked on the stove. Persome is worried that her brother has gone out in extreme cold. When she learns that her brother has gone to see Marie's ailing mother, she bursts out in anger at the selfishness of the people, who went about troubling him. Persome's anger is genuine because her brother has already sold off his estate, furniture and other valuables to help the poor and the needy. Persome is shocked to discover further that the Bishop has even sold off his silver salt-cellars to help another ailing lady, to pay her rent.

The Bishop promptly arrives and dispatches Marie to tend to her mother. He gives away his comforter to her to ward off the cold outside. Persome gets very furious and says, "You'll sell your candlesticks next." The Bishop thanks her for giving him the idea, although he admits that the candlesticks were his proud possessions, a gift from his dying mother and he would not like to part with them.

Persome takes leave and the Bishop settles down to read. It is already midnight. A convict enters the room stealthily, seizes the Bishop from behind and demands something to eat. He threatens to kill the Bishop if he raises an alarm. The Bishop is unflustered. He calls the convict 'son' and wakes his sister to serve some food and wine to the convict. He also calms down Persome who was frightened to see the knife in the convict's hand.

The convict pounces on the food greedily. After eating, the convict warms up to the Bishop and relates his sad story. He tells the Bishop that he was once a normal man. He had a wife and a home, but no work. So he stole to feed his sick wife. He was caught and sentenced to serve ten years in prison. He was chained like an animal and beaten mercilessly and fed on filth. The Bishop consoles him and arranges for him to rest there for the night.

The next morning Persome finds that the convict and the silver candlesticks are missing. She raises an alarm and

informs the Bishop about the theft. The Bishop is upset but he refuses to report to the police.

Soon a Sergeant appears with two soldiers and the convict in chains. They had arrested the convict on the suspicion of stealing the Bishop's candlesticks. The Bishop tells the police that the convict was his friend and he had gifted the candlesticks to him. The police free the convict and go away. The convict is thunderstruck by such kindness. He promises to reform himself and begin his life anew. The Bishop blesses him and gifts the candlesticks to him. He shows him a secret path to Paris, where the convict could lead a safe and respectable life.

सारांश

फ्रांसीसी लेखक विक्टर ह्यूगो के सुप्रसिद्ध उपन्यास 'ले मिज़रेब्ल' पर आधारित यह नाटक — 'द बिशप्स कैन्डलस्टिक्स' है। इस नाटक में एक अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न पूछा गया है — क्या अपराधी पैदायशी होते हैं या समाज उन्हें अपराधी बना देता है? यह नाटक अपराध, पाप, दण्ड और दुष्कर्म से उद्धार जैसे महत्वपूर्ण विषयों पर अपने विचार प्रकट करता है। ईसाई धर्म की मूल्य आस्थाओं — दया और क्षमा की इस नाटक के द्वारा पुष्टि होती है और यह नाटक अनेक नीति शास्त्र सम्बंधी विषयों का विवरण करता है।

नाटक के शुरू में बिशप की रसोई में उनकी छोटी बहन परसोम और नौकरानी मारी आपस में बातचीत कर रहीं हैं। चूल्हे पर सूप चढ़ा हुआ है। परसोम चिन्तित हैं कि इतनी ठंड में उनके भाई बाहर गये हैं। जब उन्हें पता चलता है कि वह मारी की बीमार माता को देखने गये हैं तो वह क्रोधित होकर लोगों के स्वार्थीपन पर बोलने लगती हैं, अपने स्वार्थ के लिए लोग उनके भाई को तंग करते हैं। परसोम का क्रोध उचित है। बिशप अपना फर्नीचर, ज़मीन, कीमती वस्तुएँ, सब निर्धन और असहाय लोगों की सहायता के लिए बेच चुके हैं। परसोम को एक और बड़ा धक्का लगता है जब उसे ज्ञात होता है कि बिशप ने, एक और बीमार महिला के लिए अपनी चाँदी की नमकदानियों को भी बेच दिया।

उसी समय बिशप आते हैं और मारी को तुरन्त अपनी माँ की देखभाल के लिए घर भेज देते हैं। वह उसे अपना गरम गुलुबंद भी दे देते हैं सर्दी से बचने के लिए। अत्यन्त क्रोधित होकर परसोम कह बैठती है, “अब तुम अपना मोमबत्तीदान (दीपाधार) भी बेच देना।” बिशप अपनी बहन को इस सुझाव के लिए धन्यवाद देते हैं। परन्तु वह यह भी स्वीकार करते हैं कि मोमबत्तीदान उनकी अत्यन्त प्रिय संपत्ति है। उन्हें यह मोमबत्तीदान उनकी माता ने मरते समय उपहार में दिया था और वह उसे कभी किसी को नहीं देना चाहेंगे।

परसोम चली जाती है और बिशप पढ़ने बैठ जाते हैं। अर्धरात्रि हो चुकी है। एक कैदी चुपके से कमरे में आता है और पीछे से बिशप को पकड़ लेता है। वह खाने के लिए कुछ माँगता है। वह बिशप को धमकाता है कि अगर वे चिल्लाएँगे तो वह उन्हें मार देगा। बिशप बिल्कुल शांत रहते हैं और कैदी को बेटा कहकर सम्बोधित करते हैं। वह अपनी बहन को जगाते हैं और उसे कैदी के लिए खाना और मदिरा लाने को कहते हैं। वह अपनी बहन को शांत रहने को कहते हैं जो कैदी के हाथ में छुरी देखकर अत्यन्त भयभीत हो गई थीं।

बंदी खाने पर टूट पड़ता है। पेट भरने के पश्चात वह अपनी कहानी बिशप को सुनाता है। वह बिशप को बताता है कि वह भी कभी एक आम आदमी की तरह था। उसकी एक पत्नी थी, घर था, पर रोजी-रोटी के लिए कुछ काम नहीं था। इसीलिए उसने अपनी भूखी बीमार पत्नी के लिए रोटी चुराई। वह पकड़ा गया और उसे पूरे दस वर्ष की सजा मिली। जेल में एक पशु की भाँति उसे जंजीरों में जकड़ा गया। खाने को गंदा खाना मिला, और रोज उसे निर्दयता से पीटा गया। बिशप उसको सांत्वना देते हैं और उसका रात में सोने का

प्रबन्ध करते हैं।

सुबह होने पर परसोम को पता चलता है कि कैदी और मोमबत्तीदान दोनों लापता हैं। वह शोर मचाती है और बिशप को दोनों के लापता होने के बारे में बताती है। बिशप दुखी होते हैं पर पुलिस को बुलाने से इन्कार कर देते हैं।

शीघ्र ही एक सार्जेन्ट (पुलिस अधिकारी) दो सिपाहियों और कैदी को जंजीरों में बाँध कर बिशप के घर आता है। उन्होंने कैदी को बिशप का मोमबत्तीदान चुराने के शक में पकड़ा था। बिशप पुलिस से कहते हैं कि कैदी उनका मित्र है और उन्होंने ही उपहार में उसे मोमबत्तीदान दिया था। पुलिस वाले बंदी को छोड़ देते हैं और चले जाते हैं। कैदी उनकी दयालुता से आश्चर्यचकित रह जाता है। वह बिशप को वचन देता है कि वह आत्मसुधार करेगा और एक नया जीवन शुरू करेगा। बिशप उसे आशीर्वाद देते हैं और अपना मोमबत्तीदान उपहार में देते हैं। वह कैदी को एक खुफिया मार्ग से पेरिस जाने को कहते हैं जहाँ वह एक सुरक्षित और सम्मानित जीवन व्यतीत कर सकता है।

Word-Meaning

- **Tended** – ignited • **Rebuke** – scold • **Nincompoop** – fool • **Sake** – favour • **Cloak** – heavy gown
- **Shamefacedly** – disgracefully • **Ridiculous** – foolish
- **Wretch** – woman • **Distress** – in pain
- **Incorrigible** – not to be set right • **Stealthily** – as a thief • **Chaff** – deceit • **Defiantly** – hatefully • **Dogged** – stubborn

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS (SOLVED)

1. Complete the following paragraph about the theme of the play in pairs.

The play deals with a _____ and _____ Bishop who is always ready to lend a _____ hand to anyone in distress. A _____ breaks into the Bishop's house and is _____ and warmed. The benevolence of the Bishop somewhat _____ the convict, but, when he sees the silver candlesticks, he _____ them, and runs away. However, he is _____ and brought back. He expects to go back to jail, but the Bishop informs the police they are a _____. The convict is _____ by this kindness of the Bishop and before he leaves he seeks the priest's blessing.

Ans : convict, the, helping, convict, clothed, softens, steals, captured, gift, reformed.

2. Working in pairs, give the antonyms of the following words :

kind-hearted, unscrupulous, forgiving, stern, benevolent, credulous, generous, pious, suspicious, sympathetic, understanding, wild, innocent, penitent, clever, brutal, cunning, caring, sentimental, trusting, protective, concerned, honourable, embittered

Ans : • **kind-hearted** – cruel • **benevolent** – malevolent, hard-hearted • **suspicious** – open • **innocent** – clever • **wild** – generous • **sympathetic** – embittered • **cunning** – simple • **protective** – aggressive • **unscrupulous** – moral • **credulous** – incredulous • **caring** – careless • **concerned** – indifferent • **forgiving** – resentful • **generous** – miserly • **understanding** – misunderstanding • **clever** – innocent • **sentimental** – practical • **honourable** – dishonourable • **stern** – gentle • **pious** – irreligious, unholy • **brutal** – humane • **trusting** – suspicious • **embittered** – forgiving

3. Select words from the box from question 2 to describe the characters in the play as revealed by the following lines from the play.

	Lines from the Play	Speaker	Quality revealed
1.	“You told him she was feeling poorly, did you? And so my brother is to be kept out of bed, and go without his supper because you told him she was feeling poorly.”		
2. “take my comforter, it will keep you warm.”		
3.	“If people lie to me they are poorer, not I.”		
4.	“You are like a child. I can’t trust you out of my sight. No sooner my back is turned than you get that minx Marie to sell the silver salt-cellars”.		
5.	“My dear there is so much suffering in the world, and I can do so very little.”		
6.	“My mother gave them to me on - on her death bed just after you were born, andand she asked me to keep them in remembrance of her, so I would like to keep them.		
7.	“I am too old a bird to be caught with chaff.”		
8.	“You have your soul to lose, my son.”		
9.	“Give me food or I’ll stick my knife in you both and help myself.”		
10.	“... they have made me what I am, they have made me a thief. God curse them all.”		
11.	“Why the devil are you kind to me? What do you want?”		
12.	“I - I - didn’t believe there was any good in the world ...but somehow I - I - know you’re good, and - and it’s a queer thing to ask, but could you you, would you bless me before I go?”		

- Ans :**
1. Speaker : Persome
Quality revealed : stern, suspicious
 2. Speaker : Bishop
Quality revealed : protective, caring
 3. Speaker : Bishop
Quality revealed : pious, trusting
 4. Speaker : Persome
Quality revealed : caring, concerned
 5. Speaker : Bishop
Quality revealed : benevolent, sympathetic
 6. Speaker : Bishop
Quality revealed : sentimental
 7. Speaker : Convict
Quality revealed : suspicious, clever
 8. Speaker : Bishop
Quality revealed : sympathetic
 9. Speaker : Convict
Quality revealed : wild, cruel

10. Speaker : Convict
Quality revealed : embittered
11. Speaker : Convict
Quality revealed : suspicious
12. Speaker : Convict
Quality revealed : trusting, credulous

4. Answer the following questions briefly.

(a) Do you think the Bishop was right in selling the salt-cellars? Why / Why not?

Ans : Looking at Bishop’s nature and profession, it is obvious that magnanimity and humanity scores over personal preferences. Persome may cherish the salt-cellar but when it comes to helping others, there is no hesitation on Bishops. So he sells the salt-cellars to help Mere Gringoire, who could not pay her rent.

(b) Why does Persome feel the people pretend to be sick?

Ans : Persome is protective and wishes to maintain the household. She is pained to see that the entire humanity is turning upon them for charity and benevolence. She feels

people like Marie's mother pretend to be sick and take undue advantage of the Bishop.

(c) *Who was Jeanette? What was the cause of her death?* (CBSE 2010)

Ans. Jeanette was the convict's wife. Jeanette was ill, there was no food and the convict had no money. So out of desperation he stole food. The convict was caught and put in prison. Jeanette died due to illness and starvation.

(d) *The convict says, "I am too old a bird to be caught with chaff". What does he mean?*

Ans. The convict has suffered, he is embittered, he is experienced. So he couldn't be tricked. He ordered the Bishop to stay put because he couldn't trust anyone not to report to the police and get him arrested.

(e) *Why was the convict sent to the prison? What was the punishment given to him?*

Ans. The convict was caught red-handed stealing a loaf of bread. He was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

(f) *Do you think the punishment given to the convict was justified? Why / Why not? Why is the convict eager to reach Paris?*

Ans. No, the punishment was not justified because stealing a bread was not such a brutal act as to deserve such severe punishment. The convict was eager to reach Paris since nobody knew him there and he wanted to start a fresh life there.

(g) *Before leaving, the convict asks the Bishop to bless him. What brought about this change in him?*

Ans. The Bishop's benevolent, kind and caring attitude had brought about a change in the convict. That is why before leaving for Paris, he asks the Bishop to bless him.

5. Read the following extracts and answer the questions that follow by choosing the correct options.

(A) *Monseigneur, the Bishop is a ... a hem!*

(a) *Why does Persome not complete the sentence?*

- (i) She used to stammer while speaking.
- (ii) She was about to praise the Bishop.
- (iii) She did not wish to criticise the Bishop in front of Marie.

(iv) She had a habit of passing such remarks.

Ans : (iii)

(b) *Why is she angry with the Bishop?*

- (i) The Bishop has sold her salt-cellar.
- (ii) The Bishop has gone to visit Mere Gringoire.
- (iii) He showed extra concern for Marie.
- (iv) She disliked the Bishop.

Ans. (i)

(B) *She sent little Jean to Monseigneur to ask for help.*

(a) *Who sent little Jean to the Bishop?*

- (i) Mere Gringoire
- (ii) Marie
- (iii) Persome
- (iv) Marie's mother

Ans. (i)

(b) *Why did she send Jean to the Bishop?*

- (i) So that he could pray for her.
- (ii) As she knew that he was a generous person.
- (iii) As she was a greedy woman.
- (iv) As she was a poor woman.

Ans. (ii)

(C) *I offered to take her in here for a day or two, but she seemed to think it might distress you.*

(a) *The Bishop wanted to take Mere Gringoire in because _____.*

- (i) She was sick
- (ii) She had no money
- (iii) She was unable to pay the rent of her house
- (iv) She was a close friend of Persome.

Ans. (iii)

(b) *Persome would be distressed on Mere Gringoire's being taken in because _____.*

- (i) She did not want to help anyone.
- (ii) She felt that Mere Gringoire was taking undue advantage of the Bishop.
- (iii) She was a self-centred person.
- (iv) She would be put to a great deal of inconvenience.

Ans. (ii)

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Read the following extracts and write down the most appropriate option.

1. *'I was a man once, I'm a beast now, and they made me what I am.'*

(a) *Who speaks these lines and to whom?*

- (i) Bishop–Persome
- (ii) Convict–Bishop
- (iii) Convict–Persome
- (iv) None of the above

(b) *Who made the speaker what he is?*

- (i) The Bishop
- (ii) Society
- (iii) Himself
- (iv) His wife

(c) *What is the speaker's tragic story?*

- (i) Cruelty to his family led to the change
- (ii) Poverty drove him to become a beast
- (iii) Society maltreated him
- (iv) Tortured in the prison

Ans : (a) (ii) (b) (ii) (c) (iii)

2. *He was kind to me too—but what's a Bishop for except to be kind to you? Here, cheer up, my hearty, you're getting soft.*

(a) *To whom is the convict talking?*

- (i) Bishop
- (ii) Himself
- (iii) Persome
- (iv) None

(b) How does he interpret the Bishop's kindness?

- (i) Due to his selfishness
- (ii) His professional duty
- (iii) His pretentious nature
- (iv) His real nature

(c) Why does he say 'My hearty, you're getting soft'?

- (i) Does not want to be kind again
- (ii) Does not want to feel obliged to the Bishop
- (iii) Has no desire to have human feelings again
- (iv) Feels nothing

Ans : (a) (ii) (b) (ii) (c) (iii)

3. Convict : Ah! thanks, thanks, Monseigneur. I-I, Ah, I'm a fool, a child to cry, but somehow you have made me feel that—that it is just as if something had come into me—as if I were a man again, not a wild beast.

(a) Why does the convict cry?

- (i) Due to sudden help by Bishop
- (ii) Due to extreme compassion shown to him
- (iii) Because of humanitarian feelings
- (iv) Pain in the eyes

(b) What did the Bishop do to make him feel a man again?

- (i) Saved him from the police
- (ii) Gave him candlesticks
- (iii) Showed him a safe way to escape
- (iv) Gave him healthy food

(c) Why does he thank the Bishop?

- (i) For the candlesticks
- (ii) For restoring his faith in humanity
- (iii) For giving him shelter and food
- (iv) For giving him bed to sleep

Ans : (a) (ii) (b) (i) (c) (ii)

4. It is hopeless, hopeless. We shall have nothing left. His estate is sold, his savings have gone. His furniture, everything. Were it not for my little dot, we should starve.

(a) Why is Persome so upset?

- (i) Bishop does not bother for her
- (ii) He neglects his health
- (iii) He is overgenerous with total disregard for his own comfort.
- (iv) He is silly and people take undue advantage of him

(b) What has been the only sustaining factor to save them from starvation?

- (i) Salt-cellars
- (ii) Candlesticks
- (iii) Her dowry
- (iv) Her house

(c) Why do you think Persome is not able to influence her brother?

- (i) Bishop does not care for her
- (ii) He is most gullible and believes people easily
- (iii) He cannot think of his own welfare before the suffering of others
- (iv) None of the above

Ans : (a) (iii) (b) (iii) (c) (iii)

5. You see, my dear, my mother gave them to me on her deathbed just after you were born and-----and she asked me to keep them in remembrance of her.

(a) Who is the speaker and who is the listener?

- (i) Bishop – Convict
- (ii) Convict – Persome
- (iii) Bishop – Persome
- (iv) None of the above

(b) The speaker appears to be emotionally distressed. Why?

- (i) The mother is no more.
- (ii) Persome is disturbed.
- (iii) Due to the emotional attachment to candlesticks.
- (iv) Salt-cellars have been broken

(c) Which quality of the mother is revealed here?

- (i) Moral
- (ii) Realistic
- (iii) Humane
- (iv) Affectionate

Ans : (a) (iii) (b) (iii) (c) (iv)

NON-MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

Read the following extracts and answer the questions given thereafter.

1. You are incorrigible. You will sell your candlesticks next. [CBSE 2011 (Term III)]

(a) Who speaks these words and to whom?

Ans. These words have been spoken by Bishop's sister to Bishop.

(b) Why does the speaker consider the person incorrigible?

Ans. She considers him incorrigible because he had sold off his estate, furniture and other valuables to help the poor and needy.

(c) What is special about the candlesticks?

Ans. Candlesticks were very special because they were a gift from his dying mother, whom he loved a lot.

2. Sold! Sold! Are you mad?

Who sold them? Why were they sold?

[CBSE 2011 (Term II)]

(a) Who is the speaker and who is he/she talking to?

Ans. The speaker is Bishop's sister, Persome. She is talking to the Bishop.

(b) What has been sold?

Ans. The salt cellars, made of silver, have been sold.

(c) Who has sold them and why?

Ans. Bishop has sold the salt cellars to help an ailing lady by paying the rent of her house.

3. Tell you about it? Look here, I was a man once. I'm a beast now, and they made me what I am. They

chained me up like a wild animal. [CBSE 2011 (Term II)]

(a) Who speaks these lines and to whom?

Ans. These lines have been spoken by the convict to the Bishop.

(b) Who made him a beast? How?

Ans. The police in the prison made him a beast by beating him and keeping him in unhealthy conditions.

(c) Which figure of speech has been used in the last line of the above extract?

Ans. The figure of speech used here is 'similie'.

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. The convict says, "I am too old a bird to be caught with a chaff". What does he mean by this remark?

Ans. He speaks this line when the Bishop wishes to go out to bring the keys of the cupboard to get him food. The convict is a hard-core criminal, and so he thinks that the Bishop would go out and raise an alarm to get the police to arrest him. The convict has spent ten years in jail and is well aware of all the tricks and excuses that people make to trap others. That is why he doesn't believe the Bishop when he tries to go out to bring the cupboard keys.

2. Who was Jeanette? What was the cause of her death?

Ans. Jeanette was the wife of the convict. It was ten years back that a tragedy took place in his life. It was a bad year and he could not get any work. Jeanette was ill and there was no food in the house. So the convict stole to buy her food. But he was caught and given ten years imprisonment. The night he was sentenced, she died. It was the convict's poverty that had led to her death.

3. ".....now I'm a number 15729 ----- I've lived in hell for ten years." What was the background of this remark made by the convict?

Ans. By saying that he is not a man now but number 15729, the convict reveals the tragic life he had in the prison for the last ten years. The prison was like a hell where he was chained up like a wild animal and lashed like a hound. He was fed on filth, covered with vermin, slept on boards, and if he complained, he was lashed again. This torture had taken away his soul changing him into a beast, so much so that he himself forgot that he was a human being and just remembered himself by the number given to him in the prison, i.e., 15729

4. The Bishop was God's representative on earth in every sense of the term. Explain. [CBSE 2010 (Term II)]

OR

Why was Bishop loved and revered by everyone in

the Parish? [CBSE 2010 (Term II)]

Ans. The Bishop is God's representative on the earth as he has love, compassion, forgiveness etc. for others to such an extent as is not possible for any normal human being. He feels deeply pained at others' problems and irrespective of any inconvenience he may have to face, he goes ahead to bring relief to the person concerned. Serving humanity is the only concern in his life with no consideration to the status, material benefits etc. No doubt he is loved by everyone in the parish.

5. "There is so much suffering in the world and I can do so little." Bring out the character of the Bishop in the light of this statement, giving examples from the text. [CBSE 2010 (Term II)]

Ans. The Bishop is an extremely compassionate person. His heart pains to see so much suffering in the world. He wants to do everything possible to help such people, and feels bad at how little he is able to do for them. He sells his silver salt-cellars to help Mere Gringoire who is bedridden. He gives his muffler to Marie, the maid, so that she can keep herself warm. The love and affection, and forgiveness that he shows to the convict reforms him completely. He even sacrifices his most precious candlesticks to help the convict settle in his life.

6. Why is the Bishop in the habit of leaving his doors and windows unshuttered?

Ans. The Bishop has dedicated his entire life to charity and benevolence. He is always prepared to welcome any needy and deprived person. He is a true Christian and wishes to extend all kinds of help to the ailing and the sick. To remain accessible to all, he does not lock his doors or close any windows. Moreover, he is not afraid of any evil or crime and has immense faith in God.

7. Who is Mere Gringoire? What help does she receive from the Bishop?

Ans. Mere Gringoire is an old sick woman, who has been bedridden for a long time. She lives at the top of the

hill and she has not been able to pay her rent. The Bailiff has threatened to throw her out of the house, unless she pays the rent. The Bishop sells the silver salt-cellars to Monseigneur Gervais, who had often admired them so that he could get the money to pay the rent for Mere Gringoire.

8. Why does Persome feel that the people pretend to be sick?

Ans. Persome feels that the people take undue advantage of the Bishop's generosity and exploit his goodness and charitable nature. She shouts at Marie, when she learns that the Bishop has gone to see her ailing mother in the extreme cold. She is also disgusted at Mere Gringoire who is bedridden. Persome believes that her

brother is a simpleton who cannot see through the people who feign to be sick.

9. Why was Bishop attached to the candlesticks and what did he do with them in the end.

[CBSE 2010 (Term II)]

Ans : The silver candlesticks were a prized possession for both the Bishop and his sister. The candlesticks were a parting gift from the Bishop's mother, when she was on her deathbed. The Bishop could never think of parting with this memento in his lifetime. In fact, the candlesticks were the only thing he was emotionally attached to. He assures Persome that he would always take care of them despite all odds. But in the end he gave the candlesticks to a convict to restart an honourable life.

LONG ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Do you think the Bishop was justified in selling the silver salt-cellars?

Ans. To the Bishop, it was a burden to possess any material thing, and be attached to it if there was someone in deep pain, suffering because of the lack of money or any other reasons. He sold his silver salt-cellars to pay for the rent of Mere Gringoire's house. She was sick and bedridden and not in a condition to work. If the rent was not paid, the bailiff would not wait any longer and threaten to turn her out of the house that day itself. One can imagine how miserable would it be for her then. In such a situation I think, the Bishop was justified in selling the silver salt-cellars.

2. How does the Bishop prove that human body is the temple of the living God. Does he succeed?

Ans. When the convict had entered the Bishop's house, he was a criminal with no feeling for humanity — he was more of a beast than a man. But by the time he left him, the Bishop had shown him with his loving, forgiving, helping and compassionate attitude that human body is a temple of the living God. The Bishop knew well that the convict was not born that way, but certain circumstances had changed him into doing evil deeds. By helping the convict to give vent to his sufferings and by protecting him from the police, the Bishop has touched the convict's heart to such an extent after many years that he realises that he is a 'human being' and not a 'beast' as he had started thinking himself to be. The convict understands clearly what Bishop meant by saying that human body is the temple of the living God.

3. The Bishop is a living example of the greatest tenet of Christianity—forgiveness. Justify this statement by giving evidence from the text. [CBSE 2010 (Term II)]

Ans. It is true that the Bishop is really a living example of the greatest tenet of Christianity —

forgiveness. This is evident from the incident of the stealing of candlesticks. In spite of all the love and care that the Bishop had shown to the convict, when he left, he stole the Bishop's precious candlesticks. However, he was caught by the police who brought him to the Bishop's house. Instead of getting angry or getting the convict imprisoned, the Bishop told the police that the convict was not a thief but his friend whom he had given the candlesticks himself. He also told the police to let the convict go. Not only this, when the convict who was so touched by Bishop's actions, decided to go to Paris to start a new life, the Bishop gave him his candlesticks, which were his mother's gift to him and thus very precious. The Bishop blessed the convict and asked him to sell the candlesticks and start a new life in Paris. This was so touching and unbelievable for the convict that he cried and all the burden of sufferings of the past years just disappeared then and there.

4. Why does the Bishop allow the convict to take away the candlesticks and escape to Paris?

Ans. When the convict told the Bishop that he wanted to go to Paris as it was a big place and the police would not easily recognise him there, the Bishop supported him. He wanted the convict to sell the candlesticks and start his life all over again in Paris. He told the convict that in each person's body, there is the temple of the living God. The Bishop did all this because he sincerely wanted the convict to be a good human being and lead a normal life by giving up all the sufferings of his past.

5. Identify the incidents which changed the convict's life. Do you think the convict should be treated the way the Bishop treated him to reform?

[CBSE 2010 (Term II)]

Ans. The convict was a good man originally. Once, when he did not have any job and his wife was ill and he

did not have any money to get even food for her, he stole some money to buy food for her. He was caught by the police and given ten years' imprisonment for such a minor theft. A tragedy occurred in his life with the death of his wife on the day he was awarded ten years' imprisonment. In the prison he was fed on filth, lashed and tortured if he questioned even a little bit. All this changed his life completely and he turned from a man to a wild beast. He lost faith in himself as well as others completely.

The way Bishop treated the convict is absolutely marvellous in my opinion. This is a clear evidence to the falseness of the belief that criminals can be changed through punishment. Although it may not seem to be a very practical thing, but is undoubtedly correct that true love and compassion of the Bishop only reformed the convict, preventing him from committing crimes further, making life hell for himself as well as others. So, I'm sure that the convict should be treated the way the Bishop treated him to reform.

6. As Bishop, write an entry in your journal regarding the change that has come about in the convict. [CBSE 2010 (Term II)]

OR

Imagine yourself as Bishop and write a diary entry expressing your feeling after the convict has left as a free man [CBSE 2010 (Term II)]

Ans.

8-5-20XX

I feel extremely sorry for so much suffering in this world. A few days back, I had an encounter with a convict who had entered my house, and threatened me with a knife. He asked me for food. I fed him with all my love, and that gave me a lot of satisfaction. Anyway, he stole my candlesticks when he left but the police caught him and brought him back to me for identification. I genuinely wanted to relieve him of his sufferings and so asked the police to let him go telling them that he was actually my friend, and that I had gifted the candlesticks to him. The convict seemed to be quite shocked at this. The faith and favour, he felt I had shown in him, brought so much confidence in him that he decided to lead a normal life. I feel happy seeing that he wanted to go to Paris, a big city, where he could begin a new life without any fear of being identified by the police. Before leaving, he asked me to bless him. When I prayed for him, he literally started crying. I am so happy for the change that has come in him.

7. Justify the title of the play 'The Bishop's Candlesticks'.

Ans. 'The Bishop's Candlesticks' is the most appropriate title for the drama, as it was the candlesticks which became the focal point and occupy a very important place — both for the Bishop as well as the convict. For the

Bishop, they were very precious because they had been given to him by his mother when she was on her death-bed. The Bishop was a saintly person and was ready to give away any of his belongings for the welfare of others, except these candlesticks as his mother's memories were associated with them.

But when he saw that the convict had stolen away his candlesticks, he felt terribly bad. His emotions were deeply hurt. Fortunately, he got the candlesticks back when the police caught the convict and brought him to the Bishop for identification. Finally, when the convict got reformed, and decided to go to Paris to start a new life, the Bishop gave to him as a help, the most precious thing of his life—the candlesticks! The drama is deeply associated with the emotions attached with the candlesticks, and thus I feel the title 'Bishop's Candlesticks' is quite appropriate.

8. Suppose you are the convict in the play 'The Bishop's' Candlesticks'. After going to Paris you sell the silver candlesticks given by the good Bishop and start a business. Very soon you begin to prosper. Write a letter in about 120 words to friend expressing your gratitude for the Bishop. [CBSE 2011 (Term II)]

OR

9. The Bishop heals the tormented soul and shows him the path of God and righteousness. Comment. (150 words) [CBSE 2010 (Term II)]

Dear Friend,

You must be surprised as to how I am writing a letter to you after so many years. You already know what upheavals I have undergone in my life. Here I am going to tell you about a very special person, the Bishop, who has changed my life completely.

His love, care and guidance has just relieved me of all my sufferings. I, who had started thinking that the whole world just consists of bad people, have a completely different viewpoint now. It so happened that one day I entered his house for food, threatened him, but instead of being afraid or angry, he not only gave me food lovingly but also a warm bed to sleep on. As was my habit, I stole his candlesticks and ran away. But when the police caught me and got me back to his place, he asked the police to let me go, telling them that I was his friend and he had gifted the candlesticks to me. Do you know how shocked I was at this? Later he gave me his candlesticks and asked me to go to Paris, sell them and start a new life. It is unbelievable that such people live on this earth! He is like God to me. The faith he has shown in me has enabled me to turn back into a normal man from the wild beast that I had become.

That's all for now. See you then.

Your friend

XYZ

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

(A) READING/WRITING

Write an article on the topic 'Criminals are not born but they are made by the society' in 150 words.

- Read it aloud in the class.

(B) CONVERSATION

- Single out some instances of defiant behaviour in your class.
- Discuss with your neighbour.
- Provide solution/suggestions for improving them.
- Share with the class, without mentioning any names.

(C) CLASS DISCUSSION / DEBATE

Conduct a discussion/debate on the topic, 'Strict imprisonment helps in reforming a criminal'.

- Agree/Disagree.
- Share the outcome with the rest of the class.

(D) PROJECT

You must be aware that sage Balmiki was a dacoit in his earlier life. Not only did he reform himself, but he also rendered an unparalleled service to the entire mankind by writing a great epic like 'Ramayana'.

Conduct a research on similar lines and make a project based on the lives of such people, who did not have any merit, but ended up being exceptions in one way or the other.